

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Vietnam War

Personal Experience

O.H. 1644

JAMES ZANOTELLI

Interviewed

by

Marc Hall

on

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H: This is an interview with Sergeant James Zanotelli for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Vietnam War, by Marc Hall, on February 14, 1994, at the United States Army Reserve Center in Farrell, Pennsylvania, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant Zanotelli, today I would like to begin by asking you how you came to be in the military.

Z: Well, when I was 17 years old, I got patriotic enough. I just wanted to join the military. Off and on for the last 30 some years, I have been in and out of the military.

H: Okay. Can you tell me the date of when you entered?

Z: May, 1954.

H: Where did you go for you basics?

Z: I went to Fort Knox, Kentucky.

H: Can you tell me what a typical day was like there?

Z: Being a young recruit like that, I was pretty much scared to death. We did not know what was going to happen to us until we got into at least our third week of basic training and we started into a routine. It was rough. Back then, it was not the same type of military situation we have today that we had back 30 years ago. It was like do and you do not ask why. That is mostly what it consisted of then. From there, we went on to school. Then after school, you went through a permanent change of station which was where you stayed at. My permanent duty station was Fort Dix, New Jersey.

H: What was your actual trained occupation?

Z: When I first went in back in 1954, I went in as a truck driver.

H: Okay.

Z: I mostly just drove truck at that time. I was pretty excited about being a truck driver. Then in later years, I decided to change my speciality to finance and accounting.

H: How long were you at Fort Dix?

Z: I was at Fort Dix from 1954 until October of 1955. Then, I went to Korea for almost 17 months.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. When I was in Korea, that sort of ended my military career. Then, I got out.

H: Okay.

Z: Then, I went back in. I stayed out of the military for a while. Then, I went back in around 1963. So I got out in 1957, went back in in 1963, and stayed in until 1966. That is when my Vietnam duties came up.

H: What made you re-enlist?

Z: Work, there was no work on the outside.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. So I was looking for a job, and it was just rough to get a job.

H: In 1963 before you went back into the military, was there any talk about Vietnam on the outside? Was it much of an issue?

Z: Not that I can remember. It was talk about Southeast Asia, and it was just rumors. But that was it. Nothing was said. Of course, we were in Vietnam for a long time. Back in the 1950's, as a matter of fact, we had troops over there. We would never expect anything like this was going to happen at that time.

H: At the time you reenlisted, it was not on your mind at all or anything?

Z: No, because Vietnam was not there. Naturally, when I went back in, I had to go through basic training over again. So I had to go to Fort Dix, New Jersey, for basic training. Then, I went to Fort Benharris in Indiana for finance and accounting. I went to Korea again. I always ended up in Korea. [laughter] I do not know why. I was in Korea for a year, came home, and went to Fort Benning, Georgia. I down at Fort Benning for a year. Then, I was with the 11th Air Assault Division. It was deactivated, and they made the 1st Cavalry Division Air Mobile.

H: How did you find about going to Vietnam?

Z: We did not know for sure. In just April, 1965, it was rumored that our unit was going to be deactivated, and the first cav, it was going to replace us paperwork wise. So we did not know for sure what was going to happen. Everybody had their own theory of what was going to happen to us. When it was official, the orders came down, and we figured that year we were going to be leaving. We were going to Vietnam, and we knew it for sure.

H: Once you knew, did you go through any additional training or anything to get you ready for it?

Z: Yes, we went through jungle training.

H: Really? They sent you?

Z: It was not much jungle training because they did not have the expertise that they had back when guys were coming into the military in the 1970s. In the early 1970s, that is when they started having the jungle warfare school down in Fort Benning, Georgia, and over in Panama. We did not really learn too much about the things that would happen.

H: Where did you get your training?

Z: Fort Benning, Georgia.

H: You stayed there?

Z: Yeah.

H: Could you tell me what kind of things they taught you?

Z: Mostly it was escape and evasion. The main thing with us was about being captured, and we went through all kind of classes. I cannot remember what they called the classes. It was been so long ago. Land navigation, we had land navigation classes. There was a lot of that in sergeant. If you got captured, what to do when you got captured. We went through all kind of training on that. Camouflage and concealment. It was pretty routine. We were doing more of a refresher course and refreshing our minds on stuff that we did learn back in basic training.

H: In your occupation going over, were you expecting to see combat or were you expecting to go to a base?

Z: No, we expected to see combat.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah because we heard before we were going to move up into the jungles. So we were like 280 miles north of Saigon up in the central highlands. We knew right away we were going into a hazardous situation up there.

H: What kind of attitudes did you have on the way over?

Z: There was pretty good morale.

H: Really?

Z: Morale was pretty good, yeah. Everybody knew each other. It was like a big family. You were not with strangers. Everybody felt that there was more of a camaraderie thing.

H: Do you think that made a difference compared to some units who just took people out as they needed them and shipped them out?

Z: Yes, it did. It made a big difference.

H: When you got there, where did you first land at? Did you go over by plane?

Z: Yeah, I have went by plane. I was in a C-130 airplane. We landed at Quinhon. My company went over on a ship. The whole division went by ship. They went from Oakland, California, in the San Francisco Bay area. The ship went to Hawaii. From Hawaii, I guess they went on to Saigon. We went over by C-130. We landed at four different places in the states. Then we went to Hawaii, Wake Island, and the Phillipines.

H: At what checkpoint did you come into Vietnam?

Z: Quinhon.

H: Quinhon?

Z: Yeah.

H: Do you remember what the date was?

Z: It was the end of August.

H: What year was this?

Z: 1965.

H: What was your first impression when you got off the airplane?

Z: Getting off of C-130, you are in an area. I think we landed in Quinhon. It was a dark dirt airstrip down there. From there, we went by chopper to Nhatrang, and from Nhatrang we went by chopper to Ankhe. They were big helicopters, and we went into the central highlands up there in the jungle. We just landed in the middle of the jungle. There was nothing there. The first thing I seen when I got off that chopper was a Buddha pagoda type thing. It was staring right at me. I said, "What do we do now? Here we are." We made our way down. They had the trail going down to our base camp. We ended up in the base camp up there. Nobody was actually scared. There was nothing going on at that time.

H: Really? There were not any war raids or anything going on by helicopter?

Z: No. That is when things were really hot and heavy then. I was fortunate enough to be there at the beginning. I should not say fortunate. Nobody was fortunate to be there. It was just a terrible situation.

H: What was the name of the base camp?

Z: It was up along Ankhe. It was called Camp Rradclift.

H: Okay. How big was it?

Z: It was a pretty big area. Our company was located right at the bottom of Hong Kong Mountain down there. The area stretched out pretty good.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. We had a place called Gulf Course area and these other areas that sat back. The perimeter was so big that you just could not get around the whole area because we had infantry, artillery, helicopters. We had an LZ site there which is a landing zone. We had a medivac company right next to us, and they had medivac choppers. Then we had five flying cranes. There were only five of them in the world at that time, and we had all five of them with us.

H: Can you remember what designation flying cranes number was?

Z: It was AH something. I cannot remember exactly.

H: Okay.

Z: The thing looked like an enormous bug. That is what it looked like. They used to pick up MASH units. They had field hospitals. They used to transport the field hospitals right out to the field with flying cranes. I had friends of mine who were on a flying crane that got killed. They were shot down in small arms fire. They had small arms which consists of 5.56, 7.62 ammunition, pyrotechnics, and frags and everything else. They had a gigantic net. They picked it up, and they were hauling it off to an area. They got shot down.

H: Can you remember what some of the defenses around the camp were around the perimeter?

Z: The only perimeters I knew where the ones around our area. We had a set of barbed wire. We had a mine field area outside the barbed wire, and we had trip wires set up.

H: Was that the individual units' responsibility in their area?

Z: Yeah, it was the individual responsibility of the unit itself to do that. There were things called strip maps that we made up of areas that were mined because the infantry used to send out patrols on the other side of the perimeter line. We had to be careful we did not end up shooting at them. Communications was a big thing with pass words and everything else.

H: Okay. On the base, can you remember what the majority of the infantry types were like? Were they marines or were they army?

Z: Army.

H: They were all regular army?

Z: Yeah. Around our area was all regular army. The marines were in different landing zone areas, and a lot of them worked around Da Nang. Da Nang K-2 fire bases. All of the area had fire bases everywhere. Special forces had their own fire bases. Marines had their own fire bases scattered all over the country.

H: What was your job at the base?

Z: My job was taking care of the incoming soldiers, taking care of their records and stuff. That is what my company was, an administrative company, and we took care of that. We had to leave the area sometimes. We had to move out to different areas. We ended up in the Ladrang valley during a fire fight up there in November of 1965. We got in and out of there real fast. We did not get to stay there too long. I ended up in Nhatrang. I was with fifth special forces down in

Nhatrang. I was down there for about a month or so on my temporary duty assignments. We moved out pretty good. We still went to different locations.

H: When you were on duty around the base field, did you travel armed?

Z: All the time. We were attackable every minute of the day. We used to get mortared almost every night.

H: What kind of weapons did you carry?

Z: M-16's.

H: How about things like grenades and stuff? Give me a basic run down.

Z: We did not have to carry any grenades with us. We had them stored. All we carried was our M-16's, bayonets, and that was about it. We wore flak jackets. Pistol belts with our ammo pouches. We carried 140 rounds of ammunition while you were on base camp. When you left base camp, you were issued more ammunition, and sometimes they issued out hand grenades.

H: In times when you were on assignment like with the special forces and stuff, did you pick up your armament there?

Z: I got it down there.

H: They supplied you?

Z: Yeah, they supplied us down there.

H: Was the armament basically the same?

Z: Yeah, it was mostly the same. I felt safer down there with special forces than I did up where I was at.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. Those guys were pretty good. We went down there. We watched them train the montengards. The mountain yards are the mountain people, and they used to train them down there. Those people were very, very precisional with the crossbows. So I am glad they were on our side. They were pretty good.

H: Did you have much contact with the montengards?



Z: Yeah, we did down there in Nhatrang.

H: What did you think of them at first?

Z: They were just like anybody else. They are human beings just trying to survive. They are survivors of their own kind really because the Vietnamese did not want them. They are just like the Kurs are to the Iraqis. The mountain people, they had probably wiped their existence out by now, but they were good fighters. Very good fighters.

H: Okay. How long were you in Camp Rradcliff?

Z: I was there about seven months.

H: Where did you go after that?

Z: I got out.

H: That was when you were done?

Z: Yeah. My ETS was up. I came home.

H: When the camp was mortared at night, what was the usual procedure?

Z: We had bunkers.

H: You had bunkers?

Z: Yeah, we built bunkers up there. We used to hit the bunkers almost every night. They were coming after us pretty good.

H: Did you have any kind of warning?

Z: I do not know. Nobody knew. It just happened. Sometimes they sent up a flare. Sometimes the enemy would send a flare up. They had mortars with what they called a treetop burst on them. It was like an umbrella type thing. They exploded above you, and all the shrapnel came down on you. We had to watch. That was really scary. We lost a couple guys in our unit like that.

H: What were your bunkers like? Were they roofed?

Z: They were sand bags. They went down. We dug down as far as we could go before we hit the shell rock. Then we sandbagged. Everything was

sandbagged. We put a parapet over the top, and we sandbagged the top of it.

H: So they were basically pretty much safe as long as you were inside it.

Z: Yeah. We never had any collapse. Of course, if they would have had artillery and they would have fired artillery on us, it might have made a difference. But the mortars, I cannot remember any of our bunkers ever getting hit by mortars.

H: Did the camp ever take any assaults or anything?

Z: One time we did. One time we had an assault on the camp. We beat them off, and that was it.

H: Could you tell me more details?

Z: I cannot tell you because, number one, it happened at night. It was raining. It was during the monsoon weather, and we did not know what the hell was happening. All we know is the choppers came in and ran them off.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. They went and air struck. They came in and hit them. I would say it lasted for about two and a half hours. You could not tell anything. I could not see nothing. Everything was pitch black out. They just seemed to know exactly where we were at, which used to baffle me. They used to put markers up and use it for mortars. They would count off so many steps. We did not leave any Vietnamese in our area. So they must have done this sneaking through the areas or something.

H: That is another question. You say you did not have any Vietnamese management or personnel in the camp?

Z: No. I never seen any. I did not even trust the Vietnamese soldiers. I did not trust any of them.

H: How about them? Did you have them in your camp?

Z: They used to go through the area.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. They would pass by or take the road by or something. We kind of figured that is when they were setting up there.

H: Did you notice a correlation between when they went by and when your mortar attacks occurred or how accurate they were?

Z: Yeah. A lot of Vietnamese soldiers were actually communist soldiers. They were super spies.

H: The jungle training they gave you, did it help you at all?

Z: No, it did not. Just for being captured. We knew about being captured. They scared us so bad going through that training you did not want to get captured.

H: Do you think that was part of the point, maybe, of the training?

Z: Yeah, yeah. When you thought about it, it just put goose bumps up your back, the things that could happen to you.

H: The camp sounded like it was a pretty substantial size. Was there ever that worry of being overrun or being captured?

Z: I never worried about it.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. I never worried about it. We had a pretty good defense. We had an air force strip right there. We could fly C-130's in. That was the biggest plane we could fly into it. C-130's are props. C-135's are jets. Tried to land a C-135 there one time, and it crashed into the mountainside. Right before I was getting ready to come home, I was supposed to be on this C-130. They shot it down as it was taking off. It was shot down, and everybody on it got killed. When my wife found out, she almost had a heart attack. She thought I was on the plane.

H: When they shoot that size airplane down, is it small arms or do they manage to get something bigger in there?

Z: Probably heat seeking missiles they used.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. They had them. They used them.

H: You mentioned you saw the helicopters chased them off. Were they helicopters from your base or were they called in?

Z: Our base, we were loaded with choppers up there. Huews, we had a lot of Huews. Sometimes we had to replace some of the door gunners on the Huews. You would be the door gunner on an M-60 machine gun. You would go yourself because there was a shortage of man power sometimes. If the other choppers were out there on missions, they had all their crew chief on there and their door gunners. Sometimes we would just have to replace them. Everybody was proficient in M-60's and the machine guns, M-16's.

H: Did you ever ride door gunner?

Z: A couple times, yeah.

H: What was that like?

Z: It was not too bad. It was an experience.

H: Were you strapped on the side? Was there a restraining strap on you?

Z: No, we just sat. Actually, what I did, there was a safety harness on there that you could use if you were going to fire. Some guys hung their feet out the doors on the rutters and used that for a brace. Some of them just fired the 60 through the door. I sat on the steel parts. You did not want to sit down on the floor of the plane. Bullets were coming up through the bottom of the floor. You wanted to make sure you had something between you and the floor. I know a guy that got shot right in his butt.

H: When you were flying door gunner, did you ever actually have to shoot?

Z: No, not really.

H: Really?

Z: No. They tested the weapons sometimes, fired them off and tested them. The only time we ever got fired at in a plane that I remember was when I was coming home, flying out of Tan Sonnhut on a C-141. We picked up small arms fire. We could see out the portals of the plane. We could see the flashes down below. That was scary, especially when you are going home.

H: After it is over.

Z: Yeah.

H: Let us go back to the base a little bit. When you took arms fire from incoming

aircraft and mortar fire, how did the base respond? Did they send out strike teams after them?

Z: We had infantry units that ran our perimeter force. Those guys were there every day, 24 hours a day. Even at night they worked. We always had a patrol out there, an infantry patrol. They were usually in the thick of it when stuff like this happened. We took about four or five casualties one night, and we killed some Vietcong in the process climbing over the barbed wire fence. We thought we killed about eight monkeys one night. They tripped our trip flares, hit the trip flares. Once a trip flare goes off, that is it. The perimeter line just fired at anything. They just started firing which is bad. They should have waited to find out who tripped it off first. We killed about eight monkeys.

H: Did activities slow down at all during the monsoon?

Z: Yeah. You really could not do anything. Sometimes it would rain for one half hour, and you would probably get about almost a foot of rain that fast. It would come down, and it would stop. It would get so hot it was unbelievable, and the weather just did a turn around. In the Central Highlands, we were pretty far from the coastline. When we got hit, it was just coming through. It did not stay too long. It just came through and dumped on us, and that was it.

H: At this time, did you still have a dirt runway?

Z: Yeah. What they did, the air force laid up a metal runway. It is a landing plates are laid on. They did that. They took care of that. I had nothing to do with that. There were so many more paths. As a matter of fact, when we dug for water when we were building a shower, we had to go down so far. Then we had to use dynamite to blow the shell out because there was a lot of rock. Right below the mine there was a lot of rock. There was water down there. We had enough water so we could pump it out and build showers. You would be surprised how efficient you can be if you have to be, the different things that you can do.

H: The enemies that the patrols and people in your camp had to worry about, were they all Vietcong? Did you ever notice any NVA mixed in? Were there any rumors of that?

Z: No, the NVA never came in around our area. Mostly the ones we had were the Cong. They were mostly farmers. You could see them out there farming during the day, but at night they became Vietcong. It was that simple. Maybe after I had left there because my unit got split up. They scattered all over the countryside, and I do not even know if Ankhe even existed after that.

H: Some the standard questions I am going to ask you just to get sort of a statistical point of view. One of the things that always comes up in reference to Vietnam is drug usage. At this time, either in basics or later on, did you notice any of it doing on?

Z: No. That was the later years of Vietnam. When I was there, I heard guys talking about getting marijuana and buying a pack of cigarettes with marijuana in it for a buck. I smoked at that time, which I do not smoke anymore. I smoked at that time, but I never had any marijuana. I was deathly afraid of that stuff. You did not know what the hell you were getting into. You could smoke something that had some kind of poison in it or something. I got sick over there from eating food which I should not have ate. I had dysentery real bad. It almost killed me. You go into the village, and you think you are eating chicken. It turns out to be rat.

H: Did you get leave at all often?

Z: No. I did not take any leave at all over there. I got down to Saigon for R and R a couple times.

H: How did that work?

Z: What they did, they drew your name out of a hat. There were different sections. They would have two people a month to go to R and R, and they picked your name out of a hat. Guys who already went, their name was not in the hat. If you ended up being last, you would end up going on R and R for about a weekend or something. Some guys took leave and went to Australia. Some guys went to Thailand. I wanted to go to Australia, but I just did not get a chance.

H: On your R and R's, where did you usually go for those?

Z: Down to Saigon.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah.

H: What was your impression of Saigon?

Z: It was not too bad. It was a big city. Everybody used to go to Tудо Street which was where all the bars where. They had a big continental hotel down there with an outside restaurant. The French put most of the ethics on restaurant dining and everything else because the French were there for many years. Shanty, in Paris they had shanties. I cannot remember what they called it. They were like

outdoor cafes and everything down there. It was nice. It was clean. You go out through the outskirts around the suburbs, it was bad. You ran into dirt roads and stuff like that, and you had to really watch yourself.

H: When you went on R and R, did you go armed?

Z: Yeah. We had to turn our weapons in down there. When we got down to Saigon, we had to turn our weapons in. When we left, we picked our weapons back up.

H: Was there ever any nervousness or uneasiness?

Z: No, we were not worried about nothing. We just went there to have a good time. That was it. We were not worried about nothing when we went down to Saigon. That place became a hot spot after a while though. When I was there, they blew a couple of hotels up or satchels, car bombs, stuff like that. You go into a hotel, it is all sandbagged out, and we had machine guns set up right outside.

H: Another standard question is racial tension. Did you notice anything, even back as far as boot camp or anything?

Z: There was. There was a little bit, yeah. It was in different individuals. It was an individual thing. It was not a group thing. It was an individual thing. You always have that, and as much as people try to say no, it is here. We try to calm the situations down a lot. It still happens because you always have that individual that, whether it be black or white, always has that prejudice there. But, hey, we lived together, we fought together, we died together, and everybody knew this. When it came down to combat, it was a different situation. Then you always had that after work thing. Guys blow off steam sometimes, and it happened.

H: Was that mostly at the camp or did you notice it on leave or anything?

Z: No, I never noticed that on leave. I will put it like this. People were tensed up, stressed. It could be two white guys yelling at each other or starting a fist fight, or it could be a white guy and a black guy or two black guys. It did not make any difference. It was stress, frustration, stress, and everything else. The guys were just blowing off steam. That stuff happened.

H: Your job was basically bringing new people in. Do you have an idea of how many people were coming through?

Z: No, you could not possibly count. You could not count. It was unreal. We had records stacked up, this whole room stacked up this high full of records. There

were rooms in the tents. We had more KIA's and MIA's coming in and records coming in and new people processing constantly. We worked 24 hours a day. It was not an eight hour day job. We worked 24 hours a day seven days a week.

H: With this many people coming in, were they using basically Rradcliff as a base camp and then sending them other places or were they doing maneuvers from there and coming back?

Z: That was the first base camp. What anybody else did down in Saigon I do not know. I could not tell you. Coming in first, you had your own 82nd, had your own base camp and processing. We just handled first CAV.

H: What was your opinion of the leadership quality?

Z: I am not going to answer that question because we had good and we had bad. I am not going to take a stand. I just cannot answer that question.

H: Okay. What rank were you at this time?

Z: Sergeant.

H: You were sergeant then?

Z: Yeah.

H: Did you ever run into any troops from the other countries like Australia?

Z: Yeah. Koreans, tiger division. I ran into some Australian soldiers over there. Bush soldiers they called them. That is about all.

H: What was your impression of the Koreans having spent time in Korea?

Z: Different situation. In Korea, they did not impress me at all. Over in Vietnam, they impressed me because they were like kids in a candy store. They could get away with more stuff than we could, and they did, too.

H: You said you left after seven months. Was your tour actually up then?

Z: No. My enlistment was up.

H: Your enlistment was up?

Z: Yeah.



H: Where did you go from there?

Z: I came home. I got out of the army.

H: You came straight home?

Z: Yeah.

H: When you got home, what was your impression of the general atmosphere regarding Vietnam?

Z: Very, very hostile.

H: Really?

Z: Very hostile.

H: Having been a veteran and just coming out, did you get a lot of slack personally from people?

Z: Sometimes, yeah. Some of my neighbors.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah. It was a very bad situation. As usual, it only got worse.

H: When you were there towards the end of your tour, you were processing the new guys coming in. Did you notice any of those attitudes carrying over into the military in the new personnel coming in?

Z: Not really. Not really because you process them in so fast that all you had was asking basic questions: name, rank serial number, date and place of birth, when did you arrive in country. Stuff like this, that was it. Then you would just move along to the next guy, just keep moving. It was like a conveyor belt.

H: When you got done, do you remember what the date was?

Z: I think it was March, some time in March.

H: You are in the reserves now. How did you come back to be in the reserves?

Z: I came back in 1983.

H: Really?

Z: Yeah.

H: What made you decide to come back?

Z: The job. [laughter] Another time I needed a job, right? I lost my job, and I was looking for another position somewhere. It just was not there. I thought, "I am going to try and get back in the military." So I came into the reserves in 1983, and in 1985 I came back on active duty.

H: Did they make you go through boot camp again?

Z: No. I thought they were, but they did not. Now I have got two and a half years to go to retire, and that is it.

H: As a civilian once you got back, what were your impressions? Did you follow the war on the media and stuff like that?

Z: Yeah. Still a lot of buddies of mine were over in Vietnam at that time.

H: What was your impression of the way the media was portraying it as compared to what you knew from being there?

Z: It was not so much that the media was portraying the war as that the media was portraying the protestors out there. There was more emphasis on protesting than there was on the lives of the soldiers and all the military that was in Vietnam because you had all these activists that were doing all this. They were causing more harm than they were causing good. That is why the situation went the way it went.

H: What was the feeling when you were over there, especially towards when you were ready to leave, about how the war was going among the military people?

Z: We did not know how the war was going. We never did. Not until you come home and take another look at it. People back home did not know about what was going on, and we did not. We really did not know that much about it. We thought that we could be in and out of there in six months. That is what I thought.

H: When did you start to realize that it probably was not going to be that way?

Z: On the way home.

H: Really? On the way home?

Z: Yeah. The situation was going to last for a while.

H: Okay. Was there a point where you thought we were not going to be able to win it? Was there ever a point?

Z: No, we never were losing. We did not lose the war in Vietnam.

H: I do not think so either.

Z: No, we did not. We did not lose it. We turned it over to the South Vietnamese. They did the turn around. They left their positions. They let the enemy come in. We never did.

H: Did you realize that was probably what was going to happen? Did you think they would actually hold?

Z: It was inevitable. You could see it. When we started saying we were going to pull our troops out of Asia, we knew for a fact that Ho Chi Minh and his gang were coming in. That is all there was to it. We could not do nothing about it because we were not in it.

H: One of the areas I researched into is the Tet Offensive. You would have been a civilian at the time. What was your perspective of it having been in the military?

Z: It was something that should have never happened because a very good friend of mine got killed in the Tet Offensive, January, 1968. We were lucky that we did not have more casualties. That should have never happened. It is hard to say something about the Tet Offensive because of the strategy. Ho Chi Minh was a strategy genius. He prepared this in advance. If we knew this was going to happen, it would have never happened. He caught us with our pants down.

H: Really?

Z: Yes, he did.

End of Interview