

## Henry Minner III- TRANSCRIPT

0:00-3:37 I was going to University of Delaware and back in the that era of Vietnam it was a draft and going to college I have a deferment when you dropped out of college you lose that deferment and you would be Eligible for the draft and in the draft most people at least the feeling was that you would be drafted into the army and would be in the infantry so while I didn't really like college it was a sort of a deferment to going to Vietnam was I dropped out of college but I joined the Navy thinking no way I would be going to Vietnam but does the Navy made me a corpsman and the Navy Corpsman some of them go with the Marines as the marines do not have their own medical and they don't have their chaplains, they come from the Navy as the Marines are land force of the navy.

3:38-8:34 The area I was in Vietnam Love rice patties and I guess they called hills are somewhat mountainish but there's a lot of areas that are just beautiful that I could see that they could be made into resort areas they were in America they would be a landmine as far as money goes people would put hotels there and I have Nice resort areas. The terrain was mostly rice patties that you would walk on and they have way rice patties are made they have kind of like a little walkway For the farmers to get in between each field to walk in them but your feet would get wet a lot you wouldn't be in the rice patties sometimes in the feet as a corpsman I had checked with a lot of the feet every day because it would develop sores And they couldn't carry enough socks change socks all the time etc. so easy to maneuver in but kind of not good for your feet. My first time it was I was put with the earth time seventh marines Delta company I was a field Corman that I was in the actual battle with any kind of like the army would have infantry units and I was out in the fields. I made friends in Vietnam because your corpsman and Corpsman when your medic in the military the Marines or train that the person who can save them will be the medic a corpsman so everybody wants to be your friend so you're you become now I have a doctor but you're like the chaplain you're like a psychologist but the sad part of it as a corpsman you don't have anyone to go to besides other Corpsman usually there are two Corpsman For each platoon and there's three squads too a platoon with a gun team and we'll call it a headquarters squad which is the lieutenant in the Marine Sergeant ready on them and the corpsmen, so I was friendly with all of them continue to be friends today and I have reunions and I'm invited to all the reunions I should've brought the guy just sent me a hat that I had a reunion out in San Antonio Texas that I couldn't attend. I don't think the anybody that I know of ever was ever home sick so to speak in Vietnam too much excitement or anticipation that no one ever thought about wanting to go home and it was a funny war and the sense of conflict in the sense that almost everybody know when they're going home date. Vietnam was strange that you had a year normally Tour of duty I think the Marines might have been 13 months but they know their end of tour day and they used to keep a little pieces of paper that would have a image of something could be a teddy bear something that's would have numbers on it and when they get to be with a couple call a short timer say 100 days left that would start coloring and then and then when I got down to day one that's the day but nobody that I never associated with was home sick so to speak.

8:35-12:45 In Vietnam in the group I was with Delta company first Italian seventeenth marines. The seventh Marines you have Alpha Company, bravo Company, Charlie company, Delta company and echo and foxtrot etc. but it was three hills that the 65, 37, 55, and it is based on elevation supposedly Hill and Charlie Company in Delta company were on hill 37 and was also headquarters group there artillery on that hill and your there just base area saying Maryland you have Andrews Air Force Base today stations that you put your seabag down of your equipment and stuff but you work off that you'll go out when you come back they usually have a little canteen we'll call it A bar that they would bring in USO shows on that hill or people would have a beer, soda just trying to enjoy themselves for a couple days before they would go back out in the field.

12:36-16:54 Oh yeah when I first went in you are sent to one of the three holds and I went to Hill 65 because The way Vietnam kind of work do people rotate in and out all the time I just said you have a year tour there and so there's always marines coming Corpsmen coming and going so the way the terrain there was roads and They would go from 65 to 37 and 55 and I got to visit all the hills partially after I was in the and I went back I will have a vitalism aid station which is on hill 37 and every day we ran Road sweeps in my job was to go on road sweep between hill 37, 65 and 55. So I got to see all the hills.

16:45-17:58 No my dad was a corpsman in world war two and one of the advise he gave me was not become a Navy corpsmen because he know the Corpsmen became maybe with the Marines you could be on the ship but my Seaduty was with the Marines and so he didn't influence to be a corpsman but he did influence me to be in the Navy i've always love the Navy and I grew up in Delaware and we had Delaware Bay like Maryland has Chesapeake Bay so growing up we had boats we're out in the Delaware bay and fishing, waterskiing and stuff so I was loved the water.

17:59-19:31 My dad was in World War II and the only stories I ever heard were A good stories because he was stationed in Maryland in Solomoums island and they use to go crabbing the normal Maryland type of stuff. He was also on an attack transport ship and they took troops to war and he did mention that he was on an attack transport ship that was taking troops to Japan before the end of the war of that America was going to invade or finish the war after the Bomb had been dropped they were going to take over Japan.

19:32-21:54 When I was discharged from the Navy I was coming back from Vietnam so coming back home was the big thing I was just discharged from Long Beach California and flew home and my next mission I went back to college I knew you had to get an education you have to get a good Job to to make in life I was fortunate coming back from Nam that my salary I didn't get to spend it when I was in Vietnam and I bought a 66 Corvette when I came home and kept it for my whole college career and then I sold it for more money than I paid for it was a good investment for me

21:55-26:30 I love the Corvette it was a '66 two top I bought it used in 1970, 70 model were out but it was in such great shape. Dealer I bought it from had it in the showroom and it was the only used car he ever put in his show room. Is that great

shape with the chrome in the engine is the same and has two top so you have a hardtop and a cloth top and it's just The sad part when you look at car is a 1966 so compared to today's car didn't have power steering is a little tougher to start when you're trying to park and things like that.

26:31-31:01 It was great and for me it was even better because I was being discharged a lot of people come back and get assigned a new base. I was. Assigned again a Maryland base that had a branch office that I was basically going to be stationed in Louis, Delaware and it was a fort Meyer base many from World War 2 and in fact when I was going to college and I joined the Navy reserves and they had a underwater detection unit there and it's a big mound if you ever go to Cape Hedlopum Park there's this mound that is closed now. But it kind of looks like a sea doom of sand and you can go into it and they have all kind of equipment to detect any kind of ship that might be back in World War II coming up to Delaware Bay toward like Philadelphia and it was great coming home but I didn't have to go to that bass I was being discharged, the normal duty for the Navy was 4 years and I spent three years one month so I got 11 month earlier out then when I came back back in the end of 69 I know the war wasnt over till 75 but they were starting to Freddie give our early out they were cutting back the size of the military late 69.

31:02-35:45 Oh when you join the navy or any I guess branch of the service you are allowed is legit they test you and you say were your best qualified for in my case I have some college because I don't know university of Delaware for a year but I was not allowed to be tested but I guess my recruiter of decided that being my dad had been a Navy corpsmen that I wanted to follow in his footsteps and on my order and going to Boot Camp had HRHS which stands for hospital recruit out of high school And so I had a choice that even though I tested to be a personnel-men that basically to get to be a personal-men matter I would have to go to the fleet and be what they call. Boatswains mate poses made it basically is a personal shipmen who chipped paint and paint the ships all day and cleans up on the ships and or I would be on gunboats in Vietnam and I really didn't want any of those jobs then decided to come a corpsmen and probably one of the best duties in the Navy as it turns out. You stationed at bases are great and the Marines treat you like you're a god so I can't complain I had a great career in the Navy and would've stayed and made it your long Jevity and retired maybe except that the more I am MOS was a corpsman. That was now a corpsmen with the marines so every time I would come up for Sea duty rather than getting a ship, I would go with be stationed with the marines and back in '69 the war was still going on and I just felt like a couple year I'd be back in Vietnam so I decided to get out.

35:46-38:10 Well my dad had talked to me about being a corpsmen and I knew that corpsmen become with the marines and I certainly didn't wanna to go to Vietnam I mean i wasn't a Conscientious objector. War is not fun it's very dangerous and very scary and I knew that just by watching TV before I went I had the misconception by watching Tv that like everyday you'd be in a battle that's just kind of every day you'd see a battle going on we'll it turns out that's not the Truth I mean it is some what where there's probably a battle going on but your unit will not be in a battle and as it turns out in any area where there's a conflict I guess since world war 2 it probably 80% of the

people that say they were in Vietnam or wherever else really are not in combat there's support people that are either say Air Force people bringing in supplies or in navy ships off the coast or the cooks or navy people that have in Vietnam that has hospitals set up in the rear areas all kinds of weapons depots that have storage of bombs and stuff and that they're not infantry people or battle people it's just the way it is and in any conflict I didn't really realize that when I was first signing up or joining up or getting into being a corpsmen I didn't know what that really entailed I just knew that they go to Vietnam.

38:10-41:00 My perspective of Vietnam That I didn't want to go number 1, and I wasn't a conscientious objector I never really understood the war and even through different training when I was a corpsmen and they sent you to camp Lagoon to get sort of acclimated to being with the marines they would make statements like "well when you get to Vietnam You understand why we're there" and I went and came home and still didn't understand why we were there. Vietnam was not a war where you have a defined goal you had a defined enemy as being the north but we weren't being allowed to go north they draw a line and they call the DMZ , demilitarized zone, and we did not have could not go North and on one side of Vietnam we have Laos and Cambodia basically the North brought the troops and supplies down but we the United States were not allowed technically to go into those countries you stop them from bringing and I'm like this is a war why aren't we going north we shouldn't be in just the south and as it turned out it was like a police action from village to village and area surrounding the hills of 65 and 37 55 and we would just make sure I guess the people in those areas were safe but once you would hit that a battle or fire fights whatever you would move on and you might come back to the same area A couple weeks later and you would come back to the same area and do the same thing and it's like this is ridiculous so I didn't really understand the war so I came home and there were a lot of protest in the 60s I was in college again and I didn't worry about it too much because college was like a big party.

41:01-42:12 Not on the radio just The TV it was all over the TV every night you turn on the TV and The Vietnam War was there when every news program every night mentioned the war or if it wasn't war the other side was in the states there was probably a protest that was going on most college campuses. So it was something I knew about but I didn't participate until I was there.

42:13-44:12 Not really the way The set up was back in the 60s is there was a draft like a lottery I guess that some people get drafted and some don't basically if you were in college you had a deferment and if you dropped out of college or if you didn't graduate you were subject to the draft. And I just had no other real opinion I wasn't anti-the war but I didn't understand the war. Like most college students back in the day I think they probably protested for their own reasons most of them I thought were protesting for a big party there's usually rock bands playing and you know that type of stuff you had a peace rally's, Woodstock happen to be in 1969 when I was in Vietnam so I wasn't a part of it but you had that big field in New York it had rock band after rock band I was kind of like a party

44:13-46:21 Yeah I rose to the rank of E5 which is enlisted stage where you come in as a recruit you're a one and then you go up. The marines have different ratings I was a

hospital-man, second class. That's what they call them. Then you go up to, eventually enlisted can be Chiefs and there's different stages of Chiefs. As a marine you're basically a private then a corporal then you can be a sergeant and there's multiple stages of Sergeant. As a corpsman it didn't really matter what rank you were in because while you're with the unit your job wasn't to give orders or take orders your job was to patch up anybody who got wounded you did have a little authority that you could ask for medevac choppers if you thought someone was seriously wounded but usually if there's wounded they're calling in medevac choppers it's not like you're going to say oh I need a chopper it like here today you would might call 911, if you're in a fire fight and there's wounded did usually medevac's.

46:22-50:29 Basically ranks as I say, ranks have have no meaning in combat even I mean the sergeants really run things for the Marines, the Corpsman goes where the action is. Anytime there's a fire fire and there's wounded the Corpsman go to that area automatically no one's telling you to go to there; nobody gives you an order, you're on your own, you get to do whatever you need to do to get there get out so to speak. Rank doesn't play much of a part in combat, even officers don't like to wear their bars that they would put on their collars because that may be the signal for the enemy to get the leader. But it's kind of a strange thing because in combat there units work, you usually have an officer and there's a radioman who goes with the officer so he can call-in artillery or medevac or whatever. But when you're marching and battle so to speak it's kind of funny send me because you have this headquarters group that anybody knows if you're near the radioman that person has authority. Back in World War II medics wore red crosses, but that became a target of the Japanese so they've done away; don't have that, Germans from my understanding or more reluctant or, they allow the medics to go on the battlefield and get wounded they didn't shoot as such like the Japanese would.

50:30-51:58 I never, in battle there's always probably medevac's called in. When you're working with the military The Marines are the land force of the navy and one of the problems is there equipment is not as good as maybe army, because their budget comes under the Navy. In Vietnam in certain battle situations like we were in a very big company sized operation that it was a cloudy day, that the Marines would not bring add a back choppers and because they were afraid of losing your choppers and if they did, they're not as readily replaced and the army did, they brought their choppers in. So you work together with the your branches, but most of the time it's air you would operate why did you use your own, the way Vietnam, certain areas like the Denang area DMZ, basically the Marines and when you get around Saigon that's the army. And I'm not sure how the Army operated but third marines division was usually on the ships offshore and they I like reactive, if we got in serious trouble they would be notified and they would help bring reinforcements.

51:59-52:53 Back in the 60s the training for the navy was boot camp started in the Great Lakes all the Corpsmen were also trained at the Great Lakes at the Naval Hospital there, is all kinds of schools that the Navy had at the Great Lakes and it's a huge complex up there there's a train station right there that you get off at the Great Lakes and you leave, like you would go into Chicago or you could go the other direction

and go to Milwaukee. So there's just different training bases for different groups like all kinds of different training though up at the Great Lakes.

52:54-53:13 There were a lot of memories that made you laugh. I don't know if I can say here but one of the strangest I'll say it One of the strangest wounds I had to treat, which is funny in battle I guess, I mean it's not funny but it was later, is I had to treat a marine that had been hit by a sniper and it had went into his thigh it broke this bone femur bone and that supposedly one of the most painful injuries you can get to Break that bone, but the marine was not worried he didn't know anything about the bone because he had been shot in such an area that it creased his penis. And he thought he had lost that part of his anatomy. And that psychologically took all his pain away from the leg. But I was able to reassure him that it was OK but I had to take his weapon, and make a splint for his leg, and a chopper him out.

53:14-54:23 No I mean I've seen almost all kinds of wounds. One thing in conflict that most people don't understand, like the younger generation maybe now with video games, Think there's a reset button and they can redo the game or whatever. I was, I don't know if it was fortunate or unfortunate The first person and I had to treat in Vietnam was a KIA which is killed in action and he was hit by a sniper right between the eyes. And to be graphic it blows out the back of your head. And that made me realize this is not fun and very tough but you don't treat that wound because he's KIA but people around him that were his buddies had to calm them and almost pretend you were fixing him and that he was going to be OK. Because you're in battle and you can't have people going haywire, they have to keep their emotions and keep their focus.

54:24-55:57 Battle is tough,& I think there's a different mentality in the country today. Back in the day, The 60s I grew up, I learned follow orders and discipline. And Vietnam I was almost like a loner, in the sense you're with people but you're sort of separated and you have to learn that while they're your friends, you can't treat any of them different just like A husband and wife had children they don't have supposedly a favorite so you don't get emotionally tied into your unit or I certainly did not. I was fortunate that there was two Corpsman for each platoon and theres three squads and a headquarters. So, The other Corman were always injured he ended up getting for Purple Hearts, at three purple hearts you go home, he got his fourth one when he was home because of a battle that I wouldn't sign off on his injury as being war related. Because he got for purple hearts and never has a scar. They all were basically we think self-inflicted. And you see these type of things and, but you realize everybody's human and has different emotions and back to my discipline no it's a lot different than these people I guess, some just in fear and in this era we have something they called PTSD, post traumatic stress disorder, I think. Back in Vietnam war did not have that or I never heard of it and I'm sure it's a real item I think with all the modern testing and psychological evaluation I don't see how anybody could go to battle and come back with that and my reasoning for that is we should be able to weed out people who can't handle combat I guess I was a little nutso, I could handle battle because I feel like a person on an ambulance, my job was to fix people. And that's what I did I eventually left the field I went to the Battalion aid station where I ran road sweeps but I had to go back in the field because a corpsman was using his morphine on himself and claimed to be a drug-addict so he had

to be taken out of the field to be evaluated and I was always skeptical of that I think some people just get to the point they can't take a battle and that's why corpsmen I think rotate out quicker than say marines that we're not as trained for combat as Marines were so our stress level was a little different

55:58-56:14 No I never ever after I came home I was a happy guy I got discharge got my Corvette went to college I was fortunate to have enough to have probably a girlfriend it was the brightest girl on campus and also maybe the most attractive so I was loving life and so I never but I think it's strange with the PTSD people I know person who was in the National Guard it went I think Afghanistan was a female who was not in combat and is now considered 90% disabled which I think is how could that be never saw combat and has that disorder I'm like impossible but I think you get a lot of people when they evaluate them now in the hospitals and they get signed off on things that I'm more of the old school discipline and I'm like suck it up and go forward

56:15-57:29 I don't think yeah I had the stress in Vietnam I was trained to do a job and while I was there that's what I was trained to do so you do your job and I don't let nothing else distract me so to speak you can't let someone else's injury bother you. You have to move on. And you know it if you treat one person that that's not it I mean battles go on and there's other people and you can't be just worried about that person I had a guy I knew very well I was only 18 Who was shot and was talking to me at the loading zone waiting for a chopper and couple days later we found out he died and it was strange because he had a bullet that went up into his body that that you did detect and he died of gangrene and things like that should never happen but even though I was there when he was initially wounded you can't worry about what happened it's out of your control you can only Control so much and do what you have to do

57:30-58:54 When I was in Vietnam there was a corpsmen who had the using of morphine and I had to go back to a unit Well the unit didn't know me and I didn't know them we went out on a at night ambush and what they call Vietnam a bagging the bush that means you don't run the regular routine. With they had a watermelon patch that we had seen during the day so they decided to bag the bush and stop and have watermelon and we were at a river where they were suspecting a crossing of Vietnamese and that there would be a group we were going to ambushed them and as it turned out why we were bagging the bush or getting ready to, a Vietnamese person signal to us or said something in Vietnamese and the Marines open fire on and if you don't know anything about weapons weapons you normally the recoil sends them in the air never touched the guy. That he got away but we know is there because he left an RPG round but the frightening moment for me was that The Marines were more concerned with this crossing not what was supposed to be crossing none of them became the rear guard and I ended up be sure of the rear guard of it is that so but I was more combat tested then I think most of the Marines were in that sort of freighters and one thing as a corpsman I noticed in talking to people is that the they don't seem to have a sense when they're not going home and they would come to me and tell me pack their stuff and make sure this person got it or that person and so I knew start having that feeling That if I stayed with that union I wasn't going as we got back to the hill my replacement was there and I left the Unit.

58:55-59:26 Yeah One of the big, I guess passions is you have a lot of dead time and you write letters all the time different people my mother wrote me every day so you don't get mail every day but I certainly got some days 3-4 letters and I had a lot of people who would write to me and so I wrote a lot. One of the saddest things I did was when you talk about this Sad/scary moment for me when I was glad to get out of the field I had wrote my dad and I didn't want to send it to my mom because I knew it would upset her and I was telling my dad that he had to get a congressman or something to get me out of the field I sent it to where he worked and he got it and it upset him so bad that he had to go home a day that so I regretted sending that letter

59:26-1:01:19 I just wrote that I have you either need to go to see congressman whatever the pool and I got a strange things happen like that in this country the rich control everything and most of them don't see battle congressman can pull strings to get you out and you know I just wrote him what was happening because you know there was people I could talk with and I was the one time I felt, man I got to get out of here cause I'm not gonna make it and you have this feeling everybody I think he gets it and if you were in battle I could feel bullets go by me you have a shield in around you body that Kind of let you know stuff in that think you tend to start knowing when your time is up and that's why wrote the letter was I thought if I didn't get out of my time was up and having said that I mean once you're not in the field is that when you look in Vietnam I ended up at first med battalion in near Denang and I feel safer then probably in some places in the states I mean it was great we were near what they call a freedom hill near where bob hope use to perform and that was right probably half mile from where I was living at time and so my tent it's just amazing that if you can be in a so-called war zone and Be safe. So it takes all kinds and such out there

- You're welcome.