

## **Beal, Randy USMC**

[00:00:15.21] JOE GALLOWAY: When and where were you born?

[00:00:17.01] RANDY BEAL: July 7, 1948. Provo, Utah.

[00:00:20.85] JOE GALLOWAY: Provo, Utah. Who were your family members?

[00:00:24.93] RANDY BEAL: I had an older sister named Janet and my mother Alice.

[00:00:29.97] JOE GALLOWAY: Your hometown, do you consider Provo? Is that where you--  
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[00:00:32.96] RANDY BEAL: No, Blue Bell. Blue Bell is my hometown. RANDY BEAL: My stepfather was a Marine in World War II, done a lot of Island hopping, and I figured I never met his expectations.

[00:00:51.70] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, my.

[00:00:53.46] RANDY BEAL: So when I turned 17, I had Mom sign for me to join the Marine Corps.

[00:00:58.10] JOE GALLOWAY: This was what year?

[00:00:59.54] RANDY BEAL: 19-- April 9, 1966.

[00:01:04.43] JOE GALLOWAY: '66. Vietnam War was underway, but just barely.

[00:01:09.56] RANDY BEAL: Yeah.

[00:01:10.25] JOE GALLOWAY: What were-- what did you know about it at that point?

[00:01:13.40] RANDY BEAL: I remember reading about it in American problems. And I was just hoping like hell it wouldn't be over before I got old enough to enlist.

[00:01:22.13] JOE GALLOWAY: You and me too.

[00:01:27.76] RANDY BEAL: MCRD, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

[00:01:32.08] JOE GALLOWAY: San Diego. And advanced? Did you do any advanced training past that?

[00:01:39.61] RANDY BEAL: No, on the last day of graduate-- or basic, they handed out our MOSs and everybody in the platoon got 0311 and sent to Vietnam. And they made me a 2143 Ontos mechanic. So I got sent to Camp Pendleton at Camp Del Mar for two weeks of missed duty. Then I had two weeks ITR, Infantry Training Regiment, and then--

[00:02:11.43] JOE GALLOWAY: You did need training on being a mechanic on an Ontos.

[00:02:15.36] RANDY BEAL: Yes, and they sent me to Camp Del Mar for six weeks, Ontos-man school.

[00:02:21.99] JOE GALLOWAY: All right, and then to Vietnam.

[00:02:24.00] RANDY BEAL: No. Then they sent me to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. And I put in for transfer every week for Vietnam. And after six weeks it finally come through.

[00:02:38.87] JOE GALLOWAY: Aah. You wanted to go.

[00:02:41.10] RANDY BEAL: Oh yes.

[00:02:41.69] JOE GALLOWAY: All right.

[00:02:42.72] RANDY BEAL: Yes, I was very disappointed.

[00:02:45.90] JOE GALLOWAY: They were sending you the wrong direction.

[00:02:47.83] RANDY BEAL: Yes. RANDY BEAL: My orders were for an Ontos mechanic, and I figured I'd get there if I was a mechanic or rifleman. And went back to California at Camp Pendleton for two weeks, Vietnam training. And we flew into Da Nang, I think it was September 7th or 8th.

[00:03:21.34] JOE GALLOWAY: '66?

[00:03:22.84] RANDY BEAL: '67.

[00:03:25.33] JOE GALLOWAY: Your first impressions when they opened that plane door.

[00:03:28.84] RANDY BEAL: Well, when I got to the door to get out, the heat hit me, the humidity hit me, and the smells hit me.

[00:03:36.73] JOE GALLOWAY: All at once.

[00:03:38.38] RANDY BEAL: All at once, and it felt like a ton of bricks landed on you. I was assigned to a transit barracks. Operation SWIFT was going on at the time. And the commander says, you, you, you and you are now riflemen, you're going to the 5th Marines.

[00:04:00.10] JOE GALLOWAY: And you were happy?

[00:04:01.18] RANDY BEAL: I was happy as a lark. They sent us to Hill 65, which was regimental headquarters. We spent one or two days there, I can't remember for sure, and then to Que Son, Hill 51.

[00:04:22.75] JOE GALLOWAY: Mm-hm. That was out in the middle of nowhere.

[00:04:24.31] RANDY BEAL: Yes.

[00:04:25.96] JOE GALLOWAY: Flew in?

[00:04:28.39] RANDY BEAL: Choppered in.

[00:04:29.23] JOE GALLOWAY: Choppered in, Yeah.

[00:04:30.76] RANDY BEAL: Assigned me to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. 2nd Platoon, 1st Squad.

[00:04:44.46] RANDY BEAL: I lived in a bunker, ate C-rats, and done a lot of patrolling and ambushing.

[00:04:55.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Sleeping on the ground when you were doing that.

[00:04:56.96] RANDY BEAL: Yes. Yeah. RANDY BEAL: Most of them was very professional. They just got through Operation SWIFT. And the ones that were there were very humble, and very glad to be alive. We had a very good relationship with them.

[00:05:21.95] JOE GALLOWAY: Now '67, there's starting to be a lot of turmoil at home and racial tensions and stuff like that, any of that come over to where you were?

[00:05:35.66] RANDY BEAL: Just what we got in Stars and Stripes.

[00:05:37.79] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:05:38.90] RANDY BEAL: And the stories weren't very pretty.

[00:05:42.71] JOE GALLOWAY: What did you guys do for off duty time, if you had any?

[00:05:47.00] RANDY BEAL: There was no such thing as off duty. You were on patrols in daytime, and ambushes at night.

[00:05:53.00] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, pretty constant.

[00:05:54.71] RANDY BEAL: Yes, every day.

[00:06:01.39] JOE GALLOWAY: Can you describe the quality of the leadership in your unit.

[00:06:05.78] RANDY BEAL: It was very good, really good.

[00:06:09.13] JOE GALLOWAY: Sergeants, lieutenants, captains?

[00:06:11.05] RANDY BEAL: The lieutenant, squad leader, and platoon sergeant were very professional.

[00:06:23.95] JOE GALLOWAY: Now you served multiple tours.

[00:06:26.71] RANDY BEAL: Yes, three tours.

[00:06:28.35] JOE GALLOWAY: Two with the Marines.

[00:06:29.20] RANDY BEAL: Two with the Marines, one with the Army.

[00:06:32.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Did that quality of leadership change over that time?

[00:06:37.45] RANDY BEAL: I was very fortunate to have very good leaders.

[00:06:41.20] JOE GALLOWAY: Throughout?

[00:06:41.62] RANDY BEAL: Throughout.

[00:06:45.82] JOE GALLOWAY: Can you describe significant actions that you-- or operations that you participated in those three tours?

[00:06:55.66] RANDY BEAL: The only ones I can remember, I got there at the end of SWIFT. After that, we went to Hoi An, and a lot of patrolling and firefights and stuff there.

[00:07:13.71] JOE GALLOWAY: You went north to Phu Bai?

[00:07:15.58] RANDY BEAL: Then we went north to Phu Bai.

[00:07:17.65] JOE GALLOWAY: Hue City?

[00:07:18.43] RANDY BEAL: Then we went south to-- I can't remember the name of the town. It was right at the base of Bach Ma. That's one of the highest mountains in South Vietnam.

[00:07:30.70] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your unit get involved in the Hue City fight, in the end?

[00:07:35.08] RANDY BEAL: Yes. January 30th we was out on an ambush, and we were seeing some Vietnamese coming down the trail. I took the point man out with my Ka-Bar, and kept on walking. And when the rest of them walked in the squad opened up on them and killed them. And then all hell broke loose. What we had ambushed was the point unit of a regiment--

[00:08:05.38] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh dear.

[00:08:06.67] RANDY BEAL: --of NVA. And there was eight of us.

[00:08:08.77] JOE GALLOWAY: With a squad or a platoon?

[00:08:10.21] RANDY BEAL: Squad. There was eight of us.

[00:08:13.57] JOE GALLOWAY: I hope you ran?

[00:08:14.68] RANDY BEAL: We ran like hell, and--

[00:08:17.09] JOE GALLOWAY: And were the bad guys coming after you?

[00:08:18.82] RANDY BEAL: Yes. I found a little hedgerow, and we crawled into that.

[00:08:24.04] JOE GALLOWAY: Let them go by.

[00:08:25.17] RANDY BEAL: No, they didn't. They stopped and was looking for us. And we called in Puff, a C-130 gunship.

[00:08:34.48] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:08:35.17] RANDY BEAL: And he opened fire with his miniguns, 6,000 rounds a minute. And the next morning there was NVA all over the rice paddies. And not one of us got scratched and--

[00:08:51.61] JOE GALLOWAY: How many they take out?

[00:08:53.68] RANDY BEAL: It was a couple of hundred.

[00:08:55.09] JOE GALLOWAY: Couple of hundred. Got them out in the open.

[00:08:57.37] RANDY BEAL: Oh yeah. Yeah, there was-- the rice paddies. They looked along the dykes for us and stuff. Couldn't find us.

[00:09:06.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Tell me about going into Hue City. That was a nasty fight.

[00:09:12.64] RANDY BEAL: January 31, the morning after we got out of the rice paddy-- or out of the hedgerow-- we met up with the platoon. And we had this one little black kid named Mackey, he was very, very nervous, didn't want to be in Vietnam. He was a pothead, and he started screaming out, there's gooks, there's gooks, there's gooks.

[00:09:45.34] And I was walking point. I always walked point. And I turned around to tell him there was nobody over there. And he fired his rifle, and the barrel was about this far from my face, and the bullet caught me right in the corner of the eye and ricocheted off to the side. And I was blind in both eyes, powder burns.

[00:10:11.23] And they sent me to the USS Repose. And I was on the Repose for four weeks, and then back to Vietnam. And then I joined up with the unit in Hue City. And I didn't know anybody, all the guys that I knew before had been wounded and medevacked. And--

[00:10:37.27] JOE GALLOWAY: So it was a different outfit.

[00:10:38.74] RANDY BEAL: It was a totally different outfit.

[00:10:40.72] JOE GALLOWAY: Just in one month's time.

[00:10:42.31] RANDY BEAL: Yeah, but people that were wounded were refusing to be medevacked. They wanted to stay. They didn't want to leave their buddies. Some of them was wounded so bad-- they had to be medevacked-- going block to block, house to house.

[00:11:02.35] JOE GALLOWAY: Were they still doing that house to house when you got there?

[00:11:06.79] RANDY BEAL: Yes.

[00:11:07.20] JOE GALLOWAY: So you saw the tail end of the Hue city recapture.

[00:11:10.12] RANDY BEAL: Yeah.

[00:11:12.25] JOE GALLOWAY: That was some bad stuff.

[00:11:13.96] RANDY BEAL: It was very bad.

[00:11:21.90] JOE GALLOWAY: Describe for me the worst day you had during your tour, probably when you got shot in the head.

[00:11:30.54] RANDY BEAL: That wasn't bad because I got a Purple Heart, and Dad got a Purple Heart in World War II.

[00:11:37.17] JOE GALLOWAY: All right.

[00:11:38.04] RANDY BEAL: So I matched him. My worst day was April 22, 1968. And we had new lieutenant. He wasn't-- I didn't think very much of him-- and was getting ready-- it was on a battalion-sized operation on our way up to Khe Sanh to try to relieve the siege. And he sent my squad across a rice paddy. I was the squad leader by then.

[00:12:16.29] And we started taking machine gun fire and I pulled back and I told the lieutenant to call in an air strike. He wouldn't do it. So I called in an air strike and they dropped napalm. Then he sent my squad across, sub security for the rest of the battalion. And when he came over he found three dead people. And he just blew up.

[00:12:41.73] JOE GALLOWAY: Three dead North Vietnamese?

[00:12:44.22] RANDY BEAL: North Vietnamese.

[00:12:45.40] JOE GALLOWAY: What was he mad about?

[00:12:46.89] RANDY BEAL: That they was dead. I don't know what. He was-- getting drafted, he ran to Australia to get out of the draft. And then they find him in Australia, so--

[00:13:00.57] JOE GALLOWAY: They made him a lieutenant?

[00:13:01.29] RANDY BEAL: He went OCS. He had some college, so they made him a lieutenant.

[00:13:09.00] JOE GALLOWAY: Don't sound like he's going to last too long?

[00:13:11.13] RANDY BEAL: He didn't last very long, no. But anyway the battalion come across. Then he sent my squad out on a last light patrol. And we got ambushed. And a grenade got me in the legs. I got hit 27 times in the legs. And I died twice that night, and they kept-- they revived me both times.

[00:13:38.19] JOE GALLOWAY: You were shot up bad.

[00:13:38.97] RANDY BEAL: Yeah, and getting medevacked was the worst day in Vietnam.

[00:13:47.94] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, I guess. Where did they send you to, the Repose?

[00:13:51.96] RANDY BEAL: No, the first time I got wounded, I went on the Repose. The second time I refused to be medevacked. And then two days later I got hit in the legs. And that was my third Purple Heart.

[00:14:06.48] And they sent me to Da Nang, 1st Med. From there I went to Yokosuka, Japan. I spent two months in Yokosuka, Japan, recuperating. They were going to take my legs off, my right one at my hip, and my left one at the knee. And I put up a little bit of a stink, so they left them on.

[00:14:36.63] JOE GALLOWAY: And they cleaned up OK?

[00:14:38.46] RANDY BEAL: They healed up pretty good, yeah. I just recently I had my right foot-- my toes were all hammered. And years ago, I had an operation and most of-- four of them straightened out pretty good. My big toe was still hammered, and every time it hit the ground-- I got shrapnel in my nerve in my right ankle-- it would send a shock up through my leg.

[00:15:06.63] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:15:06.93] RANDY BEAL: Well, last year I decided to get it fixed. So they operated on it, straightened the toe out, put a screw in it, and the screw come out. So they operated on it again, put a bone graft in, put two screws in, screws came out again. So then they had to take the toe off.

[00:15:29.49] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, man.

[00:15:30.60] RANDY BEAL: And that's why I'm wearing this funny boot.

[00:15:35.40] JOE GALLOWAY: At least your ankle nerve isn't getting shot every time you move your toe.

[00:15:40.44] RANDY BEAL: No, but when the straightened the toe out and took it off most of the pain went out of my leg. Because that toe wasn't hitting the ground every time and sending the shock up through.

[00:15:53.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, after you finished at your good they sent you back to back to Vietnam.

[00:15:58.89] RANDY BEAL: No, they sent me to-- back to Pendleton and made me an MP. And I spent nine months as an MP at Camp Pendleton and I transferred to Patuxent River, Maryland as desk sergeant for the MP's there. That was Naval Air Station.

[00:16:26.76] And then I had two brothers die and another brother was getting drafted. And Mom was going spastic, afraid he'd be sent to Vietnam and killed. Mom was going crazy, so I waived my disability and--

[00:16:44.62] JOE GALLOWAY: Got out of the Marines?

[00:16:46.00] RANDY BEAL: No, volunteered to go back to Vietnam so my little brother wouldn't have to go if he got drafted.

[00:16:52.63] JOE GALLOWAY: So that's second tour.

[00:16:54.15] RANDY BEAL: That was my second tour.

[00:16:56.52] JOE GALLOWAY: And where did they send for that?

[00:16:57.93] RANDY BEAL: I went to Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. And we started on Go Noi Island and Arizona Territory. And then the Marine Corps wanted to start a new program called the CUPP, Combined Units Pacification Program.

[00:17:22.77] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, where they put you out in the village.

[00:17:25.65] RANDY BEAL: Yeah my squad was the first one to try it and we were very successful, so they adopted it. And I got a Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Combat V for the way I was able to bring the villages in our area together and protect their rice and everything.

[00:17:49.62] And on December 5, '69 a force of over 200 VC attacked our village and there was 12 Marines and 30 Popular Forces there. And we fought them off and I got a Navy Commendation with V for that. And after that they didn't bother us anymore. And the villages was all happy, because they kept their rice supply, didn't have share with the VC.



[00:18:34.24] RANDY BEAL: Well, we stayed with the village chief. He had a cement hooch. And he had one big room off the side. And that's where we kept our supplies, C-rats and stuff like that. And he had a daughter that was about 18, and she was married. And December 6, we found him face up out by the well, he was a VC. And after that things--

[00:19:11.73] JOE GALLOWAY: Who did him in?

[00:19:13.00] RANDY BEAL: We don't know. One of us. But after that things cooled down quite a bit. And we didn't have any more problems. And then in June they relieved me as the squad leader. And made me a supply sergeant. And we moved to an Army compound just off of Hill 41, which was the 1st Marine Brigade-- or Regiment.

[00:19:50.33] I guess my worst day on that tour was civilian buses going to Hoi An one day and they hit a 500 pound landmine. And we had to go out and help them pick up the parts and try to put them together. And there was over 50 people on that bus.

[00:20:10.52] JOE GALLOWAY: And they were all killed.

[00:20:11.48] RANDY BEAL: They was all killed, all completely dismembered. And trying to figure out what arm went with what body and what leg went with what body and whatnot that was a pretty gruesome scene.

[00:20:30.96] RANDY BEAL: On my first tour, we was working with the ARVNs. And one of them got hit right in front of me. And half a dozen of them run out to get him, and they was all hunkering over him and then they pulled back and the guy was still laying there, but he was naked.

[00:20:51.93] JOE GALLOWAY: They took his clothes.

[00:20:53.07] RANDY BEAL: They took his clothes. And I said that's the last time I ever want to work with Vietnamese. But my second tour they was pretty good when I worked with PFs.

[00:21:10.60] RANDY BEAL: Just writing letters back and forth.

[00:21:13.57] JOE GALLOWAY: How much news did you get about the war you were fighting, about politics, and the demonstrations back home that kind of stuff.

[00:21:23.14] RANDY BEAL: Politics, demonstrations is just what they printed in the Stars and Stripes. And Mom would write and say that they watched the news every night looking for me, but they never saw me.

[00:21:37.97] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you feel that whatever was going on back home had any effect on you?

[00:21:43.48] RANDY BEAL: Yes.

[00:21:44.32] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:21:45.16] RANDY BEAL: A big effect, that's why I stayed in Vietnam, one of the reasons. Because I knew what was happening there, and I couldn't get along with the civilians at home.

[00:22:04.34] RANDY BEAL: Yeah, I got discharged out of the Marine Corps, I think it was August 9th of '70. Came home, got a job working for Associated Foods in Salt Lake. And I worked swing shift because I got an extra \$0.10 an hour. And I was working with draft dodgers and college kids. And it was just a constant fight, we fought every night. Didn't get many trucks loaded.

[00:22:36.83] And I worked there for a month, drew my time. I went up to Wyoming and I worked as a lumberjack through October. And I was ass deep in snow trying to cut down trees. And I said, what the hell am I doing? So I drew my time there, got in my car, and I drove to California, back to Oceanside, and laid out on the beach for 30 days and drunk.

[00:23:07.25] And then I hawked-- I had run out of money, so I hawked an old rifle I had, got \$20, drove back to Salt Lake. Ran out of gas at 4th, 4th, south of Main Street. And a recruiting office was right across the street. So I walked in to join the Marine Corps again and they wouldn't take me.

[00:23:27.77] JOE GALLOWAY: They wouldn't have you.

[00:23:28.41] RANDY BEAL: No, so I joined the Army and the guy says, when do you want to go? And I said, right now. And a wrecker came and towed my car. I never saw that again. And the next day I was on my way to Fort Lewis, Washington. And that was quite an experience going from the Marine Corps basic training to the Army's.

[00:23:54.42] JOE GALLOWAY: Right. You had to go back through basic?

[00:23:56.76] RANDY BEAL: I didn't have to go through basic, all I had to stay there till I got my uniforms. They kept me at Fort Lewis for three or four months, then they sent me to Yakima, Washington.

[00:24:11.38] And I kept putting in transfers to go back to Vietnam and one of them finally come through. And I went back to Vietnam. I was with--

[00:24:22.16] JOE GALLOWAY: '71 by now?

[00:24:24.46] RANDY BEAL: '71, yeah, and--

[00:24:33.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, who did they send you to when you got back to in Vietnam?

[00:24:36.56] RANDY BEAL: I went to the 2nd of the 5th Cav, 1st Cavalry. JOE GALLOWAY: 1st Cav Div. RANDY BEAL: Yeah, it was based out of Bien Hoa just east of Saigon-- or west of Saigon.

[00:24:52.90] JOE GALLOWAY: Things were a little different from the Marine Corps?

[00:24:54.94] RANDY BEAL: It was way different. On our first operation we was out in triple canopy. And we run across the gook supply column. And we opened fire on them and naturally they dropped all their stuff and took off. But one of them got wounded. Well, I charged. That's what we did in the Marine Corps. The rest of them pulled back and called in artillery.

[00:25:22.78] JOE GALLOWAY: No.

[00:25:23.92] RANDY BEAL: So me and this gook were laying out there and mortar rounds pop off around us. And the captain come up and he says what the hell are you doing Sergeant? JOE GALLOWAY: Taking a prisoner. RANDY BEAL: Yeah, and we got him alive.

[00:25:40.36] JOE GALLOWAY: You're lucky you were.

[00:25:41.77] RANDY BEAL: Yes, but after that I knew not to charge out anymore. I went over in August and they pulled us out in May, they was bringing the Cav home to Fort Lewis-- or Fort Hood, Texas.

[00:25:57.61] JOE GALLOWAY: Fort Hood, Texas, yeah. That was the last of the Cav.

[00:25:59.86] RANDY BEAL: Yeah, and I tried to volunteer for another rifle company in a different unit that wasn't being pulled out. And they wouldn't let me. So I told them I'd stay as a military police. And they wouldn't let me do that either. So I had to go to Fort Hood, Texas with the colors--

[00:26:19.53] JOE GALLOWAY: With what was left of the Cav.

[00:26:21.19] RANDY BEAL: Yeah. but on the way, on my 30 day leave, I ended up getting married. And took her to Tempe, Texas, we had an apartment. And I was an MP. And race riots and civilian riots was in full swing. And I'd had a particularly rough day one day with a big race riot.

[00:26:56.92] And I stopped at the bar on the way home to have a couple of beers to cool off. And I told the barmaid to call my wife and tell her I was on my way home in a few minutes. When I got home, she'd packed up and gone. And next day I volunteered to go back to Vietnam again.

[00:27:18.04] JOE GALLOWAY: And did they send you?

[00:27:19.95] RANDY BEAL: No. So I re-enlisted to go back to Vietnam. And I made it as far as Oakland. And they says, no more combat troops to Vietnam. I said, you still got MPs, don't

you? And they said, yes. I said, I'll go as an MP, that's my secondary MOS. They said, no, you've been there too many times.

[00:27:41.10] So they sent me to Fort Lewis. When I got to Fort Lewis I tried to get out of the Army on a breach of contract. And they said, no, you can choose your duty station. So my brother was stationed in Germany, and I hadn't seen him in quite a few years. So I volunteered to go to Germany.

[00:28:04.47] And there I end up at Schweinfurt, with Hohenfels and Grafenwoehr, the training area. And I'd have never decide to come across the border, our town was a town named Hail H-A-I-L

[00:28:22.41] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:28:22.98] RANDY BEAL: We called it Hell. And our sole purpose-- JOE GALLOWAY: Was as a speed bump. RANDY BEAL: --for our brigade, was to slow Ivan down for five minutes. And I found me a nice little guesthouse. And there was a pretty fraulein in there. And I says, I'm going to die with a fraulein on my lap, a beer in my hand and the 60 in the other hand.

[00:28:51.12] JOE GALLOWAY: There you go.

[00:28:52.40] RANDY BEAL: And that was my spot. I spent three years in Germany. And then I was out on the Reforger one year, and my leg gave out. And they medevacked me to Würzburg, operated on me and classified me as for-- gave me P for profile, no marching standing, running, nothing.

[00:29:23.24] And then they decided to discharge me.

[00:29:27.08] JOE GALLOWAY: Medical retirement.

[00:29:28.43] RANDY BEAL: Medical. And I fought that, and there was one job I qualified for in the Army and that was a desk job. And I couldn't handle sitting behind the desk. I got out.

[00:29:42.89] JOE GALLOWAY: You got out. What year?

[00:29:45.72] RANDY BEAL: December, 31, 1975.

[00:29:48.89] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, the war was over then.

[00:29:50.75] RANDY BEAL: The war was over, no use staying in.

[00:29:54.95] JOE GALLOWAY: What did you do after you left the Army?

[00:30:00.71] RANDY BEAL: My brother was working for an international explosives company, in Lehigh, Utah called Ireco Chemicals. And he says, they're hiring, go put in an application. I went down, put in an application. Never heard a thing.

[00:30:23.04] And he said, did you put it in that application? I said, yeah. He says, go put in another one. They're going to hire a bunch more. So I went down, put in an application again, never heard a thing. And I done it for the third time, only the third time I put down that I've never been in the service. And I got hired that day. JOE GALLOWAY: Got hired that day. RANDY BEAL: Yeah.

[00:30:44.13] JOE GALLOWAY: That's a hell of a note.

[00:30:45.99] RANDY BEAL: Yeah, it was, just showed me how much they thought about our veterans. Of course, that's where things were back then too.

[00:30:54.68] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you have difficulty readjusting to life after the military?

[00:30:58.98] RANDY BEAL: Yes, I had a very hard time. I had flashbacks, PTSD-- of course, they didn't know what it was-- and depression, anxiety, all that stuff.

[00:31:13.98] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, the whole nine yards.

[00:31:15.48] RANDY BEAL: Yeah, one night I had a friend from Germany that was getting sent back to the States. And he called me up, and I told him I'd met him in Lehigh. And I put my uniform on. And I went to the bar called the Wrong Number, and sitting there started drinking, waiting for my friend to show up.

[00:31:41.50] And one of the guys in there, an older gentleman, he started hassling with me. So I decked him. And they called the cops, and after the cops from Lehigh, Pleasant Grove, and American Fork all come over to assist--

[00:32:00.71] JOE GALLOWAY: They needed all of them?

[00:32:01.93] RANDY BEAL: They need all of them, there were six of them in the hospital.

[00:32:05.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Whoa, you cleaned them up.

[00:32:08.34] RANDY BEAL: I cleaned house. And they finally got me strapped into a gurney, and sent me over to the American Fork hospital. And I was fighting trying to get-- break the bounds. And the doctor came in and he took one look and says, I ain't going to touch that guy. He said, send him up to VA.

[00:32:33.33] Well, they sent me up to VA, put me in a strait-jacket, and a padded cell. Came in every eight hours, gave me a shot of Thorazine, and after three days opened the door and kicked me out. No shoes, no belt, no nothing. And that's the way the VA treated us back then.

[00:32:59.82] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your Vietnam experience change you, and affect your life afterward? I'd say so.

[00:33:05.82] RANDY BEAL: Yes, very much so. And I've been in a PTSD group now for 22 years. And on medication, and my daughter can attest to this: before that I was one ornery son of a bitch, very violent with the kids, very violent with everybody around. I got divorced from their mother.

[00:33:40.50] And was coming back from Tooele one day, and a van cut me off. I ran him down, run him off the road, got out of the car, and went over and tried to pull him out of his van. But I couldn't do it, and I was just screaming at him. And the kids was in the back seat screaming and crying, stop Daddy, stop, stop, don't do it. It was very hard through them years. But now I'm on the right medication. I've been to-- let's see, Denver PTSD program once, Menlo Park four times, Sheridan, Wyoming once, American Lakes, Washington once, and Boise, Idaho once.

[00:34:35.91] JOE GALLOWAY: You've seen them all?

[00:34:37.01] RANDY BEAL: I went to most of them, yeah. But now I'm on an even keel. And my kids like me, my grandkids like me, my wife likes me. And I'm a happy man.

[00:34:50.01] JOE GALLOWAY: You're a happy guy.

[00:34:51.30] RANDY BEAL: Yeah.

[00:34:53.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your time in Vietnam affect the way you think about troops coming home from the wars today.

[00:35:02.20] RANDY BEAL: First, I was a little bit jealous of them. I know-- I remember when--

[00:35:07.77] JOE GALLOWAY: The Gulf War.

[00:35:09.16] RANDY BEAL: The Gulf War, the first I broke out. I went down and tried to enlist. And they said, get the hell out of here grandpa. And I said, but you know, I might be old, but I got a lot of experience.

[00:35:22.12] JOE GALLOWAY: I know about that stuff.

[00:35:24.19] RANDY BEAL: And they said, we can't use you. And at first, I was very resentful at the way that they got treated when they come home versus the way we was treated.

[00:35:38.42] JOE GALLOWAY: But they were getting mad because of the bad way--

[00:35:41.38] RANDY BEAL: Because of the way we were treated. And after I realized that then I started respecting them. My daughter got--

[00:35:49.96] JOE GALLOWAY: When they would have those parades, they would go along the road pulling the Vietnam vets off the sidewalk and say, you march with us.

[00:35:57.46] RANDY BEAL: Well, I never went to any of the parades. I never saw any of them. So I don't know about that.

[00:36:05.71] JOE GALLOWAY: What do you think that war meant to you and your generation? The Vietnam War.

[00:36:13.22] RANDY BEAL: In a sense I think it was needed to break up-- straighten out the government. And the hippies and all of them that was doing all the rioting, and hell no, we won't go, and burning their draft cards, and everything, they're all congressmen now. So--

[00:36:40.09] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, very likely.

[00:36:41.74] RANDY BEAL: Well, Blumenthal, is one that-- I went to Vietnam, he never seen-- went in the service.

[00:36:54.29] JOE GALLOWAY: How do you think the Vietnam War is remembered in our society today, or is it?

[00:36:59.72] RANDY BEAL: Today it's starting to be remembered more. And--

[00:37:05.30] JOE GALLOWAY: More positively?

[00:37:06.65] RANDY BEAL: Positive. People are treating us with respect and say thank you for your service and stuff like that.

[00:37:16.91] JOE GALLOWAY: Are there lessons you took from three tours in Vietnam, that you would like to pass on?

[00:37:23.75] RANDY BEAL: Only the one that when it's your time to die, you're going to die. And it don't matter where you're at or what you're doing.

[00:37:31.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, not all the bullets have your name on it. Some of them are addressed: To Whom It May Concern. JOE GALLOWAY: Have you visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in DC?

[00:37:50.17] RANDY BEAL: Three times.

[00:37:51.89] JOE GALLOWAY: What are your thoughts when you go there?

[00:37:55.27] RANDY BEAL: Very humble. I don't know too many names on there, but there's a lot of them on there with the guys I served with. But we all went by nicknames in Vietnam. And they didn't put nicknames on the Wall.

[00:38:10.18] JOE GALLOWAY: You're right.

[00:38:11.05] RANDY BEAL: So I only know three, Rodney Davis, that would have been my first squad leader. He was awarded the Medal of Honor. Willie Davis from Knoxville, Tennessee. He was so proud to be a volunteer. And he got killed December 26, '67 on a cease fire. We had to abide by them, but the Vietnamese didn't.

[00:38:53.60] And then in the Army it was Buford Drinnon. He was from a little town in Oklahoma, I can't remember the name right off the bat. But he went to NCO school, Ranger school, every school he could to keep from going to Vietnam. After he had all this education behind him, they sent him to Vietnam.

[00:39:20.72] JOE GALLOWAY: And gets killed.

[00:39:22.16] RANDY BEAL: And we was best friends. And I was a platoon sergeant, he was the 1st Squad leader. And one day the company commandant says, we got one R&R. And we was the two seniors to get R&R, so we cut cards. He drew the ace of hearts, and I got the ace of spades. I went on R&R.

[00:39:48.66] I come back and-- I was in Bien Hoa and they was unloading some bodies off a chopper. And I got on that chopper, went back to my unit. And come to find out that the body that they was unloading was Drinnon. And I didn't know it at the time, but I could have escorted his body home. But nobody bothered to tell us that.

[00:40:19.97] RANDY BEAL: I think a lot of it. It's very important to me that I've made it 50 years.

[00:40:27.14] JOE GALLOWAY: There you are.

[00:40:28.34]