

## Michael Quinn's Oral History

**[00:00:00] Dean Wetzel:** This one, then we'll start. This one showed us that. All right, Michael, I wanna start off by saying real quick, thank you for sitting down with me today and doing this oral history. Gonna start out with some, you know, basic information biographical information here. Where were you born, your parents, when, what were they doing for a job?

**Michael Quinn:** Okay, well thank you for your interest. I was born in Three Rivers, Michigan. April 13, 1947. My father was a factory electrician. My mom, a stay-at-home mom. My dad was a World War II Navy veteran who was on the Maryland, USS Maryland when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Practically all my Uncles and two Aunts had served in World War II or Korea as enlisted.

**Dean Wetzel:** So extensive.

**Michael Quinn:** In different services, yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. Extensive family history in the military then.

**Michael Quinn:** Yes.

**Dean Wetzel:** Well, thank you for all of your guy's service. Did you mention any siblings? Are you an only child?

**Michael Quinn:** No, I have a brother who is two years younger, and a stepsister who's, I don't know, 15, 20 years younger. She joined the family after I left, so. And there was another sister who died at age seven she was, oh, 16 years younger, yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** Well?

**Michael Quinn:** No, not that I forget. She passed in 1963, I think she was born in 57, yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** Do you know what she died from?

**Michael Quinn:** It was an accidental drowning.

**Dean Wetzel:** Drowning? Sorry to hear that. So, you, when was it that you joined the service, and which branch?

**Michael Quinn:** I enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1966.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. So just after Vietnam was going on. So just after America entered Vietnam, essentially, quote unquote, with the war. How did your family then feel about you joining?

**Michael Quinn:** They were upset. My parents were upset. I had finished one year of college at the University of Michigan, and was working a summer job in Menden, Michigan. And I came home late from work one day. And my mom had gone through my room and found recruiting materials, and she said why are you late? And I said oh, I had to stop downtown. And she said, “You didn’t go see a recruiter, did you?” And I said, yeah. You didn’t enlist, did you? And I said, yeah. And my mom just melted down. I mean, it was like went on for several minutes, and my Aunt Pat was also in the living room, and she said what did you enlist in? I said Marine Corps. And my mom started all over again. And I just, yeah, she really melted down, and my dad was disappointed because it was really important to them that I finish college, so, that was a memorable day.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah mom melting down would definitely be a memorable experience for sure.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, she didn’t talk to me for a couple weeks after that. Nothing. She was really mad.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did they ever warm up to you eventually?

**Michael Quinn:** Yes.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. That’s good. At least they eventually came around. That’s always the good thing. Now, obviously you mentioned you went to college for a year, before joining in that. Go into a little bit if you could, just the jobs that you were, you were kind of getting or you were possibly having at that time, or was it just college that you were doing?

**Dean Wetzel:** No, like your job. So, your job is in like, what were you doing for income while you were going to school? Or was it just schooling at that time?

**Michael Quinn:** It was pretty much just schooling, but I had a summer factory job in the summers.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay, so like just a normal college student, school during the fall and spring semesters, working during the summer.

**Michael Quinn:** Yes.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. So, what was it, because you obviously enlisted, so why the Marines then?

**Michael Quinn:** I felt that I had to go to the war. And, I had doubts about myself, you know, the Marine Corps has a pretty fierce reputation. As you well know. And I didn't, you know, I didn't know if I was going to survive boot camp, even. I'm just a little guy. My thoughts were, if I were going to go to war, I'd rather be with people who were dedicated about what they were going to do, and not with draftees.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah.

**Michael Quinn:** Who didn't, obviously, did not want to be there mostly. And, I also had an uncle who had served in the Marines that I greatly admired, my dad's younger brother, in World War II in the Pacific. The summer job I was working with, my foreman was a Korean War Marine Corps veteran. And he was just a really good guy, so I had a lot of admiration for both of those Marines. And plus, you know, the Marine Corps reputation. Sometimes when people ask me, I, I say, well, Marines have the best uniforms. And I thought if I could get that uniform, I could get a girlfriend. Didn't work out, but.

**Dean Wetzel:** Those dress blues, right? Those dress blues. Well let's just get right into it then. What was boot camp like then in 1966?

**Michael Quinn:** It was abbreviated for me, gosh, I don't know. Nine weeks maybe or something like that.

**Dean Wetzel:** Probably nine with the zero week or whatever they call it.

**Michael Quinn:** Something like that. I don't remember exactly, but you should be able to find the dates and the orders and things. Well, it was, you know, you try something different, you're stepping out of your comfort zone. In Marine Corps boot camp, you're out of your comfort zone for sure. Yeah, you can, I think a good representation probably is, you'll get in the movies, is *Full Metal Jacket*, so.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did you stand on yellow footprints?

**Michael Quinn:** Oh yes. Yep. We got there at night. And got off the bus at night. And got processed from there. And I think it was probably close to 72 hours before we got any sleep.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yep, it what is it, haircut, it's uniform giving, it's dental, you have medical, you have, and a whole bunch of other random stuff in between. What was that first haircut like for you? The first haircut. The very first one. They set you down. After the yellow footprints, you're being rushed right in. Sat right in that chair. What was going through your mind?

**Michael Quinn:** Just, I was just very apprehensive, you know. And the haircut didn't last long.

**Dean Wetzel:** No. No. About long enough for you to go, I'm wondering if I made the wrong decision.

**Michael Quinn:** Yep, then they blew the hair off with compressed air.

**Dean Wetzel:** So, it was 8, 9 weeks, what exactly did you guys all get trained up on? What were you guys doing there for those 8 or 9 weeks? Was it a lot of marching? Was there climbing? Hiking? What was going on?

**[00:10:00] Michael Quinn:** Yeah, it was close order drill, physical, you know, calisthenics, stuff like that, classes in Marine Corps history and regulations we had to follow, you know, learning general orders, cleaning up our areas, taking care of our uniforms and shining our boots and, catching hell, you know.

**Dean Wetzel:** Oh yeah, looking back at it, what is one thing that might have been very surprising that you did? Going through it that you were like, I, even though I looked in the Marine Corps and I thought I knew what I was signing up for, we did blank in the, in bootcamp. For me it was fast roping. I had no idea there was a fast rope tower. We were going to be jumping 60 feet down a rope or anything like that. And here we are in bootcamp doing it.

**Michael Quinn:**, I'm surprised that I was able to keep up with the physical part. Pretty much, like I said, I'm lightweight and pullups and chin up were easy. And I had been, training before I went in, Phys ed classes in college, and also running around at home with, a pack, and so I was able to keep up, and you

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know, past that, and the other thing was, qualifying with, with the rifle, which is huge in the Marine Corps. I mean, our, our guide, the first guide we had, did not, and, man, that just, that, that was it was shocking, but got the toilet seat, you know, the marksman's badge, and that was pretty amazing to me, yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** They, so, I have to bring it up, so you mentioned Full Metal Jacket earlier, how close was that to your boot camp experience?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, mine was shorter, the drill instructors were not as mean as they were in the movie. Yeah. But there was, you know, a lot of verbal and some physical abuse, and, and, they were pretty damn strict, you know.

**Dean Wetzel:** Awesome. alright. When did you earn the title Marine? Because I've heard this now told to me a couple of different times from, you know, other individuals that are Marines, is that it's not like the Army that once you're at boot camp you're a Marine. You have to earn that title. Is that correct?

**Michael Quinn:** Yes.

**Dean Wetzel:** How, do you earn that title? Where did you earn that title at?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, boot camp graduation day, we were allowed to unbutton the top button on our, utility shirts. And, I was still, you know, buck private, but.

**Dean Wetzel:** You were a Marine.

**Michael Quinn:** I was a Marine,

**Dean Wetzel:** yeah. Did they do?

**Michael Quinn:** that's what they told me.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did they do anything like a crucible like they do nowadays?

**Michael Quinn:** I don't, no.

**Dean Wetzel:** Nothing. No Final ex. Okay.

**Michael Quinn:** No, like I say, it was a short bootcamp.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. What did you do after bootcamp? Did you go straight on into schooling or did they give you.....

**Michael Quinn:** Communications electronic school right there at MCRD, San Diego.

**Dean Wetzel:** That had to suck, it was in the same place, you weren't going nowhere.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, I was assigned to MOS 2841, which is Ground Radio Repair. There were three schools, Radio Fundamentals, Basic Electronics, and Ground Radio Repairs. And I managed to graduate first in my class in all three of those schools. And got a stripe for everyone. So, I left school as a corporal. It was, and the schools were also abbreviated. They had asked who wanted to go through a faster training. And I was one of the volunteers and said, okay, I'm going to get this done as quick as possible.

**Dean Wetzel:** Now with it being abbreviated, did you feel you were prepared then for Vietnam?

**Michael Quinn:** For Vietnam? Prepared for Vietnam? Well, that's a good question. But I was ready to go. Instead, they sent me out to 29 Palms. headquarters and service battalion, so I was doing, some in detail repairs to radio equipment, more than I did in Vietnam as far as getting into the nitty gritty of electronic repairs, but, I was stuck out there for probably close to 17 months, and I actually applied for a transfer to WestPac to transfer to Vietnam and that was approved, when they could get a replacement for me at 29 Palms. And I went over as a replacement to 1st Radio Battalion. Which was headquartered in Da Nang, but Dong Ha was where, I got sent to. And Dong Ha is up by the DMZ, and bordered with Laos. Little sites on high places to listen to radio traffic from the North Vietnamese and, radio traffic on the start of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. First radio battalion did not do patrols, sweeps, assaults, anything like that. I never fired my M 16 up there, at anyone. And it was a pretty easy job for, for a Marine, I would say.

**Dean Wetzel:** Before we dive too far into Vietnam, I want to go back to 29 Palms really quick.

**Michael Quinn:** Sure.

**Dean Wetzel:** And give me just a.... I mean, this is out in the middle of nowhere, 29 Palms, so what was your daily life like? What did you, what was work like? What was, you know, recreation like? Did the military at least try to make sure you guys had a decent way of, you know, a gym and a decent way to, like, release? Or were you just stuck in the middle of the desert?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, the recreation. That's a pretty short description I can give you out there. We get up early in the morning, chow, morning formations, go into a, big air condition building to work on the radio gear. They also, the same building, you know, repairing tanks and self-propelled guns and stuff. And it was just a workday, pretty much, working on that stuff. And of course, there were days for inspections and what else. Some trainings, rifle range. I was, also assigned to a, there was a battalion that was getting ready to maintain order because there was, you know, riots in Detroit at that time and other places. We never got sent out while I was there to do anything, we were called to do crowd control calls for, Bob Hope Desert Golf Tournament, one time. That's about, you know, but, you know.

**Dean Wetzel:** Learn to hate sand?

**Michael Quinn:** It was right across from, 29 Palms, right across from Joshua Tree National Monument. And went hiking around there. Was, you know, looking for old gold mines and stuff. It was pretty neat.

**Dean Wetzel:** I hated that place when I was in because our rifles would just get caked in so much dirt. I spent more time cleaning, I feel like, than I did training. Every range we'd have to go through to clean your rifle, and I hated that. I hated 29. And then it's 115 during the day and 35 at night.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** You're like, yeah, I lived there. I know.

**Michael Quinn:** Well, at least when I was there we had M14s. Which are a hell of a lot easier to clean than the ....?

**Dean Wetzel:** That M4 we have today? If you have the handguards, it's not too bad, but, well. Were you at all surprised about 29 Palms as being your place that you went? I mean, possibly going through boot camp and all of that. I'm sure you were thinking Vietnam is where you were going.

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**Michael Quinn:** Right, right, yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** So, what was it like, were you kind of like upset at the Marine Corps possibly when they said you're going to 29 Palms and not Vietnam then?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, I figured I'd get there eventually, but I didn't know it would take so long.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah.

**[00:20:00] Michael Quinn:** Like I said, if you look at my documents, you'll see that I did file a request for a transfer out of there after a while.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah. Might be one of the few that actually requested to be dropped into Vietnam, huh?

**Michael Quinn:** No. I think I had a fair amount of company. In that.

**Dean Wetzel:** When is it that you finally get transferred to Vietnam?

**Michael Quinn:** August of 1968. This was after the Tet Offensive.

**Dean Wetzel:** How, well, let's ask that question. How did Tet make you feel then? Well, obviously you're not there, you're just watching it.

**Michael Quinn:** Tet happened in 29 Palms for me. I was, you know. So, we were following the news as closely as we could.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did it anger you?

**Michael Quinn:** No, not anger. No.

**Dean Wetzel:** No. How about towards the protesting that was going on, did that anger you at all?

**Michael Quinn:** No, not that either. There weren't any protests close to the 29 Palms.

**Dean Wetzel:** Sure, no one's protesting out there, that's fair. You know, I would wonder what it would be like to, to put on the uniform and then still see people,



you know, protesting, even the uniform as itself. You know,. Were you ever worried for your family's safety then? Cause obviously you're in 29 Palms and they're back there.

**Michael Quinn:** No.

**Dean Wetzel:** No?

**Dean Wetzel:** When you were in 29 Palms (Interviewer error should have said Vietnam), Obviously I'm guessing a little bit of stuff happened. one thing we talked about, last week was you have four campaign, bronze campaign stars.

**Michael Quinn:** Yes.

**Dean Wetzel:** could you just run us through, if you remember any of those names, those campaigns that you were a part of?

**Michael Quinn:** there's a list in, in the documentation. Now, Dewey Canyon was one of them, I don't remember the names. I'll tell you why. Because, the first radio was, like I said, just intelligence gathering. We didn't. We didn't go out in the field during those campaigns. We were reporting on what we were hearing, as a unit, and just didn't, names didn't come up.

**Dean Wetzel:** Do you feel that you were, your job was successful?

**Michael Quinn:** I did what I was told to do, and I did it well, and, to the best of my ability. I'm not ashamed to of it.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah. I just, you know, being intelligence, I've talked to a, another gentleman who was in Morris Code and he did things like, he'd go out and like radio fix on enemy positions, and he got to a point where like if it was such a close, tight grid that he knew they were sending in troops. And he struggled with that because he's like, you know, bomb them back into the stone age. I could care less if you drop bombs on them. But he, he hated the idea that guys would go in some place and possibly get injured in that. Did you ever have a moment where you were like, I might be getting my own guys injured or hurt? That ever happened to cross your mind at all.

**Michael Quinn:** No, not, not really. I did a lot of, a lot of perimeter guard, and I was actually sergeant of the guard in Dong Ha for a while. And part of, part of

the perimeter was, guarded by army troops. And those idiots would frequently sleep. And, if I encountered them, I'd take their rifle and turned it into the Commander of the Guard and I did that several times. I kind of felt disdain for those guys.

**Dean Wetzel:** Well, I think that would be warranted, right? I mean, like, here you are in Vietnam, active combat zone, and your safety is in the hands of the other guy to your left and your right. And if they're asleep, That's kind of a slap to your face, wouldn't it? That's how I would take it, at least.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, well, you know how the Marines feel about sleeping on guard. You were in trouble. I don't know what happened to those guys, but they were doing it often enough that I....

**Dean Wetzel:** Well, I'm sure you've heard of the horror stories, because even I, when I was in service, had heard of the horror stories of people in Vietnam falling asleep on post and the Viet Cong infiltrating and attacking while people are asleep, you know. Again, I'm sure that was active in your mind as you're seeing these army guys over there, like, sleeping on posts. I'm sure that would upset me, at least.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah. I never caught a Marine sleeping. And, you know, I did a lot of nights in the bunkers, too, on the perimeter. But, like I say, this was after TAT. And the big invasion of the NVA toward the south. I can't recall that the Dong HA perimeter was ever, really seriously probed the whole time I was there.

**Dean Wetzel:** That's always a good thing. Yeah. I'm sure that was probably the, the more, scariest part of your, your time over there then, was probably guard duty, because that's Probably where you were most exposed I'm guessing, is that correct?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah. Definitely.

**Dean Wetzel:** Do you, do you have any time, I know you just said that it's never been actually probed or anything, but did you ever have a time where like maybe your challenging past didn't line up or didn't meet and you thought, this might be the NVA right here, this might be the North Vietnamese?

**Michael Quinn:** It was, it was always a possibility at the top of your mind, but, really I didn't have any,. Any real excitement on guard duty. Mm hmm. Yeah. Thank goodness.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah, that's always good. Well let's get back to your MOS here, a little bit. Going through that, what is a time, looking at you, overall your whole time being in Vietnam, did you ever have like a, an oh crap moment that things were getting crazy or whatever you were hearing coming through you were just like, oh, this is not, we're, this is not good.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, I had a couple.

**Dean Wetzel:** Do you mind sharing one?

**Michael Quinn:** One was when, we had a shitbird in the unit who was constantly bragging about how stupid he was from Indiana, you know. And he was assigned to guard duty and had been drinking a little bit. One of the other guys with him went to set up a claymore mine, and was holding, the blasting cap in his mouth, and the shitbird, set it off, and just about blew his jaw off. I was happy to write him up.

**Dean Wetzel:** I believe they say stupid is as stupid does.

**[00:30:00] Michael Quinn:** Another time we had a transient come through that stayed at our, stayed in the hut I was living in. And some artillery was coming, a few rounds were coming in at night, and so everybody had to the bunkers. This guy would not get up. I don't know what he was on. It was my job to get everybody out. You know, and so I just grabbed the side of his cot, lifted it up, and he bounced off the floor, and then ran straight out the hut, down to the wire, and he got caught in the barbed wire in the perimeter. I don't know what it was. Another time, I, was delivering an antenna to one of the sites on a very pointy hill. It was accessible only by helicopter and, it was a great big antenna sag, I forget what they called it, I was supposed to hop out of the back of the helicopter, which did not actually land on the site. And, as I was looking for a place to jump to, the pilot wagged the tail, and I just fell off. And fell into the wire around that. This was a real little site; I think they'd taken a big bomb and blown the top off a hill. All they had, there were just a few guys there with their radios. I didn't get hurt, I got a few scratches and stuff, and they had a good time laughing at me. I think, probably, the closest call that I can think of in Vietnam that I had was, one time I was at, kind of like a field service guy, traveling around to the different sites we had. And I got off a helicopter at, I guess it's

Vandegrift base that was up there, or they call it LZ stud. And the helicopter I was on, this is a base that's surrounded by mountains, pretty much, you can put it down, and the helicopter didn't want to hang around, it made a lot of noise. So, I jumped out, and couldn't hear anything, you know, under the helicopter, and I started walking towards the edge, and the helicopter was taken off, and the enemy in the hills was shooting at the helicopter, setting shells, mortars or shells or something down, I don't know what, but. My first, awareness of what was going on was seeing pieces of the, airstrip going up. And I felt like a bug on a plate, you know, because there isn't much place for, cover and concealment. I know they weren't shooting at me; they were shooting at the helicopter. They didn't give a shit about me, but that was the target they were after. Luckily, they missed that too, and I didn't get hurt either.

**Dean Wetzel:** I'm sure it's unnerving, right?

**Michael Quinn:** It was unnerving.

**Dean Wetzel:** So, let's talk a little bit about the equipment then that you were using. Do you remember the military name or its technical name at all that you had?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, we had, PRC 25s and 77s, 25s, 27s, and we had, these Korean War vacuum tube radio direction finders, I forget the model number for them. We did a lot of work on those, replacing the tubes and tuning them up. They also had vacuum tube radio receivers. The, the translators were used to listen to, and again we had to find out which vacuum tube failed, and replace it, and do a little tune up on it. Let's see. Did a lot of headset repair. The guys who were actually doing the listening after they'd have a whole shift of wearing a headset would. Remove it and throw it rather than carefully placing it down. I can understand why. I saw a lot of head set cord repair.

**Dean Wetzel:** Was that the same equipment that you would have been trained on in the schoolhouse?

**Michael Quinn:** The radio direction finders were new to me and the receivers also. They weren't that hard to work on. Tubes.

**Dean Wetzel:** You figured it out pretty easily?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, we had two testers.

**Dean Wetzel:** Because the military has that loveliness of wanting to send people over somewhere and then give them new equipment or different equipment than what they've been trained on. So, how long were you in Vietnam, exactly?

**Michael Quinn:** from August of 68-69, I don't remember the exact days, but it's in those notes.

**Dean Wetzel:** I know you mentioned being up there by the Laos and North Vietnam border. Was that the only place that you were during your time?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, I went in, into Vietnam, into Da Nang. And I was there for, I don't know, a couple weeks before I was sent up to Dong Ha.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did you ever get; I think they call it R& R?

**Michael Quinn:** Yep. I went to Singapore.

**Dean Wetzel:** Singapore. What was that like?

**Michael Quinn:** Very different from Vietnam. It was clean, food was good, very multicultural. I was quite impressed. I picked it because, at that time they, would list R& R sites according to the VD rate, and Singapore had a pretty low one.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah, that's a safe way to go. I've been to Singapore myself. Very beautiful city. Very beautiful. Very different than what we have cities here like, I would say. Was, how many times were you able to go to Singapore? Was it just once?

**Michael Quinn:** Just once.

**Dean Wetzel:** Just once? Was that the only place you did R& R at?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, I only had one R& R.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. What do you remember most from your time in Vietnam?

**Michael Quinn:** Lots of things. I remember C-rations. That was the main part of the diet. Occasionally we'd get other food, but...

**Dean Wetzel:** What was your favorite one?

**Michael Quinn:** Beef, spice with sauce and I liked that.

**Dean Wetzel:** What's the one you avoided?

**Michael Quinn:** The turkey stuff. I didn't care much for that. A lot of guys didn't like the ham and lime and beans. They called them ham and motherfuckers. And that, when you come to a rat fuck C ration box, that's what you'd find in it.

**Dean Wetzel:** For us it was the Asian beef strips, that's the one that no one touched at all. That was the, that was the one. Yeah, I can't imagine lima beans in a, making my stomach flip just thinking about that one. Do you remember anybody you served with? Did you happen to make any friends while you were over there?

**Michael Quinn:** I went over as a replacement, and guys did come into the unit that I'd gone to school with, but, I haven't had much contact with them. I had, I don't know, maybe five or six emails over the years, in fifty years.

**Dean Wetzel:** You guys don't do things like reunions or anything like that?

**Michael Quinn:** I don't.

**Dean Wetzel:** So, well the next question I have for you is, how, did you stay in touch with your family then? I know it's kind of rough.....

**Michael Quinn:** Oh yeah, I wrote, I wrote letters and there's some in that bag there too, that my mom had saved.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. Was it pretty regular? Were you getting mail pretty commonly? Pretty routinely?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, pretty much. Mail took a while, but.

**Dean Wetzel:** You could kind of rely on it, though. You knew that eventually you would get your mail. Yeah. Yeah. It's always, it's not always a given.

**Michael Quinn:** No.

**Dean Wetzel:** I had one letter in seven months when I was on deployment. They just couldn't catch up to the ship.

**Michael Quinn:** Never served on a ship.

**Dean Wetzel:** You're not missing much. What else was going on for you over there in Vietnam? I know we talked a little bit about your daily workload in the guard duty in R& R. Was there anything else that was going on while you were over there? Anything else that you guys did?

**Michael Quinn:** We were just, I mean, there was regular workload. We, when I got there, they were rebuilding our, our area. So we were filling a lot of sandbags and repairing bunkers and that. When I first got there, before I made sergeant, we had a lot of corporals in the unit, I'll tell you, used to occasionally pull, the job of, burning the shitters. You know what I'm talking about? Every, every morning you could look across the base and see coins of smoke rising.

**[00:40:00] Dean Wetzel:** I can smell it now. That wasn't good. How did you get to Vietnam? I guess I should have asked this one a while ago.

**Michael Quinn:** By airplane.

**Dean Wetzel:** By airplane? Was it a straight flight over there?

**Michael Quinn:** No, they stopped in Okinawa for for a few days.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay.

**Michael Quinn:** A couple days.

**Dean Wetzel:** But you didn't have no problems with that, no issues flying over or anything?

**Michael Quinn:** No. No.

**Dean Wetzel:** I've talked to a few guys that are like, the plane's engines just stopped. Hmm. I just wanted to make sure that wasn't a common thing going on in the military. Do you remember anything particularly humorous from while you were, while you were over there? Maybe as a sergeant in the guards or something. One of the guys were pranking each other or something.

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**Michael Quinn:** Well, you know, you, you got to try to be humorous. I don't remember anything really super funny.

**Dean Wetzel:** Nothing that stands out. What did you guys do to break up the monotonous? I mean, did you guys play cards? Did you guys try to do unit building cohesion things?

**Michael Quinn:** We play cards. Poker, blackjack, did some reading that I could get, but most of it was just work, you know. Either working on, working on equipment or working on the filling sandbags or, I never pulled my mess duty again in my tour, but I'm thankful for that.

**Dean Wetzel:** So, 69 is when you get out, correct?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, but it's separated. I did three years of inactive reserve after that.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. In 69, did you get sent out straight from Vietnam? Or did you get sent back to the States and then sent out?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, from Da Nang to, Okinawa for a few days. And then from Okinawa to El Toro where I was processed out.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did they do anything like to help you understand what benefits you might have or, help you get into the VA? Did they set you up for success, do you feel?

**Michael Quinn:** No.

**Dean Wetzel:** No. That's fair. Would,

**Michael Quinn:** Not that I recall.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did they do anything for you at all? Do you remember?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, there's a, you know, quick physical check. Some, probably some more organizations or. Something, different drug to, against malaria. I don't know. The paperwork, you know, where you're going, there's your tickets.



**Dean Wetzel:** Out the door you go.

**Michael Quinn:** Final pay, yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yep. Looking at your service as a whole, from 66 to 69, in Vietnam, You, made it through a really rocket time, just overall in the American military. Do you attribute that to maybe luck? You attribute, do you attribute your survival to anything, or do you, just the skills the Marines taught you?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, yeah, I think luck was a good part, and we took care of each other. They'd see somebody depressed, give them some extra attention, have some drinks with them. You know, keep them going they're good people. I served with really good people.

**Dean Wetzel:** What about mementos? Did you have something that, you know, like a little picture or something maybe that you kept in your breast pocket throughout your time that you were like, with this, I know I'll be safe. You hear that like in World War II and some other people in Vietnam and things like that.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, yeah, you can, religious metal that my dad gave me, you know, that I wore. Yeah. Along with my dog tags.

**Dean Wetzel:** With that you felt like, at least God's on my side, probably.

**Michael Quinn:** Mm hmm. No, I just wore it. You

**Dean Wetzel:** Just wore it? All right. All right

**Michael Quinn:** I don't know if God was on my side. I was, when we were filling the sandbags, we, and we did a lot of that, it became apparent that our the area was located over what had been a Vietnamese cemetery. We dug up a lot of old bones and skulls and things. I pretty much got the feeling that we weren't welcomed as liberators in that area. Or defenders against communism.

**Dean Wetzel:** That kind of

**Michael Quinn:** Contact with Vietnamese was very limited. I did not speak Vietnamese. But they weren't real friendly. The Vietnamese troops that were assigned to our unit did not want to be in that area either. That was too close to North Vietnam for them, and they would.

**Dean Wetzel:** I'm sure that didn't make you feel all that great too, when you're looking over and you see the Arvan troops not wanting to be there.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, it made you wonder, if they don't want to be there, why are we here?

**Dean Wetzel:** Exactly. Going to the back of your mind there, what would you say was yours, the best part of your service to you, and why?

**Michael Quinn:** I'd say it was a great honor to serve in the Marines, to be accepted into a camp, to pass, to do my job, get promotions, and, I was never put in a situation where I had to, demonstrate valor or courage or anything, but just the Marine Corps experience, I think has served me, throughout my life, just, endurance, leadership, discipline. Those are, those are qualities that they build into you.

**Dean Wetzel:** Honor, courage, and commitment.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah.

**Michael Quinn:** Been in a situation where you need commitment.

**Dean Wetzel:** Alright, well, let's move on to the end of your service if we will, here in 69. Do you remember the exact day your service ended? Does that memory last?

**Michael Quinn:** It was somewhere in the first half of August, and, I was going back to, back to college in Ann Arbor, and, so I just, you know, some visits with family and everything, and then, trying to find a place to live in Ann Arbor and get enrolled again and everything.

**Dean Wetzel:** nKowing that, knowing kind of the college campus and that during the 60s there at Michigan, much like other college campuses across the nation, wasn't exactly supportive of what was going on over in Vietnam. So, when you went to campus, how did you feel as a student? Did you feel like your peers were accepting of you?

**Michael Quinn:** No.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did you feel like you needed to leave? Did you feel safe there?

**[00:50:00] Michael Quinn:** Oh, I felt safe, but, it was not a veteran friendly campus or culture in Ann Arbor in fall of 69. It was, yeah. I took up drinking then after a few semesters managed to drink myself out of college. And then I was working other jobs and, some, most of them involving electronics, because I had worked in that, as an electronic technician, I could. In, 1975, I was accepted into the Peace Corps and I went to, they sent me to Nicaragua. To set up a communication system for a reforestation project in a remote part of Nicaragua. And that was, that was really a wonderful experience. I was able to use what I had learned in the Marines, in a very, friendly culture. and it, really helped me settle down a lot, you know, I just wound up pretty tight when I got back, even, when I got back from Vietnam, and, the Peace Corps really did me a lot of good. Yeah..

**Dean Wetzel:** Do you feel that your military service opened that door to the Peace Corps?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, it certainly did to that job, to that assignment. I got there; they had a really crappy, practically nonfunctional communication system that covered a huge area to be reforested. And I specified the kind of radios they needed and helped them with the bid process, made the selection, trained people there to take care of it. Helped him install it. I think I accomplished something there.

**Dean Wetzel:** It probably felt good after being in Vietnam.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, it certainly did. The place had really friendly people around. And, it was interesting. I mean, they had a, Rainy season and a dry season down there. And the dry season, it was pretty much firefighting. Yeah. Yeah. Grass fires in the Plains of Savannah, Occasionally the tops of the trees would catch fire too. And participate in that rainy season, not much I have time to study. Study Spanish, read the Bible, do a little bit of mathematics.

**Dean Wetzel:** Do they, do they have good food down there?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, they did, if you like rice and beans. And meat. They had clean water. I met my wife down there. She was a schoolteacher. And we've been married almost 47 years now.

**Dean Wetzel:** So, how long were you down there with the Peace Corps?

**Michael Quinn:** 27 months.

**Dean Wetzel:** Twenty-seven months. Has a lasting impact when you meet someone like your wife, right? Pardon? Something like that has a lasting impact on you when you when you meet someone like your wife. Like for me, it was in my military service. I met my wife there. Mm-Hmm. for you in the Peace Corps. You met yours down there, in Nicaragua. Did you ever think about staying down there then? So, you know, she was.....

**Michael Quinn:** I was invited to stay the project. They asked me if I wanted to work for them, but I wanted to get back to the States.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did you, so when you get done with the Peace Corps, do you try college again at that time?

**Michael Quinn:** No, I went back to work, working as an electronic technician, repairing and servicing clinical, instruments, for electrophoresis and nerve probes and things like that. I worked in Ann Arbor for three years and then that company sold a line of instruments to Beckman Instruments in California, and I went along with that line and helped them get started up there. I was a Beckman employee for four years. That was really interesting. My wife got Montessori teacher training while she was, while we were in California. In 1985, we moved back to Michigan so I could get a job at Sumit Palmers as a process engineer. And she opened a Montessori preschool. And she operated that for about 36, 37 years before we were retired.

**Dean Wetzel:** Now looking at how you, how people treated you when you returned from the Peace Corps in, in 69 (Error by interviewer his military service ended in 1969 Peace Corps, 1977 was when his Peace Corps Service ended) were those experiences similar or were they different?

**Michael Quinn:** They were different, but, the Peace Corps service wasn't, much of a resume enhancer for, you know, they figure you're pr]art of the Hippigonna be, a vagabond. Peace Corps has a reputation, too, but I got good jobs, I guess, eventually.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah. We're, so, obviously, 69, did you immediately come out showing that you were a veteran? Did you feel?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, I had, I had a lot shorter hair than most of the other people on campus when I arrived. I just wore civilian clothes, I didn't wear old uniform stuff or anything, really.

**Dean Wetzel:** Kind of put some distance between you and the service?

**Michael Quinn:** I just wasn't, I had a lot of trouble sleeping, so.

**Dean Wetzel:** What do you equate that to in your own thoughts? Where do you think that stems from?

**Michael Quinn:** I think for all the times when you're, I mean, you know the schedules. Some days you're up all night and you don't have a regular sleep schedule a lot of time. And where we were. In Vietnam, we hear artillery all the time, most of it outgoing, which has very different sounds than incoming, but I could tell them asleep, pretty much, which direction the shells were flying. And I recall one time in Ann Arbor, I was recently back and, I was sleeping. I couldn't sleep in a bed. I wanted to sleep on the floor. And somebody in the parking lot started up a motorcycle. And I remember, just waking up in a real panic. But, ever since, I had a lot of trouble sleeping. He was eventually, diagnosed with sleep apnea, by the VA, and, I've read that the rate of that is really a lot higher in veterans than it is in the general population, .

**Dean Wetzel:** Are you getting medical service and treatment and all that, that you need from the VA?

**Michael Quinn:** Yes, they've been great. Over in Battle Creek. VA Medical Center. People over there, they've taken really good care of me.

**Dean Wetzel:** Awesome. I'm glad to hear that. It wasn't that case for a lot of the guys coming back in Vietnam. Initially there was a lot of pushback from the VA in that. So, I'm glad to hear that you're being taken care of.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah. I didn't get involved with the VA until about 2009.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** What, can I ask what the reason for that was?

**Michael Quinn:** I went to a job fair in Detroit, and they had a booth there and signed me up, I was out of work at that time, and as long as I was there, you know, signed up, and they've been real good to me since.

**Dean Wetzel:** Awesome. What do you think was the easiest part of the military lifestyle for you to adapt to?

**Michael Quinn:** I can't think of anything that was really easy.

**Dean Wetzel:** Well, let me ask out this, what do you think was maybe the hardest thing to adapt to?

**[01:00:00] Michael Quinn:** just the hierarchical range structure, you were always subject to arbitrary decisions by your superiors, yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** do you remember any one particular of your medals or ribbons that you were awarded? Does any of those stand out for how you were awarded those?

**Michael Quinn:** Just the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V that came. While I was a reservist, they mailed the award afterward. That's the highest one I've gotten.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay. What did you, did they specify? Did they give you a cert that came with it for what that was for? It's in the, it's in the, in the paperwork. Awesome. So, when did you start joining veteran organizations then?

**Michael Quinn:** 1985, when we moved to Portage, there was a World War II Marine Corps veteran, actually two of them, in different houses. Both of them, right across the street from me. They've both passed away now, but they, Bill Falquist, got me to join the VFW, in Portage. But I never, after signing up once, I never renewed, they, it was mostly, World War II Korean guys, they didn't care much for Vietnam veterans. I didn't join another one until, I think 2009, when I got into the, service with the county. I was county commissioner, and they put me on the, Veterans Affairs Committee for the county. The guy that was running the veterans office got me into the Marine Corps league. And that was, that was really different than VFW. I of course by that time there were more Vietnam veterans in it that were active and, fewer World War II guys, and they, it was, my wife said these veterans organizations are just drinking clubs, not really what I needed, but the Marine Corps League was really pretty active

Interviewee: Michael Quinn  
Interviewer: Dean Wetzel  
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in the service things that they were doing, and it was just a different, a really different experience than the VFW had, being, being those Marines again.

**Dean Wetzel:** We are unique.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, a cult.

**Dean Wetzel:** Ah, yeah. That's, yeah. Now, I know when you talked, you came back and you went, came back from Vietnam and went to Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan. That didn't work out, did you ever complete college?

**Michael Quinn:** Oh, yes.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay, when and where?

**Michael Quinn:** 1985 we moved back to, Michigan, and I was in Portage working for Summit Polymers. In 1986, I started taking one course at a time at Western, Applied Mathematics. The diplomas are also in that bag. 1991, I got my bachelor's in applied mathematics. And then, I signed up for a master's program in Statistics. I got the master's degree in 1998.

**Dean Wetzel:** Awesome.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, it was, I was really proud of that.

**Dean Wetzel:** That's a great accomplishment. Were you able to use your GI Bill for that?

**Michael Quinn:** I burned that up in Ann Arbor while I was flunking out. But Summit Polymers was great. They, they let me flex time so I could take courses I needed. that were offered during the workday. And they also helped with the tuition. And I was able to apply what I was studying there to the work I was doing that summer.

**Dean Wetzel:** That's awesome. It's always nice when someone's willing to work with you a little bit like that, you know. It helps, it all helps. How do you how do you think your military service, your military experiences directly affected your life?

**Dean Wetzel:** It's a tough one.

**Michael Quinn:** You know, I strongly identify as a Marine veteran. I mean, that's part of my identity.

**Dean Wetzel:** It's the one branch that they say there is no such thing as an ex-Marine. Once a Marine, it's always a Marine.

**Michael Quinn:** Well, there is such a thing as an ex-Marine. You know, in terms of informal release,

**Dean Wetzel:** yeah,

**Michael Quinn:** More comfortable, yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** I always equated that kind of being, being a part of something bigger than just you.

**Michael Quinn:** But the marine uncle that I had, we were going through a hell of a tough time for years with the situation and, he said, you know, when you're going through hell, keep going. And that works.

**Dean Wetzel:** It's a great piece of advice. Do you think you learned any life lessons then while you were in the service at all? In the Marines particularly?

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** Would you care to share any of those lessons?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, like I said, perseverance, endurance. Those are as a way of I think you've served me.

**Dean Wetzel:** I don't know what it is about the Marine Corps boot camp, but they just have a way of ingraining that into all of us.

**Michael Quinn:** This, you know, stretch you out beyond what you think you could go. If you don't break, you wind up a little stronger, I think.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah. It's that rubber band.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah. It stretches farther than you think you can do it.



**Dean Wetzel:** Now, obviously going through Vietnam. From, taking, you know, not direct fire, but being around incoming fire and things like that, has your opinion or your thoughts on warfare changed?

**Michael Quinn:** Oh, definitely.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay.

**Michael Quinn:** My concept of what was going on with wars, at the time I decided to enlist, was that wars were fought between military organizations. But what I saw in Vietnam was that the indigenous people were really, really suffering and they were kind of getting it from both sides. And, and just the, the scale of the waste involved, you know, humans, waste of humans, waste of environment and landscape, waste of materials, just, I thought, this is insane, this is fucking insane. And, I follow the news and, about the wars that are going on now, and that have been going on, they call them forever wars, you know, ever since 9/11, and, that's my opinion. The worst thing Humans can do is wage wars.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah, it's no longer like it was during the Roman time, right, where you have three, four hundred guys out in some field swinging swords at each other. Maybe the field gets lit on fire by somebody, but that, that's it. Nowadays you're sitting out there with these artillery shells where you're leveling entire towns, villages, whole cities are gone. You know, you think of like maybe World War II, it's probably the best imagery you could have of what modern warfare, prolonged modern warfare, with the explosions we have now are capable of. You had just a complete, basically, dust pile of Europe after World War II. You know, that's, that's, that's the cost nowadays. It's a very, painful cost. War, it, it, it weighs heavily. You see it in Ukraine. Entire economies and whole worlds can be wiped out. So.

**[01:10:00] Michael Quinn:** I think, I sound like a, really a totally gone cult member, but I, I think, The Marine Corps has a role in national defense if it were to be used the way Smedley Butler said it should be used, to defend our borders, and not on overseas adventures, you know. Have you read *War Is a Racket*?

**Dean Wetzel:** I don't think I, hmmm.

**Michael Quinn:** He wrote it. You read it, right? She did a paper on Smedley Butler.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** Two Medal of Honors. I think, I think we had, I think it was on the commandant's reading list when we were deployed. And I think I read so much on deployment. So, if not, I'll put it on my to do list.

**Michael Quinn:** It's a short book, but it's, it's really good. But, you know, the end result of boot camp, if you're a committed Marine, it's, you're, you're ready to kill another hand human being. Be rewarded for doing that. The more the better in my old age, I don't think that's a good spiritual place for me to be. You know, I try to become a, a compassionate human being that sees Christ in everyone I meet. And that's not the attitude I had when I was 19.

**Dean Wetzel:** No. But that also could have been what kept you safe, too. You know, that ruggedness, that, that, that hardness. It has its place, too.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, it has its place in time. But not for old men.

**Dean Wetzel:** No. They said, there's no place for old men in a young man's profession. That's what I was always told when I was in.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** You know. Did you ever get any tattoos? About your service?

**Michael Quinn:** No. I don't know why.

**Michael Quinn:** I never did.

**Dean Wetzel:** No? Always a fun one to ask. So, I know you also have a little bit of a political career as well. When did that start exactly?

**Michael Quinn:** It started in 2006. A guy in our neighborhood, whom I thought was about the only other Democrat in the city, was a government teacher, a high school government teacher, and he had run, I think he ran about 12 or 13 different campaigns. He was the first Democrat in Portage ever to be elected to the county commission. And for some reason in 2006, he wasn't running. Maybe his wife wouldn't let him or something. And, a couple days before the

filing deadline, he called me up at work and asked if I would run for the county commission. I said, Larry, I don't know cat shit from peanut butter about that. What does the county commissioner do? Don't worry about it, he says. The party's not going to support you, you're not going to win, you just want to have a name for every office on the ballot. They said, I'll help you. Okay. All right, I'll do it. And my thinking was that I'd been overseas, a couple different places, trying to do what I could to make a change that was worthwhile. And here I was in Portage. What was I doing for my community that I was living in? And I thought, well, if there's ever a cause that I want to get people to be working on, just learn how to campaign. It'll be worth it. So, I went in it, to win it, and I came close. I lost by 64 votes out of a few thousand. And so two years later, when, Obama came out, so did a lot of Democratic voters, and I won that race by 36 votes, beating the former mayor of Portage. And that shifted the balance of power on the county commission. We now had a, Of 9-8 majority. That was really, this was a really another experience. I lost the subsequent campaign, by 670 votes or something salted for six years. And then when a democratic party activist caught me in a tavern and said Quintin you got to, you got to run for the county board again. It will be easy, Hiliary is going to win big. So, I signed up for a campaign, I won that one by 45 votes, and then, I won the next two campaigns, but I won them by 1, 000 votes, and by 1, 800 votes. And in the final year of my service, the board elected me as chairman. And that was a huge responsibility. I mean, we had, like a 120 million budget for the county. And on top of that, 154 million dollars of federal, this was after the pandemic, of federal relief funds to divide up to different projects. It was a hell of a lot of work, and as chairman, there's always a few, trying to get you in every way they can, and people were calling us every name for trying to protect our health officer. I mean, it was It was a real challenge.

**Dean Wetzel:** Do you think your time in the Marine Corps helped you?

**Michael Quinn:** Oh yeah. It helped me restore order to the board for one thing. They were, you know, there were loud public fights, insults, on the board during the meetings. And I put a stopped that. I said, we're going to show respect for each other or you're out. The sheriff was going to escort you out, and there were only two times when I had to issue a quiet warning when they started, and after that, the meetings went, and we stuck to business, and we maintained a decorum, and I, I think, they knew I was serious.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** Awesome. What message would you like to leave for future generations who hear your interview?

**Michael Quinn:** That, wars are worse than you imagine. We should all be working for peace in the world. And that military service, it can be honorable, and it can be personally, you know, you can get killed or you can get stronger, but if you're willing to take that risk, I don't know I'm not smart enough to be giving advice to future generations. They'll have their own challenges.

**Dean Wetzel:** I think that's wise wisdom in of itself right there. Well, Michael, we're getting close to the end here on your oral history. I would like to open it up now to for you to add anything to this oral history that we haven't talked about or anything that you would like to add to your oral history. If there's not, then we can also keep moving on, but I always like to open up some time for that. And I know there's a lot we've covered and probably a lot more that we haven't.

**[01:20:00] Michael Quinn:** Just that I feel blessed that I've had so many experiences in different ways. And, you know, you think of the Marine Corps and Peace Corps as being disconnected, but, you know both cases, you're carrying out foreign policy on the grassroots level. Different methods. I was able to carry my occupational skills, you know, from one to the other and I think in a lot of ways, Marine Corps service, prepared me for serving on the County Commission. I mean, you've got a campaign, you've got a organize people for a campaign, get resources, get out there and pound on doors, convince people, that they should support you, and then, you know, learn, it's quite a learning curve to being on the County Commission. They're into so many different activities from, you know. Parks and Roads, Health Department, Justice System, Spending money, you know, lots of money, that was, that was a huge experience. So I just feel we're really lucky to have seen different aspects of the work that different places in the world, different aspects of what's going on in the community and where I live. I enjoy good health, thank God. My wife says it's good genes and not clean living.

**Dean Wetzel:** How do you feel personally about Vietnam, looking back at it?

**Michael Quinn:** It's a war we shouldn't have gotten into. And it was conducted badly by our administrations and pissing on McNamara's grave is probably on my bucket list somewhere. They, they knew it was futile and prolonged it way past the time they knew that.

**Dean Wetzel:** Would you say you're angry?

**Michael Quinn:** No, I, don't feel anger. It was just such a waste. It was such a waste.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah. How about when the wall came down and, you know, the co you know, communism essentially was over at that point, did that change your feelings at all?

**Michael Quinn:** That was, that was a surprise, to me. I you know, I was in kindergarten, first grade, we were doing duck and cover, thinking the Russians were, were gonna nuke us, possibly. And, seeing the collapse of the Soviet Union was quite a surprise.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did you feel good?

**Michael Quinn:** I felt happy for them, yeah. I thought they had a chance at, Getting a better system than they had.

**Dean Wetzel:** I mean, technically your enemy in Vietnam was the North Vietnamese, but I mean, behind every time they said the North Vietnamese, I mean, I'm sure you were like, well, also the Russians, also communists.

**Michael Quinn:** Well, the Chinese, actually.

**Dean Wetzel:** Chinese, you know, you're fighting communism more, so this might be the body today, but we're fighting this. So, seeing that fell, I mean, that might have been the time where you could have been like, okay, maybe we did. win somewhat in Vietnam. Maybe there was something that we had there.

**Michael Quinn:** No That wasn't my feeling.

**Dean Wetzel:** And that's fair too, like I say. Vietnam's just such a weird one because the fall of Saigon, the way it ended, the way we fought it, the way it was conducted. It just, a lot of veterans are hurt with that.

**Michael Quinn:** Oh, yeah. And rightfully so.

**Dean Wetzel:** Rightfully

**Michael Quinn:** So. Rightfully so.

**Dean Wetzel:** You know, and do you feel like your government or your country kind of left you high and dry in Vietnam?

**Michael Quinn:** Well, I think they lied to us a lot. And, they really should have had, some sort of transition programs for men and women that they trained as warriors. Because when you get out of that culture, you go. Back to civilian life, that's a pretty drastic change. I've read that, the Japanese had a, returning warrior ceremony where the, village would take the veteran and thank him for everything he had done as a soldier. And, very appreciated. And then tell him that, we don't need you as a soldier anymore. We need you to be a father and a worker in this community. And welcome home and, we're going to help you with what your new assignment is. I really think the, United States should do something like that, you know, a better, better transition, to civilian life for people who are suffering, you know.

**Dean Wetzel:** Would you say transitioning to civilian life is maybe the hardest part of being in the military? It's not necessarily going through it, but

**Michael Quinn:** It's hard enough. Of course, everybody's experience is different. I'm lucky I wasn't transitioning with an artificial leg or something. Not my, my experience.

**Dean Wetzel:** I guess. I guess that's a good point, you know, mental transition is one battle, but if you're battling mental and the physical disabilities also, that could be a whole other world. A whole other fight. Well, last question I have for you is what do you wish people knew more about veterans? I've had guys, answer this with like, you know, we wish that they just understood that we were, we're still Humans at the end of the day. You know what I mean? We might be this guy that goes off and becomes a Marine or a soldier and has to do some pretty horrible things. But at the end of the day, we still bleed like everyone else that we're no, no different, we're no special. And we just want to be welcomed and accepted for who we are.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Dean Wetzel:** Would you say that's something that you think is what you would wish for?

**Michael Quinn:** I don't know. I think they're doing a lot better now than they were. I think they're moving in the right direction.

**Dean Wetzel:** I definitely think, my peers, myself included, have a very nice road right now with the VA, with, with the American people, with, with our service. People are willing to work with us and that is the work of you Vietnam veterans that have gone forth and had to, had obviously paved these roads and, and wore these battles and stuff.

**Michael Quinn:** Yeah, I, had a bumper sticker on a car I used to have that said I was a Vietnam veteran before it became popular.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah. Alright, well, Michael, I would just like to take this time again just to thank you in all of this, sharing these memories, recounting these stories, talking about your service. I do want to say welcome home, you are home now, and thank you for your service.

**Michael Quinn:** Thank you for your service, thank you for your interest in this. This, this was really an opportunity that, I actually look forward to telling somebody about it. Not many people are interested.

**Dean Wetzel:** Well, I'm glad that you were, you were interested in talking with me. I'm very interested in learning history from the bottom up, from the people that were there.