

McRoberts, Jim USMC

[00:00:16.33] JOE GALLOWAY: How old were you when you went to Vietnam?

[00:00:19.00] JIM MCROBERTS: 29.

[00:00:19.99] JOE GALLOWAY: 29. You were an old guy.

[00:00:21.96] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. JIM MCROBERTS: I had a wife and two children, and the children were three and one.

[00:00:36.05] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow.

[00:00:37.38] JIM MCROBERTS: And they were living in Santa Ana, California when I moved over-- when I went to Vietnam. We came from Beaufort, South Carolina.

[00:00:47.22] JOE GALLOWAY: That was your hometown?

[00:00:48.36] JIM MCROBERTS: That was our home base. But, no, my hometown was Ketchum, Idaho.

[00:00:52.41] JOE GALLOWAY: All right.

[00:00:53.31] JIM MCROBERTS: You've heard of Sun Valley? It's right next door.

[00:00:56.22] JOE GALLOWAY: Ketchum is a famous town. Hemingway's town, wasn't it?

[00:01:01.05] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes, sir. Yup, I knew him somewhat.

[00:01:05.16] JOE GALLOWAY: How long had you been in the Marines when you deployed?

[00:01:11.07] JIM MCROBERTS: I joined the Marine Corps as an officer in 1959. And then I deployed in 1966.

[00:01:21.36] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. What led you to a Marine Corps commission?

[00:01:27.45] JIM MCROBERTS: I went to University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado on an NROTC scholarship. And during the sophomore year, I spent time

with the Marine side of it. But in the freshman year, I spent the summer on a destroyer in the North Atlantic, and I knew that was not my--

[00:01:47.55] JOE GALLOWAY: Not what you wanted.

[00:01:48.21] JIM MCROBERTS: --cup of tea. So I-- and I'd come from the mountains, and I was a hunter and all that, and a skier. And I thought, well, the Marine Corps is obviously a better choice.

[00:01:56.55] JOE GALLOWAY: Far better.

[00:01:57.40] JIM MCROBERTS: So that's how I chose it. JIM MCROBERTS: I got a Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical engineering at the University of Colorado. My father had been a light plane pilot a little bit, and I wanted to learn to fly. So I did. I learned after I was just about to graduate from college. And then I went into the Marine Corps as a ground pounder down at Camp Pendleton.

[00:02:28.00] And one day while we were out doing maneuvers, and the airplanes were coming over us and practicing shooting and all this kind of stuff, the gunnery sergeant in the hole next to me said, Lieutenant, why are you down here and they're up there? Well, I don't really have a good idea. So the next week I applied for flight training.

[00:02:48.76] JOE GALLOWAY: And they accepted?

[00:02:49.72] JIM MCROBERTS: They accepted me. So that's how I got there.

[00:02:59.13] JOE GALLOWAY: You landed in Vietnam in 1966?

[00:03:02.88] JIM MCROBERTS: January 10th.

[00:03:04.07] JOE GALLOWAY: January.

[00:03:04.71] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah.

[00:03:05.73] JOE GALLOWAY: What were your first impressions?

[00:03:08.04] JIM MCROBERTS: It was hot, even in January. It was muggy. I'd been in the Far East a little bit, but not much. Anyway, it was kind of like a real rundown South-- Southern town. The fact they called it Dogpatch is where we lived there on the-- out just off the runway there Da Nang.

[00:03:33.79] JOE GALLOWAY: Da Nang. I know Dogpatch well.

[00:03:35.92] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. And so-- but anyway, it had a lot of historical cultural things to it that were-- certainly didn't know anything about. But yeah, it was shocking to say the least. That the--

[00:03:57.10] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, I was the assistant operations officer, so I was sent over there with another-- with a major. I was a captain, and the major was the maintenance officer. And we went over there to be with the squadron that we were going to take over their airplanes. And they were going to leave. So our whole squadron was coming over by--

[00:04:16.35] JOE GALLOWAY: You were the advance party?

[00:04:17.44] JIM MCROBERTS: That's-- yes, sir. We had a couple of enlisted men and then the major and myself. And so that was our program, to get everything lined up for our group to get there.

[00:04:28.69] JOE GALLOWAY: How long did that go on?

[00:04:30.94] JIM MCROBERTS: Probably two weeks.

[00:04:34.29] JOE GALLOWAY: What was your daily routine, once your squadron came in?

[00:04:38.09] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, as operations officer I was in charge of looking after schedules, making sure that every-- somebody was assigned to each mission that we had to fly. And then just making sure that everything ran smoothly after that. And that all the people that recorded the time and the missions and the mission briefings that were given-- the mission briefings were given by somebody else from the Marine Air Group 11.

[00:05:07.74] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, were you on flight duty at the same time?

[00:05:10.08] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes.

[00:05:10.43] JOE GALLOWAY: So you were flying missions--

[00:05:12.21] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes.

[00:05:12.72] JOE GALLOWAY: --plus doing your other operations?

[00:05:14.79] JIM MCROBERTS: Almost every day, yes.

[00:05:17.85] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. What were your living quarters like?

[00:05:20.67] JIM MCROBERTS: They improved from when we got there. The tents we had didn't have floors, but we got floors shortly thereafter. We had-- there were tent-covered wooden floors, and that was it.

[00:05:34.35] JOE GALLOWAY: Sanbag walls?

[00:05:36.31] JIM MCROBERTS: Part way, yes. And we had clothing lockers and things like that that keep the bugs out of your clothes and keep them somewhat dry and clean. But like your-- in your bathroom where you have all your stuff, shaving gear and everything, we had a little wood shelf there that held all that stuff.

[00:06:01.44] JOE GALLOWAY: How was the chow?

[00:06:03.63] JIM MCROBERTS: Chow was actually quite good. Yeah, I can't complain about it. We-- nobody ever went hungry. And they had--

[00:06:13.50] JOE GALLOWAY: Hot meals?

[00:06:14.40] JIM MCROBERTS: Meals were hot. Yeah, we had a good mess hall. And a little later on, if you ask the same question I'll tell you because I was in charge of the mess hall later on.

[00:06:28.70] JIM MCROBERTS: They all seemed to be very friendly. They were walking around, all around us. They worked out in the fields, the rice paddies right next to the town. And they seemed-- and then because we were right in the city, we had a lot of association with them because they worked for us. They had-- we did-- they did menial tasks, they would clean up around the area.

[00:06:54.78] And then we also used to have them help with road building and things in the local area. And we bought stuff from their local vendors, roofing material, and things like that to build our officer's club and our chapel. So they were good.

[00:07:19.85] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, we had worked together in Beaufort, South Carolina from 1963 to the end of '65. First in one squadron called the Marine Air Fighter Squadron 451, that was my first squadron there. And then after they decided that our sister squadron, Air Squadron 235 was going to go to Vietnam, they chose a few of us that had been instrumental in founding 451 and put us in 235 to be the advanced group to prepare it for Vietnam.

[00:07:59.27] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. I don't know if this is applicable, but what did you do for recreation or off duty activities?

[00:08:07.82] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, we played basketball and a little bit of soccer. There was enough room to do that. And I can't remember doing much of else. We were pretty darn busy. Yeah.

[00:08:22.34] JOE GALLOWAY: Where were you flying missions, in what area?

[00:08:27.05] JIM MCROBERTS: All of Vietnam north of Chu Lai, and up into Cambodia, and Laos, and up to the DMZ and sometimes beyond; out over the-- we did some patrolling out over the water to do some protecting for people that were out there, other ships that were out off the coast. And-- but mainly we flew up and down the Ho Chi Minh Trail interdicting that night and day.

[00:09:00.18] And we were controlled-- when there was air control required the people that-- if you were been to Da Nang, you know Marble Mountain.

[00:09:07.86] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:09:08.57] JIM MCROBERTS: OK. Marble Mountain was the-- all the radar sites.

[00:09:12.09] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:09:12.39] JIM MCROBERTS: And so they controlled us. And then we would work with the forward air controllers that were out in the air over the areas where we were going to interdict. We did helicopter preparation landings. I don't know if you heard the term punji sticks or not?

[00:09:32.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Yup.

[00:09:32.91] JIM MCROBERTS: OK. Punji sticks were commonly used in areas where they thought that we might be going to land troops, and so they'd stick them in there. We had these 500 pounds bombs with a four foot long fuse on them-- they were --so that they would explode before they hit the ground. And they-- they called them--

[00:09:50.62] JOE GALLOWAY: Get all those punji stakes out.

[00:09:51.49] JIM MCROBERTS: They called them Daisy Cutters.

[00:09:52.84] JOE GALLOWAY: Daisy Cutters.

[00:09:53.74] JIM MCROBERTS: And so we did a lot of that in preparation for landing zones. And then because we had 20 millimeter machine guns, we took care of the perimeter of the zone while the troops were getting out of the helicopters and spreading out to take over an area.

[00:10:09.64] JOE GALLOWAY: Right. Describe your interdiction operations on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

[00:10:17.89] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, we would be told by the forward air controllers that they had word that there were going to be trucks or actually sometimes elephants carrying stuff they used-- that was really hard, I'll tell you, trying to kill elephants.

[00:10:31.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Kill elephants. [LAUGHS].

[00:10:32.19] JIM MCROBERTS: That wasn't fun. But anyway, we would get notified of that and then we would go up there and we would-- there may be somebody already there that had been working on the target. There were a lot of river crossings. And we tried-- that was a good place to catch the trucks because they couldn't go very fast and they were wide open when they were in the river. So those were the kind of things we did.

[00:10:56.89] And we also-- we sure-- we bombed an awful lot of trees. But the controllers and the local natives would tell-- they'd find out where somebody was that wasn't supposed to be there, and so we would go in and just saturate an area with--

[00:11:17.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Bomb it up.

[00:11:18.28] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah, bombs, 20 millimeter cannons and/or napalm.

[00:11:23.86] JOE GALLOWAY: Now were you also doing close air support for the Marines?

[00:11:28.36] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes. Yes, we would. Yeah. If they called that they needed help, if they were having trouble in a landing zone or moving beyond some place, we would, yes, go in and support them either with--

[00:11:40.81] JOE GALLOWAY: Fly the A Shau Valley?

[00:11:42.88] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes.

[00:11:43.18] JOE GALLOWAY: Que Son?

[00:11:43.84] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes.

[00:11:45.64] JOE GALLOWAY: All of that. Can you describe significant actions or campaigns that you participated in?

[00:11:57.28] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, I was-- the Tet Offensive was part of one of the events that I-- but as far as other-- just by name there was just the hill number such and such and that was it. There was the Marines on the hill, and you went out there and took care of what was trying to get to them.

[00:12:17.83] One very strange event occurred right in Da Nang. There was a big meeting of top brass, both US and Vietnamese. And then there was a rogue Vietnamese pilot in an AD. And he was flying around, and he was threatening to bomb the meeting. So they sent us up, I happened to be my term on duty, to go up and fly around behind him. And a AD flies about 120 knots and an F-8 doesn't do well unless it's landing below about 180.

[00:12:53.08] So we've got a fly around behind him in case decides to drop the bomb I'm supposed to shoot him down. That was a disaster that never happened. He got he got tired and went off, but then we went back and landed. But that wasn't going to be--

[00:13:09.39] JOE GALLOWAY: What's your memories of the Tet Offensive?

[00:13:13.78] JIM MCROBERTS: It was just continuous operations. We had-- there were some Vietnamese tank drivers that went into Dogpatch, and they had a tank, and they had the barrel pointed right at the Buddhist chapel, cathedral-- whatever you call it. Temple.

[00:13:36.22] JOE GALLOWAY: Temple.

[00:13:37.45] JIM MCROBERTS: And we lived just the other side of that, our tents. If he'd have shot-- that tank-- it would have gone right through that building, which didn't have much strength, and would have gone right through all of our tents. So we were very, very nervous the whole day he was there during that particular time.

[00:13:58.45] JOE GALLOWAY: You were flying support for the battle of Hue?

[00:14:04.60] JIM MCROBERTS: We did, yes, yes. Yeah. I went up to Hue and hauled bodies. After I had my 100 missions, I got out of the active fighter squadron and went into the Marine Air Base Squadron.

[00:14:22.70] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:14:23.41] JIM MCROBERTS: That's when I was in charge of the workers and had the-- but anyway, during that time, I flew missions at night with the F-8. And then I flew the C-117. And we went up-- used the C-117 to go up and get the bodies from Hue and bring them back to Da Nang to have them--

[00:14:42.56] JOE GALLOWAY: Sent home.

[00:14:43.04] JIM MCROBERTS: --sent home. Yeah. That's the only time that I ever actually got hit. There was-- it must have been a farmer in the field, and he was mad and he shot at this transport taking off. And the bullet hole went between the engine and where I was sitting here in the co-pilot's seat. And we-- fortunately, we didn't know that till we got back to Da Nang.

[00:15:11.77] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, my most vivid memory was when one of my squadron mates was shot down and captured just north of Hue. His name is Orson Swindle.

[00:15:20.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:15:21.04] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah, Orson was my squadron mate. That was a real--

[00:15:26.56] JOE GALLOWAY: He was shot down this side of the DMZ--

[00:15:29.20] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes, he was.

[00:15:29.85] JOE GALLOWAY: --south of.

[00:15:30.16] JIM MCROBERTS: And captured there. Yeah.

[00:15:31.42] JOE GALLOWAY: And captured and taken north.

[00:15:33.46] JIM MCROBERTS: Correct.

[00:15:34.15] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:15:34.96] JIM MCROBERTS: And then the other one was one of our young pilots. He got target fixation, and he let a bomb drop and flew into the ground. And just a fine young Marine, and--

[00:15:50.89] JOE GALLOWAY: Just done.

[00:15:51.40] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah, and unfortunately that was-- those are the two that were the most traumatic at the time.

[00:16:09.12] JIM MCROBERTS: The day that I left.

[00:16:11.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Everybody says that. [LAUGHS}.

[00:16:15.06] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. JIM MCROBERTS: Well, I think it was during one of those high intensive operational periods where we worked 24 hours a day. We had airplanes up all the time. And there just was no--

[00:16:34.70] JOE GALLOWAY: No let up.

[00:16:35.70] JIM MCROBERTS: --no rest. And sometimes you knew that you were sending guys out there that were really tired. And/or you went out yourself if you were-- but anyway, those-- they didn't-- there was no really the worst day like that. They were just a lot of days that were--

[00:16:54.60] JOE GALLOWAY: A lot of bad days.

[00:16:55.73] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. JIM MCROBERTS: Actually, I had none.

[00:17:03.33] JOE GALLOWAY: None.

[00:17:03.73] JIM MCROBERTS: No. Our side of the base there at Da Nang was pretty much all by itself. And we had more contact just with the local Vietnamese population than with anybody else. We did-- we did hear them on the radio while we were flying. We could tell that--

[00:17:22.15] JOE GALLOWAY: What was your general impression of the South Vietnamese military?

[00:17:31.24] JIM MCROBERTS: The ones that we had contact with in the local area of Da Nang they were just kind of like MP type people. So there was-- they saw no action from them. They weren't-- they weren't performing any duty that-- other than to help us protect-- right. Yeah.

[00:17:56.72] JIM MCROBERTS: We used to use the MARS radio.

[00:17:59.38] JOE GALLOWAY: MARS radio.

[00:18:00.15] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. And so in order to talk to my wife, I had to wait up till two o'clock in the morning in order to be able to get a channel through to them and--

[00:18:10.64] JOE GALLOWAY: I love you. Over.

[00:18:11.63] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah, right. Yeah, that was the part. Over.

[00:18:14.03] JOE GALLOWAY: Over.

[00:18:15.20] JIM MCROBERTS: No, I said over. Anyway, no, we did that. Then I did-- we had R&R. So I did get to go to Hawaii and visit my wife for a week. And that was, well, that was pretty exciting.

[00:18:31.00] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:18:31.76] JIM MCROBERTS: Get out of Vietnam and get to see your wife. But anyway, we used tapes, the little disk.

[00:18:39.16] JOE GALLOWAY: The little cassette tapes.

[00:18:39.41] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I bought a cassette at the PX for my wife and bought one also from my parents. And we used to make tapes and send those. And of course, they'd go-- they'd be gone and three or four weeks later they'd come back and-- but to hear the kids talking on those tapes was really exciting. Yeah

[00:19:00.35] JOE GALLOWAY: How much news did you receive about the war from home? Either through letters, or Stars and Stripes?

[00:19:10.35] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. Yeah, mostly Stars and Stripes, or somebody would go on R&R and bring a newspaper back, something like that. And everybody would read that till it fell apart. But my wife was not for the war when I left. And she wasn't for the war when I got back. But anyway, we didn't really get the - Stars and Stripes or somebody just coming through. There were a lot of people transiting through that area, coming in to replace people that were leaving. So you got their cut on what the news was.

[00:19:46.00] JOE GALLOWAY: What the news was.

[00:19:47.11] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah.

[00:19:50.35] JOE GALLOWAY: Were you aware of any particular political or social events or movements going on back home?

[00:19:56.77] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah, we were--

[00:19:58.09] JOE GALLOWAY: The antiwar stuff?

[00:19:59.05] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes. Yeah, we were. And that was always sort of discouraging because they had no idea what was happening over there. They just had what they thought was going on. Whether the war turned out to be good or bad, or

whether we won it and then walked away I don't-- that's not for me to say. But there was no-- we didn't think of anything that the people were doing back home that was making it any easier for us over there-- especially the guys that were up on the front lines.

[00:20:38.32] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:20:42.31] JIM MCROBERTS: It was no encouragement. JIM MCROBERTS: I was a regular officer. And fortunately, I turned in my request to resign my regular commission and enter the Reserves when I came home. And I did that, as it turns out just the week before they cut it off. And so I was felt-- there was another guy in my squadron, he and I we both did the same thing. So we thought, well, gee, we won the jackpot on that one.

[00:21:16.41] But anyway, going back home-- getting on the airplane, I think it was Continental was the airplane that was hauling everybody home, was just such a relief. And we always counted down. I got two days and a-- two weeks and a wake up and all that, that kind of stuff, before you can go home. And then you kind of-- we backed-

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[00:21:44.46] JOE GALLOWAY: Short timer charts.

[00:21:45.44] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes, that's right. We backed out of the schedule somewhat to give ourselves a little comfort zone to-- before we had to leave. But taking off out of Da Nang was certainly uplifting, no pun intended. But-- but a very wonderful feeling.

[00:22:07.97] JOE GALLOWAY: What was it like landing at the other end?

[00:22:11.57] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, there was smiles, and little kids that had grown up quite a bit in the year, and the hugs and kisses and all that kind of stuff and--

[00:22:21.29] JOE GALLOWAY: No bad experience?

[00:22:22.88] JIM MCROBERTS: No, none. No, not there.

[00:22:24.74] JOE GALLOWAY: Where did you land? Did you land in San Diego or--

[00:22:28.04] JIM MCROBERTS: No we landed in--

[00:22:31.13] JOE GALLOWAY: Travis?

[00:22:31.97] JIM MCROBERTS: No. No. I'm trying to think now where we did land. I think it was at El Toro because we were in the Marine Corps. I can't remember. But I had gone back there to do-- I had two weeks before-- or after-- I'd only been over there two weeks. I was sent back to El Toro to talk about what they could do to improve. But then-- so I don't remember where I came back to.

[00:22:58.18] JOE GALLOWAY: Where you came back to.

[00:22:58.39] JIM MCROBERTS: There were other-- other things were so much more overpowering to see than to remember where it was.

[00:23:04.15] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. What-- and you had your resignation in works?

[00:23:10.60] JIM MCROBERTS: Oh, yeah. It had been accepted, and I was going to be turned into the Reserves and not stay on-- not stay on active status. And-- because I had a job lined up then.

[00:23:22.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Was it difficult readjusting to life after the war?

[00:23:26.74] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah, it was in the fact that now I knew that there was a lot of hostility, and there's a lot of people didn't like-- we were baby killers and things like that. Just by assumption you were convicted of those atrocities.

[00:23:51.49] And so it was-- you had a hard time with certain class-- certain ages of people that-- and we had been here in Seattle I was held up at lunch one time, downtown Seattle, by a march. Hell no, we won't go, and all that. Get us out of Vietnam. And this was in April or something like that of '67. So we had--

[00:24:21.77] JOE GALLOWAY: After you came back?

[00:24:22.46] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah, I was working here at-- for Boeing.

[00:24:29.28] JOE GALLOWAY: How much contact have you had with fellow veterans over the years?

[00:24:34.56] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, the ones that were in the squadron, since email became popular, we've all been keeping in touch. And about the guys that have passed away and that--

[00:24:48.12] JOE GALLOWAY: Have a reunion now and then?

[00:24:50.47] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, they have had both the reunions but they've all been on the East Coast, and I don't go to the East Coast.

[00:24:58.16] JOE GALLOWAY: You won't go?

[00:24:59.61] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. But anyway, in fact in May one of our guys is going to be interred in the National Cemetery, and I won't be able to make that. But anyway, what I have been doing in the last few years is I've been working for something called Project Healing Waters. And I teach veterans how to tie flies and take them fishing. And I do that once or twice a week here at the Seattle VA and then down to American Lake.

[00:25:28.05] So we have-- in fact, we're going to take a group on a fishing trip this weekend. We've got about 20 veterans lined up to go fishing in a little lake up here, ride around in a boat, and have a good time.

[00:25:41.11] JOE GALLOWAY: I've heard about various projects around American Lake.

[00:25:44.73] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah, that's-- I'm-- I work down there at least three or four times a month down there.

[00:25:56.53] JOE GALLOWAY: Is there any memory or experience from your time in Vietnam that has stayed with you through the years and had a lasting influence on your life?

[00:26:08.99] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, it was two things. The first time I did a bombing at night on the Ho Chi Minh Trail where they were dropping flares out of a C-130. And when you're flying along and in the cockpit it's all dark, the instruments are red and-- to protect your night vision. And then all of a sudden, you go down and you go underneath all these flares, and now it's just like bright summer day. And your eyes are-- pop wide open. And then you drop your bombs, you pull back up in the pitch black. You can't see anything.

[00:26:43.78] JOE GALLOWAY: Can't see a thing.

[00:26:44.87] JIM MCROBERTS: And so there's been times when folks have gotten disoriented doing that and gotten close to being in trouble. So that was something that I remembered-- that you better expect things that you don't normally want to happen, that they are going to happen sometimes, and you better be ready for them. And you've got to accept them, that they're going to happen.

[00:27:11.38] One another time on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, I told you that when trucks were crossing the rivers it was easy to-- and there was this one place where they had a big bunch of trucks going across. And the forward air controllers had told us that there were anti-aircraft guns in the hills.

[00:27:27.73] But they didn't think they were manned, so we went down and we made a strafing run on them. And I made-- fired two bullets and the gun's jammed. So there I was. I had nothing left, and I just pulled up and got out of there as fast as I could. And so, don't always count on technology to save you.

[00:27:50.52] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your experience in Vietnam affect the way you think about veterans coming home from combat today?

[00:27:57.33] JIM MCROBERTS: Yes, yeah. I am so happy that the veterans nowadays are not the problem. The government might be the problem for the war, but it's not the veterans problem that did their job. And that was not what it was from Vietnam. It was the veterans problem in Vietnam. Government wasn't even considered.

[00:28:20.55] And now it's-- the outlook, at least as far as I can tell, and the veterans that I work with here they feel much the same way, although they may have problems with the VA and their treatment and scheduling. but the fact that they are not spit upon or harassed if they're wearing their uniform, and things like that.

[00:28:45.46] And I think the media that has shown these commercials of the veterans on airplanes being thanked for their service and things like that, and in fact now that many of the big stores around give veterans discounts and thank you for your service, no matter how long ago it was.

[00:29:09.48] JOE GALLOWAY: How do you think the Vietnam War is remembered in our society today, or is it?

[00:29:17.16] JIM MCROBERTS: I think it is either not understood-- and not that I understand it. But anyway, they would just as soon forget it. It wasn't-- it wasn't a great war like the Second World War. It was-- and Korea was sort of a mess too.

[00:29:37.95] JOE GALLOWAY: A mistake.

[00:29:38.88] JIM MCROBERTS: Yeah. So anyway, I think most people are so overwhelmed by the other wars we have going on that Vietnam-- if you hadn't said it was 45 years or 50 years since the start of Vietnam War, they wouldn't even think about it. But you're going to remind them that with this--

[00:30:01.35] JOE GALLOWAY: We certainly are. Did you take away from Vietnam more that was positive and useful than you invested in blood, sweat, and tears?

[00:30:15.79] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, since I wasn't on the front lines being shot at every day, I would say that I probably didn't give out as much blood, sweat, and tears as a lot of folks. But I did come back with the idea that we could go over there and do our job, and that was all that was asked of us. And that that's all we had to do. No matter what anybody else thought, as long as we did what we were supposed to do.

[00:30:45.74] JOE GALLOWAY: What lessons did you take from your Vietnam service that you would like to pass on to future generations of Americans?

[00:30:55.98] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, we had draftees. And a lot of them were very, very good, and a lot of them didn't seem to care one way or the other, but they all-- all the ones that we were in our units were-- they did-- they did what they were supposed to do. They obeyed orders. They did a good day's work.

[00:31:15.70] And I would just say that no matter what endeavor you are in, that you just do what you're supposed to do and do it-- a full day's work for a full day's pay or whatever. And don't try to shortcut anything. Do what you're supposed to.

[00:31:38.26] JIM MCROBERTS: I haven't seen it. I know that I have two guys, two friends of mine that are on-- their names are on there. But I have not physically seen it. I don't know whether I could stand it or not.

[00:31:51.46] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:31:57.44] JIM MCROBERTS: Well, I think it's outstanding. Yeah. There are a lot of-- a lot of false impressions. And I think anything you can do to correct that-- and maybe it'll help correct whatever comes out of these other wars that we have, the outcome and what people think.

[00:32:18.88] JOE GALLOWAY: Thank you, Mr. McRoberts.

[00:32:20.79] JIM MCROBERTS: Oh, you're certainly welcome. I do appreciate the opportunity.

[00:32:24.38] JOE GALLOWAY: Thank you.