

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Vietnam

Personal Experience

O. H. 1226

CARL H. GAISER, JR.

Interviewed

by

James E. Duffey

on

July 13, 1989

CARL H. (CHIP) GAISER, JR.

Carl (Chip) H. Gaiser, Jr. currently lives at 178 Wychwood in Youngstown, Ohio. He was born March 5, 1948 in Butler, Pennsylvania, graduating from Butler High School in 1967. In June of 1967, immediately after graduation, Chip joined the U.S. Army and served until 1970. During that period, he served 2.5 tours in Vietnam as a crew chief on a helicopter.

In the time since Vietnam, Chip has been married twice. Currently he resides with his wife Lenora and he has two children. His daughter Kelly, age 18, resides with her natural mother in Butler and his son, Douglas, age 9, lives with Mr. Gaiser.

After discharge in 1970 Mr. Gaiser worked for several companies. He worked for Hills Department Stores from 1974 to 1978. Next he moved to American Fire Clay Refractory, working there from 1978 to 1981. His current employment is with the Republic Hose Company on Albert Street in Youngstown, where he has been since 1984.

Chip has earned 85 Air Medals (each one equals 25 missions), the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation, a Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, 9 campaign ribbons, a Presidential Citation, and the Vietnamese Unit Citation.

Mr. Gaiser has been a member of Chapter 135 of the local Vietnam Veterans, and helped start an outreach program for Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and is a member of Families Anonymous. In his spare time he enjoys reading, particularly history, aviation, and fishing.

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INTERVIEWEE: CARL H. GAISER, JR.

INTERVIEWER: James E. Duffey

SUBJECT: South Vietnamese Army, various villiages,
Agent Orange, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

DATE: July 13, 1989

D: This is an interview with Carl H. (Chip) Gaiser, Jr. for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Vietnam War, by James Duffey, at 178 Wychwood Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio, on July 13, 1989 at 2:00 p.m.

D: Chip, in what branch of the service did you serve?

G: I was in the United States Army.

D: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

G: I enlisted.

D: Was there a particular reason why you enlisted at that time?

G: I was going to make it a career. I had always watched too many John Wayne movies, I guess.

D: What year did you enter the service?

G: 1967.

D: What year did you serve in Vietnam?

G: I was there in 1968, 1969, and half of 1970.

D: Usually, guys went over there for thirteen months? Right?

G: No. In the Army it was twelve months. A year. 365 days.

D: You said you were there in 1968, 1969, and half of 1970. Did you reapply for it?

G: Yes. I volunteered.

D: Was there a reason for that?

G: Yes. There were lots of reasons. When I came home at the end of 1968, I found out that home wasn't there anymore. I was alienated. I felt uncomfortable. They assigned me down to Texas at Fort Hood. I got down there and they were playing chicken shit, bullshit games, and I had been in combat for a whole year thirty days before that. I couldn't see playing these games. I knew if I stayed there, they'd put me in jail for the rest of my time in the Army. So I volunteered that same day to go back to Vietnam.

D: What kind of games are you talking about?

G: Spit shined boots, shined brass, run out in the woods and hide, games that weren't real and didn't pertain to Vietnam or war at all. I was in a company down there, a headquarters battery they put me in, a division of artillery. I was a crew chief on a helicopter. There were seventy of us that came back from Vietnam that they put down there and there was nobody below a sergeant. Everybody was sergeants and nobody knew anything about artillery. It was ridiculous. All they were doing was picking at you, it seemed they were trying to get you to screw up so they could put you in jail to eliminate any problem. They looked at you like a problem. The Army looked at you that way. You were a problem. If you survived Vietnam, you were a fucking problem. Let's get rid of you, put you in jail, do some damn thing with you.

D: Why did they see you as a problem? Was it because of being so hyped up from coming back that you couldn't come down from that or why do you think?

G: You've got to remember. There you are, fighting a war and twenty-four hours later, you're sitting in your living room at home with your mom and dad. You are a fucking animal. You aren't human. One day does not make you a human after a year of combat. That doesn't go away. The way they did it just fortified that.

It's kind of hard to put into words unless you experienced it.

D: So you were in a war situation for a year and then they dropped you right back into civilian life.

G: Right, like nothing ever happened.

D: No adjustment.

G: Yes. Just like you've been at summer camp for a year. Plus all the training before in basic was always "Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill." They made you a killer. They told you that you were going to die for months before you even got to Vietnam. "When you leave here, you're never coming back, you're dead", and "If you come back, you are a survivor." Screw everybody, I know how to survive. It was a lot of mental games and they didn't deal with that in the Army at all. They never took that into account. They never realized that you need a deceleration, sort of like a detoxification program for your body and your mind and they never give you that.

D: I've talked to a number of Veterans and they say pretty much the same thing.

G: It's culture shock deluxe. People don't realize, you can't realize unless you've been there.

D: Why did you choose the Army?

G: I didn't like the Navy, the Marines were ridiculous and the Army guaranteed me I could fly.

D: You said you wanted to fly?

G: Yes. So I couldn't be a pilot but I could be a crew chief which would have enabled me to fly anyhow so I'd still get to be in the air. I didn't want to go sleeping in no mud, either. If I got to die, I might as well have some creature comforts.

D: What rank did you hold in the service? What was your ultimate rank?

G: Platoon Sergeant.

D: Other than your normal boot camp training, what kind of training did they put you through to go to Vietnam?

G: AIT down in Fort Eustis, Virginia. That is Advanced Infantry Training, that is what they call it but mine was how to deal with helicopters, how to work on them, how to repair them, anything that could go wrong, I was

supposed to know how to deal with it. How to load them, how to shoot the machine guns.

D: Do you feel that you were adequately prepared for what you found?

G: No. I felt like, to be blunt, a fart in church when I got to Vietnam. I sat there and cried for hours because I thought I didn't know what the hell I was doing.

D: You mean as far as the actual job you were to do there?

G: When I got to the unit, the sergeant took me out and said "there's your helicopter, do the daily on it." I froze. I didn't know what the hell... I'm doing all this book learning, but the book learning didn't pertain to reality. Basically I trained myself all over again from day one. I listened to the other guys. Common sense pulled me through. Common sense will get you through ninety percent of life's problems if you use it. From day one I had to start surviving but I had actually sat there and cried for hours, feeling that I was a nineteen-year-old kid, I was going to die because these mother fuckers weren't helping me. I felt real bad at that time. That was the last time I've cried in twenty-five years.

D: What time of the year was it when you first arrived in Vietnam?

G: It was in January, January 11, 1968. Three weeks before the TET Offensive.

D: How about the TET Offensive?

G: How about that?

D: What was that like?

G: Well if I could steal the name of the movie, "When Hell was in Session", that was TET.

D: Were you pretty much in the thick of that?

G: Continuously, I flew twenty-one hours a day, seven days a week forever it seemed. Fly, and fly and fly, and shoot and kill, it was ridiculous. They just kept coming and coming and coming. You hear about human whale attacks in Korean Veterans. I always thought these Korean Veterans were giving me a bunch of shit. They weren't. It's a nightmare I still live with.

D: Looking back, before you went to Vietnam, what were your notions about what Vietnam was going to be like and then, when you got there, was it what you expected?

G: Well, you're not going to believe this but in 1963 I was in 9th grade, I knew I was going to Vietnam. They had started teaching us in school. I knew where Vietnam was, I knew what the conflict was, and I knew in my mind that war would still be going when I got out of high school so I could participate in it. The great American adventure, the once in a lifetime thing. I knew it was going to be there from the time I was in 9th grade. I expected it to be like John Wayne movies, Audie Murphy movies, I had grown up with that. I had grown up listening to war tales. The man who had influenced my life most was my high school teacher tell war stories about himself in World War II and you tend to glorify it when you tell it. There is no real glory in it. But I was brainwashed if you want to call it that. I really didn't give a damn if it was for country or apple pie. It was my adventure. It was my shot at it. I knew long before I even got sworn into the army that I was going to be there.

D: After you got there?

G: After I got there, I wished to hell I was back in the womb. One day I said, "goodbye Army for a career." Let me survive and get the hell out of here. It doesn't take much. Somebody shooting at you will give you a different perspective on life.

D: I'm sure that the whole experience was tough. You were there longer than most. What do you think was the most difficult thing for you to deal with when you were in Vietnam?

G: Not being allowed to win the war.

D: Are you talking about the political decisions that were made about how the war was to be fought?

G: Those and not being allowed to deal with the enemy when you saw them. He would be across the street and you're not allowed to shoot at anything across the street. He'd be sitting over there blowing your ass away, but you weren't allowed to shoot him.

D: Why was that?

G: They called them free fire zones and restricted fire zones. Some politician in Saigon got bribed to say you can't kill anything here so we weren't allowed to shoot anything there. It was very frustrating. When you do take something, you turn around and walk away and give it back to them and then you've got to give it back to them, then you've got to retake the son of a bitch later. Pardon my language, it gets me riled up sometimes. It wasn't like any war we'd fought before.

We had forgot our past history. We didn't think. We didn't learn from the past. I'm not saying this because you're a history teacher. It is my firm belief. We did not learn from the past and the past repeats itself with great regularity.

D: You make the same old mistakes.

G: The same old mistakes with a different title. That's all. Having seen your buddies die for nothing is absolutely ridiculous and it preys on your mind.

D: Over a period of time from probably the mid 1960's into the end of the war there was, from what I understand, quite a difference in attitudes of the guys when they went over there. Maybe because some of the ones that went there later were more exposed to the anti-war movement and maybe to the frustrations of the guys coming back. How was the attitude of the American soldier when you were there?

G: When I first got there in 1968 and I would say through 1968, with the Tet Offensive and the May Offensive, and the Spring Offensive, all these offensives that went on for months, the morality of the fighting man was great. They thought they could still win. They hadn't been subjected to much anti-war at that time. They actually felt that we could win it. They felt justification in their being there. 1969, I could start to see a deterioration. People were just surviving. They didn't give a fuck for what reason, they were going to survive.

D: Keep your head low and last that.

G: That's it. Make it through 365 days, that's all anybody cared about. Then each batch that came in, you could see it deteriorate a little more. Morale and everything. The racial shit started.

D: What do you mean by that?

G: Blacks against whites. In 1969 it really started to take hold.

D: Why do you think it was?

G: I've thought about that for twenty years and I can't come to a real conclusive answer. You get out in the field, there was none of that shit.

D: Everybody would depend on everybody else.

G: Right. Everybody depended on everybody, black, white, brown, yellow, whoever was there, you're ass depended

on his. The minute you got back in, then they started playing their lifer chicken shit games with the burning shit and KP and spit shine this and spit shine that. The blacks just didn't seem to want to get into it that much, neither did whites for that matter but it seems that the lifers came down harder on the blacks. Maybe because they were more militant about their disobedience because they banded together and would roam and kill guys and beat them up if they caught you. It depended on what mood they were in.

D: Our guys?

G: Oh, yes. There were American's killing Americans. I'd say in 1969, they started fragging a lot to.

D: Fragging is?

G: Some lifer, Captain, Major, Sergeant that you feel is inadequate to lead sheep to water, let alone men, somebody would throw a grenade into their bed and that would be the end of them, or go out in the field and all of a sudden they don't come back, they got killed, you know.

D: I've heard of that before. I've heard friends of mine talk about that. Was that a real common occurrence among the troops at that time?

G: More in your infantry units. I tried it once myself but I got stopped before I completed it. Our Major got my friend killed for no damn reason. It snapped me. There was no premeditation to it, I just went and did it. It was just like pulling the trigger on a gun. You do it.

D: Most of the guys that were fragged, were they people that were college guys that come out and got commissioned?

G: Yes. Most of them were. Guys that didn't know their ass from a hole in the ground. They were twenty-year-old John Waynes brainwashed to the max. My nine-year-old son had more common sense than these guys and they still believed in you charge a machine gun head on. Fuck that. There are other ways to do it.

D: How about the South Vietnamese soldiers, did you have much personal contact with them?

G: Yes. I had a lot of personal contact with them in helicopters because we used to fly them into their combat assaults all the time, especially in 1969 when I was over there.

D: How was their attitude about the war?

G: They were the most worthless pieces of shit that God ever put breath in. They didn't want to fight, they didn't give a damn about communism, they didn't give a damn about Vietnam, they wanted to grow their rice and be left the hell alone. They didn't want to die. As long as the Americans were there to die for them, why the hell should they? They were lousy soldiers. You had your exceptions, as in anything. You had a few good units, but what made those units good was their leadership and the leadership eventually got killed because of the duration of the war, the unit went down the shitter.

D: When you were in Vietnam, could you name some of the places where you served?

G: I was in the 3 and 4 Corps area and part of the 2 Corps would be Tay Ninh, Da-Tieng, Chu Che, Moc Loe, Ben Hoa, Long Binh, Phu Loi, Can To, Ber Cat. I was all over practically the whole country with helicopters. You go wherever they needed you.

D: Did you have a particular base where you would return?

G: They had one base in Diaw, pronounced Z-On, which was just a little bit Northeast of Saigon, that was supposed to be the base but nobody ever got there. You were all over the place.

D: Looking back now twenty years, now or better, when you look at how the war was conducted, do you think it was a winnable war?

G: Yes it was, but it was winnable back in 1946, not 1968.

D: For what reasons?

G: If you study Vietnam, Truman screwed up with Ho Chi Mihn. Ho Chi Mihn wanted to be our ally. They snubbed him. They turned him towards communism. Then they went the other way. See, we supported the wrong side is what the hell it boils down to. If they would have taken care of Ho Chi Mihn in 1945, 1946, then Vietnam would have never happened. I think our part in being there, the way we fought it, the way we were allowed to fight it, it was an unwinnable war.

D: Do you think that had a lot to do with more of the political decisions about it?

G: It was all political. It had nothing whatsoever to do with the ability of the American fighting men. If it was based on that, we would have won the war. We could

just plain kick some ass. We weren't allowed, that's all.

D: There have been a lot of movies recently about Vietnam. I know Vets have had a reaction to those movies. I don't know what you have seen or haven't seen but as far as students going to movies now, is there any movie or movies that you think really accurately depicts what the Vietnam War was like?

G: About the closest you're going to get to actually being there without being there is "Platoon". There is no doubt about that.

D: In what sense is it accurate?

G: You get the gut feelings. Good and evil. The Platoon Sergeant Barnes and the other guy fighting and how he eventually boils down to Americans killing Americans to cover his ass. It really gets into the burning of the village. How so much builds up and you explode and how its chicken shit officers don't know how to deal with anything. It was just basically the all around feeling. It gets right to the core of it. You just don't look at that movie just to see who's getting killed. You got to listen to what they say and you've got to study it. You've got to see it more than once to really understand it.

The other ones are just shoot them ups. Hamburger Hill, I was there, that was an alright movie to watch but I only saw it once. I got Platoon out here on video. I take it out every three or four months for a revisit.

D: Over the last twenty-some years, how has your experiencing Vietnam affected your life after you've come back to civilian life?

G: It has done a pretty good job of screwing up. It has cost me one marriage, possibly two, it has turned me into an alcoholic, which I'm not now, by the way, I've been clean for four years now. Gave me absolutely no respect for authority figures whatsoever. Anybody in authority as far as I'm concerned doesn't know shit, and I'm damn near always right, too. It gave me a quick temper, it's scary. I don't own a gun because I wouldn't hesitate to use it for anything. If you get me mad, I'll just shoot you. I would feel no remorse, I really wouldn't. It just made me emotionally dead. There is nothing. There is no love, there is no hate, just dead. Just like a walking shell.

D: How does it change your view of war itself?

G: War, I'm afraid is a necessity of civilization. You always have wars. People are always dying and it will always be young people to die. You're not going to get away from them, you're not going to have a peaceful world where they don't exist. If you are asking me would I fight another war? If it came to the country needing me, I'd go back, but it wouldn't be another Vietnam situation. It would have to be a full fledged- we're going to invade the country- type deal.

D: Where you knew you were fighting to win.

G: Yes. In my livelihood and my family depended on it, but I wouldn't go traipsing off all over the world looking for it. I'm afraid at my age, the adventure is gone.

D: What do you think the Vietnam Veteran's biggest problems are today?

G: Themselves.

D: How do you mean?

G: Not being able to deal with Vietnam on an individual basis. Maybe I should rephrase it. There is apathy. They don't seem to give a fuck. They bitch and they complain, but when you give them a plan where they can actually go about helping themselves, they don't want to fucking hear it. They seem to like to wallow in this dilemma they're in. They don't want to confront reality, they don't want to confront the past, they don't want to confront the present and they don't want to look at the future. I don't know if it's fear. I think it's a lot of fear. There is no doubt about it. There is a lot of fear involved in it. I went to counseling for seven years before I was able to deal with even giving this interview. Up until the last couple years I've even started to read things about Vietnam and watch the movies and stuff like that. I wouldn't even talk about it before. I think the Vietnam Vet's biggest problem is the Vietnam Vet.

D: What about the government?

G: Oh, fuck the government. They're not doing shit for you. Right now I could take you to any VA hospital around here and they wouldn't treat me.

D: Why is that?

G: No money. The good hearted Republican conservative cock suckers who want everybody to fight and die for the flag but don't want to take care of you after you do it. I don't know what political party you belong to

but I'm sorry, they don't want to deal with the Veteran. Let them die off, they're middle aged now, we can stall them another twenty years, the biggest part of them will be dead and they will probably eventually go away. Agent Orange, PTSD, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can be treated. That can be dealt with immediately and curtailed and life can become a little better, but they don't want to do it. They are trying to cut the funding for that. Agent Orange is just plain, economically impossible for them to admit to. That would cost to damn much money for them to admit to Agent Orange.

D: Yes. For all these guys' cancer operations.

G: If you look in the obituaries, and I have a nasty habit here since I hit forty, I look in the obituaries every night and guys my age that were in Vietnam, there is two to three a week dying of cancer and heart attacks. It is unheard of. I started looking into it and this doesn't happen back through medical history; age groups just clicking off like that. Not even to mention the suicides.

D: Were you involved in any of this work toward getting benefits for the people that are victims of Agent Orange at all for the Vet's Organizations?

G: Jerry Brest, who in my opinion was one of the best guys God ever put on earth. I worked with him. I tried to help him whenever I could. He is about the only one in the Eastern United States doing anything for anybody with Agent Orange or disability. I'd say he is fanatical about it. He is putting his whole life on hold just to deal with the Vietnam Vets. I feel sorry in a way because I know a lot of them are just using him. But he is steadfast in his course.

D: There was a settlement...?

G: That's a joke. Nobody is going to see any of that money. Nobody is going to see any of it. If they do, it will be such a poultry sum that it won't amount to anything really.

D: It seems like the amount was really just a few million dollars. It didn't seem like it could come close to covering but a few medical costs.

G: I've met guys who have children with birth defects. I mean real pitiful cases in themselves that have been caused by orange. I myself, I believe I have it but I'm not fighting it. Because we used to spray and I flew through it and every other damn thing. But, just nobody will believe them because, my God, you're talk-

ing billions of dollars if you took care of everybody that had an Agent Orange claim and it is economically impossible. They'll wait until most of us are dead before they admit to it. I'll tell you a good book to read on Agent Orange is An Army Waiting to Die I don't know if you've ever read it.

D: No, I've never read it.

G: It's An Army Waiting to Die and it's about Agent Orange and the Vietnam Veterans. That's a hell of a book and it will open your eyes up. I can't remember who the author was. I can't think of his name now, but it's a hell of a book. It explains Orange a whole lot better than I can.

D: One of the things I've told you I want to use this tape for was for history classes. Is there a lesson or a message that you feel would be the one thing that you'd want to pass on to your kids or students or future generations about the war in Vietnam? Is there one big conclusion that you can come to about it?

G: For those kids whose dad's were Vietnam Veterans, they were never cowards, don't let anybody tell you that. Don't always believe what the political parties in power tell you because you've got a good seventy percent to thirty percent chance their lying and covering something up. If its threatening to the country, then it's worth fighting for. If it's worth going 10,000 miles away for, don't believe in the domino theory. It doesn't work.

D: Do you have any final thoughts or anything that is maybe on your mind about the Vietnam War, your experiences that we haven't covered in this interview so far?

G: This rock kind of sums it up.

D: He has a rock sitting on his dining room table, here, for the sake of the tape.

G: That is Vietnam.

D: Is that from Vietnam?

G: That is Vietnam. That is what the country is made out of. Granular form or mud. Red clay.

D: Did you bring that home from Vietnam?

G: Yes. That explains a lot of the Vietnam war. That's what I was getting to. At the end of my tour in 1968, you were allowed to send hold baggage home thirty days before you leave the country. That was like if you

bought tape recorders, you could send it home. I took my half duffel bag of stuff that I had over there and they said it didn't weigh enough. It had to be a minimum of fifty pounds. So I went outside and threw rocks in it. So the federal government spent \$4,000 to ship three rocks home for me from Vietnam, but they won't treat me for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Agent Orange.

D: That says something right there, doesn't it.

G: That kind of sums the war up in how stupid it really was. A waste. It was a total waste. People collect guns, flags, and things. I collect Vietnam.

D: I want to thank you for having me in to do this interview. I know it's not an easy thing for most of the Vets. I appreciate it and for the kids that will get to hear segments of this, I thank you.

G: I just hope somebody could learn something and not forget. It seems we have been forgotten for a whole lot of years. Maybe we will get a bigger place in the history book than a page and a half.

D: Let me ask you one more question that I don't have on my list. What could the government have done when you guys came back that might have helped you adjust better?

G: I've talked to the Vets about this and have talked to World War II Vets and Korean Vets about it. All the other wars up to this one were fought with units. You were trained with men, you went to war with these men, you came home with these men, whoever was left you came home with on a boat. Six weeks, eight weeks, whatever. You weren't a one on one, being dropped in as a new guy. If you lived fine, if you died, fine. Nobody knew you, you knew you, you were you, you were all that you cared about.

D: In other words, when you went there, you were really alone.

G: You were alone from day one until you came home and for the last twenty years, really, you have still been alone. If the Army would have fought it as a unit, like they did in the other wars, and allowed the men, after it was over to be given that six weeks on a boat, or four weeks on a boat, or even put on a tropical island where they had beaches and just could relax, talk it out, talk their experiences out, get civilized a little bit again, and try to get their heads back together, basically, and tell the people, well here's what culture shock is. I didn't know what the hell

culture shock was, and here's what you're going to face. You are going to face anti-war protesters that are going to spit on you, you are going to face alienation from all your friends whom you've had through childhood and are not going to want anything to do with you anymore because you are a "cold blooded killer", your mother and dad are going to look at you differently, your brothers and sisters aren't going to want to be like they were with you. Be honest with them then, tell them what they got to face so they can start dealing with it before they get there. Instead of taking you out of a damn fire fight and dumping you in your living room twenty-four hours later. That just don't work, folks. If you want to screw up a nineteen-year-old's life, train him to kill, drop him in the middle of a jungle 365 days later, pull his ass out of the jungle and drop him back in his living room. Now if that won't screw you up, I don't know what will.

D: You mentioned something earlier and this is of a more personal nature, and if you don't want to discuss it, I understand. It seems like something that would be kind of important. you said that it cost you one marriage. Why is that? I've heard this from a lot of people.

G: I've thought about this through the years and this marriage right now is on shaky ground. I think being emotionally dead is what killed both of them. Somebody could walk in here and blow your brains out and your head could be laying on my table and I would go ahead, sit down here and eat supper with you laying there and it wouldn't bother me a damn bit. Somebody would say, "Well, isn't that terrible?" and I'd say, "He's dead, what the fuck? He don't care." I'm living, he's dead. That wouldn't bother me. I wouldn't have nightmares about it. I would just clean you up and away you would go or whatever. Stupid things that people get upset about, somebody has appendicitis or something, it don't mean nothing. My boys or my daughter would get hurt, I'd take them to the hospital but I wouldn't get involved. Women seem to want this constant love and touch. I don't like to touch. I don't like to be touched, I don't like to be confined and that's hard to do socializing. People talk garbage. People just talk bullshit. How much sex can you talk about. To hell what's going on in the world, economically or anything else. People are boring, life is boring.

D: So what you are saying is that you go through an experience like this and suddenly you start to evaluate what is really important.

G: I feel like I have matured twenty, or twenty-five years beyond my actual age. I feel like an old man, mentally. Like somebody who has already lived seventy or

eighty years. I can sit there and say, "That's inconsequential. This you should deal with." But I do it totally unattached. I just stand back and instantly, I don't think about it, I just seem to know instantly know what is right and what is wrong. People cannot understand that. I can't blame them, I can't understand them. It killed the marriage. Of course my first wife cheating didn't help either. But it was a lot on my part.

D: I can understand that and most people could. The reason I really asked the question is because a lot of kids sitting in government classes or history classes might have fathers who are going through the same thing and they may not understand what is going on, or even wives may not understand that.

G: If you have a father, or an uncle, in some cases, even a grandfather, it seems to go through cycles. Certain times of the year they really get withdrawn, depressed, angry, certain dates. It occurs every year at the same time, like clockwork. Then they have Post Traumatic Stress. What they are dealing with is anniversary dates. Even subconsciously they may not know what it is, something traumatic happened to them at that time and that period and they are reliving it every year at that time. People will look at you like you are fucking crazy. You really are at that particular time, because you are trying to deal with reality then and reality now and you were never allowed to heal to compensate for this. If the parents seem detached, now this goes for women, there were women Vets over there too, and they hide pretty well, they don't come out much at all, but look for that cycle. It happens. It could be a three month period every year. It could be one week, one day. But it is more than one time a year. Things may be fine for a month, and then all of the sudden, you see it coming. You can see it coming if you look for it. It's Post Traumatic Stress, Survivor's Guilt.

As far as the emotional part, it is really hard. I don't think there is anything anybody can do. I don't think you can put back emotions once they have been killed. I really don't. I've tried now for ten years. I've tried believe me. I've tried hard. I don't think you can put them back. I think once they're ripped out, they're ripped out. The only thing somebody else can do is try not to get too angry and to eventually forgive. There is a lot of anger on both sides. The Vet will be angry, the spouse and the children will be angry, they will be angry at him, they will say, "You're a goddamn asshole." He won't know how to answer. He'll think he is. He'll take off, go to the woods, get drunk, get in fights, get in trouble with

the cops. He is trying to find himself but he's never going to find himself. Basically we should have all died twenty years ago, because they sure did kill us.

D: Or something should have been done right away.

G: Like the guys who had invaded Grenada, those guys got debriefed. They went as a unit, they came back as a unit. Lebanon, the Marines that all got blown up, they went in as a unit, they came back as a unit. There is not as much Post Traumatic Stress, Survivor's Guilt, there because they had time to talk it over with the survivors and relieve the guilt and frustration, and the angers.

D: When you say survivors's guilt, are you talking about that you feel guilty that you survived and other guys didn't, or do feel guilty about the things you did when you were there.

G: Survivor's Guilt is when you feel you survived and better men than you died. This country would be a whole different place, I think if some of the brain power wouldn't have died in Vietnam. There was some exceptionally smart men that I was there with. Even though they were nineteen, or twenty years old, they could have been president today.

D: I appreciate the time you took to be interviewed and I know that this will go a long way in educating people about what the war was all about for you guys.

G: Just so one person can learn, that's all.

D: I think a lot more than that will learn. Thank you.

G: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW