

Dougherty, James USMC

[00:00:16.11] JOE GALLOWAY: When and where were you born?

[00:00:17.94] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Marion, Ohio, 9/16/45.

[00:00:22.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Who were your family members?

[00:00:25.78] JAMES DOUGHERTY: My family was my mother and father, and I had three sisters. I had five brothers and sisters that were stillborn. It was that what they called RX factor in those days.

[00:00:39.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:00:40.42] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah.

[00:00:41.91] JOE GALLOWAY: They didn't know what it was.

[00:00:42.52] JAMES DOUGHERTY: They didn't know what it was, exactly. JAMES DOUGHERTY: My father was in the newspaper and advertising business.

[00:00:54.29] JOE GALLOWAY: And where did you go to school? What do you consider your hometown, where you grew up?

[00:01:00.20] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I consider my hometown to be Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. I grew up all over the area because my mother and father met in Kansas and moved back towards Conshohocken, which is where my father was from. He wanted to be in the New York market.

[00:01:18.26] And so we moved back across. We lived in Chicago for a while. We lived in Ohio for a while, lived in Jersey several times, lived in Conshohocken a couple of times. I was in-- let me see-- probably 10 schools before I got out of high school.

[00:01:36.94] JOE GALLOWAY: Whoa.

[00:01:37.87] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Several of them, I was asked to leave, but-- [LAUGHS]

[00:01:43.12] JOE GALLOWAY: How did you come to enter the military and when? What year?

[00:01:48.43] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I joined the Marine Corps in something like May of '64. I was still in high school.

[00:01:58.09] JOE GALLOWAY: Delayed Entry Program?

[00:02:00.22] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yes. Yeah, yeah, the 90 day delay program. Yeah, a buddy of mine and I cut school, went down to see the recruiter, and enlisted, came home, and everybody went nuts. What happens if you don't pass? What happens if you don't graduate? I said, we have all summer to go to summer school. We will be OK.

[00:02:27.08] JOE GALLOWAY: Where did they send you for basic?

[00:02:29.57] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Parris Island.

[00:02:30.26] JOE GALLOWAY: Parris Island. Ooh. Nice.

[00:02:34.31] JAMES DOUGHERTY: That's why we took 90 days delay. We went in September. [CHUCKLES]

[00:02:38.24] JOE GALLOWAY: Very good. August is not very--

[00:02:40.02] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No. August-- July and August, no. In those days, when you left Parris Island, you went to Camp Lejeune. And a portion of Camp Lejeune is called Camp Geiger. And that's where they do ITR, which was in those days, mostly for infantry training.

[00:02:55.46] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, advanced infantry.

[00:02:57.56] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yes. Yeah. I was 0311. All my buddies went to school to be admin guys, and I ended up in the infantry. JAMES DOUGHERTY: When I left boot camp, they sent me to Jacksonville, Florida to a guard duty, guard station. And that was great duty. I had a good time there.

[00:03:19.27] I was there approximately-- I don't know-- six, seven, eight months. And all of a sudden, the flyers started showing up, and they were now seeing orders for forming a new regiment in California, and that was going to be the 26th Marines. And the first group of guys that went ended up in the 1st Regiment of 26th Marines.

[00:03:45.58] I volunteered and got into the 2nd Regiment, so I left probably a month, month and a half after the first group left. And the 26th Marines were one of the organizations that had been discontinued after Korea.

[00:03:58.78] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:03:59.23] JAMES DOUGHERTY: So they brought them back in life because they needed people.

[00:04:02.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Brought the flag back out, stood them up.

[00:04:04.63] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Mm-hm. So when I got to California, I was kind of like senior man. I mean, everybody else was straight out of boot camp. Here I was, a lance corporal, I

was like a little god running around. I had stripes. These guys were all bare shoulders, and it was kind of an interesting opportunity because it offered me the opportunity also to advance quicker in a situation like that. But I went over with the 26th Marines on my first tour.

[00:04:32.02] JOE GALLOWAY: This was a deployment to Vietnam?

[00:04:34.39] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Oh, that was the whole reason for the organization.

[00:04:38.41] JOE GALLOWAY: So this is early '65?

[00:04:40.42] JAMES DOUGHERTY: '66.

[00:04:41.29] JOE GALLOWAY: '66.

[00:04:42.04] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. I got there. I flew into Da Nang. We went by boat out of Long Beach. And when we got--

[00:04:49.63] JOE GALLOWAY: And you were in the advance party.

[00:04:51.12] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Well, I was with the unit. And when we got to Okinawa, then I became part of the advance party. So we got to stay in Okinawa a few days. And that was a young infantryman's heaven, yes.

[00:05:03.52] And then we went on to-- we went on and we replaced-- and I forget who it was. I don't know if it was one of the 7th Marines or who it was, but we replaced somebody whose time was up. A whole unit was moving out, and we were moving in to replace them. We were probably the last ones to do that. Because after that, everybody became replacements.

[00:05:22.03] JOE GALLOWAY: Individuals.

[00:05:22.96] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. We landed it Da Nang, and we were in an area just outside of Da Nang. And what we were primarily doing was running ambushes, running patrols, doing sweeps. We weren't entering any really big major operations because we were so new.

[00:05:44.05] Most of the guys, myself included, had really no infantry training. There was very few in our organization that had any real infantry training. So they were basically keeping us close in. And as time progressed--

[00:05:59.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Guarding the air base.

[00:06:01.06] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No, no. We were out. We were out off the base. We weren't on the base. We were well out, but what they started to do then was to remove people. They'd call up and say, OK, take six guys out of the 1st Platoon and send them up. And then all of a sudden six guys would come from another organization. So they started bringing in experienced people.

[00:06:23.02] JOE GALLOWAY: Experienced people, infusing them into the unit.

[00:06:26.04] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yes. Switching around. And they started doing that. I hit a landmine there because that's what we were seeing mostly. Some of the ambushes we saw some people, but most of the activity was landmines.

[00:06:39.25] JOE GALLOWAY: Booby traps.

[00:06:40.42] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. I was showing a new point man how to detect the booby traps, and I tripped one. Yes.

[00:06:56.58] JOE GALLOWAY: Blow you up?

[00:06:57.42] JAMES DOUGHERTY: That was embarrassing. That was very embarrassing.

[00:07:00.12] JOE GALLOWAY: Were you wounded?

[00:07:01.20] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Yeah. I got a million dollar wound out of the deal. I thought, man, this is great because I didn't feel hurt or anything. I didn't feel any big deal, but I saw an opportunity. See, all the other guys who'd had ever been wounded, they would take them back to Da Nang. And if they came back, they came back with jungle utilities.

[00:07:28.72] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, you were going to get a new suit?

[00:07:30.46] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. So I took off all my-- I stripped down naked and got on the helicopter and told the guys to put the stuff in my hooch because I'm coming back with new jungle utilities.

[00:07:40.98] [LAUGHTER]

[00:07:42.58] Well, I get to Da Nang, and they take me in and do the operating thing. And I come out, and my arm's all wrapped up. I wondered what that's all about? I wake up and say, what's this all about? And they said, well, your nerve was hit. And I noticed that I couldn't move my hand. My hand was froze just like this. And evidently, what happened was a piece of shrapnel went in here and just punched it, didn't cut it, but knocked it out.

[00:08:17.14] JOE GALLOWAY: Knocked it out.

[00:08:18.02] JAMES DOUGHERTY: But they said, you should be OK. Everything should be all right. Well, I was in the hospital there for a couple of weeks, and nothing happened. And of course, they can't keep you around, so they sent me to Japan. So I went to the Yokosuka Naval Hospital, which is also a great place.

[00:08:32.83] JOE GALLOWAY: Still naked.

[00:08:33.88] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No, no, no. They gave me they gave me pajamas to wear. And when I was in Yokosuka, they said the same thing, no problem. This is going to heal. The skin grafts are working fine, all this kind of garbage, but the hand never moved.

[00:08:50.86] I had a good time in Japan because I was able to get liberty there, but after 30 days, they started telling me they were going to send me home. And I said, why? This thing's supposed to heal. Why?

[00:09:02.56] Well, they said, your unit can't get a replacement as long as you're in theater. So they had to ship me home in order for a replacement to go to my organization. And they had no idea when my hand was going to start working. So they sent me home to the Philly Naval Hospital. And that's right down the road from the house. That was great. Things were there.

[00:09:26.12] And I was there, and they gave me a job working, cleaning out the whirlpool tubs. And all of a sudden, one day, I'm sitting there cleaning the tub out, and I feel this thing go, bing. All of a sudden, my finger started moving.

[00:09:40.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Got that thing working.

[00:09:41.48] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Then next day, another one. And all of a sudden, it started working again. Everything was fine, and they sent me over to the Philadelphia Navy Yard. And the gunny says, well, you can have pretty much your choice. Where do you want to go? Where do you want to go? I said, I want to go back to my unit. He said, no, we can't do that. And I said, well, I don't care then. I'll stay here as far as that's concerned. He was all happy about that because they needed people.

[00:10:07.20] That was almost my downfall. Everybody in the guard detachment was Vietnam and out of the hospital. Some of these guys had eyes missing. Some of these guys had legs that barely worked, and arms, but they had volunteered to stay on duty at the guard detachment because they needed people. And they said, well, we'll stay six months, we'll stay this long and then take our discharge. So we had a motley crew.

[00:10:35.12] JOE GALLOWAY: A motley crew.

[00:10:35.78] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yes. Yes. And we were on what we call-- I don't know if you know what it is-- but running guard.

[00:10:41.39] JOE GALLOWAY: What is that?

[00:10:42.38] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Well, normally in a guard detachment, you work a week on, week off, day on or day off or weekend on, weekend off, that type of situation. Here, you came in at 4 o'clock, you spent four hours basically cleaning your rack, and then you went on duty. And as soon as duty was over, you were free. And so you were just constantly-- around the clock.

[00:11:06.95] Well, I ran into a guy there that lived right down the road from me, and he had a car. So he and I and one of his buddies would drive home every day. He'd drop me off at my aunt's drug store and then I'd go down home and have dinner and then come back at night, and he'd picked me up and we'd work our way back to Philadelphia from bar to bar.

[00:11:29.01] JOE GALLOWAY: No.

[00:11:30.00] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh, yes. Yes, we were big into drinking. It was quite an experience. And that's how he ended up being my brother-in-law because he met my sister. My sister would drive me down and meet us and pick us up. They actually hooked up after I went back to Vietnam. So anyways--

[00:11:51.54] JOE GALLOWAY: You claimed no responsibility.

[00:11:53.05] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah, that's exactly right. I was just getting a ride. But my job there was to work the gate, and we worked the gate, and that was a lot of fun. We had all kinds of fun. We used to screw with the poor Sailors.

[00:12:07.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Of course.

[00:12:08.77] JAMES DOUGHERTY: We were unmerciful to the guys. Oh yeah. And then they put me on brig duty. So I worked in the brig. Now, my brother-in-law-to-be was the brig warden, and we basically worked mostly night shift, sometimes day, but mostly night. And we had this little situation there. We were coming back from liberty. We were pretty drunk.

[00:12:32.45] And of course, if you know anything about Philly Navy Yard, the barracks is a National Historic Site. And we had a bar in the cellar of that place called Tun Tavern, so we were able to keep lubricated right around the clock. So we go on duty. I'm pretty drunk. And the officer of the day comes to check post.

[00:12:57.21] Now, we had a situation there where you have a gate he opens up, then he walks down a walkway with a fence around it to another gate. Well, when he comes to the first gate, Pete's looking out, and he can see the guy pull into the parking lot out there. And he passes the word, officer of the day, get everybody ready. And everybody answers, we're good. He says, where's Dougherty? He says, he didn't answer.

[00:13:18.19] So they're up there hollering for me. Now, I'm in one of the back jail cells. We had two wings there and 30 guys in this one wing, and the other wing was empty. But we had two gates, and they couldn't get to my gate.

[00:13:34.90] JOE GALLOWAY: And you're asleep.

[00:13:35.43] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. They couldn't get my gate open. Well, they couldn't find me, yeah. And one of the guys is back there banging on the gate. And one of the prisoners comes walking up. He was a Marine. And he said, where's Dougherty? And he said, turn the lights on. He couldn't find me any place, either wing.

[00:13:51.12] So he said to him, the officer of the day's coming. Put the utility cap on. Report to post. So the officer of the day comes in, the prisoner reports to post, he leaves, everybody's happy. And then they get the master key and come up looking for me.

[00:14:06.76] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh yeah.

[00:14:08.18] JAMES DOUGHERTY: They find me in the empty barracks, under a mattress, laying on the springs, with the pattern down my body, out cold.

[00:14:19.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Cold.

[00:14:20.24] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yes. After that, I thought about it, and I'd just made sergeant. And I said, I'm going to lose these stripes faster than I got them.

[00:14:29.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:14:30.35] JAMES DOUGHERTY: So I went down to the gunny the next day and says, gunny, you got to get me out of here.

[00:14:35.06] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:14:35.91] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yes. And he said, well--

[00:14:37.04] JOE GALLOWAY: Too good a billet.

[00:14:38.33] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. He goes, well, you know where you're going to go? I said, that's fine with me. So I went back for my second tour. And this time I went to the 5th Marines.

[00:14:45.29] JOE GALLOWAY: OK.

[00:14:45.89] JAMES DOUGHERTY: And that was a whole different experience than the first tour. Everything was much, much more active. Of course, the war had progressed quite a bit.

[00:14:58.26] JOE GALLOWAY: You went back in what? '68?

[00:15:01.64] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No, no, no. '67.

[00:15:02.90] JOE GALLOWAY: '67.

[00:15:03.77] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah.

[00:15:04.22] JOE GALLOWAY: So you're going to get to do Tet?

[00:15:06.20] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I made Tet.

[00:15:07.43] JOE GALLOWAY: You're going to get to Hue?

[00:15:09.11] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I got to the borders of Hue. That's where I got hit again.

[00:15:13.13] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh dear.

[00:15:13.88] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. Yeah, I got there early, just as UNION II was ending and went through the summer in the Que Son Valley with-- we had several operations there. I got wounded my second time on SWIFT. And that was just shrapnel from a mortar round, which was not much of a big deal. But SWIFT was a major operation.

[00:15:42.35] I mean, we went out. We were supposed to go to Khe Sanh. 5th Marines were listed to go up and take over Khe Sanh. And after SWIFT, we weren't capable. We didn't have the personnel.

[00:15:55.55] JOE GALLOWAY: You lost that many people.

[00:16:06.53] JAMES DOUGHERTY: We went out with, I think it was like 37 guys, and we came back with nine. We actually came back with 14, but five of them were guys who came back from the hospital at the end there, but yeah, it was--

[00:16:22.73] JOE GALLOWAY: And that was similar losses for the whole battalion?

[00:16:28.79] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Up and down the line, yeah. Yeah. Battalion lost out. We had a couple-- we had an organization from 3/5--

[00:16:34.97] JOE GALLOWAY: You ran into the NVA.

[00:16:37.19] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah. That's all we had in Que Son Valley was NVA.

[00:16:40.21] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:16:41.03] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. UNION I, UNION II, and SWIFT were all battles against the 2nd NVA Division. And as much as they mauled us, they weren't in any position because they were supposed to take Da Nang during Tet, and that never happened.

[00:16:58.52] JOE GALLOWAY: Never happened.

[00:16:59.03] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Never happened. Yeah. They weren't in any position to do that.

[00:17:01.49] JOE GALLOWAY: They weren't in any better shape than the 5th Marines.

[00:17:04.88] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Exactly. But after that-- let me see-- during SWIFT I started out as a right guide, then I became a platoon sergeant, then I became platoon commander.

And then after SWIFT I went back to platoon sergeant. After SWIFT we rebuilt and moved up to Hoi An.

[00:17:34.14] And I hated Hoi An. That was a terrible place. I mean, it was nothing but land mines, and they were big ones. Yeah, when you stepped on one of them, you were gone. But in Hoi An, I was platoon sergeant--

[00:17:48.66] JOE GALLOWAY: Hoi An is south of Da Nang if I remember correctly.

[00:17:51.00] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah, right. Yeah, just south of Da Nang, yeah. North of Chu Lai area.

[00:17:54.42] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:17:54.78] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. And I was platoon sergeant there. And then we lost our lieutenant at that point, and I became platoon commander again. And that lasted this time for about three or four weeks.

[00:18:07.98] JOE GALLOWAY: You guys were going through lieutenants pretty fast pace there.

[00:18:12.61] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah, that was not too uncommon.

[00:18:15.39] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:18:16.39] JAMES DOUGHERTY: You get some of these lieutenants, and they thought they were supposed to lead. And you try to tell them, hey, you're not supposed to lead. You're supposed to tell us what to do. And that's unfortunate, but the Marine Corps would train these guys like that. And they wanted to be out in the front and that's--

[00:18:32.67] JOE GALLOWAY: The front's where you get killed.

[00:18:34.44] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. We need you because, I mean, me especially, I mean, my experience in the infantry was all OJT. After my first tour, you wouldn't believe how well I learned to read a map, call in artillery, how to do-- all these things that I never knew before, but I learned all that stuff real quick.

[00:18:58.74] We were in Hoi An in for a while. And after that, we moved out of Hoi An, and we moved up to Phu Loc. And that was just below Phu Bai.

[00:19:13.62] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:19:14.25] JAMES DOUGHERTY: And we were there for all of Tet, but that was--

[00:19:19.56] JOE GALLOWAY: That's the Street Without Joy, if I remember right.

[00:19:22.62] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah, and I really liked that place. I mean, we had a good time. All the month of January, they had kind of like a pre-Tet. The NVA came out early and basically did a practice run.

[00:19:40.41] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:19:40.92] JAMES DOUGHERTY: And so they sent us out to Highway 1. And we were running up and down Highway 1, guarding the different villages, working with different CAP units. And we had a good time because Charlie was trying to cut the road, and it was just a matter of who could get to the bridge first. And if you got to the bridge first, then you were waiting for Charlie when he got there.

[00:20:03.66] And we pulled off several ambushes. I mean, like I said, we were enjoying ourselves. That was a good time, that whole January. We had a lot of contact, low, low casualty rate, so things were working out pretty good. We got a new lieutenant in, so he took over, a guy named Jim Bergen. Unfortunately, he got killed during Tet. It was--

[00:20:35.57] JOE GALLOWAY: That's your third lieutenant in what? Three months?

[00:20:39.52] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Three or four months, yeah. Yeah. He never got the message about not leading. We told him, that's not your job, but--

[00:20:48.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Marine.

[00:20:49.36] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. But Tet came along, and that was a happy experience. I mean, we were guarding the district headquarters at Phu Loc. Our company, and it was nice little ARVN hill right outside the village there, and there was a big CAP unit inside the ville.

[00:21:13.68] Our platoon was sent out to guard the northern approaches to the village. There was rumors that something was going to happen, whatever. And nobody really gave us the information of what was happening. I mean, that was one of the things that's always surprising.

[00:21:32.00] We were walking through the village, right down the main street. And the CAP unit's right on the road there. And we were passing the CAP units. And the guys from the CAP unit were standing at the wire, saying, where are you going? How far are you going? What are you doing? And we were telling him where we're going.

[00:21:48.00] And he says, they're coming. They're coming tonight. And we're looking at these CAP guys, and I mean, they had eyeballs like this. I mean, you could see-- I mean, they were excited. They were scared. They said, they're coming. And we went out and set up our ambush and were facing the mountains. At about 1 o'clock in the morning, all hell broke loose behind us.

[00:22:13.97] They were already in the village. Oh, they were already in there. God, they'd been in there probably a couple of days. I mean, they were-- all of the shooting. We turned around. What the hell's going on? It was all behind us. Yeah, they tried to blow all the little bridges

around the area. You hear all these explosions going off, but they were in the village behind us, and they were shooting the shit out of the CAP compound.

[00:22:32.42] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:22:33.20] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah, they got most of those guys, but they escaped and evaded. So they got they got out of there. They went and hid in the church.

[00:22:40.24] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:22:40.75] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. Yeah, it was like a walled church, and they got into that. We got up the next morning there and they told us they wanted us to cut off the road and approach from the north. The rest of the company was going to attack from the south. So we got on the road and started approaching. And I had-- what's his name now? Jeez.

[00:23:07.55] Snitker, Curt Snitker. I had his squad, and I was on the highway. I had another squad on the railroad tracks because the railroad tracks were right next to us. And the lieutenant was on the far side of the tracks. And we were moving on to the village that way. And we got about 100 yards from the village. And I turned to look to the left, and I said, where the hell's the guys on the left? There's nobody on the tracks.

[00:23:32.46] So I told my radio man, I said, hey, call the lieutenant. See what's going on. And all we could hear was huffing and puffing, and they're running like hell. And their radio man's telling them, we spotted gooks, and we're going after them. And I'm going, oh no. Yeah bad, bad, bad, bad move. They ran into the village over there on the other side of the railroad tracks and of course, they ran into an ambush.

[00:23:58.20] JOE GALLOWAY: Of course they did.

[00:23:58.89] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:24:01.35] JOE GALLOWAY: Another lieutenant?

[00:24:03.55] JAMES DOUGHERTY: First it was Pete. Pete was the point man. Pete should have known better. He was too good. But they came up on the CAP compound from the left and they thought everything was OK, but they didn't realize that the gooks had the compound.

[00:24:17.23] So when they come up to the walls of the compound, they opened up on them, and Pete was machine gunned, and he wasn't killed. And the lieutenant went up to get him, and that's when he got killed. So we called and said, what do you want us to do? And they said, keep advancing. So we started forward.

[00:24:33.90] And there was a little hump bridge, a little creek there, a little hump bridge. And my point man crossed the hump bridge, and I saw the guy stop. I said, what's going on? And he hollers, there's a body here. I said, pump some rounds into him. And he said, it's a Marine. And as soon as he said that, all hell broke loose.

[00:24:54.42] They laid the body out there, one of the CAP guys. They laid the body out there to stop us. Yeah. And the point man got wounded, and everybody else dives behind the bridge there. And the rest of us are laying back on the highway. And there was a sniper up on the railroad tracks. And I called to my radio man, and all I heard was [IMITATES MUFFLED ROUND], and the sniper got him and the radio.

[00:25:23.05] And I'm laying there, looking around, and a couple of rockets, RPGs, went by and a couple of mortars went off. And right in front of me, probably four or five inches, a big piece of blacktop jumped up. I said, shit. This guy's shooting at me.

[00:25:40.58] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:25:42.12] JAMES DOUGHERTY: So I said to the squad leader, Curt, I said, Snitker, get your people up. We're going to get out of here. And he jumped up. And I guess the guy thought I was the squad leader because he was shooting at me, but as soon as Curt jumped up and started waving his hands, and I looked at him, and hollered, no. And-- yeah, he just went down. So we took off, and we ran back about 200 yards and set up about 200 yards back. And we'd lost-- well, the point man was wounded.

[00:26:14.58] JOE GALLOWAY: Lieutenant's dead.

[00:26:15.80] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Lieutenant's dead. Pete was dead, but we weren't in contact with them anymore. And Snitker was dead. Courtier was dead. So we set up and I put a guy up on the railroad tracks so they couldn't come at us from the blind side. And he hollered, they're coming. And I look up, and there's these two guys running down the railroad tracks.

[00:26:39.84] And I says, don't shoot. Don't shoot. These two guys are running and waving. They were cops from the village. They had changed into civilian clothes. They were hiding on top of a roof all night long.

[00:26:52.38] JOE GALLOWAY: They were South Vietnamese police.

[00:26:54.30] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah.

[00:26:54.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:26:55.62] JAMES DOUGHERTY: And they come running down there, and they told us, there's 400 or 500 in the village. I said, you got to be kidding. He says-- now I think they exaggerated. It was probably 200 or 300, but they they saying 400 or 500.

[00:27:06.58] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. It's still more than you needed.

[00:27:08.07] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I mean, we were in a good enough position. We had an open field of fire, and we had a machine gun. So we thought--

[00:27:17.85] JOE GALLOWAY: The rest of the company's supposed to be coming in from the other side.

[00:27:20.94] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. But we have no contact anymore. We have no radio.

[00:27:23.43] JOE GALLOWAY: You've got no radio.

[00:27:24.72] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah, we have no radio. And he told us, he says, yeah, he says, they're talking. And he says, they're coming for us because that was going to be their way out. I'm thinking, hm. Yeah, I don't think I want to be here. Yeah.

[00:27:43.26] JOE GALLOWAY: But I am.

[00:27:44.01] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. So we crawled up and got the radio. And the radio had holes in it. We got the radio working. It was real scratchy, and we were able to call in one fire mission. When they first came out of the village, 20 or 30 of them came out of the village by the creek. And we called a fire mission on them, and that scattered them, but then the radio went dead.

[00:28:04.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:28:05.09] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. So what we did was we were right there at the bay. We went down to the bay and got in a boat and started to take off. Well, this little kid comes running out, no, no, no, no, no, don't take my boat.

[00:28:17.97] JOE GALLOWAY: My boat, my boat.

[00:28:18.44] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. So he did the paddling, took us out. And what we were going to do is we were going to go around the village to the other side to where the compound was and then come back in that way and rejoin with everybody else. That was our plan.

[00:28:32.79] Well, we got out there in the water and the Navy picked us up with Swift boats. They were gathering all these people that were coming out in their boats to get away from the fighting and of course, searching people and looking for VC and all that kind of stuff.

[00:28:45.09] Well, they wouldn't take us back to where we wanted to go. They took us to their little base and used us for added security for a couple of days. So we spent two or three days there with them. And then they sent a helicopter for us, and we rejoined the unit. But yeah, the Tet Offensive turned out to be quite a big deal.

[00:29:09.59] I was already eligible to leave because I had three hearts at that time. I actually got wounded-- actually, I thought I had three hearts at that time. I got wounded in Hoi An by a landmine.

[00:29:25.47] JOE GALLOWAY: You got an affinity for lead.

[00:29:27.40] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I told everybody I was like a magnet. You could track the stuff. We were in Hoi An, and Dave Ryder was made platoon commander, and I was made platoon sergeant, and we were doing a sweep through this village. We came up on these vehicles on the sand dunes, and there was a village down below us. And we got fire from the village, returned fire and killed a couple. And then we started sweeping.

[00:29:55.10] Well, as soon as we started sweeping, all of a sudden, you start hearing, boom, boom. All these mines were going off. I mean, when we approached the village, we could see the Bird Dogs and helicopters above. And they're throwing these smokes down. Here, smoke here, smoke there. And that means they're seeing somebody.

[00:30:15.04] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:30:15.58] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Well, what they were seeing, which we figured out of course afterward, was they were running around, setting the booby traps up.

[00:30:21.37] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:30:22.93] JAMES DOUGHERTY: And we started in there, and I think we must have lost 10 guys, maybe 11.

[00:30:29.79] JOE GALLOWAY: To booby traps?

[00:30:30.97] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah, to booby traps. But we were on line. That was the problem. We were on line. And we were approaching this tree line. There was a tree line in front of us, bush-- tree and bush. It was really thick. And I'm walking straight towards it. And I looked to my left. And about 15 feet to my left, there's this gully and this trail that goes around.

[00:30:50.79] I said, shit. I'm not going through those bushes. And I said, nah, I better go through the bushes. Well, Dave went that way. And he tripped the mine. He lost a leg on the deal. I got shrapnel in my hand.

[00:31:06.31] And I said, they always tell you, don't take the easy route. Yeah. But that's when I got-- I thought I had my third heart, but Doc Stroud, he took care of Dave. And then he came over and took a piece of shrapnel out of my hand. I says, great. This is my third heart. And he says, suck it up, Sarge. You don't think I'm going to do paperwork for that shit.

[00:31:33.47] [LAUGHTER]

[00:31:36.40] So I never got the third--

[00:31:37.96] JOE GALLOWAY: You never got the third heart.

[00:31:38.53] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No, no, no. I didn't get the heart until just before February 7, I guess it was. Yeah. And that one, it got me a free ride home. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:31:50.47] JOE GALLOWAY: But you were ready to go home anyway.

[00:31:52.45] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No, no. I would have stayed. Are you kidding? I was a lifer. I had dreams about getting promotions and going up the-- oh yeah, I had all intention of staying in.

[00:32:08.90] JOE GALLOWAY: Describe the quality of the leadership in the combat units you served with. I mean, obviously, you're going through lieutenants like grass through a goose.

[00:32:20.36] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yes.

[00:32:21.44] JOE GALLOWAY: At the company level, at battalion level, if you could see that far, how was the leadership?

[00:32:29.15] JAMES DOUGHERTY: On the battalion level, we were pretty good. We had Highpockets-- when I first got there-- Hilgartner and then Thompson. We had two guys in between. They got wounded real quick, within a week or two of each other during Tet. They were just in and out. We never even got a chance to know them.

[00:32:47.93] JOE GALLOWAY: Never knew them.

[00:32:48.92] JAMES DOUGHERTY: But Hilgartner and Thompson were both excellent.

[00:32:51.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:32:53.27] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Our company commanders, we had Jim Reese when I first got to Bravo Company. He was excellent. He got wounded on SWIFT. He was replaced with Ben Drollinger, who was one of our lieutenants who came back during SWIFT. And then they made him XO and made Don Drobnian from Alpha Company our CO. And he was excellent. Very, very good officer, both him and Ben were good officers.

[00:33:25.44] The officer we had on SWIFT, lieutenant we had on SWIFT, was not very good. He should never have been an infantry officer. There's other jobs for guys to do, and he would have been great at them, but he was not an infantry officer. And the company commander we had when I got wounded was not very good either. I'm not going to mention an names, but he was the reason I got hurt.

[00:33:55.82] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:33:56.06] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Put it to you this way, Hilartner fired him, sent him to the rear. That's the kiss of death. Because of what was going on during Tet and a need for officers and also because of some of this guy's political background, they brought him back. He was one

of those ring knockers who were on the fast track. And we got him. So we knew when we got him, his reputation. And his reputation--

[00:34:29.75] JOE GALLOWAY: Not good.

[00:34:30.26] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Not good. I mean--

[00:34:32.69] JOE GALLOWAY: He's the guy who put you in front of that machine gun.

[00:34:35.99] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. Yeah. And I think-- I'm not positive-- but I think Thompson fired him in a way too. He just didn't have it. But on the whole, the officers I saw were good officers.

[00:34:52.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Good officers.

[00:34:54.80] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I saw the-- I compare leadership. Most people don't understand, at least in my opinion, people don't understand how important leadership is. It makes all the difference in the world. We can be gangbusters with the good boss. You can have a great company with a good boss. It's extremely important. Fortunately, like I say, on the whole, we had good leadership.

[00:35:34.82] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I think the best day we had was when we punked Doc Nichols. We were at Phu Loc. It was near Christmastime. And Doc Nichols, he lives over here in Shelbyville, Kentucky. Doc Nichols got a package from home.

[00:35:58.79] So John Dillinger, Tim Haney and I, and I think there was somebody else, we were in this little tent waiting for our share, cakes, cookies, salamis, pepperoni. We're ready. So Doc opens the box, and in it was socks, toothpaste, toothbrush, dental floss.

[00:36:28.30] JOE GALLOWAY: No.

[00:36:28.63] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah. And there's a letter in there, and it's from a church group from his hometown.

[00:36:37.47] JOE GALLOWAY: No pastrami, no salami.

[00:36:40.26] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I think we might have been drinking too, but I'm not sure, but I think we were drinking. Anyways, we started on Doc. You've got to be kidding me. Who the hell would send you this? For Christ's sake, Doc, don't they know you're fighting a war? What do these people think of you? What's wrong with them? We're working on him, and he's going, well yeah, yeah, but they're nice people.

[00:37:00.72] Anyways, we get him riled up to the point where he starts saying, yeah these no good suckers should've known better. There's a Bible belt area, basically, with these people. So these very nice people went to all this trouble to send all these packages out. So we get him to

the point where we say, you know what, we ought to tell these people just how you feel. So we start a letter.

[00:37:22.95] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh jeez.

[00:37:23.76] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah. We write this beautiful letter about, how could you do this? What, are you people idiots? Really, really-- anyways--

[00:37:34.35] JOE GALLOWAY: You didn't send it.

[00:37:35.98] JAMES DOUGHERTY: We pass out drunk and whatever. And next morning, we're walking across. The doc comes by and says, hey, by the way, make sure you tear that letter up. And we go, Christ, Doc, we sent it.

[00:37:48.11] [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:50.10] Oh, he thought he was going to die. How can he go home to these people and see them? We let him stew for three days before we told him that we didn't send it.

[00:38:06.20] JAMES DOUGHERTY: We moved up to the Troui Bridge just short of Hue, and we were sweeping the village there. And the NVA were trying to keep troops and supplies from getting into Hue.

[00:38:21.10] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:38:22.57] JAMES DOUGHERTY: So we were pushing, trying to push to keep the road open. And we were sweeping, and we were hitting these strong points. We'd hit a strong point. Maybe the guys on the-- we're all on line here. The guys two platoons over would hit a strong point where we'd stop and wait, and they'd knock out the strong point. We'd start moving again, and we'd hit another strong point in a different spot.

[00:38:45.16] Well, we hit the strong point. It was Ken Vitucci, 2nd Platoon. They were right alongside us. And Ken was 2nd Platoon commander. I was the 1st Platoon commander, and Blinks somebody, lieutenant, was 3rd Platoon. Well, the captain was with Ken, with the CP group. And they're right in front of this machine gun and rocket or mortar position. And it's firing on them.

[00:39:14.66] So they fire-- return fire. And I'm just sitting there, smoking a cigarette, watching what's going on. I got nothing to do. And they said, OK get up. We're going to move out. And as we get up, they say, OK, everybody move to the right. So we move to the right about 50 yards. And now we're in front of this position.

[00:39:33.95] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, lovely.

[00:39:35.08] JAMES DOUGHERTY: And they said, OK move out. And it bothers me to this day because I assumed that somebody checked it out.

[00:39:48.10] JOE GALLOWAY: That they had taken out that position.

[00:39:49.62] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. Mm-hm. And we walked across this open field to this house. And as soon as we hit the backyard, I was saying, look guys, let's stay on line. Stay on line. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw this guy pop up in the window. And [IMITATES GUNSHOT].

[00:40:06.14] JOE GALLOWAY: Whoa.

[00:40:07.42] JAMES DOUGHERTY: That sucker, I always thought it went between my legs, but it might have landed-- anyway, it picked me up and threw me forward into this little ditch. And he opens up with a machine gun. You always say, you should have known better. What if? But I was the lucky one because I fell into a hole.

[00:40:27.48] Kent Saulnier was laying in front of me. I thought he was dead. He was just out. He was out, out cold. A piece of shrapnel go through his jaw, and stick at the top of his mouth and knocked him cold. Well, that was good because he was just laying there. The machine gun was right in front of us.

[00:40:41.14] JOE GALLOWAY: You had this B-40 go off between your legs.

[00:40:44.65] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. Yeah. It picked me up and-- well, it broke my leg, broke my leg, and popped my eardrums, and it broke my wrist. And my M-16 was a steel rod.

[00:40:56.74] JOE GALLOWAY: You had some shrapnel here, there, and yonder.

[00:40:58.93] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, yeah.

[00:41:01.00] JOE GALLOWAY: And you're laying in a hole.

[00:41:02.57] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I'm laying in a hole, yeah.

[00:41:04.02] JOE GALLOWAY: And the machine gun's working.

[00:41:05.65] JAMES DOUGHERTY: And machine gun's working, and I'm hollering for help. There was two other guys in the ditch with me, one on my right, one on my left. And I told them, keep your heads up, watch out for grenades because we're only about 25 feet. I said, keep your heads up. They're going to throw grenades in on us. You gotta stay alert.

[00:41:25.03] And then I talked to my radio man who's laying behind me, and I told him, we need a LAW. We need a LAW. Somebody's got to have a LAW.

[00:41:33.22] Well, we're hollering for a LAW. And nobody in the 2nd Platoon had one. Nobody in the 3rd Platoon had one. And none of my guys could move because everybody that moved was in the open. As soon as they moved, the gun turned on him.

[00:41:45.13] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:41:46.57] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I called-- I told my machine gunners to open up. I said talk to your guns, talk your guns. That means one guy shoot, next guy shoot, one guy shoot, next guy shoots. When you say talk, they try to pin down the other gunner, but he had too good a position. He took them both out.

[00:42:14.05] I told the guy next to me, I had a grenade. And I said to him, I need you to pull the pin for me-- because I couldn't use my hand-- and help prop me up so I could get out of the hole. So anyways, we finally knocked the thing out. I lost a lot of people.

[00:42:44.52] JOE GALLOWAY: Your grenade took them out.

[00:42:49.14] JAMES DOUGHERTY: They stopped firing after that. They took off. We got, I think, two of them, but the rest got away. But we should have never talked to that. That should never have happened.

[00:43:07.70] JOE GALLOWAY: B-40 rocket between your legs is pretty bad.

[00:43:11.69] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No. Losing the people is bad.

[00:43:13.22] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, losing the people. Right. You don't maneuver when you haven't taken out the strong point.

[00:43:21.33] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Somebody's got to check it.

[00:43:22.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:43:23.29] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Somebody's got to walk up and look at the body. You can't just--

[00:43:25.66] JOE GALLOWAY: Can't just assume.

[00:43:27.86] JAMES DOUGHERTY: That's exactly right.

[00:43:31.74] JOE GALLOWAY: This was your third Purple Heart?

[00:43:33.29] JAMES DOUGHERTY: This would be my third heart, you know, and--

[00:43:36.59] JOE GALLOWAY: You got a trip home.

[00:43:38.06] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I got a trip home after that, yeah.

[00:43:39.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:43:40.10] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah, I went to Bethesda Naval Hospital this time. Philly Naval Hospital, I mean, I just referred to it as a pigsty. I mean, it was old, old hospital. The guys that were in the tower were OK, but the guys in the wings, I mean, it was--

[00:43:55.34] JOE GALLOWAY: This was Bethesda?

[00:43:56.63] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No, no. Philly. Bethesda was all brand new. It was beautiful. And of course, there was all these congressmen and senators running around, so I mean, they were going to take good care of us.

[00:44:07.15] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:44:08.09] JAMES DOUGHERTY: They used to invite us, once we got ambulatory, to go to picnics and things at their houses. Big mistake. Oh yeah, we'd go in, go to the bar, drink up what they got and leave.

[00:44:21.03] [LAUGHTER]

[00:44:21.83] Oh yeah.

[00:44:22.34] JOE GALLOWAY: Of course.

[00:44:23.54] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh yeah. We had a really good time in DC. And then they sent me over to Headquarters Marine Corps to get discharged. And that was another-- a good thing. Here I was a sergeant, and a salty sergeant to boot.

[00:44:43.41] JOE GALLOWAY: Still, you'd given up on a lifetime in the Corps.

[00:44:47.42] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No, no, no, no.

[00:44:48.96] JOE GALLOWAY: You didn't want to be discharged.

[00:44:50.76] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No. No, I thought things were good. They took me before this board. They gave me a naval officer, pretty nice guy, and he was to be my advocate. And he took me in front of this board of young naval officers that were going to interview me and let me know what's happening.

[00:45:12.59] So we go in there, and they asked me all kinds of questions. And they asked me about my medals, and they asked me about my wounds, and all these kinds of things. And of course, these guys were really young. And they were just impressed to hell. I mean, they were like, candy. You could almost eat them up.

[00:45:34.16] I mean, we were going along. And the first thing they asked me was, well, what do you want to do? And I said, well, I want to return to duty. And they said, well, we can make arrangements for that. You can go back to duty. I said, that's great. He said, what do you want to do? I said, I want to go back to the infantry. And the said, you ain't going back to the infantry.

[00:45:56.36] I said, what? He says, no, no, no, no. You're going to be an admin or offices. You're not going to be in the infantry anymore because my leg was too messed up. So I said, well, hell, if can't be infantry, forget it. I'm out of here. And he said, OK, he says, we can retire you. I said, retire me? Are you kidding? He said, no.

[00:46:17.99] So they were, anyways, going along and they were asking me all kinds of questions. And I mean, they were young. So they were overly impressed with something which I didn't consider to be such a big deal, but they retired me.

[00:46:35.57] JOE GALLOWAY: Medically retired.

[00:46:36.47] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Medically retired me, yeah. I had no idea in the world what that meant.

[00:46:41.15] JOE GALLOWAY: It usually means a check every month.

[00:46:43.79] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I didn't know that. I didn't know that I had benefits and I had this and that. All I knew was I was going home, and that was the end of it.

[00:46:50.84] JOE GALLOWAY: That was good enough.

[00:46:51.44] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. Yeah. I was going to go home, and that was the end of it. JAMES DOUGHERTY: I ran into one New Zealand officer-- or Australian, one Australian officer. And I had contact with one Army liaison officer with a-- well, twice with Army liaison officers with the Vietnamese.

[00:47:17.59] JOE GALLOWAY: Mm.

[00:47:18.36] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. The Australian officer was funny. I think we were asking him about something, discussing how to do something or whatever. And he looked at us because we said, well, we can't approach it that way, whatever. He says, my queen don't play that shit.

[00:47:37.01] [LAUGHTER]

[00:47:38.86] That was his remark. JAMES DOUGHERTY: More or less, the ARVNs we dealt with were sub par.

[00:47:51.71] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:47:52.61] JAMES DOUGHERTY: They were sub par. The people were the people. They just wanted to live. They didn't care who was there. They just didn't want to get shot and killed for it.

[00:48:02.48] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:48:03.02] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I mean, they were OK. They were nice, and but you could see all they were trying to do was survive.

[00:48:08.15] JOE GALLOWAY: Just survive.

[00:48:08.99] JAMES DOUGHERTY: That's all they wanted to do. They wished the whole thing was over with and wasn't going on, and some of them were pro, some were anti. JAMES DOUGHERTY: It's just letters. We used to write the same letter every day, I think. What are you going tell them? We got shot. So and so got hurt. You just wrote them, hey, we went out today, didn't do anything. Things were good.

[00:48:32.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Things were good.

[00:48:32.93] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah.

[00:48:34.01] JOE GALLOWAY: How much news did you guys get about the war you were fighting, about the politics back home?

[00:48:41.24] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Not much.

[00:48:41.81] JOE GALLOWAY: Not much?

[00:48:42.53] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Not much.

[00:48:43.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Stars and Stripes?

[00:48:45.89] JAMES DOUGHERTY: We knew something was going on and hearing about it. It just didn't make a whole lot of sense. And--

[00:48:52.82] JOE GALLOWAY: Didn't register.

[00:48:54.08] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Not really. no. I mean, you'd hear the guys that would come over that had just came in, and they would tell you this is going on, but we just thought they were hippies and whatever.

[00:49:09.26] JAMES DOUGHERTY: You've got to understand that when I graduated from high school, the nun told me that it was a good thing I joined the Marine Corps because it was highly unlikely that my shadow would ever darken the portals of an institution of higher education. And she was right. I mean, I was an idiot. And that's the way it was. But four years later, things are different.

[00:49:38.48] So I went to community college for two years just so I didn't have to get a job. I mean, the VA was going to give me \$400 a month to go to school and \$400 a month spending money. So I could drink a lot of beer at \$0.15 to \$0.25 a glass.

[00:49:56.26] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:49:56.98] JAMES DOUGHERTY: And the community college was two blocks down from my favorite bar, so I went to the community college, and that worked out OK as long as I went to morning classes. Afternoon classes didn't work out too well.

[00:50:14.89] JOE GALLOWAY: Not too good.

[00:50:15.67] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. But I got out of there, and my grade point average wasn't so great. I was looking for a four-year school to go so I could continue not having to work, but I got married my junior year, and I transferred to a school called PMC. PMC stands for Pennsylvania Military College.

[00:50:35.01] JOE GALLOWAY: Yep.

[00:50:35.74] JAMES DOUGHERTY: It was located in Chester.

[00:50:36.99] JOE GALLOWAY: Yep.

[00:50:37.75] JAMES DOUGHERTY: They still had a Corps cadets, but they had turned to be a civilian school. Eventually, it would become Widener University, but when I went there, they were calling it Penn Morton, using the same initials, but it was Penn Morton. And PMC would take any veteran, sight unseen. It doesn't matter what your grades were. Nothing mattered. They'd take you in. Now, if you didn't perform, they'd throw you right out.

[00:51:01.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:51:02.11] JAMES DOUGHERTY: So that's where I went, and things worked out extremely well. I did extremely well for the next couple of years. I graduated cum laude. Things were good.

[00:51:12.94] JOE GALLOWAY: A lot of our officers from the Ia Drang were from PMC.

[00:51:17.86] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Is that right?

[00:51:18.53] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:51:21.25] JAMES DOUGHERTY: They had a long tradition. A lot of Irishmen come out of PMC.

[00:51:25.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:51:26.02] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. After that, I went to shoveling blacktop. A friend of mine had a paving company, and I was shoveling blacktop and doing driveways. And I got a call from a friend that Norristown needed a substitute teacher.

[00:51:49.76] They called me up and asked me if I'd come in. So I went in to see the guy, and he told me that this young kid's wife just died, and he was going to be out for three or four weeks.

Would I be a long-term sub for him? I said, OK. So I went in and did a long-term sub for three or four weeks. And when the kid came back, I went back to shoveling blacktop.

[00:52:10.91] And a week later, they called me again and told me they were firing this other kid because he never went and got his additional credits. You had to get professional credits, ongoing education. And he was a hippie, but he was a good teacher. And he, said, why in the world would I bother doing that? These kids aren't going to learn anything more from me that way.

[00:52:34.62] But anyways, I finished out the year doing that, and then went back to the rest of summer shoveling. And in the fall, they called me again. A guy that they had planned to hire turned them down.

[00:52:46.23] And they said, we'll give you a full time job. And I figured, well, OK. So I went and talked to them and gave them my terms. And my terms were no extracurricular activities, none of this, none of that.

[00:52:59.81] JOE GALLOWAY: And you were shoveling blacktop.

[00:53:01.85] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. Oh no, no. Blacktop was a good job. I enjoyed that. We'd do two driveways in the morning, go to the bar. Yeah, I was still-- I guess I quit drinking-- I quit drinking probably just after I graduated. I started having blackout periods, and my wife was not very happy and things-- so I ended the drinking, and that changed a whole lot of things.

[00:53:32.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:53:33.50] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah. I haven't drank until about eight months ago, I started drinking again.

[00:53:40.22] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, no.

[00:53:41.30] JAMES DOUGHERTY: It's all right now. I'm not having any problems. I'm old and retired, so I can have a beer every now and then.

[00:53:47.07] JOE GALLOWAY: A beer now and then.

[00:53:48.02] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah, not like before. Yeah. But I taught-- I planned to only be there a year or so. I ended up being there six years. And-- hardest job I ever had.

[00:54:02.61] JOE GALLOWAY: Teaching kids.

[00:54:03.29] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh god, yes. It was hard. Yeah, it was real work. But that was during the days of the sit-down demonstrations, and parents running into school and out of school and stuff. And there was no discipline. I never had any trouble in my classes. I was able to

control my class, but outside the door, there'd be hell going on, people running up and down the hallways and stuff.

[00:54:28.97] And no support from the administration because I couldn't be fired, but they could. So they made sure they smoothed everything over. And after about six years or so, another friend of mine told me about a sales job, so I left teaching you went into sales, and I did that for the next 25, 26 years. Sold highway equipment, street sweepers, and pavers and rollers, and made a good living and retired and almost went crazy.

[00:54:58.26] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:54:59.96] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Like this, you got to have something to do after you retire. So for the last 13 or 14 years, I've been driving a limousine part time. I'll probably do that till my eyes go. But life was good. I had children, and I got grandchildren.

[00:55:17.90] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your Vietnam experience change you and affect your life afterward?

[00:55:22.91] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Completely.

[00:55:23.72] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:55:24.62] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Completely.

[00:55:25.19] JOE GALLOWAY: For the better or for the worse?

[00:55:26.60] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh, definitely for the better, yeah.

[00:55:29.66] JOE GALLOWAY: Did the way you were treated when you came back--

[00:55:32.80] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh, oh yes.

[00:55:33.72] JOE GALLOWAY: --affect the way you look at those kids coming home today?

[00:55:37.59] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh, certainly. Yeah. I mean, we worked as a group. We've worked very hard to make sure that this group coming along doesn't get the same thing we got.

[00:55:53.38] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:55:54.28] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I mean, I know that they started that-- what was it? That fund for the Iraqi and Afghanistan guys. And they've specifically said, it was not for the Vietnam guys. Some of the guys were bitching about that. I says, who do you think made those rules? Vietnam vets made those rules. This is not for us. This is for them.

[00:56:22.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:56:22.68] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Remember, that's the whole point of what we're doing, making sure that these guys don't get treated the way we did, make sure that they get the support they need.

[00:56:31.02] JOE GALLOWAY: How do you think the Vietnam War is remembered in our society today?

[00:56:36.36] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh, today we're heroes. Oh, everybody wants to say, thank you for your service. A lot of guys tell me how much they enjoyed their time in Vietnam. And I think, you weren't in Vietnam.

[00:56:53.79] [LAUGHTER]

[00:56:55.18] Who are you kidding? A lot of letters, a lot of wannabes out there anymore.

[00:56:59.81] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, exactly. Are there lessons you took from your time in Vietnam you'd like to pass on?

[00:57:11.98] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Well, lessons, if you're talking about hard work, yeah. I learned that things are important. You have a job to do. You do your job. You don't quit.

[00:57:29.75] There is no such thing as giving up. If you have to spend more time, you do more time. You don't say, well, I only work eight hours. That doesn't exist.

[00:57:45.58] JAMES DOUGHERTY: No.

[00:57:45.96] JOE GALLOWAY: No, haven't been there? Going to go?

[00:57:49.99] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I've tried.

[00:57:53.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Got close?

[00:57:58.05] JAMES DOUGHERTY: I've never been able. JAMES DOUGHERTY: I'm not a monument guy. They want to have these monuments. They want to have these ceremonies. That's all fine and good.

[00:58:19.75] I did my time. I did my thing. I'm glad I did it. And I'd do it again, but the rest of it, some people are happy. That's fine.

[00:58:30.63] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Sir, thank you for coming in.

[00:58:34.86] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Oh, it's a pleasure to meet you.

[00:58:35.75] JOE GALLOWAY: Great story.

[00:58:36.48] JAMES DOUGHERTY: Yeah.