



**Jim Scott**

Corporal

Marines

Radio Operator

Salt Lake City, Utah

**Interviewer**

Your full name.

**Jim Scott**

James, middle name is Brent, Scott.

**Interviewer**

And where were you born?

**Jim Scott**

Salt Lake City, Utah.

**Interviewer**

And where'd you go to high school?

**Jim Scott**

Skyline.

**Interviewer**

And what year did you graduate?

**Jim Scott**

1966.

**Interviewer**

When and how did you go into the Marines?

**Jim Scott**

I was being drafted and I joined the Marines in August of '65.

**Interviewer**

How did you feel when you got your draft notice?

**Jim Scott**

I was already in the Marines when I got my draft notice.

**Interviewer**

You said you knew you were going to be drafted?

**Jim Scott**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

So how did you feel about knowing you were going to get drafted?

**Jim Scott**

It was something I was expecting.

**Interviewer**

So you went into the Marines. You were happy to go into the Marines?

**Jim Scott**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

You can give me bigger answers. Where'd you go to basic training?

**Jim Scott**

Went to San Diego November 1st of 1966 and took the boot camp in San Diego and then ITR in Camp Pendleton, California in the San Onofre area and then radio training in main side Camp Pendleton, California.

**Interviewer**

When you got into the Marines was it what you expected? Did you expect this?

**Jim Scott**

I had no clue what I was getting myself in for. I had no idea where I was headed when we got off the plane. We got on a bus and they took us to San Diego on a Navy bus.

**Interviewer**

When did you realize you were really in the Marines?

**Jim Scott**

I think it was about the third word out of the DI's mouth when he said, "Get off the bus... and you already should've been off."

**Interviewer**

So when did you get orders for Vietnam?

**Jim Scott**

I got orders for Vietnam, the first time was November of 1967 and somebody else had been where I was stationed at longer and they gave 'em to him. He wanted get out of where we were stationed. And the time when I went to Vietnam was November of '68 and I got a 30-day leave and then I was in Camp Pendleton from January 1st to January 22nd of 1969 and then I flew into Kadena Air Base. And then from Kadena I flew into Da Nang where I was stationed with the 5th Com Battalion Radio Relay and Construction Company of 3rd Amphibious Battalion or Marine Division, sorry.

## **Interviewer**

Tell us about getting off that plane. Was it a civilian airline or how did you get there?

### **Jim Scott**

It was a Pan Am. It had civilian hostesses. When I flew into Da Nang I flew in with some returnees from R and R and it was kind of interesting. They called me down when I was going in there because the other people on the plane were a bunch of young kids that just got out of boot camp and out of ITR and they were nervous as can be.

## **Interviewer**

You were nervous too?

### **Jim Scott**

Oh, yeah. We flew in, as we approached Da Nang they were burning out a helicopter, two of three of them on each side of the runway as we landed in Da Nang.

## **Interviewer**

These helicopters had been hit?

### **Jim Scott**

They had airlifted them down out of LZ's that had been hit or went down and they were burning them out of the wiring and then scrapping the aluminum.

## **Interviewer**

That must have been frightening.

### **Jim Scott**

We weren't sure what was going on. And then we got the routine, the instructions if we got hit on the way in, what they would do and what we should do if we got hit.

## **Interviewer**

What were those instructions?

### **Jim Scott**

If we started taking rockets as we were landing, that they would take back off without stopping on the runway. And if we were stopped and we were unloading, that we were to run to certain bunkers that were close to the runway and not to go back behind the jets until they were completely off.

## **Interviewer**

So you got off the airplane and what was it like?

### **Jim Scott**

It was... relatively hot. I managed to get to Da Nang, I think it was about five days after the 22nd and it was a sunny day except for we flew into cover and you needed your sunglasses, it was kind of white sandy with a lot of foliage and smoke from different places.

## **Interviewer**

So radio operator, where did they assign you?

## **Jim Scott**

I was assigned to the 5th Combat Battalion that was in Da Nang and we had approximately 25 shots all around I corps area. Four or five of those were right on the DMZ, the rest were in the middle or there's a couple right around Da Nang; Monkey Mountain would be one and Hill 22 and Hai Van Pass was one of them. Chu Lai, Phu Bai, Camp Carroll or LZ Stud or known as Vandergrift if you were in the Army. And LZ, Con Thien, it was a fire base, it was nothing but white sand with gun in placements, a combination of Army and Marine field artillery.

## **Interviewer**

So tell us about that.

## **Jim Scott**

About a week after I got in Da Nang and I received my machine gun and my flak jacket and a helmet and canteen 72 gear, the first place we went was to Monkey Mountain to guard duty. And it was like 6,000 feet just outside of Da Nang and you had to take a mountain road. And we got up there and spent the night guarding this area because there was only four marines in the LZ or compound area. They pointed out bunkers and showed where the flares and other things were at in case we got hit and where the foxholes and other stuff was.

## **Interviewer**

When was the first time you came under fire?

## **Jim Scott**

The first time I came under fire was somewhere between... it would've been like March 1st. There was a zapper that hit the deep water pier and it set off secondary explosions, lifted two LSD's and took them out of the water and put them in the middle of the road. And so our reactionary platoon, we loaded up on a six-by-six and drove to where the deep water pier was at and secured that and a bridge and started pulling bodies off the bridge and we were put in a position to secure the bridge so in case they came in force to take out the bridge we'd be the guard on the bridge as we pulled these bodies off.

## **Interviewer**

So did they start firing?

## **Jim Scott**

The only thing I know is that we had shells going off all around us and secondary concussions going off and we sat around the bridge for a day and a half in quick fighting holes or what we could find to hide behind a sandbag just in case they came down in force because they'd hit four or five installations down south and a couple up north. Not as severe as Tet of '68 though.

## **Interviewer**

Tell us more about there.

## **Jim Scott**

Monkey Mountain was an installation where we had multiple installations, Marine land battalion above us and then our radio and also our radar units and we had Air Force incoming radar there. And a couple times, later on in the tour of duty, we had about a 30-second firefight where we caught some NVA, we think they were NVA, walked into our LZ and we saw 'em coming through the clouds of mist or cloud and we opened fire on 'em, they opened fire... it lasted for about 30 seconds. Went through two magazines and it was over with. No body count, nobody wounded. Just a whole bunch of spent ammo.

## **Interviewer**

You were assigned a truck weren't you? You told me some fun stories about that.

## **Jim Scott**

When I was TAD'd to the 3rd Marine Division in Dong Ha and we would do a mine patrol in the morning to go out and do a patrol of the road, clearing the road; it's called a road sweep or sweeping the road. And a couple of times we found some IUD's and other hazardous stuff. While I was driving from Dong Ha to a place called LZ Stud there's a bridge, a pink bridge, and I picked up two Marines as a checkpoint and they were from the first Marine sniper platoon and they were carrying a sniper rifle and a M79 grenade launcher and I had them in the back of my truck because I was carrying parts to my radio platoon up in Stud. And we received a couple of rounds from an AK-47 across the hood of the truck and they fired a grenade launcher over my head and discharged their sniper rifle and started banging on the roof of the truck to stop. And I went about a mile down the road and then 'em off. They wanted to go see who was shooting at 'em.

## **Interviewer**

What was the most intense firefight you were in?

## **Jim Scott**

I think our 40-second firefight was about the most intense... up on Monkey Mountain.

## **Interviewer**

What were Marines talking about? Were there demonstrations back home?

## **Jim Scott**

You would have to have had a television back at your main side and it would come on at like four o'clock in the afternoon. So if you weren't at the main side you didn't hear anything at all. I mean you'd have radio. They didn't let us listen to anything at all like that. We had our own radio or tapes that we had from home and our own records or little cassette tapes. And we listened to Charley Pride or Johnny Cash. We had no idea about Woodstock until I came back from Vietnam.

## **Interviewer**

So how long were you in Vietnam?

**Jim Scott**

For a year. I was there from the 22nd of January 'til the 22nd of January, both coming--

Interviewer

'68?

**Jim Scott**

--of '69 and January of 1970.

**Interviewer**

So you were there for Tet?

**Jim Scott**

No.

**Interviewer**

What happened there?

**Jim Scott**

I had orders from that to go in '67 which would've put me right in the middle of Tet and this other marine took my orders and it was just for a general slot instead of separate orders. And he took that and he was in Vietnam when I came back. He extended and stayed in Vietnam.

**Interviewer**

Tell us funny things that happened.

**Jim Scott**

One of my friends on, when we were up on Monkey Mountain for the 4th of July, he decided that he wanted to celebrate and he wrapped a bunch of pop flares and star clusters and parachute flares together and was gonna set 'em all off at one time. And we were all sitting around the LZ up on Monkey Mountain and he lit it off and when he set 'em off they all went flying at level with the ground, passing within inches of me and ducked. And we went through, shot off about a case of pop flares. And they called us on the radio and wanted to know if we'd been hit or if we were getting hit because of all the flares. The people downtown didn't understand it was the 4th of July.

**Interviewer**

What were holidays like? Were there other holidays you celebrated in Vietnam?

**Jim Scott**

We celebrated New Years. Christmas, when I was in Vietnam in 1969 was a real quiet time. I had been TAD'd to another LZ that I was with, Korean Marines and it was kind of strange because I was TAD'd to this other unit and they were kind of really tight with each other, they didn't get along with anybody else even though we all went to the same Com school in Camp Pendleton, all were Marines. It was kind of different.

## **Interviewer**

Tell us about the Korean Marines. That's interesting.

## **Jim Scott**

They're kind of different. A little bit smaller but they had their own code that they ran by. And the ones I was with were, this is their boot camp or their training for real, for the war, is when they were in country, that was their ITR training. So a lot of them were young Korean Marines. There was a bunch of trainers there that we had that were interpreters for us and we were using old school radios and stuff.

## **Interviewer**

Did you ever get in trouble in Vietnam?

## **Jim Scott**

The only trouble I think I got into is when I was with the 3rd Marine Division in Dong Ha and I was the sergeant that was supposed to go around or the NCO that was supposed to take the crew and go clean all the toilets and clean the other things and burn the excrement with diesel fuel. And we had set up all these 50-gallon drums that we had pulled out of there and stacked 'em up then dumped diesel on 'em and lit 'em on fire. And it was during the monsoon season so the water table is up and bring up the diesel around. And then we left the fire around where this is at and went to the PX and we came back out and the fire had blown up our 50-gallon drum and it had engulfed this pond that had water in it. And it had diesel laying on it and it burned for four days until the Seabees and the aircraft people from the LZ came over there with some foam and put it out. They were afraid that it was going to travel underground and hit the fuel bladder about a mile away.

## **Interviewer**

So were you punished for that?

## **Jim Scott**

We were sent to another LZ. Right after that is the 3rd Marine Division, it was around October, was pulling out of Vietnam. So that left me up there in Dong Ha and its staff with a small group of people... about seven.

## **Interviewer**

Did you have a girl at home at the time? Anybody you were writing?

## **Jim Scott**

I had about four or five friends that I would write to and they would write back and I'd get some of the gossip from in town, what was going on. And in around Christmas they would send us some stuff like that, like fruitcake and cookies and other stuff they made. And I think fruitcake, everybody cracks up about fruitcake but fruitcake was the first thing that disappeared; it got used really fast, where I was really kind of surprised; just bring it out and put it out and within hours it was gone. When normally you could keep one for ten or fifteen years.

## **Interviewer**

So you had friends at home you were writing to?

## **Jim Scott**

I had a bunch of friends, a couple of them were ex-Marines and one of them was stationed in Camp Pendleton until like July of '69 and then he got out of the Marines.

### **Interviewer**

What were some really interesting memorable days that you had over there?

## **Jim Scott**

I think the worst day was the day with the LZ. The best one was when we got a chance to go to a Bob Hope Show or work and so we went. Hill 22 was right directly over the Freedom Hill Exchange in Da Nang and they had the Bob Hope Show there and they flew everybody from the Bob Hope Show off the aircraft carrier down into the LZ there at Freedom Hill Exchange. And we got to watch it from a ways away but you could hear all the way through Da Nang, the sound. And we got to meet a few of the people from the Bob Hope Show.

### **Interviewer**

Anybody we'd know?

## **Jim Scott**

I'm not sure of her name. She was the lady that co-starred with George Burns, I don't remember, her name was Wendy or something like that. But I think that was her star name or whatever.

### **Interviewer**

Tell us about the Bob Hope Show. People don't know how big, how elaborate they were. Tell us about that.

## **Jim Scott**

There was probably, looked like, from my vantage point, during the Bob Hope Show there was probably like 50,000 Marines, Navy guys, civilians, Army guys from as far south as they could come up. And it was a whole area and everybody bring their own chairs and set up their own chairs. There was no chairs so if you didn't bring your own chair; everybody managed to find a chair while they were in Vietnam unless you were a grunt and you didn't have any room on your backpack for that. But most everybody had a chair that they would figure out a way to make a chair out of somethin'. But it looked like a concert that you would see out at the soccer stadium or out at USANA, but a lot more. The outskirts, people were sitting in jeeps and there was security on every hilltop and on the mountainside in case some zapper got out there, nothin' would happen to 'em.

### **Interviewer**

So what was the noise like for that show? Tell us about the GI and how they reacted and what it meant to you?

## **Jim Scott**

They acted like normal jar heads. I had seen a couple of smaller U.S. shows here when I was up with the 3rd Marine Division and it was quite interesting. It was kind of relaxing to go to it, but then when you realized how many people were sitting down there and I was kind of paranoid when I was down at the Bob Hope. One because there was so many people around there and I figured if something was gonna happen it would, by Murphy's Law it would



happen, which it didn't do, but you know, you never know.

**Interviewer**

Did you enjoy the show?

**Jim Scott**

It was good. It was good. I had worked, when I was in Twentynine Palms, on Bob Hope's golf course during an April golf event that he'd have because we were closest to him from Twentynine Palms so we'd go down there and work his golf tournament a couple of times. It was kind of interesting, kind of funny guy.

**Interviewer**

So you did two tours in Vietnam?

**Jim Scott**

No, just one.

**Interviewer**

You had a gap between?

**Jim Scott**

Yeah, I spent most of my time after Camp Pendleton in Twentynine Palms, California. And going to Vietnam wasn't really scary. I had information on it and we had people there. I think the worst thing that happened or the worst I got scared when I was in Twentynine Palms is this weekend and it was a non-holiday weekend and I was just sittin' around the barracks because I was broke and the sergeant, major, came walking through the barracks and started rounding people up and taking 'em to the company area, the work area, and we started pulling in our trucks and pulling the green camo off and changing from the green camo to the desert camo and we worked that shift, I think like eighteen hours.

And then we got a break and then we got up at seven in the morning and went back and did it again. And we changed out fuel cans for water cans and fuel cans instead of just the fuel cans. For Vietnam we'd had about five cans for a vehicle and this other place that we were setting up for you'd have equal water and fuel cans. And we went to the company area to check on some orders or somethin' and the sergeant that was in charge, the duty NCO had the television on and there was a report about Israel being attacked by Jordan and the Seven Day War taking place and we'd had some C-130's show up and they had boarded some artillery and also land battalions during that time while we were changing our camouflage and we set up all our trucks on the grinder in this parking lot, had all our trailers hooked to the back of the trucks. All our vans stored in there and we had our sea bags packed and ready to go and we got almost ready to board C-130's and they told us to stand down, the war was over with.

**Interviewer**

Tell us about the little tricks that Marines and GI's would do to stay comfortable?

## **Jim Scott**

Most of the time we had a cot with a back end off or we had, in particular, when I was with the 3rd Marine Division I'd gone to Quang Tri for resupply and they had a garbage dump there that they took all the stuff that they were throwing away and inside this garbage dump was a white tent liner. And the hooches we used in Dong Ha and Da Nang were tin roofs so I took this tent liner and put it on the back of our hooch and we got a cable; we had all kinds of cable spools around so we took an old blanket and put it on top of the piece of plywood we put it on top of the cable spool and we made a card table out of that. And then I had bought a hammock from one of the local indigenous personnel and I put the hammock off of an engineering stake and kind of lay back during our off time.

## **Interviewer**

Was there a lot of drinking going on and things like that?

## **Jim Scott**

You would have your share, you know, after four o'clock in the afternoon unless you were on duty or on guard duty or something like that. You had plenty enough beer that you could go buy. Up north there wasn't any PX's unless you went south or north or you ran into a bunch of Seabees that were down by the boat docks. A couple of times we would go to a PX and buy us some stuff.

## **Interviewer**

What did you think of your officers? Did you have a good relationship with your officers?

## **Jim Scott**

Most of the officers that I was with, except for a few were relatively, really good Marines. There was a couple of them I had no use for, a couple of them... I really don't care to know where they're at. They're kind of a pain, you know? But you could say that about any type, it just depends on your situation at the time.

## **Interviewer**

What about your buddies? Your fellow Marines? Tell me about some of the friends you knew.

## **Jim Scott**

Yeah, after coming back, I lost track of them but there was a couple of them, the one that wrapped the pop flares together. He'd seem to have these weird ideas about stuff. And one time we'd gone to the Air Force compound across from ours and we had watched Atari. And he got it in his head he wanted a baby monkey for his pet. So we decided to go to where this tree was at with a grenade launcher and we didn't have a net to throw over the monkey so our next best thing was to knock down the tree. So we took the grenade launcher and there was about seven of us there and fired the grenade launcher, the tree fell down. My buddy Peanut Butter ran up and grabbed this monkey by the back of the neck, this baby monkey, and it turned around and bit him in the hand. He was trying to shake it loose and all the time the baby monkey was squealing because he had a hold of it. And the mama monkey came over and jumped on him, bit him around the neck. And he got rid of the little monkey and the mama monkey disappeared real quick. Other than he had to go for like 40 days down to the Delta Med to get his tetanus shot and rabies shots and monkey fever shots. And he soon lost interest in that. His nickname, Peanut Butter.

## **Interviewer**

Why was he called Peanut Butter?

### **Jim Scott**

He liked peanut butter. He'd put peanut butter on anything. And you know, it's one of those staples you have when, that everybody sends you. You could ask them for some Skippy peanut butter or some Jiffy peanut butter and you could get bread almost anywhere so peanut butter on bread or C-rats or K-rations; hotdogs with K-rations and hotdog buns. We managed to have a refrigerator almost anywhere I went. I wasn't like a grunt where I was out in the field marching around the mountains. I was fixed at a radio van in a bunker and so we had peanut butter and hotdogs. And a couple times, instead of boiling the hotdogs on a hot plate we decided to have a fire. And so during the daytime we lit a fire and got the coals real hot and sit around at night around these coals drinking beer and frying hotdogs.

## **Interviewer**

Did you have a nickname?

### **Jim Scott**

Hmm... I think my nickname, what they called me was "Scotty." I don't remember any other name besides that.

## **Interviewer**

How about the music? The play time, the fun time? Who's the guy you said next to Johnny Cash?

### **Jim Scott**

Charley Pride is a country and western singer. He did couple of 'em; we even listened to Merle Haggard and... a couple of other ones, Loretta Lynn. One of my best friends lived downtown Watts and we spent a lot of time down there when I was in Twentynine Palms so we had a lot of tapes of The Spinners, The Four Tops. So we had a mix besides country and western.

## **Interviewer**

Was marijuana a problem for any of the Marines?

### **Jim Scott**

If you wanted to find it and you had the time for it, you could find it. I know people that found it. And it'd mess you up just like anything else. Just pick your poison. When stuff happened, most people would drop out from any other substance thing like that and it was like, you know, you'd be right there instantly, and then as soon as it let off then you'd relax. But yeah, you could find that if you were into that type of thing.

## **Interviewer**

What were you radioing in or out? Can you give us an example?

### **Jim Scott**

The radio van that I would be working except for when I was with the Korean Marines was a Track-97. It had two parabolic reflectors and it worked off a microwave and the parabolic reflector would weigh about 900 pounds.

## **Interviewer**

So give us an example of some of the radio traffic you might be going through in a day.

### **Jim Scott**

Well when you would go take your van you would pull-- 'cause if it's radio relay in a construction company, we were in charge of taking cable all the way through Da Nang, all the way up to Dong Ha, up to Stud. And if you couldn't put a wire line out there, secure it, you would put one of these radio vans. So you would have two or three of them sitting around your LZ: two to receive and two to send back to where it originated from.

Or our hub was downtown Da Nang at the 3rd MAF which is 3rd Marine Amphibious Force. And they had four or five different radios that you would microwave to 'em. It was just the beginning of the microwave. And then they had 40 separate phone lines or channels that you could plug phone wires into it. So all the headquarters and all these outlying places that had wire from the hospitals or the LZ's or the airport would have these vans and it was a communication. And then it transferred the radio to Okinawa and then to Hawaii and then to the United States.

## **Interviewer**

So you were more of a technician. You weren't an operator were you?

### **Jim Scott**

Yeah, I was an operator but at that time when I first went in we had what they called a Mark-62 van. It used a regular 148.939 megahertz. And the Track-97 was ultra-high frequency. And the one using digital multiplexing to throw that all onto one line where the other one was radio frequency multiplexing.

## **Interviewer**

Give us an example of what you might be transmitting back and forth.

### **Jim Scott**

Everything you could imagine from orders, instructions, who was calling in; calling in for an LZ or calling in for a medevac once it hit company areas. All the reports you can imagine that they use right now. Some of it was right next to the headquarters' company or the headquarters of the generals that went in that were in charge of all the Marines and all the Army guys.

## **Interviewer**

So you could tell if something was really happening in the field?

### **Jim Scott**

Yeah.

## **Interviewer**

And how would that change the radio traffic?

### **Jim Scott**

It would get real busy and people would get really nervous. Especially the channels start getting real busy and

you'd have to start changing wires around 'cause different wires would break or the detectors on there would break so you'd have to prioritize which ones were more important than the other. The one that went to headquarters' company would go out a lot and we'd change out a detector and put it in there. Sometimes it would break for no reason at all, you couldn't figure out what it was, change it around, the part that wasn't working was working just fine, it was one of those Murphy's Laws where if it's going to wrong, it will.

**Interviewer**

So you only had to fire your weapon that one time in battle? Were there other times?

**Jim Scott**

The only time I ever had to fire my M-16 was that 40-second firefight and when I saw the cycle rate of fire, as soon as I found something else I put that away, locked it up, and used the other weapon that I had.

**Interviewer**

You didn't like the M-16?

**Jim Scott**

No.

**Interviewer**

Tell us why.

**Jim Scott**

It wasn't accurate and the whole time I was in the Marines except for when I went to Vietnam I'd been a trained rifle expert with an M-14. Different cycle rate of fire but it was more accurate and it was heavier; it weighed fourteen pounds where the M-16 weighed like about ten to fifteen pounds depending on the magazine you had. But the M-16 to me was more experimental and meant for close where if I was that close I didn't want to be anywhere near there. Where the weapon that I found after that 40-second firefight I found an AK-47 on a strike zone out in Con Thien. So as long as I was up north I was okay with that.

**Interviewer**

Did you get in trouble for that weapon?

**Jim Scott**

No. No, it disappeared just about the same time the 3rd Marine Division pulled out. And then being a radio operator and a truck driver at the same time and I started driving for my XO, I was issued a .45 so I had that on my side as well.

**Interviewer**

When you were a driver for your commanding officer, any things happen that were interesting with that?

**Jim Scott**

A few things. We got stuck out on a couple of LZ's that were abandoned because we had problems with our vehicle and we did some other things with vehicles. We had this wizard that decided that he wanted to make a dune buggy

out of a scrapped out M-91 jeep. And so we took some tires from some Seabees and traded them for a beer ration and a couple of other things and split the manifold and made this dune buggy and then we put a seal on the back end or a canvas seal on the back end and shined it up really nice and put fake numbers on it 'cause it was supposed to have been burned out. And everything was going fine for about six months and then it got in a crash and the MP's impounded it. The driver got in trouble for it, the XO didn't know anything about it. But you know.

**Interviewer**

So did you go out and have fun with this thing?

**Jim Scott**

No, we'd use that to go around to take the mail. And every so often, once a week, we had to go to Monkey Mountain and grab the crypto machine from there and same with this other LZ that I was at with the Korean Marines, we had to take the crypto machine and so they had to put two or three people in the jeep with it. So this thing was faster than the normal jeep that they had.

**Interviewer**

How old were you during that year in Vietnam?

**Jim Scott**

1970, or 1969 I would've been... what, 24?

**Interviewer**

You were 24?

**Jim Scott**

Uh-huh. I turned 20 in boot camp and got wacked a whole bunch of times. Everybody lined up. I thought I had escaped because Christmas was really close. And they called me up and said, "There's something you're not telling us."

And I go, "What is that?"

And he says, "Today's your birthday."

And I go, "It is?"

And he goes, "Yup. And you got this package for your birthday."

And my dad, even though I had sent him all these letters saying, "Do not send me any kind of candy or anything else." He was hell bent on sending me some homemade Christmas caramel that he'd make up from scratch. And inside this box was this like five pounds of homemade caramel. And it got given away immediately.

I knew what it would do, it would pull your teeth out if you bit into it. It was hard tack caramel. And so, to celebrate my birthday, everybody lined up in two lines and you had to run through it. That was your normal thing for your birthday. Where if you were in boot camp, if you got a letter from home from a girl, especially if they put perfume on it, the DI would smell it and he goes, "Oh, this is from so-and-so, this smells like something else."

And throw it at you and you had to grab it. If it hit the ground it was his. If you didn't grab that letter as it flew by you--he didn't hand it to you like this, he'd fling it like a card or something like that and you'd better had grabbed it. Couple of times I'd seen some guys waiting to see what they would, you know, what he had in there and he'd start flinging them like this, couple times it hit the ground.

### **Interviewer**

Tell us about your drill instructors or your sergeants at basic training.

### **Jim Scott**

One sergeant that was on the bus, met us at the bus, he stayed with us all the way through. There was a couple of corporals that were on the bus and as soon as we got to our company area the second day, they disappeared. But we had this one sergeant, he was like six-six and... looked like a football player and he looked like he could take you out real quick. And another one was about the same size as I was, looked squared away but he was kind of different. The sergeant that met us at the bus was just a regular buck sergeant, the other one was a staff. Then we had a gunnery sergeant and he seemed to me more like he didn't belong in the military. He was very smart and knowledge of everything.

### **Interviewer**

Were they tough? Tell us how tough they were.

### **Jim Scott**

They were relatively tough. They'd put you down on your knuckles for any reason; if you smiled or if you did something stupid.

### **Interviewer**

"Put you down on your knuckles," what does that mean?

### **Jim Scott**

That means you go down on your knuckles like that, with your knuckles on the grinder and they usually bleed and you would stay there, not doing push-ups, you would stay on your knuckles until they told you to get off. Or they'd put you down and say gimme a hundred push-ups or 25 or whatever it was.

### **Interviewer**

Tell people what "being short" is.

## **Jim Scott**

When I left Kadena Air Base we flew out of there, we couldn't leave there until you had a dress green uniform. And I had a bunch of civilian clothes that I could've put on but you had to be in military uniform to fly home. And it was on Pan Am. And when we got to the United States we landed at Oakland air station and if you had orders or your home address or you lived in Oakland Airfield area or San Francisco you'd get off the plane, but they wouldn't let anybody else off the plane. I could've got off the plane to go visit my friend Peanut Butter but they wouldn't let me off and it would've been a lot easier to get off there 'cause then it would've been direct flight into Salt Lake. They were afraid. Their excuse was that if we got off the plane we would be attacked by the people that were demonstrating at the airport.

## **Interviewer**

Was that the first you heard of the demonstrators? Really, at that time?

## **Jim Scott**

Yeah. They were, in fact, a couple after that, about a year or the ones that were coming back in the later part of '70, as soon as they got to Kadena they were given civilian clothes and they flew in without their uniforms on. Most of the traveling that I did, unless I was flying military standby I would wear a civilian uniform--or a civilian suit or Levi's. My favorite thing was Levi's, cowboy boots and an alligator golf shirt.

## **Interviewer**

When you were in Vietnam, what did the troops think of the war? What was everybody talking about? Did they think it was going well? How'd they think?

## **Jim Scott**

I think a lot of people were thinking that they were wasting our time 'cause there wasn't nothin', all the end-runs are going off and it seemed like the NVA, every other day would say that they were surrounding us and we were sitting around waiting for things to happen. They didn't send any patrols out as far as I know, looking for them until they started going into Laos and Cambodia from Dong Ha.

## **Interviewer**

So what would the average Marine say about the war that you encountered? Were they frustrated? Did they want to do more or were they saying this was a screwed-up war?

## **Jim Scott**

I think most of the ones I talked to were kind of frustrated because the NVA and the VC would come down and attack these people. Even if they were children and hold them ransom so their parents would get 'em, would do what they wanted them to do. And a couple of times some of the civilian works that would come in, they had this air about them.

Especially when I was up north, there was a mama-san that would do our laundry and she would take it and travel almost fifteen miles with it. And one day I saw her out when I was out off the base of Dong Ha headed towards



where she was headed and she had a trailer full of wood and it had a hitch on the back but she was using it like a rickshaw and her kids were pushing the back of it and she was up front pulling it; a trailer that would be on the back of a truck and she was hauling this wood, completely full. And I stopped and asked her if I could help her and she waved me off and told me to ditty. And when I talked to her later she said that I endangered her, not to ever do that again.

**Interviewer**

How did you endanger her?

**Jim Scott**

She was afraid that the VC or the NVA would see her fraternizing with me or me helping her and then they would attack her.

**Interviewer**

Tell us about getting home. Did your family have a celebration?

**Jim Scott**

I got home from Vietnam and I really didn't call home until about the fourth or fifth day.

**Interviewer**

Why was that?

**Jim Scott**

I decided to ease back into stuff. And it was a Saturday and I didn't feel like having to deal with Sunday things or the weekday thing and so I stayed with a couple of my friends overnight and had an interesting thing, you know, hit the town and relaxed.

**Interviewer**

How did people treat you as a Vietnam vet?

**Jim Scott**

When I got back here most of the people I talked to were my friends and only one of them hadn't been in the military, he'd separated his shoulder and so he'd been working. And we didn't talk too much about stuff that was going on there. He was just in his 24-year-old mode going to the university and then working, you know, so. I don't know if there was that much stuff going around here until about '71 or '72 in Salt Lake that I saw.

Interviewer

"Stuff"--What do you mean?

**Jim Scott**

Well demonstrations and other weird stuff. You know, here in the valley you would had to have been here right at the time when the demonstrations, especially up here at the U were taking place.

Interviewer

How did that make you feel, those demonstrations?

**Jim Scott**

I kind of stayed away from 'em and I didn't pay any attention to 'em. I had got back here and since I got back, within about seven months I got married and then within about, oh, a year after getting back I started working for Salt Lake City so I just stayed away from stuff like that. The only time I ever saw any demonstrations was during the Gulf War, '91. And I went downtown, stood on a corner 'cause I swore that I wouldn't let happen to the Gulf War guys what happened to us, that I saw people spitting on people and other stuff.

**Interviewer**

You saw that? Where did you see that?

**Jim Scott**

When I flew from Oakland Air to LAX we landed in a Naval air station... I can't think of the name. Anyway, a Naval air station. And so I took a taxi to LAX and when I got out of the taxi I had about half an hour to go from the terminal where I got the ticket to where the airplane was boarding at the time so I grabbed my sea bag and ran down the tunnel and got up there and just got up to the gate and they had still waiting to board. And this person blindsided me, it was this young lady with her two kids and she goes, "Oh, you just got back from Vietnam?" And I go, "Yup." And she goes, "How many babies did you kill?" And I just gave her this nasty look and said something to her and then I walked away from her. It wasn't worth it.

**Interviewer**

A lot of vets have said there was a lot of boredom and all of the sudden, a lot of fear. Were you bored a lot there? It sounds like you did a lot of innovative play.

**Jim Scott**

Yeah, you're 24 years old or 20 years old and you don't have anybody really watching you. When I was in Monkey Mountain or at these LZ's, there was seven of us but everybody there was like less than 24 years old so we'd come up with weird stuff to do. Like the monkey thing on Monkey Mountain or the flares, the pop flares. Or one of my friends tried to make a thousand-round magazine or a hundred-round magazine for his M-16 and different stuff.

**Interviewer**

How'd that work out?

**Jim Scott**

We got about 50 rounds out of it before it jammed up. It was an inverted V shape.

**Interviewer**

And tell us about insects or bugs or rain. Tell us about the rainy season.

**Jim Scott**

During the monsoon season you'd be sitting there, go from one place to another and it would be raining in one

place and the mud and gumbo, stuff that if you let it dry on your boots it would stay there, it would take a cold chisel to get off or get it on your jeep or on your other equipment. And traveling around a lot I had taken my sea bag and instead of just leaving it in a footlocker I made a locker out of a econ box that I found and I got some wheels I put on it. Then I took some rope and made a handle. Then I put shelves inside of it and then I put a two hasp that I could lock it up and that's what I drug around with me the whole time I was in Vietnam. And I could lock up my M-16 in there, my 72 gear and the other stuff so it didn't go south.

**Interviewer**

What about the bugs and insects and snakes? Did you have any trouble with those?

**Jim Scott**

When I was up north, for some reason we didn't get our pink pill which was the malaria pill so we were out of the malaria pill for about a month and a half and I think three of us came down with that after the fact or during the time that we were up north in Dong Ha and Stud area because of the 3rd Marine Division pulling out so we were left by ourselves. And a couple of us were stationed even farther out in an LZ called Khe Sanh but there was nobody there at the time, not like in '68 where they had 4,000 Marines sitting at Khe Sanh. There was eight people and they had a single strand of constantan wire around 'em and they'd see people walk by 'em all the time.

**Interviewer**

Did you get malaria?

**Jim Scott**

Yeah, I think so.

**Interviewer**

What did it feel like to have malaria?

**Jim Scott**

Shivers and shakes.

**Interviewer**

Talk about what malaria feels like.

**Jim Scott**

You would come down with the cold sweats at night and shake. And even though it was hot outside you had a blanket over the top of ya and you'd lose a lot of weight. I mean it would be kind of hard to know if you had malaria because the whole time I was in Vietnam I was sick. You couldn't drink the water, we had our bottles that we'd put those HALO tablets in there to clean it up. But still most anytime almost everybody was sick.

Couple of us, my XO had managed to get a tape worm when he was in Okinawa when he first went in the Marines in 1954. And he was trying to quit smoking so he was chewing tobacco and I tried that because I was trying to quit smoking myself and that made me sicker than a dog within about two seconds. He'd acquired a tape worm and

when we were in Dong Ha just before the 3rd Marine Division left, it decided to exit his body and he ended up spending some time on the repose and he had about 25 of them that he'd acquired.

### **Interviewer**

Tell us what the Marines had to choose from for entertainment.

### **Jim Scott**

Yeah, Da Nang would be like if you went up on top of Ensign Peak and looked down over the Salt Lake Valley, Da Nang kind of looked like that except for you had the South China Sea surrounding it and Monkey Mountain was a peninsula off of that. So if you got up on there it would be like looking over Great Salt Lake and it was about the same area as Salt Lake Valley with mountains to the west and to the east. And in all those mountains in some of the outlying rice paddy areas there was concrete bunkers that were inhabited by the VC and also NVA regulars.

### **Interviewer**

Tell us about the nightlife, the things that GI's could choose from for entertainment.

### **Jim Scott**

Well when you're in Da Nang there was no nightlife, you weren't allowed off the compound at all. The road closed at 5:00 at night and if you were out on the road you didn't get through any type of gates. During the daytime you could go to the PX but you would have to check out a vehicle and most of the time that was just once a month you'd be able to go to an Air Force PX and check that out. And a couple of times we went to the PX and we ran into some nurses from the NSA hospital and a few German nurses that were from the Catholic orphanages that were surrounding where we were where in Da Nang was at.

### **Interviewer**

Tell us about the civilians and how you felt about them. How did you feel about the Vietnamese?

### **Jim Scott**

The mama-san that did our laundry, I thought she was very strong and knew exactly what she was doing at all times and would use anything to protect her family. One time we had decided to trap some rats that were attacking our hooch, coming into our hooch so we trapped them. And being stupid Marines we messed with them for quite a while and then mama-san came up and saw us messing with them and she talked us out of having the rats.

So we gave her the rats and she used those rats for food for her kids, like 25 rats. And she offered to do our laundry for the next month for free and I souvenired them to her but it would disgrace her if we just gave them to her; she had to give us something for it so she did our laundry and carried it from her home which was in Cam Lo, which is about 15 miles away.

### **Interviewer**

Did you see any other things with any other civilians? Did you get to know any?

## **Jim Scott**

I went downtown with my XO to go to 3rd MAF and it was like a Sunday. All of the sudden about 7:40 in the morning, like 4,000 or 5,000 orphans came walking downtown Da Nang all in kind of yellow dresses with their white pajamas and they all came walking down the road. I think they were going to church or something. And I remember seeing those and the XO telling me that they were all orphans, every one of 'em, and there was about two or three thousand of 'em.

## **Interviewer**

That hit you, seeing all those orphans?

## **Jim Scott**

It kind of threw me into shock because most of 'em looked like younger than my little brother. And you know, how could you end up with two or three thousand orphans, and the whole town of Da Nang had orphanages everywhere. We had one behind us. The VC used to--we'd go out there to ambush them because they would try to get on the orphanage and shoot down at us 'cause they knew we wouldn't shoot back at 'em. And when I was in Da Nang a couple of times, go over there and help the Catholic nuns with the orphans and help them do their laundry and other stuff.

## **Interviewer**

Was that common for Americans to help out like that?

## **Jim Scott**

You could get a pass to go do that if you were so inclined. A lot of people were bored to death and they would do stuff like that or take up hobbies like draw or paint.

## **Interviewer**

Thank you.