Donald M. Boardman ’65, Tuck ’67
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
April 28, 2016
Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft

[CHILETA J.]
DIM: So, hello. My name is Chileta [J.] Dim. I am here with Donald [M.] Boardman. We’ll be interviewing over the phone today. I’m at Dartmouth College, in the Jones Media Center, and Donald is—where are you located, Donald?

BOARDMAN: I’m in Bethesda, Maryland.

DIM: Bethesda, Maryland. Wonderful. We’re conducting this over the phone. And today is April 28th, 2016, and right now it’s 1:02 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Thank you. Great. So we’ll just start at the very beginning. When and where were you born?

BOARDMAN: Chicago, Illinois, in 1943.

DIM: Okay. And did you grow up there?

BOARDMAN: I did. I grew up there until I left for Dartmouth College in 1961.

DIM: Oh, wow. Can you explain what your hometown was like, what it was like to live in such a big city?

BOARDMAN: Well, I lived on the far southwest side, so we didn’t get much of the downtown flavor that everybody thinks about. It was a neighborhood, sort of a lower-middle to a middle-class neighborhood, and I went to a public high school called Morgan Park High School. And, you know, it was—it was just a regular neighborhood with mostly individual family houses and actually a relatively nice and safe place to grow up.

DIM: Nice. So, you would describe the area as mostly working class? What did residents of that area typically do occupation wise?

BOARDMAN: I would say that we—we ran the gamut from—my dad was a commission salesman. There were some people who were lower management at some of the larger businesses around Chicago. We had one banker, who was, you know, down the street a bit. I don't really know or remember too much about what the various people did. I think it was either white collar or what you'd call gray collar, lower supervisory type stuff.

DIM: And was this a close community? Did children play outside with each other?

BOARDMAN: Oh, yes, absolutely. There was a number of parks around where people could play and get together. It was a—it was a 1950s picture of where to grow up.

DIM: Nice. So on that topic of children and occupations, what was your family life like? What was—what were your parents' names? Did you have siblings?

BOARDMAN: My father's name was William [K.] Boardman [Sr.]. My mother's name was Ellen [McKee] Boardman. My dad, as I said earlier, was a commission salesman. My mom was a stay-at-home mom, although later on, really after we were all away at college, she did get some clerical type of jobs.

I had two brothers. There were three boys in the family. All three boys went to college.

DIM: Nice.

BOARDMAN: Neither of my parents finished college. My mother had a couple of years, but I think the [Great] Depression set in and put an end to that. So my older brother went to the University of Illinois, I went to Dartmouth, and my younger brother also graduated from the University of Illinois.

DIM: Great. You mentioned that you were born in 1943. World War II ended 1945.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: Can you talk a little bit about that experience? [cross-talk; unintelligible; 4:09].

BOARDMAN: My father was in—he had two children at the time, and he decided, lest he get sent overseas to where he didn't want to get, he joined the [U.S.] Merchant Marine and was gone I think from 1940 to—it must have been after I got started because I was delivered while he was away. He basically was, after his training, sent to join a—the Merchant Marine were—were private shipping companies under charter from the government, and the federal government supplied seamen, sailors for those ships, and my dad was one of those. So he was there until 1945.

DIM: Mm-hm. Till the very end.

BOARDMAN: Right, although he was basically on a run from New Orleans up to Baltimore, shipping sugar and other materials. As far as I know, he never ran into any kind of dangerous situations.

DIM: Did he talk about his experience a lot when you were a child?

BOARDMAN: Not very much. I really didn't learn much about it until he was in his 80s and nearing the end of his life.

DIM: Thank you for that. Was your father the only person that served in that war, to your knowledge?

BOARDMAN: Only person in the family?

DIM: Yes.

BOARDMAN: You know, I don't know the answer to that question. I don't know of anyone else that served, although there probably were, because I had a number of uncles and aunts that were stepbrothers, but I don't remember many stories about it.

DIM: Okay. Thank you.

I'd like to pivot back to your siblings. Were you—were you close?

BOARDMAN: Yes.

DIM: How far apart in age were you?

BOARDMAN: My older brother is two years older, and my younger brother is two years younger, so we were nice and evenly spaced.

DIM: So I would imagine you guys were in school together at certain periods of time.

BOARDMAN: Yeah, we all went to the same schools. We all went to the same Boy Scout troop. And we all went—we all sang in the church choir, the men and boys church choir, along with my dad.

I'll give you an interesting sideline on what the neighborhood was like, is my father and I—I played on the high school football team—both had the same football coach, and all three of the boys plus my father had the same Boy Scout leader, so it as a very, very stable neighborhood.

DIM: It seems very connected, as well, generations—

BOARDMAN: Yeah.

DIM: —going through the same sort of activities.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: That's wonderful.

So let's talk about school again. You said you went to a public school? Did you like school?

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm. I did, and I was a very good student. Not at the top of the class but in the top 10 percent.

DIM: Mmm. And you went to public school from kindergarten through graduation.

BOARDMAN: Right. Yes.

DIM: Okay.

So maybe we can transi- —how did you make your way to Dartmouth? What made you apply?

BOARDMAN: Through my grandmother. I had never heard of the school and didn't even knew where it was. And I had applied to and been accepted at and actually done the early tests for Purdue University in Indiana. And the Dartmouth freshman football coach was the—was a nephew of my grandmother's duplex mate, and his aunt said, "You better come visit me before I die," and so he said, "Awright, awright," and so instead of going up to the North Side of Chicago, where he always went, he went to my—my school, which was on the far South Side, for his one and only visit. And he said, "Let me go up to the high school and hand out some cards." And I got one of the cards and sent it in, and I heard from Dartmouth every single day for nine months and got in and got a nice scholarship and loans and worked at Thayer Hall [now Class of 1953 Commons], and that's how it came about.

DIM: And so when did you graduate high school, exactly?

BOARDMAN: Nineteen- —well, in Chicago you graduate twice a year. One class graduated in January, which was me, and one class graduated in June. So I graduated in January of 1961.

DIM: Mmm.

BOARDMAN: No, 1960, '60. I started [at Dartmouth] in September of '61. Yeah, January of '61.

DIM: Okay. So graduating in 1961—JFK [President John F. Kennedy] was elected the year before.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: I was wondering, did you have any feelings about the election?

BOARDMAN: Oh, it was all very exciting back then. I had actually met him—

DIM: Wow.

BOARDMAN: — and spoken to him. There were some awards given out by the *Chicago Tribune*, and in 1959 our local high school

chorus sang at those awards, and Everett [M.] Dirksen and John Kennedy were there to present the awards, and everybody went over to talk to Everett Dirksen, and nobody was talking to John Kennedy. They didn't even know much about who he was in Chicago. And so I went over and shook his hand and talked with him. That was—you know. So I've been kind of interested in him, you know, all the way through the election until '63.

DIM: Mmm. Were you particularly political, or was it just him?

BOARDMAN: No, no, he had celebrity status at the time. I wasn't particularly political.

DIM: Okay. That's great. So graduating January of 1961. You start Dartmouth September of '61?

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

DIM: And can you describe your first semester? How was it, making friends, adjusting to New Hampshire?

BOARDMAN: Well, it was a big change from living on the South Side of Chicago. I—I had no friends. I had never been to the school, and it was very intimidating. Now, my school in Chicago—Chicago public school—we did not write papers. I think I wrote one paper in my whole high school career. And we didn't have final exams.

DIM: Mmm.

BOARDMAN: So you can—you can guess that my preparation was somewhat weak. [Chuckles.] And I was like a whole lot of people that come from, you know, the lesser public schools. The whole—very intimidating, because everybody, you thought, knew more than you did. And it took me, I would say, a year for me to figure out that (a) I could compete with all of these guys (because that's all that—it was obviously men back then), and gradually built up, you know, friends. Obviously, most of my friends even today were from my dorm, which was Topliff Hall at the time. And so I think that's where the friends came from. And then a bunch of us went over in our sophomore year and became members of AD

[Alpha Delta], which was this infamous period from whence the book and movie come.

DIM: Great. Topliff still exists, actually. It's now an upperclassman dorm.

BOARDMAN: Yep.

DIM: Yeah.

Did you play sports?

BOARDMAN: I was scheduled to play football. One of the reasons I got into Dartmouth, I'm sure, is that I happened to be an All Chicago halfback from my high school. But I—I—in the six to nine months that I spent before I got to Dartmouth, I just lost whatever motivation—and there were so many things that I was interested in, I didn't want to put in the time or the energy, so I in fact did not play football. Whatever sports I played were intramural.

DIM: Okay. So since you had—you weren't doing sports, what were you doing on campus?

BOARDMAN: First of all, I was learning how to study and write papers. [Chuckles.] Spending a lot of time in the library, just trying to make sure I could stay there. I—I sang in the [Dartmouth College] Glee Club. I did [Dartmouth] Outing Society. Was a Freshman Trip [Dartmouth Outing Club First-Year Trips] leader. I think that's most of what I did.

DIM: Okay. And you mentioned before that you were in ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps].

BOARDMAN: Right.

DIM: When did you join? How did that come about?

BOARDMAN: I think that was the sophomore year, and, let's see, I needed money, obviously, to—you know, to have any kind of a social life. And—and my folks' situation was such that I didn't feel I could ask them for extra dollars, even though they probably would have sent it. So the ROTC at that time gave you $80 a month for being in the program, and so I joined up. And it

turns out that my two college roommates also joined up. You may have even interviewed them. They were both in Vietnam.

DIM: Mmm. Yeah, maybe we'll go back to them when we get into the thick of the war and—and see how you guys reconnected.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: So what was it like being in ROTC as Vietnam was going on and this knowledge that most likely you would go? How did that—how did that affect your college experience?

BOARDMAN: I don't think it was uppermost in any of our minds at the time, because in '61 or '62, '63, it was really just beginning and hadn't really developed into a full-fledged program, or at least it—it didn't reach our awareness at that time, so we all figured we'd be in some stateside post for our two years or whatever it would take. So it wasn't high on our radar screen.

DIM: When did that knowledge change? When did it become apparent that you would have to go eventually?

BOARDMAN: Well, I can—it was—I can give you the date. [Chuckles.] It was June—let's see, I'll look at my diploma here.

DIM: [Chuckles.]

BOARDMAN: Ah, damn, it's in Latin. [Both laugh.] It was about June 15th in—in 1965. We were commissioned the day before the graduation,—

DIM: Oh, wow.

BOARDMAN: —and you were handed your offers—uh, your orders. And so my—mine said, "You're going to go to basic training in Fort Augusta, Georgia—Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia." Then for—oh, it said that I was going to be in the [U.S. Army] Signal Corps, which is one of the prime branches to get. They usually, you know, will assign people that are better in terms of academic records to that.

And then I was going to Fort Monmouth [New Jersey] for some secondary studying, and then I went to a place called Fort Huachuca, which is in Arizona, which was a wonderful posting, although I didn't have much to do. And then at the bottom of the page it said, "Beginning in September 19-"—it would have been 1968—"assignment to"—it's called an "unidentified hostile fire zone."

DIM: Oh, wow.

BOARDMAN: And so that was pretty clear.

DIM: Mm-hm. Did these orders come as a complete surprise, day before graduation?

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm. And two weeks before I got married.

DIM: Oh, wow. That's—that's a lot to take in: leaving college, a new husband, and knowing that you're going into a war zone. How did your wife take this?

BOARDMAN: Well, it was two and a third years off, because I had—I spent the first—you have—in ROTC, you have a six-year commitment: two in the active Reserve, two in the inactive Reserve, and two on active duty. I spent the first two years, my active Reserve time, while I was at Tuck School [of Business].

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: And, you know, that's the time when you're supposed to go to summer camp and do the weekend training and stuff like that, but I never had to do any of that because I was a full-time student.

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: And then I did—and then I knew that the—I had an additional year of training, and then—and then I knew I had this year. But I think even in 1965, the full trajectory of where things were going hadn't really emerged yet. It was '67 and '68 or '69 is when the huge buildup was.

DIM: Mm-hm.

Can I just ask, what was your wife's name? How did you meet?

BOARDMAN: My wife's name is Janet.

DIM: What's her last—

BOARDMAN: She was- Hmm?

DIM: What was her maiden name?

BOARDMAN: Maiden name was McNeilly, M-c-N-e-i-l-l-y.

DIM: Okay.

BOARDMAN: And she was a graduate of Skidmore College. We met on a blind date there in 1963 or late 1962. But she grad- —she was two years older than I was. She graduated in '63 as a nurse and worked in New York City as a nurse during my last two years at Dartmouth.

DIM: Okay. And while you were at Tuck, were you living together up here?

BOARDMAN: Yes, yes, yes. We were married, and we lived at Sachem Village [a housing community in Lebanon, New Hampshire].

DIM: Okay. What was Tuck like? Were there many undergraduate friends at the school as well, or was it outsiders?

BOARDMAN: There was a few, but I didn't have any close friends from that group. And because we lived in married student housing—

I'm hoping that our cleaning people are here. I hope that—can you hear that?

DIM: I can hear you.

BOARDMAN: Well, they're vacuuming outside. Anyway, excuse me.

Since we lived in married student housing and we were all newly married, we pretty much stuck with that crew. I think at Tuck School—there were a lot of people at Tuck School who

had come from the service and were a little bit older, and—and Tuck School, as you know, runs with small study groups, and so all the study groups were right there at Sachem Village, and so you stuck pretty close to that group. As a matter of fact, I would say I didn't even know half of the single guys.

DIM: Oh, wow. Okay. And—and while at Tuck, did you try and curate your experience to help you in Vietnam, or was it similar to undergrad, where you take a set list of courses?

BOARDMAN: Ask me that question again.

DIM: So what were you studying when you were at Tuck? Could you choose your—

BOARDMAN: I was studying—I was studying finance.

DIM: Okay. So 1967, you graduate from Tuck.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: And do you go into training right away?

BOARDMAN: No, I had a summer job. I think—I worked for an accounting firm in Boston, Arthur Andersen & Company [sic; Arthur Andersen LLP], because my—my career program was to become a CPA [certified public accountant] and then get—some time thereafter, get into corporate finance, which I did.

DIM: Okay.

BOARDMAN: So then we had to drive down to Fort Gordon, and my wife and I drove down. That was a pretty nervous experience for both of us, a big, big and very serious change, and I think we both put off any real discussion of the [end year? 34:32] in Vietnam, even though we both knew it was coming.

So she was at home because we had our first child in December after I was in Augusta, Georgia, and then we lived together up in New Jersey at Fort Monmouth, which is near Red Bank, while I was in communications school. And then we all moved and had base housing at Fort Huachuca, where we were for eight months.

DIM: Okay.

So all of this training is—it goes over a number of years, and while this is happening, the war is actually amping up.

BOARDMAN: Yes, it is. And now we're getting pretty much aware of it.

DIM: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. How—how did your wife, your parents, your children—how—how did *you* react to what was going on in the news that you were seeing every night?

BOARDMAN: Well, to some extent, having been in ROTC and having my roommates also in ROTC and going through all the military training, you were insulated from the protest side of things, and plus the fact that I think—especially once I got on active duty, you were sort of forbidden from participating in programs. And—and—and so that I would have to say that I was somewhat insulated from that, though you began to read about it, but in fact I would say that we in general, in particular because of where we were, in the military, you know, we had a negative attitude towards the protestors, if not necessarily their protest objective.

DIM: And this was most people in the military, would you say?

BOARDMAN: I think—well, it depends on how far you go with most—a lot of people in military—[Both chuckle.] We—we—we, you know, would regard protestors as quasi-treasonous. I didn't feel that way, and I think having a liberal arts education gave me a little broader perspective. I think what I was developing over this time was a reasonable skepticism about the war that didn't, you know, migrate into active protest.

DIM: Okay. So you would have had to have taken, I assume, specific training for the Signal Corps.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: Can you explain what that was, what that training was like?

BOARDMAN: Well, ev- everybody who's in the Signal Corps goes through what's called Basic Signal Officers Training School [sic; Signal Officer Training Course], and that's where you learn

all of the various sub-branches of the different kinds of communications. And interestingly enough, most of our equipment and the stuff we were trained on were surplus World War II stuff, so it was big and clunky and unreliable, I would say. So you learned the basics, you know, which is radio, telephone—we used a lot of teletypes back then. There's microwave. And then basic—just basic leadership.

And then when I went to New Jersey, it was a more specific training of how to run something called a [comm? 27:29] center, which is basically you take ticker tapes, like you're used to—it's punched paper tapes, like you're used to seeing in the very early computer days. And you literally carry them from one machine and put them onto another, and it was a way of passing messages around—it was all encrypted—that is separate and distinct from telephone. So that's what I learned to do in New Jersey.

When I was in Fort Huachuca, it was basically just some place to put me for the eight months I was scheduled to go to Vietnam, and it was wonderful because I had some—some basic housekeeping duties for the post administration, but other than that, it was a wonderful time to just go off and explore the Southwest.

DIM: Mmm. And this was in Arizona?

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm, south of Tucson.

DIM: Tucson.

BOARDMAN: And that was quite enjoyable, enjoyable enough where we could sort of put off what was coming. I don't think we had huge discussions. My wife was angry because of the four or five young lieutenants who were at Fort Huachuca. I was—we were the only one that was married, *and* I was the only one sent to Vietnam.

DIM: Okay. So the [cross-talk; unintelligible; 29:06].

BOARDMAN: Others went to various and sundry places, and, you know, even with the couple hundred thousand that were in Vietnam by that point in time, you know, the military is ten times larger, so just by the numbers, most people go elsewhere.

DIM: So was that your last base before shipping out?

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm. Yes.

DIM: Okay. And about when did you leave?

BOARDMAN: About September 20th, 1968.

DIM: Mmm. And—and when you—so can you describe your feelings, stepping onto a plane, getting—going over to Vietnam, knowing what you know about the war at this point, how were—how was that experience?

BOARDMAN: Well, the—the high-emotion experience was, you know, kissing my wife and my baby daughter, who was eight months old at the time, goodbye at Logan [International] Airport and then getting on a plane going to Travis—a commercial jet going to San Francisco to find the military shuttle up to Travis Air Force Base [California]. It was—it was, I would say, a feeling of more numbness than anything else, and I had no idea what to expect.

One of the problems with Vietnam was they sent most everybody over a person at a time, so you didn't have any unit to which you had, you know, familiar faces attached. And so this is all by yourself. It gives you a lot of time to think, so I—you know, I have often said that that was just not the right way to do it. And, of course, they don't—they don't do that anymore. [Musical tones.] Sorry, go ahead.

DIM: You—

BOARDMAN: So then you—then you—you know, you had your uniform on, and you catch a charter jet from Travis Air Force Base, which is north of San Francisco, and you have essentially a 24-hour flight, alcohol free, I might add, and you're continuing to be by yourself, and you have sort of conversations about where you go and what your branch—all sort of impersonal conversations with people. We landed—we refueled in Guam, and then we landed at a place called Bien Hoa [Air Base]. Bien Hoa is the—was the major point of entry for most everyone that came to Vietnam.

And what I can remember is landing and getting off the plane to about 102 percent humidity—

DIM: [Chuckles.]

BOARDMAN: —and being moved to a shuttle. And they took us all—all the intake of everybody was over at the large U.S. headquarters called Long Binh. Long Binh was, oh, a huge—many tens of square miles, about 15 miles east of Bien Hoa, so it was pretty—pretty close.

You go to a—it's called a replacement battalion, and their job is basically to get you set up, and I think you get your uniforms and your precise assignments. I didn't know precisely where I was going. And then we ended up in a Signal Company which was back at Bien Hoa, so I got taken back there, and I was at a place called Bien Hoa Army, which was this little, small protrusion from this gigantic air base, from which flew in and out every day—what we called them was Freedom Birds. Those are the chartered [Boeing] 707s that would take you in and out, plus more jet bombers and fighters than you could even count.

And-and then I—I joined my company. The name of the company was Company A/—no, A44/36 Signal Battalion [sic; Company A/44, 36th Signal Battalion]. And it was a company that provided signal communications of all kinds to—it varied over time, but anywhere from two to five base camps around the area.

DIM: And this was all in Bien Hoa.

BOARDMAN: This is—this is all at the big air base in Bien Hoa, which is two or three miles from a little tiny city of—well, it's not [there? 35:20]. It was a regional capital, so it must have had 10[,000] or 12,000 people in it.

DIM: Okay. So you arrived September of 1968 in Bien Hoa.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: The Tet Offensive began in January, and Bien Hoa was somewhat attacked.

BOARDMAN: [cross-talk; unintelligible; 35:41].

DIM: Did you have any notion of this, coming in?

BOARDMAN: No, the big—the big Tet Offensive was the year before I got there, and one of the things that I remember was lots of buildings that were just pocked with bullet holes and, in fact, I remember it clearly, going from Bien Hoa to Long Binh and back, how many buildings were pretty much totally destroyed. There was second Tet Offensive, which *was* when I was there, but I think the big one was before I got there, was in '68. But would have been January, February.

DIM: Mm-hm. So—

BOARDMAN: Does that match with your dates?

DIM: It does. No problem.

So can you sort of set the scene for us, while you're in your first post? What were the other officers like? What was it like working with—you mentioned that there were several hundred people in your company.

BOARDMAN: Right.

DIM: What was the camaraderie like?

BOARDMAN: Well, we were not combat troops, and I think the camaraderie was—you know, it's a different nature than the guys that were out there, actually, you know, out in the bush. We had—I think we had a captain who was the commanding officer, who I really liked, and he and I got along quite nice. As the brand-new lieutenant,—

DIM: What was his name?

BOARDMAN: Wallace. [Makes "thinking" sounds.] I think it's Dick Wallace.

DIM: Thank you.

BOARDMAN: And I don't know where he went to school. Almost everybody was ROTC from one school or another, but we didn't have any Regular Army folks with us. And there were four or five

other lieutenants, and they came and went. Everybody came and went at different times, which was pretty—you know, you form a friendship, and the first thing you know— they didn't get transferred around very much to other units, but they went home. And everybody had these what they're calling "short calendars," which had 365 days in the form of a somewhat obscene drawing, little boxes. And as your days went along, you would ink out each of the boxes, so everybody talked about being short. You really didn't get to be short until you had 90 days left, and then that was the big sense of humor for someone to come up to you and tell you they were short [chuckles] and you weren't.

DIM: [Chuckles.] Oh.

BOARDMAN: I think that's probably still true in the service these days.

DIM: So you were 25, a lieutenant here in Bien Hoa.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: What was—what was your day-to-day experience? You said you were a supply captain, first getting there?

BOARDMAN: Supply officer as a—as a first lieutenant. And then there's all sorts of other duties that the new lieutenant always gets, one of them, rat control officer and the postal officer and the—and, you know, all sorts of things like that. You know, one was one had charge of the communication center, one had charge of the radio and telephone platoon, and various things like that.

The—the first experience I had that we were not in a game was that I would say I was there about a week, and was awakened by these screaming rockets coming over our heads. We had a very large communications tower—it must have been 200 feet high—in the center of the base that we used to communicate by microwave over to Long Binh or Saigon or wherever. And the Viet Cong or whoever they were used to use that tower as an aiming stake, and so they would shoot these things over us, mostly to try and hit the air base.

DIM: Did this happen often?

BOARDMAN: Oh, about twice a week.

DIM: Oh, wow. Yeah.

BOARDMAN: Occasionally, one would fall—as far as I know, nobody in my unit, anyway, ever got hurt by these things because they were so random.

DIM: Okay.

BOARDMAN: But we had a lot of holes in Jeeps and things like that.

DIM: Were the people that you were working with—were they mostly officers, or did you have interaction with non-officers?

BOARDMAN: Oh, we had—we each had platoons. Each of us were platoon leaders, and—and each platoon worked in a particular area of Signal tasks, and so you got to know your own men. I worked, I would say, more with the sergeants—

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: —than I did with most of the enlisted men. But that changed later, and I'll tell you about that.

DIM: Okay. So—so how long were you at the supply officer rank?

BOARDMAN: Well, I would say about six months. And the captain, Captain Wallace, rotated back home, and they had no captains, not for any, you know, war-related reasons other than they just didn't have a new captain coming in. And they looked at my record with Tuck School and Dartmouth and all of that, and they figured, "Well, we'll make *you* the company commander." So after six months, still as a lieutenant, I became the company commander.

By then, I think we had four different base camps, so we weren't just at Bien Hoa; we were strung across the south-central part of Vietnam, all the way to the South China Sea.

DIM: Oh, wow. How did you get these new units to cover?

BOARDMAN: Someone called us and said, “You’re takin’ over this.” That’s about how they did it.

DIM: Mmm.

BOARDMAN: And, you know, I would say by then, we—there’s a lot of—even though you worked seven days a week, there’s a—there’s a lot of time where you’re just kind of bored, and so I—I—I looked at this more as a challenge and an opportunity than anything else. And so I could either take my Jeep (I had a driver) and go to these various things—things were relatively peaceful because I think by then we had 500,000 troops, most of whom were in my area. And so it was actually a nice relief to get out and go.

I had one unit down in Saigon. I had one unit at another provincial capital called Xuân Lộc. I had a mountaintop relay center, helpfully called Hill 886, which was way up in the middle of the jungle. And about once a month I had to helicopter to go there. And then I had another place over on the South China Sea called Hàm Tân. And all these were smaller, much smaller units, and it was more of a reporting relationship, but they were part of the communications network.

DIM: Mm-hm. And how was it that—that *you* were selected to take on all these units? Was it that other captains were also going home and they just needed—and they needed someone to take these areas on?

BOARDMAN: I really—they didn’t discuss it with me, but I think in part, this was—this was into ’69. I think they were already beginning the drawdown.

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: And I think it was—it was a staged and relatively drawn out—now, what I don’t know is whether they thought they’d won the war and that they could do this, or whether they already knew that they—you know, politically they were losing the war here at home. I don’t—I don’t really know the answer to that.

But from my point of view, that was the most interesting part of the job when I was there, in terms of management of not only four or five lieutenants but also probably 30 or 40 sergeants and then another 300 men. I mean, that was something that would be unusual for a 25-year-old to get assigned to.

DIM: I can imagine.

So you said you—you had to travel a lot as company commander. You went—you were in South China Sea. You were in Saigon. Did you have much interaction with Vietnamese soldiers [cross-talk; unintelligible; 46:44]?

BOARDMAN: Vietnamese soldiers? No. We were instructed to hire—and we had funds to pay as many Vietnamese nationals as we could, and so we had—in Bien Hoa, our compound, we had a couple of dozen switchboard operators. Just like the- you see in the old movies, they take the plugs and move one plug to another plug. We had mess hall assistants, probably a dozen. We had—they called them "hooch girls." They were basically maids and laundresses. And so, you know, I would say we had—at one time, we had maybe as many as a hundred. All women. We didn't have any Vietnamese men. They were all—the men were all off doing their own fighting.

And we would see, from time to time, convoys of—the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, the ARVNs [pronounced AR-vins], going in convoys on various and sundry places to do battle or search and destroy or what have you. And they always had American advisers with them.

DIM: Okay.

BOARDMAN: But, you know, that's where we saw the soldiers, but we never stopped them, had conversations with them.

DIM: Why do you think the Army encouraged so much interaction with Vietnamese nationals?

BOARDMAN: I think it was hearts and minds effort.

DIM: Right.

BOARDMAN: Build up the economy, minimize the black market. We had—we didn't have American greenbacks; we were paid in sort of an artificial currency called military pay script [sic; Military Payment Certificates], which was like Monopoly money. And about every two months, we would have to completely change it, you know, for a new and different-looking paper bills. And these were all a device to at least minimize what was a pretty active black market at the time.

DIM: And did you go out into the cities very often?

BOARDMAN: I did.

DIM: Just on recreation?

BOARDMAN: Yeah, we went—there were some restaurants there. We went to a restaurant on the Saigon River and had a nice French/Vietnamese meal, and that's the one that got blown up a couple of months afterwards.

DIM: Do you remember the name of that?

BOARDMAN: I don't. It was on a—it was floating. It was on a barge on the river.

DIM: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Yeah.

So I'd like to start talk- —talking again about how it was like being 25, just graduating college, being in charge of such a large operation of men that—I'm sure many were older than you. What was that [cross-talk; unintelligible; 50:36]?

BOARDMAN: Well, certainly the sergeants were. The sergeants were, you know, probably as old as 60.

DIM: Oh, wow.

BOARDMAN: And it was very intriguing because the tradition in the—in the—in the military is you call the commanding officer "the old man." So I got that term, which I found somewhat humorous. I was—for the military, I would say, not as stern an authoritarian or a stickler for formality as the guys who were Regular Army or who went to [the U.S. Military Academy at] West Point. And while I didn't become friends

with any of them, I just think there's a way to manage people without demeaning them and [unintelligible; 51:32], and so, you know, I think—I think generally I got along reasonably well with all the levels.

DIM: So you think your—your Tuck education really did influence how you managed people in the war.

BOARDMAN: Yeah, I think the Tuck—the Tuck—the Tuck experience and the Dartmouth experience and my basic temperament all goes together.

DIM: Mmm.

While you were in Vietnam, you still had, of course, your wife and two children, a family back home.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: How often were you able to communicate with them?

BOARDMAN: Well, that's—that wasn't so—that wasn't so good. It was all by letters, hand-written letters, and they were probably—you know, two weeks to get from Point A to Point B. My wife, of course, had—had a second child while I was gone, and so she was pretty busy, so I wrote more of the letters.

Oh—this is interesting because it makes you think back—we also had 8-track cassettes. I don't know if you remember those. You probably don't, you [laughs; unintelligible; 52:52].

DIM: [Chuckles.]

BOARDMAN: They're—they're big, clunky cassette things, and we would ship them back and forth.

DIM: Mmm!

BOARDMAN: Once—once, I was given the opportunity and an assignment for a time to go to something, the MARS network. MARS was Military Affiliate Radio System [now Military Auxiliary Radio System] or something like that, and it was basically a group of ham radio operators, and they—you would go to a tall building in Bien Hoa, and you'd have an assigned time,

and they would crank it up, and hopefully some operator, in our case somewhere in the Southwest, would pick it up, and they would patch you into whatever number you gave them for your wife or your parents or whomever.

And so I had 3 in the afternoon to call, and my wife answered the phone at 3 a.m., with two newborns, and we had a very unsatisfactory conversation. [Chuckles.] So that was our only—that was my only direct, face-to-face until I went to R&R [rest and recuperation].

DIM: Mmm. What did you guys talk about?

BOARDMAN: Nothing of substance whatsoever, because it was a—it was one of those radio things where you had to say, "Over" and "Out." And it was a one-way conversation, not two-way. And it was 3 in the morning, and she really just didn't [chuckles]—didn't have much to say. So I would say that that was—that was an experience that probably it would have been better off not even having it, compared to today, when people, you know, can Skype.

DIM: I would imagine letters, though, you would be able to go more in depth about conversations—

BOARDMAN: Oh, yes, yes.

DIM: —and things like that.

BOARDMAN: We both still have all of our letters. Very important.

DIM: Aw [Chuckles.] Mm-hm. What were in those letters?

BOARDMAN: Oh, I would say—you know, I—my life was so different. I'm told that they were, you know, more interesting or exotic or whatever you want to say because I was talking about the—I down-pedaled any of the—of the military war stuff, but I was talking about, you know, getting these new assignments and traveling here and there and stuff like that. And she was mostly talking about the kids, and she was living with her parents at the time, and all of those things, so. But they—they had what you would expect as a—as a relatively newlywed fondness expressed.

DIM: So your wife was not working as a nurse while you were away.

BOARDMAN: No, she was—she was—at least two kids—at least two newborns.

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: And she was able to do that because I didn't have any expenses, and I sent most of my paycheck home.

DIM: Mmm.

BOARDMAN: As a matter of fact, I didn't even see it. It went directly to our—our account. She also lived near—she lived on Cape Cod [Massachusetts] while I was away, at her parents' house, and she was very near something called Otis Air [Force] Base [now Otis Air National Guard Base], which had a PX [post exchange] and commissary and military heath care available to her.

DIM: So were you company commander till the end of your stay in Vietnam?

BOARDMAN: Yes.

DIM: Were there any significant changes from the time you took your post to the time you left?

BOARDMAN: Well, they kept—they kept adding these new bases. I think it was six by the time I left.

DIM: Oh, wow.

BOARDMAN: So it got to be quite a large job. I mean, there were periods of time where enemy activity would, you know, have some kind of a brief resurgence, and so that was more so, I think, in the latter half. As I told you, we had—there was a second Tet in January, February of 1969, which was not as overwhelming as the first one, but it did result in a fairly good-sized company of North Vietnamese soldiers being pinned down right outside of our perimeter. And, you know, that resulted in quite a firefight for about two days, with

bullets flying over our heads and things like that. That was—that was very anxiety-ridden.

And my wife really didn't know anything that was going on until the pictures showed up on the cover of *LIFE* magazine of the aftermath of this battle that I just told you about,—

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: —after which I got a fairly intense letter, saying, "You're not telling me everything."

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: But we weren't directly involved in that, other than we manned the perimeter, which hemmed them in on one side.

DIM: Were your—how did your men feel about the attack?

BOARDMAN: Oh, you know, if you're not—if—if—if it's just an occasional, random thing, I think—I think—I think the level of anxiety always goes up, and it was a very high-pitched—;and everyone was very nervous. And we were putting bullets into magazines. And we had to—we had to, as I say, man the perimeter, so there I was, you know, for relatively unused machine guns and grenade launchers and things like that, supervising the guns. They were getting orders from the central command post. But that was relatively short. I would say that was about two days.

DIM: Okay.

BOARDMAN: Occasionally, we would go down to Bien Hoa City, and we'd see, you know, dead bodies in the street or we would see Viet Cong captives in what they called tiger cages, these tiny little cages put up for public display. But that was—that was relatively uncommon, enough to get your attention that something was going on, but was out of the ordinary.

DIM: Did you know why they were captives?

BOARDMAN: Well, I mean, some- —somebody—see, the Viet Cong would come in and they would do assassination somewhere, usually of local leaders who were siding with the

government, and these guys were, I'm sure—they were either guilty or close enough, and they were there and put on public display to show in fact that, you know, these are the people that are doing these things. It was public shame type thing. Whether it worked or not, I don't know.

DIM: And this was going on while you were still working as company commander,—

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: —traveling around,—

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: —being quite exposed, I would imagine.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: So when you made stops at your various locations, what were you doing, exactly? Who were you working with, and were they aware of what was going on in—in Bien Hoa?

BOARDMAN: Well, they had their own issues wherever they were. The unit that we had way over in the—on the South China Sea was part of what—which was part of the Safe [sic; Strategic] Hamlet Program,—

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: And so they had put a unit of South Vietnamese soldiers with American advisers to protect this little hamlet, reinforced with, you know, barricades and things like that. And they certainly knew what was going on. I think the general populace was afraid—is afraid—is afraid as anybody about what would be going on.

The area where we were I think was a hodge-podge of cultures and religions. There was a high percentage of Catholics in that area, and the Catholics—the Diệms [Ngô Đình Diệm] were Catholics, so that if the South Vietnamese Army was going to lose, these people were in the greatest danger. And a lot of the employees that we had, the Vietnamese women, would talk about that.

Then there was the Buddhists, who were—by that time they were immolating themselves. We didn't see any of that, but that certainly made the news. That was in protest to the Diệms, I guess.

And then—then there's this other sort of shadow group called Cao Đài were around. They were sort of halfway in between, so it was a very, very diverse and boiling pot of culture [flesh? 1:03:57], as well as the war going on.

And that was one of the good things about going out. You could see some of the stuff going on.

DIM: I'm sure.

So as this is going on, were there any changes in the city or among the military for safety purposes, or was it really business as usual, interacting with everyone?

BOARDMAN: I think there was—I think it was close to business as usual. There were—it was—there were mostly suicide bombings or, you know, just general bombings going on, but infrequent enough where, unless you were real close to it, it—it—we—it was more news. Like if, you know, you heard about the Boston Marathon, you were fairly far removed from it. I think it was that feeling.

DIM: And—and so when did you leave as company commander and—and Vietnam?

BOARDMAN: Well, in August, very late August of 1969, I had about a month left to go, and I was visiting one of my sites, the one all the way over on the sea, and I got a telegram from the [American] Red Cross saying that my mother had had an aneurism, a burst, and that I was required at home. So I got to leave about a month early, out of the Merchant [unintelligible; 1:05:53], so that's when I left. And it was fairly sudden. There was a whole lot of—I mean, I got on there—it took me two or three days. They had sent over my replacement, and, you know, you had to pack up again, all these things in progress, and you had to brief the replacement, and—and so it took me two or three days.

And when I flew home, via Cam Ran Bay to Seattle to Chicago, where my mother was, she turned out to be recovering by then.

DIM: Okay. So you were able to be there for your family during this very difficult time.

BOARDMAN: Mm-hm.

DIM: Yeah, that's great. So that's a very sudden way to leave such a—

BOARDMAN: Yes, it was. it was—

DIM: —an extraordinary place, yeah.

BOARDMAN: It was jolting. And I would say the transition was—you know, jolting.

DIM: How long did you stay at home?

BOARDMAN: But welcome, I must say. [Chuckles.]

DIM: I'm sure. How long did you stay at home with your parents?

BOARDMAN: I think I was there about a week, and then I flew to Boston, where I reunited with my wife and, by then, two kids.

DIM: Mm-hm. How old were they by then?

BOARDMAN: My daughter was, like, 18 months, and my son was four months.

DIM: Okay. How was your homecoming like?

BOARDMAN: Oh, that math doesn't add up. [Chuckles.] It must have been—he must have been over a year, if I could count the months properly. He must have been over a year, which he was, and my daughter then would have been a little over two, two years and four months.

DIM: Okay. And so you've never seen your son up to this point. Is that correct?

BOARDMAN: Before that, correct.

DIM: Before then, yeah. So what was your homecoming like, especially seeing him?

BOARDMAN: It was—it was weird, I must say. Even—even having had a week in Chicago, the change in one's life after having a family—you're basically going from working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, which is what you did, to having a family and disciplining, you know, normal kid behavior. My wife was also used to running the show and having the kids, you know, to herself. It was an adjustment on both parts.

DIM: So what did you do immediately after coming home?

BOARDMAN: Well, I got out of the [U.S.] Army I think about the same time that I would have gotten out of—you know, had my two years up anyway. And then I went back to work for Arthur Andersen.

DIM: Okay.

BOARDMAN: In Boston.

DIM: How long were you—how long were you working for them?

BOARDMAN: I worked for them for three years, and then I joined—became a chief financial officer of a tiny little development company, which turned out, 20 years later, to be a huge national development company, so that's been my career.

DIM: Can you give us the company's name?

BOARDMAN: Yes, it's called Foxford Development Corporation.

DIM: Okay. Were there a lot of transitioning into the workforce? Were there a lot of veterans in Arthur Andersen?

BOARDMAN: You know, it wasn't—it didn't—you would run into them every once in a while. There were fewer than one would have expected except, you know—you know, occasionally you'd have a chat with somebody. I would say—I would say no more than a handful that I talked to.

While I was over in Vietnam, I did meet with my two college roommates from Dartmouth.

DIM: Oh, *in* Vietnam.

BOARDMAN: Yeah. [Thomas L.] “Tommy” Miller—we were all three Class of ’65. Tommy Miller was a captain in an armored cavalry group, and he was—he was there before I was, so I saw him fairly early in my—my career before I became CO [commanding officer]. And the other one was [Daniel J.] “Dan” Walden, who was with the 101st Airborne Division. And so the three of us just got together and—in Bien Hoa, at my unit, and had a wonderful time. And that picture of the three of us appeared in the [*Dartmouth*] *Alumni Magazine*.

DIM: Do you have a copy of that picture?

BOARDMAN: I do.

DIM: Can you describe it for the sake of the video, for the tape?

BOARDMAN: Well, I’m looking at it right now. It’s the three of us in Vietnam, standing in front of a Jeep. Dan and Tommy are both captains. I remained a lieutenant and chose not to extend my time, which was fine with everybody concerned. The interesting part of the picture is you can see, from their uniforms, that they’d been here a *long* time. You can tell, you know, by how sort of bleached out and—and—and thin-threaded their uniforms are. I had relatively brand-new uniforms that still had some starch and the original color to them, but by the time I left, mine looked like that, too.

DIM: Mm-hm. So I’m sure the three of you had very different experiences. They didn’t go to Tuck or graduate school?

BOARDMAN: Well, I can’t tell you when, but one of them wen to Columbia [University] for an MBA [master of business administration], and one of them went to I think Georgetown [University] for a law degree, but I think that was afterwards.

Dan, who I’m sure is in your database, is—is very bitter because he was exposed to Agent Orange. Actually had a brain tumor, which has since been related to Agent Orange exposure, and he called—or I called him a month ago, after

he went public to say that he had, after 45 years, gotten VA [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs] benefits for that.

We had our 50th college reunion last June, at which he was one of several panelists, but it was clear that he was a very angry guy.

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: My roommate—my other roommate, Tom Miller, would not come back to Dartmouth. He really didn't come back till his 50th reunion, largely because he was so upset with what he thought was poor treatment of returning veterans by the U.S. and the college administration in particular.

DIM: Mmm. Were these conversations that you were having in Vietnam, or immediately after?

BOARDMAN: About what I just told you?

DIM: Right, about treatment of veterans, Agent Orange.

BOARDMAN: [Chuckles.] The conversation about the treatment of veterans and—and the more supportive aspect of the war protests actually took place when I was calling—calling Tom Miller, who lived in London. He actually left the country.

DIM: Oh, wow.

BOARDMAN: He still lives in London. I think that was more because of a job opportunity than anything direct—but I was trying to raise money, a donation to the 25th reunion, and let me have it as to why he wasn't sending it.

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: So Dan I don't think is angry so much at the college as he was angry at the Veterans Administration. I'm sure you've talked to him and it's in there somewhere.

Then we had two others of our—of our classmates that are on the Wall, the Vietnamese Wall [sic; Vietnam Veterans Memorial]. And there was one by the name of John [C.] Seel [Class of 1965], who was killed. I never knew why until

that same panel for our 50th reunion—he was killed due to being in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was a fragging [killing or attempted killing by a soldier of a fellow soldier] incident, where one U.S. sergeant was trying to go after another U.S. sergeant and had hidden a grenade underneath a sandbag, and to get a door open, this classmate of mine, John Seel, picked up the—he had to move the sandbag and blew himself up with the grenade. That's another sad story. And I had never heard that until the same panel for our 50th reunion.

DIM: Mm-hm. Wow.

So there were a number of classmates and people that you knew in Vietnam, experiencing this as well. How did you talk about it post serving?

BOARDMAN: We didn't have a whole lot of conversations about it except at various reunions. I kept up with Dan Walden, the fellow with the Agent Orange issue over the years, and we actually spent a number of weekends at the [Second] College Grant up on the Maine border, and we talked about it extensively then.

DIM: And about what time were those conversations happening, a long time after leaving?

BOARDMAN: No, I think they were, like, the 15th and 20th reunions.

DIM: Okay.

BOARDMAN: We usually connected with the reunions.

DIM: Mm-hm. Has-have reunions been a real culling point of bringing veterans that have served at Dartmouth together, do you think? Or is it just happenstance because you—you were friends with them?

BOARDMAN: Well, they were college roommates, so I think there was a natural affinity to spend time together for reunions. I think the 50th one was—and it's largely because of this panel on Vietnam that really brought a lot of it into the open because each of the panelist members had a completely different experience. They were protesters, they were military, they

were—there's a professor and sort of a moderator, all who had a different, unique perspective of the war.

I did not experience any particular resentment by the public towards my military service whatsoever. Absolutely none.

DIM: Did you and your wife and family live in Boston indefinitely after, or—

BOARDMAN: Yes, we lived in Boston from 1970—we live in Sudbury, Massachusetts—through 1975.

DIM: Okay. Did you talk to her or your children about your experience?

BOARDMAN: Yes, I think—I mean, I—I didn't sit them down and say, "Let me tell you about the war." I think that there were questions, there were pictures that we had. I would show them pictures. My son was more interested, as boys would be more interested in war stuff. And my grandsons always want to see that kind of stuff. So, yeah, I didn't really try to hide anything. On the other hand, I wasn't—I never fired a gun [chuckles] in the war.

DIM: I mean, this year that you spent in Vietnam must have been really a seminal point for you. Is there any major—looking back, is there any major take-aways that you—that you feel you got from your experience?

BOARDMAN: A couple of things. First of all, by the time I was getting ready to leave, I was pretty sure that we had imposed ourselves on a civil war, and the excuse of the domino theory with the Russians taking over another country was bogus. And so, you know, my philosophy of the war became less sympathetic, and that continues through to this day.

We—my wife and I, along with two other couples—one other couple—made a trip to Vietnam in 2005. We were there. We went to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. And in some of the museums, you will see, for the past two millennia, you will see the invasions of Vietnam originally by the Khmers [Khmer Rouge] in Cambodia and certainly related cultures, but most often by the Chinese. And then the French. And then the U.S. And then after us, the Chinese again attacked.

And it shows on a bar graph how long each one was there, and it shows when the Vietnamese threw them out.

And so that was probably one of the most meaningful images that I have of my trip back there. And that is that the Viet- —it confirmed my view, when I finally left, that the Vietnamese are highly nationalistic, very proud, very confident people, and they will defend their country to the death. And they've proven it probably two dozen times. So that—

At the same time, we were warmly welcomed by the Vietnamese that we got to see. We had Vietnamese guides in every city. And even the museums are fairly balanced in terms of how the war went.

I had asked our tour operator if we could go to Bien Hoa so I could see where I was and take everybody there, and instead of a two-lane road going through the sort of shack-like, small villages between Saigon and Bien Hoa, it's now six lanes on each side of a divided highway, with factories as far as you can see on both sides. And it was just jaw-dropping, the change.

And when we finally got to Bien Hoa, we couldn't get anywhere near the air base, although I can tell from Google Earth that most of the buildings I was in are still there. But we did see a memorial for Tet, except it wasn't for us; it was for them.

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: [Chuckles.] So that was a real eye opener.

DIM: Mm-hm. How long were you there?

BOARDMAN: We were—we were in Southeast Asia for just about a month.

DIM: Okay. Were you able to reconnect with other officers or soldiers that you fought with, that you were with in that period?

BOARDMAN: No, and I've lost track of them. See, and I just go back to my original point, is everybody came as an individual and left as

an individual. And so it would be rare to have more than three or four or five or six months with the same people, and there was not sense of unit cohesion. I mean, we don't have—as opposed to the World War II vets, and I'm presuming for Iraqi vets—there are no units as such with which you could have a reunion. And I think—you know, you kind of miss that, or I suspect I miss it, if it was even possible. So the answer to your question is no, I don't—other than the two roommates that I—that I have described to you, those are the only—the only two that I have any contact with.

DIM: Were you involved in any sort of Vietnam War veterans type things, maybe not with people that you served with directly but maybe generally?

BOARDMAN: No. No, I'm not—I'm not driven to do that. I've read a number of books on the war. I just finished the one by—who's the professor—he was on the panel—who wrote the book about the Diệm regime?

DIM: Oh, yes, I know, Professor [Edward G.] Miller.

BOARDMAN: Which I—I thought that was quite fascinating. I felt like I was back in college. There were lots of footnotes, and—you know. [Chuckles.] And that really helped, because a lot—that was—a lot of that was before I was there, but it put into perspective a whole lot of things that I just sort of was wondering about. You're in a little cocoon while you're over there.

DIM: Mm-hm.

BOARDMAN: You know, information is filtered and spun, if you will. And all of this stuff with the Diệms, other than what happened to me in the newspapers—you know, that was a new thing for me to do. But it's been mostly reading books about it.

There was a book called [*A*] *Bright and Shining Lie*:*John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*] that talked about a guy by the name of John Paul Vann. And the reason I was interested in him was we provided signal services to him, personally. But he—he led, among other things, an assassination squad.

DIM: Do you think about the war often now?

BOARDMAN: I don't—I would have to say no, I don't. You know, I got, you know, a couple of items and paraphernalia that I have in my office. I have a plaque that I got when I left which listed my—my job as commanding officer. I have a picture of my three buddies, and I have an old, fused cone from a North Vietnamese rocket that landed near us, that didn't explode. And so those are sort of mementoes, but I don't really dwell on it.

I didn't—I didn't lose any direct friends that I knew about it at the time. The only two deaths we had while I was there was a traffic accident. We had two guys in our company killed when their—their three-quarter-ton truck overturned and they drowned.

DIM: I was just wondering: You mentioned that you worked for a large development company. Do you think going over to Vietnam and experience war—experiencing war affected what you did in the corporate sector later on in life?

BOARDMAN: Oh, I think so. I think it's all part of life's experience, and they all add up. You know, I don't—I don't think that it was—the fact that it was a war job or it was a job in a war zone made a huge difference, but I think the confidence in managing and motivating people was instrumental in success going forward.

DIM: Are there any other thoughts or comments that you want to give on your experience or how you felt immediately—after this took place?

BOARDMAN: Well, the thing that I have often said is—and I think the country has finally learned—is you have to separate the soldier from the policy, and it was very well and good and correct to protest against, you know, [Secretary of Defense Robert S.] McNamara and [General William C.] Westmoreland and the other folks, and [President Richard M.] Nixon and [President Lyndon B.] Johnson and all of those folks who were signing the orders, but I think it is counterproductive and really disingenuous to protest against those soldiers that are out there doing their jobs. And I don't have a sense—I think—I have a sense that the country has

learned that lesson, but they certainly hadn't learned it back then.

DIM: Mm-hm. Thank you so much, Don. I really—this has been a great interview. We really appreciate you taking the time to do this. And if there's nothing else you want to say, I think we can conclude the interview?

BOARDMAN: Well, I just want to say thank you. I'm glad you're doing it. It was quite a moment in—in history, and Dartmouth history in particular, so thanks for your time and energies in making it work.

DIM: My pleasure.

BOARDMAN: And I'll visit the Rauner [Special Collections] Library to see what you finally come up with.

DIM: [Chuckles.] Absolutely. Please do.

BOARDMAN: Okay, thank you.

DIM: With that being the end of our interview, it is now 2:32 p.m., and I am concluding the recording.

BOARDMAN: Good. Thank you.

[End of interview.]