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Oral History/Garry Bell/Carissa Blewett

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HIST 155 B, Fall 2015 / Carissa Blewett

Student Interviewer's Name: Carissa Blewett

Interviewee Name: Garry Bell

Time and Location of Interview

The interview was conducted in three segments on November 1, 2015. The total time of the segments was approximately one hour fifteen minutes and forty seconds. It was conducted at the Trenton Baptist Church, the home of Garry Bell in Trenton, GA, and the war museum in Trenton, GA. The interviewer, Bryan Blewett, Kelly Butrum, Korine, the Interviewee, and his wife were present.

About Garry Bell

Garry Bell is from Kentucky and was part of the military for twenty years. He did two tours in Vietnam from 1968 to 1970. In the first tour, he was a warrant officer in the 25th Intelligence Detachment of the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi. He was so good that the North Vietnamese Army put a price of one thousand dollars on his head. This Interview ranges from what he did in the army to what type of weapons were used in Vietnam and was conducted at the Trenton Baptist Church, at Garry Bell's home, and at a war museum in Trenton, GA.

Interviewer: Carissa Blewett (CB)

Interviewee: Garry Bell (GB)

CB: When you went to Vietnam, were you drafted or enlisted?

GB: Well, ah, neither one. I was ordered over there on military orders which is part of my- you go where you're ordered whenever you're in the military and, uh, I just received orders to go and I went. I knew I was going because when I, uh, went to intelligence school, I knew when I came out, I was going to be sent to Vietnam. But I was sent for a year en route to language school, Vietnamese language school, at Biggs Field which is in Port List, Texas. And there I studied the language for a year. And then I came out of there. I went in as an enlisted man and while I was there I applied for Warrant Officer. And then I came- Then they sent me back- instead of sending me directly to Vietnam, they sent me back to Fort Hollyford, Maryland where I had taken my intelligence training and cross-trained me in counter-intelligence field and then I went to Vietnam.

CB: Where were you living at the time?

GB: Oh in school? Well I had my family. I had my late wife and children. We were at Fort Halibut which is in Baltimore, Maryland. And we were renting an apartment over there.

CB: Why did you pick Intelligence?

GB: Well that's an interesting point. Like I said, for ten years I was enlisted and I was in personnel and administration in '87 and, uh, let me get my hat so I can explain it a little bit better. (gets up to go get hat). This is my American Legion Hat. At the Time, that I went into Intelligence I was a sergeant first class. That's a five stripe sergeant. OK? Then, when I was in language school, I was selected for warrant officer. At that time I was a W1. That would be one black stripe then two and three stripes. Then when I went to, uh, back to train for the second time in counterintelligence, I think I mentioned what area of intelligence was before. I was working in what you would call human resources. You recruit a human, a person, to be you agent who lives in there. Of course that human has to have placement and access into the target area. So I was train to do that and then when I was trained in Counterintelligence. Which Counterintelligence is different in the fact that even though the two fields can interact with each other, they are also specific to themselves. Such as Counterintelligence also has to do with preventing the enemy from getting intelligence on you. Whereas in the other one you are trying to get intelligence on the enemy, the other one is to prevent them from getting intelligence on you. So when I went to Vietnam, we would two different areas. One was VCI Infrastructure. Which was we went to collect information and destroy the Infrastructure of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese. The other one was Base Camp Security. They were to preserve the security of the base camp where we were. But anyway, Counterintelligence or the Military Intelligence Company generally consists of a Imagery Interpretation Section, Counterintelligence Section, Interrogation of Prisoners of War, and Order of Battle. Those are your, four sections in a Military Intelligence Company. I was in Counterintelligence and I was a team chief for exploiting the Viet Cong Infrastructure to gather information on them and kill them. That was my job. We were quite successful in the- we completed that we went to Vietnam. I was a brand new what was called Warrant Officer or a Wobbly One as we called it and I arrived in Vietnam on the day before Christmas Eve in 1968. I got into base camp and on Christmas Eve, my team chief was a captain and he said "Let's go and photograph and enemy bridge." So we went up into a helicopter, we were under a cease fire at the time with the Viet Cong for the Christmas holidays we weren't killing each other and so we went over this Viet Cong Bridge and he was taking a pictures leaning outside the helicopter. I was holding him by the pistol belt to keep him from falling out. We were taking pictures of it. And we were taking pictures of enemy targets and then of course we would call in the infantry. We would exploit those targets and a lot of times I ended up going with them. Because my source, we would go out there and explain to the infantry commander the target that we wanted to exploit. He would give me the resources that I needed to go into the combat area and pull the trap door up for them to show my team where it was. That's why I was in so many firefights and that's where God worked with my life. 'Cause I was a hot and wanted target at that point they want me because I had a price on my head. We had killed so many of their leaders and so on in that year that I was there. They wanted me dead and so they put a price on my head. They feed me some false information which, uh, I didn't take advantage of all the other resources that I had but I went out to the Infantry with this target. I said, "I've got a hot target here. It's perishable. We need to exploit it now so I need two companies of infantry to go in and exploit this

target.' Without checking the target out and it was not the five infrastructure I was hoping to get in this grid cord. With everything in the Military you go by grid cords. The map has perpendicular crosswise. You read it by the coordinates so you know where the location is by looking at a cross section on a map. When we went in there, a whole regiment waiting for us. They wiped us out we had forty-two men killed that day. As we were fighting there I was fighting with an NVA. I was trying to kill him and he was trying to kill me. We were at shooting each other but God kept our rounds going over each other's heads. His was going and knocking all the branches of the trees off on my head. About that time- as I was a Christian but I was not living like a Christian at this time. I was doing everything a Christian shouldn't do. A young soldier came down the trail and fell right beside me and he had a bullet in his lung. The fighting was so heavy we could not get our slicks in, a slick was a medevac helicopter that was supposed to take out the wounded. So a lot of men died because of that, and this boy fell beside me with a bullet in his lung and as I was watching him die, God spoke to me. He said, "Son are ready to listen to me now?" It was just as audible as if I was speaking to you. Well when you are in a position like that and God speaks to you, there is only one way you answer, Here am I send me! And this was a turning point in my life and at that time, right behind us coming in over the trees at treetop level, was an FC4 Phantom Jet. The Airforce come in right behind us across the enemy. They dropped napalm on 'em. It looked like an apocalypse now all the fire going up and burning everything. Finally we were able to get extracted. I went back to the base camp on a helicopter full of dead and dying men. And so that was just one of the thing that I had a whole year experiencing. Of course my wife and two children were back at home waiting at any moment for the news that I had been killed or seriously wounded and it is just as hard on the woman as it is on the man when you are in combat. 'Cause she doesn't know if he is coming back. In fact, one morning someone rang the doorbell. She was not up yet and she look out at the door and saw two men standing there with briefcases and overcoats. She said, "That's it. They're here to give me the word." She got up, put a house coat on, and went to the door. She asked, "May I help you?" They said, "We're from the electric company." She says, "Sure come on in. May I sit down?" Her knees were weak. I was ordered over to Vietnam the first time. The second time I was ordered to Vietnam was right after God had called me to the ministry.

CB: Were you with an actual unit or did you pick the units that went with you?

GB: No no. I was assigned to a unit. I was assigned to the 25th Military Intelligence Detachment in the 25th Infantry division. They gave intelligence support to that division.

CB: What was like when you arrived in Vietnam?

GB: We went into Long Binh. Like I said, it was during the Christmas Holidays when we arrived there and we noticed it was very very -when we got off the plane, there at Long Binh we started out, there was a whole group of soldiers that was waiting to leave and it quiet. It was early in the morning and it was so quite you could have heard a pin drop. All

of a sudden over the loud speaker came the announcement, Flight so and so we are going back to the States. All of a sudden of the soldiers who were waiting to leave shouted **YAAAAYYYYYY!!!** They could have lifted the tin roof right off the building they were so loud. They were getting onto the plane that we had just got off of going home. They had spent their year in Vietnam. But it was very quiet. My wife, my late wife flew into Vietnam with a newborn and one that was two years old on the way to Thailand that was in Bangkok and they had to stop in Vietnam and she said it was deathly quiet when they landed in Tan Siet airbase. When they came off the plane to go and get a coke or something, she said all they could hear was the generators. It was eerie. It was eerie how quiet the place was.

CB: When you got to Vietnam what was your assignment or job?

GB: I was assigned as a Counterintelligence Officer. I was a Viet Cong Infrastructure Exploitation Chief with the Counterintelligence Detachment of the 25th Military Detachment. The CI section is just one section of that detachment.

CB: Did you see combat?

GB: For a whole year. Yes I was in combat for a year.

CB: Did you have many casualties in your unit?

GB: In our unit. Not to many in our unit, we killed over twelve thousand in that year. In our TAOI. TAOI is Tactical Area of Operation Interest. The 25th division killed twelve thousand men.

CB: Were you taken as a Prisoner of War?

GB: No. No. Praise the Lord. No. I probably would not have come out alive. They would have hamstrung me if they had me.

CB: Were you awarded any medals or citations?

GB: I was awarded three Bronze Stars in combat. When I was with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam, I earned two Bronze Stars and two Army Commendation Ups. I have three Bronze Stars, a Legion of Merit, two Army Commendation Medals, three awards of Good Conduct Medal, and various other medals- a National Service Medal, a Vietnam Campaign Medal, a Vietnam Service Medal, and a Staff Service Medal awarded to me by the Vietnamese Government.

CB: How did you get your first Bronze Star?

GB: The first bronze star I got was a night snatch operation and I'll explain. When I was in with the 25th infantry division, I was, uh, had one of my sources, had one of my Vietnamese brought me in, brought me in said that the VCI, the Viet Cong Infrastructure. We got Information that the Viet Cong Infrastructure were coming into this village at night, staying there, going out in the morning early, go back to their tunnels and so on So I decided to mount up an operation when they were least expecting it. I went with a LERP

team. LERP is Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol. I took off my Warrant Officer bars and put on sergeant first class stripes to hide my true identity. I went with this LERP team into a ARVN outpost. ARVN stands for Army of the Republic of Vietnam. They had an outpost just outside this village. We went in there on the –with the- under the guise of a night ambush. We went in there and they hide us in that ARVN outpost at about seven o'clock at night. First thing they did was hit us with an RPG. That's a Rifle Propelled Grenade. They hit us. I was laying on a table and an impact knocked me off the table onto the ground. Well anyway, We trade shot with them for about thirty minutes and they drifted back in the village and hid themselves. Well at four o'clock in the morning, after the moon went down, I sneaked out of the ARVN outpost with the LERP team. We went into the village and snatched seven of their VCI out from under their mosquito nets, put duct tape over their mouths, and got them out of there without firing a shot. And so that's how I got my first bronze star.

CB: How did you get your second Bronze Medal?

GB: My second Bronze Star was a.... Come here I'll show you my awards. I got 'em here on the wall. The Office is a little messy so you'll have to excuse it. This here is the Bronze Star with two Oak Leaf Clusters. That means three bronze stars. This here is the Meritorious Service Medal. Which I received this was my last thing which I received as I was leaving the Army when I retired. This is the Army Commendation Medal. Second award of it. This here is the Good Conduct Medal with four awards. The original plus three loops. So four award of the Good Conduct Medal. You get one every four years. This is the National Defense Service Medal, right here, which is given right now to any soldier, sailor, or service member gets one of these right now. This was the Vietnam Service Medal with six declared campaigns. This here is Armed Forces Service Medal for twenty years as a reserve officer. This here was the Vietnam campaign Medal which is given to all who went to Vietnam. These are division awards here that was given to the 25th Division. Here the Merit Presidential Meritorious Unit Citation. The Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, and this is the Civic Action Award with Palm. As an enlisted man I was a part of the Army Security Agency. That's this patch here. I showed you a five stripe. Then when I became a Warrant Officer, I was assigned for the first time with the 25th Infantry Division that's Tropic Lightning. The second time as Military Assistance Command. Right there and of course Military Intelligence Brass of course Warrant officer and I was a Hat Brass. There was my final as I was retiring from the service. That was me in the dress blue uniform. Right there. That's a picture of my late wife there. This is a picture of me now in command of the Honor Guard. This is the Honor Guard of the American Legion. One of our primary functions is conducting funerals for veterans. We just had one yesterday for a World War Two veteran. There is a picture of me as the commander. Here are some at the Chattanooga National Cemetery.

CB: When you were in Vietnam, how did you keep in touch with your wife?

GB: Letter and also we would send cassette tapes back and forth also.

CB: Did you keep anything special for good luck?

GB: Well this sounds weird but years before I went to Vietnam I told you that in Bangkok I had a close friend's mother gave me a- My friend was Thai and Chinese his mother was Thai and of course Buddhist, and she gave me an ancient Buddha carved into a stone on a little thing that you wear around your neck and I wore that around my neck. Not that I believed in Buddha or anything like that but out of respect to her I always wore it. She said, "Wear this in Vietnam. It will protect you." Well I know that Christ is the one who protected me but, anyway, I always wore it out of respect to her more than anything. I don't even know right where that thing is right now.

CB: Did you have any Buddies that had good luck rituals?

GB: Well It's kinda strange, because the guys would have the Ace of Spades on the side of their helmet. We had the Wolf Hounds, The 1st and 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Infantry and they left their trademark on every enemy they killed. They would put a cigarette up the nostril, stick an ace of spades in their mouth, and take a wolf hound forum and stomp it into their forehead. Then they would leave the body. Of course when the enemy caught them they didn't do anything very nice to them either. So they had going a personal warfare between them the whole time they were there.

CB: Did you feel any pressure or stress in Vietnam?

GB: Well you kinda lived under stress but I mean I would come in and at time I was a beer drinker and I would come in. It's hard to explain because when you're out in the bush out there, knowing that you could get killed. One guy could be killed. You see in Vietnam each war has it's own thing that the other wars did not have. For example World War Two we had what were called frontal assault. All went there and side was at a prime and would attack the other side that way and it came from The Civil War. I mean people got mowed down you know. Finally quit that in Korea. Of course the Vietnam War had the tunnels and the spider holes. We found a big tunnel complex right there close to our base camp. I tell ya somethin' that we need to do that would really help you. Why don't we go down to the museum here. I give you a guided tour through. It's all war.

(At the Museum)

GB: Our museum covers every aspect of military history form The Revolutionary War to the present-day war in the middle-east. So what you are interested in a- so let's start over here. This is our British display here. This here is my corner right here. This is my- this of course was when I was in Vietnam found out that when I was cleaning this that the- it was not the original stock. Apparently the Viet Cong had broke the original stock and whittled a new one and it got a yeoman's job on it. But, uh, so this is my corner. This is the Vietnamese Flag. That red and blue with the gold stars is a Viet Cong Flag. You can see the difference between that and, uh, let's see what I do with the other flag? This here is a Aliie which is a Vietnamese dress I had made for my wife on the second tour. It has a pair of

long black pajamas there. And this go over this and of course the conical hat is very common. This here was, uh, the curator that started this museum. Oscar Ellis, one of the most decorated men in the Dade County. This is his medal collection there that he received. He received a rendition of two awards of the Bronze Star. He received a Silver Medal for saving the life. That's the highest award. The Purple Heart of course for wounds in action. He got also a Legion of Merit and so on and so forth. This M-60 I was telling you about the, uh, day that I had a run in real bad. We had an encounter we got pinned in by a regiment. Our boys were careless and they were going around this houch and there were four NVA and they killed the machine gunner and got his M-60. Turned it on us and they kept us pinned down for two hours until we finally killed 'em and got it back. This here is the M-16 rifle which is the main rifle that we carried in Vietnam. And, uh, let's see. These here are- I'm the model builder. I built most of these model planes myself. This here is the B-52 bomber that, uh, destroyed a lot of payloads. This here is an old C-47 gunship. We call it The Spooky because they would put three gatling guns in the side and they could clear- they could put a round in every six inches in a football field and they did a lot of damage over there in Vietnam. It was a very very interesting aircraft.

CB: When you were in Vietnam, what sort of pranks would be played?

GB: Well, uh, pranks, well thee always pranks that you do on the new guy ya know. Like send him all over the company area looking for a left handed monkey wrench. Things like that. And, uh, these of course here are the – here is a rifle here that we carried when I was in basic training. This thing- here hold it- It weighs nine pounds fully loaded. This is a World War Two – very good rifle. And, uh, we tried using those for the Honor Guard but they're very independable. This of course is a mortar, A1 mortar 2. This is a grenade. (throws one to me) These are dudes. The charge has been taken out of 'em. But, uh, this the Commander of the Legion now. This is, uh, Brigadier General Bob Woods, a retired. Spent over thirty years in the military in the army. He put his uniform in here. This here is the flags that we use in the Honor Guard. We generally put up the, uh, we put up the American flag and the flag of the deceased on the left and right of the casket. This is the Navy, this here of course is the Coast Guard, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Army. And if the deceased was a commander, we put up all the flags for them out there. This of course is a AK-47 which is a, uh, the rifle that I was on the business end of he first year I was in Vietnam. One time we was flying into a a Land Zone LZ and they were waiting for us the Viet Cong was waiting for us and it looked like when we sat down, it looked like Fourth of July with the tracers. Red tracers and the green tracers. The red tracers were ours and the green tracers were theirs. Comin' in like that. We got those nine helicopters out of there not a one of 'em got hit. Now it was only by the grace of God that happened. I still don't know One of those strange things that happened in Vietnam.

CB: How did the Vietnamese use Pungi sticks?

GB: What they would do is they dig a pit and they would put these bamboo sharpened bamboo stakes and they would cover them with fecal mud so it would get stuck and the poison would, uh, blood poison. That's what they were used- and that's what they would do

and so you'd step on those things and go right through your boot. But, uh, let's see here, that right there is a North Vietnamese officer's hat my son sent me from Hanoi. That of course is the M-14 which is right near the M-16 which we used right here. The M-60 machine gun was like I said used in ground to ground combat.

CB: What do you remember most about leaving Vietnam?

GB: Glad to get out of there. The first time I lifted off from Vietnam, I said I never wanted to see that country again. But after I surrendered to the ministry, within a week I had orders to go back- for a second tour. You gotta be careful when you're telling God you'll go where he wants you to go. He'll be liable to send you to the one place that you don't want to go just to test your faith. 'Cause when I was on orders I didn't have any opportunity to say no. But, uh, this here is one of the gunships we was talking about. I built this on with a pilot and a copilot. These are rockets on it. This is the First Calvary Gunship. These are just various models of different thing that we used in Vietnam. These here were used later. This is what we used in Vietnam. This is some other helicopters that used. This right here was an Apache. This is one that we used over there. And then there's the Cobra. The Cobra Gunship.

CB: Were you in on the planning for the different raids that you went on?

GB: Oh yeah. See there were generally, as a result of the enemy information I had collected, and so tell what our target was and I'd go out and brief the commander of the Infantry. I said we're going in after this person and this location and we're going to need so many infantry, maybe need gunships, or we'll need artillery support, uh, maybe various support and he would give it to be ready to go go go. We by two infantry went in with nine ships, nine helicopters lifts taking company- it would take nine helicopters to carry a company in combat. Sometimes it was, a hot LZ, a hot LZ means that the enemy were waiting on ya and you had ta- you had ta firefight on your hands in force even as you were jumping off the helicopters. One thing that happened I remember I was driving a jeep along to the hospital and all of a sudden I looked up and this helicopter was coming in like this. (makes a snake like motion with his hand) I said what's that guy? Drunk? And I got up to it and I found the whole undercarriage of the ship was shot out in the helicopter. And the pilot was lying dead in his seat and the copilot was blind and the door gunner had his hands over the shoulders of the copilot and was guiding the stick and the- was just using the pedals with his feet and the two of 'em brought that crippled ship back in. I think they both got the DFC, the Distinguished Flying Cross, for doing that. But a lot of weird things happened in Vietnam, and, uh, the weird stories that we come out with is just a number of things that you would never have figured out how that happened. We don't know. It must be God himself that worked it out because we saw His hand moving in a lot of ways in combat. You've heard of people-you have heard of combat conversions? Yeah, don't think it doesn't happen. There are no atheists in foxholes let me tell ya. When you get bullets flying over your head you'd be surprised how fast a man stops playing with that game and starts getting his heart right with the Lord.

CB: You said you had a price over your head. How much?

GB: A thousand dollars dead or alive. Now see what happened was we got information that started out with Imagery Interpretation. Imagery Interpretation is where you got people where they get photographs of an area and they have equipment that they set that photograph down. They put that equipment on that photograph and it puts everything up in three dimension. So they can see it. And this Warrant Officer said, "Garry come over here I want to show you somethin'." So I went over and said, "What you need?" and he said, "Look at this picture of this town, this village?" He said, "What do you see?" I said, "I don't know there's a big building in the center of it and unlike the rest of 'em there all thatch roofed this one has tin on the big building," He says "look at the ground around that building. It looks like it's kinda tore up." He said now look at these pictures that were taken several days later." The picture had changed completely around that building. He said, "I think we got a cash sight here." Where they would cashing their weapons and stuff there. So then about the time I got this information, we got a prisoner from that area. An IPW, Interrogation Prisoner of War that's what IPW means, and so I sat down to talk to him, gave him a cigarette. I says," Are you being feed? Are you hungry?" he said, "Yeah, I've been fed." I said, "Are you hurt? Do you need help?" He said, "No, he was O.K." I said, "O.K." And so I became his friend and so I just treated him- I never believed in beating a prisoner. I did not believe in that. That is a soldier, a human being that deserves respect. You have to – slapping around a prisoner, I don't believe in that. I believe that is very unprofessional. So I just took care of him and he told me anything I wanted to know. You know he told me his unit. He was with a supply company that's in 6-8 NVA regiment I said, "What about Hat Nan? Do you know?" "Oh yeah, that's the main place where we stay at night." I said, "Oh?" He said," We come in at about three in the afternoon and after all the US troops go back on the firebase. We come out of our tunnels and we'll put up our AK-47's for the night and have our rice, go to bed, sleep with our women. And the next day we wake up and go back to the tunnels." And I said, "Wow so that's your base? So about six o'clock you all will be?" he says, "Oh yeah, about six o'clock we'll be having a good time." So I said, "We're going to have a little operation in that village." So I manned an operation. I prepared an operation plan first of all, drop artillery in there, then have cobra gunships come over and spray the area and drop two night-ship lifts of infantry right on top of 'em. Caught 'em completely flat footed. We killed every one of that company but three. And so then that and we destroyed everything they had in that village. Well that put the NVA, the 268 NVA regiment without supplies. Needless to say they weren't to happy with me. And that's how the price tag got put on my head. Because they were out foraging for rice. Whatever they could to feed the regiment. That's what became of this operation that I took into an ambush. I took two companies into an ambush. They were waiting for us. And they literally cleaned our plow that day. Forty-one men were killed of our men and so like I said they paid me back. But, uh, that's, uh, basically what life was over there. Live was cheap. That's why I have such a high respect for human life because I've seen how easy it is to kill a man

CB: Why did you get out of the service?

GB: I retired. Well I could have stayed till thirty years but I got out at twenty with minimum retirement because I felt called as a missionary. And I went to field for thirty years as a missionary right after I got out of the service. Church Planting and, uh, also training. I was helping with the Puerto Rico Bible College down there. Where we started training nationals down there for the ministry and also for the mission field and education. So education is been my secondary. Primary planting churches secondary in education. That's where I got my doctorate in education.

CB: Did your military training have any effects on how you interacted with the church planting?

GB: Oh absolutely. Leadership when I earned in the military. Um, being able to handle situations that would pop up that you can't understand where they come from but you gotta handle it. Um, being able to react to different situations. Uh, like I said leadership mainly. There are two principles to leadership. I don't care if it's in the home, in the school, in business, in the church, in government, in the military, there are two principles in basic leadership. One way or the other but complete your mission. Don't ever be turned aside from the mission that you have. The goal you set, do it. If it's a goal for the family, goal for the business, goal for the church, whatever. That you should complete your goal. Second principle take care of your men. Take care of the people under you. Those are two basic goals of leadership. I don't care what it is. Everything, everything like Dr. Lee Roberson who started Tennessee Temple University said everything rises or falls under leadership. That's very true. And we have a lot of people and you see a failure, in anything, in business or church, or a failure in the home, any failure is because of a lack of leadership somewhere. Remember that. It's very important.

CB: Did you join any Veteran groups?

GB: I'm the Senior Vice Commander of the American Legion. I showed you my cap. I'm also the Commander. I started the Honor Guard. So I'm the Commander of the Honor Guard. We conduct a lot of funerals. We buried three veterans in seven days. One was a World War Two veteran in the Air Force, a World War Two veteran in the Navy, and a World War Two veteran in the Army. In seven days we buried these three guys. We get a lot of funerals out at Chattanooga National Cemetery and of course all over Dade county.

CB: Is it in one of these capacities that you actually help the families with the paperwork?

GB: Absolutely. Any time they need help, I will do everything I can to help 'em. I will get DD Form 2-14, that's the primary document you need for your rights as a veteran. That's your discharge papers. A lot of these people don't know what happened the D-14 I go in and get the 2-14 for them and then their able to get them full burial out there at the Chattanooga National Cemetery. They have a free lot for two people. It has a vault already in there for two people and you can open and close the grave. It's free and the headstone is free. That saves thousands of dollars. I can tell you right now. I'm also help 'em getting, uh, benefits, widows benefits, things like that. Everything I can do to help in that respect, I do that. Uh Guys need medical care, help, I get that for them.

CB: When we were coming in you were talking about helping the next generation to remember. What are your views about war?

GB: Well I think all of us change with time and experience and age. When your young, it's exciting. There is nothing exciting about seeing your friends get blown to pieces. There is nothing exciting about it. That's reality. It happens and, uh, War is something that been time in memorial. It's in the Old Testament. God said to and God said we said to wipe out everything. Men, women, children, an old people, everything. We say how could this God a- how could a God of love be that way? We don't understand everything about God. It says he has an infinite mind and ours is finite, limited to what we know. But we know that, uh, war is- war is something that none of us really like. Especially those of us that have suffered it, been through it. I mean I saw- I can tell you stories of children I saw killed. Let me tell ya. I remember one day a a Samlog carrying a bunch of people around an anti-tank mine blew them to pieces and I saw a dead woman with a dead baby in her arms and when I came back they were throwing these bodies into the back of a dump truck and the decapitated baby head was floating in a pool of blood. That affected me for a long time. The scene of war is not pretty. War it-it is a- it is something that we will have to accept until Christ comes again. He's going to end all wars. But until that time, it's not gonna get any better, it's going to get worse. Until the tribulation comes to a end. And, uh, that'll be the final. But anyway as far as my own particular, I think it's something we as a – something we have accept and we have to go to war and if you're in the military, go in the military you either go in voluntary. They don't have the draft anymore. The draft is ended. But if you volunteer, that's, uh, that's one of the hazards you risk in going in. But I always say this. I'm not going to the Army I'm going to get killed. Remember very very small percentage of people get killed. Compared to all the millions who are in the armed services. Most of 'em all come home and they get out. They get their GI benefits and they go to college and it pays for it. You know. Plus while they're in, they learn a lot they learn experience. Uh, traveling you get to meet people of various- all over the country all over the world. And they have everything. They have very good salary a lot more than I did when I was there. They have their uniforms given to them, they have three hots and a cot as we say. Three hot 'en three meals a day and they got their-their bed for 'em. They don't pay for that. They got free medical, free dental, everything. So you know it's good for a person comes out of high school don't know what you're gonna do, join the military for four years. That'll broaden your horizons and it'll pay ya while you're doin' it en when you come out four years come out and go to college. You'll be settled. You'll know what you want to study. But most kids comin' out a high school, they don't know what they wanna do. They go and they waste their- waste money going to college. Waste, uh, waste their time. They change their credits and they change their major en this that and the other. Lose all their credits and ohhh. No no no no no no. So go into the military for four years, see the world, make, uh, make- do the best you can. Then if you want to make a career of it, make a career of it. If you want to get out, - when I – when I came in, went into the army, I had two years of college. While I was in there I picked up three credits here, three credits there, three credits here, there. I got my third year completed. Then The Bootstrap program opened up and I was able to go en enroll full time my final year. En got my bachelor's

degree with the-the government paying everything. When I got my bachelor's degree then I started studying my master's degree and I did my master's degree by correspondence. Master's in Religious Education. And then when I retired, I started working on my PhD, When I finished that after I got to the mission field. En the reason I wanted- I'm not collecting degrees- what I wanted - because of start en expand the Bible Institute into a Bible College where we could trade credits with others and so we needed men with doctorates. And so I went back to my school and I got my masters and got my PhD. Education- I-I- education is good. It's what you need. And the Lord can use you wherever your feel like to use you he's going to prepare you. I always tell young people – well they say how can I know what God's will is for my life? Do what God needs you to do right now. He wants you in school. Get yourself ready, pray everyday, give yourself to the Lord every day. Lord I'm here today. Not next week, not next year, today, use me today. Help me father to complete your will out in my life today. Tomorrow is another day. And then eventually He will show you. He will open the door where he wants you to be.

CB: Do you usually have get-togethers with these veteran groups?

GB: Well depends, I'm a member of six different military organizations. I'm a life member of The American Legion, Vietnam Veteran's Association, 25th Infantry Division Association, National Association of the Uniformed Services, Disabled American Veterans, and The Military Association of America. All of 'em I paid up life member. I don't hardly go to any of the meetings. I just dedicate myself here to the Legion because I got my hands full. Just being Commander of the Honor Guard and Senior Vice Commander of this post.

CB: Do you have get-together with the Honor Guard?

GB: Oh, ah, generally we'll see each other almost every week at a funeral. Every time Mr. Ryan or Mr. Moore calls us. We've got a veteran. I said Ok I'll be right down to get the information. We see each other and we meet once a month on the third Tuesday of every month and practice folding the flag and the other stuff that we do to make sure that we're ready and, uh, like I said just mainly to polish our skills in the Honor Guard. And recently we've been having the executive meeting on the first Tuesday night of every month and the second Tuesday everybody – we-we all get together. And Brenda my wife she's the president of the Auxiliary. She had never wanted to get into it. She never had anything to do with the military. Now she's the president of the Auxiliary. She was defunked when she got into it now about two weeks ago she was informed that this Auxiliary Unit here was the first in membership drive in the state of Georgia.

CB: Did you make any close friendships while you were in Vietnam?

GB: Well Yes I'd, uh, several, uh, several people we are in touch with, uh, one of my bosses is in Texas, another Warrant Officer is over in Fagel, North Carolina, one of my bosses just passed away a couple of years ago. I have quite a few the man who was the best man at my wedding of my previous wife, my late wife, he stood with me in 1960 we got married and when she and I celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary he stood with me a second time

when we repeated our vows. Now that's very unusual when your best man fifty years apart standing with you is something. He died three years later.

CB: Thank you so much for letting me interview you.