

Viet Nam War Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: DENNIS PHELPS

Interviewer: Bridget Devlin, Christopher Le

Date: November 12, 2021

Location: Irvine, California

Sub Collection: Viet Nam War Oral History Course, Fall 2021

Length of Interview: 1:30:08

Time Log

00:04:36	Mr. Phelps was diagnosed with Bryce Disease, yet that didn't prevent him from being going to the Army.
00:06:10	He did not believe he was going to go to Viet Nam when he quit his job.
00:06:42	He was drafted June 1969.
00:07:35	He went to basic training
00:09:13	Mr. Phelps awarded MOS because he was a welder; went to Kentucky to teach NCOs.
00:12:27	Arrived in Cam Ranh Bay, Viet Nam.
00:18:20	Shipping off to Viet Nam, saying goodbye to his wife and given a first class seat.
00:22:59	Mr. Phelps remembers his first day in Viet Nam.
00:26:55	His experience of monsoon season.
00:29:40	Bob Bassat and Mr. Phelps caught officers stealing food rations.
00:31:51	His experience of combat at night.
00:33:21	He begins to explain the story of his friend Desmond who was killed.
00:34:31	For 15 years, he felt that he was the one that should have died instead of Demond. He contemplated suicide.
00:36:24	He visits the portable Viet Nam memorial wall and meets Desmond's family. The meeting erased his feeling of wanting to

commit suicide.

00:38:31 His experience with guard duty- the most dangerous job

00:41:23 He believes the VA is only maintaining veterans, not curing them, there is distrust.

00:42:26 He kept sanity by goofing off with his friend Bob Bassat.

00:56:58 He shot an enemy soldier, which had a negative effect on him, but once Desmond died, he wanted to kill the VC.

01:02:25 His experience of being rejected from the American Legion

01:04: 11 He was called baby killers by people and society in general.

01:05:58 Because he lives close to Disneyland, he gets flashbacks when fireworks go off. He has to be standing outside and looking at the fireworks.

1:10:20 Mr. Phelps believes that veterans are getting a lot of help and recognition now. People will approach him and thank him for his service.

1:11:09 He is not ashamed of being a Viet Nam veteran, and would do it all again.

1:12:10 Mr. Phelps is part of the Life Saver Helicopter program.