

## Episode 5

I had a hard time watching tonight's Episode 5. I was in Vietnam during this time and hearing my good friend John Musgrave, Gunny as he is affectionally called by his friends, share his story made me cry, even though I already knew it.

I heard someone say, "We wasted these gooks" and I recall how often the word wasted was used in terms of both Vietnamese and Americans that were killed. I would say that we wasted some gooks or the gooks wasted so and so. I never thought about how profound that word was.

When I watched this episode, our tactics looked so bad, losing men taking the same territory over and over. This is what I did and it was hard to see all that wasted sacrifice.

"This is war, this is what we do" the veteran said. What is war? I define war as organized murder sanctioned by governments. War is an institution made up of criminal behavior. Killing people, and destroying their homes is criminal behavior outside of war.

You could see from tonight's episode that the rules of war are not always obeyed, especially when you want revenge for what happened to your friends. It seems odd to me to have rules of war. If you could really have rules, wouldn't the first one be that you cannot solve your differences by murdering each other?

If your life or the lives of your friends were on the line, would you cheat and break the rules if you thought it could save those lives? I did all of the time. Perhaps one of my problems was that I considered the lives of Marines much more valuable than the lives of the Vietnamese.

On October 12, 1967 outside of Quang Tri, my unit was ambushed, surrounded, cut off and overrun at some points. This happened on operation Medina, about 22 miles south of where Gunny was. There was intelligence that said there

was a meeting of NVA leaders at the top of this mountain. We trudged up the mountain and they were waiting. This was different than what we were used to. The VC would attack and melt away. The NVA stayed and fought.

I highly recommend the book about this battle called "Lions of Medina" by Doyle Glass. Doyle interviewed everyone he could find who was in this battle. The book gives very graphic details about what each of us was experiencing in the battle.

In this episode, there was talk about the M-16. In 1966, I carried an M-14 that I trusted and could depend on. In 1967, they took my M-14 and gave me an M-16. At first I liked it because it was lighter so I could carry more ammo and it could be fully automatic. But it soon became evident that it was not reliable.

There was a squad that was pinned down in a rice paddy. I got to a little hill that allowed me to give cover fire so those that were pinned down could try to make it to safety. I saw a VC behind a dike firing at the men that were pinned down. I aimed at his head and just as he saw me I squeezed the trigger and my M16 did not fire. I quickly ducked and tried to clear my weapon. The brass from my previous shot did not eject, so a new round could not feed into the chamber. I took the cleaning rod out of the back of my rifle, screwed it together, opened my rifle and pushed the cleaning rod down the barrel to knock out the brass. I was now defending myself shooting 1 round at a time and using the cleaning rod. This was too slow so I switched to my 45 pistol. A couple of amtraks came up firing 50 Cals which allowed all of us to get back to safety. I have always wondered what that VC thought about why I did not shoot him.

There were stark differences between the truth and what we were being told. It has become evident to me that the main purpose of secrecy is to protect the politicians from the public. The enemy already knows what we are doing to them.

This episode had 2 battles where they talked to those on both sides and I found that very interesting. I went back to Vietnam in 1994 and had hoped to talk with the Vietnamese about operation Medina but was unable to make that happen.

I did not know that there was anti-war sentiment in North Vietnam and that the government there went after those who were against the war like our government did here.

I was unaware that Native Americans had the highest per capita service in Vietnam. We still treat Native Americans as second class citizens in the US today, shameful for many reasons.

It was interesting to find out about how democracy worked in South Vietnam. The US Ambassador met with Thieu, Ky and the generals and told them to decide who would run for president and vice president. They picked Thieu and Ky and they were elected with about 35% of the vote.

I knew about the quote from Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, “the light at the end of the tunnel” but I did not know that the French used it in Vietnam first. I loved when the Ambassador was asked how long he thought the tunnel might be.

It seemed surreal to me that after having had 107 men killed and 282 wounded taking Hill 875 that had no value, the survivors were treated to a Thanksgiving dinner.

I thought that it was honest for LBJ to raise taxes to pay for the war, unlike the leaders of today who put the costs of our current wars on to the backs of our children and grandchildren.

It is painful for me to see that instead of learning from our past mistakes, our country’s behavior has not changed. We still think that we can beat others into submission.