

Michael Lenehan '68  
Dartmouth College Oral History Program  
Dartmouth Vietnam Project  
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Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft

[WALKER S.]

SCHNEIDER: All right, this is Walker Schneider with the Dartmouth Vietnam Project interviewing [Michael] "Mike" Lenehan, Class of 1968.

Okay, Mr. Lenehan, so I guess how I'd like to start is just could you tell me a little bit about your family, their background, kind of—yeah, who were you growing up with? And then what that was all like in the 1950s.

LENEHAN:

Okay. Well, I was born in 1946, and my immediate family was just my mother and father and my brother [Robert A.] "Bob" [Lenehan], who was one year older than I. We lived in a variety of places. I was born in New Rochelle, New York, and—but the first five years were spent primarily in—well, all of them in New Jersey, I think Roselle Park and then Westfield. And then we moved, actually, to Caracas, Venezuela, because my father at that time was working for Standard Oil of New Jersey [sic; Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, now Exxon]. And Creole Petroleum [Corporation] was a subsidiary of theirs back then, and so we spent two years in Caracas and then came back I think in 1953 and spent a year in Eastchester, New York, and then in '54 moved to Pelham, New York. And that's really where most of my growing up occurred.

I don't know that our family was particularly unique. We had a pretty large extended family on my mother's side. My grandparents lived in New Rochelle, and I had three uncles, and they had a lot of kids, so we got together a lot: Christmas, Easter. I was raised Catholic. We're an Irish Catholic family so, you know, we all went to church on Sunday. And the various holy days of obligation were observed. And, you know, that was pretty common in New York State.

I went to public school throughout my growing-up years, and, you know, Pelham was a great place to grow up. I was one

block from my elementary school and three blocks from the junior high and high school, which were in one building. And I was very fortunate I had a great education. Pelham was a small enough town, you could walk everywhere, so I think I had a pretty—pretty happy childhood.

SCHNEIDER: Cool. I also just realized, and I'm sorry, DVP, that I forgot to start recording on my phone as well so I'm going to pause this for one sec.

LENEHAN: [A device tone.] Uh-oh.

SCHNEIDER: No worries.

LENEHAN: Excuse me a minute.

SCHNEIDER: Not at all.

LENEHAN: [Device tones again.]

[Recording interruption.]

SCHNEIDER: As I said, this isn't in any way formulated by any guidelines, so if he calls again, no worries.

LENEHAN: Okay.

SCHNEIDER: What I'm really interested about is—so you leave for Venezuela kind of at the height of U.S. chest thumping, postwar euphoria.

LENEHAN: Okay. Well, I was five years old, so I don't remember a lot about what was going on, you know, as far as the world scene was concerned.

SCHNEIDER: Well, what do you remember about Venezuela? And I guess more important- —not more importantly, but interestingly as well—how do you remember the transition coming back from Venezuela when you were a little older, when you returned to the U.S.? What was that like?

LENEHAN: You know, it was kind of an adventure. I mean, I—we went down by plane. It was a prop plane back then. I don't remember really much of anything about the flight. Coming

back, we went back on a boat, a ship, and I remember a bit more about that. But it was all pretty exciting to me. I don't—I don't think I had any problems of reentry.

We lived in a really kind of an enclave of Americans who were working for different companies at the time. This is back when it was a friendly government in Venezuela. And so, you know, it was really almost like a different part of the U.S. So I—I—I don't remember anything other than occasional, you know, mixing with some of the Venezuelans, like at a swim club or at—that's where I learned to swim. But it's all pretty hazy. I mean, this was a long time ago, and I think when we got back to the U.S., you know, I quickly sort of rejoined life in the U.S.

SCHNEIDER: Did your parents participate at all in the war effort in World War II?

LENEHAN: Yeah. My—my father was in the [U.S.] Navy, and they got married, my mother and father, in 1944.

SCHNEIDER: And what were their names, by the way?

LENEHAN: [J.] Robert Lenehan—

SCHNEIDER: Senior.

LENEHAN: Yeah. Well, Joseph Robert Lenehan, and Geraldine. Her maiden name was Donovan. And so they—she was, like, 20, 21, when they got married because that's what people did back then, got married at very early ages.

So my dad was a supply officer in the Navy and never went overseas. He was stationed at [the Naval Air Station] Quonset Point. There was a big naval air base in Quonset, Rhode Island. And then in [the Naval Air Station] Key West Florida], another big air base down there.

And they met [chuckles] when my father did his training in the Navy at Harvard Business School.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, really?

LENEHAN: Well, the Navy took over Harvard Business School, and that's where they trained their supply officers, and so he was there for, I don't know, three months, six months, and my mother was attending a college near Boston [Massachusetts], and that's how they met.

SCHNEIDER: That's really interesting. That's cool.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: So you then enter high school in 1960, correct?

LENEHAN: Yes.

SCHNEIDER: And you're there through '64.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: So you—there's a lot that happens in those years. You've got the Cuban Missile Crisis, JFK [President John F. Kennedy] assassination.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: I mean, what was kind of coming of age like during these really formative events, not just, I'm sure, for you but also for America?

LENEHAN: Well, I certainly remember the Cuban Missile Crisis and JFK's assassination. I mean, those were two, you know, really important events. You know, the Cuban Missile Crisis—I mean, I remember my friend, Greg Murphy, you know, sort of joking—not really joking but, you know, wondering [chuckles]: “This could all just end for us. Have you ever thought about that?” But, you know, we were doing a lot of other things, too, so, you know, we were certainly aware of it, but I can't say we dwelled on it.

When President Kennedy was assassinated, I certainly remember that. I mean, that—I was a senior. I remember where I was walking in the hall. You know, I was between classes and passing the library, and someone came out and, you know, made this announcement, “The president has been shot.” And for the next four days, we all watched

television and watched funeral processions. It was pretty dramatic.

SCHNEIDER: What was the kind of emotional impact like on you and on your classmates, do you think?

LENEHAN: You know, I think it was kind of a wakeup call about the world. I think that—well, our high school yearbook had a big picture of President Kennedy at the front, and I think some people were more shaken than others. Again, you know, we all had different activities. I was mainly involved in sports, and so, you know, that was something that I kind of went back to, and so I didn't—I'm not sure it really altered my life in any way.

SCHNEIDER: So also, then, kind of while President Kennedy's getting shot in November, you're also starting to think about colleges.

LENEHAN: Right. Yeah, I was, yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: I guess this might be a better question for the Admissions Office more than the Dartmouth Vietnam Project, but why Dartmouth? What drew you here?

LENEHAN: Why Dartmouth? The summer before—would have been the summer of '63—I worked at a summer camp in New Hampshire, in Wolfeboro. And one of the counselors there was a guy named [Donald E.] "Don" Kubit, who was Class of '64 and just a great guy. And he said, "Oh, Mike, you know, you ought to come to Dartmouth. It's a place—you know, it's a great place. I think you'd really like it." So I didn't have any connection with Dartmouth, but I got in touch with—with "Kubes," as he was called, and he said, "Well, come on up."

And so I actually flew up. I got a plane in New York and flew up to Lebanon. Landed in Lebanon, [New Hampshire]. I didn't know how far it was from Dartmouth, and this—I was—this was back when the Lebanon [Municipal] Airport was really small. And I think a woman saw me just sort of looking around [chuckles] and said, "Do you need a ride somewhere?" So she gave me a ride up to Dartmouth.

And Don was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity, and that's where he was staying. So I stayed there. And then I had an

interview the next day with—I think he was an assistant, you know, dean in the Admissions Office. And I decided, you know, to apply early decision, but I didn't get in early decision, so I was quite disappointed. But an alumnus in Pelham, you know, interviewed me again and said, "Oh, you know, don't give up," so—so I was admitted in April, along with the rest of the class.

SCHNEIDER: And what—so I would assume you then applied to some other schools.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: Did—what other schools were those, and did Dartmouth remain your top choice throughout the process?

LENEHAN: Well, the other schools were Columbia [University], Brown [University] and Yale [University]. And I had some family connections with Columbia and Brown. My father had gone to Columbia. And on my mother's side, my grandfather and two of my uncles had gone to Brown. And so I applied to them. And the baseball coach at Columbia was mildly interested in me. He was really more interested in Tony Nardoizzi, who was one of my teammates at Pelham [High School], so he invited us down to the campus. So I—you know, I was kind of miffed at not getting in early decision, but, you know, after I was admitted, I said, "Sure, it's still my first choice."

SCHNEIDER: As a Columbia guy, what were your dad's views on Dartmouth at the time?

LENEHAN: I don't think he had any strong feelings that, you know, he wanted me to go to Columbia. I mean, my dad grew up in the Bronx [New York City, New York], and Columbia was, you know, the—the local school with a big reputation, I guess, and so that's where he went. And I think with, you know, my—with Brown, I don't think there was any special pressure, you know. I think, you know, he would have been happy if I had gone there, but I certainly wasn't pushed one way or the other.

SCHNEIDER: So you get to campus fall of 1964.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: And I was reading through a class reunion report, and I read about this Moosilauke-e.

LENEHAN: [Laughs.]

SCHNEIDER: That's [unintelligible; 14:14]. Can you—it's seemed like a critical story. Can you elaborate on that?

LENEHAN: Well, sure. Yeah, this was the freshman trip, and—which was a wonderful experience, and, you know, I met a lot of friends who were friends throughout my four years there. And we had all, you know, been hiking in different parts of the White Mountains the first two days, and then the last two days, we were back at the Moosilauke [Ravine] Lodge.

And I'm not sure how it happened, but one of the guys in the Class of '67, a guy named Beirne [pronounced like Bernie] [F.] Lovely [Jr.], sort of encouraged us to, you know, show some spirit as a class. And I don't know, one thing led to another, and, you know, we climb up the mountain and paint a few '68s, and even, you know, at the top had a picture of us [both chuckle], all eight of us, with a '68 painted there.

And then—I don't know—it was a few days later or a week later, there's this front-page article in *The Daily D*, *The Daily Dartmouth*, and it shows this picture, and the dean of freshman, Dean [Albert I.] Dickerson [Class of 1930], I guess, went on a rampage. He just said, "These—you know, they're desecrating Mount Moosilauke." And so we were all hauled before the Student Judiciary Council or—and, you know, they sort of read us the riot act. And Dickerson, at a freshman assembly, actually, talked about it and said, you know, "These men don't belong at Dartmouth." [Both chuckle.]

SCHNEIDER: Jeez!

LENEHAN: You know, that was a, you know, kind of a tense time for us. But we did get rousted out of bed one morning and taken up to Moosilauke with scrub brushes and some sort of paint remover, and we had to climb up the mountain and scrub off the '68s.

SCHNEIDER: So it's a pretty tumultuous start to your Dartmouth career.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah, it was. It was. But when we were actually, you know, in this proceeding, I could kind of tell that some of the—you know, the student government people were trying not to laugh, you know. And I think their marching orders were to, you know, you know, "Put the fear of God in 'em," and so they tried to do that.

SCHNEIDER: How would you say your Dartmouth experience unfolded from that point?

LENEHAN: Oh, it was wonderful. I mean, I loved the freedom. I loved being away from home. And it—it was wonderful. I really loved it. I played freshman football, which I really—this was back when there were freshman teams, and freshman actually could *not* play in the varsity, so, you know, we had I think over a hundred guys go out for football. And I met a lot of, you know, my friends through—through that. You know, I—I—unfortunately, I—I didn't apply myself as a student, especially, you know, the first two years, and so—and I suffered academically. I mean, I paid the price with a pretty low GPA [grade-point average]. But it wasn't really until I got into my English major that, you know, I really started to enjoy the classes.

SCHNEIDER: Did you go into Dartmouth thinking you were going to be an English major?

LENEHAN: Well, actually, I was thinking more about being a classics major. I'd taken quite a few Latin courses at Pelham High and had an excellent teacher. And so I took a few Latin courses freshman year. Both were taught by an instructor named Paul Swarney, and I think he was trying to encourage folks to major in classics, so at the end of freshman year, he said, "Oh, Mr. Lenehan, you know, you really ought to major in classics. But you have to take Greek, and I'll be teaching it next fall, so, you know, why don't you sign up?" So I did, and unfortunately he left over the summer, and a new fellow came in, a very intense, humorless guy, and I took Greek and didn't study at all and ended up with a D and decided that *classics is not for me*. [Chuckles.]



SCHNEIDER: [I can tell? 10:47] a lot of people still choose their majors these days. It's the first C or D they get.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: They go the other way.

LENEHAN: Yeah, so—and I'm glad I majored in English. It was a wonderful major, and I thought the professors were just outstanding.

SCHNEIDER: You were on campus during two big societal movements in the United States: the civil rights movement and the beginning of the antiwar movement.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: Did those affect your daily life? What was their presence on the Dartmouth campus like, and how did *you* interact with them, if at all?

LENEHAN: Yeah. I don't know that I really interacted much with them. They were—they seemed pretty distant. I mean, this was back when Hanover [New Hampshire] was a bit more remote. I mean, Route 89 [Interstate 89] hadn't been completed when—if you were traveling down to Boston, you were going down [New Hampshire] Route 4A and [U.S. Route] 4 [in New Hampshire]. And this, of course, was back when Dartmouth was all men, and so, I don't know, we were a bit more cut off from the world, in a sense.

I was certainly aware of these things. I would read newspapers and, you know, follow the news, but both—both—at least at the beginning, the Vietnam War seemed remote. But, I mean, each year it—as it grew, you know, and the number of troops increased, you know, we became more aware that this—this may be a big deal by the time we graduate.

Civil rights movement? It's hard to say. You know, I read about what went on in Selma [Alabama] and, you know, it was pretty horrific. But the South seemed like a foreign country almost, you know?

SCHNEIDER: Yeah.

LENEHAN: And there were a few black guys that I knew from the football team but not—not many. I mean, I think the number of African-American students was—was very small at that point. So, you know, occasionally there'd be—well, I remember when George [C.] Wallace [Jr.] came as a speaker.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, I didn't realize he came to campus.

LENEHAN: He did.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, wow!

LENEHAN: He did, in Webster Hall, and—actually, did he come twice? I—I—no, I think it was that one time. And I think some people charged the stage, yelling he was a racist, and then outside his car was surrounded. And, you know, it was a pretty big to-do. [Chuckles.]

SCHNEIDER: So did you attend that talk?

LENEHAN: I did. I did.

SCHNEIDER: And what did you think about it? What were your take-aways?

LENEHAN: Oh, Wallace was a—I mean, he was sort of a—the version of the populist back in the '60s. I mean, he had a real appeal, I think, to, you know, the average Joe, the blue-collar worker. I mean, he—I mean, in many ways, [President Donald J.] Trump—you know, Trump's campaign was somewhat like his. And so he had a following. And he talked about some of the issues that other candidates weren't talking about. But [chuckles] he—I mean, he was—he was a smart guy, too, in that he knew his audience, and he'd come across as—very differently when he spoke up here than when he was down South. So he was impressive in an odd sort of way.

SCHNEIDER: Was this part of the kind of campaigning trail that crossed through Hanover for the '68 election?

- LENEHAN: I think it was maybe part of the early campaign of Wallace, because Wallace I think did run in '68.
- SCHNEIDER: Yeah.
- LENEHAN: And so, you know, yeah, I think that was part of his campaign, but it was at a very early stage.
- SCHNEIDER: Did you get any other candidates up here for that election, like [Hubert H.] Humphrey [Jr.] or [Robert F.] "Bobby" Kennedy or—
- LENEHAN: Yeah. Well, there—there were. I think [George W.] Romney was—George Romney was up here. And there were others. I don't know that I attended any of the other speeches that—that they gave.
- SCHNEIDER: You weren't overtly political?
- LENEHAN: No, not—not overtly. I mean, I—what was the first election I—well, I guess '68 was probably the first election I voted in. But, you know, before I'd turned 18, no, I probably wasn't that political.
- SCHNEIDER: So JFK gets assassinated while you're in high school, and then I believe Bobby was assassinated while you were at Dartmouth, correct?
- LENEHAN: Yes.
- SCHNEIDER: What—what was that like for you to have another Kennedy get shot?
- LENEHAN: That was—that was about one week before graduation, and that was part of a series of events my senior year that—all were pretty—pretty earth-shaking. The assassination of [the Rev. Dr.] Martin Luther King [Jr.] took place I think in January, and that caused riots around the country.
- SCHNEIDER: Were there any at Hanover?
- LENEHAN: I don't remember a riot, no. I think there were religious ceremonies at Rollins Chapel and—

- SCHNEIDER: And vigils and the like?
- LENEHAN: And vigils, yeah. And the end of March, President [Lyndon B.] Johnson announced that he was not going to run for reelection. I remember that very well. And so Robert Kennedy's assassination occurs I think June 6<sup>th</sup>, maybe, it was. And our graduation was one week later. So, you know, you sort of had a feeling the world was starting to fall apart.
- SCHNEIDER: Both of your graduations were marked with a memorial to a Kennedy.
- LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah, that's true.
- SCHNEIDER: That's got to be pretty earth-shaking.
- LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.
- SCHNEIDER: As the Vietnam War increases from '64 to '68, I—I've been led to understand the ROTC [U.S. Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps] presence on Dartmouth campus also increased. What made you decide not to join—or what factored into your decision to not join the ROTC?
- LENEHAN: I don't know that I really thought about it that much. You know, my roommate, Peter [N.] Baylor [Class of 1968], was ROTC. Actually, Peter went to Pelham High with me.
- SCHNEIDER: Oh, really?
- LENEHAN: Yeah.
- SCHNEIDER: Cool.
- LENEHAN: Peter was—graduated the first in his class. Of course, he applied here early admission, and he got in, no problem. But Peter—Peter's brother had been in ROTC also, and so Peter decided to, you know, do the same, in Army ROTC. I just—it wasn't something that I had really thought about. When I was apply- —you know, coming to Dartmouth in '64, Vietnam really hadn't started yet. I think, well, the Tonkin Gulf [sic; Gulf of Tonkin] incident was in, what?—August or something? But—but we really didn't start the buildup until,

you know, 1965. And so I—I didn't have any, you know, particular incentive to—to join ROTC.

SCHNEIDER: So this is a little bit of a selfish question: I'm also on the rugby team here, and I saw you were as well.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: What was playing rugby like at Dartmouth?

LENEHAN: Oh, it was fun. I—I did it mainly freshman and sophomore year, and—and I really enjoyed it. And a lot of football players [chuckles] ended up quitting football and—and playing rugby,—

SCHNEIDER: Yup. [Chuckles.]

LENEHAN: —which I think still happens from time to time.

SCHNEIDER: Yeah.

LENEHAN: And so it was just fun. I—I was never that good. I—I think I mainly played fullback, because I could punt. I punted, you know, on the football team. And I—I remember, you know, getting pretty banged up because when you're fullback, you're sort of the last man, you know, and somebody breaks away and you have to make an open field tackle, and, you know, I—I remember, you know, just not being able [chuckles] to get up very quickly. So I—I got some minor injuries, I think, and I—I didn't play much junior and senior year.

SCHNEIDER: And why was that?

LENEHAN: I think I—I think partly just I was more interested—I didn't go to the rugby parties, but, you know, I—I was not a good enough player to really, you know, take it seriously, but I certainly knew guys that played rugby, and there were a number of guys in our fraternity that played, and we had rugby parties, and so I enjoyed them.

SCHNEIDER: We call those guys "social members" these days.

LENEHAN: Social members, yes.

SCHNEIDER: It's my understanding that [William S.] "Bill" or "Billy" Smoyer [Class of 1967] was on the rugby team while you were there. Do you remember him at all?

COOPER: I remember him mainly from hockey. You know, he was I think captain of the hockey team, or he was certainly one of the—one of the major players. I don't really remember him from rugby. I mean, there were a lot of guys that played, but I do, you know, certainly remember him from the hockey games.

SCHNEIDER: What was—you were, I believe, on campus when he—when news of his death came, or it happened while you were a Dartmouth student, at least, right?

LENEHAN: Yeah. Let's see. He was Class of '67, and so he was probably killed in '68? I—I don't remember the date.

SCHNEIDER: I know he was killed two weeks after he deployed, but I don't know when.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: What was—he was the first Dartmouth casualty in Vietnam.

LENEHAN: Was he?

SCHNEIDER: Yeah. What was that impact like? If there was one.

LENEHAN: Yeah. I don't—I mean, I remember more some of the deaths after I graduated. [J. Robert] "Robbie" Peacock [II, Class of 1968] in our class was killed. You know, I knew him pretty well. There was another guy, though, in Bill's class, Duncan [B.] Sleigh [Class of 1967], who was killed in Vietnam, and I knew Duncan from some of my Latin classes. So I knew him better than I did Bill. But certainly some of the guys in Theta Delt[a Chi], you know, were affected by it quite a bit.

SCHNEIDER: What was the impact of Duncan's death on you?

LENEHAN: You know, just a very sobering [chuckles] event.

SCHNEIDER: How did you receive news of it?

LENEHAN: I guess I read about it, maybe, and, you know, the name certainly rang a bell, and—but, you know, that was happening more and more. You know, I certainly knew of guys from my hometown that were, you know, getting drafted, and so I think that second half of the senior year we all were very aware that, you know, this was something we had to deal with.

I had been contacted by my draft board. It was Local Board #10 in Mount Vernon, New York. And I got a letter saying I'd been reclassified 1-A [Selective Service System classification meaning "Available for unrestricted military service"]. This was when I was a junior, and "report to the board." And I did [laughs], you know. And, you know, they're basically saying, "Well, why shouldn't you be drafted?" And I said, "Well, I'm a full-time student at Dartmouth, and, you know, I'm gonna graduate in '68." And they wanted to know, you know, whether I was actually a full-time student, you know?

SCHNEIDER: Right.

LENEHAN: And so I was questioned, you know, certainly pretty closely about that. And they finally determined that "yes, we'll allow you to graduate, but you'll remain 1-A, and you'll be drafted after that if you don't, you know, join or enroll in one of the other branches."

SCHNEIDER: So then you graduate Dartmouth, and were you drafted then, or did you enlist?

LENEHAN: No. I—well, I applied to several Officer Candidate programs: the Navy. That was my first choice. And there also was a program in the [U.S.] Army, which was called the OCS [Officer Candidate School] option. And what that entailed was I would enlist for two years. The usual enlistment period was three years, but this was an option enlistment, where you had a two-year commitment and you had the option of attending OCS. And so that's what I decided to do. The Navy had rejected me, so [chuckles] I thought, *Well, you know, the Army will take me.* And there really weren't any other options that I could see.

SCHNEIDER: It was either that or get drafted?

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah. And, I mean, I didn't have any medical issues.

SCHNEIDER: No bone spurs in your ankles? [Transcriber's note: He refers to the ways Donald J. Trump evaded military service.]

LENEHAN: No. [Laughs.] No, no. [Laughs.]

So I went over to Albany, New York, I think is where we had to do our physicals and everything, and I went over there with [Robert S.] "Bob" Schley [Jr., pronounced SHLIE; Class of 1968], who was, you know, one of my classmates and he was a fraternity brother. And so we both—you know, we went into the Army in August of '68. And so that's how my Army career began.

SCHNEIDER: What was the—I guess as a fraternity member myself, I'm curious: We're not a very political organization. It's mainly social. So how did the draft looming and the Vietnam War kind of impact Phi Delt[a Alpha]? Because—especially because you went up with your fraternity brother. What was that presence like?

LENEHAN: Well, I think we all were thinking, you know, *What are we gonna do?* Peter Baylor—I had four roommates—well, three roommates. There were four of us at the Phi Delt house senior year, and we were up on the third floor. We had one room with two bunk beds and then our living room, so we had a suite, if you could call it that. And John [G.] Mercer [Class of 1968] was—he decided to go the Marine [U.S. Marine Corps] route, and so he I guess was accepted to flight school, although it turned out he had a problem with his eyesight, so he stayed stateside the whole time, as a Marine.

[Stephan A.] "Steve" Elliot, who was from northern New Hampshire, got drafted sometime I think in the fall of '68, and so he went in, and he ended up in Vietnam. And then Peter actually had a four-year commitment, Peter Baylor.

SCHNEIDER: Why a four-year?



LENEHAN: Well, he decided that he would—you know, he would get the—I guess the scholarship that ROTC provides. As Peter put it, he got sick of hearing about how expensive Dartmouth was, so he said, *Okay, I'll—I'll just apply for the scholarship.* So his last two years I think were fully paid for.

SCHNEIDER: Wow.

LENEHAN: But he had a four-year commitment, and he initially was in Thailand, at an Air Force base, sort of a liaison there, and then he was in Vietnam for a year after that.

SCHNEIDER: Your older brother Bob. Did he go to Vietnam?

LENEHAN: No, he was drafted while I was in Vietnam.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, wow. After you.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah. He was in law school out in Colorado and finished his first year and then was drafted I guess after he'd started his second year, and so at that time I was in Vietnam, and the Army had a policy: You know, if there was family of just two and one of them is in Vietnam, the other one won't be sent there, so he ended up going to Germany and, you know, was a clerk or something.

SCHNEIDER: Interesting.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: So you enlist in the Army August 1968.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: And then you go to basic at—I believe you gave me the name here—Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri.

LENEHAN: Right.

SCHNEIDER: Very different from Westchester County.

LENEHAN: Certainly.

- SCHNEIDER: Missouri. Basic training, Missouri. Different from Dartmouth, Ivy League, Westchester County.
- LENEHAN: Yeah. Yeah.
- SCHNEIDER: What was *that* transition like?
- LENEHAN: Oh, basic training is—is the great melting pot. I mean, it was, you know, an experience probably everyone should go through. I mean, I met just about every type of person you could imagine. I mean, some of these guys were straight out of the Ozarks [Ozark Mountains]. And—and then there'd be these black guys from, you know, the inner city of Chicago [Illinois], and we all were in the same boat. I mean, it was—and then there were these college guys like me, and, you know, some others, and we I think got along pretty well.
- SCHNEIDER: There was no kind of discrimination of, “Oh, he’s an Ivy Leaguer” and—
- LENEHAN: You know, I—I kept it to myself, actually. [Laughter.] But, you know, if people knew about it, they’d kid me about it, but—
- SCHNEIDER: Nothing too serious? No discrimination?
- LENEHAN: No.
- SCHNEIDER: And anti-intellectualism?
- LENEHAN: No, no. I think some of the NCOs—you know, if they’d see you reading a book, they’d think, you know, *What are you wasting your time for? Gimme some meaningless job to do.*
- SCHNEIDER: Can you describe kind of the day-to-day basic training for those weeks? What was that like?
- LENEHAN: Well, we’d get up very early, and, you know, essentially you’re harassed by drill sergeants, but, you know, it’s—it’s not too bad. I mean, you’re double-timing around and doing calisthenics, and, you know, you look the wrong way at somebody, you have to do pushups. And then, you know, you’re trained on—we were trained on the M14 rifle, which was one of the predecessors to the M16. We’d go on these long marches, you know, carrying a rifle, backpack and all

that stuff. And it was eight weeks, you know, so it went by pretty quickly.

SCHNEIDER: And so what made you choose artillery, then, to go to the AIT, I believe? Yeah.

LENEHAN: Yeah, Advanced Individual Training is—AIT is the acronym for that. When I applied for the OCS option program in the Army, I had to choose one combat branch. Well, you were supposed—in theory, given choices of what branch you wanted to be in, but one of them had to be a combat branch. So I chose artillery because I thought, *Well, that sounds better than infantry*. And then I chose, you know, intelligence, all these—these other branches that, of course, you know, was not going to happen because, you know, they were sending people over to Vietnam in droves.

So I chose artillery. Actually, my grandfather had been in artillery in World War I, so, you know, a little history there. And he had trained at Fort Sill [Oklahoma].

SCHNEIDER: Oh, no way!

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: So when you choose artillery, then you get selected to go. Did you have any communication with him about that?

LENEHAN: Oh, yeah, yeah, I had, you know, a long correspondence with my grandfather throughout the war, and, you know, he sent me, you know, old memorabilia that he had from his Fort Sill days.

SCHNEIDER: That's very cool.

LENEHAN: So sure. Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: Did you—so you felt very, very connected with obviously him and your father, then, through the service that you all had in the armed forces.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

- SCHNEIDER: Did that—did that help you kind of on the darkest days of training get through it, or was it kind of just a nice—
- LENEHAN: I think it was a nice thing. I don't know that the training was especially arduous. And, you know, even the drill sergeants—when you really got to know them, they were pretty good guys. And occasionally they'd let their hair down and talk about Vietnam and, you know, what a tough place it was.
- SCHNEIDER: Oh, they had all returned from Vietnam.
- LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah. These were career guys, the drill sergeants, and they all had had tours in Vietnam.
- SCHNEIDER: So what were those conversations like when they're talking to you, who's inevitably going to go to Vietnam, about what it was like? What were those like?
- LENEHAN: Well, it would depend on, you know, how—what the context was. I mean, when they were sort of yelling at you and, you know, you're marching around, they'd be—you know, you'd have to sing these songs about, you know, going to Vietnam and killing Charlie Kong and, you know, that sort of stuff. But, you know, I remember a few conversations where, you know, they said, you know, "It's a tough place, you know, and you gotta watch yourself." They mostly had been in the infantry, and I was sure hoping I wouldn't, you know, be out in the boondocks like some of them.
- SCHNEIDER: I mean, what impact did that have on you? Did it increase your apprehension?
- LENEHAN: Well, sure, yeah. Yeah, sure.
- SCHNEIDER: Can you describe the difference between basic training and AIT, and then exactly what AIT was like on a day-to-day?
- LENEHAN: They were quite different. AIT was really mostly a classroom program in fire direction. We were being trained, potentially, as fire directional officers, but, you know, we were enlisted men, and we could also go on as fire direction specialists. And so at that time, we worked mainly with charts and just learned all there was to learn about computations for the

gun, the Howitzers. And that was—you know, you had several classes of guns, but we were trained on how to take in the information that you got from the infantry you were supporting and translate that information into directions that you'd then give to the guns.

SCHNEIDER: And that communication from infantry to artillery—was that all radio?

LENEHAN: Yes.

SCHNEIDER: So you primarily worked, I believe you told me, with the SP-155.

LENEHAN: Yes.

SCHNEIDER: That's a Howitzer. Can you kind of explain how you would compute the fire direction for those guns specifically?

LENEHAN: Well, it was a while ago. [Laughter.] And, you know, at this point it's pretty hazy. Usually, it would commence with, you know, the—the forward observer, who's with the infantry unit, calling into us on the radio, and he'd be setting up camp for the night. Usually the shooting was at night, for the most part. And he would radio in, you know, coordinates of where they were.

And then we would—he would select these predetermined targets on the perimeter or around where they had set up for the night, and so we would then determine, you know, from the coordinates that he gave us where we should—or he would suggest where we should fire our first round, and it would usually be a white phosphorus round that would burst above ground, and he would then say, "Well, move it three clicks one way or another, and then put the next round on the ground." And that would be a regular high-explosive round.

And then he would just move them around or direct us to move these predetermined targets so that he had basically his encampment surrounded by targets that he could then call in if they were attacked during the night.

SCHNEIDER: That's fascinating.

LENEHAN: So that's sort of—

SCHNEIDER: That's how it went.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: Going back to Fort Sill, you wrote to me that you had the option to go to OCS finally at that point.

LENEHAN: Yes.

SCHNEIDER: And then declined it.

LENEHAN: I did.

SCHNEIDER: Can you walk me through that decision-making process of yours?

LENEHAN: Well, I think it was pretty easy. After being trained in artillery, orders came down, and most of us got orders for infantry and, you know, report to Fort Benning, Georgia, for six months of infantry training.

SCHNEIDER: For OCS infantry training.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah. And I didn't want to be a platoon leader in Vietnam, so I said, "No, thank you." [Chuckles.]

SCHNEIDER: "I'm gonna stay right here."

LENEHAN: "No, thank you, sir." And so I was then a holdover at Fort Sill for three to four months until I got orders. And I was not alone. I think most of us who got orders for infantry declined.

SCHNEIDER: Were you in communication with, you know, Peter Baylor, John Mercer, Steve Elliot at this part or any other Dartmouth students? And classmates of yours?

LENEHAN: Yeah, I—certainly Peter, who's a lifelong friend and, you know, I was in touch with quite a bit. And—and John Mercer. Steve, I didn't have as much contact with, and I'm not sure why. I guess I didn't know when he was drafted until later, but, yeah, no, I was in touch with—with—with them. And

also, after I got to Vietnam, there were a number of guys that I communicated with by letter. Tom [W.] Stonecipher [chuckles] Class of 1968], who was a fraternity brother of mine, had been at Fort Sill about a month before me, and he went to artillery OCS, and he went over to Vietnam as a forward observer. And so I—I got letters from him.

SCHNEIDER: Was he in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade as well?

LENEHAN: No. I'm trying to think where he was. Actually, I found some old letters that—a couple from Tom, and [Jeffrey H.] "Jeff" Hinman [Class of 1968] sent me a letter. He's I think been interviewed as part of—

SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I interview him. That's how we were able to reach out to you.

LENEHAN: Okay, okay, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: So we're very thankful to him that you're here right now.

LENEHAN: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. So I—I, you know, was in touch with—with them. I'm trying to think of others who were in the service. I mean, a lot of the letters were from people who were either not in the Army, you know, or stateside somewhere.

SCHNEIDER: Well, from the letters that you did get from your Dartmouth classmates, either in basic training or in—well, we'll stay in basic training for now. We'll get to Vietnam in a little—

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: How did their experiences differ from you? Or did you not talk about that at all and just kind of shoot the breeze?

LENEHAN: Yeah. I don't know that they were that different. I mean, basic training is pretty much the same for everybody, you know. You know, you get through it. And, you know, if you're in reasonably good shape, it's—it's no big deal.

SCHNEIDER: Right.

LENEHAN: I think, you know, the experiences that people talked about were after they got to Vietnam. And, you know, I—I continued to have discussions with people. I think Vietnam was one of those experiences that people didn't really talk about a lot when they got back. I think the initial feeling was to get, you know, back into the world, and so I think a lot of us kind of lost touch with people from the Army after we got out. But in later years, sure, we talked about it at reunions, yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: So when did you find out you were going to be shipped out to Vietnam, and what was that like?

LENEHAN: Well, it was not a huge surprise. I mean, I—you know, I was hoping maybe I'd get orders for Germany or something, but most of us, you know, got orders for Vietnam. I was at Fort Sill as a holdover, and, you know, we didn't have much time. We had—I think, as I recall, we had a choice of going home for Christmas, you know, for extended leave, but if we did that, we might not be able to get leave before we shipped out.

Well, you know, deferred gratification is not something that, you know, I was interested in. [Both chuckle.] So, you know, of course I went home for Christmas. And then, when orders came down in early February, you know, I just was shipped immediately out—to Vietnam. I mean, I say "shipped out"; we went by plane.

SCHNEIDER: Right. So what was the—I think that plane travel is probably a little different than commercial air travel today.

LENEHAN: Well, it was a commercial flight, though.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, really?

LENEHAN: Well, it was a regular commercial airline that—you know, the airline had contracted with the [U.S.] Department of Defense. And we had stewardesses, as they were called back then, and—but, you know, we all were in Army fatigues, and, you know, we spent the night before in San Francisco [California] and went out and probably drank too much, and then got on the plane the next day. It was interesting. We stopped in



Hawaii, Wake Island, Guam, and the Philippines before getting to Vietnam.

SCHNEIDER: To refuel every time?

LENEHAN: I guess so. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: So then you arrived at I [pronounced like EYE] Corps after—

LENEHAN: Well, I originally—you know, we get processed at the big base in Long Binh, which is not far from Saigon. And I was there for a few days awaiting orders, you know, because my orders were just to go to Vietnam, you know, and I was stateside. [Chuckles.] And then you have to have orders, you know, after that. And so the orders I got were to report to 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry [Division, 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery], up in northern I Corps. And that, as I learned later, was the last unit to actually ship over to Vietnam as a unit. They went over in June of '68, and they were—it was not the full 5<sup>th</sup> Division; it was a reinforced brigade that was actually attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, which was an unusual arrangement.

SCHNEIDER: Because they were trying to reinforce them, correct?

LENEHAN: Yes. And so initially I was at this fire base outside of Quảng Trị City, and we were there until I think late in the year in sixty- —I think it was the fall of '69, when we then relocated to the old Marine base at Đông Hà [Combat Base], which is quite a bit closer to the DMZ [Vietnam Demilitarized Zone]. It's actually within artillery range. And so I spent the last four or so months in Đông Hà, although we did do one mission where we went west toward the mountains and were there for about three weeks.

SCHNEIDER: I want to pursue that in a little bit, but before we get there, I'm really curious: So you get to Long Binh, and you were not—you did not get there with a unit; you came there as an individual.

LENEHAN: Individual replacement. That's the way most—at least by the time I went over there, that's the way most G.I.s went over.

SCHNEIDER: So you knew you were coming in as a replacement. Where were you—did you have any, like, hope of a certain area you

wanted to get to, a certain corps you wanted to get deployed to?

LENEHAN: No. I mean, I—I didn't know enough about the geography of Vietnam to really have a sense of whether one place would be better than another.

I've got to take a break, if that's okay.

SCHNEIDER: Yeah, sure. No problem.

[Recording interruption.]

SCHNEIDER: Again. All right, cool. This is going up again.

So you get to I Corps as a replacement for 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: What was it like arriving as a—as a replacement and not with the original unit?

LENEHAN: You know, I—I—I arrived off of this I think a [Douglas] DC-3 plane, prop plane. I was met by somebody, and I can't—it's all pretty hazy to me. But I think we take a Jeep down to the brigade headquarters in Quảng Trị, and from there I'm directed to or taken out to this fire base. And, you know, people are nice enough. I mean, when I get to the fire base, I found the fire direction center and say, you know, "Here I am." [Both chuckle.] Or I guess I reported first to the—the captain or the first sergeant, you know, for our unit. The battery was the unit, the battery being six guns, and there'd be a captain who would be in charge. And, you know, he'd have somebody show me, you know, where I'd be sleeping and also where the fire direction center was. And that was, you know, this sort of sandbagged place where the charts were set up. So I met, you know, the crew that was along. We'd usually have, like, four people on for 12 hours, and then another crew would come in, you know, at 4, I think.

SCHNEIDER: This was all within B Battery.

LENEHAN: Yes. Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: And how many—how many guys were in B Battery?

LENEHAN: I don't know the number. A gun crew would have consisted of, I'm guessing, five or six guys, maybe, per gun. I don't know the exact number.

SCHNEIDER: But it's not super, super small.

LENEHAN: No, no. So we'd have—you know, if it was, say, six guys on a gun, that's 36, and then we'd have additional guys who would—well, one would be a medic. There'd probably be, you know, mess crew, you know, to do the meals. So it was maybe 50,60. I—I just don't know what—what the total number would be.

SCHNEIDER: Okay. And how did those guys receive you? Like, any normal guy? Was there any kind of, "Hey, rook [rookie], welcome"?

LENEHAN: You know, I think they were just pretty friendly. You know, "Welcome to 'Nam." You know? [Laughs.] "How'd *you* get so lucky?" And, you know, they all I think had come at different times, and so, you know, they went through the same thing I did.

SCHNEIDER: Did you know anything about the guy you were replacing?

LENEHAN: No, no. You know, he—and I don't know that it was a specific one-for-one replacement. I think, you know, these units had a general sense of whether they were short of, you know, one person or two people. And so I don't know that I was sent specifically to replace a guy who was leaving.

SCHNEIDER: So you talked about this a little bit earlier, how you would court the guy who—what would you call him?—the front man?

LENEHAN: Forward observer?

- SCHNEIDER: The forward observer. He would call in, and you would find the coordinates and fire those phosphorus rounds, and then he'd give you adjustments—
- LENEHAN: Mm-hm.
- SCHNEIDER: —and you would have those targets ready. Did you also load the 155s [155 Mr. Moran Howitzers]?
- LENEHAN: No, no, that was the gun crew. And so I—
- SCHNEIDER: Okay. It's a different role.
- LENEHAN: Different role.
- SCHNEIDER: Was there any kind of animosity that—
- LENEHAN: Not animosity. I mean, joking mainly.
- SCHNEIDER: “Get out of the bunker” or stuff like that?
- LENEHAN: You know, they were sort of the macho men, you know, and the guns, and we were the “pencil necks.” [Laughter.] But, you know, we all got along, I think.
- SCHNEIDER: Did you ever experience—so you never experienced any sort of firefights or combat in that sense that the forward observers would get into?
- LENEHAN: No. Certainly not to the same degree. I think there were a couple of incidents where our perimeter was attacked, and we, you know, would have to respond—it was really almost too close for the guns, so, you know, people had their machine guns and M16s.
- SCHNEIDER: And so you came to Vietnam [unintelligible; 1:04:03] with the M16 as well?
- LENEHAN: Yeah, we all had an M16. And the guns all had .50 caliber machine guns mounted on [cross-talk; on them? 1:04:14].
- SCHNEIDER: Oh, okay. That's a cool design.
- LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: Can you walk me through kind of a couple of examples of com- —well, I guess you already did, but when you get that call in from the forward observer, what's that like for you and the fire direction center?

LENEHAN: Well, it's, you know, a call to action. I mean,—well, not so much the predetermined targets. That was pretty routine stuff that we'd do, you know, in the early evening. But, you know, if you get a call in the middle of the night, you know, "We're being attacked" or "We need fire support," yeah, I mean, you'd sort of spring to action. You know, it was—it was pretty engaging for however long it took. And sometimes it took, you know, quite a bit of time. If it was a big, you know, attack, there might be several batteries that would be called in. And one time I think even the Navy—there was, you know, I think the [USS] *New Jersey* battleship was off shore, and the Navy was shooting as well.

SCHNEIDER: So were A and C Battery also at Firebase Sandy?

LENEHAN: No, we were all at different locations.

SCHNEIDER: Okay. When you—you're firing these Howitzers. What's your role? You're getting these calls in. Are you then just relaying the message to the gun crews? How did—what your specific [cross-talk; unintelligible; 1:05:53].

LENEHAN: Yeah, we were sort of the liaison, in a way, between the infantry and the gun crews, and so we would receive communications from the infantry and, you know, talk back and forth with them. And then we would relay—you know, after we determined the direction, we'd relay that to the—to the guns. And, you know, they might have a question, but mainly it was just we would tell them, you know, where to shoot—I mean, what direction or angle. And we'd also tell them what charge. You had—this is the amount of explosive. And so you had a one through seven degree of explosive, and seven being the biggest bang.

SCHNEIDER: So what would you use, like, a one or two on, then? What kind of target?

LENEHAN: Well, one that's not as far away.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, okay. That makes a lot of sense, then.

I guess—you were showing me those photos in the break, and I noticed in one of them there was a—an etching or maybe a chalk design of Snoopy [Charles Schultz cartoon dog] on the side of a gun, perhaps, or something.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: And that just make me think what was so—beyond the—when you're firing the guns and you're getting these instructions from the forward operators—what was the day-to-day life like at Firebase Sandy, kind of right on the DMZ in I Corps?

LENEHAN: Well, during the day, I was [chuckles] mainly—you know, I'd eat breakfast, and then I'd—I don't know—I might write a letter or something. And then I'd go to sleep. I'd be down in the bunker, and, you know, I'd hope to get enough sleep that I'd be reasonably functional, you know, when I got up in the late afternoon and I'd get, you know, an early bite to eat, you know, before going on at six p.m. And I liked the—the night shift a lot better.

SCHNEIDER: Oh. Why?

LENEHAN: I was able to—well, there was more going on. I mean, it was—that's when most of the shooting was done. There was less, oh, I don't know, interruption by officers coming in [laughter], making trouble and, you know, asking, "Oh, why isn't this being done?" So I think we all much preferred being on during the night.

SCHNEIDER: And can you—you know, you mentioned your perimeter was attacked a couple of times.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: Can you walk me through what *that* was like for you as someone who's kind of been in the fire direction center? All of a sudden, you know, these guys are at your perimeter.

- LENEHAN: Yeah. Well, I mean, the first time that happened, I was actually off duty, and this was when I was doing a day shift and was sleeping at night. And I think in the middle of the night—and I think we were in a tent, if I recall—this guy, who'd been there a while, you know, woke me up and said, you know, he heard a mortar. I mean, there's a special sound that it makes. And he said [chuckles], "We're being attacked. Grab your, you know, rifle and follow me to the perimeter." You know, we had a barbed wire perimeter.
- And, you know, I did that. I couldn't see anything. There were a lot of tracer bullets being fired from, you know, our side and some gunfire that I could sort of discern, you know, coming from whoever was attacking us. I don't remember too much about it. I didn't see anything that I could shoot at, and I—I think eventually made my way to the fire direction center, just to see if there was anything that I could do. I remember that, I think, more than whatever time it was we were attacked up in Đông Hà, but that was different because it was a bigger base and the perimeter was a lot further away.
- SCHNEIDER: So was it just B Battery at Firebase Sandy?
- LENEHAN: Yes, at Firebase Sandy.
- SCHNEIDER: And then Đông Hà was—
- LENEHAN: Đông Hà was a bigger base, and so there was infantry also there. And I—I don't think, you know, we were as vulnerable, in a sense.
- SCHNEIDER: Was that the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion [sic; Infantry] at that point that was with you?
- LENEHAN: Yeah. I mean, it was 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry—
- SCHNEIDER: Fourth artillery.
- LENEHAN: Fourth artil- —yeah. Again, this was 40-plus years ago, so I—[Laughs.] A little hazy.
- SCHNEIDER: I try to find the picture in my own head.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: I guess what I'm really curious about is: So this guy wakes you up. Says, "I heard a mortar. Grab the rifle."

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: What's going through your head? What's your pulse like?

LENEHAN: Yeah, it was racing. I mean, I—this was new to me, and, you know, just adrenaline, I guess, kicks in, and, you know, you get out of this tent where you were and, you know, at least move to the perimeter where, you know, there'd be a little more safety.

SCHNEIDER: Interesting. Yeah, I can't imagine—

LENEHAN: [Laughs.]

SCHNEIDER: As someone of similar age, I couldn't imagine if someone woke me up in the middle of the night like that.

Did you—when you're at Firebase Sandy, did you have any interactions with the ARVN [spelling it out instead of pronouncing it AR-vin; Army of the Republic of Vietnam] at that point, with the South Vietnamese ?

LENEHAN: No. And I don't know that there were many ARVN [pronouncing it AR-vin] units in our area at that time. This was really before the drawdown of American troops had started. I think mid-'69 we were still, you know, like 560,000 troops over there. And this process that [President Richard M.] Nixon called Vietnamization I think maybe started in mid-'69. And one indication of that was when the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division was redeployed from, you know, the DMZ. And so they left, in large part, in the fall of '69.

SCHNEIDER: And that's when you moved to Đông Hà?

LENEHAN: That's when we moved to Đông Hà.

SCHNEIDER: What was that transition like from kind of the psychological, emotional perspective? You hear Nixon saying, "We're gonna undergo this process of Vietnamization." The 3<sup>rd</sup>



Marines are out. You—I guess—did you—what was the sentiment among the troops at the time, among the guys you were with? Was there a prevailing sense that the war effort was doomed, or was there kind of, “All right, this is just a shift in strategy”? What was going on?

LENEHAN: I—I don’t think that things really changed that much for us, and—and, you know, at that time, I don’t think anybody sort of knew, you know, “Where is this going to end up?” We all were more focused on, *Well, I’m here from, you know, February ’69 to February ’70, so that’s what I’m interested in.*

SCHNEIDER: [Laughs.] Okay.

LENEHAN: And—and—you know, so I don’t think we were thinking long term. You know, you’re pretty insular in your thinking. So, yeah, I—I knew, you know, when I was going to get out. [Laughs.]

SCHNEIDER: Right. Sure, sure, that day was circled.

LENEHAN: [Laughs.] Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: What was the transition to Đông Hà like? How was that different than Firebase Sandy?

LENEHAN: Well, it was a much better base in the sense that it was fortified far more than Firebase Sandy. I mean, the Marines—well, it would have been the Navy Seabees [the U.S. Naval Construction Battalions] would have built their base. I mean, they really knew what they were doing when they built bunkers. And so it was, I think, much better protected. And we had these ready-made bunkers to move into. And so, I mean, they were—it was sort of like moving up [chuckles] in the real estate market. So I think, you know, we kind of liked it.

SCHNEIDER: So you go from this—yeah, this isolated base to this improvement, but you’re also now interacting with not just B Battery with, as you said, a lot more infantry troops, but on the base. What was that like?

LENEHAN: I don’t remember all that much of a difference because we were kind of an enclave in the battery, itself, and my routine

was, you know, pretty limited. I'd be on duty, and then I'd get something to eat and go to bed [laughter] and get up and—and that really didn't change much, so I can't say that I—my—my life really changed that much.

SCHNEIDER: And ARVN [now pronouncing it AR-vin] was—they were not present there yet?

LENEHAN: I don't think so. I—I—I—I don't remember ARVN troops being on the base when we were there.

SCHNEIDER: What I'm curious about is you mentioned listening to George Wallace and kind of undergoing this whole civil rights movement in the United States with African-Americans. What was the prevailing sentiment toward the Vietnamese in terms of racial tension, among U.S. troops and in your experience?

LENEHAN: Well, there was a lot of racist talk. I mean, when I think about it now, in the Army they were referred to as "gooks." I mean, that was—and—and, you know, unfortunately, a lot of impressionable guys, especially, you know, people who, you know, don't have much education or—I mean, they picked it up. And so, yeah, I think the Vietnamese were, at least from what I observed, were kind of seen as "different."

SCHNEIDER: Both North and South.

LENEHAN: Yeah, although, you know, the South Vietnamese certainly we had more contact with. There would be—like, a guy would cut my hair. He'd be a guy who, I guess, you know, passed whatever security had to, you know, be in place. And so I'd have some minimal contact. But I think we had far less contact with the Vietnamese than G.I.s who were stationed further south, near Saigon or one of the real big bases.

SCHNEIDER: But they were combating the Viet Cong, not the NVA.

LENEHAN: Yeah, although—I mean, Viet Cong were also present where we were.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, they were?

LENEHAN: Yeah. So it was a mix of NVA and Viet Cong up in the DMZ.

SCHNEIDER: So I told you we'd get back to this: The mission to the west, in the mountains—what was that? Can you elaborate on that?

LENEHAN: I don't know much about it because, you know, I [chuckles] was just a lowly enlisted man, and we're told, "Okay, we're heading west on"—whatever the route was, [National] Route 9 [in Vietnam]. And I think it was ostensibly to support some operation the infantry were engaged in. And I don't remember a lot of action. I think, you know, the NVA or Viet Cong who had been there probably retreated more into the woods, and so we really didn't have all that much shooting when we were out there.

SCHNEIDER: What was transporting the 155s like? They're big instruments.

LENEHAN: Well, they—they—they picked up a lot of dust. [Laughter.] And those—those pictures I showed you were I think mainly taken on that operation.

SCHNEIDER: Do you know the name of it, by the way?

LENEHAN: Of?

SCHNEIDER: The operation?

LENEHAN: No, I don't. I don't. You know, I—I wish I had kept a record of—of my time there, but—and I might have written some letters to people that would have talked about things like that, but, you know, I—I just don't have a memory of it.

SCHNEIDER: Were you—were you nervous to be leaving your base and going along RC9, kind of breaking out of your protective shell a little?

LENEHAN: Yeah, but, I mean, in a way it was an adventure. It was something different.

SCHNEIDER: Yeah, [unintelligible; 1:20:29].

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah. So I—I—I can't say that, you know, I was especially scared about it. It—you know, I knew that we had

infantry around us, and we were—certainly weren't alone. And, you know, there was [U.S.] Air Force support in the air, so I saw it as, you know, a different part of the country. [Laughs.]

SCHNEIDER: Right. Another adventure.

LENEHAN: Yeah, another adventure.

SCHNEIDER: So you just were talking about the letters, and that reminded me: What were your roommates up to and then Tom Stoner said—I believe that was his name.

LENEHAN: Stonecipher.

SCHNEIDER: Stonecipher. What were they up to? So you're swapping letters when you're in Vietnam.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: How did their experiences either match up, differ from yours? Were they with you at all, or what was that like?

LENEHAN: No. I—I never actually met up with—with any of them, but Tom, you know, was—was—I mean, he had a kind of a sardonic sense of humor, and [chuckles] would—and—and I think that was often, you know, the way we would communicate—you know, joke about the Army, about, you know, some jerk of an officer who—and—and I don't know that we talked all that much about, you know, actual operations or anything. It was more “How are ya doin'?” and “I can't want to get outta here” and that sort of thing.

SCHNEIDER: How—how *was* your psyche when you were there? Was it—did you kind of remain normal emotional levels, or did you fall into depression ever?

LENEHAN: I—I think I was pretty normal. I hope so. [Laughter.] I—I—you know, I enjoyed getting letters and writing letters. I—when I was able to, I actually read quite a few books. I remember reading *The Brothers Karamazov*, which I'd never had time to read. [Both chuckle.] So—and I—I liked the guys I—I worked with. I mean, it was a good bunch. And I wish that I'd stayed in touch with them.

- SCHNEIDER: You've fallen out of touch since?
- LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.
- SCHNEIDER: But not the Dartmouth guys.
- LENEHAN: No, no. But, you know, there were a couple of guys that I think you saw in the picture, and I have some old letters that they—they wrote, but after a year or so, you know, we just lost touch. And I think everyone was, you know, anxious to get on with their lives.
- SCHNEIDER: Understandably so.
- LENEHAN: Yeah, and I—and that was back when people really didn't talk about Vietnam much. I think we were ready to—to get back into normal life in the States.
- SCHNEIDER: Sure.
- During this process, you were promoted, correct?
- LENEHAN: I was. I was.
- SCHNEIDER: Can you walk me through that? That's got to be pretty cool for a guy coming in, getting promoted.
- LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah. No, I liked that. That was nice.
- SCHNEIDER: What was that process like? What was the timeline of that?
- LENEHAN: Again, I—I don't remember. Spec 4, as it was called, Specialist 4th Class, was actually equivalent, I think, to a corporal. That occurred, I think—I don't want to say automatically, but at some point in time, I think I just, you know, was—received some sort of order saying I'd been promoted to Spec 4. And I think it was partly because I'd been there, you know, six months or five months. I hadn't screws up too badly. [Both chuckle.] And so I—I got that promotion. I think Spec 5, which is equivalent to sergeant, is a bigger step. And there, I actually had to meet with, you know, a review board, which was I think an officer and the

NCO, and they interviewed me, asked me a few questions, and I was promoted.

SCHNEIDER: And was that while you were still in Vietnam?

LENEHAN: Yes.

SCHNEIDER: Or by the time—

LENEHAN: No, that was when I was still in Vietnam.

SCHNEIDER: And how did your duties expand then?

LENEHAN: My duties really didn't change. I think what that did was increase my pay, which was nice, and—but a Spec 5 really didn't have any particular authority that was greater than a Spec 4.

SCHNEIDER: Okay. Not more men under your command?

LENEHAN: No, no, no. I think I was just one of the senior people there.

SCHNEIDER: Okay. How was it to—you're in Vietnam a little over a year, correct?

LENEHAN: Yeah, I actually—and I—I still think, you know, would I have done that today? I extended by 34 days. And the reason I did so was back then, the Army had a policy that if you arrived back in the States with five months or less to serve, you would be immediately discharged. And I thought, *Oh, that'll be nice*. And I'd stayed in touch with my friend Bob Sleigh, who ended up being sent to Korea, and he was going to extend 34 days, because we had gone into the Army the same day, and—

SCHNEIDER: He was the Phi Delt '68 that you got your physical with?

LENEHAN: Yes. And we had both befriended, at the beginning of basic training, a guy named Bill Burkett, who had not gone to Dartmouth but was a great guy, and he—

SCHNEIDER: They're out there, surprisingly.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: [Laughs.]

LENEHAN: He and Bob went to Korea together.

SCHNEIDER: Interesting.

LENEHAN: And we all had plans to meet up at Fort Lewis, Washington, where we would get discharged, and take a road trip down the West Coast. And Bill was going to get a car, and so that was my motivator.

SCHNEIDER: Did it work out?

LENEHAN: It did, fortunately, yeah. But, you know, when I think back on it, you know, some serendipitous event could have occurred where, you know, I wouldn't make it. But at that time, you know, I'm—what? How old was I, 22 or—you know, I was invincible. [Chuckles.]

SCHNEIDER: Yeah. That leads me to this other question, which might be a little tougher to answer: If at any point we need to stop, let me know.

LENEHAN: Okay, sure, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: While you were over there, did you receive word of any of your Dartmouth classmates or friends getting killed in action or passing away, or was that even in your unit, KIA [killed in action]?

LENEHAN: Not in the battery. But in the infantry, certainly, I'd hear that, you know, they lost a few guys. But I—I didn't know them personally. From Dartmouth, I think Rob Peacock died after I'd gotten out. He was a Marine pilot and was shot down, but that was—that might have been '72, and that was later, I think.

SCHNEIDER: And was he a '68 or he was just a [cross-talk; unintelligible; 1:28:48]?

LENEHAN: Yeah, he was '68, yeah. And he played freshman football. He was a great guy. He was in Theta Delt. And so—I'm

trying to think of anyone else that I knew. I can't think of anyone in my unit.

SCHNEIDER: Yeah, it's got to be very, very different from infantry to artillery.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: That's what I was curious about.

LENEHAN: Sure, sure. Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: So you then have—you're at Đông Hà. You're getting shelled occasionally? Or were you just in range?

LENEHAN: We were in range, and I think the shelling [chuckles] actually took place after I left, because I—I—I remember getting a letter maybe a month and a half—or it was written a month and a half later by one of my friends, and, yeah, they were starting to see—or, well, receiving artillery fire from the north. And things had really gotten—had picked up, and the NVA was operating much more openly, so I was glad to be out of Vietnam by then.

SCHNEIDER: How do you—with the whole Vietnamization, you said you weren't really thinking about that; it was in a bubble.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: But in general, did your perception of what the war was, in truth and reality—did that change over your kind of year-long deployment?

LENEHAN: Sure. Yeah. No, it did. It did.

SCHNEIDER: How so?

LENEHAN: I think the futility of it, the realization that during the day, you know, we controlled all these areas but at night we didn't. Just the—the unworkability of the government in South Vietnam. It was a very unstable government. It was not supported by a large percentage of the population. And I think the war was just having a terrible effect on the Vietnamese. So I—I—I didn't see any good outcome. And



certainly, when I was, you know—after I was out of the Army, I mean, I was certainly anti war in the sense that I thought *this is not going anywhere good*.

SCHNEIDER: How did you—you talked about kind of the government in South Vietnam and how it was really taking a toll on the Vietnamese.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: But you were in the DMZ, or near it, rather.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: How did you see the effect of the war on the Vietnamese? How were you able to perceive that and kind of get word of what was happening in Saigon?

LENEHAN: A lot of the area up north was pretty barren, and I don't think they had, you know, the—the—the farming—the soil, I don't think, was as rich as it was further south. And a lot of the area was—I—I didn't—there weren't many villages around us. I don't think the population was as large in the area where we were located. I do remember that—I mean, we would occa- —outside the perimeter was basically a garbage pit or an area where, you know, we would take garbage, and I'd sometimes have to go on those runs. And I do remember a lot of Vietnamese waiting, you know, for the garbage run so they could go through it.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, really?

LENEHAN: That's a—you know, a sobering sight.

SCHNEIDER: Yeah.

LENEHAN: So I think the war was very difficult for them. And they were caught, really, between the Americans and the Viet Cong, and I think it was just a very difficult time for them.

SCHNEIDER: Did you trust the Vietnamese near Đông Hà? Or was there a sense that I know there was, at least, outside of Saigon, where, you know, they were friends with you during the day and VC at night?

- LENEHAN: Yeah. I—I never saw evidence of that, and I don't know—there might have been some people who were, you know, actually working for the Viet Cong, but I can't think of any incident that occurred as a result of infiltration.
- SCHNEIDER: Was the racism that you described earlier—was that directed just exclusively to the north, or was there some coming back at the South Vietnamese as well?
- LENEHAN: Oh, I—I don't know that there was a distinction made.
- SCHNEIDER: Oh, really!
- LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- SCHNEIDER: Okay. That's interesting.
- So I believe you get discharged in March?
- LENEHAN: March, March 9<sup>th</sup> or—
- SCHNEIDER: Something. I don't think you gave me the day, in 1970, though.
- LENEHAN: I might have it.
- SCHNEIDER: Okay. Are those your discharge papers?
- LENEHAN: They are. This is—this is—“We are returning attached forms since it is no longer needed for our records.” That's the local draft board.
- SCHNEIDER: That's got to feel pretty good.
- LENEHAN: Yeah. And let's see—I was looking on here to see—I went in on August 8<sup>th</sup>—March 11<sup>th</sup>, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1970.
- SCHNEIDER: Okay. So you returned to Washington.
- LENEHAN: Yeah. Fort Lewis.
- SCHNEIDER: Fort Lewis. March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1970. You get discharged, and then you had, with Bob and Bill, down the coast. You rent a car.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: Tell me about that road trip. What was that like?

LENEHAN: It was great. It was wonderful.

SCHNEIDER: A little different than Vietnam.

LENEHAN: A little different. I met up with them. They were in a motel just outside Fort Lewis, and the next day, we go into downtown Seattle—and this was before Seattle [Washington] became the real, you know, swanky place. And there was an old JCPenney there, and I had my Army fatigues or—you know, or—no, I guess they gave me, you know, Army dress uniform. And so I got some civilian clothes, probably some really bad-looking clothes, and, you know, then we started heading south.

And we stopped in Eugene, Oregon, where a buddy from Phi Delt was doing some graduate work, and then we headed down the coast to Sausalito [California], where Bill knew some girls that had an apartment, and so we arrived.  
[Laughs.]

SCHNEIDER: [unintelligible; 1:36:33], yeah.

LENEHAN: [Chuckles.] Yeah. And I'm sure they were happy when we left.

SCHNEIDER: [Laughs.]

LENEHAN: So we crashed there for a while. You know, I can't remember. It seemed like a week, and we spent around San Francisco. And then we just started heading east, and Bob Schley lived in Milwaukee [Wisconsin], and Bill lived in Buffalo [New York]. And we stopped along the way in various places, like Lake Tahoe and Salt Lake City [Utah]. Somebody had a cousin we stayed with. That was a great road trip.

SCHNEIDER: And so you're—you're driving literally across the United States—

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: —right after the Vietnam War, right after you had served.

LENEHAN: Yeah.

SCHNEIDER: What was the prevailing—what were your—yeah, what was your take-away of the difference, or maybe similarities, between what you experienced in Vietnam and the sen- — the American sentiment at home? What was your interaction with that?

LENEHAN: I was so happy to be home. I—you know, of course, the girls were beautiful, and, you know, I just was—was—it was a really nice time in my life. And I think the people we encountered were all happy that we were back and we were safe, so it was—it was really a nice experience.

SCHNEIDER: There was—you didn't encounter any resentment that you had served.

LENEHAN: I—I didn't. I mean, I've certainly read that other people did, but I—I didn't. I think the people that we met were, you know, just happy we were safe, and so I had a good experience, you know, getting out of the Army.

SCHNEIDER: Yeah, that's sounds pretty—pretty fortunate.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: And so then eventually you make your way back to Pelham, correct?

LENEHAN: I did, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: And what—then what? I know you decided to go to law school on the G.I. Bill [Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944] at a certain point.

LENEHAN: Yeah. Well, initially, you know, getting home was—I mean, I liked getting home. I certainly reconnected with, you know, my—all my relatives.

SCHNEIDER: Was Bob back from Germany?

LENEHAN: No, he was still over in Germany. So I'm home for a week or so, and I get a call from Bill Burkett in Buffalo, who says, "I'm bored!" [Both chuckle.] "So let's do a road trip!" So—

SCHNEIDER: Oh, no way!

LENEHAN: Yeah. Bill and I do a road trip down to Florida and, you know, stopping along the way. I mean, I had money to burn. All that combat pay piled up, and I certainly didn't spend it in Vietnam. So we went town to—ended up in Florida, and I had another friend from high school who was in the Navy at Mayport [Naval Station], which is in Mayport [Florida], which is one of the bases on the Atlantic [Ocean]. And then John Mercer, my former roommate, who was in the Marines—and he was at the Pensacola Naval Station. And so we spent some time down there, and then Bill said, "I know a girl in Boston. Let's go up there." So we went up, and that's actually how I met Betty [Lenehan], my wife.

SCHNEIDER: Oh, really?

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: So was she the girl in Boston?

LENEHAN: She was, yeah. And so we met and hit it off, but Bill and I then did a 45-day excursion trip to Europe.

SCHNEIDER: Whoa!

LENEHAN: This was Icelandic Airways [sic; Airlines].

SCHNEIDER: Yeah, sure. I've actually flown that. [Chuckles.]

LENEHAN: And they had a special deal, and so we wandered around Europe. I saw my brother Bob and—

SCHNEIDER: Oh, you got to visit him in Germany.

LENEHAN: Yeah. And saw some Army buddies that were stationed, one guy in particular, in Heidelberg. Then I also—and Bill and I split up for a little while, and I visited relatives in Ireland that

you know, my grandfather told me about. And then we flew home, and then I went up to Boston.

SCHNEIDER: So to see Betty again.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah. And we got married the next year, but I found a job in Boston. Worked for about two years for the—what was then the First National Bank of Boston and then decided I—well, I didn't really like, you know, what I was doing, so I applied to law school.

SCHNEIDER: When you in—you were in Europe during Vietnam, right after having driven across America.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: What were—what was different about—if there was a difference—between the European attitude towards the war and American attitude towards the war?

LENEHAN: You know, I'm trying to think of the discussions I had. I guess it varied a bit by country. I think in Ireland, certainly I remember, you know, they were curious about it. I don't think there was any particularly strong feeling about it. It was more on a personal level, you know: How did you feel about it? What did you do? In the rest of Europe, I think there were occasional antiwar protests that were held, but I don't remember any, you know, particular animosity expressed toward—toward us.

SCHNEIDER: So you get, then, to Boston. You choose to go to law school.

LENEHAN: Mm-hm.

SCHNEIDER: Was that—why law school?

LENEHAN: Why law school? [Laughs.] I think it was a way, in a sense, to defer, you know, really getting on with life, and I—I had some family who were lawyers, and so, you know, I—I thought, well, maybe that would be something that I would be good at. And so I applied and went.

SCHNEIDER: Do you—so after your road trip across America, did you have any further interaction with the antiwar movement during your time with the First National Bank, in law school?

LENEHAN: No, I don't think so. I remember meeting a guy at some party in—in Boston, who was active in the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and he had lost an arm in Vietnam. But I never joined. I mean, I certainly was aware of some of the, you know, protests that they were involved with, but I—I was more interested in my own life and getting on with things. You know, it's kind of selfish, but—[Both chuckle.]

SCHNEIDER: No, I don't think I'd even blame you in that regard.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: All right, fascinating. I think we should take a break right now for a little—

LENEHAN: Okay.

SCHNEIDER: —because I also noticed it's 11:53.

LENEHAN: Ah. Okay.

[Recording interruption.]

SCHNEIDER: Were those windows there when it was Webster Hall?

LENEHAN: I—I think so. You know, it's usually at night when I was there, so—

SCHNEIDER: Oh, okay.

LENEHAN: —so it's hard to remember.

SCHNEIDER: Right. [Both chuckle.] Windows don't stand out as much, I guess, then.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

- SCHNEIDER: So I read your entry to the Dartmouth class report for the 40<sup>th</sup> year.
- LENEHAN: Oh, yeah, yeah.
- SCHNEIDER: In there, you expressed this passion for traveling.
- LENEHAN: Mm-hm.
- SCHNEIDER: Have you ever been back to Vietnam?
- LENEHAN: We were. It was, I think, 2009 or '10. It was—my daughter Rosie and her husband are both teachers, and they decided they wanted the experience of teaching abroad, you know, before they had kids. So they spent two years in the Philippines, in Manila. So Betty and I—the first time we went over there, we decided that, *well, were over in the Far East. Why not?* So we went to Vietnam and spent three or four nights in Hanoi, which was a fascinating place. And so, yeah, we've—we've been back to—or I've been back to Vietnam.
- SCHNEIDER: What year did you go back?
- LENEHAN: Well, I can't remember. I'm guessing about 2009.
- SCHNEIDER: So fairly recently.
- LENEHAN: Fairly recently. Yeah, yeah.
- SCHNEIDER: What was that like for you, returning after the war and seeing it through a different lens?
- LENEHAN: Well,—
- SCHNEIDER: Different experience.
- LENEHAN: It certainly was, although Hanoi is not a place that anyone would have actually been to,—
- SCHNEIDER: Correct.
- LENEHAN: —unless they were a POW, so—but—but it struck me as a very foreign place. We stayed in a small hotel, which was in



the middle of what was referred to as the Old Town. And it was a nice little hotel that I think, you know, really went out of its way to attract visitors from other countries. And I think TripAdvisor[, Inc.], you know, which is one of the main, you know, service or travel companies, had given its number one rating.

SCHNEIDER: Do you remember the name of it?

LENEHAN: No.

SCHNEIDER: Because I was just there in December. I think I might have stayed in the same one. I think I know what you're talking about.

LENEHAN: Okay!

SCHNEIDER: Yeah.

LENEHAN: Well, it was—it was a wonderful place, and, you know, you knew you were in the third world when you stepped out on the street. But, you know, the center of the city is really quite beautiful, and there's this old hotel that's been restored, called the [Sofitel Legend] Metropole[, Hanoi], which I think the government of France and the Sofitel hotel company [Sofitel Hotels & Resorts] and the government of Viet- — North—Vietnam I guess got together and worked out some arrangement where this hotel could be completely renovated. We didn't stay there, but we had a couple of meals there, which were, wonderful, you know?

SCHNEIDER: Yeah. So did that reinforce your sense—seeing Vietnam and seeing it be so beautiful and—did that reinforce the sense of futility you felt in 1970?

LENEHAN: In a way, it—it—it showed that over time, events happen that you don't foresee at all. We I think reestablished diplomatic relations with Vietnam in the late '90s, I think when [William J. "Bill"] Clinton was president. And Vietnam is now one of our major trading partners. I mean, a lot of plants are now located in Vietnam, and, you know, we have a big trade, you know, with—with Vietnam and have good relations with them. And, I mean, that's totally different from what anyone would have foreseen.

So it was—it was an interesting place. We got a guide one day and went around to—well, we went to Hồ Chí Minh’s—you know, the mausoleum and the house where he had lived. We went to what was called the Temple of Learning. And—and, you know, just walked around the lake there in the middle with—with the guide, and he would point out, you know, shrines that were important to the Vietnamese people.

Crossing a street was quite an adventure. There are no traffic lights, and we learned that what you do is you just walk slowly into the street, and cars and bicyclists will, you know, avoid you. They’ll go around you. But don’t step back. You have to keep moving forward.

It struck me as a very cooperative society. I didn’t see anybody with guns. Police were really nowhere in evidence that I could see. It looked like a very cooperative society.

SCHNEIDER: Did you share with anyone while you were there that you were a veteran?

LENEHAN: I don’t think I did. I didn’t have much interaction with Vietnamese people, but, no, I—I—I didn’t want to. [Chuckles.]

SCHNEIDER: And why did you not want to?

LENEHAN: I don’t know. Maybe I wasn’t sure what the reaction would be. I was just there as someone who was curious about this city that I’d never seen before, and so, no, I—I don’t think I mentioned it to anybody.

SCHNEIDER: How would you say your experience in Vietnam has influenced your—your world outlook and your political views over time? Did—does it have an effect? Not at all, because you were so young? What is kind of the lasting impact on your—your outlook on life, I guess both: spiritually, religiously, politically, interpersonally?

LENEHAN: Mmm! I think politically it certainly made me much more anti war, if that’s the word. I can remember in 2002, when the big build-up was occurring before the invasion of Iraq, and I couldn’t believe that this was happening, where we’re going

to invade this country with no real plan, you know, after that. And what really dismayed me was that both [American political] parties were sort of going along with it. And it—it mystified me. It really did. I thought, *Haven't we learned, you know, from this experience?* So, yeah, it certainly affected my view of, I don't know, the futility of invading a country, and then what do you do? I mean, do you win? [Chuckles.]

SCHNEIDER: Right.

LENEHAN: And then what? You're kind of stuck with it, and that was certainly true in Iraq.

SCHNEIDER: Still is.

LENEHAN: Still is. It still is. It still is.

SCHNEIDER: So I'm going to kind of—for my final question, I want to throw this over—throw this as a bone to Dartmouth College.

LENEHAN: Okay.

SCHNEIDER: What has your experience and connection with Dartmouth simultaneously, as an alumnus and as a veteran, and kind of playing those dual roles?

LENEHAN: I don't know that I—I can distinguish them. I—I don't really feel any special connection because I'm a veteran. I mean, I certainly know classmates and friends who were in the service, but as far as, you know, my relationship with Dartmouth, I—I don't think it really affected me. I mean, I've had a strong relationship with Dartmouth, I think, all along. And, I mean, maybe being in the Army reinforced it. It made me miss it more. But, you know, so, I was not involved in ROTC or I didn't have any connection with the Army while I was at Dartmouth, so I can't say I really see the roles as being different, my role as a veteran and my role as an alumnus.

SCHNEIDER: Right, interesting.

Is there anything we've missed that you—you would like to share or add to the story right now?

LENEHAN: Well, I've enjoyed this. [Laughs.]

SCHNEIDER: Yeah, same, likewise.

LENEHAN: [Laughs.] I—I can't think of—of anything. You know, we've covered a fair amount of ground.

SCHNEIDER: Well, if, you know, on the drive home or your time in Rhode Island, some sort of lightning bolt of inspiration strikes you, shoot me an e-mail, give me a call—

LENEHAN: Sure.

SCHNEIDER: I'd love to keep chatting for anything you have to offer.

LENEHAN: Yeah, yeah.

And we don't have to be on the record here, but do you need the names of any people that, you know, were in Vietnam that you don't have?

SCHNEIDER: I think—I think we're all set. I would like to—what are your roommates up to these days: Peter Baylor, John Mercer, Steve Elliot and then Tom Stoncepher [sic; Stonecipher] or Bob Schley, those guys?

LENEHAN: Well, Peter Baylor's just retired. He was a lawyer also in Boston and lives, actually, now in Newport, Rhode Island, so, you know, I'll be seeing him when we're down in Rhode Island. But we get together, you know, pretty regularly over the years.

SCHNEIDER: And he's not been interviewed yet.

LENEHAN: I don't think so. I don't think so. He'd be an interesting interview because he was there later than I was and worked a lot with some of the ARVN units. He was an officer, you know, ROTC, and in, you know, the combat engineer branch. So he'd be interesting to interview.

Steve Elliot, who was drafted, was also a combat engineer. He was an enlisted man and was at a number of fire bases that were attacked, and I think—I think he was with the 105 Howitzer batteries.

And then Tom would be a great interview. I mean, you know, is a philosopher. [Both chuckle.] Actually, he majored in philosophy.

SCHNEIDER: Okay. Get that sense of humor on—

LENEHAN: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SCHNEIDER: —on the record.

LENEHAN: Yeah. And Bob Sleigh was in Korea, but he's a very interesting guy. [Chuckles.]

SCHNEIDER: Well, we'll certainly—I'll pass all these names on, absolutely.

All right, well, so this was Walker Schneider interviewing Mr. Michael Lenehan. I just want to say thank you so much for everything, Mr. Lenehan.

LENEHAN: My pleasure.

SCHNEIDER: Thanks for coming today.

LENEHAN: Yep.

SCHNEIDER: Appreciate it.

[End of interview.]