

Episode 6

I am grateful for the 2 days R&R since the last episode. I was a bit more exhausted than I realized.

By 1968, I was home from Vietnam and still had a year and a half left of my 4 year commitment to the Marine Corps.

I was a platoon sergeant with I/3/10, stationed at Camp Le Jeune NC, and my total focus was on my current responsibilities. I knew that my Nam unit was in Hue but I lost touch with everyone there; we did not have unit integrity.

I went to Marine Corps schools and trained Marines going to Nam.

I went to embarkation school in Little Creek VA and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) warfare school at Camp Geiger, NC.

I was teaching Fire Direction Control (FDC) to Marines going to Nam. There was a big difference in attitude than when I was training to go to Nam.

In 1965 when I was training, we were all Gung Ho and wanted to go kick some commie ass.

Now in 1968, these guys did not want to go to Nam and some of them even questioned the war itself.

There was some drug use, heroin, speed, all kinds of pills, pot and of course the drug of choice, alcohol. I looked the other way unless it interfered with their responsibilities.

When Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, to me it meant that I was put on standby to be deployed to riots.

Now I was sent to riot control school. Robert Kennedy was assassinated and there was more unrest.

At the time I did not understand the significance of these assassinations, I just thought about how they affected me. For the most part that was negative because I could not go home on weekends to see my girl since I was on standby to go a riot or anti-war demonstration. I never thought for a

second that those rioting or demonstrating might have a legitimate grievance. Civil Rights, what was that?

Tonight's Episode 6, "Things Fall Apart":

1968 is described as the watershed year for the war. It is the year that it becomes painfully obvious that we are not going to win this war, yet we have 7 more years to go. The "Wise Men" say it is time to "Disengage", yet we have 7 more years to go. How can this not make you angry? The real sin is that it is 50 years later and nothing has changed, "We Have Met The Enemy and He is Us". 50 years from, now will they be learning the truth about 9/11, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan.....

I found it pitiful when LBJ said that the enemy had "deceitfully" taken advantage of the Tet Holiday.

I did not realize the phrase "Peace With Honor" came from LBJ and that Nixon used it after him.

I love how the reporter asked Westmoreland for some reasons he said that he had "Confidence & Growing Optimism". The disconnect in saying things were going well while asking for more troops was lost on Westmoreland.

I also Love when Walter Cronkite said it was time for us to "Negotiate Our Way Out".

Those were the days when the press really were the "Fourth Estate" and asked the hard questions.

It seems that after Sam Donaldson, hard and direct questions were no longer asked. The official story became the truth without question, "The Official Illusion" as RFK called it.

"It Became Necessary to Destroy the Village to Save it", This is easy to say when it is not your village and can only make sense to the most warped individuals.

I did not know about the assassination of 2800 suspected enemy by the VC & NVA during Tet, but it reminded me of the 40,000 suspected enemy that the CIA assassinated in Vietnam in the Phoenix Operation.

Someone used the word “insanity” to describe what we were doing and it certainly fits - doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. This is mid-1968, ‘Things are Falling Apart’ and yet we have 7 more years of deceit and Criminality to go. Outrageous and sad.

The fact that I only saw the other political disasters and crimes that were going on in 1968 in terms of how they affected me and my job and not my country is also sad. I had a lot of learning to do.