

Interviewer : Michael Bass Smith

Interviewee: John Adrian Straley

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Q: (Read by A. Straley)

Adrian Straley: Where did you grow up? Okay I was born in Indiana. I live there about eight years. Then we move to New Mexico because of my mother's health. She suffered from asthma because of the dry climate, we thought would be better for her. We lived in a town called Algodones where I was exposed to both Native American Culture in the terms of the Pueblo Indians that lived nearby and Hispanic Americans, who were actually the majority in the state of New Mexico until at least the 1940s, and Spanish was the majority language until living memory. And I had all the diversity I can handle you might say. And then we moved, my father got a job a little South of Albuquerque, at a dairy farm. We were living on the dairy farm and I got exposed to a very different kind of environment. And then on a trip back to Indiana, every summer to stay in touch with our relatives and friends, on one of those trips back to Indiana my father met some Indiana truck farmers who were active in Florida, Southern Florida in the truck farming business, and they needed a good superintendent or foreman for their operations and offered him a job. So we moved to Southern Florida. The town of Immaculee, which was very much back in the sticks, and it was there that I attended eighth through the twelfth grades. I was not good in school throughout most of my childhood through eighth grade but about the ninth grade the light bulb came on. It was a good environment we had, it was a little country school, but there were good motivated teachers and they didn't just disappear at quitting time, they were accessible in the classroom after class and so I could get additional help on things and anyway for some reason everything just clicked and I started getting A's. And I started getting ambitious and thought then I can excel and I could go to a good college. And maybe even a very good college, although our family was very poor, we lived in a very shabby house trailer all throughout my school years and when I talked about going away to college especially maybe even to some prestige college my parents looked at each other and rolled their eyes who's gonna pay for this. But I was fortunate I applied for several schools but was accepted by the University of Chicago. And I got a full ride scholarship, tuition and a sizeable stipend for room and board and so forth. And what it didn't cover my parents by sacrifice a lot managed to make a good bit of the difference. So after graduating and I was class president, and valedictorian but, and I thought I was a hot ticket, you know but, there were only eighteen in my graduating class, so I was a big duck in a very small pond. But I thought I was a pretty struck guy but then I got to the University of Chicago where they recruit heavily from some of these East coast prep schools Boston Latin school and all of these places and all of a sudden I realized that I was over my head. I remember sitting in freshmen orientation and some guy sat down beside me and was reading Lucidity Peloponnesian Wars in the original Greek and I panicked and I said what I am I doing here. I'm so over my head. But anyway, I hung in there and managed to get through and had to study a language, and the study language that I selected, they didn't offer any languages not even Spanish in my high school, so I had to take a language, a foreign language in college and so I chose German. No particular reason. But I'm glad I did. They were on the quarter system and the first quarter I got a D in German, second quarter I got a C, Third Quarter I got a B, so I took second year German and got straight A's. Again, the culture shock, and the mystification factor were a problem at the beginning, but I caught on with good instruction and mastered German.

And, they had an exchange program with the University of Chicago, excuse me, the University of Frankfurt Germany, those two colleges exchanged one student per year. I applied for that and was accepted. So I spent a year as an exchange student and again that was all tuition paid plus the stipend for room and Board. So for a kid from very poor parents living in a shabby house trailer, I got a heck of an education and some amazing opportunities. I look back on it now and I'm baffled how in the world, somebody, and now I know who, was looking out for me (Looking up towards the roof, signifying God). Now at the time, I was not Catholic, I wasn't raised in the church. I didn't take full advantage but anyway, that's how I grew up.

Q. Before we get to the next question, what was the year you started or were in college at that time?

Adrian Straley: I graduated from High School in '59 and then I went in the fall of '59 started at the University of Chicago. And of Course, Eisenhower was still President and this was before Vietnam but I think it was my senior year in high school I got some recruiting leaflets from the Marine Corps. And, shows this snazzy uniform you know about all the pride and accomplishment, that goes with being a Marine and , anyway, there had never been any Marines in my family, but there were alot of service, my father was in the Navy in World War II, several of my uncles, they weren't drafted, they signed up and went because that was what you do in time of war. There was not a trace of any kind of contempt of the military culture at all. It was expected of a young man of military age that was physically able that he would serve especially in time of war. I learned about a program while I was in college, the University of Chicago did not have R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officers Training Corps). But the Marines had a program called the Platoon Leaders class. In which you would sign up and agree to go to Quantico for two summer program, six week programs in officer candidate school. And if you completed those successfully, they were basically the equivalent of boot camp, but for officer candidates. And if you maintained at least a C average in college, then upon graduation, you would be commissioned not in the regulars, but you would get a reserve commission as a second lieutenant and be expected to serve three years. Now they didn't pay unlike R.O.T.C., you didn't get paid while you were in college except for the six week summer training program, but I signed up in this program as a freshman and that started my pay entry base date as a Freshman and so plus I had this year as an exchange student so I didn't graduate, it took me five years to graduate. So by the time I actually graduated and received my commission I had like four and a half years longevity for pay purposes. No when I signed up I didn't know anything about that I was completely ignorant of that but man that made a difference in my pay from the first day. Anyway upon being commissioned then after graduation then received orders to active duty to the what was called officer's basic school at Quantico. Because two six week sessions in the summer that doesn't give you what you need to be an officer. This was a six week course, six months course excuse me, six months course at Quantico for freshly commissioned officers. And all newly commissioned Marines went there, including we had in my class, Naval Academy graduates from Annapolis. They had been living under strict military discipline for four years and I came in and I didn't even know how to my bars on my collar you know. But because they got a free education from "Uncle Sam", their pay entry base date didn't start until they were commissioned, after four years at Annapolis. And I, ignorant "Joe College", you know coming' in there I was making much more than they were and when we went through the pay line on pay day they saw what I was getting, man I got some nasty comments. That was obviously great training, learned a lot

about leadership and learned you know I didn't have much confidence, self confidence in high school or in college. I was a quite timid person I hadn't dated in high school or in college. I remember in my platoon in basic school they said after one strenuous field exercise we back to our quarters and got cleaned up and they said ok, let's go out and party a little bit and they said they'd drag me along and said Straley what are you drinking and drank some in Germany some beer, but I had never drunk any hard liquor or anything, they said oh you got to get over that, you got to do that there. You can't be a Marine and not ever taste a strong drink, so they, at least I had a designated driver and we had some safe friends so, we went out to a bar, it wasn't some strip club or anything it was just a respectable bar but anyways, what do you want to drink, and I said I don't know one drink from another, so they suggested Scotch. I said OK, so I started drinking scotch, I didn't much like it, but, I didn't want to chicken out so I kept on drinking it and I got seriously drunk. And that is the only time in my life I was ever seriously drunk, but I was knee walking drunk. And I remember hugging the commode a lot that night. And that is why I have never been drunk again. I didn't want to do that again. And I cannot stand the smell of scotch. Ok.

Q. For me it's Rum.

Adrian Straley: This was a fine fraternity. And I abide the traditions and believed in the lore of the Marine Corps and what it stood for and its Ethos. Although, you know as a, I never played athletics, I had not, we didn't have much in my high school, and they didn't have much at the university of Chicago, in the terms of athletics. So I was not into blocking and tackling and uh, but I made, I forced myself to make the forced marches with a field marching pack and to pass the physical requirements and uh you know, carrying a pack and jogging for three miles in a certain number of minutes. But, it was not my natural environment, I really had to force myself to do, to do those kinds of things.

Q. I think, I think number two has been answered, but I do want to go to number three. Do you recall any speech that was given in relation to military matters prior to your commissioning?

Adrian Straley: Speech?

Q. Any Speech that really stood out as far as the military or military actions that were being done or anything that you can recollect before you signed up?

Adrian Straley: Only speech that as such that I remember is John F. Kennedy's inaugural address. This thing about Let the word go forth that we will pay any price, bear any burden, and so forth, to uphold freedom. I took that literally. I've since been a little disillusioned about that because obviously the outcome of the Vietnam War. We were not willing to pay any price, bear any burden, and but I swallowed it at the time. I not, I didn't turn cynical but I realized that you can't always take everything a politician says at face value.

Q. Of course, your number four was answered, Where did you go to college for your bachelors, and that was the university of Chicago.

Adrian Straley: And that was not any accident that they didn't offer R.O.T.C., it was not a pro military place, and when they heard that I was doing this platoon leaders class, they kind of rolled their eyes, most of them. Of course this was before Vietnam really became what it later became.

If you went back later you would have encountered it very different. A much snarkier environment. But even then, it was not anything pro military.

Q. That definitely answers number five, What was the atmosphere on campus during your time there as it relates to military service.

Adrian Straley: Generally skeptical to hostile.

Q. What was the atmosphere on campus as it relates to the government entities?

Adrian Straley: Government entities as far as?

Q. They are not supportive of the military, how were they feeling towards the Kennedy Administration?

Adrian Straley: I think the Kennedy administration at that time was still well thought of, he had started the peace corps, that appealed to them. And his rhetoric appealed to them, his youth and zest appealed to them. And, he was in compared to previous presidents, well, by present day standards, he would have on the civil rights issue he would have been thought rather timid. But, he managed to get enough in front of the issues that he didn't appear too timid. And also his brother Robert Kennedy was the Attorney General, his Attorney General and so they took a fairly aggressive posture and also I think that was during the Kennedy Administration that George Wallace did the "Stand in the Courthouse Door", the administration somewhat timidly at least they couldn't let him get away with that so they intervened. So Kennedy was seen I think on college campuses at that time as being on the side of the angels. Although again, by present day standards rather timidly but nevertheless he was well thought of so. There wasn't the nasty anti-government attitude that later during, that arose during Lyndon Johnson's administration. This was pre-Johnson. And that really changed and of course the further evolution of the Vietnam War really soured the climate on campus.

Q. Number seven was what caused you or motivated you to serve in the armed forces, and I know you said that you received a brochure that talked about the uniform.

Adrian Straley: Well the example of my father and my uncles and just the general respect in which the armed forces were held of course which probably I guess reached its peak during World War II. Though armed forces retained their prestige during the Korean War although the support for the war didn't ever equal the Korean War never equaled that of the second World War. There was a lot of criticism of Harry Truman and so forth and so on. But, that never turned into a nasty anti-military spirit that I could observe of course I was still a youngster during the Korean War. I do remember the first funeral I ever went to was the funeral of a soldier killed in Korea and I was, I still remember the rifle volley that was fired over his grave. Cause that was the first experience I had of such a thing. I was not exposed until I was in college and to anti-military mentality at all.

Q. With all the different branches you could have gone in to, and I know the brochures showed the uniform and so forth kind of a follow on question to number eight was why the Marine Corps but I know you addressed that.

Adrian Straley: Well I was also familiar with the feats of the Marine Corps during the second World War which was you know the apogee of the Marine Corps glory during the Pacific war in particular where the Marine Corps took the lead in the island hopping amphibious campaign through the Pacific. I was in general familiar with that and of course the Marines weren't bashful about publicizing those things. And then, in Korea the Inchon landings which saved the day at the very beginning of the Korean war and looked like North Korea was going to push the U.S. right out of the Pusan perimeter and complete the conquest of Korea when suddenly the, I believe it was the 1st Marine Division fell on their flank and in Incheon and now although General MacArthur was not was generally not the favorite general of Marines and they had thought he was a glory hound and so forth, but nevertheless, he respected the Marine Corps and he realized the way to save the day was turning movement and an attack far to the rear of the North Korean Army at Inchon and the only people who could do it were the Marines. And the Marines had to really throw their, they didn't have but one brigade hardly on active duty they had to mobilize the reserve. And they weren't the reserve after World War II had fallen into a poor state. None of their gear had been renewed or replaced. They had to dig stuff out of the store room and dust it off. Anyway these guys who were World War II veterans, they knew their stuff and so even with a minimum of preparation they were able to get their act together and carry out a very complex amphibious landing with only a few weeks preparation. And it was MacArthur who said you all can do it. And, I know you can do it and here's where we're going to do it, and we're going to knock the socks off of them. So, to his credit, you know, even the Marines said, "Are you sure?" But it worked, and it worked brilliantly. An so, a lot of that stuff was still in the air you know, when I was in high school and so that all made the Marine Corps very appealing to me.

Q. The next question I have for you is, when you did finally get into your officer basic course, I think you said it was six months long, at that point, did they send you additional training as an Engineer Officer?

Adrian Straley: Yes. Ok. But while you are in basic school, they basically assigned you a preliminary officer MOS in some field or other. Now, the creme of the guys got infantry. Now, in other services they might think that's the last place I want to go. But not in the Marines, that was, I mean if you were, had any, if you were a real Marine, you wanted to be an infantry officer. You wanted the Marine Infantry MOS (Military Occupational Specialty). And, or Artillery. Which was you know, a hard corps combat branch. And on down, Armor, and the like. And so those who excelled in basic school, and were the highest regarded, they were asked do you want to be Infantry. And it was considered a shame or disgrace if you were asked to opt for Infantry and you refused it or asked for a different MOS. That is what every real hardcore Marine was supposed to want. Now, I would have been glad, but I wasn't at the head of my class. I would have been glad to do infantry. Realistically, I could see these really had charges who had been in R.O.T.C. in college or had, and were Annapolis graduates and so forth. They were going to get what they wanted and I had to look around and see what else was available. And I knew that there were some MOS's where they needed folks and that appealed to me. One was intelligence but I didn't, except for German, I didn't know foreign languages, they wanted guys with Spanish or especially of course oriental languages. But anyway, finally they suggested to me that they needed people in Engineering. Now engineering in the Marines is not like heavy construction. It's more combat engineering. Demolition, and light duty construction. Mind sweeping and field fortifications and that sort of stuff. So I said I guess I can handle that. And I was beginning to get some glimmers of being interested in city planning. And I thought you know, there might be some carry over. I

might learn something that might do me some good later if I decide to go into city planning. So I asked for Engineering, and they sent me then after graduation from basic school, I got orders to Marine Corps Engineer school which is not equivalent to Fort Belvoir. If you stay in the Marines in regular in engineering, they will eventually send you to Fort Belvoir for some advanced training but we had Marine Corps engineer school at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina for kind of the basics of Marine Corps Combat Engineer. But it was like six or eight weeks or something. I learned a lot but there were some things that when I got to Vietnam I said Oh man, I don't know nearly enough. But anyway, they taught me as much as they could teach me in that length of time. But I felt a little raw when I got to Vietnam.

Q. The next question I have for you is geared a little bit towards your training as a leader within the Marine Corps. I know during this time frame you had segregation taking place and they were trying to, the civil rights movement was beg... Everything transpiring around this same era that you are coming in at, and I know that, I believe it was Eisenhower or Truman that actually signed the order that says that the military services would no longer be segregated. So with that being said, with all the emphasis on the desegregation, what form of training did the Marine Corps provide for leadership during this time period?

Adrian Straley: Basic school there was a lot of leadership training about the fact that as an officer you don't, you are responsible for everything that happens in your unit. That doesn't mean, you can delegate some functions but you cannot delegate responsibility. And when you give an order, there's different stages of military leadership, go down through supervision, don't just say do it and then go on liberty (time off). You've got to supervise and make sure things get done. In the field when people are going to chow, the officers are the last ones to go through the chow line, and the senior, the commanding officer, is the very last to go through the chow line. If the food runs short (chuckling) it's going to be the leaders who come up short, don't get enough to eat. Very strong sense of honor and they also, well, there was a manual that we had on military leadership that emphasized these kinds of things. Like, they told about an officer who'd been on leave, traveled on an airliner in civies (civilian clothes) and a couple of service men in uniform had too much to drink and they got, acted up, and got into a brawl and really caused a scandalous mess on this airplane, and the stewardesses and the other airline personnel had to quiet them down and the airplane had to land and get them off and the MP's (military police) came on and investigated so forth, and it came out that there was this Army Colonel or I don't know what branch, anyway he was a field grade officer (usually a major or above) and he hadn't intervened. He said well I was on leave, and I was not in uniform, I was on leave and they were not of my service. There was this sailor and this Coast Guard guy, you know and they were not you know my guys. He got court martialed (military justice) and drummed out of the service because it doesn't matter if they're your guys you're an armed forces officer and you don't, you're responsible for the honor of the armed forces, and for the conduct of the armed forces. I mean, and to be on leave, you're never on leave, I mean an officer is always on duty, especially when something is gone amiss. You intervene and you don't ask questions, and so this kind of stuff was drummed into our heads. So I had very strong leadership orientation. They told about a commander of a ship, that the ship had run aground, the Captain was asleep, and the officer of the deck miscalculated and fouled up and was responsible for it but um, somehow, the captain had not adequately trained and supervised the guy. And he assumed that he what he was doing. And he was Um, relieved of his command. And his career was effectively ended. So these kind of things were just, you know, hammered at us. Now, as far as race relations were concerned, the integration had already taken forth, place. We already had some black officers attending the basic

school with us. And, we were told we're color blind in terms of how we operate and if you discriminate, you are going to get an unsat (unsatisfactory) fitness report and that'll be the end of your career. I mean they didn't go on in some of the sentimental vein that we hear race relations talked about today. It was just a no nonsense thing that these are your comrades, we are all equal unless and until you prove you're not equal, by failure on the battlefield or failure in some other respects morally or whatever, Now, I encountered one or two senior officers who I suspected had racist attitude. I remember, but they didn't show it that I could see. They had black personnel in their unit and I didn't hear any complaints that they were not treated fairly. Like there was one guy that was named, States Rights Smith, that was his actual legal name. He was from the heart of South Carolina someplace. States' Rights Smith and he had a real southern accent and the whole deal you know. And you would have thought if anybody was going to be a racist, it would be him. If he was a racist, he kept it to himself. And his unit had good morale and everything else. I heard that he had a brother, now I don't know if this was a joke or if this was the truth, they said he had a brother named, White Supremacy Smith. (Chuckling) But, anyway that was a different era but nevertheless, the Marine Corps was straight up about race relations and that you know a Marine is a Marine and weather you like it or not, if you don't like it that's tuff, you better not show it in any observable way, or that'll be the end of your career.

Q. And that kind of leads to the next question which was did you encounter segregation in your unit. And what I meant by that more than that was were there any incidences where let's say black soldiers stuck together and white soldiers stuck together and there just wasn't a good mesh and they may have done their duties together that there were just or were there any time where tensions were because of whatever was happening in the United States that, that kind of felt like they didn't want to be around each other in their off time when they were not doing their work?

Adrian Straley: When I got to Vietnam, it was early in the war and the drug thing had not taken over yet. The drug culture had not penetrated our forces, and we were still you know had high morale and thought we were going to win this thing and go home. I don't mean that there weren't frustrations and um, things that injured morale but, no I at this time, I don't remember this. Now, maybe if I had been an enlisted man, I might have sensed more than I did. But, I'm not aware of any such things.

Q. When did you first deploy to Vietnam.

Adrian Straley: In well, first my orders after Marine Corps Engineering school were to report to 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa, the 3rd Marine division was still in Okinawa and I went there. Now, when I was in officers, when I was in the engineer school, a Marine brigade landed in Vietnam, from Okinawa, went to Vietnam. And then they started building up, but that's not what my orders said, report to 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa. So I went there thinking I'm going to spend my Westpac (Western Pacific) tour in Okinawa, but they were sending one BLT (Battalion Landing Team) at a time, as a reinforced Marine Battalion, reinforced with some engineers, some armor, some support forces and um, uh we had an added tank weapon corps called Ontos, fired at then six big recoilless rifles mounted onto it. It was kind of a fad that didn't last in the Marines, but, if they ever fired off those recoilless rifles, they could do a lot of damage. Anyway, when we got there, they were sending one reinforced battalion at the time, south. And gradually building up, there and melting down in Okinawa. So anyway, I got to Okinawa in like March of 1965 but our turn came up and I went South with a my Engineer platoon was attached to a uh to a Marine Corps Infantry Battalion, as in to make a BLT, and we went south in June and I arrive in Vietnam

in June. Now we went south on amphibious shipping. We didn't, cause we had a lot of heavy gear you know. Like we took a bulldozer with us, I had a bulldozer attached to my engineer platoon, a light bulldozer it wasn't anything impressive, but anyway there was heavy gear and also a bridge platoon went with us. That carried all this, it was bailey bridging but something similar, it was a bridge kit, a kit that you could put together and cross, or make a pontoon rafts, pontoon bridging basically. But it was heavy as hell, you couldn't fly it in, and had to go on ships.

Q. I do have a question that I would love to ask wasn't a part of these questions but, did you remember a ship by the name of a ship they call it a LST and I guess its main transport was to be able to transport Marines to the shore line, drop its bow, called the U.S.S. Fresno?

Adrian Straley: Fresno?

Q. Yeah

Adrian Straley: No, I mean I, I was on, I saw some LST's and I, we um, had a job on one LST one night, and we went to shore it up, it had cargo that had to be shored up to keep it from shifting around before they set out to sea because and LST rolls like crazy, has no neat keel or anything so we spent the night stowing cargo in other words on this LST, but no I don't remember an LST named Fresno.

Q. I just have a picture of one from my Father's ship and uh, based out of San Diego at the time, talking about the early 70s of course way after 65. Number thirteen you pretty much answered that one, which was during your deployment did you encounter leadership challenges related to racial tension, you said that you didn't really encounter anything based on what the Marine Corps gave you guidance to. But, number fourteen may have come up, Did you experience any leadership issues with other leaders of the platoon or company depending upon the level you were at the time towards any other class or religious class or any of that nature?

Adrian Straley: No, I think we had a good esprit de corps in our unit, there were guys these were all volunteers this was before the draft kicked in, they were all volunteers although some of them were a little surprised to be in Vietnam because when they volunteered this wasn't going on. And some of them, I mean they were ready when their tour ended, they were most of them were ready to get the heck out of there and uh and they didn't have, there were a few motivated people that wanted to re-up or ask for an extended tour but they were kind of looked at with kind of wide eyes by most of the other guys. What are you thinking you know. And that implied to most of the officers, they took their time, did their time, and went home, but there were some that who extended or asked for a second tour or just wanted to stay in place. There were some interesting things that went on there in the sense that uh, there was not much to spend money on there so they would simply say we can give you, you can tell the pay officer to hold most of your pay and just pay you a token amount so you could have pocket money, and that way then when you go back home, you're going to have a big wad of cash waiting on you. And that most people had the intelligence to do that because it helped you to save and there wasn't truly much of anything to spend money on. When I first got there, we were so new, they were still paying people cash greenbacks. They soon realized a lot of that money was vanishing into the hands of the Viet Cong because there was even a little bit of liberty allowed where you could go into town and spend the greenbacks. And they realized this was not good and they quickly started did away from the greenbacks and started using script or military pay certificates, it was basically kind of monopoly

money, which would have been accepted in a little field PX or an officer's club or NCO club or whatever. But no Vietnamese could negotiate that kind of money, so it was a way of keeping the money out of the hands of the enemy. I think, some men of my platoon got a chance to go on liberty once in Da Nang, and they had to actually put on, take off their field dungarees or utilities, we didn't call them fatigues, that was army lingo. But anyway, they had to actually put on khakis, and piss cutter hat, to go into town. I don't think I went on liberty cause I wanted my men to be able to go, but I never did go. Somebody had to stay behind and tend the fort. So, a lot of people assume that if you were in Vietnam, you must have caroused with the natives a lot. I spoke to Vietnamese got my hair cut by Vietnamese, always tried to be polite, again it was win the hearts and minds, we were trying to be oh so polite to all Vietnamese and respectful and everything, but, as far as ? contact with Vietnamese it wasn't there. And we were in the field a lot, and didn't have an opportunity to do that.

Q. Can you describe your typical mission that you would have overseen as an Engineer officer?

Adrian Straley: Well, uh A lot of our early duty was building the strong back tents, the wooden framework, that would put a general purpose tent over, a G.P. tent. Uh, and but when we got there, there was no, lumber in the supply officers were all scrambling around, Where can we get lumber. They got a lumber mill in Vietnam. They brought in some Mahogany from the Philippines. (chuckling) And it was like steel. You couldn't drive a nail through it. You start out with a sharp saw trying to saw it. By the time we finished the saw was as smooth as a butter knife. You know it was horrible. We did the best we could with it. I remember the day the first ship arrived from the U.S. with treated pine lumber, and we just practically cried when they started unloading that stuff. We actually had workable usable lumber that we could work with. And we were doing a lot of this with hand tools. I mean we didn't have these pneumatic hammers, we were driving nails with a hammer, and we had a squad tool kit was hand tools, hand saws, I think every platoon may have had one chainsaw but it was a light duty chainsaw. And so anyway, um, we did the best we could with these limited tools. Um, and um, we also had to do um, road work. Uh, and our battalion had a road grader and they had several bulldozers and uh, and um, and then there was a lot of um, improvised what are now called improvised explosive devices and as well as actually factory built mines that the Vietcong used and they, so we had to do a lot of minesweeping. And before Marine vehicles went down any road on the frontier, in the morning there were marine engineers out there sweeping with these minesweepers, just go a foot, of course we had been taught that at Marine Corps engineer school, how to do that, and if you got a suspect reading you know, you get down, and kind a poke on the side with either a bayonet or a spike up into there, don't go from the top down, because that's where the trigger is, so hook around on the side to verify if there is something there. It is slow work you know, you get a reading, and you poke around, and kind a dig away from underneath it and it turns out to be a discarded ration can. But once in a while you encounter a real a real explosive device, so that was our job to do that. We also had to help with field fortifications building bunkers especially the CG Marine 3rd Division, he wanted a command bunker that could resist a direct hit from an artillery round. And there were huge timbers available that had to be sawed up to the right link and spiked together, anyway that was a big project to build a division headquarters that was basically built into a giant notch into the hillside and then backfilled with dirt. And again, we were a pioneer, basically a pioneer engineer battalion, that is combat engineer battalion not a that are in the Marines, we didn't have heavy engineer battalion, that work was done by CBs, since we work hand and glove with the Navy. So a lot of this work was better suited for a CB battalion because they had the real heavy duty equipment power equipment, we had hand saws and hammers, and uh, we would go

out and help and supervise em, infantry units with their field fortifications, show them how to string their barbed wire correctly, and um, I put in a minefield myself, a defensive minefield, there was an ammo dump, and we didn't Viet Cong getting into it and so I put a barrier minefield around it. It was a scattered slap dash affair, it was following the field manual, so many feet this was and so many feet that way, and everything had to be properly mapped, with detailed mapping, so that if somebody had to come back ten years later, and remove the minefield they would have an accurate map and know exactly how many mines were in there and where they are. That part I remember because I concentrate heavily on what I was doing, because one missed step literally could be your last.

Q. Now what was your actual location when you ?

Adrian Straley: This was in the Da Nang area.

Q. Da Nang, Ok, I remember you stated that's where your guys went to that ville.

Adrian Straley: Yes and That was where our engineer battalion headquarters was. Now, of course we farmed out engineer detachments out to the infantry, uh so we were always, a lot of them out with their little tool kits and operating with the infantry, but I stayed behind, oh yeah, one assignment, work assignment I will never forget, there was a supply road out into the boonocks unpaved of course and um and old bridge had been destroyed by the Viet Cong and so there was a gap and we were supposed to put in a big culvert and build it up and tamp it compact it and make it into a usable road. Well I guess supplies were very limited, we had a bolt able cup, in other words not an entire intact culver but kind of a kit where you took these kind of semi-circular pieces and bolted them together on the flanges and you just bolted enough together you could make a complete culvert. well, we were out there and starting to bolt together and I got a call to go back to battalion headquarters there's a staff meeting, I left my platoon sergeant in charge. He wasn't the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree um, he got it bolted together, and I got back that he said it's all done, but he'd only put in about one bolt out of ten that needed to go in there, he was making it easy on himself. And It didn't have the necessary structural strength. And I being you know still a rookie shaved tail, didn't know, or anyway I let him get away with it, or I didn't know any better, he put it in, covered it over, smoothed it over, ran a bulldozer over it and the whole thing crushed. And the battalion commander was fit to be tied cause that was the last of the culverting material. Said well y'all will have to dig it up, bend it back into shape and bolt it together correctly. Well now it was buried in tons of mud, uh Ok, Anyway, so we were up to our chins in this mud with leeches all over us and trying to pull this thing out, and the suction was such that you couldn't get it out of there, anyway we spent a couple of weeks trying to do that, and the battalion commander screaming at us from a mile away, you nincompoops, get that damn thing built, get that dug and get it out of there. So that was the most nightmarish experience that I had. Now, meantime while we were out there, there were Viet Cong nearby, and we would, so we had to have security, we spent the night out there, and obviously had to keep our security up around there. Well we'd be out there working on this culvert and we'd here pop pop pop from the tree line a half a mile away, a quarter mile away and we would hear a bullet as a bullet went by so let's get down, don't stand on the ridge line. But there's nothing to shoot back at cause all there was, all you could see was the tree line, a quarter of a mile away, all I had was my 45 pistol. No point wasting ammunition, so all I could do is say love you too fella, wave at the Viet Cong and Go back to work.

Q. A question that I had was what technical skills and basically you answered this but I was kind of wondering how the training stateside versus the transition to actually in the field doing the training, and was there let's just say Ok, I'm training to do all of this and I get here and I'm not doing the exact same thing I was trained for?

Adrian Straley: Well there was...

Q. I mean did that happen?

Adrian Straley: Well there was some of that and there was several of the stuff, oh now I know what they were talking about back there but they didn't teach us nearly enough and that we didn't have nearly enough hands on, I mean we went through the field manual and we saw a field demonstration and that was pretty much it, but you know, but when you gotta do it and it's got to be done right and you've never really had to hands on it before, then I thought we got to use twice or three times as amount of training and actually and done a lot more hands on stuff because I got my hands very dirty trying to do stuff that I just had book learning on back in the states. So, and I was I hadn't been any handyman, I hadn't even had a shop class in high school. I was not a skilled anything you know. All I knew is what I had learned in the Marines and it didn't go far enough or sufficient in depth. I mean, I learned I knew enough how to put in the minefield according to the field manual but I wasn't I had no confidence to let's knock this thing out, you go there, you go there, and just rock right on through it, I was very careful Ok what are doing next, or what does it say, oh yeah, very methodical, so I'm sure I had a reputation of being a real slow poke. But, when you're putting in a minefield, you know and you've never done it before, and you don't know half what you're doing, you don't want to cut too many corners, these were not improvised explosive devices, these were bouncing betties, these were U.S. factory made, very lethal mines, and if one went off at the wrong time, there was no oops, let's start over, you were gone.

Q. Through this sequence, we have actually answered some good questions, I want to go to number eighteen, can you just, uh no I'm sorry number nineteen, um, How did you feel or how or can you kind of give your relationship between you and your subordinates whether it's your NCO (Noncommissioned Officer) leadership that you had with you or some of your troops that were under your command.

Adrian Straley: Well at one time in the Marines I had an excellent platoon sergeant who was obviously head and shoulders knew, he knew his stuff, it was this stuff like Sergeant go take the platoon and do this and I could be assured that it would be done, and then unfortunately when I got to Vietnam it was the opposite, the guy was not respected by his fellow platoon sergeant, other NCS's, they all kind of rolled their eyes and made faces. He was the guy that I had. So, for a kind of a green second luis like me to have that kind of platoon sergeant was not good, wasn't good for me, but then you know, you I should've made up for some of his shortcomings, and sometimes I did, sometimes I didn't. Now as far as my relationship with the troops in general, they obeyed orders, they didn't talk back, they didn't sulk, they didn't pout, but, you could tell they knew I was very green and you can sometimes detect a little bit of a smirk you know. I didn't I didn't impress them as a awesome officer, I knew I didn't impress them because I wasn't an awesome officer, I was still a rather green second lieutenant. But they did their work so, and I'm very satisfied with them and their behavior.

Q. A question that I didn't have on here, that kind of sparks my interest because of my experiences in Afghanistan was the inability to know what was going on around me, I actually had to read daily the Siprnet computers or the Niprnet or some of the different levels on the computers so you could read the information?

Adrian Straley: We didn't have the computers obviously or the internet, to call back to the states we had a shortwave facility there, although I never made use of it, never had time to make use of it. But there were bulletins on a lithograph machine put out by division headquarters, that would bring you a little up to date on how things were going. You know they were largely propaganda, there wasn't anything down and dirty about it, our such and such BLT went out on a sweep and encountered heavy force of Vietcong and uh cleared their area and inflicted heavy damage on the enemy. You know, that nobody, none of those reports said we got our butts kicked.

Q. I just know that in 65 was the first Cav air mobile went into I think it was the Ah Drang and it was pretty stout fight and I just didn't know whether because you were in Vietnam in 65 and I was wondering, were there any communication that y'all received that said hey this was what our boys were doing in the highlands.

Adrian Straley: Oh yeah, I mean there were from unofficial channels when we had detachments of our engineers out with the units making these sweeps and that were in heavy contact with Vietcong and so especially if there some really tense situation that needed or called for reinforcements then we would get some hasty commitment to send these men with this equipment and report such and such place ASAP because they got to they got to be transported to such and such location. Now that was nothing systematic, the information flow was nothing official or systematic but, there war was going on around us and especially when we got urgent demand this that and the other um, we realized what was going on, and of course our battalion commander and other field grade officers were going to staff meetings and division headquarters and then they would have a staff meeting and tell us a lot of things that were going on, and as an officer of the battalion of the engineer battalion I was privy to what they would report. Now, I wouldn't say a whole lot of that got, not every detail got down to the enlisted man, but because I was an officer, I overheard a lot more from the horse's mouth you might say than others.

Q. It also kind of summarizing what engineers did and kind of tie into some things that I know from my experiences with air mobile Air Assault training, Did any of your people ever get called up to let's say we need demolition teams or anything like that to go out to X location because we need to clear mine, not clear minefields um, basically open a landing zone or anything like that we need to blast a brand?

Adrian Straley: Yeah absolutely, and uh we did a lot of our engineers did a lot of demolitions and destroyed tunnels. Um, yeah they were out there doing that kind of stuff all the time.

Q. I just remember part of my training was, if you needed to go out and set up a landing zone as a pathfinder they would fly you out drop you off and you would go and clear an area, whether you were setting up a mine or rapping det cord or a shape charge and you put it on a tree, blast the tree out and get everything out of the way so you could land a helicopter because you can't land it in another spot.

Adrian Straley: I suppose back in the mountains there was different kinds of engineering challenges uh, closer to Da Nang, there was a lot more paddy rice paddy environment uh, and so there were extensive areas where there weren't trees, trees weren't a problem, and if there was a paddy area that wasn't flooded, finding LZ's wasn't that tuff a problem. Now, now if there was a like a Marine corps fire base on top of a hill a high mountain or hill, there were obviously engineering problems in clearing that off and making an LZ and everything else but I never was deployed out into the boondocks far enough to observe or partaken or participate in any of that, so I can't give you details on all they did.

Q. Upon you completion of your tour in Vietnam where did you go?

Adrian Straley: I got orders back stateside. My orders were to Marine Corps base Quantico Virginia. So that, and I went was reported to a unit called um, School let's see let me think of the title of it, uh,.....Something like School troops, that's not the correct name, that's a long time, this is the unit of active duty marines that provided the aggressors for Schools demonstration troops, that was the name of this, it was a battalion, it was titled schools demonstration troops, they provided aggressors, or if you wanted to have a live fire display and show the capabilities like a I remember having schools demonstrations troops set up a final protective fires. They showed how you know in a fully developed defensive line, you had interlocking fields of fire and your barbed wire obstacles and everything and with those interlocking fields of fires, you have short range mortars then heavy duty mortars firing beyond that and um, I don't remember all of the weapons systems that were employed there. We went one night out and saw final protective fires and every fifth round was a tracer and they open up and fire all of this stuff and there's just a hail storm of lead flying out there and you could observe the path from the observing the tracers and it was schools demonstration troops that did all that stuff. And you would go out on patrol and like the officers of basic school were learning patrolling skills and schools demonstration troops guys were the would set up an ambush and try to ambush them. Anyway, all of that kind of stuff. So I was assigned to that unit, but I was assigned but they had an actual engineer unit and also there was an armor unit actually got assigned to the armor company and so um, they had tanks and ontos' and so forth there and then I was reassigned from that armor company to headquarters company. Headquarters and service company H&S company, I was the executive officer, and then the commanding officer was reassigned so I was reassigned so I became the commanding officer of H&S company. Which provided the clerks in the battalion headquarters were members of H&S company. And we had um, a lot of the supply a lot of the battalion supplies were under the care of H&S company and a lot of administrative tasks and so forth. But I was a company commander such as it was and I enjoyed that assignment and my three years of required active duty were coming to an end and I decided to go to grad school and I applied to Ohio State University because I decided I wanted to be a city planner they had a good reputation in that field. The school started like the first of September but my tour was over the end of June. I said, well why leave? So I requested an extension of active duty from June until like the 1st of September just a couple of days before school started so I was released from active duty just in time to pack up my gear, get in my car and drive to Columbus Ohio, and got paid through the rest of the summer for doing that and also because the Vietnam war had opened during my time on active duty I was now covered under the GI Bill and so that helped to pay my tuition to grad school so that was unexpected plus all the money or most of the money I had accumulated while I was in Vietnam and still had saved up most of that, so I was able to get through grad school without basically having to do any student loans. I still had student loans for being an undergraduate but while you were on active, those were national defense student loans, and while you were on

active duty not only did I not have to pay them, they didn't accrue any interest, so for three years they weren't even accruing interest much less have to pay on the principle. And then if you're going to grad school it doesn't accrue interest and you don't have to pay the principle. So there I have a couple more years that I didn't have to pay on my student loans from as an undergraduate. So, I mean I have to confess, Uncle Sam I mean took pretty good care of me. I was then finally got my master's degree and got an honest job as a city planner that I had to start paying on my student loans but, anyway, I have no, I was treated right.

Q. That leads to the next question, obviously you were doing the city planner work and so forth, but revisiting an earlier question from before service and now post active duty I think you reserve at the time at that point?

Adrian Straley: I stayed in the reserve and went to drill every month and that was more income to help me get through grad school. And but I stayed in until I was involuntarily retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1990 so. I, the Marine Corps again, joining the Marine Corps, there are three wise decisions I made in my life, being received into the Catholic church, marrying my wife, and Joining the Marine Corps. And you know, I've made mistakes and done dumb things, but those three things I've got right. And I thank the Lord that I did.

Q. I think you and I are pretty much about the same. I've got the same three except the Marines was not my choice it was the Army. When we talked about before service, when you went to, of course what year was this you went to Ohio State?

Adrian Straley: I went to Ohio State then on release from active duty that would've been in the fall of 67.

Q. When you went, of course by this point you know the tet offensive had not happened and we had only been in Vietnam for a couple years with full forces, I mean we had advisors prior to, but, and obviously the sentiment is starting to change um, did Ohio State being a bit different than Chicago but still in the Midwest, was there the same feeling or had it changed even more?

Adrian Straley: Well no it was it wasn't a real nasty attitude at that time, by the way, I was released from active duty and the Tet offensive occurred not too long after that and there was a lot of talk that you know that their gonna mobilize the reserve and I'd just got out of active duty off of active duty and I said, Oh I'm Going Back. But President Johnson took the opposite course, no we're not going to mobilize, we're going to try and draw back but skepticism and a little bit of cynicism was beginning to be in the air even in a place like Columbus, Ohio. for my part, I was still an enthusiastic supporter of the U.S. presence there I mean I had a personal grudge against Ho Chi Minh. Still do. I think he was a, an aggressor, and brought great misery upon his people. I'm glad that Vietnam is now prospering. At least to whatever degree it is prospering. Is sure is a lot more prosperous than it was when I was there. But it was aggression. And a forcible takeover of the South against the will of the people there. Anyway, so I continued to support the war, but there were others that were beginning to get a little cagy, And there were, I remember people who were going away to Canada, because they were still drafting for the armed forces. And, there were draft dodgers going to Canada. I wasn't didn't think a lot of them.

Q. It kind of leads into a question that, and I guess the interest behind this is kind of seeing the different types of ideologies that exist within our campus societies now, did you have any

opportunity during your graduate studies to inform others on campus about the importance of what you had done in Vietnam and the types of things that you had to do to be able to?

Adrian Straley: I remember I was invited once to some civic club like, Lions club or something like that, and I spoke about, I think I went in uniform and as a representative of the Marine Corps Reserve, and they may have given me some slides and things to take, and I spoke to this club and I got a few skeptical questions but also other expressions of support. Yeah, I spoke.

Q. You didn't have any reservations about communicating with people did you?

Adrian Straley: Nope. I lived for my second year, I heard about an opportunity to live in a, I boarded off campus the whole time, but I had to find suitable quarters and low cost. There was a group of relatively young adults living in this house and they had a spare bedroom but they were not at all aligned with my kind of culture and thinking. One of them I'm pretty sure was certainly smoked pot. For all I know he may have dealt pot. And so the kind of looked at me with a weary look the whole time I was there. But, though and you know I knew I once went into this at this time folk music became a big fad and I went into this coffee house on the fringe of campus like what we would call the University strip today here, they had something like that at Ohio State too. I went into this coffee house and I noticed this very peculiar acrid smell in the air and I from personal experience didn't know what it was but I deduced pretty quickly what it was. And So I decided I was not going to stick around here. And I got out. I mean but, anyway, that was beginning to be an in thing and a popular thing. It wasn't as, Columbus, Ohio wasn't Hyde Park New York, What's the name of that neighborhood in New York City (trying to think of the name). Around Columbus square, or it wasn't New York City and it wasn't Chicago. But still some of that culture was creeping in and seeping into Columbus Ohio.

Q. Haight Ashbury Community?

Adrian Straley: Well that was San Francisco. That was the extreme community but anyway I experienced some of that but I steered clear of it as I could.

Q. As you reflect on Vietnam, as a whole, and the other experiences of today, what is the most impactful moment of the experience?

Adrian Straley: Well I guess getting wounded. That was pretty impactful literally. Doing a road reconnaissance and we were at the end. We had gone the maximum distance we were going to with I was accompanied by a squad of infantry and make taking measurements, making observations, and so forth and we also had a mine detector with us and we had detected a number of beeps and done some probing and again came up with nothing except some old ration cans and things like that so we were kind of getting well ok it's time to wrap this up and turn around and go back. But there was one last, we came to a little fence with a gap in it, and I'll just take a look on the other side of that and see what I can see. And that was a stupid thing to do cause a gap in a fence is an invitation to go to walk through it and anybody who wants to place a booby trap knows that if you goanna place a booby trap place it where people going to be channelized and have to go through it. And so I was I walked through it carelessly and there was a tripwire in there. The trip wire was connected to a, fortunately it was improvised it was a homemade kind of thing with just a cast iron shell but with some TNT in it or something and a pull friction fuse. If it had been a you know, powerful high explosive thing I would, it would have been the end of me.

But anyway, it went off behind me because I when I tripped the wire and the thing was buried under some sand behind me. Well, fortunately I had a Flak Jacket on, Flak Jacket caught some chunks of this so I didn't get it in the kidneys or anything but I got some in the buttocks. And also a chunk went through one calf, came in the back and went out the front. And you know, picked up sand and debris in small chunks and stuff. But it didn't sever any tendons or really didn't do any damage to any bones. Soft tissues took the blow. For years there was a big chunk of metal floating around in my buttocks, I guess it finally went away. But I wouldn't want to pass through some MRI or something with some powerful magnet cause who knows what might still be floating around in there somewhere and suddenly come flying out of me, and tear a hole in me. But I remember that I Was evacuated by helicopter to the field hospital. They weren't called M.A.S.H.'s, the were called Charlie Med in Da Nang. But it was a, the doctors there were Navy the doctors and nurses were Navy, not Army. And the Marine Corps didn't have its own medical. But I remember a doctor passing a piece of gauze through this wound but it was an entry wound and an exit wound and he hooked it all the way through was kind of like polishing it (demonstrates with his hands an in and out motion) to get debris out. So I thought this is an interesting sight (Chuckling). And he put his hand against my toe and he said now see if you can push against my hand. I tried real hard and I pushed and got my toe to go down. And he could tell you know that I had no tendon damage or anything like that. He looked at me and said you are really lucky. I said I don't feel real lucky. You pulling that gauze back and forth through my hole in me and so forth. I had sand a debris in my forearms and a little bit in this forearm (pointing to the forearm). And so anyway I was evacuated first to the Philippines to, I forget the name of the big medical hospital in the Philippines. Then to Naval hospital in Guam.

Q. Philippines would have been Subic Bay?

Adrian Straley: No it was at an Air Force base. And then flew me out of there to Guam. There's a Naval hospital Guam. And that's where I recovered, because they said no this is not a bad enough wound to send him back to the states, he'll recover in a few weeks. So I was in there for several weeks in Guam and finally reached the point where they said well Ok return to duty. Here's your orders, and a plane from there to Okinawa. Reported in there for processing and got orders from there back to my unit in Vietnam. And so about a month after this injury, there I was back again fit for duty. Young guys heal quickly, if their going, I mean if it's healable obviously, you lose a limb it's not going to heal. No but a, anyway, I had what they used to call in the western movies, I had a flesh wound. I had a lot of them I had flesh wounds all over the place but nothing that was no damage to vital organs or anything like that. Thank Goodness. And that flak Jacket helped. Cause otherwise I might have caught something in the kidneys. Cause they took, I saw my flak jacket afterwards I saw that it had big chunks in it. Embedded in the Kevlar.

Q. As we're getting towards the end a lot of this is definitely reflection, of course I had to do this too, on occasion and thinking about the things that I've seen and done. Knowing what you know now about the actions of the United States in foreign wars what if anything would you have done differently or would you have encouraged others to do?

Adrian Straley: Well, I would have served I know have a different perspective on the Vietnam war. I think that it was, that it was not sufficiently important and for the vital interest of the United States to make that level of commitment to it. And that it has to be looked at against the background of what had happened in the previous period in the cold war period when these countries of Eastern Europe had been taken over by Russia. And of course we'd have the

blockade of Berlin and the successful Berlin airlift. And then the war, somewhat semi-successful war in Korea. At least we kept North Korea from taking over the whole peninsula. And especially the fall of China, which was very traumatic for the United States. Cause they were sold on Shanghai Cheuk. And through that he'll beat, he'll beat Mao Zhang Tong. And he didn't. And in China, with a tremendous strategic importance of China, the loss of China was just a shocking blow and there was tremendous political argument about who lost China. As if it, as if China was ours to lose. But nevertheless, there was a feeling like you know, this has got to stop somewhere. We can't just go on letting one country after another fall. And so it was against that background that the Vietnam war got going, although strategically there wasn't that much at stake for the United States in Vietnam. We could have said well it's a shame we'll give equipment and arms to South Vietnam but if they can't fight their own wars and win, then that's tuff. We're not going to go in there. But I understand given the background and all that had preceded it why the U.S. why Lyndon Johnson felt you know we have to draw a line in the sand and in fact if they had there's still debates going on if they had gone in heavily at the beginning instead of piecemealing it that they could have shut down North Vietnam before, before all the Chinese and especially Russian aid had got time to get in there. Their air defenses eventually got very good and very dangerous. But in the first months of the war, they didn't have much of anything. We could have kicked fanny.

Q. There was a general I believe his last name was or his name was Giap.

Adrian Straley: Oh yeah.

Q. I've had part of this course, part of this readings and he was a general that was in charge of from, during the war with Japan, the war with the French, and into the United States, what's unique about what I read in his writing was a protracted war. And I heard this term come up again when we were discussing protracted war that we are fighting in Afghanistan and their mentality was "Hearts and Minds" of their people supporting the Northern movement. They were looking at supply, were looking at making people spend money, making people making them use up supplies. It just seems like they did the same thing to the United States whereas the United States had done let us say what happened on Normandy on D Day when they went in with just a overwhelming force to just say we are goanna flush them out, that maybe it would've been a different tactic.

Adrian Straley: Well of course the presence of China was a big was an alarming factor. In Korea of course the U.S. had once after the Inchon landings the U.S. pushed the North Koreans way back and they were in a route they were being routed and MacArthur was chasing them. But then the question was then how far do we chase them? China was saying don't you dare chase them all the way back to the yalu river. We don't want American troops on our border and Harry Truman respected that and told MacArthur to stop and he didn't stop he kept on going and that's what provoked the Chinese intervention. And when the Chinese intervene, then we had a hell of a war on our hands in Korea. And for the U.S. had that dread of Chinese intervention also on the side of the North Korean or North Vietnamese and so we couldn't just absolutely invade and take over all of, now we could've taken over either enough of it or else or destroyed enough of their infrastructure and mine their harbors enough to have made them incapable of making an aggressive war against the South. I don't know but you don't want to put troops on the ground in North Vietnam and advance closer and closer and closer to China because then you got China on your hands because they're not going to put up with having an American Troops literally on their

doorstep. That was, that brought about a little bit too much timidity on the U.S. When a little bit more of aggression would not have been enough to trigger Chinese intervention but would have put a serious hurt on North Vietnam's ability to wage war against the South. I don't know, obviously you can't just press the reset button and do all of these things over thank God. We don't want to do both, but we don't know what would have happened, it might have been a happier outcome if the U.S. had been a little more aggressive. Things said by people Curtis Lemay, General Curtis Lemay who was then the commander of the Strategic Air Command, and still was the commander of the strategic air command, but he was a "Nuke the Hell Out of Them" guy. And everybody was suspicious of him. Or cringed I should say at some of his advice. And so they were, and I think he did to cause more harm than good by some of his reckless statements, and nobody wanted to be another Curtis Lemay, or to be aligned with him or suspected of being under his, under his influence.

Q. If you ever encountered a Lieutenant with the same set of orders as you, what would be your advice to that Lieutenant?

Adrian Straley: With the same set of orders? Well of course, well, if a Marine Lieutenant gets orders to the third Marine Division in Okinawa, I would say enjoy your tour. And work hard, and take it seriously because there's some bad guys, they're not in sight but they're just not too far over the horizon and so it could happen that you actually got to do some of this stuff with your life at stake and the lives of your troops at stake so master your craft as best you can.

Q. What in your experience is the best way to handle difficult situations in a combat environment?

Adrian Straley: Well, as I said, we were shot at but we weren't in heavy contact, I wasn't in heavy contact in on the main corps, the main force Viet Cong or much less NVA unit. I would, the best advice give would be to keep your head and carry out your orders as faithfully as you can and don't... practice what you've been taught because when you go into a new combat situation sometimes old training may not stand you in good stance, there may be new challenges that they didn't know about back when you were in training. But if you're in an ongoing conflict like you were in in Afghanistan they had some recent up to date experience, Ok, here's what works and here's what doesn't work. And so, pay it close attention cause the, your commanders do have your welfare at heart. And they, you've got to do your part and let them do theirs.

Q. The last question I'm going to ask is with soldiers that I've seen when I was deployed because I was basically a platoon sergeant grade, soldiers had issues that deal with things going on back home, marital issues, family issues, what is the best way that you found and I'm sure that even though maybe it wasn't an intense environment for you based on what you have told me today but in the aspect of soldiers receiving notifications or they're on the outs with a spouse or someone that they care about, what was the best way for you to comfort them in times of distress, what kind of actions did you do for them?

Adrian Straley: Well, we try to encourage them to stay in touch. Write home a lot. And if, there was always a line to use the short wave back home, if there was some reason to think that somebody was in crisis try to get them to the head of the line. But I encourage them also, although I at the time was not religious at all, I was a practicing unbeliever at the time, but I would try to tell them to talk to the chaplain, and follow his advice. Now there were times when

some men were killed, I obviously had to write, some of my men were killed, I had to write letters home and that was a painful experience but I would try to be as respectful as I could I don't know, I remember one time we were inventorying a guy's gear who had been killed and send it home. And he had some pornographic stuff in his duffle bag, obviously we just destroyed that, now you don't want the parents or the wife or whatever to see something that's goanna cause them be ashamed of their serviceman. Besides, we well, now you might say some privacy fanatics might say well you don't have a right to censor his belongings and I'd say well you're full of crap. We're going to try to spare the feelings of his loved one back home and the guy is not here to claim ownership of his skin books and dirty magazines and to hell with it. Destroy that stuff. And send back the rest of his honest to God belongings that are fit to see back to his family.

Q. Is there anything that you would like to add or take away?

Adrian Straley: Well I would say there are people who came up and were and have suffered and have continued to perhaps to suffer post traumatic distress syndrome or have been lost souls, kind of homeless guys that they can't keep a job or they you know and I see them and I feel desperately sorry for them but I didn't undergo that. I came home a better man than I went, as much more mature man. I had my act much more together, not that it's totally together even to this day but nevertheless, I couldn't fully identify with some of the psychological basket cases that came back. Yet, I know I wasn't in some of the hell holes that they were in and experience the kind of trauma that a lot of them experienced but I think also some of them maybe didn't have the upbringing that I had either, maybe they were more vulnerable before they went over there. And just weren't able to take some things that others of a different background or of a different nervous system a different temperament were able to take in stride. So I don't think it was just totally the pressures of war but also it was what you brought with you as well as what you experienced while you were there. Without claiming any special virtue on my part, I came home a better man. I'm not saying I'm glad I went, you know, or I'm glad it all happened (Chuckling) I know better than that, but, nevertheless, as it worked out, I came home a better man than when I went. I wouldn't want to do it again, there were some experiences that were not fun at all and I mean there were whole time periods I just couldn't wait for this to be over, days of real misery but nothing nothing to traumatize me, or reck my subsequent life, if anything my subsequent life has been better as a result

Q. I think that about wraps it up.

Adrian Straley: OK.