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The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Anthony Goodrich
Conducted by Steve Maxner
April 11, 2002
Transcribed by Jennifer McIntyre

NOTE: Any text included in brackets [] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.

1 Steve Maxner: This is Steve Maxner conducting an interview with Mr. Anthony
2 Goodrich on the 11th of April 2002 at approximately 11:10 AM. We are in the Vietnam
3 Archives Special Collections Library interview room. This interview is part of the
4 Vietnam Archive oral history project. Sir, why don't we go ahead and begin with a
5 discussion of your early life, and if you would just tell me when and where you were born
6 and where you grew up.

7 Anthony Goodrich: Okay, I was born December 8, 1949 in Ogden, Utah. My
8 father was a career Air Force enlisted man, NCO; he was stationed in Hiller Air Force
9 base in Ogden in 1945. Traveled around the world when I was growing up, I guess I was
10 in Ogden for about six months, the Korean War happened and I guess it started in the
11 summer of '50. My father got sent to Japan, we followed him, Musawa, Japan, Musawa
12 Air Force base. He was a 1st Sergeant of an air rescue squadron, after the war came back
13 to Clovis, New Mexico where my younger brother Kevin was born, that was 1954. We
14 went to Clovis, we went to Greenville, South Carolina, Donaldson Air Force base, and
15 that's where I went to, let's see, I must have started school there. That would be 1955. I
16 think I was in Kindergarten and 1st grade. I went through one year of Catholic school,
17 then, did not do well with the nuns. My father, he had to come and get me quite often
18 there because I was just not very, I don't know, the nuns and I just didn't get a long well.
19 1956, my father got stationed in France, a place called Chatteru, he was the 1st Sergeant

1 of, and I think a maintenance squadron there. We followed him over about six months
2 after he got there, in 1956. We stayed there until '59, came back to Biloxi, Mississippi,
3 Keesler Air Force base. My dad was the 1st Sergeant of a training squadron there. I was
4 going to school of course, all this time. In Mississippi, that's where I started, I guess, my
5 last two years of grade school, and first year of junior high which would be the seventh
6 grade. 1962, went back to Europe, back to France, Roan Air Force base, my dad was the
7 1st Sergeant of an air police squadron. Roan was an F-101; I think they were F-101
8 reconnaissance aircraft. That was in the, let's see, 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis happened
9 that year, for that, I remember my dad coming home with a helmet on and a 45 and said,
10 we might be going to war, and we didn't go to school for several days, and I thought that
11 was exciting. I don't think I was ever afraid, so that was pretty fun. Then in '63 JFK was
12 assassinated and it's one of those days in your life, where I remember exactly where I
13 was at; I was getting ready to go see a movie, it was, I guess, I don't know how much
14 what the time difference was between Dallas and there, whenever that happening, it was
15 just a real horrible thing I thought. I was in seventh grade, no, it must have been eighth
16 grade. 1965, when I was a junior in high school we came to Albuquerque, my dad was
17 assigned to one of the squadrons at Kirtland Air Force base. I graduated from high
18 school in 1967, Iden high school. We lived in base housing when I was growing up. I
19 had a great childhood, got to travel, got to learn how to speak lang –I could speak French
20 and Japanese, and all kinds of, I just had a great time growing up. I got to see other
21 cultures, I think that really helped me before I went to Vietnam, also helped me go to
22 Vietnamese language school too, but that'll be later. Graduated from high school in '67,
23 my dad was, I guess you probably should know, my dad's pretty strict, pretty
24 disciplinarian. There was, I had an older brother and a younger brother, so there were
25 three boys and I was in the middle, and my dad and I are always kind of pounding heads,
26 you know, as I was growing up. I went to University of New Mexico, '67-68, probably
27 had the lowest grade point average there, or at least tied for it. 1968, right after LBJ
28 announced he wasn't going to run again, I guess it was in the end of March, I was 18, and
29 I ran into a friend of mine, very strange, a friend of mine I knew in Europe and I haven't
30 seen him in five years. I found out his father had been shot down, he was an MIA, I
31 don't know if they recovered him. He was an Air Force pilot and in May of '68 we had

1 both flunked out of UN basically, so we went down to the recruiter to see, we were going
2 to talk to all the recruiters, the Air Force, the Navy, and the Marines. We get down to the
3 recruiting office, and the Marines were the only ones that didn't have anybody sitting in
4 their waiting room. True story, so we went in there to talk to this Staff Sergeant
5 Valentine, we walked out of there with three year enlistments, and he was a great guy,
6 probably the nicest staff that you ever knew. He told us, you guys have a year of college,
7 we'll send you to a good school. So, of course, I'm going, yes. I guess I joined the
8 Marines, that was probably the main reason we went down there, there was nobody there.
9 I think I joined the Marines too, because I always wanted to show my dad up, show him I
10 was a man and I didn't want to go into the Air Force, I wasn't going to go into the same
11 service that he was in. I just didn't see that as being a way for me to show him that I
12 could be as tough as he was. I liked the uniforms and I watched all the John Wayne
13 movies and I always that was kind of, you know, they were tough, they were good, so
14 there were several reasons I guess, why I went in, 120 day delay plan. Joined in May,
15 went to boot camp in September of '68, September 3, 1968, San Diego, Marine Corps
16 recruit depot.

17 SM: Before we talk about boot camp, let me go ahead and ask a few more
18 clarifying questions about your earlier experiences. You mentioned going to that
19 Catholic school, I was wondering, were you raised Catholic?

20 AG: Yes.

21 SM: How much did that have, as far as an influence on you, concerning war at
22 all, if at all?

23 AG: I don't think there was any influence there at all. I mean, I did the whole, I
24 did my first communion and I did confirmation and I was an altar boy for a while, I don't
25 think that had any influence on my outlook on war. I always thought war was kind of
26 neat, I mean, my dad used to tell me war stories about World War II, he fought in the
27 Pacific, with the Army Air Corps. He was one of the first units to go in 1942, I think
28 January '42 was when they got on ships to go to Australia, and he told me some great
29 stories. I thought they were funny, I thought it was just a, it would be a fun thing to do,
30 and of course, the movies that I saw growing up, the war movies were very, they glorified
31 it very much. They looked like the way you become a man, the way that you become a

1 real American was you go to war. I think that influenced me, my dad's stories and I think
2 seeing movies I think influenced me, but I'm not sure that my faith did.

3 SM: Well, did you have other relatives that served in World War II as well?

4 AG: Yes, actually. My dad was an only child so on my mom's side of the
5 family, she had five sisters and all of their husbands, all of my uncles served in World
6 War II, all of them, and if I remember right they all served in the Pacific, either in the
7 Navy or the Air Force, I don't think anybody was in the Marines, or the Air Corps I guess
8 it was called, so there were five uncles in my family that served in World War II.

9 SM: Would they talk much about their experiences?

10 AG: Not too much. I really didn't see them much when I was growing up
11 because we moved around so much, but when I did see them, no, they never talked about
12 it.

13 SM: You mentioned that you lived in base housing, did you also go to military
14 base schools, or did you go to the?

15 AG: Yes, went to the base schools. When I lived in Europe we went to a, I think
16 both times, we went to half a day of U.S. dependent school, we had French kids go to
17 school with us, and then in the afternoon we'd go to the French schools and the American
18 kids would go to half a day in French school, out of the economy they called it, and that's
19 where I learned how to speak French.

20 SM: You said you also learned some Japanese, was that from your earlier
21 experience there?

22 AG: Yes, well actually I was very young in Japan and I remember, to this day I
23 can sing, I can sing, what do you call them, where you're a kid and your mom is singing
24 to you in the crib, I can still remember those songs. It's very strange, I mean my mom
25 and I start singing Mushi, Mushi, Wo Da Ne, and this kind of thing, I go, "God how can I
26 remember that mom?" She goes, "Well I used to sing that to you when you were in the
27 crib." It's very, it's weird, weird, weird, because I was only, I don't know, a year to three
28 years, one year to four years old, and I still remember some of the Japanese. I remember
29 how they answered the phone. We had a Japanese, like a nanny that came in and took
30 care of us, and she used to talk to us also.

1 SM: Now, moving around so much, did that strengthen your relationship with
2 your brothers?

3 AG: I think so, yes, I think I did. I always looked forward to moving. I knew we
4 were going to move every three years. I thought it was exciting, we got to, second time
5 we went to Europe we got to go on the S.S. United States, a steamship, it was great. I got
6 to make new friends everywhere I went to and just new experiences, new schools. I think
7 that my school experiences in the military, dependent schools were excellent. We had
8 great teachers. I feel very lucky to have; I mean they were very good. I learned how to
9 read and write at a pretty young age, and I just was, I think my education was enhanced
10 because of their skills and their abilities to teach well.

11 SM: You mentioned the Cuban Missile Crisis, and obviously that had an impact
12 on you, and your memory, what do you remember about what was actually happening?
13 Do you remember much at all, as far as the specifics of?

14 AG: Well, I remember my dad came home, we were, the only media was radio,
15 Armed Forces radio, didn't have any TV, and remember, we listened to the President talk
16 about they had photos of missile sites in Cuba, and he gave them so much time to get out
17 of there, we read, I remember the blockade, they put a blockade on, and I remember we
18 were, my mom was scared to death, my dad was his usual stoic self and we got to stay
19 out of school for a couple of weeks, I mean, that was fine with me. But I remember
20 listening to the radio quite often to see what was going on, and since we were in Europe,
21 they thought that we would be, my dad was saying, well we might be the first ones to
22 have to go to war, because the Russian might come across the German border, or, I
23 remember my dad telling us that we had to be prepared for, and I don't know how much I
24 listened to him, except I do remember him telling us we need to be prepared if something
25 happens, for us to. I'm not even sure, I think there were places we could go on the base
26 where they had shelters or something like that, because we used to have nuclear drills,
27 you know, the duck and cover, and then a couple of times they took us to these places on
28 the base that had food and water stored. We did that a couple of times; I always thought
29 that was fun.

30 SM: Where in Europe were you again?

1 AG: In France, twice in France, a place called Chatteru in the middle of France,
2 and then a place called Rouen, which is up north, about seventy miles north of Paris.

3 SM: Any other memories of drills, you mentioned duck and cover drills, I guess,
4 evacuation drills to shelters, anything else?

5 AG: I guess, I'm a history major; I've got a history major too. I liked living in
6 Europe and studying World War I, because we went to Verdun, we went to, we got to go
7 the battle sites. We went to Normandy to see where the Americans came on shore on
8 June 6, '44, and I think that's probably where I started. I love history, and being there to
9 where you could actually go to these places, and Europe's very old, we used to go to
10 Paris and go to Versailles and I think that was, I really enjoyed that part of school
11 because of the field trips we used to take in Europe, up to Belgium, we went to Germany.
12 We did lots of field trips, you know three and four day field trips around northern part of
13 France and southern Belgium, stuff, I just had a great, that's probably why I became a
14 history major, and I like to read history, so I thought that was exciting and I thought that
15 was fun.

16 SM: And these were school field trips, took you around?

17 AG: Yes, school field trips, sure.

18 SM: Wow. How about family outings?

19 AG: Once a year we traveled. We went to Spain one year, we went to Italy one
20 year, Germany a couple of times. I had an aunt that was a colonel in the Air Force and
21 she was stationed in Europe the same time we were in Germany, we visited her a couple
22 of times. I was in the Boy Scouts, we used to camp everywhere in Europe. In fact I think
23 I remember we went to Belgium once and I got to meet the ambassador to Belgium, I
24 think it was, I want to say, John Eisenhower was the ambassador I think, then. It was just,
25 I loved Europe, I'd like to go back. I haven't been back since '65 when we came back to
26 the States; I'd like to go back. I'd like to take my wife there and see those places where I
27 used to live and maybe try to find some of my old friends.

28 SM: Did you have, were you able to establish any long-term relationships with
29 people, and did you ever encounter eventually the same families or same kids?

30 AG: Actually, no but I do remember names of some of my French friends that
31 lived in Lyon, that lived in, actually around the Lyon area in Renuis, but I really haven't

1 stayed in contact with them, no. But I have stayed in contact with some of my junior high
2 and high school friends from there.

3 SM: From Europe?

4 AG: Yes, from Europe. In fact, just recently they've started a website and I've
5 run into people I haven't seen since '65. We're emailing each other now, so that's kind of
6 neat.

7 SM: How were you received in Europe, was it always?

8 AG: I thought, from what I remember we were received very well. I mean it was,
9 I don't know as a kid I guess I never, I never, I hung out with other kids and it didn't
10 really matter what culture or what country you were from. For the most part, I think we
11 were received pretty well in France, although my mom says some of the French did not
12 like us there. That's what she's told me, but she probably saw things I didn't see. For the
13 most part, especially us children were accepted as just kids.

14 SM: Did you play many sports in school?

15 AG: Yes, I played baseball. I love baseball. I was too small to play; well
16 actually we didn't have any sports over there like football, played soccer and baseball,
17 were the two things that I played.

18 SM: And you mentioned already that some of the motivating factors as to why
19 you went into the Marine Corps. Did you have any interest at all, especially since you
20 were volunteering and took a three-year enlistment, did you have any interest in the G. I.
21 Bill that you might be able to use it?

22 AG: Yes, actually I did have an interest in doing that, because I knew when my
23 dad was paying for my school, I flunked out I knew I had to find another way, another
24 source of income. So yes that was definitely there, that was definitely, the G.I. bill looked
25 like it would be a good way for me to serve the country and then get out and be able to go
26 back to school, and I guess I had a sense of duty too. I don't know if I mentioned that. I
27 knew I was going to go into the military as I was growing up, I just knew it was a matter
28 of time. It was just something that was there, I never questioned it. Both my brothers
29 went into the military. My older brother Sam was a pilot in the Navy, and my younger
30 brother Kevin was an F-4 mechanic and they went in after I came back from Vietnam. It
31 was just something we knew was going to happen and it was a way for me, my dad was

1 always talking about we need to give back to the country, and it was just that honor and
2 duty ethic that my father had. It was just part of the family, part of growing up.

3 SM: Did you have much contact with your grandparents?

4 AG: No, neither set of my grandparents were alive, they all died before I was
5 born.

6 SM: When you were in high school, and just before you graduated, the two years
7 basically before you graduated, the Vietnam War was under way. Did it ever become a
8 subject matter for school, for classroom, was it ever discussed much?

9 AG: Never.

10 SM: How about in your home, as far as your father talking about the war, and
11 what the United States was trying to accomplish?

12 AG: The only thing I remember my dad saying he thought that the President was
13 doing the right thing. My dad was a big stickler on keeping a strong defense, and he was
14 a big stickler on thinking that the Communist were a threat that the government told him
15 it was. I had no, I watched TV, I could turn it off, it was one of those, I had no feelings
16 one-way or the other about it.

17 SM: When you got to college, University of New Mexico, what was it like there,
18 what was the atmosphere like there, especially regarding the war?

19 AG: Well, starting I guess in '67, there was some protest on campus, I remember
20 that against the war. I remember there was some, I don't even remember. I remember I
21 was, I guess I was for or on the side of the war, I'm not exactly sure how to put it, but I
22 started to become aware of my feelings about why are these guys against the country. I
23 guess I believed that they were wrong to protest the war, they were wrong to think that
24 this is something that wasn't, that we should be into, the draft card burning started then, I
25 just didn't understand that, but I think that's mostly, I was pretty naïve about things I
26 think then, but naïve in the respect that I just didn't understand why they were doing this.
27 And my opinion said that these people aren't being the loyal Americans that they ought
28 to be or something. But I think that was just all my youthful, my youth coming through or
29 something, didn't quite understand things yet.

30 SM: When you left UNM in '68

31 AG: '68, right.

1 SM: So, you were still there when Tet occurred, Tet of '68 occurred, what kind
2 of effect did that have on the atmosphere on campus if any that you remember?

3 AG: Well, I remember my dad saying that, I think my dad started getting
4 disillusioned after Tet. Well, I remember my dad saying years later saying, you know
5 after Westmoreland got on TV and said, the light's at the end of tunnel, my dad said, "I
6 remember when he got up there and said, 'we can win this war in six months we have
7 them right where we want them,' and then all of a sudden Tet happened." It was a big
8 huge surprise, and my dad said, what is the government lying to, my dad's saying this
9 stuff, I was just amazed that he became very, I think that's where his disenchantment
10 started, that he didn't think that we were being told the truth and that right there amazed
11 me. My dad never ever questioned anything the government did. You know that was the
12 same year that LBJ resigned, Martine Luther King was killed that April, Bobby Kennedy
13 was killed in June and my mom thought the country was falling apart, maybe it did that
14 year or something. But Tet, I remember watching Tet, too and seeing the Embassy in
15 Saigon on TV being attacked and I didn't really know what was going on. I knew there
16 was a real war going on there, but I guess it wasn't till then that I saw scenes of what was
17 really going on there. I joined, I guess in the first week of May is when we went down to
18 join up. I'm sure that was in the back of my mind. I can't really say that it was, I'm sure
19 it was there, but the thing that hit me is my dad started turning and I think that he started
20 really questioning things.

21 SM: When did he retire?

22 AG: 1973.

23 SM: Okay, so he was active the whole war basically . . .

24 AG: Never went to Vietnam, well he had orders to go, but I was already there so
25 they didn't send him.

26 SM: Oh, I guess they wouldn't send necessarily a father.

27 AG: Unless he signed, I think you could sign waivers, but they wouldn't send
28 him because I was already in country. He enlisted in the Horse Cavalry in 1936, my
29 father. He got out of the cavalry; he spent three years in the Horse Cavalry in Texas,
30 Brownfield, Texas. He got out in 19--, must have been '39 or '40, and then when Pearl
31 Harbor happened, they day after Pearl Harbor he went down and joined the Army Air

1 Corps. I remember years and years afterward, I said, “Dad how come you didn’t go into
2 the cavalry again?” I guess his unit got turned into the first cav or something, he says, “I
3 didn’t want to be a grunt,” and I said, “Well, you never told me that,” and he said,
4 “Would you have listened to me if I’d have said that to you?” I said, “No.” He said, “I
5 decided to go Army Air corps, I figured it’d be safer,” and I said, “You never told me
6 that.”

7 SM: Well, when you, the interim between joining the Marine Corps and actually
8 leaving for boot camp, how did you spend your time, what did you do?

9 AG: Oh, I just did the same, I hung out with my friends, I went swimming, I
10 played baseball that summer with the Connie Mac team. I just did my regular summer
11 teenage stuff.

12 SM: Did you pay much attention to the news?

13 AG: Actually, I did. I started paying more attention to the news and I started
14 paying more attention to where the Marines were at, what the Marines were doing and
15 everything in the paper I started reading. Anything about the Marine Corps I started
16 reading, and I guess that's when I started thinking, well I’m probably going to be going to
17 Vietnam, but I had some stupid idea that since I could read and write maybe they
18 wouldn’t make me an infantryman, of course that was quickly dispelled. And I went in
19 on the buddy system. I’m sorry I didn’t mention that. My friend that I ran into, his father
20 was killed there, he and I went down up and joined up in the buddy, I don’t even know if
21 I would have joined the Marines unless if he would have gone with me. We both enlisted
22 that day together, on 120 day delay, it was a buddy plan, we both got to go to boot camp
23 together basically.

24 SM: Was that the promise that was made, that you would just go to boot camp
25 together?

26 AG: Yes, you’d just go to boot camp that was it. The buddy plan, was just, that’s
27 what the Staff Sergeant Valentine said, you can only go to boot camp, we can’t guarantee
28 you guys will stay together in the service, so that’s what we did. This guy's name was
29 Terry Walker, and a good friend, real good friend of mine. He and I still are in contact.
30 He never went to Vietnam. He was a Seagull in the Marines; he was on an aircraft
31 carrier, Admiral's aide.

1 SM: An Admiral's aide?

2 AG: An Admiral's aide, yes.

3 SM: Well, who do you think got off better? Which duty was better being the
4 Admiral's aide or going to Vietnam?

5 AG: He definitely got rank, he was a sergeant when he got out, and well he didn't
6 qualify with a rifle, I don't know if you know anything about the Marines, but Marines
7 well, you've got to qualify with rifles, and he didn't qualify. And they sent him to Sea
8 school, he was real smart, very smart, much smarter than I was and he had a slick chest
9 and I always thought that Marine Corps would not let you disqualify the rifle, but he
10 couldn't see, I mean his glasses were this thick. To this day we still laugh about that, he
11 says, "I don't even know why they even took me, Tony. I could barely see." But he didn't
12 qualify with rifle, and pictures I have of me and him, he doesn't even have a shooting
13 badge, and that's almost unheard of in the Marines, so don't ask me, I don't know
14 whether they needed bodies and that's why they kept us there. Maybe, because after Tet,
15 that's something I would really like to find out why, or how, maybe that's some kind of
16 new policy they had during that time period, but he was slick chest the whole time he was
17 in the Corps, never qualified.

18 SM: How long did he stay in, just the three years?

19 AG: He was the three years, I got an early out. I got out about a year before he
20 did. We ran into each other, I'm probably getting ahead of myself here, but we ran into
21 each other, I went on R & R to Hong Kong and I went down to the docks there and
22 there's a launch coming off this carrier and there he is standing there. I mean it was such
23 a pure chance meeting in Hong Kong IN December of '69, after I'd been in country six
24 months, and he was in his dress blues and took me out to the carrier, showed me around,
25 showed where his bunk was. Its funny that you should mention about which one of us
26 had the bet – he wanted to go to Vietnam in the worst way and do what I was doing, and I
27 just told him you're crazy or stupid but if you want to trade jobs with me, I will be gladly
28 be on that carrier being the Admiral's aide and you come and be an infantryman. I
29 remember getting angry at him, I said, "You don't want to go and do what I'm doing
30 Terry," and it just, I'm glad he didn't go. I'm really glad he didn't have to go, but it was
31 funny when he said that he, "I thought we were going to do this together, and I was going

1 to go revenge for dad” and this kind of stuff, I’m doing that stuff, you don’t have to be
2 doing the shit. It was pretty amusing though. I want to go, and so let’s trade places.

3 SM: Well, why don’t we go ahead and talk about your boot camp experiences
4 and if you would just describe what it was like leaving home and getting on the bus and
5 arriving. Where did you go to boot camp, you said San Diego?

6 AG: San Diego, yes.

7 SM: What was it like?

8 AG: It was San Diego. We left Albuquerque, I guess we flew out of there, must
9 have been around dusk if I remember right, because I remember when we got to San
10 Diego it was dark, and they had us wait. There was a Marine there, I’m not sure, he must
11 have been a drill instructor because he had his campaign hat, Smoky the Bear we called
12 them. He had us stand in line, then we got on buses, they pulled up in buses, we got on
13 the buses. I had no idea how many of us there were, one or two busloads probably. I
14 remember we got onto the bus, and the driver turned around and said, “You guys just
15 made the worst mistake of your lives.” And I think I started thinking then maybe I had
16 made a mistake. Anyway, we drive into a Marine Corps recruit depot, probably around
17 midnight, it must have been eleven or twelve at night, and the drill instructor starts to get
18 on our bus and then he starts screaming at us to get off the bus, get off the bus. We had
19 to get out and, they have these yellow footprints, stand on the yellow footprints, of course
20 the drill instructor’s in front of us, and above him was two or tree of the UCMJ, I’m not
21 even sure to this day which ones they were, but he pointed to them, “You’re now in the
22 United States Marines, but you’re not Marines. The UCMJ is now your law and me,
23 basically. We can get you, if we can’t get you any of the other UCMJ stuff, we can get
24 you on the Cam de cummi cummi or something like that, so forget everything you’ve
25 learned, right then, forget everything you’ve learned, forget all your past life, forget your
26 girlfriend, your mother. I am your mother, your father, your professor, everything,” and
27 we went through the, we went to get haircuts right away, they shaved our heads. Yes,
28 they gave us sweatshirts, utility trousers, tennis shoes and covers, and then they, we had
29 to pack up all of our civilian stuff, put it in boxes. We went and took showers, that’s right
30 we went and took showers, came back, put all of our, and they marched us to our
31 Quanson huts. It was probably two or three in the morning, and of course an hour later

1 they came in there and started get up and get out, and the first week there was mostly
2 processing. It was a lot of paperwork, a lot of inoculations, getting all our 782 gear on,
3 you know our web belt and our rifle, all that crap that we had to carry with us, our sea
4 bag, and it was just a blur. I look at it now, I was in pretty good physical shape because I
5 was, I ran track when I was in Albuquerque in high school, I played baseball, I was in
6 real good shape. The physical part was easy for me, I could run three miles no problem,
7 but it was the mental thing, where they were trying to, they were trying to break us down,
8 which is, I look back on it now and I understand why. But it was, I learned quickly to not
9 stand out. I tired to get to the middle of the formation, whatever they tell me to do I tried
10 to do as quickly, I didn't even want him to know what I was, because I saw what
11 happened to people. They would smack people, they wouldn't beat people, but they
12 would smack you and hurt you with just one little blow, so I didn't want that to happen to
13 me, I did not want that. They were very loud, they were very profane, I think when I try
14 to describe boot camp I tell people to go see Full Metal Jacket, see that scene there, that's
15 definitely 1968 when I was in boot, that's exactly the way it was, except for the barracks
16 there. That's the way they talk to us, that's the way they trained us. I mean, that drill
17 instructor in that movie was exactly the way we were talked to, lots of profanity, lots of
18 you're maggots, you're not Marines yet until I say you are. It was just very disciplined,
19 learning how to think as a team, and my dad was pretty loud so even that didn't bother
20 that, I knew how to polish boots. I was pretty good at doing all that stuff because my
21 father was usually on my case, but he was, like I said, it was bore. I remember, it was
22 only eight weeks then, boot camp. The Marines, I didn't know until years after, the
23 Marines had cut back quite drastically on their training regimen because they needed
24 bodies, so it was eight weeks of boot camp, I guess the most fun thing in boot camp for
25 me was going to the rifle range. I never shot a rifle, and I ended up being a marksman or
26 sharpshooter. I was really good at five hundred meters, I could put a bulls-eye, I was bad
27 off-end, I was a lousy shooter off end, but if I learned it was pro, and I just, it was an M-
28 14 I qualified with. I loved that weapon. I thought that was the most fun in boot camp,
29 going to the rifle range, learning how to shoot. Drill instructors, they did their jobs, they
30 were loud, I remember, years, I guess when I got to Vietnam that I realized they would
31 yell us to get in our face a lot, and I realized that it was that loud noise that when

1 incoming came in, they would scream at us and when I got to Nam and realized it's those
2 loud noises that make me hit the deck. They were good at their jobs; they were really
3 good at their jobs. It's funny, I remember their names, Collins, Soto and Ross, staff
4 sergeants, all staff sergeants, and I could still see their faces and hear their voices.
5 They're definitely high on my list of what I expected in the Marine Corps. They were
6 very disciplined, they looked good all the time, they cared about us, even though at the
7 time I didn't realize they did, but they cared highly about us and getting trained the right
8 way and to go do the job we had to do.

9 SM: Had they been to Vietnam?

10 AG: Yes, all of them had been to Vietnam, all of them.

11 SM: Did they talk much about their experiences?

12 AG: Yes, but not until, it's funny, they didn't really talk about it till the end, kind
13 of toward the end, when we're getting ready to graduate, they told us, "We've trained you
14 the best we can, you just need to listen to your leaders in Vietnam. You're going to go to
15 the infantry training now, just listen to those people. You guys are fine, you're Marines
16 now, so just hold high the banner. This is the first step for you guys staying alive there,
17 and you just need to listen, listen to your leaders and remember your training." And I'll
18 never forget Staff Sergeant Soto, little short Hispanic guy about that wide, who could do
19 close order drill better than anybody ever said, "You guys ever see me any where else in
20 the world you just come up to me, and I'll buy you a beer no matter where we're at," and
21 I actually ran into him in Vietnam, believe it or not when I was coming home. It was
22 very interesting, took him to this NCO club for a beer. Amazing, and he remembered my
23 name; to this day I'm stunned.

24 SM: He remembered you by name?

25 AG: He remembered my name, Goodrich, he remembered my name, and I was
26 completely amazed because, they were shoving platoons through there, every eight
27 weeks, and he was there for three years, he told me he was there for three years, and he
28 remembered my name. I don't know, I said, how do you remember my name? I
29 remember all you guys' names. Truly amazing, truly an amazing Marine, very Marine-
30 like, good man, real good man.

31 SM: Three DI's per platoon?

1 AG: Per platoon, yes. And we were platoon 1074.

2 SM: Was there much competition?

3 AG: Yes, there was. We had competition drill, shooting; PT, and they gave each
4 platoon that won flags. We didn't win any, my platoon was bad at everything except PT,
5 we won the PT because we were punished all the time.

6 SM: For not winning anything else?

7 AG: That's exactly it. In fact, Staff Sergeant Soto, here's the man who said,
8 "You know, you might not win any flags," because we were lousy shooters, we were
9 lousy on the drill field, we were lousy in inspections, he said, "but you're going to be the
10 strongest Marines that ever came out of this damn place," and sure enough we kicked ass
11 in the PT, so.

12 SM: How about other types of competition, when you guys went through,
13 especially?

14 AG: Pugle sticks, that kind of stuff. I liked the obstacle course too. I love
15 running the obstacle course and pugle sticks, they pitted, I did pretty well in pugle sticks,
16 that was fun. I think that was fun, I thought the bayonet trading was fun. I thought they
17 had close to hand to hand combat where you had to choke a guy until he passed then you
18 let him go, and if the drill instructor or the instructor saw you weren't doing it right, he'd
19 go down there and show you. They actually got us behind the eyes, you would pull up
20 until he went limp and then you'd let him go, very realistic stuff, realistic as hell. I'm
21 trying to think.

22 SM: Did they explain why they were doing that?

23 AG: Yes, because they said when you go to Vietnam, you might have this
24 opportunity to be in hand to hand combat, you're going to have to learn how to kill that
25 person, and they showed us how to kill people with cartridge belts, he says anything
26 that's laying around, you better be able to pick it up and use it. Now, knives, they taught
27 us judo, that kind of stuff, the choking drill, matter of fact I still remember exactly what
28 you do, tuck your head, and make sure they don't even grab you, and that was an eye
29 opener when they were teaching us that, and these guys, if you weren't doing the position
30 or the move right, they would get off the stand and come down, this is how you do it. Do
31 not fuck with me, Private, because is what you need to do, you're going to have to want

1 to kill these people if they come into your position and you don't have anything to pick
2 up and they were, it was good training, good training.

3 SM: When they would show you, would they demonstrate on the person who you
4 were trying to?

5 AG: Yes, well it depended, because some guy would say I'll just choke you a
6 little bit, and they'd see that and say, this is how you do it, and they'd do it to both of
7 them. It all depended on what they were feeling like, or what they saw what was going
8 on.

9 SM: So they weren't going to allow anybody to shirk?

10 AG: I got pretty good at choking people, and so did the buddy, my buddy.

11 SM: Now, when you went, since you were on the buddy system, did you and
12 your friend, were you like on the same team, were you literally buddies in boot camp?

13 AG: Yes, buddies in boot camp, exactly.

14 SM: So you would choke each other?

15 AG: Yes, choking each other, right. We still laugh about that too when we talk on
16 the phone.

17 SM: Indoctrination films, especially concerning what was going on in Vietnam
18 and also just about the Marine Corps, or the Cold War, the Soviet menace?

19 AG: That's an excellent question. I know we had to take Marine Corps history
20 classes, and I aced all those. They talked about from the beginning they told us all the
21 double Medal of Honor winners and Chestie Puller and we had to say, good night Chestie
22 Puller at night, but I'm trying to think of films they showed. I'm sure they showed us
23 some films in Vietnam, but I don't even know if I was awake during some of that stuff,
24 but I think I remember a film that talked about the Communist threat, and that's why we
25 were in Vietnam, a Department of Defense film, black and white thing. I know we saw
26 some films on, you knew we had films on first aid and digging the terrains and that kind
27 of thing, but I don't remember too many films in boot camp, I really don't. The one I
28 remember about the Communist threat, I remember that one barely, that's why we were
29 going to go help the South Vietnamese beat the Communist threat basically.

1 SM: Back to the competition stuff, was there much team on team or was it pretty
2 much just either the platoon was participating and against other platoons for this ribbon
3 or streamer?

4 AG: Yes, there would people out there grading each platoon for the streamer, but
5 there was not really.

6 SM: There was no internal, squad on squad, team on team?

7 AG: No, except for the pugil sticks, I remember we all got together, right the
8 individual. It's funny, I remember Staff Sergeant Soto used to get us out and he would
9 ask us individually, "Why do you want to kill gooks?" I remember that distinctly, and
10 you would have to say, I want to kill gooks because they're Communists or because
11 they're killing Marines, and he'd say, he would look for a certain answer. "Why do you
12 want to kill gooks?" I realize then, even at eighteen, that they were trying to de-humanize
13 the enemy, I've heard that before. I didn't realize until he was saying that, why do you
14 want to kill gooks and go down the line. I want to kill them because they killed a Marine,
15 because they're Communist, because they're godless, all the propaganda we were taught,
16 and I think that was a way for us to de-humanize them for us to be able to kill them,
17 although somebody asked me once if I had to hate the Vietnamese to kill them. I don't
18 think it had anything to do with it Steve, I, with me it was staying alive. I never thought
19 about hate, it wasn't a big hate thing, it was just a matter of staying alive and seeing a
20 target out there. But overall boot camp, I didn't realize how cushy I had it at boot camp
21 until I got to Vietnam, you got six hours of sleep a night, got three square meals a day.

22 SM: The food was decent at boot camp?

23 AG: Yes, it was good. I thought it was good because I was hungry all the time,
24 not as good as my mom's food but.

25 SM: Many people drop out of things?

26 AG: It's funny, funny you should mention that. We had two guys go over the
27 fence the first day, the first day. You know in San Diego, MCRD is right next to the
28 airport and they went through the fence, and believe it or not, when we were graduating,
29 they were coming in in shackles, these two guys, they had them cuffed up and we were
30 laughing at them, you dumbasses, man. But I guess we had some disciplinary problems,
31 then they had a thing called motivation platoon, they would go to. These guys would

1 basically go down to the beach and dig holes in the day and fill them up at night, and they
2 would do this, I had no idea how long they would do this, but they would get motivated
3 and then they'd get sent back to the platoon. There was the fat farm, these guys would
4 go, they'd usually do PT all day and eat lettuce and skim milk at night. I didn't, one of
5 the things about Marine boot camp, if you got sent back you would have to go through
6 the whole thing again. That's one of the things that motivated me to get, whatever it takes
7 to get through this, so I don't have to do this again. We had guys that were second and
8 third time, we had a guy in our platoon that came in about halfway through, this was like
9 his third attempt to try to get through boot camp, I guess they would bring them back to
10 the point where they dropped out or something. But it was hard to get out of the Corps.
11 You could not fake, I mean we had guys saying they were crazy or drug addicts and stuff,
12 and they'd just send them to motivation platoon, nobody got out, it was interesting,
13 motivation, fat farm, correctional custody, but there weren't too many crimes committed
14 in boot camp, but these guys would go do their time at these places, then come back to
15 boot camp.

16 SM: No suicide attempts?

17 AG: No, none. We had a guy that ran the three-mile run, and he had a 104
18 temperature after the run. I don't know if he had pneumonia or something, but drill
19 instructors pointed these guys out, see this guy's motivated, look what he did, and he's
20 laying there dead. One motivated Marine.

21 SM: Did he become a recycle, did he have to go?

22 AG: I don't know. He went away we never saw him again. It was towards the
23 end of must have been like the sixth or seventh week we were finishing up our final PTs
24 and stuff, never saw that guy again. Boot camp was good in the respect that it taught me
25 teamwork, I think that's where they started instilling in me, you had to trust the guy next
26 to you, if one guy dropped out, I remember we'd go on runs, if one guy dropped out, we
27 would run around the guys until he got up and joined us. One man would fuck up and
28 everybody would get punished, and that came real, I was confused until I got to Vietnam
29 and realized, you had to watch out for the weakest man in your platoon or your squad,
30 because you've got to count on each other, and Marines were real heavy on that, that
31 you've got to trust the guys next to you, or you're going to die, and I didn't really realize

1 that until I got to Vietnam and saw it played out over and over again. You've got to be
2 very aware of your strengths and weaknesses of the people on your team, and your own
3 and the whole teamwork thing, the whole thing about pulling together.

4 SM: How ethnically diverse was your platoon?

5 AG: Pretty much. We had, I'm going to say, there were 75 in my platoon, boot
6 camp platoon, I'd say twenty of them were blacks, hell, I don't know, ten or fifteen
7 Hispanics, the rest white guys. There were some Native Americans too in there, I know
8 there were some guys from Albuquerque went with us, a few native Americans, four or
9 five of them, pretty diverse though, pretty diverse. A lot of guys from the South, a lot of
10 the white guys were from the South, I don't know what that is, Texas, Alabama,
11 Mississippi, all the black guys for some reason seemed to be from Detroit and Chicago,
12 up north somewhere, from what I remember talking to them.

13 SM: Were there any conflicts or any tensions between various racial groups?

14 AG: No, I didn't see any at all, not at all.

15 SM: '68 would have been about the time too, when there was some movement, of
16 course, in the United States, black power and things like that so that's why I asked?

17 AG: Right, no, I didn't see it all. Now, whether they nipped it in the bud quickly
18 if they saw it, the drill instructors, but no, I didn't see that at all.

19 SM: And what would you say, well I guess, you've already really said it, I was
20 going to ask you what you thought would be the greatest challenge you faced in boot
21 camp, and I guess you thought it was the mental breakdown part.

22 AG: Yes, it was the mental thing about trying to, paying attention all the time and
23 then, the whole sort of drill, you had to really make sure, they said left face, you better
24 make a left face. I don't know, it's that whole getting to that mindset, I guess of being a
25 Marine, or being a killer I guess. I remember the whole kill kit bill thing with the
26 bayonet, but like I said the physical part was okay, it was that mental, long days, short
27 nights. I just thought the mental aspect of it was tough.

28 SM: Did you ever go like on a bivouac or out in the field for boot camp?

29 AG: No.

30 SM: Did they ever discuss patrolling and other issues like that?

31 AG: No.

1 SM: You got that when you went to advanced infantry training?

2 SG: Yes, yes we did.

3 SM: Where did you go for that training?

4 AG: It was at Camp Pendleton, and that was right after we graduated, this is
5 November of '68, infantry training. We all went, in fact it was basically the whole
6 platoon just went to Uniform company, there were three or four platoons, I forget how
7 many in the company. We got our MOSs, I have to tell you this, the day we graduated,
8 everybody was assigned their MOS, and I guess out of the 60 or 55 that were left, 50 of
9 us were infantry, 03's and five were other things, and the drill instructor's just laughing
10 like hell. "How many of you guys were promised Air Wing?" Half the people, "well
11 you're not getting Air Wing." But 50 of us, I think it was around 80 or 90 percent of us
12 were 03's.

13 SM: Now you said that you lost I guess close to a third?

14 AG: Yes, well I think, I want to say fifteen or twenty, fifteen or twenty of the
15 guys dropped out, never came back, or didn't get through the fat farm. There was a
16 couple of, I'm trying to think of injuries, and I don't think there were any injuries,
17 might've had a guy break a leg or something like that, but it was mostly disciplinary
18 stuff. Actually the cops came and arrested a guy I think in boot camp, I think that did
19 happen. In fact Terry and I've talked about that, that was early, you know, it was one of
20 those where nobody knew anybody, and I think the cops came and arrested some guy, he
21 was a wanted felon I think. But anyway in November graduated from boot camp, got
22 bused up to Camp Pendleton for infantry training and that's where we learned how to do
23 fire to maneuvers and that's where we humped, we went up and down mountains, we dug
24 in at night, we fired all the weapons we could.

25 SM: What was your personal weapon in Advanced Infantry?

26 AG: It was the M-14.

27 SM: Still the M-14?

28 AG: Yes, M-14.

29 SM: Did you get at least some familiarization training with the M-16?

1 AG: No, well actually, yes fan fire with M-60 and the M-16, yes. But, yes we
2 got to fire all the weapons, the law, got to fire the .50 cal, we got to throw grenades, but
3 the -14 was still our individual weapon.

4 SM: And these were fully automatic M-14s?

5 AG: Yes, actually they did that, the selector switch.

6 SM: Any enemy weapon familiarization, AK-47s?

7 AG: Yes, there was, in fact I still have my, one of the things I want to donate is I
8 still have my little notebook that I took notes, yes they actually showed us the AK-47 and
9 showed us the RPG, didn't fire the weapons, that's the thing, because an AK makes a
10 different sound and in Vietnam I learned it very quickly. But basically there was a, there
11 was a village we had to go through, with pop-up targets, and they had trip wires, and that
12 was quick little one or two day thing, it wasn't very good, I didn't think.

13 SM: Was it a Vietnamese village?

14 AG: Yes, Vietnamese village, they had pop-up targets, and like I said, they had
15 trip wires, they had punji pits, where we had to, basically maneuver our way through this,
16 John Wayne village I think is what we called it. But it was thatched hooches and they had
17 some fake bamboo and that kind of stuff there, that was about it for training us for
18 Vietnam.

19 SM: Do you remember much the stories that the first, your drill instructors at
20 boot camp, and then your instructors in infantry training?

21 AG: Our instructors at infantry training were, they were all combat vets, all
22 combat veterans. You know in boot camp, Staff Sergeant Soto was a truck driver, and we
23 had two combat vets, and then Staff Sergeant Soto, the truck driver. Anyway, in infantry
24 training we had a Captain who was actually waiting to get out, he was getting medically
25 retired, but they would get us around, tell us stories, and scare the hell out of us. The
26 Captain was at Khe Sanh, 881, 82, those old fights, Chato, who was one of the Sergeants
27 there, was with the 9th Marines and he was at Khe Sanh and Dong Ha, and in one of the
28 major battles up north, tall guys with glasses. I can't think of his name, he was with the
29 5th Marines in the rice paddies, but they would tell us stories about, when you get to
30 Vietnam, you're going to be re-learning everything that we think we're teaching you
31 here. They were trying to do sleep deprivation with us. This is what you're going to be

1 doing in Vietnam, they would not give us much water, they would try to keep us
2 hydrated, but I think they did a great job of getting us prepared for Vietnam, what we
3 were going to be facing, conditions especially. They couldn't get, they used to tell us just
4 to keep, stay alert, listen to the people that you're in charge of, and just do what you're
5 told and you might survive. They all had hearts, the Captain had like three purple hearts,
6 all these guys had purple hearts, but they were also good men too. That was the first time
7 I saw the look in the eyes, a thousand hearts there they call it, these guys definitely had
8 the look, and that scared me. I think that's when I first started getting scared about what I
9 was going to do.

10 SM: What was the biggest challenge in your infantry training, your advanced
11 infantry training?

12 AG: Well, there the physical part. Damn, we had to carry, in boot camp we
13 didn't carry anything, and there we had packs and we had our rifles, we had to do
14 formation runs up and down hills, like I say sleep deprivation. They put us out in the hills
15 there and dig a hole, they would go around to make sure you were awake, we'd get two
16 hours of sleep, and eats lots of C- rations, we didn't do that in boot camp. That was the
17 first time I had C- rations was there, ate lots of C- rations, but it was nice there because
18 on the weekends we got leave, we got to go on liberty, so it was like five days a week and
19 then you got liberty unless you were doing fire watch or Sergeant of the guard or
20 whatever they're called. But I think there the physical part, I mean they ran us and kept
21 us tired and it was tough, it was really tough. The mental part, I liked in the daytime
22 when we had schools, it was great. We had first aid, we got to set explosives, I love
23 throwing frags was always one of my fun things, shooting the weapons was always neat
24 too.

25 SM: Now, did you have any live-fire experiences?

26 AG: Yes.

27 SM: Of course, just on the marksmanship range in boot camp, right?

28 AG: Yes.

29 SM: You didn't throw any live grenades or anything there, but?

30 AG: No, but in our infantry training, almost everything we fired was live fire, the
31 laws we got to shoot at targets, all the guns had ammo in them, all the guns we fired. That

1 was where we got to crawl through the fire and they fired a 30-caliber over our head, and
2 they had explosives going off in the wire too, that was kind of exciting. It was raining
3 like hell that day I remember, and they were happy, these guys, this is exactly the way its
4 going to be in Vietnam. Get under that barbed wire and you're going to slide through
5 there, we're going to fire these two 30 cal's over your head. That was amazing, that was
6 the first I ever heard rounds, I mean in boot camp when you're in the butts, when you're
7 qualifying you could hear rounds going over your head, but its different than an
8 automatic weapon firing over your head, you can hear that sound, but yes, firing the
9 weapons in ITR was my kick.

10 SM: You mentioned that the packs, or the physical aspect was one of the biggest
11 challenges for you, how heavy, typically was your pack?

12 AG: I've thought about that. They were about half of what we carried in
13 Vietnam, I'd say thirty pounds maybe, thirty of forty pounds. We carried C- rations, we
14 carried claymores, usually a couple of frags, but it wasn't half as much as we carried in
15 'Nam. We only carried like one magazine in our weapon, we didn't carry, like in
16 Vietnam, fifteen or twenty magazines. I'd say thirty pounds, maybe, maybe thirty
17 pounds.

18 SM: So when you got to Vietnam, you started carrying a whole lot more.

19 AG: Yes, I'd say double that. As a machine gunner I carried the gun, I carried at
20 least three hundred rounds of ammo, four or five frags, five or six canteens of water, a
21 claymore, pop-ups, depending on whether the mortar men had enough people to carry
22 their stuff, I carried a mortar round, C-4, I had a .45 and I carried about three or our
23 magazines for that, C- rations.

24 SM: Water.

25 AG: Water, at least six canteens, I carried in Vietnam, at least six. That was a big
26 thing, the first thing I was taught there is you carry a lot of water around here, because we
27 never know when we're going to get re-supplied, so I carried at least six, never less than
28 six, sometimes eight, all depended on where we were going, and whether we were going
29 to have access to clean water or not. I carried eighty pounds in my back, easily carried
30 eighty pounds. To this day, I look at the pictures of me with all my stuff on my back, I
31 don't know how in the hell did we move. How did we hump, me and my friends talk

1 about that all the time, how the hell did we do this? It was, and the Marines always had
2 the hand-me-downs too, even when we were going through training, we had the hand-
3 me-downs from the Army or the Navy. We never had the good equipment, World War II
4 packs, World War II C-rats, I remember infantry training, ex-1944 some of the stuff we
5 saw on there, not good with a P-38 to open up the cans. Yes, but infantry training was
6 pretty exciting, pretty fun.

7 SM: Any of the indoctrination or propaganda type films in infantry training that
8 you remember?

9 AG: Good question, I don't, I'm trying to think, no, no, I don't think so.

10 SM: Were any of the, I guess, films on Vietnam or anything like that?

11 AG: No, I don't remember, I really don't remember any films there, so that was
12 four weeks, infantry training was four weeks.

13 SM: How much time did you get off between the end of your infantry training
14 and when you went to Vietnam?

15 AG: Actually, I had to go to machine gun school.

16 SM: Oh, you went to machine gun school, how long did that last?

17 AG: That was three weeks, and I guess that was the beginning of December.

18 SM: Now that was pure ground fire machine gun school, or was it also air fire?

19 AG: No, it was all on a tripod. We qualified on a tripod, at a thousand meters.

20 SM: Three to five round bursts?

21 AG: Yes, three to five round bursts, right. I was always always at nine to ten
22 round burst guy.

23 SM: Oh were you? Did you get in trouble for that?

24 AG: Actually, I was a good gunner, so I got in trouble a little bit, but I was good,
25 I was really good. I could make a fifty-gallon drum dance at a thousand meters effective.
26 My instructors were pleased with my machine gun ability.

27 SM: So they gave you a little bit of license there with bursts?

28 AG: I finally was able to, I said hell I can put nine or ten rounds out there, come
29 on. But that was, we moved, our infantry training we stayed in barracks, two story
30 barracks. For machine gun school we moved up on the hill, we had to sleep in tents, and
31 we had these oil based heaters, this was in December, got pretty damn cold there. We'd

1 get up in the morning, it was 4:30 or 5:00, and we had to carry our guns to the range and
2 that was interesting, I got to find out how heavy that gun was.

3 SM: How far was the typical hike to the range.

4 AG: I'd say, probably an hour march, we'd march an hour. I don't know how far
5 that was, but we'd march in formation.

6 SM: A couple, few miles, four or five miles.

7 AG: Yes, that's what I figured, but that was three weeks long.

8 SM: Now how did you get selected to become the -60 gun?

9 AG: I don't have a clue, I really don't. I was an O-3 when I got out of boot
10 camp, when we got out of infantry training they got out there with the little roster, and
11 they just went down, I always think it was A's through F's were O-311s, the rifle
12 bannock, I really don't know.

13 SM: There was no rhyme or reason, they just got selected.

14 AG: No, I could not understand why, G's through Qs are machine gunners and
15 the rest of you guys are mortar men or rockets or flame throwers.

16 SM: Did you ever have to hump the mortar plate?

17 AG: No, thank God, no. I carried mortar rounds, but never the base plates, no .

18 SM: The rounds are enough.

19 AG: Yes, 60 mm mortar rounds, yes, so that was three weeks.

20 SM: And again where was that, the M-60 training?

21 AG: That was also at Pendleton, in fact the same place we had infantry training
22 except we just moved up to the hills, into tents there.

23 SM: What was the greatest challenge with that, obviously not the machine-
24 gunning itself?

25 AG: Well, I found it great, the machine gunning school, I came out, I think
26 second best in the school. And I got pretty disciplined, even though I said I liked to fire
27 the ten or twelve, they guys that taught me was a gunner in Vietnam, two tours, and said,
28 "You're one of the best I've ever coached," so I felt real proud. I wasn't real good with a
29 rifle, maybe that's why they made me a machine gunner, I didn't think about that, but I
30 wasn't that good with a rifle, I qualified, but I wasn't an expert.

1 SM: So it was after you finished machine gunner school that you got leave,
2 twenty-day leave?

3 AG: Twenty day leave.

4 SM: And then you were shipped off to Vietnam?

5 AG: Actually, no. I came home for twenty days, I went back to Albuquerque,
6 actually slept through the Joe Namuth Super Bowl, my mom said, "You sure did sleep a
7 lot less, and finally I have you back you sleep for like three months here," so twenty days
8 here than we went back to thing called staging battalion, which is what all Marines go
9 through before they go to Vietnam. Now this was the first time that I got to fire an M-16
10 on a range. When I went through infantry training they had us tear down a -16, we fan
11 fired one, one day. When I went to staging battalion, they actually had us get on the
12 range and shoot at targets. That was the first time that I'd ever done that. We went
13 through a POW camp that we'd had to escape from and they'd come looking for us. We
14 filled out Power of Attorney and stuff, I remember doing that.

15 SM: Will and testament.

16 AG: Will and testament. This is where we started seeing films. We did our
17 Geneva Convention cards. They had little classes on Vietnam, the culture, don't pat kids
18 on the head, don't sit down and cross your legs and point your feet at them. This is
19 where we saw films: Why are we in Vietnam? What are you going to be doing there?
20 Just typical DOD black and white films, this is Vietnam, this is the history of Vietnam,
21 that kind of thing. I remember it was pretty amusing, I thought it was pretty amusing, so
22 did the people showing the films to us. Yes, we got our Geneva Convention cards, they
23 read all that stuff to us, they told us basically if you get caught, you're supposed to show
24 them this card, and they'll laugh and say, well the Vietnamese did not sign the Geneva
25 Convention or something. We went through a booby-trapped village there, that was
26 pretty interesting. They showed us the different kinds of booby traps, the bouncing bettys,
27 the command, they actually took us out to a range, I remember, they showed use these are
28 the kind of booby traps you're going to encounter. They actually had a guy come in, he
29 was some hide in the tree lines, so that this is command detonated, they had, anyway, all
30 kinds of stuff, trip wires, grenades and C-ration cans falling out of trees. That was pretty
31 good training I thought. Good training, came in handy in Vietnam. That was around,

1 how about I say ten days, a week or ten days of that, and then I got called out of
2 formation one day, about ten of us did, and we were selected to go to Vietnamese
3 language school in Monterrey California. My language skills came in handy again, when
4 I was in boot camp, they gave us language tests, and I scored highly enough on the test to
5 go to twelve week Vietnamese intensive language school in Monterrey California.

6 SM: Twelve weeks?

7 AG: Twelve weeks.

8 SM: How effective was that?

9 AG: Well, it was, I was in the top ten percent of my class and I got a meritorious
10 promotion to lance corporal. I learned formal Vietnamese, did not help me in Vietnam
11 because we weren't in any cities or any universities, so it took me about six months to
12 learn how to speak bush language basically, which was Vietnamese, French, English,
13 uneducated, it's very, lots of slang, and it took me a while to catch on, to get my ear
14 accustomed to what they were saying to me, but I did well. I like Vietnamese language
15 school, two reasons, one is learning the culture, we were taught by a Vietnamese woman
16 who taught us all the cultural, what they eat, this is what you do, the Buddhists and
17 Catholics. That was a real, real good thing for me to go through before I went to Vietnam,
18 and I think it gave me a little respect for the Vietnamese people, because I told you in
19 boot camp why you want to kill gooks, and I figure this woman is telling us we're
20 fighting the Communists. We had these, every day we had to learn so many words, then
21 we'd go back to the barracks and study at night, then they'd come in and do, they had like
22 a picture, would be pointing to things, and it was basically, where's the machine gun,
23 what is your names, what's your age, basically military terminology. We learned lots to
24 that, but what the ranks were, how to say hello and good-bye of course, and it was just a
25 real cultural eye-opener for me, and I got a pretty good history of Vietnam, and history,
26 from the South's point of view of course. And I was real pleased at school, to be able to
27 go to that language school.

28 SM: The woman who taught you, do you know if she was from, what part of
29 Vietnam she was from.

30 AG: She was from the North actually, and I don't remember her name. She was
31 from the North, she came South. I want to say she was young, but I could never tell with

1 Vietnamese how old they were. She was probably 30, I'd say 30 or 35 years old, that was
2 in '69, and I think she told us, she said that she was from North, but I think she made the
3 move down in 1954 with the Catholics moving, she was a Catholic. When the Catholics
4 moved from the North to the South I think she was a girl when she did that, and she wore
5 Ow Dia everyday. She was a real pleasant, very soft spoken, you know here we are,
6 these tough Marines, but she was probably one of the nicest people I met in my military
7 career I think. But it was just a real good experience for all of us, all the Marines that
8 were there, it was good for us, and I would like to do research on why the Marine Corps
9 did this. We were all enlisted men and they sent us to this twelve-week language, just a
10 quick, and there were no Army, Air Force, or Navy enlisted men there, they were all
11 officers. We had a Special Forces Major was in our class with us, and there were ten
12 Marines, ten Marines and a Special Forces Major. We were all PFCs or privates.

13 SM: Well had you heard at all about the CAP Marine program before you got to
14 Vietnam?

15 AG: No, I hadn't. I knew nothing about it till I got there. And that was good
16 duty, Monterrey was nice, it was an Army base, the food there was excellent. We were
17 the only Marine detachment there. They allowed us into the enlisted men's club there so
18 we could drink beer on Friday nights. It was just good duty, the barracks were nice. We
19 ran three miles a day after class we'd go out and run up and down the hills there, I
20 remember we got into trouble from the General's, we used to run by the General's
21 quarters, and his wife complained because we had our chants we would do, and of course
22 we would use swear words as we'd run by so she complained to our Company
23 Commander and our skipper called us and said you guys can't be swearing over, so then
24 we started running by, we would hum the swear words, and she'd be mad about that so
25 they changed our route, so we couldn't run by the General's house any more. It was just,
26 it was fun. It was twelve weeks, I got meritoriously promoted to lance corporal, last day I
27 was there. The night before we were going to Vietnam I went out and got drunk with a
28 couple of my friends, and came over the fence to get back into the base, I destroyed some
29 government property, so I was kept there. All of my friends went to Vietnam and I was
30 kept there for office hours, for 115.

31 SM: Oh, for crying out loud. What did you destroy?

1 AG: Oh, I was so out of it, a friend of mine told me when I ran into him a couple
2 of years later, that I had thrown some stuff through some windows there, a surfboard,
3 some trash, I guess I'd smashed a few windows out of the school. Then the MPs came
4 and I was in trouble, so.

5 SM: Did you lose your meritorious?

6 AG: Yes, I was a lance corporal for one day. Steve, it's a matter of, I think it was
7 fate or something because I got to stay two extra weeks in the United States, got to go up
8 to Treasure Island where I waited for hours to go to Vietnam after my office hours. And
9 I started getting letters from my friends that so and so got wasted, so and so lost both of
10 his legs, it was just, that's when everybody had started whacking me is my friends had
11 gone. I got a letter from my good friend Jim Blackburn's wife who said "Jimmy was in a
12 huge ambush, he's in the hospital now, he's probably going to lose his left leg. Do you
13 know anything that's going on?" And I said, "I'm not there, I don't know what to tell
14 you," but I got several letters from my friends that said so and so was with the 9th
15 Marines, he was killed last week, this is two weeks after they had gone, I started getting
16 these. So I was the only Marine on the airplane when I flew to Vietnam. I got to see a
17 couple movies and flew to Okinawa. That was in June, must have been the middle of
18 June '69. Yes, that's when it started hitting me it was real, when I started to hear about
19 my friends being casualties.

20 SM: I thank you very much, sir. This will end the first interview with Mr.
21 Goodrich.

22 Steve Maxner: This is Steve Maxner continuing the interview with Mr. Tony
23 Goodrich on the 19th of April 2002 at approximately 2: 05 Lubbock time. I am in
24 Lubbock, Texas and Mr. Goodrich is in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is a
25 continuation of the interview we started last week. Why don't we go ahead and begin sir,
26 with a couple of follow-up questions with regard to your training and I was wondering,
27 while you were going through advanced infantry training, was there any kind of squad on
28 squad patrolling or any kind of competition that pitted you against another unit out in the
29 field?

30 AG: No, not that I remember Steve.

31 SM: Do you recall any kind of unit competitions in advanced infantry training?

1 AG: No.

2 SM: Well, we've pretty much discussed all of the training in the last interview,
3 why don't we go ahead and look at your trip over to Vietnam, and if you would describe
4 what it was like when you left, the trip over itself and when you landed?

5 AG: Did I tell you that I was promoted to lance corporal and I was lance corporal
6 for one day before I got busted back? I was kept in the United States, the rest of my
7 language school Marines went away and I was kept in Monterrey I want to say two or
8 three days, just doing stuff for the CO of the Marine company there and then I got sent up
9 to Treasure Island where I spent about ten days waiting to get manifested on the flight out
10 of the United States to Vietnam. I left about mid-June of 1969, I got on a flight at, I think
11 it was Travis Air Force base up by San Francisco, we flew from there to Hawaii where
12 we refueled and if I remember right, I think I was probably the Marine enlisted man on
13 the flight. There were a lot of Air Force and Army officers on this flight. I remember we
14 got to see a couple of movies, it was different than what other friends of mine had
15 described about going to Vietnam on their flights. Anyway we re-fuelled in Hawaii and
16 Honolulu, flew to Okinawa. The Marines had this policy I guess, I stopped in Okinawa,
17 where they checked my shot records, wanted to make sure all my records were up to date.
18 I was there for three days doing preliminary checking in for Vietnam. After three days I
19 got on a flight, I flew in to Da Nang Air Force base. It was the middle of the night when
20 we came in, must have been nine, ten maybe eleven o'clock at night. And I think it's the
21 first time that I started getting scared because I looked down as we were coming for our
22 approach to land at Da Nang where I could see tracers and I could see flares being
23 dropped and I really started questioning what I had just done. I landed in Da Nang, got
24 off the aircraft, first thing I remember is how hot it was there, hot and humid I mean just
25 it was like a furnace, and it was the middle of the night and I wasn't looking forward to
26 seeing the day and how hot it was there, and me a young man from New Mexico where
27 the humidity here never gets above ten percent, it was just like stepping into an oven.
28 The Marines were taken to a bus and taken up to the R & R center, or the inprocessing
29 center and R & R center, I think were in the same area. They gave us a rack to sleep in
30 that night, in the barracks they had there and the next day, we went and talked to an office
31 folk, administrative type there, that had our name on a roster and they told us where we

1 were going. I was assigned to go to the 5th Marine regiment, I had no idea where they
2 were, who or what they were. All I knew was I going to go there as a machine gunner and
3 I was going to be in the infantry. I remember the guy telling me that the rear area for the
4 5th Marines was an area called An Hoa, I was going to An Hoa combat base and he said
5 they called this place Little Khe Sanh because it was surrounded by three mountain
6 ranges and they used to get lots of incoming there and that scared me. So they took us out
7 to the LZ, one of the LZ's there, where I got on a helicopter and they flew me out to An
8 Hoa. I checked in to some administrative place there before I got sent down to my
9 company because they saw that I had language skills. I remember talking to the S-2
10 people, which were the intelligence people, that told me if they, they didn't have any
11 openings then for any S-2, they had no S-2 slots for people who spoke Vietnamese
12 language, but they would let me know if there was any slots open, and of course they
13 never let me know. I got assigned to Mike company, 3rd battalion, 5th Marines. I went
14 down to the company bunker where I met the 1st Sergeant, and if I remember there were
15 probably eight or ten of us that went down to the company together, I think there were
16 eight of us. Anyway, we went down there, we checked in with the 1st Sergeant, he told us
17 to, gave us a check to go get our jungle utilities, we were still wearing our stateside
18 utilities and our weapons, so I went down and got my jungle utilities, helmets, flak
19 jackets, back pack and an M-16 was actually my first rifle there. I came back to the
20 company area, we slept in these canvas tents, the company was out in the bush, and they
21 were going to wait for the company to come into the rear, they weren't going to chopper
22 us out into the bush. Actually had pictures of me when I was new. Everything was new.
23 You could tell I was new because I still had polish on my boots and my utilities were
24 clean. My helmet was clean. My rifle doesn't even have a magazine in it, in the picture I
25 have of me. I remember sitting in the tent that we were sleeping in. There were some
26 Marines in there from the company that came in and started telling us these scary war
27 stories about getting ambushed and taking casualties, and how much we were going to
28 hate it there. We were real stupid for going there and all kinds of things that scared the
29 hell out of us. We were in, I'm trying to think if we did anything, oh yes we did. I
30 remember I got to go out on my first duty, as a marine in Vietnam was to go on a road
31 sweep. They used to do road sweeps between An Hoa and a place called Liberty Bridge.

1 Road sweep was actually a mine clearing patrol so the convoys could come from Da
2 Nang to us. What we would do was we would go from An Hoa to the Liberty Bridge and
3 then another mine sweep patrol would go from Da Nang to Liberty Bridge. I remember
4 being given when we got out there we reported to a staff sergeant. They gave me the
5 mine sweeping equipment. I was brand new in country. It was one of these, you put
6 headphones on and you've got this little metal plate that you swing in front of you on the
7 road. I remember being so damn scared. The guys said just listen for a beep. If you hear
8 a beep then stop. I remember getting out in front of this column of Marines and then
9 behind us were trucks some Amtrax. It took me, probably an hour to go about 100 feet.
10 Every beep I heard on the ground I would stop. They'd go up and they'd go up and
11 they'd check. Nothing. I remember the Lieutenant that came running up and started
12 screaming at me, "What the fuck is taking so long here?" He looked at me, saw my
13 brand new uniform, my brand new boots and said, "What the fuck are you doing here?" I
14 said, "Well the sergeant sent me up here." The lieutenant called the sergeant up and said,
15 "You get this man to the rear of the column and get somebody that knows what we're
16 doing or we're going to take all day to get this damming sweep done." I was grateful to
17 that lieutenant. I got to the back of the column, drenched in sweat. Probably giggling a
18 little bit because I knew that lieutenant saw me for what I was, which was a new green
19 Marine who had no clue what was going on. That was my first introduction to being out
20 in the bush, I guess you could say.

21 SM: Was that in conjunction with an engineer unit?

22 AG: Yes. Yes, it was, because every time I would hear something they would
23 call the engineers up and they would probe where I had heard. It was very strange like
24 WWII with bayonets. To this day, I have no clue why they put me up there. I guess the
25 staff sergeant didn't want to do it or something. We had an engineer unit right behind us
26 that was usually flanking, usually a squad of Marines that were on our flanks off the road
27 in the tree lines were along the road. Probably a platoon of Marines infantry behind us.
28 Then behind them there were several trucks, 65s and Amtrax. The company came in out
29 of the bush about a week or two after; I'm not real sure about the time line here. They
30 were choppered in. The first thing that struck me was how dirty they were. They hadn't
31 shaved. They just looked filthy. The uniforms looked filthy. The weapons of course,

1 looked clean, that's the thing that you had to have to stay alive. The guys just looked, I
2 think the term we used was gungy. Just the filth and the look in their eyes too. These
3 guys had the 1,000 yard stare they used to tell us about. These guys had seen things that I
4 was going to see. That was quite frightening also. They had a pallet of beer on ice and
5 they were cooking steaks for these guys when they came in out of the bush. That was
6 something that happened every time that we came out of the bush. They would have a
7 steak fry and cold beer for us. I got assigned to the first platoon. I met my squad leader.
8 I don't remember his name; I don't remember too many names. He welcomed me to
9 Vietnam. He'd been there eight or nine months. He said keep my eyes open to look at
10 the guys that have been there for a while just to follow his lead. Said he would try to
11 show me everything I needed to know to survive. There were one, two, three, four of us
12 that went to the first platoon, maybe five. He immediately told us that they had lost a
13 whole gun team and some others. They had taken eight or nine casualties. We were
14 actually taking the places of these. It was tough for me because I was afraid that these
15 guys were killed. I was going to be replacing guys friends or buddies. That scared me
16 too. I was really afraid I might do something wrong I guess is what it comes down to.

17 SM: You were on a 60-gun team?

18 AG: Actually no, I wasn't. Initially I wasn't. Initially I was a rifleman. That
19 story's coming up. For the next ten days, we were doing what they call road security.
20 We would go out on the road, on Liberty road between An Hoa and Liberty Bridge and
21 just have outposts. Little bunkers every couple of hundred meters and we'd sit there
22 during the day. At nighttime, we ran ambushes mostly. Some night time patrols, usually
23 ambushes.

24 SM: Did you make contact on those ambushes?

25 AG: No. Not the first ones I went on. I did some stupid things. I'll tell you
26 about the stupidest thing I did in an ambush. My first ambush there. We were at our
27 ambush site. I was on watch and I don't think I slept the first month I was in country. I
28 was so damn scared. I didn't eat much either. My stomach was kind of shrunken. I
29 drank a lot of water, I remember that. Lots of water. Anyway we were on this ambush, I
30 was on watch. They used to drop these gigantic flares, out of the aircraft. Huge flares
31 with huge parachutes. They would just light up the whole area. I remember watching

1 this parachute come down with the flare burning. The flare burned out and this parachute
2 and the flare, which was still glowing, fell 30 or 40 feet away from where our position
3 was. Me and my infinite wisdom decided I'd like to have a parachute. It would be nice
4 to have something. I walked out there. I picked up the parachute with the glowing end of
5 the illumination round and walked right back into the ambush site. As I stepped into the
6 ambush site, my squad leader decked me. Knocked me silly. I could see stars. He said,
7 "We're not in Camp Pendleton anymore, you stupid fuck. You could have got us all
8 killed. If they would have been out there with a sniper, they could have picked us all
9 off." He said, "We've got to move. We've got to move the position now, because of your
10 stupidity. Don't ever let this happen again, or I'll kill you." It was a learning experience
11 for me, to say the least. I look back on it now, and go, "What the fuck was I thinking?"
12 Anyway, that was one of the few times I fucked up. You have a short learning curve
13 there otherwise. You do that more often than once, you're going to get wasted.

14 SM: Just out of curiosity, when you first arrived in country and then as you were
15 moving and you got processed into the unit, into your company, into your platoon, what
16 kind of briefings did you get besides that first meeting with the squad leader?

17 AG: That's an excellent question. We actually got to go to some kind of in
18 country processing where we went and sat in a group. They got an officer up there with a
19 map that showed us where we were at on the map. Showed us where they thought the
20 enemy. That's a great question, I haven't thought about this in a long time, Steve. He
21 showed us where the enemy was; what regiments, what divisions were around us. We
22 were basically surrounded he said. They also had demonstrations. They had
23 demonstrations if AK-47 fire. They showed us what RPGs looked like. They talked
24 about the kind of rockets we might get. 122s and not sure what the other one was. 122s
25 and some other thing. They talked about booby traps. They actually had a demonstration
26 of looking for trip wires for booby traps. They showed us different kinds of booby traps.
27 Grenades inside of C-ration cans. They showed us where they could take an artillery
28 shell or a bomb dropped from an aircraft, that hadn't gone off how they could set those
29 up as booby traps. They talked about daisy chain booby traps, which is more than one or
30 closely set up in a line. They told us to basically keep your wits about you. Make sure
31 you're very aware of everything that's around. Anything that's out of place, don't get

1 near it or step in it or anything like that. Then they had a demonstration by a sapper. A
2 daytime demonstration. They had this guy come through the wire. Cutting the wire, he
3 would tie it up. He was only in a loincloth with a satchel charge bag. Came through, I
4 forget, 50 meters of wire in about 5 or 10 minutes. You couldn't hear the guy. You
5 could not hear him. That was scary. I didn't get any of this training in the States before I
6 got there. That was like a two or three day orientation. I'm trying to think of anything
7 else. I think that was it. We had like a three-day orientation there before we met up with
8 our unit.

9 SM: What about interacting with the Vietnamese people? Did they say anything
10 about that? Dos and Don'ts, that kind of stuff?

11 AG: Not much. I remember not much, but I had that training. Language
12 training. I learned there. No, not much at all. I remember there was a lot of people that
13 worked on the base that were Vietnamese. They cleaned things. There was just a bunch
14 of them that worked on the base. I remember at nighttime they'd have to leave. They'd
15 come in at dawn or daybreak. The barber was Vietnamese. The little photography shop
16 there was a Vietnamese guys running it. Little maids or hooch mamasons, I think is what
17 some of the guys called them. I didn't interact with them too much in the rear though. I
18 didn't interact with anybody until we went out into the bush when I started talking to the
19 people out in the bush.

20 SM: Were you told that fraternizing with the Vietnamese civilian women in
21 particular and prostitutes, that was a no-no? Were you ever told anything like that?

22 AG: We were told that we could get court marshaled I think, for getting the clap.
23 I don't think they ever said anything about fraternizing. If we were 'caught', that was
24 the term. Actually it was a corpsman that told us this. If you get caught they could court
25 marshal you. But, other than that, no.

26 SM: What for? For damaging government property?

27 AG: (laughs) I guess so, I guess so.

28 SM: That first ten days, I guess where you were working road security and doing
29 the night ambushes and that kind of stuff, did you guys make any enemy contact at all?

30 AG: No contact, no contact at all. There was a couple of times on the road
31 sweeps, if I remember correctly that they guys on our flanks hit booby traps. They had to

1 medevac. I didn't see any of that. They were way off the road. I remember medevac
2 choppers coming in and picking these guys up. I think that happened once or twice in
3 that ten days.

4 SM: How about actually finding mines on the road?

5 AG: None. No mines.

6 SM: Were there any Vietnamese villages along this road nearby?

7 AG: Yeah. You could see they were a couple hundred meters off the road.
8 There was a few of them, not many. But, pretty well cleared out then. I remember
9 looking at the map and seeing villages on the map and then you'd look and there
10 wouldn't be villages there. Then I was told that these maps were four or five years old
11 and the villages would basically be located to other places. No, I don't remember. I saw
12 a few hooches off the road, but very few.

13 SM: Did civilians use the road for traffic as well?

14 AG: Yes, they did. Saw lots of kids out there that were trying to sell us
15 everything from cigarettes to cold soda pop to marijuana. Kids, by the tons. They all
16 spoke English very well.

17 SM: When did you go over?

18 AG: It was June of 1969.

19 SM: June of '69.

20 AG: Yeah.

21 SM: When you were approached by these kids selling stuff and you saw other
22 Vietnamese people using this road that you guys were clearing, did you ever get any
23 indication that they were avoiding certain sections of the road or that they were at all
24 concerned that there might be mines on the road?

25 AG: I didn't see that. I do remember Marines that had been there for a while,
26 saying don't trust these kids. They said don't buy anything from them that's in a bottle
27 because they put glass in it. Don't give them anything that they might be able to use to
28 identify you. They said don't trust them. They were out there probably counting us.
29 Seeing what kind of weapons they had. I was told they'd go back to the vills and then
30 whatever vills there were VC controlled or VC or NVA would come in at night, they
31 would be telling them what we were. What our strength was, that kind of thing.

1 SM: What did you do after that first learning experience?

2 AG: After that first learning experience.

3 SM: What kind of operations did you go on?

4 AG: We were just doing patrols in the area. Just day patrols. To be very honest,
5 I never knew what we were really doing. We'd go on these patrols and go through
6 villages. Sometimes we would check for I.D. cards, sometimes we wouldn't. I
7 remember one of the only times that I didn't make a hump because it was too, too hot and
8 I actually passed out on a hump. We were going up into the foothills of the Khe Sanh
9 mountains on a patrol one day. It was 95 degrees, humidity was about that much. I
10 remember just blacking out. I woke up in the coroner and was pouring water on me. For
11 the most part, I didn't get teased too much. Everybody said this happened to every one. I
12 got pissed off at myself. Never happened again after that. They said make sure drink
13 plenty of water. I didn't do salt tablets because I really didn't need to. When I first got
14 there, I carried four canteens of water and I ended up carrying six and eight, the rest of
15 my tour. That was the day that they asked, I was never asked what my MOS was when I
16 got in country. I wasn't going to volunteer that I was a machine gunner. About three
17 weeks into my tour, maybe a month, one of the machine gunners rotated home so they
18 asked if anybody here was an O331, of course I learned very quickly, you never
19 volunteer any information. They knew, Goodrich is an O331, we have his rosters right
20 here. I remember my squad leader saying, "How come you didn't tell us you were an
21 O331." I said, "Because I knew better." He laughed. He took me over to this guy, who
22 was the gunner. Another man whose name I don't remember. Probably the guy that
23 taught me more than anything I needed to know to survive there, dark hair. I have picture
24 s of him. I'd like to find him someday. Anyway, I went up to him and he said, "I'm so
25 and so, you now my assistant gunner, which means you feed belts of ammo into my gun
26 and when I'm moving you're attached to my asshole. When I move, you move." He
27 says, "You will not carry anything but a .45. If I'm knocked down, you pick up the gun."
28 Anyway this guy basically sat me down one night and said this is what you need to do to
29 survive here. This is what you carry. He took my backpack. Took everything else I
30 didn't know I had. I carried extra utility uniforms, threw that away. He said, "you want
31 to carry three or four dry socks; this is how you carry your C- rations. This is where you

1 put your frag. This is how you carry your flak jackets.” The guy actually sat me down
2 and said, “This is what you need to carry. This is what you need to not carry.” He said
3 that we were a team. This whole thing about an FNG country, everybody doesn’t want to
4 get close, he said that doesn’t work with me.

5 SM: Well, you’ve got to keep that gun fed.

6 AG: Yes. I had to keep the gun set. That’s exactly what he told me. He said,
7 “You see the belt getting short you make sure you clip another damn belt on there.” He
8 said as an A-gunner, I’d have to carry I think 400 rounds is what he told me. Which
9 would be four belts. Like I said, he said, “Just carry a pistol. You don’t need a rifle
10 because you won’t be using it.” So, I said o.k. Shortly, after that I ‘d say a couple of days
11 afterward we got called back to An Hoa, where we were told we were going to go on a
12 combat operation up in the mountains. The company had just come out of the mountains
13 before I got there. They were not happy. They said the mountains were scary. There
14 were lots of enemy there they said. You couldn’t see ten feet in front of you anyway. I
15 got the whole story about be very careful up there because you never know what’s going
16 to happen. My gunner and I got together the night before we went up. He said, “This is a
17 combat operation, this is going to be your first one, just follow me. Do what I do, pay
18 attention to what I do. This is what you’ve got to look for. This is the way you’ve got to
19 comport yourself. Ration your food and your water as much as you can. Carry as much
20 ammo as you can. Carry as many frags as you can. We’ll get up there and we’ll do just
21 fine.” I have a picture of me sitting on the LZ the next day getting ready to go up on this
22 operation. The choppers landed, the 46s. I remember I had an upset stomach that
23 morning. I was very scared. He said, “There’s no doubt we’re going to go up there and
24 hit something. We’re going to find some enemy. It’s not going to be like we’ve been
25 doing for the past two weeks down here.” So, we got choppered up, Operation Durham
26 Teach. End of July to about the middle of August is how long the operation lasted.
27 Years later I found out that we were basically chasing a couple of divisions of NVA with
28 a battalion sized operation from our side of the Que Sanh mountains. There was a
29 blocking force to the south of us, by the Americal. I think another Marine unit. I know
30 the Americal was down there doing a blocking force. We were supposed to get up in the
31 mountains and basically chase the enemy down the other side of the mountain to the teeth

1 of the Americal. I should tell you the night before we went up there, they did an arc light
2 on top of these mountains that we we're going to go to. My gunner said as these bombs
3 are dropping, it was just an awesome sight, to see the whole sky lit up on the top of this
4 mountain. A few minutes later, a few seconds later the ground would start shaking, you
5 could hear the rumble. It was just a truly amazing sight. He said, "That's where we're
6 going tomorrow." I said. "Will there be anybody up there when we get up there?" He
7 said, "Probably." Anyway, we chopper up into the mountain right where the dropped
8 those big bombs from the 52s. Get out of the chopper; he trained me to be the last guy in
9 the helicopter. The 46s had that back ramp; he says, "We want to be the last two on the
10 chopper, because we want to be the first two off. If this thing gets hit," he said, "there's a
11 hot LZ we want to get the hell off this thing. Besides they need automatic weapons to get
12 off there quicker than the rest of the platoon so we can lay down a base of fire." So, that
13 made perfect sense to me. So, I did that my entire tour in Vietnam. Always the last one
14 on, the first one of. We fly up there, wasn't a hot LZ. They were actually able to land
15 these choppers up there on top of this mountain ridge. We got off eventually. We got the
16 whole company on this ridgeline. We started humping. We humped that day probably
17 for six or eight hours to our position on another mountain. I remember how the heat,
18 even in the mountains, it was hot as hell up there. I remember just trying to gain footing.
19 We were going straight up and straight down. It was double canopy jungle. Not triple.
20 It was just tough. It was hard as hell. It was hot. It was humid. There were lots of bugs.
21 There were a lot of little animals scurrying around. There was lots of noise. Lots of
22 jungle noise. Which my buddy said that's good, because if there's lots of noise, you
23 knew that the enemy wasn't around. When it's quiet you've go to watch out for yourself.
24 I remember going up the side of these mountain and they were vines rabbing onto your
25 gear, onto the gun, everything. You would fall, slip and fall back, knock people down. It
26 was just a miserable hump. My first killer hump in Vietnam, nothing like I went through
27 in training, nothing. Anyway, we get to the top of this other ridge. We got to our
28 objective for the day. We set up guns. We set up good field of fire, actually by the LZ.
29 We had a small LZ that probably wasn't wider than maybe 30 feet across. I remember
30 the choppers came in for resupply. The front wheels would hover; the back wheel would
31 touch down. They would drop the ramp and they would throw out C- rations and ammo

1 to us. The chopper skills were just amazing of these guys. A 300 or 400 foot cliff on
2 both sides of this little LZ we had up there. That's where I gun was set up. I remember
3 that. That was around the same time that man landed on the moon. Somebody had a
4 radio up there. I remember he said, "We just landed on the moon, the United States, just
5 landed on the moon." There was no celebration. Everybody said, "Well fuck so what?"
6 We wish they were here and we were there." That was July 20th I guess. July 20, 1969.
7 It was just one of these, nobody cared. I didn't even see the moon landing until ten years
8 after the war. After I got home from the war. That was just one of the weird things that
9 happens.

10 SM: Did that seem surreal to you?

11 AG: Yes. We used to call the United States, the World. That's exactly what it
12 seemed like to us. It seemed so far away and so out of our range of what was reality and
13 what wasn't. Very surreal. Like I said, nobody gave a shit. Nobody cared. The guy said
14 that and everybody just kind of grunted. So, what?!

15 SM: Did you get other news sources while you were in country?

16 AG: Occasionally we would get stars and stripes out in the bush. Other than that
17 unless guys got letters from home with news clippings, no. We got very few sources of
18 news where we knew stuff was going on around the world.

19 SM: When the 60 gunner, that you worked with, when he emptied your pack and
20 told you these are the things you need to carry with you, and most of it's probably going
21 to be ammunition and frags and stuff like that. How much would you estimate you were
22 carrying at that point?

23 AG: Pound wise. For years, I've thought about that, I would say not less than 60
24 pounds, probably closer to 80. We carried claymores. Everybody carried a claymore.
25 We carried to pop-up hand illuminations. At least, two of those. At least two pounds of
26 C4. I probably carried four to six frags. Four or five hundred rounds of machine gun
27 ammo. The mortar men needed people carried more, sometimes I carried an extra 60
28 millimeter mortar round. Of course, my pistol. I had on my helmet and my flak jacket.
29 I'm trying to thin of what else. Anything that they needed help carrying, I helped carried.
30 I know that the hundred rounds of machine gun ammo was seven pounds each. If I
31 carried five of those, there's 35 pounds right there. Illumination, sometime smoke

1 grenades. Sometimes willy peter or thermal grenades. Depending, I'd say close to 70, 60
2 or 70 at the minimum.

3 SM: And your water?

4 AG: Water? Yeah. Six canteens of water. We were weighted down pretty
5 much. It was interesting the way they showed me how to our backpack we could take
6 off. Anytime we hit any kind of fire, we would drop our backpacks and leave them,
7 wherever the hell we were and then make our maneuver toward wherever we were going.
8 Most of our equipment, most of our ammo was underneath our pack. The flap jacket
9 weighed a ton. Those flap jackets we had; I thought they were worthless until I saw a
10 guy get his life saved because it stopped shrapnel. They would get wet and they'd be so
11 damn heavy. They were heavy dry, but they were really heavy when they got wet. I
12 remember being in the jungle, out in the bush if you get a scratch on your hand or on your
13 arm or face and how it would fester because there was no way you could clean it. We
14 called those gook sores. To this day, I still have scars on my arms and my legs and I
15 think my back, too. There was no way. Corpsmen would clean it quickly. They'd say
16 pour water on it, but we hated to use water for something like that. Water was a
17 commodity. One of the things, you didn't give it away.

18 SM: Right, You drank it.

19 AG: That's right. You used it to drink; you didn't use it to brush your teeth. You
20 didn't use it to wash anything. It was to drink. I learned that quickly too, from my
21 gunner. That water is yours you save it for you. Anyway, back to Durham peak, this is
22 where I got into my first firefight. We were running patrols, stayed in this one position
23 for several days. I remember we were running patrols from our little ridgeline to a
24 ridgeline that was higher than us. It was a pretty good trail that had been well used where
25 we had our position. We found some spider holes and some tunnels up there also. We
26 knew that the enemy was close. We knew that they were close by. One day we were on
27 a patrol. I should probably tell you my lieutenant's name was Lieutenant Williams. The
28 only platoon commander's name I remember from Vietnam because he was so good.
29 Lieutenant Williams. He's now a Federal Judge in North Carolina. I just contacted him
30 about three year ago. We were on patrol one day going up to this mountain, actually with
31 the mountain ridge that kind of overlooked all the other mountains. Highest point from

1 where we were at. We were on patrol one day, we stopped. The Lieutenant told us to
2 stop and we were going to take a break and we saw one of our platoon members, a Native
3 American guy from Arizona saw a line of Vietnamese about 200 meters from us going up
4 this denuded hill. It was just flat and there was nothing growing. There was 15 or 20 of
5 them humping up the side of this mountain. We all got in line, Lieutenant had us all get
6 on line and we opened fire. We actually ambushed these guys. It was pretty amazing.
7 We fired everything. We fired logs at them, bloopers, machine gun fire and M-16 and
8 M-14 fire. Everybody was firing on line. Probably 20 of us, 25 of us. After that was
9 done we called in an air strike. They came and dropped napalm and 250 pound bombs.
10 Of course, after that was all over we had to go check out the area. My machine gunner,
11 we did not carry a tripod in Vietnam. I don't know if I told you this. A tripod was built
12 onto the gun. He actually showed me how to use the gun with a bipod. I never shot the
13 machine with a bipod when I was being trained. He also showed me how to do it with a
14 strap. Basically off hand what he called floating the gun. That happened later that day.
15 He told me watch what I do. This is how you have to change your aiming. You have to
16 change they way you lay on the deck. This how you shoot the gun laying flat on your
17 belly with the bipod out there. Basically taught me that day how to do that. I remember
18 feeding ammo into the gun and picking out targets for him. I'd say 20 meters to the left
19 and he'd go right over there. He was a great gunner. A great gunner. I remember
20 picking targets out. The enemy was running around on the hill. They had no idea where
21 the fire was coming from. You could see them getting hit. You could see them actually
22 getting blown apart. We had an RPG, not an RPG a lawman who actually took this guy.
23 You could actually see him fall apart, arms and legs going different directions. We got
24 no return fire. These guys had no clue what was going on. After all this was over we
25 called the air strike in. We had to go check out the area. I remember the first thing was
26 the smell of the napalm and the smell of the burnt flesh. That always stuck in my mind.
27 We found, I want to say three bodies and they were shot to hell. I mean there were big
28 gaps, big holes in them. One guy had no face. His face was missing. We found no
29 weapons, but backpacks with rice, some medical supplies. Lots of blood trails. Lots of
30 blood trails everywhere. We knew that they were going to a place that we were going to
31 have to go to. The next day, we actually came back from our patrol that day. I think we

1 found some documents too on a couple of these guys and the Lieutenant had them. Came
2 back to our position gave all the stuff to the skipper of the company. There were some
3 intelligence guys there that radioed back what we had found. The next day the skipper
4 decided to send two platoon patrols down the same trail, up the same ridge. This was
5 probably mid-morning. The first one by the way, was just one platoon. This is a two-
6 platoon patrol. They sent us over. We were the lead platoon. I remember walking
7 through the area where we had ambushed these guys and you could still smell. You
8 could still smell things there. We started getting sniper fire. The first time I'd ever had
9 rounds going over my head that weren't being in rifle range. Very distinct sound. I
10 remember everybody of course jumps off the side of the trail facing outward. They call
11 guns up. My gunner gets up, I'm right behind him. We run right to the front of the
12 column. I'm feeding belts into the gun. He's doing it off hand, the floating of the gun,
13 with the sling over his shoulder. We're just chewing up the jungle in front of us. I
14 thought it was great. I thought it was just fascinating and just fun as hell. I realized I was
15 paying to much attention to what was going on in front of me instead of paying attention
16 to the rounds I was feeding into the machine gun. I did not clip a belt on as the belt got
17 smaller. We ran out. He smacked me. Screamed at me as he opened up the breach of
18 the gun said, "Goddamn it I told you." As I pulled another belt off my shoulder, which I
19 should have done anyway, I realized that we were being shot at. I remember rounds
20 hitting around us. I remember hearing rounds go by my head. I remember him
21 screaming at me. It was that moment that I realized that somebody was trying to kill me.
22 I realized that this was real. This was not training. This was the real thing. I remember I
23 pissed my pants that day. Anyway, I got the belt into the gun. They were still shooting at
24 us. To this day I have no idea why they didn't hit us. I remember seeing rounds hit all
25 around us and going by us and whizzing right by my ear. We got up and moved forward
26 and they disappeared. The enemy disappeared. The gunner was pissed off at me, as he
27 should be. "You know you don't be paying attention to what's going on there. You're
28 job is to make sure this gun does not quit." I remember firing my .45 after I put that
29 second belt in there. He said, "You did the right thing with the bushes there, you did the
30 right thing." As I was feeding the gun, I was firing my .45 pistol into the brush around us.
31 That scared me. I knew then that I was going to have to change my thought pattern if I

1 was going to get through the war. I had to concentrate on what I was doing. He kind of
2 congratulated me, said I did a great job. “When we moved, you moved right with me. I
3 appreciate that. Just make sure you concentrate on your job with the gun. That’s all you
4 have to do. Don’t worry about anything else.” I learned another lesson that day. Thank
5 God that wasn’t a fatal one for anybody in the platoon. I remember shaking like hell. In
6 fact, I did that after every firefight. I remember getting sick and throwing up. I knew
7 that it was real. I knew that people were going to die even though nobody died that day.
8 Went back to the position that night. The next day I don’t know whether it was two
9 platoons or the whole company went on the patrol. We knew that something was going
10 to happen so we went back up that hill again. We were the lead platoon again. We
11 topped this ridge and everything exploded. Everything blew up. I remember being
12 knocked down, knocked out. Knocked into a bomb crater. There was automatic
13 weapons fire, RPGs. I even think they were dropping mortars in on us. We were
14 ambushed badly. The second platoon, which was behind us, were in the middle of the
15 kill zone. I remember waking up, my head was ringing, I couldn’t hear. All I remember
16 is the light, bright lights. Lots of dust, lots of smoke. Being scared shitless. My gunner,
17 I had no idea where he was. He got knocked off the trail also. I remember just being
18 scared. I remember hearing screaming. When my hearing started coming back hearing
19 screaming and I had no idea what to do. I didn’t know what to do. When I looked down
20 the hill, I saw this Marine, big black guy, machine gunner from the second platoon
21 running up the hill with a gun. With a machine gun. Firing on both sides of the trail.
22 That’s when I saw guys in pith helmets. They were shooting at him. He got up there,
23 killed I want to say six or seven North Vietnamese and he got shot and killed twenty
24 yards in front of me. He basically broke the ambush up single-handedly this guy. His
25 name was Hayes. Larry Hayes. I live today because of him. I’m sure they would have
26 killed all of us.

27 SM: Want to take a minute?

28 AG: Yeah, yeah.

29 SM: What happened after that particular incident. After Hayes got killed we
30 swept the area and the enemy, of course, had disappeared like they usually do. The thing
31 that sticks out in my mind is that I lost something that day. I was so damn pissed off. I

1 was so angry about his death and I wasn't able to do anything about it. I still feel bad
2 about it. I still feel kind of guilty because I didn't do anything. I was so scared that I had
3 no clue what was going on. I remember we had several K.I.A.s and several W.I.A.s. I
4 remember putting W.I.A.s. I remember the choppers came in--we blew an LZ at the top
5 of this mountain to get everybody out that had been hit--about how bloody the LZ was. It
6 was just drenched in blood. I lost my humanity or something that day. I don't know
7 what happened. I got numbed. I numbed my feelings. My anger and fear from that day
8 on is what carried me through Vietnam. That's how I survived it. We weren't ever able
9 to mourn the deaths that I saw there. That was one of the things that bothered me for a
10 long, long time. Somebody would get killed. Put them in a body bag and then you'd
11 forget about it because you had to go do the next thing you had to do. So, I guess I lost
12 my innocence that day or something. Something that's always stuck in my mind. That
13 was a big change in my life that day. For the next few days we chased this NVA.
14 Whoever the hell was even up there.

15 SM: This will end the interview with Mr. Tony Goodrich on the 19th of April.
16 This is Steve Maxner continuing the interview with Mr. Tony Goodrich on the 22nd of
17 April 2002 at approximately 2:40 Lubbock time. I'm in Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Goodrich
18 is in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is a continuation of the interview for the Vietnam
19 Archive oral history project. Sir, why don't we go ahead and pick up with the discussion
20 of your perceptions, your experiences after Durham Peak, and if you would just explain
21 how that impacted you.

22 AG: Well, we left off where I had experienced my first dead Marines around me,
23 and also dead enemy and that kind of changed the way I thought about the war. Well first
24 of all I knew it was serious, I knew that I might get killed there, and I knew that I had to
25 do things that maybe I wouldn't, I thought I would ever be able to do to survive in
26 Vietnam. So I made a decision that after that first fire fight and that first ambush that I
27 survived to so whatever was necessary to get through the war, so I basically cut my
28 emotions off and anger and fear drove me through the rest of my tour in Vietnam. I
29 consider myself pretty lucky, I didn't get wounded in my tour there. I spent three
30 hundred and sixty days, I think in Vietnam. The tour then was supposed to be thirteen
31 months, but when I got there the Marine Corps cut it back to twelve months, and I was

1 looking through my records the other day and realized they had shaved a month off of our
2 tour of duty. The company, I've done a little research on my company over the years,
3 and out of my whole company, there was about 70% casualties when I was in Vietnam,
4 that's either wounded or killed, KIAs weren't that bad after the first three months I was
5 there. It was mostly wounded from incoming or from booby traps, and booby traps were
6 the big killer of the Marines that I served with.

7 SM: Was there any kind of memorial service for the killed Marines?

8 AG: Yes, we'd come in out of the bush, and they would have memorial services
9 where they'd turn the rifle upside down with the bayonet stick in the ground, and put a
10 helmet on it. Those are kind of, I don't know, I guess at the time, they didn't really mean
11 anything, because it was usually weeks, if not months after these men had been killed and
12 taken away in body bags. So they would just, it was something that we all had to do but it
13 was very uncomfortable for me, in the respect that it wasn't really a way to mourn these
14 me, but it was a way for the Marine Corps, I guess to mourn them. But I found it to be
15 kind of ghoulish, I know that sounds weird but I found it to be kind of ghoulish and kind
16 of silly and I know most of the Marines me also felt the same way. And it was many
17 years after the war that I was able to go to the Wall; there I was able to mourn these men.
18 Yes, they had the ceremonies, every time they came out of the bush, where it was killed
19 they would have a little ceremony, read his name and rank and if he had been awarded
20 any ribbons or medals.

21 SM: Was there a chaplain present?

22 AG: You know, I'm trying to think. I didn't pay attention too much. Yes I think
23 there was a chaplain present, and this would happen usually at our regimental rear, which
24 was An Hoa combat base.

25 SM: And would they offer any kind of counseling or anything like that?

26 AG: No, we were never offered anything like that.

27 SM: Now, was there a perception amongst the Marines that attended the
28 memorial services that it was kind of, I guess, pro forma, this was the Marine Corps
29 going through the motions of something they were required to do?

30 AG: Yes, that's actually an excellent observation. That's exactly what it was.
31 We, like I told you earlier that my emotions were cut off because I couldn't dwell too

1 much on the deaths at the time because we had jobs to do. We had other missions to go
2 on, and if men did that it would really destroy their combat effectiveness for one thing.
3 And I'd say that's a good observation, it was a way for the Marine Corps I think, to think
4 they were doing something for us, and at the time it didn't mean anything. There's an old
5 Vietnam saying, 'don't mean nothing,' and that's basically what we said to each other
6 when we were watching these rituals that would occur.

7 SM: Just out of curiosity, do you think there was a way that the Marine Corps
8 could have done it better, that would have, perhaps had more meaning for the men that
9 survived?

10 AG: You know, I thought about that question for years Steve, and I don't know, I
11 really don't. I can't think of anything they could have done because, like I said, we had
12 to continue with our missions and we couldn't dwell too much on KIAs.

13 SM: How about your leaders, out in the field after someone was killed like that,
14 was there anything offered as far as, I mean, I realize that they can't sit there and counsel
15 people, but in terms of any kind of quick memorial, mini-memorial, any kind of?

16 AG: No, I think that the best thing that we did, was as quick as we could get a
17 medevac in and get these guys out of there, especially the KIAs. Sometimes we had to
18 spend nights with the bodies and that was just a little bit too eerie for me, it was just no,
19 and our leaders, they just told us basically to forget it. We have to do something
20 tomorrow, we've got to do something next week so we've got to get, keep your
21 concentration on what you need to do to get the job done, and I think that was probably
22 the best advice at that time.

23 SM: Did you ever get a chance to talk with the other Marines about these things,
24 like when you were back in garrison?

25 AG: Yes, actually we did. We talked a little bit about it, talked about how good
26 the people were. Most of the time it was some goofy black humor thing. It was just, we
27 talked about how good the people were, we never talked about ourselves, it's funny, we
28 never talked about are we going to be the next one to get it. It was, I hate to say this, I've
29 heard this clichés, but it's true, I used to think, it's better them than me, no matter who it
30 was. We knew that these men that had died, died so we could stay alive, and that was a
31 big burden, and it's a big burden even to this day, for me to realize that these men

1 sacrificed themselves for me and that's really, really, what is was all about over there.
2 That you had to trust the Marines around me, the ones that kept me alive, and the ones
3 that died were the ones who kept us all alive.

4 SM: In talking to other Marines, did you find that they were using the same
5 coping mechanisms that you were?

6 AG: Yes, we sure did. We tried to laugh about the person that was killed. there
7 was a strange ritual when somebody would get killed. We would go through his gear, and
8 see what he had that we could take. I got an M-14 off a dead Marine and I wanted that
9 M-14 and I just took it off the dead body. I figured, hey he can't use it any more. Well,
10 we go through his backpack, if he had any C- rations, if he had any extra ammo, anything
11 that we would need, we would take it our of his pack and put it in our own pack, and
12 maybe that was our way of honoring them. I know that sounds strange, but I think that
13 they understood that they would do the same thing if something happened to us, and I
14 think we all coped that way. We tried to forget about, I guess forget about them, even
15 though we never did, it was just a matter of forgetting and getting on with business.

16 SM: What did you guys do after Durham Peak?

17 AG: We came back to An Hoa, they choppered us out after we went down the
18 mountain – there's a couple of things happened on Durham Peak I need to tell you about.
19 We had a point man by the name of Garcia, a guy from Houston, Texas. His name was
20 Chico, probably one of the best point men I've ever seen. He broke up two ambushes on
21 Durham Peak, right after Hayes was killed, he broke up two L-shaped ambushes waiting
22 for our platoon. He was the point man and killed these two Vietnamese. After the
23 second ambush, we were ordered to go down the hill to see if we could find the enemy
24 that had run away and they started sniping at us, so we were afraid there was going to be
25 another ambush and I remember our Lieutenant, Lieutenant Williams called an air strike
26 within fifty meters of us. We got into this big bomb crater, I guess there were, I want to
27 say there were twelve or fifteen, maybe more, a little more than that, but we got into a big
28 bomb crater, he called in F-4 air strikes, and they dropped napalm and big bombs, I'm not
29 sure, 250's, that literally bounced us around in the inside of this crater, but they actually,
30 if there was anybody down waiting for us, they took them out. So we felt good about that.
31 Lieutenant Williams was an amazing platoon commander. He's the only platoon

1 commander whose name I remember. He was just a good man, he cared about his troops.
2 He would go the extra mile for us, to try to get us what we needed to survive out in the
3 bush and he could read a map as good as any body I've ever seen and in the mountains
4 that was very important because reading the map of a mountain is tough, but to be able to
5 call in an air strike like he did that day was just truly a miracle. He did something that he
6 probably should have gotten a medal for. Also, on that same operation we found a huge
7 enemy hospital as we went down the mountain, chasing the division or regiment of
8 Vietnamese who were in front of us down to the blocking force at the bottom of the
9 mountain. It was big, well stocked, fairly well made hospital complex we found that had
10 left their patients there, the ones that didn't have legs, there was a couple of guys there,
11 had their legs surgically removed, this guy with an arm gone. Some of them had diseases
12 and we had to carry them down the hill. But Durham Peak, that was about a three week
13 operation, and I got to the bottom of that hill after the end of that operation, just thinking
14 that I still had eleven months to do. It was the first time somebody gave me a calendar I
15 started marking days off on the calendar. After Durham Peak we came back to An Hoa,
16 our rear area, and we went to a place called Arizona territory. It was a strip of land north
17 of An Hoa where there was an operation Arizona in the early part of the war, I think '66.
18 And it was basically an area where we did just search and destroy missions and patrols, in
19 an area where there used to be rice paddies and used to be lots of hamlets, but there was
20 nothing there. It was a huge conduit for NVA coming down the Ho Chi Minh trail, they
21 used to come right across the Arizona. Out there it was mostly boredom, most of my tour
22 in Vietnam was being bored to death, being too hot, being too hungry, being too tired,
23 being too angry. Went out there this must have been in August and September, we took a
24 lot of incoming out there, there were lots of booby traps in the Arizona, lots of them, and
25 we got overrun one night, in the rain, and I hate rain. That's why I love living here in the
26 southwest, but we got overrun badly in the rain. We were set on these three hills, each
27 platoon had a hill. I'm assuming we were on the north part of the Arizona. There was
28 other units operating in the southern part, and we were at some kind of blocking force.
29 The monsoons had just started, this must have been September of '69. We were on these
30 hills for three days and then the skipper, our company commander, decided to have us
31 rotate on the hill, the 1st platoon moved over where 2nd platoon was, and 2nd to where 3rd

1 was, and that night it was pouring rain. I remember we had RPGs shot at us, mortar
2 rounds were shot and AKs, they snuck up close enough to the lines, they were throwing
3 Chi-com grenades at us and shooting at us. And my gun team, they fired at us, a couple
4 of RPGs at us that didn't go off, we found RPGs right next to our hole that were
5 unexploded. First time I ever used a claymore to take out a, there was a sniper right in
6 front of our hole, fifty meters, we could see the muzzle flash from his AK, and we took
7 him out with a claymore, which is an amazing weapon. Next morning the hill where the
8 CP was, which we were at the night before, had taken a lot of casualties. I have no idea
9 how many men were killed and wounded that day, but it was the same hill that we were
10 on the day before, the gun teams that had taken our hole were either all killed or
11 wounded, so it was another, being in the right place at the right time. Most of the time
12 out in the Arizona I was just patrolling, sitting up on hills watching for booby traps,
13 watching for incoming and basically looking for the enemy.

14 SM: Now, when you were overrun, was there anybody captured?

15 AG: No, there were several bodies that we found the sappers that came through
16 the lines and lots of Chi-com grenades that didn't go off, and actually a couple of mortar
17 rounds and a couple of RPG rounds that didn't go off. But no Americans were captured.

18 SM: Did you capture any Vietnamese alive?

19 AG: No, none alive, no.

20 SM: About how many dead were there?

21 AG: I'm trying to think. I think we killed six or seven that night. I think that's
22 how many bodies we ended up putting on the choppers to take away.

23 SM: Speaking of the casualties, the enemy casualties, back at Durham Peak you
24 mentioned the hospital where you had to pull the patients out, how many patients were
25 left behind?

26 AG: I'd say a dozen, ten or twelve.

27 SM: Yourself, did you get a view of the hospital?

28 AG: Yes, I did.

29 SM: About how many patients could it have accommodated?

30 AG: I'd say at least 50. They had bamboo beds. They had canopies over the
31 beds. There was basically a cave complex in a valley that had water going down right in

1 the middle. There was a stream, operating tables, IV's. One of the things we found was a
2 box of clothes from the University of California at Berkley. We found T-shirts at UC
3 Berkley that were sent from friends of the Vietnamese people or something. Anyway, the
4 hospital was very sophisticated. I'd never seen anything like it before or during my tour.
5 There were a lot of bloody bandages around, but it was just truly an amazing piece of
6 work, and they had bamboo beds, I'd say fifty patients they could work on. We found a
7 bunch of rice, a whole bunch of medical supplies, a lot of captured medical supplies. U.S.
8 stuff, morphine, we found morphine syringes, we found IVs, we found, actually, what the
9 Army and the Marines called B1 units, which is actually units the Corpsmen carry, we
10 found several of those there, that I'm assuming they either captured from the South
11 Vietnamese or from us, but it was just.

12 SM: Or bought on the black market.

13 AG: Black market too, yes. But it was just truly a piece of work. I was stunned
14 by the sophistication, stunned by just the, it was well hidden because of the canopy. I
15 mean you couldn't see anything from above, and I know after we left they called an Arc
16 Light, they came in and blew it all away with the 52s.

17 SM: Now, you mentioned for instance, getting back to Durham Peak for a
18 moment, that your Lieutenant had to call in an air strike about fifty meters from your
19 positions, after that air strike was finished, did you guys have to go through and patrol
20 that area and confirm?

21 AG: Yes, actually we did. We got up and went through the area to confirm there
22 was no enemy and no bodies, no parts any of that kind of stuff.

23 SM: Did you find anything?

24 AG: No, we didn't find anything, didn't find a blood trail or anything like that.

25 SM: And the only personnel you found in the hospital were injured soldiers, sick
26 soldiers?

27 AG: Yes.

28 SM: And they were just taken back to the rear for processing by intelligence,
29 military intelligence and stuff?

30 AG: Right, actually we were on a squad sized, reinforced squad patrol one day as
31 we were going down the mountain. Our point man heard noise. You could hear a radio

1 being played, it was Vietnamese music, you could smell, they were cooking rice. We
2 were on a small ridgeline overlooking this little base camp they had before the hospital
3 and I remember, hell, there couldn't be more than eight or ten of us, I remember the
4 Lieutenant was going to get us all on line, and we were going to assault through this
5 position, but our point man panicked and opened up, and everybody took off and we went
6 down. There's probably, we're figuring two platoons of North Vietnamese that left
7 everything there. We found rifle, AKs, backpacks, radios, I mean all kinds of
8 documentation, all kinds of good intelligence information. And they just took off, they
9 just took off down the mountain and we were assuming that they were, either some kind
10 of rear guard, but there were too many of them, in my opinion there were too many just to
11 be a rear guard. I mean our interpreter said he was thinking maybe it was a combination
12 of a hospital and R & R complex or something, because they had bathing pools and that
13 kind of stuff, but we didn't kill anybody that day. We could have had a bunch of kills
14 and our point man just kind of lost it and opened up and didn't hit anything.

15 SM: And you said you think there were about two platoons of people there?

16 AG: Not two platoons, but we probably took out about fifteen weapons, we took
17 out two mortars, I remember that day, two dozen backpacks, lots of rice, lots of Chi-com
18 grenades, cooking utensils. They had a big pot of rice, a huge pot of rice that was cooking
19 over a fire, maps, we found maps and we found lots of documents that made us think.
20 Well, our interpreter with the S-2 guy said there was at least, they said there were two
21 platoons there, which probably means between forty and fifty Vietnamese.

22 SM: Was that the largest capture of cached type weapons and things like that that
23 you had?

24 AG: Yes, it was, in fact we had to carry. We couldn't bring in choppers to extract
25 this stuff because it was just too thick so we had to carry half this crap down the
26 mountain. I mean, all the weapons were carried down the mountain. We destroyed the
27 rice there, the engineers came in with either c-4 or we pissed on it or something to
28 destroy the rice and the food. We carried all the weapons down the mountain. I carried
29 and SKS, and a pistol that I found and actually a hammock and some other stuff I ended
30 up throwing away before we got to the bottom of the mountain, it just got too damn
31 heavy. But I walked out of there with an SKS and a Chinese 9 mm pistol.

1 SM: Were these trophies or?

2 AG: Yes, actually you know what I did, I actually brought back, there's a helmet
3 and a belt I got that I brought back to the States with me. I sold my rifle to an Air Force
4 guy in Da Nang on the way home. He offered me \$300 and I figured what the hell, beer
5 money, the pistol I ended up giving to my platoon commander.

6 SM: Now is that the one you recently made contact with?

7 AG: Yes, Lieutenant Williams, he's a federal judge in North Carolina.

8 SM: Now, getting back to your time in the Arizona territory, you mentioned that
9 of course, a lot of patrolling, a lot of looking for booby traps and stuff like that, and you
10 mentioned being overrun that time, were there many snipers in the area?

11 AG: That's a good question, no, there weren't that many snipers there. There was
12 hardly, well there wasn't any civilians living out of the Arizona. I mean it was basically, I
13 don't want to use the term free-fire zone, but it was, anything out there that was moving
14 that wasn't an American you could shoot at, but no snipers that I remember at all, except
15 for, like I said, mortars. They were very accurate with their mortars and with their rocket
16 fire, very accurate.

17 SM: How often would they hit you with mortar and rocket fire?

18 AG: Well, it depended. If they did it usually was at sundown or sunrise, and
19 sometimes it would happen for two or three days in a row, and then it wouldn't happen
20 for a week. It also varied in the intensity, sometimes they'd only throw in two or three
21 and other times they'd mortar you for fifteen or twenty minutes, throw in a hundred
22 rounds. And of course we were always trying to figure out where they were coming from,
23 and we were pretty good at spotting, especially at night, when mortars come in at night
24 you can see the tube, usually.

25 SM: There's a flash.

26 AG: Yes, the flash and the sound. The flash of course is nice to see because you
27 always see that before you hear the sound. And as far as I'm concerned, mortars were
28 probably the most terrifying thing that I went through because you couldn't hear them
29 until they were on top of you. I remember one day we had just set up in a position for the
30 night, and you can hear the tubes working out. You could hear bloop, bloop, bloop, and
31 you could actually see the mortars coming in, I mean you could see them leave the tube

1 about five hundred meters away from us. There was a tree line, and directly in front of
2 my position, you could see the mortars arch up and come right down on us, and we were
3 digging our fighting holes, and it was very tough digging that day because it was mostly
4 shale, and that hole was about six feet deep in about five seconds. When you're under fire
5 that way, you can get very creative and try to get below the tree line. Mortars were no
6 fun; RPGs were probably my second frighteningest weapon shot at you, sound like a
7 freight train.

8 SM: When you were getting hit by those mortars that you could actually see, you
9 can see the men then as well, the enemy?

10 AG: No, actually we could see the muzzle in the tree line, yes, and we didn't
11 have, I remember our rocket men getting out there with laws. Now a law had about a
12 three hundred meter, but these guys were actually vertical with the laws, and these guys
13 are truly amazing. We were firing back at them with laws, and these guys were just
14 Kentucky winded, I was truly amazed at these mortar guys. I mean our rocket guys,
15 rockets and mortars I guess were the same MOS, but they were putting law rounds right
16 on target, and then that night we called in an air strike and took out that tree line
17 basically.

18 SM: Now, but you didn't have a sniper for instance that could come and take
19 some good, well-aimed shots at these guys?

20 AG: Well, actually the snipers I saw were usually with battalion, and I saw very
21 few snipers there, not with our unit. The special people we had with our unit, actually,
22 when we were up in Durham Peak we had some dog handlers come up with us, we loved
23 them. The dog handlers were great, the dogs were great, in fact we always wanted the
24 handler to sleep in our position with us so the dog could be on watch, but those dogs and
25 the dog handlers were very brave, brave men and the dogs were truly amazing. As far as
26 we were concerned they were one of us.

27 SM: Now, what were the dogs best at doing?

28 AG: Well, walking point. Usually they would walk point, and they were really
29 good sniffing out ambushes or sniffing out the enemy and the dog would react a certain
30 way and the handler would usually be able to tell us what was coming up. The dogs were
31 truly uncanny in that respect.

1 SM: How about in detecting trip wires and mines?

2 AG: You know, I don't remember the dog doing that, but I'm sure he did if he
3 was walking point. The only thing I remember is they were saying there was enemy in
4 front of us, the dog was good at doing that. In the nighttime, we knew the dog was
5 always on alert also, so we never got hit when the dog was on lines with us.

6 SM: You never got hit with rocket or mortar fire, or anything?

7 AG: Well, nothing, nothing, and I don't know whether that's because of the dog,
8 but I think the enemy, I know that the dogs were big targets. We found some documents
9 saying that they would pay rewards for dead dogs and dead handlers. But I liked the dogs,
10 I liked the handlers and there should have been more of them. And we usually only saw
11 them when we were in the mountains, not in the lowlands, the paddies.

12 SM: Now, any major contacts in the Arizona territory with large enemy units?

13 AG: Actually, no, during the daytime nothing. At nighttime, that one time we got
14 overrun we'd get mortared like I said, in the morning and afternoon, but no major
15 contacts, none.

16 SM: Did you guys do nighttime patrolling as well?

17 AG: Yes, nighttime patrolling and ambushes, lots of those.

18 SM: Were the ambushes ever tripped?

19 AG: Actually, two times I remember we ambushed some, we actually made a
20 night movement to get down to the river. I'm not sure which one it was, the Bui Diem,
21 the Tuy Bong or the two rivers that were around Arizona. We made a night movement,
22 got down to the river, saw a dozen boats crossing the river and we were about two clicks
23 away unfortunately. We could see them, but we couldn't shoot at them, so we called in
24 artillery on them and took out, we caused a lot of casualties that day. A lot of kills we got
25 that day, but none from our own guns, we had to call artillery on them. Another time we
26 had a thing called a nantose, which was a tracks vehicle that had six 106 recoilless rifles
27 mounted on it. We went down the river one night, and for once the intelligence was right
28 on the money. We took out twenty-five or thirty enemy crossing the river.

29 SM: Now how long did you stay there in the Arizona territory?

30 AG: I think the longest we stayed out was forty-five days.

31 SM: So you'd stay out for a certain length of time, come back to garrison?

1 AG: Yes, the minimum amount we'd stay out was like three weeks. We were
2 usually out between three weeks and I think the longest time I was out was sixty-two
3 days. We went out right before Christmas of '69, I think December 20th or 21st, we
4 stayed out all of January, all of February, came back in about the middle of March.

5 SM: Now, when you were out on these extended types of periods, especially in
6 the Arizona territory, how periodically would you get re-supplied? Was there ever any
7 kind of morale boosting activity?

8 AG: Well, re-supply was usually for ammo and food, and depending on where
9 we were at, we probably get re-supplied once a week. They'd come out, and of course
10 we ate C- rations, and they would bring water in five-gallon cans and we'd refill our
11 canteens. As far as morals boosters, I remember one of the most surrealistic things I ever
12 saw in Vietnam was at Christmastime, Christmas day. It was raining like hell, we were in
13 the Arizona, it was just muddy and rainy, just miserable and we had a chopper come in, a
14 -46 that was bringing, they told us it was bringing care packages from the States and it
15 was, it was a bunch of mail and care packages from the U.S. and I remember the chopper
16 landed, the back ramp dropped down and there was a guy dressed up like Santa Claus
17 that started throwing packages out. He had this big bell, and he walked out and he was
18 ringing the bell saying Ho, ho, ho, as he threw the bags out, and of course we laughed for
19 about two seconds and then we wanted to take him out. But I remember this chopper
20 just, after it unloaded all the bags, all the mail, all the care packages, the chopper took off
21 and circled our position, and this guy was leaning out the side window ringing this bell
22 and saying, "Ho, ho, ho," and it was just one of the strangest things I'd ever seen. That,
23 and they day we were on patrol during the Christmas season, and there was a bird dog,
24 which is an observation plane flying overhead that had a speaker and it was playing
25 Christmas carols, and we were on patrol in the Arizona, in the middle of nowhere, raining
26 like, well it wasn't raining that day, it was kind of overcast because he was still flying.
27 But he was playing Hark the Herald Angels, and Frosty the Snowman, it was just another
28 surrealistic thing. It was just very loud and we thought it was pretty stupid because we
29 thought he was spotting us from where we were at out in the bush, so.

30 SM: Was he flying like over you?

31 AG: Yes, he was flying directly over us.

1 SM: Like he knew where you were?

2 AG: Yes, absolutely and if I remember right, I think our lieutenant got on the
3 radio and says get the fucking plane away from us, but that was Christmas carols, and I
4 think they thought these were morale boosters. I look back on it now, it's funny, then we
5 weren't happy.

6 SM: So they didn't have the intended affect?

7 AG: No, they did not have the intended effect, but the packages when Santa
8 Claus left, the packages we got from home, that was a real pleasant surprise. We got
9 packages from people we didn't know in the United States, just said to any Marine,
10 here's, it was the weirdest stuff, they were sending us like shoelaces and deodorant I
11 remember, the package I had deodorant and shoelaces and Kool-Aid. Just stuff that we,
12 there was some stuff we were able to use, and I just wrote a nice long letter back to this
13 woman from somewhere in the Midwest, just thanking her profusely, saying I really do
14 appreciate this. You don't even know me, it was very, that was a good morale booster for
15 us, getting these nice packages from these people in the States who were at least thinking
16 of us.

17 SM: Now, that package that you received with deodorant, you guys wouldn't use
18 that would you?

19 AG: No, not at all.

20 SM: Why wouldn't you use deodorant?

21 AG: Well, because the enemy could smell it. In fact, I didn't realize until after I
22 had been there for awhile, the dirtier we were, the more we smelled like the enemy, the
23 better chance we had of doing our job right. It's just like, Steve, when we were out in the
24 bush, I got to the point where the smaller the unit was, as far as I was concerned, the safer
25 I felt. We used to have battalion-size movements on line through the Arizona with track
26 vehicles and you could hear us coming from miles and miles away, and I was nineteen
27 years old, lance corporal, I knew this was stupid. But I would volunteer to go out in squad
28 size ambush, the smaller the unit, the safer I felt, because if we could act like the enemy,
29 then we had a much better chance of surprising him and for being like him, being able to
30 move quickly, quietly, and concealed. You conceal yourself easier, the less people that
31 there are.

1 SM: Now, was one of the other attractions, as far as the smaller squad size
2 patrolling and things like that, you were more effective that way?

3 AG: Absolutely, in fact, I bet we captured more people because we surprised the
4 enemy more when we were doing small size patrols.

5 SM: On the large battalion size missions, did you ever make contact?

6 AG: Never, and you know what's weird is, we made contact at night when we
7 would set in, that's when we would get mortared, when we'd get RPG'd because there
8 were, I think the term was clusterfuck, there was too many of us out there. They knew
9 exactly where we were at. We'd stop at night and they would drop stuff in us all night.

10 SM: Did you ever encounter any friendly Vietnamese out there?

11 AG: You know, outside the Arizona, yes. One of the weird stories, I guess, from
12 my Vietnamese language is when I got to Vietnam, I wasn't able to converse very well,
13 because the people in the bush were uneducated basically, and they spoke a pigeon
14 Vietnamese, French and English, and it took me a while to get, to be able to converse
15 with these people. Eventually, I was able to be pretty good at it, but one of the first
16 patrols I went on, where we were told to go out to this one sector outside of An Hoa, and
17 go to this village, and if there were any males there, they said between the ages of fifteen
18 and, I think they said forty-five, that we were supposed to bringing them back to the CP
19 so the intelligence people could interrogate them. We were a good three clicks away
20 from our CP and we went to a vill, and I was, since I was the alleged Vietnamese
21 interpreter, I went up there and asked people how old they were. There was one man
22 who said he was forty-five, at least that's what I thought he said, so we brought this guy
23 all the way back to the CP took him to the Intelligence bunker, they guy comes running
24 out and starts screaming, "Who brought this man in?" Of course, I said I did. He said,
25 "This guy's seventy-five years old." So we had to take this man, I tell you, I had no clue,
26 because the, he didn't look like he was that old, so we had to take this guy back out to his
27 village and apologize. They gave him some money, they gave him some food, and then I
28 had to escort the guy back out, so that kind of blew my cover as far as being able to get
29 any jobs interpreting.

30 SM: Now, did you find any young men at all?

1 AG: Actually, no, not on that one, but on a couple of patrols we did, and these
2 men were always suspicious, because most of the villas we went into, in fact all of the villas
3 we went to, it was either very old women or very, very young kids. In other words, kids
4 that were ten or twelve or less and women that were in their fifties or sixties or older, or
5 old men. Usually there weren't that many old men either if I remember right, but any in-
6 between, you never saw middle-aged men or women that were between the ages of say,
7 fifteen and forty-five. They were either working for the enemy or they were dead.

8 SM: So when you were out in the Arizona territory you never encountered any
9 Vietnamese unless they were enemy, period.

10 AG: No, there was no Vietnamese out there, none. Even though on our maps,
11 there was probably I'd say, five or six dozen hamlets on the map that were marked there
12 was nothing out there.

13 SM: They had moved them, relocated the people.

14 AG: Right, they had relocated them and there, none of the rice paddies were
15 viable. It was basically a bombed-out, shelled, denuded area.

16 SM: Had they sprayed much defoliant in the area, or did they even need to?

17 AG: Around the rivers they did. There used to be at least fifty to one hundred
18 meters on both sides of the rivers, and I didn't know it was Agent Orange until I came
19 home. But it was a weird, I want to say like a gray dust, there was nothing growing, either
20 side of the river for about a hundred meters and we walked through it, it smelled funny, it
21 was just very strange. We had no clue that it was defoliant until several years after the
22 war for me.

23 SM: How about, you guys getting sprayed directly, any birds ever fly over you
24 spraying anything?

25 AG: No, never happened to me.

26 SM: How would you handle the insects?

27 AG: Well, we had bug juice, we had the lousy Army bug juice they gave us, but I
28 think that they liked, the mosquitoes were horrible, It was flies in the day and mosquitoes
29 at night, and it was just horrible. Living here in New Mexico, there's no such thing as
30 mosquitoes here but it was just, I can't describe to you how pesky they were. And they
31 were always present, it was either flies or mosquitoes, one or either and it was just a pain

1 in the ass, let's put it that way, and the mosquito repellent usually did not work and after
2 a while you just get used to it, I remember, just got used to it, they were just part of life.

3 SM: Did you guys ever encounter any snakes?

4 AG: Yes, lots of snakes, in fact, our point man killed a huge snake once.

5 SM: Any idea what kind it was?

6 AG: No, it was a big one, that's all I remember. I remember he killed it, he
7 dragged it by us. I want to say it was a Python or a Boa Constrictor or something, and
8 there were a lot of poisonous snakes. I know that the villagers would show us when we
9 were able to walk to the villages, they would have them hanging up. We never had
10 anybody get bit by a snake, but we had guys get bitten and evacuated, medevaced
11 because of spider bites. We had a guy get bitten in his arm up in the mountains, and it
12 swole up to about three times its normal size. We had to call a special medevac to get
13 this guy out of there. It was a spider, lots of insects.

14 SM: What happened to him?

15 AG: You know, he never came back to the unit, I have no idea. He was
16 delirious, he had a fever and the Corpsmen were very worried about him. I have no clue,
17 he never came back to the unit.

18 SM: Do you remember who he was?

19 AG: Somebody from one of the other platoons, second or third platoon.

20 SM: And how about wildlife, tigers that kind of stuff?

21 AG: Rock apes, there were apes there, rock apes we called them, way up in the
22 mountains, these apes would pick up rocks and throw them at you while you were
23 walking down the trail. They made lots of noise, they had these lizards that we used to
24 call the fuck you lizards, because at the sound they made, in the jungle, they'd say fuck
25 you, I mean that's basically what they sounded like. I didn't see any tigers or elephants
26 or anything like that, even though I heard stories from other Marines saying there were
27 tigers around, and I actually saw pictures years after the war too but most of the time they
28 avoided us. If there were any big wildlife, they avoided us, but rock apes were a pain.
29 They were definitely one of the, one of the pains in the ass up there in the mountains.
30 Like I said they used to throw rocks at us, I remember being asleep in the mountains, it
31 was so damn dark in the jungle, I was sleeping on my back one night, I remember I

1 thought I was being woken up for my watch, there was something on my chest, it was a
2 damn rock ape, scared the hell out of me. I screamed, we were pitch dark, I screamed, I
3 woke up the entire platoon, and of course everybody, I got harassed about that for weeks,
4 it was very scary.

5 SM: How big were these things?

6 AG: Oh, I don't know, probably three feet high, maybe between fifty and
7 seventy-five pounds.

8 SM: He was just sitting on your chest?

9 AG: Yes, sitting on my chest, scared the crap out of me. All I saw was his eyes
10 and I screamed and it took off.

11 SM: That is so bizarre.

12 AG: Yes, very bizarre.

13 SM: Now, did you ever encounter them out on patrol, the rock apes?

14 AG: Yes, actually it depended on where we were at. If we were up in real thick
15 triple canopy jungle, they would sit up in, probably the second canopy and throw stuff at
16 us. They'd throw rocks, they'd throw whatever the hell they had in their hands and that's
17 why they call them rock apes, and I always thought it was an old wives tale when I first
18 got there. Well, we got up there and this started happening, people said see, these are
19 North Vietnamese rock apes they used to say. It was silly.

20 SM: They brought them down south with them, to harass the American troops.

21 AG: Right.

22 SM: When you were in the Arizona territory and you were out for extended
23 periods, how would you guys bivouac, was it in the same location every night, or a
24 different place?

25 AG: Well, usually, usually we'd move every day. We would get up when the sun
26 came up, we'd saddle up and move to a new position. Occasionally we would stay in one
27 position for more than a day or two, but that was very dangerous because if you did that
28 they would start zeroing in on you with mortars or rockets, or usually it was every day
29 we'd move from one position to the next, then we'd go out on patrols for the rest of the
30 day, around the area and at nighttime we'd send out ambushes and LPs, listening posts.
31 But I would say eighty percent of the time, we were moving every day.

1 SM: Now, when you did encounter enemy units did you know, or could you tell
2 if you were encountering a Vietcong unit versus a North Vietnamese unit?

3 AG: The North Vietnamese that we encountered all had uniforms. They wore
4 pith helmets and they had uniforms, actually their haircuts, you could tell by their
5 haircuts, they had high and tights, they had good weapons, AKs and RPDs. the VC were
6 mostly, they were dirtier it seemed like to me, a dirtier, more unkempt, no uniforms, and
7 sometimes their weapons were very crude. They had British Infields and French Stins, a
8 couple of these guys that we killed, or captured. And I remember once we got a guy that
9 had a bar, B-A-R, that we captured this guy with a BAR he was from some village and he
10 was just wearing black, black pajamas. But the NVA were usually more, they looked
11 more professional, they had uniforms and they were a lot more hard core, when we tried
12 to interrogate them, much more hard core. The VC seemed to be very eager to talk to us
13 and give us information.

14 SM: And would you say you encountered more VC or more NVA?

15 AG: NVA, I'd say NVA most of the time.

16 SM: Did you ever encounter any women combatants?

17 AG: Yes, actually we captured two North Vietnamese nurses.

18 SM: How about women who were fighting versus there to treat?

19 AG: No.

20 SM: I didn't know if you ran into VC women, Viet Cong women.

21 AG: No.

22 SM: As your tour of duty continued to progress, did your attitude about the war
23 ever change or become changed because of events, in addition to what you already
24 explained, that is, the survival?

25 AG: Well, I think that my illusions about the romanticism of war kind of got
26 destroyed pretty quickly. My trust in the government kind of went away real quickly.
27 We didn't sit around and discuss the politics of the war. We just knew we were stuck,
28 and we knew, when I was there in '69 and '70 we knew that we weren't there to win, we
29 used to sit there and say, "What the fuck are we doing, if we're not there to win?" We
30 weren't taking ground, and if we did we'd give it right back to the enemy. It was
31 basically a war of survival, not of anything else but just trying to stay alive, and it was

1 frustrating in that sense, I think because we knew that we, nobody wanted to be the last
2 person killed there. And it was just a matter of watching our for your buddy and trying to
3 stay alive so you could get your tour over with and get the hell out of there, but hardly
4 any, in fact I can't think of any political discussions about why we were there.

5 SM: But you did discuss the issue that it just didn't seem like America was there
6 to win the war?

7 AG: Right, we said, that's exactly it. "We're here as fodder basically, so the
8 politicians in Paris can do their flapping of their mouths in Paris at the peace talks while
9 we sit here and get killed." Nothing was being accomplished, I mean we weren't like I
10 said, the war was over, it was coming to an end we just didn't understand why we all
11 weren't pulled out at once.

12 SM: Had you heard about the Vietnamization program?

13 AG: Just a little bit that I read about in the Stars and Stripes, from what Nixon
14 was saying. People have asked me, we did not work out with the Vietnamese that much,
15 did not work out with them at all, the only units that I actually worked with were the
16 Korean Marines, and some, I'm not even sure what you call it, Regional . . .

17 SM: Regional Force, Popular Force?

18 AG: Yes.

19 SM: The rough puffs?

20 AG: Rough puffs, right. The rough puffs and the PFS, like village militia and
21 they were pretty good, they were eager to learn and they were pretty good at what we
22 were trying to show them how to do things. I liked the Korean Marines, because they,
23 nobody would mess with us when the Korean Marines were around us. They were
24 probably the most ruthless people I've ever met. They did not take any prisoners, they did
25 not, even in their own ranks there were, they used discipline a lot in their own troops,
26 they were a frightening group to be around, you wanted to have them on your side, not be
27 your enemy. But they would not take any prisoners, they were ruthless and I liked them
28 because they were.

29 SM: Now, when you say they wouldn't take prisoners, you're talking about
30 combatant prisoners?

1 AG: Yes, we would capture people, send them to the Koreans, they would
2 basically interrogate them, then kill them. I saw that happen at least three times that I
3 remember. They would interrogate them and then shoot them in the head.

4 SM: And what did you guys think about that as a tactic of interrogation?

5 AG: Well, to be perfectly honest with you, we laughed. They were getting
6 information. I never thought twice about it, Steve, never thought twice.

7 SM: What else would you say about the Koreans that you worked with, they're
8 ruthless?

9 AG: Well, they were well disciplined They loved what they were doing, they all
10 knew some kind of marital arts stuff. The officers and they NCOs were very strict on
11 their men, I didn't see them kill anybody, I heard stories about that, but they, it seemed
12 like they could go forever. We'd get tired, those guys would be going, I don't know if
13 they were doing drugs or anything, but they were just, they didn't eat much, they didn't
14 much water. Thier reason for being there was to kill the Vietnamese and I don't think
15 they cared who they were killing. It was just a frightening thing to see these guys doing
16 their job, like I said, I'm glad that they were on our side, not the other side.

17 SM: Back to the Rough Puffs, when did you have an opportunity to train with
18 them?

19 AG: Well, not really training with them, but just going into vills and seeing them
20 there. The Marines had a thing called CAP units and CUP, but we went to a couple of
21 vills where they were being trained by these Marine squads, and they seemed to be very
22 trainable and they seemed to be very enthusiastic, very friendly, and from talking to my
23 Marine CAP friends there, they said that these people were just magnificent in doing
24 what they had to do to keep the VC out and keep the Americans happy. In my own
25 opinion, I think that we should have gone that way in the first place, these small Marine
26 squads going into these villages to win the hearts and minds of the people. It would have
27 taken longer of course, but I think that would have been the way to go, I really do. I just
28 talked to too many Marine CUP and CAP guys saying it was working. It was just taking
29 time, it just worked because these people got to know who we were, we were giving them
30 medicine, we were giving them food, we were giving them training, and I think that
31 would be the way we should have gone from the beginning.

1 SM: When did you have the opportunity to go to the villages and see that, do you
2 remember? When during your tour?

3 AG: Well, you know something, there was a couple of times, I'm trying to think,
4 they had elections there. I remember we had to go out and do some kind of voter security,
5 where they would come up, we'd check their ID cards, and you know what, Steve I
6 don't remember where the hell that was at. It was around Liberty Bridge somewhere I
7 think, and we went to some vill there where we actually, voter security, we actually made
8 sure that nobody could sneak up and throw frags into the voting booth. Well also, we
9 checked ID cards and did that kind of stuff. I also remember another time, around that
10 same time period where we had to go do a, we had to move people from a village to a
11 safe area. I remember going into this village, this was something that really sticks out in
12 my mind. We had to round up all the people in the village, we had to kill all their
13 animals, we had to set all their hooches on fire, burn them down and then we put them on
14 choppers to send them to a relocation camp, I think is what they called them, but I'll
15 never forget the looks on these people's faces. We were shooting, the water buffalo,
16 shooting the chickens or pigs, and these kids were begging us not to do this, and that just,
17 that's always stuck in my mind, as this is not the way to win these people's hearts and
18 minds, destroyed all their crops, burnt down all their houses and put them on choppers
19 and say we're going to keep you safe back in some other place. I just never understood
20 that. I had to go around with my M-14 and kill all the water buffalo, and that was tough,
21 it was tough for me to do. I thought about, if this was happening to me, and people came
22 into my town and said okay, we're going to take all you guys, we're going to move you
23 from Albuquerque to Santa Fe, we're going to destroy your neighborhood, and I'd been
24 there for generations after generations, I just knew that was not right, we weren't doing
25 the right thing there. I have no idea why that order came down, even the Lieutenant our
26 platoon commander was baffled, we did not understand why we were doing this, it was
27 just crazy.

28 SM: Do you remember about when that happened?

29 AG: I want to say sometime in the spring, Spring of '70 because it wasn't, I
30 remember it started to get hot again, and it hadn't been rainy in a while, must have been
31 Spring of '70.

1 SM: And about where that was?

2 AG: March or April, or around, somewhere around Liberty Bridge or near Go
3 Noi Ion, in that area.

4 SM: Now, when that kind of stuff would happen, again, just out of curiosity, the
5 overall tenor, conversation, that you and the other Marines would have, did you talk
6 about these types of issues?

7 AG: Yes, we were questioning why are we doing this? We even asked the
8 Lieutenant, "Lieutenant why are we doing this?" He would say, "Don't ask me. These are
9 orders from battalion or from regimental. We're here to save these people," and of course
10 that was tongue in cheek, we were kind of giggling as we're saying, we're going to save
11 these people by sending them to someplace where they have no idea, taking away from
12 their ancestral land. It was just, we all questioned what we were doing, including the
13 Lieutenant. I remember it was a platoon size thing, it was just, shaking our heads the
14 whole time as we were killing animals and destroying crops and putting people on
15 choppers, and they're in tears with rage and sadness in their faces, just incomprehensible.

16 SM: How many villagers did you relocate in that particular instance, do you
17 know?

18 AG: I'd say there was fifty to a hundred.

19 SM: Was that the only incident where that happened?

20 AG: Yes, that only happened one time.

21 SM: And, now were these things that were occurring simultaneously while you
22 were going in and out of the Arizona territory or did there come a point where you
23 stopped your actions in the Arizona territory and were doing other things?

24 AG: Yes, actually we stopped, there would be another battalion or another
25 regiment go into the Arizona and we would leave and go to, there was a couple of fire
26 bases, there was a Hill 65, a Hill 52, Liberty Bridge, and we would do these, what you'd
27 call, civic actions, I think that's what they called these, where we would run MEDCAPS.
28 Actually, I liked doing that. We would go to some vills, especially when we were on Hill
29 52. It was a village right off the hill, and we would go down with a Corpsman or two
30 Corpsmen and we'd let the villagers come up and tell the Corpsmen what was wrong
31 with them, and that was probably the most satisfying thing I think I did there. The

1 Corpsmen would go down with their B-1 units and have the medicine and the aspirin and
2 that kind of stuff, and the people would get in line and come up and say well, this is
3 wrong with me, this is wrong with me, and the Corpsmen would take care of them. I
4 though that was, that made me feel real good, when we were doing that, the people were
5 very grateful, and very, I felt we were doing something positive.

6 SM: That's such a dichotomy.

7 AG: Absolutely, and then at night we'd go back up on the hill and send out
8 ambushes.

9 SM: But also on the one hand helping the villagers so much with the MEDCAPS
10 and on the other hand, in that one instance anyway, destroying the village, it's such a
11 dichotomy.

12 AG: Yes, that was all over the place there.

13 SM: Now, how would they handle the med caps in terms of interpreters? Did
14 they have Vietnamese that could speak English?

15 AG: Yes, we had, usually, you had Vietnamese scouts with us. We either had
16 what they called Kit Carson scouts, or Chieu Hois that would come out with us, but Kit
17 Carson scouts, usually they would come out with us, but Kit Carson scouts usually
18 worked with an America S-2 man, but our platoon had a Kit Carson scout for the whole
19 time I was there.

20 SM: Did you guys trust him?

21 AG: As far as we could throw him. No, we did not trust him.

22 SM: Why not?

23 AG: I don't know. There was just something about a former enemy becoming, I
24 don't know, I just didn't feel comfortable around him.

25 SM: What about the Chieu Hois?

26 AG: The Chieu Hois were weird. For the most part I think that they were tired of
27 the war, the ones that I remember, they got to Chieu Hoi, but for the most part they were
28 kind of older guys. We had a Chieu Hoi in the mountains, if you don't mind me going
29 back to Durham Peak. We captured the guy there, who was, I think he was in the early
30 30's and he said he'd been fighting for fourteen years and he hadn't seen his family in ten
31 years and he was a Sergeant in the North Vietnamese Army, and I talked to this guy for

1 half an hour. You could just see this guy's eyes that he was just tired, he was very tired,
2 he missed his family, he didn't think they were doing anything good. He was not a hard
3 core, like a lot of these North Vietnamese hard core, they would not get us any
4 information, they'd tell us to fuck off, they'd spit in our face, but this guy was just, you
5 could just see in his eyes, the man was broken. Seeing that I just realized, man this guys
6 had been here for fourteen years, look at the tenacity, look at these guys, the plan was that
7 they can outlast us, this guy just looking at him, he says I'm here fighting for the
8 liberation of my country, but I'm so tired, I'm just tired of doing this. The guy was not,
9 he looked skinny and he looked tired and he looked like he had just had it, and I have no
10 idea what happened to him, they took him away on a chopper. I hope he's still alive
11 somewhere.

12 SM: Did you guys take many prisoners, that is did you get many Chieu Hois, not
13 just taking prisoners, but did you get many Chieu Hois?

14 AG: Yes, we got Chieu Hois, a lot of Chieu Hois were wounded, we would shoot
15 and wound people, then they would Chieu Hois laying there on the ground begging us not
16 to kill them.

17 SM: What was the policy with regard to that though?

18 AG: Well, with the prisoners we were supposed to, we were supposed to take as
19 many prisoners as we could. It depended on how wounded people were. Sometimes they
20 were just, they were cut in half and they were still alive, you would shoot them just to put
21 them out of their misery. I mean I hate to say that my humanity was gone, but it was
22 then, and to be perfectly honest with you, when we captured that hospital up in the
23 mountains, some of those prisoners did not make it down to the bottom of the mountains.
24 We had to carry them, and we carried them and we carried them and then some guys just
25 got tired of carrying them and we took them out. I look back on that now, it's just
26 something that needed to be done. But for the most part they wanted prisoners for
27 intelligence reason which I understood, as much information we could get out of these
28 guys that might make it safer for the Marines. I never killed any prisoners, I never killed
29 any women or children. In fact, I think my platoon was pretty disciplined in that respect
30 and I think our company commander and our platoon commander were very pointed in

1 telling us that we do not do these kind of things, like taking women out or taking children
2 out, or doing that kind of stuff.

3 SM: Well, did you guys hear about My Lai while you were there?

4 AG: Yes, actually we did. In fact, My Lai changed a lot of stuff as far as our
5 ability to engage the enemy. I remember when My Lai broke in the news in the United
6 States we were told in Vietnam, okay, the rules of engagement have changed now, we
7 had to have, I remember they told us we had to have, if we sighted the enemy, if they
8 weren't carrying a rifle we couldn't shoot them. They could carry backpacks, but if we
9 couldn't see a rifle, we couldn't shoot them. We had to get permission sometimes two or
10 three layers high, just to open fire on people. We would have targets in the middle of an
11 open field somewhere, we were a click away, we would want to call in artillery and it
12 would take us twenty and thirty minutes to get permission and by then they were gone. It
13 ended up being just screwy as hell, we would have cease fires where we were not
14 supposed to do any offensive patrols or ambushes and we'd watch them cross the river by
15 the boatload with ammunition, with food, enemy just up the ass, and we couldn't do
16 anything, and then as soon as the cease fire ended we'd be hitting the shit for several days
17 or several weeks, it was just crazy, I mean it was just real crazy. The rules of
18 engagement changed and it was a direct result of My Lai, and My Lai angered us. I
19 remember us sitting around talking about William Kelly, even though we understood
20 where this guy was coming from, we just couldn't him understand him lining people up,
21 women and children and shooting them, I mean, two hundred or whatever it was he
22 killed, that we didn't understand. We could understand how somebody could be pushed
23 that far, we just didn't understand why, why he was shooting women and children.

24 SM: Was anybody in your unit, whether it was the platoon, the company, the
25 battalion, that you were aware of, was anybody ever punished for any kind of serious
26 misbehavior, serious infractions?

27 AG: I'm trying to think.

28 SM: Court Martials or anything?

29 AG: We had a guy that refused to go out into the bush once, refused to get on the
30 chopper, put his weapon down said he wasn't going to go. I remember our company
31 gunnery sergeant went up to him and was screaming at him, "You're going to get on that

1 chopper!” He said, “No”, so the MPs came and took him away. I can’t think of anybody
2 that got into too much trouble.

3 SM: How long had that guy been in country, do you know?

4 AG: He’d been there for nine months is what my squad leader told me.

5 SM: Had he had any problems before that?

6 AG: No, I guess, well this is what I was told, that he was like the only survivor of
7 his squad. I guess a couple of, before I got there, they were on some operation where he
8 was the only one left, and he just lost it, which is understandable I think.

9 SM: Do you know what happened to him?

10 AG: No, don’t have a clue.

11 SM: Anybody else taken away by the MPs, or court martialled or anything?

12 AG: No, I, everybody got into trouble a little bit. I mean I was threatened with
13 insubordination a few times but I did my job well so they couldn’t take me out of the
14 bush I guess. But we would get into our typical troubled, we’d go into the rear, and one
15 of the reasons I don’t think they liked us having the rear too much is because we weren’t
16 good rear Marines. We weren’t good garrison Marines, in fact I got to the point where I
17 loved being out in the bush because it was a lot slacker out there. I felt safer there than I
18 did in the rear. I didn’t want to get a haircut I guess, and I didn’t want to shave, but our
19 unit was pretty tight. We were pretty good, we had good leaders though, too, good
20 leaders and good Marines. We were fairly well disciplined, out in the bush especially.

21 SM: Now, how were you allegedly insubordinate?

22 AG: I got some cellulitis in my legs that Corpsman was cleaning it out every day
23 with these long Q-tips and my legs were killing me. It was just really hurting, they were
24 infected and the Corpsman every day would come up with iodine and stick these things
25 into these gaping holes in my legs, and he was going to medevac me and I remember we
26 had a gunnery sergeant, Gunnery Sergeant Washington who I didn’t like anyway. I guess
27 the Corpsman gave me a medevac tag to get me, he wanted me just to go to the rear so I
28 could do some meds and get these things cleaned properly. The Gunnery Sergeant came
29 up and say no, I wasn’t going to the rear, and he proceeded to accuse me of being a
30 malingerer and all kinds of stuff and he asked me, “You don’t have nay respect for rank
31 do you?” I said, “No especially not you,” he said, “I’m going to write you up for

1 insubordination.” I remember the Corpsman, my Corpsman friend was standing there,
2 and he says, “Where you going to get a witness, Gunny, because I’m not going to be your
3 witness for this stuff?” So anyway, we went back and forth, this Gunnery Sergeant, I had
4 no respect for him, he threatened to write me up a couple, and I didn’t care, if he would
5 have written me up that means I would have had to go to the rear, they needed me out in
6 the bush so I knew I could get away with telling him where to go. The guy was, well he
7 was basically worthless, I had no respect for him. That only happened a couple of times
8 though.

9 SM: How did your leg condition clear up?

10 AG: Actually, it did clear up. The doc was actually able to get some, they
11 choppered out some meds for me, and some better cleaning material for the doc to go
12 ahead and clean my wounds, or my gook sores, or whatever the call them.

13 SM: What caused this?

14 AG: I don’t know. I should probably talk to one of the Corpsman. It was just, it’s
15 just one of the things in Nam that you get, holes, I still have scars in my leg, little holes
16 about the size of a bullet I would say. They would get infected all the, an inch or two into
17 the muscle of my leg, just very uncomfortable, and I don’t know. It was just part of living
18 out in the rice paddies and staying wet all the time. It was just part of the bush life.

19 SM: The cleaning must not have been very comfortable either.

20 AG: It was very uncomfortable, very, but it cleared up after a week or ten days,
21 the doc got the right medication out there.

22 SM: How about other ailments, other diseases you had to deal with?

23 AG: Well, there was a lot of, what they call FUO, fever of an unknown origins,
24 lots of people had that. We had lots of malaria cases and we had a lot of heat casualties,
25 especially during the summer months, lots of heat casualties, where guys weren’t
26 carrying enough water. Hell, I bet that first summer I was there, when we were in
27 Arizona, we probably had a heat casualty a day for a month. Guys are dropping out,
28 usually the new guys, usually it was the guys coming in from the States, that were new,
29 that just didn’t know how to ration their water and didn’t know how to make sure that
30 they keep their long sleeves on, make sure they have a cover on their head and just make
31 sure they had enough water. The corpsman were very adamant in telling us make sure

1 you drink enough water, and that's why I carried six canteens of water with me. I learned
2 very quickly that's what you needed to do to stay hydrated, but other than, there were just
3 the scratches that would get infected, just little things like that that you take for granted
4 here, that would just get scratched and they would get infected like crazy, the Corpsman
5 would have to scrub them out with a brush and try to keep them clean, just little stuff like
6 that, FUOs. I had those a couple of times, your fever spikes up to 102, 103 then it goes
7 away, but malaria, I never got malaria. I have no idea why, I did those lousy malaria
8 tablets every Sunday.

9 SM: You did do them?

10 AG: Yes, in fact it was a court martial offense not to do them. When I was there,
11 they would take your blood if you were wounded or got taken out of the bush they would
12 do a blood test and they didn't find that quinine, or atrapine, whatever it was, in your
13 system, they could court martial you. So I did mine. That was one way we kept track of
14 time, every Sunday the Corpsman would give us one of our, I guess two pills to take and
15 he would sit there, make sure we took water, swallowed them and we knew it was
16 Sunday. That's how we kept track of time, that and the full moon I guess.

17 SM: Now, what about a beer ration, did you guys ever get beer out there?

18 AG: You know that's a great question, I think we got beer twice out in the bush.
19 We were supposed to get two cans a day or something. One was on the Marine Corps
20 birthday. Marines are amazing about this. November 10, 1969 we were on Liberty Road.
21 I don't think we were doing security, we were doing some operation, I think just going,
22 just sweeps around the area and they choppered out hot steaks to us, well cooked steaks, I
23 don't know how hot they were, we had two beers, they brought out baked potatoes, I
24 remember we had two beers, what else did they bring, oh, cold milk and they tried to
25 bring ice cream out to us, by the time it got to us though, it was like chocolate milk. That
26 was the only time I got beer out in the bush. In the rear, we would come on off
27 operations, I think I told you this, they'd have ice-cold beer waiting for us and they'd had
28 a steak fried. They would barbeque steak, we'd have a company or battalion, dependent
29 on how many people were out in the bush, we'd have just a big party when we come out
30 of the bush. We had one night off basically, and we'd get drunk and each day we couldn't
31 finish our steak because our stomachs were so small from shrinking up from eating C-

1 rations, but that was a good touch. The company 1st Sergeant was good about taking care
2 of us when we came to the rear.

3 SM: Now, in those instance was there a village near you where you could go out
4 for other forms of entertainment?

5 AG: No, occasionally when we were in the rear, they would ask for volunteers
6 for security on convoys going from An Hoa to Da Nang, I did that a couple of times, it
7 was fun. You would take the truck into Da Nang and depending on how long it took you
8 to get there, you'd either spend the night there or you'd come back that evening by
9 chopper, but it was fun going into Da Nang, especially since we were well basically filthy
10 dirty, and we carried weapons. We carried all of our ordnance, we had grenades and our
11 rifles, our pistols and I remember in '69, '70 Da Nang was so secure that people there had
12 blocks of wood in their weapons walking around Da Nang, instead of magazines and we
13 would get stopped all the time by the Military Police or by officers asking us why were
14 we walking around in Da Nang with magazines in our weapons. We've had to tell them,
15 well we're grunts, we're with 35, you know, and they just tell us to get out of their face.
16 "Okay, how come you're not wearing a blouse?" "Well sir, I just came out of the bush
17 with the..." and that was kind of fun, to go around and fuck with the people in the rear
18 there, but they didn't like us too much because we smelled funny, we were filthy, our hair
19 was usually longer than regulation and we had magazines in our weapons.

20 SM: And ammunition.

21 AG: Yes, and ammunition, right. We were dangerous, right.

22 SM: This will end the interview with Mr. Tony Goodrich on the 22nd of April.

23 SM: This is Steve Maxner continuing the interview with Mr. Tony Goodrich on
24 the 10th of May, 2002 at approximately 2:35 Lubbock time. I'm in Lubbock, Texas and
25 Tony Goodrich is in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Sir, thank you again and let's go ahead
26 and pick up today's interview with a discussion of anything else that you'd like to discuss
27 with regard to your time in Vietnam. Is there anything else that you recall about your
28 Vietnam experience that we have not yet covered?

29 AG: I think so. There's a couple of things that I have thought about since our last
30 interview. I think that one of them is what I consider the lack of leadership that I
31 experienced when I was in Vietnam. I went through in the year I was there, I went

1 through six platoon commanders. Since, I talked to you last time, I sat down and actually
2 wrote down who I could remember and who I couldn't. For the most part, especially
3 toward the last six months of my tour these guys have just been out there to get their
4 combat ribbon so they could get promoted. They were basically offing people or people
5 in the rear who had never been out in the bush. We didn't have too much respect for the
6 squad leaders and the team leaders that I served with. The only Lieutenant I remember,
7 there were two good Lieutenants I had. One was Lieutenant Williams, which was my first
8 platoon commander. I don't remember the second guys name. I have pictures of him. He
9 was an R.O.T.C. guy. He was a P.E. major. I have no idea what his name is. Someday
10 I'll find it. For the most part, the other four that I had were very forgettable. For the
11 most part, they couldn't read maps. They couldn't call in air or artillery strikes. They
12 were scary. One I remember in particular was a Naval Academy graduate who played on
13 the Marine corps football team for two or three years. Came to Vietnam, called all the
14 squad leaders together, told us that he was the bushmaster and we couldn't teach him
15 anything because he learned everything at Quantico. He lasted about two weeks with the
16 company. The company commander, after we went and talked to him, got rid of this guy.
17 What they did with these Lieutenants or they actually had a staff sergeant come in and be
18 our platoon commander for a little bit. I don't know what they did with them. I assume
19 they sent him to the rear. But our CO Lieutenant Claire, 1st Lieutenant, we had was a
20 good man. He listened to us and he loved us. He treated us the way that we wanted to be
21 treated. He was instrumental in keeping us alive and keeping these pseudoleaders away
22 from us.

23 SM: What was your major complaint about this Lieutenant the only lasted a
24 couple of weeks that was the bushmaster?

25 AG: Well, he just didn't want to listen to us. He basically was all talk and no
26 leadership. When I talk leader I mean somebody who cares for the troops, looks out for
27 us to be number one, who leads. Gets out there in front and leads. He was basically the
28 guy to do it all. Told us he knew it all and we couldn't say anything to him. Not only
29 was that ridiculous, but it was also silly of him. I know that we told him he better watch
30 his back. We always used to threaten people that did not understand. He was just a
31 dangerous guy. He couldn't read a map. We had a couple of them I remember that

1 couldn't read maps, they would get us lost on patrols. We would try to tell them no, sir
2 we're not here, we're here. They wouldn't listen to us. So, thank God we had a company
3 commander who understood that these guys were going to get us killed or wounded. He
4 was pretty good about getting rid of them. Mostly it was just the arrogance and these
5 guys demanded our respect instead of earning it. I'd been there for eight months, I just
6 wanted to get it over with and I knew what I was doing. We tried to let them know that.
7 Those who listened to us, we liked. Those who didn't we did not like very much. Did
8 we talk about drugs Steve at all?

9 SM: Actually, I do want to ask more specifically about that issue, but while we're
10 on the subject of leadership, what about NCO leadership?

11 AG: That's a very good question. When I was in Vietnam the only time I had a
12 platoon sergeant, I think the first six months I was there we had platoon sergeants. I was
13 a lance corporal, an E3, and I was a squad leader. That is usually a sergeant's position or
14 a corporal's position. I was about six months into my tour, must have been December or
15 January after I got promoted. I got promoted to Lance Corporal, E3 in December of '69.
16 I'm not sure it was that month of January. They come up to me and told me I was going
17 to be the next squad leader. I told them I didn't want the position. I didn't want the
18 responsibility. They said, "Too bad because we're giving it to you." I said, "Why?" Of
19 course, they told me that I've got the longest time in the bush here. I know what I'm
20 doing. I was basically one of the survivors of the platoon. Reluctantly I took that mantle
21 of squad leader. That responsibility is heavy. You have to keep your men alive for one
22 thing. You have to try to be able to teach them what they need to know to survive. It
23 was a real burden, I thought. For the most part my squad and my gun team responded
24 magnificently under my paltry leadership I think. As far as staffing, we had a staff
25 sergeant, we had a platoon sergeant when I first got into country, Sergeant Ramos. I
26 don't remember if there were any other ones. As far as I know, we had a couple of
27 sergeants maybe in the platoon. A couple of Corporals and all the rest were lance
28 corporals or VFC.

29 SM: In terms of their competence?

30 AG: For the most part they were very competent. In fact, they were probably
31 more competent than the Lieutenants were because most of them had been in the Marine

1 Corps for some greater amount of time. They seemed to understand, the enlisted men
2 better than Lieutenants did. For the most part, I'd give them high marks. They cared
3 about us. They went out of their way to try to get us resupplied with clean clothes or
4 poncho liners or getting us hot food out in the bush, which only happened like twice I
5 think the whole time I was there. For the most part, Sergeant Ramos especially was very
6 very good, a very , very good sergeant. A platoon sergeant. He left I think in August or
7 September. Other than that, the other ones we had were pretty good. I don't remember
8 their names. I don't remember their names. I can see their faces.

9 SM: You mentioned also that the times certain incompetent leaders might receive
10 a warning. Were there any incidences of fratricide while you were there?

11 AG: Not that I remember. Not in my platoon or my company. There were other
12 companies that it happened in. We heard stories about when we'd go into the rear
13 especially. I know when I first got into country there was a platoon sergeant nobody
14 liked. I don't remember this guy's name. He was only there for maybe a month. These
15 guys always said they were going to take him out in a firefight. I really don't know what
16 the problem was except that he was an asshole. He would swear at people and he
17 wouldn't carry his own weight. Everybody's be carrying his own gear. Personally, I
18 don't know anybody. Even though I can understand how it would happen. There's an
19 old term that I learned called the Troop Protective Association. You would basically if
20 the guys weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing, the Troop Protective
21 Association would take care of the problem. I personally never participated or saw
22 anything like that. I did hear stories.

23 SM: Now this, Troop Protection Association, this was something that just existed
24 in Vietnam?

25 AG: As far as I know yeah. It was usually a squad leader. I heard this from an
26 other squad leader when I became squad leader. You become a squad leader, you get a
27 compass, you get the map. You have to be able to learn how to call in air strikes and
28 artillery. If you don't think somebody's doing their job right and somebody's going to
29 get killed, basically we were told to just take care of business. I talk about that now and I
30 look back on it and I guess it was just a frame of mind that we were in that we would do
31 anything to survive. If that means taking out incompetent American officers, I would

1 have done it. I would have done it. I was lucky because I didn't have that many
2 incompetents who lasted that long. The company commander understood, I think our
3 frustration with these guys. He would take action before we would. In the long run, I
4 can thank God.

5 SM: If he had left that one Lieutenant there for more than two weeks, something
6 would have happened to him?

7 AG: We'd have taken him out. I'm sure we would have Steve. I would have had
8 no qualms. No qualms about it.

9 SM: This is an interesting ethical dilemma. Because of course, you're looking at
10 it from the standpoint of either you're got to get rid of this guy or he's probably going to
11 get you and a bunch of other guy's killed at the same time, it's murder. Was that ever
12 discussed?

13 AG: No. Not at all. Never.

14 SM: You mentioned drugs. You wanted to discuss that since we haven't really
15 talked much about it. What was the drug use like in your unit? Both the squad and
16 platoon level, but also at the company and if possible the battalion level if you have any
17 information about that?

18 AG: I remember marijuana was prevalent there. Only in the rear. We never
19 smoked pot out in the bush. Never. We go into the rear. I never smoked pot until I go to
20 Nam. One of the reasons we smoked pot, the enlisted men is because we could not get
21 alcohol. The staff NCOs and the officers had access to alcohol when we'd come into the
22 rear. We didn't. You had to be an E5 or above to get hard alcohol. Whiskey or
23 whatever. They had an enlisted men's club at An Hoa. It was open for a couple of hours
24 a day. For the most part we would go there before we'd have to on bunkers. They'd run
25 out of beer after the first hour. It was usually warm beer. Marijuana was prevalent.
26 Everywhere. We'd smoke pot in the rear. As we snuck one or two beers or had to steal
27 beer from officers quarters or something like that. Marijuana, as far as I was concerned,
28 was a good way for me to forget things. It was a good way for me to relax. I didn't have
29 a hangover the nest day. I could smoke pot and stand bunkers at night and have no
30 problem staying awake or staying alert. Out in the bush, there was kind of like an
31 unknown rule, but a not spoken rule, that you didn't take it out in the bush. It was just

1 too dangerous out there. In the rear it was o.k. Most of the time, when the grunts were in
2 the rear at our combat, we were never hit the whole time I was in Vietnam, whenever we
3 were in the rear standing line. When we would go out to the bush and the office post, we
4 called them would stand on lines, they would get hit. For the most part, that's all I saw. I
5 didn't see any hard drugs, like heroine or speed or other things like that. Even though I
6 heard stories it was there, but that was after the war. Pot was mostly smoked by the EMs
7 because we couldn't get alcohol.

8 SM: Well, your base camp that you would come back to, where you could I
9 guess, to use a colloquial expression, let your hair down and relax and either drink a beer
10 or smoke marijuana or whatever. That base area that you would come back to did that
11 change locations very often or was it always the exact same place?

12 AG: It was the exact same place, it was a static position. An Hoa combat base in
13 the An Hoa valley. The year I was there that was where the 5th Marine regimental
14 headquarters was. To be perfectly honest with you, I probably spent my first eight
15 months in country, or I say six months were out in the bush. Maybe two months in the
16 rear. I don't even know if it was that much. We did not come into the rear often and
17 when we did we only stayed there for three or four days at the most. Usually it was like a
18 day or two and then we'd be back out in the bush. To be honest with you, toward the end
19 of my tour I felt safer out in the bush.

20 SM: Why so?

21 AG: I don't know how to put it. It was slack in the rear. I don't know how else
22 to put it. Like I said a static position. We'd have to go stay in bunkers and these bunkers
23 had been there. They were prime targets for RPGs. The grunts would come in and we
24 wouldn't stay in the bunker we would move next to the bunkers where we would set our
25 position up. We were afraid that we were going to get taken out by RPGs or mortars.
26 For the most part, I felt safer in the bush. I felt safer in the bush with a small unit. Squad
27 size was a great size out in the bush or atrols for ambushes because we could move faster.
28 We could move quieter. I always thought that we were fighting like them. If we were
29 fighting like them, we'd have a chance to maybe surprise them instead of the other way
30 around. Another thing is too. You probably know this from interviewing other Vets.
31 The Vietnamese own the night there. I used to love to go out at night because you always

1 knew they were going to be moving around or doing something. I mean we had a
2 battalion size or maybe it was a company size movement one night. We were going to go
3 down to the river and set up an ambush because they had intell that there were going to
4 be a bunch of North Vietnamese crossing the river. Unfortunately, military intelligence
5 sometimes isn't quite right on. We got to the river and about a click and a half away
6 there was probably 50 or 60 boats going across the river and we were too far away. We
7 had to call artillery on them. By the time the artillery got there they were already gone.
8 We were making a movement to have a company or battalion sized ambush. I'm not sure
9 which. If we would have gotten to the right place, we'd have had a good turkey shoot. It
10 was something that we always were hoping we could do. Unfortunately, they moved us
11 to the wrong position. Nighttime for me wasn't as scary as for other guys. My last six
12 weeks in country I was a Hill 52 artillery firebase. I used to volunteer my squad for
13 ambushes every night if I could. I used to have the new guys coming from the States call
14 me names. Like "Lifer, What are you doing? The war's over." I just shook my head at
15 these guys. Going your setting yourself up for the shit that's going to happen. I would
16 get us off the hill as much as I could. It was just a target. The hill was a target. If I could
17 get out there in the bush at night, away from the fire support base I knew we could stay
18 alive. I got lots of grief from these new guys. I hope they understand. I wanted to
19 survive. Maybe more than they did. They came in with a bad attitude. In April and May
20 of 1970, these new guys came in thinking the war was basically over. They didn't have
21 to worry about getting killed and that attitude I have no idea who and where they were
22 getting that attitude from. It was scary. That scared the hell out of me. I was probably
23 more worried about getting killed the last month I was there than the first month. I used
24 to talk to God and say, "Don't do this to me my last month here. You should have killed
25 me my first month." I think I was probably more paranoid and more hyper alert my last
26 month than the first month I was there.

27 SM: These new guys coming in in April or May in 1970 with this different
28 attitude, had there been any kind of, I don't think it would necessarily come down in an
29 official form through the chain of command, but was there any kind of emphasis or
30 scuttlebutt coming through the chain of command about well, let's make sure that we
31 limit the number of American losses. We are scaling down the war. We are pulling

1 Americans out. We are Vietnamizing turning more of the war over to the Vietnamese,
2 South Vietnamese Army. We need to minimize American casualties?

3 AG: You know, I never thought about that. I'm sure there was. I tried to think
4 about that. I don't think so. I think these guys were being told that we were pulling out
5 like you said. The scuttlebutt was we were getting pulled out the 5th Marine regiment
6 was the next one leaving. I heard that from March of '70 until I left. That we were
7 getting pulled out, we were the next one. That was a huge scuttlebutt that was going
8 around. You know, you're in the Marine Corps for so long, you realize a scuttlebutt is
9 just that. You don't believe anything until it happens. There was a lot of guys coming in
10 saying, well I heard a story in Okinawa that the 5th Marines were the next one leaving.
11 We're leaving next month, we're leaving next week. It was just silly. It was just silly as
12 hell. These guys did not have the right attitude. I didn't think so anyway.

13 SM: A final question about the drug issue? Were you guys tested for drug use at
14 all? What was the command response to the apparent significant use of marijuana by
15 general enlisted?

16 AG: You want to hear something funny? That's a good question too. The Naval
17 intelligence, I forget what they're called, NID or CID or something like that actually sent
18 out some undercover guys that were obviously under cover. They were clean. It was
19 very weird we were on hill 52, in fact, they sent a CID guy out. I think they're called
20 CID. It might have been Naval intelligence. Anyway they came out, this guy was in my
21 platoon for I want to say three days or four days. We knew exactly what he was there
22 for. He was asking questions about where he could get pot. The guy was so damn
23 obvious it was ridiculous. Here's another guy, the Troop Protection Association said,
24 "This is none of your business you out to get the hell away from us." He lasted three or
25 four days and they took him off the hill. I thought that was highly amusing. It wasn't
26 even. The guy was obviously looking for somebody to bust for pot. I look back on it
27 now and I laugh like hell thinking about this young guy. Couldn't have been more than
28 20 he was a corporal. He came out. He didn't have any bush time from what we knew
29 and he was just too obvious. Asking us where he could buy pot. He would call it the
30 wrong name. I remember the term was tuk fen that was the Vietnamese term. We'd ask
31 kids for tuk fen. This guy had some other term, I never heard of. We just laughed at him

1 and said, "We know what you are. We know what you're doing here." He would deny
2 everything. He lasted, like I said three or four days and then he got choppered away. I
3 think that the officers knew that we were smoking pot, but as long as it didn't interfere
4 with our abilities to do the job and as long as we weren't doing it out in the bush, I think
5 that they just let it slide. A lot of them drank heavily. It was just a way to forget about
6 the war, I think.

7 SM: In terms of job effectiveness, you mentioned that you wouldn't smoke pot in
8 the field, but what about cigarettes?

9 AG: I didn't do it, but the guys did smoke cigarettes.

10 SM: Out in the field?

11 AG: Yeah, out in the bush. I always wondered why there wasn't better discipline
12 as far as the smoking cigarettes out in the bush.

13 SM: Yeah, because you could smell that.

14 AG: C- rations had cigs. But they had those lousy, three or four cigarettes. I
15 always wondered about that myself, but nobody ever said anything, so I didn't. The
16 whole idea don't light three cigarettes with one match or you're going to get shot in the
17 head with a sniper, but yeah that's a good question, Steve. I don't know. I really don't
18 know why that discipline did not work well out in the bush.

19 SM: How about your trash? You guys were out on patrol out in the bush for a
20 week or two or four or whatever. How would you guys handle your trash?

21 AG: For the most part we would bury it. If we were eating C- rations we would
22 flatten the can and we'd bury things for the most part. I don't think we carried anything
23 out, because anything we could get out of our pack made our load lighter was always
24 better. For the most part, we'd dig a hole. After we'd leave a hill we would dig a hole
25 and bury stuff. Flatten the cans. There were these certain C-ration cans that were the
26 same size as a frag, they could stick in there. Pull the pin on the frag, stick it inside the
27 can and set booby traps up for us. We would flatten all the cans and bury everything.

28 SM: Did you have any major encounters? Any major engagements with the
29 NVA or VC the last month you were in country?

30 AG: The last month, no. I talked to you the last time. There's a couple of
31 incidents that I remembered after I talked to you. About getting overrun in the rain. I

1 hate the rain to this day. This is probably in late Fall of '69. We were out in the Arizona.
2 The company had moved to these three hills on the far eastern side of the Arizona. Each
3 platoon had a hill. Any time we stayed in a position more than a couple of days, we
4 knew something was going to happen. It was just a matter of being able to target us. If
5 we moved everyday that would be fine with me. We stayed in this position for some
6 reason for two or three days, we were never told why. One day the platoon commander
7 told us the CO, the skippers wanted us to rotate hills, first platoon moved to where the
8 second platoon was. Third where the first was. We were on the same hill before we
9 moved around the company commander, the CP. We moved to another hill. That night it
10 rained. Right after I got off watch, must have been around one or two in the morning,
11 they mortared us. They started popping mortars in on us. RPGs and zappers came
12 through and overrun the hill that we were on the night before, where the CP was.
13 Obviously, they knew that the skipper was there because of the radios. They overran the
14 hill that night. I remember RPGs hitting around our position and exploding. I remember
15 my ears ringing. We saw a muzzle flash in front of our hole probably 25 or 30 meters. It
16 might have been further, but it sure seemed close to us because you could hear the rounds
17 going over our position. This guy was right where our claymore was. The only time I
18 ever blew a claymore in Vietnam. We blew the claymore and the guy with the AK quit
19 shooting at us. I'm assuming we took him out. The next morning after the sun came up.
20 This probably lasted an hour. Lots of light, lots of explosions, lots of noise. I remember
21 concussions in our holes. All of us were concussed. There were several explosions
22 around our hole where our platoon sergeant was screaming at us if we were o.k. One
23 officer was screaming at us. We were telling him shut up because we didn't want the
24 Vietnamese to know where we were. We were throwing frags that night. We never
25 moved. There was movement all around us. It was probably one of the scariest times. In
26 the rain you can't hear anything. It was just very surrealistic. Anyway, the next morning
27 when the sun came up, the hole that we had been staying in, around the CP, the gun team
28 that was there were all killed or wounded. To this day, I'm just amazed that if we would
29 have not moved that day to the position that we were in that would have been us. Took
30 several K.I.A.s that day. I actually have a picture of the medevac that I'll give to you
31 guys. I'm going to say there were three to six Marines that were killed. We probably

1 policed up four, five, or six bodies and probably a hundred Chicom grenades. There were
2 several around our hole. Several Chicom grenades around our hole. It was an RPG
3 round that didn't go off that hit right next to our hole. Thank God for the rain because the
4 Chicom frags did not work very well when they got wet. My butt still tightens up when I
5 think about that night. I think that's one of the reasons I live in New Mexico because it's
6 so dry here. I do not like, I don't like the rain. My wife knows when it rains here,
7 especially during the summertime when it gets a little bit humid, I get up and I'm up all
8 night checking the doors, making sure everything's locked, going outside and that's
9 directly related to that night. Incoming and booby traps were probably the most prevalent
10 ways of getting wounded or killed in Vietnam while I was there. Incoming was always
11 an exciting time. Especially mortars. Mortars you couldn't hear. There was a couple of
12 times during the day you could see mortars coming in. That was there was frightening as
13 hell especially when you're trying to dig a hole to get into to get below ground level.
14 That happened often. It was probably more often than I can remember. Booby traps. I'd
15 say half of our casualties in my company were from booby traps. They were everywhere.
16 You couldn't get away from them. Even if you had a good point man, there was always a
17 way that you could get wounded from command detonated bobby traps or they used to
18 have these fox mines that were made all out of wood and explosives that you couldn't
19 pick up with a metal detector. It was just a matter of luck whether or not you were going
20 to get blown up by a booby trap. An incoming is the same way as long as you get to a
21 hole you usually had a pretty good chance of surviving an incoming. Loud noises still
22 bother me. I could be walking down the street and have a backfire happen. Not as bad as
23 it used to be. I was pretty fast and I could jump underneath something very quickly when
24 that happened. For the most part, I think that I was lucky because my first three months
25 in country was probably the heaviest combat I saw. I learned what I needed to do to
26 survive. I remember more about my first three months than my last nine months, lets' put
27 it that way. I think that was a defense mechanism. A way for me to cope with what was
28 going on around me. It's interesting when you get into a position where you realize that
29 you'll do anything to survive. One of the things that I remember when I came back was
30 being able to out in the bush; I know this is probably going to sound strange. I've talked
31 to other vets. I could sit there and just relax and you could see. You could smell, see

1 your senses were heightened would be the way to put it. I could always tell when we
2 were going to get incoming or there was somebody there that was going to come through
3 the line; we were going to get sniped at. There was a sense that you learned while you
4 were there that was just eerie. I don't want to call it seeing angels, but you developed
5 another sense, a sixth sense, when you knew something was going to happen. It was just
6 odd. It was very odd and very eerie, I thought. I think that had a lot to do with me
7 surviving too. I knew when that feeling came over me, that I had to be alert and I had to
8 be ready for anything. I think all of us that survived their year there had this thing. It's
9 been something I've never been able to describe.

10 SM: Very strange, very strange. It sounds like your talking about gut instinct. In
11 some respects.

12 AG: Yeah. Yes.

13 SM: Did you feel that was progressively developing during your time there?
14 You're instincts would become more finely tuned? Your reaction to certain events would
15 become better?

16 AG: Absolutely, Steve. You could tell that something wasn't right. No matter
17 how something looked, you could tell something just wasn't right there. There was a
18 feeling a gut feeling. 99% of the time that gut feeling was much more accurate than
19 getting military intelligence telling us something. In fact, the squad leaders would talk to
20 each other about how you feeling tonight? What's going to happen tomorrow? On these
21 patrol somebody would have a bad feeling and we knew something. We all kind of
22 picked up on it, when somebody would say I'm not feeling right about this tonight. Or
23 right about what's going to go on tomorrow. I just think it made us better at our jobs. I
24 think that we were a lot more alert, a lot more ready for things to happen. It was tough.
25 We were always tired. Always hungry. We were lucky if we got two hours of sleep a
26 night. It was just a matter of exhaustion. That exhaustion is hard to explain to
27 somebody and that hunger and the feeling of just being pissed off and angry and scared
28 all at the same time. Just wondering whether you're going to get to the next minute. All
29 those emotions. I never really slept there. I don't know of anybody I know that was in
30 the infantry that slept. It was just you're right underneath sleep. You're ears are open
31 and you can wake. A sound that doesn't make sense you'd wake up immediately.

1 You're fully alert. I remember firefights, Steve, and incoming and people getting hit by
2 booby traps and the adrenaline would flow, sometimes for days. That night that we got
3 overrun in the rain. I don't think I slept for 72 hours. I remember being fully awake. I
4 remember going on patrols a couple of nights after that, but I did not sleep at all. I don't
5 think I ate much either. I think that the Marines were pretty good about seeing this stuff
6 happen. Usually after something like this would happen, you would pullout and go to the
7 rear. Go to some safer area for a couple of days. They were pretty good about doing
8 that. Not always, but they were pretty good about doing that depending on where we
9 were.

10 SM: You're gut feelings, your instincts. Was listening to them something that
11 your NCOs would foster? Say, they would pursue your opinion on things and would
12 actually listen?

13 AG: Yes. My first squad leader in fact told me that I would be learning this. My
14 first gunner also told me you'll be learning these things. That there's going to be certain
15 times when you feel a certain way, you need to let your squad leader know how you're
16 feeling about things. It wasn't something that you can learn in training. It was something
17 when you got there. I was a little skeptical when I first got there. How in the hell. I'm
18 just learning. I'm scared how can I learn how to just relax and take in everything in your
19 senses? They're telling you something. It was just a matter of training your mind and
20 your body to listen. It's hard to explain, but I was told that by the squad leaders and by
21 the sergeants when I first got there. You will learn these things. They will help to keep
22 you alive. Just odd. Very strange. I'd love to be able to talk to other combat vets from
23 other wars to see if they felt the same way.

24 SM: I think the answer would be yes.

25 AG: Really, o.k. I can imagine that, I can believe that.

26 SM: Like you said, there was no way they could train you for this. This was just
27 something that had to develop in country, in combat.

28 AG: I think it's that survival thing. You know you're going through training and
29 you know you're going to be able to go home that night. You're going to go sleep in the
30 rack. You're going to have your hot meal. As good as the training was I had, I don't
31 think it was adequate enough to prepare me for what I experienced in Vietnam. I think

1 any grunt will tell you that. When you're in combat situation and you're under fire, the
2 training does kick in. You do your job. It's still hard to describe. Your training did kick
3 in, but you also learned, as you were under fire about how to do things and how to do
4 them quicker than you did in training. How to trust the men on your left and right. I
5 think that was the biggest thing for me. I wanted to keep my buddies alive because I
6 wanted to stay alive. There's the whole thing about altruism is kind of a misnomer. I
7 don't think there's anything altruistic there. We all wanted to stay alive and I knew I had
8 a better chance of staying alive and not getting hurt if my buddies were doing their job,
9 just like I was doing mine.

10 SM: Has your heightened sense of your heightened instinct, did that help you at
11 all when you came back? Have you had experiences since the war where you just
12 followed your gut and end up being right?

13 AG: Yeah. Actually it has. Sometimes it's gotten me into trouble, but before we
14 go to that can I tell you about something that happened?

15 SM: Yeah, yeah. I was just curious. Oh, absolutely.

16 AG: I know one of the things in that questionnaire that asked me about tactics.
17 One of the things, I don't know if it's tactical or strategic, but I remember one of the
18 things that really stood out in my mind being a 19 year old lance corporal was going into
19 these villages. We went to this village; we rounded up all the villagers that had been
20 probably on this land, for who knows how many generations. We told them we were
21 going to ship them to a safe area, a strategic hamlet, I think is what they called it. We
22 would shoot all their animals. We would burn down all their hooches. We'd destroy all
23 the rice paddies. I remember going in and shooting water buffalo and watching the anger
24 and the fear and just the anger in these peoples faces against us. Kids on their knees
25 begging us basically not to kill their pets. I was given the job because I was carrying a 14
26 to kill the water buffalo. We'd killed all the chicken, all the pigs, all the water buffalo.
27 We put these people on helicopters and flew them away to a safe area. We all thought
28 what are we doing? These people hate us now. I thought that was one of the stupidest
29 things we could have done. I know there's some plan there. I could never figure it out. I
30 remember all of us from the platoon commander all the way down; we were given orders
31 to do this. We followed the orders and we all went what the hell did we just do? These

1 people are going to hate us. They're going to go over to the other side. We're going to
2 destroy this village basically to save them. I've never understood. I did read a little bit
3 about it after the war about the Marine Corps had these CAPs that I thought were a good
4 idea. The Army commanders did not want us to do that because it would take too long. I
5 like the idea of having squads go into villages, live with the people, train with the people,
6 eat the same food, get to know them, get to really win their hearts and minds. I thought
7 that was a brilliant idea. The Marines were never able to convince the higher ups that
8 that was the way to go. From what I've read they said it would take too long. I always
9 thought that was a huge mistake on our part to go out and move people off the land they
10 had been on for years and years and years.

11 SM: Yes, sir. Did your unit ever engage in any kind of civic action besides this
12 refugee creation and resettlement?

13 AG: We didn't do it specifically. I know guys that left our platoon and our
14 company to go work in these CAP units or these CAG units. CUP units I guess they call
15 them too. For the most part, no. We were just strictly infantry. The only thing I
16 remember is we did a security once for election day. They would bring out the poll
17 workers and the ballot people. They would put people on trucks and truck the villagers to
18 a central area. Wherever the hell that was and we would stand security to make sure
19 there wasn't any intimidation or any of that kind of stuff. That's all I remember. The
20 only thing I remember we did civic wise. I guess you could call our MEDCAP. We did
21 a couple of MEDCAPs I thought was interesting. We went to vills. We were on hill 52.
22 It was vill right down off the hill. We'd so down there Sunday and we would allow the
23 Vietnamese people to come up and our corps mean would work on their injuries or their
24 sores. Any medical problems. I thought that was very positive for me to think gee, we're
25 actually helping these people here. They appreciated it too. I thought that was something
26 we should have done more of also. They were called MEDCAPs. You've probably
27 heard of that term. Other than those MEDCAPS and that voter security thing we didn't
28 do much of that at all.

29 SM: Was there anything else before your last week about your time in Southeast
30 Asia?

1 AG: No. I was ready to leave and I was worried about the new guys coming in.
2 That was the last month there.

3 SM: During that last month did you actually get some time to train your
4 replacement?

5 AG: Yeah. Actually I did. The gun team leader became the squad leader. I
6 don't remember this guy. I can see his face. The guy who became the squad leader, I
7 remember training him how to call in artillery orders or air strikes on the map with the
8 compass. How to use the compass, that's basically it. I don't remember this guy's name.
9 That was probably the only training I gave to him.

10 SM: What did it feel like when you're basically down to your last day or so?

11 AG: I was ready to leave. In fact, I was so ready to leave, I wanted to hide so I
12 wouldn't have to do anything dangerous. You know it's funny, Steve. We're all ready to
13 leave and I remember getting on that chopper and seeing my buddies cheering me
14 basically as I took off. I was so glad to leave. They were glad to see me leave, but I felt
15 guilty about leaving those guys there. It was really hard. I wanted to leave and I didn't
16 want to leave. I felt responsible for them. I remember them saying just get back home.
17 We all just want to get out of here and go home. Don't worry about us. We know what's
18 going on. It's that thing about I want to get out of here and I don't want to leave you
19 guys. It was tough. It was really tough for me to leave those guys behind. They were
20 like my family. I mean closer than that. Something that I guess I still feel kind of guilty
21 about. 25 3:36

22 SM: When you actually did start out-processing did you have to go through any
23 kind of special tests or anything like that?

24 AG: No. The thing I remember, the amusing thing was when we go to Da Nang,
25 before we could get on the chopper we had to go to a little, it was inside a tent I think.
26 They had military policemen come in with dogs. Drug sniffing dogs, which I thought
27 was amusing. They had a dummy up on the stage. They had a stage there. They took a
28 little pack of marijuana and they stuck it down in the dummies crotch and let the dog tear
29 the crotch out of the dummy. So, what they told us was, they had these amnesty booths, I
30 think I what they called them. Curtains. You could walk into this little booth and they
31 had little slots. Any paraphernalia any contrabands you had, you could drop into the slot.

1 Which I thought was just freaking awful. A lot of guys did dump stuff off. Once that
2 was done they had the dogs at the tarmac because you were getting on the aircraft that
3 would be there but basically weren't doing anything. It was kind of a dog and pony
4 show. As far as saying you have one last chance to drop off your contraband. If we
5 catch you with anything you'll have to stay here. Other than that there were no piss tests.
6 They went through our sea bags, I guess to make sure we weren't bringing home
7 ordines. Like claymores or frags, that kind of stuff. The only thing I got, I got an
8 AK47 bullet. One round. It was in my pocket. I have no idea how I got through
9 everything. I brought it back with me. That was it. They went through our sea bags to
10 make sure we weren't bringing back any ordines or and rifles that kind of stuff. The
11 little drug dogs.

12 SM: Did they catch anybody with contraband when you were processing out?

13 AG: Actually no. Not one person. I remember getting on our flight. Nobody.

14 SM: What was it like on the aircraft coming back?

15 AG: It was great. We left the ground and the whole airplane exploded into
16 cheers. We cursed. Cheering and cursing. Cursing Vietnam. Looking out that window
17 and seeing Da Nang airbase fade away. I was exhilarated. It was a terrific feeling.
18 Everybody in the aircraft felt exactly the same way. It was like a huge burden was lifted
19 off of us. I can't describe it. It was orgasmic almost leaving Vietnam.

20 SM: How did you get back into the Unites State? What was that trip like?

21 AG: The Marines flew us to Okinawa just like we flew over. They flew us to
22 Okinawa where we had to take off our tree suits, all of our jungle clothes. Everything
23 that we wore we had to take off and throw into a bin. Those of us who had our uniforms
24 in our sea bags that survived Vietnam in the storage area, we got to put our uniforms on
25 in Okinawa. That's where we got all of our ribbons and medals. We were issued all that
26 stuff there. We put it on our summer uniforms, I guess that's what we were wearing then.
27 You're supposed to stay there for three days. This was in the middle of June, '70. I had
28 to stay there a week because they were flying back prisoners from Vietnam from the Da
29 Nang brig and from the LBJ. I got bumped off four days worth of flights before I could
30 get home. I spent a week in Okinawa. It was because of the prisoners they were bringing
31 back from Vietnam flying back to the brig from the stockades in the United States. I had

1 fun. I went out and got drunk, got laid. Basically slept in. They were pretty slack on us
2 not really doing anything while we were there. I got a haircut. Got all cleaned up to
3 come home. I knew I was getting out when I came home. They asked me right before I
4 left, they had my orders 5th Marine Expeditionary brigade Camp Pendelton or I could get
5 out. Of course, I'd have to work and I signed to get out of the Marines. Flew back to it
6 must have been Travis Air Force base, where we refueled. We flew straight from
7 Okinawa to Travis. Travis, we got in two buses. They bussed us down to Norton.
8 Norton Air Force Base, I think. Steve, I'm not sure. From there, we were bused down to
9 Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego where we went to Separations Company. We
10 stayed there for five days processing out basically. We got to eat in the same mess halls.
11 Getting out of the Marines, the same place I went to boot camp was very odd also. We
12 ate in the same mess hall as the recruits. They were on one side, we were on the other.
13 We used to cat call them. "You guys don't know what you're getting into." The drill
14 instructor would yell at us and we'd laugh at him. There was probably a hundred of us
15 spent five days in San Diego getting ready to get out. They told us about our GI bill
16 benefits. They told us about us being in inactive reserve status. They asked us if we
17 wanted to reenlist. They made sure everything was in order. Got our last medical check
18 up. Dental check up. Just made sure all of our paperwork was in order. On the fifth day,
19 we left MCRD and everybody went their own ways. I flew form San Diego to L.A., then
20 from L.A. back to Albuquerque. One of the things I remember, I really remember sitting
21 in the L.A. airport waiting to come home in my uniform. Everybody wanted to ignore us.
22 Nobody wanted to sit next to us. We sat in the airport waiting to leave and it was just
23 like we weren't there. I just felt like I was an outcast. It was just this odd, strange
24 feeling. Maybe I'd seen too many WWII movies where people have done things like,
25 "Can I buy you a beer or something?" It was like we were invisible. I was surprised by
26 that. People gave us the strangest looks, the ones that did look at us. I thought that was
27 kind of weird. Flew back to Albuquerque. My mom was there, my brother, my aunt and
28 uncle. My father was in Korea at the time. He was still in the Air Force. My best friend
29 was there. He met me there. That was June, middle of June 1970. It took me a while to
30 readjust. I don't think I've ever readjusted completely. My sleep habits for the first ten
31 years I'd say were like in Nam. I still wake up at 3:00 in the morning Steve, thirty-two

1 years after the war. Three or three thirty every night. I came back and I drank heavily
2 the first two years and I smoked lots of pot. The reason I did those two drugs especially
3 is because I didn't dream. I could actually pass out. Not really sleep. No dreaming. I
4 hated the dreams I had about Vietnam. I did that until about 1980. It got a little bit better
5 after '80, but not too much. I worked in bars. I had several jobs doing everything from
6 cab driving to janitor to bartending to dealing marijuana. I probably would last a year or
7 two with a job, then I would quit the job or get fired, one or the other until 1980. The
8 first 10 years after the war are kind of a blur to me also. I don't remember too much. I
9 bought a motorcycle. I used to like to go to bars and get into fights. I was confused to
10 say the least. I know that we weren't well liked. My first year back I went back to the
11 University of New Mexico. Took a couple of classes. We were told in our classes that
12 we were baby killers and rapists. The mainstream Veterans organizations, the VFW and
13 the American Legion, I tried to go down and join those. We were told there that we were
14 losers and drug addicts. They basically told us you guy's war wasn't a real war. We
15 don't think that you are deserving of us. That was fine with me. I just walked out of
16 those places. That was fine. We were ostracized from society. I felt like I had done
17 something wrong. I was told that I should feel guilty. That I should feel ashamed. I
18 guess I bought into that. I mean, I grew my hair out. I didn't let anybody know I was a
19 Vet. I kind of dropped into my own peer group, trying to fit in with them and I didn't. It
20 was sad, I guess. I look back and I was so Goddamn angry. I was so angry at the way
21 the war was. There were too many of my friends that were dead and there were too many
22 of them wounded. There were too many of them still there and that angered me. My
23 own peers made me angry, too, because they didn't want to listen to anything I had to say
24 about the war. The ones that really angered me was the treatment by me and my Vet
25 friends by the WWII guys. Specifically in the American Legion and the VFW. They
26 thought that we were less than them. We hadn't seen any combat. That really hurt. That
27 really, really hurt me. I got really angry at them. I didn't join the VFW until three years
28 ago. Now I belong to the VFW and the American Legion. It was that whole sense that
29 we were outcasts. We were not welcome. We had done something wrong. I had a huge
30 problem with that because I know I didn't do anything wrong. I bought into it. Like I
31 said, I tried to after a couple of years, I wouldn't tell anybody I was in Vietnam.

1 Whenever I applied for a job, I wouldn't tell them I was a Vietnam Vet. I just didn't
2 want anybody to know. Even though I wanted to say something so bad. I wanted to tell
3 them. I wanted to tell them what Vietnam was about. I joined a Vietnam Vets Against
4 the War, but in name only. I still have my card, in fact, that you guys will get that has my
5 name on it. I still had misgivings. My friends are still there. They're still getting blown
6 up. They're out there doing their job. I can't get out there and say Ho Chi Minh is going
7 to win. There was a huge tug there, too. Basically I was in name only in the VVAW.

8 SM: When did you join that?

9 AG: I'd say 197-. It must have been after I dropped out of school. '71 probably.
10 I went back to the University for two semesters. I dropped out because once people
11 found out I was a Vet, then I was a target. '71 I guess it was. They had what you call a
12 chapter on campus. They were too radical. I was confused. Let's put it that way. I was
13 very confused. I wanted the war to end so my friends could come home, but I couldn't
14 get out there and spout the anti-war shit that I heard. I know they had no respect for me
15 as a vet. I remember going to an anti-war rally one time on campus. This was probably
16 in late summer or early fall. It must have been late fall because it was the first semester I
17 was back. I wanted to speak. You could get in line to go up to speak. They asked me
18 who I was and I said I was a vet. The guy told me I couldn't speak because I was a
19 Veteran. I was a baby killer. This guy said, "You're a baby killer. You should have gone
20 to Canada. We're not going to let you speak." I turned around and walked away. I
21 should have punched the guy, but I didn't. I figured Goddamn they didn't even want to
22 listen to me. I'm on your side. I want to end the war. I just didn't understand the
23 movement. I didn't understand why we were looked at with such disdain. I guess a lot of
24 it too for me, for the most part it was apathy towards it too. People didn't care. They
25 wanted to forget about the war and about us. That hurt. I used to go to bars and we'd
26 find each other. Veterans would find each other. We'd sit there and get drunk. I'm sure
27 people looked at us weird then. Basically we would get mindless together. We'd get
28 drunk or get high. Didn't talk about the war very much. We'd sit there and talk about
29 what we were seeing in the country and how we were being treated, what was going on.
30 Why can't we express our feeling about our friends that are still there? It was just a big

1 confusing time for me. I couldn't get a beer. I was only 20 years old when I got out too.
2 That was when I got a fake I.D. pretty quick.

3 SM: The other Veterans that you'd met on campus, had they had problems with
4 the anti-war movement as well? Or members of the mainstream anti-war movement? I
5 mean as part of the VVAW, you're part of the anti-war movement.

6 AG: Yes. I'm not sure. I guess they were more political than I wanted to be.
7 They hated Richard Nixon. I guess I did too. I hated LBJ too. I wasn't willing to work
8 politically I think is one of the reasons why I didn't stick with them too much. I guess
9 that's about it. I think back on that time period. I think about my anger. Basically my
10 anger drove me. I wasn't very fearful of things here. Even though I thought when I came
11 back I might have to start shooting my own country. That was kind of scary. In 1970,
12 right before I left Vietnam not only did the U.S. go into Cambodia, but in Albuquerque at
13 the University of New Mexico they called the National Guard out and they ran some
14 students through with bayonets. I remember in the Stars and Stripes a few weeks before I
15 left 'Nam there was a three inch headlines saying nine student stabbed at UNM. I
16 showed my friends going this is my hometown. This is where I'm going you guys. I
17 started thinking my God. They killed people at Kenn State. They shot these kids dead at
18 Kenn State. They're running bayonettes through people at the University. I'm going the
19 war's coming home. That scared me, Steve. I was real scared that I might have to come
20 back here and start doing to my own countrymen what I've been doing to Vietnamese.
21 That just did not settle with me well. Did not settle too well at all. I did buy a gun when
22 I came home. One of the first things I did was went to a pawnshop and got a .45 that I
23 carried with me in backpack at UNM for two semesters. I felt safer. After that first year,
24 I got rid of the gun. I did not trust myself to use it in a situation where it needed to be
25 used. I was afraid that I might go off the deep end, so I got rid of the gun after the first
26 year.

27 SM: As you were taking classes there, what was the response of the professors to
28 your Veteran's status or did they know?

29 AG: The one class I remember specifically, I took an English class. We got to
30 write about anything we wanted to write about. Of course, I wrote about Vietnam. There
31 was another Vietnam Vet in the class I met. We wrote about Vietnam. We were told

1 basically, I remember this teacher was a TA, she was from England. Heavily anti-war.
2 Basically, she would tell us that we were plagiarizing, or not telling the truth when we
3 were writing about Vietnam. I might even have a paper or two, that if I could find, I'd
4 like to give you guys too. I remember this class was tough to take. The people in the
5 class, once they found out we were vets, we got so much shit. We were basically told
6 that we were cowards because we went to Vietnam. We had no business being there.
7 We were called everything. My buddy and I would just leave the class. We would get
8 angry, leave the class and go outside. Sometimes we'd smoke pot out there, right outside
9 the class. That was hurtful. That just tore me up. I felt like a stranger in my own
10 hometown.

11 SM: Want to take a break?

12 AG: No.

13 SM: What about your family? How well could you interact with them about your
14 experiences. They didn't really want to talk about it. My father, like I said was in Korea.
15 I showed my mom my slides, I remember and she didn't ever talk to me about it. It was
16 just something that everybody wanted to shove under the rug. Nobody wanted to listen to
17 anything I had to say or we had to say. It was just like I had gone away on a camping trip
18 or something. Even my best friends from high school didn't want to hear anything about
19 Vietnam from me. It was a disappointment. I thought I had to something to say.
20 Obviously you've got to have an audience to be able to say anything to. My mom aged
21 20 years. I came home that was the first thing I noticed about my mom, she had gray
22 hair. She never had gray hairs before. Her face had lines on it, I had never seen before. I
23 didn't realized how much I affected her during my tour their. She saved all my letters I
24 sent her. I've read those letters since then. I'm amazed. I thought I didn't tell her
25 anything, but some of the things, Good Lord, I'm telling my mom this? That this ambush
26 happened, I sent her articles out of the Stars and Stripes about us getting overrun. I
27 always thought I'm going to protect her. I got home and I remember talking to my
28 brother and my dad about how much mom would worry. She watched the news every
29 night, anytime the Marines were mentioned. Anytime that I Corps or An Hoa was
30 mentioned she was always wondering that's where Tony is isn't it? I aged her. I feel bad
31 about that to this day. I know that she prayed for me and I know that she was premature

1 gray because of my tour there. I think she didn't want to hear, not that I wanted to tell
2 her. I don't think she wanted to hear what I had done. What I had witnessed. Even
3 though since then we have talked about it. About 25 years after the war, I think I finally
4 got around to talking to them.

5 SM: What went through your mind during some of the key events after you left?
6 The Paris Peace Accords in '73? Then the release of the prisoners and ultimately the Fall
7 of Saigon in April of '75?

8 AG: The first thing I need to tell you, in August of '70, when I got my first letter
9 from a buddy of mine in Vietnam that told me a guy named Dan Bennett was killed along
10 with a corpsman that I both new. I never wrote back to my buddies after that letter. The
11 whole thing about if I would have stayed there, these guys wouldn't have gotten killed. I
12 just cut ties right then. I didn't talk to anybody on my tour until 1996 or '97. I decided
13 that I couldn't talk to these guys anymore. I didn't want to hear anymore. I remember
14 writing my friend a letter back saying I don't want to talk to you anymore. I don't want
15 you guys to write any more letters. I didn't talk to this guy until two years ago. The guy
16 who wrote me the letter and I apologized to him. He said I understand. I cut my ties with
17 my platoon and my friends there in August. The whole Paris Peace thing, the whole
18 Secret Plan that Kissinger and Nixon had in '72. All those events angered me, more than
19 anything else. I knew the war could be ended all they had to do was just end the damn
20 thing. I just thought it was just a way for us to save face in some way or another. I don't
21 think I voted for anybody only because I didn't think there was anybody to vote for. I
22 saw the government as the enemy. I think to this day, I probably still think of them that
23 way. I lost faith in the government. I lost faith in the country. I lost faith in God, all
24 kinds of things I had believed in as a young man. That was gone. It still affects me today
25 I guess. I'm not real trustful the government tells me the truth. I think it goes back way
26 before my time in Vietnam. I think it goes back to the Kennedy assassination. That's
27 another story. I just lost a lot of faith. I lost faith in everything that I believed in before I
28 went to Vietnam. I remember '75 when we pulled out of Saigon. I remember that being
29 on live TV. I was looking at the bar tender. I remember how sad I was. I wasn't angry
30 anymore. I was saddened by the whole bug op we did. I thought about all the
31 Vietnamese we left there that we said we could get out and we left them there. That was

1 so damn sad. To this day I can see those Marines on top of the embassy getting into that
2 chopper. I can see them punching people in the face, knocking them away from the
3 chopper. I can see the aircraft carriers dumping helicopters overboard. I can see the
4 Vietnamese flying out. They're jumping out of their aircraft over the water. Just
5 abandoning those people. That has always stuck in my craw. That we abandoned these
6 people after telling them that we were going to help them. When the tanks rolled into the
7 presidential grounds, I remember that too. I was thinking what the hell was this about?
8 Was this for nothing? Did my friends die for nothing? Did I go through this for
9 absolutely nothing? I think I shut down my Vietnam side for about 20 years after that
10 whole debacle. I didn't want to see hear or read anything about Vietnam. My distrust in
11 the government increased. I guess it never has decreased since then. I'm real distrustful
12 of them.

13 SM: You said that things were kind of bad for that decade, the 1970s. When did
14 things start turning around for you?

15 AG: I think, when I got married in 1990. I finally found a woman who didn't
16 give a shit that I was a Vietnam vet. Her father was career Navy. I knew her for 10 years
17 before I could trust her and myself enough to ask her to marry me. I went through
18 probably 50 relationships with women. Especially early on, they'd find out I was a Vet
19 and they would drop me, which hurt. I met Judy and she basically pulled me out. I was
20 wallowing, pretty much in my pitty and my depressions and my anger and everything. I
21 had gotten into a couple of motorcycle accidents and I had done some real stupid things
22 that I had survived here. Just doing stupid, stupid things. Going to bars and trying to get
23 in pick fights. Trying to punch out police officers and just being a complete reprobate. I
24 met Judy. We got married in 1990. I went back to school at the University and got my
25 Bachelor's degree. There was a professor there that I met, who was also a Vietnam Vet.
26 Twenty-three years in the Marines. Actually Dr. Frankum had contacted him. He was
27 the first Vet -- this was 1990 or 1989 --that actually sat down with me and talked about
28 how we felt. Our emotions. No war stories, no laughing about this and that just how we
29 felt about the way we were treated. What it was like in combat. What that first firefight
30 was like. The first time I sat down and talked to somebody one on one like that. That
31 kind of brought me out of my denial. I think I was in denial for 20 years. That was a

1 coping mechanism for me. This guy helped me. He helped me understand. He started
2 giving me books to read. He was 23 years in the Marines. He had four Purple Hearts.
3 Three tours in Vietnam. He was there in 1954. He was the history professor at UNM.
4 Still a real good friend of mine. He was a good counselor; he was also a good listener.
5 He started giving me books to read. Marine Corps operational histories. Histories of
6 Vietnam. Histories of the Vietnamese people. History of France and the Vietnamese. I
7 never knew any of this stuff. I think that helped me understand. I think I was looking for
8 this understanding about what I had gone through. More than that I think I just wanted to
9 understand why decisions were made. Why we were there in the first place, which I
10 never knew. I think that has helped me cope with my feelings now. I think it's also
11 helped me try to understand the way that I feel and the way other veterans feel. In 1995,
12 when I was in graduate school, three hours short of getting my master's degree, getting
13 ready for my oral comps. I lost it. I started dreaming about Vietnam again, which I
14 hadn't done. I started drinking heavily again. I had really moderated my drugs and
15 drinking. For some reason Vietnam just came smacking me right in the face. I woke up
16 one day after a real three day drunk. My wife said you need to get some help. You need
17 to go out to the VA. I was reluctant to do that. I didn't think there was anything they
18 could do. I went out there for her, not for me. For her. I got out there and met some
19 great counselors there. They told me first, I had to go to substance abuse because I was
20 just tearing up my body from the alcohol I was doing. After that substance abuse
21 program was just three weeks. They did a PTSD assessment and they said that they
22 wanted me to go through a program out there. A 12-week program. I thought about it for
23 about three months and then decided o.k. I'm going to do this. I have time to do it now.
24 The opportunity's there. I still didn't believe I had posttraumatic stress because, I know
25 this is going to sound weird. I didn't think I had seen anything combat wise. It's kind of
26 silly when I look at it now. I said o.k. I'll do this. I went to the program it was terrific. It
27 made me understand why I had lived my life the way I had been living it. I tried to
28 understand my emotions better. They gave me coping mechanism that I could use. It
29 was Godsend and a lifesaver. It saved my marriage and probably saved my life. I'm sure
30 that I wouldn't be alive today if it wasn't for the VA. The people out there were very
31 sensitive to us. They were sensitive to what we had gone through. I understood that I did

1 have this thing called posttraumatic stress. One of the reasons that I was reluctant to go
2 through the program was because I had told them the first day I met them that I wanted
3 them to cure me. My name therapist, as I call her, said well we can't cure you Tony.
4 We can show you how to cope with these things. You're always going to have them. That
5 scared me. I didn't want to have this all the time. They were able to put me on anti-
6 depressants. I go out there now, once every two months to talk to my shrink. I go to the
7 Vet center now, once a week. I've been doing that since 1995. Being around other
8 Veteran's who feel the same way I do has helped me just tremendously. I guess my
9 feeling of loneliness in this whole thing after I came home, that I was the only one who
10 was feeling this and I was the only one who had gone through these things after the war.
11 Then I met other people that had been doing it. There was nothing wrong with it. I mean
12 we're not evil people. I mean I paid my taxes. I worked hard. I'm not one of these
13 wannabes, these guys that wear their camouflage things around and do their gigs trying to
14 be wannabe veterans. The VA has done a great job. The vet center I go to is one of the
15 best things I've done. It's not necessarily a struggle everyday, but it's something I have
16 to be aware of constantly. They taught me that there are certain emotions. Certain
17 anniversary dates that are going to make me feel a certain way. Now, I can see them
18 coming and I can cope with them much better. I have people to talk to. I think that's a
19 big thing with me. People to talk to and anti-depressant drugs that do the job. I just feel
20 lucky as hell that I have a wonderful wife that loves me. Also I have other Vet friends
21 who can understand and give me their opinion and their coping mechanism they use and I
22 just feel very lucky.

23 SM: When you started to that program did your attitude about your service in the
24 war change?

25 AG: Yes. It really changed, Steve. I always felt ashamed. I felt that I had done
26 something wrong, like I said. Then I realized it. I always thought that I had done
27 something wrong. The whole guilt thing about why did I survive? And why did all these
28 good men I knew didn't make it. The best people I knew in Vietnam died. Why did I
29 survive? I'm not this great, good person. I came to realize after talking to my
30 therapist out there and going through the PTSD group out there, I must have done
31 something right because I'm here. I've come to realize that I'm here for a purpose. I'm

1 not sure what it is yet, but I survived. I have to keep the memory of the men that I loved
2 in Vietnam; I have to keep their memory alive. I have to try to live my life as good and
3 as honorable and as peaceful and with as much integrity and dignity as these men would
4 have lived their lives. My guilt isn't about survival anymore. My guilt, which is not as
5 severe, is about me not doing certain things. I'm not guilty about anything I did in
6 Vietnam. It's more about if I had been a little bit quicker, a little bit more aware. But
7 that guilt has been fairly well coped with. I feel that my service to my country, but
8 especially to the men I served with was well worth it. I would do it again Steve in a
9 millisecond if I could serve with the same men I did. For a long time, I never thought
10 that. The good thing that came out of Vietnam for me was the people I served with. We
11 were the best. These men were the best people I've ever known. I tried to explain that to
12 my wife. My wife and my friends and it's hard. I love my friends. I love my wife.
13 These guys, we went through something that I can't describe. I've always been loyal to
14 them. If they ever wanted me to do anything now, I would be right there next to them.
15 That to me, is the best thing that's come out of Vietnam. Just that feeling that we did
16 something that most people haven't done. We did it with honor and integrity. We
17 weren't the horrible things that we were told when we came home, that I bought into. I
18 lost the faith, but I've gotten it back now. Semper Fidelus is that term that the Marine
19 Corps uses our motto. I wasn't always faithful, even though I should have been. I've
20 gained that faith back I think. I have to honor the men who did not come back with the
21 one who came back or were seriously wounded. I just feel lucky that I didn't get a
22 scratch on me physically. I know now that my ego, my psyche was bent, but not broken.
23 I consider myself very lucky and fairly happy and I'm living life the way I wanted to. I
24 think that what you guys are doing out at Texas Tech is very important. I think the
25 American people need to hear from us now about what we did and what we went
26 through. I just feel privileged to be able to contribute to the Oral History Program at
27 Texas Tech.

28 SM: Thank you. Thank you very much. What do you think we should take away
29 from that war as a nation? What are the important lessons we should learn?

30 AG: I think that we need to make sure that when we go to war a couple of things.
31 First, we have to have the American people behind the war. Second thing is, we need to

1 get the men and the women now, who are fighting that war whatever they need to get the
2 job done. Whatever the need to get the job done. I think we need to have a specific
3 mission. We need to have this mission clearly articulated to me. We need to have a way
4 to articulate when it's over. Then to be perfectly honest, to paraphrase Ernest
5 Hemingway, they need to kick out all of the people that got us into the thing in the first
6 place. I think that we have to be very careful when we send our young men and women
7 into war. To this day Steve, anytime we've gone and done any military thing as long as
8 we're talking about it before I don't want us to do it. Once, that trigger is pulled, once we
9 make that decision we have to get in there and do the job. We have to give our fighting
10 men and women the tools to do the job as quickly with as few casualties as possible.
11 Then we've got to get the hell out of there. This is my own opinion. I realize that we
12 have to have clearly articulated goals. We have to accomplish those goals. I'm very
13 weary about this whole war on terrorism, but that's just something I have to worry about.

14 SM: Is there anything else you'd like to discuss today?

15 AG: I don't think so Steve. I just want to thank you again for your
16 professionalism, your sense of humor, and your patience.

17 SM: Thank you. NO, it's been a tremendous experience. Thank you for sharing
18 it with us.

19 AG: This is something I've wanted to do for a long time. Now, people can
20 access. I think that as your oral history archive grows I think it's going to be a
21 tremendous resource for scholars and for veterans too. I've already gone online and read
22 a few of the oral histories you've already done. You guys are doing a great job. Keep up
23 the good work.

24 SM: Thank you. Let me go ahead and shut off the equipment and put an ending
25 to this. This will end the interview with Mr. Tony Goodrich. Thank you again.