

ORAL MEMOIRS

OF

Milton Moody

An interview conducted on

Oct 25, 2023

Interviewer: Dr. Allison Huntley, Foster Scurlock

Angelo State University

West Texas Collection

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DR. ALLISON HUNTLEY: Alright, so, um, I'm, uh, Dr. Allison Huntley here. Today is October 25th, um, we're here at Angelo State University in the Oral History Office, and the time is 12:18. We have with us, um, our student worker, Foster Scurlock, and then the person who we're interviewing is, um, Milt Moody. So, um, Mr. Moody, so, we'll um, uh— I've given you a copy of the questions- -

MILTON MOODY: Thanks

HUNTLEY: -so that you can read along in case, um, you know.

MOODY: Sure.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Okay

HUNTLEY: [laughs] So the first set of questions will ask you about your background-

MOODY: Okay

HUNTLEY: The next set will ask you about your time in the military. Um, the third set asks you about, um, your return to civil— ah, civilian life, and the last set just asks you about, um, your perspectives on the military, um, now.

MOODY: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

HUNTLEY: Um, any questions about anything before we get started?

MOODY: No.

HUNTLEY: Okay, let's go! [chuckles]

MOODY: Okay

HUNTLEY: Okay, alright so just starting off, um, with the first question there, so what is your name?

MOODY: Uh, Milton B. Moody.

HUNTLEY: Awesome. Thank you.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: Okay, and then, when and where were you born?

MOODY: I was born on August the- August the 28th of 19 and 42, uh in Dickens, Texas.

HUNTLEY: Okay, and then where did you grow up?

MOODY: Uh, actually, in Midland, Texas.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay, um, like Midland-Odessa?

MOODY: Yeah, Midland-Odessa area, yeah.

HUNTLEY: Okay, um, and then when and where did you enter the armed forces?

MOODY: I entered the armed forces, uh, around my birthday, August 28th of 1965.

HUNTLEY: Okay, and then where was that?

MOODY: Uh, in, uh, actually entered in Big Springs, Texas, but went from there, I went to basic training in Fort Polk, Louisiana.

HUNTLEY: Okay, um, and then which branch did you serve in?

MOODY: In the Army.

HUNTLEY: In the Army?

MOODY: Uh-huh.

HUNTLEY: Okay, and what were your years of service?

MOODY: Uh, August of, uh '65 through August of, uh '68.

HUNTLEY: Okay. [pause] Alright and then, which military conflicts did you serve during?

MOODY: Uh, I was, uh, I was in Vietnam, uh, from August of, uh, '67 to August of '68, in the, uh, Tet Offensive.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay. Um, and what units did you serve in?

MOODY: I was with the 554 Engineers in, uh, in Vietnam.

Huntley: Okay. Um, Foster, do you want to take the next question?

FOSTER SCURLOCK: Uh, sure. Um, so, why did you enlist?

MOODY: That's kind of a long story-

[HUNTLEY & SCURLOCK laugh]

MOODY: But to make it short, I– I got married kinda at a– at a younger age– and ‘round 21– and was married, you know, probably two years, and got a divorce and, y’know, I was just actually looking to get in– doing something different. And I decided to join the, uh, Army at that time, y’know to just kinda get away from everything, you might say. Yeah. [sniffs]

SCURLOCK: That’s fair. Um, and so what was your training like?

MOODY: Uh, it was [chuckles] it was brutal. Uh, went to, uh, Fort Polk, Louisiana, and of course, that was basic training, and it was, uh, y’know, went into the winter months so it was very, very, very, very cold, and uh- uh ‘specially times having to pull guard duty and what have you at nights y’know, just y’know walking around with a weapon at night on the post but uh– but it– it, y’know, it was interesting cause you get to meet a lot of people from all over the United States y’know and people, y’know, that you wouldn’t ever met in a lifetime probably so that was good. And then, of course, my second venture after I– after I finished basic training, was called AIT which is Advanced Infantry Training, and, uh, from there, I went to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. And of course, once again, this was– by that time, y’know, this– this is around the first of the year, uh, in ‘66, and of course it’s, y’know I’ve– brutal winters up there, y’know, so, uh, and of course, I– I never– I never [chuckles] I never realized we were, y’know, we got there, the first night we got there, it was super cold, and I guess snowing, and I don’t know what all else, and these old barracks which you know a lot of these posts still got these old barra– these old two story barracks, y’know, and you get in late at night, and check in, and get in bed. Next morning, you get up and you go in the shower, and your– your nose– around your nose is black and around your mouth is black because, you know, they’re heating with coal.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: And so it’s the coal dust, y’know, that’s blowing out from the air conditioning units, and, uh, and it didn’t actually warm the place up too much because, course everybody smoked back then, y’know, smoking cigarettes were cheap cheap, and– but you get up in the morning and course every barracks has got a– these butt cans. Butt cans are filled with water y’know so, when you drop it in it’s gonna– instead of putting it out in sand or something like that you know is gonna– it’s gonna go out. So, and– and you know it’s cold when you get up and the butt cans are froze, y’know. So I spent– I spent I think about the next, uh, about the next ten weeks there, and– and once again, you know, met a lot of different, different people from different parts of the country and, uh, when I went into the, uh, army, uh, I don’t remember if it was before or after, or in the very beginning that– where I took the test but they have what they call an OCT test, uh, which is an Officer Candidate Test and– and I passed the test so uh, they ask me, y’know, prior to going into AIT, uh, y’know, which– which school I would like, y’know, for um, OCS– army Officer Candidate School. So, of course, stupid me, I uh, selected Infantry, Armor, and Artillery. Y’know in that order– not, not really knowing, y’know. So anyway, when I finished my AIT and of course I– I would be going into Officer Candidate School. They said, well, Infantry, Armor and Artillery OCS schools are all full. The only thing we got open is Engineer School. [laughs] And I said, y’know, what’s an engineer?

[HUNTLEY & SCURLOCK laugh]

MOODY: And uh, so anyway I found out. I sel- went ahead and selected it becau- and I'm glad that I did- and uh, and from there I went to, uh, Fort Belbard- Fort Belvoir, Virginia for uh, y'know Officer Candidate School and uh- and uh, for Engineering School, and, of course, that was like- that was like six months school so I was there- actually you go through three different phases of that. You know, you got a primary, y'know, of that which is, y'know, like about your first couple of months, and then- then you go through a secondary which is like another couple of months, and then into a third. When I started into the secondary, I was behind on some of my classes or something like that so I took a- I took a six week voluntary setback, and kinda went back and started that over. And then I made it through the second period and went on into the third. When you- when you go into the third period of, uh, engineer school, uh y'know, you're- you're kinda like a third lieutenant you might say. [laughs] Y'know, cause you have, you have all the privileges and everything really at that time, of- of basically of an officer lead. They got these TAC officers, y'know, when you're in school that're constantly on your case, y'know, about various things, y'know, you're- when you go to the chow hall when you're on your first two periods right there, you know you're eating what they call square meals. Y'know, your- you- you pick your fork up and it's like this, and this, y'know, and then back down like that-[mimes eating in a square motion, up from the table, then to your mouth, back out and down.] and of course, there you- you have a senior when I became the third level, they're sitting at the end of your table and they're constantly quizzing you on different things that you're learning and going through the Engineer School.

HUNTLEY: While you're trying to eat?

MOODY: Yeah, so you don't- you really don't get to eat very much so you lose a lot of weight.

HUNTLEY: [chuckles]

MOODY: But at nights, uh, at nights- and I- I- and I assume that they kinda encourage you in some ways to do this, but we had- we had these things 'pokey bait runs' which at night, they would place guards out and what have you, and you'd have to- course back then you couldn't pick up a cell, you go to a payphone somewhere and you order out a pizza, y'know and it's delivered at a certain point, and then you bring it back in, y'know, and- and share it, y'know, with the people in your barracks. Y'know that way you supplement your food. [laughs]

HUNTLEY: And you're the hero for the night.

MOODY: Yeah!

HUNTLEY: [laughs]

MOODY: And we had places that we hid certain things, y'know, that you'd need but, y'know, you had- you had foot lockers that had to be- everything had to be a certain way in that footlocker, and- and uh- and uh- they uh- [stammers] y'know in their latrines and all, you'd go in there to smoke, or what have you and, y'know, and of course, you're not supposed to smoke and all this kind of stuff at certain times, and so on and so forth, y'know. But- but I can

remember times, y'know, a TAC officer– which is a tactical officer, y'know– he'd come in and say, 'oh y'all like to smoke, joke, and hang around' so they'd take us, sitting down in the deal, and they had these bars that went across in the latrines, and they'd make you reach up there and grab a bar and hang on to it and smoke.

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: Smoke, joke, and hang around– y'know, stuff like that.

HUNTLEY: [chuckles]

MOODY: And uh– so, so it– it was very interesting and of course, when I look back on it, of course, when I went in, I was 23 years of age, you know, when I went in, and most of the kids were kids going in– y'know, 17, 18, 19 years of age. So, I was kind of an old man, y'know, at age 23. But, uh, when I look back on it, I think they– they figured out by the time that I– I hit Vietnam, y'know, I would be, y'know, 25 years of age, y'know. And then these– because a lot of these 18 and 19 year olds– I mean when they went in, they went– they basically went through basic and maybe a little bit of schooling or something, but within a– a lot of them within a six month period of time, they're in South Vietnam.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm

MOODY: I mean fresh out of high school, y'know. And some of them, even younger than that. They actually had maybe 17 years of age where their parents, y'know, had to, y'know, sign for them, y'know, to be able to go into the military, so-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: So anyway, I'm– of course when I graduated from OCS, uh, I got like a thirty-day leave, and of course at that time I was living- I was living in Midland, Texas, and of course, went home and spent my thirty days and then y'know, eventually– y'know, shipped out to South Vietnam. Course we were pretty unpopular in those days. I can– I can remember at that time I flew from Midland to El Paso, and then was flying from El– El Paso to San Francisco where then I would catch a flight to South Vietnam, but I [chuckles] 'member I got bumped– literally got bumped, in– in El Paso.

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: Yeah, and I had to layover for– I don't remember how long there before, I, y'know, went on to Vietnam, but uh, anyway, that kinda brings me up to where I y'know– went to– went to Vietnam.

HUNTLEY: So, if we can kinda backtrack just a bit– what was your educational background before you went into the military?

MOODY: Highschool graduate.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: That's it. Yes.

HUNTLEY: There in Midland?

MOODY: Uh, yes.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: Well, actually, I went– I went– basically, uh, I'm going to say basically eleven years in- in- in Midland through the Midland public school system.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: My stepdad at that time worked for the Colorado River Municipal Water District which is still CRMWD which is still O.H. Ivie Reservoir. Is– is named after one of the higher officials, y'know, that worked with the Colorado River Municipal Water District back then. But he actually managed a pump station that was located up in the– a little bit north of Stanton, Texas.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: And, uh, so I moved basically from Midland to Stanton, and I– and I did my senior year at Stanton High School.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: That's– that's where I graduated from. [chuckles]

HUNTLEY: Okay. Alrighty, um [speaking to SCURLOCK] do you want to take that? Or– or that was it? Oh, okay. [speaking back to MOODY] Okay, so looking back to question seven– what conception did you have of the United States, um, at the time of your enlistment?

MOODY: I never thought anything about it, y'know. I mean, it was just– it was just in all your military, prior to, y'know, whether it was World War One, Two, uh, y'know, any conflicts y'know through that period of time, I mean it was, uh, course back then we had the draft of course, you know, and I joined– I wasn't drafted, I joined. And uh– and– and– it was just the thing to do. Y'know, there was no question about it or whatever, you know. I know there was a big issue of the draft dodgers– y'know, the ones that went to Canada and what have you and– and, of course, once again, when we came back not getting a very good reception, and all that.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.



MOODY: Anyway, but– but it was a very fulfilling experience, y’know, meeting all these– these kids, y’know, and– and I was more– I was– I kind of felt myself more of a protector, you might say, than– than trying to actually engage the VC or NVA.

HUNTLEY: Mh-hm.

MOODY: You know, so, uh, I can say, y’know– I– I can say that I never killed anybody.

HUNTLEY: Mh-hm.

MOODY: Period.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Y’know– I mean I was in conflicts–

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: But I was in a different situation in those conflicts than–than the actual ground pounder, y’know– the infantry, the grunt- ha!

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Y’know.

HUNTLEY: Yeah. Um, so in thinking about– like talking about that you felt that you’re more a protector rather than, um, engaging with the– with the Viet Cong, looking at that next part of the question, it’s like for you, what did America symbolize or what did it stand– what did you think it stood for at the time of your enlistment?

MOODY: Uhh, well, once again, I– I– I look back on everybody that went before I did, y’know, in– in various wars, uh, just a– y’know, young man– America’s just the greatest place to be living in, y’know, y’know– same as it is right now, y’know. I mean there’s– we got problems now but we had problems back then, too, y’know. You just hoping that your leadership and all, y’know, can– can come through for you, y’know?

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: [echoing] Yeah [louder] Okay, um, so, in that same vein, so since your time in the military, has your conception of the United States changed?

MOODY: [sighs] Ohh... I’m– I’m thinking now that the younger generation has– has got a problem, y’know.

HUNTLEY: We apologize.

MOODY: Yeah, I, uh, and I'm— 'course I'm at the age now to where— where I've had a full life, and uh, but uh...y'know, I just— I just— it's just like you for example [Gestures to Scurlock] How many— how many people your age [early 20's] would be sitting here talking to me? Y'know? Or have any conception about any of the wars prior to, y'know, that these— y'know, that thousands and thousands of— of men and women, y'know, passed, y'know, so they could be doing what they're doing today, y'know?

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And uh, I see people that— y'know once in a while I'll have a young individual that if I've got my hat up that'll come up and say, "Thank you for your service" and— and shake my hand or whatever, y'know, and— and of course, you can tell whether it's really from the heart or if it's just something that they do out of—

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Y'know, because everybody does it. But then you look at these people that're, y'know, forty years old, fifty years old— I belong to the Shannon Health Club and I work out at least five days a week. My wife and I both and I had one guy come up to me here, oh— four or five months ago, and ask me— he— he had no earthly idea what Vietnam was, and in his forties, y'know. So, uh I don't know, y'know, what can change and course of, y'know, I don't— I don't claim to be Democrat or Republican, I'm— I'm American, y'know. I get tired of— it doesn't matter whether Trump's president, or Biden's president or whatever, y'know— y'know, they're there to do a job. I don't understand people— everything that goes wrong, you know, they blame it on the president.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Y'know— once again, so I— I just wish that the country would come together, and— and I don't see it ever happening, which is— which is very sad.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: I just see it as getting worse, y'know, and, uh, I tell my wife— she's twenty years younger than I am— that she's the one who's gotta live with it, you gotta live with it, you gotta live it, y'know. [Gestures to Scurlock, then Huntley]

HUNTLEY: Yeah. [chuckles]

MOODY: And y'know, you try to do your part as much as what you can, y'know, but we're— we're such a tiny spec— it's not a drop in a bucket, it's a speck in a bucket, y'know,

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: I mean, what with all the stuff going on, y'know, in Ukraine now, in the East– and ya– y'know, I don't know someday the world's gotta get together, there's just no doubt about it– it's inevitable, it's gonna come to pass, y'know, the earth is being destroyed-

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: -y'know. And so anyway-

[both laugh]

MOODY: Y'know.

HUNTLEY: Um, so let's see- so, uh, looking at question nine, you, uh, mentioned before and we're gonna go ahead and talk about it now– so were you deployed overseas-

MOODY: Yes.

HUNTLEY: And then where were you?

MOODY: I was in, uh, I was in Cu Chi base camp.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Which iss uh– it was named after Cu Chi Village.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And it's about– about, 30 miles northwest of Saigon, is where it was at, now Ho Chi Minh City. And it, uh, my original– my company originated over there, I– I– they actually went over by ship, all the equipment. I uh– I reconnected with, uh, I've reconnected with two, two men that were in my platoon back then. One of them, Dennis Hansen, he uh, actually went over by ship with the equipment.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm

MOODY: I don't remember how many weeks they were in route, but, y'know, I– I still course, read all the stories about how Cu Chi - how LMS's 20– of the 25th infantry were, y'know, our support, when they went in, I guess, in 1966 and– and went to Cu Chi and I guess what they did at that time, they were- they were establishing points along, uh, a particular routes up to Cambodia. So as they went north they established points, y'know, for military. And Cu Chi was one of the first places that they went North of Saigon.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And of course they eventually went on up and established two or three more additional bases up North toward Cambodia.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

SCURLOCK: Um, How do you spell uh, Cu Chi?

MOODY: Cu Chi, Cu Chi, C-U-C-H-I.

SCURLOCK: Alright.

[HUNTLEY laughs]

MOODY: Yeah that's two- that's two words, that's two wor- capital- capital C-u, capital C-h-i. Cu Chi.

SCURLOCK: Okay. Cool

[HUNTLEY LAUGHS]

MOODY: Yeah. [LAUGHS]

SCURLOCK: Sorry

HUNTLEY: Poor Foster's gonna have to transcribe all of this later.

[ALL LAUGHING]

MOODY: Okay. Okay.

HUNTLEY: Um, Okay, so while you were overseas, did you, um, reflect much on, about your- Let me try again. While you were overseas, did you reflect much about your unit's mission and how much you believed in it?

MOODY: Well, uh, yeah. Of course in my mission I was, uh, I was in the corps of engineers I mean I was my- my platoon was an earth moving platoon.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Which meant we moved material, okay? And we- we- uh, y'know, we built up, y'know, started us in the 69th engineer battalion where it was actually, well they came in later but they were right next to us at Cu Chi Base Camp. But we had to establish, uh, all of the roads, y'know, within the compound. Uh, Cu Chi Base Camp was the 25,000 man cantonment area.

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: If that yea- its not y'know when you think of a base camp, yeah. So, and there were various elements, when you say 27th- er 25th infantry division. There may be 10 different units

in the 25th infantry division and each one of them, I mean they may be artillery they may be mechanized infantry they may be, uh, y'know, there's just different aspects, y'know, of the 25th but they were our support group when we were at- when we actually started to build out, y'know, the base camp. And uh, y'know, put in the roads and drainage areas and revetments, y'know, for protection of helicopters and equipment and what have ya and- and, uh, and course, we poured y'know, we poured concrete. We- we called the Vietnamese people little people.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Y'know cause they're much smaller than what we were. But uh, they uh, we employed them uh, they would, y'know, they could come on base during the- during the day. Y'know, they were screened they would come on but they served y'know in the- in the mess halls and the hospitals at various minor const- construction pro- projects. We had, uh, we had what they call a batch plant y'know with concrete.

HUNTLEY Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Where you- and it was like, y'know, three one yard little y'know batch. Y'know, each one of you -you one yard at a time. Y'know they- the concrete the- the- the aggregate and all that to go into it and each one of those. And then the only way we had to haul it was 5 ton dump trucks and a dump truck would pull up and it'd \*clicks tongue\* dump the first load, dump the second load and dump the third load. And of course over there it was - it rained a lot so it was your- if you were gonna pour concrete, y'know, if you found a dry day y'know and it was just something that was undercover or out- outside and not under cover you could pour it but during a monsoon season y'know if you were gonna build some barracks or something like that well the- they would- we'd put the-put the- the roof up first-

HUNTLEY: Oh. [laughs]

MOODY: -and all the supports and then you'd go inside. Then- then you go in and pour the concrete inside so if it's raining it doesn't [laughs] it doesn't have a long, y'know it's got a longer set time and all the but it's things like that, y'know? That- But, you know, it just, all the barracks, living quarters, I think I got a- a, I may have a picture of that if you want to look at the picture of what the base camp-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -looked like-

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: -y'know.

HUNTLEY: Um, let's see. So you talked about that there were some South Vietnamese contractors-

MOODY: Yes.

HUNTLEY: -that worked with you.

MOODY: Yes.

HUNTLEY: So, um, looking at that next question, so what did you think of the local inhabitants that you encountered?

MOODY: They were very friendly people, [clears throat] you know, but it's- it's like anything else, you know. Uh, in the- in the- in the- in the daytime, they were in, and of course, I'll tell you stuff, some stuff later on, but in the daytime, you know, they come in, they were nice, friendly, respectable, you know, and everybody got along, but- but realistically, in the night time, they could be your enemy, you know. I mean, you know, that, that goes back to, you know, wars back, you know, in different areas, World War II, you know, but, uh, but, you never knew for sure, you know, and, you know, they, when they went in and we established a base camp and all, of course, they tried, there were the. uh,, you know, of course, the French were there before we were there, but they, you know, they had all the tunnels and what have you, and of course, when we first went in to- to build, you know, the support base there, they tried to, to discover and eliminate as much of this, you know, there were, there were minefields and things like this, in- in- in that, you know, would become part of that base camp, which they had to go through, and, of course, that was another one of my jobs over there, were mine sweeps, you know, detecting booby traps and mines and things like that and all, and they tried to destroy, you know, well, they did, they had to destroy all of these mines and all that they found, and, and then, of course, they blew up the underground bunkers and what have you, the ones that they found, and they didn't even find, they didn't even scratch the surface there, [laughs] but, but anyway.

HUNTLEY: Yeah. So, when you interacted with local inhabitants, what do you think their conceptions were of the United States?

MOODY: Well, they, you know, the majority of them didn't want to be under communist rule, you know, I mean, that was the whole purpose of us being there in the- in the beginning, so, you know, they welcomed us,

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, and, uh, you know, it was, say, the majority of them welcomed us, you know, I mean, and, of course, we- we brought a lot of money and all into the, you know, into the- into the country, and- and, and, of course, you look at it today, you know, and it, you know, it'll look like New York City

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, I don't know if y'all have ever looked at pictures of, of what Ho Chi Minh City looks like now.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: But, I mean, it's just, it's just a, it's just a modern- modern city, yeah.

HUNTLEY: So, when you were there, it was more like the French colonial type of city?

MOODY: Uh, yes, it was, and, of course, there was a lot of the thing about it, too, because since the French had been, I don't know what, what year they actually went over and occupied.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: But you see a lot of, you saw a lot of- of Vietnamese-French mix, mix over there, you could see the difference, you know, the, like, the men or the, or the girls or whatever, you know, they weren't, you know, small, you know, they had height to them, and- and, I mean, you could just almost instantaneously tell, you know, that they were, they were a Vietnam-French mix.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, yeah.

HUNTLEY: That's what 100 years of colonialism will get you, right?

MOODY: Yeah, yeah, yeah, for sure.

HUNTLEY: Yeah, um, let's see, did you ever engage with them about uh, excuse me, did you ever engage them in a conversation about America or the United States?

MOODY: No, I never, I never did that.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: No, I didn't.

HUNTLEY: Okay, so looking at the next question, so did you receive any special medals or recognitions for your service, such as a, um, Purple Heart, and if so, could you explain the circumstances related to that?

MOODY: Yes. I, on February the 26th of 1968, we actually had, uh, before the Tet Offensive started in January 31st of 19 and 68, uh, previous to that time, right after- right after December, or say January 1, we were going to put a bridge over the Saigon River.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Which, uh, I was in charge of doing the road work up to the bridge abutments, which were on one side of the river, and, uh, we went, we went out to a- to a point that was closer to the work site than having to go from the base camp, Cu Chi Base Camp, every day, you know, to

make that trek. Because every day that you did that, we had to- we would have had to mine sweep.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Which meant you walked it, you know, forever, how many miles it was.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: You know, to get to a point, so that way we put it closer to the work site. So, and I had, I had built, we built a small fire support base there at that point. And of course I was very fortunate that the monsoon, the rains came. Uh, I'm going to say probably around the- maybe around December, or January 20th, something like that. I woke up, of course, it had started to rain and we were getting heavy rains. You could, you could walk out of your tent, you know, with a bar of soap. Of course, there's no women there. You just, you just strip down and walk out with a bar of soap. You know, soap up good, step back in the tent. You know, lather up good and everything, then step back out in the rain, you know.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: And I woke up one morning, and of course I had a, being an officer, I had a hospital bed. Heh, and it was, you know, it's set up off the ground about like this. And of course I- I had some what they call PSP planking, which is metal planking. That's what they did, built, uh, whatever type of runways that was built out of this planking.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And I had one of those over- over my bunk and it was covered with sandbags. So if a mortar round came in and hit the tent-

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: -the shrapnel, it wouldn't get me. But anyway, I woke up the next morning and my, and my footlocker was floating.

HUNTLEY: Oh

MOODY: And of course I said, man, it's time to go back to base camp, you know. Because at that point we had, we had trenched out these- these deep trenches. And we had these big, huge pieces of equipment. So- and we put these pieces of equipment down in those trenches there. So the VC used what they call RPG rounds, which were rifle propelled grenades.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.



MOODY: So that they could not, you know, hit one of these pieces of equipment directly. But at that point, then we had to get up and get dozers out. They literally had to be pulled out because those ditches were filling up with water.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: And some of them were already full. So we went back to base camp. And then Tet Offensive came on the— on the 31st of January. On the 26th of February, 1968, they, uh, they said we need to go back out to the— to that— that base camp that we had set up earlier and check it for mines and what have you and all. And, uh, we went out to— we went out to South Gate. There was a little— there was a village there called Tan Hoa Village. I believe that was— I think it was called Route 8A. And I'll tell you what I'll do. Rather than explain this, because I get— I get super emotional. And I'm going to let you read something. [paper rustling] I'll let you.

HUNTLEY: You would like me to read it out loud?

MOODY: You can read it out loud, if you want to, so he can get it.

HUNTLEY: Okay. All right. So we have, so from the Department, um, of the Army Headquarters of the 20th Engineer Brigade, San Francisco, zip code 96491, general orders number 562 from the 14th of May, 1968, award of Army Commendation Medal for Heroism. So it has Mr. Moody's information. Let's see. Awarded the Army Commendation Medal with V device, date action 26th of February, 1968, the Theater Republic of Vietnam. And it's okay for us to read the reason?

MOODY: Yeah. Mhm-hm.

HUNTLEY: Okay. So the reason for heroism not involving the, not involving participation in aerial flight in connection with military operations against a hostile force.

[rustling sounds of Moody looking through a bag of pictures]

Lieutenant Moody was in command of an engineer workforce, which accompanied elements of the 2nd Brigade 25th Infantry Division in an operation which involved clearing Route 8A from Cu Chi to fire support Base Scarlet. This tactical force came under an intense enemy ambush in the village of Tan Hoa, east of Cu Chi Base Camp, Republic of Vietnam. He reacted courageously and with extreme devotion to duty during the period 1300 hours to 1900 hours on 26th February, 1968. The 1st Battalion of the 5th Mechanized Infantry was pinned down approximately 300 meters in front of the engineer element. He hastily organized a rear flank security force from his engineer work party and defended a dust off landing zone. During the next six hours, he exposed himself to intense enemy fire, supervising his personnel as they crossed 400 meters of open field to assist- ins- to assist in administering first aid to the injured and then carrying litters back to the dust off landing zone. Lieutenant Moody's adaptability, resourcefulness, ingenuity, unremitting vigor, and unrelenting courage were responsible for the success of his element's emergency mission. In a dangerous tactical situation, he reacted most effectively. Lieutenant Moody's heroic actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great, um, credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Um, authority by direction of the security of the Army under the provisions of AR 672-5-1, um for commander and then it's signed by, um, no, so officials so JR Bunton?

MOODY: Yes, Bunton.

HUNTLEY: Bunton, Jr., Major Adjutant and then signed by Richard E. Taylor.

MOODY: Yes.

[unintelligable]

MOODY: Yeah, it was uh actually the village of Tan Hoa right there. We had a uh, there was an ARVN compound there during Tet and there was also an ARVN, you know, what ARVN, ARVN, it's Army of the Republic of Vietnam and there was a compound, you know, they had a, you know, a compound there, you know, which was manned by, you know, personnel, ARVN personnel and they had one in Cu Chi. During the Tet Offensive, they were wiped out to the last man.

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: And the- and the problem happened when we- when we went out of the back gate there, of course, I was kind of sitting in the middle of it and, you know, we had tanks and APCs and all of that and uh the first rocket went off or the first mortar went off. You could hear chonk, you know, when they, the mortar. And, of course, I jumped over in the rice paddy and uh, my jeep driver and, of course, my, my uh jeep's got a, you know, like an M60 machine gun on it. But the- the problem was we- we had rice paddy on both sides of it, you know, which is wet- wet ground. There was no way to turn around. The roads over there, you know, were no more than 10 or 12 foot wide, you know, so -so we were, they hit us at the right time because we were, you know, we were stretched out, you know. So the uh, of course, the APCs tanks, you know, they were opening fires and they had all kinds of booby traps up in the main where you went out into the, actually went out into a dried area and I can remember that there were these shocks of- of- of grain and whatever. And- and, of course, the VC, they, you know, they had these underground tunnels and they had these spider holes, you know, and they could, you know, they could pop up, you know, and have automatic weapons, you know, firing at you. And, uh, eventually they got through. It was at one point where they, a couple of rounds hit, you know, hit upright and didn't explode in the road.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And I used, uh, what they call Bangalore torpedoes. Do you know what those are?

HUNTLEY: I'll let you explain it.

[HUNTLEY Laughs]

MOODY: Bangalore torpedoes. I don't remember if they were in two or four foot sections or what. They're literally explosives that you screw together.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And then, like, you could, you know, we were down behind the rice paddies, so you could slide them across to the mortar that was sticking up there, slide it right next to it, and then you have a charge. And you can, then you, that Bangalore- that Bangalore, it explodes. And when it does, then it explodes that round at the same time, at the same time.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: But we went out. We eventually made it out into the field and- and- and- and were, you know, picking up wounded. Some of you didn't know if they were wounded or dead or whatever. We were putting them in the back of APCs, carrying them back on litters. I had uh, the infantry officer there was on an APC. He- his APC got knocked out.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And he was, he had lost, he was a, I don't remember if he was a, he was probably a first lieutenant like me at the time, but he had lost contact with his- with his other tanks and what have you. So he was, he was running, you know, from different, to different, you know, tanks, APCs, you know, trying to direct fire. And he, uh, I tried to reconnect, tried to find somebody. Here about four months ago, I don't remember exactly how it happened, but I ran across that officer, you know, because he was, he was moving. And he said a VC had popped up in with him. VC got a shot off at him and said he dropped him, you know.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And uh, I actually got his name and all. And- and once again, I posted, I belong to several veteran groups, Vietnam veteran and what have you. I've tried to locate him, but uh, he earned the Distinguished Service Cross, which is what, I think it's a step below the, the uh, what's the, the highest honor uh, that you can, for heroism.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Uh, anyway, it's, a Distinguished Service Cross, anyway, it's, you know, it's above a bronze and a silver star and, you know, above that. But he, he was wounded that day. And then he was, then he had two. He went out again the next day, got wounded, and same encounter again. And then the third day, went out again. And this is all, you know, you can- you can pull it up and look at it. And I hadn't, I mean, it was just amazing that all of a sudden, there it is in front of me, you know. But I've never been able to reconnect, uh, with anybody else that day to see how many survived, how many died, how many, you know, I mean, it's, you know, when you get in a situation like that, you know, your adrenaline kicks in and you're not, and that's why so many men, you know, they just go into something, seems like they're blind, you know, when they go

into these things because, you know, the adrenaline kicks in, you know, and you don't even know what's going on around you, you know.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: And, but yeah, it was, yeah, six hours there on that. And, of course, I was called in dust off, you know, which were medevacs, helicopters. And uh, and of course, they're taking rounds, you know, when they come in and fly out, you know, back, you know, right back into, you know, base camp, you know, for medical assistance and all. And uh, so it was a- we made it on- we made it on to the, on to the, uh, site, you know, the base camp that we had established early too, but it was so heavily mined, you know, we, you know, of course, once again, used mine detectors and all. It was so heavily mined that uh we couldn't, that we- we couldn't, uh, reoccupy it. And if you wanted to know, that's the day.

HUNTLEY: Okay. And this is um, this is one of the pictures that you donated to the West Texas Collection?

MOODY: Yes, yeah.

HUNTLEY: Okay. Do you want to describe to us what's in the picture?

MOODY: Well, this is, this is me in late afternoon after I came back. If you'll look at my, if you'll look at my face.

HUNTLEY: Yeah. You're a little tanned there.

MOODY: Yeah. And it's, I was just, I was literally covered with blood, you know, from, from that day.

HUNTLEY: Oh man.

MOODY: And uh, it's, you know, once again, you're, you're just sitting there in, in disbelief, you know, wondering, you know, why you're even back here.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: You know.

HUNTLEY: And that's the weapon you were talking about going out with?

MOODY: Well, no. This is- this is the M16 here. This was here.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: The- the- the other is that mounts on this one.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: The, yeah, uh. I've lost my train of thought anyway, but we have a machine gun that mounts on this right here, which— which at this point, when they come back in base, they automatically pull these. And of course they told me, my company commander told me at the time, you know, had I not been an officer, it probably would have been a silver star, but being an officer, that was, what I did was what I was supposed to do.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: So, but anyway, and, and then- and then there's, this is.

HUNTLEY: So, do you know who took this picture?

MOODY: Uh, well, it would have been, we have a- we have a photographer, you know

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: A- a company photographer that took pictures. And of course, he's the one that took a lot of the, some of, some of the pictures that they actually, she did the, everything on, you know, Monday. And we went over all of that, but I don't, I don't, I don't recall his name.

HUNTLEY: Okay..

MOODY: But if you want, that- that's what the base camp looked like.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: So that, just to give you some idea of what you're, you know, what you're thinking of, you know. And of course, the- the, uh, this- this area [pauses] this area in the middle here, of course, would-- would— would be runway.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And of course, that's— that's where the, at— at night, you know, the VC or NVA, you know, when they—when mortars were incoming, you know, what they're doing is they're walking them in.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: They may be on the outside perimeter over here, somewhere over here, but they start walking them in. They're trying to hit the runway.

HUNTLEY: Right

MOODY: So if they knock a few holes in it, you know, then we can't get, we can't get supplies in.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: But, but that just, that just gives you an idea of what, what you're, so you can imagine, you know, some of the stuff that I'm telling you.

HUNTLEY: Let me just, for the benefit of the recording. So we're, this photograph, we're looking at the 25th Infantry Base Camp at Cu Chi, South Vietnam.

MOODY: Yes. Yeah.

HUNTLEY: So we can see the runway in the middle and then the base camp.

MOODY: Yeah all of your outlying— and of course, we had perimeter bunkers all the way around, you know, that had to be manned. Actually, they were manned 24 hours a day.

HUNTLEY: Mhm.

MOODY: And especially at night, you know, we had the, you know, concertina wire and all that good stuff, you know. And uh, you know, just for 24/7, you know, you had to be on alert, period.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: And then what about this picture?

MOODY: That's me on, that's me getting my award.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: That's, yeah, that's getting the award there.

HUNTLEY: And then where was this?

MOODY: That was there at- at the base camp.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: At Cu Chi Base Camp.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: Yeah, that was— that was me.

HUNTLEY: And you can see it there, attached right to your uniform.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: Do you know who this person is?

MOODY: No, don't- don't remember.

HUNTLEY: It's okay, it's okay.

MOODY: He's- he's- he's going to be- I'm going to say he was a- a colonel of some sort- lieutenant colonel or colonel, you know, or something like that.

HUNTLEY: Okay. Do you remember what they were saying to you as, what he was saying to you?

MOODY: Well, they just say congratulations, you know, for your, and shake your hand and pin your, you know, pin your- and pin your medal on and, and, and that's about it. And here's, this is just a picture of the bridge that we were going to build-

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: -over the Saigon River. This kind, this just depicted where it was going to go.

HUNTLEY: Right.

MOODY: But I was- I was, they have abutment- bridge abutments on this side here.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And then I was doing all the road work here.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: This is a new road coming off of this road. And of course, our base camp was back down this road, a distance down this road.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: You know, but that just gives you some idea of what I was talking about, you know, where it was going.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: And, uh, of course, then they had bridge units. They had, they had bridge units that— that— that came in on barges. And they came in on barges and—

[RUSTLING OF MOODY LOOKING THROUGH BAG]

MOODY: and they— they used the pile drivers then to- to drive footing into the Saigon— into the Saigon River. And I don't know, story goes, they drove down something like 300 or 400 feet.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: And never did reach bearing.

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: You know, load bearing.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: But they got to a point to where they felt that, you know, it could withstand what traffic that would be going across it. So— so they went ahead and, of course, you know, then put the— put the bridge across it.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: But anyway.

HUNTLEY: So they were almost, forgive my ignorance, they were almost kind of prefab where they just bring all of the completed pieces and then you guys put it together or?

MOODY: No.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: They— they— they drove these— these pilings in the river. And they're— they're just, they're just beams that— that will support this bridge that they come in. And then they come in and start, you know, start putting, just like building any bridge in the United States, you know. Of course, they're not as extravagant, you know—

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: -and everything. But— but they physically— they physically build the bridge.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: It's not, it's not prefabbed or anything like that. But they do have prefab bridges. We had—



HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -we had bridges called Bailey Bridges that, you know, they were 30, 40, 50 feet long. If you had a small tributary, you know, that came off of the Saigon into the Rice Paddies on the main road. And if that bridge got blown, which– which the French had built, you know, regular concrete bridges across those. But at some point, most of them were blown. So we built Bailey Bridges. And they were, they were built on one side. And then, then you push them over to the other side.

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: Yeah, yeah. They were, yeah, you could– you could put one of those up in a hurry.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Yeah, yeah.

HUNTLEY: Got things to do.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: Um, let's see. Well, thank you for sharing those. We'll have to talk with Ms. Sturm about getting copies.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: for the–

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: -for the online site. Um, let's see. So, what sorts of, so we kind of talked about some of the technology. Oh, sorry.

MOODY: I was– I was going to show you something real– real quick.

HUNTLEY: Oh, no, you're fine.

MOODY: Yeah. This is what, this is what she did.

HUNTLEY: Yeah. So, do you remember when Daisy was showing us the ones where you were going to get this?

SCURLOCK: Yes.

HUNTLEY: Yeah. So these are the same sort of thing.

MOODY: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know. There's a– there's a ton of them there. Because, you know, and– and, uh–

HUNTLEY: And you went through with her and you talked about every single one of them?

MOODY: Every single one of those. Yeah.

HUNTLEY: How long did you say that took?

MOODY: About five hours.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Yeah. I was there from like ten o'clock to like three o'clock. And I could– I could hear her stomach growling. I said, you missed– you missed your lunch.

HUNTLEY: Yeah. This is what we live for, though.

MOODY: Yeah, okay, okay.

HUNTLEY: Okay, so you talked about some of the technology, but would you like to tell us some more about the technologies that you used in your service?

MOODY: Uh, well, it was, you know, everything was pretty– pretty old school back then. The equipment, you know, nowadays is so far updated, you know. We uh, we didn't have the equipment, you know, that they had in Iraq and Afghanistan, you know. We– I did, another one of my missions, I did mine sweeps. You know, every– practically every day there'd be a convoy coming up out of Saigon, and at different points, you know, where we had bases established, then there would be drop-off points, you know, they would have maybe 15 or 20 trucks or 30 trucks or whatever that had material and supplies, you know, that would drop off at each place but– but as they moved up from Saigon going north toward Cambodia, there were– there were sections of road between each point that there was an established unit that had to be responsible for mine sweeps. Bec– simply because, uh, if– if the road wasn't cleared and made passable for the convoy coming through, if they got stopped or delayed for anything, but they became sitting ducks.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, and– and if you've got 200 vehicles in a convoy and you knock out the front vehicle on that, then you stop the convoy.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: You know, the roads are not wide enough or big enough for them to get around. So, uh, so anyway, we just used regular old mine detectors, you know, when it was, you know, that I

would go out. Of course, I had– I had certain types of explosives, you know, to use depending on what type of mine that I found.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And we did our best to blow them in place. But, you know, when you talk about using equipment for things, I mean, there were times, and of course, I had pictures of some of the equipment that's in that, and you'll see those pictures if you look at them. I had these pieces of equipment called 290M Scrapers,

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And what they were are- are– they're huge pieces of equipment. They hold like 20 yards of dirt or fill. But the belly on– on them, you know, they're pulling a- I don't know if I had a picture of one of those or not-

[RUSTLING IN BAG]

MOODY: -in here just for– just for, so you kind of understand what I was– what I was talking about. But they– there were times that we came on– up on– on situations that, uh, that we didn't have time to– if we found, for example, one of the big things over there, they tell you don't throw your C ration cans, just discard them, especially when you're outside base camp. But there were times we would come up on– it was like they took one gallon coffee can, you know, size whatever, and they'd fill it with dirt, and then you take and put a piece, just any kind of a piece of metal on the ground.

HUNTLEY: Mhmm.

MOODY: And then you take that can and dump it. And then– so you have a mound of dirt here, but every time you– and there may be a hundred of those that block the entire road, because you're– what they are is they're– you're coming into a village that's on dry land, but you have– you've got a rice paddy on either side of you, so you can't go around them.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: So– so anyway, there were a couple of times I used what they call a det cord. It's a detonation cord. It's just a cord that's about, it's about like this, but it's an explosive. It's a high explosive, and what we did, we– we created what they call a ring main, and you take and you circle each one of those little mounds of dirt, you know, until you get back to a point, so it's a ring main. So– so it will actually– when you– when you actually ignite the charge, you know, uh, it– it– it blows.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And if, and if there's a mine under that, it's– it'll blow it.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And sometimes it's— if there's one that's elsewhere, you can get what they call sympathetic detonation. It doesn't have to be directly on the mine to explode it.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Or, or actually one mine will explode another mine.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: It's called sympathetic detonation, is what it's called. So— but there were times where we had— and another time it may just be a whole bunch of— of limbs of trees and what have you that's, that's put out in the road. And— and if, if, if a convoy's running hot, you don't have the time to blow it in place like that. We had these big, huge scrapers and they had big— they had eight foot blades on the front of them. I mean, these are huge pieces of equipment. Well, you see Reese Alberts running around with him, got these big pans on the back of them. And what they were is they had a— they have a blade on that pan, when they're, when they're getting filled, they drop that blade and it cuts material and fills that pan. That's what it does, but when we took them out, we took the pan off and we just take the scraper. So if we didn't have time, we just, we dropped the blade on it and, and run through. And of course we sandbagged the driver in. So if it— if it hits a mine, then he's protected

HUNTLEY: Right.

MOODY: You know, from shrapnel and all. Which, we lost some— some vehicles like that. There's pictures in there that show where the tires are blown off of them—

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -and one side is blown up, you know, on the— on the scraper. But, you know, and we don't— you know, the things they had in Iraq and Afghanistan, you know, the bottom of their vehicles, you know, they don't use APCs anymore, APCs, you know, all of their equipment now, you know, they've got the V-shaped bottoms on them, you know, when they hit a charge, you know, it blows it out like this. More men— more men were— were injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, you know, than killed, and, you know, we lost 58— I think 58,800 men. And, well, they say in a 10-year period of time, but it actually was only about a seven or eight actual period of time that we— that we actually lost those men. Whereas the total in 20 years that were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan were less than 8,000 men. So, you know, we lost several times more in less than half the time over there. And it was primarily— well, it was primarily because of the missions and all that we did. You know, their, all of their stuff were, you know, mines and IEDs and stuff like that and all, which ours were guys out in, grunts out in the bushes and, and what have you. So, uh, but as far as, you know, equipment-wise, we've, you know, we had some really good gunships. You know, we had one called a Huey Cobra, which I'm fortunate enough to have a very good friend here. He retired a couple of years ago from— from Lowe's, but he piloted a Huey Cobra. I don't know if you know what those are.

HUNTLEY: Do you want to explain it for our listeners?

MOODY: Cobras— cobras are— they're a— the width— the width of them— the width of them, they're about, you know, unlike a big— a Huey, fat Huey helicopter.

HUNTLEY: Right.

MOODY: You know, the width of them is about like this.

HUNTLEY: Right, so about three feet.

MOODY: And they're— and they're— they're fast.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, and, and once again, I think they've got, you know— I mean, I can show you a picture of one if you want to see what it looks like.

HUNTLEY: We can probably, it's okay, we can probably look it up.

MOODY: Yeah, okay. Huey Cobras, but they're— but they're— but— but they have what they call Vulcan cannons, 20 millimeter Vulcan cannons on them, and they— and— and plus other armament, you know, it's like uh, like they shoot these things like M70, the, the rounds that are like in M79 grenade launchers are around about this big around.

[MOODY GIVES SIZE WITH HANDS]

MOODY: You know, with a high explosive on them. But when they— they fire, they're like a Gatling gun, you know, Gatling guns?

HUNTLEY: Yes.

MOODY: And you can hear them, you know, we had to call— we called in support some, and they just start a loud whirring sound, and then, and when they fire, it just— the, the ground in front of them literally explodes. I mean, little rubber trees about, they just snap them like they're cornstalk—

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: —you know. I mean, they're just, every, every square foot, you know, they cover, you know, and they're just— they're deadly, you know.

HUNTLEY: Mhmm.

MOODY: And they still have them now, but they're not called– they're not called Cobras anymore, you know, but they're– they're just a more modern variation of it now. But they were, you know, just like our Puff the Magic Dragon over there. You ever heard that, Puff the Magic Dragon?

SCURLOCK: Yeah, the um, I'm thinking of the cartoon.

MOODY: No, okay, no, this is.

[LAUGHTER]

SCURLOCK: So probably not.

MOODY: No, this is like a– I forgot what exactly, it's a– it's a– it's a two-engine– it's a two-engine– old two-engine airplane that they, once again, that they– they cut ports in the side of it. And– and it– it was– it was– it was uh, the most– one of the most air, from, you know, from air defense with destructive weapons that we had.

HUNTLEY Mhm-hm.

MOODY: I mean, the VC and NVA were just scared as hell of it.

HUNTLEY: Mhmm.

MOODY: Because you– what they did when they came over, then they would have to, if, you know, if they were encountering somebody, they would have to pitch, you know, at a certain level like this, but they could carry so much more– so many more rounds, and– and– and they carried the same guns and everything, but more of them than what the Huey Cobra did.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: So when– when one of these things, and once again, you can look it up, and that's for uh, Puff the Magic Dragon, and that's what they– that's what they nicknamed it. And because it was just– you just, like I said, the VC and NVA were scared as hell of it, you know, when– when it came. I mean, they were in an area, they would vacate as soon as possible.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: Alright. Well, I realized we were asking an engineer about the technologies you used. So I think that that was probably a very good overview of a lot of those, um, technologies.

MOODY: Yeah, yeah.

HUNTLEY: Um, uh, so, to the next question. So what were race and or gender relations like in your unit?

MOODY: I never– I never had any problem in my unit. I had– I had Hispanics, I had Black, you know, I had of course, white, you know, and uh, you know, I go back to my growing up years. It was uh, you know, when I was five or six years old–

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: – you know, say, you know, back in the late 40s-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -you know, early 50s, you know, uh, there was a lot of problems back then between Blacks and Whites, you know.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: But when you– when you go in the military, of course, that's, uh, you know, my TAC officers were black.

HUNTLEY: Mhmm.

MOODY: You know. uh, and that never– as far as I was concerned as an officer, and I won't say that was indicative of every officer, I had no problems. If I had a good Latino or Black person, whatever, and he– he was better on a piece of equipment–

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: – than a white boy or whatever, you know, and he was doing– he got the promotion, you know.

HUNTLEY: Right.

MOODY: My platoon sergeant was Black

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And- Sergeant Mayweather, and when you– when you look back, you know, of course, they called us 90-day won– I don't know where they got the 90-day Wonders, you know, going through OCS because it was bare minimum six-month period, but Sergeant Mayweather, you know, he was a NCO, I mean, he was like an E-7.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And he'd been in the military, I don't know how many years, but he was well-seasoned-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -and he knew what he was doing-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -and I relied on him.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: I probably wouldn't have made it through without Sergeant Mayweather.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And uh, and I- and I tried to find him over the years, but he was- and I don't know how much older he was than I was, but I'm going to say, you know, say, you know, I was 25, 26 years old, I'm going to say Sergeant Mayweather was- was- and you'll see pictures of him, if you look at that, you'll see Sergeant Mayweather in some of the photos-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -and he was there, in fact, I don't know, let me look real quick, I may have a picture of him.

HUNTLEY: No, this is a nice one, I've never done an interview where somebody had the photographs with him, so this is kind of cool.

MOODY: Yeah. You might want that, that's a mine- that's a mine we dug up.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: Mine sweeps, there's a Huey.

HUNTLEY: Oh, that's what you're talking about.

MOODY: Yeah, there's a Huey there. [To himself] Oh, where ya at Sergeant Mayweather?

[BAG RUSTLING]

HUNTLEY: Yeah, it almost looks like a- I've seen a mine sweeper, but it looks, I was struck by how it looks like a metal, like a, you know, like a sweeper for gold with.

SCURLOCK: Yeah, metal detector.



MOODY: Yeah, yeah.

HUNTLEY: I mean, that's what it is.

SCURLOCK: And is this you in the mine sweep picture?

MOODY: No, that's not me, that's— that's one of my, yeah, this is what I was looking for, that's an M60 machine gun that mounts on your—

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: —that mounts on your, uh, yeah.

HUNTLEY: And that's the actual gun operator that was on-

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY; -your Jeep?

MOODY: Yeah, yes.

HUNTLEY: On your jeep?

MOODY: Yeah, it is. Yeah.

[BAG RUSTLING]

MOODY: You know who that is?

HUNTLEY: Uh...

MOODY: Okay, here we go, here we go, here we go.

HUNTLEY: Raquel Welch.

MOODY: Yep, mh-hmm. Yeah, that was.

HUNTLEY: So that was, what do they call those, the shows?

MOODY: Uh, USO.

HUNTLEY: Yeah, the USO, okay.

MOODY: Yeah, that was Christmas of— that was Christmas of '67.

HUNTLEY: Okay, and where was that?

MOODY: There's me and Sergeant Mayweather.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay. Oh, wow. And then who's this, do you know who this person was?

MOODY: Yeah, if, you can read it if you want to on the back there.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: He, yeah, it'll tell you exactly. I was sending these pictures home to my mother.

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: And— and I had— I had written on the back of them, you know, what— you know, what, you know, happened, you know, at that— at that period of time. But uh, it was an RPG round, and once again, it was a, it was a child, you know, that was carrying the RPG round.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, and it tells you how many actual Vietnamese, you know, that were killed and— and, of course, wounded. I had two— I had Teeter, uh, he was one of the two that actually were wounded, you know, in this situation.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And, of course, he was getting his— he was getting his purple heart,

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, during that time.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: But uh, but yeah, that, yeah.

SCURLOCK: No, you're good.

HUNTLEY: I, oh, okay, and so for this show here, where was this?

MOODY: That was in Cu Chi.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: Yeah, that was in Cu chi, yeah, Cu Chi Base Camp.

HUNTLEY: Do you know if she traveled, like, throughout?

MOODY: Yeah, they make– yeah, they make– they make different shows. It just so happens there, that was– that was during Christmas–

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: –but there's, they go to other– yeah, and there's digging up the mine.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: After we found it, but a lot of times, you know, if they– if you can dig them up and save them, because this one was homemade.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Then they, you know, then Intel wants to take a look at them–

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –you know, just to kind of see what we're seeing, what we're dealing with, and if there's any solution to, you know, whatever, but– but yeah, but– but anyway, the mine sweeps, you know, is what we did, and like I said, the 290M scrapers or, you know, if I couldn't blow it in place or whatever, you know, and I did that, and, of course, that was another one of the times, you know, being an officer, you know, you– you– you always have to think about your men and the people that you're with and all, and– and– and– and, of course, when you're, when you're on these mine sweeps and you're going through these villages and all, uh, when they discovered these, first of all, then I had to move forward, you know, all of your, your support, your tanks, APCs, everything is behind you, but I had all the explosives and everything to detonate, you know, discharge the mines, so we had to move forward, you know, and– and do– and do our job at that time, at that point, take care of it, and then, of course, then we would– then we'd move on and take care of the rest of our portion of the road, you know, till we met up with another group that would take it on from there.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: So anyway, that's– but– but when you did that, then you were in the front of the column, so you were sitting ducks,

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: You know, if you– if there was snipers within the village and– and– and once again, this goes back to the time of Lieutenant Calley, if you remember all of that–

HUNTLEY: Mhmm, yeah.

MOODY: –and, you know, where he opened fire on a village.

HUNTLEY: Yeah, with regards to the My Lai Massacre.

MOODY: Yeah, My Lai Massacre, you know, and you wonder what– what, I mean, what caused him to snap, I mean, did he– what, you know, was he minesweeping and– and came upon the same situation and hard-pressed, you know, to– to, you know, to take care of his mission and– and he– and he snapped, and he was blaming all of this on the villagers, you know?

HUNTLEY: Yeah, yeah.

MOODY: And so there's just so much, you know, that you can read into this–

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –and, you know, and wonder, yeah, just wonder what happened.

HUNTLEY: Yeah, I think that that's kind of one of the things that, certainly by the 1970s, that more and more people were talking about is like all of these, like, mitigating factors that are going on all at once.

MOODY: And that was one of the problems that when we came back.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Because people remembered that.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: You know, and where we didn't, you know, get such a– I was a student here at ASU.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Back in, uh, 19 and se- early 70, I believe, and I had a– one of my instructors, a female instructor, you know, found out I was a Vietnam vet-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -and she and I didn't get– I didn't– I didn't– I dropped out of school.

HUNTLEY: Oh, wow.

MOODY: Yeah, yeah, I mean, it was– it was just a bad situation. Nobody up until, up until five years ago– I never– I never wore a Vietnam cap–

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –and– and a lot of people– a lot of people that I knew years past and people that I encountered in later years never knew I was a Vietnam vet.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: You know.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –but.

HUNTLEY: We've got some questions about returning to civilian life, but just kind of finishing up about your military service. You've given us a lot of vivid memories, but are there any– is there a most vivid memory that you haven't already shared that you would like to share? You don't have to.

MOODY: Oh, trying to think back. Uh, one, no, the only vivid memory is that– is that basically that one day, February 26th. I mean, that's–

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –yeah, I mean, that's– that's the most vivid. I did go– I did go up to, uh, I had some of my– I had people killed in my company. I lost– I lost one man on the– when we were building that fire support base, uh, uh, that we had pits that were pulling material from, and uh, he, you know, there was, you know, I was back and forth as well as Sergeant Mayweather was back and forth, you know, between the bridge abutment side, where we were doing road work, and then where we were pulling material, and uh, the uh, NCO– NCOIC, non-commissioned officer in charge, who was directing traffic, had brought one of the scrapers in, and he was on too much of a slant–

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: –like this, and of course, those things weigh– especially when they're getting material in them–

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: –and I don't know whether he had raised his dump or whatever, but it rolled, and when it rolled on him, it rolled completely over on him and pinned him between the steering wheel and the top caved in on him, and he literally suffocated.

HUNTLEY: Oh, wow.

MOODY: Yeah, by the time I got back from when I was called and got back to the site and everything, there were several men that were trying to– it had rolled enough to where it rolled back upright, and they were trying to pull that cab off, but they couldn't get it off of him. He was, I don't know, 18, 19 years old.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Recently married before he went over, and– and, uh, I had to, of course, had to write a letter there, you know, being his, the OIC officer in charge of him at that time. We lost some men from incoming mortar rounds, uh, all– we called them hooches, where men lived. They had metal roofs on them, and, uh, we had bunkers, you know, at night when they'd start walking the mortars in, you know, if you heard the first round, you were alive, so you headed for a bunker, but uh, rounds managed to hit some of those metal roofs, and of course, it just created more shrapnel, and of course those– there might be, you know, 20 men sleeping, you know, in their cots, you know, and wherever that hit, you know, you could see the, where the shrapnel hit, and it– it would kill the first, maybe four in line right there, you know, and you could get those. We lost men like that, and then I was– then I went up to, up– up closer to Cambodia on the north side of a mountain called Nui Ba Den, and to build another fire support base several miles down the road, and we were– we were pulling material from the site, building this fire support base, and at one time– of course, we had to mine sweep every day down to where we were pulling the material, and one day, we had found a lot of blood and a few body parts that– the VC, I guess, that tried to set a mine, it backfired on them, closed them–

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: –because you could see blood trails going, but the only casualties we served there is, uh, the mechanized infantry unit, you know, that was supporting us, the tanks and APCs, of course, their officers had advised, you know, the drivers of these vehicles, you know, never to park in the same place every day, ever, because Nui Ba Den Mountain, of course, you can– you can look this up too, and it'll tell you, but we had a– we had a– we had a unit up on top of Nui Ba Den Mountain, and the VC supposedly controlled the middle of it, so they were constantly, you know, watching use of what was going on. Well, one of these tanks had pulled back in, of course, you know, everybody, it's, you know, it's hotter than hell over there, and everybody likes shade, but it– it had pulled back in under where it wasn't supposed to from the day before, or whatever, and parked, and– and these two guys, you know, driver, operator, got out of it and walked to the front of the tread, you know, the tank tread, and jumped off, and they jumped directly on top of a mine, and it totally obliterated both of them. We spent the day pulling body parts out of the trees, there's nothing left of them, just blew them– literally blew them to pieces, because it– the mine– the– the– the weight was– one of them jumping on it was— the weight was enough to discharge, you know, to explode the mine, whereas generally, the tank track would have done it. If they'd

went another two feet further, the track would have got it, and would have just, you know, would have blown the track–

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –is all, but, but, you know, but, so we lost two there on that, and I was up there for 32 days, and you'll see pictures of what I lived in for 32 days up there on that.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: But, and– but anyway.

HUNTLEY: Yeah, no, that's, yeah, um, let's see, and then, last question about military service was, what did you like or not like about your overall experience in the service?

MOODY: You know, the whole time that I spent over there, I mean, I just had a certain duty that I had– I had to perform, and I, you know, I just– being around– around the guys, uh, you know, my jeep driver, Gary Kerr– I reconnected with Gary about three years ago–

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: – and uh, he was my jeep driver from the time I got there, really, September, October, November, December, and uh, when we actually, when we came back from that fire support base, got back right before Christmas uh, Gary actually got transferred to another unit. In fact, I actually– I actually went down to the new unit he went to, trying to get them to, you know, send him back to me–

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –you know, we– we– we had such a good rapport and everything, and uh, but all the guys, you know, I was an officer, but– but at the same time, I was a human being.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And– and, you know, stateside or something like that, you know, I mean, all your salutes, and yes sir, no sir, this sir, blah sir, you know, but, you know, I would– I would spend time in– in the barracks with, you know, with– with my men, and, you know, at night, you know, just visiting, you know, with, you know, talking about family and friends, and– and– and what have you, and I tried to, you know, if– if– if there was a chance, you know, we could do something on part of the base, you know, to get maybe some steaks or something like that to barbecue, you know, being in an– an earth-moving company, you know, we would do it, you know, to help benefit. Uh, actually, if I can go back a little while back to– I was executive officer of the 593rd engineers in Fort Sill, Oklahoma–

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: –before I went to Vietnam, and uh, they were doing, uh– they would do these mock ambushes, you know, kind of get you prepared for Vietnam. I had went out on one of these ambushes, you know, would have, you know, five or six dump trucks loaded with, you know, with– with, you know, engineer guys, you know, and then they'd have, that was an artillery base, Fort Sill's artillery base, and they would have the VCs, mock VC, you know, made up from guys from artillery, and the day that we, this one particular day that we went out, of course, and all the weapons they used, blank rounds. Somebody had loaded live rounds in one of the weapons, and two of my men were killed, and one of them had been back from Vietnam less than a week–

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: –and he had been wounded in Vietnam, and actually was awaiting, you know, his Purple Hearts-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -that he had coming, and another was uh– was uh, enlisted, and he was, I don't know, E-5, E-6, something like that. He had been back for about a year, and he had family living there in Fort Sill, and he– they never should have been there.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: So I don't know who assigned them, but, you know, I was– I was an officer, you know, and so, you know, that, so when I went to Vietnam, that– that, that was the biggest thing, was more about, my men were not infantry, you know, they were engineers, so my job was to protect them in every way that I could, you know.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And so– so basically that's what I did, you know, I– I tried to, you know, provide protection for them-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -and all. They had– about the second week after the Tet offensive, they– they sent me down to Tan Son Nhat Air Base, which was down by Saigon, and they wanted me to check all the roads and the bridges between Cu Chi base camp and Saigon to see if they were passable, you know, see if there was no problems, but I had about 10 men from– from my– one of my squads, and then there was me, and then I had a– an infantry officer with about 10 men from his, and two– and two dump trucks.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And we left early morning for, uh, Saigon, and I guess that was probably about the middle, around 15th of February. It took us a while to go, because every village that we came upon, we had to dismount and walk the village.



HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, I mean, you know, with weapons and everything, and it took us biggest part of the day to make it down to Tan Son Nhat. When I got down to Tan Son Nhat, I called back in and said, you know, everything, you know, looked good and passable and all that, that we were headed back, so we headed back— it was getting dark, so we headed back pretty quick, and we got back in, and when we got back to the base camp, there was a— there was a mechanized infantry unit, that was tanks, APCs, that was sitting at the gate, ready to go out, and I don't know for why or for what reason, but they were waiting to go out, and they went back out and went into the village of Cu Chi, and— and I mean, all of a sudden, all hell broke loose.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: I mean, the— you could see the— the rounds, the tracers, and everything going off, and I mean, it wasn't— of course we turned around and went back to the— went back to the entry of base camp and all, and— and I mean, it was just a few minutes here, they all came back in. They had turned around, and— and the— the OIC in charge there said that they— they thought there was a— there was a, and once again, the reason I say this is, I look back on the situations that I was encountered, and it seemed like I was never at the wrong place at the wrong time, because I just came through that village. They said it was an NVA battalion, and uh, so when I— when I look back on that, I said, why, you know, I guess they just thought that we weren't enough to mess with.

HUNTLEY: Oh, yeah.

MOODY: You know what I mean? That they— somebody they knew— they knew that, you know, they were fixing to come out, and that was a better target-

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: -for them to wipe out a bunch of tanks and APCs—

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: —and yeah, then, then us, what would they really accomplish, you know, so anyway.

HUNTLEY: Yeah, no that-

MOODY: Yeah, they, uh,

HUNTLEY: -with much they know about you-

MOODY: Four months after I got back in— in, uh, I think in February of 1969, uh, one of my men had got a hold of me, I don't know how they had got a hold of me, but they had, uh, the mess hall that I, of course, frequented every day when I was back in base camp, because you have a, you know, you got a line, and you'll see pictures of these guys lined up in the mess hall in

those pictures, and— but they line up waiting to go through, and they take a tray out of a rack, you know, and I think they were fiberglass back then. They could have been metal, I don't remember, but anyway, four and a half months after I left, I got noticed, uh, the line in the mess hall. A VC sympathizer had planted a— a charge behind the rack—

HUNTLEY: Oh.

MOODY: — and had killed 15 men that were in line going through the chow hall and wounded I don't know how many others

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: And it happened again a month after that, or two months after that again, you know, but— but once again, there were just so— so many instances, and other than, you know, I can think of that one— one individual, you know, that could I have saved his life, you know, I mean, had I— I've— had I been there at the pit, you know, instead of somewhere between the pit and there, and the same two guys that, before I ever went to Vietnam, should I have looked over that roster, you know, uh, you know, when they were coming up with the roster, you know, and looked at these men, you know, see, were they Vietnam returnees, you know, they shouldn't have been there.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know. Of course, if they hadn't got it, somebody else would have, because, you know, that— it was that day, I mean, you know, and the big problem, you know, I have PTSD, and, uh, there were times on the weekends that, you know, the guys, and— and— and these turned out to be Vietnam vets that I would have to go into the— to, uh, uh, Lawton, Oklahoma, and get my men out of jail.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Like on a Saturday night or a Sunday morning like that, you know, they'd get drunk and disorderly and get thrown in jail, and I'd have to go in and, you know, and get them released, and all this kind of good stuff, and— and I didn't realize until after my tour in Vietnam that these guys were all suffering from PTSD.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: You know, and, uh, but it's just things like that, you know, in life, you know, that there were just, there were just so many, so many things, you know, I mean, uh, two or three months after I left that last fire support base and came back to, uh, the— the infantry unit that took over the fire support base, you know, had, they had to sweep that road every morning to the— to the, uh, you know, for- for convoys coming around the mountain, and, uh, once again, they— they got attacked one, and there were several, you know, killed in that, you know, in that ambush, and once again, for 32 days, I swept that road.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And the only thing we ever found was where the VC had screwed up and blew themselves up, but there were just so many instances I would just, you know, that when you look back at it, you know, I'm just— and I tell, and I— I— I have a, I have a booklet, uh, which they made a copy of it. It was like 37 pages, and I had pictures and, and all in it, and, and of course, they scanned a copy of it, so you can look at all that, too, but it— it— it— it tells you in more detail about a lot of this, about a lot of this stuff that I went through, and— and when I look back on it, you know, I— I didn't go through anything close to what a lot of people did, especially the— the grunts. We called them grunts, the ground pounders, you know, that, I mean, these, these guys went through hell—

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: —you know, I mean, the Agent Orange exposure, you know, which I've got, I've got issues now that are, you know, Agent Orange exposure, and— and, uh, but being member of, you know, Vietnam veterans groups and what have you, you know, there's, I can see on, on a daily basis, you know, of all these guys that have had— have been having problems for, you know, 50, 60 years, you know, and some of them are getting taken care of, and some of them aren't getting taken care of, you know?

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And I belong to a support group that we meet every Monday night. That's Luis Martinez heads it up, but Luis is telling us that if it hadn't have been for the— if it wasn't for the Vietnam vet, the— the VA now would not— the veterans now from Iraq and Afghanistan would not be getting the benefits—

HUNTLEY: Mmm, yeah.

MOODY: —that they deserve had it not been, and of course, Luis's dad was a— was a Vietnam vet, so he's— he was well aware of, you know, the situation anyway, so, and I can talk your ear off all day.

HUNTLEY: Well, well, in that vein, um, do you, uh, the next set of questions ask you about returning back to civilian life, um, are you okay?

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: Okay, okay, let— let me know, just throw up a hand if anybody needs to,

MOODY: I'm fine, I'm fine.

HUNTLEY: Okay, okay, so, um, in getting out of the military, did you expect to face any challenges when you returned to civilian life, and, uh, what challenges were you expecting?

MOODY: I didn't have any problems. I worked for Exxon, which, you know, was, you know, humble ordinary finding, you know, eventually, I went back to the same job that I had, you know, when I left.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: And, uh, in fact, while I was over there, you know, they had a write-up in their month—in their monthly, at one point, in their monthly little booklet they put out, you know, from them, and— and, uh, so I— but once again, I kind of just, you know, melded, molded into the, you know, into— into civilization again, you know, and I try, I actually tried, I actually was— was enrolled at Tech.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, first, and I— I got married, uh, within a year after I, you know, came back from Vietnam, and, uh, my— my that wife there was, uh, actually was, uh, nine years younger than I am, but anyway, uh, I tried Tech, but I had all these oriental instructors.

HUNTLEY: Mm-hm.

MOODY: I mean, it seemed like every— every oriental— every instructor I had at Tech was oriental, and so I— I moved back to, actually, I was living in Midland then, and so I moved back to Midland and— and, uh, went to, went, got in the insurance business.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: Actually, I worked for Allstate Insurance, and, uh, and eventually, I moved to, uh, San Angelo and went to work for Farmer's Insurance, and, uh, of course, my— my wife, uh, went through, uh, uh, got an RN license here through Angelo State, as well as both of her younger sisters. All of them were RNs.

[LAUGHTER]

MOODY: In fact one of— one of them was an, one of them was an instructor here.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And, uh— and, uh, uh, seventeen years of marriage, and, uh, I was still having some problem stuff. My wife divorced me, had two children. They were, like, ages seven and ten, you know, at about that time, and, uh, I had eventually branched out into the construction business. Her, my brother-in-law, her brother, you know, was— was in construction, and I— I basically just kind of started using my engineering skills that I had developed in Vietnam—

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: –and went into the construction business, and I had developed pretty good business, but, of course, you wouldn't remember back before your time, but interest rates, you know, they talk about interest rates now at eight percent.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Uh, back in 1985, 86, they went to 18 percent.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Yeah, you couldn't– yeah, they were, uh, yeah, you couldn't buy a house back then. Well, they had ARMS back then, adjustable rate mortgages back then

HUNTLEY: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

MOODY: You know, but anyway.

HUNTLEY: I think my parents bought their first house a little bit before that, so.

MOODY: Yeah, okay, yeah.

HUNTLEY: Just a little bit.

MOODY: So, anyway, it was– it was– it was– it was a little difficult to some– some extent, you know, transitioning back into– but, I mean, I– I– I was working 24-7. I mean, I would just go, go, go.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: I mean, it was just, you know, constant, you know.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: I never– I never let up, never– never, you know, never thought about Vietnam anymore-

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: -you know, at that point anymore.

HUNTLEY: So that was kind of a coping mechanism?

MOODY: Yeah, yeah, it was, and that's– that's how I avoided the PTSD for so many years, uh, and, uh, I tried to retire, actually, the first time when I turned 65, and that lasted about four months, and, uh, we'd been, we were over on the east coast. We'd spent a month down in Florida

and traveled up the east coast, you know, up into Virginia and, of course, Washington, D.C., and- and, uh, I- I, you know, I could- I couldn't handle it, and I, we- we moved back to Kerrville.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And I did a project there that was, lasted, built it and ran it for about a couple of years and sold it and then went to Fredericksburg and did another project that lasted another five years and then, uh, did the same thing there and then- and then tried to retire again, uh, January, this past January, five years ago, moved back to San Angelo, but- but the PTSD started, uh, getting on me and I- and some of the other issues that I never had time to think about because I was working 24-7 and plus the last project, you know, of course, everything I did was construction and, but my knees were getting so bad that I- I couldn't handle it anymore, so when I came back within a year, you know, coming back, then that's when I, you know, got my first knee replaced and I waited about 10 months and then got the second one replaced, and I submitted, actually, uh, Louis submitted, uh, in, uh, submitted my claim for PTSD in April of last year.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And, uh, I had joined the support group, you know, at that time and, uh, anyway months went by, you know, and I guess maybe October, November, I said Luis you ever get any info back on my filing? He said 'Yeah, they denied that way back in May.' I said "Oh, okay." I'd never heard anything about it. And uh, I just kinda, you know, rocked on and didn't say too much about it, but then in- in uh, December of last year I hired, uh, an attorney, actually they're- they're a group that specializes in claims, you know, veterinary claims, and they sent the same paperwork that Louis did in, within two weeks, they got a letter back from the VA apologizing

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: For, you know, that situation, and I had other instances- I've got other situations that this group is handling now for me. I mean, I've had instances, you know, in, you know, some of my claims, I started back in 2006 at the VA hospital in Big Springs, and two or three different situations, they told me I was faking, or I broke this wrist in Vietnam, I have 24-7 pain in it.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, and they conveniently lost all my medical records, so I have no medical records showing where it was broke in Vietnam.

HUNTLEY: Mhmm, yeah.

MOODY: They said it was pre-existing condition before I went in. Funny thing about it, I found a picture the night that I was promoted to first lieutenant in Vietnam with a cast on my right hand, but they still said that, they claimed it was, I broke this, I don't remember, is this the femur, or is this the?

SCURLOCK: That's the radial.

MOODY: The radial, I broke this radial two or three years before I went in the military, I played a sport called North American rink hockey for 60 years.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: Yeah, 60, and I broke it in a tournament, so when you go in the military, you have to, you know, they ask you, do you have any previous, so for three times, let's say, they denied it, they said this was this, you know, so attorney's got all of that stuff now, and of course, I've got hypothyroidism, peripheral neuropathy of the feet, I've got, you know, just– just different, I've got tinnitus, I've got a-fib, atrial fibrillation, which I'm going 15th of next month to Austin, Texas to do a procedure called the Watchman.

HUNTLEY: Mnm-hm

MOODY: They go through– you heard of it?

HUNTLEY: Probably not.

MOODY: The Watchman procedure, well, they go up, and they go into your heart–

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm. Through your femur?

MOODY: –and they install a– yeah, in there that blocks that one area where you have clots possibly form, so I take blood thinners for that, and if it's successful, then, uh, I can get off blood thinners.

HUNTLEY: Okay.

MOODY: They have two procedures, one called the ablation, and then one called the Watchman. The Watchman is up around 90%, the ablation is down in the 60s, so I was referred by my cardiologist, of course, here in San Angelo, but anyway, you know.

HUNTLEY: So kind of looking at the last couple questions about returning, so overall, you've– in West Texas, you've been able to find a lot of resources–

MOODY: Yes.

HUNTLEY: –to help you with regards to being a returning veteran and everything?

MOODY: Yes, yes, and I'm far better off now, you know, I just wish I could have made contact with, you know, I see people that were with my battalion over there, you know, the 5– or , yeah the 554 engineers, but they were there, they weren't in my company, D company, you know, they were in company C when they didn't come over until 72 or 71, so I've only reconnected with three, one of them was in headquarters company there at the same time when I was in Vietnam,

and then Sergeant Hanson was in our motor pool, and then, of course, Gary was my– he lives up in Michigan, and Dennis lives over in, uh, West, anyway,

HUNTLEY: Yeah, yeah.

MOODY: Lost my train of thought again, but anyway, and I visit with them, you know, quite often, and of course, that's the main thing I had her do off all these pictures, because I told Dennis and Gary that I was gonna send them some of these pictures as soon as I was able to get them, you know–

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –done up and all, so, yeah.

HUNTLEY: That's- that's really cool. So how do you feel about, just a couple more, so how do you feel about your military service looking back?

MOODY: Uh, I think it was great, you know, it was great.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: It was great to see the– the kids that actually, without any reservation, you know, I mean, a lot of them post now, you know, uh, show pictures of them in Vietnam, you know, they say, oh, this is my graduation party, you know, you know, that's, they went in when they graduated, you know, and– and then again, too, I never wore this hat, you know, five years ago. When I see somebody at my age, you know, that's not a Vietnam vet, they could have been, but not wearing a hat or something like that, you wonder, well, you know, were they one of the ones, you know, that went to Canada, or, you know, did they, you know, there were certain things that you were involved in, I think, you know, school-wise, you know, depending on what you– what you were doing and all that, I got this really good friend of mine, Mike Newland, you know, he used to be Newland and Petty insurance here, and his son's got his business now, real estate now, but he's– yeah, I was fortunate, that, you know, he went in at that time, but he was able to get into something that he didn't have to go to Vietnam, you know, he said, yeah, I feel for you, but man, I lucked out on that deal, you know–

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: –and I've run across Vietnam imposters, people that were wearing a hat, you know, but you ask them where they were at, when they served, whatever, and oh, you know, they don't know, you know, and you know automatically they're an imposter,

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: and then you see Vietnam, you'll see them, they'll have Vietnam era vets.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.



MOODY: You know, they never set foot on the ground in South Vietnam, they were stateside all this time, or some other duty station, but they were there during the era, you know, and for every- for every grunt that was actually doing the fighting over there, they say that there—there had to be at least, there were at least six or seven people that were actually in support, you know, of that one individual,

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: —you know, when you start taking steps backward to see where everything comes from, you know.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: I mean, it's amazing

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: It's amazing that, you know, the United States is able to do what it does, period.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And I had a— I had a— I had a very long time friend that was a World War II veteran, you know, and— and he was one of my heroes, because they went- they went through so much more than what we did. God, he just, when you start to imagine, you know, going over to France, Germany, you know, all of this, what it took to get there.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: The thousands and thousands of men, and then supplying, and oh my God.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: It staggers the imagination, if you just really get down and think about that, you know.

HUNTLEY: Mhmm, yeah.

MOODY: If you kind of just step back in time, I mean- I- you know, I look at, you know, Patton's one of my favorite movies, you know, and then there's, you know, some other more realistic movies of— of times, like World War II, you know, that, you know, will kind of signify, you know, kind of what we went through in Vietnam, but anyway, yeah.

HUNTLEY: No, no, no. Yeah, I'm just checking to make sure that it's still recording.

MOODY: Oh, okay.

HUNTLEY: That's all, that's all, that's all. No, no, no. Yeah. Do you have any advice for the young men and women who are just entering the service?

MOODY: You know, I- you know, I went bust- I'll tell you a story. I went bust back in- I went bust back in the mid-80s, you know, that's when I lost my wife, and my business, and everything else, and I met my wife now. We'd been, we had been actually, I'd had to start over, totally over again. I had a lot of- I had a lot of help, you know, from various people, you know, moving back up- moving back up the ladder, you might say. It was 17 years, we'd moved back to San Angelo. I went to the Metroplex, and, uh, stayed up there six years, and came back, and moved back to San Angelo after six years, and started basically, but I had made enough money up there with one individual's help to start all over again. And, uh, so, it took a lot more years, and I'm a lot older now, but uh, the- the- I see these, well, here over the weekend, you had all of these, I guess they were part of the re- the unit here on- Marines.

HUNTLEY: Mhmm.

MOODY: They were out with their little deals, collecting, you know, and, uh, I'm financially independent, you know. The only reason I- I have put in for stuff for the VA is because I see other people that don't deserve it. The government's doling out things, but I made it a point to these guys that were standing out on those street corners this weekend. I mean, I made it a point. Every one of them that I could stop at and drop a \$20 bill in his- in his deal, I did it, you know, because these guys are- these guys are our future military.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: You know, and, uh, they're our future, you know what I mean? I mean, you know, how many of them are gonna wind up to, you know, be in government or whatever, you know, to help move this country forward? And so, they really, that part of the generation, you know, really impressed me. [Gestures to Scurlock] This part of the generation really impresses me because he's sitting here listening to all of this, you know, but you just wonder how much further this will actually go, you know, your generation. You know, I mean, I don't know anything about it. I've got a 59-year-old daughter that's a year younger than my wife that I reconnected with about, that she was from my very first marriage when I was 21 years old. I had seen her one time since she was born when she was in her, probably her late 20s, and she's 59 years old now, her and her husband. Her husband's a missionary, and they have a- a B&B in uh- in uh, Alaska, you know. I have one daughter that, the middle daughter graduated A&M. She's been out in California for the last 20-some-odd years, but just moved back to Texas, moved back to San Antonio. She didn't, in one time in over 20 years, ever pick up the phone and say, Dad, how are you doing today? You know, but I still love her, and we get along fine, but, and then my youngest biological daughter will call me every couple weeks, you know, to find out. You know, she works for USAA in San Antonio. Her husband is a, uh, law enforcement officer with Randolph Brooks and I have two stepdaughters. One lives in North Carolina and one lives in San Antonio, the one that's working on her master's now. It took her 18 years to get her primary degree, you know, but, and she will call, you know, and visit with me also occasionally, and, but it- the young, I just don't know what to think about the younger generation. I don't, you know, and I really enjoy this because this is the only time in all of my 56 years ago that I left Vietnam, you and um...

HUNTLEY: Ms. Sturm?

MOODY: Yeah, yeah, and what's her name over there, you know, spent this time with me so that I could, you know, relate this to you. You know, my wife doesn't, she doesn't even understand it. You know, she- she just, everything's fine, dear, you know, and- and, and I enjoy it. I mean, we've- we've got, there's veterans that I'm associated with. It's got PTSD. They don't talk about it. They don't like to talk about it. Me, I like to talk about it. I don't- I don't mind talking about it, you know. In fact, the group that I enjoy, you know, I mean, it's the same old, you know, every once in a while, you know, get off of the, I did this, I did that, I- I, you know, you know, these guys, you know, subject to mines and explosives and all of this, you know, rattle their brain, but, you know, every week or so, you know, get off that. Let's, let's talk about family and friends, and- and what you've done these last 20 or 30 or 40 or 50 years of your life, and what are you kids doing, and what, you know, it's- it's, you know, it's- it's, and I don't know. I didn't realize, I saw the other day where some school up north was gonna, had implemented now where- where- where students had to learn cursive. I didn't know they didn't do that anymore.

SCURLOCK: I think that my group was the last one where it was required.

MOODY: Yeah.

SCURLOCK: Cause my younger sibling didn't even get, like, told anything about cursive.

MOODY: I mean, how in the hell do you write if you don't know how? I mean, if you don't ever write anything?

SCURLOCK: I think we print mostly now.

MOODY: Print. Well, that's what I did when I did my book. I had, I had to print it because I get- I get rattled at times and I cannot write in cursive. You know, when you look at my signatures on there, and then there's times I can pick up a pen and just, just, you know, no problem, but I did it all. I did it, I printed everything, and it's not all that neat and everything, cause I was going to go back and then, you know, have it all tied up real neat and everything. And my wife said, leave it like it is. She says that, she said, that's you, you know?

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: So I did. So, so it's- it's, you know, you can read it, but you have to read between the lines on some of it. But- but- but I don't know what to do nowadays, you know, to get the, you know, I- I try to make all the Ram football games, you know, and- and, you know, good, you know, it's terrible, you know, last year you go and watch them go undefeated and- and get knocked out by a team that they defeated, you know, in previous to the season, and then they get beat by the same team again this year already, but- but, you know, and it- it- it's a whole different ball game this year. You know, you can't be that way every year, although you'd like to be, you know? But- but I see all of these kids, you know, you go to the- and that way you kind of get, you kind of intermingle with all those younger kids that are coming to the football games

and all, and you look around and— and see their habitat— their habits and traits and stuff like that and all, and you got 14-year-olds trying to be 20-year-olds, and— and I— I don't know, I— I, yeah. And— and this, I will— I will never— I will never understand.

[FLIPS BASEBALL CAP BACKWARDS ON HEAD]

MOODY: I— I, that's my pet peeve. I mean, why, you know, it's like going to a, like going to a Ram football game at six o'clock and the sun's beating down on you, and here they are, looking around, you know? So anyway, it's just— it's just stuff like that, you know, that— that, you know.

HUNTLEY: Backwards caps.

MOODY: Yeah, yeah, and so it's, it's, you know, I got another cap to, you know, I was, my MOS was a combat engineer. I was trained in combat, so, you know, with, if, if I ever had, had to come hand-to-hand combat, you know, I was— I was trained, you know, just, I prayed that it wasn't going to happen, but, and it— and it did, you know, but— but anyway.

HUNTLEY: Well, is there anything else you'd like to share about your service?

MOODY: Uh, no, that's- that's, you know, that's— that's— that's.

HUNTLEY: We— We probably got everything.

MOODY: That's probably, that's probably about, how long has that been?

HUNTLEY: Un, an hour and 47 minutes.

MOODY: Oh, okay, well, that's not five hours I spent with her, but we were going, we were going through, you know, picture by picture, you know, in that situation, and— and, which was really cool, but— but— but then again, you know, you can look at everything that she went through and— and— and it'll kind of give you a summation of the overall, you know, period of time, but— but yeah, it, it, life's been a journey, you know, which, you know, 50 years from now, you know, you'll be looking back, you know, same situation, you know, and—

HUNTLEY: And everybody's going to want to talk to you about COVID.

MOODY: Yeah, I had COVID. I had COVID. I— I had it. Get ready now. Yeah, I, I had it, and I— I, so what happens, I had my new house was— I was a home builder, you know, for years here, and I have streets here named after my daughters.

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: Erin and Adrian Street, dead end to— into 30, into 33rd Street and, and North Bryant. Ridgemoor Heights, that— I put that little subdivision in, I built about a hundred homes in there.

HUNTLEY: Oh, wow.

MOODY: And, uh, Erin Street, Adrian Street, and Cameron Street. Cameron was my— was my— my brother-in-law's son at the time,

HUNTLEY: Oh, okay.

MOODY: -so he got to have his name on that street. But I— I built— the last big project here was Angelo Skating & Fun Center there on Buick Street.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: And La Esperanza bought it a couple of years ago. Now, of course, it's not a skating rink or nothing anymore, but that and the miniature golf course and all of that. And I'd built various, you know, apartments and hou- homes all over San Angelo. And- and of course the last project I did in Kerrville was a 62-unit apartment complex. And then I— we ran it and then sold it. And then I went to Fredericksburg and built a 150-site RV park.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: And we ran it for a while, and then we sold it. And then that's when we moved back. So I've— I've been heavily into construction, you know, basically since the- uh, I guess around 1974, 75, you know.

HUNTLEY: Mhm-hm.

MOODY: So I've done, I've done a little bit of everything construction-wise, both in Vietnam and here. [Laughs] So, so yeah.

HUNTLEY: Yeah, yeah. Well, that's, you're not going to want to talk about anything after all of this talking about it.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: Yeah.

MOODY: Yeah.

HUNTLEY: Anyway, well, thank you so much for joining us this morning.

MOODY: You bet!

HUNTLEY: And we're going to go ahead and sign off now. So it is 2:08, October 25th, 2023. Um, and that's it, so.

MOODY: All right.

HUNTLEY: Cool.