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**The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Larry Gilreath
Conducted by Dr. Richard Verrone
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Transcribed by Mark Steven Varela**

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

1 (Editor's Note: Audio cuts in, interviewee and interviewer have a conversation not
2 relevant to the interview.)

3 Dr. Richard Verrone: I am Dr. Richard Verrone. I am doing a video oral history
4 with Master Sergeant Larry Gilreath. Today is November 11th, 2005, Veteran's Day. We
5 are in Washington, D.C. at the Hilton Crystal City Hotel for the 40th anniversary reunion
6 of the Battles of Ia Drang-Pleiku. Sergeant Gilreath, thank you for being here and I want
7 to talk about those days in November and what happened in the Ia Drang Valley. Before
8 we get down there, tell me a little bit about what you were in your platoon, you're the
9 platoon sergeant, what were your responsibilities under Hal Moore and then your
10 lieutenant and captain.

11 Larry Gilreath: Of course, any small unit leader I'm sure the mission is to
12 accomplish the mission and look after the welfare of your men which we all strive to do
13 and did a pretty fair job of it during X-Ray. Of course, I lost some men and that's
14 wounded and KIA (Killed In Action). You feel like hindsight always what I could've
15 done to better that situation. Again, it's hard to lose anyone like that or anyone for that
16 matter.

17 RV: Your relationship was very close with these men?

1 LG: See, those particular squad leaders, I joined that unit in 1961. It was the 2nd
2 Battalion, 23rd Infantry on Kelley Hill, which later became air assault. Squad leaders were
3 basically the ones I'd been with for three or four years. Of course, our privates and
4 everything they were draftees mostly and of course some were regular Army. There were
5 some turned over there, but prior of going into Vietnam, we had a very nice base of men
6 that we'd been with for so long. Then, President Johnson as you know, said in ninety
7 days or less, you go. So that didn't set too well with us, but you know that's orders, so
8 you do what you're told.

9 RV: When you were going to prepare yourself to air assault into X-Ray, what did
10 you do beforehand with the men under you? How did you prepare them?

11 LG: We had been out on an operation there around the Plei Me Special Forces
12 camp. The night before we went into X-Ray, the brigade headquarters had been attacked.
13 So we pulled B Company in out on the field to beef up security around the brigade
14 headquarters. I didn't know until General Moore pointed it out to me in the book, B
15 Company was awake for eighty-one hours. The night before, of course brigade security
16 that's on one-hundred percent alert. Then, the three days and nights in X-Ray. As far as
17 preparations, issuing ammo, making sure all the equipment was right and you know if—if
18 you're on the airstrip or near an airstrip, take a backpack if you get a chance. You get
19 squad leaders together and this basically telling him what I wanted to know. The platoon
20 leader, Lieutenant Devney, we checked everything that—

21 RV: Lieutenant Devney?

22 LG: Devney. Yes

23 RV: Yes, yes.

24 LG: I haven't seen him since then. I understand he's somewhere in Florida. For
25 some reason, he chooses not to participate in anything. I don't force issues. I'm glad to
26 see him but you know, I won't beg him to come, that's up to him.

27 RV: Tell me about the morning of the 14th and what you did.

28 LG: Again, this was prior preparation. When we got the assault order, B Company
29 was the lead company. They chose me as lead platoon.

30 RV: Right. Do you know why?

1 LG: Experience, I hope was the reason. I think probably because I had been a
2 platoon sergeant there for four, five years in that general area. And John Herren, the
3 company commander, he had all sorts of confidence in me and my platoon. That's
4 basically the reason we were chosen.

5 RV: Tell me about John Herren.

6 LG: Wonderful person. Just—I don't know, he assume—he wouldn't get excited I
7 don't think, very cool. Very efficient about it. Like I said, he's just a wonderful person
8 and one hell of a company commander. Again, I'll always call him Captain John. Just
9 Captain John.

10 RV: So you're in the first lift out?

11 LG: First wave, yes. They lined up with the choppers. Colonel Moore of course
12 with his entourage, I think one or two choppers took for him. He was the first one in.
13 Then I think I had the next six choppers, a landing zone would hold that many. Of course
14 the gunships and everything prior to us and on approach they did their prep and rocket
15 fire and everything. Of course, we had artillery prepped. Once that was lifted, we hit the
16 ground. Of course in air assault always—you have an area assigned to, like my platoon
17 security may have been from nine to three, for example. I always use the nose of the
18 helicopter as twelve o'clock. So when I got out, we fanned out to our area, we got down,
19 we got out of the way then and went through the process of clearing the landing zone.

20 RV: There was no enemy fire at this point was there?

21 LG: None whatsoever. In fact, I ran into Colonel Moore and Sergeant Major
22 Plumley clearing the landing zone, they were already on the ground. I made remarks,
23 something about this area is clear move fire teams here or something like that. Again, we
24 just did our thing, we pushed out. Main thing on the clearance of the Landing Zone
25 initially, you want to stay pretty close to the chopper to get them out of there. In case any
26 fire starts or anything, you can push from fire on the end. Like I said, when they lifted
27 off, we went into our spread pushing out, clearing the landing zone and of course it was
28 no fire or nothing

29 RV: Did you all get off the choppers firing thinking the enemy was there?

30 LG: Yeah. Sure. You know, in suspected positions. Pile of brush, an anthill or-
31 scrub jungle and trees were the terrain there. We just—I always thought of it like recon

1 but fire, find something that you think looks like, you know a place one would be and fire
2 on it.

3 RV: Once you clear the landing zone and you set up where you're supposed to be.

4 LG: Set up in like a defensive position until the rest of the outfit got in. You see,
5 the 2nd Platoon came in next and the 3rd Platoon was our last platoon then.

6 RV: How long were you there on the ground by yourself waiting?

7 LG: Probably thirty to thirty-five minutes or so.

8 RV: What was that like?

9 LG: It actually, some of the squads started opening some C-rations because
10 everything was so quiet, you know. Another air assault without contact. Then, when my
11 men caught the—well we called him a prisoner, he was a deserter I think because he gave
12 himself up.

13 RV: How did you find him?

14 LG: He walked into us. You see, I have an LP that I always send somebody
15 forward. I mean fifty yards or so for early warning. Two men, John Atkins and Ron Bear
16 were a machine gunner and fireteam leader, they brought him back and "Hey sergeant,
17 look! We caught a little boy out here." Made some comment, "Boy? Hell, that's no boy.
18 Full dress North Vietnamese uniform except for a weapon" He had thrown his weapon
19 away when he deserted. He had a wound on his one of his feet, I don't remember, it
20 doesn't matter either way. But I sent him back to General Colonel Moore for an
21 interpreter there. You know, interrogating. He told us there was many, many North
22 Vietnamese on the mountain wanting to kill Americans.

23 RV: Did you go back with the prisoner?

24 LG: No. I sent him back. I was a little bit busy. After I saw him, word about the
25 next thing, which did happen. But in any case, he told the interrogator about the whole
26 bunch on the mountain. They called and told me to move forward about a hundred yards
27 or so, to expand the landing zone. I had gone thirty, forty yards, I guess. I saw him
28 coming off of the mountain, of Chu Pong. There were lack of—some had weapons still
29 slung on the shoulder and I had time to call back, to make sure there was no friendlies
30 there because the South Vietnamese army, they didn't coordinate well, they might show
31 up anywhere. They issued me that there was none, so we actually ambushed them

1 initially. Just let them get on in, get a little closer to us and then we opened fire on them.
2 The funny thing was, I told General Moore once before, I said, “General, if I know the
3 enemy is behind that first batch I fired on, I wouldn’t had fired on them, I would’ve sent
4 them on down to you.” It was about a five-hundred man battalion. I think General finally
5 traced it down to the 9th Battalion of the 66th NVA (North Vietnamese Army) Regiment
6 commanded by Colonel An in which General Moore went back and in fact called me the
7 first trip he went back, wanted to know if I wanted to go back to Ia Drang Valley. I told
8 him, “General, I respect you, but hell no I’m not going back. I ain’t lost a thing over
9 there.” That’s when he interviewed Colonel An. You know, when you think about it, I
10 got a platoon. I’m the lead forward for my battalion. These guys coming off the
11 mountains, I don’t know what size unit it was, probably a platoon, I don’t know. I
12 couldn’t see the tail end of the collar. Here he is leading the force with his battalion. Of
13 course we clashed. One thing about helicopters, I’m sure you are aware of it. I think the
14 reason they were delayed in getting to us—if you don’t see it, you can hear it, but you
15 don’t know where it exactly where it is. I think they came off out of the cave and off the
16 mountain.

17 RV: To the sound.

18 LG: To the sound of where the helicopters were. Of course—I don’t say it saved
19 us, but it really helped was when they moved me on forward and we run into them before
20 they got in real close to us. From then on, it was just—it got very wild. 2nd Platoon came
21 in and did their crazy maneuvering.

22 RV: Tell me that. Tell me about Henry Herrick.

23 LG: Henry Herrick was—he had made a comment on the ship going over that he
24 was going for the medal of honor.

25 RV: Did that concern you when you heard that?

26 LG: Not me particularly. It did on one of my dear friends, Carl Palmer, platoon
27 sergeant.

28 RV: Yes, sir.

29 LG: He told me—

30 RV: That was Herrick’s platoon sergeant.

1 LG: He said, “That’s son of a bitch is going to get us killed.” He told me that
2 when we were going over on the ship. We had—he drowned two of his men, prior to any
3 combat or anything. Gung ho, crazy training missions. It wasn’t a training mission, he
4 should’ve been patrol. He was sent up to reinforce me and get on my flank and tie in with
5 it. Here they come, Sergeant Palmer, he was from here to the camera from me. I said,
6 “Carl, where the hell are you going?” “I don’t know, but where are following this thing.”

7 RV: So you saw him going by, chasing the scouts.

8 LG: Oh yeah, went right by me. I tried to stop it because I had my hands full
9 already.

10 RV: But you couldn’t because he was answering to Lieutenant Herrick. Did you
11 see the scouts they were chasing?

12 LG: No, didn’t.

13 RV: Were there scouts, do you think?

14 LG: Sergeant Ernie Savage was the buck sergeant that wound up with the
15 remains. I talked to him quite, he said there were probably three to four that he saw. If he
16 saw them all or not, I don’t know. But it wasn’t any—like a platoon sized or anything
17 like that, maybe a squad size.

18 RV: So they go by and do they just disappear out into the woods?

19 LG: Just went out and the North Vietnamese just kept leading them on. Got them
20 out there where they wanted them and surround them and just—just tore them to pieces.

21 RV: Could you hear the gunfire from that action?

22 LG: Oh yeah. In fact, the weapon squad leader was Sergeant Hurdle. Two M60s. I
23 don’t know how soon in the action again because I still had my hand fill. But machine
24 gun fire coming back into us—

25 RV: Was it American?

26 LG: It was those two machine guns and I told Colonel Moore later, I said, “Hell,
27 those were our M60s.” He verified it later that they had wiped out our weapons squad
28 completely, got the machine guns and turned it on us.

29 RV: Right. Captain Herren, what was his reaction to this?

30 LG: He seemed like he aged five years in a matter of couple of hours. I’m sure
31 you are familiar with the fact that the army delegates authority, not responsibility. John

1 Herren felt responsible for that platoon out there, he asked me, he says “Sergeant
2 Gilreath, any way that you can think of that we can get out to them.” I said, “Captain
3 John, if the 3rd Platoon had moved up and we were in there.” I said, “Now we are going
4 to the right flank with the 3rd Platoon. But that leaves everything open. On that side of the
5 landing zone.” The 2nd Platoon was the one that would’ve filled in and sent 3rd Platoon
6 out to do their tie in but we were missing a couple hundred meters there. I told them, I
7 said “That’s the old way, that’s how we’re leaving the battalion wide open.” Drive a train
8 down through there where we had it vacated. Of course we didn’t try it. We did try to do
9 a direct assault out to get to that. They were well camouflaged, they knew where we
10 were, we didn’t know where they were. I mean, it’s obvious that they were out in front of
11 us, but we were taking casualties just trying to get out to them. The thing that was a
12 savior for B Company in particular, was that dry creek bed.

13 RV: Right, it’s a good position.

14 LG: That’s a good firing position, they usually up in the backside, you got a good
15 firing position.

16 RV: Was it accurate as portrayed in the movie? Was it about that high? About
17 shoulder?

18 LG: In places, yeah. But it ran out on my left flank where A Company started. Of
19 course, the North Vietnamese they’re smart enough to know that we were in good
20 position so they sort of skirted us around, on the A Company and C Company side. But
21 we had—you know again, senseless to try to go out there after that and we would’ve lost
22 half of the company if we had tried again and we did try it and like I said, we took
23 casualties. Nothing we can do about it. Finally, Sergeant Savage did get the artillery
24 adjusted in, right on his position. In fact we went back into the Ia Drang when I’d been
25 promoted and moved up to intelligence sergeant. Colonel Moore came in one morning
26 after a brief visit. “Going back to X-Ray tomorrow, do you want to go?” I said, “Yes, sir.
27 I would like to go.” He said, “Well, be out there at my chopper six, seven o’clock
28 whatever it was and we’ll go back in.” Colonel Earnie was the XO (Executive Officer).
29 He tried to get everybody to take him out there and show him where everything was. I
30 said, “Hell, I ain’t going out there just me and you colonel.” Artillery rounds and all sorts
31 of stuff that didn’t explode. But Savage took them out there and showed him his position

1 and the cut-off the platoon. Where the artillery, the craters were. Colonel Ernie made the
2 comment, said, "Sergeant you had that artillery running you over, didn't you?" I said,
3 "Yes, that's where the enemy was."

4 RV: Wow. Tell me about Ernie Savage.

5 LG: Very fine buck sergeant at the time. He's—we called him sort of loose. He
6 may show up here, he may not. All the other reunions, but he was dedicated to that
7 platoon and some of that Hollywood stuff in the movie shows him coming out and
8 hanging it out, bullshit. There were all up in the firing position, alert when we finally got
9 out to him.

10 RV: This was on the 15th, the next day. You led the group out to get them.

11 LG: Yeah.

12 RV: Can you tell me about that action and what Herren said to you and then how
13 you maneuvered out there.

14 LG: We had—I think the 2nd of the 5th. I'm not sure, one of the companies,
15 anyways another one that came in for reinforcement. We took my platoon and our 3rd
16 Platoon and the—Joel Sugdinis I believe was the company commander's name of the
17 platoon that came in and supported us. They just sort of flanked us. We got John Herren,
18 myself and the third platoon, you know move us up, straight out, tactical formation out to
19 them.

20 RV: This was—so Herren went with you?

21 LG: Oh, yeah.

22 RV: Was he that kind of commander?

23 LG: Oh, sure. They show Colonel Moore in that movie getting out there, Colonel
24 Moore went with us, he didn't go out with us. Of course, he shouldn't have, that wasn't
25 his place.

26 RV: Sure.

27 LG: Commanding from back there. Again, when we came upon them, some were
28 still suffering wounds and a medic, I think he was pretty well explained in book.

29 RV: Yes, sir.

30 LG: You know, when you get down you use some toilet paper. But we finally got
31 him up and got the—you know we could move back, with help brought the dead out.

1 RV: Tell me about Sergeant Palmer.

2 LG: Just an outstanding platoon sergeant. Veteran of the Korean War. Again, you
3 get in that position of rank senior NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer), you have your, you
4 know the one that you know is going to be, the good one. We sort of stuck together. I'll
5 never forget what he told me going over on the ship. We went over on the (unclear audio)
6 ship. The *Rose*. Well I never tried, I've always been on troop ships in my career in
7 different places. Here we had a state run platoon sergeant. Sergeant Palmer had one, a
8 platoon and Montgomery the mortar platoon, they had one together. Palmer told us,
9 "They're fattening up for the kids, hell I never travelled like this before going into
10 combat!" And it turned out to be true in his case.

11 RV: So when you're approaching this platoon, did you holler out to them to let
12 them know it's you coming?

13 LG: Mm-hmm, radios. He still had his radio. In fact, there was one North
14 Vietnamese laying against this scrub tree looked about this big. My radio operator, I think
15 said, "Serg! His eyes blinked!" I said "Really?" "Yeah!" I looked at him and sure enough
16 there was a grenade in his hand. I don't know how many of us—I guess it was five or six
17 magazines went into him.

18 RV: He was still alive?

19 LG: Mm-hmm. Trying to, I guess get us in there and then explode that grenade on
20 us.

21 RV: Who took him out? Who killed him?

22 LG: Oh, myself and the operator. Like I said, six or eight others. We didn't have
23 no use for him then.

24 RV: Your friend, Sergeant Palmer, did you think that he was the kind of person
25 who would've made it through that? He was well equipped for this.

26 LG: Oh, yes. Again, you know it's unfortunate, but you have a platoon leader
27 that's metal happy then—Palmer was enough of a solider that he followed. I'm not sure if
28 I may have been a little short tempered with him and if he'd been my platoon leader I
29 would've told him, "Hell no, we ain't going to do this." But like I said, just enough of a
30 solider that he followed his orders.

1 RV: How did you feel when you got there and you realized that Herrick's gone
2 and Palmer's gone?

3 LG: Terrible. In fact, I had Palmer back out in a poncho liner—

4 RV: You ask permission to carry him?

5 LG: I don't remember the exact number that was left, seventeen maybe. I'm not
6 sure exactly. Kept John attached to me, to my platoon. Just to be part of Sergeant
7 Gilreath's platoon. When we got back to the creek bed, I told Savage, "Get him, line him
8 up out here behind us on the creek bed, on the friendly side."

9 RV: Right.

10 LG: And I said, "Get some rest."

11 RV: You're able right now to speak to the future generations about this day,
12 November 15th. What do you want them to know about—about you, but also about Carl
13 Palmer?

14 LG: First off, I don't know how many of you saw it, but that movie *Platoon*,
15 Oliver Stone won an Academy Award for it and that's the nearest thing to nothing I ever
16 tried to look at, I saw very little of it. The way they depicted the American soldier, that
17 was wrong. Of course, later on in the seventies there was some frag cannons. We had no
18 problems with drugs, we had no problem with alcohol. We had a small unit leader, well-
19 disciplined men, that I guess was one of the reasons we survived it. There was no heat—
20 he depicted the American soldiers as drunks, dope-heads, and all this crap and that wasn't
21 true at all. I do some speaking at high schools and some of the colleges around South
22 Carolina and I let that fact be known. Don't think of American soldiers that way. Again,
23 that's—he comes in with good leadership, good discipline, and that's what we had.

24 RV: Tell me about your feelings about Henry Herrick.

25 LG: Had no use for it. You knew basically what he was, what he is. I guess his
26 stated mission was to be medal hungry. That's no way to be. John Herren, I think he had
27 probably tried to calm him down a couple of times, but of course the Army says if you're
28 aggressive, that's fine. But aggression can backfire on you and it did on him.

29 RV: Yes, sir.

1 LG: I didn't—I knew him as, you know, competitors. 1st Platoon, 2nd Platoon. He
2 and Lieutenant Devney. Other than that, I didn't—Lieutenant Deal was our third platoon
3 leader, now he was a fine officer.

4 RV: Yes. Have you been able to release maybe the angry or the frustration with
5 Herrick over the years?

6 LG: Yeah, in a way I guess. But, like today, we go over back to the wall and see
7 all the names, it makes you think about it again.

8 RV: Yes, sir. Tell me then, you get back with Sergeant Palmer, you're back in the
9 lines, then what happened with you?

10 LG: You mean as far as the rest of the action?

11 RV: Yes, sir. This is the terrible day of "Broken Arrow", and all of that massive
12 attack. What happened with you during that attack at dawn?

13 LG: We just started shooting and didn't quit. They would—the movie did depict
14 that pretty accurate as far as them attacking them leaves, they did. But again, we were in
15 such good firing position. Those machine guns were just cutting them down, of course
16 the rifleman pushed them all around. That was great but it ran out. I hate to say it, but we
17 were given to A Company. Tony Nadal, the A Company commander said, "Send them
18 around here to us." Again, you know, that was just the way it panned out, we happened to
19 be at the creek bed. Our 3rd Platoon we had, let's see, Deal, William—no, Curry. Chief
20 Curry was killed, that was that was one of the—he used to be my platoon and squad
21 leader. Then, Colonel Moore before we left, a couple of times it was getting a little
22 heavy, outstanding squad leaders, so he took two of them. I told Plumley, I went down to
23 battalion after I got word of what he was doing, he took Sergeant Hull and Sergeant
24 Curry. Sergeant Meyer, "They don't need to go in there." He said, "I know what you're
25 here for." I said, "I'd like to see the colonel." "The colonel ain't here." I told them later,
26 so I got my hand on you, I believe, the colonel. But I knew the reason, both of them were
27 promotable to E7. So they were putting them in the slider. Sergeant Hull and the recon
28 platoon sergeant and later on Curry would've been the third platoon sergeant if he had
29 not been killed. It gave me—I'm not going to call him a name, but something that I
30 wouldn't care to.

31 RV: Tell me about Sergeant Major Plumley.

1 LG: Oh, tremendous person. All solidier. His bite is not nearly as bad as his growl.
2 He's a good friend I've ever had, still friends with him, in fact I talked to him on
3 Monday. I talk to him every now and then and he just didn't take no crap. If you did your
4 job, you have nothing to worry about. I had and still have a good relation with him. Of
5 course, he is one of the few people I saw in the book. What they call a lifer or an airborne
6 or whatever. Made all the combat jumps and hell how many wars he was in.

7 RV: Three.

8 LG: Three, yep that's right. He's getting a little, I guess a little feeble. Of course,
9 he's eighty-four or eighty-five, I think.

10 RV: Yes, sir.

11 LG: But still a tremendous person.

12 RV: Tell me about then Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore?

13 LG: They don't make them any better. He's the type—again, if you do your job,
14 show progress in whatever you're doing as far as tactics or anything, training, your
15 mission everything, you have no problem with Colonel Moore. I remember one time in
16 inspection, full-field inspection where you have all your equipment laid out on the beds
17 in the barracks prior to going. One of my machine gunners, there's a pad that fits the
18 harness. Makes it a little easier on the bones, I guess. Name was Rucker and he had his
19 pad laid out there on the bed. It looked awful, old and ragged. Colonel Moore said,
20 “Sergeant Gilreath, look at that thing.” I said, “Yes, sir. There's a requisition for the
21 unit.” I said, “But that piece of paper, put it on a shell it don't help none, but that old
22 ragged pad there will help him a little bit as far as carrying his gun.” Then, he saw the
23 logic in that and then said nothing else about it. That type of person you know, if there is
24 reason for it, then you tell Moore and he had no problem. In fact, when he started writing
25 the book, he called me and travelled interstate I-85, which is near my home. He was
26 going up to West Point to do a graduation address. He called me and said, “Would you
27 meet me somewhere?” Because he started doing research on doing this book. I told him,
28 “Yes, I would be glad to.” I was with the sheriff's department then. So he called, I met
29 him up there it was at a Howard Johnson's on the interstate. It was three stories then, well
30 still is. I said, “Why would you retire? I sort of thought you'd be chief of staff one day.”
31 He said, “Sergeant, they offered me the Ryukyu Islands.”

1 RV: The what?

2 LG: Ryukyu islands. Japan, Okinawa, all that. He said, “You know how many
3 combat troopers is in that command?” I said, “No sir, I’m not sure.” He said, “Not a damn
4 one. So instead of taking that command, I retired.” That’s the way he was. He wanted
5 combat troopers, of course he commanded a company in Korea during the Korea War. He
6 was just a hard know—well. If you deserved it, if not then you had no problem with it.

7 RV: What do you remember about him during that three days at X-Ray? How
8 well is it portrayed in the movie, how well is it portrayed in the book?

9 LG: We did a History Channel interview, there was eight of us all over the
10 country. They flew us into New York and we went out to West Point and saw the movie
11 for the first time and two days later, we went in and they—it was called “History vs.
12 Hollywood” and we interviewed and we rated the movie. This one guy, from South
13 Carolina said, “Did you notice that—I didn’t know Colonel Moore killed them all, I
14 thought we killed few of them.” (Chuckles) Talking about the way the movie depicted
15 and it wasn’t the way at all. Of course, he was in the action, but not to that extent. He
16 finally made a comment that he was the command rifle and not B1. So they got him back
17 in the rear there where he should’ve been to start with.

18 RV: Tell me about Joe Galloway, what kind of contact did you have with him?

19 LG: Knew him when he came in, course you know, didn’t know that much about
20 him. He was back in the battalion CP (Command Post) and of course I was out forward
21 there. Didn’t really see that much of him. I think one time we went back—that’s when
22 they brought 2nd Platoon back in, I saw him then. He was hustling around there and doing
23 whatever you know. Had a rifle. Other than that, didn’t have any contact with him then.
24 Mostly the folks around the CP area did.

25 RV: In the interest of time, we have to wrap up, what’s it been like now on this
26 40th anniversary of these battles for you?

27 LG: I can tell you better after today, we go over to the wall that’s always—you
28 know, it’s hard but we go every time.

29 RV: Yes, sir.

30 LG: We reminisce some of the folks in the hospitality room. I don’t miss
31 anything, I go to all the—But it’s enjoyable. Family orientated because I bring the family

1 and the kids all the time, the grandchildren are here this year. But again, after this
2 weekend, it'll—I don't really make it a milestone or anything, it just happened forty years
3 ago.

4 RV: Sergeant Gilreath, what would you want the people listening in a hundred
5 years, what would you want them to know about X-Ray in those days?

6 LG: Without outstanding artillery and air support, we wouldn't be sitting here
7 talking. We had outstanding support from the 1st of the 21st Artillery, 229th Aviation,
8 Bruce Crandall. Choppers in and out the whole time, and our air. The old A1E Skyraider,
9 did more damage or pinpoint accuracy than the fast moving jets, because we had them
10 all. Again, you got to know how to use your support, know when to use it, and don't wear
11 them out before you need it.

12 RV: Yes, sir.

13 LG: Then again, you know the battalion commander doing hard leadership. Did
14 not try to direct from the helicopter, he was there with us. He was the first on the ground
15 and I was the second.

16 RV: Okay. Well, we'll end the interview now, thank you very much sergeant.

17 LG: No problem.

18 RV: Appreciate it very much.