Garth Davis: This is Garth Davis. It is 1:22 p.m. on May 1, 1990. I am interviewing, for the first time, Jack Vineyard. This interview is taking place at the home of Mr. Vineyard. This is part of the Vietnam Archive Oral History Project at Texas Tech University. Jack, why don’t we start with how you came to join the military.

Jack Vineyard: Well, I went in the military the first time when I was seventeen. I had an uncle that was in the military and he was just kind of a hero type to me. So, I’d been following in his footsteps, and so when I became seventeen and was old enough, I enlisted with my parent’s permission. That’s how I went in when I was seventeen. Stayed in four years and got out and…let’s see, it was 1961 when I believe I got out the first time. And I stayed out for two years and went back in. My first duty station on my first tour of duty was in New Mexico, I was stationed at a weapons storage site out there. Nuclear weapons storage site. I got out of the service in ‘61; I came back to Lubbock. Stayed there for two…a little over two years and I went back in. I went to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina. And I stayed there a little over a year. I went from there to Germany, on an Air Base in Germany. Stayed there in Germany for almost three years and then came back to the States. And I was stationed in California at…can’t remember the base. But I was stationed right out there on the coast, I’ll think of it here in a minute. But, it was where they tested missiles out there on the coast. And anyway, when I got through with that tour of duty there in California, I went to Alaska. I was stationed at Clair Air Force Station in Alaska, which is a BB site, a ballistic missile early
warning site. I stayed there a year. Came from there back to South Dakota. Rapid City,
South Dakota. Spent a little over a year there and then I got a notice one day at noon and
left at four o’clock for sunny Vietnam.

GD: Were you married at the time?

JV: Yea, I was married, I was married off and on at the time. (laugh) The military
has a bad way of doing in some marriages. But when I left the base there in South
Dakota, I went to…like I said, we were going over strictly on a TDY, six month TDY to
Vietnam. Which wasn’t too bad. Not that I wanted to go, but we went anyway, you know,
it was one of those things.

GD: What year was this? What time?

JV: Well, let’s see. I’m trying to…I’m trying to think back down what time it
was. I want to say it was about ‘70, right about…when they were winding down, they
were starting to wind down when we got over there. Our main thing was, you
know…when we went over there we were going for a short tour. We did four months in
‘Nam and then came back to Guam for two months and kind of supported…in Guam,
they were running bombers out of Guam to Vietnam. Right there at the end, they were
bombing a lot. You know, we were guard and support on that. When I was in ‘Nam,
that’s basically what we was doing, you know, guard and support on aircraft and guard
and support on the perimeter stations on base. A lot of, you know, a lot of stuff was weird
over there, you know. If we’d start getting incoming fire on us, you know, like we was on
our positions, we’d start getting incoming fire, being in the Air Force, we had to call in
for permission to return fire, which was strange, you know, but that was another one of
the strange little deals that happened. I remember one specific incident where a guy called
in one night and he called in and I happened to be in base operations. And they were
getting…he was getting incoming, and he called in about three times asking for
permission to return fire, you know. And everybody was running around, nobody wanted
to make the decision to give the guy permission to shoot back. So finally, he took it upon
himself. From base operations you could hear the M-60 cut loose, you know. They had a
distinctive sound. And everybody broke to go out there where he was at, at that time. And
when we got out there, he had done in probably about, I’d say in the neighborhood of
thirty or forty VC. And he'd stacked them up real nice and neat, you know, he had them
stacked up in three piles. And he crossed them like you would stacking wood, you know. Lay some one way, and some across...but he had them stacked real neat. And he was sitting up on top one of the piles smoking a joint, you know. But, like I say, marijuana over there was nothing, you know. It was easy to come by and a lot of guys got hooked on that stuff. He was sitting there smoking a joint real calmly when we got there. And blood running all out from under them. It looked weird for somebody to be that calm sitting on top of a stack of dead bodies, you know, blood running all out from under them. But it stuck in my mind. And one of the guys that he had killed, one of the VC that he had killed, it was a male, was one of the base barbers. He had cut my hair about three days before. Needless to say, I didn’t get another haircut while I was in Vietnam.

GD: Did that make you mad or scared?

JV: It was scary. It was kind of scary because that made me realize right then that we didn’t know who in the hell we were fighting. Because the guy was sitting there, you know, the guy, three days before was cutting my hair. Trimming the back of my neck with a straight razor. He could have easily cut my head off. And three days later, he’s out there in a stack of bodies that were trying to come in and shoot up the base. So, it kind of made it real scary. It was real scary. That’s about the only way I can explain that to you, that for me it was scary. I remember the first haircut I got when I got back to Guam. I think then I made sure it wasn’t an oriental looking barber that gave me the haircut. I was just scared about it every time I get around somebody like that... even though they’re not...if somebody tells me somebody’s Vietnamese and I meet them for the first time, I get a cold chill on my back. Even if they’re the best people in the world. I still got a weird feeling about it. Hopefully it’ll go away one of these days. I don’t go out of my way to be nasty to a person just because they’re Vietnamese, but I watch them a heck of a lot closer than I would the normal person, just from the experiences that I’ve had over there. And, like I say, that was the only two bad experiences I had. When I seen stuff going on over there that I thought was bad, like, I remember a lot of guys carrying photos of their wives, nude shots of their wives in their wallet. And so one guy was showing pictures one time of his wife. You’ve got to understand the situation over there...somebody might say, ‘Well, I wouldn’t want nobody seeing my wife nude.’ Well, it’s a lot different the place is different. You didn’t know if you were going to be living the next day or not, so you just
got a little loose with your morals, I guess. And I remember this guy got hit, we got some
incoming fire and this guy got killed. And the first guy to find him ripped the pictures off
of him. He said he was going to look his wife up when he got back to the States. Right
then I said, ‘You’re wrong.’ And, you know, nobody else even said anything about it, you
know, nobody even thought anything else about it. But to me, I still had that much
decency than that and I said, ‘No, man, that’s wrong.’

GD: That’s the first thing he did when he came to the body was get the pictures?
JV: That’s the first thing he did when he came to the body. You know, you could
tell that the guy was dead, you know, half his head was shot off. But the first thing that
guy did when we got to the body was get the pictures off of him, you know, this guy’s old
lady. And I started to walk away from it, because I know if I’d stayed there, we might
have had some kind of confrontation. You didn’t want a confrontation with people you
had to depend on to back you up on certain situations. I was glad when I left Vietnam and
it’s not a place that I’d want to go back to. I was glad to get the hell out of there, you
know. I know one situation that comes to mind was, while we were there, we slept in
what we called hooches or houses. You know, little small buildings. And usually each
hooch, we had four men to a hooch, was you know, a small Quonset hut, a Quonset hut
was what it was. A guy in the Quonset hut right next to us had thirty days left in-country
before he was coming back to the World. Or coming back to the States, was what we
called the World. And one of the Vietnamese hooch maids, which they had Vietnamese
women that would come in and clean up the hooches. While he was asleep, for no better
reason than the fact that she was VC, they found out, went in there and dumped sulfuric
acid in his face. And, you know, the guy was ruined because he eventually died. You
know, they did a lot of surgery on him and tried to correct it. Somehow or another he
died. I don’t know if it was from that. I don’t know if he got some medicine and over-
medicated or what, but he eventually died, I heard later on. And after that, I wouldn’t
sleep, you know, I would sleep maybe an hour and a half, two hours a day. And when I
slept, I had a gun, a shotgun laying on the bed with me. And I had my bed pointed toward
the door, and the gun was loaded. And I said, ‘Anybody that comes through the door
while I’m in my bed, I’ll kill them.’ Because we worked different shifts, the guys that
stayed in the hooch with me. Three of them worked one shift, and I worked another one.
And I knew they shouldn’t be coming in the hooch. So nobody else was supposed to come in the hooch. The hooch maid would come in when I wasn’t there. But anybody that came in the hooch while I was there after that incident happened, I actually believe I would’ve killed them. Because I didn’t want that to happen to me, you know, I’d seen it. I didn’t want it to happen to me. Like I said, I was just glad to get out of there with my own body intact as much as possible without suffering anything, you know. The fact that the things that I’d seen and how situations like that could make people lose all their morals…they’d lose self-respect. They got to where, you know, they didn’t give a damn. Didn’t give a damn for nothing. And we came back, and we spent a couple of months there in Guam which I was kind of glad we did because I don’t think I was ready to come back to the States. I was wound tighter than an eight-day clock when I got back to Guam. All I wanted to do was just drink, you know. Drink and gamble and fight.

GD: Why?

JV: Just trying to get…I don’t know, I was just wound up, you know. I was just wound up. I wasn’t sleepy. I wanted excitement in my life, I wanted to do something, you know. I was tired of the situation we were in. But I didn’t want to slow down, you know, my body didn’t want to slow down. I’d find things to do. We’d gamble, we’d gamble all the time.

GD: So, that was just kind of a winding down period for you as opposed to all the other guys who just came straight over from Vietnam back to the World.

JV: Yea. Well, we came back because we still had two months left on our TDY. When they didn’t need us anymore, they sent us to Guam, because they needed some troops in Guam for a couple of months. So they sent us there to finish out our TDY. And which I was kind of glad. You know, like I said, it gave me a chance to kind of wind down a little bit. I was still hyped up when I went back to the States, too. I took 20 days leave when we got to back to our base in South Dakota because I couldn’t…and I didn’t come home to visit anybody. I took 20 days leave and just wore them out, you know, I drank and just had myself a time. I gambled so much when I was over there, which I made pretty good gambling. I had a friend of mine that came through Thailand that picked up some jewelry for me, you know, and jewelry was cheap in Thailand. And I gave him a little bit of cash and he picked me up a bunch of jewelry. Well, I sold that for
about ten times what I paid for it over there back in the States. Plus, the six months I was
gone, I hadn’t cashed a paycheck. And I had almost seven thousand dollars in cash when
I came through Customs. And you weren’t supposed to have that much cash, but I had it.

GD: What did you feel like when they first told you that you were going to
Vietnam?

JV: You want my honest to goodness opinion? I was pissed. I was really pissed
off. I had just came off of a remote tour. And had been at the base I was at for less than a
year. And here I was going back into another remote tour even more remote. But, what
had happened at that particular time, I was in the process of getting divorced. Well, there
was a bunch of guys that were selected to go on this TDY that were married. Which, you
know, their wives were there at the base in South Dakota. And, of course, their wives
went to the commander. And the commander went and picked the guys out of the
command that weren’t married or were in the process of getting divorced. And sent them
in their stead. Of course, I voiced my opinion to the commander, who told me that was
the decision he had to make. And I told him what I thought of his decision and told him I
was only sorry he wasn’t going with us.

GD: Kind of pushing it there weren’t you?

JV: It didn’t make any difference.

GD: What could they do to you, send you to Vietnam? (laugh)

JV: Yea, send me to Vietnam again? Or court-martial me and keep me in the
States. At that particular time, I really didn’t care, you know, I was that mad. But I went
anyway, you know. And I won’t say that I’m glad for the experience, I met some good
friends over there, I met some good people. Seen what a whole lot of people were made
out of. When I say that, you know, you seen how a lot of people would react. One kid I
was stationed with in California, I ran into him over there. He was with a group that they
called Combat Security Police that was sent over there. They were trained…there was
four wings, what we called four wings. I forgot exactly how many men there was. But
they were trained as Combat Security Police in the Air Force. They did the same thing the
Army and all those others did. They’d go out on Search and Destroy missions and
everything. I mean, they were combat troops. And this little kid’s name was Billy D.

Rainey, I’ll never forget him, he was from Arkansas. He was country, he was country.
Dipped snuff, chewed tobacco, you know, really countrified. And I talked to some guys and they said the first time they went out, Billy D. was on the back of a jeep on the M-60 machine gun and they were going down the road and they started getting mortar fire. And everybody else scrambled out, jumped out and started trying to find a place to hide, you know, digging in. And Billy D. was standing up on the back cutting down with that M-60. They said he wouldn’t come off the back of that jeep until everything had stopped. They said they just went up there and they had to just pull him loose from the gun, he had just frozen, I guess. They said he was real pale, and they asked him if he’d been hit. And said he said, ‘No’. And they asked him, ‘Well, how come you’re so pale?’ And he said, ‘Man, I swallowed that goddamn tobacco.’ (laugh). And, you know, it was kind of funny to me. But, here’s a guy who…this guy was, you know, just the minute they were attacked, he just stood up there. You know, they said he just stood up there while everybody else was running. And that was kind of funny. But, like I said, I seen a lot of good guys go down. A lot of guys didn’t get shot and killed over there because a lot of guys that lost it. They had…their mental makeup wasn’t such that they could stand that kind of pressure. I’m thankful that I was brought up strong enough to do it, you know.

GD: Where were you stationed?

JV: Da Nang. And we moved around a little bit, you know. We’d go different places, but that was the main place. I saw one guy that you thought was the picture of health. A good friend of mine, and he picked up some kind of virus or something over there. And within three months, he was wasted, gone. They didn’t have no cure for it.

GD: Within how long?

JV: Within three months. He was like, 195 pounds, muscled up you know. And before he died, he was something like, 90 pounds. It’s hard to watch somebody do that. That’s basically all I can tell you about my fun over there in southern Vietnam. I’ve got a sister-in-law that’s Vietnamese. And when me and my wife, my present wife, first got married, we were living in Lubbock, and we were coming up to Plainview for Christmas. We were going to my mother-in-law’s. And my brother-in-law and his wife happened to be in the States at that time. He works for the State Department. And they happened to be in the States, and my wife had told me, she said, ‘My sister-in-law’s Vietnamese, they’re gonna be there.’ She says, ‘Please don’t call her a gook.’ Because I had said things like
that. You know, telling her different things that had happened to me, you know, I used
the terminology slope or zip or gook which…it was the terminology we used, you know.
I’m sorry if maybe it didn’t apply to everybody but I had to really watch myself when I’m
around her, you know. And she’s the nicest person in the world. The nicest person in the
world to me, she’d just do anything in the world for me. Sweet as all get out. But I still
have that inherent cold spot in my back every time I’m around her, I have a chill.

GD: Was it just the fear of getting shot at from these people, or how did they treat
you over there?

JV: Well, I was never close to anybody, or any of the Vietnamese people over
there, per se. As far as being close to real good friends with any of them. But after I’d
seen the barber incident? After the guy was cutting my hair, and then three days later, he
was one of the ones trying to come in on us? And then here’s the hooch maid, and all the
hooch maids over there were usually pretty nice, you know. They’d clean the barracks up,
do your laundry and all that, and have everything done for you. All smiles and all that.
And she comes in and dumps acid in this guy’s face…You judge, I know you shouldn’t,
but you judge them all by what’s happened. And it’s made me…I wouldn’t say I’m in
fear of the people. It’s just lack of trust.

GD: How old were you when you went over there?

JV: Let’s see, when I went over there, I was thirty…thirty-two years old when I
went over there.

GD: What was your detachment? Who were you detached to?

JV: We were just assigned to the base there.

GD: Your unit number.

JV: Oh, god, man. I’d have to go back and look up some of my papers to find the
unit number. We were on the TDY out of the base there at South Dakota. We carried our
own number from there, and I can’t even think of what that is now. I’d just have to go
back, Garth, and look at some of my papers.

GD: But you were just Security Police?

JV: Security Police. A little incident that happened that was humorous, I thought,
was the first night we were there in-country, they slapped me and this kid on a bunker out
there. And I guess they were feeding us a line of crap, you know, about that’s where
Charlie came in last time and all that kind of...just kind of shake us up a little bit, scare
us. And the kid that was with me, he was stationed with me when I was in Alaska, too. In
fact, he worked for me up there in Alaska. Great big old Polish kid. His name was Poly.
This guy stood about six-five, six-six. And weighed a good three hundred fifty...three
hundred twenty-five pounds. Big, big man. And we were there, and it was quiet, and we
seen the lights bouncing out across the boonies coming towards us. Headlights. And, they
stopped. And there was this dart come lobbing through the air, you know. And I thought,
‘Oh, man. Shit, it’s on us!’ So I said, ‘Let’s hit it!’ So we just hit the ground, you know.
and we laid there and we laid there and we laid there. And nothing ever happened. And
then we hear this laughing, and the lights start coming toward us again. And when he gets
up there close, it’s two Marines in a jeep. And what they had thrown at us was an orange.
Well Poly, when we got up off the ground...now here’s a guy that’s...I think he could
kill the world, you know. So big and mean. And he’s crying, you know, tears are running
down his face. And he walks up there to the jeep, and he sticks his M-16 right up to this
Marines face, and he says, ‘If I ever see your ass the rest of the time I’m in Vietnam, I’m
going to kill you.’ And turned around and walked back and picked the orange up off the
ground, and walked back to the bunker and started peeling that orange to eat it. Things
are never logical. If, back in the States, you’d just got through having done something
like that, you wouldn’t think about eating an orange. You might think about taking a
drink or something, something to calm you down but, you know. Things were never
logical there, it wasn’t a logical place. It was never logical. It was something that I hope
one day I forget. It’s not something that I want to remember for the rest of my life.

GD: A lot of people say that while they didn’t particularly enjoy the experience, it
was an experience that they’ll always remember, and they feel better because of it. Do
you feel like it helped you at all?

JV: I’ll tell you the truth. I would feel better if I hadn’t have went over there. I
will tell anybody I never lost a damn thing in Vietnam. I didn’t find nothing in Vietnam,
and I will never go back.

GD: How are your feelings toward the war in general as a whole?

JV: Well, to kind of coin a phrase...watching a movie on TV, it was kind of a
cluster fuck if you know what I mean. They always used to talk about you know, well,
that was a real war, and they said about Korea, that was a police action. That was a cluster fuck. because you weren’t sure who in the hell you were fighting. You had to go through a lot of crap to be able to do what you were sent over there to do. Vietnamese people were stealing from you left and right. They carried most of them off the bases, and when we left, we left all that stuff. To win that war, it would’ve made the United States…would have been a lot of people against the United States. It wasn’t a popular war, you know. And here’s one war that they said, ‘Well, here’s our boys going off to fight the war, you know.’ And everybody at home doing work to help the war effort, you know. And here are the guys going to Vietnam, and everybody at home protesting against the guys going to Vietnam. Then when we come back home everybody, you know, looking down their nose at people that were over there fighting the war. So most of the guys would just say, ‘Yea, I was in Vietnam,’ and leave it at that.

GD: When you came back from Guam to the States, did you have any bad experiences with the people here?

JV: No. I was on the base at Rapid City. We came back, and we landed at the base. Me and this friend of mine that was there, he was a full-blooded Sioux Indian. Me and him were together most of the time when we was over there. His name was Vernon Kills-In-Sight. And that’s K-I-L-L-S-dash-I-N-dash-S-I-G-H-T, Kills-In-Sight, that was his name. We got back to the States, we landed there at the base at Rapid City. And when we left, he was in the process of getting divorced. His old lady had taken up and moved. Didn’t have a chance to clear base housing, so, he had a house there that he’d paid on six months, base housing, he’d paid rent on. So he said, ‘Come on over there and stay with me,’ because I didn’t have a place to stay, because I’d moved out of my place. And we went over there and got settled in, and started drinking. We was supposed to clear the base the first day, we didn’t do it. Sit down and drank. And we went out to the reservation and visited his people and drink out there. I think we just kind of disregarded everything, you know, just disregarded what we was supposed to be doing. And we didn’t give a shit if we got in trouble or not. But as far as a bad experience of anybody walking up and getting in my face about going to Vietnam and all that, that didn’t happen. I don’t know how I would’ve handled it. Because I do have kind of a short fuse sometimes, you know. I don’t know if I could’ve handled it like some of the guys did. Some areas of the bigger
cities, stuff like that where they had a lot of protests and stuff like that, I don’t know
how I would’ve handled it.

GD: I guess you were close enough guarding the airplanes that you got to talk to
some of the pilots?

JV: Yea, I got to talk to a lot of the pilots. More so when we were in Guam. Of
course, they were running bombing runs into Vietnam out of Guam.

GD: B-52s?

JV: Yea. They called them Ditchdiggers, was what we called them, because they
were just going in and dropping bombs, they weren’t even sure what the hell they were
hitting. I’m not sure what they were hitting either. But they were like, three planes every
fifteen minutes taking off. Three planes coming in.

GD: And this is still what, 1970?

JV: This is in the latter part of ‘70. That’s every fifteen minutes, bombs.

GD: That’s a lot of bombs.

JV: Yea, when they would be loaded down, we used to stand there at what they
called the 7500 foot crossover. It was just the 7500 foot spot on the runway. Well, they
had to be getting up pretty close to that time or they were dropping off in the ocean, you
know, because Guam is an island. And it was kind of funny watching…they would really
be pouring it to those B-52s right about that time. They would be putting every bit of
power on them they had to get up. At 7500 foot crossover. That was where they’d cross
like that, the 7500 foot mark. And we had one bomber went into the drink, I think it was
three or four hundred miles off the island there. Went in with a full load of bombs on
him. They recovered everybody except one… well, they had one extra man. And, from
what I understand, two weeks after they got the crud out of the water, they found his body
washed up on an island down there, the island of Yap. Y-A-P. And when they got
it recovered, the body didn’t have a head. It was minus a head.

GD: How did the pilots view what they were doing?

JV: They were some pretty good pilots. There was one pilot that brought… of
course, every time a B-52 would come in, it was coming in on an in-flight emergency,
there was always something wrong. A guy came in, evidently they got hit pretty good,
there was some kind of anti-aircraft fire or something that he was in. When he dropped
his landing gear, he didn’t have no tires on one side. Just had the wheels on one side. And he had a hanging ordnance underneath the wing, one of the bombs didn’t drop. So when he came in, he just kind of slipped it in, and when the wheels touched down, he kind of flopped it down, like that. (makes bouncing movement with hand) And the bomb came rolling off like that. And we were sitting in front of base operations when we seen him coming in. And the bomb was rolling like this (makes rolling motion) toward a pad where there was about eight or ten bombers parked, fully loaded, ready to go. My friend said, ‘What are we going to do about if that son of a bitch goes off?’ And I said, ‘Well, we’ll kiss our ass goodbye, because there’s nothing else to do.’ Ain’t no place to run an island that’s fifteen miles wide and you know, not very long across. You know, where in the hell are you gonna go? You can’t go anywhere. We’d stand there and watch. Of course the bomb didn’t do nothing, didn’t hit nothing. Just rolled down there in the runway, and we went down and picked it up. We had to pick it up. When you get the chance to get rid of a lot of ordnance that they had down there they’d store it for a long time. I think that’s probably what they’re just doing, was getting rid of iron bombs. They dropped a hell of lot of bombs out of there. And I seen just about every kind of aircraft the Air Force had while I was there at Guam. Every kind of aircraft in the world came in there. Once, they had a U-2 come in there. That was what I thought was neat, you know, was those aircraft. You got a chance to talk to the guys that flew them.

GD: When you were in Vietnam, did anything about the country, the atmosphere, Da Nang in particular, the people that really just sticks in you mind that’s strange or different?

JV: Well, they were strange people to me, they were strange. And it might not be so strange to the Vietnamese but I think that the Vietnamese people, they were either rich or they were poor, you know, there was no in-between, no middle class. There were very few rich people in Vietnam, as far as rich Vietnamese, there weren’t very many of them. Most of the suckers were dirt poor. And they lived about ten steps below our poverty level, what we’d live at, you know. You’d drive by and see them crapping on the side of the road, they wouldn’t be trying to hide from you, you know. They’d just be sitting out there in the middle of everything taking a crap on the side of the road. That’s strange. Ten
and twelve year old girls down there trying to sell themselves and being pimped off, you know. Stuff like that.

GD: Do you think the Americans brought that on?

JV: Oh, I don’t know. I don’t think the Americans brought it on. I think they probably agitated the situation. You know, us being there in that situation where we were. Like I said, I don’t advocate war or nothing like that, but if want to do something, do it right. And that war, that wasn’t done right, you know. Aggression like that, you’re supposed to gain something. We didn’t gain nothing. Of course, anytime we’ve ever fought, we haven’t gained anything. The American people have never gained nothing. We’ve only beat the people that we were fighting. We always just turned around and helped them back up. We never gained anything.

GD: Do you think that there are MIAs still over there?

JV: Oh yes. No doubt in my mind. I don’t think there will ever be anything done about it, but I think there’s still people over there. I think that there were people that were MIAs because they wanted to be, you know. As far as prisoners of war, yea, I think there’s still a few of them over there too. But MIAs, I mean, that could be a guy that said, ‘Hey, I’m tired of this shit. Jack, I’m gone.’ And goes over the hill, fades into the scenery. Yea, I think there’s still people over there that are not legal without legal papers. Sure. Th reason they list them as Missing In Action is they don’t want to list them as guys going AWOL or something, or deserting. MIA is a much cleaner word to use. You know, they say Missing In Action, well that looks like... it’s a cleaner way of saying they don’t know what in the hell happened to the guy. You know, they’re not sure that this guy was doing anything. He might not have been even fighting, he might have been a cook. and he’s listed as MIA, Missing In Action. You know, he might have just said, ‘Dang, I’m tired of this crap.’ and hasta luego on out, you know. And left. He might not still be in Vietnam. Vietnam’s just like a lot of other places. If you’ve got the money, you can get away. You could buy everything there if you had the money. You could buy your way right on out of that country. Those people over there are different than we are, different. Money could change hands, and I’m not saying some of those things are not done in the States, but over there, it’s a way of life. You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours. You pay me so much, and you can do this. You know, whatever. Just done, accepted. And I think
that’s probably what got a lot of guys, you know, if you could buy your way out of the
country and get on down, you could go anywhere you wanted to. There might be guys
that are supposed to be Missing In Action in Vietnam that are living in Europe. If a guy
had the right kind of business, had enough money together, there’s all kinds of
possibilities. I don’t think that every guy that’s listed as Missing In Action was killed and
his bones are rotting in Vietnam, no. I don’t think that. And, no, I don’t think that
everybody that’s Missing In Action is out there in those little bitty bamboo cages in
Vietnam. No, I don’t think that. I’ve seen a lot of ones listed as MIAs wanted to be
missing. In other words they left if the truth be known. I can’t prove that, but that’s my
theory. I’ve seen too much. But that’s about all I’ve got to tell you. Short period of time
that I was there, my few little war stories, what happened to me. May help somebody
down the road.