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**The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Lt. Col. John Gary Morris
Conducted by Laura M. Calkins, Ph.D.
August 31; September 1, 2005
Transcribed by Mindy Moser**

1 Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech
2 University, initiating an oral history interview with Lt. Col. John Gary Morris. Today's
3 date is the thirty-first of August 2005. I am in the interview room in the Special
4 Collections building on the campus of Texas Tech in Lubbock. The colonel is speaking
5 to me by telephone from his home in another part of Texas. Colonel, first of all, good
6 morning.

7 John Gary Morris: Good morning.

8 LC: I want to thank you for taking the time to participate in the Oral History
9 Project. It's extremely important to us that we have your contribution and we're grateful
10 for your time.

11 GM: Honored.

12 LC: Thank you. I want to confirm that it's all right with you, first of all, that I
13 call you Gary.

14 GM: Yes.

15 LC: Okay, and also that we make this interview available, both in audio and
16 transcription form, to researchers through the Vietnam Archive.

17 GM: Yes.

18 LC: Thanks, Gary. First of all, let's start off by finding out a little bit about
19 where you hail from and when you were born. Can you tell me a little bit about where
20 you were born and when?

1 GM: 1942 in Houston, Texas. From there I moved to Dallas and eventually
2 ended up in Irving at age four, which has been my home town basically for the rest of my
3 life except for the stint after I came home from Vietnam. I spent seven years there after
4 the war. Then after seven years I moved back to Irving and I've resided there ever since.

5 LC: Where were you living after Vietnam?

6 GM: In Denton, Texas.

7 LC: Oh, okay. So you're Texas through-and-through.

8 GM: Yes.

9 LC: Okay. Gary, tell me a little bit about yourself growing up and your parents.
10 Did you live with your family and what did your parents do?

11 GM: My mother was a teacher. My father was a self-starter. I admired him
12 greatly. He started his own business, which lasted up until almost forty-five years, which
13 I sold later on. When I did sell it, it was the fourth oldest business in town, in Irving. He
14 started it with two people and we ended with three people. So he started it. He had no
15 credit. As I look back, it was quite something. He was Czech. His parents came over
16 from Czechoslovakia. He was probably, in my mind, as I look back—he's deceased—
17 he's probably the most unusual person and the most fascinating person I have ever known
18 in my life.

19 LC: Really?

20 GM: Extremely patriotic. He would talk about it to friends, but I'll tell you he
21 just came as close to John Wayne as I ever seen except that he didn't talk about it. His
22 favorite person was Tom Landry.

23 LC: Tom Landry, the football coach?

24 GM: Yeah. He came close to being a Tom Landry. He was active in the
25 Methodist Church. He didn't talk about it much. He taught Sunday school class for
26 years. As a Czech, he was extremely protective of his family. Also, I guess as a
27 European parent, praise was little, physical hugging and kissing and all of that was
28 unheard of, but the paddle was there. Not much talking about whatever other than, "Did
29 you do your schoolwork?" and if you didn't do what you were supposed to do you got
30 busted, but extremely protective. He told me about my grandfather who came over. He
31 came over from the old country. He left there because he was at the age in which

1 Czechoslovakia was going to draft him in the Army and at that time when you went in
2 the Army you went in virtually for your life, I think for twenty to twenty-five years
3 servitude. So he came over in a boat and he started out in West Texas where my father
4 was from. The thing I remember about my father was he worked all his life. I saw a
5 book that he gave to his granddaughter that was a fill-in-the-blank sort of space. It would
6 ask you questions. Some of the things he said was—and it was very impressive upon
7 me—was, “What did you do most in your childhood?” He said, “I worked.” “What did
8 you do for a pastime?” “I worked.” “What was your favorite thing to do?” “I swam in
9 the creek.” He lived with seven brothers out in West Texas. It was an extremely hard
10 life. His dad was a blacksmith. It was hard. All his brothers became alcoholics with the
11 exception of him. I don’t know why he did not. I guess it was because he was the oldest
12 brother. Alcoholism was not unknown because out there they didn’t have much water.
13 So being a Czech, they knew how to make their own brew. I understand from my cousin
14 that it wasn’t that un-often that they didn’t get into the brew. They drank a lot of it.

15 LC: Whereabouts in West Texas were they?

16 GM: Bomarton, Texas, which is just southwest of Seymour, which is just
17 southwest of Wichita Falls. They were such a wild bunch that he told me one time that
18 when they came down to dinnertime it was everyone for himself. One time one of the
19 brothers stuck a fork in the other brother’s head.

20 LC: In his head?

21 GM: In his head. They took him off to Wichita Falls in some type of vehicle to
22 have a doctor extract it and so forth. They were just a wild bunch. Dad strongly believed
23 in sports and schooling. He loved to read Latin. He graduated valedictorian of his class
24 of four. He had a scholarship to Texas. He went down there and he didn’t like it. It was
25 too big, I think. He went to North Texas. I keep talking to him because he was most
26 influential in my life. My mother was caring. She was a schoolteacher. She was there.
27 She just didn’t have that much contact with me. He was the one I was always trying to
28 impress in everything.

29 LC: Now, where was she from?

30 GM: She was from a little town. I forgot the name, but it was up on the other
31 side of McKinney. On her side, I became a member of the SAR (Sons of the American

1 Revolution), because back in her history there was a member who was a great-great-
2 great-great grandfather who was in the Revolutionary War and who was wounded and
3 fought in several engagements.

4 LC: What was her name? What was your mom's maiden name?

5 GM: Johnny Davenport.

6 LC: Was her first name Johnny?

7 GM: Johnny.

8 LC: Was that legal? That was her legal name?

9 GM: That was her legal name.

10 LC: That was kind of hard.

11 GM: Johnny LaVerne Davenport. My father who was in the Revolutionary War
12 was named John Dick, D-I-C-K. I had several other grandfathers who fought in the War
13 of 1812 and so—

14 LC: What about the Civil War? Do you know anything about that?

15 GM: No, I couldn't find anybody. But I don't know. I grew up in a very
16 patriotic family. I can remember lots of times playing Army. I did it all the time, all the
17 time, always playing Army. I don't know why, I just did it all the time.

18 LC: What about brothers and sisters?

19 GM: I have a sister. We weren't terribly close. I did have—a great effect on my
20 life was I had a collie from age four until I graduated from high school.

21 LC: What was your dog's name?

22 GM: Her name was Jill. I loved that dog. I was not here when she died and it
23 killed me. I loved her so much that I named my firstborn after her. My daughter's name
24 was Carrie Jill Morris.

25 LC: Well, I know that feeling.

26 GM: It was horrendous. So anyway, with that, I was not good in school.

27 LC: Were you not?

28 GM: No.

29 LC: Did that displease your dad?

30 GM: Yeah, and at the time they didn't know anything about ADD (attention
31 deficit disorder), but I was ADD. You can go back and I found my old lessons and so

1 forth and they all said, “He needs to slow down. He needs to stay in his chair. His
2 writing is terrible. He needs to slow down.” Everything was fast, fast, fast. I can
3 remember fast, fast, fast. I needed the medication. In fact, even all the way up through
4 college I worked on the principle of reading something three and four times. I over-read
5 and if you looked at my book it looked like a coloring book. I’d line it and one color
6 would be yellow and then I’d come back and line something else in black. It was a
7 coloring book. I had a professor one time tell me, “Gary, you can tell me what color
8 socks General Lee wore at the Battle of Gettysburg, but you can’t tell me who won the
9 battle.” Therefore I was a C-minus student and I worked hard in school. It was hard to
10 prove to my parents that I was working hard. So I got scolded a lot and even in college—
11 I had a scholarship to the University of Dallas to play baseball. I loved the game of
12 baseball. My father loved it. We played a lot in the backyard and so forth. Anyway, I
13 had no help in high school playing baseball. They didn’t know anything about it. We
14 had high school football coaches.

15 LC: What high school did you go to?

16 GM: Irving High School.

17 LC: About how many kids in your class?

18 GM: Oh, seven hundred.

19 LC: So it was huge for that time.

20 GM: I think that was it. Yeah. But my graduating class was only like three
21 hundred.

22 LC: What year did you graduate?

23 GM: 1960. Baseball was my love.

24 LC: Did you follow all the—were you a big fan of professionals?

25 GM: Yeah, I was a Yankees fan.

26 LC: You couldn’t hardly help it back in those days.

27 GM: No. My drive was to be a first baseman for the New York Yankees. I heard
28 all this garbage about, “You can do anything you want to if you just try hard enough.” In
29 later years I clarified it. If I may jump forward, with my artwork I would go to the
30 schools and sometimes I’d be there with some professional basketball player or football
31 player. They’d always say this garbage, “If you want it bad enough you can get it. Just

1 try hard enough.” I always come up behind them and I’d say, “Well, you can try that but
2 you’d better have a back-up.”

3 LC: Back-up plan.

4 GM: I use the example that when I was a kid I’d try hard enough to be a first
5 baseman for the New York Yankees and finally one time I got to meet the first baseman
6 for the New York Yankees. I realized that guy weighed about sixty-five more pounds
7 than I did. He stood about eight inches taller than I did and hit a ball about a hundred
8 yards farther than I did and there was no way I was going to play baseball for the New
9 York Yankees. I realized “I better have a second plan. So you can try, but have a back
10 up, pal.”

11 LC: That’s very good advice. Were you drawn to any particular subject in
12 school, in high school?

13 GM: No, no, nothing.

14 LC: Nothing?

15 GM: Nothing, just baseball.

16 LC: Just trying to get through it so you could get to the Yankees.

17 GM: And then when I went to college, it was the same thing. Just get through.
18 So I played my four years of college baseball at the University of Dallas. I guess those
19 were probably the happiest four years of my life. I still think back to those days, the
20 competition, the fun, the laughter, the extreme competition, and I was good. I had a
21 national record with NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) for several
22 years of stolen bases. I just used to get on the bases. We had a great coach, Coach Al
23 Ogletree. He eventually ended up being the winningest coach in NCAA (National
24 Collegiate Athletic Association) history and he ended up in every hall of fame you could
25 think of. I helped him into the Texas Baseball Hall of Fame. We were just a bunch of
26 kids that he was fortunate to be able to get that didn’t make it to the other colleges. We
27 would go and we beat every Southwest Conference school. We played a brand of ball
28 that I would call it a combination of little ball and we had a little bit of big ball. Little
29 ball was hit, bunt, steal sort of thing and then we had a couple of guys that could go into
30 the pros with big ball. They could hit the big ball. Coach would let me and other guy

1 who were extremely fast, if I may say, and he would work it—I don't guess you want to
2 hear all this.

3 LC: I sure do. Actually, I'm waiting to find out how many bases you stole.

4 GM: I stole twenty-seven in one season and we only had twenty-nine games in
5 one season.

6 LC: Oh, my gosh.

7 GM: We didn't play many games. Today they play sixty and seventy. Back then
8 we played twenty-nine. I stole twenty-seven straight without being thrown out. So that
9 was a record. Nobody broke that for several years. So we had situations, for example, I
10 went to Coach one time and said, "I've got an idea if you let me try it." He said, "What's
11 your idea?" I said, "Well, if me and Pat, if we get on first and the other one gets on third,
12 let's say I'm on first. Let me walk off first and pretend I've got myself caught off first. In
13 other words, the pitcher will see I'm off and I'll start back to first and I'll slip, but I really
14 have control of my body."

15 LC: You're going to fake him out.

16 GM: Yeah. When he throws the ball at first I'm actually doing to take off
17 towards second. I'm going to have a real good jump towards second. When he starts
18 chasing me down towards second, Pat's on third. He's going to take off toward home.

19 LC: Right, got it.

20 GM: He's going to chase me to second and while I'm going to second, he'll stop
21 and look and see that Pat has already gone toward home. Pat was fast enough that he
22 could get into home plate before the throw is there and I'd already be at second. By the
23 time the catcher got the ball at second, I was already halfway turned to third. I'd go into
24 third. So where you had a situation where you had a man at first and third, now you have
25 a man that scored and I'd be at third base.

26 LC: And you're sitting on third waiting.

27 GM: Yeah, and the pitcher would be going, "What the hell happened here?" But
28 it was all planned.

29 LC: What did Coach say?

30 GM: He just sat there and laughed and the other guys are going, "What'd they
31 do?" I guess our biggest thrill, we played Ft. Hood. Now, at that time the services were

1 drafting and they drafted out of the majors. We're going down to play them in a
2 tournament two years. We beat them both two years and they had guys on there that
3 were playing for Philly, you know, and they didn't have any Yankees, and the Dodgers
4 and they had Los Angeles. It was just unbelievable when we looked at the roster. We're
5 going to play these guys? It was bad enough playing Baylor and all those guys and Pan-
6 Am. They played—the first game we beat them in a playoff. Then we played in the
7 playoffs and these were men, okay? We were kids. They played dirty and I'd be on first.
8 I played first and these guys would come back into first and they'd go for my foot when
9 they tried a pick-off.

10 LC: Now, when you say that, what do you mean?

11 GM: Well, if the guy's on first base, he's got a hit and he's standing there. The
12 pitcher tries a pick-off and throws the ball back on first. Well, he comes back toward
13 first to step on the bag. Well, guess what? They'd step on my foot with spikes. It hurt
14 and they'd bring blood, you know? I wasn't going to say anything. It happened three or
15 four times. I'd go over there and we'd look down and hell, I wouldn't even have a sock
16 hardly at that point. It would just be gone. We weren't going to say anything so we'd
17 fight back on double plays. If I was at first and there was a ground ball—you know what
18 a double play is?

19 LC: Yes.

20 GM: I would go in to second base. If I wasn't going to second base I'd go out to
21 shortstop. I would literally go out of my way and I would go in there. While he's
22 throwing it in there and whoever's at second we'd go in there and knock him silly. You
23 could do it and you could hurt them because if they were in the air they've got to come
24 down and they could come down wrong. Well, there was a time we were playing Baylor
25 and I slid in and I didn't mean to hurt this guy. I went under him. I just barely touched
26 his toe with my foot and he came down wrong. He broke his ankle. He was the starting
27 split end for the Baylor Bears and he was out for the season. That's toe versus toe. Well,
28 every time we went in to do something like that they respected us and they wouldn't start
29 a fight or anything. But later on in the game one time they went too far.

30 LC: What happened?

1 GM: Well, they had a man on second. They hit a ground ball to shortstop, this
2 guy did. When you're that close to the ball, to shortstop, you're not going to go to third
3 because you're standing right in front of him.

4 LC: Right. He could reach out and touch you.

5 GM: Haul over to third base and then you're out. It's what we call you look him
6 back. You're look him back towards second, making sure he goes back towards second,
7 then you throw to first. Well, this guy just took off toward third and the third baseman
8 was behind third. He's supposed to be ready to receive the ball, bent over, glove down.
9 This guy did what we call a stand-up slide. He tucked one leg under and the other leg up
10 so he could bring it down fast and stand up. He raked Norman. He raked him from the
11 top of his head all the way through the face, down to his chest with his spikes. I mean, it
12 was ugly. I mean, he went back and all you could see was blood, especially on his face.
13 Nobody did anything. Norm was just bleeding like crazy. We sent him to the medic
14 place to get taken care of. So Coach being what he was, he was stout. We played on.
15 We remembered who the guy was. So when he came to bat the next time, the next inning
16 or so, Coach walked out to the mound and he brought all the infield together and he said,
17 "What I want you to do," he says, "I want you to put the first pitch right in that guy's
18 head. I want you to hurt him. I don't want anybody here, if he charges the mound,
19 nobody's to move. Nobody's to move. I will take care of it. If he doesn't come out,
20 that's fine. You just keep throwing 'til you hit him." We had a guy who threw pretty
21 damn hard. So what was going to happen, we looked over at Al and he was up on top of
22 the dugout. What he was going to do, he was going to waylay him from the side. I guess
23 you'd call it a clip in football. He was going to take care of him right there on the infield.
24 He came up to bat. The coach over there called him out of the game. That was the end
25 of that. The funny part is that Norman was sleeping in the bunk with me that night. He
26 was above me. No, he was below me. Well, I got up in the middle of the night to make a
27 head call about three in the morning and Norman had come back all bandaged and stuff.
28 He was asleep. I got down to go made a head call and he wasn't there. I went all in the
29 quarters there and he wasn't there. So I said, "Coach, Norman's not here." Norman was
30 from Irving, too. We played ball together. Norman was quiet, but you didn't mess with
31 Norman. He's the one, he'd get you. You know? So sure enough, we went out and we

1 looked for him. We called security and they said, “Well, we’ve got him over here at the
2 police station.” “What do you got him over there for?” “Well, he went over to and beat
3 this guy up about something that happened on the baseball field. He went over there and
4 beat him up. We had to go over there and drag him off and we’ve got him here locked
5 up. We were just fixing to call you to come pick him up.” So what Norman did, he
6 found out where he was and went over there and beat the hell out of him.

7 LC: He handled it separately.

8 GM: He took care of it himself, all bandaged up. He went over and got the guy
9 in bed and I don’t know, just beat him up. We had great fun. We were playing Baylor.
10 Baylor was a bunch of jerks. University of Dallas was Catholic and they were Baptist.
11 They just didn’t like us. They would give us a bad time so a couple of our guys took
12 some shoe polish—this was at the Fort Hood tournament—and they had their uniforms
13 out hanging on the line. They took this shoe polish and on the back of their jerseys they
14 wrote UD (University of Dallas) on all of them. So we played them the next day and
15 they had UD written on the back of their jerseys.

16 LC: I bet they were mad.

17 GM: No, who was mad was our principal. Not our principal, our president.
18 University of Dallas was an intellectual type of school and I learned what pseudo-
19 intellectual meant there. We had to pay for all of those and so forth.

20 LC: Uh-oh. You guys were supposed to be better than that?

21 GM: Four years later they dropped us. In fact, we ended up going to NAIA
22 conference playoffs the next year and the president came down and said, “I want you to
23 reduce your schedule to thirteen.” We asked why and he said the school was getting
24 better known for the baseball than they are the other.

25 LC: So he decided—

26 GM: The coach left.

27 LC: Oh, yeah, right.

28 GM: He left and they dropped all the scholarships. It was so sad because a lot of
29 the kids had come here and were freshman or sophomores and now they don’t have
30 scholarships and now they’ve got to go somewhere else. As a result Dallas Baptist
31 University over here got a bunch of boys, our guys, and started a program and now they

1 have probably one of the best baseball programs in Texas. They've sent several to the
2 majors. I remember the time the president of SMU (Southern Methodist University)
3 came over here to watch us play SMU. While he was over there he said, "I'd like to meet
4 the president of your school." We sent a runner up there to get the president, Dr. Cowan,
5 and asked him to come down. He said, "I don't go to those games. If he wants to meet
6 me he's got to come up here." What a jerk. My father was president of the Irving
7 Chamber of Commerce. He went out there and talked to the president, Dr. Cowen and
8 said, "We ought to do a joint venture here. Let us join hands and we can help you and
9 you can help us," and today that's a major deal. The public relations person of the school
10 is president of the Chamber. It's a big deal between the two. He said, "No, we work
11 primarily with Dallas. We don't do anything with you guys." He basically escorted Dad
12 to the door.

13 LC: He sounds very—

14 GM: I got to get back to telling you about Dad. One time he did something for
15 me I'll never forget. I was a senior. I slid into second and I actually broke a bone in my
16 ankle in which I could not go up on my toes, but I could walk. When I run, I run on my
17 toes. Good runners run on their toes. So Coach came out there and he was a football
18 coach. I could walk around without my toes and I couldn't run. He just kind of did a
19 number on me and told me to get off the field. It embarrassed me and really hurt me
20 because I was ready to play. I loved the game. Dad was over there. So I went home. I
21 was really upset and—no, I went to the hospital that night. They had to look at it because
22 it was swollen. They took X-rays. The doctor that was there checked it out and said,
23 "You've just got a bad sprain. Go on home." About 7:30 the next morning that doctor
24 called and said, "No, you need to come on in here. You've got a broken bone." So I
25 came on in and I got a cast. I went on up there. So I went to school. My first class was
26 close to the football coach's office. I was going around and I looked around and I saw
27 Dad's car there. My best buddy was there and I said, "Hey, Dad's out there. I wonder
28 what he's doing out there. Let's go out and see." Charlie said, "Hey, I know your dad.
29 You better leave things alone." I'll be darned. I came out of my first class and there's
30 that coach. I want to talk about someone that did a 180. "Hey, Gary, how are you doing?
31 How are you feeling? Need help getting around?" I mean, he must've really got in his

1 britches. That always impressed me about Dad. The game—one time I hit a ball, and I
2 guess my greatest thrill was we beat Texas. I hit a homerun the last inning. Here's this
3 little old school of five hundred people that beat Texas. I hit a homerun and I came off
4 and he was setting over there and I went over past him. It really hurt me. He didn't say
5 anything like, "Nice hit, I'm proud of you," or a slap or anything. He was just sitting
6 there keeping score and he said, "Be sure to get your studies done." That was all and that
7 hurt. Well, what I didn't know was, the minute we got back home that night he called all
8 the newspapers and told them what I had done. It came out the next morning in the
9 *Herald* and all the papers. I said, "Hey, Coach, how'd you get that so fast?" He said, "I
10 didn't call them." I said, "Who called them?" He said, "Your dad did." So he would tell
11 people what a good ballplayer I was, but he never would say it to anybody else.

12 LC: Well, it also sounds like he was also concerned that you study, too.

13 GM: He was concerned I'd become a—the worst thing he could call me was a
14 showboat. Boy, he called me that one time and, boy, that really hurt. I quit doing
15 whatever it was that I was doing. "You've got to quit showboating out there in the field."
16 "I'm not showboating." Anyway, I admired him as a patriot. When I was in Vietnam he
17 sold flags. I got this story from the places. Some hippie came in there and wanted to buy
18 a flag.

19 LC: Came into his store?

20 GM: Yeah. Dad wasn't going to sell it to him. He wanted to know what he was
21 going to do with it. He got in this humongous argument about selling him the flag
22 without saying—they got in this big argument and Dad was going to physically throw
23 him out of the place. The secretary called the police and they came out there and got this
24 guy and threw him out. He wasn't going to sell him that flag because he was afraid he
25 was going to burn it. See? I always thought that was neat. He never, ever said anything
26 about being proud that I joined the Marine Corps or I was going to Vietnam, never said
27 anything to me. When I left to go to Vietnam and I left Love, I guess it's typical about
28 every father and son. I just went down and hugged mom and hugged sister and came to
29 Dad and I almost broke down and I almost cried. I almost cried. We just looked at each
30 other and I turned around and walked away. I was fixing to cry.

31 LC: You didn't shake hands or anything?

1 GM: No, just walked away. The feeling was there. I understand that while I was
2 overseas he arranged to read so many pages of the Bible each day through the tour. It
3 was so funny. My mother said that somehow they got into a discussion. She heard that if
4 you got hurt or killed that the Marines would come knock on your door. So she told Dad,
5 she says, "I want you to remove the doorbell." "Why?" "I don't want the Marines to
6 come and ring the doorbell." He said, "Well, they'll just knock on the door," and she
7 said, "Well, I want you to remove the front door." She was a wonderful mother. I used
8 to love that. "I want you to remove the front door." He said, "Well, I can't remove the
9 front door. People can just walk in." "Well, I don't care. I want you to remove that front
10 door. I don't want it." I just love that story.

11 LC: Well, Gary, let me ask you, when did you leave University of Dallas?

12 GM: When did I leave?

13 LC: Yeah. Did you graduate?

14 GM: No, I didn't graduate. I lacked two years of Spanish. I just couldn't deal
15 with Spanish. I just couldn't handle it. So I transferred over to North Texas and I
16 graduated the next year.

17 LC: Which was?

18 GM: '65. That's where I saw the Marines land at Da Nang.

19 LC: On TV, you mean?

20 GM: On TV. Yeah, I can remember the day I saw it. I was in the chow hall
21 watching them land. Oh, I've also got to tell you one funny thing, too. The last game I
22 played we were in a conference. I always hoped that I had a chance of playing some pro
23 ball somewhere. I hoped somebody was watching. There were scouts up there. This guy
24 came up behind me and I was untying my shoes and he says, "Son, are you married?" I
25 said—he said, "Son, you got any kids?" I said, "No, sir." He said, "Are you married?" I
26 said, "No, sir." He handed me his card and he said, "Call me when you get back," and he
27 was with the Cubs. I turned to my buddy and I said, "What the hell is he talking about,
28 'Call me when you get back?'" He said, "Hey, there's a war going on. You're fixing to
29 be 4-A." It's the first time I thought about the real world, the real world out there. I saw
30 the thing on Da Nang. Then I started to think about what I was going to have to do and
31 the recruiters knocked on my door.

1 LC: Did they really?

2 GM: Yeah. They were going around the place I was staying. I loved the blues.
3 It goes back to the beginning of time. The blues sell themselves. I talked to them. One
4 of the reason I joined them was when I played college ball I never missed a game. I
5 never missed a game and I always wanted to hit leadoff. Leadoff, most guys don't want
6 to hit leadoff. It takes a particular person, Coach told me later, to find somebody that
7 wants to hit leadoff. It's like a lot of people don't want to sit on the front row. Nobody
8 wants to be the first one to do something of whatever. They want to be the fourth or fifth
9 one back. Well, I always loved being the first one there because I liked to get things
10 going. I always like to screw the pitcher up as much as I could, you know? I liked to get
11 in close to the plate and see if he could hit me. I would try to foul off as many as I could.
12 I just loved to—the pitcher and me were at war. Then when I got on first it was me and
13 the pitcher and then it was me and the catcher and the second baseman. It was just these
14 little wars. I loved it. But I loved to be the first one to get this thing started. One time I
15 bunted myself on after I fouled this guy off many times. Then I finally got him to throw
16 to first base so many times he finally threw it away and I went to second and I got on
17 second and I was bouncing around. The guy turned around and actually threw the ball
18 over the shortstop's head. Wrong place. I went to third. The coach took the pitcher out.
19 I had him so flabbergasted that he actually got taken out and I had him taken out. But
20 that was my greatest thrill. We had him going before the game was ever going. So
21 anyway, I joined the Marines because they kept saying, "We're the first ones in. We're
22 the first ones in at everything." I said, "Hey, that's me."

23 LC: That sounds like me.

24 GM: That's me. "What do you mean you're the first one?" "We're the first ones
25 in, always."

26 LC: Well, when did you sign up?

27 GM: That year.

28 LC: '65?

29 GM: In that fall or that spring. I spent the next five or six months running. I
30 weighed 129 pounds and I stood 5'10". I was just a stick. I barely made it in the weight
31 category to go in the service, but that's the way I played. I was just skinny all the time

1 and it was part of that ADD. I ran everywhere. I couldn't walk. So I went in and I could
2 run—before I went in I could run five miles forward and five miles backwards carrying
3 fifty pounds without stopping. My upper strength was real good. So when you got in
4 there at boot camp I could run with them, but the Marines had a way of getting you.
5 They could see it. What they would do is they would make you walk fast. They
6 wouldn't let you run. These DIs (drill instructors) could do that. In that, they killed me.
7 They absolutely walked me in the ground. I couldn't go a hundred yards. Have you ever
8 tried walking fast?

9 LC: It's a whole different—the muscles are completely different.

10 GM: Yeah, it's hard. You'll bust your rear end walking fast. Then when I got up
11 to do the pull-ups they saw I was really banging them out so what did they do? They
12 made me reverse hands. It's a whole different set of muscles.

13 LC: You mean cross over?

14 GM: Yeah. Instead of having the hands facing you they made you turn them and
15 do the hands to look the other way. That's a completely different set of muscles. I did a
16 half of one and they loved it. They were just screaming at me.

17 LC: Now what would they scream at you?

18 GM: Oh, lots of not nice things. I can't remember. That was the time when they
19 could use profanity. They can't use profanity now.

20 LC: Right. They have to be more clever.

21 GM: They'll get you.

22 LC: But they would spew out whatever came to mind, probably.

23 GM: Well, in basic their deal was, "You think you're going to be a lieutenant or a
24 Marine officer. You came in here to Marine officer, you were a candidate." They would
25 just make you terrified of you're not going to make it. It worked. The guys who
26 thought—most of them were from California. I'd heard them on the bus coming from
27 California that it was a piece of cake. They were gone the first three days.

28 LC: Gone meaning they washed out?

29 GM: Yeah, they quit.

30 LC: They left.

31 GM: They just quit. That's where we lost a lot. They just quit.

1 LC: Now, Gary, why did you not quit?

2 GM: I wanted to be a lieutenant. I did not want to go home as anything but an
3 officer in the Marines. I was going to be an officer of the Marines and that's all there was
4 to it.

5 LC: Since you had your degree, that was going to be possible.

6 GM: What?

7 LC: Since you had a degree and had been to college, it would be possible for you
8 to be an officer.

9 GM: That gave me the capability to be an officer. That's what I've told these
10 kids at school. Have a backup plan. Go to school and get a degree. I tell this as how I
11 got into the art field. I didn't get to play first base for the New York Yankees, but I got
12 my college degree which led me to the point that I became an officer in the Marine
13 Corps, which gave me—and I'll get into the art here later—it led to this other thing.
14 That's how I got in there as a lieutenant.

15 LC: Just for listeners, to clarify, you did your boot, your basic training at
16 Quantico.

17 GM: Yes.

18 LC: Once that was completed and you hung in there, what is it, ten weeks or so?

19 GM: Yeah, it was ten weeks.

20 LC: Something like that, yeah. Then they needed to send you for further training.

21 GM: Yeah, Basic School.

22 LC: Basic School.

23 GM: They gave you about two weeks off and then you came back and you were a
24 lieutenant. They sent all the lieutenants to Basic School, which is dormitory. It was the
25 coldest winter in twenty-seven years of Virginia. Here's where you learned leadership.
26 You learned how to land navigate. You learned how to call in air support, mortars. You
27 got to use all the firearms. You qualified with your rifle, and it was hard.

28 LC: Did you spend some time in the classroom and some time out on the field,
29 out on the ranges and so on?

30 GM: Yeah, fifty-fifty. I wasn't impressed with Basic School. In fact, we talked
31 about this when we went back to the reunion about three years ago. We went back to

1 Basic School and we talked to the CO (commanding officer). We told him about what
2 we had and he said, “No, it was terrible.” In fact, I have a copy of the CO’s address to us
3 at Mess Night. In other words, about the last two or three nights that you’re there at
4 Basic School, right before you graduate you have a Mess Night. You put on your blues
5 and you learn how to conduct yourself as an officer when you’re eating in your blues.
6 You don’t pick up your fork until your guest does.

7 LC: Sure, some etiquette.

8 GM: Yeah, and which fork you pick up. Make sure you don’t stick it in
9 somebody’s head like you do in Bomarton. You do all this. Don’t let me forget to tell
10 you about the Civil War. I got a copy of that. I’ll tell you, the first thing out of his mouth
11 was, he said, “I’ll tell you what. Out of all the jobs I could get in the Marine Corps, this
12 is the worst job I ever got.” He listed all the jobs he got and all the ones he wanted. He
13 said, “This is the one they gave me.” That’s a hell of a thing for a CO to say.

14 LC: That’s not very inspiring.

15 GM: “I ended up being a principal for a bunch of lieutenants. I want to go back
16 to war and I’m over here doing this.” That tells you the attitude right there, that there was
17 a problem. So during Basic School they didn’t really give you enough. I remember one
18 night in particular that will tell you how bad it was. We went on a march. Then we came
19 back—a long march and we stayed overnight—and we marched some more. The next
20 afternoon we marched back to a hill where there were some bleachers. We were
21 supposed to meet some trucks, what we called cattle trucks, to take us back to Basic
22 School. We were all wet from marching and it was cold. The wind was blowing and we
23 sat up in those bleachers for about an hour and it just got cold and they never showed up.
24 So most of us got down off the bleachers, got down to the side of a hill and just huddled
25 up together because we were freezing. So they didn’t show up for about five hours. So
26 we got in, went back, and about two hours later it was time to get up. Nobody got up out
27 of the dormitories. The DIs came to do their—not the DIs, they were called the platoon
28 commanders, they were captains—they came through there banging on the doors, telling
29 us to fall out for formation. There was only a very few of us that did. I was one of them.
30 I can remember the guy banging on my bunk and a lot of guys fell out and went to sick
31 call because most of them were sick.

1 LC: Oh, I can well believe it.

2 GM: Even some of them got pneumonia.

3 LC: Yeah, pneumonia, exposure, yeah.

4 GM: Yeah. So we went to formation and there's about six of us. Boy, they
5 screamed and yelled at us. "Those guys are in bed. We're going to write you up." So
6 anyway, I forgot what happened, but about two weeks later we had decided we were
7 going to the rifle range. There was two companies of us. I think we told the other
8 company what we were going to do. I think they did the same thing. So we went out to
9 the rifle range. This is how your company is graded. The captains and the base
10 commander was graded on how well you did. The Marines are great. You want to be
11 great shots. Marines are supposed to be great shots. We've got out there and said, "By
12 God, we're going to pay him back on that." So when it came time to shoot, we shot
13 birds, trashcans, anything, leaves, bushes, anything you could think of. We didn't hit the
14 target. If you shot and didn't miss and you missed there was—on the end target down
15 there was a white rectangular flag made of wood that they'd fly. They'd fly it over the
16 target. There were about eight of them. That's all you saw down there was white flags
17 all afternoon because nobody was even hitting the target. We didn't even hit the thing.
18 Boy, they were—they could see what we were doing. They were torqued and they
19 marched us back down there. Finally, I forgot how they found out they did it, while we
20 were doing it. The base commander went nuts. He called us all in and did a number on
21 us. You couldn't talk back. If you talk back you could be relieved of duty.

22 LC: That's right.

23 GM: So somebody had guts enough to request mast with his boss. It's the formal
24 thing you can do.

25 LC: Now, explain for someone who doesn't know what that is, what is it?

26 GM: Request mast is where you can talk to your boss. If you're aboard ship you
27 can request mast to talk to the captain.

28 LC: Without—

29 GM: Talking to your superiors. It's their superiors. You want to talk to the boss.

30 LC: You can go around the chain of command.

1 GM: Everybody. If you're having a problem with your captain, with your boss
2 and you know he's a problem child, too, you can request mast with his boss. Anybody
3 you want to. You can actually request mast with the commandant of the Marine Corps if
4 you want to. It's hard to do, but you basically just want to go up to the person above. So
5 he did. He went up there and told him what the problem was and what we'd been going
6 through and the terrible training that we had been receiving and all this sort of thing. So
7 anyway, I think he got his butt chewed and whatever. Then he came back and things got
8 better, but I noticed one thing. This was 1960. Guess what happened about a hundred
9 years earlier? 1860.

10 LC: Fort Sumter was fired on.

11 GM: That's right. The Civil War, if you think back, was only a hundred years
12 earlier.

13 LC: That's right.

14 GM: I want to tell you something.

15 LC: Okay.

16 GM: The Civil War was alive and well. Most of us had never been out of the
17 state. It didn't take long before people were calling Johnny Reb and Yankee.

18 LC: Is that right?

19 GM: Yeah. Even though we were all college graduates and known better, there
20 were some—and our particular class, and I think it was common with everybody else,
21 there are a lot of Texans who joined up. I think that's true of any war.

22 LC: Yes, I think so.

23 GM: A lot of Marines come from Texas. A lot of Mexican-Americans join the
24 Marines, but there just seem to be an overabundance that joined the Marines from Texas.
25 I don't know how many guys in our group got called "Tex." You got tired of it. But the
26 Civil War was alive and well.

27 LC: Well, how did it go with African-American guys?

28 GM: We didn't have any.

29 LC: None?

1 GM: Well, I think in my basic school class we had two. I'm sorry. In my boot
2 camp we had two. I think that was about the average. Out of forty in my group we had
3 two. So there was just a few.

4 LC: How did they get along?

5 GM: Fine. I don't know how they got along with the guys up above. As far as I
6 know, I got along with them fine.

7 LC: Right.

8 GM: The ones I had a problem with was the damn Yankees that kept calling—
9 and I wasn't there to start a deal. Just quit calling me that, you know?

10 LC: So these guys from up North, they'd give you a hard time?

11 GM: I'd come in there and I remember one guy kept making fun of the way I
12 talk. Finally one day he kept saying—he talked about Cuba. I'm going—he kept saying,
13 “One day I'm going to go to Cuber.” He kept calling it Cuber and I laid into him. “I
14 went back to the queue last night and I went through that damn dictionary and I couldn't
15 find Cuber anywhere. Where the hell is Cuber? I know where Cuba is but where the hell
16 is Cuber? You keep talking about ‘You're going to get an idear.’ What the hell is an
17 idear? I know what an idea is. What the hell is an idear?”

18 LC: You let him have it.

19 GM: Yeah. I just nailed him to the wall and he didn't bother me anymore after
20 that. It mostly came from the Boston side. The Boston people, they were the ones that
21 used to drive me nuts.

22 LC: Boston.

23 GM: They would talk about the way we talk and I said, “Hey, get a grip.”

24 LC: Well, you were saying, Gary, that the content of basic school wasn't really
25 enough to keep you guys, not occupied, but keep you moving forward in terms of
26 learning and everything.

27 GM: No. Of course, a lot of us from there went to whatever school you were
28 going through, supply school or infantry school, and that's where you really learned what
29 you needed to know.

30 LC: How was that determined, who went where?

1 GM: You had a choice, three choices of what you wanted to do. Then the CO
2 and platoon commanders would decide what you wanted. Coming out of management I
3 decided I wanted to do supply because I wanted to have that as a backup when I got out
4 of the Marine Corps.

5 LC: That you could get a civilian position?

6 GM: Yeah. That's what I wanted. I knew I wasn't good enough. We had done
7 some field training for infantry. I just knew right off the bat that I was not that good or
8 had the qualifications to be a grunt or whatever.

9 LC: Which would take what? What was it that you thought you didn't have?

10 GM: The biggest problem was navigation at night, land navigation at night.
11 What we only had at the time was a compass. We took the compass and you had a little
12 nightlight pop through. What we had to go through in the country is you had a bunch of
13 guys behind you. They told us, "This is the only way you will go on patrol." You don't
14 go by lakes, ponds, trees, and whatever. You might during the day, but at nighttime
15 you've got to use that compass. That just terrified me because I just knew I couldn't do
16 it.

17 LC: That wasn't going to be your specialty.

18 GM: That scared me. I just knew I couldn't find those points. You'd have to
19 walk three hundred meters at certain degrees. When you got to that point you would
20 check in. You better be at that point because if you've got yourself in a bind and you
21 need to call in an artillery strike it would work off where you were. "I need some rounds
22 two hundred meters east of where I am."

23 LC: Right. The errors could be really bad.

24 GM: If you weren't in the right place and that happened a lot. In fact, in
25 Vietnam, that's why we lost a lot of lieutenants. Lieutenants went fast in Vietnam. You
26 talk to guys in infantry who went to infantry school and all that, they'll tell you that they
27 didn't learn. You just forget what you learned. You had a little book that you kept that
28 was basic fire rules and things you got when you went to get a brief on something. It was
29 just kind of like a pilot's book when you went to checkout your aircraft when you're
30 about to fly. You do all these checks through the book. Well, you did kind of the same
31 thing here but every commander did it a different way. You eventually just forgot it,

1 what they told me. Then what I ended up doing it on patrols, they told me what they
2 wanted to do and I just did what they told me. I can remember certain things from Basic
3 School, but I learned real quick what they told me over there.

4 LC: You internally—

5 GM: You listen real quick and you watch and you learn real quick from
6 somebody else. The guys that were there, they told you. There was no problem in not
7 telling you. They weren't going to be an ass and not tell you because you were a rookie
8 or you were green or something. You were a Marine. I don't know what the Army did,
9 but you were a Marine. They were going to help each other when you came in. They
10 didn't want you to get the guys killed. They'd ask you, "Have you ever called in an
11 artillery fire?" "No, I haven't." "Well, let me show you how it works. If you got
12 anymore questions let's go through it again." That's the way it worked. If you didn't
13 know it, if you didn't do it, he'd go to the CO and say, "He can't do it."

14 LC: Gary, you went to supply school, is that right?

15 GM: Yeah.

16 LC: Where was that?

17 GM: No, it was Camp Lejeune.

18 LC: How long was that course? How long did it take?

19 GM: Oh, about fifteen weeks.

20 LC: So you're becoming a logistics officer, logistics and supply? Is that right?

21 GM: Yeah.

22 LC: Was what you learned there what you needed to know?

23 GM: I never once—in my three years I never was in supply.

24 LC: Not even at the end of your—

25 GM: When I came back after Vietnam I think I spent three months in supply and
26 I had forgotten everything. I didn't know what I was doing.

27 LC: Now when you were at supply school, of course, you're going forward
28 thinking, "These are the jobs I'm going to put to. This is what I'm going to be assigned
29 to." Did you have an affiliation with a unit at that time?

30 GM: No.

31 LC: Okay. When did you—what happened after you left supply school?

1 GM: I stayed at Lejeune and was assigned to a supply company. I did nothing
2 for about four months but sit in a chair. I mean, nothing. I kept wanting them to do
3 something. They said, “Well, you’re going to have orders to go to WestPac. Your orders
4 are coming any day. It’s going to take time to work you into the program,” and they
5 basically didn’t want to waste their time with me working me in there. So I did nothing.
6 I mean nothing. For four months I did nothing. I’d go in there saying, “Where are my
7 orders? When can I go? Send me somewhere.” Sure enough, my orders finally came
8 and I got out of there.

9 LC: To where?

10 GM: Head west. I was going to west. First I went to California. We had a
11 month of what they called jungle training and so forth. You were given a platoon. I was
12 in a company of Marines. So you took these Marines out and you took them around these
13 trails and taught them what you knew about ambushes and how to deal with an ambush,
14 what you would do during an ambush. We taught them how to defend a hill when it was
15 being taken if you were being attacked. Then we learned how to take a hill. We’d teach
16 them how to read a map and how to do squad and then fire team attacks. One would
17 cover the other. Then you teach them how to do it and how to use voice commands and
18 arm commands and that sort of thing.

19 LC: How long did this last?

20 GM: About a month.

21 LC: Where was it? Twenty-nine Palms?

22 GM: No, it was Camp Pendleton. I’m trying to think of what all happened there
23 that was strange. One thing I’ll always remember is there was a lieutenant. He was a
24 Naval graduate. I guess he was a picture book trying to be Chesty Puller. You know
25 Chesty Puller?

26 LC: Yes, sir.

27 GM: He always had this sawed off cigar in his mouth. He was always talking out
28 the side of his cigar and he was loud. Everybody just got sick of him and nobody wanted
29 to be around him. So one day he had his platoon up on the side of this hill. We were, our
30 platoon, breaking off and going somewhere. So my platoon broke off and we were
31 passing in front of his platoon. He said something to one of my guys, which you’re not

1 supposed to do. If you've got to say something, they're out of line or something, you
2 come to me. Of course, that embarrassed me because I couldn't say anything back to him.
3 It wasn't right.

4 LC: Right. So he got a dig in.

5 GM: Yeah, he was being a big man with a cigar. I remember looking up at him.
6 He had his hands on the side and his legs spread. I was 129 pounds and he was
7 considerably bigger than me. So I said, "I want to talk to you. I want to talk to you over
8 here." So he was in front of me and we went behind these trees and then just when he got
9 to these trees I took my helmet off and I hit the top of his helmet real hard and got his
10 attention. He turned around and I think it scared him or got his attention. I told him,
11 "Don't you ever do this again. If you do I'm going to the CO. Everybody in this platoon
12 knows what you're doing." We just talked. I said, "You're forgetting all the points of
13 leadership. If you don't we can just settle this right now." So anyway, he didn't stop, but
14 he didn't bother me anymore. One day he finally got what's coming to him. He got
15 relieved. I remember this. He finally got his—out in the field or anywhere, when the
16 chow is served, your men get served first and then the NCOs (non-commissioned
17 officers) get fed and then your officers get fed.

18 LC: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

19 GM: He broke in line and got fed. He got his chow.

20 LC: You're kidding.

21 GM: Yeah, he did, with his cigar. Somebody reported it to the CO. Then I went
22 in there with the guy. I said, "I want to tell you something else, what he did to my
23 platoon."

24 LC: Do you remember what it was he said? Is it something you can tell on the
25 tape or not?

26 GM: To my man?

27 LC: Yeah.

28 GM: It was just something about the way he was marching.

29 LC: Implying that he what?

30 GM: He wasn't marching right or he didn't have his cover on straight or, "You're
31 marching out of tune. Get squared away." Just something that had to do with the way he

1 was marching. “Get that collar up,” or, “Your shoe’s untied,” or something, but he did it
2 in front of all of the Marines. Every Marine knows that you don’t bother the other
3 company or the platoon.

4 LC: Right. You mind your own house and all that.

5 GM: Anyway, he got relieved. He got relieved. He got pulled out. I don’t know
6 what happened to him after that.

7 LC: Well, that sounds like it was probably a good decision by someone.

8 GM: Oh, yeah, I’m sure somebody got a hold of him and yanked that cigar out of
9 his mouth. You might be from the Naval Academy, but you’re no Chesty Puller. In fact,
10 when you went to Vietnam, if you had some of those Chesty Pullers, those hard chargers,
11 I was told when they had these guys—I don’t know who told me, I just remember this—
12 that, “Hey, we’re going to hi-diddle-diddle right up the middle,” hard-chargers. “Just
13 give me a rifle, give me a platoon and show me where they are,” they would take those
14 guys from the field and fly them into Da Nang and take them through the morgue.
15 They’d walk through the morgue. All of a sudden there wasn’t any more hi-diddle-diddle
16 up the middle. It kind of sobered them up. No more hi-diddle-diddle up the middle.

17 LC: That’s interesting.

18 GM: I heard that that’s what they had done.

19 LC: That’s interesting. Well, when—let me just stop you for a minute, Gary, in
20 terms of talking about the training and the progression that you were in to ask what you
21 were thinking about the conflict in Vietnam itself. What did you understand about why
22 the United States sent troops in, particularly the Marines?

23 GM: No question about why the Marines were going. It was obvious we were
24 going. As far as the war was concerned, I feel today the same way I felt then. We had
25 some type of an agreement signed with those people to protect them or help them in the
26 event that they were attacked from a foreign source. It was no different to me than
27 Korea. It was another Korea. That’s the way I feel about it today. People say we
28 shouldn’t have got into that. Well, to me, I don’t know about the Tonkin Gulf and all
29 that. Maybe that was wrong. He was looking for an excuse to go in, but that’s the way I
30 feel about it. I’ll tell you something I’ve always wondered, if I can get off the subject a
31 minute.

1 LC: Sure, of course.

2 GM: If I could change one thing in my life with someone else in my life was the
3 fact that Kennedy would not have been killed because he was the first one to start sending
4 the Army Special Forces over.

5 LC: The advisors.

6 GM: The advisors. He was the first one to put troops in. He started it. Then he
7 was killed and then it went to Johnson and it got bigger and anybody and everybody
8 hated Johnson. I think primarily because of the fact that he was from Texas and he talked
9 like it. Again, you had the Bostonites who hated Texas and came in. My feeling is that's
10 what became the anti-war. I always would've liked if he could have stayed alive to see
11 what he would've done.

12 LC: To see what Kennedy would have done.

13 GM: Yeah, what he would've done. Would he have—I don't know what would
14 happen. I'd like to hear what you would think of what would happen with all those anti-
15 war people who were up in the Northeast, his people, what would his people have done if
16 he stayed?

17 LC: Do you think that he would have stayed or do think—of course, this big
18 discussion—

19 GM: I have no idea. That's what I'm saying. I have no idea. I'd like to talk to
20 somebody that could've told me what they thought might would've happened. It was
21 obvious that you could withdraw.

22 LC: Yeah, everybody you would talk to on it, you would probably get a different
23 answer. There's a lot of debate about it, that's for sure, a lot of debate.

24 GM: Yeah. I'd like to talk with somebody from the Northeast, I guess maybe
25 one of his campaign supporters or what Bobby Kennedy would have done. Well, Bobby
26 Kennedy was going to pull them out, but that was after Johnson was there. What would
27 he have done if he'd stayed in, because we were already in? Great mystery.

28 LC: It is a mystery. It's a very interesting question. When did you, Gary, get
29 your orders for going to Vietnam?

30 GM: '67.

31 LC: Do you remember when about?

1 GM: No.

2 LC: Sometime in '67?

3 GM: Yeah, because for some reason—this is true—I was in a jeep in the hills of
4 California. A guy pulled in and said, “We’ve got sudden orders for you,” and I said, “For
5 where?” He said, “You’re going to Iwakuni, Japan.” What? So I ended up going to
6 Iwakuni, Japan, for two months because somebody got relieved of duty. A lieutenant had
7 a job there. He did something with the money and got in trouble. They had another
8 lieutenant coming, but they had to have somebody fill that hole there for two months.

9 LC: What was the job? What were you supposed to do?

10 GM: It was great. It couldn’t have been any better. Special Services, tennis,
11 basketball and all that kind of stuff.

12 LC: No kidding.

13 GM: Yeah. I even had my wife come over for a month.

14 LC: Now when did you get married?

15 GM: Sixty—we got married—

16 LC: What were you doing? Were you already in the Marines?

17 GM: Yeah. We got married, I think, when I came back after I graduated from
18 Basic School. I came back and got married.

19 LC: What was your wife’s name?

20 GM: Linda.

21 LC: Was Linda from Texas?

22 GM: Yeah.

23 LC: There you go.

24 GM: She went to TWU (Texas Women’s University) and I was at North Texas
25 and there we met.

26 LC: I see. So you got to have Linda come over to Japan?

27 GM: Yeah.

28 LC: Well, that was good.

29 GM: Yeah.

30 LC: What were you supposed to do, kind of make sure that recreation was
31 available to officers?

1 GM: Well, the Japanese really ran the thing, okay? But they had to have an
2 American officer sign off on everything.

3 LC: So you were there to sign off?

4 GM: Yeah.

5 LC: That sounds pretty good.

6 GM: Yeah. The thing that's interesting is I found out later that one of the
7 Japanese that was working for me, somebody, another Japanese, caught him and for years
8 he'd been stifling money off the top and invested it in land for years and had beaucoup
9 money that he had. He went to jail for—when you go to jail in Japan you go to jail for a
10 long time. Meanwhile, guys like us were just signing off on stuff. I think they eliminated
11 her job. I'll tell you one thing that's funny that happened over there. I was over there for
12 the Fourth of July. They came over to me and you know you can get fireworks over there
13 for nothing. So they came to me and said, "Well, we're going to have a fireworks
14 display. Well, we can have a fifteen minutes fireworks display or a thirty minutes display
15 or we can have an hour's worth of display." I was piddling around with something and
16 they said, "It's your decision. What are you going to do?" I said, "Oh, hell, let's just get
17 it over. Have a fifteen minutes display." So I got up there and I got myself in trouble.
18 There was people that didn't get there in time. I'll tell you what. Fifteen minutes of a
19 Japanese fireworks display, it was the Second Coming. I mean, fireworks were
20 everywhere. It was from horizon to horizon. It was everywhere. It was the most
21 spectacular fireworks display. I've never seen anything like it. Then it was over and it
22 was like a war. It just quit. Everybody said, "Well, what are they going to do next?" It
23 was over. It was the greatest fifteen minutes of fireworks display you have ever seen in
24 your life.

25 LC: But you got in trouble.

26 GM: Yeah, it was over. People said, "Wow!" but it was over. They shot off
27 everything. Yeah, it was horizon to horizon.

28 LC: It was great if you were there on time

29 GM: Yeah, it should have been a forty-five minute show where they have a
30 normal fireworks display, hell, they just lit the candle on one fuse. It was literally like a
31 war and then it was over. You'd have this stuff drifting down where you were sitting.

1 LC: Oh, sure, I'll bet.

2 GM: That was kind of neat. Then I got orders to go south. That's when I went to
3 Da Nang and I said, "When am I going to get to go? When am I going to get to go?"
4 Also, this is kind of interesting. They had the shows come over and they would practice
5 here before they would go to Da Nang, USO (United Service Organization) shows.

6 LC: They would practice in Japan?

7 GM: Yeah, and I had—Hugh O'Brian brought a show over. Sandy Duncan came
8 with him. She was a nobody. I remember we were in the O-club talking and that was
9 dinner. He pointed her out at the other end and we talked. She was from East Texas.
10 Then lo and behold, years later she becomes somebody.

11 LC: Very famous.

12 GM: If you remember, she lost an eye.

13 LC: Yes, I remember that. I don't remember the circumstances.

14 GM: Well, guess who spent all the time up there with her? Hugh O'Brian.

15 LC: Oh, is that right?

16 GM: Yeah, they were very close. They did a song and dance routine. Then one
17 night I went into town with him and we had a good time. He was a neat guy. He bought
18 my wife a dress and he bought me something. He was a pretty neat guy. He had a
19 brother who was killed on Iwo Jima.

20 LC: Oh, is that right?

21 GM: Yeah. He said he was trying to break out of the stereotype of he was
22 playing the part on the TV of who was it? Hickok or somebody. He was trying to break
23 out of that role and that's what he was doing over there.

24 LC: Well, Gary, let me ask you about your arrival in Vietnam. You arrived at Da
25 Nang, is that right?

26 GM: Yeah, I went to Okinawa. Then they transferred me to Da Nang.

27 LC: Okay. Did you think that you were going to be doing logistics and supply
28 stuff?

29 GM: Yeah. I didn't know what I was going to do, but I kept thinking, "Maybe
30 they'll send me out." I wanted to go out and be assigned to a company somewhere
31 outside, something where I could be going with the infantry because those four months I

1 spent at Camp Lejeune, I didn't want any more of that. I didn't want to be stuck in Da
2 Nang doing nothing.

3 LC: Did you tell people that?

4 GM: Yeah, in fact, that's where I ended up. I ended up at Da Nang with the 1st
5 Marine Air Wing actually doing something with the wing, but it was just there. I told my
6 Major Dillo, I said, "First opening that should come, send me out there. I don't want to
7 just be sitting here." So I sat there about two or two and a half months. During that time
8 I'd usually get little things. I didn't like this. I didn't like it. It was somewhat scary. I
9 had two squads. At nighttime we would go out and we would go through these villages
10 that were outside our compound. We would go through those villages and just walk
11 through them just like if you were out in the bush. You would walk through these other
12 villages and you'd check them. You'd check underneath to see the pads and see if there
13 were actually any tunnels in Da Nang. It could be tunnels into Da Nang. You'd check
14 them to see if there were firearms or anything like that. You'd find them.

15 LC: So you're you looking for caches of supplies?

16 GM: Yeah, and they were there. What I didn't like about that was I was afraid
17 some guy would have a punji hole there that you couldn't see.

18 LC: Yeah, for sure.

19 GM: Yeah. Every time you came upon a mat between things you were scared. I
20 was concerned somebody could just nail you from behind because these things were so
21 close. But I did come back and find one thing. There was a Vietnamese compound next
22 to a Marine compound. Tet was just beginning to happen. Tet, that's when the North
23 tried to take over the South.

24 LC: Now, Tet of '68, right? Big Tet?

25 GM: Yeah, Tet was a big one, the '68 Tet, but there were a lot of rumblings
26 going on before that. I came across this compound, one and the other. They had a big
27 fence and the Vietnamese had taken a six-by, which is a big truck. It had railings on each
28 side of the truck so that you drove it up next to this fence. Hold on a minute. Took this
29 two-by-eight, and they ran this thing over the top of the fence. Then on the other side
30 they put a ladder so if they started—and they had three 105 pieces there that they were
31 going to use for support to shoot at. In other words, they could get shot at right there.

1 They were an artillery base. If they got any incoming the first thing they were going to
2 do was run up this ladder, run across this six-by and hit this board like a diving board,
3 into this American compound. I went up and told the CO, “You’ve got to come see this.”
4 So he looked at that at first he got mad and then he says, “I’m going to do something.” I
5 said, “What are you going to do?” “Leave me alone. I’ll do something.” So the next
6 night I came by there and I couldn’t see really what he had done. So I looked and I
7 looked and then I found out what he’d done. He’d taken a saw. On his side he had had
8 one of his Marines cut about halfway across or better on that side of the fence, real close
9 to the fence all the way across that board. So the first guy that jumped on the side of that
10 fence was going straight down. It was going to be the world’s shortest dive. So anyway,
11 that was something I’d never—I took a picture of it.

12 LC: Gary, let me ask, just so that people listening will have a sense of the
13 progression of things. You sent along a copy of your DD-214, for which we thank you,
14 and it shows that you were in the Da Nang area from about September of ’67 through
15 May of ’68. Does that sound right to you?

16 GM: Yep.

17 LC: Were you with the 1st Marine Air Wing that whole time?

18 GM: Yep.

19 LC: You were? What was your rank at this time? I went from—let’s see. I
20 became a second lieutenant, a first lieutenant, and captain.

21 LC: Did you become a first lieutenant, then, while you were at Da Nang?

22 GM: Yeah, and a captain.

23 LC: And then promoted to captain. Let me ask about the location. You were
24 based in Da Nang, but you did some operations outside, obviously, outside the city.

25 GM: Yeah, during the Tet Offensive I was moved out and I’ve got Mike
26 McCollum. He’s got a map and I can’t remember the hill numbers of it, but there was a
27 place out behind what I call the Bob Hope Theater. Out behind there, up on a hill—there
28 were some hills, I think two or maybe three, that we had and we built. It overlooked this
29 huge valley called Happy Valley. From there a lot of rockets were shot into Da Nang
30 from time to time.

31 LC: From the hills overlooking the valley, those—?

1 GM: No, down in the valley.

2 LC: Oh, from the valley.

3 GM: On the hills, we would view and from there we would go on patrols from
4 there out into the valley. Fortunately there was not much jungle there. It was just heavy
5 brush, almost kind of like West Texas brush, but thicker. So we would patrol out into
6 those areas and just basically try to keep from getting ambushed and see if we could
7 make them aware that they couldn't set up something in there.

8 LC: Now, just to get the geography right, and correct me if I'm wrong, Gary,
9 does Highway 1 go through Happy Valley?

10 GM: No.

11 LC: Okay. It does not.

12 GM: No, I don't think it did. It went beside it. It went between Da Nang and
13 Happy Valley.

14 LC: So you're up on the ridgelines, essentially, around Happy Valley.

15 GM: Yeah.

16 LC: How many men were you commanding, let's say, as a first lieutenant?

17 GM: At that time I had about thirty-two and the other platoons had likewise.

18 LC: You're training, of course, had been primarily leaning toward logistics. All
19 of a sudden here you are in combat in command. Was this something that you look to
20 right away?

21 GM: No. But I was—the funny thing is in the Marines you just say, “Hey, this is
22 what I'm supposed to do.” You were all basically combat officers. These guys know
23 that I'm not trained for it. Somebody will be there to give us guidance. Sure enough,
24 when I was there they told me what I was to do and told me what to be looking for out
25 there. Be looking for the punji holes, what kind of punji holes we'd be looking for, what
26 kind of trails to be looking for, obviously don't walk on any trails, don't walk the same
27 place twice, here are your sister battalions, here are your support elements if you get in a
28 bind, mortars are over here, radio calls, and all the basic stuff. The first three or four
29 times you went out you had a gunny go with you who knew the stuff. He was in
30 command.

1 LC: The gunny would be somebody with so much in-country experience that he
2 would help you out.

3 GM: Right. That's what you'd do. I did not get a combat medal because quite
4 frankly, I didn't really—there was guys that spent six months out there in that stuff. I
5 was out there maybe six or eight weeks. It just didn't seem right to get one. So I didn't
6 get one. I didn't ask for one. I didn't even put in for one. I wasn't going to be that guy.

7 LC: Yeah, I'm picking that up. Gary, when you were out there, were there any
8 days that you particularly remember, either because you located something or did you
9 have any contact or was it because they were boring days?

10 GM: There was a village way out that we came into and the standard deal was—
11 and the gunny was in charge. We went in the village and it was an unknown village. So
12 we surrounded it and we came in. We poked around and checked out the top of the
13 hooches for weaponry. We had the bayonets. We checked the floors under the mats for
14 holes and caches and so forth. While we're doing this we're rounding up all the
15 Vietnamese. They ran around like chickens with their heads cut off and this sort of thing.

16 LC: The Vietnamese civilians?

17 GM: There was a guy there walking around with a camera and there was a guy
18 with a microphone. Where he came from, I don't know. They just came from
19 somewhere. So they were there filming this thing. Anyway, they were filming all this
20 stuff. I didn't pay any more attention to it than that. Sure enough, we found a door
21 underneath one of the mats and it was a tunnel. That made it a VC (Viet Cong) village.
22 What we did was call in one or two H-46s and put all the Vietnamese aboard and flew
23 back into Da Nang where the intel people could separate them and find out if any of them
24 were Charlies, which they were, I'm sure. They took all the rest of them and doctored
25 'em and—what am I trying to say? The corpsman checked them out, the kids and
26 everybody, and fixed them up. I understand what they did. Then they put them into a
27 new village safe from where they were, from Charlie. That took care of them.
28 Meanwhile, after we blew the whistle for somebody to go down and look at—I don't
29 think anybody did. We didn't have any tunnel rats with us.

30 LC: Right. So what did you do?

1 GM: We just blew them. We dropped grenades down in there and then I think
2 we dropped—we didn't have any satchel charges or anything.

3 LC: You just threw some grenades down there?

4 GM: We threw some grenades down there and got some secondary charges and
5 explosions down there.

6 LC: Which told you what?

7 GM: There was stuff down there. There was armament down there.

8 LC: Ordnance of some kind.

9 GM: Then we torched the village and I can remember this cameraman watching
10 us torch the village. Then this guy was talking on this microphone. We turned around
11 and another helo came in, an H-46, and we all got on board. We went back to the hill and
12 I remember these two guys went with us. Then they got to the hill and they got in some
13 kind of jeep. They went back into Da Nang. I mention that because when I got back
14 home I saw something very close to this that really, really upset me.

15 LC: Saw it on TV?

16 GM: Yeah. It was one of those cases with the press in which they didn't tell you
17 the whole story.

18 LC: Okay, sure.

19 GM: It was one of those things that just made you furious.

20 LC: Did you know, Gary, who they represented? Was it Associated Press or was
21 it American TV? Who was it?

22 GM: No. They were Americans.

23 LC: Television?

24 GM: Yeah.

25 LC: You have no idea how they just showed up at your operation.

26 GM: No, I heard them. I was told they were going to be coming up from behind
27 us. They were going to follow behind us and don't be concerned. They were going to be
28 going with us, but they showed up late. They were going to go anyway. So we showed
29 up and they came up behind us. They introduced themselves to the gunny and told them
30 okay. Then they started shooting.

1 LC: Now before you later saw this kind of operation shown on television in the
2 States, while you were actually there and they were there filming it, did it bother you that
3 they were there? Did you think, “They have no business up here,” or did you think,
4 “Well, whatever. They’re doing their job”?

5 GM: I didn’t really think about them because I was watching the gunny and I was
6 trying to learn—we were in a possibly VC village and I was scared that somebody was
7 going to fall out and start gunning us down. I was more concerned about—I was at the
8 ready.

9 LC: Somebody might pop up from a spider hole or something.

10 GM: Yeah, that somebody would come out from somewhere behind or
11 somewhere and I was walking around looking for stuff and looking for people and kind
12 of making sure that we all had the place covered all the way around it. I was afraid we
13 were going to get ambushed.

14 LC: About what time of day was this?

15 GM: It was afternoon, about mid-afternoon.

16 LC: You guys had arrived in the village. How did you get there?

17 GM: Oh, we walked in.

18 LC: You walked in?

19 GM: We went on patrol and we were told to go out and check out this village.

20 LC: Did you get any—other than the interrogation effort which happened back at
21 Da Nang separately, did you get any intel in the village itself, like did you find any
22 written materials or documents or anything?

23 GM: No, but what we did find that’s kind of funny—the gunny forgot to tell us to
24 do this. When he told us when they started torching that thing we started walking off and
25 we heard something go (makes shooting noise). He says, “Everybody get out of here
26 fast.” He forgot to tell us if there’s ordnance in there we might get hit. Boy, we boogied
27 out of that place pretty fast. I remember that. Boy, rounds went off everywhere and were
28 popping off and so forth.

29 LC: It was a little frightening.

30 GM: Yeah, that’s kind of stupid that he forgot to tell us. We laid down and hid
31 behind stuff.

1 LC: How did your guys react under—this is a pretty stressful situation they're in.
2 You don't know what danger you might actually be in, but you have to assume that you
3 are in danger when this is going on. Did your guys react well and did they hang
4 together?

5 GM: Yeah. Yeah, they did. In watching the Iraq films, it's just the training. It's
6 just the training. Where the real stretch comes in, and we were in this one time for just a
7 few minutes, it was in the dark, you've got an ambush from the left and we went in.
8 Everybody broke out of the trail. It was me and a radio and you don't know where
9 anybody is. You don't know where they are. It is terrifying. It is terrifying because you
10 don't know what's going on and it's your job to—

11 LC: Get it together.

12 GM: Get it together and try to just—what I learned from the gunny is he told me
13 that you've got to learn to just stay calm and try to figure out as quickly as you can where
14 the fire's coming from. You can't see the fire. You can go back to Iwo Jima. You can't
15 see bullets flying and they're not necessarily going to have—what am I going to call it?
16 Bullets are going to be—I can't say the word—where you can see them coming.

17 LC: With tracers and stuff?

18 GM: Yeah, tracers. They're not going to be firing with tracers when you see
19 them come at you. They don't have smoke. You just had to listen with the sound.

20 LC: You just had to go by what you could hear?

21 GM: What you could hear. Our training is to go toward that fire.

22 LC: Go toward it?

23 GM: Go toward the fire. Move toward the fire. Put all your weaponry toward
24 that fire. So we did that and then your squad leaders would have radios and then you
25 would try to find out where they are and what kind of casualties you've got. Then you'd
26 work from there and try to work around it if you could. Let them do what they can do
27 and let them tell you what they need. "I need a backup squad out here. If we can get
28 somebody over to the right and eliminate the fire," or, "We need somebody to bring up
29 this," or whatever. I forgot exactly what we did. I think we just sat there and I think one
30 squad worked around to the left. This is important. I think the people who really run the
31 war are the sergeants—staff sergeants and sergeants.

1 LC: Why do you say that?

2 GM: Because they're the guys that move the people and are with the people. I
3 can tell them, but I'm not there. They tell them and they're there. They're really the
4 ones that are—they're the Marine Corps. They're the Army.

5 LC: Well, Gary, let me ask you about another group of people. On a night like
6 the one you're describing where you're in contact, what about the corpsmen? What role
7 did they play and do you remember anything, if anyone that evening got hurt? Can you
8 tell me anything about those guys and how they performed?

9 GM: We lost two.

10 LC: Two corpsmen?

11 GM: No.

12 LC: Two men.

13 GM: Two men. There was nothing the corpsmen could do. There was nothing
14 they could do. They were hit instantly from the fire.

15 LC: Obviously the corpsmen were called to try to help them.

16 GM: There was a funny thing that happened. I'm going to tell you the best, too.

17 LC: Okay.

18 GM: Americans have this knack of—I saw some of these things on TV on a
19 couple of the history things. If you interview them or talk to them and they're together
20 and it's hot and there's nothing they can do and they're sitting there they'll actually have
21 a sense of humor. They do.

22 LC: Yes, sir. That's true.

23 GM: They do, they will. I lost my thought. Oh, yeah. We went down the creek
24 embankment. The corpsman was in the water. He slipped and fell down. Somebody
25 thought he got shot. So he opened up and everybody opened up. It took about four or
26 five minutes and two guys went down on top of him to make sure he didn't get hit.

27 LC: They threw themselves on top of him.

28 GM: Yeah. He's sitting there screaming and we think he's hurt. No, he's
29 screaming, "Get off of me."

30 LC: Right, but those guys were trying to protect him.

1 GM: Yeah, and they're trying to protect him. Finally I stopped everybody
2 shooting. Once everybody stopped shooting he's screaming obscenities about, "Get off,
3 you're killing my leg." Then everybody just broke out laughing. It was just funny as
4 hell. Well, then we had to go home because we made too much noise. We had to go
5 back.

6 LC: Right because now obviously your position was completely revealed. Did
7 you in that situation have to basically get out of there fast?

8 GM: No, we just called in and said, "The mission's over."

9 LC: But I get that you guys did laugh about that.

10 GM: Yeah, it was good. It was good. That's not bad. When I told them what
11 happened and when you're in that type of situation, unless you've got a screwed up CO
12 or something, it's okay. If you find somebody that's bad, that's really not doing it, word
13 is going to get out and you're going to send them back. In this business about drugs and
14 this movie they did that—I can't think of the guy's name that did the movie that was so
15 famous about Vietnam.

16 LC: *Apocalypse Now?*

17 GM: No, the other one. *Platoon*.

18 LC: *Platoon?*

19 GM: Yeah, and he said all that stuff about the drugs and all this kind of stuff and
20 made it look like we were all on drugs. I'll tell you if anybody's on drugs everybody
21 wants him out because if he's walking point or if he's walking flank and he's out in la-la
22 land, your flank's going to be useless.

23 LC: It's worse than useless though, isn't it?

24 GM: Yeah, somebody could walk right through him and he'd say, "Hi, how are
25 you doing, pal? They're right over there." So what you do is you get rid of him. You
26 tell your sergeant. We'd get him out and we'd send him back to wherever. In most cases
27 he ended back in Okinawa and then back home.

28 LC: Now back in Okinawa would there be some kind of judicial proceeding or
29 something against him?

1 GM: Yeah, they'd get the word and be tagged. In most cases they'd be shipped
2 right out of the Marine Corps. They'd be sent back to the States with probably a general
3 discharge or a BCD (bad conduct discharge) and kicked out of the Marine Corps.

4 LC: So just on this topic for a moment, Gary, did you know of guys who were
5 even when they were—let's say they're not walking point, they're not on a patrol, they're
6 on downtime or rest time or whatever—that had access to, I don't know, marijuana or
7 something?

8 GM: No.

9 LC: You just didn't see any of that?

10 GM: No. I'll tell you something else. I don't know about the Army. When we
11 were off duty we kept everybody busy. In most cases you didn't have to keep them busy.
12 They knew how to keep busy. If you ran out of something to do you cleaned your rifle.

13 LC: That was taught, right? That was taught from the time they came into the
14 Marines.

15 GM: Yeah. But it was hot. So on occasions you'd go back and you'd take your
16 shirt off and you put it up there to dry and you put on a dry one because if you went to
17 bed that night or the rack that night with that wet shirt and the temperature would drop
18 twenty degrees you would freeze your rear end off. So you put the one up there to dry,
19 you changed socks. You always changed socks. You put them up to dry. If you could
20 you washed them out. You always washed your shirt out if you could, your underwear,
21 too. You just tried to keep yourself as clean as possible. If you had time you'd wash
22 your hair. The things you could do—there was always things you could do, write letters
23 and do all that other stuff. We didn't find somebody—yeah, you'd find them resting.
24 That would be fine.

25 LC: Sure. Oh, gosh, yeah.

26 GM: But not too long. If they were sleeping, leave them alone.

27 LC: Because I'm sure that more times than not they're exhausted from the heat
28 and all the action that they'd been in and so on.

29 GM: You'd spend most of your time—and I'm not really, I'm not speaking from
30 a combat veteran, just in the little time that I saw and talking to a lot of my buddies, you
31 spend most of your time doing nothing back at the place. A lot of times you're preparing

1 your hooch. This is from my buddies—you'd spend most of your time, those guys were
2 digging deeper holes all the time.

3 LC: The reason for that?

4 GM: In case you get mortared.

5 LC: Right. You need some kind of bunker.

6 GM: Yeah, it was always good to be another inch down. Put a few more
7 sandbags on top.

8 LC: So if you can't think of anything else, get a shovel and get going.

9 GM: Yeah, just do something because after a while you can get bored doing
10 nothing. I'd do the same thing. I'd get bored and have nothing to do. There wasn't
11 anything to do but sit up for the next two or three days and you're not going to be doing
12 anything. So hell, I'd just try to find some more timber laying around and I'd spend time
13 with my binoculars looking out around the countryside to see if I could pick up some
14 kind of movement. You'd see that all the time. Somewhere out in the valley out there all
15 of a sudden you'd seen some mortar rounds land. Somewhere somebody else saw
16 somebody moving. A lot of times it was just kind of a harassment fire. You'd call in
17 harassment fire for there to be landing, just to let them know that you were there.

18 LC: Now, it's pretty clear that there was no—Happy Valley was not a free-fire
19 zone. You guys had to work with the civilians who were there. But was part of the
20 mission to try to get friendly civilians out of there? It sounds like it.

21 GM: Yeah.

22 LC: Relocating them to other villages.

23 GM: Yeah.

24 LC: Okay. But could you pretty much fire if you saw some movement? Could
25 you pretty much call in fire or at least let people know?

26 GM: Yeah, it was a free-fire zone.

27 LC: It was?

28 GM: Yeah.

29 LC: Okay. Let me ask if I can about—you mentioned that you had to keep
30 yourself clean and you had to try to stay in dry clothing as much as possible. Guys
31 must've been getting sick, though. I'm not talking about combat. I'm not talking about

1 injuries right now. I'm just talking about feeling sick, getting a virus, getting stung, all
2 the different things that could happen. Was there sick call? Did you guys have access to
3 treatment for that kind of stuff?

4 GM: You had your corpsman.

5 LC: What could he do for you, I don't know, let's say if you had a really upset
6 stomach or something like that?

7 GM: Oh, he'd have pills there for you. I know that—if you were bad enough—
8 the CO would leave the call up to the corpsman. So the corpsman, he'd go to the CO and
9 say, "This guy is sick. He needs to go back there." Or he'd say, "He just needs two
10 days' rest."

11 LC: Okay, so you relied on the corpsman for that.

12 GM: Yeah, the corpsman, he was the doc. I'll tell you what else he carried that I
13 used one time and that was—what do you call it?—pills.

14 LC: The malaria pills?

15 GM: No, no, the pills you use when your bottoms all stuffed up.

16 LC: Ex-Lax? That kind of stuff?

17 GM: Yeah, the stuff you stick up your rear end.

18 LC: Yeah, the suppository things?

19 GM: Yeah, he carried those. He had a bunch of those. He could always tell.
20 The new guys would come back and he'd walk around and he'd ask them, "When's the
21 last time you made a number two?" They'd say, "Well, it's been two or three days."
22 "How does your bottom feel?" "You know, my bottom kinda hurts when I sit down."
23 It's because your rear end from fear tightens up. It just tightens up. So after two or three
24 days you're pretty well stopped up so he'd say, "You go take one of these now and
25 relieve yourself." There was a term. I forgot the term that we used for that. My memory
26 is so bad sometimes.

27 LC: You're doing fine, Gary.

28 GM: There's a term that we used when things are bad. Anyway, it's not a good
29 term to use.

30 LC: Well, if you remember it let me know because I think it's—I mean this is
31 what life was like for you guys. This is what we need to make sure is not lost. I mean

1 this isn't written down anywhere. This isn't in the documents and that's why we've got
2 to get you to remember as much as you can about it. Let me ask another thing, if you
3 don't mind, about the medical situation. Did you ever have an experience where one or
4 more of your guys had to be medevac'ed out?

5 GM: Yeah.

6 LC: Can you tell somebody who doesn't know what that was like what happened
7 in your situation? What was the degree of—what were the circumstances under which
8 you had to call in a medical evacuation?

9 GM: Well, we had two guys that the corpsmen would tell you, "It's Medevac
10 time." He would tell you the number and then he would also tell you the seriousness of it
11 because the Medevac people would pick you up, but also they would need to know the
12 seriousness of the wounds.

13 LC: Right, how bad it was.

14 GM: Yeah, "Which ones are we going to go pick up? We've got two critical
15 over here at A and then over at another place we've got two guys shot in the arm and
16 they're in good condition." Well, which one?

17 LC: Right. They had to make a choice.

18 GM: Also what the enemy condition is. Is it a hot Z, an LZ (landing zone) or is it
19 about to be? You'd better come get him now because they're closing in. Usually it'd be
20 a Huey come in and those guys would—they'd come in and you had to give them a
21 direction to come in from where it was safe and where they would have less chance of
22 being fired upon.

23 LC: Were you responsible for that communication, for making those decisions?

24 GM: Yeah. Or you'd go to your gunny or somebody that's out in the area and
25 tell them which way is the best and somebody would know. Then you'd send somebody
26 that had done it before and you'd send them out there as they were coming in and you'd
27 help them land.

28 LC: How would you help them land?

29 GM: Well, like you see them at the airports, he'd put his arms out telling him to
30 come forward, come forward.

31 LC: Making sure that he's not going to hit trees or anything.

1 GM: Right. Drift left or drift right. By the time he's ready to land he's ready to
2 draw up left or right and then they would settle down. Then that would be it. A lot of
3 time we would drop smoke telling them where we are and telling them what color smoke
4 it would be. Charlie used to get real—I never had this happen, but Charlie on a lot of
5 occasions got wise. You'd say, "Where are you?" and say, "I'm going to drop green
6 smoke." Charlie might be on your frequency so about that time he'd throw out green
7 smoke. So what we learned to do was that you'd say, "I will pop smoke out to you," and
8 then the pilot would say, "I see your green smoke." You'd say, "That's affirmative." He
9 would identify your smoke.

10 LC: Rather than you telling him in advance.

11 GM: Right, yeah. So then he would come in and doc would have him ready.
12 We'd put him aboard. In most cases, morphine was almost always given. That tickles
13 me that these corpsmen would be dealing with—I remember one time a friend of mine
14 had a picture that he kept with him all the time. The corpsman and two other guys were
15 fixing this guy up. They were up to their chest in the creek fixing this guy up. He lived.
16 Then they put him on an aircraft. I keep thinking you go to the doctor's office and you
17 get worked on. Everybody's super clean. I think that about that and I go, "Good grief."

18 LC: Here he is in the mucky river.

19 GM: What's all this? I can remember a guy in a creek bed one time and they had
20 no gloves or anything. That was it.

21 LC: What was his condition, this guy?

22 GM: This guy here?

23 LC: Yeah.

24 GM: He was shot in a limb, if I remember correctly. The other guy had fallen
25 and broken something. I remember one time I had jumped out of a helo. They had taken
26 us somewhere on the other side of an area and dropped us off. I jumped out. My right
27 ankle I had sprained so many times playing ball and it's almost gone. I had stuff on my
28 back. It was high weeds and I jumped off and I turned my right ankle. I mean, I hurt it
29 bad. I went to the corpsman and I said, "I've hurt this thing." But at the same time you
30 couldn't go to the CO and say, "I've got a twisted ankle. I need some rest." There's just
31 certain times you couldn't do it.

1 LC: What happened?

2 GM: Well, we took the boot off and that sucker was just—you didn't have any
3 ice so that was gone. We finished whatever we were doing. When we had time we just
4 propped it up and taped it up as tight as I could.

5 LC: But, of course, you don't know that you could've broken something. You
6 didn't know.

7 GM: He didn't think it was broken because when you've got broken bones you
8 feel a sharp pain. This was just a dull pain.

9 LC: But anybody who's ever done it knows it hurts pretty good.

10 GM: Yeah, it hurts. But then again, I don't know. Your mind was on so many
11 other things it wasn't that big a deal. If you were home around the house doing
12 something it hurts worse for some reason.

13 LC: Go ahead, Gary.

14 GM: I think this was a telling story about the Marines in that they took the last
15 Marines—I can't tell you—I heard it on TV and I think I heard it from one of the guys
16 that was in it, that they were the last Marines to leave.

17 LC: To leave Saigon in '75.

18 GM: Yeah, and being the fact that we were always the first ones in and the last
19 ones out. The last ones out was always turning it over to the Army and leaving the way
20 we did in that condition, they were the last ones out for the Marine Corps. They were
21 crying.

22 LC: Yes, sir.

23 GM: They were crying in the bottom of that helicopter. They were all crying.
24 The helicopter guys, when they got back they were terribly sad. They just wanted to be
25 by themselves because they were Marines and this was just not what they were doing. I
26 think that's also—I don't know, but I think that's probably why General Carey might
27 have picked up another star because he probably had the worst job of any Marine of all
28 times.

29 LC: This is Gen. Richard E. Carey that we're talking about.

1 GM: Yeah, the business of doing what he was doing Super Gaggled us was great
2 and being in a firefight is terrible and all that, but you'd rather be that than be what he
3 was having to do.

4 LC: Pulling out of there.

5 GM: Running away. We were running away.

6 LC: Well, thanks to you, Gary, we'll have a chance to interview the general next
7 month, in just a couple of weeks, in fact, for me. I'm looking forward to that. He's had
8 an incredible career, within which of course the actions in April 1975 in Saigon were an
9 important element. But as you know, he had a very long and distinguished career in the
10 Corps and is one of the most respected senior members of the Corps. That's saying
11 something.

12 GM: He wore the star.

13 LC: Yes, sir. Gary, let me ask you—we were talking a moment ago before we
14 started recording about the hospital ships that were off I Corps during the time that you
15 were there. They were taking Marine casualties and treating them. These are Navy
16 ships, the USS *Repose* was one, and the USS *Sanctuary*. When guys who had been
17 injured or wounded in action were medevac'ed did you have any way of finding out what
18 happened to them or where they went?

19 GM: They all went to China Beach.

20 LC: What do you know about China Beach and what went on there?

21 GM: Well, China Beach was the area that was in northern I Corps. As far as I
22 know that's where all I Corps area wounded went to. It was a major hospital right there.

23 LC: Did you ever go down there?

24 GM: I just flew by one time. I never knew anything about it. No, I didn't know
25 much about it. I just knew where it was, just on the other side of Marble Mountain. I
26 didn't know a thing about it, no.

27 LC: Was it important at all in the minds of the men that you were commanding or
28 in your own mind to know the support that was in place, the whole system of medical
29 attention that was in place and that would be available to you guys if you did get hurt, or
30 did you try not to think about it?

31 GM: No, I probably didn't even think about it.

1 LC: Really?

2 GM: No. I imagine they thought, “If I get hurt, where am I going and how quick
3 can I get there?” I imagine everybody told them that we can get helos in there and we
4 can be there in ten minutes. I think they all knew that. That made them feel better.

5 LC: Did you have any kind of particular feelings about the Medevac helicopter
6 pilots and crews, the guys that were flying?

7 GM: Sure. They were simply courageous. I was never in a situation where it
8 was a hot LZ where they went into, but I’ve seen on these history channels where they
9 were and these guys were—their mission was to go in regardless. My goodness, they’re
10 just tremendous. I can’t say enough about them.

11 LC: Yeah, it’s pretty incredible, isn’t it?

12 GM: Oh, it’s unbelievable what they did. They’d be lifting off and they’re just
13 sitting targets. To hear those rounds hitting you, I just don’t know how they did it.

14 LC: It’s just incredible selflessness.

15 GM: Oh, yeah.

16 LC: And courage, that’s for sure. Well, you know, it seems to me, Gary, that
17 some of what you’ve told about your own experiences are pretty courageous stuff, too,
18 and the men that were with you, quite remarkable. Let me ask some questions that may
19 kind of lighten it up and maybe let us know something more about the experience. When
20 you were out on operations, either night or daytime, were insects or snakes or animals
21 ever part of what you came across? Do you remember anything about that?

22 GM: I never saw any, but I was terrified of snakes.

23 LC: That was from before you got there, I think.

24 GM: Yeah. Let me tell you.

25 LC: You can tell me.

26 GM: I was terrified of them and I’m still terrified of snakes.

27 LC: You and me both.

28 GM: I was just afraid I’d get captured and they might put one in there with me
29 just to make me talk. God, I’d sing songs, whatever they wanted me to do. I’ll tell you a
30 story about a buddy of mine. He lived next door to me at Camp Lejeune. He was in
31 recon. He was a captain in recon. Those guys are pretty hardcore. They eat bushes and

1 everything. They're pretty rough and they go out real far in the bush. I'll never forget
2 this. I found out he was in Da Nang. So his wife told my wife. So I went over to see
3 him. I drove up and went inside and we talked. He says, "Gary, you've got to wait
4 outside a minute. I've got to talk to one of my troops. He killed a snake and shot a snake
5 and we were out on a recon and it killed the mission right there. You hear the gun and
6 you hear fire all over the place. I've got to nail him here." I went outside and so he
7 started chewing on him and he said, "Why in the world did you shoot the snake? We've
8 been planning this mission for months. We were in North Vietnam. We had so many
9 we thought we could get. You put all our lives at risk by doing that when you killed the
10 snake. Why in the world did you kill the snake?" or, "Why in the world did you shoot
11 the snake?" He said, "Well, sir, because it was too close for an air strike." I thought that
12 was great. My kind of guy.

13 LC: Yeah, I can relate.

14 GM: My kind of guy.

15 LC: I can relate to that. What about insects and that kind of stuff, leeches and all
16 the rest? Did you guys have to deal with that up where you were?

17 GM: Not much. Where I was at we didn't have all that kind of crud. I mean we
18 had insects and stuff like that, but the leeches were generally up where the mountains
19 were and so forth. I saw a few, but I didn't deal with that. It was just the bugs. I just
20 couldn't get used to the—I just didn't like anything touching me. Of course, we wouldn't
21 let the guys really go around with their shirt off. For one reason so they wouldn't get
22 bitten. Also, their clothes, lay your shirt arms out and leave the shirts long because
23 especially if they're wet, during the day that acts as an insulator as opposed to leaving
24 your arms out naked because there's the direct rays from the sun and nothing protecting
25 them. But if you leave the shirts on all the time you've got an insulator there.

26 LC: Right. You're not going to get so many cases of heat—

27 GM: Bugs and sunburns, too. It's an insulator.

28 LC: What, if you had to say, was the most useful piece of the uniform or the
29 equipment that you had? I know everybody tended to try to customize what was issued
30 to them so it worked best for them. What worked best for you? Did you have a certain
31 way of carrying your stuff?

1 GM: This is the—you just ran into something I really love.

2 LC: Okay. That's fine.

3 GM: I wrote and had them send me—and I got a bunch of them. The company
4 sent me a bunch of them—were these little things that you scrub your head with. It's got
5 a little nipple on one end and on the other end it's got a whole bunch of little things
6 sticking out. You'll put your hand around it and you scrub your head, plastic. You don't
7 have to use your fingers. Basically it just feels so good to massage your head with that
8 thing.

9 LC: You wrote back home and got one?

10 GM: Yeah, "Send me one." They'd send me one and then all the guys wanted it.

11 LC: I'll bet they did.

12 GM: They all wanted it. We'd all be sitting up there just massaging our head with
13 it. We'd wash our head all the time. The colonel couldn't figure out what the hell we
14 were doing. We just enjoyed it.

15 LC: It feels good.

16 GM: It feels good. We'd wash our head three times a day. That just felt so good.

17 LC: Well, actually that's not too hard to imagine because I'm thinking of all the
18 stress and you know those muscles up around your neck and all and the top of your head
19 just tight as they could be, I'm sure.

20 GM: It wasn't unusual to find buddies sitting by their buddies rubbing their
21 necks. The packs we had aren't like today. They were packs that literally weighed on
22 your shoulders. It put all the weight on your shoulders. They hurt.

23 LC: What did you have to have with you in the packs, just for somebody who
24 wouldn't be familiar with the basic equipment you would not leave on a patrol without?
25 What would you take?

26 GM: I'd always carry an extra weapon. I'd always carry an extra small-arms
27 weapon.

28 LC: Making for a total of how many weapons that you would have?

29 GM: I'd have a .45 in there and I'd have another .45 on my side. Then I carried
30 that M-16 with me. I'd always carry—oh, what did I carry? It's been a long time.

31 LC: I know it.

1 GM: I didn't carry much on patrols because see you didn't—
2 LC: What about food?
3 GM: Yeah, we'd carry food. I'd carry generally for two meals. I always carried
4 an extra canteen of water. I would carry my blade on the side. I'd carry a small
5 pocketknife, kind of a Swiss pocketknife for everything.
6 LC: Right. What about a shovel?
7 GM: No.
8 LC: Pretty much not?
9 GM: No, I didn't carry that. I carried extra morphine, an extra roll of—what do
10 you call that—body wrap in case I had to turn into a corpsman.
11 LC: You mean like a gauze kind of thing?
12 GM: Yeah, in case the corpsman couldn't get there and the guy was sitting next
13 to me, hurting.
14 LC: Like a pressure bandage?
15 GM: Yeah, I would do that and I had the morphine right there.
16 LC: So you had some of that to carry around.
17 GM: Yeah, because I was trained to do that. Let's see. Towel—I had an extra
18 towel in there because I needed something to wipe my face because I wanted my face dry
19 for some reason. If I wanted to do something, like talk on the radio or something I
20 wanted my face dry.
21 LC: So you had a towel?
22 GM: I had an extra map for radio calls. It was mostly equipment that I used.
23 LC: What about ammunition? How much would you have?
24 GM: I had that around me.
25 LC: So on a bandolier kind of thing?
26 GM: Yeah. But see, I wasn't really supposed to get into that.
27 LC: Right, you're commanding.
28 GM: Yeah, I'm supposed to figure out what we're going to do. I'm supposed to
29 find out where to go. They know that's what I'm supposed to do. If they see you firing
30 back there they know we're in deep trouble.

1 LC: But you, of course, wouldn't want to be without the ability to defend
2 yourself.

3 GM: Oh, no. If I see them coming up I want to be able to do it. I can't
4 remember what else I carried. I carried as little as I could because I wanted to be able to
5 move. The more you put up there and you lay down the more they can see, the bigger the
6 pack.

7 LC: That's true. The bigger the profile as you're moving through.

8 GM: Yeah. You see these guys today over there. Geez. That's a huge pack
9 they've got on their back.

10 LC: Yeah, and it weighs a lot, too, as I've heard.

11 GM: Yeah. Oh, and probably about three pairs of socks and powder. I carried
12 talcum powder, too.

13 LC: Now, most people might not get why that would be a high priority item. Can
14 you explain?

15 GM: Well, it was always—sweat and humidity can do a number on your feet real
16 quick. They'd get infected or you'd get blisters, which you can get with water in there
17 rubbing against the shoe or whatever. If you get blisters you're going to be in trouble so
18 you always used dry socks and made sure the feet are always dry and clean. Always try
19 to wash them because you're putting—I forgot what the square foot of weight that you're
20 putting on your feet. It's a lot.

21 LC: The pressure per square inch, yeah.

22 GM: I forgot the amount.

23 LC: It's huge.

24 GM: Yeah, per inch of your feet.

25 LC: It's huge.

26 GM: You've got to take care of your feet because there's nothing else to walk on
27 unless you turn into a monkey and walk on your hands or something. So you better
28 protect those suckers. So you keep them dry.

29 LC: Did you try to reinforce this with your guys or was it not necessary?

30 GM: No, these guys, they had been through infantry school and they were
31 already grunts. They already knew. They were in the know. Again, I don't know about

1 the Army, but these guys—there was a guy who came back, a reporter with Channel
2 Eight who came back from Iraq. He'd been with the Army and he'd been with the
3 Marines. He said, "I can't tell you how well-trained the Marines are. When they pull up
4 to a site to set up camp or to prepare to go into battle nobody says anything. Everybody
5 just does what they need to do." In camp, shoes come off, socks come off, people start
6 cleaning their rifles. He says, "In the Army I see them lay down their rifles on the
7 ground. You don't ever see a Marine lay a rifle on the ground. That's automatic dirt.
8 They'll sit down and talk or whatever, but these guys they're doing things. They're
9 trained. They're setting up their machine guns to cover certain areas for crossfire. They
10 just automatically go in and do it."

11 LC: That's very telling.

12 GM: Yes, it is. He said, "Also it's sad that the Marines never have any
13 equipment." He said he rode in a convoy of Army trucks. Every truck had a radio, about
14 fifteen or twenty trucks. He got out to the Marines and only the front truck and the last
15 truck had radios. What did they decided to do? They just sent everybody in trucks to do
16 what they were going to do. They told them where they were going, but they didn't have
17 any radios in between.

18 LC: You know, that makes me think about your mention earlier of calling in for
19 Medevac support and the fact that the VC were monitoring the radio channels, at least for
20 Medevac on occasion or you thought they were. You had to be prepared for the fact that
21 they might be. Did you think that that was true for most communications?

22 GM: I think if I could point out the biggest error military-wise looking back on
23 our part that we screwed up the most on was not having good communications security.
24 We just got on there and talked. We didn't use codes. We didn't tell anything. You say,
25 "Well, these guys are just Vietnamese and Viet Cong and they don't know." Well, I'll
26 tell you what. When I had my business here and we did plaques for the school for their
27 end-of-year awards, about eight out of ten were Vietnamese.

28 LC: The names of the students?

29 GM: Yeah. The top kids in the school were Vietnamese.

30 LC: Sure.

1 GM: So we did one of the worst things you could do is we underestimated the
2 enemy, first of all. Every time, especially around Marble Mountain, when somebody
3 called in for something they had—years later under Marble Mountain they found a huge
4 cavern there where the North Vietnamese or Charlie had been there all along. On Marble
5 Mountain there was an entire Marine squadron, maybe two squadrons of helicopters that
6 would lift out of there. Boy, when they got lifted out of there they knew where they were
7 going, where they were going to land, where the firefight was and when they got there
8 they wouldn't be there. They'd be gone.

9 LC: Because communication security was—

10 GM: They heard us. Or in some cases if they knew they'd be waiting and sitting
11 up there and they'd go in there and they'd get blown away. So our security, not using
12 right codes and secrecy of what we were doing was terrible and we underestimated the
13 enemy and they were smart. They were smart.

14 LC: Where do you think that underestimating them came from?

15 GM: The Asian mentality. Asian.

16 LC: Just because they were Asian, Americans thought—

17 GM: Yeah, we did it with Japan. You look at little bitty Vietnamese guys.
18 “These guys aren't smarter than monkeys.” Well, we found out wrong and when I was
19 doing those plaques I go, “Holy cow. These people are smart. They don't even speak
20 our language and they win eight out of ten categories.” So we underestimated the enemy
21 and they were listening to everything we said and they took appropriate action. That was
22 our biggest screw-up. I mean major operations, they're waiting on us. It's like we broke
23 the Japanese code in Europe, I mean in World War II.

24 LC: Right. Except this time we were the ones who got it done to us?

25 GM: Yeah. How many times did you hear them say they were flying there and
26 there was nobody there? We'd fly in there and let out hundreds of troops and march
27 them northeast and there was nobody there. It was using the old military philosophy,
28 “We fight on our grounds,” so they would pick their own grounds to fight.

29 LC: Did you experience or observe or hear about the distinctions and capabilities
30 between Viet Cong and NVA (North Vietnamese Army)?

1 GM: I didn't see it. I really didn't see it or know it. I had heard that the North
2 Vietnamese were much well better prepared and organized. I assume that meant they had
3 radios, the backup mortars and artillery and tanks, whereas the VC just operated alone.
4 So I'm sure that's what they meant. You know, the NVA, the North Vietnamese, hand an
5 entire regiment came down to Hue during the Tet Offensive and took Hue. I can't
6 remember where I heard it, but that General Giap, kind of Westmoreland's counterpart,
7 that regiment came down there to take care of them. They were going to come down and
8 kick the Marines' ass down there at Hue. They did, but they only walked away with four
9 people, four or five people at Hue. They didn't have anybody else left.

10 LC: Where were you exactly, if you remember, during the Tet Offensive? You
11 were in the area.

12 GM: Out there where I just told you.

13 LC: At Hue?

14 GM: No, I just told you that story because they were there. I was listening a lot
15 to what was going on up at Khe Sanh. When I went over there it seemed like most of my
16 Basic School class ended up in that area. We all ended up at the Tet Offensive. When I
17 go to the reunion just about all of us were in that.

18 LC: You were all up in I Corps and all up in that—

19 GM: Yeah, we were all in I Corps and we all ended up in there at the time of the
20 Tet Offensive. You go in there and take roll and almost all of us were there during that
21 time. It's just strange that a lot of those guys were up in the Khe Sanh area.

22 LC: What do you remember hearing, Gary, about the battle that was going on at
23 Khe Sanh? Of course, it went on for quite a long time.

24 GM: Well, where I was—you could always tell the guys from Khe Sanh when
25 they were coming down.

26 LC: How could you tell?

27 GM: They were all brown. Everything on them was brown.

28 LC: From the mud, you mean?

29 GM: No, just from the dust up there. They were all brown. You'd just go over
30 there and ask them, "How is everything up there?" They'd say, "We're holding. We're
31 going to hold." You just did that. That was my feeling. They were heavily surrounded

1 and there was fighting going on, but I don't think there was any doubt in my mind they
2 wouldn't hold it because I knew also we had tremendous air support going on up there. I
3 found out later, and you can talk to General Carey about this, I don't know for sure, but I
4 understand they had—the Marines up there were just hoping they would come out
5 because it would've been—well, you had these final lines of fire support in which you
6 crisscross your lines of your fire. You'd have them stacked differently all the way across
7 this line in which you've just got waves of fire going across this open area.

8 LC: Meaning artillery?

9 GM: No, machine guns. Those guys were just hoping they would come out from
10 the mountains and come down and come through that no-man's land because there would
11 have been a slaughter. Also General Carey, I understand they had aircraft just stacked,
12 waiting to come down on top of them if they came out one after another. They were
13 ready to come in.

14 LC: Right. Aircraft up above, in tiers. Yeah, this is something that I do want to
15 ask General Carey about.

16 GM: I understand also they knew the battle was over and the battle was over long
17 before the Army got there because the Marines were already starting to march out of the
18 hills was when the rats left.

19 LC: When the rats left?

20 GM: Yep. The guy told me that. He said, "We knew it was over when the rats
21 left. They'd gone out into the hills. There are better meals out there instead of here." So
22 they left. "Where'd they go?"

23 LC: Because they could get out to the hills because the NVA had withdrawn
24 essentially.

25 GM: Well, there was better food products out there, to be raw about the thing.
26 There was people laying around out there. Here there's live people so they went up there.

27 LC: While that was going on were you able to get information about what was
28 happening up there other than from individuals?

29 GM: Hearsay.

30 LC: Okay, scuttlebutt and stuff.

31 GM: Yep, scuttlebutt.

1 LC: What was your main source of information about what was going on in the
2 U.S. during this time? Did you see *Stars and Stripes*?

3 GM: No, I'd just hear it from guys.

4 LC: Really?

5 GM: Yeah, scuttlebutt.

6 LC: Did you have any idea, Gary, how big the anti-war movement was becoming
7 during this time and after Tet back in the States?

8 GM: No, because when I came home I went to Camp Lejune. I spent six months
9 back there. You knew it was going on, but you just—

10 LC: You weren't really seeing it up close.

11 GM: You wouldn't see it. Then when I came home in Irving, Texas, there was
12 nothing going on there. Then when I got to Denton I didn't see it at first, but then that's
13 when things started to grow and then I realized just how big it was.

14 LC: Sometime in the early '70s.

15 GM: I just realized we would read magazines if we could get three or four guys
16 get together and we'd sometimes—somehow we'd get these magazines, *Life* and *Time*
17 and *New York Times*, which was generally the worst. We'd pick out an article and we'd
18 read them. We'd pick out one that was the most misquoted. We'd each pick out one to
19 read and then we'd vote to see who had the worst misquoted or was just simply a lie or
20 didn't finish telling the truth. Then we'd read one that was the best propaganda for the
21 NVA that looked like it was written for the NVA. Those were hard to pick winners
22 because they all were. If you were going to write something for the NVA, which one of
23 these would you pick? They all looked that way. I found an old paper that I ordered
24 when I was in business. I found one that was written about the Marines when they came
25 out of the battle up at—oh, I can't think of the river—the Chosin Reservoir with the
26 Marines at the layout. I found a copy of the *New York Times*. You ought to read that
27 thing. It is glowing about the Marines. I mean the way they wrote about the Marines
28 coming out of there, it was just—you go, "Wow." They gave praise and told about how
29 they looked and it was wonderful. If you gave that to the *New York Times*, boy, they'd
30 laugh like crazy.

1 LC: Well, I hope that when you and I continue the interview tomorrow we can
2 talk a little bit more about media and the media's treatment of the Vietnam conflict and
3 that you'll share some additional observations because I think it's important that we get
4 those.

5 GM: That's very important.

6 LC: Let me ask you about your own—again, during your time in Vietnam—your
7 down time. You've talked about how busy Marines kept themselves with maintenance
8 and hygiene and cleaning their rifles and so on. All that's important. Was there music
9 around? Did you guys listen to music?

10 GM: Oh, yeah. Just about every one of those guys, in their backpack they had a
11 carry-on radio. Everybody had their own radio.

12 LC: So everybody was kind of—

13 GM: Everybody was tuned in, but the only thing you'd get was *Stars and Stripes*.
14 A lot of guys got tapes. They played—it ranged from country-western to rock, whatever.

15 LC: What about mail from home? Did you get much mail?

16 GM: I'll tell you something funny. Dad told me that we decided—I told him
17 when I got the mail from him. He said he got mail faster to me than he could get mail
18 sent to Grand Prairie. Yeah.

19 LC: I believe it, actually.

20 GM: It took four days to get to Grand Prairie and it took three days to get to me.

21 LC: Was your dad a faithful correspondent?

22 GM: Oh, yeah.

23 LC: Did he write a lot?

24 GM: Yeah, they all did. Everybody did.

25 LC: How important was it to your guys and to yourself, Gary, to have that
26 connection?

27 GM: Oh, my God, it's like any war, like anywhere. The hard ones were—there
28 were guys that were single that lost their girlfriends to somebody. Those were the ones
29 that were hard.

30 LC: Did you ever know of any guys who basically just couldn't handle that
31 news?

1 GM: One. I heard about it and you didn't want to talk to him because that's what
2 your gunny is for or your NCOs are for. In the military, that's why you have your
3 sergeant majors. The sergeant majors and your master sergeants who are running it.
4 They're the mother of the platoon. You're kind of the father. You do all those logistics
5 and you do—

6 LC: You do some discipline on them when they need it.

7 GM: Yeah, or you're making plans for this or that. You're running a business,
8 you stay out the business of the enlisted. That's what your sergeant major does. He'll
9 come to you when he says, "I think it's time we need to move him to another platoon or
10 we need to move him out." It doesn't look good for an officer to bring him in just to
11 make him feel better. That's not good. That's not what you're for.

12 LC: Interesting.

13 GM: Yeah, that's not your job.

14 LC: So you had your master sergeant and other sergeants to kind of monitor
15 the—

16 GM: You only do it if the sergeant major or the staff sergeant says, "Sir, I wish
17 you'd talk to him. He's the one to talk to and if it doesn't work then I think we need to
18 transfer him out." You'd bring him in and it's kind of uncomfortable to have a captain
19 talking to a corporal about his personal business. All you need to do is say, "I know
20 you've got a problem," and you don't want to get in there and listen to the problem.
21 "You need to get squared away here because other guys are depending on you." You do
22 the typical Marine Corps bit.

23 LC: Right. Just get on with your job.

24 GM: Right. "We've got to depend on you. You're part of us. If you can't do it
25 then we're going to have to make some moves."

26 LC: Was there ever a time when, for whatever reason, you had to relocate one of
27 the men out of a squad or out of a platoon for whatever reason, personal or otherwise?

28 GM: Not for that. The only time we ran somebody off was because some guy
29 was completely incompetent doing his job or drugs, but you really didn't want to run a
30 buddy off. The buddies—guys are tight. Guys are tight.

1 LC: Yeah, and that's part of the point, right? In the paperwork that you sent in,
2 Gary, there was one mention that I think listeners might be interested in in the future and
3 that has to do with a note you made about a time that you suspected some of the
4 Vietnamese civilians who were around were probably VC. Can you tell me anything
5 about that, that their sympathies were with the VC? I think you mentioned a barber.

6 GM: Oh, yeah. During the Tet Offensive, back where I was staying in Da Nang,
7 I had been told—I'll tell you what. I was down there the first night that the Tet Offensive
8 kicked off. It was three o'clock in the morning and I was called over by this colonel. He
9 sent me over there with a bunch of cooks and bottle washers and all this. They're all
10 Marines—and that was a great story, too. I've got to tell you that. I went over there to
11 his quarters. As I turned the corner I saw these, I don't know, probably about two to
12 three platoon sizes of Marines over there lined up. I didn't know what they were for and
13 then I turned the corner to go into his place and there's another bunch of Marines over
14 there lined up. He said, "I want you to take these Marines out there and go over to the
15 river just north of the bridge and set up a blocking position. The 1st Marine Division
16 elements are pushing some VC into the river. You're to take them as they come across."
17 We were to set up and the guys would come across. I said, "Well, there's two groups up
18 there. Which one do you want?" He said, "Take your pick of either one you want." I
19 said, "I don't understand." He said, "Well, when we call for volunteers we have so many
20 of them we had to form two organizations. So take your pick." He says, "By the way,
21 don't issue any ammo until you get one unit out of sight." "Yes, sir. We'll kill each
22 other to death out here." I thought it was funny, "Don't issue any ammo." It also showed
23 you just how eager these kids were. If they were working the mailroom and all that stuff,
24 shit, they wanted to be worth something. They wanted to fight. I thought that was—then
25 when I got home and I saw the other garbage and I think about those kids that were
26 volunteering to go do that it just added to my problems. They just wanted it. My God,
27 they wanted to do it. Back in the town when I was in the Da Nang area we had a lot of
28 fights. There were a lot of fights because kids wanted to go out and they joined the
29 Marine Corps to fight.

30 LC: They were ready to rumble.

31 GM: Yeah. They just got bored. They were on edge and they got ticked off.

1 LC: Yeah, I believe it.

2 GM: We never took disciplinary action against anybody. What are you going to
3 do, send them to Nam? So we just usually put them in another unit and moved them
4 around.

5 LC: Well, I had asked you about the barber. What did you find out about him?

6 GM: We were over there and took care of the situation. As we're going through
7 the dead and so forth, one of them was a barber and I recognized him.

8 LC: You're going through the VC dead bodies?

9 GM: Yeah, looking for papers and all this kind of stuff. One of them was a
10 barber.

11 LC: No kidding. How did that make you feel?

12 GM: That gave me a scare. Then two other guys they found were cooks in the O-
13 club. Then we picked up a couple of mamasans. One recognized them for the ones that
14 were cleaning the hooches in another area.

15 LC: Now were they dead?

16 GM: Oh, yeah. Then we went back and somebody said—we had these hooches
17 with two doors on either end. Then we had a shelter outside, or bunkers. You could
18 really—if you wanted to all you had to do is open up a door and roll a grenade through
19 this.

20 LC: That didn't actually happen.

21 GM: No.

22 LC: But it was possible.

23 GM: Somebody could do it. What we did was we took a broom handle and put it
24 through the doors so nobody could open the door. That's all we need was some mamasan
25 rolled through there and roll a grenade through there. They came out. They rose up and
26 came out, but they got nailed.

27 LC: Yeah, the VC's losses obviously were very heavy. Could you see any
28 change after the Tet Offensive in terms of how much enemy activity there was, say, in the
29 Happy Valley area?

30 GM: Yeah. We kept going out farther and farther and farther and nobody was
31 there.

1 LC: They were all gone.

2 GM: Yeah, we just kept going out and kept going out. We had to go farther, but
3 then somebody was going to have to come get us. They would have to get a helo to come
4 get us. We didn't want to go out that far.

5 LC: Well, Gary, at some point here you got promoted to captain, is that right?

6 GM: Yeah.

7 LC: Now, did that come about—I know you're a modest guy, but did that come
8 about because of incidents that you had been involved with in part or was it just your
9 time in the progression?

10 GM: Well, you have so many slots in each position open in the Marine Corps.
11 Let's say you've got five hundred first lieutenants open. The Marine Corps tries to fill
12 them as best they can. Say you've got five hundred in wartime. In peacetime it may be a
13 hundred. So promotions are slow. In wartime you have so many people get killed so
14 you've got more promotions. So basically there were more slots open and the Marine
15 Corps filled them quicker. So I got it picked up quicker. I went through my first
16 lieutenant bars in about a month. The lieutenants were just getting nailed. They really
17 just—it was sad. If you were one of those lieutenants you just didn't hardly last. First
18 lieutenants were tremendously open. So if you were a first lieutenant and there was an
19 opening you got made a first lieutenant. Like I say, technically I wore my first lieutenant
20 bars about a month before I made it to captain. Now that's a sad story for both the
21 Marine Corps and me and for other guys. I'm just lucky I didn't get myself in a situation
22 to be—that's a major hop as far as responsibility's concerned.

23 LC: Yes, sir. It is.

24 GM: It's going from a platoon level up to probably a battalion level and there
25 you're talking about completely different tactics, support, and the whole nine yards.

26 LC: Did you have to move into those responsibilities right away?

27 GM: No. I still went out there and did my bit out there as the platoon leader.

28 LC: Did your guys treat you any differently?

29 GM: Nope. If they had put me into a battalion-level position I would've
30 probably embarrassed myself because I didn't know what I would be doing. At the same
31 time I would've been hurting the Marine Corps because I couldn't have done the job the

1 way it should've been done. But that's kind of the way it was. I kept saying, "Good
2 God, I hope they don't put me in this captain's responsibility because that's a major
3 jump."

4 LC: Yeah, it is. It stands out right away on your DD214. I just wondered what
5 the circumstances were and they're very sad circumstances, as you noticed.

6 GM: Yeah.

7 LC: Yeah, it's a sad thing that's often said that the life expectancy of a lieutenant
8 in the Marine Corps, especially during this time period, '67, '68, was just very few days
9 in-country. Not very long.

10 GM: Really? Is that what you read?

11 LC: Yes, I've seen that.

12 GM: Days?

13 LC: Yeah, a couple months, actually, I think. Not necessarily that they were
14 killed, but they were wounded such that they weren't able to return to the field right
15 away. Yeah.

16 GM: Well, just about everybody I've talked to in my basic class who were in
17 another billet got transferred over to the Tet Offensive. Artillery, or whatever, they got
18 transferred over. The infantry officers were doing infantry work.

19 LC: Yeah. Also where the Marine Corps was during the Tet Offensive was
20 clearly the hotbed of larger operations that involved the NVA, not just the VC, up in
21 Quang Tri and all around there. So it's a real tough area, a real tough area. Gary, let's
22 take a break there.

Interview with John Morris
Session [2] of [2]
Date: September 1, 2005

1 Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins with the Vietnam Archive at Texas
2 Tech University continuing the oral history interview with Lt. Col. John Morris. Today's
3 date is the first of September 2005. I'm in the interview room in the Special Collections
4 building on the campus of Texas Tech. Gary is speaking to me by telephone from his
5 home in Texas. Good morning, Gary.

6 Gary Morris: Good morning.

7 LC: Thanks again for your time. Gary, yesterday we were talking about
8 problems in the field, particularly medical and kind of day-to-day health problems. I
9 wonder can you clarify the term that we were talking about yesterday?

10 GM: Yeah, this term is called the "pucker factor," which refers basically to your
11 bottom when it gets real tight. Most people in the civilian world don't really experience
12 it unless they've been in a long-term situation where they've been scared. Then they
13 really don't realize it maybe until later. But when you're scared your bottom tightens up.
14 Then after a while you sit down and actually your bottom hurts where you use the
15 bathroom because it's just a natural tendency to tighten there. It goes back probably to
16 the beginning of time. I don't know. I'm sure in modern times maybe in the Civil War
17 or whatever, but at least in Vietnam we used the term "the pucker factor is up for the
18 night." What's it going to be like tonight? Well, there's a good chance we're going to be
19 mortared or shelled or we're going to be hit. This was everywhere and that meant the
20 pucker factor was going to be up tonight which means it's going to be a bad night.

21 LC: You're going to be scared.

22 GM: Yeah, you're going to be scared. That was a common term used. One of
23 the ways you treated that was the use of—what did you call it?

24 LC: Well, suppositories was what I said yesterday.

25 GM: That was generally the best way to do it. In some light cases you'd drink
26 some milk of magnesia or whatever or something to make you go to the bathroom. Just
27 milk of magnesia but the corpsmen didn't like to carry that around because it was in a

1 bottle. A lot of guys didn't know how to use it. Some of them even put it in their mouth
2 and took it. They'd been in the country or the city and—

3 LC: Never had it before.

4 GM: They'd kind of get embarrassed to walk off with it. They'd come back and
5 find out, "Did you use it?" "Yeah, but it tasted terrible." He'd say, "You're not
6 supposed to take it, pal." He'd have to explain to them what they're supposed to do it
7 with it. Of course, everybody'd get a big chuckle out of it. That happened to the guys
8 that were green coming over. That was even for the officers. Even second lieutenants
9 were coming over and the corpsmen would always tell them, "Hey listen, be sure put this
10 in the right place and don't put it in your mouth." That's what that meant.

11 LC: Okay. It's helpful to have those terms clarified, too, so we know what that
12 means. Let me ask you a little bit, speaking about times when it was quite reasonable to
13 be scared, Gary. About the weapons—what enemy weapons were the most frightful?
14 Which ones did you guys most wish didn't exist?

15 GM: Well, I guess anything that had to do with an ambush. That's the thing, I
16 would not have wanted to use that. I was terrified of ambushes, whatever they used in an
17 ambush. Of course, the first weapon they used was generally a booby trap, which got
18 your first guy. You were always terrified of that. It was the same thing we would use.
19 What we used on an ambush would generally be a machinegun or toss out a couple of
20 grenades, but quite frankly the things that just drove me nuts was mortars. They don't
21 make any sound when they come down and they just explode. Other artillery you can
22 kind of hear coming over and whatever. These suckers just explode and it's very
23 unnerving.

24 LC: Just out of nowhere?

25 GM: Out of nowhere it just "boom" and you don't know when the next one's
26 going to boom. That's the one I guess that bothered me the most. The other troopers, I
27 don't know. I never did take that. I know that the North Vietnamese, and I can
28 understand this, the thing that they were most terrified of were B-52s because they could
29 be walking along and they would not even hear the explosion. They wouldn't hear the
30 thing coming down. They didn't have that whistling sound like you hear of with the
31 Germans. They made those things to whistle for terror factors. But these things would

1 come down and they would explode in the air and in cases they were so big and powerful
2 that they'd basically just evaporate people up front. So they'd be walking along and all
3 of a sudden people up front would just evaporate in the hot air. They were terrified of
4 those. That was their problem. I guess the mortars were the things that scared me the
5 most.

6 LC: Even more than booby traps and stuff along the trailside?

7 GM: Oh, yeah, you're right there. Bouncing Betties terrified me in that you
8 stepped on one and when you released it, it would pop up. It would pop up to about your
9 waist so it not only got the guy that walked on it, but it would get the guy behind you and
10 it got you in your private parts. Guys were terrified of that part. Frankly, I was more
11 concerned about being blinded. I just could not imagine being—to lose a male part, fine.
12 I just don't want to be blinded. Just shoot me. I don't remember anybody being blinded,
13 but—

14 LC: Why did you have such a fear of that, Gary, do you know? Where did that
15 come from?

16 GM: I don't know. I just could not believe living in a world of blackness and
17 what a terrible, terrible—I guess maybe seeing guys in World War I and films of those
18 guys or maybe seeing somebody in the real world walking along with a cane and a stick
19 and seeing how people treated them. They were treated terribly. Even today they're
20 treated with such terrible disrespect. People don't talk to them. They just kind of give
21 them away. I've seen one in our church. He's not invited to anything and people just
22 feel uncomfortable around them and they get treated terribly. They don't know how to
23 deal with them, as opposed to somebody who's lost an arm or a leg or something like
24 that. They're treated as badly as I was treated when I had my emotional problems from
25 post-traumatic. People just didn't want anything to do with me.

26 LC: You're just ostracized in some way?

27 GM: Yeah. I also didn't want to be felt sorry for.

28 LC: Yeah, that's the other thing that operates. Gary, you mentioned yesterday
29 when we were talking that your squad was involved in, I think, an ambush at night and
30 that there was a lot of confusion. It seemed kind of out of control, the events that night,
31 and that a couple of men in your unit were killed. Do you remember that?

1 GM: Mm-hmm.

2 LC: Were those guys killed by these ambush weapons or weapons that were left
3 by—?

4 GM: They were killed immediately.

5 LC: By what? Can you say?

6 GM: Well, we were coming out of a helicopter is what happened. It was a hot
7 LZ and I jumped out. I remember I had turned my ankle. That was when I was telling
8 you I turned my ankle. Two guys behind me, the radioman and the guy behind me both
9 got hit with live fire.

10 LC: Right away?

11 GM: Yeah. I remember the drag on my—I didn't have the radio. I just
12 remember he was there and then he wasn't there. The guy—there was immediate fire,
13 which was good. The bad thing is I got to know my radioman pretty good and that hurts.

14 LC: Gary, just as part of the record and to honor his service, can you give his
15 name?

16 GM: No. He was a corporal. One was a corporal and one was a lance corporal.
17 I don't want to give their names.

18 LC: Okay. I understand. Let me ask about the Americans' weapons. What was
19 most effective? What were you glad that you had or that was available and being used?
20 Was it the M-16 or was it artillery? What were you most relieved to have around when
21 you were out on patrols?

22 GM: Hmm. Well, I guess everything was all right. There was nothing really
23 great. The M-16 was great when you had it working and so forth. The grenades were all
24 right. I guess the best way I can answer it is I look back now and see what these guys
25 have got today and go, "Oh my God, I wish we had that." But I don't know. I guess the
26 thing I most trusted were probably mortars and artillery for immediate support when I
27 needed it. All the other stuff was just basically standard stuff. If we all had machineguns
28 that would be great because you can put out such a volume of fire. I guess that was the
29 most important weapon we had.

30 LC: Did you trust the M-16 or did you have troubles with it or your guys have
31 troubles?

1 GM: No, you always had this fear in your mind. I don't remember having that
2 much trouble, but the guys were always terrified and that's why we always cleaned
3 weapons. You heard stories and so forth and they got things fixed. The M-14 was
4 nothing more than a rifle that fired off a few rounds. That thing was just not—against the
5 AK what they had it was just nothing. We were outgunned.

6 LC: Outgunned.

7 GM: But I think I always felt comfortable in that when you went on patrol you
8 always kept locked-in with your fire direction control, your FDC, and you radioed in. By
9 the way, I didn't mention, but you always took very frequent water breaks because of the
10 humidity and whatever and also when you did you kept very quiet and it gave you a
11 chance to listen to what was out there. So anyway, knowing that somebody was tracking
12 you back there everywhere you went, every time you called in somebody you really were
13 adjusting your weapons as you went. In other words, you went from location A and you
14 went halfway to location B. You reported in halfway. In some cases the weapons would
15 be moved to in their sites to location B and sometimes they wouldn't. In most cases
16 they'd move there with you. So if you called in a fire strike when you wanted to adjust
17 fire they could adjust fire from there. You'd say, "I need some rounds two hundred
18 meters from my point two hundred meters east of me." They would just make
19 adjustments. They would always fire one round first to see where it landed. Then once
20 they got where you wanted you'd say, "Move right or move left," and then you'd say,
21 "Fire for effect," which means the other three guns, or whatever they had, mortars, who
22 were tracking identically with that one and then would fire for effect.

23 LC: And that means let it loose. Let go.

24 GM: Yeah, but the one I really distrusted the least, and the guys on the air wing
25 side are going to get mad at me, but I can't say this. There are different types. I was
26 always terrified of calling an air strike because it's harder to pinpoint dropping a bomb.
27 You never really wanted to drop a bomb unless there was larger numbers. If you just get
28 small arm fire you're not going to call in an air strike. You'd call in the smaller stuff.
29 You'd go to artillery for larger. Mortars were used for reverse kill operations. In other
30 words, you were going along in a location and you were getting mortared. You'd look on
31 your map and you could determine that the fire was coming from the reverse side of a

1 hill. Your artillery wasn't really good because it fired more horizontally. If it hit it was
2 going to generally hit on your side of the hill. You need something that would go up and
3 over that would land on the other side. So you'd use mortars for that, you see. If you had
4 an area and they were on this side of the hill and you needed direct fire then you'd use the
5 artillery. It just depended on what the situation was and if there were pockets of these
6 people and they were really dug in. You needed napalm or something like that or five
7 hundred pounders you'd move back and then you'd call those guys in.

8 LC: You'd call the location in for a strike.

9 GM: You'd call the air guys in and boy I tell you, you loved them.

10 LC: I'll bet.

11 GM: You wouldn't call them in too close. I saw on the History Channel one
12 night that they called it in. I never thought about this but there was an Army group and
13 they were in the high-tree area with lots of trees. They were having trouble getting these
14 guys dug out. But what they forgot was they called the air over the top of them. So when
15 they dropped the bombs they hit the trees and detonated before they even got to the target
16 and killed a lot of friendlies. I said, "God, I never thought about that. I don't remember
17 anybody teaching that in class." So they called it off immediately because it just
18 happened. Somebody didn't know or somebody forgot or somebody called it in from the
19 wrong direction or somebody screwed up. This is something else I want to say. People
20 say, "What were you scared of most? Booby traps or whatever?" I think I can say in
21 reality that most any person in command, I would say from a sergeant who had a squad of
22 folks all the way up to a three-star general who was in the field or even a four-star—
23 Schwarzkopf for God's sakes—was terrified. Let's talk about people in the field. It's not
24 so much as them being hurt or killed. I didn't want to be blinded, I'll tell you that. I was
25 terrified of that. I didn't want to be crippled, I knew that. But above all that I didn't want
26 to be the person that did like the tree thing, that did a screw-up and caused people to lose
27 their lives. Or march them into an ambush that I knew better. For example, if I was
28 stupid enough to march people down a trail. That's a court-martial offense then. If you
29 march people down a trail and somebody found out about it you could be court-martialed
30 for it because the VC knew the Americans were slack enough to go the easy route. I'm
31 not going to talk about them. I'm going to talk about the Marines. Dikes, we didn't have

1 any dikes down south. That was (unintelligible) location. You just didn't walk along the
2 trail. Even in the bush you didn't go down through the bush the same way twice because
3 they knew where you walked. That night they would do it.

4 LC: They would do it, meaning they would put something there.

5 GM: Right. You were terrified that you might be walking that same area maybe
6 once too often. Maybe the second time in three weeks, I might've marched this area too
7 much. Or you might have called in an air strike or you might have made a wrong
8 command and brought in a reserve element somewhere and you're a screw-up. You're a
9 screw-up and you caused people their lives. That was a terrible fear, a terrible fear. I
10 admire—nobody ever thinks about this, nobody, but I admire guys like General Carey
11 and Schwarzkopf and people. I had to worry about thirty-six guys and their families and
12 their girlfriends and their loved ones. I was responsible for those. Now walk that sucker
13 up to a captain or a major who's lining out that operation on a table and putting out on a
14 battalion level, "This is what we're going to do," and he's got to go to bed that night and
15 say, "Dear God, please help me make sure that I'm not walking into a regimental ambush
16 from the North Vietnamese." You can walk that sucker on up, just all the way up until
17 you get to a lieutenant colonel and a colonel who's working out the plan for a large
18 program, say at Khe Sanh and stuff like that. Look at General Carey. He had to work out
19 that Super Gaggle and worry about the tremendous risk of planes running into each other.
20 Don't tell me he didn't worry about that.

21 LC: We're talking about, just to clarify for future listeners, Lt. Gen. Richard E.
22 Carey of the U.S. Marine Corps.

23 GM: Walk it on up. Then you look at Schwarzkopf who had, there's the
24 possibility of thousands of guys and hundreds of thousands of parents depended on him.
25 He talks a little about that, about how it was to sleep at night worrying about that. You
26 have to be inhuman. I think one of the things that upset me the most is there was a show
27 called *M*A*S*H*.

28 LC: The television program?

29 GM: Yeah. They always made fun of the brass, from colonels and especially
30 generals. They always showed generals with a cigar in their mouth. There was always
31 one of these guys out of the hospitals up on the front line and they always wanted booze

1 and they always wanted the women. They just made them look like buffoons. I wrote
2 them. I said, “This is not the way it is and I’m mad because you make them look like
3 that. They had to make terrible decisions, and making people’s lives. Please make them
4 look good.” I remember here in Irving, when they had their last show, I remember, I
5 don’t know where you were, but one time when they had that last show there were a lot
6 of parties going around and they had one here.

7 LC: Yes, I remember.

8 GM: They called me and said, “How about calling the Marines and see if we
9 can’t get some props and stuff up here?” I said, “I’m not calling the Marines. I don’t
10 want anything to do with that.” They got mad at me. “What’s with you? Why won’t
11 you do that?” I said, “Because I don’t like the way they show the generals.” I was at the
12 chamber board meeting and that was the one that was going to do it. Of course, I was
13 glad I had the opportunity to tell them. But you know those people looked at me like
14 they hadn’t had a clue. They just didn’t understand. It was like I was talking in one ear
15 and out the other ear. I can just bet that when the meeting was over they walked outside
16 and said, “I think that guy, he didn’t know what the hell he—what’s he talking about?”

17 LC: “What’s wrong with him?”

18 GM: “What? The generals were what?” They really believed more what was on
19 TV and you could almost hear them say, “I saw this episode where they showed this
20 general.” They believed the TV show more than they did me. It was like me talking—
21 the same old thing about the press. The TV was more powerful than me. So I could tell
22 by the way I talked and the response I got because I do remember this. They said, “Well,
23 do you know anybody else that we could call?” I said, “No.” That’s what told me that
24 they didn’t hear a word I said.

25 LC: Well, you were trying to make the point and really if you think about it,
26 other than very famous generals for whom things typically went pretty well, even though
27 they were taking huge risks, like General Eisenhower comes to mind, General Bradley,
28 pretty much nobody stands up for, General Marshall, pretty much nobody stands up for
29 the generals who have to make these decisions, which are, as you say, extremely difficult.
30 That’s an interesting point.

1 GM: But on the side there are people who should have never been in command,
2 who should have been relieved right off the bat. I think of people like—well, I think
3 MacArthur in Korea, he was lucky when he landed there. He was just pure lucky. The
4 way he conducted the war going up north, sending one division of Army people on one
5 side of a mountain and another division of Marines on the other side of a mountain in the
6 dead of winter, splitting two commands that couldn't even talk to each other—they
7 couldn't even talk to each other because there was a mountain range. Then him running a
8 war from another country, you don't do that. Then number three, not believing the
9 intelligence that was picked up from the field that you're picking up Chinese. I didn't
10 like him and I didn't like Westmoreland. I thought he was a terrible general.

11 LC: Why did you think that?

12 GM: After he had been told time and time again that his game plan, the body
13 count and all that kind of stuff or he didn't stand up to MacArthur who—

14 LC: McNamara.

15 GM: McNamara, yeah, who was really a total jerk, and really I don't think cared
16 one hoot about the people. Really, I'm positive of that because what he wanted, from
17 what I have read and heard, he didn't care. Westmoreland and some of the generals, and
18 this is where I get mad at the generals, didn't stand up to him and say, "What you're
19 doing is wrong. This is wrong and I'm not going to stand for it anymore." He didn't. So
20 we continued on a warfare front of doing things like allowing this business of which were
21 free-fire zone and which ones were not and what was considered rules of engagements
22 which were not realistic. A lot of cases they must have body counts. I'll tell you
23 something, a lot of body counts—and I wasn't involved in this—but a lot of guys I've
24 talked to hated body counts because if you won the battle or whatever it was, the ambush,
25 and you had to go out and get body counts, let me tell you something. That wasn't any
26 fun because especially the North Vietnamese, they might just have a sniper, too, with
27 their group. So you're out there walking around and counting the dead and guess what?
28 More than one time you got nailed or one of your guys got nailed.

29 LC: Because they were trying to collect this information.

30 GM: Yeah. You're out there counting the dead and they pull back into the brush
31 and bam! We lost a guy. So a lot of guys just would wait and go for count and you would

1 just guesstimate on what the body count was. It wasn't worth it. They went out and got
2 their own. They might have run out there and got the cache of weapons. They got the
3 rifles and stuff. Maybe you kind of went after dark and went out there and got it, but
4 they're not going to risk any lives to go out there and go, "One, two, three, four, five.
5 You missed two over there, I think." It wasn't worth it. That body count of
6 Westmoreland's and McNamara's deal was stupid. It was obvious we were killing more
7 of them than us, but we were losing people. One family is without a soldier now because
8 of that stupid body count that he wanted to do.

9 LC: Gary, have you paid any attention to McNamara in the last, say, seven or
10 eight years when he's been publishing books. There was the film called *Fog of War*,
11 which was a long interview with him about his decision making in Vietnam and even
12 earlier, actually, in World War II, where he appears at least—I've only seen them once
13 and I'd have to watch it a little more closely, but he appears to be apologizing on some
14 level. Have you seen that?

15 GM: The thing I understood was he was apologizing for his part in the war, as I
16 understood it.

17 LC: Yeah, that's what I think.

18 GM: Yeah. That's why I didn't take kindly to him. He never apologized for the
19 terrible leadership and decisions he made. That's what he needed to take—that's what I
20 wanted him to make an apology for, not his part in the war. That just infuriated me. That
21 was a pain on the pain. You don't keep—running the war from the White House that's
22 what he needed to apologize on, not turning over the command back to the people who
23 were in the field. A lot of this I'm getting from documentaries and from people who
24 were flying over there. I was with air wing. For example, he liked the rules of
25 engagement. That was probably the big issue—where you could shoot and couldn't
26 shoot on the ground, but it was even more dangerous in the air. I've seen this clip many a
27 time, where they would have guys hit the same target. I forgot what they call them when
28 these missions would come over from McNamara and Johnson and they would have them
29 hitting the same target day in and day out. They'd just run that target, the same one, and
30 just keep making bigger holes.

31 LC: Basically because they weren't allowed to bomb elsewhere.

1 GM: Yeah they were told if they went elsewhere they could be court-martialed if
2 they went elsewhere.

3 LC: What did you make of that? Was there any rationale for that at all for
4 restricting?

5 GM: No, none. There was no rationale except to leave the command in the field
6 to make these decisions. The pilots come back and say, “Hey, I hit that thing.” So they
7 can make a decision that the intelligence people who have got cameras and so forth and
8 they come back and tell you they hit it and say, “Okay, we’re not going to hit this
9 tomorrow.”

10 LC: Yeah, got that one already.

11 GM: Yeah, we already got that. But there was one guy on the television with the
12 Navy. He said, “We just got sick when we knew we all had to run that same deal and not
13 only did we waste it, but the people were waiting on us and we were in the range and not
14 only did we hit the same one we had to hit it on the same flight pattern so they were
15 waiting on us.”

16 LC: With anti-aircraft fire.

17 GM: Yeah. It was terrible that we had to run that same flight pattern. It was just
18 ridiculous what they were making us do.

19 LC: Was there anyone, given that you didn’t think Westmoreland was doing a
20 very good job, was there anyone about whom you knew while you were over there—and
21 I understand the level that you were working at, Gary, but was there anyone, even say in
22 the Marine Corps, who you felt would’ve had better decision making than General
23 Westmoreland around these issues?

24 GM: I’d take anybody in the Marine Corps.

25 LC: Why do you say that? I mean, I know you’re a Marine.

26 GM: I’m just saying they have a better feel of what’s going on. I don’t know. I
27 would probably say in this case anybody—first of all, anybody, first of all.

28 LC: Right, I know you’ve got to say that because you’re a Marine, but what
29 about, for example, General Carey? He was a very senior general.

30 GM: I think anybody who had good intelligence and a good feel of talking to the
31 people over here who had flown over here and had talked to the commanders and had a

1 good brief of what really was happening, that's the guy that I'd rather have as a general
2 doing the thing. Knowing what was going over here, regardless of what—I shouldn't
3 have said Marine. Anybody who knew what was happening over here.

4 LC: You felt that General Westmoreland was too busy worrying about what was
5 happening in Washington, for example.

6 GM: General Krulak—there was a General Krulak, Jr. and General Krulak the
7 father and they were both commandants. The father, there's a book out that I read, there
8 were just continuous arguments with the way he wanted to run his particular war and it
9 wasn't working. I'd have to go back and research. I can't remember, but the way it was
10 working, the way he wanted to pacify one area and the way the Marines were working—
11 they were working very well with the Marines, the way we were working it. He didn't
12 like the way we were doing it, but it was working with us.

13 LC: I think that's generally accepted, that the combined action platoons and so on
14 were fairly affective. Most historians would agree with that.

15 GM: Yeah, you know more about that. I can't remember. I just remember that.

16 LC: But General Krulak that you're talking about is Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine
17 Corps.

18 GM: His son's got one of my paintings.

19 LC: Oh, is that right?

20 GM: He gave me a great compliment one time. We had a Dallas Military Ball
21 here one time. We were sitting at separate tables. I've got to tell you a funny story about
22 it, too. We were at separate tables and one of my paintings was going to go to the head
23 guest of this High Rollers of Dallas. They had these balls of Dallas.

24 LC: Yeah, with all the bigwigs.

25 GM: Yeah, they do these things every year. So they got one of my eagles. In
26 fact, it was the one that was going to the president and it was sitting up front. It was
27 going to go to the guest, the person that was in charge of this thing. Right next to this
28 table was a Remington. What do you call it?

29 LC: A bronze?

30 GM: Yeah, it was beautiful.

31 LC: By Frederic Remington?

1 GM: Remington, yeah, it was sitting there. People were going to hand it out at
2 the guest ball over there. So they invited me to come up to give to the guest of honor my
3 eagle that was there and they invited the general, Krulak, to come up and to receive the
4 bronze. We kind of angled up and marched up together. I was in uniform and we'd
5 already met before, but we had a long way to walk. He says, "Hey, Colonel, what would
6 you take for us to swap those things after this thing's over?"

7 LC: No kidding. Now is the guy that you were talking to, the one who has your
8 painting, he is the son of Gen. Victor Krulak?

9 GM: Yeah.

10 LC: What was his rank?

11 GM: He was commandant of the Marine Corps at that time. This was the father
12 and son.

13 LC: Yeah, I'm trying to sort out which one you were talking to. You were
14 talking to the commandant of the Marine Corps.

15 GM: Both of them were commandants of the Marine Corps.

16 LC: I did not know that.

17 GM: They are the only father and son team that have ever been commandants of
18 the Marine Corps.

19 LC: Oh, I didn't know that. I'm sorry.

20 GM: I was talking to the son. He's a little guy and I've got a picture of him here
21 with me. I need to send you those.

22 LC: Yes, please.

23 GM: So we angled up there together.

24 LC: What an honor. What an incredible moment.

25 GM: I've got another one to tell you about General Grey. That's even funnier.

26 LC: Well, go ahead. Unleash it.

27 GM: Well, let me tell you about the night before. We were at this house. A
28 reception was given for us guys. I was one of the ones that got to go because I had done
29 the painting. Krulak was there in this house and it was forty acres and nineteen
30 bathrooms. The sucker was huge.

31 LC: I'm sure.

1 GM: General Krulak was coming from one area and I'm coming from another
2 area. We saw each other and I said, "Hell, General, I'm going to need a compass to get
3 back to get back home." He said, "Don't worry about it. I've been dropping bird seed
4 ever since I left the front door." Old country boy.

5 LC: He sounds like a pretty cool guy.

6 GM: "Don't worry, about it, Colonel. I've been dropping bird seed since I left
7 the front door."

8 LC: That's pretty good.

9 GM: What a sense of humor.

10 LC: Well, it's great that your artistic work not only helped—I'm sure it helps you
11 and it's a good thing for you to do, but it's also appreciated by people like the
12 commandant of the Marine Corps. That speaks a lot about your own character and what
13 you put into it.

14 GM: Well, I'll tell you another funny story.

15 LC: Okay.

16 GM: General Grey, he was a character, too. There was a function here. I think
17 there was a Marine Corps League national convention. They wanted me to give one of
18 my eagles. I was presented him an eagle and I've got a picture of it here where him and
19 myself were there. He kept referring to my date as a movie star. She ate that up.

20 LC: I'll bet.

21 GM: So I presented it to him and when I did it was just about that time just
22 earlier when we'd lost that Marine colonel in Lebanon who had been hung. Remember?

23 LC: Yes, I do.

24 GM: Okay. Well, I said, "I'd like to present that in honor of him if I may. I will
25 give it to you and then it'll be an honor to him." In fact, I had it engraved at the bottom
26 in honor of him. I got a letter back from him that said, "Thanks very much. Being in
27 memory of him is da da da da." So about six months to a year later this Metroplex
28 Marines I'm telling you about, we were having a lunch. At the head table is this lady
29 Marine. This Marine sitting next to me, he was at that dinner. He said, "Hey, Gary, you
30 know who that lady Marine is up there?" I said, "No." He said, "That's the wife of that
31 Marine that got hung up there. That's who that is."

1 LC: She was a Marine?

2 GM: Yeah, and also in that letter, I've got to back up and say that he was going
3 to—he told me at the dinner—I can't remember in the letter, but I do know he told me at
4 the dinner that he said that he was going to see that she got that. He would give her that
5 painting.

6 LC: No kidding.

7 GM: Yeah, he was going to give her that painting.

8 LC: Did you know her name? Did you find out her name?

9 GM: Higgins, I think. Yeah, Higgins. Major Higgins.

10 LC: She was a major in her own right?

11 GM: Yeah. I've got the letter here. It's in my portfolio over at the mag, but I've
12 got that. This is something I don't want publicized. I think General Grey is still living
13 and I don't want to embarrass him, but anyway, I'm sure it was Major Higgins is her
14 name. She was there and I said, "No kidding? That's her. She's supposed to have one of
15 my paintings. General Grey said he was going to give it to her." So I walked up to her
16 afterwards and I said, "I'm Gary Morris. You just might know my name." She said,
17 "No, I don't know your name." I said, "Well, you have a painting that was given to you
18 that I did in remembrance of your husband of an eagle that General Krulak has and was
19 going to give to you." She just heehawed. She said, "This is not the first time this has
20 happened." This is another offhanded compliment. She said, "I love the general very
21 much. He's been very kind to me, supportive. He's taken care of me, but sometimes the
22 general kind of likes to keep things that I was supposed to get that he likes." He kept the
23 damn eagle. She never got it. She never got the eagle.

24 LC: She sounds as if she was very gracious about it.

25 GM: Yeah, she was.

26 LC: That's a classy lady right there.

27 GM: A classy lady and another offhanded compliment. He kept my eagle. I
28 said, "I'll tell you what. I'll get another print and I'll send it to you." So I thought that
29 was—

30 LC: She handled that very well, very smooth.

31 GM: Yeah, she didn't say, "What?"

1 LC: Yeah, right.

2 GM: Like I did with the congressman, you know.

3 LC: Right. Everybody does that sometimes, but she sounds like she had been
4 through this before.

5 GM: Well, I'll never forget Krulak's, "That's all right. I've been dropping bird
6 seed ever since I left the front door."

7 LC: I like that, too. I like that, too. Well, it may be at this juncture, a good idea,
8 Gary, since we're talking about some of these big-picture issues to ask you, and in fact
9 you invited me in the forms that you filled out. One of the questions said, "What did you
10 think about American strategy in Vietnam?" You wrote down, "Ask me," so I will.
11 You've already mentioned the restrictions on the rules of engagement, both on the ground
12 in terms of free-fire zones in the areas where you had to be, of course, much more
13 cautious around civilians. You've talked about the restrictions in the air, the bombing
14 target selection and all that. In general, as an overall investment of American military
15 resources, what insights can you offer as to whether this was a good proposition, whether
16 it ought to have been undertaken, if it should have been undertaken—what should have
17 been done differently?

18 GM: Well, I think the war in Iraq showed everything that we should have done
19 right. It shows what we should have done. In other words, we're going to go into a war.
20 We're going to go in there where we don't have to worry about necessarily a free-fire
21 zone and we can fight on the other side of the fifty-yard line. We can go north of the
22 DMZ (demilitarized zone) like we did here. We can go into downtown to fight.

23 LC: Meaning Hanoi?

24 GM: Yeah. This business of chasing them up to the DMZ like we did in Korea
25 was asinine. Chasing them over into Laos, which was supposed to be a neutral country,
26 and stopping was asinine because when Nixon finally let us go in there, those guys going
27 into Laos and Cambodia and bomb, that country burned for four days. One of my best
28 friends said he dropped one bomb and got about eight secondaries off of one bomb.

29 LC: Now was that in Cambodia?

1 GM: Yeah. The so-called invasion, which was basically nothing more than an
2 intrusion. Basically, the Ho Chi Minh Trail was coming down through there. Well, if
3 they were using it, why couldn't we use it?

4 LC: Well, yeah, the question is how much did the Cambodian government
5 control that area.

6 GM: They didn't. I mean, I don't know what you mean by control. All I know is
7 the bad guys were storing stuff over there like crazy. They were letting people come
8 down through there like crazy. All that food and supplies and people were stored over
9 there and they worked themselves in not only by the land, but by the rivers. So not being
10 able to go over there and use that as an area for strategy and not being able to say we
11 can't go over there, that's dumb, and not being able to go north is dumb. Not being able
12 to bomb the SAM (surface-to-air missile) sites because McNamara says, "We can't do
13 that. We might piss off the Russians," is dumb.

14 LC: Or piss off the Chinese.

15 GM: Or the Chinese. Not being able to bomb the harbors, that's dumb. I mean
16 that was ridiculous.

17 LC: You didn't have any worries, either then or now, for example, that the
18 Chinese with their huge military and, of course, they were nuclear capable at the time,
19 you didn't think that it was worth it in any way trying to not ruffle them and get them
20 involved.

21 GM: Well, I didn't even think about it at the time. But when I came home and
22 thought about it I kept saying, "We're losing all these guys a day. What the heck?" As
23 far as nuclear warfare, I couldn't believe that anybody would be dumb enough to do it. I
24 kept thinking that Korea would do it. I said, "If anybody's going to do it, it would be the
25 North Koreans." I didn't think the Chinese would do it and I was sure the Russians
26 wouldn't do it because they had already proven before that they wouldn't do it.

27 LC: In other circumstances elsewhere.

28 GM: Yeah.

29 LC: Like where? What comes to mind?

30 GM: Pardon?

31 LC: What comes to mind?

1 GM: Oh, Korea.

2 LC: Okay.

3 GM: You read back on it and they were the ones that kept them from doing it.

4 LC: Yes, in fact, the Soviet Union was pretty restrained there.

5 GM: I had a doctor who was Russian. He was about my age and he remembers
6 back to that time. We talked over dinner and he said, “I can tell you right now the
7 Russians didn’t want any part to do with that Vietnam thing. We wanted out.”

8 LC: The Korean thing or the Vietnam thing?

9 GM: The Vietnam thing. Yeah, they wouldn’t go in there. They had some
10 Russian pilots and stuff in there.

11 LC: But minimal.

12 GM: He said, “We didn’t want any part of that.” It was proven out when we
13 went into Afghanistan. It was a no-win situation. They really didn’t want to tackle
14 anything with the Americans. He said, “It wasn’t so much of a win-loss situation, it just
15 would’ve been a waste of time, energy, morale and people to fight this thing over this
16 silly country.”

17 LC: So let me ask you—

18 GM: “And the Americans were doing enough harm to themselves. Just let them
19 continue on. Why should we go in there? They’re doing a number on themselves as it is
20 so why should we interfere?”

21 LC: Do you lay that whole situation, the United States basically pouring men and
22 manpower into Vietnam and not in fact confronting either the Soviet Union or directly
23 the Chinese in that war, do you lay that whole thing to President Johnson as having
24 miscalculated and getting bad advice?

25 GM: Yeah, being terrified of that and also probably with the support of
26 McNamara. He was the one that wouldn’t let us bomb per se. He was a big Kennedy
27 supporter.

28 LC: Yeah, he came in with Kennedy. What do you think about President
29 Johnson? What’s his legacy, Gary?

30 GM: I think he was really—I feel sorry for him because I’ve seen him during
31 those shots and so forth. I believe he was a tortured man as far as the troops. He loved

1 his troops. He loved these men. He was a Texan. He loved his troops. The time he
2 went out in a helicopter and shook hands with those guys, you can't tell me that he didn't
3 feel hurt when those troop counts came in.

4 LC: You know of course his son-in-law served over there.

5 GM: Yeah. He had to hurt. I think that's probably one of the reasons he resigned
6 was the pain of losing those people that's probably one of the main reasons he resigned.

7 LC: That's very interesting.

8 GM: The main reason he resigned was because, as he said, I can't think of the
9 woman's name, but I got a letter from her. I sent her a painting. She was the official
10 historian for—

11 LC: Doris Kearns Goodwin?

12 GM: Yeah, I did a painting of Carl Erskine and sent it to her. She was a big
13 Dodger fan.

14 LC: Yeah, that's right. That's her.

15 GM: She sent me a letter, which I've got it here.

16 LC: Oh, really?

17 GM: Yeah. That was neat.

18 LC: Well, that was pretty neat of you to take the initiative to do that.

19 GM: She loved it. I put on there in the letter, I said, "Here's Mr. Erskine's phone
20 number. He wants to talk to you." She really got a kick out of that, she had his number.

21 LC: I'm sure she did.

22 GM: But I remember her saying—I lost my train of thought when she was talking
23 about—

24 LC: She was a biographer of President Johnson.

25 GM: What were they talking about? Oh, the fact that—and we'll get to this when
26 Cronkite came out and said we're not going to win the war. He came out a few weeks
27 later, almost a month to the day and said, "If they're going to believe Cronkite, they're
28 not going to believe me," and he resigned.

29 LC: Yeah, he decided not to run for reelection and announced it.

30 GM: In her book she said that he made that decision because they believed
31 Cronkite.

1 LC: Well, let's talk about the press for a little while.

2 GM: Well, let me go ahead and finish strategy.

3 LC: Oh, okay, good enough. Go ahead.

4 GM: That was a big thing. If we're going to play we're going to play the entire
5 field. Whatever the rules of engagement are going to be they ought to be done on a local
6 level. The rules of engagement ought to be set and then as far as fire missions are
7 controlled—when you have the rules of engagement let us fight the entire enemy. I mean
8 if we had done that in retrospect with the second war in Afghanistan or Desert Storm
9 where Israelis were being hit with the Scuds—

10 LC: Yes, in 1991.

11 GM: Yeah. If we had not been allowed to take care of that situation we would
12 have had a major war. But we were allowed to take care of that situation.

13 LC: Militarily.

14 GM: Yeah, we were allowed to tell the Israelis, "Let us take care of it" because if
15 the Israelis had fired one shell back, every one of those other countries, our allies, would
16 have turned, quit, and turned on Israel in a heartbeat. But we were able to tell them, "Let
17 us take care of it." The rules of engagement allowed us to fight.

18 LC: Now, Gary, I just want to clarify for someone who might not have the full
19 picture of what you're talking about, and correct me if I'm wrong here, that in rolling
20 back the invasion of Kuwait, U.S. troops were actually allowed to go into Iraq, cross over
21 the border, go into Iraq and do some serious damage to the Iraqi Army, which was the
22 Army that had invaded Iraq. We didn't have to stop at the Kuwaiti border. General
23 Schwarzkopf had commanded that operation.

24 GM: Yeah. Also when the situation came in Iraq in which the Iraqis were flying
25 missiles directly into Israel and trying to intimidate the Israelis, who could be intimidated
26 easily, to fire back. If they had been allowed to fire back all the Arab countries who were
27 their enemies for many, many years would have dropped being our Allies and would
28 have turned on Israel. So we were able as a military and were allowed by rules of
29 engagement from the White House to talk to both the White House and Israel to allow us
30 to use our military force to try to knock out the Scuds.

31 LC: The Scud missile deliveries, right.

1 GM: Right. By doing so we prevented them hitting Israel.

2 LC: And provoking a war.

3 GM: Provoking a much wider war in a heartbeat.

4 LC: Yeah, I think you're right.

5 GM: That's the kind of thing that we wish we could have had there. I'll give you
6 another example and I saw this—I heard a captain talk about this on TV. He was doing a
7 bit on McNamara and how much he disliked him. This is very important because you
8 know we had—well, anyway, how it started was the *Oriskany* and the other ship that
9 caught on fire. I forget which one. There were two ships that caught on fire, but anyway
10 on both ships they were running many, many too many hours of fighter attack times,
11 which not only hurt and endangered the pilots' time of making errors and getting shot
12 down, but also ran the possibility of the people on the ships of maybe eighteen and
13 nineteen years olds working many too hours, not getting enough sleep and them too
14 making an error. It proved out. Maybe launching an aircraft into another—you're doing
15 something wrong with lack of sleep. Well, anyway, McNamara came aboard this one
16 ship and I think it was *Oriskany*. He went in to visit with the officers and the pilots. The
17 captain was going to brief him. After he had his say he was going to tell him that they
18 needed to cut back on flight time because of the dangers and all the facts and the figures
19 that you reach a certain point that errors are going to be made. The first thing out of his
20 mouth was, "What are your man-hour flight time ratios?" They told him and he said,
21 "Well you've got to increase them." Apparently the captain just lit into him. Later on
22 down the line I guess they were going to relieve him. I really don't know what happened
23 to him but he lit into him and told him, "You're really fooling with fire here. These guys
24 can't fly anymore. It didn't show it in the stats that you're going to have some major
25 problems here." He didn't even listen to him. "I just want you to increase it by one point
26 and so-and-so."

27 LC: Yes, that sounds pretty typical of McNamara.

28 GM: He was a businessman.

29 LC: Yes, exactly.

30 GM: He really didn't care about people, which makes me mad about him talking
31 about sorry about the war.

1 LC: Let me just stop you there for a moment because this is something that I
2 think is really interesting. Do you think that now, let's see, he's got to be in his mid-
3 eighties now, that he's lived long enough to actually have turned that corner and realized
4 that it was about people, it wasn't about the numbers or do you not get that from him?

5 GM: No, I don't think people have anything to do about it.

6 LC: You don't think that, huh?

7 GM: I think he's looking for a way out to cover his tracks.

8 LC: Like what is his legacy going to be kind of thing?

9 GM: Yeah, he wants to be on the side like the other people in that we lost the
10 war. Now therefore he wants to say, "I know we shouldn't have done it," whereas if we
11 had won the war he would've said, "Yeah, I'm glad we went in there." He wants to be on
12 the side of the—yeah, so he wants to put his tracks down on that regard.

13 LC: Yeah, so the historians won't just take him apart.

14 GM: He didn't want to put down the real story and the facts and figures of how
15 he really screwed it up like wanting to build a picket fence or a fence across Vietnam at
16 the DMZ. Remember that one?

17 LC: The McNamara Line?

18 GM: Yeah, he was going to build a fence across there. I guess he was going to
19 hire some West Texas cowboys to run along there and picket that sucker or better yet,
20 might hire some Texas Rangers to take care of it.

21 LC: That might have been more effective than what he did do.

22 GM: That was one of his stupid things. I mean, give me a break. Like there was
23 Laos and Cambodia over there. They'd just run around the end zone and run around
24 behind the bench and run around the track field and come right on back on the field.

25 LC: Back in play.

26 GM: Back in play, but no, we don't do that. But him, no, he didn't care about
27 people. He was just trying to cover his six to make sure he's on the right side. That
28 made every military man in the world furious. But anyway, it was just a short time after
29 that you remember they had that terrible fire on the *Oriskany* and Senator—oh, I can't
30 think of the senator's name. You'll have to say it. He was onboard that aircraft. What is
31 his name?

1 LC: I don't know, actually.

2 GM: He was a POW (prisoner of war) for years. He had on his field digger for
3 years. He's from Arizona.

4 LC: Oh, John McCain.

5 GM: Yeah, John McCain. He was on the aircraft next to the one that caught on
6 fire.

7 LC: Yes, you're right. I'm sorry, yes, that's true.

8 GM: He saw it happen. What caused the deal was there was some seaman that
9 accidentally lit one of those Sidewinders when he was putting it on the aircraft next to
10 him. It fired off into another one.

11 LC: That started the whole thing.

12 GM: That started the whole thing. When they did the investigation afterwards
13 they could not blame the seaman and it was whatever. They looked back at his work
14 schedule and they found out the guy hadn't had any sleep in about three days, which
15 proved out exactly what the captain said. He showed it to McNamara and he had some
16 ridiculous comment. I can't remember what it was, but it infuriated everybody in the
17 Navy that he never did recognize that fact that what the captain said was true. Then the
18 other one caught on fire the same way. It was a major—I forgot, but I want to say it was
19 the *Lexington*. Was it the *Lexington*?

20 LC: That I don't know.

21 GM: That was another carrier that caught on fire—

22 LC: You may be right.

23 GM: For the same stupid reason. But the business of that and having these pilots
24 flying the same route same way—

25 LC: Making them basically easy targets.

26 GM: I'll tell you somebody you might want to talk to who would be interesting
27 would be Dr. Lane, Peter Lane of the University of North Texas in the history
28 department. I think he's decorated for flying those Thuds, many Thud missions up north
29 for the Air Force. Those Thuds were the ones that caught all the—they were flying those
30 missions at the time in which they had to fly straight and true.

31 LC: Now, he's at the University of North Texas?

1 GM: Yeah, they were told to fly straight and true.

2 LC: Right, which, again makes it pretty—

3 GM: You know, you can't fly straight and true, but that's what the orders say.
4 They were just sitting ducks because those suckers were just—

5 LC: Now was he Marine? Was he a Marine flyer or U.S. Air Force?

6 GM: Air Force. Pete's very well spoken and a good friend and a patriot. He
7 could give you some very good input about that side of the air war. But that's kind of the
8 strategy aspect I'm talking about. Let's play the whole field, let's look at the rules of
9 engagement and let us fight the war the way it needs to be fought and none of this crap of
10 fighting the war like MacArthur did from another country. We were doing the same
11 thing from the White House. I mean, it was terrible. Okay.

12 LC: Well, Gary, these observations are very important to record because they
13 come from someone with your experience and credibility. So it's something that we here
14 as part of the project want to make sure we capture.

15 GM: Well, it goes a lot deeper. I won't go into it. I don't know that much about
16 it, but I know it goes a lot into the M-16 and bringing in the M-16s.

17 LC: Well, go ahead and say a little bit about that because it's a very controversial
18 issue.

19 GM: Well, a lot of guys said—you know they brought it in too quick. It wasn't
20 ready. A lot of guys were left out in the field with a weapon that didn't work and there's
21 nothing more terrifying than being in a situation with a weapon that doesn't work.

22 LC: The thinking was that it was approved by the Department of Defense before
23 it was really field ready in terms of design and so on.

24 GM: It didn't take much dirt to get in there and crud that sucker up. They made
25 many alterations to it.

26 LC: Well, it won't surprise you to know that in other interviews I've done I've
27 actually spoken with guys who had it jam up right at the moment when they needed to be
28 able to use it, right at the instant in a firefight when they needed to be able to use it.

29 GM: You know the rules of engagement, and I think according to the Geneva
30 Convention said you couldn't use shotguns, but when your rifle doesn't work, hey,
31 shotguns came over from the States and a lot of them came over sawed off.

1 LC: Could you get one? I saw in your notes that you said you wished you had
2 one. Did you actually have one at one point?

3 GM: I wish I had a sawed-off and could use it, but your mission was to lead and
4 direct.

5 LC: Yes, that's right.

6 GM: But a sawed-off shotgun would've been nice at the point when somebody
7 came up on top of you. Besides that I couldn't hit the broad side of barn with a .45 if I
8 needed to. I couldn't hit anything with it. But a sawed-off, yeah, I would have liked to
9 have had that right there with me so I could have reached up and used it. Or better, a
10 pump. I wish I had a pump.

11 LC: Can you think of—I mean, is there a particular—?

12 GM: I wish we all could've had a pump. I'll tell you another weapon I wish we
13 really could've had. I saw this about two years ago at a reunion up at Quantico. You
14 know about the grenade launcher, the shoulder-held grenade launchers?

15 LC: Sure.

16 GM: It looks like a shotgun and you put a shell in it and put a round out there?

17 LC: Yeah, shoulder launcher.

18 GM: They had it mounted as a machinegun with a belt. I said, "God, put that on
19 top of a hill on all those areas where you've got 105s mounted out in the bush and they'd
20 like to take a hill." Give about three of those for each one of those hills or give them one.
21 You could just sit there and boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. What damage that sucker
22 would've done putting grenades out there a hell of a lot farther than you could throw one.
23 There's tree line out there, which would have supplemented the difference between
24 mortars and a hand grenade because mortars took too long and you could also get an
25 instant reaction if you put something out there. Also, when you went into an area of an
26 open field and you always tested out an area all the way around it to see if you could get a
27 reaction before you cross an area—you could always put some rounds in there.

28 LC: Or for an LZ, creating an LZ.

29 GM: Yeah. But if you needed some heavier stuff you always had to call in
30 mortars or you had to bring along that damn old bazooka type. It really didn't look like
31 we've come up with anything better from what I see on TV. I don't know why we don't

1 have any RPGs (rocket propelled grenade) like the other guys have got. Those things—
2 but anyway, what we had there was good, but to have it as a machinegun pod, wow.

3 LC: That would have been helpful to you?

4 GM: As a defensive item when you had out there in the bush these support
5 elements, the 105 howitzers to fire support rounds wherever. They placed it where the
6 hills went back and forth. There's a famous one you've probably heard of. They're
7 called the Rock Pile.

8 LC: The Rock Pile, yeah.

9 GM: Which is really—I talked to one of my buddies who was up there. It was
10 just really not much bigger than the size of three ping-pong tables at the top. All the
11 foxholes digging was down around the side. We talked about if you had one of those it
12 sure made a lot of difference.

13 LC: Man, oh, man. Well, Gary, let me ask you, now that we've sort of surveyed
14 the problems with the strategy—the flip side of that, of course, is what was going on in
15 the States and particularly, I think, to your mind, problems with reporting about the war
16 and what was being conveyed to people in the U.S. You returned to the U.S. from
17 Vietnam in what, the middle of 1968, am I right?

18 GM: May.

19 LC: In May of '68. You went to—you had a year's additional service
20 requirement, is that right? So you went to—

21 GM: Six months.

22 LC: Six months? I'm sorry. So you went to Camp Lejeune. Yesterday when we
23 talked I asked you about if you saw any sort of elements of the growing anti-war
24 movement and you said, "Well, not really." In Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, there's
25 not a lot of that going on and then you were back in Texas. But no doubt you were
26 watching at least some of the television coverage of the war during '68, '69, and '70, and
27 on it goes. Can you talk a little bit about the impact that that had as you see it now?

28 GM: You mean after I left Camp Lejeune?

29 LC: Well, yeah, and at that time, as you were watching the television reporting
30 from Vietnam.

1 GM: I don't remember much about being at Camp Lejeune. All I can tell you
2 about it is I wish I hadn't gone back at that time. I will tell you that when I landed at
3 LAX, I was there in an area with a couple of other Marines that were going back to
4 Dallas. There was two guys with Notre Dame sweatshirts on. They were prettied up.
5 They came up and starting harassing these two Marines, enlisted. They were in another
6 area. It was still the same thing. We talked, but they kind of kept to themselves.

7 LC: What were these guys saying? Do you remember?

8 GM: Names?

9 LC: Well, what were they saying to these enlisted men?

10 GM: Oh, they was just harassing them. I can't remember what the deal was. But
11 they got in their face and they were harassing them. I can't remember what they were
12 doing. But it was obvious they were harassing them.

13 LC: Giving them a hard time.

14 GM: Yeah. I started to get up and go over there and get them and say something
15 to them or I was going to go get the police. I can't remember which one I was going to
16 do. But before I did anything one Marine decked one of them. I mean he was out cold.
17 He was stretched out. The other one took off like a rocket and I'll never forget it. I
18 remember that OJ (Simpson) commercial. You remember when he used to run through
19 that airport and jumping over the suitcases?

20 LC: Yeah, with the Hertz commercial. Yeah, I remember.

21 GM: That's what that guy was doing. I mean, he was flying. He was launched.
22 People in the deal there started laughing at how fast he was moving. Every time I have
23 seen a Notre Dame football game I just wish they'd get their butt beat 150 to nothing.
24 I've hated Notre Dame ever since. So anyway, I remember that. When I came home I
25 had talked to my monitor. Your monitor is the guy that's the head of your MOS (military
26 occupational specialty). The Marines are small. We were actually drafting people by
27 then. That was not a good time. This is '68. Things are going downhill. The president's
28 already resigned. Walter Cronkite has already issued his proclamation that we're not
29 going to win so we're looking at a longer war. I've lost my train of thought.

30 LC: That's okay. We were talking about what the press was kind of showing and
31 telling about the Vietnam era. You were talking about your own return to the U.S. and

1 those incidents that happened at LAX and then Walter Cronkite and then LBJ decided not
2 to run again in '68. The buildup is happening. The number of people getting drafted into
3 the Marine Corps—

4 GM: I know what I was talking about. You're going to have to stick with me
5 here because—

6 LC: I'm going to stick with you, Gary, no problem.

7 GM: There's a point in time here where I had some medical treatment that really
8 shocked the hell out of my memory system. When we come into areas like this my
9 memory is really going to be hurting. I'll remember the stuff, but I'll be talking and then
10 I'll forget where I am.

11 LC: Well, can you tell me what medical—this is again at your discretion, but can
12 you explain a little bit about what happened to you so that people have a context for this?

13 GM: Yeah, I had I think it was twenty-one or twenty-four shock treatments.

14 LC: Okay. Because why?

15 GM: Hmm?

16 LC: Why was that prescribed and why did they do that?

17 GM: I'll explain to you when I get there.

18 LC: Sure.

19 GM: All right. Anyway, what were we talking about? Oh, I had talked to my
20 monitor about when I was going back. In most cases you were going to go back no
21 sooner than twelve or thirteen months. I was going back in, I think, like seven.

22 LC: Back to Vietnam?

23 GM: Yeah. Quite frankly, I wasn't ready to go back in seven months. So I made
24 probably the biggest mistake of my life. That's probably the biggest mistake of my life
25 because it affected my career or it affected my life up until today. Because what I
26 attended and went through during this time as a civilian caused me major problems. I've
27 often thought if I went back, if I got nailed I got nailed, and if I came back maybe I
28 might've stayed in. If you would've had two tours in Vietnam it would've pretty set you
29 well up for a good career. I would have been in long enough already. I would have been
30 in at least seven or eight years and at that point with two tours in Vietnam you've got a

1 pretty good career going. Of course, I don't know. Maybe there was a possibility to go
2 back a third time. I don't think so. But anyway, I didn't go. I went home.

3 LC: Back here to Texas?

4 GM: Yeah, and we took a tour. I can remember we went through New Orleans
5 and that was my first taste of hippies. I was looking for a fight. It was the first time I
6 realized my wife really didn't appreciate it and really didn't care. I remember there was
7 one time I was walking down the street and here came these two guys. I didn't care how
8 big or how small, but they were hippies. I heard about them, knew about them, and I
9 made an effort to walk right between them. They were arm-in-arm and I walked right
10 between them and did a 180 and I was ready take them on. They didn't do anything but
11 look at me like, "Who is this fool?" and then turn around and walked on. I remember she
12 and I had an argument about it. I realized then that she didn't want any part of it. She
13 didn't care about it.

14 LC: You mean she didn't care about you?

15 GM: She didn't care about my actions. She didn't care about the war. Her life
16 was going to be built on family, going and building a house and doing the civilian thing.
17 Whatever was happening outside her front door and anything on the other side of the mall
18 or past her mother's house just didn't count. Politics was nothing. That proved to be the
19 case all the way. She didn't know the difference between a DMZ and a driveway. That
20 was my first inkling that there was not going to be any love or assistance in this program.
21 So anyway I remember I asked his lady at this store I was buying some stuff from, I said,
22 "Where'd you get all these damn hippies?" She said, "Probably from your town." I
23 thought that was a great line.

24 LC: That was pretty quick.

25 GM: It was a great line. Anyway, we went to Irving. But before then—I've got
26 to back up. When I first came home from Vietnam, before I went to Camp Lejeune, I
27 came home first for a couple of weeks.

28 LC: You had some leave, probably.

29 GM: Yeah. I remember I came home from LAX going, "My God, what's it
30 going to be like in Dallas?" I came home and I saw some hippies and I didn't see any of
31 them doing anything wrong. Everything went fine here. In fact, I went to my father's

1 Rotary Club, which I'm a member of now, and I was well received. I thought everything
2 was fine and there's not going to be a problem. It was and I stayed a couple of weeks and
3 Irving was great. So I took off and then fast forward to coming back through New
4 Orleans and I can't remember anything that happened there other than that. So I got a job
5 in Irving with the phone company selling switchboards. First of all, coming out of the
6 military was a different life and coming back from a war was a different life, two
7 different things. Then coming back into an environment of dealing and sitting across the
8 table from these hippies and some of them weren't really anti-war or whatever. They just
9 had long hair down to their knees. It's the way they were and I didn't like them. Even
10 though they may have not been anti-war they were just those kind of people. It was hard
11 for me to get along with them. So I can remember after they hired me I'd go out to
12 dinner with my boss and some other people. They'd be talking about PBX equipment
13 and things that were going on in town and all this kind of stuff. I tried to relate and I tried
14 to understand. I sat there and I couldn't. I'd be quiet because I didn't know what to say.
15 My boss told me one time, "If you're going to be a salesman you're going to have to
16 learn to talk up." I said, "Okay." So the next time we went out I started talking about
17 some of my adventures over there and some of the stuff that went on. I remember one
18 time we went down to a gathering of all the salesmen in the company down in San
19 Angelo. Oh, and I can remember on the way down I was riding with my boss. I started
20 talking about my adventures—

21 LC: Your adventures in Vietnam?

22 GM: Yeah. I had a thousand stories and everybody just got quiet. He said,
23 "Gary, I don't think anybody really understands what you're talking about." I said,
24 "Yeah, I guess you're right," so I just shut up. I couldn't do one way or the other way. It
25 was just this time I realized I had really made a mistake. My wife didn't care. If I had
26 gone back she probably would've left me anyway. It would've hurt but at least it
27 would've been over with. Then, too, I'm in an environment where I can't talk about
28 anything. Also I had left Irving, which was a mistake. I should have gone to work. My
29 father had a business and I should've gone to work for him. As I look back, he gave me
30 opportunity. But so young, I was still his son. I was three years earlier, I was still just his
31 kid. I just wasn't ready to go work for my dad and I should have.

1 LC: Right. That's tough, though.

2 GM: So I went down there and there were about fifteen, twenty guys there. I can
3 remember after the meetings we'd all go out to dinner. They'd heehaw around. They're
4 having the best old time heehawing and having these drinks and telling dirty jokes and
5 laughing and just having just the best old time in the world. I'm sitting there thinking
6 about what's going on with my guys. What are the guys going through right now? What
7 are they doing? I'm reading the paper and that's far out of the loop to find out what's
8 happening around where and all I can read is bad news.

9 LC: Bad news from Vietnam?

10 GM: Yeah, things aren't looking good. I'm seeing these guys having the best old
11 time and stuff. So I finally just didn't say anything. I remember one time we'd go out
12 and we went out in this parking lot. Everybody was leaning against their cars and
13 drinking and having a good time. I kind of just moseyed away and just kind of looked at
14 things. So I just walked across the street to this old, old building. I was just kind of
15 looking at it and looking at the bricks and this kind of stuff. I guess I was over there for a
16 while. I walked around and came back. This time the general manager came over there.
17 I guess his boss had seen me. He was an older guy and he didn't have a clue. He said,
18 "Why don't you come over and join the fun and have a good time? My name is so-and-
19 so and what is your name?" He didn't ask where I was from or anything. He was half
20 loaded. So I said, "Okay, I'll come over." So I went over and kind of stood around and
21 got tired and couldn't wait until it was time to go to bed. So I remember that, just how
22 out of tune I was with all those guys. Really I didn't get angry at them, I just wanted to
23 go over there and grab them and say, "You guys need to kind of keep it quiet. You need
24 to think why. You need to kind of cool it. There's something else going on." So the
25 next day we had a golf tournament. I hadn't played golf in years, but I had in college. I
26 guess it was one of these deals where you hadn't played in so long—and this is true.
27 When you first play golf and you haven't played in a long time you play a great game.
28 When you play your second game it's absolutely horrendous. So we went out there and
29 we played. I just played unconscious. Everything I hit went in the hole. The rule was,
30 "Don't beat the general manager." Well, I didn't think anything about that crap. I
31 thought they were all kidding. I beat him by two strokes. People were looking at me.

1 Sure enough, when he came up and handed me a trophy this guy glared at me. I mean, he
2 actually glared at me. He was not happy. So I put it in the trunk of the car and we were
3 driving home. Jerry said, “You know, you shouldn’t have won that sucker.” I said,
4 “What?” He said, “It might present a problem.” I said, “I didn’t know anything about
5 it.” “Well, didn’t you hear people talk about it?” I said, “Yeah, but I don’t know how to
6 lose. I thought they were kidding. I’ve never heard of losing to anybody in my life.” He
7 said, “Well, it’s called politics and when you’re in the corporate world you’re going to
8 have to do it.” I thought, “Ding, it’s the third reason I need to get out of this program.”
9 So anyway, I went home and I took the trophy. I remember sitting down and she asked
10 me what was going on. I told her what had happened. It went in one ear and right out the
11 other. She didn’t find it amusing or anything and she changed the subject about her
12 mother or about something they were going to do with the house. It just didn’t even
13 make a dent about where I was coming from. So I remember taking the trophy and took
14 the garbage out and I took it out there with it because I didn’t want to see it. So then one
15 night, the next thing I can remember we were in Denton. I can’t remember—I think it
16 was really before we were in Denton. I think it was in Irving and we were watching TV.
17 Or maybe it was North Carolina. Again, the treatments I took wiped out a hell of a lot of
18 memory factor. In fact, I don’t think they even hardly do these shock treatments
19 anymore.

20 LC: No, sir.

21 GM: I had twenty-four of them.

22 LC: When did this happen?

23 GM: I’ll get to that.

24 LC: Okay.

25 GM: So anyway, it was around the time—I do remember the man landing on the
26 moon. I do know that. But that’s about all I remember. But I do remember Walter
27 Cronkite. I remember coming home and feeling very good about myself in that I knew
28 we had won the Tet Offensive. Well, all I had heard and going out on patrols and hearing
29 people talk and Khe Sanh was held and we took back the embassy. I heard the goal was
30 to take over all the cities and they didn’t take over any of them. My philosophy was you
31 can take it, but you’ve got to hold it to win it. The last man on top of the sandbags—the

1 last man on top of the sand pile is going to be the winner. You could bomb it and strafe it
2 all you want the way the Marines look at it the man that's standing on it is the one that's
3 holding it. We used to throw that to the Air Force all the time. Dig as deep of a hole as
4 you want but the guy that's sitting at the bottom of the hole is still the one holding it. So
5 I remember Walter Cronkite coming over there and getting on TV and saying that the war
6 was un-winnable. I go, "Where did he get this? What did he know? What? What's he
7 talking about?" We were talking about coming home. They didn't do anything. They
8 didn't keep anything. It wasn't until years later that I did some digging and realized we
9 had killed in that three week period of time around fifty-four thousand people. No, fifty-
10 two thousand people known killed. Fifty-two thousand people in three weeks' time
11 which was almost the total number of people that we lost, which was like fifty-six
12 thousand, in the entire war. We also learned a few years later on that General Giap was
13 on there. He's now dead. I know the chair I was sitting in. He said, "Yes, we lost the
14 Tet Offensive. No doubt about it. Our attempt to take over all the cities and villages in
15 which we hoped that the local villages would rise up and which some of them did and
16 take over the cities, which we were able to do, but we were unable to hold them. That
17 was our mistake. We were not able to hold them against the massive firepower of the
18 Americans. We weren't able to take over Khe Sanh. We were trying to turn that into
19 another Dien Bien Phu." Now, you understand what Dien Bien Phu is? Do you want to
20 explain what that is?

21 LC: Well, most people will know that was the major French defeat that caused
22 them to withdraw.

23 GM: That's why they wanted to capture those hills so bad.

24 LC: Sure, the hills around.

25 GM: Yeah. That's why the general did such a great job with that Super Gaggle
26 because they needed those hills.

27 LC: General Carey.

28 GM: They needed those hills. Anyway, he said, "Yeah, we didn't win that, but
29 we did win," in so many words. I've been trying to find this. I don't know where it was.
30 It's been almost five years since I've heard it. It probably was on the History Channel.
31 He said, "But we did win. We lost the battle and we lost the war in that we won the

1 psychological minds of the American people through the press by the American people
2 being told that the Americans weren't going to win the war." When I heard that years
3 later I just got that much madder because that was Walter Cronkite. It shows just how
4 much power the media had and how much power that idiot had. As a result the war went
5 on another five or six years and it ended the way it did. The channel that I was watching
6 this, and I remember this, he said they lost the Tet Offensive. It would've been a good
7 time that this channel made this—and it's not the press it was this historical document. I
8 can remember it probably was true that it was a good time that the North Vietnamese
9 probably would've been more willing to make a more negotiated settlement. We
10 could've ended the war right there. They were whipped. But he made the judgment that
11 we were not ready when they attacked, but the people saw on TV that we were fighting in
12 our own embassy. We made a point of that. We were not ready and unable to hold
13 anything. They didn't bother to tell them that we took it back. It was just a simple way
14 of rewording the thing and saying, "Yeah, they attacked, but we took back and their
15 objective of taking over"—the intelligence people knew this. All you had to do is talk to
16 the intelligence people. They probably knew this and would say that their goal of taking
17 over these cities had failed. You can also tell how many people they probably lost and
18 say that the American forces that shined did shine their best. But no, within thirty
19 seconds he cost us so many lives, so many lives, and cost us the war and on top of that
20 caused guys like me pain and misery for years. Even today, a friend of mine told me he
21 was out on the West Coast. He said there's an area just outside of San Francisco and this
22 is in the Long Beach Wall. You can drive along that area and about every hundred yards
23 you'll see guys sitting on that wall looking west for miles and they're all Vietnam vets
24 just looking for miles. They just sit up there, all those guys, thanks to Walter Cronkite.
25 So thanks to him he cost us the war. That's why I hate the guy so much. I tried to tell
26 that to a friend of mine who is a well-known author, columnist for the *Dallas News*,
27 extremely liberal, extremely liberal. We're best friends. I've told him my story and he
28 feels for me. In fact, he told me, "I wish you were president." But when I told him about
29 Walter Cronkite and this, you can see that it's kind of like, "Boy, this is really off the
30 wall. Does he really believe this?" I said, "You think this is off the wall and this is
31 something that did not happen and I'm going to tell you one more time. I want you to

1 listen. It makes sense because after all this happened, within a month the president
2 resigned. It was said on TV.” I couldn’t find it written down because I just didn’t have
3 the time and energy and didn’t care about looking it up, Johnson resigned because he
4 said, “If they believe Walter Cronkite they’re not going to believe me.” So once he
5 resigned it was downhill forever for the war. All American troops hear that our president
6 resigned, North Vietnam hears that our top leader has resigned. You know we’re not
7 going to win that sucker.

8 LC: Gary, did it pave the way, though, for President Nixon? It’s unclear, of
9 course, because history that didn’t happen is a guessing game, but if President Johnson
10 had run again, Mr. Nixon might not have been elected in 1968. If I’m gathering correctly
11 what you’re saying, Nixon did a good job. He opened the way for the incursion into
12 Cambodia. He took some of the bombing constraints off by 1972. He ordered the
13 bombing of Hanoi. I’m not confronting what you’re saying, I’m just trying to open a new
14 way of asking you about it and seeing whether you think that there’s any good that came
15 out of it.

16 GM: Out of his resigning?

17 LC: Yeah, out of President Johnson stepping aside.

18 GM: Well, I think that there was some major good out of it because Nixon was
19 elected. As far as saving guys’ lives it was too little, too late.

20 LC: Yeah, I hear you. I hear you.

21 GM: If you talk to any military guys, especially the POWs and the guys like
22 me—and a lot of us guys there, Nixon’s our hero. People say, “How can you stand
23 Nixon?” I say, “Let me tell you what he did.” First of all, he did what he was supposed
24 to do. He went and bombed the hell out of North Vietnam which was what we were
25 supposed to have done. Those guys were sitting up there and what he did, he basically
26 bombed those guys back to the negotiation table and we ended the war. He bombed them
27 and bombarding is what he called it. We lost a lot of people. Also, he opened it up and
28 let the people in the Air Force set up their own bombing runs. In fact, from what I
29 understand from Pete and some other people, they set up their own bombing runs at
30 different altitudes and different directions. They didn’t do the McNamara thing, straight,
31 high, and level, same route, same everything. They did their own bombing routes and

1 just bombed the living whatever out of them. Which, they were terrified of them. They
2 finally came back to the table and we supposedly negotiated a peace treaty, which they
3 violated the minute we left Dodge. So we all admire him for doing that. Also there was
4 intelligence reports coming back that we found out later that had been so long since we
5 had been up there and bombed anything that there was some input that there were some
6 people beginning to lose it. They thought that the war was really and truly over and they
7 were actually forgotten.

8 LC: Now, do you mean POWs?

9 GM: Yeah. So therefore he definitely wanted the battle or the bombing to go on
10 because they were losing it because they also were telling them, “The war’s over. The
11 bombing’s over. We won. You’re going to be here the rest of your life.” They were
12 beginning to believe it so he went north and bombed them.

13 LC: Gary, how did you feel when, and again, this might be something that you
14 don’t remember spontaneously, but when the POWs were released do you remember
15 that?

16 GM: Extreme anger. But let me go back to the other thing. He also let us go
17 with an incursion into Cambodia. I couldn’t understand why people were—of course, I
18 understood also the hippies were running the world now. I was just so happy that the
19 guys over there in Vietnam were finally getting a break for a few days because they just
20 bombed whatever they had over there and took out so much stuff. So the guys in
21 Vietnam had a few days’ rest. It’s just sad we couldn’t continue doing it. So yeah, I
22 think he did us some real good. But if he had stayed in office, I don’t know what might
23 have happened. We might have gone out with a better program. Now, what was your
24 next question?

25 LC: Well, I was just going to ask if you remembered about the POWs being
26 released.

27 GM: Yeah. I was angry at what I had heard about the way they had been treated
28 up there. I was angry about that and even more angry when I found out how badly they’d
29 been treated. Then when I heard about what Jane Fonda had done when she’d gone up
30 there the anger just ripped me in two and watching her on TV. I watched TV at the time.

1 Linda again just could've cared less. She was watching *Days of Our Lives* or something
2 or going to the mall. Anyway, what's your next question?

3 LC: Let me ask about time going on in 1975. Of course, the final evacuation of
4 Americans from Saigon and then the overrunning, really, of Saigon by North Vietnamese
5 troops. Certainly General Carey, who is a friend of yours, was deeply involved in
6 making sure that as many Americans and South Vietnamese employees and supporters
7 got out as possible. How did that hit you? I get that you were having some difficulties
8 during this period. I just wonder if that contributed to things.

9 GM: Being the first of my family and the first of the Americans to lose a war at
10 least in terms of not being like other American service people made me feel like a loser
11 even though I knew that I don't remember a battle of us ever losing. But not winning, it
12 hurt. I can remember staying up at night and saying, "God, why did I have to be the
13 generation that lost?" I always thought one time that if I ever went to war would I ever
14 be of the generation that lost? Well, guess what? I was. It was a hard pill to swallow.
15 I'll tell you, even as recently—I've got to mention companies like BBC, the British
16 Broadcasting Company—I'm doing so well now with the news. Like how I'm handling
17 it so much better. I still don't watch it, but I can just see it. I can just say, "Give me a
18 break." This year was the anniversary of the war being over. This British broadcaster
19 was talking about the Americans and how long it took for us to learn how to lose a war
20 and to handle it. Okay. You're touching something right there, how long it took us to
21 learn how to become accustomed to losing a war and how we're becoming accustomed to
22 do so. Maybe perhaps we could learn to now maybe open the doors for free trade and all
23 that and really get along with our former enemies. Of course, the thing that pops in my
24 mind is, "Sure thing, pal. Just as soon as they give us a very formal apology for the way
25 they treated our POWs and secondly for the way they piecemealed our MIAs (missing in
26 action) during the latter four years of the war with the remains that they found. They did
27 that to the utmost in getting what they wanted because they knew by the relations that
28 they found three more remains. I'm sure they had a bunch of remains up there that they
29 were willing to let go if America would do whatever. That was basically blackmail. Of
30 course the American families would say, "Do it. That may be my father. That may be
31 my brother." They used our MIAs for blackmail and that infuriates me. Also for another

1 country to look at us as saying we are just getting used to losing a war, that infuriates me.
2 If I could talk to the guy I would say, “You guys in Britain have lost so damn many wars,
3 maybe you had gotten used to it, but we haven’t got used to it because we haven’t lost
4 any and we don’t know how to lose a war. We don’t know how to lose one graciously.
5 We haven’t lost one.” I wonder why he said that. It was either out of just pure stupidity
6 and ignorance or he was just taking a jab at us. I don’t know which one, but he got his bit
7 in.

8 LC: But this is partly why, Gary, isn’t it, that you try to avoid watching the news
9 anymore?

10 GM: Yeah. The only news I watch is Fox because they’re fair. In fact, if they
11 had that bit on TV they’d probably get the guy on there and they’d nail him. They’d nail
12 him to the wall as to why he’d do something like that. They’re constantly criticizing the
13 other media, the big media for the way they—they’ll show things that they’ve said. They
14 showed one that I saw on my cover page. I used to have a cover sheet when I was
15 turning on my computer and it was CNN. They’d have the hotline of the day and one of
16 them that they had one there—and this is when I got rid of it—it said “One hundred
17 thousand civilians killed since the Bush war.” I mean, if that’s not a political statement
18 and a slanderous statement by saying, “the Bush war,” and then saying, “one hundred
19 thousand civilians,” which they don’t know and not telling you how many of those one
20 hundred thousand was killed by their own terrorists like dropping a bomb when those
21 twenty-six kids were standing around, how many of them were used in front of them
22 when they crossed the street—

23 LC: Yeah, shields.

24 GM: Shields and not telling the full facts and grouping them together, they
25 showed that. Of course, I ripped it off. I don’t have anything to do with CNN anymore.
26 But that type of stuff, that is unbelievable. The liberal media is still there and alive.

27 LC: Well, let’s turn to something else for a minute, Gary. Let me ask you about
28 the artwork that you do.

29 GM: Let’s go back to the beginning of where we get to artwork. Let’s go back to
30 the beginning, if we can.

31 LC: Sure.

1 GM: We need to go back to what happened afterwards and this will lead into the
2 art world. I think the art world is kind of the last thing, if you don't mind.

3 LC: Okay.

4 GM: After I went to work for Denton and went to work for the phone company, I
5 went back for those training schools, I went to work. I noticed when they introduced me
6 to the ladies at the front of the office who handled all the residential accounts—this was
7 after the My Lai massacre—that a lot of the ladies didn't have much to do with me. They
8 just said, "Hi, how are you?" I got the bag and I thought, "Man." I called a friend of
9 mine who was in plant department and he said, "You've been over there. What is this
10 thing?" He said, "It's this My Lai thing. They don't know what you are. They don't
11 know whether or not you're a killer or a massacre or what you are. They don't know
12 what to make of you. They've heard so much about you being baby bombers and all this
13 other stuff. On top of that you're a Marine. They don't know what you are, whether to
14 run from you or congratulate you. They're just not going to have anything to do with
15 you. Right now they don't have anything to do with you." So I found that somewhat
16 disconcerting. I had a boss who was rather large, but he had a little man's ego, as I call it,
17 and he also didn't like being upstaged by a Marine combat officer in his town because he
18 was the big man on campus in that town. He was chamber president and he was
19 everything. The other guy that I took the place of was easy going, laughed a lot, kidded
20 around, had a good time, they'd chuckle a lot, told jokes, went to places. I come in and
21 I'm pretty solemn. It's, "Yes, sir, no, sir." He's not my boss necessarily. He's the
22 general manager. My boss, the one I was telling you about, he was back in another city.
23 I report to him in marketing. He'd come over and if there was something he doesn't like
24 he can't tell me what to do. He could just report to my sales manager. It got to the point
25 several times where I almost got replaced because he got tired of hearing about me, but I
26 defended myself. It was nice. I had his boss and the manager in my office, his boss
27 became really—I don't know how it happened. He became a big supporter of me and I
28 never talked to him. He became a big supporter of me and he defended me in that office
29 to my boss and to the general manager, this manager here, and saved me a lot of times. I
30 didn't know it 'til years later. He died and I wished I could've thanked him. For some
31 reason he defended me and said, "I'm not letting him go." So I came back and things

1 just—I wasn't comfortable with these long hairs coming back here. There were some
2 adjustments I had to make. I had to learn to let these guys—I didn't like these long-
3 haired hippies coming in there. I didn't want them coming in there, but I had to make the
4 adjustment to let them come in there, that worked the plant department. I just didn't like
5 hippies, but I was told I had to deal with them. So I said, "Okay." I'm trying to think of
6 all the instances that I can start telling you, but I'll just tell you in general. There were
7 times that I would go out on campus. It became known that on North Texas in particular,
8 that I was in a yellow and white car and I had short hair. It wasn't after long that people
9 knew me all over campus as a Marine.

10 LC: That was a bad thing?

11 GM: Yeah, I'd come back and find my car keyed. You know what that is?

12 LC: Yeah.

13 GM: Go up and down the side of your car. I'd go back and my boss would blame
14 me for it. It got to the point after a while that he wanted me to let my hair grow out so
15 that this wouldn't happen. I'd also get along better with the people out there. I told him,
16 "I'm still in the Reserves and I can't do that." He said, "Well, I think you better consider
17 whether or not you want to stay in the Reserves." I said, "Listen, the Marines come first.
18 This job is second. You need to understand that right now." So he told my boss. That
19 was the first time. "We want to get rid of him because the Marines come first." I don't
20 know what my boss did or not. He never talked to me about it and nothing ever
21 happened through, that but I do know through this other source he went trickling off to
22 my boss. I do know after a period of time he screamed Chicken Little so many times he
23 lost his effectiveness. Every little thing he went running off to my boss. My father even
24 came up there one time after all this. Again, my father, being very protective, and I
25 didn't know he was here—my cousin told me years later he came up and closed the doors
26 on this man. He was basically on a patriotic deal. "He served his country. He doesn't
27 have to fight with this country any more being up here. If you harass him any more about
28 his service over there you're going to have to deal with me." He walked out the door.
29 Guess what, he called my boss. He said he'd been harassed by my father and that's how
30 he left it. He didn't tell what it was about or anything. He said he'd been threatened and
31 had been harassed and threatened by my father and also that it had been put up by me,

1 which made me look cheap. I didn't know about it because my father wasn't going to tell
2 me about it. I had no way of knowing. But it came back to me later that that's what was
3 said, years later. So anyway, things like that and I was beginning to become very edgy to
4 people by the way they treated me. There was one time I was talking to this professor
5 and he just guessed and said, "You've been in Vietnam?" I said, "Yes, sir, I have." He
6 said, "Get out of my office." I got out and I can remember I went out to my car and I just
7 steamed. Here I am a Marine officer I felt like I was being treated as somebody and
8 here's a jerk office guy with long hair and probably the only thing he ever known in his
9 life is bugs and he's telling me to get out of his office. Well, about six weeks later
10 another guy told me to do that and I in turn threw him out of his office. This was my first
11 official affair that I got in trouble in. Fortunately, the guy who was our technical liaison
12 with North Texas was a good guy, a country boy about my father's age that I had met
13 several times. We took an instant liking to each other. He hated hippies as much as I did.
14 In fact, one time, I'll never forget the story, there were some hippies that came in one
15 time that were complaining about the fact that they were mowing the bushes too low in
16 the park and they had no place to sleep. They asked him if they wanted John Matt to take
17 care of the situation and he said, "I'll take care of it." So the next morning they came out
18 there and all the bushes had been cut down.

19 LC: Wow.

20 GM: Anyway, that's the kind of friend he was. When I threw him out I called
21 John Matt and I said, "John Matt, this guy threw me out of his office because I was
22 Marine and I in turn threw him out of his office. By the time we finish this call security
23 will already be on its way down here because I've already called security. I'm sure
24 they're calling and I wanted to call them first and tell them I threw this guy out of his
25 office. If you want to call them too"—so he did. He knew how to call security. He came
26 on down, too, and he was laughing as he came in. He made a joke out of it to this guy.
27 John Matt, when they knocked on the door it scared him. I opened the door and he said,
28 "You're going to let this guy in?" I said, "Sure, he can come on in. No problem." Boy,
29 the guy was just steaming and John Matt was laughing and the security—I think most of
30 those guys were former service guys and knew what had happened so nothing happened
31 except this guy, he flirted with fire and got his fingers burned. But anyway, he called the

1 phone company. He called my boss and technically I was in trouble because I was not
2 supposed to do things like that and I got my first warning. “You can’t do that.” Then
3 there were so many things. I’ll just try to remember—because again, the shock
4 treatments wiped out a lot. I remember one time I was in church, First Methodist Church
5 of Denton, which is just a good old standard Methodist church. This preacher was kind
6 of a hippie. He had a thing tied in the back of his head and he was young, but I liked
7 listening to him preach. He seemed like a nice guy. My wife’s in the choir. But during
8 the Lombardi raids he got up there and to make a long story short he called the pilots
9 murderers in the sermon. So I turned to the lady at my left and I said, “Did he say what I
10 think he said?” She said, “Yes, he did.” So I got up and four or five other people got up
11 and I pointed at Linda and I said, “You need to get up.” She didn’t move. As I walked
12 out I got his sermon and I went home and, boy, she didn’t say anything, but I could tell
13 she was mad. We had another discussion and I said, “How can you not be angry about
14 what he said? Your dad was in the Air Force?” She said, “I don’t care. You
15 embarrassed me.” I said, “Embarrassed you? After what he said? How come you never
16 support me? Why don’t you support me? I’m your husband. I’m the one that’s catching
17 hell on this thing and these other guys are catching hell.” She just didn’t care. She just
18 didn’t care. Like I said, she didn’t care about politics, she still didn’t care about politics.
19 It’s a day-to-day thing with her.

20 LC: You were just on a different wavelength.

21 GM: Yeah, she just lives in a different world. Unless somebody’s landing on the
22 nearest mall, communist troops, she might pick up a banner or a sign and protest. She
23 just—and I think what was so bad is that on top of that she just never helped me. I
24 helped her on a couple of occasions. That brings up another occasion is that my daughter
25 had ear problems and she went to this doctor. The guy made her wait three or four hours
26 out in the deal. It made me mad. He did it a second time and I went up and talked to him
27 and he wouldn’t let me talk to him. So I got a call one night from one of my Marine pals
28 who is a friend of mine. His wife was a nurse or worked in this office out there and he
29 said, “I want to tell you why he’s making you wait. He reviewed your file and she had
30 written down there in the form something about you were a former Marine something or
31 other in Vietnam. He didn’t like the war and so forth and this is his way of punishing you

1 through your daughter and your wife. You can't tell anybody." I said, "I won't." So I
2 waited until after hours the next day and I knew where his car was. He came out there
3 and I said, "I'm Major Morris. I'm the one you don't like and I'm the one who made my
4 wife wait out here in the lobby and all that. You remember that?" "Yeah." I said, "Why
5 did you do that? It isn't the war, is it?" He said no and I said, "Well, you're a liar. Are
6 you going to do anything about it?" He did nothing so I cold-cocked him in the nose and
7 bloodied his nose. I said, "You don't mess with my family like that, pal. If you want to
8 get up and do something about it, you can, but you don't mess with my family." I didn't
9 tell Linda because she'd be furious. In fact, years later this thing came up and I was
10 talking to her and this was about last year and I was talking to her on the phone. I said,
11 "I'm going to ask you something. You remember the time that doctor made you wait?
12 Did you ever know what he did it for, because he was punishing me through you guys? I
13 went out there and told him, 'You don't treat my family that way,' and that I knocked
14 him down?" She kind of gasped and I said, "What would you have done if I had told you
15 that?" She said, "I would've gotten mad." I said, "I figured you would. What would you
16 have been mad about?" She said, "You would have just embarrassed me," and I said,
17 "That's what I thought. You were truly useless." Even after all that time her feelings
18 were to be left alone, nobody bother her. I can remember a neighbor got under her skin
19 one time over my daughter and her son. She'd come home crying about it and wanting
20 me to do something about it and so forth and I said, "Well, I'd do it, but it seems like
21 every time I do something for you or try to do something you say I embarrass you. It's
22 between you and her. You leave my daughter alone here and you go over there by
23 yourself. I'm tired of getting embarrassed." Anyway, that was another time I got in
24 trouble and he reported it. They all reported it to the phone company. Of course, they
25 couldn't do anything. He reported to my boss and he couldn't do anything. It was after
26 hours. He reported it to the police and it was the first time I filed out assault charges.
27 This was the first time I met the police chief. We actually became pretty good friends. It
28 was actually the beginning of a friendship. Anyway, the pastor infuriated me. So the
29 next morning I waited for him and hoped he'd show up before eight o'clock and he did.
30 This was the second time I hit somebody. He came in there and I was fuming. I told
31 him, I said, "Those guys are up there fighting a war and I'm who I am and I'm here to

1 defend them. I don't like you and if you've got anything to say, say it before I hit you."
2 He kind of looked at me and he said something. I broke his jaw and knocked him across
3 his desk and he fell down behind his chair and so forth. Before I got out to the car here
4 came the police and I'm back down at the jail. The chief walks in the jail and they
5 unlocked the door and said, "Come on out." We had another cup of coffee. So he let me
6 go and sure enough I was fired again by the time I got to the office. Boy, he was gloating
7 this time. "This time you did it. You did it during hours. It's 8:35. You're fired." I
8 said, "I hate to pop your bubble, pal, but it happened about 7:15." He said, "Well, this
9 time you hit a preacher," and I said, "Well, whatever." So he reported it and so forth.
10 Then my boss came down and said, "What'd you do it for?" This was the next day and I
11 said, "I'll just show you what he said. If you want to fire me, that's fine, but I am going
12 to appeal it. I will go to the local newspaper with it," because I knew that the editor of
13 the paper here, I had met him because he was an Iwo Jima vet, Marine type. I said, "I
14 will go to Mr.—I forgot his name. I said, "I will give him this piece of paper and I will
15 expose that bastard. I will expose that bastard for what he did. He'll print the fact that
16 how many people over there might have had kids over there or relatives over there with
17 this." So he took it and come to find out later he was filing the papers to do it. Word got
18 back to the area manager and he saw a copy of what was done. He killed it on the spot.
19 As time went by I was going on a two-week leave to Florida with the Marines.

20 LC: Because during this time you were in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves.

21 GM: Reserves, yeah. So I'd been taking my own two weeks to go on Reserve,
22 my own company time, my own military time so I could make company time money, too.
23 I could draw both pays. But this year I decided I was going to take company time off. So
24 I went in there and told them and they said, "No, you're not." I said, "Yes, I am." "You
25 can't do it." "Yes, I can." So I went and got the federal regs and said, "It's a federal law
26 that I can take my time, I'll get my pay. I won't draw the pay, but I'll get my same job
27 and position back when I come home. There it is, black and white." Of course, now you
28 look at it and it's almost ridiculous because everybody does it now, but at the time
29 nobody was being activated. So I went and about Saturday night at two o'clock in the
30 morning I got a call from Linda. She said that she got a call late that night from one of
31 the ladies in the front office who had gotten word from one of my plant guys. My plant

1 guys turned out to be some of my best pals because by this time we had a manager that he
2 had hired himself who was an alcoholic and a real jerk. I mean, he was a jerk. I once
3 invited him to meet me out in the middle of the football field at Fouts Field just him and
4 me. He was an older guy but he was a—so anyway, he—no, this was a later case. That
5 was a later case. She learned from somebody in the office that he was bragging to his
6 secretary. His secretary was out in the open where the ladies were and that he was going
7 to pitch me this time. He was going to transfer me to Sherman and still be in good with
8 the law because I'd get the same job, same money, same position. When she heard it she
9 called Linda and she called me. So the next morning I walked out. We always carried a
10 legal officer with us. We never did use them, but just in case. I said, "Hey, I best put you
11 to work," and so I told him. So he called the Marines and they put him in touch with the
12 Navy and next thing I know I'm talking to the Navy folks in Washington because this
13 was such an unusual case. I can remember this admiral coming on and he said, "You
14 want to tell me this thing one more time because I don't really believe it." I told him, I
15 said, "Yeah, this guy doesn't like me. He doesn't want anything to do with me, he
16 doesn't like the Marines, doesn't like the war. He's transferring me." He says, "Give me
17 this guy's number." I gave it to him. He said, "I want his home number." So he called
18 him at two o'clock in the morning on a Sunday morning and just harassed the hell out of
19 him. He told me what it was. He told him, "This is Admiral So-and-so and I'm calling
20 from the Navy Department in Washington. I heard what you're doing. Just wanted to let
21 you know you're in violation of the law. If you commence to do this by the time Major
22 Morris comes back to work Monday morning you will be fined \$50,000, General
23 Telephone will be fined \$500,000 and their doors will be closed. Goodnight Mr. So-and-
24 so." He hung up the phone, didn't give him a return number or anything and that was in
25 the middle of the night. I thought that was great because the guy probably went back to
26 sleep and the next morning said, "Did I dream that?" I've done that before. "Did that
27 really happen or not?"

28 LC: Gary, let's take a break there for a minute. Go ahead.

29 GM: Well, this went on with the other things with the school and the office and
30 so forth for about six or seven years. As time was going along the last two years,
31 especially the last year, I was reaching a point to where I was coming in and I wasn't—I

1 was getting depressed. I was watching a blank TV. I didn't really much care about
2 anything. One day instead of walking in the offices, there was a psychiatrist's office out
3 front and I just walked in to see her. We didn't have much contact because shortly after
4 that I did crash. I do know I did sit down and try to talk to my wife one time. It didn't
5 work, but I did talk her into going to see the doctor. The doctor did tell her to not—
6 PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) really wasn't known at the time. She did tell her, I
7 learned later, that she was not to corner me, which was a very stupid statement because I
8 have never touched a woman in my life. I never touched Linda in my life. All I know is
9 she never once gave me any support, helped me at all. She's probably I guess maybe like
10 others. I never frightened her, but I just know she never carried out the vows of her
11 marriage. I am not bitter anymore. I'm just stating the facts.

12 LC: How long were you two—I mean I consider that you must be divorced now.

13 GM: Yeah, we were married about ten years and I never received one ounce of
14 support from her like, "Hey dear, let's go in there and sit down and I'll be with you. I'll
15 help you all the way." Nothing. None of that at all. So finally one night the girls were
16 just babies, three years old and five years old.

17 LC: Your daughters?

18 GM: Yeah. What's so funny is that her daddy had been suffering for quite some
19 time from depression so she knew what depression was.

20 LC: Linda's father had that.

21 GM: Her father. Then so finally one morning I woke up and realized that in the
22 middle of the night she had abandoned me. She had taken my two girls in the middle of
23 the night and abandoned me to her mother's. My girls told me years later that she left
24 because she was afraid that I was going to hurt her and her girls. Her doctor told her not
25 to corner me. I tried to explain to them and I'm going to here now that it was not the
26 truth because I spent—well, immediately I crashed and was found walking around either
27 the den or walking around the cul-de-sac in la-la land and was immediately put into the
28 Fort Worth Hospital and was immediately given shock treatments. The doctor had tried
29 numerous times to get her to tell him what the problem was. She refused to talk to him at
30 all to give any kind of indication of what was going on. Later on, after the shock

1 treatments were done I was out. Then I went into another hospital after I was out for a
2 while. I couldn't even go to the barbershop by myself.

3 LC: Gary, were you able to talk to the doctor yourself or do you not remember?

4 GM: No, I don't remember. I just don't remember. I don't even remember the
5 shock treatments. I just know I don't remember anything. In fact, it locked up my
6 memory even past—we had gone to New Orleans a year before with the girls on
7 vacation. I didn't even remember that. Then I don't even remember a long time past
8 that.

9 LC: Did they tell you—Gary, this is your personal information so it's up to you,
10 of course, whether you answer or not. I'm just trying to be clear as to what happened.
11 Did they tell you what was wrong with you? Did they give you a diagnosis?

12 GM: No. All they had down there—as I look back and see all the stuff I've got
13 and I've got all the medical records is all they have down there is his wife left him.
14 That's all. That's all they had and nothing from her.

15 LC: No information?

16 GM: Nothing, nothing.

17 LC: That's very sad.

18 GM: Nothing, which makes me infuriated about her. She left a sunken ship, a
19 dying ship.

20 LC: Yes, sir.

21 GM: Which is equivalent to leaving a guy in a wartime situation. Even today she
22 has no comprehension of what that means.

23 LC: Do you have any contact with her?

24 GM: Oh, I have to. I have a granddaughter and my daughter. If I mention it to
25 her she wouldn't have anything—she's a weird cat.

26 LC: Yeah, I think that's becoming clear.

27 GM: She teaches school, but she is one of the most unemotional people I have
28 ever met. Cold, I guess, is the word I would have to say.

29 LC: Yes, sir.

30 GM: So anyway, that kills the argument about me hurting anybody. She just
31 didn't want anything to do with me. In fact, she married I think within six months which

1 is always—a good friend of mine who was a very good friend of mine in Denton who
2 said he had strong belief that she had something else going on that he had indications that
3 she was, but I can't prove that. But she was married I think within a very short time after
4 that.

5 LC: Are they still together?

6 GM: No, he was found stealing money out of her teacher's fund.

7 LC: That was the end of that.

8 GM: That was the end of that. Now she lives with her mother. So I just know
9 that she never once helped me and she refused to help. Then when I went down to the
10 hospital the doctor had nothing to work on and he was trying—this time I remember the
11 doctor and I remember a lot of the hospital stay. It was after the shock treatments and all
12 that. Dr. Tripp, he kept trying to figure out what was wrong. He finally made me call
13 and beg her, beg her to tell him what was wrong. It was so bad that her husband came on
14 the line and told me that he wanted to talk to my doctor. He talked to my doctor. This is
15 probably the lowest point in my life. I'm talking to my wife who I still loved. He told
16 him that she had no information to give and do not bother them again. I was so
17 embarrassed. From that point on there was nothing much you should use for clinical
18 depression other than lithium and some other drugs. I was so bad off that I would wet the
19 bed. I would stay in bed for days. It took a major initiative to get me out of the bed to
20 walk a few paces. This is the time when insurance would allow you to stay in the
21 hospital and the phone company let me stay. I think they might have got a possible, even
22 then, a possible feeling that they could have their butts sued off for what had been going
23 on. Maybe then, I don't know. I would happen now.

24 LC: But your insurance coverage was still available?

25 GM: Yeah, it was still available.

26 LC: What about the VA (Veteran's Administration)?

27 GM: I didn't go to the VA.

28 LC: They weren't involved, then?

29 GM: We didn't know what post-traumatic syndrome was. I didn't even think
30 about that. They were treating me and I had a good doctor. All I can remember asking
31 him "When I was going to get my drive back, when am I going to get my drive back?"

1 So I can remember I was in the hospital two or three times in the next three years. The
2 last time I was in I came out, we made an agreement with the phone company that I
3 would not go back to work and they would give me an additional three months off. I
4 would find my own work. I can remember that I was in such depression I never once
5 considered suicide because of my girls. I will tell you this. There were many, many a
6 night that I wish I would go to sleep and never wake up. I remember that the
7 depression—and I've talked to groups about depression. They say, "What is depression
8 about?" I'll say, "The only way I can possibly describe it it's a nightmare while you're
9 awake. Nightmares at night are bad, but there's a good side to that is that you wake up
10 and say, 'Thank God I woke up.'" In the daytime you can't wait until you go to sleep. If
11 you can't go to sleep you take sleeping pills and it is, to me, I have not had other pains
12 like it. It's the most painful pain I've ever had. You can't roll. You can't get into
13 position. There's nothing you can do. You can't walk. You can't do anything. You just
14 have to sit there and you have to sit there and take it and pray to God, "Please take this
15 thing out of me. Whatever it is, get this thing out of me. I can't take it. I can't take it."
16 Well, after a period of time I guess the lithium took its effect after a few years. Anyway,
17 it was hell. I dealt with depression all the way up until about two years ago, at which
18 time we finally found the right medication, a combination of medications that worked.

19 LC: That takes a lot of time and patience on the part of the doctor.

20 GM: Well, it took a lot of other things.

21 LC: What else?

22 GM: I'm bouncing ahead here, but let me go ahead and finish that part of it.

23 LC: That's okay. Sure.

24 GM: What happened is one day I'm walking along and I just kind of started
25 feeling pretty good after thirty-some-odd years. It wasn't like a bulb of light came on or
26 all that. I was just feeling pretty good and for some reason I'd always felt—my basic
27 good feeling when I was depressed was I would just go to the store and come home and
28 do this or do that. This time I felt pretty good to the point I think, "I'm going to out and
29 trim the trees." It didn't dawn on me. My drawing was pretty much something I had
30 done years earlier and had not ever wanted to do anymore. So I went to bed and the next
31 morning I woke up. It was the first time I heard birds chirping out on the trees. I said, "I

1 don't have birds out there." I went out and looked and I felt pretty good. So I went in
2 and started drawing and it still hadn't dawned on me. So then I went to the store and I
3 was beginning to see things that I hadn't seen before and observe things I hadn't seen
4 before. I went in there and talked to the guy, the clerk, about something. I was actually
5 listening to this guy and what he was talking about. I said, "My God, I'm well. I am
6 normal. I am normal." I called my doctor and told him. I said, "I'm well. I can't
7 believe it. I'm well." He said, "Well, the last thing we're going to need, Gary, I saw
8 some stages I think I saw you coming out of that were kind of like the last stages. I think
9 we've found the right medication, but we're not for sure. We may have to increase or
10 decrease over a period of time and you've got to stay in touch with me. If you fall back
11 we may have to increase" or whatever. I did and had a fallback. But the big deal was my
12 concentration was back. I could remember entire phone numbers now where I used to
13 could remember only the 9-7-2 and the first three digits if I was lucky. I had for years—
14 I'm getting way ahead of myself so you've got to take me back now.

15 LC: That's okay. All right, I will.

16 GM: I was able to go out and carry on a conversation with somebody. I was
17 probably, my doctor says, the greatest actor of all times. He said, "We used to come out
18 in the lobby and we'd see you with your head between your knees and we'd say, 'Gary,
19 come on in,' and you'd pop right up and you'd come over and say, 'Hi, Doc. How are
20 you doing? I've got a funny story to tell you.' You'd come on in and you'd start talking
21 and we'd be talking around and you'd be fine. We couldn't figure out what the hell's the
22 matter with you? Why you were out there and how come you're doing here? Now we
23 know what the deal is, is that you had this automatic response of a cover-up of your
24 depression." All during this time since I had in my period of recovery—and I'm going to
25 go back and touch on something and tell you when I started recovery—a period of
26 recovery started at ground zero when I was feeling okay. My father had retired from the
27 advertising business and was just doing some engraving. God save my father. What a
28 man. He fired up his business after he had retired for me. I can remember starting up.
29 We had advertising specialties, pens, pencils, calendars, and so forth. He had a very good
30 business at one time. I remember starting off at MacArthur Road, parking my car, and
31 having a pencil catalog in my pocket. I went door-to-door selling pencils, selling pencils.

1 Somewhere along the line, the fifth or sixth door somewhere, I sold some lady five
2 hundred pencils with her name on it. It was just like somebody shot me with some
3 adrenaline. The next two or three doors I turned into the old salesman I was because at
4 GTE (General Telephone & Electronics) I was the salesman of the year. I mean I was
5 your best. I was your best. Despite all the terrible stuff I was going through I was their
6 best salesman.

7 LC: It just started coming back to you.

8 GM: It started coming back and it came back. Then the business started growing
9 and then I started doing stuff, joining the chamber and the Heritage Society. Since that
10 time I have got more damn awards in here than you know what to do with from the
11 Rotary Club to the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotarian of the Year to the Ambassador
12 of the Year twice for the Chamber of Commerce to the Irving Parks and Recreation to the
13 Irving schools Golden Apple award of the year and God knows what all I've got in here,
14 the City of Irving High Spirited Citizen Award. I've got three boxes full of awards out
15 here and I did that after I had recovered. All during this time I was putting on this acting
16 job. Now I had some ups and downs, some terrible ups and downs.

17 LC: I'm sure. I believe it.

18 GM: But I hid them. What I would do, I would go up and talk to people and say,
19 "Yeah, how are you doing, George? Good to see you," and we'd talk and I'd talk and so
20 forth. I could walk out the door and you'd say, "What did you talk about?" "I don't
21 know. Haven't the foggiest idea." I would go places. I couldn't remember where I was
22 going. I'd go in the grocery shop and I'd take my list. Sometimes I'd forget my list.
23 Then sometimes I'd forget my billfold and it was terrible. That's the way it went for
24 years and years and years, but I was a great actor. I've got to go back to one other thing.
25 One of the most terrible parts of my life was after I got out or while I was—during the
26 hospital stay, and this is what I'm probably the most proud of myself of, is that I had to
27 go over and keep my visits every two weeks with my daughters on weekends and pick
28 them up while she was living with this man, who I still loved, and tremendous anger and
29 jealousy.

30 LC: You still loved her?

31 GM: Now?

1 LC: No, then. You still loved her?

2 GM: Yeah. Hell, she hadn't been gone that long. I mean, she's sleeping with
3 another man. I'm having to go over there and knock on the door. She comes to the door
4 and my wife is coming to the door and tells me to be sure and have them back. This is
5 heartbreaking. This is killing me. It was so bad I couldn't drive or come back driving
6 because I was crying all the time. I couldn't drive because of the tears in my eyes. I
7 would still—and before I would go, like a Thursday or Wednesday of that weekend that I
8 had to go pick them up, I was just miserable. I was terrible because I hated those
9 weekends, but I went and I picked them up. During those weekends, a lot of those times
10 my father and mother would entertain them and I would go to bed because I was so
11 terribly sick. Headaches and just sick.

12 LC: But your parents backed you up?

13 GM: Yeah. My friends would entertain them in another room. By the time I'd
14 get calm I'd have to take them home. I'd come back and I'd cry and I'd cry. I was
15 depressed and, oh, that was horrible. That went on for months and months and months.
16 It was terrible. So anyway, all that went along and meanwhile I don't know what
17 happened for about a year or so. By the way, it took me a year to learn how to run
18 between two goalposts. Now here's the guy that had the NAIA record for stolen bases. I
19 could almost run to first base as fast as Mickey Mantle, true. I mean, I could run. I loved
20 to run. Now I'm talking about I couldn't get my mind in synch with my legs and my
21 body because there was a chemical disorder. That's what it is, it's a chemical disorder.

22 LC: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

23 GM: I'm talking about the goal post on the same side of the field, twelve feet a
24 part. I slowly worked up to that and slowly learned how to walk fast between lines,
25 worked up to jogging on the football field and eventually learned how to run and
26 eventually learned how to run. During this time, at the first of this when I went down I
27 still continued to go to the Reserves. My buddies covered me in the Reserves. When I
28 went to the Reserves I was in no shape. I was so drugged up from the hospital. My shoes
29 were untied. My shirt was untied. I was unshaven. So my buddies would report me in to
30 my CO. They'd say I was in and on a job. They would take me over to Q and at first
31 they'd just tell me to lay down. One day they found me walking back over toward the air

1 wing. They took me back over and locked me up. They had the key and locked me up
2 and told the BOQ (bachelor officer's quarters) director to not let me out of there under
3 any circumstances. They left me food and water in there for two days. They'd make up
4 excuses and so forth. Anyway, somehow the CO found out about it. He wrote me up a
5 bad fitness report and then the next CO wrote me up as a bad fitness report. Well, two
6 bad fitness reports and you're out of the Marine Corps. So the next horrendous thing that
7 happened to me is I'm back in the hospital. I have no family. I have no job. I don't have
8 my Marine Corps. That was probably I guess the next lowest point in my life.

9 LC: What year was that? Do you know, Gary?

10 GM: About 1979. I don't have anything and I've got the depression. I just think,
11 "Why? What did I do to deserve this?"

12 LC: But you later were able to come back into the Reserves, is that right?

13 GM: Well, it took a year and a half of fighting. I mean hard work and paper. It
14 took about fourteen inches of paperwork. We don't have time to talk about it, but I had
15 to start at the bottom. I did it all myself. I basically—unless you want to know how I did
16 it.

17 LC: Well, go ahead and tell me. How did you do it?

18 GM: Well, I first had to go back and I talked to my two men who wrote the bad
19 fitness reports. I said, "If I were able to prove to you that I was sick and prove to you that
20 I should not have been on duty, would you have written those fitness reports?" They
21 said, "No, we wouldn't have written them." So I went back and took the letters from my
22 doctor in the hospital and took them to the medical doctor there at the Navy Dallas and
23 showed it to him and he said, "You shouldn't have been on duty." "Thank you very
24 much. Write me a letter." I took them to the COs and they wrote a letter and said, "After
25 we see here, we would not have written these reports." One doctor said, "After I know
26 him now, he should not be out, but now I think he should be promoted." But one of them
27 was a former Blue Angel. So anyway, then I took those two letters and other material
28 and made up a book. You know the Board of Correctional Review?

29 LC: Yes, sir.

30 GM: Okay. I had that package. I went to D.C. and met with the board. I went
31 beforehand, carried that thing with me and presented it to him and went over it with him

1 as to what was happening and what happened and that I would like to present it to the
2 board as to what happened. It took a year and a half of paperwork flying back and forth
3 and denial of this and that. Finally one morning I got a call about six o'clock in the
4 morning from the XO (executive officer) here. He says he knew what was going on and
5 so forth. "Gary, congratulations. You're a Marine again." I cried. I hung up the phone
6 and I cried. I mean by God, I was a Marine again. All during this time I also was
7 attending meetings. I was telling them I was continuing to go to drills for no money and
8 that helped.

9 LC: Just to sort of round it out, Gary, you retired from the Marine Reserves then
10 in 1999, is that right?

11 GM: Yeah.

12 LC: As a lieutenant colonel.

13 GM: Well, see, after I got back in I even got promoted to lieutenant colonel.

14 LC: Yes, sir.

15 GM: So I was still doing good, but I wasn't well. All along, more and more
16 drugs are being made. More and more meds have been coming along. So it was taking a
17 business—and meanwhile, after that I was single and I was doing pretty good. Then I got
18 remarried and then I went back downhill because the marriage was terrible. I was living
19 with a woman who was just terrible to live with. She had a boy who like to burn flags.
20 He was gay. He was obnoxious. He knew everything there was to know. He liked to tell
21 me what to do. He knew everything there was to do and basically she cared more for her
22 son than she did me. Every time we'd go to the hospital with her he would take over. I
23 finally told him one day, I said, "I signed the papers. I am now in charge of her. You are
24 second. You understand that? Don't be going to the doctors and don't be taking over." I
25 lived with her only because of the fact that she was basically a wino. She was abusive
26 and we lived like roommates. It was terrible living conditions I was in. Terrible. The
27 only reason I lived with her was for two reasons. First, because I wasn't going to do to
28 her what my first wife did to me. I was going to try to help her. That was a mistake.
29 Number two, I was terrified of getting a divorce because I didn't know if I'd fall apart
30 again. Finally my doctor said, "I'll tell you this. Be aware that something will happen
31 and when it does happen you jump on it and you do it. You get out and then you stay

1 out.” Well, something did happen and I was at the hospital. She got sick and I was up
2 there for two days. Then I went home one night to take a rest. I told the boy to come up
3 there and stay with her. I called up there the next morning and I said, “You can tell Eric
4 to go home. I’m on my way up.” She says, “Oh, please. Give me a break.” God, that
5 was it.

6 LC: That was the end of that.

7 GM: That was it. When she came home I said, “You people are out of here.
8 Take your flag burner and get out of here.” The boy said something to me and I almost,
9 almost hit him. I told her, “If you don’t get this boy out of this house right now I’m
10 going to hurt him bad.” He already knew. He was already scared of me. So they left.
11 Things started getting better and that’s when we found the meds and the doctor said, “It’s
12 not just the meds that helped you, but you have had for years. You might’ve gotten well
13 and better but for the last ten years you’ve had some broken bridges in front of you that
14 needed to be repaired that have kept these medicines from working. When you got out of
15 this marriage then these bridges were fixed and somehow these medicines, in his opinion,
16 were able to work. Now you don’t have to play act anymore. Your concentration is good.
17 You’re fine. You’re getting along well.” I’m doing well. The one thing I miss is
18 probably the relationship with a female. Now, the artwork really came in many years
19 ago. It just kind of came in by strain. It was during a two-weeker down in Florida. It
20 was a bad two weeks. We had a terrible mission to run. We were looking for a missing
21 girl. We had F-8s and we were running red-eyed missions and heat seeking trying to find
22 her. We were working all hours. One of our Marines was paralyzed from the neck down
23 on a wreck that he come down there driving his car down and we had to deal with that.
24 One night I was in the club and there was this huge mural on the wall. It had three A-4s
25 doing a tac mission at night and it reminded me of the time when I was there. I said,
26 ‘I’ve got to have that.’ So I started sketching it on a couple of beer napkins.

27 LC: So you started sketching.

28 GM: Yeah. I sketched them out pretty good so I took it back to Denton and I
29 took it to this lady. She said, “That’s not bad. Why don’t you do it yourself?” I said, “I
30 can’t do it.” She said, “Yeah, you can.” So we started working in oils and, sure enough,
31 I did it with a lot of help. She did about half of it for me to do it and I still have it here. I

1 show it at all my shows. It's my first and last oil. Then I met another lady who
2 introduced me to Prisma pencils, Prisma colored pencils, which I've been at ever since. I
3 still do straight pencil. I like straight pencil, too. Now I'm going into straight pencils of
4 the same color. This is going to be really fun. I haven't started it yet. I will be later on,
5 but you do straight pencil, black and white, but how you make the different shadings is
6 that you use not so heavy—there's about three different pencil color strengths that you
7 can use for shading. Well, with the Prisma colors there's about two or three different
8 colors you can use and one's a gray. It has six different strengths. So I can do that gray
9 on a different type of matte board and I saw one and it's gorgeous. It's great. So
10 anyway, I started doing Prisma colors and never had a lesson. I just learned like building
11 a house.

12 LC: Who are some of the people that you've either given your artwork to or have
13 requested it or who have it now in their collection?

14 GM: Well, I give most of my stuff away. Most of them I've given the prints
15 away and I've kept the originals for my kids. But the people that have got them have
16 been two Texas governors, as you know, the two commandants. I've got one former
17 Secretary of the Navy. Troy's got some, Aikman.

18 LC: Troy Aikman of the Dallas Cowboys.

19 GM: Yeah.

20 LC: I'm just clarifying Troy Aikman.

21 GM: I've got numerous baseball players that I have not only done that I have
22 done of and for. It's a thrill because I love the game of baseball. Duke Snider and Carl
23 Erskine, two Hall of Famers for the Dodgers. I've done Goose Gossage of the Yankees,
24 Bobby Richardson of the Yankees, I've done one of Roger Maris for the Roger Maris
25 family. I got a letter from his wife that Bob Richardson said that they wanted to open up
26 a museum up in North Dakota and they were looking for paintings. So I did one for
27 them. One is hanging in the museum at Parris Island. One I've got, as soon as I finish
28 this one it's going MCRD (Marine Corps Recruit Depot). One was hanging in the Dallas
29 Museum of Natural History. Gosh, I did one for Rusty Greer for the Rangers. I did one
30 of Dick Bosman, the former pitching coach for the Rangers. I'm sitting here looking
31 around the room. I've done musical instruments that are in some clubs.

1 LC: Gary, how important is the artwork now to you?

2 GM: It's become major and I'll tell you why. Because there's a creative side in
3 there that is as important to me as going to the bathroom because I want to do it. If I
4 don't do it, especially if I've got something to do like this one going to California and I
5 need to do it I'll get down and I may even reach a point to where I may have trouble
6 going in there and starting. I mean getting up out of the chair and doing it. Once I have
7 gone in there and done something for two or three hours and once I sit down I'll sit there
8 for two or three hours, maybe four hours, working on something and doing it. Unless I
9 reach a point where absolutely I can't deal with it anymore, I'll generally go to a point
10 where I'll say, "Hey, I've done more than what I thought," or reached the point where I
11 thought I wanted to go for today. Then I'll come away and I'll feel pretty good.

12 LC: Yes, sir.

13 GM: I'll really feel good. I feel like I have done what I needed to do with my
14 artwork for the day. So I need to do it and just like today, we finish talking here, I'll rest
15 up a while. Then, by God, I better go and do about three or four hour's work because if I
16 don't, if I don't, I'll starting getting down at myself. I don't know if you know what the
17 classic definition of depression is. Do you know?

18 LC: No, I do not.

19 GM: It's anger turned inward. From that it leads to chemical disorders and lots
20 of other things. So I have had lots of that. A lot of that has been because I have gotten
21 mad at myself because I have sat on my butt knowing that there's artwork in there to be
22 done, I'm not getting any younger, I need to do some stuff that I need to leave for my
23 kids and I don't do it. So every night I go to bed angry. The next morning I say, "Today
24 I want to do it." As the day goes along, I get angry, and I get that much more depressed.
25 I will reach a point where I might end up in the hospital. That's because I get my hours
26 turned around. I can't sleep. I've got my days mixed up and I'm back in the hospital. I
27 also got to mention during the second marriage, when I was going to the hospitals, I had a
28 wife that never came to see me. She never even went. I'm talking about if I got sick.
29 I'm not just talking about emotionally. She never showed up. She just wouldn't go with
30 me. She tried to get my daughters to go, take me and she got mad. She didn't understand
31 why my daughters wouldn't go. My daughters wouldn't go because they thought that

1 was her job. So that was that type of relationship. So with the artwork, it's important.
2 Now I want to get mad at myself for not doing it because I think of so many people,
3 people who live across the street and next door or whatever who live and die. They leave
4 a good name and grandfather so-and-so okay. You leave a tombstone and they're slowly
5 forgotten. Well, I'm fortunate enough that I'm leaving some artwork that hopefully my
6 kids will pass on down the line, down the line, down the line a long way that I can leave.
7 I'm having the opportunity to leave something other than a tombstone. I get mad at
8 myself because I don't do more for them to keep. That's what makes me angry. So
9 having this ability or talent or whatever you want to call it, leaving this stuff for them and
10 not doing it is almost anti-religious, as my pastor told me one time. He said, "God
11 created this thing for you to do and you're not doing it. He's not going to be a happy
12 camper because He knows you're giving it away, your prints. You're making people
13 happy with it. It's not just for your family, but you're making people happy with it. Get
14 excited about it. If you don't do it you're not doing what you're supposed to be doing."
15 Since I'm not married I need something, I need this creativity for some reason, to go in
16 there and make something and make this thing work.

17 LC: Well, I think you've explained it very, very clearly, Gary.

18 GM: So yes, I would be honored to have something in your place or two things in
19 your place to have you show forever. I'll give you probably both of them and you can
20 make the decision of which one you want to hang up to deal with, either the eagle or the
21 Iraqi. You can do both.

22 LC: Well, Gary, one of the things that you have done that will last beyond both
23 of us is you've given your time to doing an oral history interview and discussing your
24 experiences in Vietnam.

25 GM: Well, see, the kids can go—I might have great-great-grandkids that go to
26 Texas Tech. They'll go through the museum and say, "There's my daddy's painting."

27 LC: Yes, sir.

28 GM: Other parents that live around me can't go to Texas Tech and say, "There's
29 something that my dad's done." Nothing. I'm able to do that.

30 LC: It's a special thing, both the painting and the interview. Gary, I want to
31 thank you for taking the time to do the oral history interview with us today. I just

1 appreciate the time that you spent and want to thank you for your service to the country
2 as well as for what you're doing now, feeling healthier and better about yourself and
3 doing the artwork that you've done. It's an important thing and it honors the service of
4 other veterans as well.

5 GM: Well, I would just like to say finally that I thank you guys for having the
6 place to do something like this because as I told a person the other night, I said, "You
7 know, I can finally go to bed and know that this story—and I haven't even talked about
8 you to the press—other than the fact that I know that the press, i.e. Walter Cronkite, and
9 all the stories that they do and don't tell and there's one story I didn't tell that was
10 important that they don't tell cost us a war. Also the lack of support from your spouse,
11 those two things are now on print for people to understand how important those two
12 things can play in a war and in a person's life are now on paper. They're now
13 somewhere. I don't have to worry about writing it up and putting it somewhere to give to
14 my kids somewhere to read later. It's somewhere, not only for them but for other people
15 to read. I can die tomorrow and know that it's somewhere and that is so neat and that is
16 only because of you guys.

17 LC: Well, it's an honor, sir.