Interview with Jerome Wiese

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Interviewer: Stretch Ledford

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Wiese: My name is Jerome Raymond Wiese. I'm nearly 63. My birthplace was Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

Interviewer: What position did you serve in in the war?

Wiese: I was a combat medic.

Interviewer: Take a moment, think about who Jerome Wiese was right before he enlisted in Vietnam. Then think about Jerome Wiese after the war. Are those people different?

Wiese: Oh, absolutely.

Interviewer: Can you tell me who that person was initially and who that person was after?

Wiese: Well, that person initially was just someone who had no plans in life whatsoever. He was just like a wind-up toy that bounced off one wall to the next. Whatever happened, happened. There was no nothing. The person today is a little bit different. He's more mature. He's a father and a grandfather and retired. It's a whole lot different being me today than it was being me back then.

Interviewer: What about that person two years later just coming out of the war?

Wiese: There was some adjustment. It was kind of difficult because I couldn't quite find the friendship that I had encountered in the military in the civilian world. I worked with a lot of good people, but once we got done with our job we went home, and that was it. In the military you serve with them 24 hours a day.

Interviewer: That friendship, did you see those guys right after? Did you keep in contact?

Wiese: The guys I served with?

Interviewer: Yes.

Wiese: No, we actually lost contact immediately after coming back from the war. Most of us only had nicknames, and that's how we knew each other. As we went to Vietnam one at a time and not as a group, so when I went, I went by myself, and I left by myself. Some of the guys I served with were there already, and they left after I got there. Some of the guys I served with came after me and they were there when I left. We lost contact. It kind of bothered me because for years I really wanted to talk with them and see how they were doing. Back in 2007, a letter showed up at my doorstep. My wife got the mail and she presented me with a letter from a lady named Kitty Mallord. She's from Texas and it's my understanding she's a retired private detective or something like that. She had run me down and wrote a letter and said that the people that I served with were actually looking for me as well. Within a month and a half after this letter was there, they were actually having a reunion in St. Louis of all places. I mean I could drive there in a couple of hours. I saw the guys I served with for the first time since Vietnam in the last part of May, 2007.

Interviewer: Can we back up for a second, the forty years between going to see them after looking for them for so long, can you tell me a little bit about how that affected you?

Wiese: I was lost. I just felt lost. There was an old saying that in Vietnam, you've probably heard this before that you go from the combat zone to the Twilight Zone. There's some truth to that because you just feel like everything that you fought for, everything you learned over there, it was gone. I'm not saying it was a good time, but there was some good times. I enjoyed the people I served with. They were very close to me. They were my second family, and then all of a sudden they were just gone. It was kind of difficult for me. I worked in a large company. Can I say the name of the company?

Interviewer: Sure.

Wiese: Kraft, ok. There were a lot of Vietnam veterans at Kraft, but very few combat Vietnam veterans. Most of them served in the supportive roles.

Interviewer: Could you talk about your relationships in Vietnam? How did they develop and what was this friendship like?

Wiese: Well as a medic, I was actually more than the medic. I was the mailman, too. I mean they brought all their mail to me because my aid bag had a waterproof compartment. When we got resupplied, my job was to give the mail to the door gunners and they would take it back and mail it. I went with them on all the patrols, initially anyway, usually two a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. You lived with guys like that, and like any family there were some of us that would argue. I got brothers and sisters I argue with today, but that doesn't mean I don't love them. It was the same way with these guys. You live with them 24/7. There's some you like better than others, but you love them all. I regarded them as my family. Whenever we were attacked or ambushed or threatened, I took it really very personal that they were trying to hurt someone in my family.

Interviewer: Would you say you trusted them with your life?

Wiese: Even today I would trust them with my life. They're the only people I know that I would absolutely trust with my life. My wife, perhaps, but these guys for sure.

Interviewer: Can you talk about your role as a combat medic and your goal initially going in the war? What did you do as a combat medic?

Wiese: Do you want me to tell you about all that training I had?

Interviewer: I would just focus on being a combat medic.

Wiese: A combat medic is a little bit like being a first responder. If you have a heart attack, you call the ambulance, and you have somebody who hope is trained show up at your door and administer first aid to you. They transport you to a hospital where a doctor would see you. Well, a combat medic is a little bit like that. You administer first aid to them, and then you get them ready for transportation back into a real hospital with the medical personnel who know what they are doing. We're kind of limited in what we can do. Our training was only ten weeks long. We're not doctors and never have been doctors. Although, there are some very good medics that probably became doctors, but we were just basically first responders.

Interviewer: Was that your initial desire when you enlisted?

Wiese: No way. I did not want to be a medic at all. I wanted to be infantry. I wanted to have a machine gun in my hand. I wanted to go to war and shoot them up, but I actually became a medic instead.

Interviewer: What do you think of that irony of being in the infantry as a person who kills guys and then being a combat medic who kind of saves them?

Wiese: Actually, there wasn't much difference in being a combat medic and being an infantryman. A lot of people have the misconception that medics do not carry weapons and that they have helmets that have big red crosses on them. That might have been true in the Second World War, but it sure wasn't true in the Vietnam War. I was a heavily armed medic. I carried 660 rounds of ammunition with me. I had two hand grenades and several smoke grenades to call in helicopters. Until someone was actually injured, I was just another infantryman returning the fire.

Interviewer: Is there any specific day that sticks out to you as a medic you encountered?

Wiese: Yeah, April 27th, 1971. We lost eight guys in one day. What happened was − a long story kind of short − we were operating very close to another unit of our company, the third platoon. It was getting near dusk. They were setting out their Claymore mines. We called them MAs, mechanical ambushes, trip flares, and trip wires and Claymore mines. There was a loud explosion. We could clearly hear that off in the distance not too far. We got on the radio and asked them what had happened. This is what they told us, they said a turkey, if you can believe this or not, a turkey had wandered into their mechanical ambush and set off a Claymore mine. We thought, well that's pretty good. We're going to all have turkey instead of C-rations. They said no, you stay where you're at. We all kind of grumbled about it a little bit. About a half an hour or so later another explosion went off, and we thought oh great, another turkey. I never saw a turkey in Vietnam, but that's what they said that another turkey had hit their mechanical ambush. We tried to raise them on the radio, and we couldn't raise them. What had happened was, the artillery sends out rounds. If you call for artillery support, they'll tell you look we're going to send you ten rounds out to you. You can hear ten rounds coming in, but if you don't hear ten explosions, maybe you hear nine, that means there's one of them out there someplace just sitting there. That 105 round has a lot of potential to do some damage. Normally we would have to go out and hunt it down, and we did this on several occasions. What happened to them was a 105 round had been booby-trapped by the enemy, and they got very clustered together and it was command detonated. When it blew, it killed eight. Actually it killed seven guys out right. The other guy died later. The rest of the guys in the platoon were wounded to the point that they had to ship them home. Theoretically, that platoon was wiped out. That was the second platoon that got wiped out. One platoon got wiped out before I got there, so we lost two platoons in a very short period of time. I never ever read a single word about this in *Stars and Stripes*. Even today looking into the past, you can't find anything. Their names are on that wall, and their names are listed chronologically on that day. I know it happened.

Interviewer: After that happened, what were your thoughts and what was your first reaction?

Wiese: Well, I was only 18. I didn't know those guys very well. Like I said, we all had nicknames, and they immediately took us out of the field. I mean like right now they took us out of the field. I didn't understand what this was all about, but they took us out of the field and we had a memorial service back in the rear for these guys. There was a chaplain. It wasn't inside a building. It was outside, and it was on some wooden benches that were sitting on top of some telephone post studs that were our benches. When they started to mention these guys' names, they called them by their Christian names, their birth names. I didn't really know who they were talking about. Like I said, I knew them by nicknames. There was a guy name Fast Eddie, and later I found out his name was Edward Furman. That's why they called him Fast Eddie, but the names were alien to me. I couldn't put faces to these names. Some of the other guys who had been there longer knew who they were talking about, but I didn't. There was a guy named Spider, just nicknames.

Ledford: Would you just describe that ceremony briefly for her? What was it like to be part of that as a survivor?

Wiese: They had us, it was kind of a semi-circle. I'd only been in Vietnam a short period of time. I was still taking a lot of this country in. It kind of freaked me out in a way that this had happened so early in my tour with this company. Then when I heard that this other platoon had been wiped out, it was like "Wow." I was in Eleventh Brigade, Fourth Battalion. It was very close to being in the same unit as Lieutenant Calley. When I first got to Vietnam as a medic…

Interviewer: Could you just describe the ceremony real quick?

Wiese: There was prayer. I mean we had a moment of prayer. They called all of their names off and had a moment of silence. Afterwards, we pretty much disbanded and went about our way.

Interviewer: Did your perception of the war change at all?

Wiese: I was still trying to get my perception of the war at that point. I wasn't sure what I thought about the war.

Interviewer: Do you remember the moment that your perception changed?

Wiese: A lot of the guys that had been there before me, they were pretty wise about what was going on. My age was a factor. I was only 18. I was the youngest guy in the platoon. A lot of these guys were 20, 22 years-old, and to me they were grandpas. I mean they were just so much older. I thought that we were there to stop communism. That's what we had been told. At least that's what I had been told. They were telling me, "You're full of crap because this country is corrupt. They don't want to save themselves. Why should you worry about saving their country from communism? They'd be better off if it was communism." Maybe to some degree they are since it's communism now. At that time, I didn't believe that the country was so corrupt. We had come out of the field off of a mission and we were pulling bunker guard around this fire base. It was called Debbie at the time. LZ Debbie, that might have been it. There was a dirt road not too far beyond the concertina wire. During the daytime, you'd see people going up and down these roads with motor scooters and bicycles and ox and just walking.

Interviewer: Were these all civilians?

Wiese: As far as I knew they were all civilians because the enemy had a tendency to blend in with the civilian population.

Interviewer: Could you describe the civilians? What were they like? What was your interaction with them?

Wiese: I didn’t trust any of the civilians. I didn’t trust any of them at all. Any one of them that I ever came across personally was a thief. I’ve had things stolen from me. It was not a big deal, but still a thief is a thief. I went on a thing called MEDCAP once. As a medic, occasionally when we came out of the field − I didn’t like it − but I was plucked away from my company to go do something else. I was assigned at headquarters and headquarters command and only attached to Charlie Company. When Charlie Company came back out of the field, sometimes they would take me and say, “You need to go into the main village and basically pull sick call.” I and a couple other medics went into this village. We were supposed to go to like an orphanage, I believe, or school, a lot of young kids 12, 13 years-old. They were all hanging around us. I had just made E-4. It was hot, and I took my jacket off so my t-shirt was on. I laid it down beside me, and it didn’t take more than probably fifteen seconds before that jacket was gone. I thought these people were thieving because you couldn’t find it. I wanted to find this jacket because I had a new pack of cigarettes in the pocket. I still smoked then. It kind of pissed me off that these people would do this. This one Vietnamese boy, a young teenager, was saying, he called me Boxy which was what they called medics. He says, "Boxy." You know, he's trying to get me to come with him. He said he knew where it was at, so I followed him. I followed him a couple blocks away from where we were supposed to be, and I got very very scared. I thought there's no shirt or pack of cigarettes in the world worth this. I said you keep it, and I walked away. What he did have was my spec-4 pins. I knew he was telling me the truth because he had my rank in his hand that came off the collar.

Interviewer: You said when you enlisted that you thought you were there to fight communism. Was that perception continuous throughout?

Wiese: Nope, that perception ended immediately. I was trained to do this, but the reality of it was, and a friend of mine whose name was Dennis Rogers who's gone now, was the one that said, "You're only job is to get your butt home. You don't owe these people anything. You don't owe them a damn thing. Just go home. Put your time in. Make it as easy and as simple as you can. Do not take risks, and go home." That's kind of how I took that attitude afterwards that I don't owe those people anything. After that, I didn't want to go on patrols. I mean you go on them because you have to, but I didn't want to.

Interviewer: What did you believe was going on with the war? Why were we at war?

Wiese: Well, it's probably political, guns and butter. During the Vietnam War, unemployment rate was way low. I read about this once. Companies that were making parts for the war be it guns, bullets, food, clothing, boots, whatever. They were in production making things for the war and certainly a certain percentage of people got knocked off in the war which is good for the economy as well. It was all about politics.

Interviewer: Is that why you enlisted?

Wiese: No, I enlisted because the truth of the matter was my heart was broken. My girlfriend had broken up with me. Kent State was May 4, 1970. I turned eighteen May 16, 1970 and enlisted just a couple days later. If I could have gone into the French Foreign Legion I probably would have done that instead, but the Vietnam War was on. I lived in Rantoul. I didn’t have a car. I got on a train early in the morning, took the train from Rantoul to Champaign, got off, and the recruiters office was right across the street from where Christie Clinic is. At this time there was a barber college there. A friend of mine was actually going to school at the barber college. I went to the barber college and told him to take my hair off. He asked my why? I told him I was going to walk across the street and join the Army. He thought I was crazy. He’s still a friend of mine and to this day he thinks I was crazy. I walked across the street and had to walk through protestors from the U of I who were protesting the war in Vietnam. I walked into the recruiter’s office and I told him I wanted to join the Army. I wanted to volunteer for Vietnam, and I wanted to ship out today. He said, “Well first of all, you cannot volunteer for Vietnam until you are trained.” He said “And the second thing is, it’d be impossible to ship you out today because you got to take a bunch of tests.” I said, “If I don’t ship out today, I’m going back home and I’m going to call it off.” He and another recruiter got together and started whispering things, and they spent all day with me taking these tests. That afternoon I was on the train going to Chicago for my induction. I got what I wanted.

Interviewer: You talked about walking through the protestors and your friend calling you crazy. Put yourself in their shoes. Did you understand why they might have felt that?

Wiese: Perhaps. That wasn't my mindset. I was born on an Army base, Camp Atterbury, Indiana, during a war, the Korean War. My father was a career soldier. I lived on bases all my life. I grew up watching John Wayne and the TV show *Combat.* To me, if your country calls, you don't ask, you go.

Interviewer: So you enlisted?

Wiese: I enlisted. Out of all the guys that were in service, I was probably that two percent that walked in and said "I'll go." The other 98%, they had to come kicking and screaming off the campuses and all the other things. It was not really a great thing to be a, what they call a regular Army, during the Vietnam War. That doesn't mean I wasn't accepted by my friends, but when they found out that I was born on an Army base and my father was a career solider and I had joined, for the first time in my life I heard this term, "lifer." I thought lifer what does that mean? Well, I found out what it meant. I wasn't a lifer. I got out after 22 months.

Ledford: We didn't finish the story about the protestors. Can we just go back to that? When you walked through them, what did you see? What did you hear?

Wiese: Well, I wasn't threatened.

Interviewer: Could you imagine even where they were coming from with that?

Wiese: Today I can. People in my age group that were trying to tell me don't go in there, think about what you're going to do. I was determined, no matter what. If they had formed a human chain, I would have probably busted through them. I think at one point I thought I might have to fight my way through these protestors, but it never came to that. Like I said, I was patriotic back then, and I'm patriotic right now. I don't know if I agreed with what they were doing, but they did what they had to do and I did what I had to do.

Interviewer: You mentioned that your friend told you that all your goal is to survive. If you knew that going into the war, would you still have joined?

Wiese: Probably so. Probably so. I think it was my destiny to become a soldier. All of my life that's what I wanted to be was a soldier. Kids play cowboys and Indians. I played Army. When I went trick-or-treating, I was always dressed up as a soldier. When we would go someplace on the bases and we'd have to stop and let soldiers march by, I'd always watch these guys all in step. It just seemed like that's what I wanted to be. I've told my wife several times just recently. I do miss the military. It was to me, I was only in for 22 months and maybe I should have been a lifer, but to me it was the greatest adventure of my life was going in the Army. I enjoyed it. I didn't enjoy the combat part of it. Don't misunderstand me. I didn't enjoy that, but I enjoyed the camaraderie. I enjoyed the travel. I enjoyed the fact that I was actually on my own away from my family, but I really wasn't on my own. There was this invisible force, and if you made a mistake, they put you in a stockade for a timeout. They'd take your pay away, take your rank away. You were under their thumb, but you weren't under your mother and father's thumb.

Interviewer: Did you ever experience a sense of hopelessness?

Wiese: No, not in Vietnam. I felt hopelessness when I came back home and I didn't fit in. I was just another employee. All the accolades of being a combat medic didn't make no difference. If you're late, you're docked. You can be fired for doing something. It just didn't make sense to me that all that was gone. Does that make sense what I'm trying to say? When I came back from Vietnam, I was told to go to this hospital in Fort Belvoir and work in a hospital. There were some sergeants, and they kind of got on to me because my moustache might have been a little bit past here or sideburns or my boots weren't shiny enough for them. I really kind of thought, you know what, here's this guy, he's never been in combat. I still had friends in combat that were finishing their tours in Vietnam out, and this guy was really concerned about my moustache? It was hard for me to accept that this is what it's come to. Even when you came back from Vietnam and still was in the Army, you got no favoritism. None.

Interviewer: Do you think it affected your health in any way?

Wiese: Oh, absolutely. A few years ago, I contracted prostate cancer and had to go through the radiation treatments at Christie Clinic. I wasn't really aware that prostate cancer is one of the top three symptoms of Agent Orange poisoning until after I'd gone through this. When I got to looking into it, it made sense to me, that possibly, I could have been exposed to Agent Orange because as an infantryman, as a grunt, you fill your canteens up in the stream for fresh water. You take baths in the stream. You sleep on the ground, and certainly there were areas we had gone through where the vegetation had been defoliated, if that's the right word.

Interviewer: What's a grunt?

Wiese: A grunt? There's two types of Vietnam veterans. One is called a REMF, that's R-E-M-F, and one is called a grunt. During the Vietnam War, they were at war with each other. The grunt is the guy that carries the rucksack on his shoulders. Obviously, you are doing a lot of grunting because you're carrying all this weight around in this stifling heat. The REMFs the guy whose got the job in the rear − where there's some generator running his air conditioner and his little refrigerator is keeping his beer cold. His boots are shiny, and he's got hot food on all three of his chows. He's got maybe a hooch maid who cleans and makes his bed for him, and he writes home the horrors of war. War is hell. That's what a REMF is. I was a grunt. When the missions were over, we'd come back to the rear for three days and pull bunker guard around the fire bases, but all the other times I was there I was out in the field. I was out in the jungle.

Interviewer: What made you a grunt? Did everyone who was a combat medic?

Wiese: No, you could have been a combat medic and worked in some big hospital in Saigon and never even seen the field. It's just the luck of the draw. The word is combat medic not hospital medic, so that's your first job is being a combat medic. That's what we were trained to do.

Interviewer: You were a combat medic, and you told us a little bit about what your role is. I kind of want to know about your specific experiences. What kinds of things did you do as a combat medic?

Wiese: Mostly the medic was taking care of rashes, heat stroke. There were wounds, but that was not the major part. The major part was just surviving Vietnam. Every plant over there, as pretty as the place was from the air, every plant seemed hostile towards humans. It was either poisonous or had thorns. It would make you itch. It'd make you break out. That's what I did most of the time was take care of those things.

Interviewer: Didn't you say you had a friend? Can you tell us about the hand story?

Wiese: I had a very good friend of mine from Texas. He died about a year and a half ago. He had put a big thorn in his hand, the left palm of his hand. He didn't say anything about this, and it stayed in there and it kind of got festered up. By the time I saw it, I thought, you know what, about the only thing I can do is call in a med-evac helicopter and get you out of here. He didn't want to do that. He said, "Just cut it out of there." After hauling around with him, I finally said hey, fine. I got my surgical kit out. I got a scalpel, and I laid his hand open. I pulled this thing out of his hand and bandaged him up. I got a picture of him sticking his hand up, smiling from ear to ear, hand is just filthy dirty, and he's got a Band-Aid on. He said it was my very first open-hand surgery. He didn't come out of the field.

Interviewer: As a combat medic, did a lot of combat medics carry guns? And did you?

Wiese: I did. I always did. I never went out in the field without a weapon. There were a few medics that for religious purposes − they were conscientious objectors − that would go out without weapons. Foolish as it may be because the enemy didn't much care if you were a medic or not. They shot anybody. A few of them changed their mind after being out in the country after awhile. They wanted weapons. They realized being a CO doesn't make much of a difference, but I was fully armed. I had an M16-A1. I had 660 rounds of ammunition. I carried 60 rounds in the weapon. That's two thirty round banana clips taped together so you could instantly drop one and turn around and you got another 30 rounds. Then I had two bandoliers across me and one around my waist. Those were 20 round mags. They weren't 30 round mags. I believe there were 210 slots. That's 200 per, so I had 600 rounds and 60 with the weapon.

Interviewer: You said the enemy. Can you please think about the enemy for a moment? Who or what was your enemy in Vietnam? What was it like shooting at them and maybe killing them? Was it possible in that situation that you could see the enemy?

Wiese: Occasionally, you would see the enemy. They were very well adapted at hit-and-run. They knew that we had the ability to bring in artillery. We had the ability to bring in jets, and we could annihilate them if we knew exactly where they were at. Their tactics were basically to ambush us as quickly as they can and then get away from us as quickly as they can. Occasionally, you could see them. As far as shooting them up, I slept like a baby. It's not a personal thing. They were the enemy. Our job was to kill as many of them as we could because their job was to kill as many of us as they could. I have no animosity towards those people today. My wife wanted to know if I'd want to go back to Vietnam, and I said sure with an M16 I'd be happy to go back, but I don't want to go back to Vietnam as a visitor. No.

Interviewer: Talking about the Vietnamese people and the civilians. Did you have interactions with them?

Wiese: Occasionally, occasionally. We would have to go into villages and talk to them. You never trusted these people. You couldn't understand what they were doing. You were frustrated with them all the time because they would constantly lie to you and tell you things they thought you wanted to hear. I understand now why. The average rice farmer doesn't want no part in the war either. They just want to raise rice and raise their kids in peace, but they had the NVA and the VC on the one side poking at him. They had us on the other side poking at them. They were kind of stuck in the middle. I know that statistics show that there were far more civilians killed in Vietnam than there were actual combatants.

Interviewer: What was the drug culture like and did you have any encounters with the drug culture?

Wiese: Well, everybody knows about the drugs in Vietnam. Perhaps the first part of the war it might have been not so much, but by the time I got there the Vietnamese realized there's big bucks in them drugs. They didn't have the DEA flying over eradicating big fields of marijuana and what not. I got there, and I had never ever experienced any kind of drugs at all until I got to Vietnam. After the first mission, we came out of the field, and we were assigned these bunkers to guard, usually three or four guys per bunker. These guys were partying hard. They were rolling their joints and having a good time. I was the only one looking out the window expecting a human wave attack to come any minute. I thought these guys aren't doing their job. They're slacking off. Who am I to tell these guys what to do? They've been here for months. I've only been there for a few weeks, and they told me that before I left I would be just like them, and they were right. Before I left, I was just like them.

Interviewer: What exactly is Agent Orange? Explain it in a way like if you had to explain it to my ten-year-old nephew. What is it?

Wiese: Agent Orange is like weed control on steroids. It kills all vegetation. They would do this. They would line these planes up in a straight line, maybe the C-130s. They would kind of like carpet-bombing only it's Agent Orange. They would come in low, and they'd spray the vegetation. It might take awhile for the vegetation to die. It doesn't just die like that, but along the Ho Chi Minh trail they used Agent Orange a lot because they could see the guys going up and down the trails. They also used it in areas of dense jungle just to deny the enemy the chance to go in and fortify that area. I had never heard of the word Agent Orange until I came back from Vietnam. I didn't even know what it was. My mother called me up and told me there was something on TV about Agent Orange. I had no idea what she was talking about. I later found out that it was a big deal. It was a real big deal. I mean obviously I'm getting benefits from the VA because of it. It's not for my wishful thinking. I've got prostate cancer, and I'll probably die from something like that. It's probably shaved off a few years of my life.

Interviewer: You said Agent Orange might have taken off a few years of your life, but you talk about how it was in the war. You got to experience true friendship and true brotherhood. Knowing what you didn't know then, would you do it all over again? If you could go back and trade not having that camaraderie for not having been exposed to Agent Orange, would you?

Wiese: I wouldn't change a thing. My friendship with these guys is so strong I wouldn't change a thing. I've experienced something with them that I could never experience anywhere in this world. I've never depended on somebody like I did these guys. There's been several times that they had my back. I got excited because they were screaming "Medic, medic, medic!" I remember one time I took off and left my weapon behind me, and a guy actually came dragging my weapon up and said, "Doc, Doc, here your weapon." I said "Oh, yeah I need that too." They had my back. They wanted to take care of me. They didn't want to lose me. As a medic, when we moved from one position to the next, I generally stayed near the rear. Not the last guy but not far from the last guy. They wanted to make sure I didn't get hurt. They were very happy to have me as a medic. I was their very first school-trained medic. They had what we called some 'shake-and-bake' medics, guys that they give two weeks training back at some H-station, not much but some, and they'd send them as medics. When they found out I was a school-trained medic, they just got all excited about this like they won the lotto. They took good care of me.

Interviewer: There's this kind of balance. Do you ever think about the fact that the military never told you anything about Agent Orange? How do you feel about that today? Has that ever affected you?

Wiese: You know, there's a lot of things our government doesn't tell us. That's just one of a million things. No, it's just normal.

Interviewer: Going back to the cause of the war itself, did you think you were fighting for a just cause while you were there? What did you think about the way the war ended?

Wiese: I didn't care for the way the war ended at all. We actually had given the ARVNs a hill called San Juan Hill. I wasn't involved in this. I heard about it this afterwards. I spent many a day on San Juan Hill pulling bunker guard. The ARVN Army didn't want to take this hill over until it was cleaned up. As GIs, we had a tendency to throw our junk over the wire, and this hill was very tall. I showed my wife a picture of it. It's so tall that there were clouds below the top of the hill. GIs would throw their garbage over the concertina wire, and the ARVNs weren't going to take this over until it was cleaned up. Some of our guys had to go over the wire to get garbage picked up, and there was an ammo can that was on a pressure release device. They picked the can up, and it blew them away. I heard that when the North was marching through South Vietnam that this hill was just abandoned, just abandoned. You know, if I can diverge for a second, the Iraqis dropped all their equipment. That's why you see this guys with ISIS driving Humvees because they left that stuff. They left it all, just dropped it and took their uniforms off. The South Vietnamese did the same damn thing. I asked a Vietnamese at Kraft one time. He was, my wife knows who I'm talking about, he was a nice guy, but I asked him one time, "Why'd you guys lose?" He goes, "You left." That was the mentality. When you left, we lost.

Interviewer: There was a point on Wednesday when we were talking, and you said you realized while you were there that the war was unwinnable. Could you talk about that moment with your friend?

Wiese: That was when he was telling me that the whole country was corrupt, and the black market gets everything they need. We get what's left over, and there's some truth to that as well. I didn't want to believe this. He told me that he was doing bunker guard and there was this dirt road just a short ways over the concertina wire. He said, "You pick anybody out on that road, anybody, and I'll guarantee you they'll sell you dope." I waited, and I waited, and this little girl comes by. She was probably 7 or 8 years old. I said, "How about that little girl?" He started yelling to her in French, Vietnamese and English. He made his point of what he wanted, and she said, "You wait, tee-tee." She took off the other way, and she came back and threw a great big bag of dope over the wire. That's when I really realized he knew what he was talking about. This is a very corrupt country we're in. That's when I realized all I wanted to do was go home now. I don't care about their future. I care about mine.

Interviewer: Did you ever think about that little girl and what the civilians were thinking about that at that time?

Wiese: You know, no. I don't think about them too much. I know when I first got to Vietnam, I hadn't even taken anybody's temperature yet, and I was an inexperienced combat medic. I had to put two weeks in at a place called the battalion aid station. That was back in a town called Đức Phổ. The battalion aid station is like a MASH. Everything comes in in that area, and from that they do their triage. They ship out the more serious wounded. If it's just a flesh wound, they bandage him up and ship him back out, but civilians come in as well. POWs too, there were some POWs that came in, but a lot of the civilians were children. I remember a lot of kids with their legs blown off. One little girl, her sister brought her in. I distinctly remember this girl. She had a looked like a shark bite out of her leg, and she was laying there. This girl wasn't crying or whimpering or anything. She was a real trooper. I would have been screaming my ass off. I'm sure that that leg didn't get fixed or repaired, but we were waiting for the doctor to take her in and amputate the leg. The POWs, they came in. I distinctly remember one POW. He was an older POW. He was laying motionless more or less on this stretcher. I mean an older guy, probably my age, and he had something in his eye. He was constantly going like this. I thought something is bothering him in his eye, so I got a wet sponge or rag or something and I kind of wiped his eye out. I think this guy really thought he was in some hospital in Hanoi or something because when he could see me, he spit on me. I thought, “You son of a bitch.” I got a handful of sand out the front door, and I went back and put it in his eye. You know what, it makes you understand that they don’t care for us or they didn’t back then. That’s the probably the only time I ever really did something I’m ashamed of. I am kind of ashamed of that, but he pissed me off.

Ledford: That story about the little girl was amazing. I didn’t quite follow it. Can you just run through that story one more time? Start from the beginning.

Wiese: The aid station at Đức Phổ was right on the perimeter of this fire base. I don’t know why it was there, but she’d come walking up to this wire with her sister and almost got fired up by the guys doing guard duty. It was clear that she was carrying this girl. She actually had to throw this girl over the wire. She knew that this was an aid station because there was a white cross out there. We got her and took her into the aid station. She had to go around to a main gate to get in, but this girl never cried. Maybe she was in shock. I have no idea, but I just remember waiting and waiting and looking at this girl. Her sister came in, and he sister was probably 18 or 19 years old and holding her hand, but this girl was a real trooper. Like I said if it had been me I would have been screaming.

Interviewer: Can you go back and describe what her condition was?

Wiese: Her leg right in this area. To me the best way to describe it is it just look liked a shark bite into her leg. You got to understand in Vietnam that kids are kids, and you know all kids play. You go out there and you set a booby trap, and the kids don't know. They go out there, and they set the booby trap off. That's what happened to her. A booby trap went off and it blew her away. It took so much meat out of her leg, I can't possibly see how it could have survived. When they took her out, I'm sure she went in to have an operation to have it amputated. I never saw her again.

Ledford: That's great, but I was talking about the girl who sold you the grass. That was pretty interesting. I just wasn't clear on how that happened.

Wiese: That's how that happened. She sold us the dope. She got her money, and she went on down the road.

Ledford: Can you just set it up with the dirt road and everything?

Interviewer: And tell us what your friend was telling you as well.

Wiese: Well, we got to arguing about…

Interviewer: Who was we?

Wiese: Dennis Rogers, the guy from Texas who ended up being my best friend in Vietnam. I made a comment, and I stand by it today. I would have followed him to Peking, but when I first met him I didn’t care for him. He was a bragger from Texas. Everything is big in Texas. He was trying to educate me that the people were corrupt, and the war was all about money and dollars and all this. I didn’t believe it. I was only eighteen. He was the one who said everybody in this country is corrupt, and you can buy dope from anybody. I said “Really?” He said. “Pick somebody out.” This dirt road was just fifty feet away from where our bunker was on the other side of the wire. To these people this dirt road was like a major highway, an I-57, so everybody was going up and down this dirt road. I’m sure the enemy was going up and down the dirt road as well. I picked that little girl. He stopped her and started yelling at her. She said to wait. She took off, and she came back with a great big bag of dope. That’s how that went down.

Interviewer: What impact did that have on you?

Wiese: Well, I realized right then and there that he knew what he was talking about, and I didn’t. I really needed to listen to these guys. You know, everything that they had told me in basic or AIT or high school didn’t matter. Nothing matters except what’s real, and that was real. I saw that with my own two eyes. All this thought about the domino effect and all that stuff, it just went out the window.

Ledford: What replaced it?

Wiese: What replaced it was a guy that was just like the rest of them. Light them all up. Let God sort them out, you know that kind of mentality. No one’s going to kill me for a country that doesn’t want to solve its own problems. Like I said, it changed my attitude altogether. I really did change. I got to where I didn’t want to go on patrols after that. As a medic, you’ve got to go on a certain number of patrols. When I first got there, I was going on every patrol because I was a miniature John Wayne I guess. But when I realized that this was ridiculous to die for this country, they don’t want to solve their problems. I didn’t want to go on any patrols. It got to the point where you have to go on some. Oh ok, I’ll go on a couple here or there.

Interviewer: We had the fortune of visiting you in your home, and we saw a lot of security things. Sort of you described your home to us as a castle or a fort or something of that nature. Could you use that phrase again and tell us why your home is like your fort? What relation does that have to what you experienced in Vietnam?

Wiese: I’ve got eight cameras on the side of my house. I’ve got two in each corner. In the military, we have intersecting fields of fire. If you’re setting up a machine gun position, you don’t want an area that you can’t shoot somebody, so they have to intersect. All my cameras are set up like intersecting fields of fire. It’s virtually impossible for you to walk up to my house and not be photographed. Every door, every window, including the garage door, has got a security device on it that my wife and I set when we leave and when we go to bed. I have a camera on the inside of my house, so I can see what’s going on on the inside of my house. I have five motion sensor lights. If you walk up to my house, in addition to being seen by the cameras, you're going to be seen by the lights. Now I didn't realize that this is one of the, I had actually talked to a friend of mine from Vietnam, his nickname was Baby-san, but his real name was Larry. He's in Texas as well. He still calls me Doc, and he said, "Doc, that's one of the major things that they look for in PTSD. Grunts are very insecure. We're never secure enough with our perimeter." He said if I were to put in a file for PTSD, which I have not, he says I'd probably have to talk to a psychiatrist. That's one of the things they look for. Are you secure at night, and I never will be totally secure. I got a dog that's very alert, and I got guns, and I got my cameras and all that stuff. You just never really 100% secure.

Interviewer: Do you think that these cameras replace your buddies in the platoon and why?

Wiese: I don't know if they replace my buddies. I want the cameras to stand out. I even have a sign in the yard saying I got security. I live in you know in a very nice neighborhood. It's not the slums. I don't want someone to try to get to my family. I want them to leave me alone, so they're very prominent out there. Yeah, and maybe they do in a way. Even in Vietnam, at night we'd put out trip wires and trip flares, so if somebody came in at night. Sometimes animals did. It set this trip flare off, but we also had mechanical ambushes. We had claymore mines. We'd set them up, and there's a whole saying that when you blow the claymore mine you better get down because the "dinks" would come in at night. They were pretty good at sneaking around, too. They could take these claymore mines and turn them around, so when you blow the claymore mine you're actually blowing it on yourself. I saw a demonstration when I first got to Vietnam. It was at Chu Lai at this place called the Combat Center. All of us were supposed to go through this two-day orientation thing. There was a North Vietnamese traitor or POW that decided to come work for us. I remember his name was Kahn. They called him Mr. Kahn. This instructor had a bunch of concertina wire, and they had kinds of tin cans and trip wires and stuff. They said this guy used to be a sapper. He's going to show you how they sneak in. He took his time, and this guy in broad daylight made it through this without setting off any kind of device. I thought wow. These people were very determined to kill us.

Interviewer: Can you describe a night where you are in Vietnam, and you're setting up, and talk about your shoes. Talk about how it feels to go away from your campsite to take a poop.

Wiese: Well, you know you're setting up, and you don't want to get all clustered in one location. If you got to take a wizz, you know you can easily go to a wizz over here. The ground absorbs that, but if you have to relieve yourself, if you have to take a poop, you're not going to do that where you sleep. You need to go out on the other side of the wire. You're not to find anybody to go with you. That's just something you're going to do by yourself. You take your weapon and you go out beyond the wire. It may not be very far away, but it's far enough away that you're by yourself. You pull your pants down, and you kind of squat, and you lay your weapon on your lap, and your eyes are constantly looking because every time I did it I was convinced some sniper had me in his sights. That's probably how I'd get it you know, out there taking a dump. Consequently, you don't want to take a dump every day. You learn to kind of hold it a little bit.

Interviewer: How do you think that kind of mentality affected you while you were there? How do you think it affects you now?

Wiese: Well, I don't think it affects me now. I don't worry about it when I'm in my bathroom. It's just something that while I was there I thought if I got killed while taking a dump, by that time the Army whitewashes everything. They're going to write some letter that I valiantly died doing something which is untrue. They aren't going to say your son got it because he walked out here and took a dump. Your dumb son got it right between the eyes. They're not going to say that, so I used to think of that. How would my folks hear about this? What would they think?

Interviewer: That's the kind of thing a grunt would encounter right?

Wiese: Every grunt would encounter that yeah.

Interviewer: As opposed to a REMF. You mentioned that REMFs had a hooch maid. Can you tell me what that is?

Wiese: Well a hooch maid would be like a civilian. You might pay them something like two dollars a week, and they'd iron your uniforms for you. They would make your bed and change your sheets for you, shine your shoes for you. I was watching an episode of MASH, and they had something called on MASH they called a muse. When I saw that episode, that's just a hooch maid. That's all that is, but that's how they made their living. Unemployment in Vietnam was a big thing for these people. They had to eat, too. They would do anything for a couple bucks a week, and that's what they did. I never had a hooch maid at all, but the guys in the rear all had their own private hooch maids. Maybe there were some other things going on with them too. I don't know.

Interviewer: Did you ever meet a hooch maid?

Wiese: Oh, I saw lots of hooch maids, lots of them. When we came out of the rear, they were all over the place. I didn't trust them either because you could see them kind of stepping off in the distance from this place to that place. I knew what they were doing, but they were these guy's hooch maids. They trusted them, but I didn't trust anybody who was different than I was race-wise. I just didn't trust them.

Interviewer: Were there people of different races in your platoon?

Wiese: Not in my platoon, in some of the other platoons there were different races, but in my platoon we were all white. There were blacks. Take that back, there was a, we called him 'Mafia' that was his nickname. I'm not too sure if he was Spanish or Italian, but he was not exactly all Caucasian either. He was in our platoon.

Interviewer: Back to how you were a grunt. Can you talk about your living conditions and how difficult it was to live in the jungle? What were some of the hardships and difficulties?

Wiese: Well, people got the idea that we have little pop tents like this, and we have sleeping bags and air mattresses. That's not the case. When it's time to settle in for the night, you got to clear an area, and most of these things have got roots. You have an entrenching tool that is a small shovel. You can actually bend it like this and kind of make it into an ax. You might be able to ax through some of the roots, but you're not going to get them all. I slept on the ground with a poncho on the ground to protect me from the dirt. No mattress, no nothing, just straight on the ground. If you didn't get them all up, they'd poke you in the back. I didn't have a tent. I had another poncho that we would tie the neck together real tight, and we had extra boot straps, boot laces. We'd tie them off to branches and stuff, and sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes, not all the time, we'd put mosquito netting down. That mosquito netting could be a barrier in an attack. You know you're monkeying around trying to get out of that mosquito netting, but sometimes we put the mosquito netting down. Basically, I slept on the ground. My pillow was my aid bag. It made a nice pillow, kind of. Fully clothed, I didn't get undressed for bed. I did take my boots off at night, and I had a little pair of − I called them boonie slippers −that I would put on and slept with in case we had to run or get up. Generally, when it started getting dark we got kind of quiet because your noise travels a lot. You want to make sure that you already ate because if you light any kind of fire, and by fire I'm talking about a little C-4. We used C-4 to cook our C-rations, and it would burn very intense. It lights it up. I guess I should have showed you, and I probably should have brought it in was the radio I had in Vietnam. I didn't think about that. I had a radio that had an electric lighter on the side of it. It had a little flashlight that was used to light cigarettes at night.

Interviewer: What about the climate and the vegetation? I'm sure there were plenty of mosquitos. Tell me about the climate while you were living in the jungle.

Wiese: Well, the mosquitos were huge. We called them B-52s. They would buzz by your ear at night, and you could hear them buzzing by your ear. There were lots of insects. I'm not an entomologist. I couldn't tell you. They were just to me, I'd kill them all, kill every one of them that crawled up on me. There were snakes, creepy-crawly things that would come through at night and crawl up on you. Some of these snakes were poisonous. I watched a show where some guy was going across Southeast Asia trying to find the world's most deadliest snakes, and one of them was in Vietnam. When my wife saw it, she said, "You slept out there?" Yeah, you know they called it the bamboo viper, and the old-timers called it the two-stepper. Because supposedly if it bit you, you walked two steps and you dropped dead. I didn't want to put it to the test. I just took it for what it was. There were lots of creepy-crawly things out there. I don't like them on me now, and I didn't like them then, but I didn't want to act like a sissy. You know get this off of me or whatever. It was just the environment you had to put up with just like everybody else. It was in the jungle. There wasn't any breeze to speak of. The breeze was up above the trees and not down where you were at. At night time it cooled off a little bit but not a lot. In the daytime it was just like living in a sauna.

Ledford: What did it smell like? What sort of sounds did you hear?

Wiese: Well you know, I don't know if it smelled like anything. If anything smelled it was probably us that smelled, you know your own perspiration. As far as any sounds, we didn't hear any hoot owls, no coyotes, nothing like that. You know you watch these TV shows, and you hear these jungle noises. Hoo-hoo ha, ha. I can't really recall hearing anything like that in the jungle. You would occasionally hear something snap, and there were some orangutans, and there were some apes out there. There were a few tigers, not many, but there were actually tigers out there. I guess there was even some wild elephant left in Vietnam. You'd hear animals moving about, and in fact we lit some animals up on guard duty because you can't take any chances. An orangutan moving across in the moonlight, if you could see him at all. Looks an awful like a "dink" and you can't take any chances. So you light them up, and in the morning you'd think I just wasted a million dollars for a monkey. Well, better safe than sorry. I'm not sure if that answered your question or not.

Interviewer: Traveling through the jungle, how difficult was it to burst through the vegetation?

Wiese: You know, you had to hack your way through a lot of stuff. When I first got there, the hand grenades that we were using, we had two little lapels on our rucksack to put these hand grenades in, but the hand grenades had a twisty, like for bread, had a twisty tie on them. I thought what's this all about? I found out later that a lot of guys because of the vines and stuff, they would get in the jungle and these vines would get wrapped in their hand grenades. They would pull, and they'd pull the pins out of these hand grenades and blow themselves up. The Army thought well, we'll solve that problem. We'll put twist ties around the hand grenades. The only problem with that is, you have to remember to take the twisty tie off when you throw it or the "dinks" pick it up and throw it right back at you. To answer your question about the vegetation, yeah you had to hack your way through some of the stuff. Again as a medic, I was near the rear of the column. For the most part, all the hacking part was done by the time I got there. I was kind of concerned about booby traps as I told you guys.

Interviewer: Yeah, can you tell that story?

Wiese: You know the booby traps killed a lot of guys on that wall. That's how a large majority of them met their maker. You know there was 18 guys in my platoon at one point. At one point we were down to 12, but you kind of wondered what were the odds of everybody in front of me stepping over that wire and then I come along, and I'm the guy that didn't step over the wire. I set it off. We didn't really use trails too much. We made our own trail because trails were booby trapped. It was a common fact that trails were booby trapped.

Interviewer: Did you ever encounter a booby trap?

Wiese: Just once. Just once personally and that's because we were using a trail. You kind of want to keep your distance. You don't want to get all clustered to one spot. We had a different word for it I won't use, but clustered. This trail would twist and wind, and I didn't like using the trail as anybody else didn't like it. The trail branched off, and when it did, and I got to this Y, I stopped. I didn't know which way to go. You couldn't really start yelling "Hey you guys, which way did you go?" So I stopped until the guy behind me came up and said "What's the holdup?" I said, "I lost them." He said, "Pick one and take it." So I went to the left, and I walked about a hundred feet and fell into an old punji pit. Thank god it was an old punji pit, and it was probably about this deep. My boots smashed the bamboo.

Interviewer: Can you explain more about what that is?

Wiese: They'd dig these pits, and they'd take a bamboo and sharpen the bamboo really to a point and stick them in the ground. Sometimes they put human feces on it to infect you. They Vietnamese I understand it, they really didn't want to kill us. They wanted to maim us. A number of deaths doesn't mean anything, but if you have to see all your friends coming back with no legs, no arms, it really demoralized the whole war thing back here. A lot of these booby traps were not designed to kill. They were designed to maim us. That was one form. Another booby trap we had to deal with over there, more the point man than me, was the bouncing Betty. You set this thing off. It had two charges. One charge to bounce it up about chest high, and the second charge to set it off.

Interviewer: Can you go back to you fell into a punji pit?

Ledford: Actually can you just start with you were at this Y. Then somebody came up behind you. Start with what he told you and then go from there.

Wiese: He was kind of aggravated with me and said "What's the holdup? I said, "I don't know which way they went." He said, "Choose one." So I chose to the left, and I took off, and he stayed behind me because if he had taken off he would have been right on my heels. He was going to give me some distance. I fell into this old punji pit and realized they didn't go this way. I came back and said they must have went to the right. It hit me later that day what had happened was I actually was entrapped in a booby trap. If it hadn't been for the fact that this was all rotten, I would have been a casualty. My boots did have steel plates in them, so when my boots hit it it just crumpled the bamboo. It could have been a different booby trap. I would have hit the damn thing and set it off.

Interviewer: So you talked on Wednesday that you earned a badge. What was this badge and why was it the most important badge to you?

Wiese: Well, I've got it right up here. That's my combat medic badge. The only way to get this as a medic is you've got to be in direct contact with combat and then enemy. The way I got it was we had a guy named Jack that got what I call a million-dollar wound. They were screaming for the medic, and he was the very first casualty I went to. I want to say it was his right leg. He was laying on his stomach, and the round pierced his leg, did not shatter the femur.

There was very little blood. I was so nervous that I remember I was trembling and shaking, and this guy was telling me to calm down. He was, "I'm ok, just take it easy." I needed to cut his pants down like this, and I realized I had used my bayonet as a tent peg. I didn't have my bayonet with me, so I was looking for something to cut his pants off with so I could see how bad it was. Finally, we got it ripped open, and there was very little seepage. He didn't require any medication. I simply bandaged him up, shipped him out and that was it. Because of that one thing I got the CMB, the combat medic badge. It's the equivalent to the CIB. The CIB is called the combat infantryman badge. That goes to the straight infantryman. Then there's one for the combat medic. They hold the same weight, same level of whatever. If you ask any Vietnam veteran that's got the CIB or the CMB, he'll tell you it's the one medal that means more than anything because it shows you, it shows anybody else that I've been there. Lots of guys have died trying to get these things. Guys that shouldn't have been in combat. There was a misconception that if you were an officer, especially a career officer, a pencil pusher, that if you wanted to get an advancement up to the field grade level you had to have a CIB, combat infantry badge. They would go out on one mission, and maybe come in contact with enemy just to get this. Sometimes they were in control, and they would get guys killed because they didn't know what to do.

Ledford: What did it mean to you when you got that? Has that meaning changed to you?

Wiese: No, it’s still intense. It means more than the Bronze Star. It means more than the Army commendation medal. It means more than any other medal I got. This is the one I’m the most proud of. The rest of them I got, I kind of thing I got them because they had too many of them sitting around. This one I know I earned. You can get a Bronze Star for pushing papers around. They call them meritorious service. Is that the right word, meritorious? This is the one that I know for a fact I earned. It’s the one that means the most to me.

Interviewer: Having that pride, when you came back and there were still protests going on, people who were still opposed to the war, did you ever feel that you were attacked by that? What were your perceptions of those people?

Wiese: The war was still going on when I came back. I had to deal with this too that not everybody felt the same way I did. I was at Fort Belvoir once, just after I came back from Vietnam, and I am somewhat dark complexion anyway and exposed to a lot of sunlight I got very dark. I stopped at the gas station to buy a pack of cigarettes. There was a woman behind this counter. She kind of reminded me of my aunt. She looked like an older woman. She looked like she could make an apple pie and get a blue ribbon. She said, “Did you just get back from vacation in Florida?” I said, “No I just got back from Vietnam.” Her whole attitude changed towards me. I thought maybe I shouldn’t tell people this. Maybe I should keep it to myself.

Ledford: Tell us about what her attitude was and how that made you feel?

Wiese: I'll tell you exactly what she said if you don't mind. When I told her I just got back from Vietnam, her exact words were "big fucking deal." I thought ok, I got it. I understand now. Now maybe she had had a son in Vietnam that was killed. I have no idea, but her whole attitude was just get your cigarettes and get the hell out of here. She was an older lady, and actually Fort Belvoir was just outside of Washington D.C., so there was a lot of protests going on then, too.

Interviewer: What did that comment mean to you? How did you feel?

Wiese: It shocked me. It just literally shocked me that somebody would say that to my face. I had a few things. My mother and my father were living in between Fort Belvoir and Washington D.C. in a mobile home park. I was visiting my mom and dad, and my dad was gone. My mom said, "You know what you need to do? You need to walk over here to Route 1 and get on a bus and go on to Washington D.C. to Georgetown and get drunk and have a good time." My mother had convinced me that this was what I should do because I didn't have a car. I took off walking, and I got to Route 1. As I understand, there was this older black gentleman that was making a living collecting pop bottles. He was riding bicycle. It had two baskets on the back of it full of pop bottles. He was going from trailer to trailer asking for pop bottles. Route 1 was a four-lane road, very busy, and he tried riding his bicycle across this traffic. A white [Plymouth] Valiant hit this guy and took his leg completely off. I mean bang, and threw this leg over into this apartment complex. He landed on the curb and hit his head. The car, the white Valiant, was driven by a white guy and a white woman. It took off, and there was blood all over the car. I was right there. I went to this gentleman on the ground, and I took my belt off and applied a tourniquet. He was probably dead already. I kept yelling for somebody to call an ambulance. Actually, I think I was using the word dust-off. This apartment complex was full of black people. They got around, and they start talking about this guy and how he took off. Apparently, his wife had talked him into coming back and not to run. When that car pulled up, they almost killed this guy. They drug him out and started to beat him. By that time, the police were there, and the fire truck was there, and the ambulance was there. I never knew for a fact whether this old gentleman made it or not, but I feel pretty sure he did not make it. I went back to my mom's trailer. I had blood all over me. "I think I'll just stay home." That was one thing. The other thing that happened there was I was with my two younger brothers and somebody shot two rounds through my mom and dad's window. I remember getting my brothers down on the floor very quickly. My wife would tell you even today I still am very quick to react to loud noises and stuff. I guess you'll never get through that or away from that.