

CHARLIE SHYAB ARMY MEDIC (C.O.) '67 - '68

Producer: Whenever you'd like to begin.

Charlie: I was born October 7, 1944 in Cleveland, Ohio. A nice family, large family, had my grandparents there and growing up and my sister was 11 months older than I. So I was just she and I. Life was pretty good until I was about six or seven when my dad passed away from a heart attack and that changed. My mom used to get chauffeured around and we had a maid and everything. So mom had to learn how to drive and take care of us and so on with my dad. As a matter of fact, my dad died that was died on a Friday. He was going to be baptized on Saturday and he passed away so that changed everything, but the church members moved up and then we went to church school in Cleveland and rode the buses and so on.

That's where I came across about not wanting to kill people. I don't know if you are familiar with Desmond Doss, who was an Seventh-Day Adventist medic in the Pacific. He rescued 90 people off of the escarpment and he got the Medal of Honor so there was that legacy. When I had to register for the draft when I was 18, I chose to go a 1-AO which was a conscientious objector. So the Seventh-Day Adventist Church had a system in place where we would be trained asthmatics. Sen. McCallsky in the awards ceremony mentioned that I chose to still serve and didn't shirk my duty, but I still chose not to carry a weapon.

I had gone to college for four years in Tacoma Park, Maryland at Colombia Union College. The people were going to the beach. I had a class. I skipped a class and go so at the end of four years they said, "Your grades aren't what they should be," so they didn't accept me and they wouldn't forward my records because there were some issues that had to be cleared up that I was involved in. So I worked for Western Electric for a year as a cable jockey. Then I got drafted in June of '67 and my mother and my sister dropped me off June 7. The bus was going to pick me up. They dropped me off at the draft center and my sister told me that she asked my mother, "Will we ever see him again?" My mother said, "No." That was I didn't know that at the time.

I had had some first aid training and marching training in Boy Scouts called Pathfinders and also in high school. So I knew how to do some close order drill. When I got to Fort Bragg, they put me in charge of a squad or a platoon and we marched and so on and that was pretty good and they did our tests. Because I was 1-AO, they shipped me off to Fort Sam.

I got picked up in a convertible from the airport and I'm saying, "This is really good." Then we had six weeks of training, not eight weeks because there were

two weeks where there was weapon training which we didn't do. We went to truck driver's school. So I learned how to do the carries and I learned how to protect the wound and stop the bleeding and the airway and prevent shock. It was very basic. Then we've got assigned to Vietnam. We all knew very few people and I don't know if you want me to tell the story or not, but this is the last day. At 11:30 the Sargeant says, "Fall in you guys." He had a southern accent. He says, "You guys, we're going to break for lunch now. We're going to meet here at 1:00 and y'all are going to Vietnam. Do you hear that?" "Yes, Sargeant, yes Sargeant" "You go to Vietnam. You're going to have a ticket so you got to leave and you're going to Vietnam." He just drilled us into it. He says, "I want you guys back here at 1:00 and you all better get here. You all be in trouble. You got to get tickets."

It comes 1:00 and here's Rodriguez doesn't show up. So the Sargeant, "Any of y'all know where Rodriguez is?" You learn in the military that certain people, they've got certain buttons you can push. We decided to push his buttons. So I raised my hand. I said, "If you know where Rodriguez is?" I said, "Sargeant, Rodriguez came from Texas and his English isn't too good and maybe he didn't hear you because you were talking about all this war and far and wheel bar and you all stuff and he didn't understand it." He said, "Come front and center." I spent the next 45 minutes in the [leading duss 00:05:57] position. That was our last dig.

Producer: Let me ask you one question. Where are the soldiers?

Charlie: We were all 1-AO, all of the people there. In the different places in the military, there were some people that would question you ... and as long as I did my job, as long as you showed willing because in the average soldier's mind, the medic was his backup and you had to earn their trust. I don't really know whether there was any collusion or anything like that, but once you proved yourself, you were well respected and that was really impetus, but the responsibility was there. You put some of the questioning aside as to why and just say, "I'll do my job."

I'll tell you a little bit more about it when, as the story goes on. We all went to different places then home. I saw a few people I had gone to school with and knew at Fort Sam. It was a country club and being there at the Alamo and we would go in and some people rent motorcycles. The town was wide open anyways. They also had a serviceman center where we could go on Saturdays to go to church and meet fellow people and so on. That was the end of September. I went home for a 30 day leave and I had met a girl in December of '66 and so I had a bunch of names and numbers in my phonebook. I was hedging my bets and everything. Some wrote every month. Some wrote every week and she

wrote pretty much every day and I told her, "I'm going away to Fort Sam." I said, "If I sent her a letter, would she write back?" So we started to go and I said, she really had done a lot to show what kind of person she was.

I said, "I'd ask you to marry me, but I don't know what's going to happen. I think that was a good choice there. We started making plans for when I got back and she wrote me. In fact, I kept asking her for a 20 page letter. What she did was that she cut up two sheets of paper into 3 x 3s and that was her 20 page letter. It was really good to have those mails and stuff because one of the worst things to be there in combat is to feel forgotten. You even save your letters and hope that you have something coming in the mail.

We came home and we went to Skyline Drive and we enjoyed each other's company for a month. She was a governess working in Potomac, Maryland, and taking care of the family. I stopped in Cleveland and saw my cousins and so on and they took a movie video which they have of me waving goodbye in my uniform. Then I went off to Fort Lewis. Fort Lewis that I remember was the Army two-story barracks, but they had cold stoves on base for heat and the snow was just all grungy. The optimism was there, gung ho, yes. This was the early part of November.

Then they loaded up a troop plane and I remember going to Hawaii where I sent flowers home. Then I went to Wake Island and then Guam and then Cameron Bay. So then they went and shipped us on up to Camp Anari up in Playku and I was assigned as a replacement for the Fourth Infantry. Landed there about a week before Thanksgiving and this was just as a replacement. I remember sitting around, but what I remember most was that we had Thanksgiving meal. I sent the menu home so it's somewhere in my papers, but that would be a real treasure, all decorated with pumpkins and gourds. That was Thursday.

Then by I think it was Sunday, they said, "Ok, you're on the chopper." I got my stuff together and I had an aid bag with all my medicines. They were all labeled because I didn't want to give aspirin for a skin condition. I was sent out to Company C, First Battalion, 22nd Infantry, 4th Infantry Division as a replacement. They had been in the A Shau Valley in November and that was that gentleman ... They were rotating the men in and out of the firefight and they said, "It's time for you to go back in." I'm not even going to mention his name, but he said, he laid down on the ground and says, "I'm not going." This is what my senior medic told me. They drew down on him. There were five or six guys standing around. He says, "You can go ahead and shoot me." He said, "But I'm just too scared." He said, "I'm not going in." The senior medic says, "Captain you better call in a chopper because if he's not by you, they're going to draw down on him. They're going to shoot him."

They called for a chopper and he got out of there and they sent him to the truck drivers place. They sent him to the fire base. They sent him to different places and once people found out what had happened, he was stigmatized. He helped pull me off the chopper when I went to the field hospital in April of '68 and this was in Kantun. I remember giving him my morphine suret side. I gave him, I said, "Give them to the medical officer." I don't know whatever happened, but that was his story. So I knew what not to do. The guy came and said, "My ankle hurts," or "My hand hurts," or "I can't read this letter," or "I need you to write me a letter," or "I need some help with this or that." The people that I have met, they remember those incidents and it really surprises me that you just that the trust.

I landed at our camp at our bunkers and within an hour they had shot some NVA replacement coming down the trail. I'm saying, "Whoa." Then they say, "We're leaving at 9:00 tonight." We packed up everything and we left on the trail and we're hanging onto people's rucksacks in front of us. There weren't that many flashlights and so we moved around and we could see the enemy's lights on the mountain going up the trail. We can see where their elephants had been, used to carry heavy mortars and so on and that was the beginning. The days just sort of go into it and so I'm passing out malaria tablets every day and talking to the guys and going on patrol with them or staying up late and watching the radio or just getting used to it.

A week later they sent out two duffel bags full of pants and shirts. I remember going in there wearing a 36. I tried to put on a 36 and I had already started losing weight. Then, of course, if you found a T-shirt, I don't know if you saw that one picture where the neckline is down below. You're just getting used to it, getting to know the people. We're going into all kinds of terrain. We're going to these fire bases. Our Battalion has three companies. So one company of about 100 men would stay at the fire base and the two would patrol and you're always under the umbrella of the artillery and the mortar. We would find things. We would find caches of rice. We would find hospital. We went and found out where some choppers went down and recovered the helmets. We were actually acting as bait and we could find their camps.

It's interesting. They knew how we smelled and we knew how they smelled because they ate that fish sauce. NVA and we could see their signs. They pretty much knew where we were. We're doing that and we were around the city of Kantun in the end of January. In fact, we were in a village like we were on R & R. We were helping the people. We were doing medcaps and river and building a shower system for them. This was the Tet. So we were thinking, "This is all celebration."

We were in this village and some guy said, "Come by." Next thing we know, the woods are on fire. These people had started the woods on fire to let the NVA know that we were there. They said, "You've got to go into Kantun now." March 2003 in the Vietnam Magazine, it talks about the fight for the city of Kantun and the first to the 22nd. If you ever have a chance to go back and need that ... As a matter of fact, can I talk about the Charlie Company.org if they want more of the story? Thank you.

We were airlifted probably the night of the first or second into Kantun. Kantun has an airport so that's where we were to provide security. There's this water tower. We had a star light scope and we could look and see and there was fighting all night long. I was out in a bunker on the south side of the airfield and I woke up the next morning and there's a bullet right by my head. It's just the on the ground. That was one of the things we learned was that everything was dangerous. You touch a tree, brush against a tree, the next day your hands all swelled up or the water or snakes ...

This guy is sleeping on the bunker got a shelter liner, pancho, his blanket on him and his toes are sticking out. It's 3:00 in the morning and he feels somebody twiggling his toes. They're always playing practical jokes. So he wanted to see who that was so he sits up real fast and here was an orangutan. This thing hits, backhands him and he starts hollering and screaming and this monkey starts running through the trip layers. The guys are dozing off. They had their hand on the claymore, well before they opened their eyes, they pressed the claymore. Everybody's shooting and all this kind of stuff and here is just this orangutan running through the jungle. There were just dangers. There were pongee pits. There were these spider holes. I think that the Vietnamese had made since the Second World War. Everything was there and you could ... snakes.

I know a couple stories of guys getting carried away by the tigers. One guy in our group, he was the mail guy that had the tiger walk through the camp and ... 8 inch high with their shooting from a mile away, shells coming back and taking some guy's shoulder out. It was all the time something was going on. The NVA had taken over the special forces compound, the Mac V compound. They had pinned down another one of our companies. We were to go up from the airport to help them. We were receiving incoming and so on. There was a church there north of the airport and we were receiving sniper fire. One of the guys went and got, recoiled his rifle on a jeep and blew the thing away. Then there were eight or ten houses or apartments or buildings and structures and they had our guys pinned down in amongst them. We came up with tanks and one guy had an NVA in the window shooting out and he snuck up on him and grabbed the rifle and pulled him through the window. We were receiving ...

I was called up to help somebody who was pinned down in amongst these buildings and I saw this North Vietnamese come up one of the houses and he was coming down like with this with his hand gun right at me. The guys behind me they just opened up. They didn't have to. That's just one incident where if I hadn't been doing my job, they could have said, "Tough." He ducked back down so we threw a hand grenade down there and they threw hand grenades back out. This went on so they went and told the captain. The captain says, "I'll fix that." He said, "Give me three hand grenades." He pulled the pins out of three hand grenades and threw them in. What they had done was they had partitioned the basement with sandbags so that if a hand grenade landed on one side, they would jump on the other.

This was going on all day and we were just clearing them out of the house and so on and we chased them across the road to a field. They had dug in all those bunkers. When we started advancing, some of them, about four or five or six guys in a bunker yelling, "Choo hoi, choo hoi." I don't know if you know what that means or not, but that means "We give up. Choo hoi, we surrender." This machine gunner, who's been losing his buddies all day said, "Choo hoi my backside," and I said to myself, I said, "I don't want that in my memory. I don't want to remember that, to see that brutality." So I walked around the tank and I heard him do that. It was just like being a turkey shoot and we just cleared them out. Somehow they had gotten the intelligence that they were ...

We went into town on patrol and that was my real first taste of combat and I had these casualties and prisoners. Some of the guys if we hadn't watched the prisoners, they would have slit their throats. They really felt. They took it personally because we lost a lot of friends there, mostly injured. We camped out in the field overnight and then they marched us west of the airport. We bivouacked there. Then there was a firing range right along the river by a pottery factory. They said, "We want you to go on patrol there." There was two platoons. What the third platoon took security of our camp where we had just bedded down in a field for that night with a C-130 spooky just going around all night. That was our protection. That's the one where you saw me bandaging up the guy. You can see the revertment stack there.

We were on this road and we came across this firing range and to the left there were these mines. They were tank mines. So we knew they were in the area. We marched on down the road and we started to get into wood line and we made a U-turn and we walked past a clump of bamboo and we could hear the NVA talking. There's probably 40, 50 guys there. This was 11:30 or 12. We went back another 200 yards and we were in this clump of trees having lunch. So we put out security and the next thing we know, we hear this explosion. This guy

comes running out and says, "We've been attacked. B-40, we've got injured." There was a Lieutenant Thomas and we all got up, forgot about our lunches and what have you and I ran down. I checked with the guys and they said it was at least 150, 200 yards and here I'm running towards the sound of gunfire. You know an AK-47 sounds a lot different than a M-16.

So I found this gentleman that was injured in with the arm. He had just fallen from his elbow on out and his leg was mangled. We started giving him first aid as best we could. We would hear some AK-47s and other shots in front of us. Then we noticed that it was going around us and we said, "Oh no." People were picken off and there was a machine gun nest in the tops of some machine and every time somebody would raise their head, it would be all head and neck and we lost about seven or eight guys. Bud Roach was another medic and Mike Stokes was right there with us and he was ...

The medic marches behind the RTO, who marches behind the officer. The RTO thought I was at 12:00 on the perimeter. So he moved up and he got ... Larry Classrow was his name and he got head and chest. We're just hearing this stuff and people are getting wounded. We called in and the tanks moved up and we told them about the mines so they skirted them. Then this probably went on for at least four hours. Then he got rid of the machine gun nest on the tank. Then somebody called in a mortar and it was short and it landed to our left about ten yards and wounded four more guys. Then the battalion commander, we said, "Look, we've got wounded." He said, "I just had my orderly clean the blood out of my chopper for the last time." One machine gunner turned around and pointed at us and said, "Excuse me sir? What did you say?" "Go right ahead. Use the chopper."

We were able to evacuate them and we tried to advance in a wood line and they shot up some guys. Then we looked at the wood line to the north and east of us and we saw this blue light and we knew it was an aiming stake for a mortar. That they were getting ready to mortar us because we were sort of out of the wood line. We called the tank over and he used the beehive around him and blew that away. What was interesting was is that creeks on either side of us were more like gullies, had steep sides so they could use that to move up and down, but they had to have their aiming stake exposed.

We stayed at that pottery factory for the next day and we lost about eight guys. Then I saw a helicopter come in to rocket where they were and it got shot out of the sky. We pushed and scarped and I think it was, I don't know whether it was Hill 285 or something, but this is all documented on the that chart. It's documented on First Battalion, 22nd Infantry where they have all the situation reports and how many sorties there were and how many pounds of explosives

and so on. We chased the enemy up there and we snuck up on one of their OPs and got him.

Here's another funny thing. We moved off of the saddle, crossed the creek and there was their observation guide. We snuck up on him and blew him away. Then we went up on the ridge line. The ridge line was probably no more than 25 or 30 feet wide before it sloped away and they were down to our right because we could hear them. This guy named Randolph, he had a shovel. He's 6'2 or '3 and one of the nicest guys you'd ever want and he was really ... We called him Kentuck because he was from Kentucky, but he had this "Hi there, my name is Randolph and I'm from Kentuck." He said, "I'm not putting up with this stuff. I'm digging this. I'm digging this foxhole. I've got to protect myself," because we had left our backpacks and stuff back on the saddle.

He digs this probably 5 foot x 3 x 2 in hard pan and at 4:00 in the morning he's sleeping to the left of his foxhole and we hear boom, boom, boom. I remember counting them 13 times and because the ridge was so narrow they overshot, but Randolph instead of going to his right to get into the hole, he moves to his left. When these mortars are going around, we hear him, "My hole, my hole, I can't find my hole." We could hear his hands going around and there was probably six or seven guys in the foxhole and we're all laughing. If a mortar had hit where we were, it would have been curtains for all of us.

A couple days later, we were at the fire base and this guy came into the fire base, one of the guys from the battalion. He says, "Where's the guy that couldn't find his foxhole?" I said, "You'll have to find him over there by the mess tent." I got a lot of laughs out of that. He made it home, as a matter of fact his sister married one of our ... was a penpal and they married, living in Buffalo, New York. He was a real character and he made it through. I'm really glad, but everybody was nice. I just remember that, the closeness and was never really experienced that closeness. I can't tell you how many people said, "We've got to do lunch." When you are in there day in and day out helping people, living with them and ...

The thing is we'd be sitting around on a campfire and, "Hey, when I get out of here, I want to marry my girlfriend and we're going to do my dad's store," and the next day you'd be putting him in a body bag so it was really hard. Then we get a box of candy. "This is in memory of my son. Please tell us what happened." We'd open that box of candy and nobody would take it. It was like an omen that nobody would do that. We missed them, missed those guys. That was pretty much the Tet Offensive in Kantun.

Then I remember we went to the river in [Dahcto 00:33:08] and we guarded a bridge and we were re-supplied. You are lucky if you got back to the fire base

and could shower. More often than not, you went into a creek at near where you bivouacked and you could do a shower then. Those are some pictures. If you read about the city of Kantun and the Tet, they had some intelligence that they knew they were coming so they sent in reinforcements. We had not really been talking it up for a while. We would find caches of rice and different things, but I don't remember... We weren't surprised, but I'm sure there were other places that they were. All the towns in different places that they went and so on, they kept it pretty quiet from what I understand. We had thought we were on the downside.

Of course, the thing was what really changed people's perceptions was in the US Embassy in Saigon where they were able to penetrate and I always felt that the media really influenced a lot. The North Vietnamese says, "Once we knew we had the media on our side, we knew we were going to win," and the anti-war protesters and I don't know of anybody who thinks some of the Hollywood movie stars are legit. We just felt like we were really out there and between the hippies and so on. When some of the news announcer gets up and says, "We're going to lose the war..."

We were there for one another. We were there to try to give the people a chance to self-determine, but what was interesting is I think that they thought we were the goose that laid the golden egg. They really worked now. The Korean soldiers in Vietnam, you didn't mess with them. They were appreciative of what we had done in Korea, but there were some units of the Vietnamese that you'd loved to fight by, but the stories were heard were always that and as the war went on ... When LBJ started micromanaging the war and took an essentially made it political and yet this was in '67, '68 and yet the war still had four more years to go. That's my perspective.

I loved the Ivy Leaf, the newspapers we got. When Martin Luther King died and Robert Kennedy died and we were so far away and here I'm reading about North Capital Street on fire and Washington in flames and what was going on here with the protests and people taking over and of course, the free love and all that. We didn't have any of that over there. We called it the world. We really just felt. We appreciated the female radio announcers and "Good Morning Vietnam" and those kind of things and letters and so on, but we didn't have any idea about the protests and the feelings and so on, unless somebody sent us the Washington Post, we didn't. That's my take on it. I was there for six years and I think I made the best of it.

The Tet Offensive really gave me the experience and told me and the guys, we'd go into a fire base or a base camp, they which make sure I was taking care of.

I found out that I had earned their respect and the trust and as a matter of fact, when they'd say, "Lock and load, we're going outside the wire," the first thing they'd say is, "Where's doc?"

Producer: By the way, was it one medic?

Charlie: It was each platoon had a medic and then it was a senior medic. They wanted me to carry a weapon in Kantun because it was house to house fighting. So for a couple of days I carried a 45, but I didn't use it and then when we left Kantun and the guys would look out for me. As a matter of fact, I haven't told this, but when we were trapped in that shell crater with that gentleman, a machine gunner had two ammo carriers. The machine gunner was keeping the AK-47s back and one ammo carrier was leaning against the bunker and he got shot. This ammo carrier was probably to my left about two feet and for some reason the NVA shot him in the back of the head, instead of me, who I was bending over giving treatment.

One of the most traumatic experiences was is that this guy that got shot in the head, I went to give him aid and saw where he was hit and I couldn't get a pulse. So they asked me, "How is he doing?" I said, "I don't think he's going to make it," and he heard me and he started slapping around and here I'm pronouncing this guy is dead and he's alive. But we were ambushed for so long that eventually being in the optical area at the back of the head and that stayed with me for many years. I remember it was just taking over my life. I got down on my knees. This was probably '73 or '74 and I just told the Lord, I said, "Lord, you've got to take it a way for me." I said, "I just can't handle it. I'm just going to lose touch with reality like that because I feel so guilty." I don't know, but I got up off my knees and it was gone. I couldn't even talk about it. It was just all encompassing and I know it was causing me to choke up on everything I did, but it was gone and that was part of that healing.

Of course, we didn't know what PTSD was or depression or all that kind of stuff. That was February, probably into March. March we went into Cambodia and the reason why I know this is one of our buddies, Fred Childs, he helps do with our CharlieCompany.org website and he did the maps. He said, "I know for sure we were in Cambodia." That was something we didn't think. Then we talk about Agent Orange and I said, "I don't remember any planes flying over me with Agent ..." They cussed at me. They said, "Don't you remember walking through the dirt on the road with no jungle on either side for 100 yards?" I said, "Yes, I remember that." They said, "We were right in the middle of it." Those are different things that we find out about it when we think about it. I didn't even know the name of some of the battles or some of the places.

Every day is a real precious day to be in touch with the friends, it's really something and, of course, thanking the Lord and appreciating how he protected all of us. Someday I hope that it will all be explained to us which I am thankful for. Yet, my wife says, "You did good today. You didn't talk about your experiences when we were out." Very few people understand that you look forward to talking to your buddies to find out more information and talk to them. It's a cathartic to get it.

Chu Moring was at the northern end of the A Shau Valley. We went to a Bam Matui early on in November and December. Bam Matui or Bam Matute or whatever it's called that's in the A Shau Valley. That's where that battle took place of in the first part of November before I reported to the company. We were patrolling in the A Shau Valley. A Shau Valley is probably many miles long and these were in the high lands. Of course, they had been there since Japan, since the Second World War and they had these trails. We could see trails going every which way and placements, camps and bunkers, hanging their clothes. Early part of '67 that was a lot of action in the A Shau Valley so that was before I went.

Producer: You had mentioned at the end ...

Charlie: We're in March, February and March. In April our long range reconnaissance patrols had observed mass traveling and resupply. Now near Chu Moring, Chu Moring is probably about 6 miles from the Cambodian-Laos border, which was part of the Ho Chi Minh trail. We're talking anything from a three foot wide trail to a truck. What really surprised me is how you could look out at night and you could probably see 20 to 30 flashlights on a mountain where they were moving stuff. They sent in our battalion, probably on the 20th of April and they sent us to LVC-Ration or firebase, C-Ration and that's where they had guns and mortars and your aid station.

We left that LVC-Ration probably on the 26th or 27th and we crossed the valley. We're going on up the hill and somebody takes the branch and holds on to it and gets up and lets it go and it comes back and it hits me, knocks my helmet off and I hear my helmet going, tumbling seven, eight, nine times. Had my girlfriends picture in the bottom of my helmet so that was gone, but busted my glasses. I had an old pair of sunglasses so I put those sunglasses on. Of course, in the jungle it starts getting dark at about 4:00 so I did my best as I could. We had no water so they would ship us water in gunpowder container tubes and the water tasted like gunpowder. So you didn't shave. Here I am with a boonie hat on, a beard and sunglasses so that's how I did.

We went into Chu Moring and we found a level place on the mountain here and we camped. We were probed and we went on patrol and then we went up the hill. They let us get into their bunkers, the first platoon I think, and they opened up. They had their bunkers underneath the tree. They were rolling hand grenades down and they were snipers in the trees. They would try to come around behind us. We're losing five or six guys every time we do the hill. This was probably the afternoon of the 26th, maybe when we first got there as best as I can recollect. We moved our bunkers to a place around a big tree. There was this trail going up there. We went up there and one of the guys got hit on the head with a hand grenade. He looks up and here's somebody tied in the tree. So he started shooting them out of the tree and they're tied in and they're hollering and screaming and this was going on. The Sargeant Buck was at the point getting up there. He was one of the first to get hit and they tried to pull him back by his boots and he got hung up. This is what his RTO was telling us. We're saying, "Whoa, this is a ..."

Female: Those came from a higher ...?

Charlie: This is really something serious. It's quite serious. We charged the hill two or three times and every time we're going up there, we're losing guys. We'd always kept some of the people back in our bunkers because they would infiltrate us. There was a trail going right up there. We had just lost the Lieutenant that had shot the OP in Kantun and he was on the tarmac to go to meet his wife in Honolulu, Lieutenant Zimmerman. He heard we were in deep stuff. He got back on the chopper and came back out and landed at 11:30.

At 11:00 the NVA on top had sent a patrol down on that trail and they walked right up to our perimeter. We shot them, but now they had our location. You do these battles over hundreds of times. Why didn't we move our bunker? Why didn't we put out claymores? We have all this stuff. Once they found out where we were, then they started mortaring us. We could hear and we'd get in our bunkers and we were OK. This was the night of the 27th.

The captain calls in to base camp and says, "Look, we've got so many killed. We've got so many wounded. We don't have enough security for our bunkers and charge the hill," and the officer said ... See, I was a senior medic so I was right near the radio. We had a center foxhole where we clustered around and the officer said, "I don't care how many men you got left, charge that hill." This was the night of the 27th. What did we figure? We figured we weren't going to make it. How does a senior medic go to the captain and say, "Look, I'm scared. I don't want to go." There's no way I can do that with my buddies so I thought, "Hey."

When the captain landed at 11:00 after they had probed us and found out where we were at 10:30 as much as I can remember, the captain said, "We've got a plane coming by. It's going to drop big bomb, 500 pound bomb on the bunkers and we're going to go up." He said, "Get ready to go." I'll lose my commission if I disobeyed his direct order. We're getting up out of our bunkers to go charge the hill and the jets flying over and I see this flash to my left about 30 or 40 feet on the other side of the tree and I felt my hand go numb. I said, "Oh, I've got to go home with no hand." I looked down and I grabbed it and I went like that and it was there. I says, "Oh thank you Lord." I says, "I know I'm hit." It took away Lieutenant Zimmerman. Here he was on the ground. I don't know whether it was a concussion or shrapnel, but it got him and it blew some guy in apart in front of the Captain Connerman. It hit our FO on the side of the face. It just decimated us as far as that goes and that was just the beginning of it.

I crawled into the bunker and the First Sargeant was there. I said, "Tom, I've been hit." He looks around and he looks and feels me and then he pulls my collar apart. His eyes got as big as half dollars and he said, "You're hit all right." Here it was a through and through, through my collarbone and out the other side that had jarred the nerve down to my arm and I had another piece of shrapnel in my left shoulder and I got a piece in my mid thigh and I got a piece right under the skin in my knee bone there so I was injured, but it was the four times. Of course, I've never seen an army bed. It's like a foot square so here I am making out the round and of course, on the radio they said, "Our senior 1-6 has been WIA. We need a replacement."

The LVC-rations maybe 1000 or 2000 yards a round up the hill. They'd get some replacements to come in and people remembered us going to the LV. One of the RTOs, Richard Casano, escorted me to the LZ. Some people remembered seeing me and there is five or six and somebody said, "Should we put the KIAs on?" They said, "No, let's get the WIAs out of here." We were walking past and the chopper comes ... The medivac's wouldn't come in because they thought it was too hot. So some of the other cowboys did come in. What else was here's the three or four helicopters pulling the wagon circle and they're shooting the top of the mountain to keep it and the enemy is shooting these mortars in and I'm waiting for the helicopter to get hit and it's getting hit by bullets.

We're pulling off and this Richard Casano puts me on the chopper and he runs back to the bunkers and he's helping Bud Roach carry somebody and the enemy is still shooting the mortars. One of the mortars got Richard right here and he just sat down and they tried to help him. They did the cellophane but it was just too severe and he just bled out right there. I never knew that until I talked to ... Bud remembers what happened, but he didn't know who it was. Tom

Viegenbacher was the RTO when he told us that it was Casano and this was one of the nicest guys and his pictures are on and do anything for you.

I'm pulling another RTO off the hill. They're going up to charge the hill and we were told to keep our heads down and this guy puts his head up and he gets ... So I get called up there and I'm helping this guy, but it's in the neck. I'm trying to find the bleeder and I can't find it. He's looking at me and he's saying, "Am I going to be OK?" I'm saying, "You're going to be OK. We'll take care of you." The captain's standing over here to my left. Sam Drake was to the right and he was covering me and he was shooting up on the hill. It's just bedlam. We got to carry him back down to the LV. Then we called in the choppers and they shoot up the top of the hill and the guy next to me, his name is Vincent Jamborino, he's laying down next to me. All of a sudden, he starts moving and shaking and rolling around, here he got hit in the back from friendly fire. I take care of him and send him down.

The captain doesn't remember that which is part of ... and this Sam Drake, he drew a map. He knew where I was and really wrote a letter up on my behalf. One guy's up there. There was a Roger Ziggler and he was up at the hill, too. He gets hit and this Bill Bolling carries him down off the hill. He took him to me and he said, "You took care of him," which I didn't remember. He goes back up the hill, this Bill Bolling guy. He had been filling sandbags an hour or so before and he's leaning on the edge of his bunker down in the hole and he hears this noise and here is this 61 millimeter NVA mortar lands about five feet in front of him and it's a dud. Talk about that and then he goes and carries this Ziggler guy.

Dennis Ziggler is in charge of the gift shop at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. They just did a memorial for his brother in the town up in Pennsylvania and we're in touch and we see and he's given me pictures and I've given him other stuff that I have, newspaper reports and so on. We email back on a regular basis. This Bill Bolling he was all over the ... everybody was doing their job. To me everybody was a hero because of way above and beyond the call of duty and anybody would ask. When the captain said, "We're going up," here's the senior medic. I knew I had to be with my men and so when we were stepping up, I took three or four steps before that mortar hit and crawling over roots.

I felt my shoulder here and I had a Bible in my pocket. So I went down and saw if that was OK. So I got that Bible with the blood on it. It was given to me by my sister so I still have that. When I got home, I started having pain in my arm. What happened is they had gone almost through my shoulder and it was just underneath the skin so when I was stationed at Fort Belfour they got it out.

He's getting ready to chuck it. I said, "Wait, can I have that?" I bring that into my classroom, the Bible and the shrapnel when I talk about Vietnam.

What's interesting is is that chopper that took us from Chu Moring and so you had 120 people, 30 of them died, 70 of them were wounded, either treated by a medic or their fellow soldiers and then about 15 of them were the last ones to get evaced off the hill. A lot of them were walking wounded. So they got evacuated back across the valley to LVC-rations. I went to the field hospital in Kantun. Like I said what I look like when I got off the chopper, the guys on the loading dock they just froze. The Sarg said, "Get in there and get him out of there." I had gore all over me. When I went in, they put me in the corners. They said, "Let him protest the war over in the corner," because they thought I was some kind of hippie with the beard and the hat and sunglasses.

Basically, took me there and then I went to the field hospital in Playku and I could tell you the name of the nurse. Her name was LaBarbara, absolutely beautiful angel. That lady that you talked to yesterday, just the nurses just made us feel so ... I couldn't write the letter. She wrote a letter for me. When they were dedicating the Nurses Memorial here at the wall, there were a bunch of fourth infantry nurses. I was there and I said, "Hey, does anybody know a nurse by the name of LaBarbara?" She says, "Yes, she's out in California, married, got a family." I said, "OK, she took care of me." I said, "Please tell her hi for me," which is really cool. I don't know why it came back, but I just felt, you feel out of it when you got no glasses and you got these bandages and so on.

Of course, I overnited in Korea I think and then we went to Yokohama, Japan, for a month. One night we were telling jokes and the next thing we know the beds are moving. Here we thought we were getting punished for our bad jokes, but it was an earthquake. We just laughed and joked and stayed there for a month and riding the taxis. They had this one street where all the restaurants were and they had their food displayed in the window, but it was all plastic. It was all latex. Just great guys and if you got shot in the butt, we'd laugh because you were retreating or if you didn't have any hearing, we'd act like we didn't hear.

They get you up in a day or so and got you a shower. Here I got this hole in my body and then they asked me if I want to go back to Vietnam and I said, "The medic does six months so I'm not going to be out in the field. I can't carry a backpack." I said, "I'm my mother's only son for the family name." So I said, "I need to go home." They shipped me home and then I got assigned at Fort Belfour and I did six months in the emergency room and nice people there. They wanted to ship me to Colorado and I told them I was going to get early out so I spent my time there. They wanted me to re-up of course, but I said, "If I re-

up, they're going to send me back to Vietnam." So I said, "No." There were two nice sergeants, Fitzgerald and Murphy and a nice nurse, Mrs. Hall, and they ran a good job on the emergency room. Then I got an early out. I went back to school. I was married now.

Producer: The same woman who sent you all those letters?

Charlie: Jocelyn. What was interesting is I was in school for two weeks, G.I. Bill. They call me into the Dean of the Students office and they sat me down almost like this. They said, "Hey Charlie." They said, "You don't have any more chances." I said, "Yes, I know that. They said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I got the Army and the government, the Department of Defense, the VA, my mother, my sister, my friends, they're all waiting to see if I'm still the same old guy." My sister when she came in to visit me when I got transferred to Fort Belfour as a patient, they knew right away that I was more introverted. They saw me cowering down and that was their first impression.

I didn't think anything had changed. In fact, I tried to get somebody to come down and pick me up and take me up there. I had called on Mars Station in Vietnam and it cost \$45. I called my friend from Fort Belfour and I said, the operator said, "Will you accept a collect call from Charlie Shyab?" There was a two-minute pause because he's thinking \$45 is like \$.45 or \$.25 and he says, "Yes." He said, "I can't come down." So it couldn't work out that I had everybody come visit me and I got out. That was my phone call. I just saw him just this weekend. We've been friends ever since then.

I am so sorry. The morning of the 28th, I realized that buff Charlie Shyab was not strong enough to save himself. So I took my Bible and I went off and I meditated and read and I prayed and I said, "Lord." I said, "I'm not strong enough to save myself." I said, "If you see fit to save me, I promise you that I will do what you want me to do. If you want me to teach, I'll teach. Whatever's there." I said, "I just can't save myself." I said, "I'm ready to give it all." I emptied myself. A half-hour, an hour later that's when I was wounded. They wrote an article in one of the publications. It said the title was that "Charlie Keeps his Promise." That's when I finished in 1970 and then I started teaching, retired in 2008, shared my story.

Some of my students work for the government up at Fort Dietrich and they just love the stories. My son is a DC fireman and he's got a lot of my mementos and things. Then there's that frame I brought down with my dog tags and the Bible. I just look back on it and see how blessed I am. The Bible talks about "greater love has no man than to give his life for his fellow man" and that's what it was. The guys would do anything for it. What the results have been for me was is

that meant that my life had value and when I was given an obligation then to make something of myself and the memory and the respect of those guys.

In 2002 and 2003, I went online and I said, "Charlie Shyab looking for Bud Roach and Richard Casano and Truman Loven and Captain Connerman," and I got a call. The guy said, "Hello Doc." He was one of the guys on the hill on Chu Moring and he said, "You've got guys looking for you." He was like the clearinghouse. He said, "Anybody who has a claim of an injury that's who they want is the medic because he verified them and then treated with them." Two days later I get these calls and we're talking for an hour. The memory, you had put this out of your mind for so long and they started talking and remembering and you started talking and started putting the puzzle together. Bud Roach and Jim Murray, we had talked and Jim Murray was a fellow medic. He had gotten injured when one of those tanks moved up in Kantun, the NVA ambushed them and shot an officer and he helped the officer.

We asked them, we said, "Do you want us to put you in for a promotion?" I said, "No, no, no." Low and behold when we met them, he had gone to Desert Storm and they found a spot on his lung from Agent Orange. To improve his benefits, he claimed the Purple Heart. He claimed to be injured. They said, "It has to be documented." I had the Ivey Leaf Newspaper article with him in it talking about that. He was on a cane. He was pretty sick and this is probably in 2003 June, July. He was on his way to Fort Sam and when we met in Corsicana, Texas, and we brought all of our metals and our uniforms and our pictures and our orders. He had it all there. I gave him. I had the thing there.

We were in this hotel room. All of a sudden his wife starts hollering and screaming. She's hyperventilating. I know whether she went into shock or something, but she found that article of the papers so I gave then to her. They go down to Fort Sam and he presents this and they said, "Here's your orders for the Purple Heart. We're going to send this to you." This is probably on a Monday or Tuesday and he passes on a Thursday and the Purple Heart comes on Friday and the service is on Saturday. They put that Purple Heart in his hand. This was over Labor Day weekend, Memorial Day weekend. There were some guys there. I couldn't be there.

I went down to the Wall and they're doing the Wall and there's a pile of rubble there and I picked up three of the stones of the Wall. I found somebody and we put "Jim Murray - Kantun, 1968, a Purple Heart," and I gave that to his wife and that's on one of her ... I've got one and Bud Roach has got one. Those are her ...

I started teaching in 1970 and we came here to Washington. I didn't really talk about it. I got interviewed a few times. Most of my friends say that I never

really talked about it, but then once the Desert Storm came. Once they did the Nurses Memorial, the Internet came along and we started talking about it. My early students didn't really know too much about Vietnam because you just didn't talk about it. Then I started talking about it and my school was a mile away from Walter Reed. So when the choppers would go over at 1:00 in the afternoon that was the end of the day. They just loved it. So they'd remember.

It's interesting how some of the children took what they could from me and used it to do whether it was nursing or medicine or administration or military. Probably about a month ago, I was subbing at DeComb Academy and I hear some noise behind them and here's this Jonathan Black. He had his military uniform on. He said, "You're the reason why I joined the military." He said, "I'll always appreciate that." It just keeps coming home. I'm sure on my way home, I'm going to be remembering about other things there.

Producer: Charlie, I want to thank you for sharing all these memories.

Charlie: The memory and there's a book being put out about Chu Moring. I just received a first copy of it a couple days ago, but of course, there's that CharlieCompany.org and then there's also the First Battalion 22nd Infantry website. I just hope I'm telling you ... I just want us to remember the sacrifice of those men that we were with. They were the salt of the earth. The closeness and the dedication, we would help each other by carrying things and sharing food, just not stuff that we did back in the world.

I'm thankful for the VA. I'm thankful for what the military has done. I've got some health issues because of Agent Orange and the VA's doing a very good job in helping me there. Of course, Wayne, with the veterans group, has just made me feel a lot better. I still have the [spiral response 01:14:17] and the flashbacks. I've actually heard a AK-47 on my front lawn from some druggies over the way and I'm falling down on the lawn with my shirt and tie on and my briefcase. It's always there and it's a healing thing, great guys at that center. Thank you Mr. Day, I appreciate it.

Producer: Thank you for doing it. Thank you so much. Let me just raise my arm here since