

Tate, Bryan US Army

[00:00:16.19] BRYAN TATE: I was born in Toronto, Ontario on February the fourth, 1945.

[00:00:22.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow.

[00:00:23.15] BRYAN TATE: And the story about that is my dad was an Army person that was drafted in 1939. And he was stationed at Fort Belvoir. He met my mother. My mother was a Canadian citizen that had actually gone to Washington, DC to work for the Australian embassy. Canada and Australia were all part of the Commonwealth, so she could go there.

[00:00:52.39] She went there with a girlfriend, met my dad at a USO dance. And they were married in 1942. And Dad got orders to go with the Third Army-- General Patton-- to North Africa. And he went to North Africa and all through Sicily. And he hit the second wave at Anzio. And then he came home. And that's when I was conceived.

[00:01:16.06] But he wasn't allowed to have time off. So as I understand it, they didn't have maternity leave back in the '40s. And so my mother decided, when it was time for me to be born, to go up to be with her family in Toronto. I was born at the Salvation Army Hospital, Grace Salvation Army Hospital in Toronto. But--

[00:01:36.46] JOE GALLOWAY: Dual citizen?

[00:01:38.47] BRYAN TATE: According to Canada, yes, the US, no.

[00:01:40.63] JOE GALLOWAY: No.

[00:01:41.05] BRYAN TATE: So my mother told me that I had the option until I was 16 as dual citizen. Then at 16, I would live in the country of my choice for five years, and then I would give up the right to the other country. And so obviously we were living, growing up in Dayton, Ohio. And so I remember 16 and I remember 21. I said, well there goes Canada. Not that--

[00:02:00.54] JOE GALLOWAY: There goes Canada.

[00:02:01.39] BRYAN TATE: Yeah. And then later in my career after coming home from Vietnam, I actually took a job where I was assigned-- one of my duty responsibilities was to move to Canada. So I went through the whole process of becoming a landed immigrant, took six months, had to have police reports from every place you lived since you were 16. I get to the border, and the guy says, where were you born? I said, Toronto. He said, come on in. I said, well.

[00:02:27.76] JOE GALLOWAY: Didn't read the paper at all.

[00:02:29.44] BRYAN TATE: Didn't need the paper at all. So that's when I discovered that Toronto still-- unless I had renounced the citizenship-- still viewed me as a dual citizen.

[00:02:42.93] BRYAN TATE: Well, my dad was Charles William Tate, and my mother was Olive Elizabeth Burrow. And then when they were married, she became Olive Elizabeth Tate. And I'm the first of four children, the oldest of four children.

[00:02:57.05] JOE GALLOWAY: Ah.

[00:02:58.14] BRYAN TATE: I had a younger brother that was four years younger than me. Another one that's five years younger than me, and then my little sister came along 16 years later.

[00:03:06.12] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow.

[00:03:07.17] BRYAN TATE: Growing up, there were three boys in the house, and four, if you counted my dad. And my mother always used to say-- she said, the good Lord didn't give me any girl, so you boys going to learn to do what girls do. And she taught me how to clean bathrooms and iron. And my other brother got-- they were younger, so they didn't have quite the duty schedule that I did.

[00:03:25.75] JOE GALLOWAY: What do you consider your hometown? Where are you-- did you move around a lot?

[00:03:31.29] BRYAN TATE: Well, I grew up in Dayton, Ohio. I was only in Canada for six weeks, I think. And then Mom came back. And we lived with my dad's parents in Dayton. And that's where I grew up until I went to college in 1963. I graduated from college in March of 1968 and got drafted in April. I didn't think the government could do anything that fast, but Tet '68, I think, sort of turned--

[00:03:55.87] JOE GALLOWAY: Turned the faucet on.

[00:03:57.48] BRYAN TATE: It did. They needed some more people. After I got my draft notice--

[00:04:01.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Did they offer you OCS?

[00:04:03.70] BRYAN TATE: Oh, yeah. They wanted me to sign up for five years. I did very well on their test scores. But I just really didn't think-- and it maybe had something to do with the state of the Vietnam War. I just didn't really have a desire to make it a career. And so I tried to join the Marines, the Navy, and the Air Force after I got my draft notice. But none of them would talk to me.

[00:04:26.55] JOE GALLOWAY: Really?

[00:04:26.91] BRYAN TATE: Yeah.

[00:04:27.96] JOE GALLOWAY: That's amazing.

[00:04:29.94] BRYAN TATE: I think they had orders that the Army needed recruits and hands-off. Right.

[00:04:33.87] JOE GALLOWAY: Stay out of their way. Yeah.

[00:04:42.27] BRYAN TATE: So I reported for active duty on July 18 at the bottom of the federal building in Dayton, Ohio called the Knott Building, and then spent some time there. The Salvation Army was there at 5:30 in the morning, playing music and giving coffee and donuts. And then they loaded us on the bus and took us down to Cincinnati, Ohio to the federal building down there. And that's where we went through all of in-processing, physical, swearing allegiance, taking two steps forward, the whole nine yards.

[00:05:16.47] And then they loaded us on an airplane, much later that night, and flew us down to Atlanta. And then they loaded us on a bus and took us to Fort Benning. We arrived at Fort Benning about 2:30 in the morning. We met our drill sergeant. And the first thing they did was-- we had a police call. And so we didn't know what police call was. But they told us to pick up everything we could see that didn't move, including the big 3-inch cockroaches that they have down there.

[00:05:43.23] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh.

[00:05:45.42] BRYAN TATE: Finished basic in July and August at Fort Benning. And it was hot and humid down there. It was actually-- and they have bamboo down there. And so I didn't think it would get any worse than that until they sent me to Fort Polk for AIT.

[00:05:59.37] JOE GALLOWAY: That's worse.

[00:06:00.39] BRYAN TATE: And-- worse. It is definitely worse. And they have critters in Fort Polk.

[00:06:03.78] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, they do.

[00:06:04.80] BRYAN TATE: Actually, I was on an escape-and-evasion one night and got chased by a pig.

[00:06:09.87] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, wild boar?

[00:06:11.76] BRYAN TATE: Well, I didn't know that at the time what was it.

[00:06:13.44] JOE GALLOWAY: It takes your leg off.

[00:06:14.61] BRYAN TATE: My first sergeant told me. He said, you're lucky. That pig would have hurt you. He said, it wasn't a pig. It was a hog. And he said it would hurt you--

[00:06:19.86] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:06:20.16] BRYAN TATE: --if it caught you.

[00:06:21.36] JOE GALLOWAY: It would take your leg off at the knee. All right. So you go through AIT. Your MOS is obviously cast in stone. You're infantry.

[00:06:36.31] BRYAN TATE: 11-4BP. 11-4P.

[00:06:41.47] JOE GALLOWAY: All right. How do you get selected to go to the NCO school?

[00:06:46.84] BRYAN TATE: Well, they moved us back to Fort Benning. I think I went back to Jump School first.

[00:06:52.36] JOE GALLOWAY: OK.

[00:06:53.11] BRYAN TATE: And then I was in Fort Benning. And then I might have that backwards. But actually, I was recruited to-- they tried to get me to go to OCS. And that meant more years. And so they said, well, you could go to the NCO school, and there's not additional commitment in time. So I did that. And there were 300 of us in our NCO class.

[00:07:17.29] JOE GALLOWAY: How long did that last?

[00:07:19.45] BRYAN TATE: Seems to me that it was a couple of months long. It was pretty extensive.

[00:07:23.53] JOE GALLOWAY: Pretty intense?

[00:07:25.42] BRYAN TATE: A lot of tests, a lot of books, plus physical training. As I said, there was a big component of Ranger training. We went through-- OCS troops were right next to us, so we felt like we went through the same program. But some of the obstacle courses-- and the Ranger obstacle courses were pretty tough.

[00:07:50.23] Toughest thing for me was walking the log where you had to climb up and then walk across that little narrow board on top of the telephone pole and then go over the steps, and then out to the end, where you had a rope and you had to go out and touch the Ranger tab and then request permission to drop.

[00:08:07.42] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh.

[00:08:08.17] BRYAN TATE: And I requested permission to drop. I was lucky to get to the other side. My fingerprints are still on that metal pole. I can tell you that for sure. And the rope was no problem. And I got to the thing, the drill sergeant said, look up and drop. And I looked up, but my hands didn't let go of the rope.

[00:08:26.26] So he started hollering at me. He said, I told you to drop. And finally I was able to talk my hands into letting go of the rope. And it seemed like forever before I hit the water. Anyway.

[00:08:36.70] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you receive any further training before you got orders to Vietnam?

[00:08:43.18] BRYAN TATE: Well, we went through the-- the NCO course was a course that involved training. And as I said, there were about 300 of us and a lot of it was a combination of taking tests and learning from textbooks. And then there was also field operations where you learn how to read a map and read a compass.

[00:09:01.70] And we have had that in basic and AIT, but this was more extensive. And I did well with that. And then you also had to have peer reviews. So in order to get your final grade, all of your company had to report on everybody. So you had to report that on everybody, but you needed-- in order to finish in the top. The top five people were commissioned or were awarded a staff sergeant. Everybody else, if you graduated, was going to be a--

[00:09:35.24] JOE GALLOWAY: Three striper.

[00:09:36.04] BRYAN TATE: --three stripe sergeant. So I was fortunate enough to finish at the very top of my class. I was promoted to staff sergeant, E-6.

[00:09:44.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow. Very good. Do you think that that training prepared you for what you faced once you arrived in Vietnam?

[00:09:56.92] BRYAN TATE: I think it-- the answer to that, I would say yes and no. I think that the military training was very valuable. But I don't think any amount of training could have prepared me to be in a firefight, or combat, or shoot, engage with that sort of thing. I mean, that's something that you do and you learn how to do it. And then you do it again and you learn more.

[00:10:21.61] But I think the combat training was very helpful. And certainly for me, map and compass training were very helpful because we didn't have any technology the way the young men and women have it today.

[00:10:32.98] JOE GALLOWAY: That's right. No GPS out there.

[00:10:35.45] BRYAN TATE: Well, and it was important because we operated on ambush patrols every day. And what they would do is they would set all the platoons down at about 7 o'clock at night. And you had to be where you told them you were. Because if you weren't, then they would start firing harassing and interdicting fire at night. And if you were not in the right location, that was not a good thing.

[00:10:55.21] JOE GALLOWAY: Not a good thing.

[00:10:56.38] BRYAN TATE: That's right. So fortunately, I was pretty good with a map and a compass. So I kept my platoon safe. One time, we did get a little-- we weren't misoriented, but we were not completely sure. So I got the radio, and I started tuning to aviation channel. And I got this-- must have been a forward air controller. But he was an Australian guy.

[00:11:16.16] And I asked him if he could help me with some-- just confirming my directions. And so he asked us to pop smoke. We did. And he sent us an encrypted GPS or a coordinate for where we are. And sure enough, we weren't where we thought we'd be. I thanked him profusely. And told him I'd buy him a beer if I ever-- I don't even know who he was. But I bought a lot of Australians beer now because of that very guy.

[00:11:39.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Because of that one guy.

[00:11:41.00] BRYAN TATE: Yep.

[00:11:46.84] JOE GALLOWAY: How old were you when you arrived in Vietnam?

[00:11:50.68] BRYAN TATE: 24. We left from McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. We had spent a night-- we had to report to Fort Dix. And then, I think it was the next day or the next day or so, we reported to Fort McGuire to get on the plane. We flew from Fort McGuire to Elmendorf in Alaska. I think we spent a night in Elmendorf, or maybe we just were on the plane.

[00:12:14.89] But I remember it was dark. And then we went from Elmendorf to Yokota, Japan, to refuel. I don't recall getting off the plane. And then from there, we flew to Bien Hoa.

[00:12:26.53] JOE GALLOWAY: To Bien Hoa?

[00:12:27.04] BRYAN TATE: Yeah.

[00:12:27.70] JOE GALLOWAY: And this is 1969. What month?

[00:12:30.83] BRYAN TATE: '69 in September.

[00:12:33.94] JOE GALLOWAY: OK.

[00:12:34.72] BRYAN TATE: September. And we landed in Bien Hoa at around noon. And I remember the pilot. There was a stretch-8. There were about 300 of us on the plane. And I remember the pilot telling us it was going to be a fairly abrupt landing. And he was quite serious about that. He put that thing into a nosedive, and it spiraled all the way down. And it was quite memorable. And when he got on the ground, he came on the radio, and he said you couldn't make a low approach. He said it was very dangerous--

[00:13:07.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Very dangerous.

[00:13:08.05] BRYAN TATE: --because they wanted to shoot those planes down. But anyway, it was hot and humid when I hit the ground.

[00:13:15.20] JOE GALLOWAY: Do you have an assignment, or they run you through the repo depot?

[00:13:19.16] BRYAN TATE: I landed-- they sent us to 90th Replacement. And we checked in. And we got there at noon in the daytime. And so by the time we got all through all of that, they fed us and then they assigned to some barracks right at the replacement station. And we spent the night there. And then the following day, we went to get our assignments at the personnel section there.

[00:13:44.75] JOE GALLOWAY: And where did they assign you?

[00:13:46.88] BRYAN TATE: They sent me to the-- the night that we stayed at 90th Replacement, somebody opened up a CS canister, and we got smoked, tear gas. And so you just never knew what to expect. Here you are in a strange country and it's hot and steamy and--

[00:14:05.39] JOE GALLOWAY: And you got tear gassed.

[00:14:06.70] BRYAN TATE: --and we got tear gassed. And so by then the next day, I told the placement-- I think it was a spec 4-- I told him, I said, you know, my buddy who went just two weeks before me-- we went through all basic and all that training together.

[00:14:20.90] I said, he's with the 1st Infantry Division. So he said, well, I can't make any promises. I got my orders. And they were the 1st Infantry Division. But it was the 2nd Battalion, 28th infantry. And Mike was in a different bunch. I never did see him.

[00:14:34.34] JOE GALLOWAY: Never did see him?

[00:14:35.54] BRYAN TATE: Never did see him. So they sent me to the Charlie Company, the 2nd Battalion, 28th infantry. And their headquarters were in Dau Tieng. But we had to go to Di An first for a little jungle training. And they give you your M16. And you zero it in. And then they would send-- they sent me from there to Lai Khe. They actually-- because I was the ranking NCO, they made me in charge of a convoy, which was--

[00:15:05.21] JOE GALLOWAY: Done.

[00:15:05.58] BRYAN TATE: --a little nervous. Here I was in country for maybe two or three days, four days at the most. And they gave me a flak jacket and a steel pot and an M16 and told me to lead this convoy, this huge convoy--

[00:15:15.57] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh my God.

[00:15:16.38] BRYAN TATE: --25 trucks or something like that through enemy territory to Lai Khe. We made that and did it. And I didn't get in trouble or nobody got hurt. So they spent a couple of days in Lai Khe. Then they put us on a bus and sent me up to Dau Tieng, which was our division-- our brigade rear.

[00:15:42.40] BRYAN TATE: Charlie Company had a brigade rear there. And so I caught up with them. But then they loaded me on a deuce-and-a-half and sent me out to my firebase. And we were at-- I was stationed at Fire Support Base Kien, which was-- used to be Fire Support

Base Mahone. But when they had the Vietnamization process, they designated this firebase to be a model for Vietnamization.

[00:16:06.82] So half the firebase was Vietnamese and half of it was US. And as you know, a firebase is about 300 meters in diameter with concertina wire and bunkers and all that. So it was divided right down the middle. And half of it was ARVN, and the other half was US, our group.

[00:16:25.84] JOE GALLOWAY: Now when you get there, are you assigned to a platoon?

[00:16:29.23] BRYAN TATE: I was. I was assigned to the 1st Platoon.

[00:16:31.27] JOE GALLOWAY: As the platoon sergeant?

[00:16:33.04] BRYAN TATE: Well, they didn't-- yes, as a platoon sergeant. But when I went there, there wasn't any platoon leader. In fact, there was a E-3 running the platoon.

[00:16:41.77] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh my god.

[00:16:43.15] BRYAN TATE: So I got there in the daytime. And he was giving me a little bit of a rundown. And he was a very seasoned-- he had been in the company for quite a while. So he was very seasoned. I was not seasoned, but I was in charge. And so that was-- the training didn't quite prepare me for that back in Fort Benning. But I mean, it was what it was. And so I took command of the platoon. And I think we had 18 or 19 guys.

[00:17:11.23] JOE GALLOWAY: About half of what you should have had?

[00:17:13.09] BRYAN TATE: Yeah, I think TOD was 31. And we never had a more than 19. Most often it was 17 or 18 with new guys coming in and people going home, DEROS, and then also R&R. So I spent the first night out in the bush. And it rained. And I've never been so miserable and scared in all my life, and then to hear the lizards talk at night. You've probably heard the lizards. Anyway.

[00:17:44.29] JOE GALLOWAY: He wants to know what a Shake 'n Bake NCO is.

[00:17:48.55] BRYAN TATE: That was the name that they gave to us because it was sort of a 90-day process. They called us a number of things that weren't nearly as flattering as Shake 'n Bake, but Instant NCOs and other non-warming titles.

[00:18:09.01] JOE GALLOWAY: Were you treated differently?

[00:18:13.32] BRYAN TATE: I think we were treated differently when we came home because people-- as I said, I went from E-1 to E-6 in very relatively short period of time.

[00:18:27.06] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:18:27.47] BRYAN TATE: Some members, as you know, or probably know, spend years making-- to get to the rank of E-6.

[00:18:35.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:18:35.88] BRYAN TATE: And so I think there was some resentment on that part. It's probably no different than a lieutenant that's a 90-day wonder. My dad went through OCS. After he came back from Italy at Anzio, he went through OCS. And he was in E-6 in-- with Patton's group and then became a second lieutenant. And he said they called him a "shave tail" and a "90-day wonder"--

[00:19:02.79] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. I know.

[00:19:05.55] BRYAN TATE: --bunch of other things.

[00:19:06.36] JOE GALLOWAY: A bunch of other stuff, too.

[00:19:14.10] JOE GALLOWAY: What were living conditions like, firebase and in the field?

[00:19:19.74] BRYAN TATE: Well, on the firebase, if we were spending the night there, which we did usually about once every four to eight days, depending upon the mission length, some of the guys would have hammocks that they would string between two stakes, or some people would just sleep in the bunker. But that was it. We had a dayroom, but it didn't really have any beds in it.

[00:19:44.85] I had a hammock, a little hammock, that I picked up from somebody. The Vietnamese used to use hammocks to sleep in all the time. And then you collect one or you find one and that's what I slept in when I was back in the rear. But most of the time, we were out on ambush patrol. We ambushed every night.

[00:20:03.81] So we would sleep-- we'd take a poncho, not a poncho liner. I didn't get a poncho liner until I left the country. But we would sleep-- sort of make a sandwich style. And hopefully, you'll learn that you have the round part uphill.

[00:20:21.12] JOE GALLOWAY: Uphill.

[00:20:22.26] BRYAN TATE: It took a while to learn that.

[00:20:23.70] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:20:24.15] BRYAN TATE: Otherwise, in the middle of the night, it's a monsoon rain, and you just filled up with water.

[00:20:28.11] JOE GALLOWAY: That's it. Take you off down the hill.

[00:20:31.98] BRYAN TATE: Yep. But we would ambush. Every night we were out in the field. And it was sleeping on the ground. We'd have to--

[00:20:40.35] JOE GALLOWAY: You didn't dig in on ambush?

[00:20:42.12] BRYAN TATE: We did not. Now a lot of the different units that I was told did dig in. But our method was not.

[00:20:48.99] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:20:49.71] BRYAN TATE: We had something called Eagle Flights. And so the way that we did the ambushes-- they would pick my platoon up in four Hueys and take us up in the air and fly us around for 20 or 30 minutes and then set us down someplace. And then we had orders then to go from that location to wherever we were supposed to be that night. Sometimes it was two clicks. Sometimes it was 15 clicks.

[00:21:15.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Whoa.

[00:21:15.87] BRYAN TATE: So you had to-- and it would depend on the terrain. Some of it could have been--

[00:21:19.14] JOE GALLOWAY: And they land you in the dark?

[00:21:21.18] BRYAN TATE: Well, they usually landed us in the light. Yeah, in the daytime, and then usually sometime in the late morning. And by the time we got picked up, go to the pickup site, get on the choppers, take off, fly around for a while, and then they would put us down at a different location. And we had orders to go from there to where our ambush--

[00:21:42.85] JOE GALLOWAY: Point A. Yeah.

[00:21:43.38] BRYAN TATE: --was that night. That's correct. I had a lot of helicopter rides when I was over there.

[00:21:49.00] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, I bet.

[00:21:54.13] BRYAN TATE: When I first got there, of course, I got put in charge right away. And so I took that seriously. And I didn't have-- I didn't know anybody. I mean, I just met them. You know, hi, I'm Bryan or Sergeant Tate. And so I think for a while it was sort of guarded. But after a while, especially after being in the field and being in some firefights, and then you sort of know who you can count on and who's there and which squad leader and which squad is going to really step up.

[00:22:22.90] And after a while, you become close to those guys. And after a while longer than that, you're really close to those guys. And I think a lot of the heroism that's happened is not so much a person just wants to be a hero, but they're out there trying to save their buddy--

[00:22:39.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:22:39.61] BRYAN TATE: --or save this guy over here. I mean, I've watched people-- in a firefight, I had a guy from Puerto Rico. I'm not even sure he was a US citizen. Name was Hernandez. And he shot our M60. He was our M60 gunner, one of them. We had two. And we had gotten in a nasty firefight. And he was sitting cross-legged behind that gun, shooting. So I mean, most everybody else was down as low as you could get trying to look up at ants. And so he was amazing.

[00:23:11.96] JOE GALLOWAY: It's amazing what sights you see.

[00:23:14.66] BRYAN TATE: But you do--

[00:23:15.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Guys are willing to risk their own lives for a buddy.

[00:23:19.25] BRYAN TATE: Exactly right. And you saw that, and you do--you become pretty close to these guys. You still have to maintain that military order. So when we get ready to go out on patrol, it was my job to make sure everybody had all their stuff, especially all of their weapons and ammo and stuff.

[00:23:39.20] So we carried 18 magazines of M16 rounds, a bandolier. We carried Claymores. We carried two hand grenades. And so I would go around and check to see. And my one squad leader didn't have all his stuff.

[00:23:55.04] Well, by the time you loaded up C-rations, all your stuff and your pack-- I mean, sometimes those rucksacks would weigh 90 pounds. And so the guys would-- if they could, they didn't carry everything. So I had to talk to them and make sure they go back and--

[00:24:10.70] JOE GALLOWAY: Make sure they go back and get it.

[00:24:11.60] BRYAN TATE: --get your hand grenades, get your Claymores, load up. I saw guys throw away writing paper because it was too heavy.

[00:24:18.62] [BOTH LAUGH]

[00:24:21.89] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you form friendships with men from different racial and social backgrounds during your time in Vietnam?

[00:24:30.05] BRYAN TATE: I did, but didn't really think of it as racial. I mean, they were just people, men in my platoon.

[00:24:35.36] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:24:35.75] BRYAN TATE: We all counted on each other. I mean, I had a guy from Hawaii. He was my other M60 gunner. And the poor guy had boils.

[00:24:43.94] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, dear.

[00:24:44.54] BRYAN TATE: We called him pineapple. He was a native Hawaiian.

[00:24:46.82] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:24:47.33] BRYAN TATE: And he called me a Holly, which is a bad nickname for a white person that's not a Hawaiian.

[00:24:54.98] JOE GALLOWAY: The other version of gringo.

[00:24:57.14] BRYAN TATE: That's right. But he had these giant, massive boils all over his body. And he had them on his shoulders. And of course, the strap to the M60 is heavy.

[00:25:06.05] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:25:06.47] BRYAN TATE: And I sent him to the medics. And they would do what they did to him.

[00:25:09.16] JOE GALLOWAY: Lance the boils.

[00:25:10.46] BRYAN TATE: Exactly right. And he'd come back with a little wick sticking out of him. And the medic said he's just allergic to Vietnam.

[00:25:16.55] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:25:17.03] BRYAN TATE: But he was a great guy. His name was Moniz, Henry Moniz. And great, great guy. And then we'd go different ways after-- he'd leave or go home. The guy probably I was closest to was my squad leader, Steve Boehne, who was the one I had to send back to get his hand grenades and his Claymores.

[00:25:40.07] And I chewed him out pretty good and just told him, I said, right in front of the platoon because I said, you know, guys, we all depend on each other. And if we're out there and somebody doesn't have the right equipment and we're in a firefight, I said, that could be the difference. And so he went back. But he and I became very, very close.

[00:26:00.06] And so we all got assigned-- probably getting ahead of your questions-- but when the 1st decided to go home, the 1st Infantry Division, we all got reassigned to different units. He got assigned to Americal Division. I sent him a letter, and the letter came back, KIA. I mean, it was-- still to this day--

[00:26:21.27] JOE GALLOWAY: And out of all the places he could have been assigned, that's not exactly a good one.

[00:26:27.78] BRYAN TATE: Yeah. So you do form friendships. And then once again, you didn't think about them as-- I had a guy from-- I had several African Americans that were great

Soldiers. I had a guy that came to us. He was a new twink that came in, new guy, new guy, twinks. [LAUGHS]

[00:26:53.07] And he was from Oklahoma. He was a redhead. He would get suntanned through his fatigue jacket. And those things were pretty heavy. You wondered. And he'd roll it up and show me the burn on his arm. I said, man, oh, man.

[00:27:03.21] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh my god.

[00:27:05.09] BRYAN TATE: But anyway. Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

[00:27:07.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, dear. Now back home, the country is on fire. There's antiwar demonstrations. There's race riots and assassinations. Does any of that come over to where you are?

[00:27:22.71] BRYAN TATE: We saw it back in the rear-- when I say the rear, back at the fire support base. You'd go back there to clean your weapons and resupply. We'd do that once or-- four, five, six, seven, eight days, depending on how long we're out for the mission. And we see some people with Black Power symbols.

[00:27:43.41] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, yeah.

[00:27:44.07] BRYAN TATE: But my guys-- I mean, a couple of my guys would have a shoelace bracelet that they braided. And I guess it was black. And I guess it had something to do with it. But I didn't notice any of that out in the field. And we lost some guys that were-- in fact, one of my point men was a black man from South Carolina. And it was just a huge tragedy when I lost him.

[00:28:09.44] JOE GALLOWAY: When you had any time off, what did you do for recreation?

[00:28:15.83] BRYAN TATE: We didn't really have any time off except for R&R. And so I took my R&R to go to Tokyo. I was going to take-- you got a seven-day leave, and then you got an R&R. I only ever took the R&R. In my seven-day leave, I was going to go to Australia because of that forward air controller that helped me out. But it didn't work out that way.

[00:28:39.88] And then one time, my platoon-- we had three platoons, and then a weapons platoon. So I was the first platoon, and second and third. And the company commander would take turns rotating us back into our fire support base based on who was up next to go back in. And the good news about going back into the support base first was that they had resupplied the cooler with Cokes.

[00:29:03.76] And you would have a five-gallon container that had been sitting in the sun all day, so you could get a relatively warm shower and a Coke. But if you were like second or third platoon to go back in, you got Grape Nehi or Wink and cold water for the shower.

[00:29:20.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, yeah.

[00:29:21.55] BRYAN TATE: One day-- and I don't know if you call this recreation. We did. But the company commander called us and said we were getting picked up at 700 in the morning, and it was going to be a Chinook. And normally, they didn't use Chinooks out in the field. And he said it was going to be a hot extraction.

[00:29:36.97] So hot extractions mean you put out Claymores and then you blow them as you pull back and then get on the chopper. We got on the chopper, my whole platoon. And I asked the pilot. I said, where are we going? He wouldn't give me any information. So we got up, flew around for probably 30, 40 minutes. I can't recall. And we landed at Lai Khe.

[00:29:59.11] And this was like December 22. And they chose us, my platoon, to go to see Bob Hope. And so we spent the whole-- we got there like 7:00 in the morning, or 7:30 in the morning. And Bob Hope didn't come on to like 4:00 in the afternoon. And we hadn't been-- we'd just came out of the field after being in the field for like four or five days.

[00:30:17.41] JOE GALLOWAY: You were a little grubby.

[00:30:18.64] BRYAN TATE: A little grubby, and no place to clean up. But let me tell you. It was great because it was secure, and there were-- you could get some food and some hot food. And so that was great. But other than that--

[00:30:29.82] JOE GALLOWAY: How was that show?

[00:30:31.63] BRYAN TATE: It was great. And do you know--

[00:30:33.73] JOE GALLOWAY: Who was the dancing girl?

[00:30:35.44] BRYAN TATE: Well, they had Connie Stevens.

[00:30:37.63] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:30:38.20] BRYAN TATE: And so I told you earlier that I have two middle initials or two middle names, Charles and William. So she gets up there. And this crowd is unbelievable. It was a huge crowd. There were thousands of Soldiers out there. And she gets up there on the microphone. And she said I'm going to sing this song. And she said I want to have a volunteer anybody named Bill.

[00:30:58.42] So I raised my hand because my-- Bryan Charles William Bill Tate, right?

[00:31:02.08] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:31:02.48] BRYAN TATE: So I raised my hand, but I didn't get picked. About half the other-

[00:31:05.32] JOE GALLOWAY: Every other kid there.

[00:31:07.18] BRYAN TATE: --the whole audience raised their hand. She picked some guy up. She came up and she sang the song "Bill" to him and hugged him while she was singing. It was amazing. I didn't get picked. And then also they had Teresa Graves and The Golddiggers.

[00:31:22.66] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:31:24.55] BRYAN TATE: And here you've been in the field for seven or eight months. And that's the first round-eyed girls you've seen in a long time. I mean, they had Donut Dollies. But they didn't come out to the field, not out to the fire support bases. They would be back in the base camps. And they did a great job. But The Golddiggers were the first American females with-- and of course, Ms. Stevens-- and he had some other men there that were funny, some comedians, and so forth. But those women sure were good looking at that time.

[00:31:54.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:32:00.23] BRYAN TATE: I was reassigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade because I was jump-qualified. And the 173rd-- the 101st and the 82nd were already over there, but they had become leg units. So they were not airborne qualified. The 173rd was still-- and it was a separate brigade. So it was still on jump status. So I guess they took me there. And jump status meant 90% of the entire brigade had to be jump qualified.

[00:32:23.84] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:32:24.23] BRYAN TATE: And so they sent me up there. That was up in northern II Corps in a place called Bong Son, right on the South China Sea. But prior to that, the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hobbs, had recommended me for a battlefield commission. And so he told me. he said, it's going to be-- take six weeks to get through Congress. And then you'd be promoted to second lieutenant, and then you'd have a one year obligation in country after you became a second lieutenant.

[00:33:00.83] And the reason they were doing it because they were short of second lieutenants. And there was a reason for that, probably. And I thought about it. I only had about, I think, five months left to go or something like that maybe six.

[00:33:10.67] JOE GALLOWAY: On your enlist-- on your draft term.

[00:33:12.71] BRYAN TATE: On my time in Vietnam. And so I turned it down. I was always sort of wondered if I should have done that. But you can't look backwards.

[00:33:22.64] JOE GALLOWAY: Can't look backwards.

[00:33:23.33] BRYAN TATE: So anyway, I turned that down but then in January when they announced that the 1st was going to be going home, he selected me to be one of 30 men to go back with the colors back to Fort Riley, Kansas. And so I was so tickled pink I was going to get to go home early. And I wrote my mom and dad, told them I'm coming home early.

[00:33:40.64] And then they had a change of command. So General Malloy, who was in charge of the 1st Division, was two short-- he needed to stay in country, so they had another general change command. And then he looked at the list and he said, nobody with more than 30 days is going to go back to Fort Riley. So I got reassigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. And I had to write my mom and tell her I'm not coming home.

[00:34:04.61] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:34:05.18] BRYAN TATE: She was not happy.

[00:34:06.41] JOE GALLOWAY: Where was the 173rd operating at that point.

[00:34:10.40] BRYAN TATE: They were in Bong Son--

[00:34:11.57] JOE GALLOWAY: In Bong Song.

[00:34:12.56] BRYAN TATE: --in northern II Corps. Correct.

[00:34:14.09] JOE GALLOWAY: LZ English?

[00:34:15.77] BRYAN TATE: It was close to LZ English, but it was actually a division-- a brigade rear. So our commanding officer, General Cunningham-- and we had a big helicopter place there with all the 173rd helicopters. So their logo on the front of the helicopters were two dice. And so the helicopter runway area where they kept all the planes was called the crap table.

[00:34:47.69] And while that was sort of funny, being out of the field-- and the personnel officer when I reported for duty looked at my 201 file, and he said, well, it looks like you've got enough ribbons here, and you've been in combat. He said, I need somebody in the headquarters company. Would you be interested in that? Yes, sir. Thank you very much.

[00:35:06.53] JOE GALLOWAY: And that stays back?

[00:35:08.24] BRYAN TATE: Well, they were in the-- I stayed then in the brigade rear. And so I was NCOIC for our brigade, our headquarters company. But I can tell you, being in the rear is not a bargain because we got rocketed every single night, 122-millimeter rockets coming in. And when those things came in, you had to hit the ground. And you could hear them.

[00:35:32.96] They would start on the helicopter landing strip to blow up helicopters. And then they would walk them across the compound. You could just hear them moving. And it took about two minutes, I guess, to get counter mortar out. And then the outgoing-- once we got artillery going the other direction, they stopped firing.

[00:35:50.21] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:35:50.96] BRYAN TATE: But it was pretty scary being back in the rear.

[00:35:55.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Can you describe the quality of the leadership in the 1st Division and the 173rd as high up as you could see it?

[00:36:07.91] BRYAN TATE: As high as I could see, it was our battalion commander. I didn't see anybody above that. But he was a great leader. And I say that because he was a fair complected guy. And he would get out there. And he'd have this white sunscreen on his nose. And you could see him a long way away.

[00:36:25.28] But he was right out there shoulder to shoulder with the company commanders and with the people in the field. So I gave him full credit for that. I mean, I had heard that a lot of times that the high-ranking officer stayed in the back, stayed in the bunker--

[00:36:37.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Or stayed in the helicopter--

[00:36:38.53] BRYAN TATE: --or stayed in the helicopter.

[00:36:38.96] JOE GALLOWAY: --overhead.

[00:36:39.62] BRYAN TATE: Yeah. So Colonel Hobbs was right out there with us. And my company commander, Ronald Stocker, he was also right there with us, too. And these guys-- I just felt like it was good leadership. I didn't have any bad experience.

[00:36:54.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, when you got to the 173rd, you're back in the rear, you see a little higher, maybe.

[00:37:00.74] BRYAN TATE: I saw quite a bit higher. In fact, it was quite common to run into the commanding general-- he was a two star-- and of course, our first sergeant and then all of the XO's and his staff, his S2 and all of that.

[00:37:15.89] JOE GALLOWAY: How do you rate them?

[00:37:18.20] BRYAN TATE: Well, it was just a different type of leadership. It was sort of a back-- of course, I didn't see them in the combat reference. I did see them at night. They were in the same bunker I was trying to get away from those rockets. But I felt like it was a good leadership.

[00:37:36.65] And one of the things we would do is we would host the combat platoons to an R&R site that we had built and set up for right on the South China Sea. And these guys would come in for a day, right out of the boonies, I mean. And they could get a meal and resupply. Get ammunition, load up, get clean fatigues, and then back out.

[00:38:00.29] So their company commander and their platoon leaders came in. And so I got experience with those guys in that regard. And once again, I wasn't with them out there in the jungle. But I sense that they were pretty good leadership.

[00:38:14.39] JOE GALLOWAY: Boy, every unit in Vietnam should have had one of those little places.

[00:38:21.58] BRYAN TATE: It was secure only with barbed wire and Claymores. It was right on the coast. Bong Son was on the other side of the coastal mountains. So we had to take a helicopter to get to this little R&R site that we built. And we strung the concertina wire and all of that. But you had to take a helicopter to get back to the base because it was pretty heavily saturated with not-friendly enemy over there.

[00:38:49.01] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Did a couple operations through the Bong Son, including MASHER/WHITE WING in '66. Nasty country.

[00:39:06.56] BRYAN TATE: A lot of hills. Where I was in with the 1st Division, it was pretty flat, all except for the Black Virgin Mountain, which was called Nui Ba Den.

[00:39:14.60] JOE GALLOWAY: Nui Ba Den.

[00:39:15.59] BRYAN TATE: And it had the 25th Infantry around the bottom and the Green Berets around the top. And then the middle was full of--

[00:39:22.33] JOE GALLOWAY: The enemy.

[00:39:22.61] BRYAN TATE: --the enemy.

[00:39:23.24] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Yeah, I remember that.

[00:39:24.68] BRYAN TATE: But we used to use that. At nighttime, you could see the Green Berets had lights out, and so you could get your compass, to get your bearing on the mountain. But up north, there were mountains everywhere.

[00:39:38.42] JOE GALLOWAY: Do you recall any of the named operations in which you participated in the 1st Division or the 173rd?

[00:39:47.87] BRYAN TATE: I really don't. We engaged the enemy with the 1st Division approximately every week, not evenly. Sometimes it was every day. And then we'd go for two weeks without engaging the enemy. And we had one big firefight where we had sort of walked in on a division of NVA I think they were. And we got ambushed. And it was a pretty serious fight.

[00:40:13.88] We were in that fight most of the day. And that's where I was-- that's the fight that I was awarded my Bronze Star for valor because I led a group of APCs in with some heavy weapons on them. And that sort of brought a stop to the ambush, to the conflict.

[00:40:41.69] BRYAN TATE: In my platoon, we shared a Starlight scope with the whole company. We had one for the whole company. And maybe I got to use it twice.

[00:40:47.99] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:40:48.38] BRYAN TATE: So there was-- our experience to technology really wasn't great. The M16 worked. If you kept it clean, it worked. The biggest technology I saw was really in the air support and the artillery support. That was quite good. Actually, our company observed in our flight mission.

[00:41:08.87] So the B-52s came over. You couldn't hear them or couldn't see them. But then the bombs-- we had to clear out I think three kilometers away.

[00:41:16.90] JOE GALLOWAY: Yep, three kilometers away.

[00:41:19.40] BRYAN TATE: And then we also had a fire mission from the USS New Jersey. And they shot right over our head. And that's an experience that you have to live to get because it's a 2,000-pound projectile that--

[00:41:32.33] JOE GALLOWAY: Like a Volkswagen going over.

[00:41:34.40] BRYAN TATE: --23 miles.

[00:41:35.81] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:41:36.38] BRYAN TATE: A 2,000-pound projectile that shoots 23 miles. And it did. It sounded like a freight train going over the top. The B-52 bombs were cluster bombs. And so they didn't shake the ground. But when that Navy round went off, I mean, you could feel the vibration--

[00:41:50.21] JOE GALLOWAY: There was an earthquake.

[00:41:51.20] BRYAN TATE: --even as far away as we were.

[00:41:52.77] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:41:53.05] BRYAN TATE: Yeah. You're exactly right.

[00:41:54.14] JOE GALLOWAY: Absolutely.

[00:42:01.14] BRYAN TATE: Taking off to go home.

[00:42:03.51] JOE GALLOWAY: I have heard that a few times.

[00:42:05.40] BRYAN TATE: Get on that freedom bird. And it was a long trip. I was up north in Bong Son. And then they sent me down to-- not Bien Hoa--

[00:42:18.83] JOE GALLOWAY: Cam Ranh?

[00:42:19.44] BRYAN TATE: Cam Ranh Bay.

[00:42:20.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:42:20.78] BRYAN TATE: And we waited for a day or so to get the plane. And then the night we were going to take off, the gooks were rocketing the airstrip. So they made us wait longer and longer and longer. So it was about 2 o'clock in the morning. They marched us out. And we get on this Flying Tigers airplane, sitting right on the runway.

[00:42:39.59] And we sat there. And you could hear rockets going off. And I sat there and looked at the top of that plane thinking, oh, there's going to be a rocket come through there. And finally, it started moving and took off. And when that took off, the loudest cheer you could ever hear in that plane.

[00:42:54.65] [BOTH LAUGH]

[00:42:55.61]

[00:42:59.72] BRYAN TATE: There were several. But probably the firefight that I was into where I earned my first Purple Heart wasn't such a great day. We got engaged with a VC company. And fortunately, we were able to win that without taking-- I think I was the only casualty, and it wasn't a serious-- it wasn't life-threatening.

[00:43:24.28] So-- and then another time was this time that I told you that we got ambushed by-- I think they were NVA. And we got out of that by bringing some-- not tanks, but APCs and with some heavy firepower on that. Probably, the worst day was in early January, early-to-mid January. We were going out from our fire support base on a routine ambush patrol.

[00:43:53.10] And this time, we were walking to the site we were supposed to be and not helicoptering to the site. And so it was in the morning. And we were lined up, heading out. And they assigned me a dog handler. I did have a platoon leader at the time. And so they assigned me a dog handler and a dog, which I think was the first time we had ever had a dog handler.

[00:44:16.13] But those dog handlers and the dogs were very good. He was on my right squad. And we were going out, and we got ambushed. And it was either a command-detonated ambush, or it was-- we tripped a wire. But it's unlikely that we tripped a wire because the dog-- it was the right flank that got hit the hardest. And the dog was killed. The handler was killed.

[00:44:40.86] My point man, the fellow from-- the black man from Tarboro, North Carolina, lost his legs. He wasn't killed. They medevacked him to Cu Chi to a MASH hospital. And then two other guys-- one of them was my squad leader. His name was Edward Witek We called him Corky. And he got hit pretty badly. And the medic came over. And the medic was giving him some blood. And I had him in my arms. And he looked at me. And then all of a sudden he just died.

[00:45:20.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh.

[00:45:23.37] BRYAN TATE: And then one of my machine gunners-- a rifleman actually, not a machine gunner, from Columbus, Ohio was killed. And he was just dead. And so it was a long day. And we cleaned up from that, then medevacked the wounded and got out of the area.

[00:45:43.17] And we were sitting there waiting for orders. The commanding officer, Colonel Hobbs, sent his XO in a helicopter to find out what was going on. So the helicopter-- I'm sitting there filling out reports. I'm filling out casualty reports with my medic. My medic is sitting right here. I'm sitting here. And we're both filling out these casualty reports.

[00:46:03.60] And the XO's chopper came in. He's hovering right above us, probably 25 feet in the air. And we hear this loud explosion. And the chopper starts spinning.

[00:46:14.76] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh my god.

[00:46:15.48] BRYAN TATE: Starts spinning and coming straight down, spinning, spinning, spinning, and hit the ground. Doc was sitting here. The rudder hit right there.

[00:46:23.97] JOE GALLOWAY: Whoa.

[00:46:24.42] BRYAN TATE: And it hit so hard that it knocked the machine gun off it's-- the door gunners had machine guns--

[00:46:30.81] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:46:32.07] BRYAN TATE: --physically mounted to the helicopter.

[00:46:33.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:46:33.96] BRYAN TATE: Knocked it off. It hit that hard. And the rotor blade was going on an angle. And you could hear it, whoosh, whoosh. So your first instinct was to get up and run. But--

[00:46:45.87] JOE GALLOWAY: Bad idea.

[00:46:46.74] BRYAN TATE: Bad idea. And I look to me. My medic's gone. I don't know where he is. But I see his helmet's crushed under the skid.

[00:46:53.82] JOE GALLOWAY: Whoa.

[00:46:54.57] BRYAN TATE: And so I started running the other direction from where the low point of the rotor blade was going. And I got out from around it. But it was a terrible thing. But the good news was I ran into my medic. He got out. After, I guess, when the chopper hit, he got out the back side. I went out this side.

[00:47:14.61] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:47:14.91] BRYAN TATE: And he was OK. He was alive.

[00:47:17.88] JOE GALLOWAY: What about the guy on the chopper?

[00:47:19.89] BRYAN TATE: The XO was killed. I'm pretty sure he was killed. And the door gunner got thrown out. He was OK.

[00:47:26.78] JOE GALLOWAY: With the gun?

[00:47:28.05] BRYAN TATE: With the gun. The gun went-- he went that way. And so then the battalion commander called in the jets, called in-- I guess it was F-4s. I'm not sure.

[00:47:40.76] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, very likely.

[00:47:41.52] BRYAN TATE: But he told us, everybody get down. He identified where the enemy-- and I think it was command-detonated to knock the helicopter down because the enemy was off to our left. We were exchanging gunfire. And we could hear the jets coming. And I heard a lot of planes and jets in my life, but one coming right at you screamed so loud.

[00:48:03.12] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, yeah.

[00:48:03.27] BRYAN TATE: You couldn't believe it. And he's right here. And he's coming right at us. That's what I'm saying. Somebody tell him that friendlies are here. And I thought sure enough he was going to get us. And we actually could see the bomb drop, 500-pound bombs drop--

[00:48:18.19] JOE GALLOWAY: Right over your head.

[00:48:19.42] BRYAN TATE: --right over our head. And of course, when they hit, they go off. And then the splash goes away from where the friendly units were.

[00:48:24.79] JOE GALLOWAY: That's right.

[00:48:25.21] BRYAN TATE: But still, there's pieces of shrapnel, that long, were flying behind us and cut down a tree 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[00:48:34.54] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow.

[00:48:35.35] BRYAN TATE: And so that was probably the worst and the scariest day of my tour.

[00:48:42.90] JOE GALLOWAY: You remember what date that was, when it was?

[00:48:46.86] BRYAN TATE: I wrote it down. I think it was January 17--

[00:48:50.46] JOE GALLOWAY: Of?

[00:48:51.79] BRYAN TATE: --of '70.

[00:48:53.07] JOE GALLOWAY: '70?

[00:48:53.73] BRYAN TATE: Yeah, '70. And so it was shortly after that the 1st Infantry announced that they were going to go take the 1st back home to Fort Riley. And so they took us back to the brigade rear, which was in Dau Tieng and then-- waiting for reassignment.

[00:49:12.87] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:49:13.35] BRYAN TATE: So we spent a few days back in the base camp.

[00:49:22.48] BRYAN TATE: So one time with the Australian pilot, as I told you.

[00:49:25.33] JOE GALLOWAY: That's it.

[00:49:25.81] BRYAN TATE: And one time with a Korean ROK soldier, Republic of Korea soldier. My dad had told me that he had served with Korean soldiers in World War II in Korea. My dad was also in Korea. And he said they're tough soldiers.

[00:49:42.00] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:49:42.49] BRYAN TATE: So we had captured-- this was back with the 1st Division, maybe sometime back in November, something like that. We had captured a prisoner. And so they called in military intelligence to interrogate. And it happened to be a female. Apparently, she was a pretty high-ranking captive.

[00:49:58.97] And so the military intelligence guys were interviewing her right there in the midst of where our company was, our platoon was. And she wasn't talking. She was no bic. Right? That means they don't speak English. So finally, the MI guys brought in this Korean interrogator. And it was amazing. She took one look at him. And she started bickering. She started talking, talking, talking and talking.

[00:50:26.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Talking, talking because--

[00:50:28.15] BRYAN TATE: I guess his reputation preceded him or something.

[00:50:31.06] JOE GALLOWAY: Not him. All of them.

[00:50:32.47] BRYAN TATE: All of them. But her confession led us to the largest weapons cache I think that had been found. In fact, we made the front cover of Stars and Stripes. And I'm still trying to find that edition. I can't find it. But the company commander had me digging all these weapons out. We found all kinds of Chinese-made weapons, just a whole bunch of them.

[00:50:55.40] And one of them that I dug out was a lot of them SKSs. And the company commander gave me the SKS for finding and digging out all these weapons. And so getting that thing home was--

[00:51:07.43] JOE GALLOWAY: That was another story.

[00:51:07.72]

[00:51:08.68] BRYAN TATE: I thought it was tough going through-- becoming a landed immigrant. Getting that SKS rifle home was more. So anyway. And then the ARVN troops. We dealt with the ARVN troops quite a bit because we had the joint firebase.

[00:51:24.49] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:51:24.88] BRYAN TATE: And then we actually had a Chieu Hoi scout in my platoon that was assigned to me, who was ARVN-- he was an ARVN soldier that-- he was actually a VC that surrendered. Chieu hoi.

[00:51:36.64] JOE GALLOWAY: Chieu hoi.

[00:51:37.30] BRYAN TATE: And then they put them through a course. And then they become advisers. So you were just never sure. But he was a good kid. He was a young man. And he was helpful to communicate with the village elders. So that's how we used him.

[00:51:57.82] BRYAN TATE: So the villagers-- we'd go into villages a lot. And the village people seem friendly. They seemed-- they would have little hooches, grass huts and so forth. They seemed somewhat friendly. But in the area we were in, we had a lot of VC. And we knew that some of the same people in the village by day were VC at night. So you just never knew for sure.

[00:52:19.69] Now I did have a chance to meet-- when I was with the 173rd, they sent me to Saigon. And I had a chance to meet some civilian Vietnamese people in Saigon. And one family invited me into their home. They were very nice. And they were very respectful to the Americans for helping their country. Other than that I didn't really have a lot of exposure to other allies.

[00:52:49.63] BRYAN TATE: So, not much. Letters, My mom would send us-- we'd exchange letters. And I would-- every once in a while, she would send a care package, which was nice, cookies and hot sauce for C-rations.

[00:53:04.24] JOE GALLOWAY: The guys would help you eat it.

[00:53:06.07] BRYAN TATE: Yeah. Well, you'd trade. Nobody liked ham and eggs. So you'd trade for pounds cake. And so you did a lot of trading. I happened to like ham and eggs. So I would get a lot of ham and eggs. You had to eat them cold. If you tried to heat them up, they were terrible.

[00:53:22.18] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:53:24.01] BRYAN TATE: And then, the time I was selected to go home with the colors and then got my orders changed, I was able to call my mom and dad on a MARS station. And back then the MARS station-- probably stands for something-- but it was a whole series of patchwork telephone calls from different places all around the world.

[00:53:42.32] JOE GALLOWAY: And you got to teach her how to say, over.

[00:53:44.92] BRYAN TATE: And working.

[00:53:45.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Working.

[00:53:46.27] BRYAN TATE: If you had to keep saying working-- if you didn't say working, they'd unplug you and plug in the next guy.

[00:53:50.26] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:53:51.73] BRYAN TATE: I finally got to talk to my mom and dad. And it was great to hear their voice.

[00:53:55.57] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:53:57.19] BRYAN TATE: But other than letters, that was about it.

[00:54:00.36] JOE GALLOWAY: How much news did you get about the war you were fighting and about the wars that were going on back home? Stars and Stripes?

[00:54:11.25] BRYAN TATE: Well, we didn't get Stars and Stripes out in the field. Occasionally, there'd be a copy back at the firebase to our company and our platoons. So we'd get a replacement guy would come in and he would tell you what happened at this. The most shocking news that I got when I was over there was about the Kent State--

[00:54:28.05] JOE GALLOWAY: Kent State.

[00:54:28.80] BRYAN TATE: --deal because I was from Ohio.

[00:54:30.54] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:54:30.90] BRYAN TATE: And Kent State was a college in northern Ohio. And apparently, the riot happened because the president allowed us to go into Cambodia, which was the best thing that anybody could have done because the gooks would run right back to the line, and they would get refuge there because we weren't allowed to chase them into Cambodia. We were right on the Cambodian border.

[00:54:53.97] JOE GALLOWAY: But we were bombing the crap out of them.

[00:54:57.00] BRYAN TATE: It was hard to tell because when we would be on our Eagle flights in a helicopter, you could look down and you could see the surface of South Vietnam was pockmarked with bomb craters, bomb craters everywhere. And on the other side of some imaginary line, it was no bomb craters. There probably were bomb craters, but it just was obvious in--

[00:55:15.81] JOE GALLOWAY: It was farther in.

[00:55:16.80] BRYAN TATE: Yeah, it must have been farther in. But that was-- you could tell where you were close to the border because bomb craters, no bomb craters.

[00:55:24.22] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:55:25.35] BRYAN TATE: And you may know this or not, but the bomb crater, a 500-pounds bomb will create a pretty big crater. It's a cone-shaped crater, maybe 25 or 30 yards across.

[00:55:35.88] JOE GALLOWAY: They turned them into fish--

[00:55:37.32] BRYAN TATE: And they filled--

[00:55:37.88] JOE GALLOWAY: --fish ponds and--

[00:55:38.07] BRYAN TATE: --up almost overnight with water.

[00:55:40.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:55:40.56] BRYAN TATE: Clear as a well water, crystal clear water. But they warned you not to drink it because it was full of bacteria, right?

[00:55:46.77] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:55:47.07] BRYAN TATE: And so sure enough, we were on an ambush patrol one night and one of my men started having stomach cramps. And he started having them so bad that he was in agony. He was screaming. On an ambush--

[00:55:59.22] JOE GALLOWAY: You don't want that.

[00:55:59.79] BRYAN TATE: --you can't have anybody letting-- and so I had to actually call in the Dust Off to take him back. He had leeches growing in his stomach.

[00:56:07.86] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh my god.

[00:56:08.91] BRYAN TATE: And so-- the poor guy. But I mean, he was OK after they fixed him up. But we had to pick up and move because we had been compromised, right, our location.

[00:56:16.88] JOE GALLOWAY: You certainly had, Ollie.

[00:56:21.06] BRYAN TATE: But anyway. So the news we got-- I think we heard about Kent State. And then one time the vice president, who was Spiro Agnew at the time, came to our fire support base because it was the model base for Vietnamization. So he came in on a big Chinook, he and his crowd. And then he had another Chinook full of reporters. It must have been 30 of them, all running around.

[00:56:47.97] Our unit just happened to be in the base camp or in the fire support base that day doing-- pulling security. So I didn't get to meet the vice president or anything, but I got interviewed by some of the reporters.

[00:57:00.93] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, while you were there, do you have a memory of marking the holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas?

[00:57:11.09] BRYAN TATE: The only day-- the only time you knew what day it was Mondays because we had to take the big malaria pill on Monday. We took little pills every day for malaria, the Dapsone. But the big one on Monday, you knew that was Monday. And then you generally knew the holidays were coming up.

[00:57:27.50] But what was significant about Thanksgiving was, the company commander would send helicopters in with hot food. So we had turkey and dressing out in the field--

[00:57:35.09] JOE GALLOWAY: Out in the field.

[00:57:35.75] BRYAN TATE: --at the French fort, actually, is where we had our first hot meal. And then at Christmas, the same thing. Hopefully, you would get a hot meal at Christmas.

[00:57:43.37] JOE GALLOWAY: Were those the only hot meals you got in the field that tour?

[00:57:49.04] BRYAN TATE: If we went back to the firebase, we could get a-- what the day we were in there resupplying, we also pulled guard duty for the firebase when you're there. But you could get a hot meal there too.

[00:57:59.69] JOE GALLOWAY: B rations.

[00:58:01.25] BRYAN TATE: Yeah, exactly. And they had the milk. They had-- it was like reconstituted milk. And they would make ice cream out of it. And it just wasn't the same.

[00:58:10.13] JOE GALLOWAY: No. Not quite, not quite.

[00:58:18.08] BRYAN TATE: Well, we got on the freedom bird, the Flying Tigers. And we left Vietnam. And we probably stopped along the way. I don't remember much about that. But we landed at Fort Lewis, at SeaTac.

[00:58:31.86] JOE GALLOWAY: SeaTac.

[00:58:32.17] BRYAN TATE: And then they took us to Fort Lewis from there to be outprocessed. And I can remember them going--

[00:58:39.16] JOE GALLOWAY: You were done with the Army.

[00:58:41.26] BRYAN TATE: I was not out of the Army, but I was done with active duty. I was placed in a Reserve unit. But it was inactive Reserves at the time. And I stayed there for the following four years. But I remember them going through all of our records, making sure that we had all of our awards and things were properly--

[00:59:01.48] And that was sort of like happening real quick. And I remember them giving me a hearing test because I had some hearing issues. And then they gave us some other tests. But I remember them most saying, you've got to get out of these clothes and into some civilian clothes as quick as you can because you do not want to be wearing your uniform through the airport.

[00:59:25.96] Well, I didn't have any civilian clothes. And we were on post the whole time. So there was no place to get them. So I flew from SeaTac, or from Seattle to Chicago, and couldn't get a flight from Chicago to Dayton until the following day. So I went up to the USO. And I spent that evening in the USO. I think I slept in a chair or something like that. And they gave us some food. And the USO is great. I can't say enough good things about the USO.

[00:59:52.93] JOE GALLOWAY: They are terrific.

[00:59:54.19] BRYAN TATE: They are. And our group, our veterans group volunteers for the USO. And it is so heartwarming. Johanna has been down there with me. And God love her, she gives all these people a hug. And here we are marching them back to the airplane to send them back to a combat assignment in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

[01:00:09.73] And it's just-- so I spent the night in Chicago and you could just see people looking at you, civilians, in the airport, and not wanting to be near you and not wanting to look at you. And it was pretty chilly. I didn't have anybody spit on me, but it was pretty chilly.

[01:00:28.99] And then the next day I flew to Dayton and was greeted by my family, which was a much warmer reception. But it was still a long time before you really felt like anybody appreciated the fact that you made it home.

[01:00:45.43] And I remember the person saying, giving me my DD-214 and saying, are these all your awards? And I looked at it, and I said, well, I think so. And I said, remember having a Good Conduct Ribbon. And they said, well, it's not on your DD-214, so you don't have one. So originally, when we had our medals made up, I had the Good Conduct--

[01:01:08.35] I remembered having the Good Conduct Ribbon. They said, nope, you don't have it. It's not on your DD-214. So I sent my medals back. And I had them-- no Good Conduct Medal. But in preparing for this interview, I went through all of my records. And sure enough, I found my Good Conduct orders. So I'm going to go back and get my medals.

[01:01:28.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Go back and get your medals.

[01:01:29.46] BRYAN TATE: Well, because I was-- they told me at Fort Benning when I was there-- I was a basic E-1. They said, don't get a ticket because if you get a ticket, that's a DR, and you're not going to get a Good Conduct Ribbon. So I've always been trying to do the right thing in my life. And I said, well, I don't want to get in trouble, then I won't get my Good Conduct Ribbon.

[01:01:48.85] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:01:50.26] BRYAN TATE: I found it. I have one.

[01:01:54.56] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you have any difficulty readjusting to civilian life after you came back from Vietnam?

[01:02:01.08] BRYAN TATE: I got back home in sort of mid-July I think it was, about the 18th or 19th of July.

[01:02:10.16] JOE GALLOWAY: 1970?

[01:02:11.54] BRYAN TATE: In 1970, correct. And it was so wonderful to be back home, sleeping in a warm bed, eating hot food, listening to the toilet flush. I hadn't heard that sound in a long time. So people that haven't been there wouldn't understand what that's all about. So one of the things was, what's your memory of, your first memory of Vietnam in terms of smells?

[01:02:33.44] Well, I landed at Bien Hoa, and you could see these-- black smoke going up where they were burning the--

[01:02:38.54] JOE GALLOWAY: Barrels.

[01:02:39.20] BRYAN TATE: --barrels. Oh, my gosh. That's an odor that you can never forget, right?

[01:02:44.15] JOE GALLOWAY: That's right.

[01:02:45.59] BRYAN TATE: But Dad took me downtown. And somebody must have had a leftover firecracker from the Fourth of July. And he and I were standing on the corner waiting for a light, and this firecracker goes off, and instinctively I hit the ground. I mean, the cement sidewalk. And there I am on the ground in civilian clothes and just feeling like a fool. But Dad had been in World War II and Korea. And I think he sort of understood what it was.

[01:03:10.28] And other than-- I went to the VFW. And I was thinking about joining the VFW. And they said, well, you're not eligible. Vietnam is not a real war. And I thought, you know, that's pretty cold.

[01:03:21.11] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:03:21.44] BRYAN TATE: And I never forgot that.

[01:03:23.30] JOE GALLOWAY: They came to regret that.

[01:03:24.68] BRYAN TATE: Oh, yes, they did. And now, the VFW is very anxious for you to join their groups. I never joined. I think I joined the American Legion, but I'm not active in that. I belong to a Purple Heart club in Athens, Georgia, and so I'm not very active in that either.

[01:03:42.02] But the readjustment to life, I eventually got a job, a good job. And so I got back into society and tried not to think about Vietnam, tried not to watch the news at night because of hearing all the people that were being killed-- and having been there, it's personal, right?

[01:03:59.03] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:03:59.45] BRYAN TATE: And so I didn't watch any movies. I didn't read any books. Didn't want to talk about it for the longest time. I think it was like the early '90s right here in Atlanta, some person said you ought to come to our Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association meeting. I said, no thanks. I'm not interested in that.

[01:04:19.48] I did go, and I met some very nice people. And lo and behold, they weren't talking about the war. They were talking about business. They were talking about politics, or something like that. So I went back. And it's been a great, great association. And it's therapeutic. It really is, as you well know.

[01:04:35.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. After you get done with the Army or at least your two-year draft tour, did you go back to college? No, you already had a degree.

[01:04:48.29] BRYAN TATE: I had completed college. I went to work in a professional career.

[01:04:52.38] JOE GALLOWAY: OK, doing what?

[01:04:53.85] BRYAN TATE: Well, I was an industrial engineer for NCR Corporation in Dayton, Ohio. NCR to Dayton was sort of like Coca-Cola is to Atlanta.

[01:05:01.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[01:05:01.80] BRYAN TATE: And now, of course, NCR moved to Atlanta, so who would have guessed that? But no, I had a professional career, and then eventually got transferred to a different company. And one of the transfers I got was to Canada. And this was probably four, five, six years after I'd returned.

[01:05:18.93] And during my stay up there, I ran into draft dodgers. And that was not a friendly, warm thing for me to do. I resented those draft dodgers. And I didn't want to have anything to do with them. And the ones that I talked to, they found out I was a Vietnam veteran. They wanted to try and explain their story.

[01:05:35.25] JOE GALLOWAY: No, I don't want to hear it.

[01:05:36.27] BRYAN TATE: That's it. I don't want to hear that. There is no explanation. You could have done a lot of things. In fact, my first medic, with the first--

[01:05:42.73] JOE GALLOWAY: CO.

[01:05:43.35] BRYAN TATE: --was a conscientious objector. And that guy-- and there we were in combat. He would carry extra canteens instead of a rifle. And we were on the battlefield, and one of my men would get hurt. And there's Doc crawling out to bring him back under live fire with no gun, dragging the person back to a safe area. He was amazing.

[01:06:04.53] JOE GALLOWAY: Have you maintained any contact with people that you served with in Vietnam?

[01:06:11.01] BRYAN TATE: The only person-- there are two people. My platoon leader, who I only had for a relatively short period of time, lives in Texas. And we send Christmas cards back and forth every year. And then the platoon leader for the second platoon, lives in Colorado. And I send Christmas cards to him. But other than that, I haven't had any way to reach the people.

[01:06:34.67] I understand the 1st Division has a reunion, but I've never participated in that. I don't really know much about it. I think we were driving back some time from out West, and we went through Fort Riley, Kansas. And I remember pulling off just to see the home of the Big Red One.

[01:06:49.74] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:06:50.79] BRYAN TATE: Somewhere else. Oh, I know. When I went to the beaches at Normandy. And they had a big 1st Infantry Division place where they recognize the Big Red One men who had been killed at Normandy. Well, the cemetery at Normandy is-- you want to talk about tax dollars. That's the best use of tax dollars I've ever seen. That is immaculate, and it's well maintained. And it's really an honor. And oddly enough, the French people all around that area are so warm and friendly to Americans.

[01:07:22.74] JOE GALLOWAY: You bet.

[01:07:23.37] BRYAN TATE: Not so much in Paris. But certainly by Normandy and the other beaches there, they're very friendly, even the young people, who have to be like great great grandchildren or great grandchildren of the people who fought there, are still warm. I mean, they carried on through their generation.

[01:07:44.98] BRYAN TATE: I told you a little bit about the confidence that the battalion camp commander had in me and offered me a battlefield commission. I still wonder if I should have taken that.

[01:07:53.50] JOE GALLOWAY: I got to tell you that was-- there were only 60 battlefield commissions handed out in Vietnam.

[01:08:01.27] BRYAN TATE: Really?

[01:08:01.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:08:02.25] BRYAN TATE: I'll be darned.

[01:08:03.08] JOE GALLOWAY: A rare bird.

[01:08:05.49] BRYAN TATE: And I told you about the worst day of my life over there. And I mean, it was a long time and some happy moments, some sad moments. And the people you met. I mean, I haven't been able to keep up with any of the people. The one person that was-- my squad leader that got transferred up to Division-- really was very hurtful for me.

[01:08:36.94] And so when I got home-- after a while, I reached out to his parents. They lived in Indiana. And being in Ohio, it wasn't that far to go. And I can remember Steve telling me that his dad was an alcoholic. And his dad would beat him. He had a sister. And it was pretty ugly. And so he obviously didn't have very much respect for his father.

[01:09:00.57] So I called him. And I had taken some pictures when I was over there. And so I got all my pictures, and I sent them to his family. And I actually wound up actually meeting his family, talking to his dad. The day that Steve was killed, his father quit drinking. And he didn't drink a drop from then on. He was part of AA. And he actually came out to visit me.

[01:09:26.46] I lived in California for some time afterwards. And he came to visit me in California. And he probably drank three pots of coffee all day. But he never drank a drop of alcohol after he learned that his son was killed, which I-- still stuck in my mind for that.

[01:09:41.49] I reached out to the other families of the members that were killed. And I was never able to get in touch with Corky's family. They were in Chicago. I sent letters and stuff, but I never heard back. My riflemen from Columbus, Ohio, Mark Tonti, I wound up talking to his brother and his girlfriend. And the same questions, tell me how he died. We don't know. We don't know what happened.

[01:10:07.14] And so I didn't share gruesome stories with them. But I gave them some information that they could hang on to, and told them how important their family member was to me and to our country. And then Bobby Jones is the fellow, my point man, that-- in the ambush, he lost his legs. We went to Cu Chi--

[01:10:30.66] a couple of us went to Cu Chi to visit him. And it was really hard. He was in a MASH hospital. And they had amputated both of his legs. And he would tell me-- he took a pellet or a bullet in the throat. So he had a tracheotomy. And he had to talk to us through a tube. So he couldn't talk very well.

[01:10:54.51] And he told me, he said, I ain't got no legs. And then a week later, we heard that he died. So I reached out to his family. And I talked to his sister. And apparently, Tarboro is just a small little town in South Carolina. It's probably a poor town. And it was quite moving.

[01:11:18.57] Years ago, our veterans group connected with somebody to do pictures, to put pictures up on the web. And it was the virtual wall where we could post pictures. So I had pictures. I posted pictures of the men that were killed in my platoon. And that's how some of the family members had reached out to me and gotten my contact information.

[01:11:49.42] JOE GALLOWAY: Mrs. Tate, have you thought of any questions you would like to ask your husband? You've got him on camera and under oath here.

[01:12:02.83] JOANN TATE: I guess, did you ever get taught Vietnamese, or did you just pick it up by being there?

[01:12:08.78] BRYAN TATE: Yeah, no I was never taught Vietnamese. You do pick up some bits and pieces. But I've been told that when I wake up in the middle of the night having a nightmare that I'm speaking Vietnamese. Other than a few words about beer and different types of food, I don't know that I know how to speak any Vietnamese.

[01:12:31.99] JOE GALLOWAY: But you can speak Ba Moui Ba

[01:12:33.52] BRYAN TATE: Ba Moui Ba.

[01:12:35.95] Ba Moui Ba and-- yes, exactly.

[01:12:39.10] JOE GALLOWAY: Do you feel that your Vietnam experience changed you and affected your life afterward for good or for less good?

[01:12:47.96] BRYAN TATE: It definitely did. I mean, when you think back over your life-- I just turned 75. And you think back over your life, and Vietnam-- and serving in that war-- is one of the most vivid memories that I have of all the things that I've done. And I've been asked this before. And I really think that serving in the Army-- in the military in general, but specifically the Army-- the Army teaches you leadership. The other branches, the Air Force and the Navy, they teach you skills.

[01:13:19.15] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:13:19.48] BRYAN TATE: But the Army teaches your leadership. And when you get-- and for me, I was a relatively young staff sergeant. And they put me in charge of a company, a platoon right away. And I was in charge. And so you not only learn leadership, but you learn discipline, you learn other traits that help you in life and in business.

[01:13:40.15] And fortunately, some of those traits have paid off for me in my business career. I've had a pretty successful business career that I'm very proud of. And I think I give a lot of the

credit to my time in the military. My dad was a military person, too. And so he sort of-- we had that growing up. We took care of ourselves, and we did the right thing.

[01:14:02.71] And he inspired that to my brother. And my brother that's passed was a Marine. And then, so Paul and I were the only two in the family that had military experience other than my dad. But we got raised with that, sort of sense of doing the right thing.

[01:14:18.92] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your time in Vietnam affect the way you think about the troops coming back from combat today?

[01:14:26.98] BRYAN TATE: Oh, it certainly did in the way we were treated both coming back and then after that for many years. And then to this day, the men and women-- you know, one of the things we have learned-- I have learned in talking to young people that are on active duty or military today, war hasn't changed much.

[01:14:46.96] JOE GALLOWAY: Not much.

[01:14:47.62] BRYAN TATE: What's changed is the technology. I mean, they have great technology. But when it comes to killing and fighting, that hasn't changed much. And so today, these young men and women are so well trained, and they have so much preparation. And we are just so proud of them. I mean, it was our honor.

[01:15:04.57] And Johanna and I would go down to the USO to welcome these folks back and then send them off back to a combat zone. And it's just-- you're so proud. I mean, I would get to lead a whole group of them, maybe 30 or 40 of them. And you'd be in the USO.

[01:15:19.75] And you go down the escalator into the main lobby of the Atlanta airport. And I would be in charge of that. So I would holler out to everybody, we're taking these people back and please give them a hand. And so everybody would clap and applaud. And it's good. That's my payback-- when you do that.

[01:15:36.40] Our veterans group has-- we have a scholarship fund that we raise money to give scholarships to young men and women coming back to help them with their education, to come back. And we give 100 pennies of every donated dollar to the veteran. Not a penny goes to postage stamps or anything else. And I sort of dubbed it "one generation of veterans helping the next."

[01:15:58.48] But today's veterans are just salt of the Earth. I'm just sorry that more people aren't in the military. I mean, I think one of the questions I saw was, how do you feel about the draft and would you--

[01:16:10.30] JOE GALLOWAY: I think we ought to bring it.

[01:16:11.44] BRYAN TATE: I think we ought to bring it back, too. Because when I was drafted, I was a group out of Dayton, Ohio. But there was a group out of Michigan, Detroit, and a group out of Florida. We all came together at Fort Benning in one big company. And the guys

from Detroit, there's several of them that were in jail and said, either stay in jail, or go to jail, or go into Army.

[01:16:33.28] JOE GALLOWAY: Go to the Army.

[01:16:34.33] BRYAN TATE: And I can remember this one guy, Alan Beal, big, tall guy. He must have been 6' 5", 6' 6", had an Afro out to here, every other tooth missing. He had come right off the streets of Detroit. And he joined the Army instead of going to jail. He would have been in jail. One year later, I saw him. His hair was cut. His teeth were fixed. He was strack. And he was going to make the military a career.

[01:16:57.40] That's what the military did for people like that. And there are still people on the streets that could use that discipline and use that guidance. Maybe they didn't get it at home. One of the veterans that we honored with a scholarship was a foster child that grew up on the streets of Detroit. He didn't have any parents, didn't know who his parents were. All he knew is he had foster families.

[01:17:15.85] And he made his way to go to college, to get out of that. And going in the Army was one of the ways he did that. And he was one of our scholarship recipients.

[01:17:25.21] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow.

[01:17:26.26] BRYAN TATE: And before we end this, I want to thank you and General Moore for what you did because I think We Were Soldiers was the first movie, the first Vietnam movie that I ever saw. I refused to watch Platoon or any of those others. I just didn't want to see them.

[01:17:43.81] JOE GALLOWAY: I walked out on all of them.

[01:17:45.70] BRYAN TATE: I watched We Were Soldiers. And of course, being filmed in Fort Benning, I recognized some of those streets in the movie. But I think that movie brought so much awareness to what real life was, and the cabs coming up, and the orderly coming up and giving the news, the report that their loved one had been killed.

[01:18:05.71] I mean, a lot of people told me they didn't know that that's how it happened.

[01:18:11.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Telegrams from the cab driver.

[01:18:13.99] BRYAN TATE: Exactly right. And so I think what you guys did and the whole effort that went into it has just been invaluable in really creating awareness of how ugly war is, not just for the Soldier, but for the women-- or men and women now-- that stay home and have to support the family while their loved one is in combat.

[01:18:35.44] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:18:36.28] BRYAN TATE: So thank you for doing that.

[01:18:37.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Thank you. Appreciate that.

[01:18:45.40] BRYAN TATE: It's very moving. The first thing I do is I look up the men that I lost. And we find their names and pay our respects to that. We were up there about a year ago, I think, for the 50th Anniversary celebration. A bunch of us from our veterans group were invited to go up. And we actually received our pin. And they had a ceremony right at The Wall. And it was very moving.

[01:19:11.11] And you can't go there and see that Wall without feeling just sadness because the names just go on and on and on and on. And you just think about the four names that I know personally. And there may be other people that were killed that I don't know that are on The Wall. But I just don't know that.

[01:19:33.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Don't know that.

[01:19:34.09] BRYAN TATE: But the four people that I lost that were close to me. I mean, each one has a story, each family. Like I told you, Steve Boehne's family. His dad was an alcoholic. Never drank a drop after he learned that his son died. I mean, every single one of those 58,000 names has a story behind it. And that story needs to be told somehow.

[01:19:53.77] And thanks to Sue in the History Center, and for what you all are doing with the Veterans History Project and what you're doing here-- it's taken me a long time, Sue. And I know-- she has pestered me to death about getting down here and doing this. And I'm glad I did it. Thank you so much.

[01:20:14.84] BRYAN TATE: I think it's a great thing that the government's done to recognize and honor the men and women that served. I really do. And the pin was very nice. There have been several pinning ceremonies. I got mine when I was in DC.

[01:20:28.03] JOE GALLOWAY: Excellent.

[01:20:28.66] BRYAN TATE: So they actually came to our veterans group. I think you were there, maybe not at the same time.

[01:20:36.70] JOE GALLOWAY: Sergeant Tate, thanks for coming in.

[01:20:39.58] BRYAN TATE: Thank you, sir.

[01:20:40.21] JOE GALLOWAY: Thanks for telling your story.

[01:20:42.38] BRYAN TATE: Thank you very much.