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ORAL HISTORY

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John H. Henshaw
(Signature - Witness)

Sanford, Roger

WEST VIRGINIA VIETNAM VETERANS

AN INTERVIEW WITH: Roger Sanford

CONDUCTED BY: John Hennen Jr.

September 11, 1984

TRANSCRIBED BY: Vina Hutchinson

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67 pages

JH: Three--fifteen p.m. with Roger Sanford. This is a Vietnam Era Veteran project with the Oral History of Appalachia. It's Tuesday, September 11 and, ah, we'll start off with a sketch, basic sketch of Roger's background and what he's been doing since he got out of the service, and then just, take it from there. Okay, Roger, if you would, ah, just tell me a little bit about where you were born, grew up, where you went to school, that type of thing, family background.

RS: Ah, Huntington's my birth place. Ah, date of birth is, ah, 3 June 47, which makes me 37 years of age. Ah, lived all my life in Huntington, ah, up to high school, ah, lived in a blue collar/white collar type family background, ah, in the west, western end of Huntington. Ah, I attended the Cabell County public schools, ah, felt that I was given, er, a fairly good education, or at that time was afforded an opportunity to receive a good education.

JH: In the west end?

RS: Yes. Went to West Junior, ah, and then to Huntington High School, decided to go, to attend college at the last moment and, ah, attended, ah, summer school after I graduated from high school at, at that time it used, the Oley Junior High School.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Which is a summer school program and I, ah, took algebra II. In high school I had, ah, business math, and then, you know,

algebra one and then algebra two and I didn't really make the grade that I wanted to make and so I took it over in summer and made a B and then they erased it, the previous grade, and, ah, I, at that time, ah, you had to, those were back in the days when you had to pass the ACT test (Ah huh.) to get in school. (Right.) You know, it was back in 65. And ...

JH: Was that, did you finish high school in 65?

RS: Yeah, ah, June of 65. Graduated, ah, class of, ah, about 485 at that time at Huntington High School. Ah, like I said, ah, went back and completed algebra II, got a B in it. Ah, took the necessary, ah, exams, ACT, and was admitted at that time. You know, you had to be going through the formal process and I was admitted to Marshall. Ah, at that time I really didn't know what I wanted to major in, I was just taking some classes. I, I wanted to go into education because I was inspired, ah, well, for one thing, my mother wanted, ah, you know, a profession to go into. She insisted on, you know, my sister, (Mmm hmm.) sisters and myself had a profession to go into and that my grandmother was a schoolteacher for forty years and, ah, ...

JH: Was that around Huntington also?

RS: Yeah. It was in Cabell County for forty years. Ah, my dad attended Marshall before he, ah, was inducted into service in World War II, he studied here, I believe, for three semesters.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: Ah, my mother eventually went back to college and got an associate degree. Ah, that was in her late forties. Ah, after high school, as I was reiterating here, I did attend Marshall. I attended Marshall for, ah, two years and, ah, one summer term. Ah, I received draft notice on two occasions for report for induction.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Ah, went one summer term, ah, and that waived the first induction notice. Ah, for some reason, I don't know, deep down inside I, I feel that I honestly wanted to go into the service, you know, ah, for adventure ...

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Ah, patriotism. Ah, was bored with, you know, I'd been here all my life, except for a couple of vacations.

JH: Ready to move a little bit, huh?

RS: Yeah, right. Essentially I think a lot of people from Appalachia, ah, from studies I've read, ah, joined or serviced to be in Vietnam due to, k, knowing they were, you know, going to go there, ah, due to the patriotism, socio-economic background, ah, adventures for them, ah, they were unemployed. Those were reasons. Ah, nonetheless, ah, I reported for induction. I had already been given prior induction physical exam and I was called in by an army recruiter and he said, Sanford, you know you taken these series of exams and they're all exceptionally high, you know, ah, as compared to what we're getting. They had

something called the AFQT test, Armed Forces Qualification Test. (Mmm hmm.) I did very well on that and then it breaks down to a series of exams and they were all over a hundred and he said, you passed the OCT test, that was Officer Training Test with, ah, I, I'll never forget it, the minimal qualifying score was 90 and that I scored 90. Ah, so I enlisted to go to OCS- Officers' Candidate School.

JH: Right.

RS: Ah, then I signed an, ah, an obligation for three years. Ah, after completing, ah, BCT, which is basic combat training in the U.S. Army at Fort Knox, I entered there in June and, ah, it was quite demanding, physically and mentally. Lost a lot of weight, got in shape.

JH: How long does that program last?

RS: That's eight weeks.

JH: Eight weeks?

RS: Yeah. Eight weeks. And it is very thorough, every minute of the day is accounted for, just like, they've got a schedule and they got it down, right down to the, well, to the minute, you know, of training, sleep, eating, ah, you know, personal needs. Ah, I decided about the fifth week or so that I did not want to go to OCS. In fact, in fact I had to do it over again I, you know, I didn't like military life. Ah, at that time, I found out later in the three years I spent in the Army that there, ah, are some pleasures to it if you can find it.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: Ah, I eventually received orders for Vietnam. Ah, I would like to say that when I received my draft notice I was rec, I wasn't by myself because about everyone in my neighborhood and the, just general geographical area was either being inducted or enlisting for military service.

JH: Ah huh. Was there a lot of enlistments?

RS: Ah, gee whiz. Ah, believe it or not, over seventy-some percent of the people that served in Vietnam were volunteers. Ah, ...

JH: Largely, probably for those reasons you wanted to go?

RS: Yes. Patriotism, ah, unemployment, adventure, our socio-geograph, ah, ec, ...socio-economic backgrounds, standards, you know, I've gotta have that military behind me. Ah, what can I, what would I say to the neighbors if I, you know, went in and they, you know, didn't finish or, ah, was called for induction and I, you know, for some reason, was denied, you know, ah, the opportunity to serve my service, ah, ah, country, excuse me. Ah, those were the standards then, and they've always, always been characteristic of West Virginia. West Virginia's had the highest, ah, ah, input in World War II, and Korea, and Vietnam per capita than any state in the Union.

JH: Is that right?

RS: Yes. I, I can factually say this - that West Virginia per capita, ah, I believe, it's eight hundred thousand or one

million population, had the highest casualty rate, that's KIA - killed in action - than any state in the Union.

JH: I have heard that.

RS: And, ah, a, a heck of a lot of people joined Marine Corps and Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, ah, a lot of them wanted front line duty and made that most explicit, ah, you know, when they enlisted (Mmm hmm.) that they wanted to be Airborne Ranger, Airborne Ranger/Jungle expert. You know, what have you, ah, well the, the irony behind the thing or what is, I, I think is sort of comical, when my father, believe it or not, ah, which is a World War II veteran, he served in the Army in the 66th, ah, Infantry Division, World War II, tried to take my place, ah, when I received my induction notice. Ah, in fact, he went down to Ashland, that was the old induction center, Ashland, Kentucky, (Ah huh.) was the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station, or AFEES (Ah huh.) for short, and said he didn't want me to go, he'd objected to the war. Said the war was crazy, it made no sense. There was no, ah, ah, you know, established reasons for the war, ah, or objectives for it, ah, he said the war, ah, you know, is, of this type, ah, he felt was unjustifiable. And which was something for me, he did go down, believe me, now I didn't know about it until later, tried, and they said you know, you can't do that.

JH: What was your response to that?

RS: Ah

JH: Was it hard to believe his attitude about, about you going anywhere?

RS: Well, my dad had been in a war. I just recently ran across some pictures of his, ah, taken in Europe of war. Ah, now I can appreciate, you know, what he was thinking. He, he was doing a lot of thinking at that time and I can op, now I can understand and appreciate, ah, just historically speaking, in Vietnam was, in my opinion, was the biggest tragedy in American history and that's including the American Civil War. There's no doubt about it. It was, ah, a tragedy, ah, ah, to this day it still haunts tens of thousands of people that served, ah, their dependents, ah, to include spouses, children, parents, ah, brothers and sisters, neighbors, and, ah, people they have to deal with, try too work with and even socialize with. But going back to, after being assigned I went to Vietnam. I was assigned to the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division. Got there in October of, the latter part of October 1967. Ah ...

JH: And this is, correct me if I'm wrong, this is just about the time where the war's really picking up, isn't it? It's 67?

RS: Yeah, 67's right before the major, ah, first big offensive of the war, which right, the Tet Offensive right, ah, January of 68.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: Ah, was given money and orders to report to Fort Ord, California. Of course, I, my mother was in ill health, just

recently out of the hospital, and, ah, I was concerned about her. She was having a lot of problems with, ah, hypertension, and, ah, ah, anxiety, ah, gastro-intestinal problems and I tried my best to get a compassionate, you know, deferral.

JH: Right.

RS: And being assigned, ah, I called, ah, Washington, D. C., a couple of times. I had her family physician, wrote a nice letter, ah, explaining I was the only son. Ah, that, having, being the only son and having flat feet, believe me, is, is strictly mythological, because I am the only son and my feet are extremely flat.

JH: And off you went.

RS: And off I went. Of course, it was upsetting. And it was, it was a very emotional departure from the Tri-State Airport. Ah, I couldn't believe it. You know, just a few months ago, I was a kid on the Str, you know, going to, ah, Marshall University. Now I'd been trained, thoroughly trained, ah, soldier, U.S. Army. Of course, ah, yeah, I was experiencing periods of anxiety and, ah, home, you know, being that young and being on a Piedmont plane was a first step, ah, you know, flying on a Piedmont plane at that time was, ah, traumatic enough.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Ah ...

JH: Especially out of this airport. [laughs]

RS: Yeah, out of this airport. Ah, as we found out later the tragedies due to just a, a couple thousand dollar-piece of equipment. Well, landed in Cincinnati and there, ah, we started, ah, it was like a bunch of, ah, cattle going in a corral. We started running in more GIs.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Cincinnati. Then, ah, as we got out of Cincinnati, we caught a jet. And, ah, that is the first time I've been on a, on a jet, now I've been taking prop planes, you know, between Louisville and Huntington, but I'd never, you know, on leave and, ah, whenever I could get a weekend pass or, you know. But we caught a jet from Cincinnati, landed in Chicago, and wow! - I mean there's hundreds of GIs. You know, there's, ah, well, primarily Army, you know. You've got, ah, officers, enlisted men and top sergeants, and all areas. And, ah, ah, people coming, they're going. You got the guys coming back, you can see by their decorations and their patches and their, and the, I guess the glaze in their eyes. You know, the, the, ah, they'd been somewhere that I hadn't been before. They'd seen a movie that I hadn't seen before. And after leaving, ah, O'Hara, ah, International in Chicago, then it was straight on to, I believe we landed at Kansas City, for a brief time. And then from Kansas City, ah, to, it was non-stop to Fort Ord or Travis Air - Airport Base, Air Force Base and we landed there and I met up with some people that, ah, my, you know, made acquaintance with

at Fort Knox. Needless to say, everyone was, ah, you know, was upset. We really didn't know what was, ah, ahead of us, but we, we were leaving families, we were leaving wives, we were leaving, ah, children, one case the guy left, ah, that I went over with, left a wife that was, like, 3 1/2 months pregnant. So that was another myth about the pregnancy deal. Pregnancy, flat feet, and, ah, being the only son in the family did not, you know, had little bearing on it.

JH: That's saying they only apply maybe when it was convenient for the Army?

RS: Ah, in certain situations I think when there needs, there needs to be a lot of political pull. Ah, not to say that there wasn't a lot of political pull in the Vietnam, ah, War. If they used sense of the one down in the Vietnam, you could have gotten out of it, you know, just for one thing, just refusing to go.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: That's the simplest way, ah, or stories. I've read several books, ah, ah, on Vietnam falsification medical reports ...

JH: Ah huh.

RS: ... at the government's expense. Certain doctors and nurses and people at the medical, certain medical schools that were using VA facilities, at that time which they were affiliated with, to falsify, you know, like, ah, blood work, or urinalysis.

JH: Right.

RS: Ah, blood pressure, ah, EKGs, ah, electorcardiograms, ah, you know, eye refractions. They were just doing a lot of things and they were mak, professionally doing it. You know, then that report would come back to your local induction center and the guy would see that this was legit, you know, and he's not going to take the time to call up and say, you know, Doctor, ah, you know, Dr. so-and-so at the medical school, or you know, is this r, you know, he's just going to, you know, stamp, you know, denied, you know, he does not meet the medical qualifica, ah, qualification require, requirements.

JH: Right.

RS: This happened quite a bit. Ah, essentially, Vietnam was a, and I don't mean to, to take away any of the, ah, imput of the other services, but Vietnam was essentially a Marine Corp - Army war.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: Ah, that's, you know, which was different from World War II. Korea was essentially the same, the same thing. It was a, it was an Army - Marine Corp war.

JH: So, how long were you at, ah, Fort Ord?

RS: Ah, it was Fort Ord, ah, we got off and I caught a cab, ah, we landed at Travis Air Force Base and I didn't have to report for a day and a half.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: So I caught a cab and went to, rented a, an average type hotel room. Ah, I think it was on, like, the seventh floor. But on an oldie, built like in the late forties or early fifties. And went up there and just watched TV, relaxed, pulled the, the curtains and just relaxed. Didn't, didn't even go out. I mean, I sent for food. Had room, some type of, ah, room service. Extremely afraid and I called home and talked to my dad and he was surprised that I was out there that quick, you know. Because it was just constant, now this, bear in mind, that, at, on those flights, it just, ah, you know, a half an hour's delay and then, you know, I was exhausted.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Ah, then I reported to Fort Ord under, believe it or not, I got there with c, taxi, you know. I, cause I, how else are you to get there, and I paid for the taxi. We got demonstrators by the hundreds in front of Fort Ord, you know, out in front of the gates, and we got the military police escorting, you know, everyone, ah, with, at that time, was M-14s. And you know, escorting, they were on military reservation, so they take, ah, precedent.

JH: Escorting the draftees and enlistees?

RS: Ah, escorting the soldiers, so they could report to their base. You know, get in. We got these people on the outside, ah, you know, waving various flags and, ah, you know, ah, chanting different things and, I don't know if it

was just that day or that week there was a group. I understand it was sporadic, like the whole week you might have demonstrators and then, for two weeks, there'd be no one out there but one or two people. Ah, reported to Fort Ord, ah, was with a staging group. You know, they sign you with a staging group and the staging group was, there was an NCO in charge of it. This guy was a staff sergeant. And the staging group that I was on was, ah, just enough to, you know, to fill a plane. I don't know, one, one of the big Boeing planes or whatever, like 78 or 88 people, you know, the maximum, ah, that's for my staging group. Ah, we got to this big terminal, it was huge, you could see it for blocks, you know, with nothing but bunk beds, bunk beds, and signs, you know, of toilets here or, ah, info areas here. And we were issued, ah, sheets and blankets, and stuff and, you know, go over to this area and, ah, find yourself a bed, and stay in the staging area. You know, you are in blue staging area 12, stay in that area. No sooner did I make my bed and, ah, went to, to the st, guy who was in charge of our, the NCO non-commission officer started to, in charge of the staging group and we made our bed and everyone was talking, you know, and the ones that smoked and similar sort of stuffy, lack of ventilation. But it was a sense of you're just a number and it's, like being, you know, like sheep. It just, ah, you could just feel the anxiety and the, ah, uncertainty in the air.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Ah, a lot of people found that the adventures and, ah, the, this started to really upset other people, other soldiers and what-have-you. Ah, all of a sudden the guy, the NCO that was in charge of our staging area said, "Follow me." We got a report of all things, ah, I wanted to go take a shower, I was trying to find a place to take a shower, because it'd been a couple of days and I was wanting, you know, to change, ah, underclothing and, you know, break some new starch, you know. I had with me, I had orders that says wear your combat boots, you know, and, you know, be ready at, you know ...

JH: At any time.

RS: ... At any time. Report in country, I found out later why. Ah, the craziest thing, before, and this, ah, just really dumbfounds me, is in the middle of the night we lined up to get haircuts. And they gave us what they call a burr. (Mmm hmm) It's not like the burr haircut we used to get here, which was like a high flat-top. A burr haircut in the Army is a, is a baldie. You know, all of a sudden I'm getting one of those real bald haircuts, you know, and it's uncomfortable if you ever had one and put a, ah, hat or a steel pot on, you know, pressing down and got a burr haircut, you know, that's a baldie. Didn't even, they just took us in there and we didn't have any choice, the guy just cut all of our hair off real good, you know.

JH: Everybody?

RS: Everyone. I came back and said, "Man, I'm definitely going to take a shower." And all of a sudden he said, "No. Take your stuff, report to so-and-so, strip your bed, throw it down, we're disembarking." And in the middle of the night, we jump on, ah, trucks. I'm on the back of a truck, guy said, you know, "Sanford." You get on the back of a truck and ever, everyone's got their duffle bags and I'm loading, ah, with two other guys, let's say, let's put a number down, 78 cause that plane can hold 78. I loaded 78 duffle bags on duce and a half, which is, ah, you know, a, a ton and half truck. (Ah huh.) It c, can hold that many if you stack them right, you know what I'm say, and then we, in the middle of the night we drove out to the, ah, Travis Air Force Base. And there's a Continental Airlines plane, the biggie. And we go on it in no time and it was getting, ah, about an hour from early morning and, bang!, we're, we're going. You know, and we're in the air. Ah, it was getting to be, feel exhausted. Ah, everyone, you know, wanted to, gee whiz, we knew we were going to have trouble, you know, chance to, ah, ah, brush our teeth, you didn't have a chance to shave, ah, to take a shower. Ah, destination, first stop, ah, Hawaiian Islands. We touched down, guy said, don't leave the terminal, ah, you'll be leaving in an hour, within an hour and 45 minutes. Ah, everyone ran to the, ah, restrooms, got off, ran to restrooms, ah, tried to make phone calls, ah, it's funny, people start panicking and want

to make a phone call, you know. I'm gonna call home, ah, I had a good friend on that flight, his name was Jack F. Cotton. He used to play for the University of Tennessee, football and if I'm not mistaken he was all American at the University of Tennessee, he wanted to call his wife and she's the one I mentioned previously before because I, she was about 2 1/2 months pregnant. (Mmm hmm) Ah, we went to, in there and I tried to refresh, you know, went in the restrooms and washed my face and, you know, rinsed your mouth out with water, ah, someone, I went to the bar and it was, it was at the terminal and I remember, got something like a coconut cooler, you know, drink, mixed drink, and it came to about 9 bucks and something like that. I think I'm exaggerating. I believe the actual price was about, ah, seven something [JH laughs], you know, for a drink and this was, you know, and I'll never forget, in the, ah, restrooms, they was so fancy, you put a quarter in, you got, ah, a spray of cologne, you know. And it came straight out and I held my hand like it was gonna come out, you know, like a soap dispenser. So I got a spray of something, I believe it was Hawaiian, ah, Tropic something, ah, cologne, ah, right in the face. You know, you can imagine that. So I got it right in the mouth, and in the eyes, and you know, ah, ...

JH: Seven, seven dollar drink, that's a night out on, in Huntington, on, ah, in 65.

RS: Yeah it was. But there it was, you know, zero. Ah, next stop, we, we left within the hour, maybe an hour and ten minutes, stopped at the Phillipines and I'll never forget

the Phillipines, Hawaiian Islands is beautiful weather, low humidity, high seventies, you know, beautiful skies, clouds. Land in the Phillipines, it was hot, extremely hot and muggy, and humid, soaking wet. I mean, you know, you get off the plane and, ah, then, ah, we had, ah, ah, less than an hour (Ah huh) delay and I ran into the Air Force t, ah, facility, Air Force Base terminal there and got a sandwich. And I'll never forget the, the meat was spoiled, ah, di, you know, just, ah, was bad and I had to throw it out. I did get something cold to drink. Ah, we got back on the plane, ah, bear in mind, they had the stewardess, it was all commerical.

JH: Right.

RS: This was all commercial. You know, this was part of the big mic, military industrial complex, people making, you know, billions off the war. I'm not saying this airline was making billions, it was making millions, but still part of the people that were making, ah, this, this stratum in society at that time was making billions off the Federal Government on, based on ...

JH: Now were there civilians on this flight too?

RS: No, just the stewardess and, ah, the, ah, captain and the c, you know, the co-pilot, and what have you. Ah, after many more hours of flying we got word from the captain to look down below. We were off the shores of the Republic of, ah, Vietnam, South Viet, this was Vietnam, there, you know, this was the Republic of South Vietnam. We'll be landing in the

next, you know, what, twelve, thirteen, fourteen minutes.

Ah, you know, there was no smoking and I noticed to look on the stewardess, females, you know, it was sad in a way.

They'd been through this before, you know, they probably made this run about once a, every week.

JH: Mmm hmm. [begin side 2, tape 2a]

RS: Ben Wau, a monstrous, ah, airfield, ah, on the outskirts of Saigon, ah, we were given orders, ah, once we landed that before we disembarked that someone would come, some military official would come on board and give us orders. Okay, the, you know, we landed, touched down, ah, the hatch doors opened, guy gets on, Air Force, with a bull horn and says, you know, follow me in a, you know, swift manner, you know, double time to the terminal. Which was, ah, first thing when we got off that got us off was the heat because extremely hot and humid, you know, just bang, it's like a hundred degrees and sunny and humid and I really wasn't afraid because I knew we had to be in some relatively safe area. Ah, we ran to, double-time, to the terminal and all around the terminal was bunkers and there were jets, airplanes, ah, with sand-bagged in all around, -and a lot of the Air F, Air Force personnel, a few Navy personnel, Army, Marine Corps. Ah, we got to the terminal, ah, was exhausted. Ah, a lot of people were exhausted, you know, several days of, ah, constantly being on the go, no rest, ah, no time for your, ah, personal needs as far as taking a

shower or changing clothes, brushing your teeth. From there, ah, we waited for, oh I might add that we got to the terminal, what was waiting there was 78 guys to leave Vietnam on the same plane.

JH: Going the other way?

RS: So the roar was unbelievable when we entered the terminal, which was an open terminal, you know, with, ah, tin roof and s, was an unbelievable roar. These 78 guys could make this much noise. It was like, ah, you know, home coming in Marshall, you know, playing, ah, West Virginia University, you know, we, and this is in football, which would be a first and, you know. But they were very enthusiastic about going home. And from there we went ...

JH: Did you have any, did you have any contact with these guys?

RS: No, we didn't have time. No, it was just, ah, want to be plain, ah, we were segregated to a certain point. I don't think it was, was conducted on purpose but we moved over to this one area and we, you know, there was, ah, we, weapons, you know, guys walking around, they had their, ah, M-16s, M-14s, flack vests, suspenders, you know, canteens, full combat gear, combat boots, you know, I'd never seen this stuff, you know, helmets, those camouflage helmets, you know, they were walking around, officers and grenades, you know, ammo belts, guys.

JH: So you were in the airport (Okay.) with these guys.

RS: From the airport we go to the 90th Replacement Center, which is in Ben Wau. Ben Wau, ah, is a relatively safe place.

Ah, they did receive, ah, occasional incoming and, you know, snipers, ah, a few ground attacks. But you're in a, an open area that's well fortified. You've got a lot of, ah, heavy artillery, using that terminology, you got a lot of reinforcements and people if you need to call upon them.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: Ah, Went to the 90th Replacement, ah, was there four days until I received orders to, you know, where I was going and for, you know, each day we, ah, held formation in the morning only. Hundreds of guys, or thousands, the guy got up on, you know, a public address system and called off so many names and he said if I call your name, grab your gear, come forward, you know, and if you weren't called that day, you were held over in these barracks, ah, tin roofs, ah, thin wood siding, sand-bagged up to about, ah, three and a half feet and that was in case, sand-bagging is essentially for one thing and that's for incoming rounds, that when they hit, that will absorb the shell fragments. (Mmm hmm) You know, because shell fragments does not have that much killing power after it travels so fa, you know, destructive power, ah, loses it, ah, velocity and this, ah, penetration power after a certain distance. Ah, the second night we were there, ah, we came under rocket and mortar attack in a far-off distance, ah, I was so exhausted and there was no lighting in the, you know, there was absolutely no lights, you just herded in there. People were using cigarette

lighters and somehow some candles that someone had left there before, you know, and, (Mmm hmm.) and wan, wandering around, we were talking in, ah, some rounds went off in the distance and I said, "Gee whiz, what is that?", you know, ah, an artillery or what's going on, I heard the f, you know, the sirens, ah, were going off and, ah, I just jumped off, ah, the bunk I was on and laid on, on the ground. The next morning the guy said it'd been hit but it, you know, it was nothing close by. Then they put me ...

JH: Now this is roughly what, about four days since you left West Virginia? About this time, about ...

RS: Yeah. Yeah, I, I'd say about five days, you got that difference, you know, you, ah, you lose a day or gain a day. About five days.

JH: Constant travel.

RS: Constant travel, five days, yeah. You know, I hadn't been able to, well, let's, benefit of the doubt, four days and still not able to, get an opportunity to brush my teeth, get to my gear, take a shower, you know, if that means anything, it does to some people. You know, ah, just con, you know, you followed orders, you were like a number or a piece of meat, essentially, you know, you're, you're under orders and all that deal. Well, eventually, ah, if you're not called out that day in the 90th Replacement, ah, they take your I.D. card, you know, you must have your military I.D. card upon you at all times.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: So they collect the military I. D. cards and if you're not called, you know, to, to leave for your unit that day then you're put on detail. You know, when they call out, and so, ah, I knew what was going on. There were essentially about three details that were going on that base. Number one was burning of human waste, it was burned with, ah, ah, diesel fuel, you know, ah, due to the texture of Vietnam ground and, ah, their sewer system around the base, ah, people defecated in drum, oil drums that were cut in two, you know, and you make two pots out of one, you know, you imagine cutting in two and then turning them up and then taking, cutting handles out with a, a settling torch.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: After they were filled, you would take, ah, d, ah, diesel fuel and a two-by-four or a big stick and burn 15, 20 cans of that stuff. I used to pyramid it, you know, to kill it all off and stir it for a couple of hours and breathe all that stuff and, you know ...

JH: Culture shock.

RS: Yeah. And, ah, or you were put on KP, ah, or number two, you put on some type of detail. Ah, I was there four days. Ah, I told the sergeant that, ah, I lost my card. I left my card in my, ah, you know, gear where this building I was staying in, this shack, and he said, you know, always have it on you, go back and get it. Of course, ah, I didn't, you

know. I just got back there and there was some guys back there, you know, just sitting around playing cards and talking, and I didn't go back and the guy didn't know me from Adam. You know, he just forgot about me, so I didn't go back, you know, like, ah, and be a good guy and, ah, report and have to burn about 15 cans of crap. Ah, we got a chance to take a shower, oh, by the way, anyone interested in taking a shower, we got water in, what that means is: you've got, ah, ah, big canisters overhead and they fill it full of cold water and you go down and s, seal, ah, it's a sh, it's an open shower, essentially a little bit of tin around. (Ah huh.) You can't be modest around these people because, ah, a lot of the native Vietnamese would, ah, go to the call of nature right out in open field or by roadside, you know, or you see people running around naked, ah, mothers, ah, breast-feeding their babies, ah, some, you know, you're the point where nudity, there's no room for being modest. You're in the Army, ah, the guys at the hospitals, you know, you got nurses, and females and, you know, running around, that's nothing unusual in the service.

JH: Right.

RS: I found that out to be exposed to females, you know, in the nude. That's just part of the game. If you're around, you know, if you got a, ah, in the service and you have women that are doctors and their specialty is something and that's the only ones available, then by golly, you're gonna see a

female, ah, gastrointernologist, or a urinologist or, you know, what have you. (Ah huh.) Ah, ...

JH: So you were here for four days.

RS: Four days and then the fourth day they called my name, you know, "Sanford, Roger L.," you know, so-and-so, so we reported that morning, we got on a duce and a half, ah, about six of 'em, we were, we were on a convoy, in front of us was an armor personnel carrier, it had a front door and a back door. I'm using a little bit of CB lingo. Front door was an armor personnel carrier, behind us was an armor personnel carrier. Now an armor personnel carrier is a t, is a track vehicle, usually armed with a 5th caliber machine gun, ah, can withstand machine gun fire itself, ah, but you get something like a 20 millimeter cannon or R, or an RPG, then they'll just take it out every time, you know, just eat it up. But I believe it's about a three-quarters of an inch thick. (Ah huh.) Something like that. Ah, we drove for several hours and got to a place called Bearcat. Bearcat was a base camp, was, at that time, was, ah, essentially for all practical purposes, was base camp and headquarters for the 9th Infantry Division. Fact, when we reported in there was a nice big sign with the, ah, ah, 9th Division Insignia, you know, it says, welcome to the, it says, "Welcome to the 9th Infantry Division." It was made up, ah, at that time, Bearcat was not that big, you're looking at Oct, October of 67. Ah, I don't know how many men were there. You had, ah,

a lot of 9th Division there, you had some other units, you know. Thais (Ah huh) from Thailand, you had some ARVNs, Koreans. I remember seeing quite a few Thai soldiers.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: There I went through the 9th Infantry Division's old reliable academy. Bear in mind that was the nickname of the 9th Division of, ah, the old reliables, because World War II they gained that, ah, nickname because they were reliable and they always said, you know, there's the 9th Division, they're the old reliables, you can always rely on them. (Ah huh.) Well, they had a heck of a combat record in World War II and, ah, they received a heck of a combat record in Vietnam. They received several pres, you know, Presidential Unit Citations, in fact, the unit I was in, we received a Presidential Unit Citation. We, what the, the academy consisted of, ah, was about, ah, a week and a half of intensive combat training and tactics. And you were doing it OKT on the job. Ah, during the day, ah, you were, ah, receiving training on, you know, how to fire every, about every weapon, M-60, 50 caliber machine gun, ah, your M-16, how to repair it, ah, the latest lubricates and stuff that was just coming in from the states, had a new lubricate that just arrived. It would look like, ah, it was almost, ah, well, it looked like, ah, vaseline but liquid state, petroleum jelly, ah, a lot of guys had another word for it but I won't go into that, didn't resemble this but, ah,

we'll save that. Maybe some, someone else will bring that out. [JH laughs] Ah, latest devices, starlight scopes, ah, before I, let me go back to something I wanted to bring out, when I was back in Ben Wau at the old reliable academy, I might add that, ah, one of the details, I believe it was the second day they did nail me for a detail and that night I got a shower but I noticed all these bags, you know, ah, duffle bags, (Ah huh.) you know, just h, hundreds of them, just in a big pile and there were scattered of them been plundered, stuff was all out, you know, letters, ah, personal belongings and I noticed this, I vividly remember this picture of a, of a naked black female, sort of obese, you know, it says hon when you get home, ah, you know, I'm waiting for you, you know, or something like that. And I was asking, ah, a sergeant, and I said, "Sergeant, what is this? This here is a personal belonging." And he said, "Hey man, all these guys here have been s, been killed, you know, and you see that over there, that's the grave registration and do you see that way over there, that's the tom street mortuary in that general vacinity."

JH: Ah huh.

RS: And I said, gee whiz, there are, look, you know, there, put all their belongings in there. Some people ... of course the Vietnamese people plundered, a few of them, ah, GIs, I guess, you know, knocking them around but there were literally hundreds of duffle bags, ah, boots, ah, bloody, ah, paraphenailia, you know, and stuff that was, ah, no

weapons or anything of real value, just personal belongings that were there ...

JH: That stuff was all being scavenged and ...

RS: Well, yeah. It was just a big pile of ... maybe a hundred or a hundred and twelve, hundred and fifteen bags of stuff, they either AWOL bags, laundry bags, or your duffle bags full. I remember this particular one they dumped it out and, let me give you a idea, there was a couple of picture, nude pictures of his wife, some letters, ah, ah, a, a package from home, you know, halfway open, ah, trinkets, you know, things you'd wear, like a chain around your neck and this guy had been killed and they just, dump, you know, load all your stuff up and then they take it there and of course, ah, I assume that, ah, they didn't intend for anyone to get into it eventually later someone in gr, in grave registration's gonna go through there and send the personal effects back. If in fact they even do that. I don't know if they're, you know, ah, were liable to do that or not. But I wanted to bring that up. That right there got people thinking. You know what I mean, hey man, you know, what in the world, you know, ah, I have a feeling that we're on a big round up of cattle and that we're just starting, you know, before we get to the slaughteryards in Chicago, you know. We're out west on some open, you know, plain or something like that. After we finished the training, ah, we went on a ambush patrol. Ah, it was about 7 miles, ah, we

loaded on choppers, you know, Hueys (Ah huh.) and there were so many. Six, seven, eight, with comfort on each one and, you know, we choppered out at, t, that's the first time I, ah, had ever been on a chopper and funny sensation, you know, the noise and the vibration and the movement and, ah, we went on a patrol and we were given instructions when we got to the LZ, landing zone, ah, we're gonna hover over, you know, so far, jump off, you're gonna, the skids on the side of it, ah, you know, don't get tangled up in those, kick off from them, jump, go over to the bush line and don't, and take cover until the choppers leave, all of them or 'til you're ordered to. All of a sudden, ah, we're out there, we land, we dis-embark, we jump, we go to the weeds, and the hottest, unbelievable, you know, we got our full gear, we got our, you know, suspenders, canteens, sea rations, helmet, flack vest, ah, ruck sack, ah, I had, ah, but usually a lot of the guys that consumed a lot of water, carried anywhere from five, six, seven, eight canteens of water on 'em in plastic c, plastic durable canteens. Ah, I had about three or four and, ah, I went to the b, to the brushline and laid there probably for about 40 minutes, all of a sudden a guy came out and there's your squad leader and the radio op, operator, ah, guy, you know, went walking along, got everyone together. I don't know how many's on this patrol, probably thirty-some guys on the patrol. We met in this, ah, wooded area and the guy put out guards, and he was a first lieutenant and, ah, then we had our platoon sergeant,

which is sergeant first class, and he, what we're gonna do, we're gonna go on a two-day mission and we you know, went over our map and he gave off orders, and he said, you Sanford, you're gonna walk flank. What flank is, you got a point man flank you're going to go to the left or the right.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: And got the point man out front and we're going through this rubber plantation, he gave the orders, you know, we're gonna go through a rubber plantation, open ground, and rubber plantation, then we're going through this, ah, heavily, ah, area with vegetation, ah, then we'll come out of that, we're coming to a hamlet, ah, we're gonna stay near that hamlet, ah, for safety reasons, you know, ah, went through the plantation and the guy, sergeant said, you don't have to worry about anything and I said why and he said there's little kids, Vietnamese out there, and, ah, ah, and I said what do you mean we don't have to worry about anything and he said, well, if the enemy's out here you wouldn't find the kids, you know, just like, ah, it's a dead giveaway, ah, VC might be their dads, or brothers, or what-have-you, ah, we didn't need to worry about, ah, anything. Nothing really happened except I, a couple of guys were overcome by heat, ah, we had one guy that hurt himself and I don't know what happened but I, the, the radio operator, they called in a dust-off, ah, I was too far in front, you know, walking, but I could see a chopper, you know, these guys were clearing,

ah, was enough, just enough room for, well, for the chopper to come in. And they were cutting some surrounding brush, you know, the ones that were experienced and I, they said something about the Jap, you know, he cut himself, or, ah, something happened to his leg, or he became ill. But anyhow he brought a dust-off, ah, a chopper, dust-out, ah, dust-off, medivac, you know, has a big, ah, cross, red cross on the front of it.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Underneath and the sides, some of them vary what service. They got him. Ah, within a couple of hours, I was out of water, you know, just, ah, dying of thirst, ah, I took, ah, I had that military boxer underwear, you know, I still wear boxer underwear, but this, ah, the white military stuff was just, just like rolled up, all the way up, just down like a, a bikini. A small bikini isn't that hot. Now it was soaking wet and I had to stop out there, drop my pants, take my bayonet out, and cut the underwear off and throw it away.

JH: This is your first, first day out?

RS: Yeah. Ah, first evening, first day and that night, we, ah, set up for the night and, ah, we had to put the claymore, we had to put trip flares out, it's a device if you trip it, it t, throws a flare. Then we put claymore mines, claymore mine is a device about the size of that book, it's about like this, it's about that thick, you put it out, it's got little stands on it, it's got wire, you bring it back. You can detonate it two ways: you can detonate it by explosive

cap or electrical charge. Well, in this case we brought the wire, little thin wire, you know, back, I don't kn, a hundred and some feet, or maybe 75 feet, 50 feet, and you got this little hand detonator, say you got some movement or activity, something trips those trip flares, and you're gonna get some action, you just squeeze off those claymores all round and it blows people away. They, it throws out a, 200 little ball bearings. And it's a devastating weapon. It'll bring quite a, [laughs] a few people down. Ah, we didn't see anything, nothing happened except we, over the radio, ah, in our platoon, sergeant got orders that we're being pursued so we got order that we were to very quietly go down and get the claymores, and just get the claymores. You know, we don't worry about the trip flares, we just want the weapons, you underst, you know.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: We got the weapons and we moved during the night. You know, ragtag circus, you know, ah, bumping into things, getting jabbed, you know, with sticks, and, ah, cut on the, we got certain weeds over there that'll cut you like a razor blade, you know, like paper sometimes will cut you when you run your hand down a piece of paper or, ah, a piece of grass. They had elephant grass over there. That, I mean to tell you, man, it'd cut you wide open.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: So we moved and the guy, ah, we, we heard we were being pursued by, ah, an NVA unit, North Vietnamese Army, not

Vietcong, it would actually hit you, kick, ah, you know, would kick you in the rear. And would keep kicking you, know what I mean?

JH: Right.

RS: So what did we do? We moved, we stopped and the lieutenant got on the radio or, ah, explicitly remember hearing him say that we'll go into the hamlet or the village. We went into that hamlet and village and we went into a temple or a shrine. Ah, it was made out of cement, mortar, and the main body of the outfit got it, and you know, stayed in the temple, ah, the building, ah, which had open front, you know, no windows.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: And then they put us out in front, a few of us all around it as guards, you know. With putting the claymores back out and, ah, this was ear, it was getting ab, to be about 2:30, 3 o'clock, still dark out and all of a sudden, here comes a guy down the village with a torch. If you're out after night, you know, you gotta burn th, you know, the Vietnamese have gotta burn torches or someone's gonna throw about twenty rounds in him. You know what I mean?

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: So he's, this guy's going down with a bicycle down the middle of the road with a torch and got a couple of guys start to open up on him, you know, and the guy says no, you know, that's, that means they're okay, you know, that, burn

the torch and they were just seeing what was going on. Ah, [pause] and then we went, ah, all day the next day, ah, on patrol and then that evening went back to str, to an area and, ah, picked up by choppers, take 'em back in to Bear Cat, landed, went back to some, what they call hooches or buildings. They're made out of tin and wood and screen and everyone got to take a shower, an, you know, and sit and talk and discussed everything and, ah, you know, main thing is, I th, if I ever remember one thing and I, I recall it to this day is a guy said, ah, I believe it was the platoon sergeant, sergeant first class, said can you get, can anyone here believe their ear? And, you know, people were saying what in the hell am I doing here? You know, what is this all about? You know. It's hot, it's dirty, it's dangerous, it's filthy, you know, I'm afraid, ah, it's crazy. What am I doing over here, you know. I don't even know why I'm over here, I don't even know what it's about, no one explained to me anything. A short two months, man, I was, ah, you know, going to s, downtown Huntington and, ah, watching, ah, you know, Gone With the Wind for the ninth time.

JH: Mmm, yeah. I'm glad you brought that up because, ah, that's one thing I'm particularly interested in is the shock in say, going from Huntington to, to where you were at that time and, and you're in combat zone for a solid year, isn't that right?

RS: Right.

JH: Except you, I guess you had a few leaves.

RS: Yeah, ah, most people in the combat units, ah, infantry units and direct combat support were given R & R's. Well, they can't give a guy, who in the world, ah, if you're in Vong Towl would want to go on R & R because that's on the South China Sea and it, it was an R, in-country R & R center.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Or why would some guy in Saigon living in a, ah, ah, a hotel or a motel, you know, with swimming pool, tennis courts, and sauna, want to go on R & R, when, you know, ah, but we were, ah, you know, we were the infantry, ah, direct combat, ah, direct combat support, and we lived, ah, we had to live like, ah, you know, a lot of times, ah, in po, areas and conditions that we'd rather not. But that was part, you know, that was part of our mission. Bear in mind that essentially two things always was in back of my mind. Number one was fear and number two was survival. I think you'll, when you be talking with these interviews they progress, these oral histories, ah, about fear and survival. The name of the game is survive.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: You go home. I want to go home to my mother and father. I want to go home to my wife. I want to go home so I can walk in the autumn out in the woods, you know what I mean? I want to go home so I can do this, ah, fear was a constant, fear. [end of tape one, begin tape 2 side 1] Ah, Vietnam

being different from World War II, ah, you're dealing with, ah, essentially a closed in, h, terrain. What I mean by that is, ah, dense jungle.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Ah, mixed geographical terrains and regions, highlands, the delta, the coast. World War II in the European theatre, open land, you know, the fact they trained World War II soldiers up Canaan Valley because it resembled Germany, they trained a lot of people up there for, for, ah, European duty. Ah, you're dealing with an enemy Vietnam, you're dealing with the NVA, that's North Vietnamese Army, you're dealing with the Vietcong, you're dealing with the National Liberation Front, you're dealing with, ah, what I con, considered was, ah, almost like partisans, you know, they really, they didn't have anything to do with either three of those previously mentioned organizations, but it got to the point where if you came through and killed a couple of their chickens or threw about ten rounds in a water buffalo, or, an, enticed a 13, 12, 13 year old daughter to have sex, then they became very bitter at that moment and they would try to do, you know, be hostile for a few hours which might and eventually enough of this would initiate them into, you know, into one of these organizations. That's what you're dealing with. Ah ...

JH: I've heard the statement that, ah, it seemed like in the, in parts of the countryside in the daytime, the, the land

belonged to, to you, to the American forces, but at night it belonged to the Vietcong.

RS: That's very true. Ah, after night it was, ah, Charlie's country. When the sun went down, ah, Charlie came out. Charlie being the enemy. Primarily referred to the Vietcong. Ah, well luckily for us, working in the delta, we dealt, we ran up against primarily the Vietcong, ah, ah, the units up north, ah, that was, ah, NVA country, North Vietnamese Army, which was a well-trained highly, ah, organized army, not taking, ah, discredit from the Vietcong, they were very good. They were more, you know, more like a rebel force. Ah, let's go back to the American Civil War. You got the Union Army going up against a Confederate Army, it was, you know, ill-trained and ill-equipped but they fought very, very well because they had good leadership. You know, the Union couldn't no way match the leadership of the Confederates' ...

JH: And they knew the turf.

RS: Generals. And, ah, yeah. But at night it was, ah, Charlie's country. Let's sort of speed things up and maybe try to condense this because we'll be here all, you know, this thing could take 5 or 6 hours.

JH: Yeah, I was just thinking,

RS: Big adjustment, ah,

JH: Now you'd been in a combat zone for a year and suddenly, you're on your way home, I mean, that's, that seems, ah,

RS: Well, that's just about, ah, well, I think you can adapt to that easier or more readily than going over there, you know you're coming home, ah, I think the biggest problem and I'll just touch on it now and I'll touch on it when ever we conclude this oral history, is, ah, coming back and being so, ah, jumpy. You know and what I mean by jumpy, I mean just jumpy. I mean, ah, ah, I know of all the controversy today about post traumatic stress, ah, disorder, neurosis, I believe this is, ah, for a lot of soldiers, was just, beginning of it was just being nervous. (Ah huh.) You know, have constant movement, I mean, ah, let's look at it this way, some people are different, just personalities. Some people like that stuff. They've had three or what, they had guys who had five, five tours of duty in Vietnam, all combat, decorated, ah, wounded 8 or 9, 10, 12, 15 times, given every award in the world, and loved it.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Loved it. And they just and they're mercenaries today. They love it. But you have people that are afraid of that stuff, ah, they don't have that guardian angel syndrome, where they feel like they're being watched over by a supreme being or, you know, a G, by God.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: Ah, a lot of people were very afraid of death and they're afraid of being injured. A lot of them worry about losing their sight, about losing a limb, ah, ah, losing their life,

ah, or leaving their friends. A lot of them suffers much to see a good friend injured or lose their eyesight. Ah, I had a good friend that was over in Vietnam, ah, that first day on patrol he got his eyes shot out.

JH: Jimmy Walker?

RS: Yeah. Sure did. And he was in ninth division.

JH: I knew Jimmy.

RS: Yeah, ah, his, in his case, ah, they'd been sniped at by Vietcong and they sat down and the sergeant said that's all right, light up, and he said he sat down on a stump or something and he felt a real hot, you know, he didn't know wh, it just, he knew he was alive yet he didn't. He got hit, ah, you know, right in the, behind the superorbital rim of the eye, just, ah, just tramatic anucleation above the eyes and the bridge of his nose. Gives you an idea see what I mean ...

JH: You and Jimmy were probably in the same class in high school.

RS: Nah, he was a year, ah, you see Jimmy, if I'm not mistaken, was ...

JH: Was a year behind you?

RS: Two years or one year behind me. Ah, yeah, I knew Jimmy.

JH: He lived down in the west end too.

RS: Yeah. I knew, ah, a lot of guys from the, that socio-economic stratum in American society were used in Vietnam.

You mentioned that, I read General Westmoreland's book A Soldier Reports

JH: Ah huh.

RS: And he openly admits that, ah, in his book, Westmoreland's book, he said, you know, I was proud to lead a, ah, a gallant group of men who, you know, were from the working class stratum of American society. At that time, ah, General Ridgeway in his book The Korean War came out and said, in essence, essentially the same words. That he led a, you know, in the Korean War, General Ridgeway led a working class, you know, fighting force. Now I mean by essentially, you're gonna have the people that are career, military and West Point, you know, the academies and, you know, ah, that's a part of their life but as far, I mean, as first-year enlistee or inductee, ah, they're only gonna serve the one year, it was essentially ...

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: And, ah, a, if I had to put in a, one of the socio-economic strata, I would have to say it would be the lower-middle class. That'd be my best estimation of where would be the lower-middle, if you're using the sets you know they have the, lower-lower, ah, upper-lower, you know, lower-middle, upper-upper, what have you, it's been a while since sociology. Ah, it was, living in the West End of Huntington, but in a nice home, but in, a lot of people volunteered or, ah, were, ah, drafted, ah, we lost a lot of

my neighbors, and a lot of people in that general area, you know, I didn't know Jimmy that well, but I knew, you know, he was a west end, from the baseball days.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: And, ah, playing baseball, and, ah, going to, to high school, ah, junior high school with several of the guys and I would say within a one mile square radius where I lived, ah, were either killed or wounded in Vietnam. And a lot of them served, ah, ...

JH: Did you know the Major boys? Tom and Lefty Major ...

RS: Well, ah, sounds familiar, the names are familiar.

JH: I think there were three brothers. Ah, Lefty was, he'd been a good bit older. I think he was probably, he'd be about 45 now, I guess.

RS: Oh ...

JH: Wh, where is Jimmy now? Is he in Huntington?

RS: He's in Barboursville.

JH: He is?

RS: Yeah. I called, he, we corresponded, ah, he called me one evening, ah, I ran into him at the Governor's Mansion on Veteran's Day last year.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: Ah, I was presented an award by the Vietnam Veterans, ah, West Virginia State Council and was talking and he, you know, he said who are you and I, you know, I said, identified myself, and he said, well, gee whiz, you know,

why don't you, you know, I know you and you know me and he called me a couple of times and that's the last. But we just, you know, we were talking about, ah, ah, several friends of ours that we knew that were in the same division or in the same neighborhood or both that were killed or severely wounded. Talk about the Major boys, now there was, ah, talk about one I believe was killed over there, in Vietnam one of the first casualties.

JH: I'm not really sure, ah, I, I think there were three Major boys all together. I knew two of them, I didn't know the middle one.

RS: There were, ah, a couple of guys, ah, they used to box. I don't know their name, last name was Major or not. He was, ah, one of the first, ah, American service men, let alone a West Virginian, you know, to be killed, ah, in Vietnam. Ah, I believe like in World War II and Korea, one of the first casualties in both of those wars as in Vietnam was a West Virginian.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: I've got, ah, I had some, some data on it from the Ashland Gazette, you know, on the casualties in Vietnam from West Virginia and the book was updated in, ah, August of '69, and the casualties, the list, it was about, ah, the book was about three-quarters of an inch thick. And that was only up to the latter, ah, part of '69. You can imagine how thick it was at, after, you know, up to the, when, till the war ended. Ah, ...

JH: Now you, you mention, I guess t, to encapsulate that what you said that basically the guys on the line, it, it, ah, there was a working class, working class war in that sense.

RS: Yeah. Essentially it was, ah, even the, the service personnel per se in the entire war, ah, especially during the heavy years of, ah, you know, military draft when they were drafting or people were enlisting, ah, or from the, you know, lower socio-economic stratum of our society or didn't have the influence or capability to get out of military service.

JH: And had, I would assume, basically the general motivations that you mentioned earlier. Patriotic, ...

RS: Oh yeah.

JH: A desire for adventure, ...

RS: Absolutely.

JH: Ah, perhaps didn't believe that ...

RS: Your values.

JH: it'd help them to a better economic status.

RS: Exactly, having a veteran's status, ah, your morals and values and the family, the family, as defined in sociological terms. You know, that, you know, you're gonna serve and it's patriotic and I don't care what you're over there doing, if they, and if Washington, D.C. says do it, and if it's A-Okay, and the President says do it, and the generals say do it, by golly you're gonna do it. Just like everyone knows the sheriff of, ah, Logan County has always

been good and honest just like the governor of the State of West Virginia and the President's of the United States, you know what I mean, and, ah, all that, not all theologians, and everything's just beautiful, you know, and ev, you're, you're gonna do it. Ah, when your, your dad served in World War II and, ah, you, you know, and we, just be, ah, we can't, ah, well, you just don't even come up those, you know, pinko commie thoughts that you're not going to serve in the service, you know, ah, ...

JH: I know of course naturally you can, you can only speak for yourself, of course, but you have a lot of contact with, with veterans and the guys when, when you were over there. Was there a shift in those feelings and would you say generally there was or was there perhaps in yours or anybody you knew, ah, ...

RS: Ah, ...

JH: Has that carried on to today?

RS: Well, my main thing when I got over there, ah, and started coming under enemy fire, started seeing trauma, and, ah, a lot of, ah, [pause] just undescrivable things was survival. Three hundred and sixty-five days. Ah, there were times, you were not always out in the field, you were not always, ah, back at the base camps, and you were not always in a life-threatening situation but let me tell you just one good episode. You know, just one time, if they were to take you over there and fly you over and land and take you out and

Let you get exposed to this once, whatever it may be, you know, direct, ah, firefight, seeing people killed, ah, seeing people, ah, hurt, ah, seeing people scared to death you look at their, their eyes and their, just, happen, just look at their expressions on their face, you know, like a, ah, and then just take you home and fly you home and say they just wanted you to experience it once. You know, that would always be on your mind.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: You know, you would say gee whiz, it's horrible, ah, you know, this is nightmarish, you know. Gee whiz, ah, ah, this could be very detrimental to someone's mental health, you know, providing he wasn't wounded, maybe losing a, ah, his eyes or, ah, traumatic amputation of the limbs, ah, we had guys that, ah, lost, ah, both legs, penis, scrotum, complete, ah, amputation, traumatic, you know, I mean not surgically removed but I mean ...

JH: Right.

RS: Complete due to shell fragments or explosive devises, you know, complete. Can you imagine coming home and not having a, you know, just have a cavity back there? You have no penis, no scrotum, no legs, but I, you know, I knew guys who came back in that condition. Ah, lose your eyesight, lose a, lose your face, ah, lose an arm, ah, we've had 'em, ah, well, when I working as a service officer, we had a guy who lost both legs and both arms.

JH: And lived?

RS: And lived, yeah. I didn't, I, I didn't, ah, see the guys in the flesh but I've seen his records. Yeah, and I delved in records in World War II, ah, you know, ah, where a guy got hit, ah, it was an 88 shell, exploded and rebounded in his face and he had thirty reconstructive surgeries and I saw pictures, ah, that's when the World War II, the Department of Defense, and the guy, thirty reconstructive surgeries looked like Frankenstein. You know, I don't see how the guy lived but, ah, you know, the same, same happened, that's what happens, unfortunately, in war. People get hurt, ah, ah, the bitter animosity, ah, no, I, I, I'm not into football, I don't, you know, ah, football, big deal, basketball, big deal, ah, ah, I've seen people win and they're really good and they won because they survived. And, you know, what do they throw a couple of medals on them or send the parents, you know, we're sorry but the Secretary of the, you know, Defense is sorry to inform you that, you know, your son or daughter, ah, there were nine, at least nine, ah, women, female military personnel were killed in action in Vietnam. Yeah, but I'm, ah, just not, you know, ah, sports, ah, I don't know, they give too much recognition, that's trouble. You know, I don't see where they hug and all the he's great and, ah, she's great and I don't even know the girl but I've got so sick of seeing this Mary Lou Retton. [JH laughs] You know, that turned me off because I said you don't know Mary Lou Retton, you know, I

said you don't know Roy L. Rainy. Let me tell you about Roy L. Rainy.

JH: Okay.

RS: Roy L Rainy wa, was my neighbor. He was sent to ninth division after I got back. Roy came over to me when I got back and said Rog, you got back from Vietnam, I got orders to go, should I go? You know, and I was washing my '67 Pontiac, ah, GTL convertable and he came out and I, I about, and I said, you know, "No, I wouldn't go. I know where you're going to an infantry unit," ah, you know, he, he's the one that, ah, he left a wife that was pregnant, ah. Roy was over there about three months, had already been wounded 2 times, he'd been decorated for valor th, 3 times, what more do you expect out of a guy?

JH: Two months.

RS: Two and a half months. He's buried out at s, ah, and I went out and viewed his grave first time, ah, in all these years, ah, he was killed, ah, June 69, about the sixth of June, and, ah, I went over, and he, he was decorated, ah, with bronze star twice for valor, he was decorated with the Army Combination metal once for valor, and he was wounded twice, this is a period of three months, can you imagine the hell that man went through? Finally he got killed, yeah, he was shot, ah, drilled right through the chest. They brought him home, ah, his wife had the baby and the, there was a big story on it in the paper. They put the medals on the little

baby, you know, and he, you know, its diaper and its little shirt and its got all the medals and ribbons hanging down and you got a guy who was just a average Joe Blow, you know, average GI Joe, using World War II terminology, and no one knows about, gets no glory, goes over there and does something, Man, that they should, you know, he goes out and fights and you imagine the hell that man went through in three months to get those, three decorations for valor, and wounded twice? What more do you want? You know, but no, if he'd stayed if he'd kept on going, I don't know, he'd be wounded nine times, and decorated, he got, you know, one, did he eventually get it or what happens. Ah, just so happens he got in a unit that was doing some heavy fighting, they were taking on some heavy units, they were suffering h, heavy casualties and he was killed. I mean, your luck's gonna run out. So that's why I'm saying about survival thing; I did things to keep from going out in the field because I wanted to come home.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: You know. I have burned human excretion, you know, I've built bunkers, I've rode shotgun, that's like security, you know, t, ah, identified bodies, you know what I mean. Ah, I just tried to utilize, utilize everyday. Everyday was you gotta figure out, what am I gonna do. If things get too bad, then I'll go on R & R, and not come back.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: People, people did that you know.

JH: Sure.

RS: Go to the Hawaiian Islands, man, the guy, and just not the, i, from officers on down, you know. When you're in a war, and you're a police action and you're going up against someone, you're playing these political games, and it's a limited police action, ah, it, let's, let's, let's forget about is the war right or wrong, or should we be over there. If you're gonna even take on, ah, let's use an analogy, ah, a disease that call, that calls for antibiotics, that calls for so many units, and you only use so much, you're not gonna knock it out and it's gonna reoccur, right? If you're not gonna go all out, as the Russians did when they took Berlin, or when the German's blitz freaked into Poland, ah, ah, or when Sherman marched through at Georgia to the coast, right, then you're gonna end up what we did in Vietnam and what we should have learned, ah, a lesson in Korea, but Korea only lasted a short time compared to that roughly nine and half years in Vietnam. You're gonna, you're gonna learn a lesson that these people are, ah, they had their political ways of thinking, we have our political ways of thinking, they have their politicians, we have our politicians, they have their military leaders, like General Giap, G-I-A-P, ah, you got Mao in China, you got Ohl. We've got our people, President Johnson, we got Westmoreland, you've got, ah, ah, Colonel, ah, Patton, Jr. (Right.) At that time, ah, you got people that loved this stuff. They loved it, and I, you know, I, I, you know, and I didn't. I wanted, you know, and

I did whatever I, I had to do. You know, if it was combat support, I worked in it, I had direct combat, I was in a combat reactionary team. Ah, you know, I've been around some people that were good. We were lucky, everything just fell in place, and, you know, you were like on Interstate 64 the day before or day after a big disaster. You know, tractor trailer collides, ah, day after you're there or the day before you're there. The day before they can have a huge wreck and people are killed, they clean it up, you know, ah, wash the road off and you didn't even know what happened. Transpired, right? That's the way you got to look at that, it's survival, name of the game, you survive, you got home, but hell, ever ask me to do it again, you know, and I'll tell you exactly, and you're free to expose this, I, I think [coughs], excuse me, and I'm saying this as a historian that this is the biggest disaster, ah, it was a period of almost insanity, ah, if you're going to fight a war, you're going to fight it s, either to win or to get out. You make it known your objectives and your reasons for being there, and war is hell, you know, there's no limits to what you're gonna do to win the war. When they asked President Truman about dropping the atomic bomb, President Truman said, "How many lives w, will have been saved?," and they said, you know, "half a million, roughly, Mr. President, and that's wounded and killed." Truman said, "One's too many," you know, "let's go ahead with it," you know, "I'll, I'll live with it" And, ah, that's what y,

you're dealing at, war is a, hopefully, we can, we can avoid these wars. Ah, ah, why Vietnam? Thirty-three percent of the world is at war now. They're at war in Chad, they're at war, at war in South Africa, you're at war in Ireland, you're at war in, ah, South America, or Central America, ah, why Vietnam? I, I don't know, it's, ah, someone, some gullible Texas good ol' boy, President Johnson, and some, ah, extremely patriotic but paranoid general thought if we didn't stop in Vietnam there was going to be a complete takeover of Southeast Asia with communism. And that gullible good ol' Texas, ah, president went right along with it and didn't question a few of the military leaders and was influenced by Congress and Congress was influenced by lobbyists and special interest groups who wanted the war to continue because they were making billions. Now, you say, you've said this before, now defend what I mean by billions. During the Vietnam War, a hundred and seventy-five billion dollars was made on the war. I have, ah, essentially, a hundred and seventy-five billion dollars was made on the war so it was a money making proposition. I'll make the money, it's too bad, you know, give, give the widow or wife the ten thousand dollars SGLI insurance and, but we're making money on it.

JH: So the interest was in keeping the war going?

RS: Oh, absolutely! I, I knew people that were involved in businesses and even heard it come direct from a guys mouth who said, "I hate to see the war end because I'm making money," you know, we're making money, our company is making

money, ah, manufacturing munitions for, ah, the Federal Government. Now this is in Charles Town, Indiana, it's across the river from Louisville, you know, guy said that federal people were coming down, ah, and his company was wining and dining the federal people, you know, with, ah, spend ten thousand on them, but get that ten million dollar contract. Spend twenty thousand on them, you know, give 'em five thousand, go out and buy them a 'vette. Go out and buy the guy a 'vette, you know, to get our contract. You know, we're at war, man, we're gonna stop this anti, ah, religious, pinko, ah, homosexual Communist, ah, you know, spread. You know what they'll do to you if they capture you, man. You know, it's horrible when those, you know, when they're going to capture us and overthrow this country. They're going to put us all in concentration camps, you know, and they're gonna burn of all our churches, and religious institutions, and they're gonna, you know, castrate all the men, it, it's horrible, you know, they're, and then they're gonna, ah, yeah, that's what a lot of people actually envisioned w, what would happen, ah, the Red Scare, ah, the only thing I can say is if, my God, if we're that gullible, and that's our leadership, what is in the future if this thing, is it, can the Holocaust happen again?

JH: Do you think?

RS: Can Vietnam happen again? The answer to both of them? Yes, the Holocaust will happen as soon as the people, you know, will let it happen. [end of side 1, tape 2; begin side 2]
Vietnam will happen again just as soon as we let the

leadership in there that becomes so powerful and frightened and paranoid and Congress becomes so permissive and that it becomes so, ah, financially, ah, significant to our economy or maybe not significant almost, ah, essential, you know, to have a, an economy that prospers during war times. What brought us out of the Depression? What essentially really brought us out of the Depression in the 1930s was World War II. What brought the other capitalistic world, ah, countries, England out of World War II, ah, excuse me, out of the Depression, World War II. What made Germany come out of a Depression was building an army, National Socialism, you know, control, government controlled the economy and, ah, an ideology that is militaristic.

JH: Do you think, Roger, that the American people during the Vietnam and this, this includes a big cross-section, it includes the, ah, the peace movement, this campus movement, ah, you know, the man on the street, do you think they had any idea of, of what it was like to be over there, and, and how you guys did feel? Do you think they identified with that at all or do you think that was something they blocked out, something they didn't want to hear, something they couldn't understand?

RS: Ah, yes.

JH: Was there any communication there at all?

RS: Yeah, I, I essentially believe that a lot of people were acting and protesting out of their, out of this, of a fear, of a phobia. Well, I can't say you'd call it a phobia, a

phobia is an unreal fear. Let me, ah, retract that statement, a real fear of going over themselves, you know, and this was, ah, a, ah, a ah, a way where they could protest and not be guilty in doing it. You know, by not going it's like hey, I'm afraid in going over to Canada or just refusing or something like that. This is a way where you're really through almost, ah, a radical means, or, ah, a physical means, you know, that you're saying, no, I'm afraid, you know, and I'm not gonna go. Now there, I, I'm not a coward, I'll fight you in the campuses of, ah, of Ohio University, which was the little Berkeley of, ah, you know, during the war era was called the little Berkeley, you know, of the Eastern Seaboard. Ah, but a lot of them were actually upset with the, ah, system. A lot of it was, ah, communist inspired.

JH: Do you think that ...

RS: Although ...

JH: Do you think that they had any idea of what, for instance when, when the guys came back, do y, do you think the population here knew that, that, for instance, that you guys felt an, and I may be using too strong a word, that you felt like you'd been betrayed and would you say that a, that's the way you might have felt when you were over there, that essentially you'd been betrayed by the government, ah, munitions makers, whoever and if you felt that way do you think the American people knew that you felt that way? That they had any idea?

RS: Not at that, not at that time. All this came by on a, ah, ah, delayed, was like delayed discovery. You know, you have an education, psy, psychology, you had guide, you know, guided discovery and all that. This was delayed discovery or, ah, ah, a delayed, ah, awareness that a lot of people just like this post-traumatic stress disorder or neurosis is, it can come, can surface years later due to thinking, and you know, ah, nightmares, and what happened. Ah, it took, there was so much turmoil and so much strife that even if you did say hey, you know, there's no unity, you know, there was no, there was nothing like, ah, until these groups starting coming up, you know, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, ah, Viet, ah, Americans Against the War, ah, you know, ah, different groups against the, the Vietnam War, ah, what really, it didn't come until later you had to be unified to see what you're thinking. How are you thinking? You know, what's everyone thinking about? You know what's the general c, c, ah, consensus of, ah, the Vietnam veteran or the college student or the parents who lost, ah, loved ones? A lot of them, was a lot of anger and animosity, a lot of them was a lot of, ah, patriotism an, and pride, you know, I've, I've seen movies where they've had a cross section in comments on this. A, at that time, I didn't really, ah, it was, it took years to get back and it was something like, it was a nightmare occurred and you didn't discuss it because

discussing it people didn't want to hear it, you didn't want to let people know, you know, hey, I'm a Vietnam veteran.

JH: Wouldn't people talk to you about the war?

RS: Ah, they were not interested in it. You know, I came back to Marshall in 1970, people were not interested about Vietnam. They had, unless they had, ah, a close relative that was there. History classes, I had one professor, history, wouldn't even touch on it. You know, he was just so upset about the, ah, ah, maybe it was a personal reason, he was so upset about the war that he, ah, he elaborated very little on it, you know. Ah, ...

JH: How about your old friends, your family, would they talk about it?

RS: There main thing was you made it home, you know, you're home, you made it, you got your year in, you know, it's all ob, an obligation, you didn't let your country down, you got veteran status, ah, gee whiz, that's gonna get you a lot, that veteran status. Ah, there's nothing wrong with you. You know, the, the neighbor's not gonna complain. You know, what happened, or, you know, and they can't deny you a job. At least you can get a job with the post office, you know, ah, somewhere if you have to move to New York City maybe out of 15,000 openings every week, ah, [chuckles] you'll get one. Ah, we, there was no unity to, ah, there was a lot of, of, ah, news coverage, you know, but you have to have an organizational structure to see how people feel, you know,

and to see if you can really voice again. You know, Vietnam veterans were in the closet for many years, ah, they were in the closet for many years with these emotional and drug problems. You know, guy says, hey man, you know, I've got a nervous problem, ah, you know, ah, gee, you know, I can't let people know that I have trouble sleeping at night and nervous during the day and I'm taking sleeping pills and I'm taking tranquilizers, and I'm taking anti-depressants. You know, it's, I'm not, ah, vi, I'm not gonna hurt anyone, I'm not, ah, ah, inappropriate. I might be neurotic as far as my behavior, but I'm not, ah, considered, ah, you know, harmful. But you can't let people know this and then all of a sudden, you know, people, this is c, I'm just re, re, ah, relaying to you discussions with people when I worked five and a half years as a counselor and, ah, Veteran's Service Officer and Representative. You know, ah, there's a cross-section of all, you know, different types of veterans, ah, unfortunately, ah, I think, ah, less than 20 percent of Vietnam veterans came back and went post secondary education. Which is ...

JH: Less than 20 percent?

RS: Ah, a, just about 20 percent. Now that's the ones who did not reach it prior to, you know, the service, and they came back (Right, ah huh.) and roughly, ah, about 20 percent only went past, ah, you know, post secondary. Ah, you know, you talk about Vietnam veterans going back and going to medical school, and going to law school or going back to graduate

school, or even getting a four-year degree, you're talking, you know, er, there's not that many that com, you know, that completed. Ah, due to the fact that they had a lot of problems. Let me give you some factual data. Ah, ah, close to 90,000 Vietnam veterans have been incarcerated. [pause]

JH: In, in jail, (Yeah.) they're in jail, you mean?

RS: County, state, federal. [pause] Over 50,000 have either committed suicide or have been in questionable death, ah, causing circumstances. Ah, you say, well give me an example and that, clarify it for the record, ah, guy has nine wrecks in one year driving at 140 miles an hour, you know, under the influence of barbiturates and alchohol, you know, and not wearing his glasses. You know, you say, you know, gee whiz, that's, ah, well, you know, ah, there's some question to that. When I say when he's driving with his back to the steering wheel then you some, then, then you start to question, you know, what's going on.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Over about 50 thousand Vietnam veterans have, ah, committed suicide. We get into this, ah, nervous problems or, ah, emotional problems caused by the war, ah, that goes, we really don't know, ah, how deep that is. It's been estimated there could be up to 400, 500 thousand veterans suffering with emotional problems. I'm not saying they're all characteristically, you know, the same symptomology, you know, I mean, they all act this way or look this way, you

know, it could be depression, it could be anxiety, it could be anger, it could be, ah, ah, avoidant type personality, ah, drug addiction, alcohol addiction, both, sexual, ah, hang-ups, ah, self-esteem problems, learning problems, ah, let's face it, if you got an anxiety problem, depressant problem, so awfully, it's very difficult to go to school, I mean, you try to take a couple of classes, try to study, and (Right.) you can't, you read two pages and they say what did you read and you say gee whiz, I remember one word in there, you know, what word was that and kill or danger or beware, you know, something that, ah, they can identify with. Ah, Vietnam veterans have been characteristically known or noted, use the proper word, ah, for unemployment problems, and drug problems. And you say, well, how does Vietnam, how do you interject drug problem an, or blame the war on that? Well, let's go back to the war itself, when, ah, how easy was it to obtain drugs in Vietnam or Southeast Asia or Thailand or Hong Kong? About as easy, probably ah, just about as easy for me to go downstairs to the second floor and find a men's room. Because you had the South Vietnamese Army selling it, you had the South Vietnamese Lieutenant General that was their, ah, Kingpin. You had the sergeant major of the United States Army, you know, the sergeant major's only one, the sergeant major, which is a top enlisted man in the United States Army that was caught with that, that group, you know, that, ah, dope ring. Ah, c, civilians sold it, GIs sold it, ah, marijuana, ah, so

potent, you know, that, ah, two or three draws, or drags or whatever, would almost put you under, like sodium pentathol. Heroin, it was so pure that you just, you know, now I've watched people do this, I didn't indulge in it myself. I've never used drugs, you know, it turns me, I just, you know, it's, it's, I don't, it just frightens me. But heroin so pure that, ah, the slightest little, you know, tip, snorting it or however would, you know, numb you for 6 to 8 hours. Ah, ...

JH: This was easily available?

RS: Just, ah, so easy they counterfitted marijuana, you could buy, ah, three or four cartons of Camels, ah, or Kool, a lot of Kools or Salems that South Vietnamese, our allies, manufactured, you know, Saigon or what have you. And, ah, three, four, ah, you know, carton of cigarettes that was just identical, you know, the whole works, stamp, the seal, the whole, but inside was, ah, marijuana. You know, ah, same thing, ah, opium, you know, you could buy cigarettes, their brand of cigarettes that was dusted in opium or dusted, ah, was in heroin. Ah, man, I didn't even need to worry about this, you know, ah, just cheap, ah, I went on, ah, R & R to Hong Kong after eleven months and, ah, you know, come up and try to sell us, ah, dope, what they call dope kits. You got a little bit of, ah, ah, like for ten bucks American or fifteen dollars American cash, you can get, you know, a little bit of heroin, a little bit of, ah,

opium, a little bit of, ah, you know, whatever, you know, maybe the grass to, to get in your system. You know what I mean, to smoke it, to get it into your lungs and gets in the blood system. But it was easy to, you know, everything was.

JH: Dope kits?

RS: Dope kits, dope kits. You didn't need a needle cause pure, you know, you talk about heroin that runs 90 to 96 percent pure. Why you need a needle and in the streets is the stuff that they have here is 4 to 6 percent pure. So you have to intravenously take it to get it in the blood. Do you understand?

JH: Ah huh.

RS: It's gotta get in the blood system. You know, you can take it, ah, and snort it. You can take it and put it in, ah, you know, ah, put it in your rectum, and it'll go right through the blood system, you know, be, ah, through osmosis, if you take it into the blood system.

JH: So was, just as an example, was, was the Veteran's Administration at all equipped, ah, to handle that? I mean, that, that seems to me a pretty big distinction between the Vietnamese, the Vietnam veteran and th, the veterans of previous American wars.

RS: Mmm. The Veteran's Administration is not equipped, ah, regionally to handle that type of problem, ah, ah, I don't know how to really, I don't know how you handle problems, I don't know how you handle, ah, someone that's been hooked

on, ah, hard drugs or hard narcotics or dope, ah, for years. I don't know if we really can cure them. Ah, as far as regionally, ah, the hospital here on Spring Valley Drive, they do not even have a psychiatric unit. Ah, you know, naturally you treat all behavioral, emotional, drug, alcohol problems, that's considered, you know, that's to be handled in psychiatric ward. Bear in mind that, ah, you know, ah, psychiatric problems you have you know, ah, ah, PTSD, post-traumatic stress neurosis, classified as, er, a disorder is classified, PTSD is classified as a neurosis and which is not a psychosis, of course, it, a neurosis is, ah, treatable and well, it's like an anxiety-depressant neurosis versus schizo-paranoid-schizophrenia, ah, or, ah, you know, ah, psychosis. But they're not equipped here, they don't have the, I don't know, people are saying the World War II veteran, you know, well, gee whiz, what's wrong with you guys, you know, couldn't you take it, are you weak, what did they do, did they, you know, well, what's the difference, ah, you know, guys are, ah, you know, on, susceptible to use dope and, ah, they can't accept people using dope. But yet when you go to the or, certain organizations, and you got some guy in there, you know, that's the main thing is his boots.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: You got some guy drinking Jack, double Jack Daniels all night long cause, you know, he's got his liver throbbing on one side and, you know, ah, ah, he's got a bulbous nose and

complexion. Those guys, ah, you know, they drink and, ah, it's acceptable to them to use alcohol where its, the Vietnam veteran they use alcohol and dope, ah, just, I found out usually the more severe, and w-w-we're starting the, everyone was, you know, there's no prior, ah, ah, tendencies or weaknesses, you know, to become upset or, or, ah, injured psychologically, that naturally the more severe the person's combat experience, the more severe his trauma, the more, ah, ah, frightening episodes, ah, and his cognition, his ability to remember and think and recall, ah, usually the more severe the guy's emotional problems were.

JH: Ah huh.

RS: Yeah, ah, they're really severe. [pause] But with Vietnam veteran, there's definitely, ah, the ramifications of Vietnam War is most obvious, ah, we still, we still have them. I think, ah, last night with, ah, the professor going, you know, coming to the meeting, I think, probably elaborated enough to you to, ah, give you a ...

JH: I haven't seen him yet.

RS: Oh, you haven't?

JH: Yeah.

RS: Yeah, well. He, you know, just to give you an idea of the problems we still have. You, let's bring one thing out, you're saying can y, have you deciphered regionally or geographically that there seems to be more problems with veterans from different geographical reasons, regions of the

country? Ah, or, yes, there, there is. I found that, that, ah, Appalachian as I said, had one of the highest casualties rates, had one of the highest com, direct combat roles or direct combat support roles. Ah, there, there has been an epidemic and, ah, of, ah, drug problems and selfreadjustment problems, ah, and emotional problems in this area. I, I've dealt with it five and half years and I asked, ah, a doctor, ah, philosophy, clinical psychologist, ah, worked with the Veteran's Administration and he agreed with me, he said, yeah, there's an epidemic and, and there has been in this area. For one thing, we come back and what do you come back to? Go out tomorrow and get a \$20,000 a year job in Huntington or Cabell County.

JH: Or almost any job.

RS: Okay, go out and get a job period in Cabell County. Does a Vietnam veteran want to come back and what he, what he, you know, stood for and what he sacrificed and want to collect garbage, you know. That'd be like asking, ah, you know, an honor, a black honor graduate of Harvard Medical School to, ah, you know, accept a job as, ah, Director of Admissions at a college of, ah, you know, 3000 students. And he only had to work one, one, one day a year in the, ah, you know, student health, so they, you know, that's, imagine how demoralizing that would be. But there's definitely, ah, the problems of, ah, and you mention, you know, I mentioned before about this group awareness deal once we became unified, you know, and the awareness and, you know,

organizations, ah, popped up. Be, ah, you know, accepted by the general public or not. Ah, then people started realizing and philosophing, you know, we started philosophing on about the war, on who made the money, you know, guy says hey, I didn't, I didn't have anything before the war, I didn't have anything during the war, and I'm qualified now and I don't have anything after the war, you know, and, ah, gee, it's tough. It's tough to get a guy that's lived a couple years and trained to live the way something wants you to live and try to throw him in and say you're gonna wear a three-piece suit and start to work for Ashland Oil tomorrow, at, Monday and you're gonna act this way, you know. It, it's tough to jump around and, ah, just like this article I gave you. It's, ah, title of it is "Veteran's Organization Work is Described as Nightmarish." It's in the Charleston Ga, Gazette, Friday, ah, June 15, 1984. And there was a follow-up in the same newspaper on Monday, June 18, 84 and it was, ah, it was about me. It was a Vietnam veteran working for a State Department of wel, ah, Veteran's Affairs, State of West Virginia and the corruption never stops. You know. And it gets to the point that I had, for a lot of relief, exposed it. I went out and exposed every bit of this to, ah, people that were interested and every bit of that is true and even more, t, to show you that, you know, why in the world are we trying to c, were we trying to correct the injustices and poverty and corruption in a country when we don't even, you know, we

have it in our own country. And we st, you know, someone in this Central America deal, you expect him, for individuals to go down there forcibly. You're gonna have the mercenaries and the people that love it.

JH: Mmm hmm.

RS: But I mean, you know, to induct people and force them to go down there and do something, you know, and they don't even have, have what they have down there in their own country. You know, I mean, ah, when they have to sue to, to have a black GI, he was killed in Vietnam, buried in a white cemetery, ah, and that did happen. I mean, gee whiz, I mean, you know, guy dies and is unable to be buried in a cemetery because he's black. And when I read that I couldn't believe it, I mean, that's s, sad that something like that had to be printed.

JH: Now you work with the, ah, Department of Veterans' Affairs so you were in, seems to me, a particularly, I mean even, even in addition to your own personal experience, you're in a, you were in a pretty good vantage point.

RS: Oh yeah.

JH: To see what veterans ...

RS: Well, ...

JH: Well, how did, how did that come about, how did you, how did that job come about?

RS: Okay.

JH: You didn't get that right out of the service? (No.) You went to school and you were in Florida.

RS: Yeah. I, ah, I graduated from Marshall in '74 and I went to Florida and worked a year in, I didn't get a teaching job but I worked full-time substitute teacher under contract. You know, I worked every day and, ah, it, it was grades K through 12 in all grade levels and subjects. You know, they might say report to so-and-so high school for three weeks, you know what I mean. After you finish that, I worked every day under contract I made more money doing that as a regular full-time teacher in Cabell County. You know, you got like, ah, thirty-nine dollars a day which at that time here teachers starting out got about thirty-five bucks a day, if they got that much. Ah, then I came back to Marshall, took a couple of classes in, ah, the summer of, ah, '75, went back to Florida and got a full-time teaching job. I taught social sciences, here it's studies, there it's sciences, ah, and a driver's ed, education course. And I taught at secondary and adult community schools. Ah, decided I didn't like Florida, re, relocated back to Huntington, was going to graduate school, ah, which I completed my master's degree in 1980 in secondary education. Ah, I had taken a couple of graduate courses in Florida and a couple of undergraduate, ah, ah, courses in Florida University and colleges and, ah, I started the master's program, Marshall University, ah, went to Charleston took a series of, ah, civil service

exams, went up there 3 or 4 times. I got this job, ah, worked five and a half years as a Veterans' Service Officer, Counselor and Representative for the State of West Virginia with the West Virginia Department of Veteran's Affairs.

[end of interview]