

## **Jones, Murphy USAF**

[00:00:20.58] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I was born here in Louisiana.

[00:00:24.39] JOE GALLOWAY: Whereabouts?

[00:00:25.36] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Well, my dad was warden of Angola. They made it to Baton Rouge in time for my birth, but I was raised the first three years of my life at the state prison there at Angola.

[00:00:37.74] JOE GALLOWAY: At Angola Prison?

[00:00:38.30] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I was. My nursemaid was a black woman in for murder, name was Kitty, I loved her with a passion.

[00:00:46.15] [LAUGHTER]

[00:00:46.95] And she lived in the house, she should never even been in prison.

[00:00:50.04] JOE GALLOWAY: Your dad was an officer there?

[00:00:52.08] MURPHY NEAL JONES: He was the warden.

[00:00:53.37] JOE GALLOWAY: He was the warden?

[00:00:54.24] MURPHY NEAL JONES: He was the boss, and later head of the state police. He retired from the state police.

[00:01:01.56] Mom, Dad, my sister, are all deceased, and my brother lives in Baton Rouge where I was raised mostly, at least from fifth grade on. And went to high school there, played football, graduated from Baton Rouge High School, 1956, and went to Tulane University on a football scholarship. Was first string center and linebacker for three years there. Last guy to play 60 minutes at Tulane, that was as a sophomore against Alabama and we won, 7-nothing.

[00:01:39.47] JOE GALLOWAY: All right.

[00:01:40.32] [LAUGHTER]

[00:01:42.99] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Got to Vietnam when I was 26. I was stationed in Japan. I had flown the F-100 prior to that here in the States, deployed in various places around the world. But went into the F-105D and was stationed at Itazuke Air Base originally, and then they moved our wing up to Yokota Air Base near Tokyo. And so we used to go down to Southeast Asia on a 60 day rotation and fly combat both out of Takhli and Korat air bases.

[00:02:18.30] I was at Tulane, graduated May 30th, 1960, went to pilot training June 25th of 1960. We had some advisers there, just a little bit of stuff, it was nothing big, and then of course

when I got to Japan things started heating up. The Gulf of Tonkin incident started and then we started going down there to fly some combat. Not so much at first, most of it was escort for the reconnaissance airplanes. In fact, my first mission, the RF-101 got shot down, and we got him out. But there were two of us escorting him in the Mu Gia Pass in Laos.

[00:03:05.90] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I was there in '64, I went back again in '65, volunteered to go back again in '66, and that's when I was shot down. And the raid that I was on was the biggest raid of the war. It was the first time we were allowed to bomb within a 30 mile radius of Hanoi. We had bombed all over North Vietnam but were not allowed to go within that 30 mile radius, for political reasons.

[00:03:33.98] In fact, two days earlier I was on a good target 30 miles north of Hanoi, a rail yard complex that supported a steel factory. We were not allowed to bomb the steel factory, we could only bomb the rail yard. Well in fact on that rail yard raid, I remember the intelligence officer giving us our briefing, and he said, if you're hit and have to jettison your bombs, do not jettison them on the steel factory. If you're hit and have to eject, turn the airplane away from the steel factory.

[00:04:10.16] And I raised my hand and I said, you know that marshaling yard exists strictly for that steel factory? I said, why don't we bomb the steel factory? And this lieutenant colonel duty officer was there, he says, Captain, don't bomb the steel factory. I said, I'm not going to bomb the steel factory, but I don't understand why. And they didn't bomb it for a year and a half. So--

[00:04:34.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Crazy stuff.

[00:04:35.86] MURPHY NEAL JONES: It was stupid.

[00:04:40.16] MURPHY NEAL JONES: They were 24 F-105's. We were going to bomb the Hanoi POL-- petroleum, oil, lubrication-- storage area in Hanoi. The Navy was going to bomb the one in Haiphong at the same time. General Simler actually came from Saigon to brief us. He said, you've been hand-picked by the White House, all your names went to the White House because of what you had done in the past in bombing raids. We expect to lose 12 of you today, out of the 24. And I look over on either side of me and said, boy, too bad about you guys. Unfortunately, I was the only one shot down, or fortunately, I was the only one shot down.

[00:05:28.64] We could not do our own tactics. We would come down what we called Thud Ridge, which was a mountain range that came down from the northwest. And we would come down there for a reason. Because we had the Wild Weasels supporting us, and we had some jamming going on and it was at least an area if you had to bail out you might be able to get rescued there. We were told, if you were within the 30 mile radius though, there would be no rescue attempt.

[00:06:03.47] JOE GALLOWAY: They were not coming for you.

[00:06:04.60] MURPHY NEAL JONES: They divided us up into six flights of four, five minutes apart, flying the same route. We would go in at 540 knots calibrated, that's about 620 miles an hour, each carrying eight 750 pound bombs. Go in in spread formation.

[00:06:24.98] I was in the sixth flight flying the number two position. And of course, by the time we got there, everybody was awake. And they had time to even take a cigarette break between flights coming in. And we had antiaircraft fire for the last 50 miles going in, all over the place. We were jinking like a bunch of doves on opening day. And as we got to the target area we were going to pop up to 12,000 feet, roll in at a 45 degree dive angle, drop our bombs on the target, and then get out of Dodge as quickly as we could. Well, as we got to the pop-up point, leader pops, I'm getting ready to pop, and I suddenly get hit with an 85 millimeter.

[00:07:11.84] We had been at about 6,000 feet. They launched a missile on us, we got down below radar on him, and broke lock, so he went ballistic. But I was watching the gun emplacement, had six guns, radar control, all firing, six guns at one time. In fact, when I went back to Vietnam in 1998, that gun emplacement was still there. Just as I popped, I got hit. I got hit right in front of the cockpit on the left side, coming up into the cockpit.

[00:07:50.36] The whole bottom of my airplane disappeared, the control stick was completely blown off, I had it in my hand. I was wounded in both legs. Piece of shrapnel took my oxygen mask off. There was a big liquid oxygen bottle underneath the cockpit and a bunch of hydraulic lines, avionic equipment.

[00:08:11.48] The fire was white. It was like snow. And it was hot, really hot, coming up. It didn't burn me. I tried to eject because I was out of control, canopy wouldn't come off, it was supposed to have come off. I jammed the handles back down, yanked as hard as I could again, it still didn't come off. By this time I was only about 300 feet, about a 90 degree left bank, and I ejected through the canopy at 540 knots calibrated air speed. Parachute opened. Ejection seat actually hits the plexiglass prior to your hit.

[00:08:46.46] And just prior, and I'm tall, but it all worked. I was still in a 45 degree descent when I hit the ground, bounced maybe 10 or 15 feet in the air. Came down on my head, fell back on my knees, staggered up to my feet. And Joe, I really thought something was wrong with my ears. The noise was immense, you cannot believe the antiaircraft gunfire. It is nothing but a solid roar.

[00:09:24.30] I staggered up to my feet and I looked up, and there were about 100 North Vietnamese soldiers running toward me. And they were about 100 yards away and they had AK's. I had two pistols, I had a .38 revolver with tracer ammunition in my survival vest, I had my own personal fully engraved silver inlaid .45 on my hip, and had a round in the chamber. And I pulled it out and I had it in my hand like this, trying to reach up with my left arm to grab the quick disconnect to release the canopy from the harness.

[00:10:00.11] And I couldn't get them, and I couldn't understand why I couldn't move it. And I looked down at my left side, and my left arm was completely broken, about 3 inches below the shoulder. Flopping back and forth, just a nub moving and the arm following it.

[00:10:16.04] I jammed the pistol back, released the canopy, pulled the pistol again. By this time the first guy was about 10 yards away and I cocked the pistol and leveled down on him, and I didn't fire. He dropped down on the ground, and it was all of them then with their AK's. And I just decided I wasn't John Wayne, and un-cocked it, stuck the pistol butt toward him, he grabbed it. I raised my right hand over my head. One of the other soldiers came up, not knowing the left arm was broken at the time, grabbed it, and he put it in a hammerlock.

[00:10:55.94] And I was in pretty good shape back then, big guy, played center and linebacker in college. I came around and just reacted and hit him. I hit him in the face, square in the nose, and I think I killed him because I could see the bone and cartilage and blood and everything went everywhere, and he went down. They got excited and I'm pointing to the arm, flopping it showing them it's broken, and they didn't seem to know how to work a zipper. They cut my survival vest off, cut my g-suit off, cut my flight suit off. I had zippers in my boots, they cut those off. Left me standing there in a pair of white boxer shorts and a white t-shirt and a pair of powder blue socks. And I remember thinking, I'm out of uniform, I don't have the right kind of socks on.

[00:11:50.50] They put a rope around my neck and led me over to some trees nearby, waiting for the all-clear on the air raid system. Now 15 minutes later that guy I hit was still lying face down in the rice paddy. A Vietnamese woman in a uniform came up, my head was bleeding pretty bad, and she put a bandage on it. Nothing for the other wounds I had, a dislocated shoulder, a broken arm, both ACLs completely torn, shrapnel in both legs, and it would turn out I had six fractured vertebrae.

[00:12:26.21] They put the rope around my neck, led me to a little small military vehicle that had stopped, kind of like a weapons carrier. We went about a quarter of a mile to a group of three houses, and they put me in this house with three soldiers. It had four windows, two in the front, two in the back. Two single beds, a little small table, and two wooden chairs. They locked the door, people were looking in, but 20 minutes later an English speaking officer and three guards arrived from the Hanoi Hilton, that's how close we were to downtown Hanoi.

[00:13:02.49] They replaced them. And the officer sat down and said, I'm going to ask you some questions, if you don't answer you'll be severely punished. I said, I'm badly injured, I need a doctor. He said, later. What is your name? I gave it to him. Said, what is your rank? I was a captain, I said, I'm a captain, United States Air Force. He said, what base did you take off from? I said, I can't tell you that. I can only give you my name, rank, serial number, and date of birth, according to the Geneva agreements.

[00:13:36.62] Well he didn't say anything else to me. There was a soldier standing behind me on the right side, kicked me upside the head, knocked me over. They grabbed the broken arm, pulled it out, pulled me out in the middle of the room. They did one nice thing there, they relocated the shoulder when they did that. They put my left arm in a hammerlock and I could feel my hand, this is the broken arm, I could feel it up by my head. Tied my ankles together very tightly with ropes, tied my wrists together, rolled me on the right side, tied my elbows together, pulled them together, like you're in a tourniquet. And then took another piece of rope, ran it from

the elbows to the ankles and bowed me up backwards. And then they started kicking and beating me.

[00:14:25.05] This went on for, I guess for a couple of hours and finally I said, Takhli. He said, Takhli Air Base, Thailand? I said, yes. He said, what squadron? I wouldn't tell him. Finally I said, 333rd. He said, 333rd Tactical Fighter Squadron? I said, yes. Then he said, 355th Tactical Fighter Wing? And I said, yes. And he said, what was your target? And I said, where all that damn smoke is coming from. Smoke was up to about 30,000 feet, and he knew where that was and didn't bother to ask any more questions.

[00:15:01.04] But he got up, went outside, and was gone maybe 10 minutes. Came back inside, said something in Vietnamese. Now this is over about a five hour period when all this took place. They untied me, led me outside with a rope around my neck, forced me to kneel on the ground in front of the house. Bowed my head. And a soldier walked up behind me, stuck a rifle to the back of my head, stood there a couple of seconds, and I hear this click.

[00:15:32.39] Now, what do you think when you think you're going to die? I really didn't care. I would have welcomed the bullet. I remember though the craziest thought in the world, damn that's a slow bullet. In my mind I could actually see the bullet, ultra slow motion coming down the barrel and I didn't know if it had already hit my head and I was dead, I'm going to heaven or somewhere. And then I said, huh, they're not going to kill me.

[00:16:04.96] And then three photographers came out of another building and they took some pictures of me kneeling there, and I have video of that. Took me back inside, re-tied the arms the same way. Led me out to a big Russian army truck that they had come in, and about six or seven guys swung me like a sack of potatoes up into the back of the truck. And 20 minutes later, we were at the Hanoi Hilton, and they started the same stuff again.

[00:16:35.96] That was 29 June, 1966. Long TDY. I was shot down at noon, and they would do that until I would guess about 7:30, 8 o'clock. And they brought in a clean flying suit, which was not mine, and a huge pair of Navy flying boots. Said, put these on, you're going to a press conference. They put them on me because I wasn't moving too well. They gave me a little piece of gauze to use as a sling, which they would take away after this parade.

[00:17:06.71] They led me out to the main gate of the Hanoi Hilton, and a big Army truck there, Russian truck. Put me in the back of it. There was a bamboo pole about three feet back from the cab. I had to stand up holding on to that, truck full of soldiers. And we took about an hour tour through the city. One good thing, I turned down one street and I could see my target burning furiously. And they took me to the International House where they had lots of people there for this press conference, because this was the biggest raid of the war and first time we had bombed Hanoi.

[00:17:46.49] They kept me outside for a bit and I said, I need some water. They said, no. Later. I said, I'm not going anywhere until I get some water. Well, I got a glass of ice cold water, and that was the last water for a while.

[00:17:59.86] From the time that I had been captured, they kept telling me I was not a prisoner of war, I was a war criminal, and had no rights in the Geneva agreements. And I said, bull. I said, what can I do to show my resistance against them? So when I walked in I stood up as straight as I could and I saluted. And I understand this film, the video I have, was used at our jungle survival school in the Philippines. And they used to say, see this is how you should conduct yourself, even the Vietnamese appreciate military bearing. Well, they didn't. They beat the devil out of me for it, but I was so proud that I was able to say, look, I am resisting these guys, come hell or high water.

[00:18:57.76] So they took a bunch of pictures, didn't ask any questions. Took me out, put me on the truck again, drove me through a different part of the city, and ended back up at the Hanoi Hilton. And for the next 10 days pretty hard workover. And what they wanted to know, when we were coming back to Hanoi and what we were going to bomb. And I didn't have those answers. But they wanted a confession. And probably the worst moment in my life, on the ninth day, I finally signed a written confession that they had.

[00:19:34.54] And it said, I condemn the United States government for its aggressive war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Two, I have encroached upon the airspace of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Three, I am a war criminal. And four, I have received humane and lenient treatment from the Vietnamese people and government. And nothing was further from the truth, but that night I cried.

[00:20:05.49] The next night though was a blessing. They moved me from that interrogation room to a small section of the Hanoi Hilton called Heartbreak Hotel. And it consisted of eight cells, four down the right side, four down the left. We numbered them 1, 2, 3, 4, and on the right, 5, 6, 7, 8. I was in the last one on the right. Eight by eight feet, two concrete bunks, leg irons embedded into the concrete bunks. That night, on the ninth night, they moved a guy in the cell next to me. And I had only spoken earlier to one other guy, Paul Galanti, who was on the other side, because we weren't allowed to see or speak to anybody and Paul was the only other guy in there. Guard came, we had to stop talking. Well that night they moved this guy next to me, guards left. I heard a voice, where is Neal Jones?

[00:21:10.06] Well, just hearing my name, I must have bounced a foot off that concrete bunk. And I said, right here, who's that? And he said, Neal, this is Dave Hatcher. Well, Dave Hatcher was a captain, flew F-105s, he had been shot down 30 days before me, he was a good friend. And I said, my God, Dave, you don't know how good it is to hear your voice because we didn't know what had happened to you, whether you were dead or alive.

[00:21:38.93] I said, how did you know I was here? He said, well I came from a camp here in Hanoi called The Zoo, and we have speakers in the cells and in the morning and evening they play a 30 minute propaganda broadcast, The Voice of Vietnam. We call it Hanoi Hannah. And the same day you were shot down, that night they announced you by name as having been captured. So at least I knew my family was going to find out I was still alive.

[00:22:11.65] And I asked him how he was. He said he was fine. He asked me how I was, and I said, Dave, I think I'm going to die. And he didn't hesitate, he came right back, and he said, Neal,

there is only one thing to do with it, and that's to pray a lot. I pray all the time. Joe, it was like he took a bucket of cold water and threw it in my face and said, wake up, quit feeling sorry for yourself. And I prayed that night. I found out 4 and 1/2 years later that Dave had just come from being tortured when he told me that. But he saved my life. We have a very close bond, of those of us that were there. Losing a lot, though.

[00:22:59.80] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Got married when I was a freshman in college and my wife was a junior in high school. We were 19 and 17. We're still married, coming up on our 59th anniversary. In March our son Neal was six, Darla was three. Came home from Vietnam, they were in the seventh the fourth grades. Glenda raised those kids when she went back to Baton Rouge with them, raised those kids, bought a house, bought a car, went to college, and got her degree in elementary education.

[00:23:35.04] She's a little bitty gal, but she could play linebacker for any NFL team. So our son was killed in 1988, he was a police officer in Corpus Christi. His son is coming to see us tomorrow. Our son is in second year of med school and we're very proud of him-- our grandson.

[00:24:01.48] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Six years, 7 and 1/2 months, 2,421 days. The first 189 days I was in solitary. And I really needed some help at that time because it was seven weeks, my right leg became badly infected. Had maggots all over it, it was split open, I had taken piece of shrapnel just above the ankle. And the inside came up into the calf, had not exited. It was still in there. They had told me they wanted to amputate it and I wouldn't let them. My left arm would stay completely broken for 4 and 1/2 years before they operated on it. But at the end of seven weeks an officer came by my cell one day and he says, the doctor will cut on your leg. I said, he is not going to cut it off.

[00:24:56.89] Just before it got dark I saw a couple of guys in white coats go by carrying a table, and they put it in the cell next to mine, which was empty. Kept waiting, kept waiting for them to come get me and suddenly I hear blood curdling screams. They were working on somebody else first. And then the officer came over after a while, said, come. He says, do not make noise, it is for the doctor. In other words, don't scream.

[00:25:34.54] So I hobbled over next door, got up on this little table and they wanted me to lay down, I wanted to watch. And so they went in with a long pair of hemostats, up into the wound, dug up into the calf, not using anything, dug around for a while, came out with a piece of shrapnel. Went back a couple more times looking. Took a pair of scissors, cutting away some dead flesh and obviously live flesh because it hurt.

[00:26:10.11] Then they made an incision in front of the leg and an incision in the back, and he took a long surgical knife and with both hands he rammed it through the leg, between the two bones. And took three pieces of latex strip, put a piece all the way through the leg, one from the top out the wound, one from the bottom out the wound. No bandage, said, go back to your cell. The doctor did give me two cigarettes. But it stayed open and draining for 7 and 1/2 months.

[00:26:46.69] In 1970 they finally decided to operate on my arm. Never healed, never mended whatsoever, it just flopped. They used Novocaine, and I watched them for 2 and 1/2 hours cut

three inches of bone out. They took a metal plate, 3 screws, took bone out of each of my hips and then wrapped those with three pieces of wire. And I had a big cast, ran from my waist up over my shoulder with a bamboo pole holding the arm up. I had that on for 7 and 1/2 months with no padding underneath it.

[00:27:34.21] And when they operated on me I weighed 130 pounds. My arms that much shorter but I flew jet fighters again. Where there's a way there's a will. There's a will, there's a way. What do you do? We were locked up 24 hours a day. First 4 and 1/2 years I was either in solitary or two or three man cell max. Not allowed to see or speak to any other Americans other than whom you live with. And you had to speak softly so nobody else could hear you outside the cell.

[00:28:05.72] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Well, the first two guys, I got to at one time, my first two. Richard Paul Keirn, he was an Air Force captain. A Lieutenant JG, he was a Navy backseat, F-4. Dick Keirn, the Air Force captain, was an older captain and he introduced himself as Pop. Well, both of them were Dick. Dick Ratzlaff was the other guy's name.

[00:28:37.66] I said, well, which one of you guys was Dick, when we got to our cell. And he said, well we're both Dick, he said, but call me Pop. I said, I'm not going to call you Pop. He said, yeah everybody calls me Pop. I said, why? He said, well, I'm old. He says, I was a prisoner in Germany in World War II. I said, you got to be kidding. He had been shot down in a B-17 over Germany and spent about 10 or 11 months as a prisoner of the Germans during World War II.

[00:29:08.86] He spent 7 and 1/2 years in prison in Vietnam, and both of them are now deceased, unfortunately. And so, lost two good buddies there after all this time, but we lived together for a good year and a half.

[00:29:28.87] Next cell mate I was in a two man cell with John Pitchford. John was from Natchez, went to LSU in Baton Rouge. And he had been an instructor out at Luke Air Force Base when I went through fighter training, so I knew who he was. He was one of the first Wild Weasels, he was the F-100 Wild Weasel. And they were shot down, his back-seater was killed.

[00:29:57.96] John had dislocated his shoulder. And when he surrendered, he was shot three times, they hit him just above the elbow. He and I lived in a two man cell with two good arms. He had a broken right arm, my broken left arm, and we had to learn to do everything together. Fold our mosquito net, fold our blankets. I'd wash his back, I'd hold his rag, he'd soap it up and I'd take it and wash his back for him when we got to bathe.

[00:30:29.79] John died a couple of years ago and I went up to Natchez for the funeral. And I drove from my home here, across the lake, and I cried all the way to Natchez. He was the toughest man I ever met in my life and I greatly miss him. We had some wonderful people, we communicate frequently. We've had several reunions. Of course, I have been kind of under the weather, and I missed the last few.

[00:31:09.07] But we have kind of a website that we communicate with, stay in touch with all the stuff. Very proud to be a part of a group that was so brave and served with honor. MURPHY



NEAL JONES: May of '72 they moved some of us up near the Chinese border. Very primitive camp, no electric lights, electricity at all. I called it the Snake Farm. We called it Dogpatch. The reason I call it the Snake Farm, we were in irons, 30 hour truck drive going up there, exhausted, we get there it's about 2 o'clock in the morning.

[00:32:05.37] Pitch black. And they're going to put our truck load in this one building, and it was a long rectangular building, about eight by eight foot cells, two wooden bunks in each one. Center hallway. And I'm carrying my little bedroll and I go down about halfway feeling the wall, anybody in here? No.

[00:32:32.24] Well Ross Terry, who was Navy backseat F-4 was the first one in. He took the cell all the way at the back on the left. We were yelling for the Vietnamese to let us have the kerosene lantern they had to see where to hang our mosquito nets. And they finally give it to us and pass it down the way, and I'm laying against the wall there, just ready to just collapse. And suddenly I hear Ross say, there's a snake in here.

[00:33:08.10] Well, had the Vietnamese put a garter snake on me I would have told them every top secret I knew. I was wide awake, it was like a cattle stampede coming out of there. Guards threw rounds in their chambers, had their bayonets fixed, yelling at us, screaming at us, and we're just pushing them out of the way. When we get out the camp commandant and interrogator come down and say, what's the matter? There's a snake back in that cell.

[00:33:41.23] So they laugh and they send two soldiers back there with a lantern and a stick. We hear this yelling, beating around. And they come out and they had a snake, it's a good three, three and 1/2 feet, four feet long. It's a cobra. It was lying on the bunk where Ross had put his bedroll. So then they said, OK, everybody back in there. They laughed. And I said, mm mm. Not a one of us would go in that cell. And they had to put us in a different building. We refused to go in there. And we had two snakes we found in our cell after we had moved in, they got in overnight. So I don't like snakes,

[00:34:32.03] MURPHY NEAL JONES: We always said it was gastro-politics. When the food started getting a little better, we're going home. And of course that went by the wayside several times over the years. But up there suddenly, even though we were way up north near the Chinese border, the food got a little better. And I remember one night we went to bed, and I was in a cell with eight guys, sleeping shoulder to shoulder.

[00:35:06.14] And I was in the corner and there was an air vent up above. I guess about 10 or 11 o'clock at night I hadn't been to sleep yet, I hear two gunshots. And that meant that somebody was coming in, this kind of box canyon, letting the rest of the camp know there was somebody coming up. And I hear a couple of trucks drive in. A supply truck, we're going to get some more food and maybe get a package. It was around Christmastime.

[00:35:39.95] A few minutes later, a couple more shots. Well, several trucks would end up coming in, and I didn't know anybody else was awake and I eased down on my cover, it was cold up there, can get in the 30s. Climbed up and I pulled up with one hand, looked out this air vent and see all these trucks. I said, man, we going home.

[00:36:07.15] Well, the next morning when they unlocked the door for us to go out and wash our dishes from the meal the night before and take a shower or a bath, we were all packed, ready to go. When are we leaving? And they said, you're not going anywhere. Nothing happened that day, they only let two guys out to wash the dishes.

[00:36:34.64] And then that night there was a lot of scurrying around the camp, they were loading these trucks up, and finally about midnight they came and told us, quick get on board the trucks. But they put us in irons, or in handcuffs. And I put my left hand on the guy next to me because of my left hand, it had so much atrophy on it I could pull them out even when they clamped down pretty tight. I pulled my hand out too early and the guard finally got in, we were sitting on top of everything they had from pots and pans to you name it, and this little dog came up and they put the little puppy in there.

[00:37:21.21] And so we got a little dog in the back with us, along with three guards. A guard shines a flashlight, sees my hand out, puts me back in there and he tells me, he says, no, don't pull it out again. OK. Well, as soon as we got going I pulled it out of there so we could at least ride comfortably. We drove until sun up. We pulled into a little valley and they gave us some French bread with some pork fat with the hide and hair on it. They put the little dog on the ground to go to the bathroom, gave him back to us. We knew after that, they didn't put the handcuffs back on, that we were going home. Because we had heard that the B-52s had been bombing Hanoi.

[00:38:15.62] And we got near Hanoi before dark. They stopped out in the field and let us go to the bathroom. Waited until it got dark before they drove in town went across a pontoon bridge because the bridge had been bombed. When we walked into the Hanoi Hilton, we knew for sure. Because where they had barricades up keeping you from seeing any other cells, guys were in the larger cells yelling at us and so forth.

[00:38:53.90] And according to the agreements, they had to read us the agreements within five days of the signing. They read them to us on the fifth day. And the first group would go home within 15 days of the signing. I was in that first group, and I would go home on the 15th day. I was on the third airplane that day. The night before they took us out in groups of 10, had some civilian clothing made in Czechoslovakia, all the same, pants, shirt, jacket, shoes, socks, and a little flight bag. And they fed us, and we didn't sleep much that night we were so excited.

[00:39:46.67] And the next morning they took us out of our cell in exact order of shoot down, and that was how it would go. Any sick and wounded, and then by order of shoot down. Alvarez was going to be the first, but there was a German nurse and somebody else that was wounded. And they did take a couple of guys that we don't consider part of our group that did some collaboration out of turn. So two good friends of mine, Larry Barbay and another guy, who were not on the first release. Larry happened to have been from Baton Rouge.

[00:40:44.01] We went across through Hanoi, streets were lined with people. I'll never forget all these school kids there with their little Ho Chi Minh neckerchief around their neck, standing there at attention like in military formation. Nobody was yelling or shouting, except it was ruined

by this one little kid, raised his fist and yelled, and adult standing next to him knocked the holy devil out of him.

[00:41:11.61] Went across to Gia Lam airfield, stopped short of where the hangar was. And the first group had already been out there. They had a restroom area there, and let us get up go to the bathroom. And I happened to be standing there, and the first airplane was not in yet. I was standing there looking out the window ion the restroom, and I saw the first C-141 come in. And they said, quick get them back on the buses. We got on the buses, we went up, and we watched this dude land. The runway was dirty and dust flying. He comes taxiing back, he's got this American flag on the tail. They had an American flag out the window.

[00:42:13.53] We kept waiting, and kept waiting, and kept waiting. We couldn't see the release ceremony. Suddenly we hear the airplane crank up. Uh oh, something went wrong. Well they had three airplanes to come in, and we didn't know that at the time, but they did not want to put us all on the same airplane. A little over a hundred of us, but they didn't want to have one crash and get all of us. So when it came time, we got out in groups of 10, stood there, and they called off our names. I remember this Colonel Lynn was the guy we were being turned over to,

[00:42:53.22] Air Force colonel, had his blue uniform on, and his wheel hat, scrambled eggs. Walked up, saluted, shook hands. Somebody, one of the crew members, grabbed my little ditty bag and walked on board. And had the tailgate down.

[00:43:11.97] They had three flight nurses and some flight surgeons, public relations people on the plane. I don't know what kind of perfume those nurses had on, but those were the best smelling women I have ever smelled. Got on board and took our seats, cranked up the engines, closed the tailgate, taxied out. Waited. And went down that runway and we broke ground, there was a big cheer. About 15 minutes later though, the pilot came over the public address system and said, gentlemen, welcome aboard. We have just crossed the coast in North Vietnam. Welcome to freedom.

[00:44:03.70] It was a great trip to the Philippines. They had very little food for us because they didn't know what we could eat. They had some crackers and cookies and things, soft drinks, fruit juices, coffee, tea. One of the flight nurses came out and said, would you like something to drink? And she told me what she had. I said, I'll take some of that orange juice. Another nurse standing behind her says, would you like something in it, sir? She had a brown paper bag with a bottle of vodka. I said, you bet. She said, this is your first warm treatment. I had four warm treatments before I got to the Philippines.

[00:44:46.62] They had some brand new magazines on board that were made especially for us. Newsweek, Time, and all those that would go back and cover the major news stories over all the years we were there. So you had a quick review of some of the major things that happened. Of course, landing there at the Philippines, Admiral Gayler was there, the ambassador was there, General Moore was there. Saluted those guys, and then suddenly you're aware of the crowd.

[00:45:23.10] We had no idea what we were coming back to because all we had heard was antiwar protests. And it was a tremendous homecoming. Got up there in the hospital and had a

flight surgeon assigned to about every three or four of us. Mine was a young bachelor and he came by and gave me a quick check. We'd already had a check on the airplane. And he said, what do you drink? At the time I drank Scotch. Well, 10 minutes later I had a bottle of Johnnie Walker next to my bed there and finished that in the three days that I stayed there.

[00:46:11.18] But the next thing I wanted was to take a shower. And I went in there and I think I used a whole bottle of shampoo, and a whole bar of soap, scrubbing and scrubbing and scrubbing and scrubbing. And then they had the dining room just fixed up beautifully, went down, and it was a near Valentine's Day so they had valentines from all the school kids at Clark Air Base.

[00:46:40.01] It was cafeteria style, I'd always thought when I came home if it were breakfast I'd have a great big cheese omelet, and if it were lunch or dinner, I'd have a big cheeseburger. Well, it was dinner. First thing I saw was some fried chicken. I said, I'll have one of those fried chicken breasts. The second thing I saw was some tenderloin steaks. I'll take one of those, medium rare. And the third thing I came to was some broiled lobster, and I said, I'll take one of those. And I ate them all, and a pint of chocolate ice cream, and about a half a bottle of wine for dinner that evening, and I slept well.

[00:47:26.47] I actually spent four days there because I had some special debriefings to do because of a classified program I was involved with. And so I would get home on the 17th of February. I got released February 12th. And we'd go into Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, that being the closest major hospital to Baton Rouge. And Glenda and the kids met me there, we got in it was about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. Big crowd, cold.

[00:48:06.49] And taking us to the hospital and I got to the hospital and the chief surgeon was in charge of me, and he was full colonel. I said, well, Doc, I need to tell you something right now, I'm not spending the night here tonight, I'm going with my family. And he says, I know, I just wanted to make sure it was OK with you, it's OK with her, that you all wanted to be together, because you had been separated for a long time. I said, you bet. Stayed there a few days and went through a great physical, went back to Baton Rouge. I had to come back, my hand was partially paralyzed, I had to have a multiple tendon transplant done on my left hand. Had that done, and was ready to go.

[00:49:00.08] MURPHY NEAL JONES: The first thing I asked the flight surgeon, I said, can I fly again? He said, well, we can hook it up, it's going to be up to you. I said, OK, I'll fly again. So I flew single seat jet fighters again. They offered me the F-4 and I said, I don't want a two-seater, I want a single seater. In fact, in 2001, just before 9/11, I got to go fly the F-15, here an old gray-headed grandfather,

[00:49:29.32] and I go out here with the Louisiana National Guard. I had given a speech at their annual awards banquet up at Alexandria, Louisiana this year. Both for the Air Guard and the National Guard. Big crowd, and the speech went over well, long standing ovation. And General Bene, the Air Guard commander, was the emcee. And when the applause died down, he said, Colonel Jones, I've already spoken to General Landreneau, who was the adjutant general. He says, sir, at your convenience, you have a ride at the F-15.

[00:50:12.87] Glenda couldn't make the trip because she was teaching school, but I called her at midnight, woke her up. Guess what I'm going to get to do? She said, well obviously you going to get to go fly. I said, you bet. So I got here to Belle Chasse, and it's a two-seater, flying with the operations officer, who was a lieutenant colonel. And he said, Colonel, it's your airplane. You may do whatever you want to do. And I said, OK, we're cleared to 15,000 feet on takeoff. I'm going to do a max force takeoff. Never been in this airplane before in my life. And I did it perfect, Joe. He went crazy. He said, man that was perfect.

[00:50:58.26] I had some weather to fly to, we went over the Gulf to feel the airplane out, do some acrobatics. I'm flying through the weather, he said, man you fly great instruments, he said, when's the last time you flew an operational jet fighter? And I said, 1978. My God, you fly this airplane better than most guys in the unit. Finished doing that and he said, what do you want to do now? And I said, I want to go to Covington, that's where I live.

[00:51:23.87] So I called approach control, we got clearance down to 1200 feet across New Orleans, across the Superdome, to the causeway. I got to the causeway, I turned off my altitude reporting, and dropped down to 300 feet and went across the lake. And we live on a golf course, and I buzzed my house five times at 300 feet, popped up, back up to 1200 feet again. Called approach control, went to New Orleans airport, Armstrong Airport, shot an approach there, went down to Belle Chasse, shot about three approaches, and landed the airplane. He never touched the airplane. You've got to stay young.

[00:52:16.96] MURPHY NEAL JONES: No, there were some Cubans that were there I would probably hold grudges against, although I was not part of the Cuban program. They were very brutal to some Americans, killed some. There were a couple of guards that were very sadistic. When we went back we had a great visit, this was in '98, we spent two weeks there.

[00:52:39.82] Only had one bad incident. It was out where I was captured, and I was looking for my special .45 automatic. And the local Communist party committee chairman threatened to have me arrested because I didn't have advanced permission to be there. And that was the only problem that happened. The rest of the country was very nice, both in Hanoi and in Saigon.

[00:53:03.12] JOE GALLOWAY: I take it you didn't find that .45?

[00:53:05.32] MURPHY NEAL JONES: No, unfortunately, I think he's got it. He probably would have been \$2,000 richer had he said something about it, but he wouldn't even let us talk.

[00:53:19.14] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Boy, that's a toughie. I suppose the best day was when Dave Hatcher said to pray a lot. I pray all the time. I think of another very bad time, Joe, and I'm going to be politically incorrect here. This was in late 1970, or early '71, after the Son Tay rescue attempt, which was November the 21st, 1970. I was not far from Son Tay, I was at another camp out there.

[00:54:01.00] The guys at Son Tay had been moved to our camp so it was empty when the rescuers came in. But three nights later they moved us back into the Hanoi Hilton, and this time

we were in larger cells. I was in a cell with 56 guys, we had about probably 36 to 40 inches between us to sleep.

[00:54:24.07] Loudspeakers in there that played the Voice of Vietnam, Hanoi Hannah. And I remember one night, Hannah was playing a recording of a Navy lieutenant giving testimony before a congressional subcommittee, and called us war criminals. That same lieutenant went to Paris, met with the North Vietnamese. That same lieutenant is now the Secretary of State for the United States of America and his name is John Kerry.

[00:55:00.33] And as far as I'm concerned, he's a traitor to this country and I cannot believe that he is our secretary of state. I cried that night, that was two times that I cried in prison. Obviously the best night, and time, is when we knew for sure we were coming home.

[00:55:22.67] No other words could say what we felt when we got that information, that it was finally going to be over. And I think when Admiral Denton got off the first airplane and made the statements to the crowd there at Clark, we were proud to serve our country under difficult circumstances. God bless America.

[00:55:56.60] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Very little. I was fortunate. I got to write a letter fairly early. I was shot down in June, June 29th, and I got to write one, I think it was in November. I had a premonition that I was not coming back from the mission I was on. One of my dearest friends had had a dream about me, that I had been shot down. Never would tell me the rest of it. But the night before I was shot down I wrote a letter to Glenda, saying, I'm not coming back from this mission. I said, go back to Baton Rouge, buy a house, get the kids in school, and I want you to go get your degree in college.

[00:56:54.80] And I'll be home someday. And I also said in that letter, I will give you-- if I get to write, I will give you my camp location in relation to where I would be from Baton Rouge, as I am from Hanoi. So in the letter I said, be sure and go over to Port Allen, which is on the west side of Baton Rouge, which I was wrong at the time, it was really more southwest where I was. And I said, be sure and talk to so-and-so at the Guaranty Mortgage and Trust Company. Well, that happened to be the brother of a guy I was living with at the time. So we were trying to get his name out because they didn't know if his name was out, and I said, he's a good friend. He'll help you out.

[00:57:55.30] Well I happened to get an answer to that letter. Her letters could only be six lines long, about this wide. In there she said, yes I looked at that house over at Port Allen, very much like my mother's house and has a swimming pool, just like her mother. Well, her mother didn't have a swimming pool. I was living at The Zoo, which had an old swimming pool in the middle of the camp. They used to dump our waste buckets in, and some of the guards would swim in. So I knew right then and there that they knew exactly where I was because there's no way her mother would ever have a swimming pool. She didn't want to have to mess around with cleaning. So things like that happened.

[00:58:50.68] The other guy from Baton Rouge, his name was Larry Barbay. Larry was an EB-66 electronic warfare officer, and there were six guys on the crew. Five of them survived, one

was killed when they were shot down. Larry's family had no idea what his status was, as most families didn't. And in one letter I said, be sure and take little Neal over to Baton Rouge High and let him watch them practice football.

[00:59:23.80] And I said, be sure and say hello to Coach Bankson and Coach Gourrier and tell them that Preacher's OK. That's what they used to call me in high school. Well, when I was a freshman, Bat Gourrier, who was the track coach and the trainer, nicknamed me Casey because I made first string on the baseball team in my freshman year. And he called me Casey at the bat, and that's all he ever called me. He knew my name, but he called me Casey.

[00:59:57.77] Well, Glenda got the letter and she didn't know who Preacher was because she had gone to a different high school. So she went over to Larry's wife's house, Agatha. And she wasn't home, but her mother and father lived on the street behind them, and their houses backed up to each other. So she walked through the back yard to Mr. and Mrs. Drago's house, showed Mr. Drago the letter, and he just broke down crying. He said, Larry's alive, he's alive.

[01:00:34.51] Get some easy things out like that. I learned I made major while I was in prison. And she told me about the leaves had turned to gold. So then I could bug all my captain buddies and lieutenant buddies, and say, look I outrank you now.

[01:00:58.27] MURPHY NEAL JONES: In solitary those first 189 days I really needed to do something with my brain because I couldn't exercise. And I said, I know, I'm going to learn to speak Spanish. I had three years of Spanish at Tulane, did well in Spanish, could read and write it quite well. Never learned to speak it. I said, I'm just going to remember all the words and I'm going to start thinking and talking in Spanish in this cell. And it was the most frustrating thing I ever did because I could only remember about 300 words that I was really sure of. It had been, what, six years or so since I even thought about Spanish. The more I thought about it, tied to that every time we slept we dreamed, and suddenly after about a month of thinking about Spanish, I started dreaming in Spanish.

[01:01:55.75] What I'm saying is, everything you've ever learned is in that gray matter up there. All you have to do is get those chemical juices flowing and get that brain active again. And it's all going to come back. I came home with a 5,000 word vocabulary in Spanish, and I taught Spanish to guys that I lived with, they learned from other guys, I learned from other guys, picked up things. And I know two of the guys that I taught Spanish to, and they learned from other guys, too. But they ended up being attaches in Spanish speaking countries when we came back. And they said when they went to language school it was a piece of cake.

[01:02:35.43] Probably one of the funniest things, this was toward the end, one of the guys I lived with, Phil Butler, a Naval Academy graduate, he had gone to Oklahoma I guess a year before he went to the Academy, and he'd been an Arthur Murray dance instructor. And one day he said, how would you guys like to learn ballroom dancing? Phil, sweetheart, we don't have any girls, and we don't have any music.

[01:03:04.35] He said, well you're going to have to go boom, chick, boom, chick, boom, chick to the music, to the beat. And you're going to have to learn both the boy part, and the girl part. So

we went through the Arthur Murray dance course. A guard looked in one day, went berserk, screaming at us, telling us to stop. Bob Purcell, who I greatly admire, was the senior guy in there. He told him where he could go, and he came back with this officer called the Elf. And the Elf was screaming at him, you must stop or you're going to be punished!

[01:03:43.71] It's against the camp regulations. And the camp regulations were posted on the wall there. He said, no, nothing about dancing on the wall, on those regulations. And so anyway we had to stop and we had someone clear, looking for guards when we went through our courses after that. My wife was a little suspicious when I came home, thought I was a much better dancer than when I left.

[01:04:15.31] MURPHY NEAL JONES: There was a Super Bowl. Super Bowl, what in the world's a Super Bowl? There wasn't a Super Bowl when we got shot down. I remember getting the score on a football game one time about Tulane, somebody passed along to us. And one of the funny things, I had been there, what, a year and a half, and another guy who had been in my squadron back in Japan got shot down and captured. And on the tap code, tapping on the wall, came a message that said, tell Neal Jones his wife is not pregnant.

[01:04:54.49] And this is a year and a half after I'm shot down. I said, well I hope the hell she's not. But I had some concerns that she may be pregnant when I was shot down, and she wasn't. We got a big kick out of that. His wife is not pregnant. OK, thank you.

[01:05:14.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Thank you very much.

[01:05:15.76] [LAUGHTER]

[01:05:20.41] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I have a wonderful wife, I have wonderful family. We talked about this. Joe, we were a different breed of cat, when you talk about most of the prisoners up there. We're fighter pilots. Fighter pilots think they're better than anybody else, a better pilot anyway. Cocky. We talked about what to expect when we got home. If your wife went off with somebody else, you could certainly understand it after all those years. 2,421 days.

[01:05:57.17] I think we, in our minds, had conditioned ourselves, OK, we're normal, we're going back home, we're going to continue life just like it was before, we're a little bit behind, we have to catch up pretty quick, but we're going to take charge of the situation and go on with life. And you look at the group that came home, several congressmen senators, you name it. And I'm very proud of the group, very successful, not many that I would say have PTSD. I don't think I do. Some people may, but I think I'm normal, and I just wanted to go back.

[01:06:47.62] But I had one thing in mind when I came home. I don't want to put someone, if I'm going to stay in the military, I don't want to put them in the same position I was in with all the restrictions that we had in being able to fight a war. If you're called upon to fight a war by your government, you should be allowed to fight that war with the objective to win. And we're not doing it today, this president we have today has totally destroyed the military. I'm embarrassed by what's happened to it. But I refused when I came back--



[01:07:27.26] I remember at the Pentagon, I was a division chief, I also was chairman of an important panel that helped build the budget each year. I had all the war fighting equipment. And I would have to go brief a panel consisting of all the one stars, to start with. And I started my briefing, and Carter had been the president prior to this, and we were in desperate, desperate shape. We had three days worth of air to air missiles to fight a war against the Soviet Union in Europe at the time.

[01:08:11.25] We didn't have enough engines for our F-15's. We would be taking brand new airplanes from the factory, flying them to Warner Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, taking their tails off, pulling the engines, to send them to operational units so they would have engines to fly. And I started my briefing, and I hadn't gone very far. And there was this colonel sitting in there from the studies and analysis group. He was acting as an adviser to them. I hadn't gone very far and he raised his hand. I had six hours to brief, non-attribution, in a closed door situation. He raised his hand, he said, Neal, the way I see it, you've already reached your bogey for what your panel had allocated to it last year. And I saw fire.

[01:08:58.72] I sit there and I stare at this guy. And I looked at General Cunningham, the chairman, and I said, time out, General Cunningham. I said, I'd like a couple minutes to say something from Neal Jones, not as chairman of this panel, but as Neal Jones, Air Force officer. And I stepped out from behind the podium and I said, let me tell you guys something. We've got one damn mission in the Air Force. And that's to be able to fight a war if we're called upon to fight it.

[01:09:30.59] It is not to fund the powered glider for the Air Force Academy, it's not to put new dorm furniture in the dormitories, it's to be able to fight a war. And if we can't do that, I'm wasting my time and your time, and I will leave now. But I have something to say, and I'm going to say it. I'm going to give this briefing, and I hope you will listen to me.

[01:09:53.80] Nobody moved, nobody said anything. It was like you were in a funeral home. And it seemed like it was 10 minutes when General Cunningham leaned back in his chair and he finally says, Neal's absolutely correct. He says, continue with your briefing. Not only did I get what I asked for, they added \$300 million to my budget. And the two items they added were the next on my list, I just physically had not put them on there because I could only go so far, I knew. The next morning the general comes in my office, and I didn't work for him.

[01:10:35.30] He said, how about a cup of coffee? It's about 7:30 in the morning at the Pentagon. I said, yes sir. And we go in my office, sit down at the conference table, close the door, and he said, that was a good speech yesterday, Neal. He said, I want you to do me a favor. I said, yes sir. When I go up and brief the Air Staff board, which is all the two stars, when I go up and brief the Air Force council, which is all the three stars, and the chief, and the vice chief, and the secretary, I want you to come with me and I want you to give that same briefing. Will you do it? I said, you got a deal.

[01:11:15.75] So I refused to fall to the political soothsayer's that try to look at it from a politically correct-- if you're going to have a military, you have got to have a military. You don't want it, you want to surrender, go ahead and surrender. But don't put me in that category. And so

I was very proud of being able to do that and stand up. And like every general I worked for, I would tell them, I will do what you tell me as long as it's legal, I will tell you when I think you're wrong, and I will give you what I think would be the better way to do it. And that's exactly what I did.

[01:12:07.54] MURPHY NEAL JONES: We got a hero's welcome, we went to a formal dinner at the White House with Richard Nixon. We later had a special he invited us to San Clemente after he stepped down, had a party at his house there, met him three different times. So we were not like the guys that were spit on that came home to the protests and those types of things. I do everything I can when I see a veteran today or a guy in a uniform, thank you for serving. I do the same thing for police. You know, what they're going through. It's just such a major difference in what's happening with some of the veterans coming home, much better reception, except for the VA, in many cases.

[01:12:55.99] It makes you change, once you've been through this. And I know what you've been through, and the battles that you've been through. It's got to change your attitude, your thoughts. You love your brothers.

[01:13:17.41] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I have a very dear friend, lives in D.C. Very wealthy, very instrumental in helping veterans. He's taken the Beach Boys or Gary Sinise over the last decade to all the hospitals, Walter Reed, Bethesda, Ramstein, Aviano Air Base, Italy. Two years now, his wife will put on performances at the Kennedy Center and I'm talking about for 2,500 veterans or military still serving

[01:14:01.48] He had a dinner party at his house and Gary Sinise was there, Charlie Daniels the western singer, Miss America, introduced all of them, introduced myself and my wife. Introduced the guy next to us at the table-- the table next to us. He was wearing a blue uniform, Army dress blue. Around his neck was a powder blue ribbon, the Medal of Honor. Sammy Davis is his name. Well, he told his story, and he played Shenandoah on his harmonica. Afterwards I walked up to Sammy and I said, Sammy, you don't know me, but I'm Neal Jones.

[01:15:00.36] He hugged me and he says, I've known you for 47 years. We knew each other, Joe. The military is the best thing that ever happened to me. I loved every minute of it except the time in prison. And I learned from that.

[01:15:27.89] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I think there are five things that helped me survive. Faith in God, our country, I was a patriot when I was shot down, I'm a super patriot today. Very deep faith in my family, very deep faith in my fellow POWs. You know the finest thing you can say about any person is, I trust you with my life. And those built a faith in myself. I don't think there's anything I can't do. Getting old hurts to do certain things, but don't tell me I can't go fly an airplane because I'll go get in the airplane and fly today, as old as I am. And I'll do a good job at it.

[01:16:13.57] JOE GALLOWAY: You'll do a good job at it.

[01:16:18.78] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Never give up. I was very fortunate that I came up through school, I had some great, great high school experience at a high school in Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge High. Great teachers, great coaches, great friends. No troublemakers, 1,850 students at the time. I remember a rowdy football practice my junior year, back in the days when there were no restrictions on what you did at football practice. You got no water, to start with. Practice about 3 and 1/2 hours.

[01:17:09.00] Well, the backs are down there with the head coach going through their little thing, running through ropes and going out for passes, and playing around. Linemen are down there going dog-eat-dog, one on one before we start scrimmaging. Suddenly the head coach yells down and he says, hey you girls, look what this little back just did. The guy was Tommy Waguespack. He was a blocking back, we ran the single wing.

[01:17:41.26] We had this one man sled that somebody had made, big heavy timbers on one block and dummy on it. Tommy was short, had legs looked like fire hydrants, he had just pushed that sled 70 yards. Any of you girls beat this little back? And Coach Bankson, a big line coach whom I idolized, he said, do you guys want to try it? And I said, yeah coach, I'll try it. Well, I pushed it 76 yards, just enough to beat Tommy. Big deal. Next year, about the same time, hey you girls look what the little back just did. Same guy, same sled. Tommy had just pushed that sled 100 yards. Joe, I didn't volunteer this time.

[01:18:27.35] JOE GALLOWAY: (LAUGHS) You decided against it, huh?

[01:18:29.49] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Any of you girls beat this little back? And Coach Bankson yells back and he said, yeah, Jones can do it. I said, come on Coach. No, you can do it. Well, I pushed it 120 yards. But you know what made me mad? When I stopped at 120 yards, I knew I could have pushed it 150 yards, and I didn't push it 150 yards. So every day I got up in Vietnam, I said I'm going to push the sled 150 yards today. And finally after those 2,421 days, Coach finally blew the whistle, and I knew I had done it.

[01:19:19.13] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Wouldn't do it at first. We lived up in Virginia for 11 years and was working there. And with all the politics around what it should look like and all of this, I was really upset and didn't go to the dedication where Sammy spoke. Which is an interesting story because he flew in the night before. Got into DC about midnight, went to the hotel they had for him, put his uniform on, went down to the Wall and found the panel with 51 guys in his small unit that were killed in that battle. Touched all the names, stepped back and played that harmonica, and saluted. And he looked up, and there were over 300 people looking at him. They had been sleeping in the trees waiting for a spot the next day.

[01:20:12.37] But I was invited to the entombment of the Unknown Soldier for Vietnam, Ronald Reagan. Sitting there at Arlington, and I cried all the way through the ceremony. And I promised myself the next day I would go to the Wall. So I took off-- I was retired. I took off from work after lunch and I went to the Wall and I stayed there about an hour and a half, two hours. Walking down, looking for names of guys I knew.

[01:20:42.00] And I cried. I think it's beautiful. I have a little replica of the three soldiers on my desk at home. A lot of names up there that probably shouldn't be there. I know you know a lot of them.

[01:21:07.85] JOE GALLOWAY: I couldn't go there for a long time.

[01:21:12.36] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I understand. I understand. But I couldn't either, for a different reason.

[01:21:25.67] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I think it's wonderful. I grew up during World War II, idolizing our soldiers, the greatest generation. Little kid, and I'd watch P-51's, P-47's fly over our house. Cousins lived up near Alexandria, where they had several Army bases, and we'd be out there, they would be having maneuvers, they'd give us C rations, and give us helmet liners, and pistol belts, and things so we could play Soldier.

[01:21:58.93] JOE GALLOWAY: Texas, we used to sit and watch the trains coming by with tanks, 300 car long freight trains.

[01:22:08.80] MURPHY NEAL JONES: We lived near Shreveport and my dad was head of security at this big Army depot, and railroad track right in front of our house out in the country. Tanks, airplanes, trucks, artillery pieces, I just couldn't believe it.

[01:22:24.38] So I remember in the first grade, teacher asking us what we wanted to do when we grew up. Boy, I want to go to West Point, and I want to be in the Army Air Corps. Well I had an appointment to West Point. A little girl changed my mind-- not the one I married, another one. And I didn't go, but I did go in the military and do what I wanted to do. So I had always wanted to be in the military, always wanted to fly airplanes. I used to wonder why they paid me to fly one of these super jet fighters.

[01:23:08.07] Just the friendships, the families that you go through. And back in the old days, it was tough, and we moved a lot. And when you moved, wherever you were, you packed up, you went to the new city, found a house, or apartment, and then you had to get your stuff out of storage. You didn't get to go there and pick out a place ahead of time. It was tough, and it's tough on the wives.

[01:23:40.02] When it was like when I got out I had 21 and 1/2 years of service, I had a good assignment, to be the vice wing commander in England of a fighter unit. And fortunately my son had-- went to the same high school for four years, but my daughter had been in 3 high schools. And she had already fallen in love with the guy she would marry, who lived down the street from us. She said, I'm not going. So I wasn't going to--

[01:24:16.04] JOE GALLOWAY: She had moved enough.

[01:24:17.67] MURPHY NEAL JONES: So I said, that's it. And the vice chief of staff chewed me up one side down the other. He said, I want you to be a general. And I said, I just can't do it, sir. I've got a family.

[01:24:37.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Thank you, Colonel.

[01:24:39.56] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Thank you, Joe. God bless.

[01:24:41.51] JOE GALLOWAY: Thanks for your story.

[01:24:47.73] JOE GALLOWAY: You know the World War II generation, when they left service, they got the ruptured duck. Well, we have made a ruptured duck for the Vietnam generation. Its got the American Eagle on the front, and on the back, it says a grateful nation honors you for your service. So I'm going to put that on you if you'll let me.

[01:25:17.62] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I'm honored.

[01:25:19.36] JOE GALLOWAY: If I can get it through that coat lapel. By God, I made it. Thank you.

[01:25:32.64] MURPHY NEAL JONES: God bless, brother.

[01:25:34.25] JOE GALLOWAY: Hey, brother.

[01:25:37.34] MURPHY NEAL JONES: I hope we get to see each other again.

[01:25:40.02] JOE GALLOWAY: We will, somewhere down range.

[01:25:42.23] MURPHY NEAL JONES: Yes, sir.

[01:25:42.80]