

## **Koziell, Richard Army**

[00:00:13.11] RICHARD KOZIELL: I've got one brother younger by 4 and 1/2 years. I was born March '42 and he was born nine months after my father got back from the Pacific. Born in Pittsburgh, PA when it was a mill town, 24/7. Everybody-- we were a mill hunky family. That's a derogatory term for East Europeans but, yeah.

[00:00:43.62] My mother was Croatian, my father was Polish and Welsh, he served in the Marine Corps World War II on Guam and he was fortunate enough to drive a forklift. So he stayed on Guam loading bombs and supplies and the rest of his platoon was more than decimated. They only had five or six people who came out of there in one piece. That's my brother's-- he wouldn't be here except for that.

[00:01:16.14] My mother made LSTs in Pittsburgh during the war. My dad came back I think he had PTSD. He drank a lot. He never talked about it. Never told me anyway. Some of the stories I got from my mother, but I didn't ever know too much. So the back and forth fighting, they left at this. My father died at 50. RICHARD KOZIELL: I was in the seminary, high school, two years of college, so that took care of junior college. My father had died and we got some insurance money and if I remember I went to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. They accepted my credits from the seminary. They had to, it's a Catholic university.

[00:02:11.18] I think the tuition was \$500 a year. I worked part time and I was fairly smart, I had better grades at Duquesne than I did in the seminary. RICHARD KOZIELL: I remember in the seminary at 18 we had to go register. And we all went into the local place and everybody registered and kind of laughed. I can't remember, ! was 2-S or something like that. But afterwards I was teaching after I finished graduating school, so I could have gone on teaching and gotten out of it, although there were-- things were always changing. Like Vice President Cheney,

[00:03:03.47] he got out for kids. If you were married you didn't have to go. Then, OK, now if you had one kid, then two kids, and three kids, and that was-- they stopped the three kids. But that's how he got out. You could get football knees. That cost \$500, in Pittsburgh anyway. And it was usually the ligaments because you couldn't X-ray them. It was always soft tissue damage.

[00:03:39.80] There was always a way of getting out. I remember at the induction going through the physical I was 5-11, 127 pounds, and I was 1-A, and all these guys, these football players are all 4-F, and how the hell did this happen? Yeah, it was a different time. If you were 18 years old and a male, that was always on your mind, even if you had deferment you could always lose the deferment.

[00:04:15.48] A lot of people went to work for places like Boeing so that they could get a deferment. It was not a popular war and those-- as a matter of fact, I remember World War II after the first flush maybe six, seven months, they realized, oh, we're going to have to start drafting an awful lot of people. And wars are like that, they're nasty. It's not just getting shot at, but I remembered the war, World War II, everybody was a hero. And I had a deferment actually in Vietnam. My brother at the time was at Pitt, and he was actually antiwar.

[00:04:57.75] He got active-- although he never joined subversive groups, he got active in 1967. I remember I was at Holabird Intelligence School and I wrote a letter on Intelligence School stationery saying, you know he really is a pacifist. He wouldn't-- he never got in fights. Kids would beat him up. And he was a big guy. And I didn't think it was a good idea because I remember MacArthur saying, never get in a war in the continent of Asia, although he was in Korea and thought he could win. But I just couldn't see not going and so I went.

[00:05:48.17] RICHARD KOZIELL: I graduated in '65. '67 I decided to go in, and now it's a war. I went to the recruiting center in downtown Pittsburgh and said, I want to join. I want to be an intelligence officer. And the sergeant said, well, can't do that exactly, you'll have to go through infantry OCS.

[00:06:20.35] Now, I can put you in a class where they're going to levy a lot of MI people, but I can't promise anything. Can you plea-- Boy Scout? I couldn't-- and it happened just the way he said. The-- let's see, I went to infantry, the basic training at Fort Dix. AIT, advanced Infantry at Fort Dix. And then infantry OCS at Benning. That took care of the first year.

[00:06:49.57] I went in. OCS, infantry OCS, I was terrible at it. I didn't think yelling at people, especially with my high pitched voice, was the best way to leadership. But that was the school, and that's what they did. And I just didn't do it, but I didn't quit. RICHARD KOZIELL: August '68. I got commissioned as military intelligence and I went to Fort Holabird, which was the Intel school at the time in Baltimore.

[00:07:27.40] Well, that was a great year. Baltimore was a nice town in those days. And so August '68 to August '69 was Holabird. And I taught order of battle. One of my classes was North Vietnam Army and another one was tactics and techniques of Viet Cong. And I hadn't gone yet. I once taught that to a Special Forces class and NCOs. They all had at least three tours.

[00:08:08.84] RICHARD KOZIELL: I took an extra pair, extra uniform, the old starched khakis, so at least I'll look good. And as I'm going down the hall this colonel, light colonel, says, are you teaching such-and-such class? And I said, yes sir. And he said, may I monitor? Yeah, like I'm going to say no. And as we're walking through, and I'm saying hi, and back and forth, this guy in the hall, Spec-4, making a gesture with a cup of coffee, and-- pshhhww.

[00:08:43.47] I didn't lose my temper. And-- yeah, I just-- what else can go wrong? Yeah. But it was a good class and they knew me, they liked me, and I liked them. And the class went fairly well. But it was a stupid class for them.

[00:09:02.28] MARC HENDERSON: Was that normal?

[00:09:04.51] RICHARD KOZIELL: It was Vietnam. Things that-- people were coming and going. Nobody was there for more than a year. People would be sick-- and it was normal practice then I guess that you came back from Vietnam and you got drunk for a year, and then you went back to Vietnam.

[00:09:29.10] RICHARD KOZIELL: They would not take you if you had less than a year and I think technically it was 10 months left to serve. So I almost finished a year and I'm thinking maybe they forgot me. And there was a stack of orders on my desk when I came back from teaching a class. I said, OK, I got leave. Went home. Mom's all worried. She had remarried by this time. I stayed there.

[00:10:02.64] I'm a little nervous, you don't know what to expect. And everybody gave me advice. Mostly, you need to take at least a couple of sport jackets and some ties because there's always parties that you have to go to. I guess they assumed I'd be in Saigon, MACV headquarters somewhere.

[00:10:27.44] And I don't remember getting on the airplane. I don't know how I got from Pittsburgh to-- that's gone. But I do remember being on the airplane, I guess from Travis, and it was all military. And it was Continental Airlines, purple airplane. Took a purple airplane back, too. Continental also.

[00:10:54.24] I did remember all the stewardesses were-- there was nobody-- no 20-somethings there, they were all seasoned veterans. RICHARD KOZIELL: Putting away my little clothes, what I have, into these-- that high school steel locker, you remember those things, yeah.

[00:11:19.29] MARC HENDERSON: Where was this at?

[00:11:20.31] RICHARD KOZIELL: In Saigon. And we were in the compound and I hear these two second lieutenants behind me, and one said, wow, that's a nice looking piece. Where'd you get that? And he's talking about a .45. And I'm ignoring them, except I'm thinking, well, you're not supposed to bring personal weapons with you. There's enough weapons in this country already. And then I hear, don't worry, it's not loaded.

[00:11:48.19] And then I heard, whiiiiing. And there's a bullet hole in the locker door. And I stood there with my mouth open, staring at it. And this major we came over with ran right over and said, Rich, you all right? I went-- pointing at the hole. No sound. He went back to the two lieutenants and said, well, I guess it was loaded after all. Well, don't worry about it. He takes the magazine out. He says, we'll just go over the MPs and we'll take care of everything, don't worry about it, it's not a big problem. It was-- it's a big problem. It's a court martial offense.

[00:12:25.77] And then as he's leaving, Rich, are you sure you're all right? --back at the hole. Now if that happened at the end, I'd have killed him. I'd have been at his throat within three seconds. Difference of a year or actually probably three or four months would have done it. RICHARD KOZIELL: Everything was terribly confusing, the smells were just horrendous. There was no indoor plumbing, everything went into the canal. And when the water was low, oh, I never really got used to that smell even though I lived with it for 12 months.

[00:13:14.93] That was the first thing that hit me. The cooking odors, everything was fried and the food was different, so it smelled different. The people smelled different, they thought we smelled really bad because of our diet. I was very nervous, it was not so much it's a combat area and I was headed for a combat area, but it was a new job. I had no idea what I was supposed to

be doing. I knew I wasn't a professional intelligence officer, six weeks of school and then-- yeah, that didn't prepare you for it. Compared to most people I had a lot of training.

[00:13:58.40] Well, I knew what to do in combat, but there was a lot of other stuff involved. And on top of that, now you're in a leadership position, there's no sergeant to-- you're supposed to tell the sergeant what to do. I didn't think I was going to be adviser. I didn't know at the time. Everybody else got their assignments. I didn't get any assignments.

[00:14:20.25] I said come back the next day, you're probably going down to IV Corps, way down in the delta. And I wasn't sure that was good or bad because most everybody was going up north. And then I got assigned to Phoenix program. I knew what it was at that time. Went down to Can Tho, which was the headquarters on a little Army plane and--

[00:14:51.45] MARC HENDERSON: Caribou?

[00:14:52.33] RICHARD KOZIELL: Caribou, yes actually. Very good, yeah, yeah. And the pilot brought me up as we were landing and he said, that's where your going. And I says, well, how are you going to land? He says, at the airstrip right there. I said, where? He said, right there. I said, that's water. He said, yeah but underneath there's the steel mat. and-- There's that much water. Yeah, a lot of water. And it was the rainy season. The guy said, no, I got nothing for you. Just keep coming in every day and-- here, you stay at this hotel. And I'll have something for you within a week. And, wait, excuse me, the phone. How bad? OK. No, no. No, no. I'll take care of it up here at the hospital. Yeah, all right. Got a job for you.

[00:15:46.41] There was a casualty. And when I got down to the province next level down they said, you'll find Captain so-and-so at the chapel. It's a memorial service. And I said, for Lieutenant so-and-so?-- who I was replacing. He said, no, no, this happened yesterday. It was another one. So they had three casualties, including one death, in two days at my little district. That got me a little nervous. That was the last American casualty we had in my district.

[00:16:31.93] RICHARD KOZIELL: I was not trained. Just, here's your desk, here's what you're supposed to do. Now, I could always talk to my major. He was-- he was good, he knew what was going on. And he knew the people to talk to and the people that just talked a good game. And this is all on the Vietnamese side now, not the Americans at all. RICHARD KOZIELL: It was set up by William Colby, and-- Revolutionary something or other. And it started as the CORDS program, blossomed into the Phoenix program where all the intelligence gathering sources of first Vietnam in Saigon would gather together in one little building so they could exchange information.

[00:17:28.70] And all the information was supposed to come up to them and they were supposed to disseminate intelligence down to all of the corps levels. The same thing happened at corps, in our case Can Tho, IV Corps, then it was disseminated down to province and province sent information up, and from province it went to district where I was stationed. I had about 12 people working on the Vietnamese side not including my translator. And they represented the military, the rural cadre, there were so many organizations.

[00:18:14.77] And they functioned fairly well when I got there. The guy before me had done a pretty good job. As a matter of fact, my boss didn't think I'd do as well. But nobody in the leadership portion of the Vietnamese side really wanted it to work. I had no idea why. Everybody talked a good game. They were prepared to brief, they had great briefings. But nobody would actually go out and do anything. And finally this police chief came, Huy, Captain Huy, and he decided to make it work and all of a sudden it started working.

[00:19:03.17] We were getting 10, 12 Chieu Hoi, that's people that surrendered-- a month. And that was outstanding. When I left, I doubt if there were 60 active Viet Cong in the Gia Rai in Bac Lieu province. He decided to make it work the way Colby had set it up. People actually told each other, they didn't keep secrets from each other, they actually shared the information and made sure that the information went up to headquarters.

[00:19:41.75] And we weren't supposed to make intelligence at district, but that's-- yeah, we did. But when it came down, made sure it was disseminated to the villages, which was the next level down, and the hamlets, which was the lowest level of administration. Later on, we did set up VIOCCs, not district but village, and it was working pretty good. Written reports--

[00:20:11.69] MARC HENDERSON: Was it card files?

[00:20:13.22] RICHARD KOZIELL: I put them in an envelope, sealed it, helicopter came to pick up and drop off, I gave it to them, it went up to headquarters. Quick dissemination, we used the radio, we used CAC code, those little sheets of paper and you write three digits, one two three means A, and so on and so forth. RICHARD KOZIELL: I was an adviser, I was to see that the Vietnamese collected the intelligence and sent it up to the district, the province. That was difficult because as an adviser you can only say, this is what you should do. And you never say, this is what you should do.

[00:21:07.14] You have to make it seem like it's their idea. I think my boss wrote once that, he has the ability to promulgate an idea three or four dozen times and then congratulate his advisee when he finally gets the idea. And he taught me that. That was more important than the intelligence portion of it. But the Vietnamese were very rational, but they didn't go for the same perspective that we did. There was always a reason why they didn't do it, or did do it.

[00:21:56.94] RICHARD KOZIELL: We had the crookedest province in all of Vietnam I think. One guy refused to give to the province chief's favorite charity, which was the province chief. And he committed suicide. He shot himself in the back of the head. Twice. That was the verdict, too. But our district chief was very good, so it worked there. And it worked when he got somebody to run it like Huy.

[00:22:34.78] The guy that was supposed to run it, the intelligence officer, he was worthless. He just wanted a soft job and he wanted me to give him a Bronze Star but he wouldn't go out on any operations. I went on 63 ops while I was there. RICHARD KOZIELL: Search and avoid. I went on 12 helicopters, one hot LZ. We did a lot of sampans. And we walked a lot. If you've been to the Everglades, that was what we had, a mangrove swamp.

[00:23:20.81] If you were really pushing it as hard as you could, you'd get 500 meters an hour. Water up to here, mud up to the knees. And the roots down at the bottom, for you to trip over. You hit one, you had a choice of falling on your face or falling on your ass, that's the only choice you had. And it was more like ice skating than marching. You could pull your foot out of the mud that way, then take another step. You know what? We could never find them.

[00:24:00.34] Occasionally, they ambushed us, but generally we just went-- occasionally, we'd overrun like a base camp-- good story later, remind me about that-- and pushed them further back. I mean they didn't want to live in those mangrove swamps. But they are little islands, and when you push them off there, and you push them again, and they got tired of it and they'd give up after a while. That's-- as bad as we were living, they were living much worse than we were.

[00:24:37.69] RICHARD KOZIELL: The hot LZ, I remember that. The door gunner, I would sit next to the door gunner, I always had the same spot, and I would communicate through him because I didn't have the helmet set. And he said, we're taking fire, we're taking fire men. And I said, get us down. Because I did not want to be in that helicopter when they were taking fire. I wanted to be down on the ground first because that's where my training was. And when we got there, everything was burning. Of course, the two or three guys that shot up, they were gone.

[00:25:19.78] I do remember the little hooch was burning and this mother cat kept meowling. And I looked in and her kittens were still in the hooch. And I went in and I got two or three of them out. And there were still some in there. I ain't going back. That roof's coming down. And she kept right on. You go in and get them yourself cat, they're your kids. RICHARD KOZIELL: Sampans, that got us to the mangrove.

[00:25:49.96] Once you got there, you'd march. That's-- there's no other way of getting through. They were just too dense. You walked through it and then you came back to the sampans or-- and this I never could figure out, sometimes we'd leave the sampans and walk back. And I don't know who was responsible for getting the sampans back. It never occurred to me but, you know next two or three days when we went out, more sampans. So I'd go out two, three times a week, get back late in the afternoon, have a beer and then do paperwork.

[00:26:26.39] So one day was all paperwork or visiting. We did a lot of that, go to this place, talk to this guy, and then operation and finish the paperwork. There was always paperwork involved. RICHARD KOZIELL: We had little Mike boats that went through. And they tied up to a-- and it's a nice place for them to sleep. We had beer, we had a stove, that could cook and it was security for the night, they didn't have to worry about security but they anchored to our barbed wire. And when the tide went out, we were close to the ocean, pushed the boats out, pushed the anchors out, pulled our barbed wire into the canal. We had to pull it out and set it back up again.

[00:27:25.37] RICHARD KOZIELL: There was only six Americans, major, captain, lieutenant, a senior sergeant-- an E-8, and he had a medical that he couldn't lift anything heavier than a pencil-- a medic, and one poor corporal who was supposed to do all the work. But we ended up sharing. If you want to go somewhere in the Jeep, you had to put the gas in yourself.

[00:27:59.52] RICHARD KOZIELL: There was a small library. We got movies. That was the big thing. We got movies a couple of times a week. As part of the-- helicopter did a round robin from headquarters to all the districts. They'd pick up the mail, leave off the mail and also movies. And we'd show the movie. And the first time we showed it, I was watching the screen.

[00:28:30.87] And all of a sudden, there's something wet. I put my feet up on another chair, and when we changed reels, I realized there was about that much water in the team house. And then I saw something going-- It's a snake. And the team sergeant said, OK, somebody put your boots on, we got to kill all the snakes. That was one of my duties, I didn't mind. I wasn't afraid of snakes, so I'd go around killing them.

[00:28:59.66] Some baby cobras. Cobras you don't have to be afraid of. They're slow. They're like rattlesnakes. Bamboo vipers on the other hand, they're little tiny things. You can't see them. You stick your hand up to rest against a tree, and all of a sudden your finger feels something. I was afraid of those guys. One day I come back off an operation and the team sergeant says, sir you have to talk to the S4, the supply officer. He says we're late getting the movie back. If we can't get it there by 10 o'clock he's going to shut off our movies for a month.

[00:29:35.99] And I said, well, it was supposed to go back in the helicopter, but the helicopter got diverted to pick up casualties, so we couldn't. Don't tell me. You talk to the guy. And went through the whole bit. And I'm saying, now look, we'll bring it up, but we're going to get there late because we can't use the road until the mines are cleared. He says, it doesn't matter, I got rules. And then I give up. I talked to the major about it. He said, here's what we're going to do, and gave me the rundown. Next day we went in with the movie.

[00:30:11.54] And the major and I went in. And the supply sergeant was up front. And the major looked at him and said, come back in half an hour. Off he went. I went in, tried to get the movies. And he said, no. And my boss comes in and says, well, is he going to give us the movies, or what? I said, sir, he says he's got rules. And he says, well, don't argue with this stupid son of a bitch. Shoot him and let's get the hell out of here. And then he leaves.

[00:30:42.81] I picked up my rifle off the counter, cocked it and I lost all respect for the man. Now, he's a commissioned officer, and when that-- a round goes home, there's a distinct sound. I had no rounds in the weapon. He never figured it out. So he said, what are you doing? And I said, hey listen, don't make it any harder that it has to be. You got your rules, I got my orders. You heard what he said.

[00:31:09.99] But you just can't-- Hey, please, please. Oh, yeah. And then my boss comes back in. And he was a big guy. And he picked me up he starts slamming me against the wall. I told you to shoot that son of a bitch, don't argue with him. Yeah, shoot him, shoot him. That's the only solution to all these problems that you have. Shoot that son of a bitch.

[00:31:30.25] Oh, all right. Go ahead. See if it works better that what you were going to do. And now the movies start flying over the counter. And he picks up the first one, these old 16 millimeter, they were big and heavy, and-- like a Frisbee across the room. We saw that one. Oh wait, here boss. This one's good. Yeah, all right, we'll take this one. What else you got?

[00:31:57.98] For the rest of the tour, if I came in a headquarters bar and he was there, he'd run out the back door. He was terrified of me. By that time I think I weighed about 130 pounds. And with dysentery, and so that I was skinny as a rail. But I had a bad attitude and he really was afraid of me. I never did explain that I wasn't going to do it, but you never know, it's good to have the supply officer terrified of you.

[00:32:37.00] RICHARD KOZIELL: First operation, I'm doing radio, carrying the radio for this captain. And I've got everything on and I've got the radio. I've got alternate frequencies, I've got the map, I've got everything. And I'm thinking, OK, we're going to go, what else? Come on now, think, think, think. No, no, you got everything, you did everything.

[00:32:57.55] He comes by, and I got up and he goes, oh, shit, I forgot it, and he runs away. And I just stood there saying, what, what, what did he forget? Whatever he forgot, we're going to die probably because he forgot whatever it is he forgot. And I'm very nervous and he comes walking back muttering, blah, blah, blah-- newspaper, blah, blah-- leaves. Oh, toilet paper? And I started laughing.

[00:33:31.99] And he just looked at me and said, yeah, you won't be laughing in a month or so. Dysentery. It was endemic. The water was filthy. All the waste from all the animals and all the people that wasn't in the paddy fields went into the canal. The water table, our water was down 65 feet and it was still filthy with amoebas. Put the pills in every day to kill it, but you couldn't avoid it.

[00:34:08.44] The flies carried it and they would drop on your food. And-- so many ways you can pick it up. Nobody avoided it. Every single person I knew in Vietnam as an adviser had it. I went from 147 to 112 by the time I left. It's kind of because it's so gradual, it creeps up on you. And the last few operations at the end, I was just dragging and dragging. Tapeworms-- well, we didn't have any tapeworms, but they were there. We found them in our little latrine once.

[00:34:44.17] No malaria. The pills worked very good. That was-- yeah, that's about it. Dysentery was the only thing we were worried about and since everybody got it and you knew you were going to get it, nobody worried about it until you got debilitated, you knew you were going to lose weight. RICHARD KOZIELL: There were six of us on a district team, so you get to know each other fairly well. We were mostly on first name basis although the major was always the boss. I was usually trung uy, which was Vietnamese for first lieutenant. Discipline was-- it would seem lax. There was no saluting,

[00:35:40.70] nobody stood at attention. But I got ambushed once, and I didn't even think about my RTO, the little 18-year-old corporal. I just snapped my fingers for the phone and he slapped it in my hand. And I looked over, well shit, that was pretty good. Yeah, I always tell people that's how I won my Bronze Star on that ambush.

[00:36:10.67] RICHARD KOZIELL: Coming up the canal in sampans, 1 and 1/4 horsepower engines. They-- against the tide it was like, puh-puh-puh-puh-puh. And we were on the north bank. We got hit from the south bank and as I'm running up the embankment, I'm thinking if this was my ambush I'd have my crew-served weapons right there. But they didn't. We got in



and I emptied a magazine just to calm myself down. And I'm thinking, wait a minute, we moved a couple of artillery tubes this morning with Chinooks. Maybe we're in range. That will be a surprise.

[00:36:58.62] So I got on the phone and I asked. And it was the-- the fire direction center was run by the province intelligence officer. And he said, where-- what's going on? What's happening? Where are they? Hey, hey, hey, calm down. Who's getting ambushed here? You or me?

[00:37:18.95] I couldn't buy a drink for a month with that line. And I finally turned it over to my counterpart, and I said, he needs the practice calling in to-- you know. Now there were two Vietnamese artillery tubes. So he's talking to the Vietnamese fire direction center.

[00:37:37.16] We both agreed on the coordinates and the first round goes out and I saw where it landed. I said, holy shit, you're not going to believe this, but fire for effect. It was exactly where-- then, boom, boom, boom. That was it. Afterwards I got up and I said, that was your first bad ambush. I'm looking down at the canal and I said, you did pretty good, you didn't make any mistakes, you were calm, made jokes.

[00:38:07.58] And yeah, Patton crossing the Rhine. I don't know whether he did or not, but I think-- I started to unbutton my fly, and I looked down and I realized I pissed my pants all the way down to my boots. But I'm still thinking. I slipped and slid all the way down the embankment and got wet in the canal up to my chest. That's a good war story.

[00:38:43.43] RICHARD KOZIELL: 1970, the rainy season was over, I do know that. So I'm thinking, I don't know, February maybe, something like that. I've been there about four or five months, so I was a seasoned veteran by that time. Up-- the point started firing. And we're getting-- receiving fire. And I'm on the phone again. And then I said, wait a minute, wait, wait. I'm listening. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. They're all M16s. Hey, is there anybody else that is in contact right now? Yeah. Yeah, I think they're attacking us and we're attacking them. Tell them to cease fire.

[00:39:29.34] So I was always thinking during those things. Not everybody will-- anybody knows the difference between AK and an M16, but to do it at that time, that was natural for me. And then I got up and started kicking people, telling them to cease fire. And I got back, and the RTO said, what the hell are you doing?

[00:39:53.28] I said, I'm getting them to cease fire. He said, but they're still shooting at us over there. I says, yeah, but they're such bad shots they're not going to hit. Yeah, well, you're right, you're right, you're right. When you're right, you're right. We'll wait till they cease fire.

[00:40:12.12] RICHARD KOZIELL: We were not the regular army. We were out with-- they called them Ruff-Puffs, Regional Force/Popular Force, Vietnamese militia. If you had a good officer, you had a good unit. They didn't rely on NCOs like we do. If it was a bad officer, it was a bad-- and Huy was good. He was-- I would put him up against any of our officers, let alone the regular Vietnamese army.

[00:40:40.65] If it was going to be-- if there was a probability of something going on, it was usually one to two company. And there was another company I can't remember now, but they were also pretty good. Otherwise, everybody has to go out. Everybody has to get trained.

[00:41:00.72] So sometimes I would just be along for the helicopters or artillery, and other times I was actually in charge. And I would kind of tell them what to do like when they got out of a helicopter and somebody opened fire and pretty soon everybody's firing at nothing. And I'd tap the lieutenant on the-- and he's looking around like that. And I said-- I turned to my interpreter and said, tell him that pretty soon, the only ones that are going to have any ammunition are you, me, and the Viet Cong. Oh, well, then cease fire.

[00:41:37.68] So that's part of the training. You don't want to embarrass them. Because if they lose face, then they'll never-- I don't know whether that worked or not, but that was our theory.

[00:41:53.87] RICHARD KOZIELL: The medic didn't go out. He had his own thing. The team sergeant never went out because he had a medical. I went out with the major, an E-6 infantry sergeant, and the corporal. And we split it up. The major would go out with the corporal and I'd go out with the sergeant. And then we'd reverse it back and forth with-- we went out probably four or five times a week.

[00:42:26.58] So I usually went out twice a week with one of the other, the corporal or the E-6. After a while, the E-6 was pretty good. He knew what he was doing. And the corporal was good. He always-- he didn't think too smart, but he always did what you told him to do.

[00:42:51.66] RICHARD KOZIELL: When I got transferred up to Dinh Tuong, near Me Tho, probably June, late June, they were bringing in a team of really professional Australians, a captain, a lieutenant, and they were all warrant officers. And they were supposed to be training the Ruff-Puffs. They would go from company to company to company and go for about a month or two. And what they wanted was targets to go out on ambush at night. It's frustrating to go out at night ambush and there's nothing there night after night.

[00:43:31.35] So we were supposed-- I was supposed to find out targets for them. And I respected the guys. I had one of the Australian point men. I never could figure out what to do. And now all of a sudden it dawned on me. We've got-- all our intelligence says-- our information at this point is they were at Mrs. So-and-So's house two nights ago, which doesn't really help, unless-- but I got a pictomap. I ordered one from Saigon.

[00:44:02.86] There's some-- yeah, they wanted our program to work. So I got-- within two days. I had a pictomap, photographs of the area. So it was a map that looked like it was-- that was a photograph. And you could line up the north, south grids, east, west. And I could see these trails. And I could say this is Mrs. So-and-So's house, this is Mr.--

[00:44:26.71] So we got the VC network, how they were moving and where they were moving. And all we had to do was figure out the time. And usually you could do that-- lunar. Quarter moon was usually the time. And whoa, all of a sudden, we've got targets all over the place until they figure out what we we're doing.

[00:44:52.94] RICHARD KOZIELL: It's dark, but not real dark. That was called the ambush moon. In Dinh Tuong, every ambush moon, we'd get mortared, every single quarter moon on the dot. And that first round was always in the compound. They never seemed to range at all.

[00:45:17.34] And God-- once I went up on a helicopter with a searchlight looking for these guys. And the Vietnamese are shooting flares up. And I'm trying to get them to stop. And they-- oh, no, we can see-- no, we don't need the flares, got the searchlight. And on top of that, if the blades get entangled in these wires, we're going down. That got his attention. We couldn't find them, by the way.

[00:45:42.67] But the next time, they just happened to have an ambush nearby. And they heard whump of the mortar. And well, there they are. They got three of them-- six of them, excuse me, six of them. We reported the bodies and they wouldn't believe them.

[00:46:03.24] RICHARD KOZIELL: Out of Soc Trang, the Warriors and the Tigers. Towards the end, they brought in some Vietnamese choppers. But 95% of the time, it was either the Warriors or the Tigers for air assaults and also for the-- pick us up to go somewhere and the round-robin to drop off this and pick up that. We didn't have pizza runs.

[00:46:34.02] RICHARD KOZIELL: I mentioned before about the water on the floor. It was everywhere when it rained. It just was everywhere. It rained and rained inches every day. I had a room. It was in a barracks and it was kind of curtained off. Everybody had their own. Sometimes we had to double up when other people came in. I had a regular Army cot, mosquito net. I slept on my own bed practically every night, unless I went out on a night ambush. So there was comfort there.

[00:47:13.78] We also had a cook and a regular propane stove. So we had cooked meals. And we were supposed to buy everything on the market. And the meat market was an open building. And they would just hang up a side of caribou or a half a pig up there. And the first time I saw it, I said, my god, that meat must be two years old. It was all black. And I got a little closer and then the flies left as I got close. No, we're not-- we're not buying this.

[00:47:53.23] Every three weeks a plane would come into headquarters at province. And they would put out the word. And everybody would get in a Jeep and run as fast as they could. We were the furthest away. And by the time we got there, there was nothing but ground beef left and meatloaf and hamburgers and Salisbury steak, and dah, dah, dah, dah. We got so tired of it.

[00:48:20.17] And the team sergeant said, we could raise pigs. And I said, well geez, Sarge, I'll kill a pig, but I'm not going to butcher it. No, no, no. What we'll do is we'll raise the pigs till they get about that big and then we'll tell the mess sergeant up at headquarters. And there is always a party for-- somebody's getting promoted, somebody's coming, somebody's leaving. There's always parties. They can have the roast suckling pig. Oh, and we trade them? Yeah, we trade them for the-- yeah, we can do that.

[00:48:56.17] So we tried to raise them. Well, what do you feed them? And the Vietnamese said, oh, rice hulls. Well, there's no calories in rice hulls. And so the sows never went into oestrus.

And we had a little bit of garbage, but there's only six of us. So we went back to the mess sergeant and said, do you have any garbage that we could have? And he said, I cook for 200 Americans. How many-- how much do you want?

[00:49:23.31] So every time we went up to province, we would take about 10, 15 gallons of garbage, put it in the trailer in back of the Jeep, slop the pigs, worked out perfect. Except one time, I was still a little weak. I got about five gallons of garbage. And I'm walking with my head down like that. And I see a pair of spit-shined jungle boots in front of me. And I said, well, you're not supposed to do that, but--

[00:49:53.81] So I moved over this way. And the boots moved over. And my eyes started coming up and I noticed he had starched jungle fatigues. And that was against regulations. And I looked up and it was a captain. And I said, Captain, excuse me please. I've got to get the garbage in the Jeep. It's getting dark. We're going to get ambushed.

[00:50:12.81] He said, what the hell are you doing, Lieutenant? I said, well, I'm trying to get the garbage into the Jeep. Do you realize what a poor example-- a commissioned officer carrying a garbage? Sir, you're absolutely right. If you'd just excuse me, I got-- and meanwhile, the sergeant is having a great time laughing. And he said, Rich, will you get that garbage in the Jeep? It's getting dark. We're going to get ambushed.

[00:50:36.06] And finally, he gets mad. And he said, who's your commanding officer? And that was like Deesis mocking-- and my major comes out of the mess hall. He's got two pails of garbage, one in each hand. Rich, what the hell are you doing? Get the garbage in the Jeep. I can't. The captain says I'm presenting a bad example. And he won't let me do it. It's not my fault. Well, Captain, if it's bad for a lieutenant to carry garbage, is it worse for a major to carry garbage? Well, yes, sir.

[00:51:05.82] And he says, that's what I thought. And he puts the pails down. Would you carry my garbage to the Jeep, please? And then he starts walking away. And the major calls, Captain, come on back. He says, Now carry the lieutenant's garbage. And as he's taking that last pail, the sergeant said, geez, Captain, will you hurry up? It's getting dark. We're going to get ambushed.

[00:51:36.19] RICHARD KOZIELL: Oh, he was at the province advisory team. He was not part of the 22nd Division, who was co-stationed with us. But I did not know him very well. He was fairly new. And he squealed on us to the colonel, the full bird colonel in charge. Colonel called us in the next day. And he-- and I saw the captain over on the side. That son of a bitch squealed on us.

[00:52:11.92] And then the colonel-- we were standing at attention, kind of. And he said, don't say a word. I want you to look at yourselves. And now I had clean boots when I started out. And my fatigues are clean, but they got holes in them from barbed wire. And, yeah, well, it's pretty good. And he said, you're a disgrace. And it's not just that. It's your whole attitude. You people down there think that you're not even in the United States Army anymore.

[00:52:44.16] What the hell? And I'm going crazy. My boss keeps saying, yes, sir, yes, sir. And I get-- no, say something. Don't let him do it. And finally he says, what I'm going to do is-- take a look at the captain over there. Look, now that's the way an officer is supposed to look. And he's got spit-shined boots. And he's got starched fatigues. I'm going to send the captain down there with you as an example.

[00:53:14.81] And I-- don't let him do that, boss. And my boss says nothing. And the captain says, well, sir, the alphanumeric report is due tomorrow. No, that's all right. Don't worry. And then he had three or four other reports. And then the colonel looked kind of quizzically at him and said, oh, major, lieutenant, you're excused. Thank you very much.

[00:53:36.93] And as soon as the door closed, we heard screaming and yelling. He chewed him up one side-- I get the impression you don't want to serve in a combat area, Captain. And then I looked at my boss and I said, you guys set that up, didn't you? He said, yeah. Well, why didn't you tell me about it? It was more fun watching you.

[00:54:04.08] RICHARD KOZIELL: Let me start with the major. He was one of those natural leaders. You just follow him because he told you to. I, on the other hand-- after a while, I was second in command. And I'm not a natural leader. People don't do things because I have to manipulate them. I would always say, would you mind filling up the Jeep. I'm kind of busy right now. That normally worked. The boss didn't have to worry about it because he had one of those natural personalities. I had to work hard at that.

[00:54:45.42] We got a new major in who was not very good and a new captain who was terrible. And I got a message in the middle of the night I had decoded. And it said, helicopter, 7 o'clock tomorrow morning. So I said, OK. I went out with Sergeant So-and-So. It's now Captain What's-His-Name and the corporal.

[00:55:15.26] So I got the corporal. And I said, make sure the radios-- get the frequency, make sure you've got fresh batteries. And he said, no, sir. And-- what? No, sir, I won't-- I'm not going out with the captain. What-- yeah, but I went out with Sergeant So-and-So yesterday and it's your turn to go. Well, Sergeant So-and-So is not going. We talked it over and we're not going out with the captain. I just-- you talked it over?

[00:55:47.00] And I didn't know what-- the guy had always been there. He wasn't afraid. And he-- the only other American, he didn't trust. So I explained to him this is not a democracy. This is blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I said, what if I go out with you guys? Well, OK. And I did chew them out a little later.

[00:56:14.07] And I went out with the captain and the corporal was right. Yeah, I didn't chew too hard. He wasn't very good. He was an engineer, didn't understand infantry tactics. What he did know was by the book. He wasn't asking me why this was happening. I'd have to explain that this going on because of that. He seemed indifferent to the whole thing.

[00:56:47.30] And I found out later on that when I left, he would get drunk every night. And he could care less. And they were absolutely right not to trust him. Because when you've only got

two Americans out there-- some of the Vietnamese units I trust, but our standing order was SOP. I'm the officer. I watch the bad guys if we get in a firefight. You're the radio operator. You watch the good guys in case they run.

[00:57:18.98] MARC HENDERSON: What would you do if they ran?

[00:57:22.84] RICHARD KOZIELL: Run.

[00:57:24.67] MARC HENDERSON: Run with them.

[00:57:25.69] RICHARD KOZIELL: Yeah.

[00:57:26.15] MARC HENDERSON: Catch up.

[00:57:26.83] RICHARD KOZIELL: Yeah, that's how my predecessor got shot up. He didn't notice they were running. Because of my position, I was a little-- actually, I was terrified of being taken prisoner. And I'm a survivor. I'm not the suicidal type. but I really, really thought seriously about saving that last round for myself because I knew too much. And they knew who I was.

[00:58:04.85] RICHARD KOZIELL: Oh, I remember that. I remember that very well. I came off an operation, and my boss was there to meet me, which was unusual. He said, I'm keeping the helicopters here along with 1-2-2 company. I'm getting about three or four other companies ready. Up north, the district right up north of us, they said they got an NVA battalion, regular North Vietnamese. And they're going to get hit.

[00:58:35.94] So you're going to go with the first unit and I'm going to-- before it's dark, we should probably get three or four companies. Well, that's 50 men, so basically they're platoons, they'd be platoons. And I said, yeah, yeah, yeah. Got it, got it. No problem.

[00:58:50.42] Now the intelligence officer up there, second in command, was brand new. And that's not bad, but he was-- if you think of a overweight Jewish lawyer from New York, that was him. He was going to be a lawyer except he got-- ended up in the Phoenix Program. And the major in charge-- I've had problems with him when he ran the command and control ship on operations. I didn't like him. I thought he was weak. And I knew the district chief up there was just a crook. And he was worthless.

[00:59:32.20] So I'm thinking about all these things as we're getting ready to go up. And I'm-- my boss is trying to get permission to send the troops in there from the S3 at-- the operations officer at province. And they said, no, no. Wait. Wait, wait, wait. I got Spooky coming in. Now Spooky at that time was a C-47 with Gatling guns, side mounted. And they would put-- within 10 seconds, I think they could put a round every foot inside of a football stadium. It was very effective.

[01:00:16.06] So Spooky was coming. Yeah, OK, but we can get a couple-- we could get two or three companies in there. My boss was thinking I would be good for leadership. And we had

some of the better Vietnamese officers going, too. And they kept putting it off, and they kept-- and finally the helicopter says, hey Major, it's getting dark. We're not going in at night in the middle of a firefight. And-- yeah, I can't blame you. Yeah, go ahead. You're released.

[01:00:45.82] He and I sat on the road watching the pyrotechnics, the flares going up. And we're listening. We've got the radio on out there and we're listening to chatter between province and the little district up there. And the little fat major, Puerto Rican, kept saying, OK, where's Spooky? And they said, well, he'll be there. Spooky will be there.

[01:01:11.00] Meanwhile, I need line 8. Line 8 was position of enemy. I have no idea why they didn't say position of enemy. It didn't save any time. It was on the radio in the open, but that was it-- said line 8. And well, they're in the-- they're about 300 meters out in this little forest, little grove out there. I think they're massing for an attack. It's now-- it's maybe 20, 30 minutes before it's dark.

[01:01:44.14] And he kept asking for Spooky. And the operations officer actually was not on the radio at the time. It was a little corporal. He let him take all the static. And he'd ask for line 8. And the major would ask for Spooky. And that went on and on and on. And finally, he said, line 8. And the major said, they're right outside the walls. Where the hell is Spooky?

[01:02:19.41] Five minutes later, position of enemy? They're running through my fucking compound, you asshole. And if I'm alive tomorrow, I'm coming up there to get you. And next day, we went up. And, boy, it had been a mess. They actually were NVA. And I saw the combat gear, the canvas webbing that they wore. No bodies, but there was plenty of blood on the ground, a lot of weapons. That little Jewish lawyer did real good. And the major showed a lot of leadership I didn't think he had.

[01:02:56.01] And my major, that major, and me went on to province. And we went to the operations office. And my boss grabbed the NCO in front. And he said, it wasn't me. Get the hell out of here, O'Neill. And then they went in, the two majors went in. He turned to me and says, nobody comes in. Got you. They started overturning bookcases and desks. Operations officer came running out. What's going on?

[01:03:31.57] And then that little, fat Puerto Rican major picked him up, and started bouncing him off the wall. And my boss was screaming, get him, Raul. Get him, get him, get him. People were running from all over. I'm standing at the door, pushing them away with my M16. Finally, the full bird colonel in charge comes over. And I said, sorry, sir, you can't go in there. He said, what did you say? This is my province. Well, OK, sir, you can go in, but nobody else.

[01:04:01.30] And he broke it up. He took the three of us out for a drink, the colonel. He puts his arm around me and he said, Rich, I'm going to ask you a question. I said, sir? And he said, did you have a round in that weapon? I said, oh, yes, sir. Safety off. OK, just wanted to check. Because my boss would have said shoot him, him, him, him. I would have done it. I was so angry, so angry. I've never forgotten that night sitting on the side of the road. It was a terrible feeling.

[01:04:43.23] RICHARD KOZIELL: It was not the day I went home. I hadn't thought of that. But the best day was-- I couldn't get any of the Vietnamese side of the DIOCC for the first couple of months to talk to me, to communicate in any other way, except the intelligence officer wanted a Bronze Star all the time. And finally, the police chief talked to me and he said, we're going to inspect the warehouses. Do you want to come with us?

[01:05:17.02] And I ran into the comm. Major, Major, they're going to inspect the warehouses, and he asked me to come along. What? Well, yeah, but he asked me to go along. I don't really want-- but-- Oh, yeah, OK, go ahead. Yeah. Yeah, that's good. It might be good. It might be good. That was the best day I had.

[01:05:40.21] RICHARD KOZIELL: District Intelligence Operation Coordinating Center-- oh, boy, I still remember that. That's where all the intelligence gathering people were supposed to gather and exchange information. That was-- there was also a PIOCC, province. I don't know what they called it up at corps, but later, we also did it in villages.

[01:06:10.82] And generally, that was just the police chief and the district chief and maybe two or three people who got together. That was really a good idea because the local policemen at the villages-- they knew what was going on. But they had no way of-- they were kind of afraid. And that got them to open up a bit.

[01:06:36.35] RICHARD KOZIELL: We couldn't get Armed Forces television. We couldn't get Armed Forces radio. We were so far down. Yeah. My mother would send me articles in the newspaper. That's about it. And, of course, I knew what was going on a lot better than what the Armed Forces radio or television was saying because I was getting the summary from different corps, and all the major things that were going on. I would read that stuff. And I would pass it on.

[01:07:09.31] RICHARD KOZIELL: I'm Leaving on a Jet Plane, that was popular. Going to San Francisco was another popular one. All the songs were-- I had one tape. It was a reel-to-reel tape of The Moody Blues. That was it. I played that thing 1,000 times, at least.

[01:07:32.32] MARC HENDERSON: Did you have headphones or did everybody else have to listen to it, too?

[01:07:35.38] RICHARD KOZIELL: No, they all had to listen to it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. We did have-- the major had a Zenith portable radio that could get everything. It was a-- I can't remember what they were called. But when he left, of course, we didn't get anything. But he would play music for-- and we would get news every once in a while through that. I forgot about that.

[01:08:02.84] RICHARD KOZIELL: There was. A lot. I didn't see much except the little time I was in Saigon. You could see this was a black bar, that was a redneck bar, and never the twain shall meet. Our E-6 was black, from Georgia. He came to me one night and he says, when I'm finished here, I want to join the Georgia Highway Patrol. This was in 1970. I said, well, you'll



get the job all right. I have no doubt about that. But you understand what-- you might be the only black there, and so on and so forth. He said, yeah.

[01:08:46.48] And we sat and talked race for a little bit. And he mentioned the Vietnamese, how he couldn't stand them. And then I just started laughing. He says, but, they're not like you and me. And I just-- I was just roaring. He really didn't understand. In a sense, he was right, too, because they had a different way of thinking than we did. But it just sounded like here's the racist American talking about how he's discriminated against.

[01:09:29.27] RICHARD KOZIELL: Oh, I didn't tell. I went on an operation, blah, blah, blah. Yeah, I usually wrote my mother. I wrote my brother once a bad-- we had a bad night. And let me see. We got hit that mortar up in Dinh Tuong. And it-- the first round hit right outside our-- the building where we lived. And I headed for the bunker, no second thought. I'm on the way to the bunker. I heard a round hit behind me. As I was going in, the third round hit right outside and I could hear the shrapnel hit the concrete.

[01:10:08.05] One guy after me got a little cut right there. See, I would have got the Purple Heart if I'd have been a little later. And it went on. And we went out to the firing-- the major up there says, take Sergeant So-and-So-- he was new, and-- to the west wall. I think we're getting-- we might get hit. So he's new. And we're sitting there, waiting for the mortar incoming round. Boom, boom, boom. Now. And I grabbed him by the harness and we went off and we hit the little bunker on the west wall.

[01:10:45.06] And I said, well, this is what's going to happen. And make sure that they're firing low-- we've got an M60 there-- they always fire high. So whatever you do, make sure they're firing low. And he looks a little nervous. Meanwhile, some idiot is beating a temple drum, boom, boom. And being a smart mouth, I said, don't worry, they won't attack as long as the drum is beating. That was some movie from somewhere.

[01:11:18.59] And he just sat there. And I said, that's a joke. And he's still sitting there. And I said, are you all right? He's an E-7. He looks like Sergeant Rock. And he says, I've never seen anything like this. And I just whispered in his ear. I said, if you embarrass me in front of the little people, the Vietnamese, I'm going to take my M16 and shove it so far up your ass your teeth are going to fall out. Do you understand that? OK. All right, I have to check the rest of the wall. Make sure they're firing low.

[01:11:53.54] We didn't get hit, but that shocked me. I always depended on NCOs and here was this guy that was the prototypical NCO. But he had never heard a shot fired in anger. The first time-- you do funny things. And I did the turkey dance when first shot at. I was doing this, looking at what's going on and then ducking back down. And I would-- they told me don't do that. When you're going down, take a-- estimate the situation and then use your ears.

[01:12:32.06] But I was never afraid, but I realized that other people are and some-- if you don't get enough adrenaline, you might just sit there. If you get too much adrenaline, you're going to panic. I got just enough adrenaline, so everything slowed down and it was-- everything was in

slow motion and I had no problems except later on. When the adrenaline wore off, you get a little sick to the stomach and you're very tired. That takes a lot of energy out of you.

[01:13:04.25] When I came back afterwards, I had a beer, getting ready to go to bed and hope they didn't hit us again. And somebody-- one of the Australians said, weren't you sitting over there, trung uy? And I looked over at the little couch I was sitting in, and right up there the second round hit, right there, the one I heard behind me. And the couch I was sitting on was shredded with shrapnel.

[01:13:31.71] And if I'd have been-- that first week, say, I was in country that had happened, I would have been sitting there wondering what to do. I wrote home that I was a little-- I was getting tired. I couldn't go out on operations. And I wrote my brother that letter, and-- this was really bad.

[01:13:58.55] RICHARD KOZIELL: How Pitt was doing, the Pirates, the Steelers. Yeah, and he was working at a biochemistry lab. And he told me what-- we were working on this, working on that. So once, I saw so-and-so the other day.

[01:14:17.01] But he was a pacifist. So he didn't join the Students for a Democratic Society, but he thought he should get deferred because he was against war period, all war, not just that war. He was against fighting. When he was supposed to get drafted, they had that big draft where everybody got a number. And he got the right number, so he didn't get drafted.

[01:14:48.74] RICHARD KOZIELL: I left August 3, 1970. I had a new major come in. And he was there like two days. And I took him around, showed him different places. We rode around I know in my Toyota cruiser that-- it was really nice. I didn't have a Jeep because I was in the Phoenix Program. I got a really nice vehicle in Dinh Tuong. And what can I tell? You're introducing-- I didn't have overlap with my guy coming in. And at this time, I was-- I thought, yeah, well, that's-- oh, who cares? I'm going home.

[01:15:49.51] RICHARD KOZIELL: No. No, No, we lost.

[01:15:54.59] MARC HENDERSON: Would you do it again?

[01:15:56.32] RICHARD KOZIELL: Pfff. Yeah. Yeah. As I said, it was actually-- it was the best year of my life. And the worst. I could have people killed for \$50. I had that much power. But then later on the dreams come. I got PTSD. I still-- when I hear a Huey, I always-- I still tense up. I'm walking somewhere where I'm not familiar with, I'm always looking for ambushes, where-- over here, over there and there, and so on.

[01:16:31.86] And a real killer for me is transmission fluid. One day I was sitting in a helicopter at March Field, the static display. And I remembered we had old helicopters supporting us. And they just put duct tape around. And you could always smell the transmission fluid when you're out. And that-- yeah, I finally put it together. That's why. It reminded me of the helicopter operations because that's always a little tense when you're up in the air and you don't know what's down on the ground when you get there.

[01:17:14.57] RICHARD KOZIELL: My Tho's fairly close to Saigon. So it was an easy Jeep. Somebody drove me up in a Jeep. I had a bunch of Viet Cong flags because it-- down in Gia Rai, my first district, we couldn't get smoke grenades to hit-- for-- signal helicopters.

[01:17:35.33] So what we did was we had the village women sew up some Viet Cong flags, We'd throw them on the barbed wire, take the tray underneath the meat, so a lot of blood there, spill it all over the flags, let it dry out in the sun, get dirty. The mud-- the blood caked up. And then I would take one of the flags on the next operation. The helicopters-- and I tucked it in my shirt.

[01:18:04.52] And then when we came back, I'd clue one of the Vietnamese. And he would reach down in my shirt and pull out the Viet Cong flag and wave it, being careful not to let it fly out the helicopter. And I'd grab it and put it back. Then I'd count 1, 2. Pilot wants to know how much you want for that flag. I'd go, ah, hell. For you guys, yeah, yeah, just next time you're by, kick out a couple of cases of smoke grenades. We did that many times, so-- and I had a lot of flags going back.

[01:18:42.47] Oh, actually, I ran into somebody from the helicopter squadrons in Reserves years later. And we're telling war stories. And all of a sudden, this guy looks at me kind of funny. And he says, I remember you guys. How many Viet Cong base camps did you actually overrun? I said, now, how much money did-- just a couple cases of smoke grenades to signal you guys. Yeah, so do you want me to tell you about the flags or do you want me to tell you about the Viet Cong base camps we overran? Yeah, yeah, you're right. Yeah, OK, never mind.

[01:19:27.71] Oh, going back, so I had a lot of flags. And I looked up this guy that I knew at Holabird. He was a Marine Mustang captain. And we're talking. He takes me over to the Massachusetts BOQ, very decadent over there.

[01:19:44.96] And he says, Rich, I can't get out of Saigon because of the job I'm in. Now, twice I've been here as a Marine gunny sergeant and both times somebody got into my duffel bag and took all the souvenirs that I was bringing home to the kids. Do you have anything? And this guy had razzed me for a whole year as a Mustang captain. I was a second lieutenant. I said, John, me? You think I would have-- ? Yeah. Yeah, here, here. I got all kinds of flags for him and all that, yeah.

[01:20:22.76] So I only took one back, and an old Mosin-Nagant, the Russian battle rifle, 1891, modified in 1931. And this-- I would never fire a round through it. Eventually I lost it. You couldn't take AKs home because they were automatic fire. You certainly couldn't take RPGs home, although people tried. A lot of people got the AKs back. SKS-- that was a semiautomatic rifle that predated the AK-47. It was practically the same thing except it was semiautomatic.

[01:21:05.90] You could take those home, but you couldn't get hold of those. Pistols-- almost bought a P38, an old German World War II pistol. They were very popular. He wanted \$100 for it. I didn't want to spend more than \$50, so pfff, I didn't take it home.

[01:21:30.84] RICHARD KOZIELL: Came back with the same two people I left with. One had won a Silver Star there. And the major that took the .45 pistol, he was there. We couldn't get-- we landed at Wake. We landed at Guam. We landed Okinawa. Everywhere we went, we couldn't get a drink. And they had no alcohol on the plane. DC or a Boeing-- early Boeing jet, passenger jet plane. It was leased from Continental Airlines. Purple, they had gaudy colors.

[01:22:09.61] Then we got to Hawaii and then we had two Mai Tais in 20 minutes. Got to Travis. It was late at night. Wait a minute, got to San Francisco, then got transportation up to Travis. And I had no problems at San Francisco Airport. I was late. I ran down the corridor and they said, oh, sorry, there it goes. And then it started turning around, coming back. There's something wrong with the engine, so-- hey, all right. And I got on.

[01:22:49.50] And as we're going down, there was a pilot deadheading next to me. And I was looking at the engine. All of a sudden, it went whoosh. I said, is that what they call a flameout? And he said, yeah, that's what they call it. Does that mean we're going to turn around and go back? He goes, yeah, that's what we're going to do.

[01:23:10.71] Some of those people-- it was the third airplane, so they gave free drinks till I got to Chicago. I was really plastered. The old khakis-- they were starched. But after-- I had no idea, 26 hours, something like that. The sun came up six times. I remember that. And I had no idea how many hours. I was filthy and tired and not very hungry. And I had to get from this place to that place in the airport.

[01:23:45.26] And I kept wondering, if there's an MP around, I'm in trouble. There were no MPs. And nobody bothered me in the airport either. A lot of guys said that happened but never. And I got to Pittsburgh and I got off the plane. In those days, you went down the ladder. And I got to the bottom of the ladder. I got down on my knees and I kissed the pavement down there.

[01:24:10.11] And that was homecoming. And I was really a different person. I didn't act the same. I didn't know it at the time, but I had the-- my body had really changed. First thing, when you hear a loud noise, you look for cover instead of trying to find out what the loud noise is. I thought the people were very strange. I was very angry with them. If you were against the war, I didn't mind. If you were for the war, why weren't you there? And if you didn't even know there was a war going on I wanted to beat them over the head with a .45.

[01:25:04.02] It was-- yeah, it was bad. And just like the people at Holabird that came back, I spent the next year in a bottle. I didn't know why, but it seemed like-- but soon as work was over, let's go have a beer. Eight, nine beers later, you go home.

[01:25:29.24] RICHARD KOZIELL: I stayed an extra year, made captain. Thought I might stay, but discipline was so bad at that time. It was horrible. People would deliberately not salute, look you right in the eye and walk by you. After a while, you just-- you got tired of harassing people. And that-- the people that did stay, that went through that like Schwarzenegger and the rest, I-- boy, that was better than Iraq, making an Army out of that mess. It was hard. I really should have stayed, but I just didn't want to fight it anymore.

[01:26:23.16] RICHARD KOZIELL: I saw the team sergeant once. I knew he was in-- lived in Vegas. And so like we used to go to Vegas a lot. And I looked him up one time. It was OK, but it wasn't the same. I often wondered what Major Wright is doing now. He's probably dead at this time. But I keep-- every year, I think I'll look him up. And I tried Google and nothing happened.

[01:26:49.35] And I've tried that-- I'm afraid to go on those sites where you put your name down. And did you serve at Bac Lieu? And I just-- they're not the same. They were-- we were very close at the time, but we wouldn't have been close otherwise. We were just jammed together. And they bring back bad memories, not they themselves, but things that happened.

[01:27:24.79] RICHARD KOZIELL: Oh, boy, what a difference. What a difference. It's amazing. And the thing is, they admire me because I was in Vietnam. And I keep thinking, God, compared to you guys, we were ill-trained, ill-disciplined. You guys are the real thing.

[01:27:50.74] And it-- as I said, it was not so much people against the war. It's the people that didn't even know I was in Vietnam. Oh, I haven't seen you for a while. Where have you been? Oh, really? Huh. Not even, how was it? Oh, really? Let's change the subject. Yeah, it's a big difference, . But of course, they won their war.

[01:28:23.97] RICHARD KOZIELL: It's not. We certainly forgot about it in Iraq Two. Guess what? We're still doing it in Afghanistan. That's just another Vietnam except it's high and cold. No, we forget.

[01:28:46.22] RICHARD KOZIELL: Sometimes it's not winning. It's how you fought. And, yeah. Yeah, let's leave it at that.

[01:29:01.56] RICHARD KOZIELL: I broke down and cried. And I've been to the rolling memorial, and I did the same thing there. Twice. So if I went back, I'd do the same thing again. I look up a friend of mine from OCS that died on Hamburger Hill. He made the cover of LIFE magazine, that famous-- where they had the picture of everybody that died that week. Yeah, I saw that cover. Oh, my-- oh, he was the best of us.

[01:29:41.61] RICHARD KOZIELL: One of the-- I think would-- it's called the Heroes Channel or something. They have all the old war documentaries. And I love it when they have the old films of the World War II veterans, even World War I veterans that this is what it was like. This is why it was always the same. This is how this particular one was different.

[01:30:03.51] I think this is a great idea that 100 years from now historians will go, this is the primary source. And they'll go and they'll say this is the way they felt about the war. Why did they bother to go fight it? For what? Yeah, I think it's a great thing.

[01:30:28.86] MARC HENDERSON: Well, the Ruptured Duck was for returning combat veterans from World War II.

[01:30:34.47] RICHARD KOZIELL: Oh, I thought-- oh, you're right.

[01:30:35.72] MARC HENDERSON: It was a nickname.

[01:30:37.24] RICHARD KOZIELL: You're right.

[01:30:38.40] MARC HENDERSON: And it was an eagle, but it didn't look so much like an eagle, so they called it a ruptured duck. And in that spirit, we've put together-- we, the Department of Defense, has put together this Vietnam War veteran lapel pin. And there's an eagle in the center and there's six stars representing each of the allies. And then on the back, it says, "a grateful nation thanks and honors you." And I just--

[01:31:11.77] RICHARD KOZIELL: That's a good sentiment.

[01:31:12.56] MARC HENDERSON: --wanted to say on behalf of a grateful nation--

[01:31:15.00] RICHARD KOZIELL: Thank you.

[01:31:15.49] MARC HENDERSON: --thank you for your service, sir. Can I put this on you?

[01:31:18.16] RICHARD KOZIELL: Yes.

[01:31:19.21] MARC HENDERSON: All right, I'm just going to pin it right on your lapel here and--

[01:31:26.90] RICHARD KOZIELL: Yeah, I don't want it hard. Don't draw a blood.

[01:31:31.13] MARC HENDERSON: There you go, sir.

[01:31:32.03] RICHARD KOZIELL: Thank you.

[01:31:32.60] MARC HENDERSON: It was a true honor to speak with you today.