

**Richard James Fifield
Veteran**

**Wayne Clarke
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Interviewers**

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Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth and place of birth please?

JF: Richard James Fifield, I was born in Granville, New York on August 23rd, 1950.

Q: What was your educational background prior to entering service?

JF: I attended school in Granville until the fifth grade and then from there, we moved to Salem [New York] and I graduated from high school in Salem, in 1968.

Q: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

JF: I volunteered for the draft.

Q: Why did you do that?

JF: At that time, I had felt obligated and some of my friends that were a little older than I was, had joined the military, they joined the Marine Corps. They, as a matter of fact, had already gone to Vietnam at that time, Roger Slater and some other friends of mine. From them doing that and me being sixteen years old, they were more or less heroes. They were my mentors and my friends and for some reason, I thought that if I joined the Army and volunteered to go to Vietnam, that I probably would be with these guys because I had no idea what Vietnam is. I knew it was a place, that was all I knew at that time and [I thought] we would all be together. That's why I volunteered for the draft.

Q: Where did you go for your basic training?

JF: Fort Dix [New Jersey].

Q: How long were you there?

JF: We were at Fort Dix for about ten weeks and I did well with the basic training. That was another thing, is that we were very poor people in my family and at Fort Dix, they gave me all these new clothes. It was kind of funny when we were going through the line, and I was a little on the large side and the guy said "don't even worry about, they'll fit when we get done." So, we just kept on going. But I was with the drill sergeant when they would ask for volunteers to do laundry or garbage pickup or things like that and I said, "Yeah, I'll do it." I got

promoted to E2 in basic training and I liked basic training, I did well and I lost some weight and was doing pretty good. The drill sergeant was my mentor then, to see the ribbons on this guy's shoulder and chest; that's who I wanted to be, that's the guy I want to be right there. Those guys were tougher than nails and they seemed to know what they were doing. Even at that time, they were training us for Vietnam, they were training us for the war tactics that-I didn't know, but later on when we started to go to RVN even when we got to Bien Hoa when the special forces guys were training us in Bien Hoa, that was the same thing these drill sergeants were doing, was basic training so they knew something ahead of time, they were getting us ready.

Q: Had they been in Vietnam?

JF: Yes, they all had the CIB badges [Army Combat Infantryman Badge], 1st CAB [Combat Aviation Brigade] and Fourth Americal Division. They were all Airborne qualified. The information they gave us was good. It doesn't seem like it was useful, but once you get to Vietnam, everything is useful, everything that somebody has told you for the past five months means something.

Q: You ended up in an Aviation unit, how did you get into that?

JF: I don't know. It must've been through my scores to get in because as soon I left Fort Dix, they sent us right to Virginia down for aviation training.

Q: Whereabouts in Virginia was that?

JF: Fort Eustis.

Q: When was that?

JF: Would have been about May of '69. We were down there in May until maybe the third week of July.

Q: Had you ever been away from your family up until this point?

JF: No.

Q: Did you get homesick at all?

JF: Yeah, maybe some.

Q: Was there anyone in your unit that you knew?

JF: No.

Q: How did you keep in contact with those at home?

JF: I wrote letters. The other guys that I knew that went into the service with me from Greenwich, wherever we were inducted, they ended up all going to Korea. They did the banana helicopters, but they were in aviation units too, they did those big banana boats there in Korea and I think a couple went to Germany.

Q: What kind of specialized training were you given in Virginia?

JF: Mostly maintenance, record keeping, flight procedures, then they gave us RVN training, that was two weeks, I think.

Q: Was that a Chinook school you went through, the Chinook course?

JF: Yeah, and they gave us the RVN training, but they trained us with BB guns. We did it with BB guns, I think of that because now they have the paintball courses that these children go through. I said, "Geez, that's a lot similar to what they were doing there," but you just had a big facemask on with the BB guns.

Q: That's interesting because we never heard that before.

JF: Yeah, they did that, they had a big swampy area where they did it.

Q: So, these were "live fire" maneuvers but with BB guns?

JF: Right, with BB guns.

Q: Did anybody get hurt?

JF: As a matter of fact, there were guys that actually got hurt, there were guys that had to get the BBs out of their shirts and stuff. They got a little close when the guys shot them, so they went through their shirts so, there was a few casualties with that.

Q: How long were you in Virginia?

JF: About four months.

Q: Do you think your training was adequate when you ended up going into Vietnam, do you think you received enough training, do you think it was adequate for what you had to do?

JF: I think as far as the military part, I think it was adequate. I think what wasn't adequate was how to deal with it mentally. I don't remember anybody telling you how to deal with this stuff mentally when this stuff starts getting into your head and you can't get it out. Right from start to finish, everybody's telling you, how many ways these Gooks can kill you, but nobody's telling you that you got to keep it out of your head. Just pay attention and keep it out of your head, but nobody's ever saying that, they're just telling you, "If you don't do what I'm telling you now, this guy's going to cut your throat. If you don't do what I tell you now, this guy's going to blow your head off. You want a cigarette on brown guard, this guy is going to blow your brains out."

Q: When did you arrive in Vietnam?

JF: July of 1969.

Q: Did you go to Fort Lewis, Washington first?

JF: No, I went to Fort Dix. They were, those airmen were-when we were getting ready to leave, we were scared to death anyway and they put on this tape of Peter, Paul and Mary, *Leaving on a Jet Plane*, so oh jeez. They had their little laugh but the part about it there, they were unloading caskets there, from a C130 or one of those cargo planes and that bothered me because I even have nightmares about that now and my thing is, was there anybody in them?

Q: So, you're getting ready to go over to Vietnam and there are cargo planes unloading caskets?

JF: Unloading caskets and I don't know if there's anybody in them or where they were coming from. That was a start of being scared to death.

Q: Whereabouts in Vietnam did you land?

JF: Tan Son Nhut [Air Base].

Q: Was it a direct flight from [Fort] Dix or what were your stops?

JF: No, we left Fort Dix, we went to Anchorage, Alaska and the guy that was in charge of the plane, I don't know who he was now, but they allowed us to get off the plane and go into the bar and have a few drinks. I remember the beer was five bucks a bottle and we couldn't buy them fast enough. We were there about an hour. I guess, they must've refueled the plane there. Then we flew from there right directly to Tan Son Nhut. But when we were over the South China Sea, just getting ready to come into Tan Son Nhut, the stewardess came around and said that we were entering a hostile fire area. "What the hell is a hostile fire area," so she's explaining if we get shot down, this is what you do. For the last three months all you heard were people telling you how many ways you're going to get killed. It starts to work on you, especially after your plane sets down, you get off and now, this is it, you're here. Everybody telling you for three months now that everybody you see is going to kill you, so we get onto a bus and we have to go to a reception area, somewhere over at another base and they drive us through the little bitty towns there, the little villages and they shut the lights off and you can see the flashes off on the hillsides where I would guess artillery rounds are being shot. These people are sitting outside their hooches and watching you go by. You figure every one of those guys have to have a gun, everybody has to have a gun; except us, we don't have one They haven't given us one yet, all we got is a toothbrush. So, we went to the reception area-

Q: -Was that in Bien Hoa or was that still in Tan Son Nhut?

JF: No, that was in Bien Hoa, the reception area, because when we went over there, there was a bunch of Special Forces guys running that. I thought these guys are going to be okay, the ones here, the Special Forces guys are going to take care of you. The first thing they tell you is "look, this is what you got to do or you're going to get killed." Everybody is telling you: "You're going to get killed, this is what's going to happen to you, and you're dying." At that part, I think they

could've handled that a little differently instead of scaring the shit out of you. I don't think that did me a lot of good other than the fact, I figured everybody was trying to kill me.

So, then they sent us to our different units and when they called my name and they said "101st Airborne," I said "oh, you've got to be kidding me." [Laughs] I only jump off a stool, what the hell is going on. Away I go and I get with the unit there and I meet two friends of mine that I used to go deer hunting with, they were with the 101st. So, we chummed around there a bit there anyway until we waited for the sergeant to come and get us at the reception area for the 101st. Then he takes us up where they're going to have us, they've got a hooch, that's right next to a radar station there at the base. First night was okay, just everyone was kind of tense, just sitting around and the next day they didn't do much of anything, even the sergeant came around to explain what training we would be doing for the next few days and just to relax, shave, get cleaned up; so, we did. That night, they hit us with rockets at night. Oh jeez, man I was so scared, that was the most scared I had ever been. They kept wobbling those things. They'd keep on coming and I'm thinking "Jesus Christ, this is an airbase, why in the hell didn't they send those planes up and find those guys shooting those rockets?" But, you know, of course they don't put the planes in the air when there's rockets, they don't want them shot down so we got to wait it out and I'm scared right to death. The sergeant never comes and gets us. In all the while we're in there, the bunker for at least three hours or more, seemed like forever, he never came, until daylight came. Of course, we're all scared and he's making fun of us. [Laughs] and I said, "This is not going to work. I don't want to be here now, this is not the place for me to be," but unfortunately, you're stuck. Once you got that far, you're not going anywhere. But he handled that rather bad I thought and the guys that were with me thought the same thing. I thought they would give you some sort of weapon, but you probably would end up shooting each other if you did, I don't know, everybody is so scared. Either that or you don't want to be next to one of them radar station when you're getting settled in somewhere.

We went from there and that was like ten days, where we did that with him. We didn't care for him. I guess he had been there from day one and didn't want to go home anyway.

Q: That was the sergeant in charge?

JF: Yeah, the sergeant in charge.

Q: I think I remember him.

JF: What a dingdong, I think he had been there forever, didn't want to go home.

Q: There was a few of them like that there.

JF: Yup, eating with chopsticks. He was a real McCoy, what a bird. So, from there, they sent me to the 478th Aviation Company. I was only there-

Q: -That was in Da Nang wasn't it or right outside of it?

JF: Yeah, just outside Da Nang, upon Red Beach. I was only there for a couple of days and then from there I went up to B Company, 159th [Assault Support Helicopter Battalion]. But I don't know, everything was in turmoil, everywhere we went. The rocket attacks-other than that, the aviation company in Da Nang, the first night I was there I had guard and I thought, "Okay, I can do it." They said, "You're new and I just want to tell you the rules here." Of course, the sergeant already told us that you do not sleep on guard; there is one thing you do not do, you do not sleep on guard. So, "I said that's fine, I can deal with that." I'm sitting in the bunker and the guy I'm on guard duty with, he lights up a joint and I said, "What the hell is going on here?" He said, "Well this is how this works," he had been there a while, "if you tell the sergeant or anyone else that I smoke this joint or another one or one after that, I will blow your brains out." I said, "Jesus Christ, this is bad enough, I got to watch the guys shooting at me and I'm worried that this guy is going to shoot me in the back. That didn't go over too well and I was glad I got to leave there anyway. That always stuck in the back of my mind too, I didn't like the guys that were doing the drugs, not when they put your life in danger.

Q: Was that prevalent when you were there?

JF: I think so, yeah.

Q: It wasn't B Company?

JF: I think a lot of guys smoked pot, I don't know about anything else but I know marijuana was a problem. But I think for the most part, there was only just a few what that didn't handle it. I think most of the guys that smoked pot, they still did normal, daily activities and I don't think that was a problem. The problem was the ones that were really hammered on it and stayed hammered because they'd be walking around in a trance all the time. You'd start getting rockets and stuff at night and these guys are going "wow, wow, wow." Go get him, get him in the morning, he'll be there wherever the pieces are, piece him back together.

Q: What was your life like with B Company? What was your daily routine?

JF: When I first went in, I wanted to get into the flight platoon and we had, I don't remember who it was now, who the commander was then. I think it was Macintosh. It might have been Macintosh.

Q: There was Major Bowles.

JF: No, it was Macintosh then. He said there, they didn't have enough room right then and that's fine and he asked me if I wanted to get into maintenance and I did maintenance. I was doing maintenance with George Folker's crew, he was really

good. I liked working with George. Then Sergeant Rutroff, I don't know if you remember Sergeant Rutroff, [he] was in Tech Supply and him and McFiercen and McFiercen went home and Sergeant Rutroff had to go home, he was getting divorced from his family. Major Macintosh said, "Jeez, would you do me a favor, we need someone to run Tech Supply. It's an E7 slot, but Sergeant Rutroff is going back, would you do that for us?" I said, that's fine but I still want to fly when I get a chance. So, we did that. That's how I ran Tech Supply and just flying on the weekends when I could get a flight. Then, I got in trouble with Captain Warren and his punishment was that he wouldn't let me help the guys fly no more and if that's the way you want to be then that's fine. He wasn't doing anything but hurting the other guys.

Q: When you were flying, you were flying as a door gunner?

JF: Yeah, I flew with Jimmy Doherty. I liked doing what I was doing, I just felt whatever they asked me to do, I did it, I did the best I could do and I liked Tech Supply, getting the parts- wheelin' and dealing- that was fun, wheelin' and dealing with those guys. I took them down to A Company, they had all the stuff, I don't know why but I think it was because they were on the beach. They got the first that came off the ships, I think. Whatever you needed, they usually had it.

Q: Any particular incidents that stand out in your mind? Any events there?

JF: I think in May when all the guys started getting killed. It just seemed like everyday somebody was getting whacked and that was tough.

Q: This would be May of '70?

JF: Yeah, that I still have a tough time dealing with that. You see them when they're walking to their choppers in the morning and the next morning, you're sitting out there with a pair of boots, a rifle and a helmet. It's almost like it's a disgrace to be doing that, to honor such a guy that way; you can just see him walking over the hill there to the flight line and now he's sitting out there with six or seven pairs of boots.

Q: At that point, Major Cone, was company commander, I don't know if you remember him?

JF: Yeah, I remember Major Cone. But that was tough to deal with then.

Q: There was about a dozen guys that were killed in a thirty-day period.

JF: Yeah, the raining season had just about stopped and all the missions were taken off, everyone was working their head off. I don't know, it just seemed to take all the steam and headway out of all the guys and everybody was bitter, angry. Then if you got a chance to shoot something up, hooray from me, no holds; they already broke all the rules, now it's our turn. I think the anger was just hulled over when you come back home and you're still angry about it, the way

they did things is, I don't know, easy to say now, game is over, but seemed like they could've won.

Q: Why do you think everyone was so angry?

JF: Well, when you were flying you could see the Gooks walking around the hillside but you couldn't shoot at them and you know that didn't seem fair.

Q: You didn't agree with the rules of engagement?

JF: No.

Q: How do you think they affected how the war was fought?

JF: Every time you wait until somebody shoots at you, they've got the upper hand. That's from hunting or anything like that; you want to be the first guy that pulls the trigger. If you're in a fist fight, you want to be the one to throw the first punch, if you hit that guy pretty hard and he gets back up then it's time to leave. You don't want him to be doing that to you and it just seemed we were letting them do that to us. It's like Puff the Magic Dragon there, you get a sniper at night and you used to watch them go around the hillside and just rivets and rivets and rivets of ammunition. Hundreds and thousands of rounds of ammunition to try to get this one guy and the next thing you know, you hear "pop" and you've got to be kidding me [laughs]. There's a certified nut. You see things like that and all that tells you is, these people will go to any extreme to get you out of there. One guy can make that much havoc. But I think the comradery is what was good. I thought it dropped off a lot when nobody wanted to be friends anymore after all the guys got killed and were afraid to get close to anybody again. It was the tightness; everybody just went about their business and kept their head right straight forward. It wasn't the same.

Q: What were relations like within the unit, was there ever any tension between the blacks and the whites in your units?

JF: I don't think so. No, the guys we had, the colored people we had in our unit I thought were excellent; they were good guys. There were guys from other units that used to come around and tried to incite these guys and fire them up, but they would just tell them-you remember Jimmy Braxton, he was my friend and Jimmy said, "you know, this is why we call you niggers, is what you're doing right now," so he said, "get away from me, I don't want to be included in that group," and he wasn't, he was a very nice man. I don't think we had a problem with that, I don't think we did at all. It seemed like our-

Q: In fact, our first sergeant was black, Adams.

JF: Adams, yes, he was a nice guy too, he was a nice man. There was Adams and-

Q: -Sergeant Statesman, was he there?

JF: Sergeant Statesman, yeah, he was in maintenance, great big guy. But the black guys were good. There were a few that-but they came from somewhere else,

I don't know if they came off the 5th Trans [5th Transportation Battalion], or where they came from.

Q: There were a few potheads.

JF: Yeah, they were dope smokers, I don't know where they came from though. The pathfinders from up above us there, they tended to be a problem with drugs too, they were heavy in the drugs up there. I think that night they touched up the Cobra pad, they hit the Cobra pad with rockets, the ammunition dump; man that was just raining shrapnel everywhere, there was nowhere to go, sounded just like somebody was dropping nails on you. That went on for four or five hours, just the ammunition going off, couldn't get near it. It sounded like it was raining nails.

Q: Do you remember the flood in the company area?

JF: Yeah, that's why I lost all my pictures of my grandmother. I lost everything I owned to that flood. The water raised like thirty feet overnight. We had to take a lifeline from one hill to the other to get out of there. Lost a whole shooting match, anything that-lost all my clothes, lost all my shoes.

Q: Was this during the monsoon season?

JF: Yeah, never seen rain like that since.

Q: What happened there, there was a bridge up above our area and it go washed down and it butted up against-remember that bridge, the road passed over next to the company area,-the remainder of that bridge butted up against the one bridge and it created a dam and the water just rose and it flooded the whole area.

JF: I never seen that much water in my life. We had about twelve-foot hooches that just immediately went under water.

Q: I know some of the mascots, some of the dogs, I guess one of the dogs had a liter of pups and they were all drowned.

JF: Yeah, the three cows and then the pig.

Q: Gork.

JF: Gork the Pig.

Q: They cut Gork loose so he wouldn't drown [laughs] and we had a huge pig as a mascot; thing must've weighed over three hundred pounds.

JF: Oh God, he was huge. He was enormous and Frito was the dog, he was there as a company mascot. The rainy season over there-I don't think the heat was as bad as the rainy season actually, the rainy season was unbelievable. Just rain and rain and rain; day in and day out.

Q: You never dried out; you were always wet.

JF: No, my feet are screwed up now. Nobody had nothing dry on. It would actually rain so hard, that it would soak right through your poncho liners. At Guard, I remember they had that Captain Warner, what a screwball he was. He

wanted us sitting outside on the bunkers, you know you had the windows on the bunker and he wanted us sitting on top of those bunkers in the rainy season. I always did while he was there, but I said “if this guy’s goofy enough to check on us every fifteen minutes, we’ll be there but I am not sitting out in that rain.” What I did is I figured that would be the one time that they would try to get us to the wire, during that time because you couldn’t see from here to that wall.

Q: Did you ever have much contact with the Vietnamese people?

JF: Only the kids, I got in trouble for giving kids candy. I used to give kids candy and I got in trouble for that. Charged me sixty dollars for that, but it was worth it. We had a couple of kids that worked around the company area doing things for us and we would give them candy and treats, stuff like that, soda. But that’s really the only—well, we went to a Vietnamese wedding, me and Joe Merkley, down in Hue down there, we went to that, that was really nice.

Q: How did you get—were you invited to that?

JF: Yeah.

Q: How did you get invited to that?

JF: The girl that worked at I think 5th Trans’ E.M. Club [Enlisted Men’s Club] she got married. She invited us.

Q: Did she marry a GI?

JF: No, he was Vietnamese. But that’s the first time I had Budweiser beer. They had all kinds of Budweiser beer there, I said “this is nice.” [Laughs]. We went to that anyway; we were a little out of place; probably shouldn’t have been there.

Q: Yeah, I know, Hue was off limits.

JF: Yeah, Tom the Water Truck Guy, he gave us a ride down, he took us down. He picked us up when he came back with his load of water. That was nice, that was interesting, church was beautiful. That’s one thing I remember, the church was beautiful. And we had lobster, I don’t remember if it was cooked or not, I don’t know. That was the first time I had lobster, don’t know if it was dead or alive [laughs], I don’t remember that part. Yeah, Hue was off limits.

Q: Technically, I guess all the villages were off limits; we weren’t supposed to be there.

JF: Yeah, we couldn’t go down, we used to do our patrols and go down through the villages down there and it’s like, especially after the guys got killed and we started losing more and more guys, going through villages, you’d see them sitting outside their hutches or working in their rice patty, you want to shoot them; you’re so bitter, you want to shoot them. Chances are, they probably are really good people, but that’s what happens to you and then they send you home.

Q: When did you leave?

JF: August, 20th or something like that. 15th or 20th.

Q: Were you there for the move to Phu Bai [Pu Bai Combat Base]?

JF: No, that must've been just after I left because I know you said they moved the company down there and they just ransacked the whole base.

Q: Yeah, I was only in Phu Bai for I think about a month or so and then I went home.

JF: Did they move to Phu Bai down where A company was down?

Q: Yeah, we were probably down a few hundred yards from them. Actually, I think we were close-I forget if it was A or C company were closer to. I think it was C Company.

JF: Yeah, that must've been just after I left. But things were very confusing. I even got ready to leave and it was very confusing there. You could see, by the 1970s, they were ready to give everything back to them then, I don't know if it was political but you could see there was no way they wanted to win the war. They were happy to leave it just the way it was and get out. I think the officers we had, the personnel we had were well capable of fighting a good enough fight to win that. They were excellent, every one of them.

Q: Who do you blame for not winning it? Political?

JF: Political. It was absolutely political. There was no way you could fight a war thirty thousand miles away. If they let their guys do their job they were trained to do, they could've won that war. It's like going to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, there were missions going there all the time but all they were doing-they weren't search and destroy missions, they were just search missions. They were just looking to see if that's where these other people were coming from, the Vietnamese were coming from and sure enough, that's where they were coming from.

Q: Did you have any incidents on the way home with anti-war demonstrators?

JF: No, what did happen is we flew back into-well, we stopped in Cam Ranh Bay; that's where we came home out of, Cam Ranh Bay. We were there two nights and the second night, of course, I was drinking and drinking more than I should've been, but I got robbed. Three GIs robbed me, they took a couple hundred dollars, I guess, but I said "nope, I'm not staying here and fighting with no MPs over this. They can have my money." We went on to Fort Lewis, got to Fort Lewis and they met us in like a staging area and they left us there. In Fort Lewis, it rains day and night every day of the year; they left us there, nobody came back. I said, "You've got to be kidding me." We got maybe two hundred people sitting there in the rain, in a parking lot. We sat there maybe three, four hours, got soaking wet and pissed off. Finally, we had an E6 that was getting out of an infantry unit and he said, "well boys, I think this is the part where we leave our stuff here and we take a

walk and we will spread out and somebody find where the E.M. Club and get ourselves some drinks.” So that’s what we did, we found the E.M. Club. Then we came back with a belly full of beer and a colonel came out and we were kicked off our duffle bags and nobody got up and saluted and he had a fit about that. Him and a Spec 4 [Specialist Rank], he said “you people are still in the military for the time being and you will salute me and give me the courtesy I deserve.” The E6 told him our story that we had been out here in the rain for four hours and we thought we deserved some respect also and he said “you do, I’ll take care of it. I’ll be back in fifteen minutes.” He never did come back. So that went on until the next morning and the next morning, they finally came and started processing us out but nobody apologized; nothing. So, we got our stuff, got processed out, got our money to go to the airport. I think we took a cab, me and Jimmy Doherty and I think there were two other guys, we split a cab.

Q: Jimmy Doherty was with you at this point?

JF: Yeah, we split a cab to go to the airport, it wasn’t very much, maybe twenty bucks. On the way out, I remember we dropped our duffle bags in the garbage cans. We already known-they told us that we may have problems at the airport with demonstrators and so on and so forth. We put civilian clothes on and put all our stuff in the garbage can on the way out. That was the easy way out, I guess.

Q: Were you aware of the anti-war movement while you were in Vietnam?

JF: Yup.

Q: What were your feelings about it?

JF: My feeling is, if you don’t like it, get out. I don’t think they should have a right to protest against the soldiers that are already there. If you want a peace movement, then you should get yourself on a plane and go to Hanoi and talk to this guy, he’s the one who’s killing all the innocent civilians. I think they’re talking to the wrong one. The Americans don’t want to kill people and we don’t want to fight with anybody. But when you’re going over there, you’ve got whole villages that are wiped out because of these North Vietnamese, well then why don’t Jane Fonda and these guys jump on their-

Q:-she did. What were your feelings on Jane Fonda?

JF: She should have stayed there. I don’t know why they let her come back. She would’ve made a nice housemate for one of them guys.

Q: Did you join any veteran’s organizations after?

JF: Yes, I joined the American Legion.

Q: Are you an active member?

JF: Yes.

Q: Did you ever stay in contact with anyone that served with you?

JF: Yeah, Roger Trembly.

Q: Where is he?

JF: He's in Rhode Island.

Q: You mentioned Richard Bond?

JF: Yeah, I talked to Dick Bond a few times.

Q: What about Jimmy Doherty?

JF: No, I lost his address and I never could find him.

Q: Was he from Boston?

JF: No, he was actually from, shamefully enough, Greenfield Massachusetts; it was like seventy-five miles away.

Q: I was going to say, I think Greg Lusto was Greenfield Mass. also.

JF: Yeah, those guys were close by. No, I stayed in contact with Roger. I took a lot of trips down to Rhode Island to see Roger and I always tried to get him to come back up with me. He rode up with me once. He's having a tough time dealing with it.

Q: He's the only one you've actually seen since Vietnam.

JF: Yeah, I went home with Dick Bondstop.

Q: How do you think your time in the service or time in Vietnam affected or changed your life?

JF: I think it changed my life to a point, where I was irresponsible, I didn't care. When I was in school, I was a decent student, I was a good student. I always wanted to be a school teacher. Being in the service got me away from that. I don't know if it's part of feeling sorry for myself when I came home from Vietnam, I don't know what it was but, it was a problem. I would have to be away from people. I would like being alone and I would go up on back roads and sit there at night to be there by myself. My wife has got me away from doing that. I'm back to where I can be a member of society, I guess.

Q: When did you get married?

JF: 1972. I drank a lot. I quit drinking in 1977. I drank a lot. The military taught me a lot as far as taking care of my family, taking care of my area. I don't need anybody to take care of my things, I can do that very well. I'm not sure if it would be legal the way I would do it, but I definitely will take care of my own people. I think I became a lot more distant from my family, from my siblings. I don't know if it was me getting away from them or them getting away from me but we pretty much stay away from each other. But I'm happy with just my little piece of the

pie. I go down for my PTSD clinic every Monday and that helps to know that there's a lot of other people that have the same problems.

Q: How long have you been attending that?

JF: Four years. I go every Monday. I had a tough time dealing with it before that.

Q: Do you think that helps you?

JF: Yes. The therapist is very good, my doctor is very good and our group, the guys in the group are very good. Oddly enough, we all have a lot of similarities in our daily routines in what bothers us. They all seem to have the same family problems I have. It's hard to deal with sometimes.

[Tape Interruption]

JF: If you can think of the worst place you can think of, that would be a palace compared to where we were living.

Q: Do you remember some of the other characters or other people around the company?

JF: Oh yeah, what were they, Weber, he was-there were some guys around there and I look at the books every now in then. There's a time in your life where everybody meant everything to each other and that's like I told my wife, it's a shame that my family can be like that. They were some characters [laughs].

Q: I wasn't sure if you would remember me or not.

JF: Yeah, I remember you. Mostly, the voice hasn't changed at all.

Q: Do you ever read much about Vietnam?

JF: Not a lot. I read some.

Q: Have you ever watched any of the movies?

JF: Some of them.

Q: Which do you think would be the best you've seen?

JF: I guess for an officer; I would have to say *We Were Soldiers*. That guy was a-I know there were some officers that were like that, first ones down and last ones up. You get officers like that and you definitely, you'll stay there with them no matter what. That's what he had; he had a band of guys that-he would do it for them too. But that's about-you've got to stay away from *Rambo* and things like that, that's kind of far-fetched. But not too many of them. I read the Vietnam Magazine every once in a while, they have some good stories in there, some heroism stories.