

Jones, Boyd US Army

[00:00:17.71] JOE GALLOWAY: When and where were you born?

[00:00:19.96] BOYD JONES: Rochester, New Hampshire, 28 March '41. My dad's name was Milford, born in Vermont. My mother was Eleanor, pure Irish, born in New Hampshire. A couple of legal immigrant parents.

[00:00:35.15] JOE GALLOWAY: Siblings?

[00:00:36.88] BOYD JONES: I'm it.

[00:00:37.84] JOE GALLOWAY: You're it.

[00:00:38.50] BOYD JONES: They broke the mold there, Joe.

[00:00:45.01] JOE GALLOWAY: And where did you grow up and go to school?

[00:00:48.79] BOYD JONES: First three years in New Hampshire, the rest in Maine. So through high school in Falmouth in Portland, Maine. Went to my undergraduate school at Norwich University, Northfield, Vermont.

[00:01:03.69] JOE GALLOWAY: And what did your dad do?

[00:01:05.89] BOYD JONES: He started off-- before he was married, he started off as an accountant in a bank in New York City through the Depression. And after that, when they got married he went to work for Clarence Birdseye in Gloucester, Massachusetts, the guy that learned how to freeze fish and ship it across country. And so he worked for him until Clarence gave up that business.

[00:01:35.36] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, Birdseye is still in business.

[00:01:37.36] BOYD JONES: Birds Eye Foods is still there. That's right. But that's where it all started.

[00:01:40.75] JOE GALLOWAY: [CHUCKLES] That's amazing. How did you come to enter the military? Through Norwich?

[00:01:47.08] BOYD JONES: Through Northwich. Why did I go to Norwich? I took a look at the various curriculum that were available, extracurricular activities, where it was, far enough away from home, but not too far. And so then, the military was a natural accession after that.

[00:02:06.10] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Now, you were commissioned on graduation. As an ROTC, or--

[00:02:12.61] BOYD JONES: I was commissioned, what, six months after graduation. They said, you didn't do too well in fluid mechanics, so you get to take that again. So I took fluid mechanics again and got my commission. It was kind of interesting-- I think in January of '64, commissioned by the minister of the local congregational church in Rochester who was a Reserve infantry captain. So it's kind of interesting.

[00:02:44.20] JOE GALLOWAY: A preacher commissioned you.

[00:02:46.57] BOYD JONES: Right.

[00:02:47.23] JOE GALLOWAY: Very good. And you were commissioned in the engineers?

[00:02:50.80] BOYD JONES: Yes. BOYD JONES: Fort Belvoir, Virginia for basic. And then, my first tour was in Germany.

[00:03:01.78] JOE GALLOWAY: In Germany. And this is '60--

[00:03:04.60] BOYD JONES: Four.

[00:03:06.41] JOE GALLOWAY: Four. Vietnam is sort of on the radar, but not a very big blip at that point. How long did you do a tour in Germany?

[00:03:15.82] BOYD JONES: The initial was for three years, and I got cut short, I think, three months. And got orders to 4th Infantry Division in Vietnam.

[00:03:24.79] JOE GALLOWAY: In Vietnam, to the 4th Infantry. And this is 1967?

[00:03:30.27] BOYD JONES: Seven. Right. BOYD JONES: Started off in the States at Oakland Army Base, and met a doctor there who'd interned at San Francisco General. And we were supposed to hop on the airplane something like 2:00 in the afternoon. They canceled it. His wife had already gone home, so he showed me the sights of San Francisco for that night. The next day, we got on the airplane.

[00:04:00.56] JOE GALLOWAY: And off you went.

[00:04:01.61] BOYD JONES: Off we went. Best I can recall, into Saigon.

[00:04:05.78] JOE GALLOWAY: Into Tan Son Nhut.

[00:04:07.34] BOYD JONES: And then--

[00:04:09.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, you had orders to a specific unit?

[00:04:13.01] BOYD JONES: Well, only--

[00:04:14.00] JOE GALLOWAY: Or did you go to Repo Depot?

[00:04:16.34] BOYD JONES: No Repo Depot. There wasn't any Repo at that time. I got off the airplane, they said, OK, your Caribou goes to Camp Enari direct in about three hours. So I drew some gear, onto the Caribou, straight into Camp Enari, which is, oh, what? 10 kilometers south of Pleiku.

[00:04:38.36] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Up in the Central Highlands.

[00:04:41.48] BOYD JONES: Yeah.

[00:04:42.94] JOE GALLOWAY: And what was your rank by then?

[00:04:45.14] BOYD JONES: I was a captain.

[00:04:46.07] JOE GALLOWAY: Captain by then.

[00:04:47.81] BOYD JONES: Probably next to the most junior captain in the Army, but nevertheless.

[00:04:53.21] JOE GALLOWAY: A captain is a captain.

[00:04:55.61] BOYD JONES: So I walked in. The commander was a lieutenant colonel by the name of Delbridge. So he said, you're with me for the next seven days. My helicopter, my Jeep, my everything, and I'm going to show you the entire area. So he did that, and then my job was S2 with about six different duties as assigned.

[00:05:20.63] JOE GALLOWAY: But S2 is intel.

[00:05:23.85] BOYD JONES: Intel officer. So the big things there was mine-countermeasure operations to find out exactly what was happening, and to try to determine the tactics we were using, see if we needed to change things. Qualified as an aerial observer, so I did first and last light recons in O-1's with a pilot, and primarily all the way north from Pleiku to Dak To on Route 14 North. That was where some of the big problems-- a little bit out to the Special Forces camps, there was some difficulties with the airstrips that we'd put in there. So we did that. We did a mine-countermeasure warfare seminar.

[00:06:11.73] JOE GALLOWAY: Were you losing vehicles to mines pretty regular?

[00:06:17.39] BOYD JONES: I guess, from the perspective of the 4th Infantry Division, they didn't allow them to have many helicopters so everything was by ground, and it was focused on just the supply routes. And it ended up that we were able to find 95%, 96% of the mines visually. And so we did some training on that. And I have an anecdote later, I guess, when we were back in Kon Tum, about a fine, young infantry lieutenant who really wondered why we actually took the time to look for mines. If you remind me we'll get to that.

[00:06:56.56] JOE GALLOWAY: [CHUCKLING] OK.

[00:06:58.37] BOYD JONES: We also did a lot of work at the Battle of Dak To. When that happened, they sent me to division headquarters as assistant division engineer.

[00:07:08.60] JOE GALLOWAY: This is Hill 875?

[00:07:10.96] BOYD JONES: This is 875 in what, probably November? October, November of '67.

[00:07:17.99] JOE GALLOWAY: A real bloodbath.

[00:07:19.34] BOYD JONES: Not a good time. BOYD JONES: I ended up in a hex tent. Two of us, the warrant officer, motor officer, and myself.

[00:07:36.28] JOE GALLOWAY: Kinda chilly up there in the winter.

[00:07:39.83] BOYD JONES: Good sleeping bags.

[00:07:40.79] JOE GALLOWAY: [CHUCKLES] What did you guys do for off duty recreation time, if you had much of that?

[00:07:49.15] BOYD JONES: I remember just one thing. I got to go to the Bob Hope Show, I think, in December of '67. That was it.

[00:07:58.16] JOE GALLOWAY: That was your recreation.

[00:07:59.25] BOYD JONES: That was recreation.

[00:08:00.35] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, I hope Joey Heatherton danced wildly in a skimpy costume.

[00:08:04.43] BOYD JONES: I can't remember who was with him. We also didn't get the promised Thanksgiving meal. I was on an aerial recon and we had some problems. Took a few rounds. Had to stop off and make sure things were OK. I think I got back 7:00, 8:00 that night. Went over to the mess hall.

[00:08:25.49] JOE GALLOWAY: No turkey.

[00:08:26.66] BOYD JONES: No turkey. No nothing. Would you like to have a cheese sandwich?

[00:08:31.22] JOE GALLOWAY: [CHUCKLES] That's not good for Thanksgiving.

[00:08:40.37] BOYD JONES: I was gone almost every day, so I relied on my NCO to do the administrivia that was necessary. And I think the relationships were pretty much straight professional. The battalion commander changed to a lieutenant colonel by the name of Emmett C. Lee, who had been my senior ROTC instructor at Norwich. So we had a history. So he pretty

much had known me for all four years in college. And so we just kind of continued that relationship.

[00:09:21.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Good. Good. Did you form friendships with men from different racial and social backgrounds in the Army that you might not have in civilian life?

[00:09:31.73] BOYD JONES: I think so, because the Army, from my perspective, was great in that everybody was pretty much treated equally when you were in a good unit. And everybody knew what to expect from the next person, and the fact they had to rely on them to do their part of the job, and be part of the team.

[00:09:54.14] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Now, back home in America there's a lot of social tension, racial tension, antiwar protests. Any of that come over to where you are?

[00:10:07.14] BOYD JONES: No. I experienced some of it here in between tours, but--

[00:10:12.18] JOE GALLOWAY: Not over there.

[00:10:13.02] BOYD JONES: Not over there. BOYD JONES: I finished the S2 business in December of '67, and then got assigned as the commander of Charlie Company. So it ended up being Charlie Company of the 65th Engineers as part of 3rd Brigade, 25th Division. And 3rd Brigade, 25th and 3rd Brigade, 4th swapped on their way into country. So the 3rd Brigade of the 4th went down to the Delta. 3rd of the 25th went into the coastal region. And I joined them in Duc Pho. We stayed, Charlie Company of the 65th, maybe three weeks? And then, they switched the flags.

[00:11:02.86] JOE GALLOWAY: Again?

[00:11:03.58] BOYD JONES: And it became Charlie of the 4th Engineer Battalion, and it became 3rd Brigade, 4th Division.

[00:11:12.13] JOE GALLOWAY: So you left the 4th Division, then you went back to it--

[00:11:16.30] BOYD JONES: All on paper.

[00:11:17.20] JOE GALLOWAY: All on paper.

[00:11:17.97] BOYD JONES: Right.

[00:11:19.82] JOE GALLOWAY: But you're still in Duc Pho.

[00:11:21.97] BOYD JONES: Duc Pho for a period of time. And then we moved north to LZ Baldy, which as I recall, is about 20 kilometers south of Da Nang, still just off Highway 1. And we operated all the way west of that location. I can't re--

[00:11:41.36] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, you had just traded up into a pretty bad area.

[00:11:45.49] BOYD JONES: Not a good area. We spent Tet there, pretty much cut off for a couple of weeks, had air resupply. The battalions were all west, and I can't remember the name of the valley, but we operated into the mouth of the valley where the NVA were coming down and branching off and heading into Da Nang. So we were south of there, kind of the stopper at the bottom of the pipeline.

[00:12:15.76] JOE GALLOWAY: I recollect that valley was pretty much Indian country.

[00:12:20.11] BOYD JONES: Indian country. And so my responsibility was the roads, because we didn't have much air support. Especially with the 1st Cav in the area up north. They sucked up all the helicopters and, you know, so the infantry division walked and rode when necessary. So my job was to keep the roads open, to make sure I supported the base, to construct the LZs for the battalions, and to sweep--

[00:12:47.26] JOE GALLOWAY: And fix all the blown up bridges.

[00:12:48.82] BOYD JONES: --sweep the road. Well, we didn't have any bridges. We had some culverts. A little anecdote. Sweep team started off one morning, and came across five or six dead NVA at the culvert. They tried to choogie a 250 pound bomb in there to the culvert, made a little mistake, and set it off early, which was probably good for us.

[00:13:11.62] JOE GALLOWAY: Which is probably good for you.

[00:13:14.96] BOYD JONES: A later-- General Livsey was the battalion commander out there at that time. Later, a four star general.

[00:13:20.54] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. JOE GALLOWAY: Can you describe the quality of the leadership in your units as high as you saw it?

[00:13:35.59] BOYD JONES: My major focus there was through brigade command, infantry brigade command. So we had George Wear to start with, and then Eugene Forrester, the two brigade commanders. They were both superb. General Livsey, lieutenant colonel at that time, had been the G3 of 4th Infantry Division when I was on the staff back there. So we had a relationship.

[00:14:02.66] And I think you can say they were pretty much all superb. They knew what they were doing. Took care of their Soldiers. Pretty much kept everyone informed. Couldn't ask for much more than that. I'll give you one more anecdote about that time there, Joe. My job also was to resupply beverages to the brigade. And so we had to run down Route 1 with my lowboys, and they were escorted by--

[00:14:34.77] JOE GALLOWAY: Pick up the Pabst Blue Ribbon.

[00:14:36.75] BOYD JONES: Whatever it was, a little Coke, a little Blue Ribbon. And someone made the mistake of ambushing us, I guess, one day. And that was the end of them.

[00:14:49.53] JOE GALLOWAY: [LAUGHS] What about your NCO leadership?

[00:14:53.01] BOYD JONES: All great, except I was issued a first sergeant after I'd been in command up there maybe two months, who had had great problems. So I had kind of a serious discussion with my battalion commander and said, this probably is not a great place to send that individual for rehabilitation.

[00:15:14.04] He said, you got him. So we gave him enough rope and he eventually hung himself. Had to board him, and that took care of that. So once that happened, rest of the NCOs, superb.

[00:15:30.92] JOE GALLOWAY: Can you describe any significant actions, operations in which you participated?

[00:15:37.49] BOYD JONES: In that first tour, pretty much the action, initially, my first six months was all based on my aerial recon. A lot of ground fire, that type of thing. Occasional rocket attacks at the base camp. Up on the coast, things were a little bit more personal. We ended up having responsibility for about five kilometers either side of our supply route, so we would have to go and work through bunkers out there, as well as support the infantry and their fire bases.

[00:16:11.24] Captured a couple of prisoners. Had an event where I had to keep my interpreter from using a pistol on one of them. There was quite a bit of animosity between the ARVN and this particular NVA captive. So we got him away and evacuated him, and hopefully they got some intel from him.

[00:16:34.55] JOE GALLOWAY: Before they killed him.

[00:16:36.14] BOYD JONES: You never know.

[00:16:36.86] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. [CHUCKLES] Generally, you can count on it. Yeah.

[00:16:41.96] BOYD JONES: Yeah. Every day we had ground fire when we were on our operations, sniper fire. And one day coming out of Colonel Livsey's place, my guys killed 22 NVA just outside the gates. So I had to see him the next day and I said, we really need a little more infantry protection here for the engineers.

[00:17:04.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Just a touch more. Talk about the difference between your two tours, '67 and '71. And what was the same, and what was different?

[00:17:22.85] BOYD JONES: In the first instance, it was all kind of inside the division to start with, and then up on the coast, we were all by ourselves. I mean, we were a separate brigade really. And so there pretty much wasn't any support that you didn't go and get for yourself, especially from an engineer perspective.

[00:17:47.03] And it was true for-- I had a Marine engineer company up there on the coast that we cooperated with, traded some equipment, and worked. He was a little bit further north up toward Da Nang. So that was a good relationship.

[00:18:06.08] On the second tour, we still had the 4th Infantry Division to start with, and it was all An Khe at that time, east and west of An Khe. Our biggest problem was the monsoon season at that point in time.

[00:18:23.76] We lost a, I think, a double double Bailey bridge that went from one piece of An Khe to another, because we couldn't pull it out fast enough. As that, I think, was the Bong Son River came up.

[00:18:36.64] JOE GALLOWAY: That thing came up.

[00:18:38.02] BOYD JONES: Came up too fast. It came up, probably, came up 20 feet in 5 hours.

[00:18:43.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. [CHUCKLES]

[00:18:43.87] BOYD JONES: Something like that.

[00:18:45.92] JOE GALLOWAY: So there went your Bailey bridge.

[00:18:47.77] BOYD JONES: Was gone, yeah. And the second half of that tour, we were 100% on our own. We had a good relationship with the Air Force. Had communication with Spooky in the evenings, who would come up and kill a few people outside the perimeter when it was necessary.

[00:19:12.31] And I think Shadow was the other one. I think Shadow was a C-130 and Spooky was a C-119. Later, I ran into a retired Air Force three star that had commanded that unit, so it was kind of interesting.

[00:19:26.94] JOE GALLOWAY: I thought Spooky was a 120 series?

[00:19:30.72] BOYD JONES: No, I don't know. The first one was a C-47. Right. And we never saw those. And then the C-119 we saw, and then the C-130s.

[00:19:44.52] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Good to have them up there.

[00:19:51.91] BOYD JONES: I'm going to switch to the first half of '71. That's the first time we got it. We did a lot of mine sweeping there. That's when I was doing industrial site command from basically 7 Bravo and 14 South in the Highlands-- I'm back in the Highlands now-- down to Buon Ma Thuot, building two lane all weather road.

[00:20:21.07] So we had this fine engineer from Fort Belvoir that came over. And he had a Jeep mounted mine detector that he wanted to demonstrate. So I said, that's fine. Put that on the front

of my Jeep, and we'll run down the road and see how it goes. I'll drive and you sit in the right seat.

[00:20:39.70] And he says, oh, I'm sorry. I won't ride in that vehicle. I said, oh, why is that? This is your piece of equipment. You expect my Soldiers to use it? And so we had a little conversation, which time I threw the thing on the side of the road there, and said, you know, please leave.

[00:21:01.60] JOE GALLOWAY: Take that thing with you.

[00:21:03.29] BOYD JONES: So that was that. We also had--

[00:21:05.53] JOE GALLOWAY: He was not willing to risk his ass with it.

[00:21:08.59] BOYD JONES: That's it.

[00:21:09.19] JOE GALLOWAY: That's it.

[00:21:10.87] BOYD JONES: We had sensors also first introduced. I had a Q4 Radar, which was good for counter mortar as long as the thing was oriented, I think, within 60 mils. I think it had a 60 mil zone, and you had to be focused on the incoming round. Once you did that, it would give you a 10 digit coordinate on where it came from. And so it was good, but problematic.

[00:21:36.79] Then, we got a ground proximity radar. And that would tell us if there were bad guys outside the perimeter running, walking, standing, crawling. That particular LZ, I had three engineer companies. There was an artillery platoon, two 155s, a 175, had a mortar section, had an infantry company, had a tank platoon, and part of, and then a full, Duster battery. So we had enough to do some damage.

[00:22:12.64] JOE GALLOWAY: Sounds like you could fight off a division.

[00:22:14.38] BOYD JONES: We were it then. Everyone else had gone home, you know, and we're sitting in the Central Highlands. And the NVA folks were coming across, kind of through, Phu Nhon on their way to the coast. Phu Nhon was maybe 10 kilometers south of where I was. And so, there was constant problems. Ended up with two regimental sized attacks against us at that time. But that sensor was good.

[00:22:43.74] And then we had some motion sensors that we received where we could put them out on the perimeter near our mechanical ambushes, and they would sense also. So all of this reported to a central location where we could read radar, the sensor, we could actually call for direct fire, and on a couple of occasions, the artillery was able to use flechettes straight across the LZ.

[00:23:12.26] JOE GALLOWAY: Lovely weapon.

[00:23:14.75] BOYD JONES: So nobody ever got inside of Weight-Davis when we were there. And that was a quarry, three crusher lines, asphalt, black base plant, and those companies that I mentioned.

[00:23:29.66] JOE GALLOWAY: You were building serious road there.

[00:23:32.18] BOYD JONES: Serious road. Yeah.

[00:23:34.34] JOE GALLOWAY: I think you already answered this, but any technology or gadgets that you were given that didn't work well? Besides the lieutenant's minesweeper.

[00:23:44.42] BOYD JONES: The prime thing was that sweeper. The rest of the things were in good shape. We also had 20 ton dump trucks, civilian models, to help us travel. And I had a friend in Pleiku that didn't need some-- I've forgotten what they were, I want to say like a GAU that's in the A-10 now. But it was a fast firing machine gun that they used on aircraft. So they were excess to him so he gave me a couple.

[00:24:20.72] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, we're talking Miniguns here.

[00:24:22.94] BOYD JONES: A Minigun. Put them in five ton trucks. So we had those because I changed the way that we moved material. When I got there, it was all done in convoy. So with asphalt, if you put it down when it's colder than 180 degrees, the stuff ain't going to work well. And so they would do 10 or 15 trucks, and then convoy them. So I said, that will not work. So we out posted the road, put them all in communication on the artillery net, and they had--

[00:24:56.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Ran them one a time.

[00:24:57.56] BOYD JONES: Yeah. They had a zone that they were protecting, and the trucks ran one at a time on down there. Helped at both ends. Kept a constant production, constant flow, didn't overload the paving trains down at the far end, so that worked out.

[00:25:13.04] JOE GALLOWAY: And the stuff worked.

[00:25:14.99] BOYD JONES: Had an old guy by the name of PFC Austin. Austin drove a five ton truck and he said, I'm not wearing any of that gear, Captain. He says, I'm going to put on my t-shirt, you know. I'll have my helmet beside me. No flak vest. I'm rolling down the road. So one day, Austin came rolling back in with 10 or 15 AK-47 round holes in his headache board. After that time, Austin had all this stuff on. He was good to go.

[00:25:50.44] BOYD JONES: I guess the best day was the fact that our shot up helicopter made it to the Dust Off pad at the 82nd Evac Hospital instead of ending up in the jungle.

[00:26:04.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Whoa. How did you get shot up?

[00:26:08.44] BOYD JONES: I had one week left on my second tour, and I had changed command at Weight-Davis. Had a new battalion commander. He had sent me to Firebase 6 to inspect bunkers one day. Left there on the last helicopter out. That night they got overrun.

[00:26:30.82] The guy that had been platoon leader in my artillery platoon at Weight-Davis had changed jobs and commanded the sound and flash detachment up there. He E&Eed with two of his guys for about three days after being overrun. And as I recall, he got the Medal of Honor for calling fire back in.

[00:26:52.84] Let's see. Next day I went to Highway 19 to the Cav. Do bunker inspections there. So we got that done. And then, I've got three days left and the boss said, well, let's go to Weight-Davis. I want you to exercise their defense system so the new guy knows what's happening.

[00:27:12.89] So we went down and did that. Took about three hours. On the way back to Pleiku, the infantry company is in contact. And we're listening to the radio, and he said, let's go down and take a look at it. And I said, Colonel, we'd want to stay up here right along about 5,000 or 8,000 feet, and just kind of head on home. We don't want to go down there and look because they're in contact.

[00:27:39.49] He says, no, we'll go down there. So down he goes. We came around a grove of trees. And in one of the few clearings that were there was an NVA platoon right there in the open. And all of them opened up on us.

[00:27:54.25] And I got shot. He got shot. It shot the top of the control stick out of the pilot's hand. Shot the communication cord from the pilot's helmet. I grabbed his helmet. Gave him mine. He kept that thing running. Gave my first aid pack to the sergeant major and I said, open this thing up, please.

[00:28:18.40] He tries to Rambo it, and he pulled his false teeth out when he's grabbing on the thing. So we got that. Hit the Dust Off pad, and they had to tow-- they had to put the helicopter on a truck and tow it on out of there.

[00:28:32.35] JOE GALLOWAY: And carry it away. How bad were you shot?

[00:28:35.89] BOYD JONES: No, it was just in the calf muscle. So not a bad problem at all.

[00:28:42.16] JOE GALLOWAY: I hope your commander who suggested going down took a worse wound than you did.

[00:28:47.38] BOYD JONES: He did. Fortunately, he took two rounds right in the butt.

[00:28:50.38] JOE GALLOWAY: [CHUCKLES] There is karma.

[00:28:54.64] BOYD JONES: I saw him in Germany on my next tour over there. And he came up to my wife and I, and he says, I'm responsible. He said--

[00:29:03.41] JOE GALLOWAY: [CHUCKLES]

[00:29:03.80] BOYD JONES: I think the worst day was back at Weight-Davis again. We were kind of pretty much under continuous mortar and rocket fire all day long, and probes on our perimeter. So I had RWY contact with Pleiku, so I called up my old boss who was the adviser to Vietnamese II Corps. He'd been promoted to one star. And that was General Wear at that time.

[00:29:42.73] So I said, if you got some help you can send down here, I said, we're pretty much strung out. So he talked to the Vietnamese general, and they sent down a mechanized infantry company that reinforced our perimeter. And that was probably 72 hours without sleep, longest I'd gone, just to do all of the things that were squared away. So we took a lot of rounds. And as I recall, we only lost one kid in the whole thing, so it was pretty good.

[00:30:17.03] BOYD JONES: Drove by a battalion of Aussies once in a move that we made from LZ English to Kon Tum City. That was it.

[00:30:25.52] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, that was it.

[00:30:33.05] BOYD JONES: Up until the last two months, it was 100% contact with Montagnards, and they were superb. They would be-- the Montagnard people did all of the housekeeping things at our LZs. And then, we worked with the Special Forces that had trained them to do patrol operations and the like. So they were great.

[00:30:58.16] As far as the South Vietnamese, my only contact was training-- the last two months of my tour in '71-- the ARVN to take over that industrial site. And they were very professional. I didn't have any problems with them. They were willing to learn. I don't know what their background was. I guess they were all engineer types.

[00:31:32.12] BOYD JONES: It was tapes and letters.

[00:31:33.95] JOE GALLOWAY: Tapes and letters. How much news did you receive about the war you were fighting in either of those tours? Stars and Stripes? AFRS?

[00:31:47.36] BOYD JONES: Really none.

[00:31:48.17] JOE GALLOWAY: None.

[00:31:49.43] BOYD JONES: My basic thing was, between tours I got sent to grad school down at Missouri School of Mines. And that was a technical campus, but University of Missouri had their other programs in St. Louis. And they, the students from that school, decided they would come down and protest a little bit at the engineer campus. So we had, I think, around 50, 55 Army officers there going to grad school. And the undergrads were mostly engineers, pretty conservative guys, so the protesters, let's just say, were not well received.

[00:32:30.93] JOE GALLOWAY: [CHUCKLES] You kicked their ass?

[00:32:33.69] BOYD JONES: Could be.

[00:32:34.98] JOE GALLOWAY: Could be. Could be.

[00:32:39.72] BOYD JONES: And then, my other experience was coming back from the first tour at Sea-Tac. I flew back with my boss, landed at Sea-Tac, and then we were going our separate ways. So walking off the airplane, there was some kind of a tunnel that you had to go through.

[00:33:00.87] The protesters were there spitting at us and throwing fake blood at us. And I was ready to provide them with an opportunity to do other things, and kind of got saved by my boss. He says, basically, it isn't worthwhile for you to do that. These guys are scum. That was something, I guess.

[00:33:27.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you run into that anywhere else on that trip?

[00:33:32.21] BOYD JONES: I didn't. It ended up that I went to the airline to continue-- I think I was going to Boston from there, and I got upgraded. You know, so it was a good trip.

[00:33:46.63] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Now, what have I not asked you about that you need to talk about?

[00:33:56.90] BOYD JONES: I can't think of all the different vignettes there, Joe. But there were some interesting things that happened here and there. We've got the mine sweep incident. We had the ambush of the beverage convoy that was fairly interesting.

[00:34:22.42] When I first got there, the way that they disposed of a mine was to blow it in place, which makes a large hole in the road, which causes lots of repair requirements. So I said, we're going to stop doing that. We're going to grapple them out.

[00:34:40.00] So you find the mine and you very carefully look around to make sure it's not booby trapped. Remind me, and I'll give you a booby trap story in a second. Flip it out, take it off the road, and blow it. And then you have a very small hole, a foot in diameter six feet deep, and you fill that in on the road. So we did that very successfully.

[00:35:06.13] During the last part of my first tour, we were in Kon Tum City now, and we moved there-- we move from Baldy to LZ English, from LZ English to Kon Tum, built our own LZ south and west of Kon Tum City. And so we are sweeping the road there from Kon Tum west to the first fire support base.

[00:35:32.98] So I flew out to go back with my sweep team, and this is when the lieutenant that's in charge of security said, this is an unnecessary thing. So we're standing about as far apart as we are right now. He's got his track parked over here, and I said, why don't you just take a look down at your foot there and see what you see.

[00:35:56.96] And so there's a Chicom plastic mine that's planted in the road within six inches of his foot. And I said, if you give us a little opportunity so that I can move my sweep team out of the way, you may go ahead and pull your vehicle forward and--

[00:36:14.92] JOE GALLOWAY: Run over that.

[00:36:15.61] BOYD JONES: --and see what it does. So that was the mine incident. So after that, he was quite grateful. The other part of that is, we started to get off route mechanical ambushes.

[00:36:29.68] And so if the sweep team got careless and didn't put flankers out in front of the sweepers to see what was out there, probably, 50 feet, 75 feet off the road, they would have Claymores or Claymore equivalents set off to the side wired to a piece of split bamboo with gum wrapper on each side of the split so that the metal part of the gum wrapper would then make contact and detonate. And it would come into the side of the sweep team.

[00:37:08.62] And we found, gee I don't know, in a two or three month period we probably found five of those. And in that particular area, a Chinook had had to jettison its load of artillery ammo en route to one of the fire bases, and we were starting to get that stuff back. The men's breakfast at church wanted to hear about an engineer story so I put that together. And it covered the last half of my second tour.

[00:37:41.30] So I had taken half of the 4th Engineer Battalion from An Khe to Cam Ranh Bay to stand them down, and the boss said, as soon as you do that, you can take a week's leave. So I went home on a week's leave, came back, and came back up to Pleiku-- they were at Engineer Hill then-- on Christmas Eve day.

[00:38:09.11] Walked in. Same boss I'd had at An Khe. Hello. Good to see you. Get your gear. Get two weapons. Get in the back of my Jeep. We've got some problems down south about 25 miles, and we're going down there today. And it was-- I called the story "Oh, By the Way, Let's Get Going."

[00:38:30.91] So we went down there, and that was the start of my last six months. When I got there, the guy that I relieved was there that night, and somebody, as a parting shot, threw a gas grenade in the bunker. And so that was my introduction to the place.

[00:38:51.25] Up the next morning and looked around, and the jungle had encroached that entire industrial site. So I just stopped work, took-- we had D9 dozers and D7 dozers-- and I cleared that entire perimeter out to 300 meters. Had to do that. Reinstalled all the wire.

[00:39:09.52] Ended up painting compass azimuths on the firing ports of all the bunkers so the kids could go ahead and give an azimuth to what they were doing if they didn't have a compass. Put out some mechanical ambushes. Told them that we were no longer going to have lights on the perimeter. We were going dark at night.

[00:39:33.16] We're going to use our Starlight scopes. Make the night our friend, and not the other guy's friend. So we did that. And then the whole thing was run electrically. All my crusher lines and everything else was electric.

[00:39:48.25] There weren't enough generators, so I got a 500k generator, two 150k generators, got the don electron electrician from Pleiku down there, had him wire all of these things so that I could switch and max the generators based on what we had to do. And so we had no lights at night, unless we had to operate the crushers.

[00:40:12.58] And the crusher guys came to me and said, we can't hear the siren in case you're getting mortar fire. So we had to replace that with an air horn that's run with compressed air. And that thing would wake the dead and would go through the noise.

[00:40:28.96] So you got a bunch of the rest of the story when we did the stuff headed on south. But I just called that "Oh, By the Way, Let's Go South." I was coming in to be the S3 of the battalion.

[00:40:46.56] BOYD JONES: Second tour going home was pretty smooth. I was still-- at that point in time, they never sewed up any of the wounds. They just kept them open, put salve, some kind of magic salve in there, and bandaged them. So the guy says-- the doc said, don't let them sew this thing up. Keep it open for like--

[00:41:11.91] JOE GALLOWAY: This is you. You've been wounded.

[00:41:13.32] BOYD JONES: Yeah, he's talking to me. Keep it open for like two weeks. So going home was no problem. I ended up flying into St. Louis at that time. Came from-- I think we went into-- same place, probably Sea-Tac-- and then Sea-Tac to St. Louis.

[00:41:34.36] Family met me there. I said to my wife, you drive, and I never do that. And so she was wondering what's happened. Well, the story came out. So then, a couple of days later, I went--

[00:41:47.29] JOE GALLOWAY: But before you get there, tell me how you got wounded.

[00:41:51.73] BOYD JONES: Oh, that was the helicopter crashing on the Dust Off pad.

[00:41:56.38] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. So that was your calf wound.

[00:41:58.69] BOYD JONES: That was the calf wound. Yeah.

[00:41:59.54] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. Continue.

[00:42:00.43] BOYD JONES: I mean, it was just three or four inch. The only thing I remember about that is the nurse said, this is going to hurt a little bit. It's so deep, we can't give you a shot. And so you heard the old story about the dowel. She gave me a dowel and said, just bite on this.

[00:42:16.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Just bite on that. Oh, it doesn't work.

[00:42:19.97] BOYD JONES: So it wasn't too bad. So that was going home. And the only part of that story that-- two, a couple of days later, I went down to Fort Leonard Wood to get them to change the dressing and put some more magic stuff in there.

[00:42:37.09] So I told the nurse what I needed. She calls the MPs and said, there's a gunshot wound here. So they respond over there, and want to know where I got shot. So that--

[00:42:48.01] JOE GALLOWAY: [CHUCKLES] Well, it wasn't that the O club.

[00:42:51.61] BOYD JONES: Wasn't there.

[00:42:52.39] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. [CHUCKLES]

[00:42:55.73] BOYD JONES: So that was OK. And then, we get ready for the next assignment, which was going to be Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

[00:43:03.10] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you have any difficulty readjusting to life after combat?

[00:43:08.98] BOYD JONES: Just loud noises. After the first tour, first night home was a tremendous thunderstorm. And the only thing I remember is my wife grabbing me by the shoulder, and I'm out in the backyard underneath the-- we had a big propane tank back there. So I'm under the propane tank.

[00:43:32.92] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh! Good place in a mortar attack.

[00:43:37.06] BOYD JONES: Yes. Don't want to be near the propane tank. I don't know why I was there, but that was it. And the only other thing is that I became very observant of things. I won't pick up strange things that I see on the ground. And if things look out of place, I kind of just avoid that area. And that exists to this day.

[00:43:58.99] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Did you maintain contact with fellow officers you served with in Vietnam on either tour in the years after?

[00:44:09.40] BOYD JONES: Only sporadically. Later on in life, I was the vice president, civil works for the East, and had some contact with Colonel Lee, who was the engineer down at Tampa. So we were doing some dredging stuff. So I got to see him a little bit.

[00:44:32.24] Got to see most of the more senior engineer officers as they grew up in my tours. But I pretty much stayed in combat units for the rest of my career. And these guys, they didn't allow me too much in the civil works or the military construction area.

[00:44:57.84] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your Vietnam experience change you and affect your life afterward? For good, or for less good, or somewhere in between?

[00:45:08.28] BOYD JONES: I'd say the good part was the experiences, the things that had to be done that you-- probably in my case, I probably would never have experienced in some other life, or some other tour. And the responsibility. So perhaps, one of the more important things was to accept responsibility for your actions.

[00:45:36.62] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your time in Vietnam affect the way you think about the troops coming back from the wars today?

[00:45:44.87] BOYD JONES: I'm just happy that they are received by the public. I guess, four or five years ago, we were in New York City for my cultural training. I have to go down there two or three times a year to see a play, or something, to keep the cultural aspects of--

[00:46:05.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Is this your wife's influence?

[00:46:07.23] BOYD JONES: Yeah.

[00:46:07.43] [LAUGHTER]

[00:46:09.44] And so we're having supper in this little cafe, and there are two ladies that come in and sit down beside us. Tables are about two feet apart. And somehow, we get on the, what did you do? Blah, blah, blah.

[00:46:29.03] Well, these two characters had been protesters. And so we had a little discussion about the protesters back then, and they really said that they were kind of ashamed of what they had done. And the troops that were coming back in the '90s were being treated much better.

[00:46:51.05] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. How do you think the Vietnam War is remembered in our society today?

[00:47:00.75] BOYD JONES: Not well. I'm working satellite voting right now. One of our election officers, a guy by the name of Nam, was an Air Force enlisted man in '75 in Vietnam. And the last day, he tried to leave and get his wife, brand new wife and two or three-month-old son, and he couldn't get out.

[00:47:30.39] So he and his boss hopped on the last plane that was leaving Tan Son Nhut. They ended up in Thailand. And he didn't see his wife for five years. And finally got the wife and son out, but we-- the thing that bothers me is we left him hanging.

[00:47:49.82] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:47:51.04] BOYD JONES: And I was at Leavenworth at the time as a student and an instructor. We had a lot of Vietnamese officers there and it was a very tough time for them.

[00:48:01.03] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:48:02.32] BOYD JONES: They usually had their immediate family with them. But all the relatives were still back in the home country.

[00:48:10.07] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:48:12.52] BOYD JONES: I was-- one other thing, just as an aside, every time our politicians stopped the bombing of Hanoi and other places, we started getting more intense incoming fire. And when we were in Kon Tum City, a bunch of that was from 105 type howitzers that had come down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

[00:48:35.62] And I guess the distance there was probably only around 16 or 18 kilometers to our particular LZ, to Mary Lou. And I just think back, if we had done what we were supposed to do, it would have been a different story. So my advice to politicians, if you're going to go to war, finish it. Otherwise, stay out of it.

[00:49:01.08] JOE GALLOWAY: Exactly. Are there lessons you took from Vietnam that you would like to pass on? Including that one.

[00:49:13.64] BOYD JONES: I guess train and delegate the subordinates that you have. Make sure they have the most experience that you can possibly give them, and give them the responsibility and the tools to do the job.

[00:49:33.68] JOE GALLOWAY: Have you visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial here?

[00:49:37.40] BOYD JONES: I haven't. Several months ago, I joined the association. And they keep having events. And I teach now, as well as other things. And usually, they do things on a class night. We teach nights, masters program over at Catholic University. So I haven't done it.

[00:50:01.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Have you received your Vietnam Veteran lapel pin?

[00:50:05.52] BOYD JONES: I don't think so.

[00:50:06.68] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, we're going to fix that right now. Let's see if I can get it in somewhere. There we go. We'll try not to make this a blood stick, in the SEAL manner. All right. And there you are.

[00:50:25.65] BOYD JONES: Like a professional. Thank you, sir.

[00:50:28.65] JOE GALLOWAY: Appreciate you coming in and telling a good story.

[00:50:32.25] BOYD JONES: Interesting.