

00:00:06:02 – 00:00:28:24

Unknown

My name is Palmer McKay. I'm interviewing Vietnam veteran Guy Maddox, who served in the Navy and was in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967. Mr. Maddox, 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.

00:00:28:27 – 00:00:56:22

Unknown

Where did you grow up and what was your area known for? Southern Indiana. A little town called Marengo. It's known for a cave. It's there. And that's not too far from Louisville, Kentucky. Can you tell me about your family growing up? Yeah. Well, I had, a farm that my dad bought, almost 200 acres, and I live five miles from town.

00:00:56:22 – 00:01:07:11

Unknown

So I had ride school bus for a long time, and it was pretty cold in the winter. So. But it's a lot of work involved.

00:01:07:13 – 00:01:23:12

Unknown

Did you have any siblings? Had older sister and older brother and, both have since passed. One was my brother, six years older. My sister was eight years older.

00:01:23:15 – 00:01:50:00

Unknown

Would you describe your dad's job as blue collar or white collar or something else? Blue collar. He was off home delivery. Bread truck. Do you have any memories of your father or other men around you telling war stories from World War two? No, my dad, didn't pass a fiscal. He was, drafted, but we went from fiscal aid, flat feet so they wouldn't take him.

00:01:50:02 – 00:02:04:20

Unknown

So. And, had an uncle that was in the Navy, but he didn't talk about it. Did you have a favorite World War Two movie growing up?

00:02:04:22 – 00:02:40:09

Unknown

Not particularly. I didn't watch a lot of war movies. A lot of Vietnam veteran memoirs mentioned John Wayne as an influence on their expectations of war. Do you remember John Wayne that way? Yeah. I think Green Beret. You see this movie, I saw that, was in service before we went to Vietnam. So, I like more, the morning Vietnam.

00:02:40:12 – 00:02:45:10

Unknown

That style, more lighthearted.

00:02:45:13 – 00:02:50:09

Unknown

Now, I'd like to move on to the start of your service and basic training.

00:02:50:11 – 00:03:14:21

Unknown

Would you describe yourself as volunteering, being commissioned or drafted? A little of both. I was, age should be drafted. Several of my friends had already been drafted, and, I didn't want to march. I didn't think so. When the Navy and I got me started.

00:03:14:24 – 00:03:43:03

Unknown

What were the main reasons you volunteered? I know you mentioned that you didn't want to march in the army. Were there any other reasons? Yeah. The environment, grew up in that, work environment was pretty limited. It was just factories and most of them were minimum wage. No opportunity to to advance a lot of the people that spent their whole life working and never did have enough to do anything.

00:03:43:05 – 00:04:14:20

Unknown

And, this, that kind of a break away, I could get out and see more and have more opportunities. Why the Navy versus the Marines or the Air Force? I had two brothers in the Navy, so he came home with a tattoo, and I never got a tattoo when I was in the service. But, I guess that's the reason he had some tales he would tell about going to different, like Spain and Italy and things like that.

00:04:14:22 – 00:04:42:04

Unknown

Did you plan to use the GI Bill to go to college? I didn't plan on it. I didn't know ahead of GI Bill. And, that's just something I found out later on. But it did come in handy because I couldn't afford to pay for college myself. And, they paid tuition and books, things like that. How would you describe your boot camp experience?

00:04:42:06 – 00:05:06:25

Unknown

Cold. The Great Lakes, Illinois. January. I went in and we had to shovel snow. Keep the sidewalks clean, and when a so out there it was, was all night. They had to keep them clean. One of the guys got so cold, he crawled in the dumpster and slept. Wow.

00:05:06:27 – 00:05:42:14

Unknown

What was Navy boot camp like? It was, Well, for, laid out as far as people that never had any, formal, disparaging, background or anything like that. Being from a small school, you know, you pretty much knew everybody. And here you still ran with people that you didn't know, and they had their own personalities and everything was different.

00:05:42:15 – 00:06:10:08

Unknown

And it was a growing experience. How difficult was the experience of boot camp for you? I know you said it was cold. I was in, the old World War Two barracks. They had completed they had brand new barracks that they hadn't finished quite yet. And so they put us temporarily into these. No, hot water.

00:06:10:11 – 00:06:35:06

Unknown

You still had take shower and very little heat in them, so we would, soap up, get wet, run through and dry off. One guy didn't do it, and they gave him a brush bath. They took bristle brushes. They used cleaned the floor. They scrubbed him with that. So he took a shower every day after that. Wow.

00:06:35:09 – 00:07:10:21

Unknown

Did anyone around you struggle with boot camp? Yes they did. There was actually, a suicide, when I was in training. Basic training? So. And there was some that wanted to fake being, Midwesterners. That was one of the reasons they could discharge you. And, fake, different things that was wrong. And what happened with the individual who committed suicide?

00:07:10:24 – 00:07:42:18

Unknown

Oh, well, it was not anything they could do to send him home. He. I don't know what the pay for work would been on something like that. What prompted him to commit suicide? It's, stressful being away from home. Some of these guys, depended on their mother to look out for them and babysit them and all this, you know, take care of things, and, there's no contact.

00:07:42:21 – 00:08:03:27

Unknown

You didn't, I think we allowed use of payphone after, a couple of weeks, but, And you didn't get mail, for a while, so it was pretty isolated. You know, you had to depend on yourself and the ones around you. Yeah.

00:08:04:00 – 00:08:28:19

Unknown

Between the time you entered the service and when you deployed in

1966, what did you do and where were you stationed? As soon as I got a basic training, I went back to Great Lakes again for the, corpsman school. And that was about a three month course we went through. And we experimented on each other like drawing blood.

00:08:28:19 – 00:08:54:29

Unknown

We took turns doing things like. And there was a big naval hospital there that, we go in and watch them. So, so then we wanted to graduate from that. First assignment was, in Millington, Tennessee, outside of Memphis.

00:08:55:02 – 00:09:25:03

Unknown

By 1966, did you expect to go to Vietnam? Yeah. Well, when I was in Millington in 60, four, they showed us a video of a column, the Marines going down this dirt road, and they was ambushed. And several of them shot and and, shown medics, our corpsman jumping in and trying to take care of them and everything.

00:09:25:05 – 00:09:45:17

Unknown

And at the end of the movie, they asked for volunteers, and I don't recall anybody volunteering to go at that that point, it was getting pretty build up, pulling a lot of people of Vietnam. So.

00:09:45:19 – 00:10:16:20

Unknown

What, if anything, did you know about the country of Vietnam before you deployed? Oh, they had war going on. I didn't know a whole lot about it. Had I had a friend that, went in before I did. He was in the Army, and, he sent some pictures back of some Viet Cong that they shot. So, you know, he'd tell me stories about his experience.

00:10:16:22 – 00:10:45:06

Unknown

What did you know about the Vietnam War? Yeah. Very contested. Some people, was going to Canada to get out of that draft and, the medical staff that I was assigned to, head doctors that was drafted as well. So they was an anxious to go to Vietnam either.

00:10:45:08 – 00:11:21:17

Unknown

I'd like to move on to your time in Vietnam. Okay. Did anything stick out to you about your flight to Vietnam? It was a long one. Had a lot of breakdowns. Those I think about 50 or 60 of us all. Corpsman went to camp at June, and, we got out to California, broke down. We spent a day there, and then they got got, cleared to go take off again, land in Washington state, checked it out again.

00:11:21:19 – 00:11:45:11

Unknown

Got to, Fairbanks, Alaska. And this is back before you could pull up the terminal. So snow and ice on the terminal. Oh, no. Airport. So we had love, a little bit of time to go in there. Try it again. Landed in Tokyo and spent two days in Tokyo while they checked out the plane again.

00:11:45:17 – 00:12:01:17

Unknown

And we finally got to, Danang. About a day later. And was it a military air aircraft or. No, it's in in.

00:12:01:20 – 00:12:10:15

Unknown

What month did you arrive? In 1966. November.

00:12:10:18 – 00:12:13:04

Unknown

Could,

00:12:13:06 – 00:12:26:07

Unknown

Could you describe your first 24 to 48 hours in country? Yeah. We arrived in, Danang, and there was,

00:12:26:09 – 00:12:58:03

Unknown

Problem getting, an aircraft to take us to July, so we had to stay camped out there on the, hangar. And that's where they pulled out their jets to test them before they took off. And they rev up the motors, and it was very loud, and I'm sure some of the hearing was lost there. But then, after a couple days, they flew us in a military, plane to, July.

00:12:58:05 – 00:13:24:03

Unknown

What did you expect when you arrived, based on TV or stories you had heard? I didn't know what to expect. They had issued our, rifles at the time, but they didn't give us any ammunition. There was windows at the top of the plane, but you couldn't see out. So when we landed, you didn't know what chief's going to have duck, run and duck for cover or what?

00:13:24:04 – 00:13:54:13

Unknown

You still have to do, but, it was an experience. Would you describe yourself as being in combat in the rear or something else? Both. July. I was a, pretty big operation. Well, first got there was very little there. They had and built any of the, huts or anything yet we had to,

to sleep in a tent.

00:13:54:15 - 00:14:19:24

Unknown

And it was during monsoon. So, he had stick the flap of the tent underneath your cot to keep it from blowing up, or otherwise you get rain blowing in on you. But they soon had that, built. And then the Seabees come in and built a huge warehouse for medical supplies. And, being monsoon the mud it almost to your knees.

00:14:19:24 - 00:14:45:18

Unknown

You stepped down and trying to get down there to it. So it was, a lot of things going on there. We was, up above the airstrip where the military jet took off. If if I was, I think it was the I don't I'm not sure. What kind of work did you do in this, medical supply?

00:14:45:18 - 00:15:20:07

Unknown

We, got the orders in. They had, two big doors that the trucks could actually pull inside of it and load it up, and then they'd take them out to the field and resupply, the corpsman and, field hospitals that they had, those set up. How much time did you spend treating injured Marines and how much time did you spend winning the hearts and minds through treating Vietnamese civilians?

00:15:20:09 - 00:15:24:02

Unknown

Yeah.

00:15:24:05 - 00:15:40:04

Unknown

As far as being with the Marines going on, on, field, maneuvers and things like that, not so much.

00:15:40:06 - 00:16:05:24

Unknown

The. You remember the mash shells that they used to have on TV? They had a Ford unit that was, kind of like that. And there was two of that went out when it first set up, and we took these metal boxes. It was about three foot by two foot by foot, eight inches, something like it deep had about 24 of those.

00:16:05:27 - 00:16:30:18

Unknown

And we flew out by, twin rotor helicopter and had to unload them. He wouldn't land on the site because it was hot zone and, had to quickly unload that. And then once he took off and carry it over and establish a site for that, and the corpsman would come in from the field if most of us would carry the one.

00:16:30:19 - 00:17:02:09

Unknown

It's a medical bag. They just kept the, the, wrappings and everything that they wrapped the room to a, inside their, vest and that, because they when things that they would look for was officers that had their insignia and a medical bag, that was the first two targets they wanted to take out. So they didn't use a medical pack very much.

00:17:02:11 - 00:17:26:09

Unknown

And how much time did you spend back on base versus out in the field? Probably half and half. A lot of that was volunteer. As far as going out on Swift Boats and going out in the field, you know, I was there. I wanted to see what was going on. I was yeah, I just found there.

00:17:26:11 - 00:18:00:04

Unknown

And, so I did go out, to a place called Duck Pho, which is, north of July. And also Kwang that and I spent most of my time crying. Now, open it and, shut it down. The, base got almost don't run. And, the Army sent the first Air Cav to take over from there, but,

00:18:00:06 - 00:18:28:24

Unknown

Did you spend much time on a boat, or were you mostly on foot? Spend a little bit of time on Swift Boat? They operated, the ones I was on along the coastline. They didn't go up the rivers. And during the, day, you go out for a day, day and night, and we would, at nighttime, go along the coastline and shoot into the caves.

00:18:28:24 - 00:19:04:06

Unknown

It was along that area and shoot mortars and and things like that. And then the next day, then it would go into a village and, and do some of the, pacification work. And as for sick people, and, and for everything basic that need attention. And one time we pulled in and there was an old guy in a, round wicker basket type fish boat like this, paddle that, and kept trying to make him understand that I was a doctor, or that's what they called the corpsman.

00:19:04:08 - 00:19:27:21

Unknown

And so, anyway, he was gone for a while, and and here comes, that half hour later, a corpsman and a canoe. And he said, they told me that you needed assistance. I said, no, I will trying to get some of the the people, local people need help. So he went back again and they sent out about 7 or 8.

00:19:27:23 - 00:19:52:10

Unknown

Most, had wounds. It was, beyond what I could treat. I did the best I could with the dressings and give them time to take and keep. And, most, they did go to the hospital, but, that's pretty much all you could do. It was just simple things. You we couldn't, well, could slow somebody up.

00:19:52:12 – 00:19:59:01

Unknown

It needed. But most, they'd been sick for a while.

00:19:59:03 – 00:20:21:17

Unknown

Were there any injuries that were really common? Yeah. Most of it on their feet. They would get out and rice paddies, you know, without shoes and and all that, and first, sharp rock or something. In the, in water, even see it and, and cut their feet. And of course, it's that mud. It would be.

00:20:21:19 – 00:20:49:17

Unknown

In fact, they did, a lot of amputations from people hurrying their feet. Did you ever treat anyone that maybe stepped on a landmine or was burned by napalm? No, I wasn't, I'm glad I wasn't put to that test. That is something that would be difficult.

00:20:49:20 – 00:21:19:19

Unknown

How would you describe the Americans you served with in terms of economic background, race or religion? Yeah, it covers the whole spectrum. Some had been to college, been drafted, others I was kind of like myself at the, knew that I was going to be drafted and they said and list instead, one person on the station with was from Louisiana.

00:21:19:19 – 00:21:46:13

Unknown

He was a and you could tell he's a Cajun because you couldn't understand what he was talking about. So there's just bet. And if you didn't, if you got mail and they didn't, they want to read your mail because they didn't get letters from home. I know you said it was a very broad spectrum. Did you ever serve with any black or Hispanic service members?

00:21:46:15 – 00:22:20:07

Unknown

Oh, yes. One guy was from Hawaii, and he's Native Hawaiian. And, there was also some, South Korean, I guess Army or Marines. I think those Marines, and they would come up to him and start speaking to him in South Korean, and they'd make him upset. But we had everybody. Do you remember any American women in the war zone?

00:22:20:09 – 00:22:33:25

Unknown

No. I have since heard that there there is, nurses there, but I didn't run into any.

00:22:33:27 – 00:23:06:24

Unknown

Did you or anyone you served with change in terms of face in the war zone relied on it a lot. I had a matter of fact, some of my friends came up to me and wanted to know how I could keep even and not get depressed. Because you gotta remember, this is back when at home, while the, protest to the school and, and and and, rioting and everything.

00:23:06:24 – 00:23:32:22

Unknown

And some of the guys who live in, Michigan, Detroit was have a lot of riots and, and their families back home. And I told them, I said, well, I've got a little Bible that was issued to me. And, I read it and I said, yeah, you're not going to be by yourself if you keep God with you.

00:23:32:25 – 00:23:41:29

Unknown

What denomination were you raised? Church of Christ.

00:23:42:01 – 00:24:27:21

Unknown

How did living in Vietnam and meeting Vietnamese people affect you? Well, Vietnam is a beautiful country in itself. If you take a war away from it, you know, and the children are like children who were, when going through some of the villages. I had a camera with me, and I take pictures of, kids playing. And of course, their environment was, a house on stilts and pigs running around underneath the house, and chickens run around and and, they just said live with what they had, but they seemed, like, happy.

00:24:27:26 – 00:24:34:11

Unknown

Yeah. People, as far as they could be.

00:24:34:13 – 00:25:09:24

Unknown

How closely did you work with Arvin Forces? Yeah, just a little bit. Like I said, this, the Crow area was kind of an RV, and not RV. A recreational center for them. And, so, just briefly talk to them. What? What they didn't always use, English. They of cast for self. They didn't mean then blend in with the Americans all that much.

00:25:09:26 – 00:25:14:28

Unknown

That's the way it seemed. Anyway.

00:25:15:00 – 00:25:27:20

Unknown

You've already talked a little bit about Vietnamese children. Can you tell us a little bit more about what you remember about them?

00:25:27:23 – 00:25:32:12

Unknown

You really can't.

00:25:32:15 – 00:26:04:27

Unknown

It's disheartening. You know why you can't trust them? You know, when you're out in the field. Because they could smile at you and have a hand grenade in their pocket. So it's it's it's, difficult to deal with it. Was that something that everyone was worried about or something that people had seen happen? And, well, if he was in a, an area that wasn't secure.

00:26:05:00 – 00:26:18:12

Unknown

Yes. Even if it was secure, you know, it, it, you know. No. And women do the same thing.

00:26:18:15 – 00:26:29:08

Unknown

Do you know anyone who saw that specifically taking place? No. This have it second hand.

00:26:29:10 – 00:27:05:19

Unknown

Do you have any distinct memories of Vietnamese women? They all were, black silk pajamas. Like. And instead of taking a bath like we're used to, they just take a little bit of soapy water, and then they take a wooden bucket and turn it upside down for rich off with. And that was their shower. Did you ever witness prostitution in Vietnam?

00:27:05:21 – 00:27:16:28

Unknown

No, I didn't witness it. I knew it was going on, and, I know.

00:27:17:00 – 00:27:22:07

Unknown

Well, I won't get into that.

00:27:22:10 – 00:27:56:27

Unknown

Did you learn any Vietnamese words or phrases during your tours? Yeah. Local dinky Dow. What does that mean? Really dumb. Or to that, pretty much I to. It was. And, you could, all of them had stained teeth and they have a, I don't know what was called is a, like a coffee bean or something like that, that they donuts.

00:27:56:27 - 00:28:28:12

Unknown

They donuts. Yes. And they chew them and they, they would measure, distance. But help me choose that was to get to where they were going. That wasn't very pretty on they grand. So. Did you experience any culture shock in Vietnam? Yeah, a lot of it, was a total different lifestyle.

00:28:28:14 - 00:29:02:24

Unknown

There was some of the buildings, it had been, occupied by, franchise, and they were still there, and sometimes they would leave like a doll or something on the porch. And they said, don't touch anything, you know, so could be rigged. So, but, their schools, I know they had small schools and I had never seen any of the kids in school, so I don't know if they was still in use or not.

00:29:02:27 - 00:29:26:22

Unknown

Did you get sick at all during your time in country? Yeah, well, everybody does when you first get there, they put you on, malaria pills, and you have to take them every day, and they have a bad, reaction. So, yeah, you need to be close to the outhouse when you take them.

00:29:26:25 - 00:29:38:03

Unknown

But that's outside that that that's, Oh. I had. Were you ever injured during your time in Vietnam? Yeah.

00:29:38:06 - 00:30:04:10

Unknown

We, filled our sandbags with what's there, when we started putting up our tent, and I guess at one time, they had dropped, chemicals on the area to to, cleanse it, take the foliage out and everything. And of course, when they get wet, if you set against them, which I did, you get a possible, chemical burning.

00:30:04:10 - 00:30:09:03

Unknown

I did get that on back of my legs.

00:30:09:06 - 00:30:35:03

Unknown

And how was that treated? Burn them. They have, a plate that you hold, and then the doctors got it. The other end. Once positive, once negative. So when he touches your body, was his part of it. That completes the circuit and it makes it burn. The skin is pretty smelly, so. Wow.

00:30:35:05 – 00:31:00:25

Unknown

What was the most interesting food you ate in Vietnam? Yeah. They have a lobster. That's called a ling gusto. It's the same family. And, so one of the guys went to the village and about some from the village, and we boiled them and had them. So it was different.

00:31:00:27 – 00:31:34:20

Unknown

What American foods did you miss most while in Vietnam? Everything. They did get, hamburger, shipped in and we'd have cookouts once in a while. But most of the time it was just your basic, powdered eggs or whatever. It was easy to keep and all that. But the steak is what most people. If they got a chance, we got an hour.

00:31:34:20 – 00:32:09:26

Unknown

An hour? After you've been in country for a while that you could take and go to another country. And so I went to Taiwan and, Taipei and, had good steak. Do you remember any distinct animals during your time in Vietnam? Yeah. That's the way I think of salad. It's like pigs and dogs and they both.

00:32:09:28 – 00:32:16:11

Unknown

So you didn't see a lot of dogs around for you or anything that.

00:32:16:13 – 00:32:22:10

Unknown

Did you have any pets while you were there. No, no.

00:32:22:12 – 00:32:56:05

Unknown

Did you ever have any experiences with rats? Yes it is. Matter of fact, one of the guys, ate sardines, a little tins of sardines. You can get before he went to bed one night. And, I heard the screaming, and I thought, he's been attacked. And everybody started having their guns. Ran out and he had to find a huge tread on his chest, smell on the breath that those sardines.

00:32:56:08 – 00:33:07:01

Unknown

And so he hit with the hand and threw it over to the side and land on another guy. Of course, he start screaming. There.

00:33:07:03 - 00:33:42:25

Unknown

Oh. Did you ever see Vietnamese civilians collecting or using American trash like Coca-Cola bottles or beer cans? They used our dumpsters, their repurpose, port. They take anything and everything. They take old tires that had been discarded from military and make sandals out of them. They would take, scrap metal and make, improvised bombs with them.

00:33:42:25 - 00:34:04:06

Unknown

And, matter of fact, they had a, display set up of all the things that they would, make to to ambush you and everything that first got down and, go through it, see how they they put it together.

00:34:04:08 - 00:34:43:14

Unknown

Who set up that display? The Marines? They tried to orientate everybody what to look for when you are on patrol, tripwires and things like, that could, of course, if you stepped on a mine, you know, you can't outrun it. Was this display like a warning to leave, to not leave trash out? Or was it just to inform you that inform you what can happen with it?

00:34:43:16 - 00:35:02:21

Unknown

Did you personally encounter the Vietcong? Yeah. Not a lot of. I've seen something that was shot. Did you encounter Vietnamese prisoners of war? Yeah.

00:35:02:24 - 00:35:32:03

Unknown

I don't know if you come. Prisoners or prisoners of war or not, but, while I was in the forward unit, they did fly some in by helicopter. I think it was probably 20 or so. And, there was men and women, children that they picked up and, and bringing them in for interrogation. And, they needed help escorting them to where they was going to interrogate them.

00:35:32:03 - 00:35:47:20

Unknown

So I helped them, go down to interrogation, but they had, sandbags over their head so they couldn't identify what they said. And so.

00:35:47:22 - 00:35:53:10

Unknown

That's the only, contact I really had with him.

00:35:53:12 - 00:36:27:19

Unknown

Do you know what the interrogation was like? And no, I don't I would that privy to that. Do you remember seeing Agent Orange being sprayed and, Trying to think. I think I have seen it sprayed. And I've seen it, after you go in, after you've been sprayed, the helicopters landed, whips it around again.

00:36:27:22 – 00:36:50:19

Unknown

So it it's pretty heavy when you get out. Were you concerned at the time about Agent Orange? I didn't know what it was. I know it's, weed killer when on a farm. I knew that, you know, farmers use weed killer. Well.

00:36:50:21 – 00:37:19:09

Unknown

What were some of the ways you coped with the war? Yeah. Like I said, my, religious. I also had, a tape recorder that I could make tapes and mail home, and, and my parents had one as well, and they'd the family would get together and they'd make a tape sent to me and and I'd send it back so we'd do it like four.

00:37:19:12 – 00:37:24:14

Unknown

How did people around you cope with the war?

00:37:24:16 – 00:38:12:17

Unknown

Fellow, Marines and corpsman, drank a lot. They had, what you call near beer or three to beer. It wasn't very potent. But if you drank enough of it, you could. You could get drunk. But, they did drink quite a bit. Matter of fact, the guy that I was stationed with in Italy was on the border of been alcoholic, and, he couldn't get the strong enough, so he drank, cough medicine, had it with codeine in it, and, he finally came down with the DTS near the shipping home.

00:38:12:19 – 00:38:51:05

Unknown

Was your faith strengthened by the war? It was in, you pray, you know, not only for yourself, but those with you. I had an incident, worth three hours. We went swimming and and, it quite a ways out to platform and all three. I was come down with cramps, and, so had it not been, I think, for, I'd been with us.

00:38:51:05 – 00:39:24:24

Unknown

Who would want all three of us might drown. So. Do you remember humor or slang or jokes or pranks being part of life in Vietnam? Oh, there's always pranks in the Vietnam or where you're. Hey, you're in the military. They're going to pull them on you. But, I can't think on top

of my head exactly anything.

00:39:24:26 – 00:39:46:08

Unknown

But they're always telling jokes and shamelessly about somebody it didn't like, or one of the officers or something like that. So. Were you aware of active duty military personnel who opposed the war?

00:39:46:11 – 00:40:01:04

Unknown

I didn't associate with them. So I really I don't know, I'm sure there was it. Anyway, it's drafted, you know, they're it's not going to change their attitude.

00:40:01:06 – 00:40:33:10

Unknown

What was the most memorable friendship you had during your time in Vietnam? Yeah. Had one of those, friends was from Oklahoma, and, matter of fact, we was, assigned to the forward unit, and, Crane died, and he was in the, same tent. Well, he got, ambushed, and Morris is going off and and, he was yelling at me.

00:40:33:10 – 00:41:00:05

Unknown

You okay? You okay? Yes. I'm that. Were you? And I said, I'm down here on the ground. Put my pants on. So what are you doing up there? But, anyway, he and I spent a lot of time, going on patrol together and things like that. I don't know what become of him. What? You know, you get an alter ego, you own separate ways.

00:41:00:07 – 00:41:17:00

Unknown

What was his name? Gosh, I couldn't tell you. Now, I've. I've forgotten his name. I just remember he was from Oklahoma, and, he was almost no help, but he said it's early 20s.

00:41:17:02 – 00:41:27:23

Unknown

What was the most beautiful thing you saw in Vietnam?

00:41:27:25 – 00:42:01:04

Unknown

We was on the new route one night and there was some full moon, and there was a, a lake that the moon was shining down on. And you had palm trees away around, and you had the, reflection in the water of the moon and the and the trees and everything. And it's, you know, if it wasn't water and moved and really beautiful.

00:42:01:06 – 00:42:16:00

Unknown

What was the worst thing you saw in Vietnam?

00:42:16:03 – 00:42:21:16

Unknown

They had,

00:42:21:18 – 00:42:49:22

Unknown

Things they called mules. It's just, you sit on it, it's got the steering wheel, motor and then it of that six. Yeah, it's in body bags for the whole culture.

00:42:49:24 – 00:42:57:00

Unknown

They just come in from the field. So.

00:42:57:03 – 00:43:05:10

Unknown

You couldn't. You couldn't really.

00:43:05:12 – 00:43:18:05

Unknown

Long form or anything. You just had to get around about your business cruising.

00:43:18:07 – 00:43:53:28

Unknown

So sorry. Thank you for sharing that with us. Can you tell me about your experiences with free fire zones? Usually they they have mountains that, they call mountains or maybe 1000ft, or less. And, because we try to have the high ground and near San, based on what they thought was the most important to take.

00:43:54:00 – 00:44:04:04

Unknown

And so once they take them, then they, where I was that they had to decide it was,

00:44:04:06 – 00:44:36:24

Unknown

Clear demand fields and all that because they, they usually will throw out mines on the side so that restrict them getting it down and everything. But I went up the top and, have a, button of rain to stay up there. And anything on the other side was where they could shoot. And anything that moved in, the rice paddies be down there and water buffalo and things like that and that.

00:44:36:26 – 00:44:58:18

Unknown

That's how they had during retained it. They would shoot at the

Buffaloes. So I don't know if they killed any or not, but it made more harassment than anything. But that was considered enemy area or anything on the side.

00:44:58:21 – 00:45:04:05

Unknown

Did you expect to survive the war?

00:45:04:07 – 00:45:35:15

Unknown

When first got there, vice that, one of the guys had already been there for a while. Said, just assume you're not going home, then your life would be a lot easier. And I think that's probably good advice. You know, you just you don't know it when it's going to happen or if it will happen. So.

00:45:35:18 – 00:46:15:15

Unknown

I know you said that you recorded your voice and sent to your parents back and forth. Who else did you write to or receive letters from when you were in Vietnam? Well, I knew some girls that I dated and, one was going to college and, and, Tennessee and, so she put my, name and address, military address on the, bulletin board for people, you know, sorority people that want to write veterans or people in the military.

00:46:15:17 – 00:46:44:23

Unknown

And, so I used to get a few letters this month. Most of the time it was just family and friends. It was close. Do you remember any American songs from your time in Vietnam? Oh, yeah, some of them. They played over and over and over again. Matter of fact, some the helicopter pilots, would play them really loud when they fly over.

00:46:44:26 – 00:47:13:04

Unknown

A fire zone. I can't remember off the top of my head what was now. But you had one favorite, I think, at the, I think it was, that, that you were to lead in any way. That was one of the songs. But the 60s there, you know, we had that's when you had all the good singers going on.

00:47:13:06 – 00:47:17:09

Unknown

Yeah, yeah.

00:47:17:11 – 00:47:48:15

Unknown

What was your most expensive or frequent purchase at the. Well, most expensive. It was, about a, Yeah, shake a 35. It was a Elektro 35. So at the, electric adjustment lens. Come in. Expanding out, coming in and everything. And it was a pretty expensive camera for the time. It

was one of the first out there.

00:47:48:15 - 00:48:16:11

Unknown

Was that model. I know you said before that you kind of carried a camera with you. I assume that that's the camera. Did you take tons of photos? Yeah. I didn't carry it all the time because I didn't want to lose it or get it damaged. But I did take it some, and, I'd take, black and white in, in color photos.

00:48:16:11 - 00:48:48:00

Unknown

Black and white actually did much better because of the heat and everything. That was better. Take it. And black, white, use some of the, can that was, for projectors and others, had them, but I don't know, it became though we moved so many times you lose them so. Did you buy any Vietnamese souvenirs?

00:48:48:02 - 00:49:03:15

Unknown

I did, there's a, picture, album that was, lacquered and had seen Vietnam on the front, and I think I got.

00:49:03:18 - 00:49:26:07

Unknown

A pair of those, flops. It was made of truck tires or whatever, but they did have a little shop set up around different places you get. I could buy coke. They they I don't know where they got it from or what was in it, but it was.

00:49:26:09 - 00:49:53:05

Unknown

That's the end of my service. Questions? No kidding. Is there another story we haven't talked about from your time in Vietnam that you'd like to share? Yeah. Didn't mention anything about the, July we flew. All asleep one night and all of a sudden, pop flares flying from everywhere. They flying over, dropping on it lit up the whole base.

00:49:53:08 - 00:50:23:13

Unknown

And, because it got through the line and they didn't know where they sat. So we had a sergeant marine search, and it was, in charge of the ammunition and everything. He had a key, kept that locked up. So he goes all up and get his hands full of ammunition in case we need to defend herself. But, that was a little bit eye opening.

00:50:23:16 - 00:50:36:08

Unknown

Let's talk about your post service life. What relationship in your life was most changed by your service?

00:50:36:10 – 00:51:15:00

Unknown

When I came home, I didn't realize it until I got married, but I had anger issues and, to me, it was just normal. What changed? But, just about caused divorce. I think when I first got married, then, you know, somebody say something to you. You made a joke and sacrificed so. But, my wife helped me get through that.

00:51:15:03 – 00:51:21:05

Unknown

Did you know any anti-war veterans?

00:51:21:07 – 00:51:39:11

Unknown

None that really would go to Canada or something like that. They did get away from it. From the area I grew up in. Everybody's very patriotic, so they wouldn't.

00:51:39:14 – 00:52:11:19

Unknown

You mentioned off camera that in your town, one was either supportive of the war or kind of ostracized. Was that the case even after the Tet Offensive there? Pretty much. So, a lot of the town had, somebody in their family had either been killed there or else, served there. So, you know, took personal.

00:52:11:21 – 00:52:28:28

Unknown

And sorry to back up just a little bit to your anger issues. What would cause outbursts? Is there anything particular?

00:52:29:00 – 00:52:38:03

Unknown

Sometimes people can be kind of crude. And.

00:52:38:06 – 00:52:45:07

Unknown

I guess I would take set pay off. Yeah, yeah.

00:52:45:09 – 00:53:02:03

Unknown

After Vietnam. Where did you go to college? Indiana University in Jeffersonville was the extension school, and, I completed my four year degree there in business. So.

00:53:02:05 – 00:53:14:17

Unknown

And what years were you there? See, it, started in 68 and graduated in 72.

00:53:14:19 – 00:53:30:13

Unknown

What did you study? Business administration. I had done a lot of accounting and economics. Did you ever consider medicine after working as a corpsman?

00:53:30:15 – 00:54:01:03

Unknown

As a matter of fact, I went to, Indianapolis, Indiana, and talked to Eli Lilly at their corporate headquarters there. And, I was interested in being a, pharmaceutical sales rep, and they said, fine, just get your degree. No science required on it or anything. Said that when you graduate, come back and see us. So I got my degree, went back and they said, oh, well, we no longer accept business degrees.

00:54:01:03 – 00:54:44:21

Unknown

You have to have a science degree. So so that's the end of my pharmaceutical pursuits. What did you expect on campus as a Vietnam veteran? The professors was all, very good to, work with. They they understood, what veterans have been through and they, there was the movement at the time were the hippies, so you might say, or whatever, you know, they had the beads and all that.

00:54:44:23 – 00:54:57:05

Unknown

I didn't fit in. I didn't think with that, you know, I probably had a shorter haircut to most. No offense.

00:54:57:07 – 00:55:33:12

Unknown

Were these hippies on your campus specifically? Yes. And how did they treat you? Okay. Yeah I mean it was, it was make love not not have what peace. You know, love not war. Yeah or not. Yeah. Not war. And is that what you expected to be treated? Decently. Well, sure. I mean, that's the way I put it, whether I was a veteran or not, you know.

00:55:33:15 – 00:55:42:13

Unknown

What was it like being on campus during events like Kent State in nearby Ohio?

00:55:42:15 – 00:55:59:12

Unknown

I really didn't pay any attention to it. You know, I had that time I was working and, had a child, and I had too much other things to worry about. And what's going on. So cross-country.

00:55:59:15 – 00:56:33:26

Unknown

Who since the war have you talked to about Vietnam? Yeah. Some of the, members of, church, attended had been there as well. And they had the same anger issues that I did and didn't realize it. I'd known them for a few years. And, you know, you get to talking and unless you are with somebody that, is it experienced the same thing and they realize you're a veteran, did it?

00:56:33:28 – 00:56:49:19

Unknown

You usually talk together. But once you establish a common link there, then you're more open to talking about it.

00:56:49:21 – 00:57:02:12

Unknown

Have you been to the wall in DC? I have. What do you think of it? Emotional.

00:57:02:15 – 00:57:09:05

Unknown

It's hard to walk through there.

00:57:09:07 – 00:57:15:13

Unknown

Do you remember it being controversial?

00:57:15:15 – 00:57:33:13

Unknown

Not when I was there. It was back in the 70s, I guess. But.

00:57:33:15 – 00:57:38:03

Unknown

It's just one of those things. If you.

00:57:38:06 – 00:57:45:10

Unknown

It should impress everybody who goes to it.

00:57:45:13 – 00:57:50:03

Unknown

Have you been back to Vietnam? No.

00:57:50:06 – 00:58:09:18

Unknown

Would you like to go back? No. I mean, it's a it's a free country, but I really don't, I like to travel, but I'd, I wouldn't pick. As for first choice to go back, why not?

00:58:09:20 – 00:58:17:17

Unknown

It brings back more water. Think about it.

00:58:17:19 – 00:58:21:27

Unknown

This is my last question. Okay.

00:58:22:00 – 00:58:43:23

Unknown

Do you have a favorite book, poem or movie about Vietnam? I guess I like Good Morning Vietnam. It's it's, more humor. Okay. Mr. Maddox, thank you so much for talking with us and sharing your stories. Oh. You're welcome.