

This is a patch that I actually had made up, it's the symbol for the first time programs a group of Marines for the time when I was in Vietnam and this is our logo. Now marines don't wear patches of their units on their uniforms but the sometimes they like to have them.

It's called a cruise book. when Marines go on board ship, and they often do, peace time or wartime they have what's called cruise book and this is a cruise book that they made up for my unit when we were in Okinawa and you see the patch is the same. I took a color Xerox of this cruise book and they made a patch to match. But the cruise book has pictures of all the people that are in the unit, or most of them anyway, and it's a souvenir, a way to remember.

No it's more of a yearbook. It has pictures of individuals and I'm in here somewhere, here is my company commander, yeah it's a yearbook.

Well yes, maybe not a lot we were pretty busy when we were in Vietnam. Of course you became close with the people that you work directly with, but the way all the military organizations work is there's kind of a chain of command, our boss was the lieutenant colonel in the battalion so he would talk to the captains who would talk to the lieutenants who would talk to the sergeants and so on. It was pretty efficient the way it worked.

I got married about 2 years before I left for Vietnam, a year and a half maybe and I was in the marines at the time and was stationed in Quantico Virginia, all the marine officers, and I was second lieutenant, go through the officer basics school, most go through college first so I had already been through college so I was in basics school, others that had enlisted recently but we're doing a really good job in the marine core were often times selected for officer rank and had to go to basics school so I got married during that period of time shortly after I got out of basics school. Now I must say I am not married to that same woman anymore, but I was married at the time.

Well I went to Brown University and I was on the track team, my major was English lit it was a liberal arts school, and I joined Navy ROTC, and about halfway through that I found out you can compete for spots in the marine core and I thought I would rather be in the marine core than the navy. When I first went down to Quantico the powers seemed to know I was a runner so they kept me at Quantico and I was on the track team and we traveled around the country competing. I was a little skinnier then.

Well she was sad, we had a young child who was 3 or 4 months old when I left for Vietnam so it was tough but I volunteered I didn't get drafted and I was used to military life, my dad was drafted into the army for 28 years so I was used to people going away. My dad had been in WW2 and Korea and it was something you did. Now someone said one day war is hell, and I agree with them but our country gets in wars from time to time and I'm glad I served.

Well during that first 3 years I was in the marines on active duty, the first 2 were in Quantico, and back then the marine core didn't have any lawyers, so if somebody was in trouble they would often assign someone who had a college degree to work on the case, and I became interested in the law, so I decided when I got out I wanted to be a lawyer and I actually took the law school aptitude test before I left for Vietnam, and while I was in Vietnam my dad was applying for law schools on my behalf. I got accepted

and when I got out I went to law school on the GI bill, which is one of the benefits of the military, it covered the cost of law school and provided me a good amount as well so when I got out I became a judges law clerk in Prince George's county and then I became a state attorney and then a job as a family court master so I spent 25 years judging juvenile delinquent cases and deciding which little trouble makers should be locked up and which ones should be set free, and also doing divorces and things of that sort. I retired from that in 2002.

Sometime after Vietnam they demolished the ROTC program but when I was at brown I was in it. The ROTC is where you take classes on your military branch, and you have drill, marching around and learning about the history of your branch and I was getting my academic courses at brown and ROTC courses too. Depending on your course you could get paid, and I was getting paid.

Well I knew I was going to go into the navy or the marine core, and I liked the idea mostly because my dad was in the army which was a ground based service and I was a runner and it would be hard to run if I was on a ship so I decided to go into the marine core.

I didn't travel that much, but I started in Quantico, then I was on my way to California to train, then got on a ship to go to Vietnam. We went to training for landings, where we would go in by helicopter and Amtrak. I did have to opportunity to go to Norway, but that's was about it for the travel.

I remember leaving San Diego on December 7th and got there on Christmas Eve. Then it was a few more days to the Philippines then another few to Vietnam.

Well in an infantry unit we were almost in constant combat, and we lost a lot of people, and I thought this was no way to make a living. So I got out, and I was out in law school, but I met a guy in law school who talked me into going into the marine reserves. I even got called back to active duty for desert storm, so I was back in in 1991 for 3 years and made some rank.

Well in Vietnam we were in a jungle with very few people, and we were in combat with the North Vietnamese army. At the start we had around 200 people. 31 were killed in one month. Now in desert storm I had a nice desk job and was not in combat so it was a world of difference.

Well there wasn't free time, you hear about people being in forts, well we were in a ship and got brought in by helicopter to an ongoing battle on a daily basis. We would dig foxholes in the evening and set up a defensive perimeter and try to get some sleep. So we didn't have much free time. Now John macknamera had an idea to build a cleared area along the border so we could be in the way of the north coming into the south. They could always go around, but there wasn't free time at all.

I wrote the Medal of Honor citation for this young man, Douglas Dicky. And I got 2 pages in the book but I just want to make sure men like him get recognized, because he didn't make it back. A lot of these guys are troubled by their experiences. You know I am 73. A lot of these guys didn't make it past 19. So you know I have been married, had kids, had grandkids, lived my life. But these guys didn't.

I was relatively old, I was 23. Many of these guys were 17, 18, and 19. Some people are 40, but you

come in when your 20 and put in 20 years there you go. It was only the top enlisted guys that had any years on them, most of them were kids. I can show you some pictures of these guys, they are kids. It's not an old man's game.

I didn't know anyone who was drafted, my dad was in the army so the first high school I went to was in Virginia but my dad got transferred to Kansas. But I went into college and got commissioned but I didn't really keep in touch with anyone back home. After I got back I got my draft notice but I already served. Now I have talked to a number of people since, in law school there were a few people worried about being drafted but most of us getting back from Vietnam got mistreated but I had some vets in my law school and they treated us great. We had 3 class offices and us veterans got all 3 of them. So I think they respected us individually, they may have hated the war but they respected us individually. One of the fake trials we had was "Was the war in Vietnam legal" and so it was interesting arguing both sides of that.

I was the only veteran on the moot court team, there were only 3 veterans there, and one was army and one navy. No air force guy though.

I felt sorry for the Vietnamese people I met, I wasn't too often because we were in that free fire zone most of the time but the area where we were was agriculture, and many of the people just wanted to be left alone, I don't think they cared one way or the other. I lived in France when the French were fighting in Vietnam, and they were fighting their French rule, and then the war goes on to a civil war almost immediately. We had a little bit of time between ours but not them. I don't think it was really something most of them cared about. I did get some pictures. After I got injured I got to go around a bit. I was in this small village, and our artillery had bombed some of this refugee village and it was the US fault, I'm not taking personal responsibility, but I was sent to make things right. The kids were very kind and happy to have me there and show me their toys.

It seemed like the adults went about their business, it was the kids that really came over and wanted to tell us what they were up to. I didn't have any language training either.

When I first got back I realized nobody would be particularly interested with me telling them this stuff and I just stayed focused on law school and my job. More recently we started to try and find other veterans and the Internet really helped with this. So we have been having these memorial reunions ever since, one a year, at the hometown of one of our guys that was killed. Those have been very bitter sweet, I meet lots of guys that I knew and we got to talk to the passed's family and loved ones. We have been doing this for around 20 years. You hear about people having PTSD where they can't function, and I am able to separate then and now, I feel sad but not guilty or responsible. It could have been us, and we appreciate the others who have their lives for us.

We used the navy doctors, and there were two doctors per unit and when someone got hit they would run forward knowing they were getting shot at and they didn't have a gun so they had a dangerous job. We had marines to our right and marines to our left and the core men would come up at treat one person after another. The one man to patch me up and throw me in a helicopter I have been in touch with, a really great guy but I know he has had his demons. We have become very close. We called all our

core men doc, they weren't really doctored but they were highly trained. Our real doctors would stay on the ship.

There was a Sargent, Wilson, and after one firefight he had unsnapped his flask jacket and he had a small scratch and a red streak. He said "as far as I can tell, a bullet went in underneath his flats jacket, hit his watch around his next, shattered it, and went out the other side." And then in comes doc, who comes in saying "look what I found in my cheek" and he was holding up a watch head. So he had a bullet that close, and all they ended up with was a few scratches. So it's kind of something to laugh about and we still do. Now Wilson got injured later but he was patched up and we don't joke about that but we joke about the other one. The serious one was pretty grim, but he recovered, as did doc.

I am still in touch in about 20 of them, now this is a sad story but the first person he found was Dicky, who threw himself on a grenade to save a few others, and this man who found him killed himself, he must have had PTSD and kept it at bay for a while. He owed his life to Dicky, and must not have been able to handle that.

When I came home I didn't have time to reflect on what happened, I was really in Vietnam fighting the first part of the month, then in law school the next. I had to focus on law school. I didn't talk about it at all, until these reunions. I didn't think anyone would want to hear. I don't think it's a bad thing now, it's tightened the bond with the ones of us that survived. You know Vietnam is communist now, and we trade with them, but I'm not convinced that just because they are communist we can't have a relationship with them.

I don't think people should decide about war, it should be a group of officials who do it. I don't think the war would have made a difference if we didn't fight.