Terry Reid
Salt Lake City, Utah

Interviewer
How did you get into the service and tell us about your early days in the service.

Terry Reid
Very good. I formally enlisted and was going to enlist in the Navy – I went to BYU. I'd put in to become a Seabee with the Navy, but when I got down to Los Angeles, their line was too long, and so I saw this good-looking Marine in his dress blues and he says, "My line's shorter, why don't you come and join in?" And I say, "That's for me." And so I did.

Interviewer
That's interesting, you got in the Marines because the line was shorter?

Terry Reid
Correct.

Interviewer
Well then what happened after you joined up?

Terry Reid
When I joined up I was able to wait a few days because they had to do a background check on me because they thought I was a Canadian citizen, being born in Canada, and they found out that my father was a U.S. citizen, I had a dual citizenship. So I had to declare my citizenship at that time, which I did, and I'm very thankful for it. And everybody says, "Well why didn't you go to Canada?" And I said, "Well, as long as I'm living here I may as well serve my country also." So I enjoyed it. My father was a former Marine, and so I was going to follow in his footsteps but not doing the things that he did.

Interviewer
What year was that?

Terry Reid
That was 1966. I went in February of '66 and went on active duty the 27th of February of that year. And I started at MCRD, San Diego in boot camp, which I enjoyed. It was just a fun thing to do. All the running and that didn't bother me at all, I enjoyed the running. But everybody used to call me "Gramps" because I was 24 years of age. Everybody else was 17 and 18 years of age, and they used to get a kick out of me because I used to run circles around 'em. But I enjoyed the camaraderie of all the people I'd ever known in the Marine Corps and especially those that were left after my unit was all but wiped out in Vietnam. I originally was supposed to go to Vietnam in April after finishing boot camp and infantry training, and I was supposed to go to Vietnam.
It was the end of April, I got on the plane at El Toro Marine Corps Base and two MPs came up to my seat and said, "Private, get off the plane." And I said, "What did I do wrong this time?" He says, "You're not going to Vietnam this time; you're going to the East Coast to be an instructor." And I said, "Oh, here we go again, being an instructor." And my instruction was to teach officers how to be motor transport officers. I would teach these young boot lieutenants that were 21 years of age, and the only reason I'd call them "gentlemen" is because of an act of Congress because they and I did not see eye-to-eye on what was to be done, but I enjoyed that tour.
But I kept volunteering for Vietnam all the time, even when I was there. And one day they got a quota that came in in 1967, and I put in for it. And my CO at the school, "We gotta cancel your orders, you're not going anywhere, you're not going to Vietnam, you're not going anywhere." And I said, "I know, because I'm going in the Marine Corps barracks, Kodiak, Alaska." And because I was 24 they selected me to be the Federal Game Warden for the island of Kodiak -- hardest job I ever had because I really loved it, being in the outdoors, being able to be around the Kodiak bear and elk and eight moose that we transplanted to that island, which didn't last but a month after the bears got a hold of 'em. But that was one of my most enjoyable tours. And I still didn't go to Vietnam at that time because I had a top-secret clearance and that was what was required at that base. I cannot disclose what it was but it was pretty highly secretive. But following that, since I hadn't been to Vietnam, I still wanted to go to Vietnam and get it over with. So in January of 1968--

Interviewer
Even as late as this you cannot disclose what your assignment was up there?

Terry Reid
Yes. The base now is used for a Coast Guard base. The Navy and the Marines are not there anymore. You could probably figure out what it was, though. I had a lot of fun there because I was working actually for the Rear Admiral White as a Game Warden – I worked directly under him. My Major had no say in the matter. But I had the

opportunity while I was there to work with Jack (Wisoe? 06:38) for eight weeks in the filming of the run of the king salmon. That was an enormous fun project.

Interviewer

Tell us how you eventually got over to Vietnam?

Terry Reid

How I got to Vietnam was I volunteered. I was in an engineer unit and was transferred to California, and I was only there 30 days and I says, "Send me over, please. I'm ready to go." And so they sent me over to Vietnam as a replacement. And I landed up in Okinawa, an island I hated with a purple passion. Japanese and I couldn't get along together, and all you do is hurry up and wait. You're on a call, and your call is supposed to come this day, and it doesn't come for another two weeks, and then when you get that call you wait another two weeks or so to finally get to go over. That was January of '68 – it was just before Tet. I'd arrived in Da Nang, Vietnam and was automatically assigned to a motor transport service division where I was sent out to various communities to oversee the maintenance of equipment. And my first assignment was with the 5th Marines, and, of course, that was the last time that the 5th Marines were there. But I was with the 1-5 and we went up to the city of Hue – the most beautiful city I'd ever seen, it was just simply gorgeous, but by the time we got finished with it, it was nothing but rubble. And this is when Tet started. Tet is actually the Vietnamese New Year, and that's when they elected to gang up on everybody, and as I was there with this unit, I was only supposed to be there two days and I was assigned to the 5th Marines and they said, "As long as you're here, you can go to combat with us." And I said, "That's fine with me." He said, "Remember, a Marine's always a Marine when he has his weapon." Just because you have an MOS of a pilot or of a door gunner or of a mechanic, your first job is being a Marine, and that is a grunt. Gravel cruncher, and we did a lot of humping, a lot of miles we put in. However, I met some of the finest people that I served with. I never met anyone I never did like because they were all right down to it. And when the Tet was over, I was sent back to Da Nang in the first part of February to my regular unit, and then I took on my regular job as a mechanic, and I would be sent out to different units that were around the I Corps Division to take care of maintenance problems on vehicles.

Interviewer

During that Tet Offensive then, when you went out, did you see much action during that time?

Terry Reid

Yes. I say not a young kid, but a dumb kid. I said man, these guys are actually shooting at ya. And as much as I didn't appreciate that, I would get a little uptight sometimes when they'd almost get me, and I'd say, "Oh, man, you missed again." But one thing I found out in combat, your best friends are the ones closest to you. I've been in areas where I've seen men die for no reason at all. And I'll get into another part later that year in Vietnam where I served with the ROK Marines as an advisor, and they were the most dedicated people I've ever been around, was the ROK Marines. They wouldn't take no for an answer, and they never did like the Vietnamese, so I didn't have to worry about that. And Vietnamese hated the Koreans because they did not take prisoners.

Interviewer

Who is the ROK Marines?

Terry Reid

The ROK Marines are Marines from the Republic of Korea, South Korea. And everybody pictures the Orientals as all being short people and especially the Koreans. Well the average height in my platoon that I had was five-foot-ten. I had four that were over six-foot, and the rest were anywhere from five-foot-eight down to five-foot-four, and the person that was five-foot-four infantry man, he carried the mortar base. He must have been 85 pounds soaking wet himself, and he had to carry an 85-pound mortar base on his back. And every time we'd go into the rice paddies I'd always have to keep an eye on him because when we got fired upon, he would dive into the rice paddies, and he'd start choking, and you'd have to grab him by the base plate and pick 'em up, and they'd give him some air for a while and then drop him down again. But it was a real good bunch of guys to work with. And I had my point man – he was five-foot-eleven. I staggered them all the way back to five-foot-four so I could see the point man out in front. And I nicknamed him "Bob" because every time he would see the enemy, he'd bob up and down real quick, and after they'd leave, he'd bob right back up, so I called him Bob because I couldn't pronounce his first name. And he and I became very close soul mates.

The lieutenant was a wonderful person also, and he was six-foot. And I was really worried about learning the Korean language – that was going to be the hardest thing I had. They kept talking to me in Korean and I'm, "Yup, yup, uh-hmm." I'd go, "Yes" and "no." And, like my son says, "Dad, you had a pretty good rounding of literature and language in Korean," but it was gutter Korean that got their attention. But I've never seen so many people in the Korean Marine Corps that spoke pretty good English. The Lieutenant I had had a Masters degree in literature, and he went to UCLA so he spoke very fluent English and most of the enlisted also did speak good English, so I didn't have any problems with that portion of it. They were good people. They were there to serve our country very well. A lot of 'em emigrated after they got back to Korea and came to the United States – Bob was one of those young men – and it took me 30 years to find 'em. I'd spend my spare weekends in Little Saigon, which is down in southern

California in Orange County in Garden Grove. I'd spend my weekends down there trying to find him – I couldn't find him. And about a year and a half before I left California, which was in 2004, my Toyota truck broke down on the highway, and I asked my boss, "Who does your Toyota?" And he told me who to go to. And so I went to this shop, and, lo and behold, I opened up the door to this shop, and he's a big picture about 20-inches tall of Bob on the wall. And I said, "Boy, I finally found him." Of all places to find him in my own hometown, and all these years he'd lived there and I never knew it. And as I looked around, I didn't see Bob anywhere, but these two young Korean girls that worked for him. Later I found out they were his daughters. And I asked them, "Well, where's Bob?" "He left us." And I said, "Oh, he's gone to lunch?" No, he'd passed away six months before I got there. But his family and I, we keep in communication at all times now. And anything I want or they want, we get.

Interviewer

So you saw a lot of combat then with those ROK Marines?

Terry Reid

Yes. Their job was to search and clear, and that means go into a village. When they meant "clear it," they leveled it and took no prisoners. You've heard of people throwing out Vietnamese out of helicopters trying to get them to talk? That's why we had the Koreans. That were some of the people you select throwing people out of planes. But when I was doing it, I told the pilot to bring it down to ten feet. It scares them just as much as if you throw 'em out at 30 feet, and the one guy left will really start talking. I enjoyed being in combat because I knew they had my back, I didn't have to worry about it, and they were dedicated people. And we had a good corpsman with them who was also a South Korean, and he was very good. He could do surgery on anybody in the field with no problem at all, and there hadn't been any problems with that. But I enjoyed going to the field. And then when I went back to Da Nang from a regular tour of duty with the motor transport, I used to go out in the evenings on patrol, I'd volunteer to go out and patrol. I said, "If I'm going to sit here and just watch all the rockets coming in, it's no fun to be a sitting duck, I want to be out so I can move at least." So I'd go out on patrol with the provisional forces and that was a lot of fun. I really met some fine people. Even though some nights you'd sit there for 12 hours waiting for an ambush and nothing would come out. Sometimes it would work out just as well, possibly.

Interviewer

Tell us in detail about some of those patrols. Would you go out at night?

Terry Reid

Yes, we'd go out at night, set up ambushes and wait for the enemy to come walking through. That's the only thing different than the Koreans, we used to set up ambushes with them also, but they could always tell where the Koreans were, and they kept away from 'em. The way they could tell the Koreans were there is because of their kimchi that they used to eat – fermented cabbage – and you could smell that for miles, and they would be able to smell them, the Vietnamese, because they used to eat betel nut, and you could smell that, also. But they would come in contact quite often. It wouldn't be abnormal to be walking patrol, and if you were quiet, you could hear the enemy walking a few feet away from ya. And that really set your hair on fire. I don't want to get into too much detail because I still suffer from flashbacks, and I've learned to control my flashbacks through medication and just pure willpower. I have my triggers that set me off, and most of us from the Vietnam War know what those triggers are, and it really sends you through a loop.

We may have killed a lot of people but the post-traumatic stress disorder has killed more than anything it will ever kill. And my son sent me an emblem to put on me, and it says, "Operation PTSD" because every little thing you get says, "Operation Starlight," or "Operation Arizona," or something like that. But PTSD is going to be with me for the rest of my life. No way I'm getting rid of it. You can work on it has hard as you want, but you'll never get rid of it. But I've seen death, and I kept volunteering for all the patrols going out, and one day my commander, he got a hold of me, and he says, "You've been going on patrols too much." And I said, "No, I haven't." "Well you're not getting much sleep." I says, "Who cares? I've got to be here for a 13-month tour; I might as well make it worth my while and do something." And so I go out on patrols and hopefully we hit some ambushes and that, and I really enjoyed it and the camaraderie that went with it because that was part of it; that everyone stood up for everyone else. Didn't have anybody running whatsoever other than maybe a couple lieutenants, but they didn't get too far.

The lieutenants didn't like me too much because I knew more than they did. They'd come out in the field, and they'd say, "Well, we're going to run this ambush position." And I'd say, "No, you're not. Where'd you get that idea?" He said, "Well I learned it from the FMF manual." I said, "Give me your manual, please." And I tore it up in front of him, and I said, "Now use your head instead." I never saw a textbook ambush or anything else out of one of them stupid manuals, and the lieutenants finally learned that they had to think for themselves and that was kind of hard for them 21 year olds.

Interviewer

And you were a sergeant at the time?

Terry Reid

I was a corporal at the time. But I was older than anybody in the whole battalion other than the major that we had, and he was 27, and he was a young major.

Interviewer
When you're going out on patrols, tell us the most dangerous situation that you encountered out there.

Terry Reid
Well, I guess you might say we were out on patrol in A Shau Valley, which is just almost to the DMZ and up towards the northern portion of Vietnam, and we went out on patrol, supposedly a patrol, and we only had 28 people in the whole group. They were a combine of bakers, cooks, infantry, motor transport, engineers and two communication people. None of us were actually in the infantry, but all of us had to do our job as infantry men. We were taught that in Basic, and so we took that up. But I can remember going up there, and I just had that feeling that we're not going to make this one out, we're not going to get out of here because we're right down in the valley, and the enemy was up on the skyline shooting down at us, and we were lying three days in a 500-pound crater trying to defend our position – nothing to hide behind. You try to dig dirt, and you keep just digging dirt and throwing it away. But as they were pepping us off one at a time, we couldn't get any helicopters in to save our lives or anything else, so we figured we were goners, and all of the sudden this one Army chopper showed up, and we all started shouting. And of course we didn't dare jump up too high or we'd get shot, so we stayed hunkered down there.

And as this pilot was making his landing – with a chopper they come in with their tail down so they can lower the ramp and we can get on and take off at the same altitude – but as we he was coming down, one of the enemy hit the helicopter with an RPG round and blew out the whole windshield in front of him, wounded him and killed his engineer and also his other flight associate. And those two people were killed, but he was able to – and to this day we still don't know how he did it – he brought that helicopter, not down backwards, but frontwards. When that round hit 'em, he couldn't see because he was just covered in a mass of blood, and he landed that helicopter so hard on its nose that it took the front gear and rammed it right up the side of his leg and missed it by a thousandths of an inch. Like I said, "If you had another pair of pants on you would've got it," and we always joked about that. And this gentleman said, "Get on board the plane." And everybody runs – I was the last one, here I was, still a corporal, and I was the last one on the flight, and the lieutenant, he was dragging his feet, he didn't want to get out of position, and two of us had to go grab him and throw him on the chopper. And as I got on, I gave the thumbs-up, and the pilot, he took off.

And that plane, it shook. I never seen so much fluid come out of the hydraulic lines in my life. So the first thing when you get into that chopper is you take your helmet off, your flak jacket and lay it down on the floor and sit on it so you don't get no rounds through it, but we had a couple that got rounds through it, and they were injured. But it took me 37 years to find this pilot. I could not find him for heck or high water. It wasn't until 2006 when I was in the Vet Center in Provo, I heard the counselor talking to this individual, and I recognized the voice and I said, "Dobie, is that you?" And he says, "Yeah, who's that?" And he comes walking out, and he says, "Well, where in the heck have you been?" Dobie, his last name is Gillies. I used to call him Dobie, and his call sign was Dobie AD-8, and he was a pilot of that helicopter. And lo and behold, I found out that he was living in Fairfield, Utah, and he was also the mayor of Fairfield, and to this day he's my hero along with all those that didn't come back.

But what a great man he is. Even to this day he takes care of that community and loves it with all its heart. Right now he is getting the help that he has needed for all these years that he's kind of ignored like all of us have at one time or another, but he's really becoming the man that he was, and he's a really good man. But those patrols, they are spooky sometimes, and everybody wonders why all of us Vietnam veterans like to take naps in the afternoon. That's been ingrained into us in our training because we stay up all night, and the only time we felt safe was in the afternoons when we could take a little bit of a siesta, maybe 10 or 15 minutes, that's all we'd get.

Because we'd stay awake all night long and then when we'd come back into the rear where all the gear's at, maybe sometimes a couple weeks before we'd get back to get replenished with our supplies. And so now, every afternoon about two o'clock, I take my siesta, and it will last for maybe half an hour, and I wake up, and I have more energy than I can shake a stick at. But it's just ingrained in us to take a little snooze. I couldn't figure out why I was always sleeping in the afternoons, and then the counselor told me why I was sleeping – because it was our safe time.

But it was hard when I came back to readjust. I'd been married with five children; all five of them were born in the States – two were born in Hemet, California, and the other three were born in Twentynine Palms, California at the Marine Corps Base there. And my oldest – who would've been 43 this year, passed away a couple of years ago – he was an engineer for Boeing and a job that he really liked. He worked for me, and I had to fire him because I didn't want him to be an architect, too, because he didn't really have his eyes set on it – he wanted to be an engineer. Boeing made him an engineer. My other children – my number three son wanted to go into the Marine Corps, but because of my problem with the blood disease that I have, which is what's called Von Willebrand disease, it's a factor eight, a clotting factor, he couldn't go into the service.

But they took me, though, and found out I almost bled to death, and that's when they really said, "How'd you get into the Marine Corps?" I says, "I just signed up for it." And one of the funniest things that ever happened to me was when I was in Vietnam on my second tour in 1969 was when the Sergeant Major calls me out of the field and he says, "You've got an emergency letter here, you've got to answer it right away." So I went back to the back to see what the problem was and he says, "Here, greetings from the President, you've just been drafted." I got my draft notice in 1969, and I'd already been in for three years, and I still have that at home somewhere.

Interviewer
So you were an active member of the Marines when you got your draft notice?
Terry Reid
Yes, they're a little slow.
Interviewer
So with these patrols, sometimes you'd go out in the evening, and sometimes you'd be gone for two weeks?
Terry Reid
Couple weeks.
Interviewer
And then how long before you'd have to go out again?
Terry Reid
I would always volunteer. Whoever was going out, I'd go with them. In the daytime I'd be there taking care of administrative stuff, and I hated being an administer. I wanted to be around the action; the time went faster. And of course one day when they blew up our ammo dump, I wasn't too healthy that day. But other than that, the rest of the time I was in good spirits. I didn't worry. They'd hit me, but I'm an Irishman – I duck.
Interviewer
When you weren't in danger you'd just walk back to the base?
Terry Reid
Generally. Either that, or we'd get a deuce and a half to pick us up and bring us back in. Most of the time we'd march back in.
Interviewer
You talked about clearing villages with the ROK Marines. Did you ever have to clear a village with just your regular guys? Tell us about that.
Terry Reid
Yes, that becomes kind of scary because you never know who the enemies were. When I came back from Vietnam, I couldn't even go into the American Legion or the VFW because we were "baby killers," and it wasn't until about two months ago that I said, "I'm not a baby killer." It wasn't until a couple of months ago that my psychologist, she says, "Did you ever kill anybody?" I said, "I'm sure I did." "How about babies?" And that's when it hit me, that I killed babies. The reason I say "babies," they're probably five to eight years of age – we were being overrun by the enemy, and they used these children to carry satchel charges. They'd tape their mouths over, and of course when they're coming through you didn't know who had the satchels, but you had to shoot everybody. And that's one of those things I'm not too proud about. I was able to put it so far back in I didn't even remember.

It wasn't until one of the other members of our veteran's group had mentioned it also, and it really hit me at that time, it shook me loose. And it's funny what the mind can do – it can put anything away, and it will store for a period of time, and then it will come up and haunt you for the rest of your life. And when I look at the young babies today, my grandchildren, it really, really hurts real hard. But going out on patrol with these young Americans, I really enjoyed their attention to duty. When you told them to do something, they would do it. You didn't have to, "Hey, come on, do it. Why don't you just do it?" You only had to tell 'em once, and a lot of times they were able to catch it by natural reflexes. And the team that I worked with, or any of the Marines that I worked with, they were like clockwork – they were thinking ahead of time.

When you're out there by yourselves marching in the boonies and you're looking for the enemy, it don't take too long to find them, or they'll find you. And I was thankful to have six of my platoon that didn't smoke, and the only reason I liked the ones that don't smoke is because then the enemy could not find us at night, but if you light a match or smoke a cigarette, he could see it for yards, and you could smell it, of course. But that's why I enjoyed people who didn't smoke, and we were able to make it back because of that reason. But it's so funny, if you were to take a cigarette and smoke it off in the distance, oh, about 200 yards, you could still see the butt end of that cigarette – if you sat there long enough, you could definitely see it. And a lot of the Vietnamese did not smoke, that I ran into, because that's how they could find us. And we had some good times together; we had some sad times together.

The sad times, I guess, were let go by some of our levity that we could just... be comedians. We were always happy. It was better to be happy than to be sad. But to give you an example of that was, there was time we were back in the rear – and of course when we were in the rear it was nice, we got to eat three good meals a day instead of maybe one or two out of a can in the field – but we had this young – I called him a hick, he was from Tennessee – when he first came into the Marine Corps, it was the first time he ever wore shoes in his life. And I used to tease him, I said, "Country, where's your boots?" He says, "Oh, I left them in the hooch, they're hurtin' my feet today." I said, "How can they hurt your feet when you just change gravel in them all the time, you don't wear socks?" And he was sharp as a fox, though.

And in Da Nang we had a big compound where we had all of our equipment and all of the officers that were there,

and his job was to go around and burn the crappers after every day, and he'd always take one of the tankers trucks. And I told him one day, I said, "Country, take tanker truck Number 1, and go burn the crappers." And he went and did it, no problem. I was going to lunch, and then all of the sudden I heard a big explosion, and it was over in the Officers' country, and all I could see was a big gulf of black smoke, and the sirens went off, and we thought it was incoming.

So I went back to work to secure the perimeter around the shop, and the Warrant Officer came up to me, and he says, "Reid, who'd you send out to burn the crappers?" I said, "Country." "Oh, man, not Country. I just promoted him the other day, he's going to lose it." I said, "Why?" He says, "The Major was out in the crapper, and you know how many times he loves to smoke his Cuban cigars? He was smoking a Cuban cigar, but he forgot, and he'd always throw his cigarettes into the crappers to put 'em out." And so at that time Country pulled up and I said, "Country, what are you doing?" And he said, "I'm just putting truck Number 2 back." I said, "Truck Number 2? I told you take truck Number 1." "Oh, it didn't start." And I said, "Oh, no, you didn't, did you?" "Did what?" "What did you burn the crappers with?" "Oh, the stuff that was in Number 2. I don't know what it was, but it sure burned fast."

It was aviation fuel instead of the diesel fuel. So when the Major threw that cigar of his down there for the last time, it blew him right out of the top of the roof, and we had to medevac him to Japan to the burn ward, and as we say, "Couldn't have happened to a nicer guy." And when the gunner comes up he says, "How long you been a PFC, Country?" "Oh about a week, I guess." "Tomorrow you'll be promoted to Lance Corporal E3. You got rid of the Major." So we got a new Major in after him who was actually worse than the one we had before, who was Major Rob.

Interviewer

Most of these experiences occurred during your first deployment over there?

Terry Reid

Couple of deployments, yes. The last one was pretty easy – we didn't do too much "snooping and pooping," as we used to call it, but we had to start picking all the stuff up and bringing it out of country. Third Marine Division was shutting down, and all the people were coming back to the West Coast. It was a fun time but a sad time thinking of all the work and men that we'd lost through the years in Vietnam, and what was it for? To come home to a country that didn't even want to have anything to do with us; it was kind of disappointing. I had envisioned it would be a little different. They put me on the drill field, and I lasted less than 30 days because the way they were teaching we couldn't even discipline 'em. Of course a foot's a good disciplinarian, but you couldn't touch the men, or you'd get a Congressional Investigation on you right away. But I really feel that we wanted to win that war... but the government didn't.

I won't be political because I don't like that even to this day, but when you don't have the people in the right places to help us. My last year in Vietnam was carrying an M16 with a wooden block in it so you couldn't fire it. And you had no ammunition. But my men were the only ones that carried a red magazine inside their chambers, and we always had one round loaded. I wasn't giving up my weapon for nothin', and they weren't either. Just because some General says we have to do it? No. I don't want to be committing suicide over here even though that's what I found out why I volunteered to go back over three times, I was trying to commit suicide because I was so wasted from what I'd seen happening to some of our men. Some of the other young men that are going to be here, they'll tell you probably about it. I won't because I live it daily, and it's just complete scary. I lost my first wife over this particular item and all my five children because they couldn't put up with their father or their husband.

I was divorced after 22 years of marriage. My children wouldn't talk to me. They didn't want to visit me. But after years and years, they can see that their father is coming around a little more all the time. I'm probably closer to my children now than I've ever been in my life, even though I had to lose one son to do that. I'm married to a wonderful woman now that I've been married to also 22 years, and she understands it. Her husband was a Reserve Marine in Korea, and he lost his leg after being there three weeks, and he came home. He had a million-dollar injury, so he came home. We've been married for 22 years, and she's come to understand more about PTSD than I have probably because she knows how I'm building up and when I'm going to have an outburst.

And a lot of these other veterans will talk to you, will tell you what they're going through with this PTSD. It doesn't go away. My biggest problem today is that these young men coming back from Iraq are not getting the proper treatment that we have been able to get. And we always said to ourselves that these young men coming back today will have a parade where they like it or not because we know what they've been through – we know how they feel. I have met some wonderful men coming back today. I look at them and see that they're going through the same problems that we had. Trying to adjust – trying to have a community that adjusts for them to come back to.

And if I had my poll, George Wahlen was a great man, I met him the first day I went to the VA Hospital here in Salt Lake. It was a bunch of Second World War veterans talking, and I used to like going to listen to the stories they'd tell. And this one gentleman came up, and he hadn't introduced himself to us at all, and he came over to me, and he says, "Hey, Sonny, are they taking good care of you here at the hospital?" And I said, "Yes, very good care." "Is there anything we can do for ya?" I said, "Yeah, help the veterans coming back from Iraq, please." And he says, "Well, I guess I ought to do that because I own this place." It wasn't until six months later when we had our wall in for the Vietnam veterans in Provo, this young man stood up and talked. I didn't know who he was until I saw him. It

was George Wahlen himself, and he was this young man that I was talking to at the hospital, and he said, "If you need any help, come to my office and I'll take care of it." And I was, like, "Oh, sure, yeah." And sure enough, any time I had any problem, I'd send 'em to George, and he would take care of 'em personally. What a great man he was. Now that's my hero.

Interviewer

You were over in Vietnam during the withdrawal. Tell us about that.

Terry Reid

It was hard trying to gather all this equipment up that we had over there, but I had a crew that was also in the background, and we didn't know what we were doing, but I kind of figured it out for myself. We got it over to bring this equipment in, and it was quite a bit of equipment; radios and what have you, vehicles. And they're all being rebuilt. And I said, "What the heck are we rebuilding this stuff just to ship it back to the States?" But we didn't ship it back to the States; we left it for the North Vietnamese to take over. I guess they figured it was cheaper to do that than send it back, but they got a lot of good material. The South Vietnamese, they didn't know what was going to happen.

Of course, this was long before the pullout; it was two years, actually, before the pullout. But in 1973 I went over there, and it was just the same time that the Paris Peace Talks were going on, and they were having a hard time adjusting for everything for them, and we were getting worried about POWs coming out of the north. And I had the opportunity, in April of '75, to be one of those to be an escort for a couple of POWs coming out. I had a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy that was one of those that came out, and you just can't believe how thankful they were to see us and how thankful we were to see them. To see the punishment that they went through and had to feel physically but more so mentally. And I sometimes wonder about some of them that came back, if they even made it back... to full activity.

But every hero that I've seen has not come back alive. We left 58,000 military personnel there dead. And what did it give our country? Nothing. That's a lot of men dead. But a lot of men there served diligently for this country. And I was lucky to have two other Canadians serving with me and I said, "Why did you join the Marine Corps?" And they said, "Because we love the U.S." And to this day, they've taken up citizenship, and they remain here in the United States. Everybody says, "Well, why didn't you go to Canada? You had dual citizenship." I said, "I'm fighting for this country, not running from it." The only thing I really have found out in my own heart, that you had to make a decision to go to Canada, I had to make a decision to stay, and both of those had to have been hard. But some day – a lot of people forget what has happened and what's going on in the world today. I don't know if it's going to get any better or not.

Interviewer

If you were to give a message to future generations about your service and what you've witnessed, what would you say?

Terry Reid

I would serve my country no matter what. Even if it was voluntarily or even going into the Service, it's the best education you can get. I, myself, have graduated from College of Hard Knocks. I haven't had my education. I made sure my children got it and also all of my children that they ought to volunteer for Service. But my one son that wanted to, couldn't go, and it just broke his heart. His older brothers have the same disease as I have where you bleed a lot when you get cut. And my daughter would even go if they'd let her. They're all getting up in their late 30s now, and now they're thinking more about their families than anything. But for the youth of this generation, you go to see the world. That's right. But you can get an education out of that alone, just being amongst the people. I never looked back twice what I did for our country and why I served – even to this day I volunteer for things. Right now I have got one of the best volunteer jobs, I think, in the world. I work with the Autistic people at the Development Center in American Fork, and it's just been one joy for me to give service to them and to see how much service they give to me also. And I think when you give, you receive more than you give.

Interviewer

When you think of Vietnam, what was the objective?

Terry Reid

Yes, we were given objectives and a mission to occur. And sometimes they took place, and sometimes they didn't. Intelligence, we used to laugh every time we'd get an intelligent report. "They're going to be coming out of the northeast at 2200 tomorrow night." There was nobody in the area. Intelligence came from our people, but it's like everything else – one tells something, and the story gets changed halfway down the loop, and the next thing you know you're battling 200,000 men. And how's a squad supposed to take care of that? And we used to also say it's the trickle-down effect. It's almost like politicians when they're trying to tell them what they're trying to do, but we have assigned jobs to do and what to take out and what to clear. Search and clear was mainly search and burn, you might say. And mama-san was always in the way. With the Koreans, they didn't really care about people. The Orientals don't really care about themselves – they don't care about death or killing and maiming. That was a hard thing that I had to see, was that people were just dedicated to killing people. And the South Koreans were no

different than the Vietnamese. I'd say, "Why did you shoot mama-san?" "Well, she VC sympathizer." But if I were to stand between that woman and that Korean, I would be killed if I tried to save her life because that's how dedicated they are in their beliefs to get rid of these Vietnamese. And I had to watch myself what I said to the Vietnamese and to the Koreans both because if I objected to what they were doing, they would point that weapon at me with no problem at all. So you had to watch yourself and watch your back. And there's only two of us Americans that were worth to the Koreans: a Master Sergeant and myself. And thankful I didn't have to learn the language that well other than to get their attention.

Interviewer

And you guys were acting as advisors for the Koreans?

Terry Reid

Correct. You never seen a bunch of nuts trying to drive a vehicle. We had 72 brand-new trucks that came to the United States that we gave to them. They had to drive from White Pier, White Beach, all the way to Hoi An and An Hoa which is about 30 miles. Out of the 78, I think we got 60 there, the rest were totaled in that 30-mile drive, and then we had to completely rebuild them. It was great – we had a lot of spare parts there.

Interviewer

What were your views at the beginning of the war before you enlisted?

Terry Reid

At the beginning, I thought it was necessary that we go over there and help these people out. But we always had the feeling that they didn't want to be helped out. I think they could've handled it themselves. There were a few things that are a little touchy in my mind. The outcome of it, everybody says, "Some people made money." No, we didn't make money. You never hear about the Golden Triangle. There was a lot of things that aren't brought up. I can remember when Johnson says, "We don't have anybody in Cambodia or Laos." And I says, "Boy, did I make a wrong turn on the freeway then." And now it's come out, since everything's been lifted, some of the things that we thought were kind of fishy were fishy. And I hate to say it about any President, but I couldn't support our President at that time. I had a hard time. Even his son-in-law was one of my Cos, and we definitely couldn't see eye to eye. Now that we're back as one family, now, I guess you might say, all this stuff has been pushed under carpet, and we'll never know the outcome of it.

We'll never know how many POWs we really have out there. A lot of 'em were sent to Siberia, and we'll never see 'em again. I'm thankful to be home, to be in a country, for the most sake, is safe. When 9/11 came, a lot of us volunteered to go back and help the country wherever we had to go. And they used to laugh at us when we called up the headquarters' Marine Corps. And I knew who was on the desk at the time, a couple of them were some of the troopers that I served with, and he says, "Hey, Terry, you'll be in B Company." And I said, "What do you mean B Company?" "Be there when they go over, be there when they come back. You can't go over this time." I would've loved to have gone into Iraq, a lot of these young men that you're going to be talking with, a lot of them would've gone, just to be part of it – to see something that was going to be accomplished. Hopefully they will have the democracy there, but I can't second-guess on that.

Interviewer

The Korean man, Bob, that you nicknamed, you said he was your "soul mate." What makes a soul mate? What did that mean to you?

Terry Reid

He was a very personable person. He was family oriented; he was married when he went from Korea. He volunteered. He had a wife and one child at that time, and we'd sit around and talk about our families and how much they meant to both of us. And from then, wherever we went, even when he went back to Korea and I came back to the United States and I found out from one of my friends that he'd moved to the States, I was hoping I'd be able to find him. When I got to meet his wife and family I could see how much his family really meant to him, and at that time it kind of brought myself together and see how much my family meant to me also at that time. My wife I was married to – she's the one who got me involved with the veterans when we were living in Pocatello, Idaho – I was having all kinds of problems with my mind and flashbacks and what have ya, and I was getting mean. I would spend 17, 18 hours at work, and then I'd go home, get up in the morning and do the 17 hours again, six days a week and forget the family. I was afraid to talk to the family because my sons were at the age they wanted to know, "Daddy, what did you do during the war?" and it was very hard to tell them what I did. How do you tell your children that you assassinated people? Because that's all I was was a glorified assassin. How do you tell your children that and try to teach them the same principles of life that they should be doing?

Before I went to Vietnam and into the Service, I'd served a two-year mission for the LDS Church. I had the opportunity to go to Ireland, to the birthplace of my parents. My father was born on a ship coming across from Ireland when they brought his 15 brothers and sisters. And I wonder why I served that mission knowing that someday I may be taking someone's life. It just really helped me to get through a lot, even today. I'm very thankful to be a member of this wonderful country, the United States of America. And every time I get that chance to fly my flag, I'll fly it. I am proud, and I am proud of the people I served with. I'm proud of those who have passed on, too.

I'm very thankful for this opportunity to give my side and to pay tribute to those of my men that didn't have the opportunity to talk for themselves. I lost more than I gained in people alone. I would never go back to Vietnam again because the area where the Koreans and I worked is now a high-class... vacation spot now in old Vietnam. And I look at the men that we left there in that one area. Did we fight to make this vacation land for them? We paid for it with our lives.

Interviewer

When you were in that dense humidity and heat, can you describe that?

Terry Reid

The sights and smells of Vietnam are different than what we'd smell here. They'll set me off if I smell 'em. Believe it or not, diesel fuel is the first thing that sets me off. I was around it all the time. The other thing that sets me off is blood. Not the sight of it, the smell of it. The smell of feces. People kind of laugh at me. My wife at the time could not figure out why I would not change my children's diapers, but that smell would set me off into a rage because it brought memories of Vietnam back. There's several things that will set me off: diesel fuel, feces, blood, occasionally sweat; when I get all clammy and sweaty and you feel it. Vietnam is not only hot, it is cold, too. Everybody thinks, "How can the tropics be cool?"

When it gets down to about 70 degrees and you're putting on everything you can find to keep yourself from shivering because it's soaking wet. But it really surprised me. I said, "Boy, I wish I was back in California where it was warm." And here it was 70 there and 70 in the States. But it's a beautiful country, it really is. Before we got there, there were some beautiful buildings that were totally alienated in Tet of '68. The University, the Cathedral, all for no reason. To save it for our kids, today they could even be traveling these places and seeing those various things if they hadn't had been destroyed. The French built a lot, and the French couldn't take care of the Vietnamese. Why did we think we could take care of 'em?

Interviewer

Is it hard for a soldier to recognize a Viet Cong sympathizer?

Terry Reid

A lot of times we had to put things aside because we would try to judge people by the way they looked. And sometimes you could tell, sometimes you just had to give them the benefit of the doubt, and sometimes you'd make some mistakes because of it. It's hard to try to picture the enemy. Some weren't the enemy that we probably killed. A lot of friendly fire was shot – even our own people got killed, but someday it will be worked out. But some of us probably judged wrong when we should've judged the other way.

Interviewer

But you're patrolling and you're trying to identify the enemy, what are you looking for?

Terry Reid

If they're carrying a weapon you know that they're generally VC or how they're dressed or even how they smell sometimes. And that's the hardest, to try to identify 'em real quick. And I didn't enjoy working with the South Vietnamese because you never know who you could trust there either. And I'm glad I could pick 'em out as long as I had the Koreans there. Like I said, it could be either one of 'em. So I guess it would be on their side, they're going to have to make a defense of. But you have to be real fast when you see 'em pop-up. And I'd always say if they're popping up, they better be staying low, and that's what we'd hit. To walk through a village, sure, someone would show up. I could remember when John Wayne made the movie, "The Green Beret," and we just sat in an open field watching that movie one night just laughing our fool heads off on all the things that they'd figured what the Vietnamese looked like and what Da Nang looked like. It looked like a beautiful city with nothing but big fancy hotels and that everybody went home at night. It doesn't go that way. I felt bad for John Wayne for even making that film because I don't think he really wanted to do it because it didn't portray the people like they really were.

Interviewer

What do you have to say about post-traumatic stress disorder?

Terry Reid

Post-traumatic stress disorder is real to me. I've had it since 1968. The 23rd of December of '68. Our compound was shelled pretty badly that night. We had bunkers around our hooches, but it was safer to stay outside and watch the rockets coming in than to go into the bunkers. I was sergeant at that time, and I had one of my corporals inside, and he wasn't out amongst the rest of us. And I said, "Where's Collier?" "He's in the hooch; he's drunk as a skunk." So I said, "I better go in and get him." So I picked him up, and as I was doing a fireman's carry out of the hooch, our hooch got hit with an RPG. And I had him over my shoulders, and all of the sudden that round went off and hit. We could just feel the shockwave, and I got pushed right over. He was lying on top of me – what was left of him – and I could feel the blood dripping down my neck, and it was warm. That's when I realized he was dead. But as I rolled over, and he fell off, he was cut completely in half by shrapnel. He actually saved my life. Even though I was wounded with a few fragments of shrapnel in the neck, I went back to work. Never thought about it again. I thought I was over it. It will go away. It didn't go away. Every night I had the same dream. And to this day, I still have that

dream. But if it hadn't had been for the people that I have met, I don't think I would've made it through myself. That is why I went back to Vietnam so many times. I was actually trying to commit suicide for my feeling of guilt that if I'd left him there, maybe he would've lived.

We always carry that guilt, "what if." In his case, he never knew what hit him. Maybe he's luckier than me, I don't know. But I still have that fear. I sometimes stay awake at night. If I'm feeling really bad, I know I'm going to have a flashback or something, so I have to keep upbeat. And sometimes you'll feel depressed, especially in the wintertime, and the biggest problem with depression with me is I love sunlight, and you don't get too much sunlight during the wintertime. So most of us with PTSD, we'd bunker in. We become recluses; we don't come out. We don't even call our friends unless we actually have to. But then one of your friends calls you, wants to know how your day is going, and he could tell right away, just from the sound of you, how good it's going. My wife knows to stay away from me when I have one of these moods. My former wife did not; she had to find out what was bothering me. And some of these flashbacks were terrifying for her because I can remember one evening having a flashback and grabbing a hold of her, and she finally got me awake, and I had my hand on her throat choking her.

And I think that's when I really realized I did have a problem. Nobody else had the same problem, nobody else has it. When I went to the first meeting – thankful to my wife – she says, "You need some help." She went to a parade, and I went to work. It was a Memorial Day parade in Pocatello. I went to work that day, closed the doors behind me and blocked out all of the world as I thought. I didn't want to see people marching in the street, didn't want to see the flag, I just wanted to bunker in. During that day, she met a couple veterans from Vietnam marching; there was only about three or four, along with this big dude that was six-foot-two-inches tall and about 38 inches across. I got to meet that man the next day when he came into my office. The door opened, and all I could see was a shadow, like the sun went out, and in walked this young man. One of the best friends I've ever had in my life. His name is Captain Haworth. He was a team leader for the Veteran's Administration in Pocatello. I said, "What are you doing here?" I didn't know who he was. He said, "You're Terry Reid?" I said, "Yes." "You're coming with me." I said, "No, I can't leave here. My boss won't like it." "He's the one that called. You're going with me." And for the next six months I spent every day after work with him. He went through everything. I said, "There's nothing wrong with me, everybody else's screwed up."

I went to group, and I found out that everybody else was screwed up, that I was screwed up, and they were just like me. And I'm very thankful for my wife doing that because I wouldn't have done it on my own. And it was shortly thereafter she left me. That was probably the hardest thing I ever had to lose. But now she knows how hard my wife has it now, and so the two of them are in communication, and the both are working on me, and they're helping me. And so are my kids and my grandkids, too. And it makes the tour a little better. But for those that are coming back, I really worry about them. I have a neighbor whose son has got post-traumatic stress disorder. He knows he's got it, and he's tried to commit suicide a couple of times. And that's the hardest thing I have to do – I volunteer my time with the police departments here in Utah. I teach two classes for each one of the patrol officers for crisis intervention teams, and the two classes are post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide.

Because that is the biggest problem we have for the police departments now – the suicide rates are high, and post-traumatic is real high. They see things that you'll never see, and they live the same life like I did. Fast and furious, and you're seeing danger all the time, and you're seeing sights that nobody should see. And I am very thankful to those police officers who give me the opportunity to ride with 'em so I can see how they handle the veterans. And I will say, unequivocally, that those police officers know what they're doing when they handle a former veteran. They don't try to tell them that they're a veteran also. They just try to help 'em through it. They know what they've been through, and most of the times I've seen that they've given them quite a good break after they've talked to them. And I'm thankful for the opportunity to have this service that I'm able to give back to my community because I know how those police officers feel and the danger that they go into. I'm just thankful to be alive today. Life is so sweet. Life is so short. And grandkids and great-grandkids are just wonderful.