



Dion Laney

Specialist, E5

Army

Salt Lake City, Utah

Interviewer

Dion, we really appreciate your coming up here. We thank you for your service to our country. You graduated from Murray High School. How did you end up getting in the service and sent to Vietnam?

Dion Laney

Okay, I graduated from Murray and then I worked, and then I took two years and went on a church mission, and then I came back and went to college, and there I met my wife and we got married in '67.

And things were happening over there and I basically didn't want to get involved in it because I had other plans or goals in my life. I wanted to raise a family and teach school. I became a school teacher and they let me graduate from Southern Utah State and then they said, "We want you," and so I went into the military in the first of June of '69.

I went to Fort Ord for my basic training, and then there, they gave me an infantry MOS and I did AIT infantry training there at Fort Ord, California. It's by the town of Monterrey. And I finished that and at the same time they gave me a secondary MOS as a Machinist, because that's what I specialized in college, was a machinist and a welder. I have to back up here. Then I got out of AIT infantry training in October and they let me go on leave because I received papers to go to Vietnam.

And so they shipped me out to Vietnam the end of October. And at this time I had a baby girl and she was just a little over a year old, and so all this time I thought maybe I was gonna get out of the draft because they kept delaying the qualifications to draft you. It was once married. I got married and thought, "Oh, wow," you know, and then I had a child and then I thought maybe that would too.

But I figured it wasn't meant to be, so they got me involved in the military and they drafted me in the Army and in October they shipped me to Vietnam. And I can remember, it's about an 18-hour flight to there. I can remember the flight, we flew up to Anchorage. And then we lit in Japan and then during the day we lit in Vietnam. And I can remember when they opened up the door of the aircraft and getting off it felt like a heating fan hit you right in the

face and the humidity was high and it was hot. I remember that and I can remember sleeping in the hooch and being all musty and so forth.

And then we went to the station where they pick you to go to your different units and they chose me to go to the 101st Airborne Division, and I told them that I didn't have wings to jump out of an airplane.

And they said, "You don't have to worry about that because it was all air mobile." The 101st had roughly 450 helicopters to use in their division. So there I went in country, I think it was Phu Bai is what they call it. That was in southern Vietnam, down there by the Mekong Delta they call it, and I spent maybe a week or two at the camp there.

They put me with what they called a Kit Carson scout. It's a South Vietnamese. Instead of becoming a Vietcong, he chose to fight for the South Vietnamese. And so they put me with him to try to learn the language and become familiar with him and their customs and so forth. His name was Toan, T-O-A-N and I can remember him. He was just a 16-year old kid at that time and here I was 25.

And then after a couple weeks there, they sent us up north, because that's where the division was, at the 101st, it was up at what they call Camp Eagle, up by the city of Hue, and Quang Tri--I think about 30-40 miles from the DMZ--and we worked in the mountains west of there. And the monsoon started and so it seemed like it rained all the time, wet, just a musty-type environment. And so after I got in camp with B Company up there, they put me with B Company, and then they trucked me to Fire Base Bastogne. Fire Base Bastogne is on the way to the A Shau Valley, which a lot of action was taking place.

On the west side of the A Shau Valley is where Hamburger Hill took place the first of that year, of '69, and so there was a lot of action. Whenever the A Shau Valley was mentioned it always sent chills down your back. Well I spent a couple days on the Fire Base Bastogne waiting for them to fly me out to my platoon. I went down to Fire Base Birmingham which was down the road from there, towards the city of Hue, and I spent a couple days there and they trucked me a lot because of the weather. The Huey helicopters couldn't fly when it was real bad weather. On Fire Base Birmingham, I spent Thanksgiving, the 25th of November, I can remember that.

Interviewer

What exactly is a fire base?

Dion Laney

Gives you support. It contains some artillery pieces and some mortar units. I can remember in Fire Base Bastogne, they had two 175 Howitzers, and they were the largest guns that they had and I could remember him telling me that

it could shoot at least 20 miles and they were using those to shoot into the A Shau Valley. And they had some eight-inchers. And in Birmingham they also had some eight-inch cannons. And so a fire base gives you support when you're out in the jungle and they tried to position fire bases where they supported each other and so forth.

Interviewer

And then you'd go on patrols or whatever and return to that fire base in the evenings?

Dion Laney

No, usually what they did is they had one company that would usually stay on the fire base and man the perimeter of it, and then they would rotate with the other companies that are out in the field. I never was on a fire base so to speak.

The first of December they flew me out into my unit, which was Company B, and I was with 2nd Platoon and 2nd Squad. And we were close to Fire Base Birmingham because we called in some artillery one night to light up the area. Every night you'd pull guard, you know, you'd transfer; take turns pulling guard. And you'd set up your claymore mines on some suspected trails that the enemy might be taking so that you could fire 'em up if they came towards you.

So every night we'd set up what they'd call ambush. And I could remember a couple of nights we went down into the lower part, into the valley, and we saw a deer, at least I call it a deer. It was kind of small, in between a deer and an elk. And the next night we heard a tiger and so we called in illumination. And I suspect that tiger was after that deer because at that time I think we were more worried about the tiger than we were the enemy.

We were in some bamboo to help protect us in case he charged, but we called in illumination to help scare him away. Illumination is where they shoot up flares. And some flares will last five minutes, some will last 10, 15 minutes, it depends on how large they were. They'd shoot them up with their cannons, and some flares they would drop out of aircraft, out of the Hueys, helicopters. So after a few days out in the bush we had what you'd call, I guess, a stand down.

That's where our whole brigade I think--it was more than just our Company, it might have been the other two Companies, A and C--but they load us in trucks--I call them cattle trucks--and then we had a lot of air support, Cobras, flying around in case we got ambushed. And so they drove us back to Camp Evans. Camp Evans is in between the city of Hue and Quang Tri up north. And we stayed in camp for a few days, and then I think on the tenth of December, we made a combat assault. A combat assault is where you gather up your gear and they told us to get enough C-rations to last seven days, so that was 14 C-rations--and of course, the ammunition that we needed and C4, claymore mines, frags, hand grenades.

And I even carried a hundred rounds for the M60 machine gun because he couldn't carry all the ammunition by himself. Usually, the guy that operated the M60 had a helper to help feed the machine gun. Anyway, I can remember my pack was so heavy that instead of standing up directly, I had to roll over on my belly and get up off my hands and knees. I can remember that part.

Interviewer

How many pounds was it, roughly?

Dion Laney

Well, I was figuring the other day. I was adding up all the stuff that I had and I figured I had 100 pounds on my body, you know, including my rifle and all the water. I had two canteens, a quart size, and then I had one canteen, I think it was one and one half or two quarts size, of water, because I always like to drink hot chocolate out there to help pass the time. That was one of the main things that would get to an infantry person out there is the boredom and not knowing from day to day where you're going or what you're doing.

And of course the weather was really depressing, especially in the monsoon season because it was wet a lot. At first when I went out from Birmingham I took an air mattress but after talking to some of the guys that were out there, an air mattress was hopeless because you're usually on an incline and you made a lot of noise when you were sleeping on an air mattress and you didn't want that to happen. So, from then on I just slept on the ground. Anyway we went on this CA, this combat assault, and we took 14 meals and we were told that we were gonna go out and make landing zones, LZs they call them. And so each platoon picked an LZ, from my understanding. And when they prepped the area with Cobras, they fire up the area so in case there's any enemy there it blows 'em away so that you don't get shot up on your landing. And so we kind of landed in kind of a flat--

Interviewer

Sorry, when you say "fire up the area," that means?

Dion Laney

Rockets.

Interviewer

De-foliating the jungle and whatever to clear it?

Dion Laney

Right. If there's any enemy there, they usually would get it so that they couldn't fire you as you were landing your Huey helicopters 'cause you're very vulnerable when you're landing. And so the Cobras would have rockets and Miniguns and that's what they'd do, they'd fire up your landing zone. And our helicopter--I think most of them, I just noticed ours--he couldn't set down because of the tall grass and because he'd get his skids stuck into 'em when he took off. So we hovered about, I'm wanting to say two feet above the ground.

So I jumped on the skids and then I jumped in the grass and at that time I looked over there and there was about a three-inch stump that had been blown with one of the rockets.

And I thought to myself, "Man, if I would've landed on that, that would have done me in on that trip."

And so after we all landed we gathered together as a platoon and we went to the ridge. And maybe because I was so green they put me in point man. Point man is the one that leads the platoon. And then you usually have a guy behind you and then you have usually a lieutenant which is in charge of the platoon, or a sergeant. And he has his RTO, his radio operator, with him.

And so we proceeded up this ridge and when we got to the top of it we started cutting an LZ; we started cutting the trees so the helicopter could land on this ridge. I could remember this one troop, they had a couple of combat engineers with us and they had a chainsaw but they couldn't get it started to cut this one tree down. This one tree was kind of hollowed out but boy, it was hard as a rock. I can remember taking a machete to it and it'd just ring in your hand because it was so hard. And so we ended up putting some C4 in it and took it down.

While we were there a couple of days the other two platoons, the CO was with them, the Commanding Officer, he was usually a captain, and they got hit. They were walking along this ridge line and they ran into I guess a small bunker complex at the end of the ridge. And I was talking to the other guy afterwards, that pulled a couple of the guys back and the point man got shot, and the third man got his legs blown off and he died that night. And then I was reading, and the next day, when the other platoon came there, one of those guys must have got killed because on this operation there were three guys that we lost.

Well, anyway, they called us over there to help re-supply them as far as manpower. And when we got there, our lieutenant, our platoon leader, he got us on line and we proceeded down from the ridge line to see if we could engage if the enemy was still there. They had killed a couple of those enemy and they had buried them there in that bunker that was there on the ridge line. And so we proceeded down this one ridge and I happened to be at the end of the line.

Our lieutenant was smart in that he put the patrol in a kind of T-formation; he put three in front so that they had six eyes instead of just two. And all of a sudden I heard some firing. And there's a distinctive sound between an AK47 and your M16 and your M60, and so that's what I heard. And so I head towards the nearest tree, 'cause I couldn't see any of the guys in front of me, and so the lieutenant, he called in some artillery, and apparently, I guess that

scared them away or something. But one of the artillery rounds came a little close to our machine gunner and he got some shrap metal in his knee and they medivacced him out. And so we just spent another couple of days there and then we went back to Camp Evans.

Interviewer

You didn't have to dig fox holes, you slept right on the ground, huh?

Dion Laney

No, we didn't. I could remember sleeping on the side of that ridge line and it rained that night, and it seemed like the only thing that kept me on the hill was a root that was sticking out 'cause it was wet. Anyway, on our operations I never did hump a trenching tool and I didn't even have a gas mask, so maybe they didn't assume that they would teargas us. But they did have that available to them. They would use it on fire bases when they would try to attack a fire base. Sometimes they'd use teargas.

Interviewer

How about poisoning? Did they have any other poison gasses or anything that you knew of?

Dion Laney

No, that's the only one.

Interviewer

Yeah?

Dion Laney

Yeah. Other than Agent Orange. Yeah, they used that Agent Orange around the fire bases and some of the trails to get rid of some of the foliage. Because in the jungle there you'd have trails that'd go through the jungle and they'd call, what they'd call single and triple canopy jungles, you know, where the foliage would raise up and cover up the trail, you couldn't see it from the sky. And so that's where they used that Agent Orange quite a bit, was to kill the foliage along the trails of the VC.

Interviewer

How long would that take to get rid of a substantial tree or something?

Dion Laney

Well, I'm not an expert on it but from what I read and everything, it would only take a week to, you know, brown up the foliage. And I don't know if you could compare it to Round-Up or not, you know, 'cause I've used Round-Up a lot and it has to be dry in order for it to work, but I don't know how Agent Orange works.

Anyway, when I got back I had put in a transfer to transfer out of infantry. I had that secondary MOS I mentioned about, as a machinist. And I went over to this aviation unit and they had a slot opened for a machinist but I wanted to repair the helicopters because there was a guy that was leaving. And as a machinist I was in the same hanger and I could work on the sheet metal end of it and repair that 'cause there wasn't anything to do there as far as

machinists. So I got transferred out on my birthday, January the 19th and I went over to 158th Aviation B Company. The 158th was with the 101st also. And so I started patching up the holes that they put in the aircraft, the Huey Helicopter.

Interviewer

So then you're--?

Dion Laney

Yeah, we're still at Camp Evans, yeah. Camp Evans was a major base. It had the 506, and I think it had one other infantry unit. And it had three--it had the 158th. One of them I think was--ours was a Huey division and there was another one. There was A, B, and C. And then I think one of them was a Cobra unit to help give us support on that. And so I finished up my tour in this aviation unit with repairing helicopters. And from infantry to repairing helicopters it was the difference between night and day as far as the action and the taste of war, so to speak.

Interviewer

How many of those patrols did you make while you were in the infantry?

Dion Laney

Well we were on patrol when I left Birmingham and then we had the stand down and then we made that one CA and we were out on patrol there. They re-supplied us once, so it must have been more than seven days, 'cause we didn't have any C-rations by the time we went back to base camp. And at one time I can remember catching water on my poncho at night to re-supply me with water.

Interviewer

Did you contact the enemy?

Dion Laney

Yeah, that one time, I heard the AK47. We contacted the enemy there and that's when he, the lieutenant called in the artillery.

Interviewer

So from there your MOS came into play and you were now back at a large airbase?

Dion Laney

Well, yeah. I was just what they call in the rear. I was stationed, I stayed at Camp Evans.

Interviewer

I see.

Dion Laney

Because the 506th was just kind of like on the other side of the hill because I can remember going back and talking with them. But it was a big base camp and we had a perimeter to it and every night we would set up on guard. We'd have about three per bunker protecting that perimeter. And then Camp Eagle, which was a real large camp, was south of the city of Hue. You probably hear a lot about the city of Hue, H-U-E, because it was well-known,

especially on the Tet offensive of '68, and it's an ancient city.

Interviewer

So what were your accommodations like at Camp Evans, where you were stationed at as a machinist?

Dion Laney

We had what you called hooches. You had a cement pad and you'd have walls of plywood, four-foot plywood, and then you'd have sheet metal roofing, and you'd have screen around it. I had a bunk bed and it was dry every night. And we had electricity. I could remember in the summer, I had purchased a fan from a guy that was going home and so I had a fan. And I got me a fly net, a mosquito net to help me, to protect me so I wouldn't get malaria, 'cause they had two pills over there that you could take, one per day and one per week to help you not get malaria. And we had a mess hall that we ate out of and showers.

Interviewer

It must beat the C-rations, I guess?

Dion Laney

Yeah, you only had probably four or five different varieties of C-rations and they were all in a can and the good old pound cake and the hot chocolate. But yeah, you had what they called heating tabs and you'd light them and you'd heat up your can of C-rations so it was hot. And if you ran out of heat tabs, you'd tear into your C4 and burn it. It was a lot hotter than your heat tabs but you'd have to watch it or you'd burn your C-rations. You didn't need as much.

Interviewer

So what's a C4?

Dion Laney

C4 is explosive. It's plastic explosives.

Interviewer

I see.

Dion Laney

They had C4 and then they had detcord. Detcord was a light rope and you'd put a blasting cap in it and it would explode just like a rope exploding. But they called it detcord and I think they wrapped that around that tree that they put the C4 in. The C4 would come in blocks about the size of an egg carton, a small egg carton.

Interviewer

Plastic explosives?

Dion Laney

Yes. And it wouldn't go off if you shot it with a rifle. You'd have to have a blasting cap and an igniter too. You'd poke the blasting cap inside the C4 like you would a stick of dynamite and spark the igniter and it would go off.

Interviewer

While you were back there, any dangerous situations?

Dion Laney

No. Most of the dangerous situations came with the pilots and the crew chiefs and door gunners. While I was there we lost two helicopters and the crews. And another helicopter we lost one of the pilots, and that's what I can remember. And one incident, I dug out some shrap metal and some armor piercing bullets out of one of the aircrafts. And the one guy would've got it but it hit his post that was holding his M60 machine gun. Other than that our camp was fairly secure except for this one time. We received a rocket and the rocket hit the hooch of a guy that went home the day before.

Interviewer

It totally destroyed the hooch?

Dion Laney

Well, where his bunk was, it hit his bunk. In fact the other guy that was close to it, he received some shrap metal, not very much. He was one of the guys that was working in the air frame repair with me. He was a tall African American guy. His name, I think, was Smith, and he worked with me on the sheet metal end of it. And he got enough shrap metal, I guess, to give him a Purple Heart. That's the only incident as far as being at the camp. And we were camped right next to the artillery unit; they were at the top of the hill and we was kind of off to the side. And I tape recorded some firing one night. Man, it seemed like it lasted for 20-30 minutes that they were firing into the mountains of the valley. They had received what they call a fire mission and they were just firing.

Interviewer

Were you afraid?

Dion Laney

When they were firing? No, no I wasn't. The only time I was really afraid was when I was out in the bush 'cause you, you know, you didn't know where they were, and yeah, you had to be on your toes.

Interviewer

Is that what you were trying to do?

Dion Laney

Well, at this period in the war, they had what they call Vietnation. But it's where we didn't go out and seek and destroy; we didn't have those missions per se, but if we came in contact with the enemy, yes.

'Cause Nixon took over at this point in '69 and their philosophy was trying to get the South Vietnamese army to withstand the forces of North Vietnam. But I could see that wasn't gonna take place because to begin with, the communists, they were in till the end, they didn't care how many people they lost. And so they would go into what they call small ambushes. And so there wasn't really a front line, so to speak, up there. There was what they called

the Ho Chi Minh Trail which came down through the A Shau Valley and that's how they'd bring their supplies to infiltrate Vietnam. And sure, they'd have a lot of bombing going on, but most of the time they wouldn't move their goods until the evening.

And at the beginning of the war, probably '65, '66, they had small trails and they would use bicycles to move their supplies like rice and their weapons and ammo. And when I was over there in '69, they got up and they were using trucks, so they had these roads well-built. And the reason I'd call it was a political war was because they signed a peace treaty of some sort, I think in '65, where they wouldn't let us go into Laos, because that's where the trail was, and so we couldn't go into there.

And of course, General Westmoreland was the general at that time and he figured that if we had these small patrols that we could get body counts and discourage them from that by taking body counts. But that didn't work, because, and so forth.

Anyway, it was a different war, and the morale of the individuals over there was getting low, especially in '69 because we all knew that we could spend a year over there and then go home. We weren't there to, so to speak, win the war. We figured we was there just to help the Vietnamese people win their own war and they didn't have enough resources to do that.

If we weren't over there, you know, you're dealing with a lot of peasants and they didn't have the money or the resources to fight against the communist country, North Vietnam. North Vietnam was getting all theirs from Russia and China, and they'd bring them down on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It was either to put a dam across the Ho Chi Minh Trail or, you know, help stop all that, which was in Laos, but we couldn't do that, so that's where the military had their hands tied.

Interviewer

So you stayed as--?

Dion Laney

Yeah, until October, which was my coming-home time.

Interviewer

You weren't there during the main withdrawal, then?

Dion Laney

Yes, I was the beginning of the withdrawal. I was there a short 18 days. So people were starting to shorten their tour there in '69. But the war continued till '73 and there was a lot of action going on in '71, '70, and '72. Well '71, we gave, I think they had what they call a Lam Son 719 operation, up there by the DMZ, and that's where they ARVNs

went into Laos, and we were their backups, as far as their support.

Interviewer

And the ARVNs are the South Vietnamese army, I guess.

Dion Laney

Yes. And they went in there and they should've just stayed but for some reason I think they came back. And there was a lot of changes of command as far as the country itself, as far as the leaders, and that was hard on the country itself, the different presidents, you know, I guess you'd call them, or the leaders of the country; they changed a lot while we were over there. In fact we changed three presidents, maybe four. Kennedy got us involved in it, 'cause he wanted us to withstand the communist aggression from the north. And then you had Johnson and Nixon and then I think we even had Ford before '75, 'cause in '75, that's when they took the city of Saigon and that's when we left.

Interviewer

The withdrawal was then?

Dion Laney

Yeah, that was the end, but actually, we got most of our troops out in '73.

Interviewer

When did you leave?

Dion Laney

I left in '70, the fall of '70.

Interviewer

And did you have any other close calls that you can think of?

Dion Laney

No, not that I can think of.

Interviewer

I'm curious about his homecoming. What was that like?

Dion Laney

Well, I didn't have any parades or anything like that. The American people weren't backing the soldiers that was over there putting our lives on the line, you know. And all these protests that were going on, I figured they were a bunch of cowards, you know, because they all tried to dodge the draft and burn their draft cards. I could have done that. I could have went to Canada but I had what felt like a moral obligation. I had a wife and child, and you know, I think more of our country than that.

Yeah, when I came home I flew into Seattle up Fort Lewis, Washington. And I got in late that night and early the next morning I got on a bus to Seattle to catch a flight home; that happened to be Sunday morning. And they didn't

know I was coming home so I called home and I said I needed at least somebody to pick me up from the airport. So I caught them just in time because they were going to church that morning and so I called just in time.

And when I got to the airport in Salt Lake I had several family members meeting me there, my parents and brothers and sisters and I think I even had some aunts and uncles there. So that was a special occasion.

Interviewer

They were glad to see you safe and sound, weren't they?

Dion Laney

Yeah, because being over there, it really took you mental-wise. You know, not only physical but dealing with the mental aspect of it. You're basically, at least I was in what you'd call a survival mode, okay. Like the saying goes, you didn't want to be the last one killed in the war, and so that's where a lot of people fought.

The ones that were together the most was the infantry people because they had to rely upon each other out in the bush. But people in the rear, you didn't have to do that, you know, just go on with your job and do your thing. Yeah, and that's the biggest problem--not the problem but it was the unknown, and the boredom 'cause you're sitting out there in the bush, you know, what else do you have to think about?

You're not doing a job, you're just surviving. And if you're on a fire base or on a fire mission you might be receiving mortar rounds and you didn't know which ones you'd get, if one hits you or not. So that was the biggest, I felt, mental aspect of it. And then you didn't have the support from your country as far as I could see. They didn't care, so that was another negative factor.

Interviewer

And when you returned to Utah, did you have any Utahan say--?

Dion Laney

No, I didn't. Because, you know, the My Lai Massacre, that got a large reputation for being that, and that shouldn't have taken place because of that lieutenant, he definitely made a mistake. He shouldn't have done what he did and so that painted a gruesome aspect on the war.

Interviewer

Yeah, that was tragic.

Dion Laney

But it's hard to put yourself in his position because when you'd go into a village, if you did, some of those villagers would sympathize with the VC and they would hide their ammunition and their rice and they would fire you up and they'd hide in those holes. And so it'd be hard to put yourself in his position but he shouldn't have done what he did.

Interviewer

Your main job as a machinist was to repair--?

Dion Laney

The sheet metal on the helicopters.

Interviewer

--on the helicopters, when they'd get shot up, you'd replace a section or something.

Dion Laney

Yeah, or patch a hole, put a piece--and I'd work on the Plexiglas on the windshield and the windows.

Interviewer

Inside your hooches, what did you sleep on? Did they have cots in there?

Dion Laney

Yeah, we had a cot. Well, I had a spring cot, but it sagged so much I just put a piece of plywood on there and then I put the mattress on it. I couldn't sleep in a hammock. That's what it was like, sleeping in that bed. But yeah, I slept on the bed and I got some ammo boxes from the artillery up on the hill and I made me some furniture, some cabinets.

Interviewer

How many men were staying in a hooch?

Dion Laney

Well, mine, I think there was only probably three or four. There was quite a few hooches so it just depended on where they wanted the--

Interviewer

So in your area, you fixed it up with a little ammo box furniture and that kind of stuff, huh?

Dion Laney

Yeah.

Interviewer

Well, we appreciate you coming in and we appreciate your service to our country. Do you want to tell us, give your views on the political thing, go ahead.

Dion Laney

I think I've probably given' you enough. I just would have done a little different than search and destroy as far as General Westmoreland thought how to run the war but everybody's got their opinion. But they did, I forget the operation, but they'd bring down a lot of supplies and ammunition on the coastline. And so I think in '77, they got the Navy and they stopped all the supplies coming down on the coastline from the north. If they would have done that on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, I think we would've had a lot better success, and that possibility. General Westmoreland was before I got there, and General Abrams was there afterwards.

Interviewer

You served under Abrams then.

Dion Laney

Yes.

Interviewer

When was the withdrawal? Was that in '75 or after that?

Dion Laney

Well, they started the withdrawal in '73, and that's when they signed all the peace stuff. But they didn't kick us out up north, they didn't come down in '75 and that's when they took over Hanoi, I mean--

Interviewer

Saigon.

Dion Laney

Saigon, yeah, it was in '75.

Interviewer

And that was in '75 when they had to evacuate people off the roof there and stuff like that?

Dion Laney

Right, that was in '75. But the military was gone mostly in '73.

Interviewer

I had a question about the point man. For those who don't know what that is, can you describe what the point man's job is?

Dion Laney

He was the guy in front and he called all the shots. In other words, he'd move as slow as possible and it was his job to see if there was any booby traps, if there's any enemy ahead of you, or any movement and so forth. Yeah, he was calling the shots and so it was--it depends on the area that you were in, it was a risky business because he'd usually be the one that gets shot. And they usually put, if you're a greenie or the first one in country, a lot of times they'd put you in point man. But if you were getting short, if you were there a long time, they wouldn't put you as point if you're getting close to going home.

Interviewer

Once again, thank you for your service and thanks for coming up.