

Anderegg, Richard "Dick" USAF

[00:00:12.70] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I was born in Cory, Pennsylvania, which is a small town in Erie County, Pennsylvania up in the Northwest corner on Lake Erie 1945. I grew up with the same kids that I started first grade with. We were just ahead of the baby boom, so we were a small class.

[00:00:36.10] JOE GALLOWAY: Who were your family members?

[00:00:37.81] RICHARD ANDEREGG: My father was Harold Herman Anderegg, first generation born Swiss American. My mother was Betty Smith Anderegg.

[00:00:48.42] JOE GALLOWAY: What did your dad do?

[00:00:50.21] RICHARD ANDEREGG: My father was a machinist. Both of my parents were factory workers.

[00:00:53.79] JOE GALLOWAY: Uh-huh. And brothers and sisters?

[00:00:57.10] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Only-- well, an only child, my mother and father. My father had a daughter from a previous marriage.

[00:01:02.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Uh-huh. And so you consider that place in Pennsylvania your hometown?

[00:01:09.07] RICHARD ANDEREGG: It is. I still go there to hunt two or three times a year. I went to college at Hobart College in upstate New York, small men's liberal arts college in upstate New York in 1963, when I started as a freshman. And until 1965, ROTC was required at all colleges and universities in the US that had land grant or had federal funding of any kind, et cetera.

[00:01:37.92] So one of the reasons that I picked that college was because it had Air Force ROTC. I was interested in flying, I was interested in aviation because, the half sister that I mentioned was a stewardess for Eastern Airlines. I thought that was pretty cool. So I didn't really have any intentions of going into the Air Force, but it was kind of a-- part of my backup, whatever. I had been in Civil Air Patrol in high school, so going to the Air Force ROTC--

[00:02:10.95] And then I continued. They said, well, we'll teach you to fly. And I said, that's a good deal. And I kind of evolved this plan where I would go into the Air Force and in those days the commitment to the Air Force for pilot training was four years. The plan was to go into the Air Force, go to pilot training, try to get into a KC-135 tanker, which is the Boeing 707 equivalent, which was the first real productive jet airliner and was still quite common.

[00:02:51.33] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:02:52.77] RICHARD ANDEREGG: And then spent my four years and go to the airlines as an airline pilot. That was my plan.

[00:02:57.45] JOE GALLOWAY: [LAUGHS]

[00:02:57.91]

[00:02:58.97] What went wrong with it?

[00:03:00.18] RICHARD ANDEREGG: What went wrong with it was that I fell in love with being upside down.

[00:03:03.51] JOE GALLOWAY: [LAUGHS]

[00:03:05.49] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I started pilot training, did a little bit of time in the T-41. Actually, I did learn to fly in college through the Air Force and got my private license, but when I went to pilot training, we went into the T-37, which is side by side small twin jet trainer used by the Air Force in those days. It was fully acrobatic. And when I went out and did my first acrobatics and my first spins in the T-37 I said, I want to be able to see the world upside down every day.

[00:03:43.21] And so and I also had a couple of mentors that encouraged me to go to fighters and so that's what I did. I graduated from pilot training at Laredo Air Force Base in Texas, which is now closed. In fact, it was closed a couple of years after I graduated. And then I did my F-4 training at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

[00:04:03.48] About 6 and 1/2 months long, then there were several other schools. There's a main survival school that in those days at Fairchild Air Force Base up in Spokane, Washington. That was about two weeks long, where you learned all the basics of survival, but you also learned the POW experience.

[00:04:22.26] And then there was water survival school down at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, south of Miami, where you learned how to survive if you had to land in the water and a one man raft and a fishing line and whatever. So all those schools together. And then the travel time between and of course classes didn't start exactly on your schedule, they started on the Air Force's schedule.

[00:04:47.52] So I graduated from pilot training in August of 1968 and I actually then went to Thailand in July of 1969. Udon Air Base, Thailand. I got there the day after Neil Armstrong walked on the moon.

[00:05:11.10] I knew that when I went to pilot training, I was going to go to Vietnam, because everyone did. The technical name for it was the pipeline, we called it cannon fodder line. So except for the few that went to Strategic Air Command and the few that stayed as instructors in the Air Force pilot training, everyone else went. Pilot training, type aircraft training, Vietnam. Yeah, everyone.

[00:05:43.38] Well, my perspective of the war from the Air Force perspective was that it was-- that the Air Force was doing a very difficult mission under very difficult circumstances with essentially at least one if not both hands tied behind their back. I found a great deal of honor in serving and service.

[00:06:07.09] And if I had to go to the Vietnam War to do that I would do that. I had still high hopes that-- and of course, this was 1967 when I came into the Air Force, 1968 when I graduated from pilot training, 1969 when I actually got to Thailand-- that we would end up achieving our goals, which was peace and stability there.

[00:06:38.56] JOE GALLOWAY: You were confident, that that would happen.

[00:06:40.35] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I was hopeful.

[00:06:41.52] JOE GALLOWAY: Hopeful.

[00:06:42.51] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I was hopeful. Yeah, exactly. And I never doubted the Air Force's ability to do what everyone in the Air Force knew needed to be done, which was all out full employment of air power in the North. That was our view.

[00:07:06.96] So at any rate, I was very hopeful until it became obvious that the Congress of the United States was going to totally withdraw funding from support of Vietnam, which happened in 1975, but certainly was in the works in the early '70s.

[00:07:28.47] And once I knew that, then I knew that we as a nation did not have the-- we as a government did not have the stomach to do what needed to be done. There was a brief flurry of that in 1972 with Linebacker I and II, which produced some good results, but that should have happened in 1966 or 1967.

[00:07:52.01] That's a lifetime story. First off I'll tell you that when I came into the F-4, we had two pilots in the F-4. In 1969, the year that I started training in the airplane, late 1968 or early 1969, we started a conversion program to convert the back seat pilots to navigators. So when I actually got to Udorn in 1969, summer of 1969, probably 2/3 of our back seaters were pilots, which is what I was. And then about a third were navigators.

[00:08:26.81] And the typical career progression was, is that you would spend an amount of time, a tour, in the back seat and then go back to the training in the US and what we called upgrade to the front seat. And then probably go back for a second Vietnam tour. That did not happen for me, because we were withdrawing troops from South Vietnam by then, closing air bases. And so when I finished my combat tour I actually went--

[00:08:58.19]

[00:08:58.28] JOE GALLOWAY: So you did a combat tour as a back seater?

[00:08:59.81] RICHARD ANDEREGG: As a back seater, correct.

[00:09:01.56] JOE GALLOWAY: You say navigator. I've heard electronic warfare officer.

[00:09:07.73] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yes. It depended on which model and what you were doing. Typically they were standard navigators. A few second lieutenants right out of nav school, but most of them were experienced navigators that were coming from B-52s, KC-135s, C-141s, et cetera-- the other airplanes around. And a lot from the F-101, which had been one of the primary interceptors. It had two seats in it earlier on.

[00:09:37.70] You asked me about flying the F-4, it was well, I flew 170 combat missions and it brought me home every time. Hemingway once said, no man has any love greater than what he has for his first fighter, and that is exactly true. It wasn't the greatest airplane, best airplane that I flew certainly. I flew the F-15 later, but it was a brute, an actual absolute workhorse.

[00:10:12.83] Very sturdily built, very reliable and quite capable of doing a multitude of missions. It was the last airplane that we had for almost three decades that was-- well, two decade that was truly a multi-role airplane that could do the air to ground mission as well as the air to air mission. It had a lot of annoying things about it, but it was a great airplane to fly. I absolutely loved flying the F-4.

[00:10:50.75] JOE GALLOWAY: What were the annoying things?

[00:10:53.21] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Oh, the annoying thing was the air conditioner didn't work. That was the main thing--

[00:10:57.41] JOE GALLOWAY: That's bad when you're sitting on a runway in Southeast Asia.

[00:11:00.95] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I know with-- and of course, you had to leave the canopies up because you couldn't close, you bake. So you left them open until you actually got on the runway and then closed them. And then once you got the power up, you would have some amount of air conditioning for a while, but the air conditioner did not have a water separator in it, so it would ice up frequently. And then when it did you didn't have anything.

[00:11:25.76] Now, when you're up at 8 or 10 or 15,000 feet, it didn't really matter too much. But for ground operations and coming back to land and all that sort of stuff, I mean, you would be totally drenched in perspiration--

[00:11:39.52] JOE GALLOWAY: Drenched in perspiration.

[00:11:40.85] RICHARD ANDEREGG: --after you flew. Yeah. I left my wife in Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was married. I got married. Backing up very quickly, my wife was an Army brat, her great grandfather, grandfather, father and brother were all career Army officers.

[00:11:59.35] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow.

[00:12:01.28] RICHARD ANDEREGG: So her father at that time was a two star general in the Army, he was at Fort Knox, he was the commander of the Armor Center there. I left her there in

a little apartment, so she'd be close to her folks. And then I went to the Philippines for more survival training, this was jungle survival school. And where they taught you the specifics of what you had learned at the other survival schools, how this applied to the jungle environment.

[00:12:30.29] Interestingly enough also at that school they said, OK tomorrow the class is over, but Anderegg and you, and you, and you and there are about six or eight, you're staying for an extra two days. And we'll tell you why tomorrow. So they said, OK this is top secret, nobody can know about it. You can't talk to any of your friends about it. They taught us ways to communicate, if we are shot down. And the ones they picked were F-4 guys that they knew were going to be flying over North Vietnam.

[00:13:02.42] I said, and they taught us codes to use and Red Cross letters, they taught us how to communicate via things that we set up there with them, prior to us going over for our tour.

[00:13:17.22] JOE GALLOWAY: A unique identifier.

[00:13:18.22] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Unique things, yes exactly.

[00:13:20.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:13:21.80] RICHARD ANDEREGG: The last three days then after that, we went out and had our survival trek out in the jungle. And then when I came back from that--

[00:13:30.09] JOE GALLOWAY: Did they let the Negritos loose on you?

[00:13:31.76] RICHARD ANDEREGG: They did.

[00:13:32.33] JOE GALLOWAY: [LAUGHS]

[00:13:32.57] RICHARD ANDEREGG: They turned the Negritos loose on us, with a five pound bag of rice. And if you got caught you had to give the Negritos the 5 pound bag of rice. So that was their incentive to find you. I grew up in the woods, hunting with my father. I knew woodsmanship. I knew how to find my way around. I wasn't afraid of crawling in the dark holes and they, in fact, did not find me.

[00:13:54.20] JOE GALLOWAY: They didn't get you.

[00:13:54.95] RICHARD ANDEREGG: They did not find me. I wasn't the only one they didn't find, but they found almost everybody else. Yeah. Almost everybody else.

[00:14:01.22] JOE GALLOWAY: That bag of rice is a great incentive.

[00:14:04.40] RICHARD ANDEREGG: One of my pilot training classmates was flying C-130s at Clark at that point. And so when I came out of the jungle experience, he picked me up and we raced over to his house and we watched Neil Armstrong come down the ladder on his television.

[00:14:19.22] And then the next day, I got on an airplane and flew to Bangkok, spent a couple of hours on the ground in Bangkok. And then went up to my squadron, which was the 555th TAC Fighter Squadron, the Triple Nickel, at Udorn Royal Thai Air Base and very northern, northern Thailand. Almost directly across the river from Vientiane, the Laotian capital.

[00:14:47.65] We had four fighter bases, seven total bases, but four fighter bases in Thailand. Udorn, Ubon, Korat and Takhli. Udorn was the northern-most of those, and therefore the closest to North Vietnam. So we required the lesser flight time, we can carry more. We didn't need quite as much air refueling, although we did air refuel. And at that point, all of the primary air to air F-4s were located at Udorn because we could provide the support for MiG Sweep and Mig-Cap, And still have fuel enough to actually be effective.

[00:15:41.78] It was not at all what I expected. The C-130 drove up to the ramp, and there were five of us, who had been together since pilot training. We didn't go to pilot training, but we've been through all the survival schools together and we've been through F-4 training together. And we're all going to the Triple Nickel at Udorn. There were a bunch of other people on the airplane too, but they put the ramp down and we got down off the ramp.

[00:16:10.61] And there were probably a dozen guys from the squadron, including the squadron commander there to greet us. And it was a real welcome, where we felt as though we were welcomed into the organization. Now this is unusual. You've been in military situations before, right? We weren't treated like FNGs, can I say that?

[00:16:32.66] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:16:33.02] RICHARD ANDEREGG: The fucking new guys, right?

[00:16:35.39] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:16:35.60] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Weren't treated like FNGs, we were immediately brought into the squadron and welcomed. I mean they had our baseball caps for us, already made up for the-- because all the squadrons wore different colored baseball caps. They had our rooms all set up, they took us right to our rooms. I mean it was a wonderful welcome. It really was. It was hot. It was July. So I mean it was hot.

[00:16:59.69] JOE GALLOWAY: It was cooking.

[00:17:00.62] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yeah. First I flew one or two orientation flights. Probably really only one. I don't remember. But I know that there was some sort of an indoctrination. And the point of that was to show you the local procedures on the ground, how to go to the tankers, where the other bases were. We went over to Ubon and did a low approach, we went down to Korat did a low approach, Takhli did a low approach that sort of thing. Kind of teach a local area of Thailand.

[00:17:39.39] And then after that I became-- I was always in a wingman position for a while, two, three, or four. Because the front lead back seater was responsible for navigation and keeping

track of where everything was and those sorts of things. And so for the first 15 or 20 missions, I flew things that were rather easy, nothing remarkable, to get the feeling, the pace.

[00:18:10.23] And then after that, I was qualified to fly in any position within the flight. And now, all of the missions we were flying at that point, that I was flying at that point, were missions that were in Laos, alright? Because Lyndon Johnson had another bombing halt of North Vietnam in October of 1968, so that was like eight months before I got there. And our tour thing had been modified prior to that, once you flew 100 missions into North Vietnam, and they were called counters, fly 100 counters, then your tour was over.

[00:18:55.77] So that could take between six and eight months. Once the bombing halt stopped, the guys were getting very few of those missions. So our tour was set at one year. OK. I did a lot from up until December of 1969, I'm not sure that I even recall any missions I flew. They were unremarkable. They were along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the Mu Gia Pass, Ban Karai Pass and the Fish's Mouth up in northern Laos.

[00:19:34.97] We did have occasion to fly escorts of reconnaissance F-4s into North Vietnam. And if they were shot at, if they were fired upon, then we could attack them. We could respond.

[00:19:51.55] In December of 1969 I was selected to go into the fast FAC program. The fast FACs were F-4s that had smoke rockets, that would go look for targets in northern Laos, bring fighters, if we found a target, bring a fighter and mark it, they would attack it.

[00:20:13.39] JOE GALLOWAY: That's very dangerous work.

[00:20:14.95] RICHARD ANDEREGG: It was interesting.

[00:20:16.68] JOE GALLOWAY: [LAUGHS]

[00:20:17.05]

[00:20:18.79] RICHARD ANDEREGG: It was interesting.

[00:20:19.86] JOE GALLOWAY: I've heard it described otherwise.

[00:20:21.68] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Well, let's just put it this way. There was a limit, they wouldn't let you fly more than 40 of those. So I flew 40 fast FAC missions. And as a little historical note kind of, my front seater that I was crewed with was John Jumper, who later became chief of staff of the Air Force.

[00:20:39.90] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:20:40.64] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yeah, we flew 40 fast FAC missions together. They could be hazardous, you really had to be careful of what you did, especially along the trail areas just across the border in the passes, where the Ho Chi Minh Trail arteries came in through the passes, because those were heavily defended by AAA guns.

[00:21:08.05] JOE GALLOWAY: We we're talking radar controlled?

[00:21:10.75] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Sometimes, sometimes. But what they didn't have in accuracy from radar, they made up for in numbers, just in sheer volume.

[00:21:18.73] JOE GALLOWAY: Just throw up sheer volume of lead.

[00:21:20.65] RICHARD ANDEREGG: So you did things like, you didn't make two passes from the same direction back the back.

[00:21:28.90] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:21:31.52] RICHARD ANDEREGG: When you were low, you went really fast and you moved the airplane a lot. Now, this made it more difficult to find targets, but we got to know the area so well, we saw it almost every day. We got to know the area so well that we could pretty much tell if there was something up someplace. Plus we had a lot of intel coming to us, from electronic sensors that were all along the trail about where traffic was moving.

[00:21:58.85] We had intel coming to us from the night gunships that were out there the night before, that pretty well suspected there was something someplace, but they couldn't get to it because they were busy someplace else. So we had a pretty good idea of what we were doing before you got there.

[00:22:14.32] JOE GALLOWAY: You're doing FAC work here, you're finding it, marking it, and bringing in the fast movers on it.

[00:22:21.58] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Exactly. Yeah, exactly. And on one of those missions, I saw an event that well, that particular event didn't change warfare, but that was a piece of-- What I saw was, the day before we flew we got the FRAG, which is the fragmentary order and it showed everybody's call sign that was going to do anything in Southeast Asia.

[00:22:50.93] And the backseater's job was to break out the FRAG. In other words, go down, look at the whole thing, and pull out the missions that we would be working with the next day. And then make a little schedule for how we are going to do things.

[00:23:04.44] And so I'm sitting looking at this one day and Jumper was there with me, he was sitting over doing something else, probably looking at some photo recce film. And it was all coded and I had this call sign from Ubon Thai Royal Base and it said the ordnance was, I'll never forget this, PWC, Papa Whiskey Charlie. And I said to Jumper, what is Papa Whiskey Charlie for ordnance? He said, I don't know. I mean, it was a very unusual.

[00:23:34.10] I mean, I knew what Mark 82s ordnance-- I knew what all the others were. This was very unusual. I said, well, I guess we'll find out when we get there. So the next day we go up, and we rendezvous with this-- we're talking to this flight leader from Ubon and he says, I want a really small pinpoint target. And he said, what do you got?

[00:24:00.17] Jumper said, well, I don't know, small pinpoint. I mean, there is a single position 37 millimeter site that we know is occupied in a kind of out of the way area. And the guy said, perfect, we'll take it. This is really unusual, I mean, so we said, OK. So follow us. So they follow us and we go some little distance and Jumper in rolls in, shoots the smoke rocket, marks it, and the flight lead says, I've got it. And he says, good. He says, we'll handle everything from here.

[00:24:34.82] So we go up to like 15,000 feet and we're orbiting like this, and we see this flight and he's in a left hand turn down below us at about 10,000 feet, like that. And he says, two, your cleared in. And we're looking around for number two and all of sudden, I look up and I see here's number two way up here like at 20,000 feet. Now, typically we rolled in from 12,000 feet. This guy is way up there, and he rolls in, and he calls, bomb gone. And we see this 2,000 pound bomb come off of his airplane, one bomb, right?

[00:25:07.54] We're sitting there watching, watching, watching and here's the gun, here's the gun. It's not shooting. It's just sitting there. And all of a sudden it just goes, pooff! Gone.

[00:25:15.76] JOE GALLOWAY: Gone.

[00:25:16.36] RICHARD ANDEREGG: And it was a laser-guided bomb.

[00:25:19.00] JOE GALLOWAY: First one.

[00:25:19.72] RICHARD ANDEREGG: First one I ever saw. Now, it had been there for a few months, but it was the first one I ever saw. The ramifications that were, unbelievable because later on, what we found out is that, we got more and more of these bombs. First off, you didn't need to send nearly as many airplanes to kill a target, alright? Which meant that your strike forces could be much smaller.

[00:25:43.33] Secondly, you didn't have to worry so much about collateral damage, right? We had collateral issues in North Vietnam of attacking targets that were hydroelectric plants that were in residential areas. I got--

[00:25:57.96] JOE GALLOWAY: That goddamn bridge across the Red River or whatever it was.

[00:26:02.29] RICHARD ANDEREGG: And in 1972, D.L. Smith and four F-4s brought down that bridge, the Thanh Hoa Bridge.

[00:26:07.51] JOE GALLOWAY: The Doumer Bridge.

[00:26:09.19] RICHARD ANDEREGG: And the Doumer bridge as well, where hundreds of F-105 sorties had failed in doing it before.

[00:26:17.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Had been hitting it for years.

[00:26:19.57] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Right. But just couldn't exactly get it right on the spot. Well, as we saw in 1991 during Desert Storm, when we watched the laser-guided bomb go down the AT&T building elevator shaft.

[00:26:30.85] JOE GALLOWAY: [LAUGHS]

[00:26:31.29]

[00:26:32.62] RICHARD ANDEREGG: The whole complexion of warfare for the projection of air power at least changed with that. And I mean we knew what we-- as soon as we saw that. And we went back, and then went and talked to our intel people. And they said, yeah, it's laser-guided. This guy is shooting a laser down, this guy's dropping his bomb, drops it really high so it's going really fast, so it's got energy with its little wings, stubby wings, to guide. And now this is first generation. By the time, three years later, this was early 1970--

[00:27:07.32] So two years later when the guys dropped the Doumer Bridge and the Thanh Hoa Bridge, they were on their second, already, generation designator. And by the time, 1974/75 came around, we were on our third, and then the fourth, and then the fifth. Alright, so I mean, the Air Force really leveraged that technology.

[00:27:31.71] When you're in combat with people, you forge bonds with them. And I use the word bond and not friendship. You forge bonds with them that last the rest of your life. Some of them become your friends. You have a bond with everybody, but some of them become your friends.

[00:27:54.96] It's because 24/7, 365, whatever we say these days, you're with those guys, you eat with those guys, you fly with those guys--

[00:28:05.60] JOE GALLOWAY: You depend on them.

[00:28:06.75] RICHARD ANDEREGG: You party with those guys, and most of all you depend on them to do their job right. And in the fighter community, and it still is this way today, if you don't do your job, you're not there very long. It's a very, very critical, demanding society.

[00:28:25.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Don't allow much room for screwing up.

[00:28:28.29] RICHARD ANDEREGG: No. Two of the five guys that I went there with were killed. The other three of us have maintained close friendship over the 50 years since then. Jumper and I have become, and our wives are still very close, very close friends. And in fact, he's my daughter's godfather. They are my daughter's godparents.

[00:28:58.00] But still, if someone from that old squadron called me today and said, "Would you do something for me?" Whether it was one of my friends or not, or whether it was one of the guys I liked or not, I would do it for him.

[00:29:07.03] JOE GALLOWAY: Sure. It's what you do.

[00:29:09.64] RICHARD ANDEREGG: It's the bond.

[00:29:10.08] JOE GALLOWAY: It's the bond.

[00:29:15.48] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I can't recall that we had any African-American guys in our squadron at all.

[00:29:22.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Asian-Americans? Nothing?

[00:29:25.95] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yes, one Asian-American. And of course no women.

[00:29:38.12] We raised hell. I mean, we just raised hell. I was 23 years old.

[00:29:45.67] JOE GALLOWAY: I was 23 when I went to Vietnam.

[00:29:48.44] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I would say the average age in the squadron, not counting the commander and the ops officer, but you know, the line pilots was average 24, 25 years old. We raised hell. I'll tell you a story.

[00:30:00.39] So remember I told you that we were converting these positions to navigators, right? And so, we had this guy, I won't tell you his last name, but we had this guy in the squadron, his name was JW. He had been a C-130 navigator and came to F-4s. He went to Hawaii on his R&R and met with his family. He wasn't married, met with his family. And he was from Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

[00:30:27.96] And he came back and somebody-- we're all hanging around the duty desk, drinking coffee, you know. I'll tell you what the duty desk is if you really want to know. But we're just hanging around the duty desk, drinking coffee. And somebody says, hey JW, how was your R&R? He says, pretty good. He had this slow Louisiana accent, which I can't repeat, but he said-- someone said, your family get there? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Your mom and dad? Yep, Mom and Dad got there."

[00:30:59.03] And one of them said, well, what's your parents think about flying F-4s? And he said, well, we were sitting out on the lanai watching the sun go down over the ocean, sitting there and talking to my parents. And he says, my mama says to me, JW, what's it like flying those fighters? And he said, I just looked at her I said, well Mama, it's like being paid \$40,000 a year to be a Hell's Angel.

[00:31:26.30] We raised hell. I mean, we played games, we made up games, we drank way too much, we sat around the pool a lot. When the Air Force builds a base, the first thing they do, if it's in the States, before they build a runway, they build a golf course. And if it's overseas, they build a pool. So we had a pool.

[00:31:54.71] Now, we only had a pool for the first half of the time I was there because an RF-4, battle damaged trying to land at-- recce, reconnaissance RF-4, trying to land at our base, lost control and went in the pool.

[00:32:09.50] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh no.

[00:32:10.58] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Now sadly, before the airplane went in the pool, it also went through a dormitory and killed a lot of people. But yeah, it went in the pool, so we didn't have a pool for the last half.

[00:32:24.51] JOE GALLOWAY: Do you have specific memories of the popular culture at that time?

[00:32:29.79] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Oh sure, I'm Leaving on a Jet Plane. Absolutely.

[00:32:35.56] JOE GALLOWAY: We Gotta Get Out of this Place.

[00:32:38.49] RICHARD ANDEREGG: OK, I can tell you what they were. They were always on the jukebox, We Gotta Get Out of this Place, I'm Leaving on a Jet Plane, Yellow River, Lay Lady, Lay and anything by The Beatles.

[00:32:49.97] JOE GALLOWAY: Anything by The Beatles, yeah.

[00:32:52.48] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yeah. Now, why Yellow River? It was a hit at that time. And we always had-- not always, but we often had a Thai band playing in the bar at the officers club playing music. And with the Thai accent, they always pronounced it Jello Reeber. It is on my mind, it is in my heart, Jello Reeber, right?

[00:33:17.11] So we always made fun of that and that's why I remember that. I remember miniskirts of course. And we saw a little bit, I was there in 1969. Wasn't Kent State in 1969?

[00:33:42.53] JOE GALLOWAY: I believe it was.

[00:33:44.91] RICHARD ANDEREGG: We got all of our news and all of our information from Stars and Stripes newspaper and Armed Forces Radio. I never saw a newspaper in the year that-- I wasn't there a year, I was there 10 months, but I don't ever recall seeing any news or newspaper other than what we are getting from there. So Stars and Stripes did a pretty creditable job. I mean, they didn't pull any punches about sharing information about what was going on back in the States.

[00:34:18.17] While I'm on this thought, I'll just continue and say that I never saw any of the negative backlash, to me, when I came home, because I wasn't there very long. I left Udorn May 30th of 1970. And by July, I was in England, which is where my next assignment was. So-- and small town USA, Cory, Pennsylvania up there, population 10,000--

[00:34:53.71] JOE GALLOWAY: Ain't no antiwar protesters there.

[00:34:56.66] RICHARD ANDEREGG: No antiwar protesters up there. No, not at all.

[00:35:04.36] Typical was go into the squadron, let's say it was a 7:00 AM take off, alright? You know, right after first light. Would be to go to the squadron at about 4:15 I guess, something like that. Have several cups of coffee and several cigarettes, and look at the area that you were fragged into for that day. Then two hours prior to take off, we were going to a big briefing room that was at the wing level. We had four squadrons; we had two fighter squadrons and two reconnaissance squadrons at Udorn in our wing when I was there.

[00:35:49.59] We'd go into the big main briefing room and intel would brief us on all the threats all over for the day. They would brief us on any people who had been shot down the day before and where they were. They would brief us on MiG activity, any SAM activity-- over the whole theater, even North Vietnam, even though we weren't going in there.

[00:36:12.81] Why did they do that? Because we did have a few missions going, usually mostly escorting reconnaissance airplanes. If one of them went down and we were airborne, we would go on the SAR, the search and rescue. So we needed to know what was everywhere.

[00:36:27.28] And then we would go to-- break up and go to our individual squadrons. Oh and they would also brief us, at that time, what the codes of the day were. Base altitude, for example, alright? So we didn't want to on the radio say, I'm at 15,000 feet, because the bad guys hear that and now they know where to set the fuses for their AAA, right? So every day we had a base altitude. And let's say for that day it was 10,000 feet. So when you were talking on the radio, if you were at 15,000, you would say, I'm at base plus 5. If you're at 8,000 you'd say, I'm at base minus 2, alright?

[00:36:58.98] They would also give us authenticator code cards for the day so that we could authenticate. You look on one column and say Alpha Charlie and you'd look at your card and say the response was Bravo Delta, to know that you were talking to Americans or friendlies. They would brief us on the safe areas. These are the areas where if you can't get home and you have to bail out, this is the best place to bail out, best place to go. Guess where those always were. At the tops of the mountains.

[00:37:31.14] Now, what do you think your opportunity is, with an unsteerable parachute, to be able to get yourself on top of a mountain? Slim to none. But the areas are pretty big, maybe a strip 10 miles long by 5 miles wide. Didn't mean you're totally safe in there, but pretty sure there were no AAA pieces, so that the rescue guys wouldn't get shot at, pretty sure that if you could hide, you're probably going to be OK. I never, in the whole time that I was there, ever heard of anybody that got shot down, saying they went to a safe area to bail out. Not once, not once, alright?

[00:38:08.07] So it was all the overview. Then you go back to your squadron an hour and a half before takeoff and sit down. If it was a four ship mission and you would-- this is how we're going to do this today. One of the main things was how many passes were you going to make. Because typically we carried nine Mark 82s and two cluster bombs. Mark 82 is a 500-pound general-purpose bomb. Six on the center line station, three on one of the wing stations. And very often, those three would have what we call fuse extenders, which was a pipe about that long that

was screwed into where the fuse in the nose of the bomb would go, but the fuse was put on this end, right?

[00:38:54.75] Some people call them daisy cutters. Because when they hit the ground, that pipe hits the ground first and it detonates the bomb above ground level. Because for the six regular Mark 82s that we had, we could set the fuse instantaneous. But even instantaneous, there's a little bit of delay and it would delay the fragmentary effects. So if we are doing a target that was going to be a soft target like people, trucks, ammunition, not buried, that sort of thing, we would use our fuse extender bombs first. If it was a hard target, where we wanted to actually crater a road, we used the other bombs first. And then the cluster bombs we'd use against anything that was a soft target.

[00:39:43.26] A lot of our flight discussion was on how we're going to deploy our ordnance. Whether or not we're going to drop it all in one pass, which we called one pass, haul ass, or if we were going to make six, nine, eleven passes, one at a time. One's in, off, two's in, off, three's-- whatever.

[00:40:04.56] JOE GALLOWAY: I hope you didn't do that too often.

[00:40:07.38] RICHARD ANDEREGG: We did it quite often actually. Yeah, actually we did it quite often.

[00:40:13.67] JOE GALLOWAY: It's those repeated passes get you in trouble.

[00:40:16.95] RICHARD ANDEREGG: They are. But if you don't see any ground fire, or you're in a place where there isn't very much, what you do then is you change your roll in headings. Like, number one will roll in from the south, but number two will carry it around and roll in from the east. Number three will carry it around and roll in from the north and mix it up so you're not always coming from the same heading.

[00:40:41.08] We might bump our release altitude up a little bit if we didn't have to be real accurate, so we didn't go so low, which reduces the time of flight for the AAA. And then after we briefed, then we go have another cup of coffee and another couple of cigarettes, fill up our water bottles and then go to life support. And life support was a big deal. Because in life support, you had a lot of things to do.

[00:41:04.12] The most important thing a pilot carried on his person was a survival radio. In my case, I carried two survival radios because-- fighter pilot logic. Do you know what fighter pilot logic is? If some is good, more is better. Or you know what Special Forces guys say? Special Forces guys say, one is none, two is one, which means if you have one of something, you're going to lose it.

[00:41:32.41] JOE GALLOWAY: Or it'll break.

[00:41:33.09] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Or it'll break. But if you have two of something, you're going to lose one or one of them will break. So you had two. Alright, so I had two survival

radios, I had four batteries, then I had all the survival stuff. I had a tourniquet up here that I could get out with one hand, because if you got wounded in the cockpit and you need to put a tourniquet on, you had to do it quick. Tourniquet here, .38 service revolver. Actually, I carried that in a holster on my thigh. I had a big survival knife called a k-bar, over on this side. Water bottle here and here, which are frozen and by the time you get to the runway they were melted. So you could drink it, they were still cool.

[00:42:24.39] And then one of the most important features was, we had a-- looked like a British telephone booth, except it didn't have walls. It had heavy copper wire woven walls like wicker. And you'd go in there and you could take your survival radio out and you could turn it on and make sure it worked. But your transmission wouldn't go outside that room. So somebody out in the airplane or flying in the pattern couldn't hear it.

[00:42:52.39] So you'd go in the room and check both your radios. Then you had on G-suit, harness over top of the survival vest, your helmet, which you put the mask on, hooked up the oxygen, hooked up the comm cord, checked that you could hear and speak, and that you got full oxygen pressure when you needed it. Unhooked all that back in the bag, and then you had your little nav bag with all your maps and all of that stuff. And you lugged that all out and got on what we call a bread truck, which was a step van, big square or whatever. And out, and they would drop you off at the airplanes.

[00:43:26.41] OK, so that's the start of a typical mission. Now the mission itself usually was, I flew 170 of them and I probably remember three or four, alright? Because they were pretty much the same. Rendezvous with a FAC, FAC will tell you what they wanted you to do, if you were a two-ship or a three-ship or a four-ship, how many ordnance you had, what the target was, what the elevation was, what direction he thought the winds were. And he would mark it and until the flight lead say, he had it in sight. And then the flight lead would drop. And the FAC would then make corrections off of that.

[00:43:59.94] Let's say it was three trucks sitting under the edge of the trees, right? So if the first bomb hit 100 meters long, two is just rolling in. The FAC would say to put your bomb or bombs 100 meters short of lead. And he would kind of talk you in. In the F-4, if you could drop a bomb within 300 feet, you were doing pretty good. 300 feet doesn't kill much. A truck, to kill a truck, you have to hit within 15 feet with a Mark 82.

[00:44:34.47] One thing I can tell you is that of all the bombs I dropped in Southeast Asia, they all hit the ground.

[00:44:39.57] JOE GALLOWAY: You were sure to guarantee that.

[00:44:41.52] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I guarantee they all hit the ground. So that's-- and then after the mission was over, after you're done expending your ordnance-- Now, it might be one pass. If you're over in Mu Gia and you were trying to cut a road, you would want to drop all those center line bombs in a string. And usually at about a 30 degree angle across the road with as short an interval as we could set. And you would hope one of them would actually hit it, right?

[00:45:14.25] So if you're over Mu Gia or Ban Karai, you might make only one pass and drop everything on one pass. Because once one rolled in, certainly by the time number two rolled in, if there were guns, they were shooting. They were shooting.

[00:45:29.55] JOE GALLOWAY: You woke them up with that.

[00:45:31.77] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Woke them up, yeah.

[00:45:39.60] The North Vietnamese decided to press their limits. And they brought a SAM, SA2, site across the border into Laos. This was Easter weekend, 1970. We found out about that. They not only put three-- and they all-- this is on a road called Route 7, which was a dirt road, they also put three more on the North Vietnamese side of the border to protect this one that was-- they had brought into North Vietnam.

[00:46:13.91] JOE GALLOWAY: Into Laos.

[00:46:14.87] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Into Laos, yeah. Sorry. So our task was, at Udorn we had four fast FAC crews. Me and Jumper, and three other crews. We were each assigned one of those SAM sites, and we each assigned-- of the full wing of airplanes from each of the four bases. And the idea was we would go up there and we would go down at low altitude and we would find the SAM site. And Jumper and I had the one that was on the Laos side, a Laredo to each of those.

[00:46:51.74] And then here would come this big gorilla of F-4s from Karat, Takhli, Ubon, Udorn, each assigned to a FAC, and we would attack those four SAM sites. That day, Jumper and I found ours and there wasn't anything in it. We could see where the revetments had been plowed and all that stuff, but it wasn't occupied. It was in Laos, but it wasn't occupied.

[00:47:14.12] But the one just over the North Vietnamese border was. And as the F-4s started coming towards it, not the FAC, but the F-4s, they start shooting SAMs, right? Which gives us now, under the rules of engagement, we can attack them because they've shot at us. Now, the fact that we baited them into it--

[00:47:35.47] JOE GALLOWAY: That's alright.

[00:47:36.77] RICHARD ANDEREGG: That's another thing, right? But if you're not cheating, you're not trying, right? So we attacked that SAM site, attacked the other one, attacked the other one, destroyed all three of them. And the next day, when we came back up, Jumper and I, back up, we had another 12 or 14 airplanes, the one in Laos was occupied. And we marked it, our guys rolled in, we corrected their bombs off of it, they shot two or three SAMs at us, it was a real free for all for a while. They had a lot of AAA there, and we destroyed that one too. So that was my best day.

[00:48:15.32] That's easy. It's the day my friend Rick Honey got killed. He was flying a fast FAC mission. Took a single .50 caliber round, came through the cockpit and hit him in the chest, and

bled to death before he could get-- before the front seater could get him back to Udorn. That's an easy one.

[00:48:37.83] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:48:40.90] RICHARD ANDEREGG: The golden BB.

[00:48:43.68] JOE GALLOWAY: You don't think it's going to get you.

[00:48:46.02] RICHARD ANDEREGG: No. I'll tell you. Certainly when you're 23 years old, you absolutely don't.

[00:48:51.55] JOE GALLOWAY: Bulletproof.

[00:48:52.24] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Why would you do that if you did?

[00:48:56.36] JOE GALLOWAY: It's same on the ground, you're bulletproof.

[00:48:59.68] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yeah, exactly.

[00:49:00.67] JOE GALLOWAY: I'm immortal.

[00:49:01.26] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I know, exactly. Right, exactly.

[00:49:03.82] JOE GALLOWAY: They can't lay a finger on me.

[00:49:05.71] RICHARD ANDEREGG: That's right, yeah.

[00:49:07.27] JOE GALLOWAY: Until they do.

[00:49:08.33] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Until they do.

[00:49:15.46] Well first off, the rules for forces in Thailand were different than rules for forces in Vietnam. If you're in Vietnam, you got an R&R, ten day R&R. If you were in Thailand, you could actually take leave. So halfway through my tour, I went home for three weeks. I was home for three weeks. During the five months before that and the five months after that, give or take, letters and tapes, audiotapes. We exchanged lots of letters and lots of audiotapes with my wife and my-- and I exchanged with my wife and my parents.

[00:49:50.32] I did have one voice contact with my wife on the MARS phone when our friend Rick Honey was killed. I called her to tell her--

[00:49:59.23] JOE GALLOWAY: So he was a friend going way back?

[00:50:01.17] RICHARD ANDEREGG: He was a friend going back to all the training that we went through, yeah. Shortly after I went to Udorn, my wife's father got promoted and became the

23rd Corps commander at Da Nang. And her brother was in the Americal down in Vietnam. And so she had her husband, her father, and her brother in combat all at the same time.

[00:50:31.38] JOE GALLOWAY: All at the same time.

[00:50:32.73] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yeah, exactly. So I didn't correspond much with them but I did with her. Now, about what did what did I talk about? I told her what I was doing, what it was like, what the days were like. We made plans for the future. We elected to delay having children until I'd had my combat tour.

[00:51:07.67] We got married the day after college graduation because she was an Army brat so all of her friends were there, were her classmates. And my hometown was only four hours away. So we got-- graduated in the morning, commissioned in the afternoon, married the next day in the chapel at the college.

[00:51:26.94] JOE GALLOWAY: She's an Army brat. She knew how to pack and move.

[00:51:30.06] RICHARD ANDEREGG: She knows how to do that, that's exactly right.

[00:51:36.27] JOE GALLOWAY: How many times have you moved her in her life?

[00:51:39.57] RICHARD ANDEREGG: 17.

[00:51:40.66] JOE GALLOWAY: Only 17?

[00:51:41.52] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Only 17. Yeah, that's not a lot, I know. It isn't. It was a very unusual set of circumstances. I did play my wife a tape from that mission that I told you about that I had because I always carried a recorder in the cockpit with me. One of those-- remember the old cassette, they had the piano keys on them?

[00:52:00.33] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:52:01.06] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Well, we didn't have any recording devices in the airplane in those days that were part of the airplane, right? So a lot of us carried those big old piano key cassette recorders. And, you know, the ear bud you used to put in to listen to your radio or music? Well, if you cut the nipple off that and turn it around so the little hole is out, put it up under your earphone, and then put that in the record side, you can record everything you hear in your headset. All your radio and your intercom.

[00:52:38.07] JOE GALLOWAY: Do you still have that tape?

[00:52:45.97] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I don't know.

[00:52:52.26] I don't think that vets that come home talk much about what they did. And I think that most people totally misunderstand that. I think most people think, if he's going to talk about

it, I'll listen. But I'm not going to ask him because it was painful. I don't think that's why vets don't talk about their experience. And I don't think I did very much either.

[00:53:17.82] The reason I think that vets don't talk about their experiences is that they think that what they did was unremarkable. Second, the bonds that they form are almost unexplainable. Because in many cases, they're even stronger than sibling bonds.

[00:53:39.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Stronger than blood.

[00:53:40.50] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Stronger than blood in many cases. And third, I think they don't think it to be a topic of conversation. And this is certainly true in my case. That was then, this is now. I lived that life, now I'm living this life. And so I don't think about it. I mean, I did my combat tour and except how what I learned in combat applied to what I was doing and flying that day, I didn't really give it a lot of thought after that. I moved on.

[00:54:16.89] JOE GALLOWAY: My dad, six of his brothers, four of my mother's brothers all wore the uniform in World War Two. And when they came home, as kids, we wanted war stories and we couldn't get them out of them. None, none, nada. A joke, something funny, but not the real stuff until I came home on leave from Vietnam.

[00:54:41.66] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yeah, because you joined the brotherhood then. You understood. You understood the bonds, you understood the terror and how quickly it comes and how quickly it goes away. You understood all that.

[00:54:57.57] JOE GALLOWAY: Then they'll talk to you.

[00:54:59.40] RICHARD ANDEREGG: You're in the brotherhood now. Yeah, exactly, I know.

[00:55:02.40] JOE GALLOWAY: But it's strange how they wouldn't say a word until that point.

[00:55:06.78] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I lecture up at Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge to their big teacher's convention. Not convention, but they have-- well, then they have teachers in for the courses, 50 at a time throughout the summer. And I go up there and I lecture about the Vietnam War.

[00:55:23.85] And I'm almost always asked that. Why doesn't my father ever talk about what happened? And that's what I tell them. I tell them the bonds, getting on with your own life, and especially, what I did was not remarkable. I did what everybody was doing, you know.

[00:55:45.22] JOE GALLOWAY: That's a cop out, but OK.

[00:55:47.21] RICHARD ANDEREGG: It is. I'm not saying that's right, I'm saying that people feel that way.

[00:55:50.96] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, they do.

[00:55:52.91] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Ask any Medal of Honor recipient and they'll tell you--

[00:55:56.90] JOE GALLOWAY: I didn't do anything special.

[00:55:58.72] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Didn't do anything anyone else wouldn't have done and I just happened to be the one that was there.

[00:56:06.51] May of 1970. And for a few weeks, and then I went to England. I was there four years.

[00:56:12.42] JOE GALLOWAY: What was that return home like?

[00:56:15.20] RICHARD ANDEREGG: It was warm, happy. I had-- my little part of the country didn't have people-- whatever. But I do want to tell you about my sister. So I know that one of these questions applies, but I'm going to tell you about my half sister. That's why I brought her up at the very beginning.

[00:56:36.33] Because even though I was an only child and she was a half sister from my father's previous marriage, she was my big sister. She was 14 years older than I was. And I thought she was incredibly intelligent, very well-read, very glamorous woman. She protested the war vehemently. She marched in parades, she poked daisies down gun barrels. I mean, actually put daisies down gun barrels.

[00:57:13.04] When I came home from England in 1974, she and I had a chance to spend some time together. And the agreement-- the understanding, not agreement, that's not the right word. But the understanding that we came to was, is that we both saw that we had a duty as citizens of America.

[00:57:37.01] She saw her duty to protest, I saw my duty to serve. I don't approve of the protest, she doesn't approve of the service. But here's the important thing, we both respect each other's decision to do what we did.

[00:57:55.42] JOE GALLOWAY: You got to be able to do that or you are going to lose family.

[00:57:59.32] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yeah. And for example, I'm on the committee, the Vietnam commemorative committee. This topic came up a few days ago at our last meeting. And I said what I've always believed, I've never asked anybody to approve of my decision to go fight in Vietnam. What I expect and I demand is respect for that decision.

[00:58:22.50] JOE GALLOWAY: There it is.

[00:58:27.21] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I served on active duty for 30 years. I retired in '97.

[00:58:32.74] JOE GALLOWAY: They let you keep flying airplanes most of it?

[00:58:35.39] RICHARD ANDEREGG: They did, almost. It was unbelievable. Except for-- well, I flew 25 of those 30 years. I had a staff job here in the Pentagon. And then I had this incredible run where I left the Pentagon in 1984 as a brand new pinned on lieutenant colonel, and I had five flying assignments in a row after that. And it was great. It was great.

[00:59:02.90] JOE GALLOWAY: Incredible.

[00:59:03.95] RICHARD ANDEREGG: It was. Well, just to review the bidding for you real quick. So I left the Pentagon, I went to Bitburg, Germany. That's when I changed to the F-15, alright? Went to Bitburg, Germany, commanded an F-15 squadron, came to Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida in 1986 as a number five guy in the wing there at Tyndall, in the F-15 training unit. Then I went to Seymour Johnson into the F-15E, which was brand new. I was there for a year and a half. Then I went to the Philippines, I went to Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

[00:59:41.54] I was assigned there because I was a colonel then, by then. I was assigned there because that's where the F-15E was supposed to go next. It never ended up there, never got there. But that's why I went there. And then I did the volcano there, Mount Pinatubo volcano.

[00:59:57.73] JOE GALLOWAY: And then we shut it down.

[00:59:59.87] RICHARD ANDEREGG: And shut it down. Which was 25 years ago right now. This is the 25th anniversary year of that. Then I went back to Tyndall. I had two more flying jobs, two more command jobs at Tyndall. And then at 28 years, I went up to Pittsburgh and did my last two years of active duty as an ROTC commander in Pittsburgh.

[01:00:21.09] Yeah, which was a great job and I'd still be there if they did college ROTC with retirees the way they do high school ROTC. I'd still be there, I loved that job.

[01:00:31.26] JOE GALLOWAY: Love that job, huh?

[01:00:33.33] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Yeah.

[01:00:37.71] The ones that were my close friends, I have kept a lot of contact with. We see each other on occasion, especially the ones that live here in the Northern area, there's only two or three who live here in the Northern Virginia area where I live. And my really, really good friend moved out to Arizona in retirement, so I haven't seen him for quite some time.

[01:01:04.51] JOE GALLOWAY: You're going to have to go out.

[01:01:05.52] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I keep track. I keep as close a contact with my ash warrior buddies as I do with my combat buddies, the guys that did the disaster response for the volcano on Clark. I wrote a book about that, by the way.

[01:01:18.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you?

[01:01:19.14] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I did. It's a good book, you should read it. It's called The Ash Warriors.

[01:01:26.69] Boy, I could talk about that for a long time. I'm going to start off by saying this. Oftentimes, I have people come to me and say, where do you-- speaking of young people in the Air Force, right? And they say to me, where do you find these people? And my answer is, we don't find them, we make them.

[01:01:48.23] So the Air Force experience, for me, taught me how to try my best to be honest and loyal, committed, search for excellence. I think those things were probably a little bit in me already as an only child, and especially as a male only child. 80% of fighter pilots are first or only sons, did you know that?

[01:02:29.26] JOE GALLOWAY: I didn't know that.

[01:02:30.27] RICHARD ANDEREGG: 80% of Air Force and Navy fighter pilots are first, oldest, or only sons. The Air Force taught me how to realize those kinds of things. I am a far, far better person for two things in my life; my wife and the Air Force.

[01:02:52.74] And my wife grew up in an Army environment. I had a lot of counseling back in the day when I was a young guy from my father-in-law after his retirement, about how to be a commander, and what it meant to be honest, and what it meant to be fair, and what it meant to not look the other way, and what it meant to stand up and do what's right.

[01:03:22.80] And he would say, you're never wrong when you do what's right. And the Air Force taught me those things. Now, don't get me wrong, the Air Force did not turn me into the second coming of Christ. I still fall short many times. But one of the things is that the Air Force taught me how to do is, when you screw it up, fix it.

[01:03:47.85] So yeah, I owe whatever kind of human being-- And I'm not talking about being successful, making money, being promoted. I am talking about whatever kind of human being I am today, I owe to the Air Force and my wife.

[01:04:07.57] JOE GALLOWAY: And your wife.

[01:04:08.34] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I'll tell you what it did for me and my contemporaries, it motivated us. I truly believe that one of the things that's great about America is that we can be self-critical. I think that's one of American citizens' greatest assets, is the ability to be self-critical. And I think after the Vietnam War, I think we were very self-critical. Not because we thought we had done badly, but because we thought we could have done so much better.

[01:04:48.38] You know what the joke was in the Air Force because we had either 100 mission or one year tours. We were winning when I was there, I don't know what happened, right? But the ability to be self-critical and especially about our training. Our training was so bad, it was awful. And I wrote a book about that too, by the way. Our training was so bad.

[01:05:15.05] We came back, the young guys. And I'll tell you, the young guys that came back in the fighter force in 1970, in the mid-1970s, made a huge difference in the Air Force of today, made a huge difference. Now, there were ones that cut and ran and went to the airlines, and said I've had it. But the ones that stuck around said, we can do this better. We can make this better.

[01:05:41.63] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, particularly with the Air Force, the aviators, political messing with targeting decisions.

[01:05:55.70] RICHARD ANDEREGG: That was awful.

[01:05:57.65] JOE GALLOWAY: That was murderous.

[01:05:59.46] RICHARD ANDEREGG: It so hurt our morale. Yes, exactly. Because we knew that we couldn't hit the MiG bases with the MiGs on the ground. We knew that we couldn't hit the hydroelectric plants because they were too close to civilian areas and there would be collateral damage. We knew we couldn't mine Haiphong Harbor, we knew we couldn't attack shipping that was coming in, despite the fact that our "allies" were bringing ships of stuff into North Vietnam. We really felt as though our hands were tied.

[01:06:39.51] And once you're like that, and it's a lot-- You know what? For many years, they called it the Vietnam conflict. It wasn't a conflict to me. When somebody is shooting at you, that's a war, right? Is that I'm here putting my ass on the line and you don't understand, for me it's life and death, and for you it's a political decision.

[01:07:03.35] You know, we lost 2,200 airplanes during the Vietnam conflict. There'd be a hell of a lot of airplanes that were lost. A lot less airplanes that were lost, a lot less people that were killed. And not just Americans, Vietnamese.

[01:07:22.11] Think twice when a politician in Washington tells you that going to war is a good idea. War is horrible, awful and ugly. And should only be as an absolute, last possible resort to something that is an existential threat to America.

[01:07:47.43] Second, I hold no ill will to the protesters of the Vietnam War. I will give all of them the credit that they were doing what they thought was the right thing to do at the right time. It's your duty as a citizen to step up and say what you think, whether you're right or wrong, win or lose. Be an American, say what you think.

[01:08:17.72] JOE GALLOWAY: You've been to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial?

[01:08:20.60] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Many times. I was there when it was dedicated.

[01:08:24.95] JOE GALLOWAY: What are your impressions when you visit?

[01:08:28.25] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Oh, I'm sad. 58,000--

[01:08:30.88] JOE GALLOWAY: 315.

[01:08:33.53] RICHARD ANDEREGG: Names, you know. Didn't have to be that way. Didn't have to be that way.

[01:08:48.19] Oh I think it's wonderful, I think it's wonderful. I understand the mission to thank veterans and their families. It's a great way to do it, it kind of covers the waterfront. Vietnam era veterans and their families. But like I said, from my personal viewpoint, I never wanted it, I never asked anybody to thank me.

[01:09:10.03] I mean, I volunteered. I went. I went and did what I thought was the right thing to do. You should never be thanked for doing the right thing, in my view. I just want people to understand-- I just want people to respect the decision I made for what it was. That's it.

[01:09:29.11] But I think that this effort is a very worthwhile effort. Every person-- In fact, I told a friend about it who's a Vietnam Army helicopter vet this weekend. I said Jim, have you heard about this? And he had heard nothing about it. Well hey look, there's 350 million. Well, there are seven million vets that served during the Vietnam era. And we already know that 10% never get the word.

[01:09:59.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Never get the word.

[01:10:00.60] RICHARD ANDEREGG: I knew that would make you laugh.

[01:10:03.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Colonel, thank you.

[01:10:05.20] RICHARD ANDEREGG: We're good.

[01:10:05.66] JOE GALLOWAY: Great interview.

[01:10:06.36] RICHARD ANDEREGG: OK, great. Thank you.