

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

VETERAN: ROBERT F. VENA

BRANCH OF SERVICE: MARINE CORPS

INTERVIEWR(S): NOEL MURPHY AND RENEE CUNNINGHAM

MAY 3, 2005

Today is Tuesday, May 3, 2005 and this is the beginning of an interview with Bob Vena at his home at 272 [inaudible], Summerhill, Pennsylvania. Mr. Vena is 49 years old having been born on February 2, 1956. Our names are Noel Murphy and Renee Cunningham and we will be doing the interview. Bob Vena is Renee's uncle. He is my mother's brother-in-law.

Uncle Bob could you please state for the recording what war, branch, and service you served in?
I was in the Marine Corp during the Vietnam War era war.

What was your rank?
Staff sergeant [unintelligible]

Where did you serve?
I served at Camp Lejune, North Carolina, Camp Pendleton, California, Okinawa, and in Vietnam.

Were you drafted or volunteered during the Vietnam War?
I volunteered so I would get specific training.

Where was your training conducted?
Camp Lejune, North Carolina

In what specialties were you trained?
Mobil electric power generation, portable generators

How long did you spend in Vietnam?
I spent 11 month in Okinawa, and 3 months in Vietnam

What duties did you have in Vietnam?
We supplied portable electric power for the beach heading and the support units. Motor transport, water purification for the rest of the battalion.

What enemy propaganda, if any, did you see or hear?
At that stage of the war it was pretty much winding down we didn't hear much of it.

How did you and your fellow soldiers regard enemy troops?
They were pretty resourceful they would use anything we threw away against us and none of them would wear a uniform so you really couldn't tell who the enemy was.

Were you aware of U.S. domestic opposition to the war?
Yes.

What was your reaction to such opposition?

Well, they had their good points, but in the position we were in over there we had to do what we had to do over there.

How did you feel about the conduct of the war by the leadership of our country?

I didn't think they did a real good job of planning the entire situation; we should have jumped in with both feet, but instead of nickel and dimeing it.

What was your reaction when you came home from Vietnam?

Reaction to what?

When you came home from Vietnam did you have any kind of welcome home celebration?

None, no celebration.

Do you keep in touch with any fellow veterans?

Yeah, there's quite a few people we still keep in touch with; Christmas card and call.

What is your opinion of what the government has done for Vietnam vets?

Well, they set up a 10-point veterans preference program which is fact how I got my job. So they've done a pretty good job.

Have you visited the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.?

Yeah, we've been down there several times.

What was your reaction?

I thought it was a pretty appropriate memorial considering there was over 58,000 Americans that died which was more than in the Civil War and each name is listed on that memorial so I thought it was pretty impressive.

Thank you very much.