

Dud [F.] Hendrick '69  
Dartmouth College Oral History Program  
Dartmouth Vietnam Project  
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Transcribed by Karen Navarro

HARRIS: This is Sara Harris ['18]. Today is Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016. It is around 12:30 p.m. and I'm in the Jones Media Center in Baker-Berry Library at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Today I'm interviewing Dud Hendrick for the Dartmouth Vietnam Project. First of all, thank you so much for meeting with me. To start off, I just want to ask some biographical questions. Where and when were you born?

HENDRICK: Hi Sara. This is Dud Hendrick. I was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1941, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1941.

HARRIS: And what were your parents' names and what did they do?

HENDRICK: They were Margaret and Dud Hendrick. I'm not a Junior. My dad was Dudley Albert and I'm Dudley Foree Hendrick. And my dad was, in his earlier career years he was the president of the Dayton Manufacturing Company, which manufactured accessories and appliances for the passenger railway industry in the '40s and '50s, I suppose, founded by my grandfather. And my dad, probably thanks to a little nepotism, rose to become the president of that company. And as the passenger railway system failed to mature as expected, the Dayton Manufacturing Company fell on relatively hard times, and my dad left that company and subsequently became a—in the Department of Commerce in Washington, DC, so he became a bureaucrat and we moved to Maryland. My mom was a conventional housekeeper in that era. And both parents had graduated from Ohio Wesleyan [University, Delaware, OH]. And we made a transition from a rather conservative, conventional lifestyle and home in Dayton, Ohio, to move to a community outside of DC, outside of Baltimore, Maryland, in 1951.

HARRIS: So, what was your childhood like in Ohio?

HENDRICK: It was very conventional for the place and the time for people who were of middle income circumstances. Pretty conservative, I would say, churchgoing, apple pie, and flag loving conventional Midwestern lifestyle. We lived in a

suburb of Dayton, and like most kids of that particular socioeconomic strata in that era, I walked to elementary school a half mile away, I guess, to go to school every day. And our social life, the family social life, I had a brother and a sister, was basically around the church community to which my parents belonged.

HARRIS: Were you close with your family growing up?

HENDRICK: Again, I think it was probably very conventional relative to the socioeconomic strata that we lived in. We were conventionally close, I would say, and nothing particularly extraordinary as I reflect on our family's life.

HARRIS: So you went to high school in Maryland?

HENDRICK: I did, yeah.

HARRIS: What was that school called?

HENDRICK: I went to Annapolis High School [Dearborn Heights, MI]. The community that we found was actually about 10 miles out of Annapolis [MD], a place called Sherwood Forest. It's on the Severn River, which is a tributary to the Chesapeake Bay, and as I say, about 10 miles out of Annapolis. And Sherwood Forest, Maryland, was extraordinarily different than the community in which we had lived through the first 10 years of my life, different in that it was primarily a summer community when my family moved there, and we were maybe the 20<sup>th</sup> family that lived in a summer community that was 300 or 400 families strong in the summer, comprised primarily of people who were employed or families whose heads were employed in Baltimore or DC, and commuted to this place called Sherwood Forest.

In that community the life revolved around the children's athletic, predominantly athletic summer camp, and a small golf course. So it was a very rural area, and in the summer was very dedicated to children's activities and was very idyllic in some respects. And you might describe it, today it would be described as a gated community. It was then and remains to be somewhat of a gated community, in that even today there are extraordinarily conservative principles or rules by which community members are expected to live by. As I say, in some respects it was an idyllic way to grow up, and in other respects it was kind of grossly distorted relative

to the circumstances of other people in our general socioeconomic bracket who were living in different sorts of circumstances. But I commuted, we did, all of the children commuted and lived there year-round to go to school in Annapolis. By bus we had about an hour commute from home to school each day each way. So I ended up at Annapolis High School, which was totally segregated, as was Annapolis in that era, a very segregated community.

HARRIS: What was your perception of race relations at the time?

HENDRICK: What kind of relations?

HARRIS: Race.

HENDRICK: Race relations. I became acutely aware that there were different circumstances under which blacks and whites lived when we moved from Ohio to Maryland. In Ohio, I don't know that I was exposed to any blacks, other than those that were members of the families that were hired by my family as sort of, you might say nannies or housekeepers. So I had very little occasion to meet people outside my lily white community in which I lived. Sherwood Forest was all white. Sherwood Forest discriminated against Jews, as well as whites. They didn't allow whites or – I mean blacks or Jews to live in that community. So, I don't know how they got away with that, and continued to get away with that extraordinary discrimination.

As I mentioned, Annapolis was totally segregated. There were no blacks there. There was a black high school and there was our Annapolis High School, white school. We moved to Maryland. Generally there were whites and black facilities, that is, blacks couldn't go into taverns or bars or restaurants, or generally weren't seen anyway in restaurants that catered to whites, and vice versa. So it was very stratified. The only large black communities I was aware of really were those that I might pass through or my father might pass through on the way on his commute to Washington DC, which was about 30 or 40 miles from where we lived. So, I knew America as only being a very segregated place as I grew up.

HARRIS: What did your parents say about politics at the time? Do you remember them talking about...

HENDRICK: I don't remember much. I know that they were Republicans and I know that they were, even then, somewhat conservative. I don't remember having much awareness of there being differences between Democrats and Republicans, but I grew up thinking that I was a Republican because my parents were Republicans. I didn't really know exactly what that meant in that day and time.

HARRIS: So what years were you in high school?

HENDRICK: I graduated from high school in 1959.

HARRIS: Do you remember any events during the era you were growing up, the Cold War era? Did your parents talk about any tensions, international relations?

HENDRICK: I'm sure that they did, but I had little appreciation or interest in those conversations, so I really can't recall the nature of the conversations. I believe as a consequence of the time in which they grew up that they embraced, and probably as a consequence of living in Ohio, which to my perspective today probably was comprised primarily of people who were willing to accept what national leadership might dictate was truth, didn't question really government, didn't question whether we should be at war with respect to Korea, or to—at that point in time, Vietnam wasn't even on the horizon at all, but as I was going through my high school years, there was some awareness that there was a war going on in Korea, but little attention being paid or little question, I would say, of our endeavors in Korea on the parts of my family or even their general circle of friends and associates.

HARRIS: Did your parents ever talk about their experience living during World War II?

HENDRICK: I'm sure that they did in my early childhood. I know that we had a victory garden in Dayton, Ohio, and I know that there were some deprivation that people lived in support of the national recognition that we were at war. I know that it impacted the Dayton Manufacturing Company to some degree, in as much as there were some protection given to the Dayton Manufacturing Company in that some of the things that they manufactured were in support of the war effort. But that's about the extent to which it entered my consciousness.

HARRIS: What do you mean by a victory garden?

HENDRICK: In recognition that there were some changes, some consequences that the general population ought to be accepting as we made sacrifices to make a conversion to a war based economy, families in the Midwest, in my experience anyway, were supporting the war effort by growing their own vegetables, growing their own small garden plots or having their small garden plots.

HARRIS: Got it. So, as you were going through high school, do you remember a time when you started forming your own opinions about politics?

HENDRICK: I think I was in—I don't think I was exceptionally unaware or undisturbed, lost any sleep, was bothered in any major way by what was going on on a national mobilization for war or what might be in the horizon. It was of little concern to me at that time in my life.

HARRIS: So, what did you do after high school?

HENDRICK: I had applied... I was an athlete in high school, and athletics was *the* realm, the dimension of my life that was most important to me. It's about all I thought about other than doing... I was inspired to work hard academically, or at least to work reasonably hard to do well. I guess that was part of my value system, imbued or instilled in me as I grew up in Dayton. So I was a pretty decent student and knew that it was expected of me to go to college, and was on an academic track as I went through high school.

So I very much intended to go to college right out of high school and worked towards that, and was accepted at a number of respectable institutions, Duke [University, Durham, NC], Lehigh [University, Bethlehem, PA] being the primary two of those. I was romanced or recruited by—I was a lacrosse player—I was recruited by outstanding lacrosse schools in the country, to include Johns Hopkins [University, Baltimore, MD] at that time, but did not get accepted to Johns Hopkins, and didn't get accepted to Duke until it was—let's see, how did it play out? I was also recruited by the [US] Naval Academy [Annapolis, MD]. And let's see... I was accepted by Duke and Johns Hopkins, I guess, before I found out from the Naval Academy, and for some reason or other I waited around to see if I was going to get accepted at

the Naval Academy, although I hadn't developed any great aspirations to go to the Naval Academy.

Ultimately I allowed the acceptance dates at those other institutions to pass beyond—to expire. So, when the time came for me to decide where I was going to be going, I only had one remaining option, and that was the Naval Academy. I got an appointment to go to the Naval Academy. And, as I said, I had no real abiding interest and aspiration to go to the Naval Academy. It played out that it was the only place I had left to go, and my motivating issue or point was that I knew that it wasn't going to cost my family any money to go there, and so, ultimately chose to go there, for no other reason than that, and the fact that they had seduced me by recruiting me for lacrosse and they had one of the top lacrosse programs in the country. So, ultimately I went to the Naval Academy right out of high school.

HARRIS: What did your parents think of you going to the Naval Academy?

HENDRICK: In that era, going to one of the service academies was very prestigious, and they were quite proud of me. And I think perhaps that pride was affected a bit by the realization that they weren't going to dole out any money to get me through a four-year post-high school education. So in any event they were very excited that I was going there, and it was at a time, as I say, when it was quite prestigious to go to one of the service academies.

HARRIS: So, you knew that you would have to enlist after going to the Naval Academy, right?

HENDRICK: I went into the Naval Academy with the realization that it entailed a four-year obligation in the military following it, and for some bizarre reason, as I reflect on it today and have reflected on it over the years, I didn't think that it was of great consequence. And I did not really consider, to my great fault I have felt all of these years, although the decision was not extraordinary relative to what any 16-, 17-year-old kid might see as the consequences of a decision being made, that there were long-term consequences of that decision. So, no, I didn't really think much about what I was really saying by going to the Naval Academy, what kind of obligation I was really incurring.

HARRIS: What did you think about enlisting during high school? Did a lot of your peers enlist? Was it something you had considered before you decided to go to the Naval Academy?

HENDRICK: Yeah. Amongst a circle of friends in that community of close friends in high school, very few thought about enlisting or going into the military right out of high school. They were all academic track, you know, all going into... My best friends went to Princeton [University, Princeton, NJ] and Harvard [University, Cambridge NH] and Yale [University, New Haven, CT], and less prestigious institutions, but universities and colleges. Almost all of them went immediately to a college with the intent of going through four years and getting a college degree. So, in my circle of close friends, very few went off to join the military. As I reflect on it now, I don't think I had any close friends who immediately went into any of the service academies.

HARRIS: So, what years were you in the Naval Academy?

HENDRICK: I graduated in '63, so '59 through '63.

HARRIS: And what was that experience like? What did you study there?

HENDRICK: At that point in time, everyone at the Naval Academy, and I think probably all of the service academies... The Air Force Academy was founded I think probably in the mid-'50s to late '50s, and so they were very early on in their existence. I believe it's the case in all three of the major service institutions, West Point, the Air Force Academy and the Naval Academy, that all students took the same basic curriculum. It may have begun an evolution towards having more latitude and more options available to students, but that didn't happen at the Naval Academy until after I graduated. So, no matter how brilliant one might have been or how much difficulty one might have been having with the curriculum, we all took the same basic curriculum. So, there was no option to go in any particular direction or to move along faster than anyone else in the class. We all took a basic mechanical engineering curriculum almost all of which was built around naval service, so that for instance in engineering courses we were talking about shipboard power systems or something to that nature, but almost all of the curriculum was built around Navy history, for instance.

HARRIS: Was it just men at the Naval Academy?

HENDRICK: Yeah, it was. Not only just men, but it was very white still, and I think there were two blacks in my class, and I don't know, maybe a handful of Hispanics. So, it was pretty homogeneous.

HARRIS: How big was your class?

HENDRICK: We entered with I think about 1,300 in our class and we graduated with around 880.

HARRIS: And what was your experience over those four years? Did you enjoy that military culture?

HENDRICK: [laughter] I think I began to realize that I was something of a rebel as I entered the Naval Academy. I think on the first morning I awakened there I realized I had made a grievous error. It was a big mistake. I admittedly was not really cut out for the regimentation and the—well, the regimentation goes along with military life basically, and certainly rebelled against it all along. For better or for worse, the Naval Academy being located close to where I had grown up, where I had lots of high school friends in the general area, I did have that distraction and that support system out there which led to some degree to my rebellion and delinquency at the Naval Academy. For the first three years, first two-and-a-half years, my roommates and I were in the bottom three in conduct in our class. I wouldn't tell you that if I weren't terribly proud of that. [laughter] So, it gives you an idea of how much difficulty I had getting through the Naval Academy. I did rebel and I got caught more often than I didn't get caught, I guess, rebelling, and so there were consequences for getting caught. And most of my close friends at the Naval Academy were also rebellious. So there was something of an underground network of rebellious type kids, if you will, at the Naval Academy, and certainly at all those military institutions.

My playing lacrosse was the end all for me at the Naval Academy. That's all I really cared about, that and what little social life we were able to have there. I didn't think about life after the Naval Academy. I only thought about the next lacrosse game and about whether I had a date on a particular weekend or whatever.



- HARRIS: Where exactly was it located?
- HENDRICK: Where is the Naval Academy located? It's in Annapolis, which is where I had gone to high school.
- HARRIS: And what do you mean by rebellion? Was there really strict rules about social activities at the school?
- HENDRICK: Yeah, yeah. You give me an idea, Sara. We weren't allowed to talk to—not only weren't there any women at the Naval Academy, no female students, but as freshmen you were not even allowed to talk to a girl. So, you were in, they called the campus "the yard." And if you were out in the yard on what little free time you might have planning tennis or whatever, you were very rarely able to go into town. The Naval Academy is located right in Annapolis. You had very little so-called "liberty time." Even then, you weren't allowed to talk to a girl. You weren't allowed to ride in cars. You weren't allowed to wear civilian clothes. The degree to which you were even—let's see, during plebe year, your freshman year, the only time we could go off the campus was on a Saturday afternoon or on a Sunday afternoon if you were dining with your parents. And then if your parents came to town—in my case my parents were only six miles away—you could get a release to go out to have dinner or lunch with your parents. The life of a plebe then was very, very restricted and very regulated and very difficult. There was a lot of harassment you had to deal with from the upperclassmen that was part of the experience. That was what basically you—it was fundamental to being a military officer. You had to go through this sort of period of indoctrination to subscribe to militarization and to the whole culture.
- HARRIS: Did it feel like most of the people at the Naval Academy were more in support of the culture than you? Did you feel maybe an outlier in that?
- HENDRICK: Yeah, very much so. Yeah. I mean, there were certainly a network of those of us who were rebellious in nature and were sort of to our severe consequences were fighting it every step of the way basically, and not seeing the purpose of it or buying into the whole experience. But generally, kids even as immature as the most mature 16- or 17-year-olds might be were buying into it generally. There were many certainly who came with a much higher level of maturity than

I who realized from the day, well, from the first awareness of life at a service academy or within the service, maybe as a result of being a son of a military officer, really bought into it and the glorification of military service, found that exciting and something to aspire to.

HARRIS: What was the general political sentiment on campus of glorification of American government?

HENDRICK: I don't think there was any deep thought given to it. Maybe this is naive of me to believe this to this day, but I think that the vast majority of kids between the ages of 17 and 21, whether at the service academy today or were then, or at Harvard or at the University of Maryland [College Park, MD] today or at University of—UNH [University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH]—or the University of Illinois [Urbana-Champaign, IL], I think the vast majority of young men and women, if you will, give much thought to what our government is doing, what our military is doing, what being patriotic might mean. I think it's a long time before, if at all, that American citizens really begin to give some consideration or thought to those issues, those matters. And I think that was the case for our population at the Naval Academy. I don't think that my peers, whether they were those who really bought into the program at the Naval Academy, or whether they were those amongst my confederates, you know, that were rebellious in nature, really gave a whole lot of thought to what it meant that we might be placing an embargo on Cuba or whether we might be beginning to—or whether we thought a whole lot about what a Communist lifestyle or system might mean, as opposed to what we might refer to as a capitalist economy. I just think those were thoughts that we as young adults don't really give a whole lot of thought to.

HARRIS: Do you remember any major political events happening while you were at the Academy?

HENDRICK: I do remember that there was a Cuban Missile Crisis that was going on while we were at the Naval Academy, and there was some scare that we might be, or some possibility that we might be pushed through to graduate early in time to be able to build the officer corps in the Navy as needed by a crisis between Russia and ourselves.

HARRIS: Do you remember the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated?

HENDRICK: Yeah, very vividly. That was after I graduated, but yeah, very vividly.

HARRIS: Was it emotional for people in your generation?

HENDRICK: Yeah, I think it was very emotional. It was for, even for me who was not really at all politically mature or politically aware. I mean, John FK was a charismatic individual, and that administration, the Kennedy era, was very romanticized I think in our history and even then was a... JFK and Jacqueline were romanticized, I think, and remain so in our country's history. When I graduated from the Naval Academy, I transferred into the Air Force and I was going to an Air Force school out in Denver, Colorado, on the day that Kennedy was shot. And I remember pretty vividly how it affected my community of young Air Force officers, my friends out there—I was in Denver—and how it captivated, of course, the country for a period of time.

HARRIS: Do you remember your awareness of the civil rights movement in 1964-1965?

HENDRICK: I don't know whether I attribute my inability to or my willingness to admit that I wasn't very aware of it. We attribute that to my immaturity on such matters or unawareness of what's going on outside of my own little world, or whether that unawareness is attributable to the fact that I was in the military and so much a part of that culture that I had four years of the Air Force I was looking at, four years of a military career, and life in the military really is all encompassing basically. It's like a subculture basically, a freestanding subculture outside the mainstream of what's going on in the world. But for whatever reason, I was not as aware as I am of that part of our history today. It's pretty amazing how little aware I was of it at the time. Again, I think it's just because I was so involved in—not that I was aspiring to be a military officer. In fact, I knew I was going to get out of the military as soon as the four years were up, but I was very involved in what I was doing in the military.

HARRIS: When you graduated from the Naval Academy, how did you feel about your upcoming four years?

HENDRICK: I was looking forward to the adventure aspect of it. I had hoped to be a Navy pilot, but my eyes went down, so that I could not qualify for Navy air when I reached that point in time in my senior year at the Academy when we had to choose the options that were open to us. And I was able to be among those 60 of us who went into the Air Force, only 60 out of our class of 880 or thereabouts. And I knew that that was going to give me the opportunity to be overseas and to choose various career options that were pretty exciting to me. Again, I wasn't looking beyond four years. I knew that I was going to get out, but I was excited about those four years.

HARRIS: So, when did you move to Denver?

HENDRICK: Well, I graduated from the Academy in June of '63, and I had to be out, I think, probably in Denver within maybe two or three weeks, so, and Denver several hundred miles further west in the country than I'd ever been. I guess I'd never—probably gotten to Chicago [IL] once when I was in Dayton, Ohio, or lived in Dayton, but never been west of Chicago.

HARRIS: And were you living on a base there? What was that experience like?

HENDRICK: Well, I was a young officer and I did live on what was then called Lowry Air Force Base [CO]. It no longer exists. It was on the eastern side of Denver. And I was in, let's see, nuclear weapons officer school. So I was training or learning to become a nuclear weapons officer. And so, and the curriculum of that career, that career track, we were introduced to the nuclear weapons in our arsenal. We went to school—there were probably maybe 20 or 30 of us in my class—we went to school from 6:00 to 12:00 each day. And I lived a conventional life of a young military officer, meaning in my case that most of us lived off the base, so we were predominantly all bachelors, and all... Let's see, I guess the accouterments and the privileges of a young officer meant that for the most part we had fancy cars and we were, for the first time in our lives we were living independent of our families, and we were all between 21 and 25 or so, or something like that, and we all had gone to college, and we were all realizing some freedoms that we had and a level of maturity at the time in life when we could live an independent lifestyle. So there was a lot of partying going on. And again, I don't think there was much mature thought given. There

wasn't a whole lot of time outside the partying and the studying for the track that we were on, in this case, nuclear weapons officer training. There wasn't a whole lot of time and a lot of energy left over to be thinking about other matters.

HARRIS: Did you choose specifically to go into the nuclear weapons officer training?

HENDRICK: Yeah, I did. I can't remember other options that were of any interest or were available to us, but I did choose it. Yeah, I didn't—I was curious about nuclear weapons and what they were all about, and I found the study of them to be interesting. And I think this will provide an interesting window on what life in the military means. As I said, there were 20 or 30 in our class, and I was *the* distinguished graduate in the class.

So, about a few weeks before we were to graduate, the commanding officer of the school came through our class, and he asked us how many were regular officers, had a regular commission? The distinction between a regular commission and a reserve commission meant that if you had a regular commission, you were automatically in a career track. If you had a reserve commission, it meant that you went through an ROTC program, as opposed to one of the service academies like the Air Force Academy or the Naval Academy or West Point. So, there was a line of demarcation there indicating that a regular officer was, a guy with a regular commission was on a faster track towards promotion. So, there was a degree of distinction between the two. I was the only one in the class that had a regular commission. All the other guys, and they were all men, had ROTC granted or other programs, officer candidate school, I forget what the other programs might have been. But they were on a lesser echelon basically. So I'm the only one that raises my hand. And then he asks, "How many of you are going to make a career in the military?" I was the only one that didn't raise my hand, which was how stupid I was, how naive I was.

So, a week or two later, after I made this declaration, all of the assignments came out, and I was going to Thule, Greenland, and the next worse assignment was probably Montana, which was generally perceived to be a worse assignment. So I'm going to Thule, Greenland, for a year, and the rest of them are going to California and Florida. And,

so I should have awakened then to either start towing the line or pretending that I was towing the line.

HARRIS: Did you feel like there was a difference in background between the ROTC people and the people that had been to academies?

HENDRICK: There was an awareness of it, yeah. I don't know how much of the military life... Is your family of military background at all? There are within the military so-called ring knockers, and they are the guys that wear the big Naval Academy rings. And I've never worn my ring, but for obvious reasons. You're probably beginning to realize I didn't have a great deal of, don't derive a great deal of pride from having gone there. But, anyway, so ring knockers, those people who go to West Point and the Naval Academy, you know, they've gone through four years of really professional training to become officers, and so, whether deservedly so or not, they're likely to be advancing up the career ladder faster than those that aren't ring knockers. So, there's that distinction within the military, and an awareness of whether this officer went to one of the academies or not. So I don't know exactly what the percentages might be, but I'm sure that there is a higher population, a higher incidence, a higher percentage of four-star generals, for instance, or four-star admirals who are service academy graduates than those that rose through the ranks, not having gone to one of the academies.

HARRIS: Do you remember when you first became aware of America's involvement in Vietnam?

HENDRICK: At some point in time during those two years preceding—well, let's see, I guess it was nearly three years before I went off to Vietnam. At some point in time, in the first one or two years after I got out of the Naval Academy...

HARRIS: So that was 1963, 1964?

HENDRICK: '64, '65, yeah. During those years, I guess our entire population became aware that there was a buildup happening in Vietnam, and it was occupying more and more of a position on our front pages of our newspapers and in the nightly news. And certainly within the service itself it became a greater awareness that something of consequence was happening in Vietnam. After I graduated from the nuclear weapons officer school in Denver...

HARRIS: When was that?

HENDRICK: December 10<sup>th</sup> of 1963. After I graduated from that school, I'm headed to Thule, Greenland, and I leave to go to Thule, Greenland on January 1<sup>st</sup> of 1964. Spent that following year in Thule, Greenland, 500 miles north of the Arctic Circle. And a pretty closed population, as you would imagine. Began to be aware, or continued to be aware at that point that there was something happening in Vietnam. I can't recall whether any of my classmates during that year went off to Vietnam. They must have. I really don't know, but I could find out easily enough.

While I was in Thule, Greenland, I became aware of a career track that I could follow, having already satisfied a prerequisite to get into this career track, having gone to nuclear weapons officer training, and that was explosive ordnance disposal. Explosive ordnance disposal was a school and is a school, an interservice school that is all EOD people, explosive ordnance disposal, whether they are Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, go to Indian Head, Maryland, to go to EOD school. And this struck my curiosity and fancy. It sounded pretty exciting, EOD school did. I had mentioned to you that I had hoped to go Navy air. So, there was this part of me that wanted to do something... It was a romantic notion, probably satisfied my macho self-perception; you know, it was glorified, dangerous.

So I found out that I could get into EOD school and I applied for it and I got into EOD school. And that was a six month school in Indian Head, Maryland. And while I was there, I know that was a period of time during which Vietnam rose further in the American conscious, and certainly did within the military. I hadn't, I don't think through those six months did I lose any classmates. I may have. We'd have to look at that. Ultimately I lost 12 classmates from the Naval Academy in Vietnam.

So, I got an assignment in California out of EOD school, and I was there the commanding officer of a small detachment at an Air Force base [March Air Force Base] in Riverside, California. There were about, I had about 20 men working for me. And it was a very closed group. Our command was up in Utah, so I was the only officer in this little unit that we had, and we were a tight knit group of guys who were doing

hazardous work, and so there was a lot of esprit de corps within the organization, and a lot of pride that we might affiliate with other sorts of emergency response sort of teams: police forces; fire departments; and within the military, SEAL training or the Green Berets, that sort of esprit de corps, and sort of macho perception, self-perception. And this was during the period in which there was more and more awareness of what was going on in Vietnam, and we became of the mind that the only place to do real EOD work was in Vietnam. If you were essentially a real man or a real EOD guy, you had to go to Vietnam.

HARRIS: Just to back up a little, what were you doing in Greenland before that?

HENDRICK: My billet, my assignment definition was nuclear weapons officer, and I was the commanding officer of a couple of teams, one of which was responsible for maintaining the missiles that we had at that base, and the other was responsible for—the other group of men that worked for me were responsible for loading those missiles on board the aircraft, the fighter jets that we had in Thule, Greenland, at that time. So, that was my job and that's what I was doing up there.

HARRIS: And when you were there, did you know you wanted to go into something new? Is that why you applied to EOD?

HENDRICK: EOD school? Yeah. The other, if I were to continue in the more conventional tracks and nuclear weapons officer field, it looked pretty unexciting to me, and EOD seemed like the way out. And I was still probably suffering from unrealized image aspirations, not being able to go Navy air or Air Force air. And so I thought, *Oh, well, here's a way I can salvage some self-respect.*

HARRIS: And where and when was EOD school?

HENDRICK: It was from... Well, the assignment to Thule, Greenland, was one year, so I got out of Greenland around January 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, after a year and two or three days more, which really pissed me off. And EOD school must have started, I don't know, the first week of January or something like that in 1964, and it went through June, late June, I suppose, of 1964, after which I headed to California.



HARRIS: And when you were in California, you talked about how your team was very close. Was their conversation about—when there was conversation about Vietnam, was it in support of Vietnam or was there any debate?

HENDRICK: Yeah, almost totally in support. I don't think we ever had a conversation contrary to the notion that we should be in Vietnam. And it certainly was politically naive conversation. Yeah, it was certainly total unawareness of what war might have meant, what our presence in Vietnam might have meant. I think totally within that world, and that world I'm referring not to just EOD, but the military in general, in my exposure anyway, there wasn't any conversation outside the community or outside the acceptance of what our military commanders and what our Commander-in-Chief was telling us that we should do, what our leaders in the country were telling us we should do. We basically, in my experience, just accepted it and we were along for the ride, and that's what we signed up to do, and we don't question it, we're just gonna go with the program.

HARRIS: Do you think it would have been frowned upon if there was dissent?

HENDRICK: Absolutely, yeah. You would have been a pariah, basically.

HARRIS: Wow. So how long were you in California?

HENDRICK: Let's see, I arrived there in it must have been late June of 1964, and I left to go to Vietnam in September of '66. So whatever that means, a couple of years.

HARRIS: And what was that training like when you were in—or I guess you already had training. What was that experience like in California? Like tasks?

HENDRICK: It was very rewarding. We had lots of interesting jobs. They all revolved around explosives being in a hazardous configuration for whatever reason or however it came about. Maybe a plane crashed and we had to go to respond to it, a plane carrying weapons on board. In every case, whether it might be a civilian aircraft or not, there are items on board that are, when exposed to a crash, are in a danger status, systems that might detonate or represent a hazard to the general population and you need to know what you're dealing with. So, respond to some of those things. We had

range clearances that we had to go on, bombing ranges that we had to go on to Utah or some islands off of the coast of Texas, elsewhere in California where bombs may have been dropped in training exercises where we were going to clean those up. And it ran a wide variety of things, but they were almost always interesting.

And when you weren't actually on one of those more interesting jobs, there was always training that we had to do that was academically challenging, and I guess the comradery of the unit and the friendships and the bonds within this work were rewarding, and kept us, I think, to a person engaged. And as I mentioned, I was the only officer and I had a team of about 20 men or so, and we were—they were tight and friends and found the work almost universally rewarding. And I was still a bachelor officer and enjoying life as a young single man.

HARRIS: So, you talked about how generally you all thought that you wanted to work in Vietnam. Was there any initiative you could have taken or were you just hoping that you would get assigned there?

HENDRICK: Increasingly there was awareness generally in EOD that Vietnam was the place to go. In 1966 I still had, having graduated in '63, I still had a year and some months to go before my obligation was up and I'd be able to resign my commission. And I don't recall, I'm pretty sure that I did not have an abiding desire to go to Vietnam. I guess I think I probably would have considered it to be a little reckless, a little silly for me to want to go off to war. And then, at the beginning of January, I think the date was the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, 1966, my best friend from the Naval Academy was shot down. So, forgive me, Sara...

HARRIS: No, of course.

HENDRICK: His name was Don MacLaughlin. And Don was a, he was an incredible guy. He was an A-4 pilot. A-4s were so-called Skyhawks. And he was flying off an aircraft carrier and was lost in South Vietnam. Probably pilot error. I guess it's never been determined what it was. But Don had been the best athlete in our class and he was an outstanding scholar, and one of the most humble guys I ever knew. And we had been

teammates on our lacrosse team. We were the national champs in lacrosse all the years I was there.

And as much as I have told you about life at the Naval Academy, you may have derived some sense of how important lacrosse was for me. It was a refuge from life at the Naval Academy. It's why I stayed at the Naval Academy basically. A number of my friends flunked out on purpose or left the Academy. And I'm sharing this with you because it's a measure of how close and important our friendships were within our team. We had extraordinary success. It was probably for all of us *the* refuge from the regimentation and the deprivation at a service academy. You know, it's where we found relief from the extraordinary demands on a kid at one of the service academies. So, my clear emotional difficulty in talking about it is a function of that, how important it was to me. And he was a very close friend. And it led to me volunteering to go to Vietnam.

So there was this notion that to do real EOD work, you had to go to Vietnam, there was this certain quest for proving my manhood, there was a building curiosity about whether we ought to be in Vietnam and feeling like I needed to go to Vietnam to find out for myself whether we should be in Vietnam. I can't say that there then was, nor was there when I decided to go to the Naval Academy, there was never any deep thought, any deep consideration made on my part as to whether I recognized the true consequences of deciding that I was going to go to the Naval Academy, nor did I think about the true consequences of volunteering to go to war. And those failures to consider those questions: whether we ought to go to war, whether I ought to give up four years of my life when I went to the Naval Academy, actually eight years of my life, and was saying by virtue of making that decision that I would go and do those things, go to Vietnam, be willing to take another person's life, I find at this distant perspective to be unforgivable, an abdication of my humanity, if you will.

So, I feel that it's incumbent upon military people to make that decision. I don't care whether you're 17 years old or whether you're as I was when I decided to go to Vietnam, I was then, what, 23 years old. I had gone to the service academy. Ostensibly I'm a little more mature than the 17-year-old poor kid that's coming out of inner-city Chicago, and because of economic situations they feel like they have to go into the military. In my era there was at least the

excuse that one was drafted. But in any event, I think that those considerations ought to be made, and I think that those are considerations that recruiters and adults or guidance people, whatever the mentor might be, or wherever that recommendation is coming from or that guidance is coming from, have a responsibility to suggest to a young person that “you really got to be considering what you’re doing here.”

So I decided I was going to go to Vietnam, without knowing anything about Vietnam, without knowing anything about the culture, without knowing anything about the people, without knowing, you know, really considering *why are we in Vietnam?* Precious few people in America would have been able to answer that question satisfactorily during that period of time when we all decided to go to Vietnam. I mean, not all. You know, within the military there arose a great resistance to what we were doing, and of course, we know well about the resistance back here in our country, but precious few who went over there really thought about it. So, I have digressed quite a bit here, but...

HARRIS: Yeah, that makes... Yeah. So, you think it was very typical of people in your position to go without thinking about the repercussions?

HENDRICK: Uh-huh. Yeah, I find it impossible to forgive myself. So, I know this is going way ahead, but when I reflect on my year in Vietnam, I’m sure if we, as we talk along here, you will find me incapable of making some admissions that are so painful that... It took me a long time to get to where I am. Sorry, I digressed a bit here.

HARRIS: No. It’s all important.

HENDRICK: So, continuing...

HARRIS: What did your parents or family say about your decision to go?

HENDRICK: It was kind of weird, you know. There was certainly no questioning on the... I’m sure that there was not a deep consideration made by my mom and dad whether we belonged in Vietnam or not. I think that they absolutely accepted that that’s what our leaders were telling us we should do, and “that’s what our son has signed up to do.”

They didn't try to talk me out of it. I guess the, I think the willingness to really have open conversations was pretty minimal within our family. And they were certainly supportive of—there's no element at all of skepticism about whether I should go or not. I don't know how atypical that might have been within our family.

I'm curious, you know, subsequent to my having served over there, when I came back and at times in our family we had conversations, my brother—shit, we're gonna be here till 5:00 or 6:00 or 7:00 at night, Sara, with my digressions. But my brother had to go into the Army. That's a whole 'nother long story. He would have gone to Vietnam. Had I not been in Vietnam, he would have been sent there, but they didn't send all the sons of one family at the same time to Vietnam. So he dodged that and went to—he had a service enlisted man. Very long story. But, that led to the radicalization of my brother, who, he went to Princeton and he was sent to—that interrupted... His service in the military, in the Army, interrupted his four years at Princeton.

HARRIS: So he was drafted into the Army?

HENDRICK: Yeah, he was notified that he had flunked out of Princeton, but he hadn't. It was a screw-up by Princeton, and Princeton tried to correct the error, and my father, much to his embarrassment, tried to correct the error through the course of the months between him getting his induction notice and the date of his induction. So, Princeton really screwed him, and here he is in Germany and had to spend two years as an enlisted man. And as I say, he would have gone to Vietnam if I hadn't been there then. So he survived that and dodged that experience, survived his experience in the military, but it radicalized him and he came back to Princeton at a time when the anti-war movement was just really building on all campuses, and particularly at Princeton, or one in particular, and he became something of a leader in the anti-war movement on the campus. And there ensued a big family struggle, you know, a big emotional family struggle. My dad, who was still very much a Republican, very much willing to accept that without really, I think, thinking about whether we belonged in Vietnam or not, so we could hardly get through a Thanksgiving Day meal or any other occasion without having a huge blowup at the family table. And I was still pretty apolitical. That's when I came—at that point in time I was at Tuck [School of Business,

Dartmouth College], and here I am thinking I'm going to make a career in business, and I still was not really thinking about what I had done in Vietnam and why I went there, and unwilling to take the time to figure it out, and not able to take the time to study and to consider whether it was right or wrong.

HARRIS: I just want to take a quick bathroom break, and then we can get into your experiences in Vietnam. I'll pause this.  
[Pause in recording]  
Hi, this is Sara Harris. It's now 1:50 p.m. on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016. I'm back with Dud Hendrick, interviewing him for the Dartmouth Vietnam Project in Jones Media Center in Baker-Berry Library at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. So, we were just discussing the different factors that led to your decision to volunteer in Vietnam. So, maybe just transitioning to you heading to Vietnam and what your emotions were at the beginning?

HENDRICK: I think before we took a brief break, I believe I had declared or admitted that I hadn't had the maturity to give deep thought to why we were going to Vietnam. My motivations were in... My perspective today, many, many years after and after years of sort of maturation, far different than they were then. My rationale for going to Vietnam at the time were because a friend had been killed in Vietnam. I wanted to go as an act of vengeance, if you will, and I wanted to satisfy this quest for manhood, and answer the question in my own mind as to whether our country belonged in Vietnam or not. And there was this notion that if I was going to be an EOD, explosive ordnance disposal, that *Vietnam*, as we said in our field, *was a small war, but was the only place to be*. So those were the thoughts in my head as I went off to Vietnam in 1966. I had volunteered to go sometime and not long after the death of my friend. It must have been within a month or two, so that meant that probably in February or March or thereabouts, I volunteered to go to Vietnam and learned sometime through the course of that summer that I had been given an assignment to report there, and had to leave to get to Vietnam in early October of '66.

Perhaps pertinent to or relevant to my decision to go to Vietnam might have been that the girl with whom I had fallen in love with at that point in time had got an assignment to teach in Okinawa, and had already gone to Okinawa, learned that she was going to be going over there probably

in the late summer of '66. So I think probably before she went, I had volunteered to go to Vietnam, but I knew that I might be able to see her while I was in Vietnam with temporary duty assignments possible in Okinawa. So, that may have had some influence on my motives to go to Vietnam. So, I left on October 6<sup>th</sup>, my birthday, and arrived in Vietnam on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October in '66.

HARRIS: Do you remember being scared at the time or were you more just looking forward it?

HENDRICK: I don't really remember being scared. I am sure that I must have been, but that I can say that today I think is an indication that it was not a consuming, it was not a consuming fear. I think maybe excitement and curiosity were kind of ruling the day as I went there. So, I never felt during that anticipation a foreboding compelling sense of fright or fear or anxiety. Maybe, you know, a low level of anxiety, I suppose. As was the case for most military personnel who went to Vietnam, I went over individually. That is, I did not go over as a group, a unit. So I didn't know anybody in the units or organizations to which I was going. I knew that I was going to be going to an EOD detachment at a place called Phan Rang, which is on the coast of the South China Sea south of the more widely known Cam Ranh Bay, widely known at the time and I guess Cam Ranh Bay is still known of kind of widely today. So, that was my first assignment in Vietnam, to be the commander of a small detachment on that Air Force base, Phan Rang.

HARRIS: How long were you at that Air Force base?

HENDRICK: I can't remember the exact date which I left Phan Rang to go to my next assignment, which was to be, and was, Tan Son Nhat near Saigon, but it was a couple of months. I think I was at Phan Rang for at least two months.

HARRIS: And what were your responsibilities there?

HENDRICK: Not unlike they would have been at the time at any other Air Force base in Vietnam for the detachment commander. We had EOD units at all Air Force bases there. Mine was, I think we might have had maybe a dozen men, something like that, and we were responsible for dealing with explosives in any configuration that might be hazardous: suspected booby traps, responding to downed aircraft or aircraft crashes,

disposing of explosives that were in a dangerous configuration having been subject to an airplane crash, or subject to maybe they had been in storage for too long, or I guess that was the nature of most calls that we had during that period. It was, I think during those couple of months we were training and studying far more than we were actually responding to any incidents, so it was not a terribly busy time in the respect that there was not a whole lot of EOD work done. Phan Rang was not in a real hot area. So, that's it. I can't think of a whole lot more to say about those couple of months that we were there.

HARRIS: Were you working alongside South Vietnamese forces? What were your interactions with the Vietnamese?

HENDRICK: No. Our unit then didn't have any Vietnamese EOD people assigned to us, and there were very few EOD people on Phan Rang Base to my recollection and to my awareness at the time. We had access to the beach on the South China Sea about maybe in the order of about 10 miles away, so periodically, once a week maybe, we could get over there and hang out at the beach and go through the town of Phan Rang. And at that time, again, there was not a great deal of combat activity going on in the area, so that was generally without great hazard when we did that.

I did during that period, I did teach in a school in Phan Rang. A few of us had the opportunity to teach in a grade school, so I had some interaction with Vietnamese children during that period.

HARRIS: What do you think was the general perception of the Americans you were with of Vietnam and of the Vietnamese people?

HENDRICK: I can't imagine that it wasn't anything other than, at the best, curiosity, and at the worst, a hatred for the intrusion that we represented there. Now, certainly we offered some employment on the base. There were predominantly Vietnamese women who came on to custodial type stuff and I guess there were a few elder men, older men, who were in that capacity as well. But, because of the really pervasive manner in which GIs, military men, conducted themselves, this notion of American exceptionalism or a sort of a supremacist or superior way in which we conducted ourselves, I can't imagine there wasn't great animosity and resentment



to our intrusion there. I wasn't aware. I didn't see any and was numb enough to not perceive it if it were there, but I can't imagine that it wasn't. Like, as was the case as far as I was aware and saw during the course of the following year around every US base that I had the occasion to visit in South Vietnam, there developed a red light district, a bar district, around the base where women were subject to gross—Vietnamese women were subject to gross conduct, and prostitution was rampant basically in those communities. There were always little red light districts around the camps, around the bases.

HARRIS: How do think the Americans you were with viewed the Vietnamese people?

HENDRICK: I guess if I had to generalize, I would think that the majority of us unfortunately had this superior way of acting and behaving. It was very racist and discriminating. I just can't think—I mean, there were certainly many of us who were trying to do good work and I think tried to conduct ourselves that way, and I include myself in that subculture, that subgroup. I'd like to think that was true, and I can't imagine that I knowingly was acting contrary to that self-evaluation. But, it was certainly pretty pervasive. You could see, every time I went off the base I know that I saw GIs that were acting like GIs do when they get drunk, and we're talking about, you know, virile adolescents basically. It's a pretty irresponsible population, you know. And at least I was I guess 23 or 24 by that time. And officers generally didn't behave in the public awareness, or misbehave as badly as the enlisted men were likely to who were more often than not younger, and probably came out of communities and backgrounds that were disadvantaged, you know, that didn't have the maturity, didn't have the awareness of how negatively they might be perceived to be behaving and how contrary to the interests of—never mind whether it was right or wrong—contrary to the interests of us or anyone else.

HARRIS: Can you think of any specific discriminatory or racist incidents that you saw your comrades in?

HENDRICK: Well, I had much more opportunity to see what was going around the next base, Tan Son Nhat, which was a big air base outside of Saigon, than I had at Phang Rang. But, it certainly was quite common within the culture to refer to Vietnamese in derogatory, dehumanizing terms, you know,

calling Vietnamese slope heads, zipperheads, dinks. Those are just a few of the terms that I can remember, and that was just sort of...[inaudible] They were "subhumans," basically, never mind whether they were allies or whether they were the Vietnamese enemy. It's reprehensible. It's what happens in war. We know that today. They call Iraqis and Iranians and Afghanis whatever, you know, ragheads, sand niggers, whatever. It's a way that we enable young people to go off and take other people's lives, to demonize them, to make them less than human.

But, my experience in Vietnam, I mean, I had friends who were Vietnamese at Tan Son Nhat that I'll probably, if we have the occasion, I'll tell you about, who were, they were colleagues. And in the closed environment of my team in Saigon, at Tan Son Nhat, they would refer to all these people, whether they were, again, allies, teammates or enemy, as less than.

HARRIS: Did you encounter the enemy forces at the first base you were at?

HENDRICK: Did I encounter what?

HARRIS: The enemy forces, Viet Cong, at the first base you were at?

HENDRICK: No, huh-uh. There were never any attacks on the base that I was at during those couple of months.

HARRIS: When did you switch to the second base?

HENDRICK: I think it was before December. I'm pretty sure it was in late November of '66.

HARRIS: And what was your role there?

HENDRICK: Well, I was really excited and proud to get the assignment. I was the operations officer, so-called operations officer of the 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force EOD team, mobile EOD team. So, our team at Tan Son Nhat was responsible for all the training of all the EOD personnel, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, coming into country, all those men, not unlike myself. When I first arrived, I had to go through this training at Tan Son Nhat. But I now was the operations officer of that team that trained, sort of further acquainting all the incoming EOD

people with hazards particularly relevant to the Vietnam War. So, we did that.

And then we were responsible for responding to incidents that happened all over South Vietnam. So, periodically my team would fly out to take care of, maybe ordnance was dropped somewhere in some remote place in Vietnam that hadn't been recovered, or it was in hazardous configuration and we had to go and respond to those. If an ammunition supply depot was blown up somewhere in the country that an EOD team wasn't located at, we would fly in to take care of that. We had to take care of suspected booby traps on Tan Son Nhat Air Force Base and throughout areas in Saigon, which was then the capital of the country. So it was pretty busy, not busy enough really. There was too much training that we had to do, which was kind of boring. But, it was exciting in that respect that we were going about the country taking care of challenging situations.

HARRIS: Can you talk a little about the importance of Tan Son Nhat Air Base? I know that it was really central to the war effort.

HENDRICK: Yeah, it was the primary base into which military personnel were coming. They would pass through Tan Son Nhat. I think there were probably other places. I'm pretty sure that there was a base that Da Nang had a lot of people who were coming into initially. It was the busiest airport, I believe, in the world at the time, quite certain it was.

HARRIS: I read that.

HENDRICK: Did you? And we were located right on the edge of the runway, so it was exciting just seeing airplanes coming in and out all the time. So, and it was MACV. Let's see, I can't remember exactly what MACV stands for [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam]. Maybe you've run across the term. Anyway, it was the overall command of the Armed Forces in Vietnam. And that was located right next to or adjacent, or basically in Tan Son Nhat. So it was a huge sprawling base, and right outside of Saigon.

HARRIS: And did any of the people in your unit get injured during any of these missions, or was there severe danger?

HENDRICK: Yeah. I was pretty lucky overall in the course of the year in that respect. But yeah, there were awful casualties. Just

before I got to Tan Son Nhat, Tan Son Nhat was struck by a really tantamount to a suicidal attack by Viet Cong.

HARRIS: Yeah, I think that was December, 1966, was what I read.

HENDRICK: Did you?

HARRIS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: So that would have been just before, so that would indicate that I got there—I did get there after that happened, right after it happened. So, I mean, that was all the talk of my team when I got there and inherited this job, that they had this incredibly scary moment. Relative to the strength of the forces on the base, the US forces on the base, it was not—they were not going to be overtaking Tan Son Nhat. So it was not an existential attack at all, but it was suicidal basically more than that. And my men, the people who became my men and my teammates, were very involved in dealing with that and the cleanup of it, so that sort of cast a, not necessarily a pall, but an element of concern for me as I was coming down to this base I now perceived to be under imminent attack any time. So it caused me a little bit of sleepless nights, I suppose, but some worry and concern naturally.

HARRIS: Were you ever under like existential attack?

HENDRICK: There was only really one incident that I—it was scary, and we were, we routinely had to go to a disposal site about, oh, it must have been 10 or 15 miles out of Saigon. Every couple of weeks we would, through the course of our general operations we would generate a fairly substantial inventory of explosives that needed to be taken care of somehow or other, maybe again, it might have been various bombs or various types of ordnance that had become dangerous and couldn't be conventionally used. Maybe it had been subject to an explosion nearby, maybe it had outlived the date of storage advised for that particular type of munition.

So, every couple of weeks we would develop an inventory of a couple of truckloads of stuff that had to be taken care of, and we would routinely take them up to a place called Tu Dac, I think, anyway it was 10 or 15 miles north. And it was allegedly a secured area, so that we could safely go up there by convoy and go out on this rather desolated area

and where we had previously exploded a lot of stuff. And we would take all the stuff off the truck. There were these craters that we had created by previous explosions, and we would get, you know, there might be boxes full of grenades, it might be containers full of flares or bombs or mortars or all sorts of ordnance that had to be exploded, sympathetically detonated. So we would build these piles of so-called shots where we would put plastic explosives all over the top of the stuff, and then we would light them with fuses, and we would retreat to a safe place a half a mile away or so and detonate them, and then come back and make sure they were all effectively taken care of. And on this one particular occasion, we came under fire, and never did actually see the enemy, see the forces that were firing at us, but there were bullets flying overhead and around us, and scaring the shit out of me. And, so no one was hurt on that occasion. But it was an interesting incident that caused, that forced me to make some hard decisions to deal with. But, as I say, no one was killed or wounded, but it left an indelible impression on me.

And there were other times when the range clearances, when the only other incidents that left a lifelong—well, there were two of them—lifelong impact was, on one occasion when we went to these... Ammunition supply depots were oftentimes sabotaged by the Viet Cong, and they would come and put time bombs, satchel charges, the so-called satchel charges. The Viet Cong would come in under cover of darkness and put these satchel charges on the various bunkers full of bombs that we were storing for use, you know, deployment. These were vast areas, secure areas, where there would be scores of bunkers, bunkers in this case being maybe a size of half a football field, and each of those bunkers being full of an inventory of a particular type of ordnance, bombs or whatever.

And the Viet Cong would plant these time charges that they were very—what's the word I'm looking for?—very primitive in nature, and then usually oftentimes in the case that I'm about to tell you about, they were simply detonated by the use of completing an electrical circuit when a Timex wristwatch would cause a completed circuit. And on this one, this place was called Binh Long (B-i-n-h L-o-n-g, I think). It was a huge ammunition supply depot north of Saigon, I mean, huge, and it was sabotaged maybe four or five times while we were there. And they were extraordinary exhibitions of fireworks, unbelievable. And we were, as I said, 10 or 15

miles away from Binh Long, and it was like the biggest fireworks display you could ever see, and causing the ground to rumble all around Saigon 20 miles away. And we'd go up the next day and the place was just devastated. It looked like Dresden or something.

And on this particular occasion I'm talking about, we were up working on a range clearance, and I was maybe the only officer there, I don't know. I was in charge and we probably had 20 EOD men, most of which were on my team, but some from other teams were there. And I'm going to tell you more than I intended to tell you, Sara, about this. [laughter] I was called upon to be heroic, if you will, in this occasion. It's general practice in EOD that the senior people will go to be the immediate responders, which seems contrary to common sense and contrary to what probably should happen in the military.

But, while we were working in some areas that had been sabotaged, some MPs, military personnel, had found a satchel charge in this other bunker, and they came running over to tell us they had found this thing, and ostensibly this was a time bomb that could go off at any point. And me and Sergeant Harlan Cooper ran over to it and we disarmed it. So, we were heroic. So that gives you the nature of our business, at times it was scary.

On another occasion we were working on an ammunition supply depot and sabotaged cleanup operation up on the coast, and one of my men was killed. He mistakenly moved a particular type of grenade that was dangerous. So, those types of things happened. On another occasion we had a job one night. On the perimeter of Tan Son Nhat there was a minefield into which some children had ventured in the middle of the night. Not surprisingly, they went looking for anything they could scavenge really, and they detonated a mine, and one of them was still alive when we got there, and we were called upon to respond to it and a teammate of mine had to go in and lost much of his foot when he detonated another mine. Those are the sorts of things we had to deal with.

HARRIS: Did you interact a lot with the other Americans on the base in Vietnam?

HENDRICK: Did we interact a lot with them?

HARRIS: Yeah, on the Tan Son Nhat Base?

HENDRICK: Yeah, for the most part we were pretty segregated, which was an extraordinary sort of situation to be in, I guess. And we were right on the base, but we were self-contained. I had, on that team we had probably I suppose 20 enlisted men, and I worked for a major and he lived there in the same little hooch that I lived in.

HARRIS: What was his name?

HENDRICK: Ted Morris. Actually, that's a whole other story. I don't know if we have time to get into that. I don't think it's illuminating for any particular reason. But...

HARRIS: You can share it if you want. [laughter]

HENDRICK: [laughter]

HARRIS: We can always do another interview.

HENDRICK: I'll give you the abridged version. I was the operations officer, and there was a major whose name was—man, I can't retrieve it. Probably just as well, because I'm going to denigrate his name. Hank West. I think Hank West was his name. He was the commanding officer of this unit, the 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force EOD mobile team. And I was the operations officer, so I was overseeing all of the training, and he and I ostensibly were supposed to alternate all the jobs that we had that called for our reaction off base. So, if we had to put together—we usually traveled by helicopter. We would go out with a team of whatever the job was requiring, maybe four or five, maybe fewer. Maybe there would be just three of us who would go off by helicopter to some other place in South Vietnam to take care of this job.

So, the understanding when I came there was that Hank West and I—I'm not sure about West. It is Hank. It's been a few years. So, supposedly we were supposed to respond to it that way. There was also Major Ted Morris, who was living there in the same quarters that Hank and I were living in. And Ted Morris reported to the 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force command, and every day he went to the office, basically. But he was EOD trained also, so, and he really wanted to go on some of these jobs, so he would on occasion. Hank, whose name

shall be left unrecalled, uncertain, early on decided that he wasn't going to go on any more of these jobs. So it was very, very weird, and all he did for about the last eight months or so that I was there was just read in his quarters basically every day, and never really participated in this. So bizarre. When I was at Tuck, I wrote a case study about him. You're not going to have time for this, but if you were interested, I could send you the case study...

HARRIS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: ...of why in the hell he behaved that way. And it would be a much more correct memory, truthful memory of the things I'm telling you about. But, I loved Ted Morris, the commanding officer, and he and I and Hank ate together often. And we were, all of us EOD people were segregated to the degree that all the enlisted men, they had a barbecue that they had created in our sand bunkers were right there where they lived and then near the hooch that they lived in. And they actually had a TV in the ready room, so every night we three officers were invited to come in and be with them basically, and chose to intrude as much on their sort of segregated lives as seemingly they—I think they were pretty comfortable with the three of us, and we had I think an uncommonly close relationship for officers versus enlisted men, perhaps not uncommon to being in a war zone, but generally not as integrated as those units might be stateside. Generally, teams like ours, Green Berets, SEAL teams, whatever, Rangers I think live a much more integrated lifestyle than typically outside those fast response high esprit de corps teams.

HARRIS: Was the general sentiment within your unit very committed to the word, "patriotic"? Was there ever any problems?

HENDRICK: Yeah, it was. I think it was a little exceptional to the general environment out in the boondocks. I was never, with a very short exception, not in a relatively secure area right on Tan Son Nhat every night. So, and I can't pretend to be this grunt that lived out there in the boondocks and was fearful of life every night and fearful of great danger every night. So, what was the question?

HARRIS: I guess, just the general commitment of the unit. Was there ever any problems?



HENDRICK: EOD guys are generally of a higher cut than the average grunt and the average enlisted man who hasn't had the professional training that EOD men have. And so, I think probably quite legitimately, they were a little more sophisticated, and likely not to be as—well, let's see... The grunts had every reason, I think, to be angry and questioning maybe. That seems contrary to... As I reflect on it, I don't think during the year that I was there in '66, I don't think there was any pervasive dope smoking or drugs on the parts of our unit. Now, maybe that was only because we were in relatively safe circumstances and not out in the field. But we read about and I know for a fact, because I am close to—you know, I've read enough about it myself, and I'm close to former enlisted men who had a far different experience than I did in Vietnam, and know, I know for a fact that there was absolute refusal and questioning of why the hell we were in Vietnam out there, and pretty widespread, and increasingly so, maybe not so much in '66 and '67, but increasingly so through the late '60s and into the early '70s was their—the rebellion within the ranks was a huge factor in bringing the war to an end, getting us the hell out of there. But I didn't see much of that or I don't suspect that it was prevalent in my team at all.

HARRIS: What was your perception of the greater war? Did you hear about American casualties?

HENDRICK: Yeah, during that year, I got out before Hue, which was an indication that there were some serious questions that ought to be asked or serious questions that we needed to have about whether we were winning the war or not, or whether it was going in the right direction or not. So, I don't think there was pervasive suspicion that things were "going west" during the time that I was there. I'm sure that at some levels it was happening, but it hadn't reached my ears that it was going down the tubes.

HARRIS: Did you have any kind of long-term interactions with the Vietnamese people that lived nearby?

HENDRICK: Yeah, the important ones were with my friend, Sergeant Pac. He was a good friend of mine. I can't remember his whole name now. We had two or three Vietnamese Air Force EOD men, and Pac and I became pretty close. They worked with us, they lived off of—they didn't live with my men or with our men, but they were assigned to us and we worked with them

on an everyday basis. And they had been trained in EOD at EOD school back in Indian Head, Maryland, so they had the benefit of being able to get the same sort of training we did. So, he was an important association I had, or friendship, I should say.

HARRIS: Was the relationships between your men and the South Vietnamese hierarchical?

HENDRICK: Yeah, very much so, yeah. I think to their discredit it was hierarchical, because it was more on a discriminatory basis than any military strata basis. That's a good question, Sara. I think that—and it's one of the things that as I began to think about what we were doing in Vietnam and the true nature of the relationship of Americans to Vietnamese, and the way in which we conducted ourselves over there, after I came back and those ensuing decades, I think that's one of the most telling things, that still there was this pervasive sense of air of superiority that Americans conducted themselves on, and this serious derogatory perception or image and manner in which they treated, we treated the Vietnamese in general, whether they were allies or enemy.

HARRIS: What did you start thinking about towards the end of your year in Vietnam? Were you very focused on the present or were you thinking about looking forward to going home?

HENDRICK: Well, near the end of the tour I was certainly thinking more about coming home. I had applied to come to Tuck, I don't know, months before my tour was up.

HARRIS: So you applied from Vietnam?

HENDRICK: Yeah. So generally, the years—the tour was supposed to be one year, and my tour was supposed to be one year. Let's see, we had an overage of men in my unit, so I applied for an early out to get back to Tuck before it began or by the time it began. I had foolishly—another instance of what a dumb ass I was when I was 22 or 23 or 24—Bev, my first wife, and I decided we would get married, in spite of the fact that our relationship was basically built on partying and alcohol consumption before she went off to Okinawa, and I saw her twice, I think, while I was in Vietnam, and was able to get a temporary duty to Okinawa for a couple of days, and had met her in Hong Kong for my R&R [rest and recuperation]. And, so we had decided we would get

married, and Bev came up here to the Upper Valley, and began teaching in Plainfield [NH], which you may know, south of here, and found us a house to live in to rent. No, wait, she started teaching in Orfordville. That was the first place. So, she was up here before I got here, so I'm only thinking about trying to get out of Vietnam, and get out of Vietnam in time to begin school when Tuck began. And the Air Force wouldn't let me out until my date of rotation, so I didn't get out of Vietnam until, I don't know, October 10<sup>th</sup> or something like that, more than a year, and I was 10 days late to get into Tuck. They really screwed me. [laughter]

HARRIS: So it was October 10<sup>th</sup>...

HENDRICK: Anyway, so I was increasingly through that last month or so, I'm working at trying to get the heck out of Vietnam, and failed to until after my date of departure. And I never became all wrapped up in whether we were going to win or lose the war, and never saw anything other than a successful outcome, not that I was invested a whole lot in whether we had a successful outcome in Vietnam or not, until well after I got back and I began to say, *Holy shit, we're gonna have to have this ignominious retreat*, you know.

HARRIS: So, you came back October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1967?

HENDRICK: Something like that. I can't remember exactly what the date was that I got back. Wait a minute... Now, ultimately I did get back before then, because we got married in Thetford [NH] on October 7<sup>th</sup> of 1967. So I did get out before October 6<sup>th</sup>, which is, yeah, October 7<sup>th</sup>, the day on which I arrived in Vietnam. So they gave me a few days, but they didn't give me sufficient time to get back when Tuck began.

HARRIS: Do you remember what it felt like the day you came back to America?

HENDRICK: Yeah, I remember some of that, yeah. I remember I got discharged. I left Vietnam on one day and got discharged in California the next day, and flew across the country the third day, and went into the Lebanon Airport and began Tuck. And my head is really way up my ass, you know. I'm thinking, *Oh, my God*, whether I'm going to shit or wind my clock, as the expression goes. I was so buried at Tuck, and trying to sort of restart a relationship with a woman that I was going to marry in three or four days. It was crazy. But I do recall well,

although I've admitted to you that to a large degree my consciousness was back in the States before I got out of Vietnam, I remember realizing and feeling, well, disturbingly so, that people around me at Tuck, people at the Columbia/Dartmouth football game—somehow or other I found time to go to that within a few weeks after I got back—weren't really thinking about Vietnam and didn't care what happened to Vietnam much at all. So, this was I think not long after that, Parkhurst was occupied, while I was at Tuck but... So, there had begun to be... Oh, no, that was probably by the time I had become a coach here in 1970 maybe. I don't know when...

HARRIS: I think Parkhurst was May, 1968.

HENDRICK: Was it?

HARRIS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: Okay, that's helpful. So we know that I was at Tuck then. I graduated from Tuck in '69. So, the SDS had been formed there.

HARRIS: Oh, sorry, May, 1969 was Parkhurst.

HENDRICK: That seems a little righter to me, but still I was—so I was just about to graduate from... Really, May of '69, huh?

HARRIS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: So I graduated in May of '69. So, obviously there was beginning to be an anti-war sentiment here on campus, and there certainly was during the first year that I coached here in 1970. But, it was disturbing to me, and yet Tuck was so demanding that I didn't take time to dwell on it. But I was well aware that people weren't really all that wrapped up in what was going on in Vietnam.

HARRIS: Was it hard transitioning mentally and emotionally coming from Vietnam going straight into school?

HENDRICK: No. The emotional and mental challenge that I was faced with was succeeding at Tuck. I'm sure I gave far less attention to a new marriage than I should have, but that was still a part of, it was much more a part of any emotional or mental challenge I had in dealing with maybe more

elemental concerns like life and death in Vietnam. It was just a case of sort of moving on, having to put Vietnam behind me. And I would admit to and lay claim to having some baggage that I had to get rid of, but it's been far later in my life.

Here's the admission I need to make to you. When I was in Phan Rang, we had enough time on our hands that I'm seeking more excitement and more proof of my manhood, I guess, and led to me volunteering to fly in the back seat of a fighter jet on our base. My EOD work brought me into connection with a lot of the pilots, and friendships with those guys, and I volunteered to fly in the back seat on a couple of occasions, just for a lark basically and to prove my manhood. And... sorry, it's... clearly it's... I guess it's only because we are alone in this room that I have so much difficulty in saying this...

I frequently, when I'm having the opportunity to speak to classrooms as I will again in the next week or two, because it's—I taught Peace Studies over at the University of Maine [Orono, ME] for a while, and I am a prominent peacenik in Maine. And part of being a Veterans for Peace is the responsibility to share what we think about war and why we shouldn't be waging war, and what the consequences are at war. And I make this admission frequently to classrooms or when I am speaking to other groups. But I usually can do it without this collapse, this breaking down that you're seeing now. I don't... We dropped... we dropped Napalm and other ordnance on these villages, and I never saw any people below... but I don't know... I don't know that there were no people there. So I don't know. I don't know how guys who have taken the lives of any others, adversaries or not, I don't know how they can live with it. So, I make the admission that I forsook my own humanity when I did that. And as much as it's painful for me to do this, and awful hard from just an admission I hate to make, obviously, and but I hate to break down in making it, but I think it, you know, probably has impact. I won't admit, you know, I tried my damndest not to. But I feel like it probably would be important for kids who were thinking about going off to war that maybe there's some consequences they ought to consider that rise above whether the military can offer a job or not, and really refutes the legitimacy, the validity of the notion of patriotism. I just think that's fucking bullshit. I think that as trite as it may seem or sound, we're citizens of the planet, and we ought to

have a higher purpose or cause than this notion of American exceptionalism and buying into this idea that because American leaders are suggesting that we ought to go to war, that we ought to have this behemoth of a military makes any sense whatsoever. So, we got that behind us. Moving along.

HARRIS: So, at the time that didn't emotionally strain you as much, and then later in your life, you thought back on it.

HENDRICK: Yeah. I'd like to... an epiphany for me... Although I had begun the transition, I had begun reading the likes of Noam Chomsky. Do you know Noam Chomsky's work? Do you know the name?

HARRIS: I know the name.

HENDRICK: It is significant that you don't know his work, because his eminence is suppressed in our country. He is *the* most cited author in the world. So you can find his name in the footnotes of more books, more scholarly works than any other person in the world. He's a remarkable scholar. He's probably eighty-... I think he's in his late 80s now. He is a professor emeritus at MIT. And you're not going to find time for a while to begin reading his books, but... So, I read Noam Chomsky and read Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*.

HARRIS: Yeah, I know of that.

HENDRICK: Those two guys were really important to me. So I had begun my journey. I had begun to think about things a little more deeply. Before I went back to Vietnam in 1998, I was offered the job of being the operations director of an event called "the Vietnam Challenge." It was a bike ride from Hanoi to Saigon comprised primarily of, well, of victims of the war. But it was conceived of by World Team Sports. World Team Sports is a non-profit and team, and their usage stands for: *The exceptional athlete matters*. So they bring together disabled and able bodied athletes to participate in rather extraordinary events, and this particular one was the bicycle ride from Hanoi to Saigon. So we had paraplegics, quadriplegics riding hand cycles, blind riding on the backs of tandem bikes, and all sorts of other people dealing with all sorts of other grievous issues. And part of our team were Vietnamese, former mortal enemies. So, you can imagine how emotional it was for all concerned, and they were riding

down the road day after day. It was 1,200 miles and about a three-week trip.

HARRIS: When was this?

HENDRICK: In 1998. And having conversations every night through interpreters with these former mortal enemies, making friends and recognizing the humanity of one another, and seeing that we were all victims of war. So, that was, as I say, it was an epiphany for me and monumental, and I think for most of us. And I've managed to go back to Vietnam I think three times since then, and been able to be with victims of Agent Orange and be able to be with victims of war, former combatants. So that's had a lot to do with where my head is as a mature being.

HARRIS: Just going back a little to your time at Tuck and at Dartmouth, did you have any involvement in the anti-war movement then?

HENDRICK: No, to my great embarrassment, I didn't. I was asked to talk on a number of occasions. There weren't very many, of course, Vietnam veterans on the campus when I got here. And, so on a few occasions I had the opportunity to talk a little bit about my experiences in support of the war basically, so I didn't acquit myself very proudly as I look back on it, taking the position that I did. I did express support of the war during that period. I began coaching, and I was the head coach at Dartmouth in 1970. That season there was a great deal of upheaval in campuses all over the country at that point in time.

HARRIS: You were coaching lacrosse.

HENDRICK: Yeah. And I didn't begin coaching the women's team until several years later. I was coaching the men's JV soccer team, and then later on the women's soccer team. So, anyway, there were discussions on our bus on our away trips all the time, but almost all the kids were pro-war, you know. There was one kid on our team who was a leader of the SDS movement. His name was David [H.] Green ['71], and he was the one kid on the team that had the courage and the strength to stand up and speak against our involvement over there.

HARRIS: For the interview, could you define SDS?

HENDRICK: Define it? Students for a Democratic Society. And they, to my knowledge they had chapters, if you will, on many campuses in the country. You probably know that. I think that they were a bunch of courageous kids at this point who really considered far more closely than the mainstream students did, or had, had really thought about it, and objected to what we were doing. And here on the Dartmouth campus, I don't know whether they occupied—I can't recall whether they occupied other buildings than Parkhurst or not. They probably did, but I can't remember for sure or not. And they had some—I think they induced some workshops here on the campus. It seems to me that we shut down school here and classes for... You might know better than I.

HARRIS: Uh-huh, in May, 1970, I think. Or in 1970 sometime, yeah. Do you remember—what's your memory of the Parkhurst takeover when you were on campus?

HENDRICK: Yeah, unfortunately that's about all I can remember. But yeah, I was probably preparing for exams at Tuck at the time, and didn't have time to really think about it. And that unfortunately, you know, that's telling. You know, that tells us, even though I was a veteran, the demands for me getting through Tuck were consuming. You know, I didn't have time for, hardly for my marriage, and certainly I didn't have time to be thinking about politics, and to my discredit. But...

HARRIS: Do you remember hearing about the Kent State shootings in 1970?

HENDRICK: What was the year, '70?

HARRIS: Yeah, May, 1970.

HENDRICK: I hate to make the admission.

HARRIS: No worries.

HENDRICK: I certainly have read about it and know about it since, but at the time I can't recall. I know the riots occurred in Chicago about that time and in Compton in California about that time, and I know that voting rights, young people, white and black, were being killed in the South. And this is really telling. And making this admission and reflecting about it makes me understand why Americans generally are just not paying



attention. You know, I was wrapped up in my—I'm not making excuses. I'm just telling you, making the admission that I was who I was, and I don't think I was extraordinary in this regard. There were, in a different sense there were extraordinary people who were aware and involving themselves. And shit, that's what I've been doing for the last now nearly couple decades. I've been arrested a half a dozen times and continue to keep getting arrested, and I'm awaiting trial right now for political activism, and I think that's what we need. We need more people waking up. But I was sound asleep in the '60s and '70s, pursuing my career and...

HARRIS: Did you have friends or comrades in the military still in Vietnam?

HENDRICK: I don't quite understand the question.

HARRIS: When you were at Dartmouth, were your friends still in Vietnam?

HENDRICK: Yeah. I did. My team was so isolated and segregated that we didn't have occasion to interact outside the EOD team much at all. So almost everybody I was close to were in EOD. Yeah, so yes, I did have those people back in Vietnam who were still there. We rotated out of Vietnam just like we rotated in, individually basically.

An interesting aside is that I mentioned to you Major Ted Morris, whom I was so fond of. He was a mentor from the standpoint of, I think, morally. This is interesting. We had lots of conversations about how ineffective we were conducting the war. He was assigned to headquarters. I think, as I mentioned to you, he was a liaison between our team and upper echelons in the military. And, so he was a guy who, even in my naivety or my—I think we didn't talk about issues of the rightness or wrongness of the war, but we certainly talked about how poorly the war was being conducted, and I thought a lot of his values at the time. I lost track of him after we came back, and I couldn't figure out how to contact him. I didn't really think a whole lot about him, like I didn't think a whole lot about my former teammates. I was still buried in Tuck assignments basically. I didn't track down Ted Morris until, well, I can tell you, I didn't track him down until 2001, I think, and by that time he was an old man. But he still was wed to the military very much. He'd been a career military man. So, me trying to rekindle our friendship didn't go very

far at all. Our political perspectives were pretty far apart by the time 2001 came along.

HARRIS: You said it was pretty minimal, but you remember having interactions with any of the Dartmouth veteran community when you were a coach or during your time in Tuck, with ROTC or any...

HENDRICK: No meaningful connection, no, not at all. My life revolved—when we came back here in 1970, we came back in, I guess at the very beginning of January, 1970.

HARRIS: To coach?

HENDRICK: To coach, yeah. And that was so challenging for me and all-encompassing, and there was hardly any time for socializing or pursuing other interests. Yeah, again, I think that's so revealing and important to think about, that we all get consumed by our careers and by raising our families, and so we're not really paying attention to what our country is doing. You know, when you read what I have written here, Sara, what I want to share with you, to leave with you are, in Veterans for Peace we have launched a program we call "Full Disclosure." And the full disclosure is with respect to how the history of Vietnam has been so suppressed, repressed, distorted, so that we can look upon it without shame, which I believe is the way we should be looking at it; without full appreciation and acknowledgement made of the protest movement and why we were protesting the war, and why it was wrong and why it was criminal. And we in Veterans for Peace think that's been purposeful. We think that that facilitates our ongoing war making and our ongoing influence of the defense industry and the military-industrial complex basically.

So, the Full Disclosure program is a pushback to the commemoration campaign that Obama launched in, I think two years ago now. It's to continue through the year 2025, I believe. I want you to Google this, the commemoration of the war, to cast it in the same light we have perpetuated ever since the war basically, to deny those other, the issues that I'm taking with the war, to deny what our country has done in these years to follow since the Vietnam War. I think if we were honest with the consequence of the Vietnam War, if we were honest with our admission that we didn't have an acceptable rationale to wage that war, that we would be

looking at war differently today, to be thinking differently about whether we should build our nuclear arsenal, whether we should have military bases all over the world. So that's what these—these papers that I've written here were in support of the Veterans for Peace Full Disclosure movement, making those points.

HARRIS: So, how long were you a coach at Dartmouth?

HENDRICK: I coached until 1982.

HARRIS: And over that time, were you aware of the politics on campus, maybe in the early '70s or afterwards? Did you ever get involved in student politics?

HENDRICK: No, I didn't. All I did was coach and, well, I did other things, but I didn't do anything politically at all.

HARRIS: And you don't really remember other students' protests or movements?

HENDRICK: Following the Vietnam War or during, before we got out of Vietnam?

HARRIS: Yeah, before we got out of Vietnam?

HENDRICK: Never allowed it to really intrude on my world or consciousness. I don't think we had any real significant objection to the war within my community of lacrosse players, and certainly didn't within my community of colleagues in the athletic department. I was the most left wing, as negligent as I was, I was probably the most left wing politically in the athletic department. So, I want to share this with you, that I was probably the single most proponent of integration, sexual integration of Dartmouth going coed, and the most outspoken advocate of dropping the Indian as the symbol of the...

HARRIS: Mascot, yeah.

HENDRICK: Mascot, yeah. That gives you an idea of how much asleep my colleagues were.

HARRIS: Do you think that had to do somewhat with the athletic demographic that was at Dartmouth?

- HENDRICK: Yeah, yeah, probably to a degree, yeah. A bunch of thick necked Neanderthals or something like that. [laughter] Does that perception persist?
- HARRIS: No.
- HENDRICK: Yeah, I continued to run a lacrosse camp, or I did until this past August, out at Cardigan Mountain School, which you may know about in Canaan [NH]. That's a private middle school, and I've had a lacrosse camp there for 40 years since 1977. And I just gave up that, but... Why am I telling you this? I don't know. So anyway, I have close friends in the coaching community, and continue to have them in athletics, because athletics is obviously a major part of who I am.
- HARRIS: So, you talked about the bike race. Was that the first turning point when you started thinking about Vietnam retrospectively, or when did that kind of develop?
- HENDRICK: Yeah, it deepened over the course of the '90s. I don't imagine that I became aware of Howard Zinn until the '90s, maybe before then. I don't think so. I'm pretty sure that Chomsky didn't become such a great influence on my life until that period of time. George [W.] Bush had a lot to do with my evolution, if you will, my awakening. I thought he was so reprehensible and his policies were so reprehensible, that that led to me becoming a more engaged activist. I probably went to my first... Veterans for Peace was founded in Maine in 1985 by four Maine veterans, or Vietnam veterans from Maine. One of them remains a close colleague. So I'm very proud of what Veterans for Peace represents. I went to my first Veterans for Peace meeting, I think, maybe in '87 or '88, or something like that, maybe a little later. But, I'm sure it was later, yeah, I'm sure it was in the '90s. And I found there detractors and questioners, doubters my age and older, some mentors who were Korean War veterans with whom I could really resonate with my thoughts. My thoughts really resonated with theirs. And so I really found a refuge basically. I had come around to having misgivings about our culture in general, and I found people that thought like I did.
- HARRIS: What's the overall mission of Veterans for Peace?
- HENDRICK: We're opposed to war no matter where for any purpose. And we're committed to working towards peace and towards the

abolition of war basically, as naive as that may sound. That's what we're dedicated towards. Our mission statement has four or five other basic tenets, but that's the fundamental one. One of those other tenets is that we are opposed to nuclear weapons, and will work on behalf of the abolition of nuclear weapons.

HARRIS: And what were you doing after you were coaching? So that's when you got involved, as like, were you a staff member or just attending meetings?

HENDRICK: At, a staff member...

HARRIS: For Veterans for Peace?

HENDRICK: Well, for the years between... I left coaching in 1982. My wife and I ran a country inn on Deer Isle in Maine, which is where I live now, and we did until 2001. So that was an all-consuming project. And I built my own home, and I became a private pilot. So there were things that were really filling up my life and I didn't get into politics until the '90s sometime. Yeah, I think it's important for me to think about that. It makes me sympathetic or a little more understanding of how it's so hard to get people to take some responsibility for what our country is doing.

But, you know, I raise the question oftentimes when I talk of whether we Americans just lack empathy. You know, what the hell's wrong with us? How can we allow our country in our name to be doing such horrible things? I think, you know, there's a level of criminality here that we all have to accept fault for, blame for. So, it's important for me to remember how negligent I was, so unconscious I was all those years. But I make the admission and the acknowledgement that I'm surrounded by good people who are doing good things. And I don't know that I have a friend on Deer Isle who's not engaged in some community effort, you know, whether helping the elderly or helping kids that can't read on Deer Isle, or helping disadvantaged, disabled, you know, they're doing all sorts of good work, as your parents are and their friends. And my abiding cause has become our war making.

HARRIS: So, what has been some of the—you talked about speaking to classes—some of the things you've done through Veterans for Peace?

HENDRICK: I was stationed in Greenland in 1964. I didn't know then that Thule Air Base was enabled through the displacement of native people there, the so-called Inuit. There were Inuits who lived where Thule now is, and whose ancestors had lived there for hundreds of years, for generations, and they were displaced. They were made to move to a place north of there, a hundred miles or so, a place called Kanak, and they were given four days to pack up and move out. It was a virtual Trail of Tears. I only know—I know this because I learned of that a few years back, in the early 2000s, and I went there to Kanak in 2008, funded by the University of Maine, where I taught Peace and Reconciliation Studies. And I met people who had been victimized as children. This happened in 1957. And some of the elders that I met there were the leaders then in 2008 of the ongoing campaign to get access to these ancestral lands from which they had been removed and to get dispensation for what had happened to their people. That continues to this day.

After I learned about what happened to those people, I learned about the Chagossians, who are the people of Diego Garcia. It's an island in the Indian Ocean, and it's where we have a huge military base. And those people were displaced in the '60s. These are things that happened in our life. And their ancestors had lived there for generations in an idyllic existence, and they were moved to a place called Mauritius, an island off the coast of Africa 1,200 miles away. And people jumped overboard in despair when they were moved from that island. And they also no longer have been permitted to return to their home.

And I learned about the people of the Marshall Islands, because I was beginning to focus on what else have we done in the world to build our military bases? I don't know whether this is so far off base, but I don't think it is. I think it's wrong and it's worth talking about. So we have probably upwards of a thousand bases on foreign land around the planet. The rest of the world's countries might have a total of 30, might have. Probably not that many. So we have over a thousand. And in many places the consequences have been of this nature.

We dropped 67 atomic bombs on the Marshall Islands in our atomic bomb testing from 1946 to '58, and we left those islands, some of the islands in the Marshall Islands irradiated, and the consequences of that radiation exist

today. There are second and third generation victims who were born with all sorts of birth anomalies, and, you know, it's disgusting. And we have a base on one of those islands called Kwajalein, called the Ronald Reagan Missile Ballistic Defense site, and the native islanders who lived on Kwajalein have been moved off. They're not allowed to live there. They can work there. There's an island not far away called Ebeye, and Ebeye is the most densely populated place on earth. It's called "the slum of the Pacific," referred to oftentimes as "the slum" or "the ghetto of the Pacific." So these are other people that have been victimized. So, that's the dimension that I have most focused on. I have learned about the consequence of these bases all around the planet, and I believe that they are, all these bases are contrary to our interest, contrary to our security, contrary to the security of all people. So, that's the message that I oftentimes am trying to convey when I am visiting schools and other communities.

HARRIS: Have you traveled a lot through this work?

HENDRICK: Yeah. I've been to Greenland. I've been to England, to sit in Parliament while the Chagossians were trying to seek compensation. But the British Government also were complicit in the removal of those people. The Brits and the US conspired to remove them. Been to Okinawa to stand in objection to our military bases there. That's another whole horror story, what we do in Okinawa, what's been done there. We occupy 25% of the island of Okinawa with our military bases. I think there are, I can't remember now, something like 30 military bases on Okinawa. It's like an occupation. I've been to Korea to stand in objection to the military base that we've built with the South Koreans on Jeju. It's an island south of the South Korean peninsula. So, and I'm pissed off because we're supporting what I think is the occupation of the Palestinian territories by supporting the Israeli Defense Forces. You know, we just recently gave them a \$31 billion defense package. I don't think we should be funding that.

HARRIS: When did you start teaching the class at University of Maine?

HENDRICK: I think it was maybe 2006, and I taught for five years, something like that.

HARRIS: Yeah, you were discussing these similar topics. Is that what the class is?

HENDRICK: Yeah. I always taught the winter term, and it began right around Martin Luther King Day, so I built the curriculum around Martin Luther King's speeches in general and what he represented, and particularly the speech that he gave on April 4<sup>th</sup> in 1967, about Vietnam. Have you read it? Do you know the speech by chance? It's really good.

HARRIS: I think I have read it.

HENDRICK: Yeah, it's really remarkable.

HARRIS: Any highlights you want to share?

HENDRICK: Let me see if I can remember some of the messages in particular about it. Well, you know, he identified his country in that speech as being the greatest perpetrator of violence on Earth, and I believe that it remains to be that. And he makes a strong case for it. And he is celebrated, of course, widely in our country, as well he should be, but not too often is it recognized what a... He made the connection really between our militarism and civil rights, you know, that blacks were really made victims by our militarism, most specifically with respect to how they bore an inordinate consequence of the Vietnam War, an inordinate price.

HARRIS: In terms of serving in the military?

HENDRICK: Yeah, yeah.

HARRIS: How do you think—I guess you've somewhat elaborated on this, but how do you think your role as a veteran in Vietnam has shaped your later life, your adult life?

HENDRICK: Yeah, it obviously surely has. You know, I didn't see myself as a veteran. Until I found Veterans for Peace, I never thought about it much. And I'm ashamed of having gone to the Naval Academy. I've shared this with you. Because I didn't examine the consequences, the real meaning of going to the Naval Academy. Same with respect to volunteering to go to Vietnam, I didn't really examine what it said. Again, I think I said this to you, that I would do whatever my Commander-in-Chief, whether it was George Bush or Donald Trump, that I would do whatever they said to do, that



it was right to not question when you go off to war. So I'm not proud of going to the Naval Academy. I'm proud of who I am today, and I know that going to the Naval Academy and going to Vietnam had everything to do with who I am today, that probably if I didn't think about what I had done, then I'd be a far different person than I am. So for that I'm grateful that I went to Vietnam.

HARRIS: Have you been involved anymore in the Dartmouth community or Dartmouth veteran community since you started your anti-war activism?

HENDRICK: I brought the movie. I didn't tell you this. There was a highly honored film made, a documentary called *Vietnam, Long Time Coming*. So yeah, when you have nothing else to do, Sara, get that. If you become real excited about it, or... Here, here's what you need to do. You need to invite me to come to present the film to your class. It's really a great film.

HARRIS: I'll work on that.

HENDRICK: Okay. All right. I'm serious about this now. But I brought the film to the HOP [Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth College], and it was made shortly after we were there, so it must have been about 2000, or maybe it was 1999 that I brought it to the HOP. And we had a full house at the HOP that night, and I was very proud to present it. It's a compelling film.

HARRIS: Is it about the bike?

HENDRICK: Yeah, about the bike ride. And it focuses on two of those guys in the ride, one of which is a double amputee. He was then and probably still is an inordinant bicyclist, in spite of the fact that he's lost both legs below the knee. And the other guy, Jose Ramos, was a Hispanic, and he was a medic and lost all the members of his team, all the young people that he was in charge of, when they were assaulted in a surprise attack. Only survivor of it. So he's damaged psychologically, but a great guy nonetheless, and he's still, he's worked it out so that he's functional anyway. But the movie focuses on those two guys, not exclusive of the whole team. But it's so important that what we do come away from that movie is a recognition that we are all brothers and sisters basically. And so, write that down.

HARRIS: I wrote it down.

HENDRICK: I don't think I've had any other occasion to speak over here. I've spoken in New Hampshire. My brother used to teach in the Ed Department here. He lives in Orfordville.

HARRIS: What's his name?

HENDRICK: Richard. Dick Hendrick. And I don't know if there are any of his colleagues still teaching in the Ed Department or not.

HARRIS: You mentioned he was also anti-war, anti-Vietnam War.

HENDRICK: Yeah.

HARRIS: Yeah. I think that's all I have. You've kind of already gone over some regrets you have about looking back. Any final thoughts on how that experience shaped your life?

HENDRICK: I think I probably have talked it through. Yeah, there is the obvious regret that I've shared, you know, regret for having contributed to the effort. That's a cross to bear, it really is. And, you know, on the one level, I forgive myself. I know that we're all... I guess where I come out is feeling like at some point we have to take responsibility for what we do. And we can give a pass to a 17-, 18-year-old kid that comes out of the inner-city somewhere or, you know, any naive kid really. But, at some point, whether you're a 30- or 40-year-old non-commissioned officer, career military guy, or a general, we have to take responsibility for what is being done. I just don't understand... I don't believe those who don't see the criminality of what we're doing are really taking full assessment, full measure of what's being done in our name. I think they have blinders on. What do you think of the notion of patriotism, Sara?

HARRIS: Definitely controversial. Okay, I'll stop the recording now. Thank you so much for doing this interview with me.

HENDRICK: Thank you, Sara.

HARRIS: It was really fascinating.

HENDRICK: Thanks.

[End of Interview.]