

Mr. Thomas Wetland

Vietnam

When did you enter the military?

“1969”

How old were you when you entered the military?

“I was about 20”

How long were you in the military?

“Two and a half years”

What boot camp did you go to?

“Fort Gordon, Virginia. I went for a physical and that’s where I ended up.”

How long was the boot camp?

“I think it was 2 months”

Did you go to a second boot camp?

“No, Advanced Infantry Training”

Did you join the military voluntarily?

“Trick question. I upped my draft. People don’t normally do that. If you joined it was three years. If you got drafted it was two years. If you told them that you wanted to get drafted earlier they were happy to do it and that’s what I did.”

What made you join?

“To get it out of the way. I had a lot of friends that were going to college or getting married to early just to stay out of the service.”

What did you do in the A.I.T?

“Infantry”

What branch of military were you in?

“Army”

What equipment did you use on a daily basis?

“Used guns and what not “

What rank did you achieve?

“E4”

Were you wounded while you were in the military?

Yes, I got shrapnel from mortars and stuff like that.

When did that happen?

“1970, Vietnam”

Were you in any famous campaigns or battles?

“No, I guess in their own way they were all famous.”

Did you receive any awards or medals for your service?

“No all declined”

What was a normal or average day while you were in the military?

“Uhh... being overseas. It ws quite it was a night time war”

What was your normal routine while at war?

“Uhh...I don’t know, Guard duty, keeping an eye on your buddies. We were one big family”

What does nighttime war mean?

“Vietnam was the nighttime war that was when they usually strike. They sneak around. Don’t like to be out in daylight.”

What type of firearms did you use?

“Everything: M16, M60, Quad 50, etc.”

What was your preference when you think of guns?

“Your M16 that’s what you usually carried around most of the time.”

Did you use any heavy weapon artillery?

“Yeah, I was in the fire base, stationed in fire base. The fire base had two eight inch Howitzers, and two 175’s. A 175 can shoot a bullet that’s three feet long. Its got three charges of powder behind it each three feet long that goes in the barrel behind it. So that’s 12 feet and it can shoot accurately for about thirty six miles; unless something goes wrong.”

What is a fire base?

“It is a place where you are stationed where it is an artillery unit. I got sent to Germany and I volunteered for Nam to get an early out. If you come back with six months or less they let you go, instead of reprogramming you. But that didn’t work out. I had to go to the fire base with artillery. I had two brothers over there at the same time; one in the Navy, one in the Marines, and I was in the Army. At one time we were all there at once; which is technically illegal.”

Why was it illegal?

“It was not allowed to have more than one family member in a war zone at that time. They have to write a letter to your parents and then the C.O. and everything has to be Okayed. That’s how I lost my early out, because I got extended and the time it took.”

While at war, what helped you pass the time?

“You gamble a lot, you drink a lot of beer because the water is no good over there. You write letter. You find things to do.”

What was your favorite card game?

“Poker, I sent a lot of stuff home because I did good at poker”

Who would you write letters to?

“Girlfriend, and my parents,”

While at war, what helped you get through the hard times?

“I don’t know just part of life.”

After you came home from war, did your perspective change?

“Well, I used to hunt before I went in the service. I gave that up. You realize what a rifle can do. Give the deer the rifle.”

Did you get any care packages?

“Yeah”

Did you carry anything with you after the military or the war?

“Yeah, I got stuff but it’s not to help remember; Just keepsakes. They have been in the trunk for a long time.”

What are some of the stuff you got that were keepsakes?

“I can’t tell you sorry.”

Would you like to say or add anything that I missed or anything you would like to talk about?

“Nope”

“Alright that was quick and to the point I have some things that I have to keep hidden.”

That's understandable. Thank You.