

## **Vietnam War Oral History Project**

**Robards:**

adequate. I mean, it beat a tent; beat living in a foxhole. We had electricity. We had showers in a separate building, and toilets in a separate building. And then once you were in the field, you were in the field. There was no quarters. There was a time I spent 30 days in the field, never changed clothes, and that is just the way it was.

**Robards:** What did you do for entertainment?

**Yeisley:** We had the Officer's Club. In fact, I was stationed right next to it, so I could go over there any time I wanted. It happened to be near a mobile army surgical hospital, believe it or not, an actual MASH unit, and to this day when I watch MASH on television, it reminds me so much of the doctors, nurses and the situations in Vietnam, that it is absolutely amazing.

**Robards:** What was the most humorous event you witnessed or that happened to you?

**Yeisley:** God, I don't know. Humorous, I don't of anything that happened that I would call humorous. There was some lighter situations. Believe it or not, being in the Officer's Club and the mortars start falling, you take your drink and you go down in the bunker and you continue the party.

**Robards:** Could you share your memories of what it was like to fly in helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft during the war?

**Yeisley:** Well, I flew in helicopters quite a bit, because I was with a Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol and also as Intelligence for the division, the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and I volunteered quite often to do forward air controlling. The biggest thing I can remember about flying in a helicopter is watching the bullets come at you. They looked like little green balls. Fortunately, they all missed. But it is a situation a 02 29617ngtignit, an0 be nea he6coptell

**Robards:**

it was even more so. They had a whole different set of values than we did. I did not particularly care for them. They were just not quite effective. And it proved itself out to be not effective.

**Robards:** What is your evaluation of American military leadership during the Vietnam War, and of your immediate commanders in the field?

**Yeisley:** Military leaders were excellent. Yeah, every once in a while you would find someone who was just not what he was suppose to be. The vast majority of leaders were outstanding.

**Robards:** In hind-sight, what do you believe was the reason for the war?

**Yeisley:** I think it was political. I want to use the word political, but a lot of economics were involved in it. Whether it affected me...I don't think so. Whether it affected big business...I do think so. It was so that the big guys could keep making money.

**Robards:** How did you feel about your military service in Vietnam when you left the country?

**Yeisley:** I was completely satisfied that I had done a good job, and I was the only one I had to please.

**Robards:** Did you ever feel that the American public did not support you as a veteran of the Vietnam War?

**Yeisley:** I honest to God didn't care. Cause they weren't over there, they didn't know what was happening, and they didn't have the obligation that a military person had.

**Robards:** Do you believe that Vietnam veterans encountered discrimination when they returned home from the war?

**Yeisley:** I can't say for everybody. I had none. There was no discrimination whatsoever. The one or two times I met someone who said "Oh you're a Vietnam vet. Did you kill babies" and stuff like that, my only comment was "You ought to be thanking me, because by my being there you didn't have to go."

**Robards:** Have your views about the war changed at all over the years?

**Yeisley:** No. No.

**Robards:** Did going to war change you in any way?

**Yeisley:** I'm sure it did. I'm not sure how it did. Maybe it gave me the realization that some of my priorities were not as important as I thought they were, and some other ones probably were a little more important than I thought they were. I'm not sure I could pinpoint something.

**Robards:** Would you repeat this experience if you could do it over again?

**Yeisley:** If my country called for it, I would.

**Robards:** Is there anything we haven't brought up that you would like to share about your Vietnam War Experience?

**Yeisley:** Only that if you have not experienced the situation, you cannot understand. I say that, because the majority of the time in combat is boring. Its 15 minutes of hell, and 3 days sitting around wondering when the next 15 minutes are coming.

**Robards:** Thank you for your time and for your service.