

James [R.] Grant [III] '69
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
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Transcribed by Karen Navarro

HUNTER: This is Ali Hunter, Class of 2019 at Dartmouth College. I'm sitting at Rauner [Special Collections] Library in Hanover, New Hampshire, with Jim Grant, Class of 1969. It is April 20, 2018. And this interview is being conducted as part of the Dartmouth Vietnam Project. So, Jim, welcome to Dartmouth. We're going to start at the beginning. Can you tell me a bit about when and where you were born? What were your parents like?

GRANT: Sure. I was born in Rochester, New York, and then we moved, when I was a year old we moved to southern California, where my mother was originally from. She met my dad during World War II. He was in the Navy and she lived in San Diego, and so they got married at the end of the war as he was about to get out of the Navy. Actually, my dad was a Dartmouth graduate [James Robert Grant Jr.], Class of '45. He came back and finished his degree here, because the V-12 program took over Dartmouth during World War II, and where they were training officers. V-12 standing for "Victory in 12," 12 weeks. [laughter] But, so there were no civilian students at Dartmouth anymore. And so, he went into the Navy. He was commissioned and had served in the South Pacific for a while. He was getting his—he was in Coronado, California, which is in San Diego, being trained to be a naval gunfire liaison officer for the invasion of Japan. And he had spent time as a gunnery officer on a destroyer in the Pacific, and was in the Battle of Okinawa. And then, with that experience, they then sent him to school to become a naval gunfire liaison officer, which means he goes ashore with the first Marines when they were going to invade Japan, and he calls for gunfire support from the Navy ships. And because he's familiar with the ships and what they can do, he's able to communicate effectively and provide that support.

Anyway, he came back, and then he was from Rochester, New York after, and they lived there for a year, and I suspect my mother said, "That's enough of the cold weather. We're going back to San Diego." And, so I grew up from a year old to 18 in southern California. And then came back here to go

to school, and a big part of that was because I had a scholarship with the Navy, which is called the Navy NROTC scholarship. Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps. And there were scholarships here. And there was a pretty good contingent of people in that program, as well as the Air Force and the Army. They had programs here, too. Some scholarship students and some non-scholarship students.

HUNTER: So, can we rewind just a little bit?

GRANT: Sure.

HUNTER: Talking just about childhood. So, you grew up in southern California. Was your dad still in the Army when you were growing up?

GRANT: No, he left the Navy just about the time he got married, and he came back to Dartmouth to finish up. He was out of the Navy then. Although he did stay in the Reserves until he had what they called the equivalent of 20 years of active duty. And, then when he was 65, I believe, he was able to retire and receive some benefits from the Navy as a result of his Reserve. Reserve meant that once a month he would train for—he'd have classes, and then every summer for two weeks he'd go on active duty. And he was never deployed. They didn't call him up for Korea or anything else. So...

HUNTER: Was that a big influence on your childhood?

GRANT: Yeah, well, having lived—although I didn't live actually in San Diego. My grandparents lived there where my mother's from. And that was a big Navy town. And my grandfather was in World War I, my father in World War II, and then my mother had a number of cousins who were naval aviators. So, yes, I was exposed to the military and I assumed at some point I would be serving in the military. That's just what I had thought. And, so when I was looking at applying to schools, my choice was either the University of California, which really there's almost no tuition for California students if you had a certain grade average and so forth, and then the other choice was Dartmouth. And if, basically I had said if I got the Navy ROTC scholarship, which was tuition based, covered books, expenses, then I would take it. And it happened. It all came together, and so I ended up coming to Dartmouth.

HUNTER: Did you have any siblings?

GRANT: I have a sister who was two years younger than I am.

HUNTER: So, when you were growing up in this Navy household, was it, the political climate when you were maybe in high school, sort of what were you expecting, if you were expected to do NROTC, but did the Cold War, I guess, have any impact on what you thought?

GRANT: Because, you know, a number of family, extended as well as close family members, had served, I just assumed at some point I would serve. I mean, I never thought I wouldn't. Hadn't made explicit plans until I was in high school, and then started looking at college, and the situation in Vietnam, which was you could get drafted. And so I said, *You know, if I put all of this together in a Navy ROTC scholarship, I can serve, certainly finish my education, have it paid for,* and then in the end you have a four year—a total of a six year obligation. Four years have to be active duty and two years of Reserves. I spent six years on active duty after I graduated.

HUNTER: So, you were thinking about Vietnam even before you got to Dartmouth?

GRANT: Well, yeah, I mean, I graduated from high school in '65, so Vietnam was starting to wind up then, certainly. And by the time I graduated from Dartmouth in '69, we'd already been through the big Tet Offensive in '68, and so things were going pretty strong then.

HUNTER: So, did you feel like your parents influenced your decision to come to Dartmouth?

GRANT: Yes. Actually, my mother I think was stronger on that than my father. My father was very careful not to push me in any particular direction, but my mother, having been here and married and lived here—I think they lived here six to nine months while he finished his degree—and so she was here and she experienced the college, and she thought it would be a great place for me. She just thought it would be a good match. And, so she probably was pushing harder than my dad to look at it, and so I think that prompted me. My father, though, was very good. He was the one that introduced me to the Navy ROTC program, because he said, "This is a nice

way to get an education.” He said, “If you’re really interested in the military, rather than go to the military academy like Annapolis or someplace, you can get a liberal arts education, they’ll pay you, and you still get a regular commission, go in and decide what you’re going to do from there, whether you stay in or make it a career or get out after your obligation.”

Yeah, so my family, we certainly were pro-military, and I don’t recall a lot of discussion. I recall seeing people in uniform, whether it was simply physically where I was or because they were members of the family or extended family. So, it wasn’t foreign to me and it wasn’t a foreign concept, and it was almost like an expectation that at some point I’d probably serve.

HUNTER: So, you arrive at Dartmouth. What were your expectations? And obviously, as you say, in ’65 things are ramping up. Just, even aside from the war, what was your sort of introduction to Dartmouth like? What did you do?

GRANT: Well, first of all, I’m 3,000 miles from home, okay, and the climate is much different, although when you arrive here it’s still summer. Went through the freshman trip; I met some people who became very close friends the rest of my career. And then, of course, I lived in Wheeler Hall in a triple, so I had a couple of roommates, one from Maine and one from Massachusetts. My expectations were probably just to survive this experience. And the military and what was going on in Vietnam didn’t enter—the Vietnam situation didn’t enter into much of my thinking because I had a four year obligation. I mean, I was going to go through school, get my degree. And, of course, if you’re in the ROTC program, you have a drill once a week, you have naval science classes, some of which are credit and some are non-credit, and if they’re non-credit, it’s in addition to what you normally take. And, then every summer you’re on active duty for two weeks, and that’s part of your training. And then, when you graduate, you’re commissioned and you go right into the—in my case the Navy.

So, my focus was my studies, my Navy ROTC obligations, getting through all that, and of course, as part of all that, you’re starting to experience—I mean, you hear about what’s going on in Vietnam, and of course it became even more significant once the demonstrations started on campus, and

that became quite significant. I remember at one point we were marching—and we used to march sometimes not too far from the center of campus when we drilled once a week, and we'd be in uniform—and at one point there was a major demonstration, and at that point there were—you know, we were the focus when we were marching of that demonstration. And that was a bit upsetting in the sense that we wondered why we were the target of all this, and it took a long time to figure that out. And fortunately, I was able to talk to—one roommate in particular was very active in SDS, Students for a Democratic Society, and he was careful to say he respected what I was doing and he tried to explain why he felt the way he did. And I would say that overall, we survived the experience with mutual respect, I think, for the most part. I know they took over the administration building [Parkhurst Hall] and things like that. And, you know, that was an event that happened, you're certainly aware of it, but it didn't seem to interrupt anything that I was doing.

HUNTER: Yeah, so, in reference to what you were doing, what did you like to study?

GRANT: Well, I started out as an engineering major, and then I decided to continue and become a math major. So I was a math major. But, you also had the rest of, especially the first two years, you got your distributive requirements, so the English, the language, those kinds of things. And as kind of a science or a math major, some of those could be fairly challenging. And, of course, as any student comes to Dartmouth, I would assume, because my friends felt the same way, you did pretty good in high school, and then you come here, and so did everybody else, and suddenly you can't do anything right in the classroom, I mean, for the most part. And, you know, I said, *Gee, I thought I could write a paper. I thought I could read and interpret a novel.* And you figure no, you can't do any of those things right. So, it takes you a while to get your legs underneath you to get through that and learn and make the changes necessary to be able to survive it all.

HUNTER: Were there any professors that you felt particularly close to or the people...

GRANT: It's a good question. Can I remember their names? There was one—my freshman year I had an English professor—

gosh, I wish I could—this is almost 50 years ago, you know—maybe his name will come to me.

HUNTER: That's okay.

GRANT: But, he was particularly helpful. And what I liked, and the reason I had so much respect for Dartmouth, is because the professors were accessible. I mean, you weren't being taught by graduate students. These were professors, and in some cases full professors, and they had office hours, and you could go in, and I found them very understanding, and they did everything they could to help you. They seemed to understand your situation, especially as a freshman, the transition coming from high school into college. And I appreciated that very much. And I hope I can remember his name, but I can't. And I had some really good math professors that I enjoyed, and again, I'm gonna—I might get a lightbulb going to tell me who the names were. Psychology, I enjoyed psychology, too. A little different end of the spectrum from math. Maybe that's why I enjoyed it, because it was a bit of a relief from that. So...

HUNTER: What about social life or sports, or what did you spend your time doing?

GRANT: Well, growing up in southern California... When I came to Dartmouth, I wasn't big enough to play football. The track coach asked me if I would go out for the track team, and I said, "Yeah, I'd love to," and I said, "but I really would like to ski." Because I had skied, and this was a perfect opportunity to ski more here, especially because they had a PE [Physical Education] program where for I think \$30 for the season, you'd get bus transportation to the Dartmouth Skiway and you'd get your free lessons, usually given by students. So, this was a wonderful opportunity to do something like that and to ski more. And, of course, we got a lot of snow, so that was... But he said to me, "We really have one season. It's indoor/outdoor. It's kind of an extension, the outdoor's an extension of the indoor, so you couldn't ski if you're gonna run track." And, you know, after having been in organized athletics through most of my life, I just decided I wasn't going to do it. I wanted to ski and I was going to ski and that's it.

But, the irony is, then we get to early spring term or the end of winter term, and a friend of mine talked me into going out

for lacrosse. [laughter] And I'd never played the game before. And so I played freshman lacrosse, and I earned my numerals, which was your freshman letter in that. I wasn't very good, but I was quick and fast, and so I could do some things. But, I wasn't terribly good. And I didn't continue with it. But, after that I played intramural sports. The first year I played for Wheeler Hall in various sports, and then after that I was in Kappa Sigma fraternity, and I used to play—I did about anything—I ran track for them, we'd play football, you know, which was flag or tag football, wrestled. I got creamed in wrestling one time. They said, "We need you to wrestle," and I did, and it wasn't a fun experience. I didn't play basketball. I wasn't good enough at that. So, I did a lot. I played rugby with them and stuff. And it was a lot of fun to do those various things, and it didn't require the kind of commitment that a varsity sport required.

HUNTER: Can you tell me more about Kappa Sigma?

GRANT: Well, at that time we were an all male school. And so, you couldn't join a fraternity your freshman year, but then after that at least a lot of my friends and people I lived with in a dormitory would join fraternities. And I had made some close friendships with several upperclassmen who were in Kappa Sigma, and it seemed to be natural for me to look at that as an opportunity, and I ended up pledging it and joining it. And I'd like to think... I thought that the fraternity life was kind of an extension of the social life, and I had some of my best friends in different fraternities. And so, it wasn't like you were isolating yourself as much as you just chose, in my case I chose to live there my junior and senior year, but I still had friends in other fraternities and we were able to maintain our relationships regardless.

And dating was a bit of a challenge because there weren't any women on campus. But, you start to meet people, you know. Friends have girlfriends who have friends, and they set up dates and so forth, and especially the big weekends typically you'd have a date come up on campus. And those early days, before you could have a date come up, there was a college hostess here on campus. You had to show proof that you had a room for your date. Then she would call the school where your date was coming from, verifying that they had a room to stay in. I mean, those were things we did. And on a big weekend if you were caught after hours in a room, in your room, you were thrown off, you were thrown

out of school, because they had curfew. We had curfew then. I mean, do you even know what that word means?

HUNTER: Yes.

GRANT: So, we had curfew. And there were campus police who roamed the halls [laughter] listening for activity after hours. And so...

HUNTER: They still do that, don't worry.

GRANT: We just accepted it as just the way it was. By the time I graduated, all that was gone. I mean, all of it was gone. And then my senior year I ended up dating my wife. We met. And she was a student at Endicott [College, Beverly, MA], and my best friend dated her roommate, and so, through several events we got together, and then we dated all our senior year, and then I graduated, was commissioned, and then we ended up getting engaged after I came back from my first tour in Vietnam. And then we got married that following May.

So, I came back in like February, took some leave to come back because she was from Rhode Island, and visited her, met her parents for the first time, and then got engaged. And I'm sure they were a bit shocked, because they'd never met me before. And then we got married in May. We got married in Rhode Island, moved to, basically to San Diego where my ship was, and that was it. And then, the ship was in the shipyards, went through that experience, went through refresher training which is basically making sure you're prepared for the ship to operate effectively, and then we went over to Vietnam for the second tour for me. And I was gone—it's usually a six month tour, but that's quite a shock, because we had just been married less than a year. And I remember on our anniversary, May 23rd, my parents entertained my wife because I wasn't there. [laughter]

HUNTER: That's so sweet.

GRANT: And she remembers to this day they had taken her out to dinner and everything, because I wasn't there. So...

HUNTER: Well, going back to Dartmouth, obviously at this point Vietnam is a talked about factor on campus. Was that a sort of factor of social life? Did people talk about it or was it sort of not...

GRANT: Well, it's interesting to me. I just don't recall. Now, it could be that I don't want to remember those things that went on, because I was on a path to go in and serve, and there was no question at the time that one way or another you were going to be in Vietnam, in my case aboard a ship, or there were other ways, too. I mean, they had Navy personnel serving in other capacities in country. But, one of the things that you can do is, you put in your choices of what you would like to do when you're commissioned, and based on your standing in your class and your grades and everything else, they will give you one of your choices, hopefully, not always. I happened to get my first choice. I wanted to go to San Diego and be on destroyers. And part of that decision was based on the experience I had in the summer training. Before my senior year, I thought maybe I wanted to go in the submarines, which would have meant nuclear power training, because all the subs then were nuclear powered. So, you went to a very difficult, challenging Navy school, nuclear power school. And before you did that, you were supposed to be interviewed by Admiral [Hyman G.] Rickover, who is the father of the nuclear Navy. And there were stories about that interview that just would curl your hair.

Anyway, I did serve. I spent two weeks—actually, I'm sorry I said two weeks. It's a six week training in the summer. I said two weeks, but it's six weeks. So, I spent six weeks on a submarine out of New London [CT]. It happened to be a conventional submarine, which means it's diesel powered and when it's submerged it operates on batteries. But it's very limited in its ability underwater to operate, because the batteries can only allow you to move it three to five knots at most and for limited periods of time. That's why we went to nuclear power for the new submarine fleet. I decided I didn't like that. I was going to stay on top of the water instead of going underneath the water. And so, my choice when I graduated was to go in destroyers, which is, you know, they're sleek, they're fast, they're maneuverable, and there's I think a sense that you're kind of a sporting person when you go into the destroyer Navy.

HUNTER: Why didn't you like the submarines?

GRANT: Well, too confining. This particular sub was the oldest submarine in the Navy. And it was actually used primarily I think for research and things like that. But, unfortunately

because of that, it was so much smaller, and the environment—we were underway for two weeks one time and the environment was pretty bad. I mean, it was hot, humid, you couldn't shower, there was no laundry to be done, and it was a pretty bad experience. Now, admittedly, the nuclear Navy would have been much different. But, that's all I needed to decide, *I'm gonna stay above the water.*

HUNTER: What year was that?

GRANT: That training took place in the summer of 1968.

HUNTER: So, your junior summer?

GRANT: Junior summer, right. That would be my last of three summer training periods before I was commissioned, because I was commissioned the day before I graduated here at Dartmouth.

HUNTER: Can you tell me about the previous two?

GRANT: Well, yeah, I mean, what they tried to do in the training is expose you to various aspects of the Navy. And the first summer I actually was out in Long Beach [CA] and I was put on an aircraft carrier, which is probably the largest ship in the Navy. And there were all kinds of midshipmen on that. We went to Hawaii, which was nice. And it wasn't too bad, but you ended up, that summer was dedicated to basically your responsibility is you worked as an enlisted man, to understand, basically try to understand their life and what their responsibilities were and the work, and get a feeling for that as that was.

Then the next summer we had two aspects of the summer. One was with the Marine Corps, because we had the option of becoming a Marine officer, but you had to decide that before the start of your junior year. So, that summer was to expose you to the Marine Corps, and then to expose you to naval aviation, decide if you wanted to fly. So, there's three weeks devoted to each of those. And then, your final summer, you got to choose, *okay, what would you like to do?* and that's when I chose submarines to give myself an opportunity to look at that as a possible option.

HUNTER: And what did you think about the Marine Corps and the naval aviation?

GRANT: Well, quite frankly, the Marine Corps was appealing in some senses, but the average lifespan of a second lieutenant in Vietnam in the Marine Corps, I mean, I think it was measured in minutes in combat. I may have that entirely wrong, but by the time it gets back to you, you know that. So, I must admit, I'll take the more gentlemanly approach and become an officer on board ship, where you sleep in a bunk, you have hot meals, you have showers, and you conduct yourself accordingly. So, it was a very practical—yeah, I think it was very practical..

HUNTER: That factored into your decision making?

GRANT: Oh, are you kidding? Absolutely, by then, now that we're talking about, okay, I matriculated in '65, '66, '67, '68, so we're talking about the war is really cranked up then. I mean, the peak of the war, I think, as far as this country's concerned was the Tet Offensive in early '68. In other words, and if you've heard that term before, you know that that's where the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese basically spent at least I would say, from what I read, six months or so staging, getting ready to attack various cities, one of which was Hue. And nobody was prepared for it. And the problem is, based on what I read recently, is that the military leadership didn't believe—when these attacks occurred, the military leadership didn't believe that they were hearing the truth. They couldn't believe that the enemy had staged so many troops, and the attacks were as big as they were.

So, yeah, so by the time you get ready, and you know you're going to be commissioned in a year or whatever it is, you start thinking about very practical things like survival, what's going to happen, you know, where do I want to be, because we're going to be there four years. I mean, I'm going to have at least four years active duty. And, so I think, you know, to be honest with you, I just said, "You know, I'm going to stay with the Navy."

HUNTER: So, news coming back from Vietnam was making big splashes in NROTC and ROTC circles on campus? Or was it sort of everyone was thinking about it for themselves?

GRANT: Okay, the first part of that question was people coming back?

HUNTER: News.

GRANT: Oh, news coming back. Combination. I think the news, it depends on if you focused on that. I mean, I had friends who focused on that, and part of me says, *Well, they're concerned about getting drafted and what's going on over there, and so they're paying attention to it.* I didn't pay that much attention because I didn't have a choice. I mean, I had made—by the time you get to junior year, you make a commitment. You no longer—if you do leave the ROTC program, you will be sent on active duty as an enlisted man, I mean, because of the scholarship and everything else. So, by the time you get to that stage, you've committed, you've basically signed an oath of allegiance to the country that you're going to serve, serve honorably. So, then it becomes a very practical situation where *okay, I'm going to be commissioned, I'm gonna be in the military, and now the important thing for me is to do the best I can at Dartmouth, and get the most I can out of these last two years.* Now, that's me. That's me. I can compartmentalize pretty well. I can lock something up and throw it away into a part of my skull that nobody could ever find. [laughter]

HUNTER: Were people getting drafted?

GRANT: Yes. Not openly necessarily. But, we had some—I think I had at least one or two classmates that enlisted. I remember one gentleman—do I remember his name?—he enlisted in the Marine Corps. I think he spent two years, and he had at least one tour in there. He came back, and we talked to him a lot about his experience, because this was very unusual for somebody here at Dartmouth to have actually served there and to be a student on campus. That's less so these days, because I know James Wright had an initiative to try to, I think, open the admissions up to former military personnel to allow them to come to a place like Dartmouth to get an education. But here, almost unheard of. I mean, it was very rare that that was the case. Unless you happened to meet an alumnus who was serving and came back, but that didn't happen very frequently.

HUNTER: So, you were talking about it, and then these protests are happening, right?

GRANT: On campus? You're talking about on campus?

HUNTER: Yeah. Did that affect your day to day on campus like with the NROTC? Or was it—sort of, how did that...

GRANT: It did in the sense that once those major protests occurred, especially when we were marching that one time I told you about, and to be honest with you, I can't tell you what year that was, but we then purposefully drilled, marched further away from campus. We used to—in the winter, we used to go to Leverone Field House, and that still was a dirt floor. Is it still dirt yet?

HUNTER: I think it's...

GRANT: Combination thereof? Anyway, it was pretty musty. But, that's where we would drill, not as much time, but in the winter. Drilling meaning, you put on a uniform, you go there, you get into formation, there's a bit of an inspection, and then you drill as a platoon, and a couple of platoons make up a company, and so forth, and you drill that way. And, then in the more clement weather, the spring, snow melts and stuff, we'd drill outside, and we used to drill in a parking lot that I don't even know if it still exists, but it was a long ways from campus, rather than marching around like I think we had marched on the streets around here in the early years. And once those protests took place, as I recall, we then made sure that we weren't as visible in what we were doing, therefore not trying to provoke any incidents or concerns.

HUNTER: I know that there were protests on the parade days.

GRANT: Yeah, I think what you're talking about is, and what I remember, is probably the celebration of Memorial Day or something like that where we marched in the town parade. It's interesting, because you bring up probably one of the most difficult aspects of all of this for me personally and others, is the way the military were treated during this war. And I've had some personal examples. And, you know, first I remember being a division officer. When I was commissioned, I went through various schools, and then I went aboard ship, and I was an assistant division officer. There were about 30 men in our division, 30 enlisted men. And then, within less than a year, the division officer was transferred. I became the division officer, and so I had 30 men reporting to me, and these are enlisted men. And a lot of them were very young men. And I remember there were at least three, four in my division who had been to two or

three years of college, and maybe through their draft number thought they were going to get drafted and decided to join the Navy, make a commitment.

But, what saddened me is that even in San Diego, which was a military town, and we're wearing very short hair in those days, there was a lot of discrimination. The young guys couldn't find dates. Nobody wanted to be around them. The first thing you did is get out of your uniform. I mean, you just didn't want to be in your uniform at any point in time, because of the way people thought about the military. And, in other words, they were really blaming us for what was going on there. And, obviously we're not the people to blame. We were taking orders and doing what we've been asked to do, and what we had, you know, we'd taken an oath to follow. And, now, there is a point at which you're told, "You do not follow an illegal order," okay? So, there are always points at which you won't proceed, based on what you're asked to do. But, that never occurred in my case. I mean, that was never the situation, at least where I was stationed and what I was doing.

HUNTER: Right, the sense of wanting to distance yourself from your uniform.

GRANT: Uh-huh.

HUNTER: For example, was that the same on Dartmouth's campus? Or more after?

GRANT: Yeah, for the most part. I mean, I believe drill days were Wednesdays, I believe, and so you get up in the morning, go to classes, and then I think drill started at I'm thinking 2:00 you had to be in place. So, you put the uniform on at 1:30, made sure that you're appropriate, maybe shaved because you hadn't shaved, because you had the Navy haircut, too. Every couple of weeks you'd cut your hair. These were some of the things you had to do. And the minute you got back from the drill, you took your uniform off. No, you did not walk around campus in your uniform, unless you absolutely had to for some reason because your class schedule didn't permit you to go and change into your uniform. But, I don't ever remember being in it. I know I had some classmates who did occasionally wear their uniform to class, and I don't think there was any problem with that.

But I know that yeah, we just wanted—we wanted to be invisible, okay? Just avoid it all, and avoid the problem, which is what we were doing, I guess, when we were on liberty, which is basically you're not on duty, for instance, unless you're on watch. I mean, but if the ship's in port, usually at 4:00 every day those that don't have the duty, and a small number of people do, and it rotates, the minute you—in the case of an officer, you'd actually take off the uniform before you left the ship, if you could. Enlisted men had a problem. They didn't have much storage on board ship, and their storage was supposed to be for their uniforms. And we ran into some disciplinary problems where people tried to store civilian clothes there and everything. But, typically somewhere near the base there was always a changing place where they could keep their clothes, and the minute they got off the ship, boom, they went there to change their—got into civilian clothes and tried to distance themselves from this. And I don't think it was because we were ashamed of what we were doing or we felt bad about what we were doing. We were just trying to avoid this confrontation with people who obviously had no intention of listening to another side of the conversation.

I read a book recently called *All Falling Faiths[^r: Reflections on the Promise and Failure of the 1960s]*, by J. Harvie Wilkinson [III], a retired federal judge. In the book basically his premise was that during the Vietnam War, our society changed in the way it communicated with each other. And rather than having a dialogue and compromise, it was *my way or the highway*, and *not only are you wrong, you're a jerk, you're an idiot, and you're ugly, too*. I mean, it was fraught with that kind of thing. And I think the emotions just took over. So, there was no rhetoric, I mean, there was no conversation. And you quickly learned that, that you couldn't defend what you were doing because they weren't going to listen to what you had to say anyway. And his premise was, what we see today started during that era, and we are even worse today than we used to be.

And, of course, Congress is a perfect example of that. I mean, you know? One side will not listen to the other side. I mean, I'm retired now after three years, and in the business world I worked in, the key was compromise: listening carefully, communicating, trying to put your emotions aside, and finding a way to do business together. And you could do that if there was mutual respect and an acknowledgement

that there are going to be differences. So, it's just absolutely baffling to see what's going on in this country. And you mentioned that earlier before we started to tape this, you know, what you're saying and everybody is. I mean, it's absolutely ridiculous. And where did it start? And this book, this particular book, says it started back then, whatever was happening...

And I suspect, after reading other books—*Stolen Valor*[: *How the Vietnam Generation Was Robbed of Its Heroes and Its History*], by [B. G.] Burkett, I read that. And he was an Army officer who served a couple of tours in Vietnam. And he went through and he tried to document all of the reporting that was done about the war and the data that was gathered and the stories about battles and things like this, and he found just so much misinformation in that. Now, some of it was the news media just not reporting correctly; others of it was the government wasn't reporting things correctly; and the military wasn't reporting things correctly. Everybody was focused on trying to justify, I believe, justify what we were doing over there, justify staying there, that they'd manipulate the data so that it looked like we were winning the war, when in fact we weren't.

And then, the other book I read that I remember distinctly is *Hue* (H-u-e), which is the name of a city in Vietnam, South Vietnam, 1968 [: *A Turning Point of the American War in Vietnam* by Mark Bowden] and it's basically the story of the Tet Offensive that we talked about. And Hue was a beautiful historic city in Vietnam, and this particular book was written about the Tet Offensive and the attack on Hue, and the fact that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong basically took over that city for about two weeks, never had the intention, as they did nowhere else in the Tet Offensive, of holding onto it. They just wanted to beat us up so bad, and make sure the American people got that story, that we would no longer support the war. And bingo, that's exactly what happened. We lost our taste for being over there, for doing anything over there, and that was the beginning of the end. I mean, it didn't end—Nixon didn't pull everybody out till about '72, but that was the beginning of the end.

And the problem is, I referenced earlier the fact that the senior military staff over there, and [General William C.] Westmoreland was a key, was ignoring the reports they were getting from the battlefield. They just wouldn't believe...

“You don’t have 2,000 people attacking you.” “Well, I’m here. I’m telling you we do.” And he says, “You’re wrong.” You know, it was just an arrogance that he couldn’t believe. But, why would he do that? Probably because of the political pressures that were surrounding this whole thing about what you could do or couldn’t do. And that was I think a key. I mean, certainly, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong won the war at that point in time, because it was soon thereafter that we lost our appetite. We weren’t going to stay there. And we ended up slowly withdrawing. But, there are stories about making significant sacrifices to take ground, hills and things, and then, within a week leaving them, and then a month later going back and trying to retake those targets.

HUNTER: You mentioned that during this time people just stopped, changed the way that they communicated with each other and weren’t listening. But, earlier you mentioned a story about your roommate, who was part of SDS. Can you tell me a little bit more about that interaction?

GRANT: Actually, I have to—you know, we lived together in a room for two years, and we were very different people. I mean, he was certainly—I was very conservative and he was less so. He was a government major and I’m a math major. So, we were really experiencing Dartmouth in different ways, especially with my ROTC.

HUNTER: Do you remember his name?

GRANT: Richard Saltman [‘69]. But, we stayed friends. I mean, I remember that we were able to talk about this and he was able to respect what I had decided to do and what I was doing here. And for the most part I was able to understand his position on this. Now, since I retired, and I must admit, during my working life, I ran into few people who’d served in the military, my age being, I’ll be 71 in May. But, I just didn’t run into a lot of people. And the other part of it is that if I did, I didn’t know it, because most of us just kept our mouth shut about what we did or didn’t do.

An interesting situation happened to me. I don’t know how much detail you want of my military experience. But, after four months on my second tour, after I had been married, the Navy decided to transfer me, and they decided to transfer me to a program which was going to lead to a year in

Vietnam as an advisor to the Vietnamese Navy. And, so they transferred me to a Vietnamese language school for nine months, where all I did is study the Vietnamese language. And then, from there they transferred me back to San Diego, where I went through survival training. And here's a Navy officer teaching you how to shoot every kind of gun there is, and you're in fatigues, and that's it.

And basically, my job was going to be go back and be an advisor to the river boats of the South Vietnamese Navy. And I wasn't too happy about that, because this was an all-volunteer program, and I wasn't a volunteer. When I got to language school, I was a lieutenant JG [Junior Grade], which is, you know, you start out as an ensign, you're promoted to a JG, and then I was a year away from making full lieutenant, which is the equivalent of captain in the Army. Everyone else, whether enlisted and officers—but all the officers were full lieutenants. So, I said, *Gees, I'm a young guy. They're all in my same year group. Because they volunteered, they were spot promoted.* Now, the insignia wasn't the big deal. There's a lot of money involved here, and I'm married, and you're scratching, you know, trying to make things work, and boy, that would have been a lot of money. So, I called Washington. They have a guy named your detailer, and he's supposed to look out for you. And I said, "What's going on here? I'm not a volunteer. Everybody's a volunteer." I said, "Spot promote me and give me some money." And "nah, nah, nah, I can't." He said, finally, "I'll make you a deal. If you don't go to Vietnam for this third tour, I'll give you any duty station you want."

So, we go through nine months of that. My wife gets pregnant, because we're not sure I'm going to come back after that. I mean, that's the practical part of it. And then, we go back to San Diego, and at that point she couldn't fly after eight months, so she came back to Rhode Island to set up and live with her folks for a year while I was deployed. This was going to be for a year. Well, then, that summer, just as I'm finishing my training, word comes back that Nixon, he's taking all the troops out and he's sending nobody new over, including advisors. Whoopee! So, I get on the phone with Washington, and I said, "You remember me? Guess what? I'm not going." And he said, "What do you want?" And I said, "I want to teach a Navy ROTC unit on the East Coast." And that was the University of Virginia [Charlottesville, VA]. So, I spent three years there, a year more than I needed to,

because I only needed to spend another year on active duty, but I said, "Well, I'll just stay here for three years total, so that gives me six years of active duty, so I'm done." And it was a wonderful duty station. I mean, we bought our first house. Our oldest daughter was born there. And so, it was just nice, because we had been separated so much.

Well, I was teaching in the Navy ROTC unit, and then I taught naval engineering, and so I'd be in uniform when I taught. Well, then when we got near the end of that, and I actually got a Master's degree while I was there—when we got to the end, I was able to use the student placement office, because I was a graduate student, to get job interviews. So, I'm getting these job interviews, and typically I'd change if I could into civilian clothes. But, this one time I couldn't, because I had a class and this interview. So, I go in there and I walk in, and the first thing the guy says to me, "Don't think that uniform impresses me." I thought, *Oh, my God*. And I didn't say anything. And I should have said something. And I didn't. And we had the interview and everything, and I left there, and I think I reported to the placement office what he said. But, I should have taken his business card and I should have called his boss and I should have said... But, see, this is what was going on, is that who are you going to talk to that's going to have a different view? And of all the experiences I had, that was the one that was most poignant, because I was trying to transition out of the military and get a job, and he made a statement like that, I mean, like I'm trying to impress anybody. I'm not.

But, the irony of that is that at 22, as long as I was on that ship, 23, 24, I have never, and very few people will have had the kind of responsibility that I had, responsible for the number of men I was; on watch, responsible for the entire ship. And you've probably heard about some of the collisions that have occurred with Navy ships recently, a year ago or so. And, if you read any of the accounts of those, it really boiled down to poor training and bad decision-making. And I remember my brother-in-law calling me and said, "What the hell's going on with your Navy?" This was just a year ago. And I said, "I'll tell you, I don't know, but it wouldn't have happened when I was there."

And so, my point was that you're not going in there and saying, "Look what I've done. Look at the responsibility I've had," and then, and expecting a pat on the back. You're just

going in there, “How about some respect in what I did for the last four years or six years I’ve served my country and done what I was asked to do.” Now, my service consisted, when I was on board ship, I was the combat information center officer. That’s the brains of the ship. That’s where the radar is and everything else. And, so that was my job. So, I was responsible for the radarman and the electronics technicians. Very bright, and a lot of these guys had college. And, so it was a challenging—I mean, you needed to find an effective way to talk to these guys, get them motivated to do what they want to do.

But, in addition to that, what you had to do is you had to stand watch. Now, as a junior officer, you were a junior officer of the deck. So, when you’re underway, there is a junior officer of the deck and then there’s an officer of the deck, who’s a senior. Now, the captain may be on the bridge or may not. You have the watch, and then the person who’s driving the ship, giving the orders, is the conning officer, and either one of those officers could be the conning officer. Typically, the JO [junior officer] was, because the senior, the officer of the deck, is trying to look at the broader picture of what’s going on. So, that’s happening all the time you’re underway.

What we did over there is two things. We provided plane guard to the aircraft carriers who were launching strikes, typically into North and South Vietnam, and our job was to follow a stern at 1,500 yards and pick up any planes that crashed, if they did, and just protect the carrier, because the carrier’s a huge ship. And believe it or not, it’s very vulnerable to small boat attack. So, our job was to protect it. And we never had an incident where we had to.

But, the other job, and it was probably primary to that, was providing gunfire support off the coast of Vietnam. So, we’re a mobile artillery vehicle. In other words, that ship can move, and if we have to we can move it 28 to 30 knots from one location to the other. So, if we got a call for fire, we could move the ship and place it where we need it to be within a mile or two miles of the coast, and provide gunfire support up to eight to ten miles away. And we had three 5”/50 [caliber] guns, huge, huge, guns. Huge. And so, the officer of the deck’s responsibility then, got a call for fire, and you then had to release the guns to fire. And we had old analog computers. You’d put in the coordinates of your target, you

had your coordinates, you enter that into this old analog computer, which is probably bigger than this room or something, and you'd come out with a solution which tells you the angle at which your guns are supposed to be at for elevation, and then the position relative to the ship. And the last thing you did as the officer of the deck is saying, "The target's there. Which way is the gun pointing?" And I can't tell you the number of times the gun pointed the other way. And you say, "Yeah, you'd better recalculate." But, the point is, you're making a final decision to fire those guns. And then, there's somebody who's the equivalent of a naval gunfire liaison officer calling this mission. Some are airborne, some are on the ground. And they then radio in what your gun damage assessment (GDA) is. So, that is what consumed the first two tours over there on board ship, those two items.

HUNTER: Did you know that that's the role that you wanted to perform? Because you mentioned you went to naval school before you deployed to Vietnam.

GRANT: Well, I went to various schools. The schools train you to be a CSC officer [combat systems coordinator]. In other words, they gave me specific training in aspects aboard ship that you would have. I mean, navigation... I'm trying to think of the various things. But, more seamanship type of things, to allow you to transition more easily when you got aboard ship, for that. And, so when you say, did I know exactly what I was getting in for? No. Did I know that I would be aboard ship and probably drive the things? Yes. I mean, that's what surface—it's interesting, because then they created a designation called surface warfare officer. And where aviators will wear wings, and submariners would wear the dolphins, we then wore the equivalent, but it was for surface warfare, which was a ship breaking through the water. I mean, about as small like this that you wore on your chest. And so, that became a specialty. I mean, we were doing that already, and they just said, "Well, let's give them a name, a designation for what they're actually doing." So, I knew that in a broader... Did I know exactly what I was getting myself in for? No. No, I mean, you never do, because there's so much going on.

And don't forget, when you're doing all these things, the other thing is, you're a ship at sea, you're using fuel, using ammunition and using food. How do you get those things?

Well, you get them by intercepting—by meeting underway replenishment ships that can provide each of those things. Sometimes a single ship can provide most of that. Sometimes you have two or three different ships to get all those quantities, because not every ship carries everything. So, once every third night you steam all night to intercept these ships, which have a position of intended movement, so you know where they're going to be. And, of course, you don't want to run out of gas, you don't want to run out of food, you don't want to run out of ammo. So, about every third night you're up all night and you're getting whatever you need underway, sometimes in heavy sea states, and you're going 15 knots, 12 knots, to get all of these things. So, that's in addition to everything else that's going on. So, you're a pretty busy person. And I guess my point is, you don't have a lot of time to think about the esoteric things that are going on in the world, nor do you have any information, because everything's so slow to get to you anyway.

HUNTER: What about, so the first day, can you tell me about when you were shipping out and how you were feeling?

GRANT: Okay. After I finished my school in San Diego, my ship had already left San Diego and was in the Philippines, staging getting ready to go to Vietnam. So, they say, "Okay, we're gonna put you on a plane, and you're gonna fly to Travis Air Force Base. You're gonna fly to San Francisco and then go to Travis Air Force Base [CA]. Then we're gonna fly you to the Philippines." So, I'm saying goodbye to my family. At that time I was single. And I even have a picture I saw recently because my mother celebrated her 90th birthday and they had a picture of me saying goodbye to my mother and my sister in San Diego. I was in my uniform getting ready to go to the airport.

So, I go up there and I've got my sea bag with everything in it and all these heavy things, carrying it, and you get to where you're going, and they say, "Well, before we put you on your plane tomorrow, you need to get shots." And there were seven shots I had to get. And I didn't know the name, but one of them is like plague and all kinds of things. And they said, "Usually we give these over a period of time, but since you're leaving tomorrow, we're gonna give them to you all at once." So they gave me seven shots at once, four in one arm. And I'll tell you, I don't remember anything for 24 hours. [laughter] So, that was quite an experience.

Then you fly over to the Philippines, and then you find your way to the ship, which happened to be anchored. So I had to find a small boat to get me to the ship, and anyway, all these things. And yeah, everything was new, different, scary, you know, *How do I get there? What am I doing? My uniform is filthy and I'm going to report on board ship like this. Should I change? Do I need to do something now? This is too hot for the Philippines. Change to a different uniform.* And these are the things that a young man is trying to deal with, because he's never been there before and doesn't have any experience doing it.

HUNTER: Were you alone or were you traveling with other people heading to the same place?

GRANT: Not to the same ship. I mean, there were people on the plane. The people needed to find where they needed to go, but nobody else was going to my ship. That was me.

HUNTER: Okay, so then you get there, and what happens?

GRANT: They take me to the XO, the executive officer, and I'd already met him in San Diego, because I went to the ship to say hello, and I put a couple of things on board so I wouldn't have to carry everything. And he turned me over to a guy who said, "Change into your whites. You're going to have the officer of the deck watch." So, within an hour, I think it was, I changed into a different uniform and I was standing watch under his tutelage. So, they don't let any grass grow under your feet, that's for sure.

And then, gradually within a week or so we ended up deploying to Vietnam. Then I was a fairly junior officer, and so I was an assistant to the job that I was going to take over within—I thought it would be a year, but it actually turned out to be six or eight months. And so, you're standing watch with a more senior officer, and you're trying to learn as much as you can, and of course, there are times when you can't get anything right, because everything's so new to you. You just try to do the best you can, and hopefully you'll survive it all.

HUNTER: Do you have any particular memories that stand out of that time?

GRANT: Yeah, I remember there are things called collateral duties, and collateral duties are all the things that go on behind the scenes, for instance, Protestant lay leader. It's a small ship, you know, 130 men or so, maybe 20, 25 officers. And so, all the things that occur in life, you're trying to replicate there, so there's a Protestant lay leader. I mean, we had secret documents, so that there was the registered publications officer responsible for making sure that those didn't get lost and they were accounted for. And medical supply officer, so you had to inventory the medicines that the chief petty officer had. I may not have the title right. But, there's a collateral duty for just about anything you can think of.

One day, I stood watch, and then I went to my bunk. And at this point I shared a stateroom with four other officers. So, I went to sleep, and the next morning I got up to go on watch, and here's this note on my locker, and there's a screwdriver taped to it. Well, it turns out that the note was from the XO, and he says, "Dear Mr. Grant"—or he didn't say "Dear", he said, "Mr. Grant, you are now Protestant lay leader. Have services ready for 9:00 a.m." And it's, you know, I'm going on watch, and I'm going, *How am I going to do this?* And the screwdriver was taped on by my bunkmates who saw him put it there. I was fast asleep. He didn't dare wake me, because he didn't want any reaction, and so they put the screwdriver, *you've been screwed*. And then there was athletic officer. I think I was athletic officer, registered publications officer, the medical officer responsible for—see, we did carry for medicinal purposes those small bottles of liquor, whiskey, and they could be issued when needed. But you had to inventory them. I think every month or so you did an inventory. And the chief corpsman, who's the chief petty officer, he was the corpsman, much like a physician's assistant, he's the doctor on board. I mean, he did everything that was needed at that point in time. If it was really serious, you'd be transferred to a bigger ship through a helicopter. So, when you're inventorying this stuff, he's got to account for everything that's not there. [laughter] So, all these audits of accountability. So, those are all the things you're doing in your spare time. So you're pretty busy.

HUNTER: What would you do if you did have any spare time?

GRANT: Well, when we were in port at times. For instance, we had R&R in Hong Kong, and that was five days. And we anchored out in the harbor. You weren't allowed in Hong

Kong, because it was a neutral port to the war. You weren't allowed to perform any exterior maintenance on the ship. So, therefore, all you needed was a skeleton crew to just make sure the ship stayed safe, and of course, you can drag anchor, so you want to make sure that the ship's position isn't changing. And if, in an emergency you've got to have a crew that can get underway regardless of who's on the beach and on shore.

So, that was an interesting experience between just being, you know, a sightseer and... I remember one officer more senior to me said—he had been there before, and he said, "Well, you've gotta go to a tailor and you gotta have some clothes made, custom clothes." You know, I'm young. You've got to remember, we're not spending any money, because you're at sea for 30, 40, 50 days, so your pay piles up. And you're also getting combat pay, and it's tax free because you're in a war zone. So, you're starting to build up some pay, even though you don't make a lot as a young officer. And so, suddenly it sounds great, you know. So you go, and sure enough the first day the guy measures you out, and then the next day you go in and you're probably seeing pictures of it, got a half a sleeve here, he's got the stitches showing, and there's this guy, it looks like he's 90 years old, and he's doing everything. And then you go the third day and you pick up all of this stuff. And then it dawns on you that *I'm never gonna wear all this. What did I do this for?* [laughter] The experience, and that was it.

And you can buy stereos and cameras and all kinds of stuff inexpensively. They had an exchange there and there's no taxes and things like that. So, you ended up doing a lot of stuff like that. We were in Bangkok. That was the same situation, except we were pier side in Bangkok, and you have a lot of time free there, and sightseeing is what you do. You do a lot of that, at least I did, and I had some friends that would do that, depending on what you were going to do.

HUNTER: What did you think of Bangkok?

GRANT: Interesting. We anchored up the river—I don't even remember the river—and it was tough to get a hold of it, I mean, just the way people lived there. They lived right on the river, and there'd be dead animals floating down the river and they'd be brushing their teeth in the river. And they had these crazy boats, they looked like dugout canoes, but

they'd have a small car engine mounted on the back of it, and then they would have a very shallow shaft with a propeller on the end, and the things would go like hell, I mean, go 30, 40 miles an hour. [laughter] So, you'd typically take a small boat to the dock, and then, depending on where you were going, get a taxi or things like that. But, it was a real rude awakening. I mean, there are some very nice places, but there's just a lot of poverty everywhere.

And, also in Singapore. We were in Singapore and that was different, because that government is not tolerant. Everything was very clean in Singapore. And the Philippines, we spent a lot of time in the Philippines. Subic Bay, that's where we staged. In other words, we went there for maintenance and things like that for periods, so we'd be there for a month at a time sometimes. And Olongapo City was right outside the base, and that was just, I mean, that was wild. I mean, there wasn't much that couldn't be found in Olongapo City. Except you had to be careful, because if you wandered too far from the middle of it—you're on liberty, that is, and you're typically in civilian clothes, you weren't allowed to wear your... They had what they called the Hucks, which were the Communists, and the word was they'll kill you. They'll capture you and kill you. So, you wanted to make sure you didn't wander too far from the center of town, [laughter] because the Hucks would get you.

HUNTER: Can you clarify the name of the destroyer you were on and tell me a little bit about it?

GRANT: Yeah, it was the USS *Hull* (H-u-l-I), and it was DD-945. "DD" stands for destroyer, and 945 is the hull number, and it was a force Sherman class destroyer, which meant it was built... there were probably—I'm not going to guess—eight to ten of these that were built about the same time. Ours was built in Bath, Maine, and commissioned in '58. So, it was about 10 years old when I got on board. And since then, the ship is no longer in existence. There are examples of it at maybe naval museums. Ships, what happens is that as ships get older, then they design new ships, and the newest ships that we're seeing today, like the littoral models of the Navy, you don't even recognize them. I mean, some of the ships I've seen in San Diego, they don't even have any outside decks, which is smart, because when a storm hits and the sea state gets high, you don't want people on outside decks because they'll

get washed overboard. Very dangerous situation. So, everything, you know.

And then, the hulls that they have now are like catamaran hulls. So, everything is very different than it was. And this is fairly traditional. You could recognize it from a World War II destroyer, you could see the difference because the bow was higher, probable sleeker looking ship, supposedly more maneuverable. It ran off of steam turbines, so you had boilers that what you do is that basically the boiler would heat the water, which would become steam, and then you'd superheat it and run it through the generators, or excuse me, the turbines, just like you see an airplane jet has got. That's what a turbine looks like. And those turbines, then, would be attached to the shaft. We had two shafts, two screws, and that would turn the ship.

And the orders are given from the bridge of the ship, which is at a high point, and then translated down to the engine room to give them all kinds of different orders, you know, what speed you want to generate... With two screws you can turn on a dime; you can put one in reverse and one forward, and so you give them that information. You want one forward, one reverse, things like that. So, there's a lot of different things you can do as a result of that. And what else about it? Three 5"/54 [caliber] guns.

I remember the second tour in Vietnam, our captain said, "You know, somebody comes close to us, we don't have anything to defend ourselves, except maybe small arms like pistols and stuff, and maybe a couple of rifles." So, he got a 50 caliber machine gun mounted on the bridge that would protect us. And I thought that was pretty smart, a pretty good idea. And then, when we're off the coast of Vietnam, and in some cases we're a mile, maybe two miles at most, sometimes we're only moving at two to three knots, because to solve the gunfire problem, the slower you're moving, the easier the solution and the more accurate you are. So, we'd move at two to three knots.

Well, the problem is there were swimmers; the Viet Cong had swimmers which were called "sappers," and what they would do if you weren't careful is they'd swim underwater and attach a mine to your ship or something to blow it up. So, if we were in particular waters where we were concerned about that, we had what we called concussion grenades,

and what we'd do is, the officer of the deck would do, is about every couple of hours he'd pull the pin, and they were concussion, so it was really what you wanted, it maximized the explosion under water, and it wasn't a fragmented type of grenade with metal, and you'd just drop it over the side. You'd tell, I mean, you'd prepare the ship for it so that when they heard this, and the idea is it would kill anybody in the water that was there close by. Never found anybody's remains. Never had any explosions that damaged the ship in any way. But, that was a precautionary that we took.

HUNTER: Can you take me through a day for you in the first year?

GRANT: Yeah, I'd say, depending on watches. Typically you'd stand four to six hour watches, and they would be on the bridge. So, you figure, let's say it's a six hour watch, so you might get up at 5:00, get dressed, have some breakfast, go on watch at 6:00, get off at noon, have some lunch, then you have responsibilities of a division officer with 30—I wonder if that's my wife [pause]... So then, you have your typical job. You got 30 men to manage, equipment that they're responsible for. So, you've got to do that. And then, at 6:00 you go back on watch. So, you have to eat prior to your watch, and then you get off at midnight. Sometime you hope there to get some sleep, because you go on watch the next morning at 6:00, so you hope that... You've got to shower, [laughter] clean up, and do all the various other things you've got. You've got reports and other responsibilities. So, that's typically what you're doing.

Now, if you've got gunfire missions or if you're replenishing, then you've got additional responsibilities. If you're going into port, I was a radar navigator, so I was in CIC [combat information center] on a radar scope, basically helping to navigate the ship into port. And, so you've got those responsibilities. And so, anything else, you know, this takes precedence to anything else: so with the missions, if you're going into port, get it going out of port; if you're replenishing underway, all those become your primary responsibility wherever you're assigned at that point in time; and then everything else takes a back seat. But, the job never goes away in terms of what you have to do there, so you have to catch up and get it done at some point in time.

HUNTER: Very busy.

GRANT: It is. It's a busy time.

HUNTER: So, missions, you mentioned. What kind of thing would a mission entail?

GRANT: Well, a mission would be a call for fire. In other words, we'd be somewhere on the coastline, and we'd receive a call for fire. And our radios were, they basically had codes in them so nobody could pick up; in other words, they were electronically set up so that if you didn't have a coded radio, you'd just hear a swishing noise rather than the actual language that was going on. So, we were protected when we were talking with the shore. So, somebody on shore, and it could be somebody in an airplane, it could be somebody with troops, says, "We need gunfire support." They know we're there. They know how to get a hold of us, and they call us, and they give us coordinates for the target. We then enter those into the guns, and then we proceed accordingly.

Now, we have to be prepared. Typically when you're in a location, you know you're going to get a call for fire. And so, what you ended up doing—you're prepared to go; in other words, you've got the watch set so that at least probably 60% to 75% of the crew is on watch, which makes it more difficult, because if somebody's got to be on watch 24 hours a day, you've got fewer people who are resting to be able to do that. So, it takes a toll from those individuals who are doing all of these things. But, you've got to be prepared, because when they say "call for fire," you can't say, "Ah, give us an hour." You can't do that. You've got to be ready to roll. So, you know, the guns have to have ammunition, they have to be—amounts have to be manned, the gunfire control has to be manned and ready to go, so that when you receive those coordinates, boom, you plug them into the computer and you're getting ready to fire, and within a couple of minutes you should be able to fire.

HUNTER: Where were you operating mostly?

GRANT: We operated up and down the coast anywhere. I mean, we'd be as far north as Da Nang, and of course, there's that famous DMZ [Demilitarized Zone]. You couldn't cross that. I mean, it's a non-existent invisible line, but you couldn't cross it. So, Da Nang. And then we'd go down south, and I'm trying to think of some of the places we'd go into the south. And we even went into the [Mekong] Delta a couple of times

on my second tour, which was very challenging because it's very shallow, and we'd move very carefully, and we would anchor so we wouldn't drift and run aground or something. And that was dangerous, because if you're anchored, you can't get underway right away. But, they needed us for gunfire support, so that's what we did.

HUNTER: What was that like, environment-wise, hot, humid...

GRANT: Well, it was very warm, I mean, very tropical. Now, the ship was supposed to be air conditioned, and in some cases some areas were more air conditioned than others. Where I slept wasn't too bad, so you had some relief from some of that, and the humidity. But, it was really tropical.

HUNTER: How far in advance did you know where you were going to be before you got there?

GRANT: That would vary. You know, you'd get a message to say "we want you to be at 'X' point as soon as possible," and you'd go, and if it wasn't too far, that wasn't a problem. But, it could take you all night to get there sometimes. So, but they understood, usually they understood your limitations, and then it was our job to get there as soon as we could to be able to provide the support they needed. So, not everything was instantaneous as far as that goes.

HUNTER: And did you ever port in Vietnam and go into...

GRANT: One of my collateral duties was as registered publications officer, and my responsibility was to safeguard the confidential top secret documents that were kept in our safe, and every once in a while you'd go in there and you'd do an inventory to make sure they were all there and nothing got lost, because in those days there was an operating manual for just about everything, and especially when it came to strategic and tactical issues and how we were supposed to approach certain situations, they would be in many cases, top secret, so they'd be kept in a vault. Sometimes they would expire and you'd have to get newer documents. What you'd do with the expired documents, you'd get a destruction notice, and so you'd destroy them. And we destroyed them by shredding them, and then at dusk dump them over the fan tail, which was the back of the ship, into the water. New documents were tough to come by, and typically you'd go into Da Nang, we'd anchor there, and then get into a small

boat—and I had to do this—they'd give me a sidearm to wear, unloaded, but the idea was that nobody was supposed to know that. I knew it. So, you put the sidearm on and you'd take—you'd go to a specific location and pick up some new documents and sign for them and bring them back to the ship.

HUNTER: So, you didn't spend that much time on the mainland?

GRANT: Not in Vietnam, no. Very seldom did that.

HUNTER: So, what was the perception on board of Vietnam and the war and what was going on?

GRANT: Well, I think there were certainly people that didn't want to be there. I mean, nobody wanted to be there. You wanted to be home with your family is what you wanted to be. But, most people were very professional, and you did what you needed to do. There were always people griping. But, for the most part I was fortunate. I had good people working for me, and even though they might have been unhappy and everything else, they'd do what they needed to do to get it done. And I think that describes probably the situation. Nobody wanted to be there. I mean, be away from your family? And my second tour I was married, and boy, I mean, that's when I knew I couldn't make a career out of the Navy. I mean, I just couldn't be gone for these periods of time. And then being faced with another year if I had gone that third time, that would have been awful. I mean, how would you cope with a year away from home? Especially when four months was hard enough. So, I think everybody at least on my ship did what was necessary to do. Did you have people who were grumpy and didn't? Did you have some disciplinary problems? Absolutely. I think most of us felt we were lucky to be where we were and we weren't on the ground having to deal with what was going on on the beach.

HUNTER: What did people think was going on on the beach?

GRANT: Well, people getting killed. I mean, there were firefights, there were battles and everything else, and we're talking about, you know, shooting small arms fire. I mean, you know, it was infantry battle. And, you know, we were fairly fortunate. We never had anybody shoot back at us. You fire a gun, and somebody would have to tell you what kind of damage it did, because you couldn't see it. And, so you're

not immune to what's going on. And there's some interesting... At night a couple of times when I was in the combat information center and we were receiving calls for fire. You'd be on the radio with somebody, and you could tell they were fairly young, probably somewhat inexperienced, but they were just scared to death, because they said, [whispering] "There's just a lot of noise all around." You know, they'd be talking into the radio, "There's a lot of people all over the place here. I can't—I don't know what's going on." And you try to calm them down and say, "How can we help? What can we do? It'll be okay. Don't make too much noise." And then you'd say, *Boy, I'm glad I'm glad I'm here and not there, because we're not sure exactly what's going on.*

HUNTER: Is there a specific event like that that you remember?

GRANT: I don't remember a specific event, not any particular battle that we were part of. No, it was just a constant support of ongoing events that were occurring and battles and skirmishes and things like that. But, yeah, it's not a particular battle that I could identify and say, "We supported that effort." And don't forget, the Tet Offensive, when it was so violent and things were just so busy everywhere, that occurred before I got over there. So, my first tour was, I think it was October, November of '69 through early '70.

HUNTER: So, you finish your first tour and go home. How long between you going out again?

GRANT: We got back in February, and that's when I got a—I took a week's leave and I went back and saw Martha, and we got engaged, and we were going to get married in May, and I went back to San Diego. I mean, I was there four or five days. Okay, we're gonna get married, and then I had to leave. And so, the ship went into the shipyard in Long Beach, Long Beach being a couple hours from San Diego. And there's a lot of renovation that had to be done. We were supposed to be there for three or four months.

So, I remember the big decision was, we're getting married in May, the ship might get out in August. Do I get an apartment in Long Beach or do I get an apartment at San Diego? Because most of the crew was being bussed Fridays and Mondays up and down, because their families were in San Diego. So, there was a bus that would take them home

on the weekends if you didn't have duty, and we had skeleton crew on duty on the weekends in the shipyard. I decided *we're gonna get an apartment in Long Beach*, even though I had to go back to San Diego for a month to go through air intercept control training, which was on board a ship. You have to have somebody who can control the intercepting aircraft, our aircraft to intercept enemy aircraft, because of their radar, the radar situations. Our radars are stronger, so we bring them into an intercept position, which then they take over the fight from there.

So, I had to go to a month, but fortunately my parents had some property that they were renovating in San Diego, and Martha and I stayed there for a month, and we painted the inside and fixed it up for them, because they were going to rent it, for free. And then I would go to school, sometimes at night, because it depended on when the training could occur with flights in the air. So, with that in note, I still got the place in Long Beach, and then we went to San Diego for a month, and then we came back, and lo and behold, the ship was extended to November in Long Beach. And was I a happy camper, because I had my wife there in Long Beach. And that was nice.

And then when we got back, and then we moved back to San Diego, got a place to live there, an apartment. November. Then it was a matter of getting the ship ready to be deployed again, because it has just come out of the shipyard. A lot of things internally had to get done. And then, you go what you call through refresher training, and that means that you're at sea for a week to two weeks, and you've got people on board who are grading you, making sure that you're trained to be able to do what you're supposed to do, and the equipment would work. And so, you're at sea. So, even though you're in San Diego, you're not at home. You're at sea for extended periods of time to get training ready to go. So, then when do we deploy? Maybe February, March? February when we deployed again, and that's when I was married still, and so, Martha at that point moved in with another Navy wife, a fellow officer. They had been renting a house, so she moved in with her so they could cut costs, and they stayed together.

And then we basically proceeded to the Philippines—a week over to Hawaii, and then you have to go from Hawaii to the Philippines, and that's probably another week to two weeks

or more. You stop and refuel in Guam, you stop in Wake [Island], I mean, some of these islands that you heard about in World War II, and suddenly you're stopping in these places to get fuel. And it's like Wake Island was just nothing. I mean, it was just crazy. It's just an airfield and gooney birds that you heard about. So, we refuel, and then we finally get to the Philippines, spend at least probably two weeks there getting ready, making sure we had everything we needed, and then we'd go over and deploy about a week to the coast of Vietnam. And sometimes we'd be stationed at Yankee Station, which is in the Gulf of Tonkin, behind—that would be behind an aircraft carrier as a plane guard. And then at other times on the gun line. And you'd be on the gun line till somebody relieved you.

And I remember one time we were getting ready to be relieved, and I'm looking through my binoculars because I had the watch, and I'm seeing a ship that's white with an orange stripe on the bow. And I go, "That looks like a Coast Guard cutter." Lo and behold, the Coast Guard was doing the same things we were. They were deployed. And then another time, I think we were in Singapore and were getting relieved by an Australian destroyer. And so, we met with our counterparts, because there are some things that you can't, that can't be written in documents as to what you do, and so you sit down with your counterpart for an hour to two hours, and you give them the kind of inside scoop. "May tell you to do this, but believe me, you want to do this, and these are the things you want to watch out for," and so forth, you know, kind of give them a head's up as to what they might run into.

HUNTER: What would you tell them?

GRANT: Well, the one thing I would tell them is, "Don't throw away or destroy the codes." Every midnight, your radio codes would change. "Don't throw away the old code, because sometimes the guy ashore calling, asking for gunfire, is using the old code. He hasn't had a chance to change to the new code or doesn't have it. So you can't reach him. All you hear is a 'shooo, shooo, shooo,' and you know somebody's trying to call you." And so, you quickly... One time we weren't getting anything and it's like 1:00 or 2:00 a.m., and we decided to put the old code back in, and that's what he was communicating on, the old code. So, you tell them things like that.

You ran all the time off the coast. There were fishermen, Vietnamese fishermen, small, tiny boats, at night, sometimes with no lights. Nets everywhere. Well, if you weren't careful, not only could you run over a fishing boat and kill somebody, but you could get the nets in your screws, and tie up the screws and go dead in the water. So, we had night scopes, night vision scopes, which uses starlight to be able to accentuate what you can see. And you go through there and you'd see, you could usually find the fishing boats. So, we'd tell them, "Watch out for the fishing boats. They're everywhere. You need a star scope up on the bridge to be able to find them."

Call for fire. We used to have harassment and interdiction fire. Now, what that was is, typically it was at night, and a call for fire would be "we want you to fire so many rounds between midnight and 6:00 a.m." It's called harassment and interdiction, which means we just want to harass the enemy. Well, we did that. And, of course, what did I tell you? When you're firing the guns, you've got to have a large percentage of the crew up. Well, we're standing watch all the time, doing all these things, and so, if you're up, you're not getting sleep; if you're not getting sleep, you're not rested. You know, there are issues. So, finally the captain discovered that we were harassing ourselves more than we were harassing the enemy. So he said, "Here's what we're gonna do. Between midnight and 1:00 we're gonna fire half the round, and between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. we're gonna fire the other half." That way we've got a period of time where we don't have to be at Def Con 2 or whatever it was that we were at. And, so you tell them that, too, see. "Let me tell you a trick. This is what we did and this is why we did it."

Now, if we're getting call for fire, a specific mission, then of course you're not doing that. But, when somebody said, "It's your judgment. We want you to fire so many rounds between 'X' and 'Y'," then that's what we ended up doing. But, that's an example of some of the things we did. And, you know, talk about the sappers. "Watch out, you might run into some sappers here." We used to look out for junk traffic, because they could be Viet Cong junks, they could have ammunition, all kinds of things. I remember one time I was on watch and there was a junk on the horizon. So I turned the ship, put it at full speed and went after it, called the captain, called the XO, said, "This is what I did. Here's what we're after." And they came up on the bridge. Well, it crossed the DMZ before we

could get to it. If we'd gotten to it, we would have stopped it, if it would listen to us, and we would have searched it. But, it crossed the DMZ before we got to it, that invisible line, so we had to end our pursuit and that was it.

HUNTER: Did you ever bump into anyone else?

GRANT: Hit anybody? Did we ever have a collision?

HUNTER: Cross paths with—all that?

GRANT: When you say “hit somebody,” what do you mean?

HUNTER: I meant like in this scenario, did you ever have the same thing happen, but catch up to them?

GRANT: No, we never did. It was pretty quiet. Of course, they knew we were there. I mean, it's pretty easy to pick up a Navy ship, so it'd be pretty dumb to do anything when you're visible to a Navy ship. And they're pretty smart people. I mean, they know what they're doing. And so it's “wait till they leave, and then we'll go do what we wanted to do.” I mean, that's what I would assume was happening. So, we were pretty fortunate. But, don't forget, when you're operating like we are, there's a lot of danger. The entire ship is fraught with danger. Yeah, a 1,200 pound steam plant, you know, that's like an explosion waiting to happen if you're not careful and if you're not monitoring it carefully and people aren't trained to watch out for possible problems. Ammunition. We'd get messages all the time that said, “Stop using this ammunition,” because there was an explosion on another ship. It exploded in the barrel, and people were hurt or killed, and so you'd make sure you'd go in and remove the ammunition and not use that ammunition anymore.

So, at sea, you know, you're constantly looking for other vessels so you don't have a collision at sea. There are rules of the road, international rules of the road. But the truth is, our captain, my second captain, was really good. He said, “My standing order...” And at night if you had the watch and the captain would go to bed, and he had two captains; he had one right behind the bridge, a bunk and that's it, and then he had a bigger captain. But at night he'd sleep in the skipper's cabin. He had standing night orders, which means, “When you're in watch at night, here's what I expect of you. And here are specific things that you need to do, and here

are things you need to contact me for.” And one of the things he said, “If the closest point of approach of any ship or contact is going to be less than five miles, you wake me up.” And what you learned to do is—you didn’t want him getting up out of bed and coming on the bridge—you’d say, “Captain, we have a closest point of approach” (CPA we called it) “of 4.5 miles” or four miles, and you’d give him a relative position of the bow, and if you could identify the ship at all—sometimes you could, sometimes you couldn’t—and then you’d say, “I’d recommend changing course to open up the closest point of approach to six miles, and then return to the base course.” And if he trusted you, he’d say, “Fine, do it.” And then you’d do it, and he wouldn’t come up on the bridge. So, you got a feeling of satisfaction when he didn’t come up on the bridge to check things out, [laughter] because he trusted that what you were telling him was right.

HUNTER: And he could go back to bed.

GRANT: Well, but trust me, he didn’t get a lot of sleep. If something happens on that ship, it’s him. I mean, no matter what happens, he’s the one that’s responsible for it. And that’s a lot of responsibility. And your career is over. I don’t know if you know, but a lot of these people have been fired, the captains of the ships, the executive officer of the ships, the watch officers, a lot of these people have been fired from the Navy, from their jobs, and some of them face court martial, because people die as a result of this. So, you know, there’s an old saying, *I don’t want it to happen on my watch.* [laughter]

HUNTER: Was there a major difference between your first and second tour?

GRANT: Yes. The major difference was I was a junior officer, didn’t know anything about anything, and the second time, although I didn’t know it at first, when we got out of the shipyard and into refresher training, suddenly I was an officer of the deck, and I didn’t do anything to... I mean, you know, it was just a matter of time. So, I’m suddenly a senior officer, relatively speaking. I’m still a JG, which is an 02, but I’m now standing the officer of the deck watches and things of that nature. And what you find is you step up to it. In other words, you say, *Gees, can I do it?* and then you find yourself stepping into those shoes and doing it. And that was the big difference, that I had more responsibility, and you had

younger officers underneath you, and then you had to deal with that, and their newness, what was going on, and you realized, *Gee, I did learn quite a bit when I was...*” having just been around and absorbing this information.

HUNTER: What about culturally, or sort of the—like Nixon by now is in charge, right?—the vibe of the war at this point? Was that a big shift from when you first...

GRANT: You know, there’s no vibe when you’re over there. You don’t have time for it. And you’re not exposed to what’s happening. In other words, I told you that communication is far and few between, and maybe what you get is a Navy newspaper or something else, and those things are edited to the tenth degree. And so, it’s just your head down, doing what you need to do, and not being sidetracked. And you don’t necessarily know what’s going on either. I mean, there’s not television, none of these things. So, all kinds of things could be going on, and you’re not totally aware of it. And I think part of it is because you don’t want to be aware of it. I mean, you can’t afford to have your focus moved away from keeping people safe, doing what you need to do, and making sure that there aren’t any accidents or mistakes.

HUNTER: When did you find out about the placement in the Vietnamese language training?

GRANT: I think I was getting ready to go on watch, like 6:00 a.m.? Anyway, it was sometime during the morning, and I can’t remember the exact day, but I was transferred off in June, I think, or late May. The first thing I noticed is—and don’t forget, messages come to the radioman, and there’s like six or eight of them, then that message is sent to the captain and the XO, and then communicated with whoever needs to know. So, I’m on board ship and I’m walking around doing something, and everybody’s giving me a scary eyeball.

And then the XO calls me in late morning, and he says, “Jim,” he says, “we’ve got some orders for you.” I said, “Oh.” And I was surprised, because I didn’t expect orders. Now, typically you don’t spend more than two years on board any one ship. But I wasn’t expecting it. And he said, “You’re going to be transferred to the Vietnamese language school.” And I figured that was going to be in Monterrey, California. And he said, “This is when it’s going to happen” and so forth. “And from there, you’re going to be sent over to Vietnam as

an advisor to the Vietnamese Navy. And that's a year tour." I'm going, *Huh? Isn't being over here twice enough?* So anyway, so I told him, I said, "The interesting thing is," I said, "does anybody know about this?" He says, "Hmmm, no," but of course I knew the whole crew knew now. Now I'm realizing what they're looking at.

So I said, "Can you do me a favor? Until we find out where I'm going to language school," because Monterrey's a nice place, "don't tell anybody so my wife doesn't find out, until I can tell her exactly where we're going." Well, come to find out, everybody knew. The woman she was staying with knew, because her husband told her or something. And in the end, he finally told me, "You're going to El Paso, Texas, Fort Biggs, which is part of Fort Bliss, and there is a Navy attachment there, and you're going to go—they have a language school down there." I'm going, "Huh?" So, I finally ended up telling Martha. But, you're writing a letter at that point in time, and it could be a week to two weeks before she gets it. So, that's when it happened.

And then, from there, we got back to San Diego, and then we drove. We didn't have anything. I had a Mustang, and everything we owned was in it. And we drove to El Paso, Texas. And she was driving and I was sleeping, and all of a sudden she's crying, and I said, "What are you crying about?" She said, "We just passed the El Paso city limits sign." And I said, "There's nothing here but cactus and desert." She says, "Exactly." [laughter] So, we went there, and the interesting thing is, we had nine months there, we rented a house, didn't own any furniture so we ended up buying some furniture. But, it was so cheap to live in El Paso, because Juarez is right across the border. And there was a whole group of us Navy officers who were in the same boat, except they had been spot promoted and were making more money. We were in the same boat, having come off ships, going through language school, and then going to be sent back for a year. So, we really had a close relationship, and we're in touch with some of those people today I met. And then, graduated from there and went back to San Diego, and then Martha had to go back to her folks, because they wouldn't let her fly after eight months' pregnant in those days. And I don't know if that's still the regulation. And then I started going through these survival schools and I started getting pretty serious about...

HUNTER: What was that like?

GRANT: Well, it was different because I'm wearing fatigues now. And in those days, you know, the Navy never wore fatigues. And jungle fatigues. And this is new stuff, and you're going to these classes and they're telling you about the Vietnamese 10-step, and *oh, what's the Vietnamese 10-step?* Well, it's a snake that comes out of a tree and bites you and you take 10 steps and you die. And I'm sure they're trying to scare us, these enlisted men who had come back and they said, "We'll fix these guys." And one guy said, "Yeah, one time this Vietnamese farmer had one of these snakes drop out of the tree and bite him in the hand, and he took his machete and cut off his hand to save his life." So, you know, how much of this is true, I don't know.

The gun range, we're firing every weapon there is, we're throwing hand grenades, we're learning how to survive, how to use these things, learning about the terrain, the environment. We can communicate in the language, because we've had nine months of it, so we're pretty good at the language. I wouldn't say totally fluent, but certainly can communicate, which was the whole idea. The idea was that the advisors going at this point in time, and this would have been '72, I think, summer of '72, they wanted them to be more cognizant of the culture and be able to speak the language to some degree, not be the Ugly American, you know. And in the early '60s we sent advisors over and it was kind of "I know what I'm doing. I don't need to listen to you. You do what I tell you." That wasn't the way it was going to be done.

So, we had a lot of education, and the people who taught us language were native Vietnamese, and they also gave us some cultural lessons. Now, the interesting thing is, there's several dialects in Vietnam, and the southern dialect is very different from the northern dialect. So, one of the things that we learned is, there isn't necessarily a natural affinity between the north and the south. In fact, they used to play us some tape recordings of the northern dialect and they couldn't translate because they didn't understand it. And in between in the mountains you had the Montagnards, and they spoke something that was a little bit different.

So, there was never, according to the people we were talking to who had lived there and spoke it, there was never

a consolidated country so to speak. I mean, it had been invaded for thousands of years, typically by the Chinese. And, so there were all different kinds of groups that were there. And so, some of it, in a way that helped because we said, "Well, we're helping the south remain independent of the north." Not knowing the total picture. Not being totally stupid, but obviously being taught also the Navy's instructing us and trying to—we're going over there to do a job. Educate us from a perspective so that we can do that job the best we can.

And since reading some of these other books that I told you about, I realize that there was too much information that was withheld, and the truth was that we were never going to win that war because we never wanted to win it, and what were we doing there? And we ended up getting out anyway. What about all the sacrifices we made in between? And of course that leads to Monday morning quarterbacking: why did we even go in the first place? We certainly didn't learn any lessons from the French, who were there for a hundred years, and ended up leaving after having significant casualties in the Battle of Dien [Bien] Phu, or something like that. So, I don't know if that answers your question.

HUNTER: Yeah. So then, you think you're going back to Vietnam?

GRANT: Yes.

HUNTER: And you find out you're not.

GRANT: Yeah, I go through nine months of thinking, every day of that nine months, *I'm going back*. And understand the dirty water Navy, which is the river boats on rivers, fiberglass river boats, and I'm about a foot taller than everybody else on that boat. And I just assumed *if I go, I'm not coming back*.

HUNTER: Really?

GRANT: I mean, we faced that, my wife and I faced that, and that's one of the reasons we got pregnant is she wanted to have a child while I was, you know, if this was going to happen. And it helped that we were several of us. There was probably five or six other officers who were also married; some had kids, some didn't. But, say there were six, one was a little bit older, he already had a child and his wife delivered just before they arrived, so she had a brand new baby. Everyone

else did not have children, but all five of them got pregnant during this period of time. And so, we all had lots of things in common. And that helped dissipate some of the concern about this. And we didn't talk about it too much.

I mean, you just take it a day at a time and enjoy the situation we're in, which was, you know, five days a week and we had our weekends off, although at night we used to have to listen to tapes and our dialogue, because they taught us probably the Rassias Method, where you sit there and you learn dialogue, and you have to learn both sides of the dialogue, and the first thing in the morning you get up in front of your teacher, two of you, and they call them up and you each recite a side of the dialogue, and then you switch. And that's how we learned the language.

HUNTER: So, when did you find out you weren't going in '72?

GRANT: That was late summer. It was probably late July of '72. And I mean, I was getting close. I was within a couple weeks of my 30-day leave, which means I'd go back to Rhode Island and have 30 days before I went back to Vietnam. So I was getting close. It was getting pretty serious. And then, suddenly one day the news came, "Nobody's going." Boom. And you're going, "Woah." And I said, "Wait a minute. I've got a phone call to make. [laughter] You know, remember me? I'm not going. This is what I want." And then we went through that process.

And in fact, one Sunday morning within a couple weeks of that, I get a call in the morning and it's my wife, says she's in labor. So I went down and I talked to the duty officer and I said, "Here's the situation. I want emergency leave to go back to be with my wife." So, he cut my orders, I went to the airport, got the last plane back there, and was there for the birth. And never did go back to San Diego. I then negotiated over the phone with being transferred to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. And I had a friend of mine go into my BOQ room and throw all my stuff in a sea bag and ship it to me. So, I never did—because I couldn't see going back to San Diego when I was going to end up on the East Coast anyway. So, you know, through the phone I was able to manage that process.

HUNTER: And so, you went to Virginia, and you're teaching. It feels like you went from sort of....

GRANT: Well, actually, it was interesting, because Virginia was a fairly conservative place, and the students that I taught, and I taught—I think engineering was a second year course—I taught second year students. But, I found these students very dedicated, very strong ROTC program there, and full support from the University, which was interesting because I think about that time Dartmouth's getting ready to throw it off campus, which I thought was—and that sticks in my craw to this day. I mean, you know, having served in the military, I thought an officer educated in a liberal arts institution could contribute so much to the military. And we're going to have a military. Wouldn't you like to have a fairly broadly educated person come in rather than everybody coming from the military academies, which is a very specific education? And, you know, you're wearing a uniform the day you enter, and so you've got four years under your belt basically before you even go on active duty.

So, I was disappointed in that, and to this day I even thought about it coming up here and I was talking to Martha about it, and said, you know, *a liberal arts institution*—and the faculty was adamant about getting it off campus, and I'm trying to think, *Are you trying to deny the fact we have a military? And by throwing ROTC off campus, what are you doing? Disassociating yourself with an institution when, in fact, you can improve the institution?* My feeling on that. So, you know, I never got angry, but it certainly disappointed me that an institution that I had so much respect for and seemed to be so liberal in its thinking, and diversified in its thinking, would do something like that, when I thought it positively contributed to the military, and I thought it helped students who wouldn't ordinarily come here, because it was a scholarship opportunity. And I just thought, I thought it worked well.

HUNTER: Well, you know it's back now?

GRANT: Well, it is with Norwich [University, Northfield, VT], isn't it? Is there someone on campus?

HUNTER: I don't think there's someone on campus, but there's a program.

GRANT: There's a program with the Army.

HUNTER: There are people who can get commissioned on graduation.

GRANT: Right, but you end up having to truck up to Norwich Academy, so it's not physically located. In fact, Webster Hall, the basement, was where the Navy had its supply depot, so to speak, kept its uniforms, so we were issued uniforms and they were down there, and then books. Part of my scholarship was they would provide books. And what they would do is, you'd come with your book list, and they would try to find it in their own library. If not, they would send you with a chip to—you don't even use books anymore, do you?

HUNTER: We use books.

GRANT: Okay. So, you go down to the bookstore, and you'd have a chip, and so they paid for your books, gave you \$50 a month, and paid for your tuition. It was fully paid. So, basically the expense was the room and board on that.

HUNTER: So, very different to Dartmouth, the University of Virginia. But, of course, you...

GRANT: The same in many respects, but different in other respects. I mean, different in the sense that there didn't seem to be—I wasn't aware of any protests. Seemed to be very strong support for the military. A lot of active duty officers going to graduate school there. And the reason I knew is because they would report into the ROTC unit. We had a Navy captain who ran it, and I guess they were attached to that while they were going to school. So, there were, oh, a half dozen, dozen officers who were just going to school there. They called it *the* University. I mean, very strong loyalty. I mean, they were almost arrogant in the way that, how good they thought the University of Virginia is. And, of course, it is an outstanding institution, no question about it.

But, I just thought it was interesting. I mean, I never got into any debates with anybody. But, it was good. Esprit de corps. And then, as I said, the students that I taught, I had a lot of respect for. We had some good conversations about what they were about to do: "You need to understand what you're doing here and the commitment you're making long-term, and if you can't do that, then you need to leave the program, because that's what this is all about, this program." But, no, it was very good. I mean, I wasn't much older than they were. See, I would have been 25 when I started teaching. And

these kids were probably 19 or 20. And so, I'd be one day ahead of them in the engineering book, you know. I'd be lecturing on something I read the night before. [laughter] Even though I had some practical experiences, there was a lot of stuff in there that I had to bone up on before I could teach it.

HUNTER: Yeah. And, of course, they want—well, were they expecting to be sent to...

GRANT: Oh, no, it was over then. There was no expectation of that. And, of course, that's an interesting point, because that probably did make a big difference in what was going on at the school. The protests probably had burned out by then for the most part on campus, I think. I don't recall much going on. And there's always something going on on campus, but I don't recall it being a big issue. Wearing a uniform was no problem, although I'd wear it to and from work and then have to teach in uniform. But, no, I don't recall any issues there. It was a very positive experience, as a matter of fact.

HUNTER: And then, you ended up coming back here, correct?

GRANT: Well, yeah. What happened is, when I got out of the Navy in '75, I told you about the interviewing process. And I had a Master's degree in education, in counseling, and because the business school wouldn't accept anybody part-time, and I needed a part-time program, and I wanted to have a Master's degree. And so, I got involved in it, and I really liked it. I enjoyed it. So then, as I was applying for positions, I actually came up to Dartmouth, I think at one point drove up from Rhode Island, because that's where I was terminated from the Navy was from Newport, because I got transferred up there, because we lived with my in-laws for a few weeks before I got a job. And I came up here and talked to the personnel people, and they said, "No, we don't have anything." Well, then, I saw something somehow, I saw something about the admissions office, so I ended up applying. And they talked to me, I sent them information, and then I came up for an interview, and then I got the job as an assistant director of admissions. And worked here for five years.

HUNTER: Did you enjoy it?

GRANT: Oh, very much. I mean, there was a point in time when we bought a house out in Etna, Hanover Center, on Dogford Road out there—I don't know if you've ever been there—but we bought a small house there, and my second daughter was born here, Mary Hitchcock. At that time it was just down the street, Mary Hitchcock [Memorial] Hospital [Hanover, NH]. But, yeah, and it was terrific; I mean, it was nice.

But, then things changed, you know, as the family starts to grow. And there wasn't a lot of movement within the office, and my brother-in-law spent some time talking to me about getting into the insurance business. And so, after five years I decided to leave and go and work for Connecticut General [Life Insurance Company] in a management program, and then that changed. I went to Sacramento, went back there for three years. And then, there was a reorganization, and I was transferred to Hartford, where I was responsible for sales training for Connecticut General.

And then I realized that I didn't really like an administrative job, so I got back into a sales job with the reinsurance organization of CIGNA. Now, reinsurance is the type of insurance that's bought by insurance companies, which a lot of people don't know about. Well, what they do is they buy it to protect against catastrophic losses, things that you can't predict. Actuarial science can say, "Okay, if you're this age, you'll probably die at this age," but they do it in terms of large numbers, and there's always exceptions to the rule. And I was in the life, accident and health area, so an exception could be, you know, a plague, it could be an accident, an airplane goes down, and an insurance company has life insurance on a lot of people on the plane. It could be all kinds of... Fires, tornadoes, things like that. The property aspect of it, I didn't work in, but it's the same concept. In other words, how does an insurance company protect itself against hurricanes? They insure against it. Called reinsurance. So, if they have catastrophic losses of a certain amount, they can cut their exposure so they don't go bankrupt. And then there are professional companies who just—who reinsure these companies.

So, I got into that business at CIGNA, and I was there till '93. So, I joined CIGNA in 1980, went to Hartford in '82, and in '93 the organization started to change a lot, and it became CIGNA by then. It was Connecticut General CIGNA. Connecticut General merged with INA [Corporation] to

become CIGNA. And I just felt that I needed more tools, more product, everything else, so I became a broker, a reinsurance broker. So, I did the same thing, and worked for some of the same companies, but I was with a privately held company, small. It started off as 20 people. It ended up being, by the time that the company was sold, and it was sold—I cannot remember that—it was probably sold in 2000, something like that, but I was a stockholder in the company, and it grew to about 130 people, and we were bought by a larger company, Marsh & McLennan, and they have a reinsurance organization called Guy Carpenter, and so, we were purchased by them, and we were then absorbed by Guy Carpenter. And under the agreement, stockholders were paid over a three year period. So, in other words, what they wanted to do was keep you with them because of your relationships and the commission, and they didn't want you to go to a competitor. So, they paid us the value of our stock over a three year period.

And then after that, I decided to stay. We then moved up to Rindge, New Hampshire, in 2005. My wife's family's owned property up there on a small lake for a hundred years, and so we built a house up there, and we moved from Connecticut there. And I worked out of there for about 10 years. And then I started getting ready—I decided I was going to retire, and they asked me if I'd work part-time. So, I worked part-time for about three years, and then I fully retired about three years ago. And yeah, in a nutshell, that's it.

HUNTER: If you're looking back on your post-war experiences, how has Vietnam sort of influenced or been a part of your life since then in all of these—in the insurance company and...

GRANT: Well, it's reminded me that, as things got tough, nothing—you know, I'm not dealing with the lives of people and the safety and all of those things, so it kind of put life in perspective, you know? And it would pull me out of feeling sorry for myself if things weren't going the way they could, and I said, *Wait a minute. Look what you've been through.* And especially I think the big change for me in attitude... You have to remember, there was a period of time there when I never talked about this, I mean, maybe to my wife, but I don't remember spending much time on Vietnam. Two reasons. It was never a popular topic early on. And secondly, I don't remember working with too many people

that served in the military. And, you know, early on you learn it's not a topic you bring up. If it happens to come up, fine, but it's not a big deal. But, it seems to me that the people I ran into—my wife said as we were talking about this coming up—she said, “That’s because you’re older than everybody you’re working with.” [laughter] And it may be. It may be that I have a five, six... you have to remember, when I graduated and then put six years in the military, then I’m looking for a job, there was a point in those early years or when I was looking, where I said, *This did nothing but put me six years behind my peers*, because of the attitude. And it seemed like more sometimes like a handicap than anything else. Fortunately, I’ve gotten over that and I’ve said, *You know, that’s done a lot to make you who you are*. And now today, when you look at the military differently, and people are proud to serve, people are happy to say, “Thank you for your service” when they see somebody in uniform, or when they find out you served, I’m glad I did. I’m glad I did. It doesn’t undo the controversy and everything else that went on. I’m kind of sorry we haven’t learned from that. But we don’t ever seem to learn those things, those lessons, some of the lessons. The lessons are fairly complex, I think, these days, but certainly a key one is communication and how we talk to each other, and how we realize that we’re all different, we’re going to see things a little bit differently, the perspectives that we have. And therefore, show somebody respect. And if you do, you’ll have a conversation, and you’ll be able to, if you’re trying to accomplish something, you’ll find a way to do that. But to simply say, you know, “You’re wrong. I’m right. That’s it. I’m not talking to you. Not only that, you’re dumb and ugly and stupid.” You know, I mean, that’s kind of where we’ve gotten to these days. And that certainly doesn’t facilitate our solving problems. So, but, you know, I’m getting to the point in age where it’s a little easier for me to put things in perspective, to let some things go. I do get grumpy at times, I admit, and it’s things I hear and see and just *I don’t get it. How could that happen?* But it does, and I just have to remember my dad probably said the same thing at some point in time before he passed, so... That’s the way it is. Got to be patient with us older people.

HUNTER: Okay. Well, I think that’s a good place to stop.

GRANT: Good.

HUNTER: I want to thank you so much for coming here. We really appreciate it.

GRANT: You're welcome.

HUNTER: It's been an invaluable conversation. And yeah, I'm closing out this interview.

GRANT: Okay, thank you.

[End of interview.]