

00:00:05:27 - 00:00:29:10

Unknown

My name is Palmer McKay. I'm interviewing Vietnam veteran Ken Purvis, who served in the Marines and was in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969. Mr. Purvis, this interview will have four sections Your Life before service, basic training, your time in Vietnam and your Life After Service. Let's get started with your background. Where did you grow up and what was your area known for?

00:00:29:17 - 00:00:37:03

Unknown

I grew up in Aiken, South Carolina, near Aiken High School.

00:00:37:05 - 00:00:50:22

Unknown

What's Aiken known for? Horses, primarily. Used to be a lot of polo. Still some polo. But when I grew up, it was primarily flat track races and polo.

00:00:50:25 - 00:00:55:28

Unknown

That was about the city. Aiken was basically that.

00:00:56:00 - 00:01:18:21

Unknown

Can you tell me about your family growing up? Yeah, I was the oldest child of three. I have a sister, 16, much younger, who's a retired schoolteacher here. And I had a brother 12 years younger. My father died when I was in the 10th grade, and I was the oldest child. So I drove a school bus and worked.

00:01:18:21 - 00:01:23:05

Unknown

Today, can drug.

00:01:23:08 - 00:01:51:09

Unknown

Would you describe your dad's job as blue collar or white collar? When he was live? All of the above. He was a county deputy sheriff for a while. He ran a pawn shop for a while. He was an insurance agent. He sold used cars pretty well. All of it. Whatever it took to make a living. Basically. Did your mom work after your father passed away?

00:01:51:12 - 00:01:57:01

Unknown

Part time, but not full time.

00:01:57:04 - 00:02:26:09

Unknown

Do you have any memories of your father or other men around you

telling war stories from World War II to. No. The veterans I knew, came back. They basically said nothing about the war. I knew some of them acted strange, but I didn't know what it was. But looking back on, it was PTSD. Had an uncle that suffered pretty badly from PTSD, but by then we didn't even know what it was called it.

00:02:26:09 – 00:02:40:21

Unknown

Shell shocked. Did your dad serve in World War two? Did not. He always said he was too young for World War one and 204, World War Two or something like that. It had no, he did not serve.

00:02:40:23 – 00:03:04:07

Unknown

Did you have a favorite World War Two movie growing up? A bunch of them. Glorified war, but yeah, I used to enjoy watching them. There was one about, Rommel in Africa that I used to enjoy watching.

00:03:04:10 – 00:03:37:21

Unknown

A lot of Vietnam veteran memoirs mentioned John Wayne as an influence on their expectations of war. Do you remember John Wayne that way? Oh, yeah. Yeah. Same thing. Yeah. It was kind of a hero thing and, you know, but then you, you know, it was common to see troops marching in street parades and stuff like that. And I always thought the uniforms looked pretty neat as a child would, but, really never thought about joining the military until, you know, I was in high school, probably.

00:03:37:21 – 00:04:05:28

Unknown

And you know, what was going on, and the draft was wide open, and, either had to get married, go to college, or get drafted, or you could, like, I just enlisted. I didn't know what I wanted to do, and I learned a lot that I didn't want to do. After serving in the Marine Corps, but it helped focus on what I want to do later in life.

00:04:06:00 – 00:04:21:00

Unknown

Did you play war as a kid? Yeah, we did it to lose soldiers about three inches tall, and we'd have battles and. But, I had thought about it a long time.

00:04:21:03 – 00:04:45:11

Unknown

Now, I'd like to move on to the start of your service and basic training. Okay. Historians of the Vietnam War note that in addition to volunteering, being commissioned and being drafted, there were also draft motivated volunteers. How would you describe yourself? Probably a draft motivated volunteer.

00:04:45:14 - 00:04:59:21

Unknown

I didn't want to get. I'd known some people got drafted, and we most of us were going to Vietnam some kind of way. And I did not want to go with some of that. Some of that crowd.

00:04:59:24 - 00:05:05:12

Unknown

When you enlisted, did you expect to go to Vietnam? Yeah.

00:05:05:15 - 00:05:31:22

Unknown

But if you joined the Marine Corps, you went to Vietnam. If you didn't, it was a rare, rare exception. You get embassy duty or something like that. But you you base going to Vietnam. When you enlisted in the Marines, did you enlist trying to avoid the Army? Yeah, that'd be fair. It was, you know, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps.

00:05:31:22 - 00:05:59:22

Unknown

So I had a friend who joined the Marine Corps, and I guess he was some motivation. I guess part of it was my lack of knowledge, but it was, you know, I thought the Marine Corps uniform looked good. The dress blues, but, And I never had any. But, I always thought if you go and just go with the crowd, that probably knew better what they were doing then than the others.

00:05:59:22 - 00:06:06:01

Unknown

But that's basically what you want. The Marine Corps, I guess.

00:06:06:04 - 00:06:12:01

Unknown

How old were you when you enlisted?

00:06:12:04 - 00:06:15:26

Unknown

18.

00:06:15:28 - 00:06:23:21

Unknown

What, if anything, did you know about the country of Vietnam before you enlisted?

00:06:23:24 - 00:06:52:03

Unknown

I'd seen pictures. And, that was when I was in high school. I was a marine who had graduated from Macon High. I came back and and talked to our history class, it seems like. And, you know, I associate with

rice paddies and that kind of terrain, which is there was rice paddies. But where I spent most of my time, there weren't any rice paddies, but I really didn't know anything about the country then what I'd seen or heard.

00:06:52:05 - 00:07:23:00

Unknown

What did you know about the Vietnam War? There was big and popular. I thought the, I was one of these people who were motivated by and believed what politicians were saying. And the domino theory and Vietnam goes there. The rest of Southeast Asian, we've learned since then that was not the facts. How would you describe your boot camp experience?

00:07:23:02 - 00:07:48:20

Unknown

Challenging. I had I was in pretty good physical condition. But I didn't realize it was going to be to that extent. I mean, I could run into animals, that kind of stuff, but, I think the harassment was the thing that stands at my mind. It was almost constant harassment. We were never left alone.

00:07:48:21 - 00:08:13:29

Unknown

It was a dog with us, 24 seven. And there was a right way to eat, a wrong way to eat, the right way to walk or way to sit. A right way. And if it wasn't the right way, it was obviously the wrong way, and it would have consequences. But, I thought the as one day I was fair.

00:08:13:29 - 00:08:42:07

Unknown

The other one was, one was a psycho. I mean, truly, he was not. He shouldn't have been in that role. Can you elaborate a little bit? He physically abused recruit. I never understood how beating a person got him to comply. I always hoped I'd never see him again.

00:08:42:09 - 00:09:09:10

Unknown

But he. The morning I left person, he stuck out his hand into me. You'll be, You're. You'll be a fine marine, Purvis. And I wouldn't shake his hand. I'm glad I never saw him again. Were there any other abuses besides beating? Yeah. Most of it had to do with harassment. I mean, I didn't see anybody pushed off steps or something like that.

00:09:09:10 - 00:09:25:20

Unknown

It would. It'd be stuff that you wouldn't physically normally see. But grabbing people in the throat and that kind of stuff, it was incredibly painful. And I never could understand what the real purpose was.

00:09:25:22 - 00:09:52:07

Unknown

How would you describe the people you trained with in terms of race? It were probably there were roughly 75 people picked up from my platoon, got picked up that were put into the same platoon. And I think there were 37 of us that graduated with out of that 75. Some of them got some of them got hurt.

00:09:52:10 - 00:10:23:11

Unknown

Some of them got recycled. Some of them broke mentally. And the racial mix up changed over, you know, depending on what stage you're in. But there weren't many, blacks. There were probably, I'd say maybe 10% at the most. That was my first exposure to Hispanic, Spanish speaking. They spoke English, but I mean, Hispanic troops.

00:10:23:13 - 00:10:28:01

Unknown

It was my first experience with that.

00:10:28:03 - 00:10:50:21

Unknown

But. So there were blacks there, but not not a large percentage. I definitely want to come back to this, but can you talk more about people breaking in basic training? What did that look like? Mentally breaking. Some physically broke, I mean, break a shoulder or something like that. A lot of physical things that you could seriously get hurt doing.

00:10:50:24 - 00:11:14:17

Unknown

But I remember one instance, particularly, I, lights was supposed to be off at 10:00 to 20 200 hours, and, this is one guy they pulled, singled him out. I don't even know why he was there. And warned him to do pull ups, and he couldn't reach the bar. And with a flashlight. The day I just kept saying jump, jump, jump, jump.

00:11:14:19 - 00:11:37:10

Unknown

And in the middle of the night, the lights out. Come on, the Colemans. Come in and haul him out. He just broke mentally. Was not a good thing to see, but it happened. Like, it's like it doesn't happen anymore. The. The guy should have never been there. He wasn't tall enough to reach the jump.

00:11:37:12 - 00:12:08:13

Unknown

The pull up bar. And we had to know that, black recruit, who couldn't read and write, and he should have never been there. I mean, that just

made no sense. And they harassed him enough. They finally just. I don't know what happened to him. To revisit race a little bit. Growing up in Aiken, was boot camp your first experience in an integrated institution?

00:12:08:20 - 00:12:24:25

Unknown

Pretty much yes. I think my class was the last class I graduated in 1966. There were blacks on campus, but there were no blacks in my graduating class that I remember. So it was very segregated.

00:12:24:27 - 00:12:56:11

Unknown

And how would you describe racial tensions in boot camp? There basically weren't any. I remember one time I was, totally out of water, and we were doing something that I couldn't even spit. It was so dry. And I was there and in the summer, so it was incredibly hot. Parris island. And a black guy beside me offered me a canteen and I had never experienced that.

00:12:56:13 - 00:13:02:01

Unknown

It built a lot of relationships.

00:13:02:03 - 00:13:37:28

Unknown

You mentioned off camera being at Parris Island during the riots in LA. Did that shape racial tensions in any way? We didn't have we couldn't really communicate with other other recruits. You could just observe that, that they knew it had happened. Occasionally you would see a newspaper. It was very rare. And you saw no TV, but it was known that the race riots were going on and you could see there was some, some friction.

00:13:38:00 - 00:14:04:07

Unknown

I guess I felt it more than solid. But you could tell that was friction there on both sides. Did anyone around you struggle with boot camp? Yeah, a lot of them struggle. A reason the only about 37 of the original 75 graduated. A fair number just washed out. Physically. They couldn't do it. A fair number washed out.

00:14:04:07 - 00:14:21:18

Unknown

Mentally they couldn't do it. And then a sizable percentage was recycled. They they weren't up to expectations, so they didn't. If you couldn't do so many sit ups or so many squat throws, you got recycled.

00:14:21:20 - 00:14:46:19

Unknown

You mentioned when we spoke off camera that you set up barricades at the Pentagon in 1967. Was that for the famous march on the Pentagon? It was. What do you remember from that night? I was stationed at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, there for a ten week school, trying to be a topographic surveyor. And I don't know why they did this.

00:14:46:21 - 00:15:12:16

Unknown

They came in, took the Marines off the base, and we went to the Pentagon to put up barricades and string, wire ropes, that kind of stuff. In preparation for the for the for the march. So we went up there that that evening. It was incredibly cold. As I remember. And, there was no provision made for food or anything else.

00:15:12:17 - 00:15:45:06

Unknown

We just we worked all night long. And as the daylight broke, the 82nd airborne came in on the convoy. But I never could figure out why they took the Marines off that base to go do that work. What we did. So I wasn't actually involved. Air during the race, during the March on Washington, but as I saw it building up.

00:15:45:08 - 00:16:14:20

Unknown

So I left before it actually began. I'd like to move on to your time in Vietnam. Did anything stick out about your flight to Vietnam? Yeah, I left Cherry Point North Carolina. There were 20 of us on special Tid. We called it temporary additional duty. We were going to Vietnam for four months to put in how to survey and control the.

00:16:14:22 - 00:16:45:23

Unknown

The maps were poor. Basically there were, oh, French maps. So we were doing high order meaning aircraft type surveying at that time. So 20 of us got on a C-130 airplane, which is a four engine prop, but seats that aren't seats, they just swings like, oh, they got straps in them like you've if you've seen some of the new movies, special ops people and we flew to California.

00:16:45:25 - 00:17:13:22

Unknown

So I had a couple days in California, Hawaii spent one night and then the next day we flew to midway, Wake and Guam, and the next day flew to denying Vietnam all on that C-130. We changed planes. And James Lee, 137 I think Hawaii. But I figured at one time we were about 49 hours flying, all together in a C-130, which was I would not recommend.

00:17:13:24 - 00:17:38:01

Unknown

Well, a long, long ride and then got on the airport there denying and I was it was a war situation going on. It was reinforced bunkers, blah, blah blah. And then it was pastel colored aircraft coming in Braniff and other airlines. Braniff doesn't exist anymore. Pastel colored airliners coming in, bringing in troops. And I was just it was so bizarre.

00:17:38:09 - 00:17:49:15

Unknown

You got a pastel colored airplane flying into a war zone, but typical Vietnam. You saw really weird things.

00:17:49:18 - 00:18:12:06

Unknown

What months did you arrive? In 1968. January. Robert. I think we left, like January. The Super Bowl Sunday was playing. We left Hawaii. Funny, was January 14th, I think, you know, in Vietnam, you know, a few days later.

00:18:12:08 - 00:18:20:04

Unknown

Could you describe your first 24 to 48 hours in country?

00:18:20:07 - 00:18:46:01

Unknown

Was attached to 11th Marines for a while, and it was a 68 was going on. So we were spending nights in foxholes and listening posts and that kind of stuff. And at the same time, there was a USO show going on at Freedom Hill, which just here again, just seems so bizarre that you've got mines in the roads and there's a USO going on with Ann-Margret.

00:18:46:03 - 00:19:15:05

Unknown

I don't know if she was there right then, but, at Freedom Hill, I could hear the music and we were in bunkers. Just crazy stuff. What did you expect when you arrived, based on TV or stories you had heard? I don't know. I don't know if I expected anything. We had not gone through any kind of training specific to go to Vietnam, since we were going over temporary additional duty.

00:19:15:07 - 00:19:40:27

Unknown

The second time I went back, they actually sent you through staging to get you ready to go to Vietnam, which I thought was interesting since I had already been. I get to go to circuit and learn how to go here again. Must make sense to someone. Didn't to me. Could you tell me more about experiencing the Tet Offensive?

00:19:41:00 - 00:20:07:12

Unknown

Yeah. It was. I guess the main thing was going on a we had I say we the, the Marine Corps had, allowing allowed, Vietnamese people to work, like, in the mess hall and in the rear areas in the more secured areas. And after Tet, or during Tet, all of a sudden they started disappearing.

00:20:07:12 - 00:20:34:08

Unknown

And in case one time I had my hair cut and a shave, I was on a it and A155 gun battery. It flew by just out of way. Still had Vietnamese in there. Got to cut my hair and shave me. And that night, we killed him for shooting mortars at us. Which I always thought was interesting that he shaved me and cut my hair.

00:20:34:11 - 00:20:55:11

Unknown

And that night, we killed him. I personally didn't kill him, but, found his body, but, it. So you got to learn real quick. You couldn't trust who. If they were Vietnamese around, you had to be very cautious.

00:20:55:13 - 00:21:21:01

Unknown

Could you elaborate on your two service periods in Vietnam in terms with the months you were in country? Well, the first time I was there for four months and I came back to the States and I was here probably about, I'm guessing six months, and went back, went through staging in California and, and went back that time we flew on a commercial airliner.

00:21:21:04 - 00:21:50:09

Unknown

And that time I had no orders, which I thought was interesting. Everybody on the plane had orders except me. I had a strange mouse being a topographic survey. They very few of us in the Marine Corps. And so I came in on a sand. And I knew from being there before that you did. That wasn't a good thing to do, because all the Marines were there basic and was was oh 311, which is infantry rifleman.

00:21:50:11 - 00:22:20:29

Unknown

And so I was really concerned that I was going to be sent to an infantry outfit, which fortunately I wasn't, I was put back with, a combat engineering outfit to use serving, which was being an infantry outfit. But so I was sent up to, Kwang Tree Province up on the DMZ, to dong hard level engineers, combat engineers.

00:22:21:01 - 00:22:40:27

Unknown

The day, the afternoon I checked in the War Office or I'd gone to Vietnam. First time, he was running the survey shop there. He told me. He said, I'm going radio around, keeps places open. You pick up all your gear. Said we don't leave it. Oh, 700 in the morning on a helicopter. And you going out to bales?

00:22:40:27 - 00:23:05:00

Unknown

He stood. You'd be out there a while. And I spent most of my second time. Helmsley stood. A Vandegrift combat base is about halfway between Dong Holland on on route nine and the Laotian border, not too far from the rock pile and caisson, which would kind of for me, you places.

00:23:05:02 - 00:23:35:00

Unknown

In your first deployment, would you describe yourself as being in combat in the rear or something else? I wasn't in rifle shooting combat. I was primarily getting hit with rockets and mortars that night. But we're in that 155 gun battery. And we got hit about every night with rockets and mortars, some small bombs were primarily rockets and mortars.

00:23:35:02 - 00:24:02:13

Unknown

Could you elaborate on the kind of work you did in your first, as opposed to your second tour? First tour? We, we hit, you know, to to 68. So we were trying to do the survey work, but, and we went up several times, but it became almost impossible to, to stand behind. We were using theater lights to survey, and you're standing still looking through an optic.

00:24:02:16 - 00:24:35:01

Unknown

It's a real good way to get killed. So we basically quit that, and then we went up to one, five, five guns. We primarily went up there to do artillery survey and controls, which was not near precisely. You weren't behind for that longer period of time. And it 155 gun barrel us that was probably, one of the most dramatic places I was ever at was when a, a gun exploded.

00:24:35:03 - 00:24:51:10

Unknown

One five, five was a very large artillery piece, gun explode, killed 7 or 8 Marines and, just as I got in that outfit, which was, not good.

00:24:51:13 - 00:25:17:00

Unknown

In your second deployment, would you describe yourself as being in combat in the rear or something else? Much like the first time I spent

most of the time I was at least, or Vandegrift Combat Base. I lived in a bunker, and we got hit, primarily rockets and mortars, regularly. Basically, we owned it in the daylight, and they owned it at dark.

00:25:17:02 - 00:25:35:16

Unknown

And if it was, cloudy, low fog, misty rain. You could just sit. You watch. You going to get hit? During the daytime. It was pretty secure. But at night it wasn't.

00:25:35:18 - 00:26:01:04

Unknown

And did your work differ in the second tour or was it similar to the first? I did primarily, construction, surveying the second time, laying up bridges, beach matting runways. I did a good bit of work at it. Corvette. That was on the, where the dong how I called it Dong River. That's not the name, but it's a river.

00:26:01:04 - 00:26:23:29

Unknown

Comes through Dong on, dumps out into the South China Sea called play side. It was called Corvette. And I'd, laid out a lot of, they were trying to put like a or and our in country place. I did a lot of survey out there to, facilitate that construction. Did you learn any Vietnamese words or phrases during your tours?

00:26:24:01 - 00:26:52:01

Unknown

None that are probably appropriate. As first mama, son and papa son. Chop chop. I never knew what chop chop was. First, I know it was literally the first day I was in Vietnam. Well, the old village and the, Those old mama son out there, with a wooden block and a meat cleaver and, said something and she said, number one, chop, chop.

00:26:52:03 - 00:27:14:01

Unknown

And I said, what is what? Number one, chop chop. She was obviously referring to what she was talking to, what she was chop. And I asked her what it was, and she said it was at several exchanges. I figured she was eating a rat. She was chewing, chopping up that rat to eat number one. Chop, chop. The protein was very hard to come by.

00:27:14:03 - 00:27:44:26

Unknown

So if a rat got killed or a dog got run over or something, they. For the protein. So, but that might be the only, repeatable words that I learned in Vietnamese. Neither time was I really around Vietnamese very much. Particularly the second time up. It was the we had no, no interaction at all with locals.

00:27:44:28 - 00:28:00:10

Unknown

You mentioned that you learned some Vietnamese words or phrases that might not be repeatable. All right. Are you comfortable sharing those with us? Probably not.

00:28:00:13 - 00:28:13:25

Unknown

How would you describe the people you served with in terms of economic background, race or religion? Primarily.

00:28:13:28 - 00:28:51:09

Unknown

Lower middle class? Primarily Caucasian. Small percentage. Black. Few Hispanic. Puerto Ricans. Most had a high school education at best. And at the end, Marine Corps was losing so many troops. I actually got to being drafted. They were drafting some recruits that came through, or drafting some people and making a marines and send them to Paris.

00:28:51:13 - 00:29:17:29

Unknown

And you could see that it appeared to me that they weren't of the same quality as the ones who had volunteered. They didn't want to be there. Obviously they had they thought they were going to get drafted in the Army. They end up in the Marine Corps. That was not what they planned. The primarily, Christian,

00:29:18:01 - 00:29:43:19

Unknown

In most places, but not in the field, but most places in the Marine Corps, they'd have a, a service on Sundays. And you could attend, but I never I don't remember one in Vietnam. I had a friend who was, work for a Catholic chaplain, and, so I knew that chaplain would, but I don't I don't ever remember a religious service in Vietnam.

00:29:43:21 - 00:29:48:15

Unknown

We're definitely going to come revisit religion. Okay.

00:29:48:17 - 00:29:58:05

Unknown

Do you remember any women, either Vietnamese or American, other than obviously the mama San you mentioned earlier?

00:29:58:07 - 00:30:23:20

Unknown

Not really. There were no women around where I was. The even, you know, we had, like, a mash unit that Elsie, I was, for a long time, ninth Marines were out there. And it was an Army function there, so it it was pretty good size. I call it mash, because that's what people

know from television, but, you know, bringing it people by helicopter.

00:30:23:22 - 00:30:38:28

Unknown

But even there, I had to go up there one time. I had jungle, right? Real bad and had to have some surgery to cut out jungle right off. And but there were no female nurses or anything. It was all all, all males.

00:30:39:00 - 00:31:12:21

Unknown

To revisit face. Did you or anyone you served with change in terms of face in the war on. That's a good question. Yeah. I think some became more agnostic and they would say stuff like, if there was a Lord, what are we. Well, if it was the Lord, was this happening to me or to my friend or whatever others, they all say you never met an atheist in a foxhole.

00:31:12:22 - 00:31:43:13

Unknown

There was some truth in that, too. So you saw that change? Yeah. They always laughed at me. I grew up in a Southern Baptist, Presbyterian now, but we always grew up saying a blessing and they laugh at me because I'd say quietly to myself, say grace over, over c rations. And they said, you, you got to be joking the way you say you think, anybody for this?

00:31:43:15 - 00:31:56:09

Unknown

But that's all we had to eat for three meals a day. So. And I was like, well, some days we didn't have one. So then you were thankful when you got one?

00:31:56:11 - 00:32:29:00

Unknown

Now, I know you mentioned you didn't see many Vietnamese people right? How did living in Vietnam and meeting the Vietnamese people you did meet affect you? I thought they were in a bad situation. They were basically starving, and I could see myself if my country had been invaded. I would fight you. And I think that's the way they saw it.

00:32:29:02 - 00:32:54:26

Unknown

Even it might be covered very often. It was a very seldom you saw overt action. But, you know, they were friends with whoever gave them a cup of rice. That's that's how they were living. So I felt I felt compassion for them. Not for the ones trying to kill me, but for the. This wasn't all in everybody like that, you know?

00:32:54:26 - 00:33:11:02

Unknown

So. And some I was with a mountain yard villagers for a while or going through an in and out of that village and, very peaceful. People were just having a very difficult time living.

00:33:11:04 - 00:33:39:01

Unknown

What do you remember about Vietnamese children? Cute. I got a picture of one of my little. Do some in preparation, bringing you some slides. I was looking through some old pics and I had a couple of pictures of, Vietnamese kids, with puppies and stuff like that. And it was made you want to go home? And the kids, you know, they having a hard time, very difficult time making it.

00:33:39:04 - 00:33:47:03

Unknown

They wouldn't kill the dog. But the dog died. Did eat the dog.

00:33:47:05 - 00:33:54:00

Unknown

Did you ever witness prostitution in Vietnam?

00:33:54:03 - 00:34:04:04

Unknown

No. Did in Okinawa, but not in Vietnam. Just what wasn't around them.

00:34:04:06 - 00:34:38:18

Unknown

Did you experience any culture shock in Vietnam? It was all culture shock. I don't know what. What culture shock? Having grown up in a in South Carolina and had been to, probably Georgia, North Carolina and Florida, the only place that everybody in my life. So, yeah, everything in Vietnam was a culture shock. The one who I was to kill me, that they couldn't understand why we would blow our nose and save it in the form of a handkerchief and put it in your pocket.

00:34:38:20 - 00:35:00:04

Unknown

They wonder why you saved that. You know, there, there, there, there weren't bathrooms. So, you know, we go to bathroom and they go side the road. So, yeah, it was all culture shock.

00:35:00:06 - 00:35:24:14

Unknown

I know you said earlier that you had a particularly bad case of jungle, right? Yeah. Can you tell us about getting sick during your time in country? Oh. The time I really got, I had a terrible tonsils, were swollen really bad one time and had, that was done during Tet, a 68, and it was, So I got on.

00:35:24:14 - 00:35:45:29

Unknown

It had to. I couldn't be in a foxhole or listening post at night, which I thought was pretty nice. So it was worth having to have to get a shot. And you were here and every morning for penicillin, for my tassels. It was worth it. Just not have to be out on the lawns every night. But, you know, then that I had a bad knee and it went at one time in Vietnam, but there was nothing to do about it.

00:35:45:29 - 00:36:10:16

Unknown

I mean, it literally. The swelling went down, it got better later. I had to have it replaced. But, the the jungle rock was just, you know, the water was filthy. You, you know, if the creek was, it was leaches into creek and new filth in the creek. And, I had jungle rot on my upper thighs, and, they got so bad, they just bleed.

00:36:10:16 - 00:36:30:06

Unknown

So that's why I went up and, like that. It was so bad when I got up that I would literally just walk in it with people laid up. Being being operated on surgery for whatever's going on. And I turned around, corpsman says, where are you going? I said, I'm really not. I don't need this. And he said, well, they'll get to you.

00:36:30:06 - 00:36:53:01

Unknown

So it works like this all the time. And so I came home and cut them off and sew them up. They got okay. What was the treatment like for jungle? Right. From what I remember, they just took a, scalpel and cut them out and sewed them up. And, I guess I went back and had the stitches out.

00:36:53:03 - 00:37:09:04

Unknown

Maybe I took them out. I don't remember, you were in a place you wanted to go frequent. They were literally coming in almost constantly with with guys. Oh, shut up.

00:37:09:06 - 00:37:41:04

Unknown

To change topics, what was the most interesting food you ate in Vietnam? I guess a steak. And they said it was horse. But I haven't eaten c rations a long time. It tasted pretty good, but it the texture was a little different. So I started to ask around. Some US soldiers were getting to that. All right, well, that's true or not, I don't know, but, it beats C rations.

00:37:41:07 - 00:38:02:09

Unknown

What American foods did you miss most? Well, in Vietnam, saltine crackers. I'd have my mother send me saltine crackers, and I don't know why. I don't even eat them today, but I don't know if it was just the idea that back then, they came in a metal box and she could send them, like, a lot of times they were broke up.

00:38:02:09 – 00:38:13:17

Unknown

But, that was what I really remember. Well, it was saltine crackers. I have no idea.

00:38:13:20 – 00:38:39:00

Unknown

You talked a little bit already about animals in Vietnam. Do you remember any other distinct animals or a bunch of distinct animals that were tigers? I never personally saw. When I saw some, it was shot. Water buffalo. I'd never seen a water buffalo before. The water buffalo. The kids would hang out all over them. It'd be 4 or 5 kids right in the water buffalo.

00:38:39:02 – 00:39:00:22

Unknown

And if you walked out in that area, the water buffalo would charge you. So I thought that was really strange. There was something called we called them rock apes. I don't really know what they were, but if you go around a river and you go to a river to swim, basically bathe. And, there was a kind of a monkey look at an animal.

00:39:00:24 – 00:39:22:19

Unknown

Ape. Like an animal that would get river rocks and go up a tree and throw them at you. I'd never seen that before. And a mongoose. I'd never seen a mongoose before, but they were on the lions house. Had a bunch of guys on the Lions one time, and out front was a free fire zone. So you shot anything that was out there.

00:39:22:21 – 00:39:36:14

Unknown

And that's when we shot mongoose. And it was a cat, a Monday. I think they called it Strange Animals like that. I'd never seen.

00:39:36:16 – 00:40:03:18

Unknown

Did you have any other experiences with the rats beyond the one mama on that? That's a really good question. Lived with the rats in our bunker. We ate one. It was. Three of us lived in that bunker most of the time. And the rats were terrible. They had a big old wall of rats. And, you had we had big traps, which he'd have to tie them off because the rat would leave with the trap.

00:40:03:21 - 00:40:23:08

Unknown

And we we took, tried to see what was the most effective way to catch them. And it came out peanut butter. The peanut butter. They couldn't get it off the trap. And so we usually that would catch them, which, like I said, you had to tie the trap down. And then at times a couple times they jump on me at night.

00:40:23:10 - 00:40:44:17

Unknown

You'd be sleeping and a lot of guys got bit. They bite you rather than those where you breathing. And then you had to take rabies shots. But when they jumped on me, I was woke up so I'd knock them off. But, the rats were the biggest rats I've ever seen. They look like a house cat. They were really big rats because there's food everywhere.

00:40:44:17 - 00:40:51:11

Unknown

I mean, you know, you dumped all the garbage, so the rats lived in the garbage.

00:40:51:14 - 00:41:05:10

Unknown

Did questions about it was on many a year. Thank you. Did you ever see Vietnamese civilians collecting or using American trash?

00:41:05:12 - 00:41:28:13

Unknown

No, I saw them. They weren't supposed. We had military payment certificates. We weren't. We weren't allowed to use U.S. dollars. And they weren't supposed to have anything but their currency, which is the Vietnamese dong, but they would have, I guess black market trading I was not involved with, but at times they would have a military payment certificate.

00:41:28:15 - 00:41:55:17

Unknown

So I remember a couple times while I was there, they would issue new payment certificate unannounced. So why are \$20 MPC? It was purple now. It was green or yellow or something. Well, you'd always get hit those nights because all those people who got rich on military payments, even now, they couldn't. It was worthless, which I thought was interesting.

00:41:55:20 - 00:41:59:10

Unknown

Somebody thought that through.

00:41:59:12 - 00:42:04:23

Unknown

Would you say you personally encountered the Vietcong?

00:42:04:25 - 00:42:34:15

Unknown

Yeah, yeah. And then I think I met two of them going back as well. Two guys I didn't partially confront in battle, but they were Viet Cong. And I met them later on. And when I visited Vietnam, two different occasions, I met but individual Vietcong people, we got along fine. There was no animosity at all.

00:42:34:17 - 00:42:43:08

Unknown

Do you remember seeing Agent Orange being sprayed? Yeah. You know, it's,

00:42:43:11 - 00:43:09:00

Unknown

You know, we'd have a road like route nine, which is the main route from Dong Ha, which is over almost on the South China Sea over to the ocean border. And that was a main thoroughfare east west. And, bulldozers would push back in and they'd spray Agent Orange as well. Yeah. So a lot of sprayed. Were you concerned at all at the time?

00:43:09:06 - 00:43:34:27

Unknown

Yeah. We didn't know anything about it. You know, I have a good friend now who was in the Air Force at the time, and, he was he said he was. He was loading Agent Orange on planes. That was his job at times, and he was covered with it. Well, now he's got a lot of Agent Orange effects done with it.

00:43:35:00 - 00:43:39:15

Unknown

What were some of the ways you coped with the war?

00:43:39:17 - 00:44:01:29

Unknown

Laugh a lot. Give you an example. You do things just to pretend you're not there. Came up to a marine one time. Only know where I was. Somewhere not my normal place and was a guy there. And they had a it really. They had a mess hall. And so I asked him what time it was, and he he looked at his watch.

00:44:02:00 - 00:44:24:18

Unknown

I didn't have a watch. And he gave me some time and it had to be about 1700, 1730, something like that. And he gave me some time, like 10:00 in the morning, that I said, that can't be right. He said, yeah, that's right. And I said, that can't be hasty. This is Tennessee time. This is all a real bad if in dream.

00:44:24:21 - 00:44:35:15

Unknown

And when I wake up, I won't be on the right time. So you saw a lot of that. Just whatever it took to cope.

00:44:35:18 - 00:44:39:11

Unknown

You have to.

00:44:39:14 - 00:45:09:25

Unknown

Do you remember any other examples of humor or slang or jokes or pranks being a part of all the time? All the time. I mean, it was just constant, you know, if you. And that was the stress reliever pull pranks on each other, I was I was telling you I had like 12 bunkers. I don't know, on the lines that free fire zone in front of us and my guys, I put them out like I oh, we had like four hour shifts, so was like 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. or something.

00:45:09:25 - 00:45:33:17

Unknown

So my guys had to first shift and then the last shift. So then around pick them up one morning, one guy calls and he says, I want to fire one round down here. And you always cleared it because if you start shooting, everybody start shooting. And, so I got on the radio, which I'm. Yeah, that's good. So he shot a pheasant and we cooked pheasant.

00:45:33:19 - 00:45:55:24

Unknown

But I went to pick up the guys one morning. It real foggy and got to one of these bunkers and sitting behind an M60 machine gun, it looks like long blond hair. And I'm thinking, this can't be. You know, it was a USO show had been put on for the Army by there. And some of the girls had come, spent the night with a couple of my guys on the bunker.

00:45:55:27 - 00:46:25:17

Unknown

So you had this blond girl sitting behind a machine gun. She was Australian and, anything to relieve the the tension. They said, what are you going to do? I said, congratulate them. You know what? What am I going to do with them? You know, but, but it was always something going on to to try to just relieve distress.

00:46:25:20 - 00:46:45:26

Unknown

We cooked on spos get heat tabs with, with a C rations as a little round tablet. You touch a match to any heat you feed. Well, never had them, so we'd take a claymore mine apart or make a little ball, roll

it into sand and set a can of. Make sure you open the can first and set it off.

00:46:45:26 - 00:46:59:16

Unknown

That's how we heat food. It is adapting. Just just make it easy, easier.

00:46:59:18 - 00:47:39:00

Unknown

Did you have any other memorable experiences with free fire zones? Yeah. I mean, typically where I was, there was always an air designate very far. I mean, it was nobody's supposed to be there. I was walking point at one time, and, all I saw was black outfit and something swinging over. And my first reaction was to shoot, but then something called me to pause, and I still don't know what, but it was an old woman out there with a hoe, and it was in a free fire zone.

00:47:39:02 - 00:47:59:15

Unknown

I still don't know why I didn't shoot. I'm thankful I didn't shoot her, but we ran her off. But you know why? She would have even been out there. She went through concertina wire and the claymore mines and, you know, should not have been out there, but they were out there.

00:47:59:18 - 00:48:10:14

Unknown

While you were in country, were you aware of any active duty military personnel who opposed the war? No, it was not.

00:48:10:16 - 00:48:31:12

Unknown

What was the most memorable friendship you had during your time in Vietnam? A guy who died recently lived in Kentucky. We went to Vietnam twice. We went. First time we went over together. Second time I ended up in the same bunker that I talked about with the rats with him. So we spent a lot of time together.

00:48:31:14 - 00:48:56:08

Unknown

We played poker at night. He would lose his money or get it would typically he would get mad because we quit playing poker. He he burn his money. So the next day, I'd loan it money so we could play poker again. The next night. But it it was just a comedy. But, I called him toad. First time one five, five guns.

00:48:56:10 - 00:49:16:11

Unknown

We got hit. That was first time we really got hit with hard. And, we

were in a bunker. He went running out of the bunker, and, I thought, we'll never see him again. And alive. And a few minutes later, he dove back in the bunker, and after things settle down, I ask him, where did you go?

00:49:16:13 - 00:49:33:11

Unknown

He said, and he reached in his flak jacket pocket and pulled out a patch of kind of a petrified toad frog hat. They drove up, he said. I picked that up out in the field today, and so long as I keep him alive, I said, he's not alive now. He said, well, he's kinda, I'm going to be okay.

00:49:33:11 - 00:49:59:21

Unknown

He's going to take care of me. We came back to Vietnam from Vietnam with that toad. He went back, but six weeks before I did two months, I got that bunker. He still had that toad. When I left to come back to the state, he still had that toad. I ran him down 30, 40 years later. And, first thing I ask him is he still have toad?

00:49:59:21 - 00:50:32:21

Unknown

And he said, not a thing fell apart. But, he was the an interesting guy from Campbellsville, Kentucky. What was his name? Roscoe Skaggs. No middle name. Bright guy, but grew up in the wrong place. What was the most beautiful thing you saw in Vietnam? The.

00:50:32:24 - 00:51:06:07

Unknown

Scenery was incredible. It was a it's a beautiful country. The mountains were lush and beautiful. The rivers were gorgeous. The Vietnamese young women who were part French, well, gorgeous. They were really pretty. The older women, they chewed, we called it betel nut. The betel nut is a pain killer for for teeth. And and the teeth were brought it out and they'd have black gums.

00:51:06:07 - 00:51:22:06

Unknown

But those young girls had had French in them were really pretty. But in the South China Sea, it like at cha beach. It's a beautiful, beautiful coastline.

00:51:22:08 - 00:51:31:15

Unknown

Beautiful country. What was the worst thing you saw in Vietnam?

00:51:31:18 - 00:51:42:17

Unknown

Those guys getting blown up with that 155 gun? There were literally

body parts everywhere, and,

00:51:42:19 - 00:52:09:16

Unknown

And literally parts. And so most of the day was spent picking up body parts and sand bags. That was the worst thing. So, and, I mean, just an accident. It wasn't enemy fire and earth. And the gun breech block didn't lock, and, it blew back on them, killed all of them. I think it was seven.

00:52:09:16 - 00:52:24:16

Unknown

And again, altogether kill six. I mean, instantly in one court up front. He basically was on fire. They got him out. He lived, like, 20 days. Sure. That were not good. 20 days.

00:52:24:18 - 00:52:28:18

Unknown

Did you expect to survive the war?

00:52:28:21 - 00:52:50:04

Unknown

Not the second time. The first time I was a novice. Enough to think. Yeah, but after. After that, you'd seen enough to know that there was a lot, a lot of people getting killed. And so the second time, I didn't dwell on it. I didn't fear dying. I just didn't want to get. We called it getting screwed up.

00:52:50:07 - 00:53:19:02

Unknown

You know, a lot of guys would get really paid or white phosphorus on them or, napalm or, you know, really, they'd been better off dead. So I didn't fear the death. I feared the other and was very, very, very fortunate. Was it then common in your experience for US soldiers to get hit with napalm or white phosphorus?

00:53:19:04 - 00:53:44:08

Unknown

It wasn't common, but it was not abnormal. It would happen. I mean, if you call in air support and it's off a little bit, it gets on you. But you would see people like that. Yeah. It was, and you didn't want any part of that. Being shot was a whole lot better than that.

00:53:44:10 - 00:54:09:05

Unknown

Who did you write to or receive letters from when you were in Vietnam? I wrote my mother. I said my father died, and, my brother and sister were still at home. So I wrote my mother when I could, I had an uncle who was, my daddy's brother, who wrote me fairly regularly in Vietnam.

00:54:09:07 - 00:54:33:04

Unknown

And I responded, a lot of times we didn't have a way to respond. When one time I was on a boat going down a river corvette and, the mailbags were on there were water was coming over the boat. So all the letters were getting right, getting ruined. And I thought, well, that's why we don't get mail.

00:54:33:06 - 00:54:39:09

Unknown

But mail was a big deal. It was always good to get mail.

00:54:39:11 - 00:55:06:00

Unknown

Do you remember any American songs from your time in Vietnam? Yeah. You know the Armed Forces Radio when you could pick it up? Played, you know, American music. In fact, one time when it was first time, I was in Vietnam with live Marines and, Armed Forces Radio would pick up, like, a local back stateside, radio show, and it was WB back in August.

00:55:06:00 - 00:55:19:23

Unknown

They used to say WB BC Tiger Radio. And that that played is as I was walking by and I said, whoa, whoa, that's home, you know. But so when you could get a radio and get reception,

00:55:19:25 - 00:55:44:03

Unknown

The typical songs of that period, 68, 6970s, there's a lot of British influence there. And and the music. What was your most expensive or frequent purchase at the. We didn't have this, I mean, around the nine, we had a Freedom Hill. You could actually buy a car and have it so you could pick it up when you got home.

00:55:44:03 - 00:56:04:15

Unknown

But, other than that, I was never. We had a, we pulled out \$30 a month. Send the rest. My mom, and basically, there was nothing to buy that was to play poker with or something. I mean.

00:56:04:17 - 00:56:30:27

Unknown

What was R&R like and where did you go? The only answer I ever got was, I was sent out to a heavy cruiser, for, I think, 3 or 4 days off the coast. It was foreign in the North Vietnam. And you basically, they had them. They actually had ice cream. They had air conditioned. They had a television.

00:56:31:00 - 00:56:53:03

Unknown

But I wasn't comfortable out there. It was strange, because it was a large ship. It was firing and where I'd been in, something fired if it was outgoing or incoming. You real quick. You knew the difference. But that ship with fire. And I kept saying, if they shoot back us up, I don't have a hole to get in.

00:56:53:06 - 00:57:15:04

Unknown

So it was a strange feeling. I mean, they were secure because they were after coast, but it was, I wasn't comfortable out there in it. It was good to get a hot bath and all that kind of stuff. But that was the only honor I ever got. Flew out on a helicopter, spent like 3 or 4 days, and then came back.

00:57:15:06 - 00:57:36:08

Unknown

When did you go to Okinawa? Went through Okinawa twice. First time, for from denying me that 2020 man detachment I was with, we went back to Okinawa. We were there, 3 or 4 days where we caught a plane back. And then the second time I went back in Okinawa, I was up on the DMZ, very close.

00:57:36:10 - 00:58:00:16

Unknown

And, when this when Nixon announced to pull out of Marines from Vietnam, we pulled off. They pulled off the the the senior people of the DMZ first and, got on a ship into Nang and went to Okinawa, spent my 21st birthday, at LST, which is a landing. Landing type ships flat bottom. We got in the edge of a typhoon.

00:58:00:16 - 00:58:18:04

Unknown

It was taken incredible rolls. Even the sailors were sick. But then I spent my 21st birthday coming out of Vietnam a second time on that lst, and I spent probably about two months in Okinawa at that time for I came back to the States.

00:58:18:06 - 00:58:38:27

Unknown

And once I got in the States, I went up to Cherry Point. I had no orders. Again, I call them orders were called call Marine Corps headquarters in Washington. And so I call on this guy, answers the phone, and he said, what's your MLS? He got service Marines here. My last is 1443. I said, yeah, he said, what?

00:58:39:02 - 00:58:56:00

Unknown

What am I going to do with that? I said, I don't know. He said, where you want to go? C d for marine career station B for he said nobody on

the whole base got it MLS I can't send you there. I said, how about Air Wing? He said, hold on it said Cherry Point. I've seen you there.

00:58:56:00 - 00:59:14:25

Unknown

So I went up to Cherry Point and I was there. I was training NCO there for a while and got an early out. I took people who, had some, I forget how many months in country and so many much left to do, and they let us out.

00:59:14:27 - 00:59:27:01

Unknown

That's the end of my service. Questions. Okay. Is there another story we haven't talked about from your time in Vietnam that you'd like to share? Nothing comes to mind. You did a good job.

00:59:27:04 - 01:00:02:21

Unknown

Let's talk about your post service life. What relationship in your life was most changed by your service? I learned there were a lot of things I never wanted to do again. In almost made me a pacifist. I found warhawks of people who've never. I shouldn't say absolutely, just not absolute statement. But, the people who are gung ho, are people because they've never seen it.

01:00:02:23 - 01:00:29:11

Unknown

And so it made me basically a pass is I had an old Volkswagen bus for years. I drove around, I worked for the department of Revenue and Upper Management, had a Volkswagen bus. And, and I always brought comments, but, and when time was, worked at Department of Revenue, I retired there. And, they interviewed me, a guy who did our PR stuff, interview wrinkle birthday.

01:00:29:11 - 01:00:55:29

Unknown

And he's against. Tell me he was a marine. Had he been in Vietnam? We didn't know each other at the time. And, he said, tell me how you would describe Vietnam as is an exercise in futility that thousands of people got killed and we accomplished nothing. So I think that's what it left with me.

01:00:56:01 - 01:01:02:17

Unknown

When did you transition to being more of a pacifist?

01:01:02:19 - 01:01:29:28

Unknown

More and more. The longer I initially, I didn't talk about Vietnam at all. My wife didn't hear. We thermostat would click in the house and

I'd jump up, or the pine cone would hit a roof in our hallway. Income and and this kind of stuff. But, and it was obviously PTSD. I didn't know what it was, but, I think that the, the older I got, probably the more pacifist I've become.

01:01:30:00 - 01:01:37:18

Unknown

But it, I think it all goes back to the Vietnam experience.

01:01:37:21 - 01:01:57:19

Unknown

I'm not naive enough to think that some people don't need to be removed from the gene pool, because I think they do. I think they're dangerous. I mean, I can't I can't say we were wrong to get rid of Hitler. But I think if we can avoid a conflict, we should avoid a conflict.

01:01:57:22 - 01:02:03:25

Unknown

Did you take any actions against the war after you got home?

01:02:03:27 - 01:02:32:01

Unknown

No. I often told people if if the if it happened five years later out of probably gone to Canada. We accomplished nothing. And the times I've been back to Vietnam, you see it still with those people? They're very. It's hard to find anyone my age in Vietnam. And you still see kids? No one around, particularly in Laos, with bombing off legs because of the mines we left there, and we still got them there.

01:02:32:03 - 01:02:37:02

Unknown

So, Yeah. I don't know what we accomplished with that.

01:02:37:04 - 01:03:10:02

Unknown

Did you join Vietnam Veterans Against the War? No, my wife told me I didn't. I want to join her. And that's probably true. I don't join much of anything. I enjoy people, but I'm not a joiner. Could you tell me about veterans rap groups you participated in? Yeah. Is for PTSD treatment through the VA. Yeah.

01:03:10:04 - 01:03:34:07

Unknown

You know, I got some help out of it. I think everybody deals with it differently. Some people really get so almost excited about talking about, well, when this happened and this happened, and, you know, some people almost dwell. And that was the high point of their life. And it was the happen one of my life.

01:03:34:10 - 01:03:48:00

Unknown

So I only did it a few times. I didn't really find it helpful. Some people didn't know. Right, ma'am, that that was their their way out. But that's what my way of dealing with it.

01:03:48:02 - 01:04:07:22

Unknown

But I've gotten good service from the VA. And I know they catch a lot of grief, but I did, go to the Siebert Clinic, that community outreach clinic here in Aitkin, and then, the main hospital is, you know, got two large hospitals in Augusta, but I get I get good service out of the VA.

01:04:07:24 - 01:04:30:06

Unknown

I have no complaints out of them. It's a very large bureaucracy, but you can go to any VA anywhere in the country, and you show them you don't. You got a card, you. They scan it, and instantly they know everything that's ever happened to you. And it our, our other medical system. You go to one doctor.

01:04:30:06 - 01:04:41:18

Unknown

They don't know what the other doctor did and they don't know what the other one did. And it's just such a hodgepodge in the VA from from my perspective, has that part down.

01:04:41:20 - 01:05:09:00

Unknown

After Vietnam, where did you go to college? I went to University of South Carolina, GI Bill, my wife, was there last semester in college, and it was a bachelor degree and my first. So then she got a job teaching in Aiken. So I went to USC Aiken Banxia, as long as I could. It was a two year school at the time.

01:05:09:02 - 01:05:33:15

Unknown

Then I transferred to Augusta College, and I only took the courses there. That business school at Carolina approved. So I got them to approve them before I took them at Augusta College just to avoid that commute. And then I finished at Carolina in Columbia. So in other words, you went to the original USC Aiken. Did.

01:05:33:17 - 01:05:56:01

Unknown

It was a lot of fun. Really small. Yeah. You just get local people. It was fun. I work at it. The gym here, at USC Aiken here. And, I find the students great. Yeah, it is a good school. And, they know the day and got the desk. I said, where are you from? You said Spain.

01:05:56:01 - 01:06:19:00

Unknown

I said, where? I said he said Madrid. I said, you got some beautiful some great museums. He said, we have some good artist. What years were you in college? Graduate in December, 74. So, went through, went to summer school and all that get through as soon as I could. So I don't know exactly when I graduated.

01:06:19:00 - 01:06:28:29

Unknown

December 74th. What did you expect on campus as a Vietnam veteran?

01:06:29:01 - 01:07:03:02

Unknown

There was, I felt a good bit of resentment from the staff, instructors and professors. A couple of them were very anti-war. And at that point, I was not pro-war, but I didn't be treated like I had done something wrong. And, served them overtly. Were very much opposed to anyone who served.

01:07:03:05 - 01:07:18:02

Unknown

Who since the war, have you talked to you about Vietnam for years? No one. As we get older, I get, I guess, more talkative.

01:07:18:05 - 01:07:36:26

Unknown

Occasionally friends. I never joined the Marine Corps League or anything like that. So really, just a handful of people, probably. You probably know more about my history in Vietnam than anybody other than my wife did.

01:07:36:28 - 01:07:51:18

Unknown

Have you been to the wall in DC? Have not been in DC a number of times, but I've not been to the wall. Why not? I'll recognize some of the names. I just I'm not read them.

01:07:51:20 - 01:08:14:07

Unknown

What do you think of it as a monument? From what I've seen pictures of, I think it's a beautiful monument. I've been to the World War Two memorial there. Which is, I thought very nicely done as well. But, it's a beautiful piece of work. It's just. I don't want to read the names.

01:08:14:09 - 01:08:40:09

Unknown

Do you remember it being controversial? Yeah. You know, I if I

remember, I had a Vietnamese woman architect designed it. It seemed like that or something, but, yeah, I remember some controversy around it, but nothing particularly. But I seem like a Vietnamese sculptor or, I guess, the right word, be sculptor. It's so big. But I think it was a Vietnamese woman.

01:08:40:11 - 01:08:46:21

Unknown

She was an Asian American Asian man. Okay, okay.

01:08:46:23 - 01:08:50:18

Unknown

Which I thought was fitting.

01:08:50:20 - 01:09:18:03

Unknown

I like I like the Asian cultures. Have you been back to Vietnam and back three times there twice. Is Marina been back three times as civilian. Twice. Just kind of a tourist. I went back the first time I wanted to go to see some of the places I'd seen before. And, I did, and overall I enjoyed it.

01:09:18:06 - 01:09:46:29

Unknown

It was it was helpful. Then, another time we we vacation went again. Didn't go to those places again, just did different things. And then last time I went a couple years ago, we built a built some housing for, out of Hanoi with habitat for humanity. When did you first go back to Vietnam?

01:09:47:01 - 01:10:16:08

Unknown

Right about 15 years ago. I can't come up with a date, but, flew into foobar, which I thought was interesting that was. That's where 155 guns were. I'd flown into that same airport. Looked a little different back in 68. But then spent some time in Fubar and and went on Up and Away ways. Beautiful city. Oh, the historic city.

01:10:16:11 - 01:10:40:27

Unknown

Why did you want to go back for I'd always. I'd always tell my wife that it was a beautiful country. And, And it is so I wanted two reasons. I wanted to show her a beautiful country. And I would visit those places that those hills, these. And stuff I'd been on. And, we had a really good God.

01:10:40:27 - 01:11:02:26

Unknown

And when I first we checked in a little hotel in, Hanoi. It's called a charming. And it was like \$17 a night for their deluxe rooms. Still

very inexpensive. And, so I asked the young woman the desk. She spoke good English, and I said, tell her what I wanted to do. And I said, do you have somebody that you can line up to?

01:11:02:26 - 01:11:20:02

Unknown

Let me go to these sites? And she said, she said, I have a book. And so I picked other things in the book where I wanted to go and added some things. And she said, are you sure you're up to this? You're pretty old, you know. And I wanted to laugh. Yeah, no, I'm pretty old. I said, well, obviously you're doing the Vietnam War.

01:11:20:02 - 01:11:42:27

Unknown

Do you know the Vietnam War? She said, yeah, I know the Vietnam War. Said, I watched I've got some movie, you know, and I said, oh, well, that's your knowledge of it. Yeah. No knowledge of it at all, you know. So which was a good mix of real good in my wife, continue to keep up with her young woman.

01:11:42:29 - 01:11:56:24

Unknown

We went back to Vietnam, stay with. She was working at a different hotel. We stayed with her at that other hotel. And then since then, she's gotten married to a guy from France that she lives in France.

01:11:56:26 - 01:12:16:04

Unknown

What was it like talking to the former member of the Viet Cong that you met? The first one we, we had a god. Well, when it worked at the hotel, and I, told her I wanted to go out in the countryside, and so. And she said you were here doing the war. And I said, yeah.

01:12:16:06 - 01:12:33:29

Unknown

And she said, I have a farm buddy you'd like to meet. So we went to this guy's house, and, he didn't know I was coming here thing. And as soon as I walked in, there was a marine Corps pack on the wall. And I thought, well, I hadn't seen a marine Corps pack in years. It was, like, really shocking.

01:12:34:02 - 01:12:57:16

Unknown

And our packs were different than the Army. And so, so we started talking and she was translating and, but he said, you know, he was a young man and he, he was with Viet Cong, and he was down near Saigon. He was in the lower part of the country, and I was up on the DMZ. But, it was interesting.

01:12:57:17 - 01:13:23:21

Unknown

It was absolutely no hostilities. We hugged each other. I asked, came by the pack that was on the wall, and he said his brother had been in Viet Cong, too, and he'd gotten killed. But the Pat came from his brother, so I don't know any other story behind it, but, just a good way to let old people heal.

01:13:23:24 - 01:13:52:15

Unknown

But both of them were really good guys. What did you do specifically with habitat for humanity? We did a number of builds all over to a number of countries, but, we were in Vietnam, we were building a bicycle, a concrete block house for for a family man. His wife had had two kids. Two boys, beautiful area of beautiful rice, a beautiful setting.

01:13:52:18 - 01:14:20:18

Unknown

My wife worked on a different house, but, but wood habitat. What we were doing was they were we were just doing what I call grunt work. They really wanted you there for your money. And to show that there was people outside of that area that was interesting in helping. Really good relationship. We did, Vietnam, Armenia.

01:14:20:20 - 01:14:40:17

Unknown

Jordan. Kyrgyzstan. Wow. Maybe 1 or 2 other countries. This is my last question. Okay. Do you have a favorite book, poem or movie about Vietnam? No.

01:14:40:20 - 01:14:49:21

Unknown

I can't think of it. I even bothered Ken Burns series on Vietnam, and I never made it through it.

01:14:49:23 - 01:14:53:10

Unknown

It was too real.

01:14:53:12 - 01:15:00:27

Unknown

Do you have a least favorite? I don't watch war movies.

01:15:00:29 - 01:15:24:12

Unknown

I read I read a good bit. And of history. History. My wife. You say it wasn't helping, but, the Revolutionary War. The Civil War. But I've never read a Vietnam War. But. Okay, well, Mr. Purvis, thank you so much for talking. Thank you, I appreciate it. Thank you. I enjoyed it very much.

