

## BOB COOK ARMY AIR MOBILE '67 -- '68

Producer: Military and become part of this conflict that we know as Vietnam.

Bob: Okay. I graduated from Hyndman High School in Hyndman, Pennsylvania in 1965. I was a very athletic individual. I was a baseball player. I had a tryout with a couple professional baseball teams. I've then decided that I wanted to go in military and it was at the height of the Vietnam War that I decided this. I decided to go in the United States Air Force. I did that at the age of 17. I had to have my parents sign for me to go in but they weren't going to do that of course but I talked them into it. I enjoyed the Air Force. I worked in the air transportation part of the Air Force. I was an air freight specialist in the United States. I was an aerial port guy.

I was sent to Vietnam at 1967. I worked in the aerial control room over there, we'll just call it ALCE which stands for ALCE, Airlift Control Element with Vietnam at Pleiku. I arrived in July of 67. I went on a number of mobility moves in Vietnam as an aerial port mobility individual. We went and flew in to all of the Special Forces I approached in and out. Move the dead and the wounded. We supplied with ammunition, food, whatever they needed and were very close with, his name is sergeant Faust who was the individual, the fifth Special Forces group depart to me or in the airlift control element with me. I also served during the had offense in Vietnam and also mini type offense in Vietnam.

The big to top fences were in January of 68 and many kind of offensive started in May of 68. The big kind offensive were as I said before to you over to the visual interview. We killed or captured over 50,000 in one week with a loss of less than 4,000 Americans and Army troops. In the mini type offensive was the same way. We killed or captured an awful lot compared to the United States losses that if you know type of offenses was turning 45 the Vietnam War here in America. The college has all protested and everything and we were winning the war up until then. The mini type offensive and the large offensive, we handled all the death, wounded that came out of the central highlands where Pleiku was located.

We were close to the ocean border, in the Cambodian border. All of the dead and wounded came through me at Pleiku. We were on offensive where I can

remember loading C-130s with body bags of them was still the complete C-130. These men were in either a lot of body bags or some were in metal casket. Very few were in metal caskets. All were mostly in body bags and the dead wounded, with the wounded the same way I watched. Many guys die in front of me on the flight line. You feel so helpless when that happens but for war it was terrible then.

Producer: You had given a very quick big overview. Now, let's go back and dig in to some of the details.

Bob: Okay.

Producer: The first thing, let's go back. When you're 17, you want to go ...

Bob: My dad serves in the sixth army in the south Pacific. He was one of the few that sent and occupied Japan after an atomic bomb was dropped. I did come from a military family.

Producer: Why would he oppose you going to Vietnam?

Bob: It wasn't that he knew that I would probably be maybe having a chance playing baseball and he was an average baseball player. In fact he was a very good baseball player. He would have definitely gone to a professional baseball player if world war two wouldn't got ... That's one of the reasons why I think he was a little skeptical about me going in. My mother didn't want any part of that. Most mothers do.

Producer: Yeah. Where did you do your basics?

Bob: Basics was at Blackland in Texas. That was in the later part of 1965. That probably lasted about, I think it was about 13 weeks that I was at Blackland then I was sent to McGuire for a space in New Jersey.

Producer: How did you happen to end up in controls mobility and stuff like that? I thought everybody want to be a pilot.

Bob: At the Air Force unfortunately most of the people that went to Vietnam were graduates of the Air Force Academy or they have a college education and they qualified the test and a lot of us who came from rural America in Appalachia. We didn't have the opportunity to do that. That's the reason why most of us who

went in there forbidden to come out but I do have a friend who graduated from the same high school that I did and he became a pilot in the Air Force.

Producer: How did you happen to pick the control element actually or they picked it for you?

Bob: They pick that for you. I had no choice of that. It's a particular time when I went in to Air Force. It wasn't like it was when at war period, whenever you could ask for the MOS that you requested that you went in whenever I was in, they assign you to wherever they needed you.

Producer: From McGuire you did your training in logistics and stuff like that?

Bob: At McGuire, yes. I was there for about a year and a half prior to going to Vietnam. I did the same thing at McGuire. I was in the Air Force at McGuire also before I went to Vietnam and when I returned I was stationed to the sac base on the Canadian border and that was also an aerial port base also. I was in the aerial port for the entire time I was in the military.

Producer: Okay. You're on that plane and it's landing in Da Nang or whatever works. Do you remember that first day when those ...

Bob: We were one of the few who actually didn't landed a major base in Vietnam whenever we flew over. I was one of the first cruises to fly over on a C141 Starlifter. They had just command the service whenever I went in to military and they want to try landing at Pleiku which they did. On a very short runway where I think we were the last ones who tried that. We were the only ones that ever tried that. They've been landed at Da Nang or at times on the major fields there who had a little bit longer runway.

Producer: In other words, did you go off the end of that runway?

Bob: No. We didn't go off the end of the runway but we got stopped just in time. It was a scary experience to say the least.

Producer: The door is open and what did you do?

Bob: The first thing that I notice the heat and humidity. It was unbelievable how hot it was because I arrived there in July and the heat and humidity was overwhelming

and there were guys who actually had hard time breathing when they got off to the aircraft.

Producer: Because likely it isn't exactly a cool place in July in Texas either?

Bob: No, that wasn't it. I was down there and from September on into January. I know how hot it gets in Texas at night time. You have to wear a field jacket and you're still cold when you do guard duty at night time in Texas. It was warm when I first got to Texas but nothing like the heat and humidity in Vietnam and I was in the central highlands where actually was a little bit better.

Producer: At Pleiku, what were your first days like?

Bob: A lot of guys just running around like a lot of guys just boys out camp. Knowing what to do, where to go, how to handle yourself. You have to take the advice of the troops that had been there for a number of years. Thank god for them I remember when I regular at Vietnam. I felt I had tried to help the new guys who came in but you rely a lot on the guys who have the experience who went to the war prior to you which they do save a lot of lives, those guides and what they tell you to do and not to do.

Producer: Tell me about some of your first duties at Pleiku.

Bob: My first duty is I didn't work in the airlift control element, I worked on the flight line. I handled loaded and off loaded aircraft but I only did that for a few weeks prior of going into the airlift control element but there I handled the dead and the wounded and of course we loaded the aircraft and cargos, take to all the Special Forced outpost in the central highland and whoever needed, whatever they needed, the aerial port guys did that. As a matter of fact that the aerial port, people in the Air Force came under fire more or so than anybody in the Air Force in Vietnam except probably the pilots who were flying or in the red horse guys came under a lot of attack also. We were flying in and out of the places that we flew in and out of, we were cross wind being shot at.

Producer: I imagined the first load of bodies is must sort of, must have hit you.

Bob: Mentally and the bad part about it, they just kept coming for the whole time I was there. I was there a little over a year. I didn't get an in country R&R, I didn't get an out of country R&R. I spent the entire time in counters without being able to go out of the country. It probably affected me more than what a guy would,

that had a chance to leave the country. I know that the guys who did leave and came back, they have little different perspective and maybe a little bit calmer than what they were when they left but I wasn't afforded that opportunity.

Producer: You didn't get a single R&R?

Bob: No. Not one. Where I work in the airlift control element, they were short personnel just about the whole time we were there. It's not like I probably couldn't have but I felt I was obligated to stay there.

Producer: How did that change everything?

Bob: That was considerably probably one of the biggest battles in the history of the United States. As I said before, we killed or captured over 50,000 in a matter of one week, a little over one week probably with the loss of only, I shouldn't say only but with the loss of less than 4,000 Americans and army troops. It was a fierce defeat of the Viet Cong that had offensive. The NVA, the North Vietnamese Army, it was a crouching preventive but the Viet Cong really took a beating during that offensive and Pleiku was one of the hardest place to sit during that offensive.

There was a lot of suffer attacks at the Fort Holloway at them which was our camp Holloway which was right across the runway from where we were at the Air Force base. I know they had their hands full with rocket motor attacks as we did. The AC-47 gunships or spooky is what we used to call them or puff the magic dragon. They were busy every night at the end of the runway keeping the people away from our airbase.

Producer: I thought the statistics were, the NVA had massive something like two million men or something like that.

Bob: I'm not sure about that. I have heard with these figures but every time I hear to choose a different number. You're probably right, it's probably a high number like that and I think the United States had a little bit of a tip off about prior to what really went down or a couple of days prior to that. The United States, they were ready for this and thank God they were but the Viet Cong and the NVA, they took a real beating on this.

Producer: It was about three weeks long?

Bob: Actually it lasted probably around three weeks long. The fiercest fighting was in the first seven days and I remember in probably less than 10 days because we had brought more attacks constantly. At camp Holloway I know that they had a couple of suffer attacks at camp Holloway with the army, the fourth division which was right across the camp from where we were stationed. They also went through a lot in that particular time too as for every installation in Vietnam.

Producer: Did you have any doubts that you might make it or not make it?

Bob: You'll never know when you're in a rocket border tech where it all ends. You'll just never know. There were some barracks that blown up. At Pleiku, they tried to blow up the fuel camp so they can get rid of our JP-4 fuel, the aircraft fuel that they had a better chance of winning the war. They would always go after the JP-4 fuel at the fuel camp but everybody has a ... In Vietnam, no matter what you did, Vietnam is unlike most other wars. You could be walking down the street in one of the cities in Pleiku or in the South Vietnam anywhere and something will come through you in the back for a bit. There were different lines in Vietnam like established prior in Korea world war two. They were just fighting everywhere.

Producer: The enemy did wear uniforms?

Bob: The NVA, they wore uniforms but the Viet Cong, they mostly were what were used to call black pajamas but of course they wore just about anything they get their hands and they were very effective fighters. Don't underestimate the Viet Cong and so was the NVA.

Producer: Did you respect their ability?

Bob: Absolutely. I did. Absolutely and so did everybody else. You always want to respect your enemy when you're in war. Never underestimate them.

Producer: How long were you over there?

Bob: I was there in just over a year. I went over in July 67 and came back in July 68. To be exact I think I was there one year and one day, one year and two days something like that. My [BET porting 00:15:25] have one year when I was there. I was in country two days after that.

Producer: How did your unit there?

Bob: At Pleiku there were I think we had nine men killed at that time. The year that I was there, we lost nine men killed and I think we had or it might be nine or 11 men killed and about 18 or 19 wounded at Pleiku. Per se Pleiku now of course camp Holloway and the other army bases around of us more count in their losses. That's just about the Air Force base.

Producer: These are result of more attacks.

Bob: No, some of them were crash landings for fighter planes coming back in that didn't quite make it. They crashed on the runway and there was an AC-47 gunship that came in. In fact I watched this when happened. It was blown in half when it hit the runway. The fourth section, everyone was killed and yet there was a few people that survived, the copilot in the AC-47 were killed. I have pictures of that.

Producer: You were flying, remember these planes when you were at Pleiku?

Bob: I actually flew on a C78 Caribou's, the C-130s and the C-123s also I flew but most of the runways with the Special Forces were so short that we couldn't get a C-123 in there or a C-130 in there because of the shortness of the runway. The C78 could land on it, very, very short distance. That's why we used those. We did everything but that's how we got to get the ammunition, the food, move the dead, wounded out, that's how we had to do it.

Producer: These Special Forces operations you mentioned, how large were they typically, how many guy?

Bob: A lot of the times they were taken out in the field in helicopters. Most of the time we didn't have anything to do with them on the six, seven days but when they would come back and if we could get a C78 to bring them back, we would bring them back whereas we ever take them out, at least I didn't not particularly me but somebody else might have done it pretty much later but I was never involved in what I'm going out. I'm just involved in bringing them back mostly. That's why we never cry and bring back the dead, wounded from wherever we have to do, that's why we probably use the C78 instead of the big aircraft.

We had more missions, we have to fly more missions but the thing is the other ones didn't want to take a chance so they didn't aircraft and overrunning the runway.

Producer: Now. Obviously that expanded. I guess you work in 24 hours a day during that time?

Bob: You were on call 24 hours a day. We actually got some sleep at night, that's midnight time. We actually could do that, I was on the augmenty groups that went out on the parameter whenever the air police needed additional help on the parameter to keep, if somebody is trying to overrun our base. We have particular augmenty groups that would go out and help them. That was not just in my squadron. That was the entire personnel in Pleiku. Not just us, it was everybody that augmented the air police if they needed help.

Producer: The sappers were servitors that basically would crawl in at night under these barb wire things with satchels and explosives?

Bob: They did. That's how they operated. They would try to get through the wire and they wanted to really try to get rid of the Air Force in Vietnam. I know they went after the Marine Corp, they went after the army, they went after everything in Vietnam but they knew if they could take away the sky, they have better chance of winning the war. Ho Chi Minh said after the war was over, had we continued the bomb head north for seven more days he would have surrendered. Seven more days. He said I would have surrendered. We didn't know that. B-52s.

Producer: Wow.

Bob: They asked him what were you feared most about Vietnam. He said because they were killing you during the aircraft war, starting out we lost because we chose Vietnam saying this was my [inaudible 00:20:09]. They were invincible.

Producer: Were they flying out at Pleiku?

Bob: No.

Producer: Because they were too big.

Bob: Yeah. I think some of them came out at the Philippines and some of them came out of Thailand. I'm not sure where the B-52s came out.

Producer: There was no base in Pleiku?

Bob: No.

Producer: They don't have one.

Bob: Their base couldn't handle a B-52 in Vietnam. They could handle smaller bombers but not something that large.

Producer: By the way you referred to that. I haven't really heard anyone that you described many type of offensive. This was another last event there?

Bob: It was and actually there was another offensive there but I'm not sure the year. I think it was in 69 or 70 that there was another offensive that they wanted. They pushed forward to try to win the war and with our massive push but the mini type offensive, I remember that. Just like the big offensive and I think it started on May the 4th of 68 and of course rocket attacks, more motor attacks and it was just as bad as I move just as many dead, wounded and what was going on during that offensive. That's what affects we most about the Vietnam war, all the dead, wounded with the aerial port guys handled. We handled a lot of dead, wounded. That's what I just say and talk about that.

Producer: What was life like on that base?

Bob: At Pleiku?

Producer: Yeah.

Bob: It was one of the cooler bases in Vietnam. Like I said we were in the central highlands. It didn't have the press of heat. We had press of heat at times but not like the bases that were up in the mountains. We didn't have the jungle around Pleiku that you could see like you could at the other bases at Vietnam. It was more wide open which actually it was a hindrance to the BC other tribe with the rocket motor type things I'd like to operate. That's why it's best operated at night at Pleiku because there was no jungle and no canopy for them to hide under. They had to do it at night time and that's just when our AC-47 gunships went into action.

Producer: Could you leave the base to go into town or?

Bob: We could but after that offensive they prohibited us for leaving the base. I don't remember how long that was before but you couldn't go in town after that.

Producer: I guess without any R&R, your memory in that year sounds like it's just our Jewish labor that you never add too many, I guess fun is the wrong word but it wasn't very enjoyable there.

Bob: It wasn't enjoyable but there are guys who went through a lot worse than what I did. They're kind of the Special Forces guys God bless and they went through an unbelievable time in Vietnam and so did all the army guys and the grunts and the Marine Corp also. These guys, a lot of them like to make fun at the Air Force how we lived and everything and it's rightfully served. The Air Force takes care of its personnel more or so than the other branches of the military but in Vietnam, that wasn't the case. There were good place for the Air Force to be in Vietnam and Pleiku wasn't particularly one of them. The army guys that I'd know in Pleiku, they know that too. We know where he went through in our mobility and things like that, how often you will be in shocked just like we were.

Producer: What were your combinations on the base?

Bob: What?

Producer: What were your combinations on the base?

Bob: The combinations of?

Producer: Yeah. Where were you, bunkers or where did you?

Bob: We actually had, it was like three pad barracks. Actually they were just there, they will bring and do whenever I got there. They were living like a little huts before I got there but there were two base, two story, not very big, they long and thin. You could sleep maybe 30 downstairs and 30 upstairs and you it had double bunks, it had like a locker between them and they were wide open. You can open up the walls if by time and get some air in there or you keep closing them. They had those like shutters on the barracks but they were all brand new actually. I've had a couple of buddies who were there a year ahead of me and they didn't sleep in there, they slept in smaller huts where these were being built.

Producer: Now, did the US shows show up at this little base at Pleiku?

Bob: They did but not as often as they did along the other places. I had a lot to go with the Bob Hope Show but two of my men wanted to go and I stayed and worked

and let those two guys go. It was handled at the Air Force base, it was handled at the army base across from Pleiku airbase at the army camp. I didn't get a chance to see Bob Hope but there were few other shows that I've seen. I saw, I remember Martha Rose being there.

Producer: You also met somebody else?

Bob: I met Fess Parker from Walt Disney fame. He played Davy Crockett and I think he played Daniel Boone once too. Also he came over with the USO and I was working, as a matter of fact in the airlift control element that day when he walked up the steps and came in and introduced himself to all of us. I asked him if he would get down the flight line and have a picture taken with me and he [inaudible 00:26:16] me and then I [inaudible 00:26:17], became a very famous photo for me. He was a real nice guy and he really cared a lot about the guys who were there in Vietnam or he would have been there because there were a lot of guys that ask to go on US oceans, it declined.

Producer: He was at military was he?

Bob: I don't know that. I don't know if he was over in the military or not but he was a real good guy and really cared about the American fighting the war in Vietnam. Yeah. A good guy.

Producer: Since you were in the ...

Bob: Actually the aerial port people and the airlift control element, they were made aware of it by all the surveillance that was done by the different outfits along the border of Laos to Cambodia, of course the Ho Chi Minh Trail came down not too far from Pleiku into South Vietnam. That's how they would have paying their information that there was a lot of surveillance done by mostly the army did most of the surveillance and did a very good job. Actually the army did an excellent job of what they did over there with the surveillance and tipping everybody off prior to the things that happened. Did an excellent job and I know that for a fact because I worked in the airlift control room.

Producer: Of course people knew that was obviously a secret operation that there was going in to countries that were not part of war.

Bob: True.

Producer: What was the general reaction of the most people?

Bob: Most people didn't even know about it until the war was over. Most people didn't know about the missions that were flown in to allow us in Cambodia. Not very many people were made aware of that the particular time and even afterwards the government probably has not denied it for many years. They declassified all the information of course during the Vietnam War and that information became public. Now everybody knows and exactly not all of the information has been declassified but some of that has. That's how the American public mostly had that about.

Producer: How large was the Ho Chi Minh trail near Pleiku because towards the end of the war it was in fact turned into a highway.

Bob: It was where it branched and believe me this is how affective they were. They would transport things on bicycles, on elephants. It wasn't like they drove trucks down on super highway and that wasn't the Ho Chi Minh trail but it was at the end of the war, it wasn't like was at the beginning of the war and I was there, probably was Ho Chi Minh, it was a trail but then it turned into more than just a trail at the end of the war because I know guys who were there many years after I was there and they said that's exactly what it turned into, your description was right.

Producer: I've seen photos, I guess they were VC and it must have been a line of a hundred or 200 bicycles and they had several hundred pounds in fact hanging from each bicycle and they weren't riding, they just were there. There was a long caravan of this.

Bob: That's exactly how they transport. It's amazing what they did over there. They would make their shoes of used tires. They'd make their sandals off tires. Of course we have the Montinyards that were with us at Pleiku. Many used crossbows and they have 16s and they were effective with what they used. Also I saw a mobility move up to the way two by area. I spent about three weeks up there with the Marine Corp. Our outfit is one of the ones who kept the marines alive face on. The aerial port guys, they flew in and out face on and kept them from being actually overrun.

We supplied a lot of ammunition and everything and of course all the marines that were face on, they knew that we lost aircraft landing and out of air. We lost men flying in and out face on. We have some crash landings that face on and our

guys were on that, the aerial port guys were on that and I will say one thing that Marine Corp should be applauded for what they went through up along the DMZ. These guys were under constant fire from nine north and don't get me wrong, the army guys are there too, not just Marine Corp but these guys, they were just unbelievable pounded overtime at face on and a hell.

Lot of these guys ever survived this is beyond because I talked to my guys who flew in on face on, they just couldn't believe what they were going through. The horrible conditions that they had to live in and I'm glad that we were a part of saving, helping these guys with ammunition, the food, the clothing, whatever they needed, we make sure they got it.

Producer: Do you think the face on which happened in early January 68 was an intentional diversion to draw troops away to weakens us for the tight offensive later that ...

Bob: I have heard. I really don't know that but I have heard that that was part of what that is all about but it did worked if that was they were trying to do. Because we were prepared for the type of offensive in all the other bases and all the other base in the south but they did file a case on it. You're right about that and that lasted for many months out there. It's just on the couple of days the type of offensive it was. Eventually you're right, it lasted a lot longer than just a week but the major party was done with less than 10 days and that of course had probably lessen for the next six months if you want to really be technical about it because from any type of offensive started in men. It falls around January.

Producer: How aware?

Bob: Very little. We were told very much about that. I learned most of that when I came back to the states. We did know about it. Most of the information that we learned was by our parents writing to us telling us what's going on in the states. The starting traits of course that we would get those maybe once a week that we could read about what their thing about it that I'm sure the starting trait was a little biased in what they wanted to let us know, what they didn't want us to know. Which sort of cooked up with a grain of salt but most of us learned by our mothers and dads writing to us, our families.

Producer: What was your reaction to the fact that that's what's going on?

Bob: It kind of hurt all of us over there. We thought that they would support us. It's about fair war by any means but I thought that maybe they would be more

supportive of what was going on in Vietnam but they weren't. I've heard that most of the main reason is because a lot of them they were afraid to go to Vietnam and a lot of the people that burn their draft cards and everything like that. They didn't want to be in harm's way but I could understand ... Sorry. I sense that I've taken, I had a little difference of opinion sense that maybe I'm getting older or I'm getting older to the people that didn't go, that drop charges and everything. Maybe I have to look at their side of the story too.

I'm not saying that I would have never done it ever. If you ask me to go back in Vietnam today, I would go back, so do all the guys that I know. I don't know of a guy who wouldn't go back to Vietnam but I can understand their side of story too.

Producer: When you return to the US, did you encounter and of it?

Bob: No, I was one of the lucky ones. When I got back to the states, I wasn't one of the ones who stood on or had a hard time to fear for it. I do have a lot of friends who that did happen to. I'm not going to lie to you that did not happen to me. I did have an encounter when I joined the BFW in my hometown but my dad handled that. He handled that real good.

Producer: Can you share it with us?

Bob: We were a bunch of baby killers and we lost the war and these were his friends saying this to me too. They were analyzing. They were saying to all of my friends who went to Vietnam. I live in a very small rural town of only about 900 people and I remember him handling it at the local BFW whenever I was there and they were saying comments about me and he was a big man just like Fess Parker. He stood up and he declared himself and that was the last word that I ever heard ever about any of us who served in Vietnam in that BFW. There were a lot of guys who had a hard time here in [Camberlin 00:35:49], I know there's a lot of guys here in [Camberlin 00:35:51] that the BFW quit down real big to abide with the BFW to have never to come back.

Producer: Gosh, I'm shocked. If it would have been the local college faculty and maybe I could believe it. Does BFW had?

Bob: That's right.

Producer: I find that incredible.

Bob: That is incredible. That is incredible and I wouldn't be saying this but it didn't happen to be but it was handled very well by my dad who like I say was with the sixth army and he fought in the Philippines, New Guinea and was in occupied Japan as they dropped the bomb. He handled it gracefully and after that there was no other words spoken about any of us Vietnam vets. I know it happened in a lot of the BFWs, not just mine. It happened in a lot. I have a very good friend here in our chapter in [Camberlin 00:36:39] that was actually total believed and never came back to the BFW. He's an in country Vietnam vet also.

Producer: Is this some of the reason for the formation?

Bob: Some people say that. Some people say that. I'm a lifetime member of BFW. I support the BFW and so do all my friends. We were all members of the BFW. It's just unfortunate the way they looked at us, the world war two vet looked at the Vietnam vet. That's unfortunate and also the Korean war vet but not too many of them.

Producer: Do you think because we were more aware of the general public of certainly atrocities that went on?

Bob: Absolutely. Everybody was aware of the causes and went on and that the world war two vets of course they came back with parade and fun fair and a role winner. We came back with none of that. Most of us came back alone. We didn't even come back as groups like they did in world war two and world war two, they look at us a losers, we lost the war and they want to make sure we knew and they did really do unfortunately.

Producer: As the years went, has this changed, has this position softened?

Bob: It has softened that most of my dad, when my dad has passed away also and most of his friends who were doing this, they have also passed away but before they did, it did smooth over especially at my small town where in rural America where I live, they knew that what they said was wrong. A lot of them were educated by us. It got better but that little bit was always there. They kind of resented it also.

Producer: Even though I think as they reflect this on over the years, they realize this is a political decision, not the soldiers.

Bob: That's right and they also realized that we didn't make the call. The commanders in Vietnam made the call. We had General Westmoreland. He was the one who made the calls over there, not us little sergeants. We didn't have anything to do with that. We just lived up to what we were told to do, that's all we did and we did it admirably.

Producer: You did. Is there a legacy I guess of the Vietnam vet that this explain maybe why seemingly such a large proportion seems to have had trouble reintegrating into society?

Bob: Are you talking about like the approach from I discuss this order and with all the elements we have. Well, I guess that has a lot to do with it. It really does. I have a lot of my friends who were seeking psychiatric help, they will be getting psychiatric help to the day they die. Because of all of these, there's a lot of things that happened in Vietnam and these guys will never talk about. They're part of our lost base, radiation orange over there, we are all dying of that. We have prospect cancers. Type two diabetes, [inaudible 00:39:59], leukemia. There are many, many diseases that [danger 00:40:03] orange has caused.

The American public recognizes that all we did was do what we were told to do and volunteered to fight for America and now America looks at us a whole lot differently. I think it was a 2,000 census that the country took. I think it was 13,500,000 people who said that they were Vietnam vets in over 247 million who was there in Vietnam. That changed dramatically from whenever we came back when even us didn't want to say we were, we serve in Vietnam. Now everybody wants to be a Vietnam vet but then nobody want to be a Vietnam vet. America has changed that and they recognize the fact that all we did is what we were told to do.

Producer: I guess really when you guys were doing that.

Bob: We do think because [inaudible 00:41:06].

Producer: Yeah and that if there's any silver lining in this whole thing, it's the fact that now the guys and women returning ...

Bob: I credit the Vietnam veterans for how things have changed. Our motto in the Vietnam veterans of America is never again one generation of veterans of band and another and we will live up to that motto. I think that it's a great motto. The people that come back today at Iraq and Afghan, that they credit the Vietnam

vet for how they are trained, how effective they are. You guys rewrite the book and we did rewrite the book, no question about that and I think that's a credit to the Vietnam vet.

Producer: I trust that the relationship with these younger set of veterans is certainly better than the prior set.

Bob: Absolutely. There is no comparison whatsoever, nothing at all. Like I said we look it differently. We know what they were going through over there, similar to what we went through at Vietnam actually and we will never turn our backs on them like certain individuals turned their backs on us. We will never ever do that with the Iraq and Afghan vets, we never.

Producer: The one thing I have heard that this Vietnam and ... These guys are doing three or four. Do you fear for their sanity of this current?

Bob: I do. I don't know exactly the tour number. I know a tour in Vietnam was a year. Now, a tour in Iraq and Afghanistan, I don't know if it's six months and if you do two tours that's a year. I'm not sure how that's setup but they are, what they're getting through to the healthcare system and everything is because of the Vietnam vet, the Vietnam vet is the one who fights on Capitol hill for these guys and they know that, they know that they have us all the time and we will continue to this until the last man stands within the VVA.

Producer: Bob. Thank you very much for sharing with us and thank you for [inaudible 00:43:25].

Bob: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Producer: Yeah. Bye.