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"Escalation"

Interviewer

I'd like some background about you, prior to going to Vietnam.

Scott Lyman

Very good. I was originally drafted in 1951 and was commissioned thereafter. Served in Korea, later on in various places in the United States and Germany. First tour in Vietnam was 1965 and the second tour was 1968 and '69.

Interviewer

And what were your thoughts as you knew you were going to go to Vietnam and that it was a controversial situation?

Scott Lyman

Briefly, first of all, I guess I could site what I put on the blackboard in our kitchen, I wrote on it, "Home is where the heart is, and my heart is here." I was concerned about going to Vietnam; I knew what was happening over there. The first tour, of course, we didn't have American troops over there, we just had advisors and support personnel and I was going over there to act as a support to helicopter operations for the Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam. I was concerned about it, of course, very much concerned about it. But by the same token, I realized we were there, why we should be there. I felt, and still feel, that the action was legal actions. We were part of the SEATO, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, which said that if they were attacked, it was as if we were attacked. And when we were ordered over there I felt we were doing the right thing. I don't think that we were defeated at all; I think we just left. We should've stayed there and finished the job.

Interviewer

And what rank were you?

Scott Lyman

When I first went over I was Captain.

Interviewer

How did you get over there?

Scott Lyman

We flew over there, on one of the various contract airlines, I think it was Pan Am that got us over there.

Interviewer

And you had flight attendants and everything on the way?

Scott Lyman

Yeah, it was beautiful. The airplanes being over there, were large jets. We landed in Saigon--then called Saigon--and we were stationed over there for two or three days before I was posted out into my unit.

Interviewer

And tell us what happened from there?

Scott Lyman

Okay. Well my first tour was with the 13th Aviation Battalion called the Delta Battalion and that was down in south of Saigon, down in the flat country, the Delta country. I was assigned to the 121st Aviation Company. Since I was a rather ranking Captain at that time--I had about four years in rank-they assigned me to be what they called Tiger Lead, which would be the lead of the lift ships going into any kind of action, we lifted Vietnamese troops into their positions.

However, I was only there two or three months when I was then asked if I would volunteer to take over the Vikings. The Vikings was the armed helicopter unit, a unit of five armed helicopters, four of them were armed with machine guns and rockets and then I had what we called the hog which is a helicopter with 48 rockets on it and a grenade launcher on the nose. It had a big bulbous nose, we called it a pumpkin sitting out in front there. The Vikings had kind of a good reputation, or a bad reputation with the VC over there, the Viet Cong, that is.

There's a woman, a broadcaster in Ha Noi called Ha Noi Hannah. And she put a price on the head of 500,000 piastres; I think it was, because we had done some damage to their people. Our helicopters all had a big blue diamond on the front of 'em with a caricature of a Viking there with a machine gun under each arm spouting flame there, and of course his horned helmet. And it was kind of an interest thing. And we all flew those helicopters with that mark on 'em, so we were called the Blue Diamond Devils of the Delta, that's what she referred to us as.

We took the nose cones from the rocket launchers we had--which were about-the pods consisted of about seven rockets in each pod and had a flared in nose cone, which we never used, we took them off anyway. They were supposed to blow off when you fired them, but we took them off and tailored them and made Viking helmets out of them with water buffalo horns to be the horns on them, painted them in silver, then put that same little caricature on the front of it with the Viking. I was Viking 2-6. Six indicates, of course, the commander of the unit and two was the platoon. So 2-6 was the commander of the 2nd Viking platoon.

Interviewer

Did you actually fly?

Scott Lyman

I did. I flew them. At that tour I was flying almost constantly. I flew until about March of 1966 when I was promoted to Major. At that time I was out-graded for the job I had and was sent down to Company A/101, which we called the

Warriors, which was a sister unit on the same compound at Soc Trang. Soc Trang was the post where we were. And I flew with them just until we came home.

The mission of the armed helicopters at that time was very similar to what it was later, kind of an air cavalry mission. We'd have people that would fly helicopters down low, over the surface to ground, watching for the enemy. They were the scouts and they had others above them that would wait for the command to fire or see something to fire on. My helicopter, which was more heavily armed than the others, would be primarily used for that purpose. I would be flying at about 1500 feet above the ground and waiting orders for them. They'd say "receiving fire" or "a cave here" or whatever they'd find and I would fire into that area. We would develop the situation and then we'd call in for the Vietnamese troops to come in and do the work.

In the second tour, of course, we had our own troops over there, U.S. troops. And the mission is similar but we had different equipment. We had the Cobras on the second tour. I didn't fly the Cobras as much as I flew the Command Ship, which was a Huey, a UH-1H model with a lot of radios in it. And my job would be to coordinate the activities of those helicopters down there. We had more than just the five at that time, of course; we had several. The second tour was with the squadron, which is essentially three troops of helicopters instead of just the one of which I'd been involved with before. "Troop" and a "company" are interchangeable. Troop refers to something in air cavalry and a Company is military unit of the same size in some other organization.

Interviewer

When you would go on a mission, how many helicopters would be on that mission?

Scott Lyman

Well let me give you two examples. The first example, we were called by my boss, the colonel, Colonel Maddox, to join him at a particular point in the Delta, he said there's an American advisor, a sergeant who'd been wounded and he needed some help out there, see if we could extract that sergeant. He was going to have me cover for him while he flew up a river there and tried to get that sergeant off from an area defilade that he could pick him up. And so at that point-- I had myself and two armed helicopters so that as I flew in, one would be covering me, and then he would go down, the next one would come in-what I call daisy chain-as we ran our rocket attacks.

The second mission, I'll tell you about was a night, an island-I forgot the name of the island-but 90 miles off the coast of South Vietnam and there was a Special Forces unit out there that would attack. I was called early in the nighttime, about two o'clock in the morning, I guess it was, to go out in the helicopters and fly deadheading for 90 minutes to this particular point at which I would be intercepted by an Air Force aircraft-we called them Puff the Magic Dragon. It was a C-123 that was loaded with the Miniguns, machine guns on one side. So it would fly in a

circle and just pulverize the enemy. And he would mark the target for me when we got in site. And in that particular mission I flew out with all four of my armed helicopters and myself, so a total of five. In that particular instance I made one run and then I had a problem, one of my rockets burned in the holder and I had to make an emergency landing there on the strip. So that didn't quite work out the way you wanted it to, but we survived.

Interviewer

They didn't have any laser-guided smart --?

Scott Lyman

No. As an example, on my ship it had the grenade launcher. The grenade launcher, the round is shaped like a .45 caliber; it's 37 millimeters so it's about an inch and a half in diameter, maybe six inches long. And it fired from the front; it's kind of boom, boom, boom, boom, boom-- about that regularity. And you would simply walk it into target. In other words, you were sensing where it was going rather than sighting it. You'd fire one and then walk it into the target and adjust from what you see exploding. The rockets themselves, we had a sight on the left side of the helicopter. The co-pilot usually flew left in a helicopter, contrary to fixed wing. Fixed wing, a co-pilot flies to the right. But in the helicopter he flies to the left. And he had a sight there and he was typically the gunner. And he would sight in on it but once again, it would have to be more or less a line of sight. He'd see then with the first round, when the first rocket exploded. We could fire them in two's, four's, six's or several. And so we would sense the target, first of all, and then just sight in where that went. Machine guns had flex kits. They could be hydraulically adjusted up or down, or right or left, within certain limits. And once again, it was strictly about what they could see-they would sight in on with this optical sight that they had on the left-hand side, but then they would have to sense where the rounds were going to really get in on the target.

Interviewer

Tell me how many men were on those?

Scott Lyman

Each helicopter had four men: a pilot, a co-pilot, a crew chief and a gunner. The crew chief also served as a gunner on each side. The machine gunners would be on the back end and it would have M60s, they'd use just for defense, in addition to the mounted machine guns on the helicopters. Their job was more or less just to protect from areas you couldn't reach with the other machine guns. That was an example of the first mission I told you about there. As I came out from a rocket attack I'd be with my belly towards the enemy, you might say, and there were four machine guns firing at me. But my door gunner would hang out the door with this M60 and spray the ground with that-kind of keeps it protected-in addition to the other helicopter coming behind to cover my exit.

Interviewer

In World War II the airmen had so many missions they had to complete. Did they have that in Vietnam?

Scott Lyman

We had a different system; we had by hours. Twenty-five hours of combat time would essentially give you one Air

Medal. I had 53 of them by the time I'd finished, but three of those were with V which means for a specific action. You'd get an Air Medal for a specific action that they figure to be noteworthy and worthy of a special medal. They call it a V and I had some of those as well as the regular, piled up by the hours.

Interviewer

Fifty three Air Medals. And did you ever calculate how many missions that you went on?

Scott Lyman

No. The horn might blow in the morning and we'd go and go off someplace and fly one an hour or so in the area and then we'd land and told to wait there until we were called again. We might have two or three times out on station and then back home again. In one case, I remember Thanksgiving Day. I was called out just before we were going to have a big Thanksgiving dinner. I could smell it all over the compound and we were all delighted to have this turkey and all the trimmings; we were gonna go out and have a good dinner. And just before dinnertime the horn blew and I had to grab my armed helicopters and go. We went several miles up into an area called Ben Tre and they told us-on the radio, of course-just told us to land on a little old dirt strip there and wait. And we did, we waited till four o'clock in the afternoon. Never did get into action. Our Thanksgiving dinner consisted of the C-rations we carried with us. I got turkey loaf because that was in memory of the day. In that case, it was just flying out, flying back, no combat time at all.

And other times you'd go out and land and refuel and go right back out on station, one right after the other. I remember on one occasion, my second tour, when I flew a total of 17 hours in one shift. Just out and refuel, and go out and refuel, and out and refuel before we came back. We would refuel with the engines still running. They had bladders. You'd land alongside the bladder and they'd put the hose into your fuel cell and pump you full and you'd just take off.

Interviewer

Tell me, on that first tour, how many missions did you have?

Scott Lyman

One particular mission, we had a mission we called Firefly. We had an UH-1H equipped with a panel that would fold out the door. It was mounted-I think it was five, C-123 landing lights, which were powerful lights mounted in it. So when they went out there, then we'd turn them on, it would illuminate quite a large area, from about 500 feet in the air you'd get quite a large area illuminated. Our purpose was to see if we could see movement of the VC at night. We had one area, an area around Ben Tre, which was consistently giving us a bad time. And a machine gun out there, a .51 caliber machine gun, which is an anti-aircraft machine gun, was always aiming for us. And so we were trying to find that machine gun. We put the light ship down at 500 feet with all of his lights painted out on the bottom. Two hundred feet above that, we'd have two helicopters, one on either side-armed helicopters-with their lights out also. And then I'd be flying 200 feet above that, just slightly behind them, controlling the movement of all

of them.

When we came to an area that we suspected might be active, we would turn on those lights. And by the way, those things were powerful enough that a hundred feet away you could feel the heat; they were strong. We'd turn the lights on and then these gunships would watch to see what action would develop and then I would be watching above them to see what might happen. On one occasion, we apparently did find that .51 caliber because we saw tracers coming towards us and they were coming high enough that I rolled in on it and fired on it. I think I got a hit because I heard a secondary explosion and then the rounds ceased to come. But at the same time I felt the vibration in my ship. Apparently he had got a round through my engine because it blew up about that time. It was the middle of the night, two o'clock in the morning and I had no field in sight there; I was about 1500 feet. And I called the other people and I said, "I've got a problem, I'm gonna have to land." And of course a helicopter, when it has no engine, has the characteristics of a rock. But you have autorotation capabilities. You bottom the collective pitch, and in doing so, it turns the rotors into a kind of a windmill so they slow your descent. And if you control that properly you can survive the landing, hopefully-if you have a place to land.

In this instance, I asked my co-pilot who was on the left there, if he saw anything at all down in the jungle. It looked like it might be a place we could set it down. As I say, it was very, very dark. I expressed it as the inside of a cow, it was really, really dark. But he saw off to the left, kind of a lighter spot of the jungle. We assumed that might be the rice paddy, I'm glad it wasn't a village. Anyway, I aimed towards that as we started down. And one of my helicopters, piloted by a guy by the name of Foster Fort, I'll tell you a story about him in a minute too. Anyway, he gave me a running narrative of what I looked like. He said, "You looked like a Roman candle." I really needed that information as I was trying to concentrate on how I'd make that approach into this field because I only had just a certain amount of leeway. I had to get over the trees and yet into the field. I couldn't stretch it, I couldn't land short; it had to be in that area. As I got short enough to put the light on, I could see that it had the dike running right across the middle of the field. And knew that if I went over the trees and then set it down too close to that dike, I'd flip it over and probably burn. If I tried to stretch over the dike I couldn't make it, I'd probably hit the trees on the far side of the clearing. I didn't really have much choice there but what we did is as we got over the trees, I just bottomed the collective pitch and slammed the helicopter into the ground using the skids as breaks. We skidded up to the dike, flipped up on our nose and back down again without going all the way over. And then we all got out of the helicopter, everybody got out, we took our operating instructions and our stuff out of there. And then the gunship that had been accompanying us were strafing around there to make sure we were secure. We survived that incident.

There are pictures in there showing a helicopter being lifted out of a rice paddy-they changed the engine of that helicopter.

After I got down there, we secured it, we called in other units and they secured it for the rest of the night. But in the morning we called in what are called Road Wreckers which the maintenance people, they came in with a Chinook, parked it alongside that downed helicopter. In 43 minutes they had the old engine out, and a new one in, and flew it out. The skids were almost flattened. You know, in the Huey, the support for the skids is kind of a parenthesis-shaped piece of metal. The front was almost flat instead of being like an inverted "U"; it was almost flat. The chin bubbles were out. But this guy who flew that out of there, by himself, without chin bubbles, with the nose pointed so far down it was almost in the mud. He took the cowling off the engine, filled the whole thing out of there, and got it back in 43 minutes, which I thought was amazing. I was glad to have survived that one also.

I told you I'd tell you about this guy named Foster Fort. In those pictures also is an article, a newspaper article in the "Deseret News" about the rescue of an Air Force pilot. After I was promoted I was sent to the Company A of the 101st Division, A Company was the Aviation Company and I was the Executive Officer. In this particular instance I was commanding operation out around Ca Mau. We had the Warriors and the Vikings, my former unit, and several others involved there. Quite a lot of enemy action down there and we had involved the Air Force too. We had involved a bunch of F-100s. And as one of them came in and made his attack, I noticed he went straight in instead of pulling out at the end of his dive, he was shelling in. Pilot ejected and the F-100 went straight into the rice paddy, buried itself in the mud, I don't know how far down. But anyway, we immediately got people over to pick up that pilot. The article gives the narration between the pilot and another individual who was close by to pick up the pilot. The reason I mention this, is the pilot was a man by the name of Bob Oaks. At that time a Captain who ultimately became a four-star General who's now one of the General Authorities of the LDS Church, Robert C. Oaks. But I was commanding that operation, I didn't actually do the pick up, I was just coordinating it. But Foster Fort, who was my co-pilot when I was in the Vikings, was the man who actually picked him up, and his picture's in those pictures too.

Interviewer

Twenty-five hours in flight, you get one Air Medal?

Scott Lyman

Twenty-five combat hours.

Interviewer

And you got 52 Air Medals?

Scott Lyman

About 50 of them for time and three of them with V. And that's two years. Yes, that's both tours.

Interviewer

Anything else in that first tour you want to tell us about?

Scott Lyman

Well, there were a lot of interesting activities. I think one of the things that impressed me the most about the first tour was that, as I say, we had no American troops to take the advisors and support personnel; we were support personnel. The Vietnamese, we were supporting what they called the Ruff-Puffs, the original forces which are kind of like our National Guard, they were a local paramilitary group.

There's one unit there, the 44th Ranger Battalion, commanded by a Vietnamese Lieutenant Colonel, but co-commanded by his wife; we called her the Dragon Lady of the Delta because she always accompanied him on all the action. She wore two .45s and she had a helmet-an American seal helmet with big tigers painted on it. That's what they called themselves, the Tiger Battalion, I guess. But she was a wild one, that's why we called her the Dragon Lady. And she quite often would come and review our troops as well and commend us in what we were doing. Eventually she and her husband got in some kind of a scrap and he shot her. There's the article in there about that too. But Dragon Lady met her Waterloo there.

I think one of the things that I noticed most about the Vietnamese people, they had been so long occupied. First of all, by river pirates for several hundred years, and then the Japanese, and then the French and finally ourselves. They were used to war. I guess that's the normal state of affairs for them, to be in some kind of a war, some kind of occupation or domination. And so they had a kind of peculiar attitude about life; they didn't much care whether they lived or died, it seemed to me. And on the other hand, they were suicidal in some of the things they would do to defeat the enemy. As an example, when we picked prisoners up, they were always afraid.

I remember one case I picked up a prisoner down in an area off the delta. The area had been overrun the night before by the VCs when we got there. The outposts were usually in a triangular shape and a place in the middle where we could land. But unlike our troops, they always took their families into these places too. There's a lieutenant there with his wife and child in this little outpost, they'd been overrun during the night, but he had survived with his wife and family. And I was sent out there before I was commanding the Vikings; I was sent out there my first tour to retrieve him. We picked him up and I started to bring him back and there's a terrible smell in the helicopter and I asked what it was. Well, he had kind of a pottery jar of what they call nuoc man, which is a fermented fish sauce that the Vietnamese really appreciate. Smells horrible; might taste all right, but smells terrible. And it was smelling so bad I said, "It goes out or you do." And so he had it in his pack, the North Vietnamese flag, or the VC flag, which is a flag with a blue bottom and a yellow top and a red star in the middle. Not like the typical yellow and the orange striped of the South Vietnamese. And he'd give me that flag if I would've let him continue to hang on to his little precious jar of nuoc man, which I did.

On another occasion, in a very similar situation, I had to go extract a man they'd captured, and he was a VC they'd

captured. They had what they called a Chieu Hoi Program. The Chieu Hoi Program was we'd drop leaflets over the area in the new to be occupied by the VC, Viet Cong in which we would offer them amnesty and land or whatever the government would provide them if they would abandon their cause and come join our forces. Well we had one of these guys, a Chieu Hoi guy we picked up. But they'd all been so thoroughly, I guess brainwashed on what would happen to them if they did surrender that we noticed that he was scared stiff. As I picked him up and flew out of the compound, you have to fly tight circles to get to altitude rather than going out in a straight takeoff because of the proximity of the enemy around; they'd shoot you down while you were at low altitude. So we would circle while we gained altitude. In the air, we were-- it was quite close to the ocean, and every time I made a turn toward the ocean this guy's all tense and shaking because they'd been told that we'd take them out to sea and dump 'em, throw 'em in the ocean. Of course we didn't but that was the impression he had. So every time as I made that turn, he'd get all tensed up and start jabbering. And when I'd turn away again, then he'd feel better. But that was just one of the things they had. They were quite cruel to one another.

On one occasion we saw two prisoners, we picked them up, turned them over to the commander in the unit we were supporting which was near Bac Lieu. And as I looked out I saw these two prisoners being led off and they had wires around their arms and cinched at the back. They were walking along like that with the guards behind them with rifles on them. They went over into the commend post area and after a while the guards brought just one back and I asked him, I said, "Well where's the other one?" "He died." I imagine he was probably killed. But they had such a low regard for each other if they wore a different type of uniform. Most of the VC wore black pajamas. Anyway, that was some of the impressions I had there.

Interviewer

Now that first tour lasted a year?

Scott Lyman

A year. Yes.

Interviewer

Anything else you'd like to tell us about that first tour?

Scott Lyman

Nothing except as I say, we knew that we were in an unpopular war and we were called mercenaries, murderers, hired killers-all kinds of things by the populous. But we felt, at least those of who, I felt that we were up on what needed to be done. We felt we were there with a legal mission to perform and we performed it the best way we could.

Of course there were some other people, you read about the problems we had with drugs and enlisted men that did not perform their duties as they should. But by in large, the American forces over there did a good job. They did a much better job later on as they cleaned out this drug culture and stuff like that.

Interviewer

Ha Noi Hannah. Can you give us a little bit more detail about why you were on the most wanted list?

Scott Lyman

Because we were effective in destroying the Viet Cong in that area. We would find them and drop them in the Delta where we were. We were quite effective. And not only myself, but there was another officer by the name of Junius Tenor who was commanding a similar unit at a place called-I forgot the name-but he was post right now. But it was north of where we were in Soc Trang and he had a unit they called the Thunderbirds. And he had a price on his head as well because the armed helicopter units were particularly effective in finding the enemy and routing them or destroying them. And so there was a price on our head. They knew who we were by name, by the way. I don't know how they knew that, but they did.

Interviewer

And so they would broadcast to the American forces and speak in English just like Tokyo Rose did?

Scott Lyman

Yeah, same kind of an idea as Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally. Same idea. She would broadcast to people that Captain Lyman and his Blue Diamond Devils would be in the area that day and that people who picked me up would be rewarded for doing so. Anyway, we kind of laughed at her. One of the Vietnamese Generals there, we had two Generals named Minh, we called them Big Minh and Little Minh, M-i-n-h, was how they spelled their names. We supported them and their troops. One of them was impressed by our actions and so he awarded us-before the Army started wearing berets, they awarded my platoon a black beret. We wore this black beret and on it we put on the ridgeline, "The Blue Diamond Devils of the Delta" with that little blue triangle I was telling you about and our rank would be displayed inside the blue triangle. Later on the Army adopted, as you know, the beret, the dark green beret. But it's flopped on the other side of the head than the way we wore it. So ours was strictly a unit emblem that we were quite proud to wear anywhere in Vietnam because it signified who we were; it was unauthorized anywhere else but we wore it there. In the second tour, when I was in the Army cavalry unit, our identification was a big broad-brim cavalry hat, a big black hat with a braid on it, you know, typical horse cavalry type thing which I still have. I have a beret and a cavalry hat.

Interviewer

Did you ever hear Ha Noi Hannah talk about you?

Scott Lyman

Once. I mostly heard about her, but I heard her only one time and it was just a broadcast in which she was welcoming the American forces in her area and telling they'd better write home because soon their loved ones would be receiving bad news about their actions there. Just kind of a psychological thing, anything she could do it to disrupt the morale of the troops there.

Interviewer

Talk about the Blue Vikings you modified again.

Scott Lyman

The missiles were not modified; the rockets came in a circular container. There were, as I recall, seven rockets in each one of these containers, six in a circle, one in the middle. It was a tube about probably 10 inches in diameter; the rockets are two and a half inches and probably six-feet long. Each one of them was independent. But around the whole container, this circular container or cylindrical container was a cone on the front of it, some kind of fiber cone that was designed, when you fired the first rocket through it, to explode and go away. It was meant there to be fairing and protection but we always took them off because they were a nuisance, we were afraid they'd cause a rocket to explode as they went through it. So we took them off and carved them up into helmets. The rockets were quite sensitive.

I mentioned a while ago about this one time I went out to this island off the coast for a night mission and ended up with a rocket burning in its container rather than it being fired. What had happened there, in that long ride out, the warhead of the rocket had vibrated loose until it came out, actually came out. That being the case, when I fired it, instead of the propulsion coming out the back end, pushing it forward, it went out both ends because there was nothing to stop it from the front, the warhead was gone. So it just burned there. And there were 24 other rockets alongside it, so it was a dangerous situation. I tried to jettison all the rockets as I made this emergency landing. I thought they all went out, but when I landed and we finally got the mess cleared up, the heat had melted the rocket module-just 24 rockets in this incidence, it's bigger than the one I was telling you about, it's 24 on each side in a kind of rectangular container--and all 24 tubes were just rounded off like about a 1939 Ford fender, just a very beautiful, rounded--because the airstream would force the metal. But I was worried because it was so close to the fuel tank, I thought I was gonna get an explosion. We did make it to the ground and then the fire went out and then when we got checking, we found not only had the one lost the round in the front of it, the explosive part of it, we found there was also another unexploded, unfired rocket next to it. And why it didn't explode, I have no idea. It should've exploded with the heat, but it didn't. I have my theories but that would get into some metaphysical religious reasons.

Scott Lyman

These cells, these local cells were consisting of anywhere from two or three or more people who formed cells and then in large they would actually form all of their people into battalions or larger units. In one instance I remember we had one of the actions, we destroyed a small, three-man unit; one of them turned out to be the man we'd employed as a barber on the base for a long while. So sometimes they were friends and sometimes they weren't. We had to be careful of that because this man had been the barber but he was destroyed. But anyway, on another occasion, we had what we called a turkey shoot where a very large contingent of these Viet Cong, down near Ca Mau, were surprised in the open. It was a dreadful scene, most of them young people; some just teen-agers that had been recruited by the Viet Cong. And I guess they were in training when they were spotted and it was a bloody action. It left bodies all over the field.

Interviewer

So the helicopter had four --?

Scott Lyman

Had four machine guns. A typical helicopter.

Interviewer

Two in the back and one side?

Scott Lyman

No, no, these flex kits were mounted two on each side on large conical-shaped hydraulically controlled mounts. So there was an upper one and a lower one; they were all controlled at the same time. So you'd turn on the left, it would also move right or left. As I say, they had limits. They would fire just a certain point but then they'd stop firing if they came in proximity of the nose of the helicopter. These were all about mid-ship mounted, these four machine guns. And they were all automatic, controlled by the co-pilot. The handheld machine gun, by the door gunners it was just an M60 machine gun, sometimes suspended on the ceiling by a bungee cord, they'd hold on and all they'd use to close in-work with it.

Interviewer

So was it you or was it the co-pilot giving the strategic information?

Scott Lyman

As the commander I would be called. I'd be alerted, the horn would blow and I'd jump in the helicopter and go and be in the air and then I'd get the information by radio about where they wanted me to go and what they wanted me to do and why. I might cite one instance. In one instance the horn blew, we went with all four helicopters. I'll mention, that proceeding that, we had had a practice the day before in an area we called the rocket range, simply a big empty rice paddy with a couple of trees out in the middle of it. But the troops would fire down there at these trees or some object in the field to try to improve their marksmanship. We'd practice there when we weren't otherwise involved. We'd been two or three days without some action, we'd go out in practice here in this field. One day we were out there practicing and most of my people couldn't hit anything, they were just, for some reason, wild, or they were not concentrating or what, but their rockets were going wild, they just weren't hitting anything they were aiming at. And then the next day when we had this mission, the mission was to destroy a village. The village had been identified as being a Viet Cong hideout or headquarters. In fact, they'd been flying VC flags. I went down there, flew down, as I went down and came in the air I saw that there was a lot of women and children there and I didn't want to destroy it. So I questioned the orders and they said, "Destroy it." After about the third time I accepted the order but I told my troops that I wanted them to use the same marksmanship they'd used the day before in the practice field. We had rockets going all over South Vietnam but never got around into the village. So I guess maybe that was the wrong thing to do but I couldn't see that mission being a legal mission.

Interviewer

So talk about that. How did you feel about that? You destroyed a village with women and children?

Scott Lyman

We did not. That's what I said. I said rockets went everywhere. We gave them orders to use the same marksmanship they'd shown me the day before when they couldn't hit anything. And they got my message when I said I want you to hit just as accurate as you did yesterday for practice. And so they had rockets going everywhere but none in the village.

Interviewer

Was that mission aborted or reported?

Scott Lyman

I reported that we had completed our mission. The place wasn't destroyed but that they were demoralized, which was true. And we left the area, but I don't think we left any casualties in the village itself. These orders came not from our people, but from Vietnamese and they would quite often issue some arbitrary orders that, to the Americans, had no sense and quite often had no basis. I'll give you another example. On one occasion we found off, near the coast, a group of water buffalo; probably 10 or 12 water buffalo. These water buffalo are very valuable animals to the farmers there. They use them as we use tractors and the value of them would be roughly equivalent to about $4,000 in American money for each one. And I received orders, when I reported finding these water buffalo to destroy them because they were being used by the VC to carry their resupplies into their areas. I questioned that again and I said you can bring a Chinook in here to pick these animals up and take them out and distribute them out among the farmers and make some points, be popular. They said, "No, destroy them." Well that was one of the hardest things I had to do was to destroy these 12, very innocent, big old water buffalo, which we did. I personally went down after we completed our rockets and heavy machine gun and went down to make sure that each animal had had a round through its head so it didn't suffer. But that was a very sad and sorrowful thing; I thought it had no reason at all to be doing it, the Vietnamese thought we were capricious in that kind of an order; they could've used those animals very well.

Interviewer

When you explained that you wiped out these young VC and before that the barber, did you report it and then the ground troops would come? Did you just leave the area immediately?

Scott Lyman

No, we would usually invite the Vietnamese ground force in. After we had, what they called "find and fix." We'd find them and fix them by forcing them into an action. And in the case I was telling you about, there we had the battalion of people out in the open. They were inexperienced young people, I guess, most of them. We didn't realize it at the time, but by the time the ground troops had come in, there were hardly any of them left alive. We did invite the ground troops to come in there, of course, and clean up the action there. But they're mostly gone. There are pictures I have here that show some of the things we captured at that time, machine guns and other things. Surprisingly, some of the things we captured from them were things that they had stolen from the Americans- typewriters and things like that. But there are pictures there that show some of the things that we got.

Interviewer

In that first mission, the VC, were they South Vietnamese Rebels or did they actually come in from the north?

Scott Lyman

They were sometimes advised, as our people, some of the Viet Cong were advised by NVA, North Vietnamese Army regulars who would come down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and come into there and advise them. Later on, they came down in force with their own forces, but in the Delta, they were primarily there just as the advisors and recruiters.

Interviewer

So it was more like a civil war going on?

Scott Lyman

Almost. It was, between the North and the South.

Interviewer

Your year was up. You went back to the States then?

Scott Lyman

Yes, I came back to the United States and I served for-about a year after I came back I went down to Fort Walters and served as an instructor and as a flight evaluator. And then from there I went to Commander General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth and that's where Featherstone and I were primarily associated, at Commander General Staff College. And then after that I went back to Vietnam.

Interviewer

Did you volunteer to go back?

Scott Lyman

No, I didn't volunteer. I went the first tour by orders and then the second tour by orders. There were people who were over there as volunteers. I might mention one, as an example. In my first tour over there I had in my Viking platoon, I had them divided into two sections, each one, two helicopters; one of them would usually be an officer. But in one case I had it commanded by a Warrant Officer. And the reason I did is he was in the National Guard, he'd been a Major but he volunteered for active duty and they gave him only the rank of Warrant Officer when he came on active duty. He was an outstanding pilot and now outstanding commander so I had him commanding this one section.

Two years ago, Lynn and I went back to Cape May, New Jersey for a reunion of the Vikings, and this former Warrant Officer is now a Catholic priest, Jerry Daley. And after he'd gotten out, he'd become a priest. But he was an outstanding pilot.

In one occasion I remember we were watching a movie on the compound at Soc Trang in the evening, we were

kind of relaxed. And all of the sudden we heard this splat sound of a mortar coming in right on the flight line. And of course that's a signal for all of us to depart and get out in the helicopters. We had our helicopters on breakaway tie-downs, that is, a gray tape over the blade so that when you started it, it would break the tape and the rope would flip off the end of the rotor and you could take off. The pilot would jump in to get it started and actually be on takeoff while the co-pilot would be putting on his armor, his helmet and his other gear and getting tuned into the radio. And then when he was ready then he'd take over while the pilot got his helmet on and his protective shield in front of him and all those things. Well that took a little time. We could usually be off the ground in about 45 seconds. But this time, this particular time, as we heard that splat, we knew that we were being attacked. By the time I got out and got warmed up even, there was one helicopter already in the air and that was Jerry Daley. He saw the muzzle flash of this mortar and went in on it; he was the only one to board, didn't have a co-pilot or gunner, just himself onboard the helicopter. But he fired a rocket and got that mortar out of action almost immediately. He was a cracker jack.

Interviewer

It was the early stages of the war where we supposedly just had advisors over there.

Scott Lyman

'65 and '66.

Interviewer

And then the second tour was what years?

Scott Lyman

'68 and '69. By then we had started bringing a lot of American troops in. My second tour was not at the Delta, it was up in the Central Highlands. Pleiku was our area of operation. The 4th Infantry Division was there. I was a member of the 17th Air Cavalry; in fact, I was an Executive Officer of that squadron, and we were attached to the 4th Infantry Division, which meant that we supported them. But in addition, all the other American troops around the area, An Khe and others.

Interviewer

Tell us some experiences and how things differed from your first tour.

Scott Lyman

Well, it differed primarily in that as an Executive Officer of the squadron-the Commander and I would alternate. When we'd have one operation he would go out and run it, the second one I would. We had a Huey that was equipped with radio sufficient to communicate with everyone on the ground, in the air, everybody except Mickey Mouse, I think. At one case I counted up the receivers I had in my helicopter, there were 14 of them and they were all controlled by a little toggle switch between the seats down here, I could turn them off and on. So if I listened to

all of this noise going on, and I got one that sounded interesting, I could flip the others off so I could hear what was being said on that one particular frequency. There was UHF and VHF and low frequency and FM and all of these various frequencies that combat units were using. And so it was quite easy to isolate who was doing what in that kind of a situation.

In one instance, as an example, we had had quite a successful action. We had been attached to the-I guess that day we were supporting the 1st Cavalry which is a distance from Pleiku, over a mountain and down another valley. And we'd had quite a successful operation that day and supported the troops quite well, I thought. But one of our helicopters, what we called a LOACH-- LOH-6 was a Hughes 500 helicopter, smaller than the Huey's, used as scouts. By the way, we didn't have those on the first tour. The second tour we had these little LOHs as scouts with the Cobras as backup and then the Hueys to carry in the troops. An air cavalry unit consists of primarily three prongs, first of all, the scouts. They're called the red-they used to have a red helicopter, we just called them red. And then the gunships, the Cobra's, they were white. So we'd have a red and a white, we'd call them the pink team. A scout and a cobra out there would be a pink team. And the scout would find the enemy and the Cobra then would attack it. I would be controlling it from above. We'd have several pink teams in operation at the same time out there. In this particular incident I'm telling you about, we had one of the LOACHs had gone down on a hillside where there was some Montagnards. Montagnards were the indigenous tribal people who live in Vietnam. And so we had rescued the crew all right, but the helicopter was largely intact and we wanted to bring it out of there but it was too late in the day to do it. We had to leave it there. So the next morning we went to retrieve it and as we went out there, I suspected that it may have been booby trapped during the night by the VC and so we were very gingerly working around it. And it was, we found a huge cache of explosives buried underneath it. Had we tried to hoist it out, it would've exploded. But we did deactivate the explosives and brought that wounded helicopter out of there.

Interviewer

In the second tour, as I understand it, the active helicopters were down below and you were in one up above commanding and giving orders to the others?

Scott Lyman

Yeah, that's it. As I say, we had the scouts on the ground, which is the red team and then the whites are the Cobras. We had also blue. The blues were the infantries; they were always waiting in reserve. When we found and fixed an enemy, then we would call the blues and they would come up with these slicks, we called them, the Hueys where it was just a UH-1H usually, sometimes Ds, and they would load up seven to eight American soldiers and their equipment and bring them in. And they would then develop the action from there. So our job was to find and fix, and then start the action going.

Typically, after we found and got things going, we would pull our people out and then like the cavalry division or

some other division would bring their troops in and continue it and mop it up. Sometimes it was just small enough we could take care of ourselves, we wouldn't have to call for additional help. But our job was not really to fight the war, but to develop the action and then get out and let someone else do it. Which was the most dangerous part, by the way, because they knew who we were and they always wanted to get at us-the VC that is, and the NVA. It was a much different war fighting the NVA than the VC, by the way. The NVA were excellent gunners, they were more coordinated; they were disciplined. They were fantastic soldiers; they were excellent soldiers. North Vietnamese Army is what NVA stands for. And they would come in, in mass. They'd come down the Ho Chi Minh trail and across the area of Muc Wa, from Cambodia. And it was quite a different thing. It was typically different warfare except that we didn't have trench warfare like we had in the First World War or foxholes in the Second World War. We had forces coming together. one would defeat the other and leave and then the next day we'd have to do it again or maybe another area. We couldn't find and hold terrain. We'd just try to defeat the enemy and eliminate them.

Interviewer

Did you have any dangerous experiences on that second tour that you could share?

Scott Lyman

Well, there were a lot of dangerous experiences, a lot of actions. I think there was one occasion where we were in support of an artillery outfit that had been up in one of the bases outside. They had bases called firebases but sometimes we called them LZ, landing zones, but usually they were firebases and they'd have a small contingent of American people out there and they were always getting attacked. The NVA would love to go in and try to overrun these firebases because they were small enough; they usually had maybe a battalion or smaller unit, a battalion being up wards of 700 people or so. They would be housed in sandbagged bunkers and they'd be their primary control in the area to secure that area so that the Vietnamese could do their work. But they were favorite targets of the NVA and then sometimes they'd try to overrun them. We'd go out there, if called upon, to assist the local people into defending against these. On one occasion I was called out there and in flying out we'd come over cloud cover. Solid cloud cover. I thought we'd never be able to get down. But as we came close to where the base was there was one little sucker hole down there, we went down through it. But once through it, we got on the ground, then we couldn't do anything because we were just down there. In that instance the VC had overrun the compound partially; it had destroyed one or two Chinooks that were there for some reason, I don't know why. But the Americans had defended themselves well. They'd lost some equipment but most of them were still ready to get up and go and fight. That was Dak To, the name of that place was Dak To.

I guess probably one of the most dangerous actions, you're asking about, that I was involved in was just prior to my coming home. I'd served the first half of the tour as Executive Officer of the squadron. But typically, they wanted it to command a unit also, and so they had taken me from my position of Executive Officer of the squadron and had given me one of the troops within that squadron, B Troop to command. Most often a person would take the troop

command before he went up to the squadron level, but in my case, my timing was such that I reversed it. I went over there as Executive Officer first and then went out and commanded B Troop.

Within days of completing my tour, for my second tour, our unit had been sent down to an area called Ban Me Thuot. And Ban Me Thuot was between Pleiku and the Cambodian border. We'd gone down there, a set of our squadron arrangements down there. Of course we got set up, there was known to be an NVA, a North Vietnamese Army who's coming down in that area and they thought it was going to do some damage. In fact, it did. But anyway, they had us go out there in units and my unit was sent out, I guess in July of 1969. And as I went out there with my unit, which would be about 20 helicopters, I noticed the RPM on my helicopter's bleeding off. Typically the indicated RMP in a Huey is about 64- to 6600 RPM, which actually isn't the RPM but that's what's indicated. The jet engine is actually traveling much faster than that but it's derated so you could read it more carefully. So the indicator would be 64- to 6600 RPM for typical operations. In this instance I noticed my RPM was bleeding off to 6,000, it would go down to 58 and the helicopter would start shuddering and then we had to put it down.

So I landed in an open area down there and we had all of the other helicopters dump their blues, their infantry people off around me to secure me. And then they got out of there and in the meantime, the fog rolled in and I was fogged in there all day. We'd just started out early in the morning, five o'clock or so in the morning, landed in this area, and then I was there all day. So during that day, I'd secured the area with my blues and then the crew chief and I were trying to get this helicopter to work. So we'd started it up and tried to get the thing adjusted to see what the problem was. Apparently it was a fuel filter problem but we couldn't locate it. We finally, towards the end of the day, we got it to where we could maintain 5800 RPM, it couldn't continue to drop off. At that point, by grace of God, the fog lifted. And as it lifted, the Colonel came in, brought me some fuel to refuel the helicopter because I'd used up the fuel. So he plucked the troops out of there and then I flew that helicopter with just one person aboard, almost hovered it all the way back to Ban Me Thuot. And that one, I thought was one of the most dangerous because I knew that within without 300 meters of where I was parked with that downed helicopter, there were NVA forces just waiting for nightfall to come and then they'd come and eliminate us. But we got out just at almost sunset when the fog lifted and that's when they could come in and bring the blues out and then I went out right behind 'em.

Interviewer

Did you receive any other medals besides those?

Scott Lyman

Yes, I have some others. I have a Distinguished Flying Cross for an action in one case, and a Bronze Star and some other things.

Interviewer

When you were awarded the Bronze Star, was that for a specific event?

Scott Lyman

I didn't get a Bronze Star for heroism as most often the infantry men would get. The Bronze Star I got was for service, just outstanding service, I guess you'd call it. Being there. But the Distinguished Flying Cross was given to me for an action at night using this light ship I was telling you about where we were able to find and fix quite a group of people there. The Distinguished Flying Cross is about the same thing the Air Force had and is awarded for similar reasons.

Interviewer

You served a complete year again for the second tour?

Scott Lyman

Yes.

Interviewer

The war still hadn't ended?

Scott Lyman

No, I came back in '69 and the war didn't really terminate until '72 but it was in 1970 or so they started to back away from things. Just didn't get any support from the American people. I might mention, that when I came back, I was stationed in Denver, Colorado. I was there with the physical evaluation board whose mission is to evaluate the situation of servicemen who had been wounded in action or otherwise incapacitated to determine their degree of impairment and to suggest a pension for them: 10 percent, 20 percent, of whatever their base of pay. And they had what they called a line officer who would be defending the rights of the soldier and these medical people who served as the actual people who evaluated what the problem was. And then I would evaluate that as line officer. My job was line officer.

But anyway, while I was there, which was after the war was pretty well winding down, I was going to school downtown. I had been drafted after my freshman year at BYU so I never completed my college degree and I wanted to get that complete. The Army likes to have, as senior officers, to have at least a bachelor's degree and I'd been working on that for years and had it almost within sight. And so while I was in Colorado, I was going down to University of Colorado in Denver, to go to school. Sometimes I'd have to leave and go down in uniform; I wouldn't have time to go home and change, I'd have to take off and go down. And at that university, as I went in there, I'd be spit upon and hissed and booed and called all kinds of names. I felt very unpopular. I wore a uniform with a typical amount of fruit-salad and I was a senior officer and yet I was just referred to as a hired killer or a mercenary. I felt bad about that. I wear my uniform every 4th of July or every Veterans Day I wear a uniform. And now, invariably, as I appear in public with that uniform I'm thanked for my service or children and people will come up and tell me thank you. And it's an entirely different atmosphere than it was in the Vietnam era.

Interviewer

If you were to speak to future generations about Vietnam and your experiences there, what would you like to

leave?

Scott Lyman

I'd like them to know that we were in Vietnam for a just cause. We were there because the people were being beleaguered and enslaved and forced to do things that they shouldn't do. We were trying to establish a democracy, which is an uphill battle because they had so much graft among their own people. But anyway, I would let people know that we were there for a league and logical reason and that we left there not because we were defeated, because the American people would not support us and we simply left the field of combat. That's what I'd like people to know. We were there because we were supposed to be there and it was a just war. It was mismanaged, there were errors made. I think in politics-I don't want to get to that-but I think we had some terrible mismanagement from the President on down in that war.

Interviewer

What did you do when you got out of the service after your second tour?

Scott Lyman

Well after the second tour I had another few years. I served, as I say, I was in Denver for a while and then I came back and finally got to the point that the Army sent me back to finish my degree. I came back to BYU and finished my degree there. And then I was sent back to Pennsylvania where I served as commander of a unit, called a Readiness Group. And my particular area was the helicopters and the aviation part of it, the Readiness Group in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. We were stationed at Indiantown Gap. I was discharged or released, retired from active duty in July of 1975. After that, I came back, I sold real estate, I flew as a charter pilot for an outfit in southern Utah, I did a lot of things that most retired people do.

Interviewer

You say you were flying protection and support for the South Vietnamese. Can you define that? Sometimes it sounds like you shot the VC, but sometimes you didn't?

Scott Lyman

Well, that's true. But typically what we would do, let's say we had one of the Ruff-Puff battalions that was sent out into an area of the Delta, around say, Ca Mau. They had probably, in their intelligence, they had received word that there was an enemy force in that area so they sent out the 44th Rangers. And we would then go out to support them with our armed helicopters to protect their flanks and to go ahead of them to find the enemy and to fix the enemy so they could then move in on them. That's what we did with them. With the American forces it was a similar situation, but the Americans are much more disciplined. We'd accompany them into battle to secure their flanks and to scout ahead of them as well as to reinforce them. Does that answer your question?

Interviewer

Yes. When you say "fix" are you just trying to find a position and radio back the position?

Scott Lyman

When I say "fix 'em," I mean to keep them from moving. Once you found them - of course they'll try to escape. They're going to try to go anyway they can. So what you want to do is to pin them down, that's called "fixing them." So you fire on them and you encircle them with fire, you keep them in a particular position so that when the infantry comes in, they have a force to fight instead of just a dissipated bunch of ghosts. Find and fix.

Interviewer

And that was pretty typical of your missions, I guess?

Scott Lyman

That's typical of cavalry. If you go back in history, the history of the cavalry, whether it would be any of the old horse people or not, their job is to go out and find 'em, and fix 'em. And then the infantry would come in and have the war.

Interviewer

When you first got there, was there really an opinion on whether this action in Vietnam was good or bad?

Scott Lyman

Well when I first got there, the first tour, there wasn't near so much anti-war sentiment as there was towards the end of it. People were supportive of us when we first went over there. The thing was, we could've done the job we were given to do and been out of there within two years if it had been managed properly. But because it wasn't, the war dragged on for, what? Eight years. And during that period of time, the American people just got sick of it, tired of it, wouldn't support it longer. But there was a different attitude towards the end of the war than there was at the beginning. At the beginning of the war they were supportive of us and at the end of the war they were -

Interviewer

Well I guess they should know that you were also restricted on what ammunition you could use against the enemy.

Scott Lyman

What she's referring to is that sometimes we'd receive word, all the way down from the President, what we called a "no-fire day." He was trying to, for some kind of an accommodation with the North Vietnamese and the VC. So we would be restricted from firing on a particular day. We could go out, but we couldn't fire unless fired upon. So during that period of time, the VC, we could see them in all the canals all over the Delta, resupplying their outposts because they knew what was happening, it just would take advantage of it to resupply their outposts. So we'd go down to try to irritate them enough they'd fire at us so that we could blow them out of the water.

Interviewer

How did you deal with fear? Were you afraid and how did you deal with it?

Scott Lyman

I think to say you weren't afraid would be a damn lie. I might mention one thing, that one instance where we had to retrieve the wounded soldier on my first tour in Vietnam where I told you that we were trying to retrieve this wounded sergeant. And I could see four machine guns firing at me. They were firing from a square. The banana

trees are quite often planted in squares over there. The farmers would have what they called a square. They'd just have their house in the middle of this square and banana trees in the berm around there that they would harvest. Well these machine guns set themselves up inside this banana square. So there are four of them firing at me. If you ever seen a tracer in the air, it looks like a red line. But if you ever see it coming head-on, it's a pinpoint of light that suddenly expands into a huge light right in front of you. Well there are four of these machine guns firing at me; every fifth round is a tracer. So I knew between everyone I could see there were four I couldn't see and there's no way I was gonna survive, I just knew I was gonna get killed. And so the taste of fear, I described it at that time to Lynn, as being the taste of brass and blood. If you've ever taken a bullet shell and tried to whistle through it and catch your tongue you'd know what the taste of blood and brass together is. That's the taste of fear. And yes, I had lots of that taste.

Interviewer

What would you do?

Scott Lyman

You just keep on doing the job. You realize that you're not the only one that has that, your other troops are still feeling the same thing, but you have a mission to perform, you do the mission.

Interviewer

I can understand why the Vietnamese would burrow homes and that was so effective they'd have actual hospitals under the ground. Did you know where those places were?

Scott Lyman

That was one of our jobs. As we went out there, we would quite often find an area that indicated there was activity around it. And then if we had these scouts down they quite often would actually find the hole in the ground that led to the cave where these units were. Not so much hospitals, but command training places like that. We'd find them typically along the canal banks. You'd find a hole in the ground and we'd usually mark that with a yellow smoke grenade and then attack it. If we got some results, fine. If we didn't, when the infantry people came in, they would have to put their tunnel rats in there so they could find what they found in there.

Interviewer

So could you bomb them deep enough?

Scott Lyman

The rockets we had wouldn't penetrate that far, no. The rocket we had, a two and a half inch rocket would have the same effect as a 105 Howitzer, more or less, which means it blows something off the surface very well. You could hit a house with it and knock the house down or on a car you'd blow the car to pieces. But to penetrate the ground, it will penetrate maybe two feet and then it's not beyond that. When we found a concentration of these places and this, more or less, is in the second tour. In North Vietnam, the B-52s would be sent in in what they called an arc light. Arc light was the name given for a bombing made by the B-52s. They would drop massive amounts of bombs.

When they finished an area, we would then go in for what they called a BDA, or Bomb Damage Assessment and see how much they'd done. And their bombs would then penetrate these caves and these places like that. But even there, they're sometimes deep enough that people come out of those things after an arc light. It was amazing.

Interviewer

What do you want to be identified in rank for this show?

Scott Lyman

Well, I'm a Lieutenant Colonel; I still am a Lieutenant Colonel, retired. I use that.

Interviewer

In the second tour you were a Major.

Scott Lyman

Yeah, it's a difficult progression.

Interviewer

What is your hometown?

Scott Lyman

Well I knew up in southern Utah, born in Salt Lake City, but I grew up in San Juan County, Blanding and Monticello, but my hometown is now Orem. I retired to Orem, we had our children go to school in Orem and I've been there since 1965. The last few years of the Army I owned a home there that I rented out. So we've been residents since 1965.

Interviewer

So you mentioned that Robert C. Oaks who is a -?

Scott Lyman

He's a member of the Quorum of the Seventy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Interviewer

Dallin Oaks --?

Scott Lyman

He's a cousin.

Interviewer

Did you ever work with him directly?

Scott Lyman

No, he was Air Force. He was Air Force and I was Army. I knew who he was, of course, 'cause I'm LDS and I knew who he was. I had gone to college and he had gone to BYU for a year or two before he went to the Air Force Academy. And of course, in a military situation the LDS people are pilots, your circle of acquaintances become smaller and smaller as you find the various things you have in common. As an example, being LDS and being a flying officer, I would know the others, like Steve Featherstone. I might never have known Steve Featherstone had I

not been a pilot and also been LDS. Well Bob Oaks had been at BYU when I was, I knew of him. And later on when he was in Europe as the Commanding General over there, once again, I knew of him. I've communicated with him since about this rescue. There's an article about that in there too, by the way. I didn't write it, but someone else did. But I knew him, yes, but I didn't associate with him in any kind of a service commitment.

Interviewer

What were your thoughts on the withdrawal?

Scott Lyman

Sorrow. I felt we'd been betrayed. I've seen pictures of the Hueys taking a load of people out and dumping them off in a carrier and then they push the Huey off into the ocean, which I thought was a terrible situation. As I say, we weren't beaten there; we just left it. We abandoned it, returned-what-$6 billion worth of material over to the VC when we left. They had buildings and equipment and helicopters to last them for 50 years. I felt we'd been betrayed by our politicians and we weren't allowed to do the job we could've done in the first two years of the war. As a matter of fact, there's an article recently, I saw, that showed General Giap who's the Commanding General of the NVA, when he said we were within days of surrendering when the Americans quit. If they'd continued their bombing of Ha Noi, had continued the actions of South Vietnam, they'd had to have quit. They were on the ropes and we stopped and they moved in.

Interviewer

We appreciate your service and coming in here today.

Scott Lyman

I had many of those people of those 58,000; many friends are still there. I appreciate coming. I appreciate representing the people. I want people to know that I love America. I love my country, and I would do what I did again, happily, and feel that we were there as we should've been. I don't always support what we do in a war situation, in that one I felt that we were there for a particular purpose and justifiably so.