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AN INTERVIEW WITH ED SHORE

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PIEHLER: This begins an interview with Ed Shore in Louisville, Tennessee on April 16th, 2001 with Kurt Piehler and Shelley Stafford.

STAFFORD: Mr. Shore, thank you so much for doing this. This is going to be a lot of help in my senior project and with the oral history project at UT also. I guess where I'd like to start is just by beginning with your youth and growing up. I know that with the information sheet that you gave us before we came for this interview you've gone over a lot about your family history. But, if you don't mind, I'd like to just start with—as a child how many brothers and sisters did you have, what year were you born ... and as much about that as you'd like to tell us.

SHORE: Thank you, and first of all let me say thank you for asking me to participate. I am quite honored. I'm very humbled by the honor. My youth is character building. I come from a family of ten kids. I'm right in the middle. It's hard to be in the middle of ten. (Laughs) There's five older and four younger. My first five years of my life was spent in the coal mines of West Virginia. To say poverty is an absolute understatement. During this period of time two—the brother next older to me and the sister next older—both died of pneumonia in extreme poverty conditions. My father never really worked, and it's hard to understand how many ... how that many kids survived with never working. My father was thirty-eight years old when he married. He was very itinerant, and—no lack of respect—he was never responsible. It's hard for me to understand but he never cared—he never supported the family in any respect. My mother is from Cades Cove, Tennessee—Maryville, Tennessee. In August of 1949 my family came to Maryville, Tennessee and my youngest brother was born in December of '49. He never really saw his father—maybe a couple times in his life. Neither of my parents never had a drivers license [and] never drove a car. But I look back on these years as real character building. I think you do one of two things in that kind of impoverished conditions. You mirror image and stay there—and we were reared on welfare. Or you use that as a springboard to say I'm not rearing my family under those conditions. And in my entire family's situation that is the case. And I'm quite proud. My family is still close. I work with two of my brothers every day. My two sons and my son-in-law work in our company business. It's all very rewarding. We're all very hard workers. I am the only one of the entire family to graduate from high school, let alone college. Usually it's somewhere around twelve to fourteen years of age the kids left home. The girls got married. There were five girls and five boys and the boys just found somewhere to go, to exist, and what to do. I left home at fourteen years old and lived on a farm. Lived by myself and went to school and was totally self-sustaining.

I can remember starting at the University of Tennessee in September of 1961. I had a hundred dollars. I lived at the dairy barn. I got free room and I got seventy-five cents an hour for milking cows. It was a great way to get an education. My kids did not go to college like that. All of this is totally character building. It gave me a resolve to rise above that and it gave me an intensity in which I work in my life today. There's no half speed—it's full speed. When I graduated from college—it took me five and a half years—and for some there are honor graduates, for me it was an honor to graduate. (Laughter) Immediately after college—I graduated in August of '66—there was a war going on. I chose—I wanted to be a Marine officer and I wanted to be in the infantry. So that's just a thumbnail sketch of my background—my family's still close. There's seven remaining, and we're all still very close. Everyone lives right here in Maryville. We visit and are very supportive and very close. And I think it's a very safe thing to say that we've all prospered. We all have big heart. We all give back, because we know where we came from.

And to that time—shortly after I graduated from college—I knew where I was going. I joined the Marine Corps. I went to Officer Candidate School—was commissioned to the Basic School and on to Vietnam.

STAFFORD: Actually, if we can wait right there I'd like to go back just a little bit to growing up. You grew up in the '50s especially when a lot of the—I guess the shadow of World War II with ... the Cold War and a lot of different issues going on in society. Do you remember being in school and having ... drills about the atomic bomb?

SHORE: Yes! And you were trained. You were given little sheets of paper that tell what the factors are and we did have the little drills. And at that point in time the more affluent—if there was such in our society. I didn't rub elbows with them, but they would have bomb shelters.

PIEHLER: Did you know of anyone in Maryville who built a bomb shelter?

SHORE: Oh yes I do. A couple right—well actually it was our landlord. Our rent—living on welfare our rent was three dollars a month. There was no electricity. There was no water, but it was a place to live. And it was an older couple and they built the bomb shelter and it may still be there today. It was twenty, thirty yards down a hill from their residence. And oh, they talked about it—and it was stocked with some canned food and some water and it was the bomb shelter.

STAFFORD: And what did you all think about that? Had you heard a lot of discussion from World War II veterans and did you see that as a definite threat?

SHORE: A very real threat. And when you take someone—I was born December 10, 1942—at the age of ten, twelve years old, when you start having these types of drills and the teachers are so solemn to ... reflect that, it's very scary. And I guess I can remember the fear and we took 'em serious. And the little drills that—if you couldn't get outside you pulled the seat over the top of you. I remember it quite well. It was fearful. By the same token, for some reason, I had a great interest in war, war history. There was no television then, or at least my family didn't have television. But I remember going to the theater and the early to mid '50s and seeing Audie Murphy's account—who was the most decorated war hero in World War II—and seeing his account of *To Hell and Back*. And since then I've learned that that's a little bit of John Wayne in that movie. (Laughs) After seeing it had a lot of John Wayne, but I think a lot of the facts were there. (Laughter) And I was totally overwhelmed—and at that point in time I guess one of my greatest goals in life would be to be in war. Now that's an aberration from society. That's not normal. But as a youth I was just totally ...

PIEHLER: Well, in some ways you're not the first veteran to say that. Particularly a lot of them say John Wayne was very influential. You found Audie Murphy was more important ...

SHORE: Absolutely, and if you ever saw the movie ...

PIEHLER: I have seen the movie, yeah.

SHORE: Well when it started out it showed such poverty from a small boy in Greenville, Texas. I identified with that. I guess most young men are looking for the greatest challenge, the greatest

excitement and exhilaration, and those types of things. And I certainly fit that goal. And I felt that I could best achieve those in combat, and I wanted to be a leader. I wanted to educate myself, prepare myself to be a commander. And I saw the movies of the western Pacific later. Iwo Jima specifically, most specifically—in which I still study—or I like to watch the History Channel on TV. And Tarawa—so many of those—Guadalcanal. And I still—I get a charge to this day—but at that point in time it was very, very influential in my life. I don't know what my life would be like today. It would certainly not be as enriching and fulfilling if I hadn't of had that opportunity. But again, I have to temper it with humility, because I had a high percentage of casualties. So close—closer than the three of us right here. And I have to say, “Why am I here?” And at the same token it gives me some part of survivors' guilt. But it makes me appreciate—it's very self-gratifying. I contrast that—I have two sons. I would not want my sons—I have three grandsons—I would not want them to go to a war. Yet, when I was in my twenties and there was war going on there was nothing going to keep me out of it. And I suppose if there was a war today and my sons came to me and said I want to participate, I'd have to look in the mirror and say, well I'd rather you didn't, but I'll honor that commitment because ...

PIEHLER: You would understand it, but in some ways you would prefer ...

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: And they fortunately didn't ...

SHORE: Exactly.

PIEHLER: I just want to back up—these are small points. I just—I'm still relatively new to the area, but the theater you went to, was it the Palace Theatre in Maryville? Or is there another theatre ...

SHORE: There was Park and the Capital. It was the Capital Theatre. The Park cost ten cents and the Capital cost twelve cents.

STAFFORD: What was the difference between the two of them?

SHORE: I don't know. They were across the street from each other. (Laughter) There were really no difference—and incidentally the Capital Theatre is still there. The Park has been torn down. It is not in operation. If you could afford a soft drink it was a nickel. And popcorn was a nickel. If you could raise thirty cents you could see two movies and have popcorn and soda. (Laughter)

STAFFORD: So, watching war movies—you really enjoyed that. Were those some of your favorite?

SHORE: Absolutely, and to this day most of my reading is something to do with war. Now, I don't like novels. I turn the television on—I love the History Channel, A&E—and I like the true combat footage and the historical accounts. The so-called John Wayne—do not like 'em at all. I feel they're kind of an insult to the ones that have been there. And I've had people say, “Well,

how can you tell the difference?” How can you tell the difference? About two seconds.
(Laughs)

STAFFORD: Well, as far as growing up in Maryville—and you were exposed to a lot of movies from World War II—did you have any World War II veterans in particular—whose stories you listened to or who you heard talk about their war time experiences?

SHORE: Yes. Coming from such a large family we weren't always together. We stayed with primarily—there were seventeen kids in my mother's family—and we stayed primarily with relatives. And I'm talking about early on—six, seven, eight and ten years old. And we would stay two or three months. I guess it was as long as they could afford us, or they could have us, and then we'd move on to another one. And one particular uncle was in World War II. He was taken prisoner. He was in the infantry. And I listened to him at great length, and as a youth I guess I believed everything and then much, much later in life I discovered that his military record was not what he was reflecting, and that was a disappointment. I had a first cousin who was quite older, obviously—was an engineer in World War II. I stayed with he and his family some, and he didn't glorify it. But he spoke more of building the pontoon bridges and how they were able to get the equipment across obstacles and rivers, and he never talked about infantry and fighting, and I was real interested in that. There were several in that regard. One thing too—the University of Tennessee—I majored in agriculture. Almost exclusively the professors were World War II veterans in the early 60's. In college some of those were very, very memorable. Dr. Smith—Dr. Harold Smith, who later went on to become the chancellor at Martin—Tennessee Martin—was a Navy officer and he was one that really was credited with—you always heard the stories, but he was documented laying a bomb right down the smokestack of a big Japanese ship. Dr. Will Butts, who is just deceased recently, was a professor in agriculture. And he went to Vietnam—Vietnam, excuse me—World War II—as an eighteen-year-old fighter pilot. And the way they did it—the most senior one, the one that was there the longest, became the highest ranking, and it was a matter of attrition. He went in as a second lieutenant. Two years later he was a twenty year old [full] bird colonel, 'cause he was the only one left. He was the most experienced one and they had the most qualified one for the job. And had great interest in talking with the staff and they were very, very influential in my military—and I'll say this, too—you were asking about my background, and you both in college and being associated now—the head of the department would call me before registration and ask me if I had enough money.

PIEHLER: That was a very nice gesture.

SHORE: Yes. And I doubt many heads of departments today pick out some poor little student to call and see if they have enough money to register for the next term. So I was heavily influenced by the staff. And it's sad, now. They're all passing away.

PIEHLER: No, I mean it's—many of the people I've interviewed are passed away. And I remember interviewing them when they were still vigorous. I'm curious. Were you in ROTC?

SHORE: Yes I was. I was in Air Force ROTC. I've—then, everyone had to go. All land grant institutions had to go two years. So I took ROTC for two years, forced, and I told you about my academic achievement. I actually failed one course at ROTC. I didn't like it. It was not exciting

enough. It was not challenging enough. It's not what I thought the military experience should be. So, I was not a good ROTC student. (Laughter) And some of the instructors in ROTC would have been very shocked to find out my dedication to the real military life. (Laughter) And that's poor attitude, and I'm not proud of that attitude. If one of my sons was taking ROTC with that attitude I'd be all over him. But, now that you mention it, I was a very poor ROTC student.

STAFFORD: Well, not to backtrack too much, but just before we move on to college and then getting into your military service, I'm curious—you mentioned earlier before we began taping about the diversity that was in a lot of the men in the infantry in Vietnam. I'm curious. Growing up in Maryville—what was that like? What was the high school like? Did you all have an integrated high school, or was it something that came along after you graduated from high school? What was your experience in Maryville?

SHORE: No, it was not integrated. And I never had any exposure, whatsoever, to ethnic backgrounds. Indian, Mexican, Spanish, Afro-American—none, zero. It was the same with the University of Tennessee. There were—in 1969, or '61, when I started at the University of Tennessee—I don't think there were ten Afro-Americans on the entire campus. I know there was none in agriculture—zero. So, I had no exposure, period. I go to officer candidate school—again zero. There were 219 second lieutenants in my Basic School class and there was no Mexicans, no Indians, and no blacks—none, zero. So, my first exposure to other races—ethnic backgrounds—was Vietnam. It was not even the Marine Corps state side. I can remember the first assignment. I was platoon commander in Hue city. And my platoon sergeant was introducing me to the squad leaders, and he said, "This is Squad Leader Jumping Eagle", and through my ignorance I said, "What's your real name?" (Laughter) I did not know. He was full-blooded Indian. He looked at me and said, "My real name is Jumping Eagle." So, zero exposure.

A little more to my background in high school. I lived on a farm. I lived in the county. I went to a city school. And I didn't feel totally comfortable. I guess I had a complex. I lived by myself. I lived on a farm. I didn't have the opportunity to participate in any extracurricular activities. I milked cows before I went school, and had to hustle home from school to work, to sustain, to survive. So, that I felt a little inferior because that was not the norm for the other kids at the city school. But, as I look back now, that was great character building, also. And I started seeing twenty and thirty years later the kids that I graduated from school with said, you were really an exception, to live by yourself and to be totally self-sustaining. And at the time I thought wow, that's inferior, it's different. I wasn't proud of it. But now, I'm very proud of it. My style—and it's been my entire family's style and that's strange—we are the most protective parents in the world. For us to have had no guidance whatsoever it's real strange. I mean we didn't learn from role models. It's real strange that all of the kids in my family are extremely protective, and I'm the same way. I have a thirty-three year old son and I still think of him as—I still think of having to be so protective. (Laughter) And I—we've allowed him room to grow and achieve and do whatever, but we were exactly the opposite in that regard.

STAFFORD: Well, that's so interesting to me because coming from that background where it was unusual, but you did go to college. How did—I mean did you know all along that you

wanted to go to a university or did you think at some point that you wouldn't go on to a university setting?

SHORE: Never a thought that I would not. I knew early on that a part of my ticket in addition to the hard work and the desire and the intensity to achieve my goals in life and to support my family in the way that I wanted to—I knew that a formal education was a part of it. And when I started college—under the conditions I wasn't supposed to graduate. I wasn't supposed to stay there very long. But there was no doubt in my mind. And when I went to OCS we started with 900—approximately 900—and I can remember standing in that line and they said, “Look to your right. Look to your left. One of you is not gonna be here in ten weeks.” There was no doubt that I wasn't going to be one of those ten. I was going to be there. So education—and I guess I was fortunate. I had a program very, very early to come out of my impoverished background and an integral part of it was an education. And there was no doubt. I was going to graduate from college.

PIEHLER: This sounds like a simple question, but how did you figure out that education was the ticket out, because that's actually—a lot of people who study poverty—it's sort of when you look at it, you know, education is central but a lot of people in similar situations in a sense don't figure it out even though you look back and it seems obvious. It was in many ways.

SHORE: Good question. It was a very vivid contrast. The ones that had done well had an education. And the ones that had not done well did not have an education. So, it seems so easy, yet—I guess it's—or it's easy to make the contrast. But it's easier to say, “Oh, I don't need the education. I'll just go ahead and do this.” But, it is—it was just so easy for me to recognize early that that was a part of it, and the contrast. Just look around—the ones that have assets, roles of leadership, jobs. And at the same token my mother was a very, very giving person. Did not have means to give, but expressed it in her heart. And it passed down. All of us kids are that way. And I knew that I wanted to be a part of this society that contributes. Having my formative years in a part of society that was the recipient, I wanted to be on the other end. And again, it was easy to recognize the ones that had affluence and assets to participate and to do that were the ones with the education.

STAFFORD: So, you saw an education as a means to do that, but what were your college years like? What did you—were you involved in a lot of things or—you said you were involved in ROTC and you were in the College of Agriculture, but what were your years like in college?

SHORE: Good question. As I told you we lived—there were six of us—lived in a dairy barn. One of the six was a grandson of Sergeant Alvin C. York.

STAFFORD: Oh, wow.

SHORE: He was from Jamestown, Tennessee—Jimmy York. And I obviously enjoyed talking with him at great length—but all six of us were pretty much in the same situation. No financial means whatsoever. Incidentally, the fee for a term at that point in time was fifty-five dollars. So it's all relative. My daughter graduated from the University of Tennessee just recently and I think it was fifteen hundred. So if you make seventy-five cents an hour and your fee is fifty-five dollars that is as easy to make if you make ten dollars an hour and pay fifteen hundred dollars.

So, it was very, very structured. I had no time for any extracurricular activities whatsoever. Even though I wanted to. I always wanted to play some sport. I was born clumsy, so I didn't have the opportunity. (Laughter) But, we started milking cows at 11:30 at night. And I would work 'till 6:00 ... 6:30, 7:00 in the morning. It was when you got through. And as I told you, I was not a good student. There were many times I found it easier to go upstairs in the dairy barn and go to sleep instead of going to class. But it takes a big toll, working like that. If you work that shift then that's the only shift you work for the day everyday. But then the other ones start at 11:30 in the morning right before lunch. And then you got through about 6:30. Of course you had to have your schedule. So, I had another business—and I only lived at the dairy barn for two years and every Monday night the six of us would put two dollars in our pot and we'd go grocery shopping. And we bought staples—twenty-five pound bag of flour, and veal, and beans, and rice. And we got free milk. (Laughter) All you had to do was head down stairs and get the milk! And it was a good life. We had lots of fun. We had water fights. We played like boys in the barn—where the other kids had different activities on the main campus. And I was a farrier, shoeing horses. I started this when I was in high school. And I had built that into a pretty good trade. And after two years at the dairy barn I had built my horseshoeing business up enough until I didn't have to have that structure—and I didn't like getting up at 11:30 at night, or not getting up. I would—rode around, do other things then go to work at 11:30 at night. That's—that was not good for an eighteen, nineteen year old boy. But, then I was shoeing horses and I could schedule a job at two or three o'clock. And I had an automobile then. When I went to college I didn't have an automobile and of course to be a farrier and to go to the horse barns you had to have transportation. So I was a full-time farrier and actually it was very lucrative. I remember I was making more money shoeing horses than going to school. And it was demanding. It was hard work and time consuming. But I didn't have a choice, or—maybe if I had a choice ... I knew I was going to the Marine Corps. Not just the military, the Marine Corps. And I had figured out when I graduated though I couldn't afford to take a job because I was making more money shoeing horses than I would have taking a job. And teaching school—when I got out of college started out about two hundred dollars a month teaching school.

PIEHLER: Which was a low salary even then. I mean, it wasn't low ...

SHORE: Oh it was. Yes it was.

PIEHLER: Oh, even then.

SHORE: Yes. Yes. Tennessee education, you know, if you were in—well we had graduate school in Florida and Michigan because they were like five and six hundred dollars a month to teach school at ...

PIEHLER: Is that what you initially—when you started college was that what you thought you would do is teaching?

SHORE: No, no. Did not have any desire, and please don't misinterpret this. (Laughs) To get what I wanted out of life I figured out that teaching—teaching is a great profession. Teaching didn't give me those opportunities. So, no I never thought about being a teacher ...

PIEHLER: Did you think that—I mean what did you think-I mean when you first—thinking back when you were an eighteen or nineteen year old why college—what did you think you might do?

SHORE: Good question. And there was not a war going on at that time, so, uh, I did not feel that I would go into the military. And even—when I got out of college if there hadn't been a war I would not have went in the military. I did not know exactly. One thing that I have in the back of my mind—and I guess the most humbling academic experience of my life was taking the LSAT test. (Laughter)

STAFFORD: I know. I can sympathize.

SHORE: I thought, well I'd like to be an attorney. Boy was I dreaming. (Laughs) And at one time in the college of agriculture too I thought I'd like to be a veterinarian. Was I dreaming again? (Laughter) I was just barely passing. You don't be an attorney and a veterinarian when you've just barely passed. So, at that age I can't say that I had a clear cut—I just knew that it was a ticket, a stepping stone to a positive future. So I can't say now that I had a real ...

PIEHLER: In other words you hadn't planned at all—even—you hadn't had a great master plan at eighteen, but you just sort of—I get the sense you had a vague sense this was going to work in the end ...

SHORE: Absolutely.

PIEHLER: Not knowing exactly how it's going to ...

SHORE: Absolutely. Had to have the ticket as a college graduate. And never deviated, and like I say, five and a half years—and I repeated some courses. It was not easy for me in college, but never one time did I doubt that I wasn't going to graduate.

STAFFORD: When you were in college when did you first ... begin thinking about the Marine Corps and military as an option after you graduated? What—what caused that—of course I'm sure that you realized that there were escalating events in Vietnam, but can you tell me about that. What were your first impressions?

SHORE: Yes. In about 1964 it was just vague. We had an advisory group there of which you could see film clips, and I really liked to read then just to kind of see. And then as it picked up in 1965—I had—he wasn't really a classmate; he was obviously ahead of me—that had went in the Army, commissioned in the Army, and he came back—he was an Army infantry officer. He's now a professor at North Carolina State.

STAFFORD: Really

SHORE: And I just latched onto him to tell me about the exhilarating things in the infantry. And, oh, it really whetted my appetite. And then one of my very favorite professors, who is now deceased—Dr. Hailey Jameson—he was a cavalry officer in World War II, primarily in Italy. He'd spend lots of hours [talking] and I was just full of questions about the cavalry in Italy and

those were sure some bloody campaigns in Italy. He was a captain. And then by early, or late '65 and early '66, classmates who were graduating were going straight on over and some were—Charlie Ayers, a tank commander just ahead of me got killed.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay, there's another Ayers we're interviewing.

SHORE: No, no. Charlie got killed.

PIEHLER: Yeah, but there's another Ayers. I wonder if it's a relative.

SHORE: He was from around Kingston, Tennessee, or somewhere in there. But, then as it became more real and closer I had just an absolute burning desire. Now as academia, let me tell you a little play that I had. At this point in time they were drafting real heavy. And you knew the professors—and they're were actually schools on the west coast that lost some accreditation because they were giving out grades so people could stay out of the draft. And we had professors at the University of Tennessee, and you could play on their sympathies about, "Oh, I can't get this F. This D will get me kicked out of school and I'll be drafted." And there were actually professors that would—and it's always known—the students would know which professors. I had a complete opposite line. I knew the old World War II veterans and I would say to them, "I need this grade because I want to stay in school and graduate and be a Marine officer." And it worked. (Laughter) You had to know—so I had the exact opposite of what was prevalent at the time.

STAFFORD: Right. Oh, my goodness. Well...

PIEHLER: Are you still with ...

STAFFORD: No, go ahead.

PIEHLER: I had a—another small question. When you said you didn't have television growing up. When did you sort of—I mean television is—I was in the generation that grew up with television, even though I came from more modest—I also had a fairly modest childhood. When did you sort of have a television? Or when did you watch television regularly?

SHORE: Let me tell you the first television I ever saw. You are going to laugh. We had one kid at the grade school—it would have been '50s. He obviously came from a little more affluent—his father worked at the aluminum company. And the television only came on—like 5:00 in the afternoon. There was only one or two stations. And he had told myself and one other kid, he said, "Come to our house and you can see a television." I would say this was probably '54 or '55 or so. I was twelve years old. Maybe '53—in that range. And he said be there at like 5:00—4:00. I don't remember which. So the other kid and I went to his house—walked to his house to see television. So he lets us in the house and ... the test pattern is on the television. (Laughter) And he's got the television on. It hadn't come on yet. And there's the test pattern and I look at that and I said, "Is that all there is to television?" (Laughter) So that was my first sighting of television, and I literally thought, "That's TV? Why are everybody making so much over TV?" (Laughter) And that's embarrassing, but very true.

PIEHLER: But, so in other words you didn't—in high school you didn't have access to a television?

SHORE: No, I did not. No. I lived by myself in a very—it wasn't a barn. It was a house, but it did not have heat or air or anything. It did not have plumbing.

PIEHLER: So you went to an outhouse ...

SHORE: Yes, yes.

PIEHLER: How did you end up on this farm, I mean ...

SHORE: My sister and her husband worked on this farm. It's still in existence. And when I was about I guess thirteen years old I was able to work a summer. And it was like five dollars a week, but I liked the farm. I really did. It was good, hard work, and I enjoyed it. So I just decided, you know, "Can I stay down here?" And the owner said, "Yes, you can stay." And that's how I came about living by myself. And shortly there after my sister and her husband went on to work somewhere else so I was there ...

PIEHLER: So you were basically running the farm? In high school ...

SHORE: You could probably say that. Or by the time I was fifteen and sixteen I certainly was. I was making decisions, repairing equipment ...

PIEHLER: Well how many cows would you milk?

SHORE: No, then we only had a milk cow.

PIEHLER: Which was ...

SHORE: Yes. In high school. Now when I went on to university—best I remember there was like a hundred and twenty to a hundred and fifty. And they always had two full time milk hands and then they had a student that assisted them. And ... we had to weigh all the food because all cattle were on experiments and you had to strip and clean so I was certainly not—they wouldn't let students be lead milkers. They had two full time employees. And quite often they didn't like us students coming in there at 11:30 at night, so ... You know, it was a full time job to them, and they didn't like eighteen year old boys in there working. (Laughter)

(Tape Paused)

PIEHLER: Well thank you for—I should put on the record for the transcript—thanks for a wonderful lunch. And really, it was a lot of fun and it was a great view of the lake/river. I guess growing up you didn't watch television. What about music? What kind of music did you listen to?

SHORE: I don't think we had a radio at out house either. I'm sure we didn't have a radio.

PIEHLER: So like listening, for example, to Elvis or ...

SHORE: Nope. And my musical talent, or skills, can be summed up real quickly. I can play the radio and that's all. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: What about going to church? Did you go to church growing up?

SHORE: Yes, yes. Our mother—it was a requirement. And we were of the Baptist faith, so yes. All the kids—I won't say we're forced. We just knew that was a requirement.

PIEHLER: Even when you were sort of living off by yourself?

SHORE: No, I did not then. When I became self-sustaining, self-sufficient I did not. Did not choose that and ... do not attend church today and have not for many years.

PIEHLER: I guess ... one of the things, I think—and this is useful for students because I think students think—often they've developed clichés about periods, so people think well if you grew up in the '50s you, you know, you listened to Elvis, and you watched television, and you—and that was all very different—you had a very different life from that. You didn't have a radio, didn't have a television. Um, you could have lived really in a different era.

SHORE: That's true.

PIEHLER: In a sense.

SHORE: Because of the poverty I—my life style would probably be more fitting of pre-war years. Even possibly the Depression era of ... having no amenities and no conveniences whatsoever.

PIEHLER: So in a sense the movies was one of the few areas—besides your actual high school were you sort of were, if I want to use the word, current, I mean that's ...

SHORE: Yes, yes. Very true.

PIEHLER: And how often would you get to see a movie? You seem to—you mentioned seeing the difference in price ...

SHORE: Yes, but very seldom. And again, that was a real treat. Three or four times a year I guess. I don't think any more than that.

PIEHLER: Before you went into the Marines, how far sort of north, west, east, south did you travel from the Maryville, Knoxville area?

SHORE: (Laughs) Good question. I used to go to Barberville, Kentucky, which is a hundred miles, to transfer horses back and forth. And as I think now ... I was on the University of Tennessee livestock judging team. Which—we went to Memphis and we went to Baltimore, Maryland. We went to Lexington, Kentucky at the university's expense. And other than that,

my travels were probably to the sides of Blount County—not even Knox County. So very, very limited travel.

PIEHLER: So going to Knoxville ... when you were growing up—would that be a big excursion?

SHORE: Oh my goodness yes. And I would say I was in high school before I ever went to Knoxville. Neither of my parents never had a driver's license, never drove a car, so it was a—I don't know how you would have got transportation.

PIEHLER: So the time you were in the livestock competition—this was probably pretty exciting?

SHORE: Oh it was.

PIEHLER: I mean you were going to ...

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: These are real trips. Baltimore and Memphis are real, real trips. I'm curious. I loved your story about the grading and when there's a draft on and the different perspectives, because I once had a—my advisor said, you know, when he first started out teaching he started out in '67 and he said grading was a different—you know, if you gave a kid a bad grade it could really have consequences.

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: I mean and more than you probably intended. What about the sort of—you were very enthusiastic about going into the war ...

SHORE: Oh yes. Yes.

PIEHLER: Was there any sort of anti-war dissent on UT? Even if—and what percentage if there was some—would you say?

SHORE: Very, very limited. There was a slight hippie movement. And you hadn't asked it but uh

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PIEHLER: And you were saying that—the tape cut off and you said I hadn't asked it but, half way through college you hadn't even ...

SHORE: Had not heard of marijuana. So, my exposure—and even through my Vietnam experience I've never been exposed to any kind of drugs in my life. Never, zero ...

PIEHLER: So your unit was a pretty clean unit from what you could tell?

SHORE: Yes, yes. And again my education at the University of Tennessee was agriculture and sciences. Most of the anti-war, draft-dodging type was for the art students or something other than chemistry, physics, and agriculture. (Laughs) So never really saw it at all.

PIEHLER: It also—the way you’ve described it—you were sort of off from the main student body. I mean is that a fair ...

SHORE: Oh, yes. Lived on the farm and most of the courses—and even to this day are still on the agriculture campus which is completely separate. And most of the other courses would have been chemistry, physics—the science courses. Had very, very few courses outside science and agriculture.

PIEHLER: I guess—he would have—you never met Sergeant York?

SHORE: No, just his grandson. He was quite a—quite an experience. He was brilliant. He cut classes all the time. I tried to cut classes with him. And uh, I’d fail or make a D and he’d make an A or a B. (Laughter)

STAFFORD: Well, I’m curious. You said that most of your professors on the Ag campus were World War II veterans.

SHORE: Almost exclusively.

STAFFORD: When the news about Vietnam really started becoming more available, what was their impression about it? What did they talk to you about Vietnam?

SHORE: One hundred percent as I recall patriotic. And most of these were officers. In fact, I guess all were officers. And many of them came back and went on the GI Bill and got their masters and PhD’s. And even some of them—Dr. Miles was full colonel in the Reserves—so several of them had stayed in the military reserve. And uh, totally patriotic, totally supportive, and that’s the way that they ... presented it to us students, and that fit me one hundred percent. I had a class in entomology and entomology is a difficult course. And uh, he’s deceased now too, but that was Dr. Bennett. And Dr. Bennett was one of the real hawks and he was an actually war hero. And he was one that I remember making a very poor grade and playing on Dr. Bennett and saying, “I need a better grade.” And he obliged. (Laughter) But that was a different twist and it worked, but uh, so many in the liberal arts departments—they would give whatever grade was necessary to keep a person in school if that was their agenda, to stay out of the draft. And I find that hard to associate with academics.

PIEHLER: I guess one—I guess it’s a ubiquitous UT question. How much—how many football games did you get see while you were a student?

SHORE: It didn’t cost anything, so uh—I think I went to most home games.

PIEHLER: So you were able to—you were able to have time for home games?

SHORE: Yes. Yes I was.

PIEHLER: What about dances and other social ...

SHORE: No.

PIEHLER: No, so ...

SHORE: No, zero. (Laughs) No social graces either.

PIEHLER: Did you ever feel—I also get a sense, um, in talking—in the interview that in many ways you came from a real rural background and you mention feeling this in Maryville High School and sounds like at UT. A real—and is it fair to say a very different world because I mean you—now in even the most isolated rural areas there's often television.

SHORE: Sure.

PIEHLER: So you often will know about stuff that there's no—people watch *Seinfeld* in the most isolated rural area and have a sense what other people are doing.

SHORE: You're very correct—almost isolated in rural area. And the impact coming to the University of Tennessee was not that bad because I was still living in the barn, and my major curriculum was still on the Ag campus and, believe it or not, there were kids there more country than me. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: Well 'cause in some ways you grew up country but also still close to—you went to Maryville High School ...

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: ... where I could imagine Sergeant York's grandson still having a good country ...

SHORE: Yes, very much so. But out of the six two of them were from Newport and Newport is much more rural than here. And we were all—we were right at home. We didn't fit in with liberal arts students on the main campus, but we fit in quite well on the Ag campus. (Laughter)

STAFFORD: Well after you left Maryville and you were at Tennessee did you keep in contact with anybody from your high school, as far as people who might have gone away and out of this area? I don't know. You mentioned that there were a lot of very successful people in your class, and so I imagine that some of them would have left Tennessee. Did you keep in touch with anybody who had really just ...

SHORE: Um, I have to think about that. I really can't think specifically now. One girl that I dated some in high school went to medical school. And she's now a local pediatrician. Um, but I can't think specifically. Once—and we had a high percentage going on to college, and I kept pretty close contact with several of them, especially the ones that majored in science courses at

the University of Tennessee. So they were pretty high percentage and I kept up with them. Just through association or seeing them in classrooms.

STAFFORD: I guess ... my point in asking that question is I'm curious um, you said that being on the Ag campus was being very separated from the university in general. But how did you—I mean did you read reports of things that were maybe going on in—about Vietnam, you know, in other university campuses. How much—how aware of the emerging anti-war movement or anything else about Vietnam were you?

SHORE: Yes. [I] did read and was very interested in news. And I felt like that that movement was much more prevalent—and I think that history reveals that—on the west coast. Cal-Berkeley, some of those ...

PIEHLER: You would have had to search pretty hard in Knoxville, particularly when you were in school, to find a strong anti-war movement.

SHORE: Absolutely. It did not really—it was very isolated and very, very sparse and few between.

PIEHLER: Did you read a newspaper when you were in college regularly?

SHORE: Yes, quite often. Between classes or something like that. Or around waiting on another class—just general exposure to newspapers. And I've always—even today I watch CNN, the History Channel and just ... limited.

STAFFORD: Well, um, I guess we can move on to maybe when you started your service with the Marine Corps. What was, um—unless you have some more questions ...

PIEHLER: Well I guess you graduated—you graduated when, just to ...

SHORE: August of 1966.

PIEHLER: And when did you enter OCS?

SHORE: March of 1967.

PIEHLER: And in between did you—you were doing what?

SHORE: Shoeing horses, yes.

STAFFORD: Did you live in Maryville during that time?

SHORE: Yes.

STAFFORD: Okay, I just didn't know ...

PIEHLER: No I'll let—now I'll let you take it away.

STAFFORD: Okay, well in that year ... was there anything that really formed your opinion about joining the Marine Corps, or enlisting in the Marine Corps? What impact did ... the draft—the possibility of being drafted have? Was that at all a consideration?

SHORE: Uh, absolutely not. I shoed horses on the military base out here, and I was still in college. And the draft was so prevalent that on one day I was shoeing horses at the base and I asked the commander—I said, “I might get drafted. What about one of these National Guard positions?” And he said, “Come out here next Saturday morning and we’ll take care of that.” So, I was actually in the Air National Guard my last year of college.

STAFFORD: Okay.

SHORE: And I told him then, I said, “Now when I graduate from college I’m going to go in the Marine Corps.” And he said, “No, you don’t have to tell me that. You’re not going to.” And I said, “Yes, sir. I’m very serious about it.” So the draft never was a deterrent at all. And I would—when I got in the National Guard friends in college were saying, “Oh, your so lucky,” because they were drafting ‘em, especially fifth and sixth year seniors. Oh they were really getting ‘em. And then when I actually joined the Marine Corps and gave up that Guard position friends said, “Oh, Shore, you’re the craziest guy in the world.” (Laughter) Including my wife. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: So you had this sort of coveted—I mean quote unquote coveted Guard ...

SHORE: Yes. And it was coveted. Yes. I was in the Air National Guard.

PIEHLER: And you needed—in a sense this guy was doing you a favor?

SHORE: Nothing but a favor.

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean in a sense if you wanted to ...

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: So you could have just stayed in the Guard during Vietnam?

SHORE: Oh, absolutely. And then after I came back from the Marine Corps I went back to the Air National Guard—and I have a total of nineteen years and six months in military service. I did not retire. I choose not to retire. I don’t want to draw social security. I will not draw social security. I will not draw—and that’s why I quit but six months from retirement in the military. It was an honor and a privilege. I don’t want anything from the government. Nothing. I only want to give to the government, and to society. Some of my colleagues and friends at the Air Guard unit down here think I’m the craziest guy that ever lived. (Laughter)

STAFFORD: Well, so when you enlisted in the Marine Corps what did—what did your family say—your brothers, your sisters, your mom?

SHORE: (Laughs) This is a little bit crude but I'll tell you exactly how I came to enlist in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps can be difficult, rough, crude, whatever. I was shoeing horses that morning and it had been raining and I was muddy and dirty—dressed accordingly. So I hadn't been out of college very long and so I said today is the day I'm going to go join the Marine Corps. So I walk into the recruiting station over in Knoxville and I said, "I want to join the Marine Corps and I want to leave quick as I can." He said, "Boy, you in trouble with the law?" (Laughter) And I said, "No, sir." And he said, "If you've got a girl knocked up ..."

STAFFORD: Oh my gosh.

SHORE: I said, "No, sir." (Laughter) And he said, "Are you a high school graduate?" I said, "Yes, sir." And he said, "I've got just the program for you. We'll send you to Paris Island for four years." And I said, "I want to be an officer." And he said, "No, boy. You can't be an officer. You got to have a college degree." And I said, "Yes, sir. I have a college degree." And he said, "Where? You're lying to me boy." And I said, "No, sir. Right over here at the University of Tennessee." He said, "Then if you have get out of here and go bring me a transcript back." So I go over there, pay my dollar, get a transcript, take it back, hand it to him, and he looks that over, and he looked me up and down and he said, "You're not lying." (Laughter) I said, "No, sir, I'm not lying." So that was the day that I joined the Marine Corps. And I was married and my wife was quite disappointed because we had friends being killed at that time. And she did not understand someone protected in the Air National Guard wanting to do something so foolish as joining the Marine Corps. And not only—I didn't join the Marine Corps just to be state side. I joined the Marine Corps with the very specific intent to be in infantry and to go into combat. And my family did not understand it. No one in my family understood it. I don't say that they were against, they were just saying, "Wow, you're crazy. We don't understand." But no, I didn't have anyone saying don't do it, but I sure didn't have many understanding it or being supportive.

PIEHLER: I guess you were married at the time?

SHORE: Yes I was.

PIEHLER: How did you meet your wife at the time?

SHORE: Uh, she and I actually went to grade school together. So I had known her sometime and I guess the first time we dated was the senior year in high school. And then dated—well sparingly, into college. And in December of my third year in college we got married, so latter part of college I was married too. And at that time that was a very, very small minority. I think now that there's a lot more married students in college.

PIEHLER: But you felt very exceptional for being married at the time?

SHORE: Yes, yes. Most of—very few of my classmates were married at the time.

STAFFORD: So when you choose to enlist in the Marine Corps—you mentioned that you knew of people who had been killed and you knew of people who had already gone to Vietnam, so it really wasn't just something that you'd seen on TV or heard about. It was actually very real.

SHORE: Very real. Very, very close. Um—I'm drawing a blank on his first name. [David] Dotson is his last name. We went to grade school together and high school together. He was an Army paratrooper and was killed. And I mentioned Charlie Ayers who was slightly ahead of me at the University of Tennessee and doing quite well—was a tank commander in Vietnam and got killed almost immediately. And he was a really outstanding person on campus. And that news reverberated back to the campus real quick—that Charlie Ayers—and I think he'd only been in Vietnam like two weeks. So, uh, you know, it hit very close to home when someone that close had been killed. So yes—knew very specific people.

STAFFORD: What—what did you make of the situation in Vietnam when you enlisted in the Marine Corps? What was your general, I guess, understanding of the war and what the United States' role was to be?

SHORE: I think at that age I did not have an ideological feeling. I think that was true of most young men. I wasn't a history major or social sciences at all. It was almost blind loyalty, total patriotism, and the chance and opportunity to fulfill life long dreams of excitement, challenges and ...

PIEHLER: So I guess if I had said to you when you were enlisting, "You're going there to fight Communists—against Communism." Would that have been a ...

SHORE: I'm going there to fight. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean in some ways it was we're at war—the details don't matter.

SHORE: That's exactly right.

PIEHLER: I mean is that a fair ...

SHORE: Yes. And at my age now it's probably a shallow feeling, but in war you don't need too many ideologues. (Laughs) You need people with blind loyalty and patriotism. When their told to charge a beachhead or a machine gun nest they don't say, well now, does that meet my ideology of the social setting? They just buckle up and say full speed ahead. And in retrospect I would have to say that depicted me totally—that I wasn't into the ideology—didn't question it. It didn't matter. We was in a war. Didn't matter what the war was about. I want my part of it.

STAFFORD: It's interesting to me that—I guess in studying World War II there were the immediate—like the attack on Pearl Harbor and Hitler's rise in Europe, that seemed like something that was—to a lot of people you know, that gave them the desire just to go and fight in the war, whether or not it was an idealistic image or not. But ... do you remember anything that maybe the government would have put out? Like posters or public service announcements calling young men to duty ... other than just the general knowledge of what was going on?

SHORE: Uh, don't recall that at all. It was that way in World War II, no doubt about it. It was protecting the motherland. A much more defined war—I think everyone knew Hitler and Tojo and the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. You defend. And it wasn't that defined in my era. [I] do not

recall those things at all. The draft was very, very prevalent for the Army. The Marine Corps had very, very few—and only slightly few draftees. Most all those joined to serve. So ... I cannot recall drives, posters, or any thing to entice young men to join the military service.

PIEHLER: Well, it's also interesting how skeptical the recruiter was when you came to see him. I mean he really was—this is not what he expected, it sounds like.

SHORE: (Laughs) Yes. And quite frankly it wasn't what I was expecting either. You know, I knew I was there, and I wasn't there under any deception whatsoever. And in his crude ways of doubt and all that ... (Laughter)

PIEHLER: ... What did you think of LBJ at the time?

SHORE: Um, at that time—and this is so contrasting to now and later ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, no I know there is that ...

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: But at the time ...

SHORE: Let me paraphrase it this way. When you're twenty-one, if you're not a socialist or a Democrat there's something wrong with your heart. When you're forty-one, if you're not conservative or Republican there's something wrong with your head. There was nothing wrong with my heart at that time. Reared in poverty and on welfare checks I was for government socialistic programs. And I liked what LBJ was doing for human rights, housing and those socialistic programs. And I especially liked the predecessor John Kennedy for all the new ideas and the socialistic ways of government. Now that is totally contrasted to me now and in later years. I'm extremely conservative and having been reared on a welfare check I am not big on government social programs now. So at that point in time—to answer your question—I liked what LBJ and his predecessor John F. Kennedy were doing.

PIEHLER: So in a sense you were also not thinking as an officer—you were pleased with your commander and chief. You didn't have that ...

SHORE: Yes, Yes.

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean you didn't ...

SHORE: Yes, and I think, too, it's easier to be blindly loyal in youth than it is later in life. And I think as a young Marine, whatever they opened up the top of your head and poured in is what you accepted, lived, and believed. So yes, total ... loyalty and belief.

STAFFORD: I guess as far as your training goes—when you went to Quantico, in your training unit, were there any people that you knew before you were inducted into the Marine Corps?

SHORE: Not one single one. Not one. We—like I said, there were about nine hundred of us—and they don't let you socialize, period. It is a selective process and they want rid of the weaker end. No camaraderie. You don't help anyone. In fact you're rewarded for helping weed out the less achievers, so you're not allowed to speak. I was there I guess two weeks and we were in a classroom filling out a form and I looked down at the guy's paper beside of me and I had been that close to him for two weeks and in his form he'd filled out he was from Tennessee. I got so excited. Oh, he's from Tennessee! So, did not know one single person.

STAFFORD: Um, so you said that you choose—you knew that you wanted to go into the infantry.

SHORE: Yes.

STAFFORD: Um, as far as the people who were in Quantico with you—how many people really—was that a big tendency? Did a lot of people choose infantry? What was the ...

SHORE: That's a real interesting question—a good question. The Marine Corps is really about the infantry, the queen of combat. And um, we had groups that would talk like they wanted to be in the infantry and in the bravado male environment, "Hey infantry, I'm goin' infantry." And if you didn't have high enough leadership scores, skills and all they wouldn't let you go in the infantry. There was a saying, "Motor ten, out in three." If you got to motor transport three years you were out of the Marine Corps—and supply and other areas. And we—I'll never forgot the day we got to choose what our MOS—Military Occupational Specialty was—and they had us all in a big room and they had officers from the different skills come and tell you about it. And I remember the supply guy comes in and says, "Oh, be in the rear with the gear," and, "Supply officers don't get killed." "If you want to have square meals and be safe take supply officer." I remember me thinking why are you in the Marine Corps if you want to do that? And then aviation—and my wife actually wanted me to fly. And I'd taken a test and I had considered flying but I'd have joined the Air Force or stayed in the Air Guard if I'd have wanted to fly. And the naval aviator came with his wings and gave his spill and said, "Get this million dollar education. When you get out of the Marine Corps fly for Delta Airlines and make the big salary. Be in the aviation wing." That didn't interest me either. And the last one showed a five minute film clip of the invasion of Tarawa and cut the film off and said, "If you want to be the best join the infantry." And a lot of us silly guys started cheering and hollering and wrote down infantry. And it was surprising because some of these guys that were saying—and it was kind of a fraternity. We're going to be in the infantry. So you stuck together. And some of these guys that were saying, "Oh, infantry all the way," well—and you wrote down what your choice was and then the next day when they posted all the selections—and I can remember seeing some of these guys that were in our fraternity saying, "Yeah, infantry"—and I'd look up there and see engineer, supply, or something. (Laughter) And, but boy they fell out of the graces real quick. They talked the walk but when it came time they chose not to go to the infantry. So—and even to this day I guess when I meet a Marine I say, "What's your MOS?" And they'll tell you real quick—O3. That's the designate for the infantry and then I'll say something like, "You're a real Marine." (Laughter) Or, you know, it's the—the infantry is—they think they're the elite and being one of 'em I'm not going to argue with 'em. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: I guess one—in terms of you—earlier again before we formally start the interview you said there was a high washout rate at OCS. And could you maybe talk about—a little about your first few days at OCS, and also about your drills—some of your initial contact with drill instructors and some of your superiors as a young Marine officer candidate?

SHORE: Yes I can. The first day we were there they gave a physical fitness test and they scored you and I scored the second highest out of a platoon of fifty-six. Then almost the next day they gave us—basically an all day leadership test and again I scored the second highest in leadership in the whole platoon. So I guess from the third day on I was tabbed as one of the ones—and I never really got the harassment. When they got on the others and they wanted them out of there, oh, they were brutal. They had every trick in the world, and they wanted rid of ‘em. If they didn’t think they measured up they wanted ‘em out of there right then. Somewhere in the second or third night we were there they asked every one of us to write a 500 word sketch of yourself, your background and your education—what you have done. And then we were all in the squad bay and they were bringing ‘em out one at a time to interview the staff and some of ‘em were writing down I was president of my fraternity and those types of things. And boy, they’d come back in the squad bay just shaking. They had really rattled their cage. I wrote mine about my background—and I had worked my way through school and wrote down exactly what I had said to you. So when I walked in there for the interview they started talking to me totally different. And they said now, “We always need one person out of the platoon to tell us things that we need to know.” And they said, “We would like to know, because we think you’re going to be here at the end and we would like to know if you would like that assignment.” They said, “Anytime you want to speak to us in confidence you can.” And uh, I didn’t even know what it entailed, but I was going to agree with anything they said. And every time a candidate would request—and you didn’t say anything—“Candidate Jones requests permission to speak, sir”—and every time that I would request permission to speak they’d say to me, “You want to speak in private?” And uh, they never said it to anyone else in the platoon and no one ever picked up on it. I didn’t want anyone in the platoon to know I had been chosen. And they came to me a few times to ask about specific violations of honor code and that type of thing. So, I suppose from the very first few days it was apparent to the staff—I didn’t know it was apparent to me, but with my dedication and intensity—I have no desire to be the one that quit or was forced out. So uh, my—it was rather easy for me, but it didn’t affect my desire to excel and to succeed.

PIEHLER: You mentioned if they want to get rid of someone they—what were the tricks in the book? What were some of the examples that they would do to a candidate—and these were supposed to be officers so they’re not just ...

SHORE: Oh, well officer candidates.

PIEHLER: Officer candidates. But they’re already—even though they’re not officers they have potential. They’re not just someone off the street.

SHORE: That’s correct.

PIEHLER: They’ve been screened ...

SHORE: Yes. We were college graduates and you did have certain—uh, they would humiliate you. And they gave you little written shit, and their favorite one was, “You don’t have intestinal fortitude.” And once they got on just anything in the world to rattle ‘em—like after we’d been there I think four or five weeks they let you have a weekend off. And the ones they were after—they gave you a little card for liberty—well, they lost their card. They weren’t there so they had to stay there. And they were just after ‘em all the time and gave them extra PT and normally that’s the ones who couldn’t handle the physical training anyhow. And oh, just any time you were around—and hollering and screaming and little ... phrases, uncomplimentary phrases for ‘em. And sometimes if we would stop the platoon in formation—if they had two or three that they were after—while the rest of us stopped they’d make ‘em run around and around the platoon and then we’d march off and these guys would all give out. (Laughter) And it was easier to get ‘em to DOR—Drop on Request—and every evening before you checked in they’d say, “All right, we got any of you girls that want to DOR tonight. Come on down I’ll take your resignation tonight.” And uh, that’s’ what they—and it was easier to say he dropped on request instead of having to fill out the forms that he’s not got the skills and did not demonstrate. And most of ‘em they just harassed ‘em so hard that they finally said, “Okay, I give up. Let me sign that paper and I’m out of here and gone.” And it was about fifty percent.

PIEHLER: Were there some who were harassed who would just take it—who would just ...

SHORE: Oh yes. Yes, yes. And once the staff saw that they could take it they’d get off of ‘em. But they would push ‘em. And in retrospect that was the proper thing to do. Did you want ‘em leading a platoon in Vietnam—and so much of it was physical. We’d start out like a three mile run and the last run was like sixteen miles. And if you straggled on half the runs you were gone. You were out of there. And in retrospect, how can you lead a platoon or a company of men ashore on an assault if you can’t keep up with them. So, a whole lot of it was just simply physical and running. And if they saw you could not handle that part of it you were out of there and gone.

STAFFORD: Well I guess—I have a question. In your training during Officer Candidate School, what did that lead you to believe about what you would be doing in Vietnam? I know that Vietnam is very hot. Were you all trained as far as how to handle heat, exhaustion, or anything like that?

SHORE: No. Officer Candidate School is almost exclusively a selection process.

STAFFORD: Okay.

SHORE: Very, very basic training in—we had a little first aid, we had some Marine Corps history, but very, very little training. This is a ten week selection process. Then if you graduate you go to the Basic School which is six months and then you are trained as lieutenants in tactics, legalities, supply, escape and evasion, infiltration, map reading, coordination of tanks, artillery, and the entire thing—but that all came in the six months basic infantry officer training. And the other—is just if you’ve got what it takes to get to the training process.

STAFFORD: So I guess then my question should be—once you left the training process in Officer Candidate School what was—how did it change from Officer Candidate School to the

Basic School? How did um, how did they—the commanding officers treat you differently—because the ones who survived Officer Candidate School, correct, are the only ones who can go to the Basic School?

SHORE: That’s correct. That’s correct.

STAFFORD: So were there any outstanding changes that ...

SHORE: Um, let me think—it was no longer a selection process. Instead of trying to weed you out, um—if you had deficiencies, and I was not a good swimmer. I had to go to remedial swimmin’. And so were a lot of us. But uh, you know the society that I was reared in, the environment—I’d never been to a swimming pool so I did not have good swimming skills. And you had remedial swimming for ones like myself. If you were deficient in weapons training they had extra training for you. They actually had tutorial type classes and help, and you were treated with much more dignity and respect at that point in time. After all, it takes an act of Congress to commission you in the armed forces, and that’s not taken lightly. Even though we were second lieutenants most of our closest trainers were captains and then the staff was majors and up. But ... a captain treated you and accorded you the privileges of a commissioned officer. But, oh, you had to work hard. The workload was just brutal. And they had comments everywhere. “Sweat and training—if you sweat in training you won’t bleed as much in combat.” And I subscribe to that theory today—the ones that took their training the most serious and learned the most were the best qualified in the actual application.

PIEHLER: What were you—I’m curious both at OCS, but later in the Basic Course—what were you told on how to treat enlisted persona—how to deal with enlisted personal, your responsibilities to them, their responsibilities to you? What was the sort of—what was the message given to you and in the training?

SHORE: Uh, yes, a good question. And they spent quite a bit of time on this because the backbone is the NCOs. You’re one lieutenant and you have three squad leaders and you have a guide and you have a platoon sergeant. So, you have to have good people skills. They spent quite a bit of time on this. But you know what? I happen to think so much of that is inherent. It is not a learned process. It’s—and my first assignment after the military—I used the same people skills as I use today in treating colleagues, subordinates within my company as I did then. And those are principles like [treat] everyone with dignity and respect—don’t matter whether private or you’re senior staff NCO. Fairness, consistency, a few basic principles. And I think they were taught that way. The Marine Corps is so big on respect in just the simple terminology. Everyone that ranks above you is greeted by, “Yes, sir” and “No, sir.” And they spent quite a bit of time, but again so much of that is inherent in your dealings with people. My Basic School class had eighty-eight Naval Academy graduates and most of the rest of ‘em were Naval ROTC regulars from Brown, Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Vanderbilt, Duke, and so their academics were really, really high just to be accepted to those institutions. I think you learn real, real quick when you get a combat command. And they would tell us things like if you have to go to your company commanders meeting and everybody’s set in a perimeter and they’re all digging their foxholes—when you get back if your foxhole is dug for you that’s a good sign. (Laughs) If they left the lieutenants to stand out on top without a foxhole that is a very bad sign. (Laughter) So ... they had—they taught us little things like that and ... they would say if you have to have some

time of supplies that are non-requisitioned items, not in the normal chain, then you talk to one of your senior NCOs and you don't ask him. You just say, "We really need this. Do you think you can help us?" And then get out of his way. (Laughter) So, they had certain implied things—and we had some classes by gunnery sergeants and first sergeants and, some of 'em said when you're in your first command watch your senior NCO. My first inception to combat my senior NCO had been in World War II and Korea both. And, even though I was the commissioned officer the respect was the other way. I'd look at him like this and say, "Yes, Sir." "Tell me what and we'll get along real well. I'm not here to affect your authority."

PIEHLER: This was his third war.

SHORE: Yes, yes. Oh, he was tough. He was real tough. From Ohio—I remember him quite well.

PIEHLER: I'm curious. The reason I partly ask ... I've gotten this comment from Army people—that some Army people that fought in the Pacific in World War II said what impressed them about the Marines was that Marines really took care of each other, and particularly officers took care of their men. There was a—not all—in no organization can it be uniform, but more than likely a Marine officer is really going to look after his men. For example a Marine officer wouldn't eat before his men ate.

SHORE: That's it.

PIEHLER: Whereas an Army officer—that might not be the case. It wasn't quite that ...

SHORE: Absolutely. And I observed some of that. But from the first day you are absolutely taught those things. And I think it's a part of the different style in leadership also. I think the Marine Corps calls it a platoon leader. The Army called it a platoon commander. And there is a difference. You, uh—it's a lot easier to lead than it is—or you get a lot more people to follow you leading than you can commanding. "Hey you, go there while I stay back here and watch you." Uh, I don't know—it's a matter of history, perception and what has worked, and your taught from the very first day take care of your troops and they will take care of you. And that is what I subscribe to today in running my business. Take care of the ones that do the work, and you will get taken care of.

Uh, you didn't ask this question, but there were a lot of fragging incidents in the Vietnam War, and they were in Korea and they were in World War II also. Most often the target of fragging was junior officers—second lieutenants. And this is exactly the way I looked at it. If I was a liability to my platoon, why would they want to keep me in a position of leadership? But, I was supposed to be the best trained one—tactics, air and ground coordination, medivacs, artillery, map reading—all those things. I was supposed to be the best qualified one and trained one. Now, at the time I was twenty-six years old—was a little bit older—and I had more unofficial leadership training as a youth than some of the second lieutenants straight out of college. But if I was an asset to 'em, they would protect you, because it's just real simple. If you were the best qualified one and you could maybe enhance their survivability and their life, and you cared for 'em and you demonstrated that, then you never had to worry about a frag. And they'd do anything for you because you were part of their ticket to survival. But by the same token I saw

some lieutenants—it was readily recognizable that they were liabilities. They did not know, they did not care, they did not demonstrate the things, and their people would pick up on it real quick. “He’s gonna get me killed out here. He don’t care.” And normally the procedure was they got a gas grenade. That’s a warning call.

PIEHLER: So there wasn’t even a war—I mean it wasn’t ...

SHORE: Oh no. They didn’t hardly ever frag one first.

PIEHLER: There were warnings that ...

SHORE: Oh yes, yes. And signs of insubordination would be there too. If they felt like you were an asset and you enhanced their likelihood of survivability, then you had nothing to worry about. They would protect you—follow you.

PIEHLER: So in a lot of ways you see fragging as non-ideological in a lot of the cases? It wasn’t so much that people were against the war ...

SHORE: Certainly not.

PIEHLER: ... but it’s more, “We want to live through this war and he is a liability?”

SHORE: And it fits. If you’re an ideologue—and even more so—and you think this guy is an asset and he’s going to enhance your chance of survivability, your not going to do anything to take him out.

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO-----

PIEHLER: This continues an interview with Ed Shore on April 16th, 2001 in Louisville, Tennessee, with Kurt Piehler and ...

STAFFORD: ... Shelley Stafford.

PIEHLER: And you—the tape cut you off in midstream, but you were saying about an ideologue—would want to keep some one alive because he would ensure their survival.

SHORE: Absolutely, and colleagues control that too. It’s just like the colleagues took care of the misfits. You heard all of the drug abuse in Vietnam. The infantry did not have it. It was in the rear where people had time on their hands—idle time—and had exposure to drugs and other illicit activities. In the infantry where it’s total teamwork—your survivability depends so directly on the one beside you. I can remember in my platoon we had two Marines that supposedly smoked dope. Oh, the rest of the platoon took care of ‘em. They watched ‘em. They would not let ‘em. Because if you’re going to be on a listening post at night and there’s just two of you do you want a pothead right there beside you? No. So in the infantry—my experience was it didn’t exist. They would not let it. I didn’t know, I wasn’t—you got fifty-six people out there you’re doing good to know very little things. (Laughs) But the others always knew. So it’s the same thing about assets and liabilities. And it’s the same today in general life.

If someone is an asset to you—they can help you achieve your goals—and now your goal is to find survivability. Then you want to be a part. You want to hitch your wagon. And at the same time if they're a liability let 'em go.

PIEHLER: I'm curious as to go back on fragging 'because you said there were warnings. I mean this—there is ...

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: And it really has more to do with officer competence than you could tell—or incompetence ...

SHORE: Almost totally and exclusively. But it wasn't just limited to officers. It would be senior staff NCOs. But of people in positions of responsibility it had a direct control over your survivability and your life. But I think it was 100% associated with competency—or maybe in some cases perception of competency—if they had the competence.

PIEHLER: When you said that, you know—it has happened in Korea and the Second World War—do you ever get stories about that when you were in service?

SHORE: Oh yes. And just recently in Parade magazine was a young Army captain that the family was never told what happened to him. I don't know whether you're familiar with it or not—just in the last few months. And all these years later—he was fragged. I guess it was his son that had a burning desire to find that out and through his investigation—he was fragged. And that was true of World War II—and if we had another war it is that simple philosophy—asset and liability.

PIEHLER: Well I've had two people ... that I did interview from World War II. They didn't quite say they fragged an officer, but the way they described the story—if they weren't fragging him—they were trying. They look for ways to get rid of him.

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: One case—I mean in some ways it's—particularly the way he said it was almost a funny story. He said we got this young lieutenant. We were in Europe in November of '44 and this guy came up to the line right out of—you know, a Ninety Day Wonder. We had him take this position and he said let's charge. You know, let's just directly charge, and they said you go ahead we'll follow you—and knowing that he's going to get shot or might even wounded or killed. So he gets out of the foxhole, charges, gets wounded—I don't think he got killed—but behind the line, [and they] never saw him again.

SHORE: Yeah. I know this to be the case too. In the command structure in the Marine Corps they were extremely sensitive to this. If there assessment was a Marine lieutenant was an asset, he was kept out there and kept in responsible positions—leadership positions—but if he was a liability he was found a desk job. And all the rest of the people—oh, Lieutenant So-And-So is back here in the rear right now and he's here for a reason.

PIEHLER: And that reason, even though it's not officially stated, is understood.

SHORE: Absolutely, and most time it wasn't official.

PIEHLER: Yeah. There are no ways to say what it was, but that's the ...

SHORE: Yes, and I can remember my first command in Hue City—they're checking you out. I check in there as a brand new lieutenant. They sent the corpsman and it's almost like he had a checklist and part of the questioning process—and he says, "Now I know at the Basic School they teach you to charge machine gun nests. How do you feel about that?" And I said, "I don't want to die anymore than you do." (Laughter) Do I look silly? Do I look like I want to die? I got a family. How do I really answer that question? You answer it. I don't want to die any more than you do. I assess the situation—what's at hand. If there's one on a machine gun and there's fifty of us and we're ten foot from him—yeah we'll charge him and overwhelm him. If we're four hundred foot back and he can pick off half of us—half that may be me—no, we're not going to charge him." And they just went through the whole checklist to see if you pass it—and boy he goes right straight back to the rest of us and says this is his answers, this is his answers. And I remember right along with that he had his entire checklist and he said uh—and I was passing his test, because I knew what he was doing. And he said, "Now Lieutenant we kill prisoners." He said, "All you got to do is turn your head. When we capture one we just kill him." And I said, "No. Wait a minute right there. End of conversation. We follow the rules. We do not kill prisoners. That's murder. When you do that you lose complete control. You have a mob. You don't have a disciplined, professional military force. End of conversation. We do not kill prisoners." And he checks out and goes on back to tell the rest of them what he had observed. There's lots of ways—and a whole lot of the command presence is visual. How do you carry yourself when you walk in front of your organization? And being able—one of the most difficult things I think for junior leadership officers—but that's still the same in business—is to pick out and identify the unofficial leadership role and it is in every society and it is in every organization and as a young commander you better be able to find out real, real quick who is the unofficial leader.

And let me tell you how I was able to discover this. I didn't discover it. Lieutenant Joe Taussig—he was a Naval Academy graduate. His father was an admiral in the Navy. I was brand new in Hue City. And just like business today, putting the right people in the right spots is what it's all about. And that's what it was about. A platoon commander with fifty Marines was finding the right people for the right position—squad leaders, fire team leaders, machine gunners or whatever. And unfortunately you get in a fight one of two things happen. Your good squad leaders get wounded or killed, or your bad ones will show cowardice and then you got to get rid of them. So I was having extreme difficulties and my biggest challenge was putting the right people in the right places and getting the right squad leaders. So I told Joe Taussig this in the rear. I said, "What's my biggest job?" He said, "I can make life so simple for you." He said, "Here's how you do it." In the daytime just walk around very informal, unofficial, and say to a young Marine—say, "Tonight if I have to send you out there on listening post and I'm going to send one person with you who do you want to go with you." And he'll name one. You don't say a word. You just move on and in the course of your days action you see another Marine and you do this randomly—a half a dozen. And it's shocking how the same name will pop up over and over and over. And guess who your next squad leader is? They are telling you. But if you went

out there and said to them, “Who do you want to be your squad leader?” Well they’d think who’s the next senior in command—what’s he want me to say? But once I started doing that—and I was a genius at picking squad leaders—all I had to do was just ask them a few questions. And one time I shocked ‘em all. We were on a big operation and we were loosing heavy casualties—every day, every night. And I had a private check in. I remember him quite well. He was small in stature—arrogant, cocky, insubordinate. (Laughter) I didn’t like this kid. I didn’t like him at all. And he didn’t weigh a 130, 140 pounds. And in continuing to find out who was my best candidate for a squad leader—the first day he was there. I was asking around the same question—and you know the people never caught on to what I was doing. They never caught on to it. Or at least they never let on like they knew. And from the first day people were saying—Loersh was his name—they were saying, “I want Loersh to go out there with me.” And I’d say, “How could that be? This scrawny, insubordinate, cocky kid!” And uh, we’d taken some heavy casualties—and I had corporals in the unit. And here he’s been in Vietnam three or four days—and I shocked ‘em all. I said, “Loersh is the next squad leader.” And everybody was looking—and it worked. He was the one that they would follow. Now I was never taught that in school, but I had a mentor—a lieutenant that either learned that by accident or somebody told him. And my job as choosing squad leaders and key people after that was very simple—let ‘em tell you who.

PIEHLER: It’s a great tip.

SHORE: Oh, it is. It’s wonderful.

PIEHLER: It’s a really great tip.

SHORE: Yes it was. And he made life so much simpler. Prior to that—I remember one of the worst squad leaders I ever choose. He had some college and he had tried out for the U.S. Olympic skiing team. He was from somewhere in Vermont or somewhere they ski. Big, tall handsome kid. And I identified with him and I thought, “Wow, wouldn’t he make a good squad leader.” Horrible—he didn’t identify at all. He was squad leader three days and I had to appoint someone else. But I was trying to make my own assessment. College kid—very athletic.

PIEHLER: Well on paper he looks like he should get the ...

SHORE: Yes, yes. Informal leader, he didn’t pass the test at all.

STAFFORD: Well I guess—we kind of skipped over a little bit of the training that you had in Hawaii before you went to I read in this book that there was a ship that was leaving ...

SHORE: Oh yes. I was not with that unit.

STAFFORD: Oh okay, my mistake. I’m sorry.

SHORE: The unit—the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines was in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. I was in the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines in Hue City, and when the battalion came to Vietnam—totally inexperienced—they picked people from Vietnam that was experienced in other units to integrate

into the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines. That's how I got hooked up with this unit. But no, I was not with them in Hawaii.

STAFFORD: Okay, my fault.

SHORE: No, no you're correct. You read your book.

STAFFORD: I did, I did. Um, well so after you were commissioned how long was it before you left for Vietnam?

SHORE: I was commissioned June the 1st, '67. And I graduated from the Basic School the 22nd of November, '67. And my son was born on December the 19th so I got a little humanitarian stay. I went in January of 1968, which was the peak of the war—the Tet Offensive. So I was right there at the most opportune time for the most excitement and challenges. And that's the highest percent—and they released the statistics in there—like the first six months of '68 almost 25% of the total Marines killed in the entire war were killed in that short period of time. I'm not sure all the statistics but very, very high in the spring of 1968.

STAFFORD: Okay. Well once you arrived, was it what you had expected-to be in Vietnam?

PIEHLER: Well what had you been told to expect in your—particularly in Basic School—in Basic Infantry School?

SHORE: That's vague. That's a good question. I don't know how you tell someone what to expect in combat, even to this day. Having been there I don't know exactly what to tell someone. One good thing that I remember they always told us at the Basic School—you will know immediately if you encounter the North Vietnamese Regular Army or if you encounter the Vietcong. And all of us lieutenants would say, "How will we know?" And the staff would say, "You will know. Believe me, you will know." And we were all, hmm that's strange. Tell us how we will know. Well very, very quickly you learn. Typically if your whole units moving out and it's the Vietcong they start shooting at you and no one's wounded—no one's killed. And they shoot a little while and they run. If it's the North Vietnamese Regulars they let you walk right up on top of them and when they start shooting, they start killing, and they don't run. They'll stand there and fight you. The North Vietnamese Regular Army has been and still is one of the most respected, best trained armies in the world. And they always told us—and guess what. You could tell immediately whether you'd encountered the North Vietnamese or the Vietcong. But one thing that was so enlightening to me—my first assignment being a platoon commander in Hue City—that was more of a conventional type war, and it was different than the rest of Vietnam. So when I got there and got sent into the city it was very different. Um, the cultural shock was one of the most unbelievable things in the world to me. Now recognize this is a group of eighteen year olds taken out of normal society where you have parental influence, you have siblings, you have school teachers, you have role models—and there are certain expectations in society. Now, taken out of that—thrust into a combat situation where when you leave there you're not going to know a one of them. You go back home. So it's kind of like anything I do there's no accountability. I don't have any of the normal society rules to go by. And also mixed with the fact that you're seeing people die every day. Your values become so different in life. Little things that in normal society you care about—brushing your teeth,

showering, cleaning up, those type of things are normal for normal society. In that atmosphere it was not. Now my first exposure—and oh they had the pressure on us second lieutenants because a very, very high percentage of our casualties were NBCs—non-battle casualties. And what was the origin to most of the non-battle casualties? It was sexually transmitted diseases. And they were after us to give lectures everyday, and it was so helpless. The first thing that I observed in Hue City was—if you’ve ever seen a World War II movie when the soldiers went into Europe, went into a town, what’s the first two things that they always encountered? Whiskey and women.

PIEHLER: They all tell me about the whiskey. They’re more reluctant about the women, but ...

SHORE: Well believe me.

PIEHLER: But some have talked ... (Laughs)

SHORE: Yes, and my first day in the city—in Hue City—the first thing was that, “Oh my goodness, who ever wrote those World War II movies were there. They were absolutely there.” And uh, it was so sad. These eighteen years old with testosterone obviously running high and no accountability. All rules that you’ve been taught are out the window. It is the most opportune situation for the bravado—do as your colleagues. I mean people do things in that setting that you wouldn’t dream of doing in a normal society around family and friends where they have expectations. And I tried so hard to talk to these young Marines. And I concluded out of Hue City if a fire team—which composed of four Marines and that’s the way, normally, you searched through houses—if there was a female in the house, sixteen, eighteen, twenty, thirty-five years old, she was almost invariable raped. And that was such a cultural shock to me and I would talk and counsel these young Marines. And if you went in a house—and on a few occasions I did burst into houses—most of the time my job was standing back coordination—but on a few occasions I went with three or four Marines and “boom,” you kick the door down. You don’t open it and go in. And there would be a mother—never saw a father—and she would have three or four or six children.

But to digress just slightly, if Marines were sweeping a village the mother would take her children out of the house in the most visible place in front of the house and however many children there were it would be like a mother hen. She would put her children in a little pile and put her arms around them. And that was the safest thing. If they stayed in the house it might get shot up, fragmentation grenades or whatever. And that was so sad to see a mother hovering over little children with houses burning and all the fighting going on. But, if you burst into a house and there was a mother and you’re obviously armed and on edge and if your weapon goes around the room—as your eyes go around the room—if it stops on something like bananas, that was indigenous to the area and that may have been the only food they had. Or sometimes in Hue—they were a little more affluent. They would have cookies or some other type of foods. And if your eyes just stopped the first thing the mother does is present it to you. This is survivability. This is their life. They present you with that as a gift. And likewise if the mother had a fourteen-year-old daughter and a Marine’s eyes stopped on the daughter the mother makes a quick assessment and says, “What’s the alternatives? What’s the options here? Can I give my daughter for all of our survivability including her, or are we all going to get killed?” Now that’s awful to think of any society having to be put in a situation and thinking like that, but that is the

real world. And I would try to counsel these young Marines and say, “That’s not real. Be above that.” It remained throughout my experience that our high—we had a very high percentage of non-battle casualties caused by that. And we’d find ‘em. We’d send ‘em back to the rear. What good is money over there? We’d fine them twenty-five dollars and treat them with penicillin and bring them right back. And unfortunately saw the same occurrences all over again.

PIEHLER: So not only—I mean I take it—‘cause you were talking about cases of rape, but it sounds like keeping them out of houses of prostitution was a pretty hopeless ...

SHORE: Absolutely hopeless.

PIEHLER: That was, you know—there’s no hope on that.

SHORE: No hope whatsoever. Houses of prostitution were normally—if you were in the rear they were set up immediately outside the gate. I mean you walk outside the gate and you were propositioned—every time. But that was survivability. That was a way of life. People say, “Well, I wouldn’t do that.” Until you’re put—survival’s one’s strongest instinct—until you’re put in a situation of what I have to do to survive, then don’t say what you wouldn’t do. Because when the options are presented survivability or sacrifice all standards and participate in whatever illicit acts, survivability will win out every time. But it was sad. And I felt like—well a lot of it is how your mother teaches you. It’s a self-imposed set of codes. And because you are in a society, a setting that you have no accountability, one still should not sacrifice there self-imposed set. And I felt like the military should put more emphasis in training through chaplains or whatever to prevent things like this. It was rampant.

PIEHLER: Well I guess—since you’ve raised the issue and it’s even in training, I’ve often emphasized in military history the laws and ethics of war. That in fact there are laws.

SHORE: Absolutely.

PIEHLER: I mean I also kind of make the distinction—first of all I’ve never been in combat or even in the military—and I say there things that are close calls. For example, when you do burst [in]. I try to draw a distinction. For example when you burst into a house there is friendly fire. You will hit civilians in the way and that’s—there’s a different moral. When you’re fighting combat there are situations where it’s going to happen, but sort of cold blooded murder is murder.

SHORE: It’s murder. It’s not justifiable homicide. If you’re in combat it’s a justifiable homicide. It’s a way of life. That’s your job. But killing a prisoner, killing an innocent child, a mother—that’s murder. It should be tried accordingly.

PIEHLER: Well ‘cause I should raise this because I offer my class—when we do a chapter—we do a book on My Lai and I try to point out that we’re not talking—this is not an incident, which happens in all war, where accidents will happen. You will search a village. This is lining up people and executing them and that’s different.

SHORE: Totally unacceptable—defies all principles of war, society, whatever—leadership. And once you do that, you lose total control. You have a mob—a mob mentality. You do not have a professional fighting force, and if you ever condone any thing like that you’ve lost all control. You need to be out of combat, out of command, out of leadership immediately. I have very, very strong opinions. And I got to help try to rehabilitate the village of My Lai. And it was—you had different villages with different cultures. I’m digressing but we would repatriate an entire village from a hostile zone. And this wasn’t even repatriation. We’d put a concertina fence around them. And uh, one time I noticed one side of the road was clean. They were smart. They were articulate. And we gave the same amount of food—we had to feed them everyday if we repatriated we put them in a barbed wire concertina area. And you could give them food, and they’d have food two or three days later. They made gardens. They took care of clothing. They tried to fix up the temporary housing. The other side of the road was filthy. If you took them three days food they ate it all on the spot. They did absolutely nothing and they didn’t cross the road. And it took me quite a while—I didn’t figure it out. I had to be told. The crude, ugly side of the road were Buddhist. The clean, educated side of the road were Catholic. You know, come from the same community but totally segregated. So you had very, very differences of people to deal with.

PIEHLER: Well since you had brought up My Lai and—it’s interesting when I interview a career Army officer—particularly West Pointers ...

SHORE: I guarantee that their sentiments are like mine.

PIEHLER: No, I mean it’s interesting because they really do emphasize that. For example Calley is not one of us ...

SHORE: No, he’s not.

PIEHLER: ... and they’ve lowered standards. It seems to be there was a real ethos about what you’re profession is supposed to do.

SHORE: Sure, sure. He was a murderer. He was a hoodlum. I’ll regress slightly, too. We captured a prisoner one time and we kind of accidentally captured him. I had flank security out and he opened up on us and he was running straight back and he was running just hard as he could and my two men were scared to death. He was about to run over ‘em and one of them reached out and tripped him. (Laughter) So he was captured as a—there’s no question about him. Most of the time if they fit the age—twenty-five to fifty—you thought they maybe but you did not know. This one we did. We knew. So we were gonna move back to the rear and I told my platoon sergeant—I said, “I don’t want anything to happen to him.”—‘cause it was a favorite trick. He started to run and I had to shoot him. I said, “If he runs, you shot him. I want you to know what’s gonna happen to you.” You are tasked with the responsibility of getting him back to the rear. And the platoon leader always had to stay up close to the front. And it was hot. So a couple hours—we get back to the rear area and as soon as we get into the area the platoon sergeant and the prisoner both just fall over exhausted. (Laughter) And I think, “Hmm, this is strange.” So we processed the prisoner and my platoon sergeant—oh he was just—you know he was exhausted. And I thought, “I don’t understand this totally.” And as platoon leader you always had to have informants, always. And I was really anxious to find out. And just a little

while one of my informants come around and he said, “You shoulda’ seen it.” He said, “Every step he took Sergeant Marks hit ‘em.” And when they got back to the rear both of them were totally exhausted. (Laughter) He didn’t kill him though. He had those words straight. And I never did say anything to him for beating him.

PIEHLER: But he got back alive?

SHORE: Oh, that was the main point. He was going to be held totally responsible if he did not get back alive. Discipline—structure in a force—you can’t say we will follow these rules. We will be paid by this rule. We will do these things, but we will deviate if it fits our needs—we will kill prisoners. You will lose total control and you cannot do that. Under the oath you take you don’t have the right to deviate. There’s many, many annals of war and history as to reciprocity. Less than five percent of American soldiers died in German concentration camps in World War II. Now, do you know what percent of Russian soldiers died in German concentration camps? About 95%. And it was all about reciprocity. Do unto others. And you deviate and it escalates. And then there is no rules. But there are some very, very defined rules in war and you have to except them.

PIEHLER: I’m curious. When we first started—before we had started—and I want to make sure you talk about it at some length—‘cause your stories are just wonderful in terms of what it was like to command in Vietnam and the men who served. You had a unit that was very diverse, particularly coming from Maryville and East Tennessee. It was a very diverse group. And it was also a very—they came from very poor backgrounds a lot of them.

SHORE: Almost exclusively very poor backgrounds.

PIEHLER: And a lot couldn’t read, and a lot couldn’t even speak English.

SHORE: That’s correct.

PIEHLER: Could you talk a little bit about the men ... in your unit? And it sounds like you were a bit surprised.

SHORE: Yes, yes that’s true. The thirteenth day of April, 1968, Bravo Company of the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines had a really devastating battle. The company commander—who I keep in close contact with—lost his right arm. His radio operator, who was a retired police chief in Oakland, California—I keep close touch with him—but he was seriously wounded. The second platoon commander—Al Kitner, a Naval Academy graduate and very strong lieutenant, was killed. So the whole command structure of the company was decimated and it was a very, very bad day. So I got to that unit on the fourteenth day of April. It was Sunday—it was Easter Sunday, 1968. And at my first meeting I called my staff together, which consisted of two sergeants, a platoon guide, and three squad leaders. And we sat down to go over necessary things and one of my squad leaders pointed straight at the number two guy—the platoon sergeant—and said, “He’s a coward! He’s a coward! We got to get rid of him right now!” And I started to think, “Oh my goodness. What have I stepped into?” (Laughter) The number two guy. And I didn’t exactly know how to handle that either. So I go on through the meeting of what my feelings are and how we are to react—what to do. I guess I was very clumsy. And just

as soon as I got through though I said the company commander needs to know about this. So I go straight to the company commander and told him exactly what happened. He said, “Send him up here right now. Get him out of here.” And they did. They relieved him—reassigned him to a chair. And on the thirteenth he had shown cowardice.

PIEHLER: Real, real ...

SHORE: Oh real, real cowardice.

PIEHLER: Not just a gray area?

SHORE: No, no, no, no, no. He had hid, and that’s serious. And that’s one of those—they were giving him a warning into his face. “He’s a coward. We want rid of him.” Well—and he was a liability. When the fighting started he hid, and if we hadn’t got him to a desk he couldn’t have been taken care of because he was simply a liability. Well the Marine that—he was corporal and there were a few sergeants there that had the informal leadership. And it was obvious that the rest of them were deferring to him at that point in time. And he stayed with me through my—I was wounded and taken out of the infantry on the fifteenth of June. But he was my go to guy the whole time. He was a black Marine from Los Angeles, California. Big, strong and very, very quiet—very non-assuming. And my biggest read-back on him came from the people that he led, not him. I would discuss orders—things to do—and he wouldn’t even acknowledge. He wouldn’t say, “Yes sir. No, sir.” And I’m thinking, “Am I getting through?” But he always came through. And troops would sit around and they would say, “We’d follow him anywhere. He’s our leader. He takes care of us.” And that’s the sign that you have to key on. Let the ones tell you. Don’t try to make the observations and the assessments yourself. Listen. You got big ears. (Laughs) Listen to the people and they’ll tell you the ones they trust—the ones they can depend on and the ones that are there during the difficult times. And there were others. Obviously in that type of atmosphere you have people that don’t want that. Survivability is ones greatest instinct. And I feared this because I saw it happen—I saw it happen to one of my radio men. You want your radio men to be a little smarter, strong, physical—‘cause he’s going to be right there within reaching distance twenty-four hours a day. So you try to choose someone that’s not going to run the other way. When you have to run he’s going to be right there with you. And this young Marine was excellent—the very best. On the fourth of June he took a shot right straight into his helmet. It went through the helmet and went into the liner—they’re designed that way—between the helmet and the liner and back into his neck. Made a big deep bullet wound in the back of his neck. Well he got a concussion—knocked him down. We medevaced him out. He was out about two weeks and I couldn’t wait for him to get back because, oh, he was a good radio man. He came back, and he was totally useless. He was the most nervous. He would not fight. You know, he just said, “I can’t handle it.” And here’s a guy that was the very best. So those things can do strange things and you can be—the pressure—and you can be very committed, strong, brave, and there’s a breaking point on most people. And I saw it happen on others, and I will say, very humbly, that I feared that myself. And I feared—if I show cowardice, if I make a miscalculation and cost people their lives, what kind of burden will that have on me now and the rest of my life. And I feared that. After being wounded the second time I was taken out of the infantry and I’m happy. You either got the million dollar wound or you took the big ride. After being so close—when I got the big ride, it’s alright. Just get me out of here. I’ve had enough of this. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: You had mentioned that—before we got started that a quarter of your unit was Hispanic—Spanish descent—Mexican. As you recall they didn't know English?

SHORE: That's correct.

PIEHLER: You said that you gave a very simple order and someone had to translate it.

SHORE: Some would know English. And we had another problem. Some of them could speak English but their families back home only spoke and read Spanish. So there would be one or two people in the platoon that could speak and read and write English and Spanish. And when we would get a chance to get in the rear to receive mail and to send out mail—you would see these one or two guys sitting there writing letters in Spanish and another one telling him in Spanish and sending back to his family. Along the same line of receiving mail—I can remember two specific cases where the young Marine would not write home. One was the brightest kid I ever had. His IQ was actually 150. He had been wounded—and it was a very small wound—but he had been shot in the head. It was not serious at all. He wouldn't write his mother. I got a letter that says, "To the platoon commander of Lance Corporal Michael Dobiel" And I open the letter—and it was a pitiful letter—"What's happened to him? He won't write. Is he alive? Is he okay?" And I got one other letter like that. I went straight to him. "You sit down. You write your mother a nice long letter. Put it in an envelope. Don't you seal it. Bring it to me. I'm going to read the letter and I'm the one who's going to put it in the mail to your mother." And you know, it's kind of shocking that they wouldn't even write their mother. But I had that happen on PFC Johnny Root and Michael Dobiel. Had that happen two times.

PIEHLER: You also said you had some people in your unit that didn't know how to read and write.

SHORE: Absolutely. I had a young Portuguese—his name was Rogue. That was his last name. Handsome kid—all appearances, bright kid. At one time I had—on Operation Allenbrook I lost five radio operators. So I was just scrambling to get a radio operator and I had been observing—'cause you always kept one in mind—and I said, "Here, Rogue. You're my radio operator right now"—heated combat. The young kid panicked. He absolutely panicked. Because a radio operator quite often had to take down coordinates and write things and medevacs and re-supply runs when they were going to come and so forth. And I said, "What's wrong, you don't want to be the radio man?" He said, "Oh, I can't read or write a word." (Laughs) I said, "Oh, okay. You're excused." (Laughter) "Get me another one in here." But it was—there were quite a few that could not read and write a word. And that shocked me. You know, you think—and even in the '60s and even today ... it's pretty much a given. But if you're really—you're both in academia, but in my company right now I have four or five people that can't read or write. Now they're good employees. They do their job. And they're real clever. They hide it. You don't know. I had one framing crew here who was excellent. He could rig a set of plans and he can't read and write anything else.

PIEHLER: No, I know there's still—I know there's more than—but I'm still sort of I think stunned with World War II and I guess in Vietnam that it's not just one or two people who sort

of can hide it. You said you—it was something like—I think you said nineteen people ... out of the fifty-six roughly you felt couldn't

SHORE: Uh, as I think back that may be a little high. But oh, it was shocking. And see if I had fifty-six I did not know every single one of 'em, because some of 'em—but it was a shocking high percentage that could not.

PIEHLER: Or let me put it this way. It was more than one person or two people.

SHORE: Oh, big time. I'm sure out of fifty that it was—on any given time it would have been eight or ten. And it wasn't only of the Spanish descent or the Afro-American descent. It was pretty much broad across the board. But again I find that shocking.

STAFFORD: Well I would like to ask you about June 15th, 1968. I've read your account in the book that you gave to us, but I'd like to hear you talk about it a little bit and what you wrote um—you said that it was a challenging and rewarding and one of the most outstanding, I guess, memory wise, days of your life. Can you just talk about that?

SHORE: Yes. It is a combination of almost everything in life—the most important day of my life. [It was] the closest, I think, I've ever come to death. The death as the citation depicts on both sides [was] very heavy. It's a mixed bag. Being able to survive or being a survivor of an incident like that gives me the greatest sense of confidence in the world. I can do anything. It's so self-gratifying, but it also gives me the greatest of humility. Why, in a setting when one young Marine two foot in front of me was killed. The two Marines to my right and my left. Both my corpsman—one corpsman's always right beside you—both my corpsman was killed. It's ... a combination, and if you survive something like that you have—it's hard to explain. You look at it with reverence ...

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE-----

SHORE: ... explain, or I don't think I'm capable of explaining the emotions that you go through during a very small point in life when it's absolute, total chaos, devastation—it is life and death in its most explainable situation. So, I mean, how do you really explain to someone what goes on? It's a combination of extreme fear—the adrenaline, the rush, the pressure that you have to survive, to take care of your people. And yet at the same time, and I think this became most apparent to me when we captured their commander wounded and we were medevaced out—not on the same helicopter—and he was put in a hospital bed across from me. My first thing is how do you feel about it? Six hours ago you were both trying to kill each other and yet now—how do you feel? And my quick assessment was—if I can't respect him I can't look in the mirror and respect myself. And I had men lined up on each side of me in the hospital bed from the same action. They had the same mixed bag. "Let me at 'em. I want to kill him." Yet others were saying, "Look. Wait a minute. He is fighting for the same cause. He believes in his cause. He had a job to do. Respect him accordingly." And you see some of the aftermath of war and I—I love those Iwo Jima things. And there were less than two hundred Japanese came off that island alive. The other twenty some thousand choose to die. And yet I can see a Marine go back now and they'll bring back a half a dozen Japanese and the interaction—and they'll hug. And then you interview the Marines and they'll say, "Oh no way. The devastation that that caused. I

never thought I could do anything like that.” Bitter enemies. So it’s a mixed bag of your trying so—with everything you have—complete destruction—to kill. And then boom, immediately you are over it. It’s difficult to explain. Um, that is the most memorable night in my life. And I have tried to contact most of the survivors and I am, one at a time. It’s hard this many years later—contacting them. The young Marine that was in front of me—that I told you about here—Kinsey Davis—was killed. And I’ll always believe that if he hadn’t have taken the full brunt of the hand grenade that it would have been me. I would have been killed. He was literally—he punched me, he tapped me—he was two feet in front of me. Well all these years I’ve wanted to contact his family. And last October—thirty-two years later I found twelve Davis names in the city of Dover, North Carolina—I knew where that was—and I started making phone calls and the fourth phone call I made was his mother. And I was saying—I would just introduce myself. “I’m looking for a Kinsey Davis, who was a Marine killed in Vietnam.” I went back to his family. It was wonderful. I talk to the family regularly now. He was the eldest of thirteen kids. They’re a precious family. And it meant closure to them. They absolutely knew nothing. They had no details. I went over there and they were all there for four hours. They asked me every question in this world and it was great. All these years later, I guess I have a little bit of survivor’s guilt from that night too. But like I say, it’s the extreme combination of the greatest day mixed with all the emotions of survivor’s guilt and humility, confidence, and everything that goes along with it.

PIEHLER: Do you ever wonder what happened to your adversary who was wounded across the bed?

SHORE: Yes, yes. And when we policed the battlefield the citation, I think, gives us credit for twenty-four—killing twenty-four of them. At point blank range literally—two, three, and five foot away. They were charging us and trying to overrun us and we were fighting valiantly to keep that from happening. When we were policing the battlefield we collected mementos—pictures—it’d be a wife and a child or two children—and, oh yes, to this day, you know, why was it him and not me. And the similarities—youth and believing in a cause and patriotism and yes, I wondered. By the same token I hope and trust that this will not be a way to settle ideological differences. There’s better ways. Negotiate it. (Laughter) Don’t fight it out. It is brutal. And who always pays the price? It’s the indigenous—the young, the old, the children. Oh, it is so devastating, so brutal, so awful. And I trust that mankind can be rational enough—sane enough and not revert. Now that probably won’t happen. Throughout the history of mankind there have been wars and ways to settle disputes have been wars and battles. But you know what? Since the ‘70s we’ve—well we had one in the Gulf War but limited—and I just trust that men—the government—societies—can settle differences short of the brutality and the carnage that goes with war.

PIEHLER: Have you ever thought of going back to Vietnam?

SHORE: Yes. And if—barring nothing happen—my youngest son who really enjoys war history and I are going back. We’ve looked into it. We can fly straight from here to LA. Take Thai Air at LA right into Da Nang. And you can actually have reservations made and a guide picks you up and you send in ahead where you want to go, and I want to go to Hue City. I want to go to Go Noi Island where I was wounded in the most memorable fifteen days of my life. Not just that one day—it’s culminated in that one day—but a fifteen day operation. We had a reunion last

year and one of the lieutenants who is now an attorney in LA did a little bit of research. If we had—in a three month period of time ending June the 15th—we'd of have one more lieutenant casualty wounded or killed we would have had 200% casualties in three months time. That is staggering. But by the same token when you can sit here today and reflect on how I've been blessed, on how good life is, and say I've survived something like that you have to be very thankful for it.

PIEHLER: I don't know what the next question should be. I guess—well I hate to ask a mundane question after that, but maybe—let me ask a question about chaplain which is not in some ways a mundane question but it leads to others—how often would you see a chaplain in Vietnam? And how close were chaplains to units? Particularly to your unit.

SHORE: Okay. On most of the operations, typically, before you went on the operation the chaplain would be there and would have a service—quite often very solemn service. And it was my experience ... a battalion, which is normally twelve hundred Marines, has one chaplain, ... and he stayed in the rear. And I think that's where he should be. He had administrative responsibilities—writing letters and caring for the wounded in the rear and the people that had other needs in the rear. So I never saw chaplains out in the front—never. And I don't think that's where they should be. So before an operation we would see them, and usually they would feed you steak and eggs or something like that. Rest of you got old C-rations so ... And the ones that were not only the chaplain but the ones that were staying in the rear were very solemn and very respectful. They're thinking this bunch of grunts is going out there and a lot of them aren't going to come back. So, that's normally the setting before you would go on one of these operations that you knew you would encounter an enemy. And then as soon as you came back there would always be a chaplain service. And most of the time—and obviously it was very solemn and you were paying respects to your fallen comrades. And that was about the extent—I did see about one chaplain per twelve hundred. But that's about the extent—before operations and after. But they had a very busy job writing, and see, they got a lot of letters. You know, I told you I got two, from my whole experience from two mothers. Well how many do you think the chaplain got from twelve hundred? And you know, the chaplains that I knew—Chaplain Brown was one I knew then.

PIEHLER: Was he a Protestant minister or a Catholic priest?

SHORE: He was Presbyterian. Yes, Protestant. I don't recall ever seeing a Catholic. Our battalion surgeon was a Jewish doc—Kolsky— but I only recall seeing Protestants. We had Kelly and Brown and one from Minnesota. I don't know if he was Lutheran. I don't know but it was Protestant so very, very few of the chaplains. And I—I don't know why that would be because a high percentage of your Marines were Catholic. Most of the Spanish and quite often I found the Spanish to be quite religious. They really were, and they were all Catholic. I never saw one that wasn't. But never encountered a Catholic priest as the battalion chaplain.

PIEHLER: You had mentioned, both before we taped and during the taping, that ... I wanted to sort of ask some questions about daily life in terms of—'cause in some ways your accounts are very similar to World War II infantry men, Marine or Army.

SHORE: Infantry's infantry.

PIEHLER: Yeah exactly.

SHORE: You get out there ...

PIEHLER: Well, in the sense that you were in the field, for example, when you're on a mission. How long could an average mission last? How long were you in the field before you got back?

SHORE: That's a good question and it's hard to say an average. Operation Allenbrook was started—actually the 3rd Battalion, 27th Marines started on the 15th of May and, oh, did they get massacred. Oh, and the whole time I was following reports. We were in the rear—and I was following the daily reports and my fears were they're going to pull them back and put the 1st Battalion down there. And sure enough on Sunday afternoon the 28th day of May, the intelligence officer for our regiment, who was a classmate and a good friend, walks outside the intelligence bunker and smiling right big and said, "Have you heard? 1st Battalion is replacing 3rd Battalion in the morning." Oh, I wanted to vomit. I'm serious. Oh, I was sick. I mean, you know, take a two by four, a ball bat ... I had no response. I literally wanted ... (Laughs) And I thought—I went straight back and I set down to write a lengthy letter. And I can remember saying, "Well I won't have a chance to write and this is the nature of the operation." And we went on that early the next morning and I had deserters. Oh, we were loading them up on trucks and they were jumping off them trucks and I was sitting, watching ... And we had three or four truckloads and I was running from truck to truck and we couldn't keep 'em on those trucks. That operation lasted until the 17th of June. Now I was wounded on the 15th so I stayed down there fifteen days. And on average we fought every single day and every single night on Go Noi Island. The French lost twenty-five thousand trying to take Go Noi Island. It was at the mouth of the Antenna Valley. They had whiskey stills for recreation. They had underground hospitals. They were reinforced. They had concrete bunkers with periscopes. They weren't going to give up that island. And oh, they—like a little Iwo Jima. And they were defending that island. And that was one of the longer sustained continuous operations. No shower, no shave. The afternoon of the 14th we got mail, we got apples and oranges, and it was so great. I literally had people that they're clothes were gone, and we looked like ragamuffins. And everyone—I weighed a hundred and fifty pounds. And I weighed a hundred and ninety-five pounds when I went to Vietnam. That was one of the longer ones, and the body can only take so much. At the end of fifteen days we had heavy heat exhaustion—heat strokes. I actually had heat exhaustion one day in a sustained long firefight. and my legs were gone. I'd fade in and out. And I was telling them to pour water on me, because that's what you do with heat exhaustion. I'd come to a little bit and I'd say, "Pour more water on me." And I did not allow myself to be medevaced. For two or three days after that my legs were totally rubbery, and it was nothing but heat exhaustion. So that was a little longer. Most operations—three to five days was a pretty long sustained operation.

PIEHLER: And then you could come back and get a shower and ...

SHORE: Yes. Oh yes, yes. Real food and a little bit of relaxation—write a letter and set down. And this was very interesting and contrasting. I've discussed this with Army people that where there and I saw that the Army wouldn't stay out in the field like that. They wouldn't. And they would say, "You crazy Marines stay out there. We're not gonna stay out there." The Army had

much better resupply. They had a lot more helicopters and they would helicopter people in and out, so they did not stay on long sustained operations like Marine Corps did. And it's not good. The body only takes so much. We stayed—we fought every day and every night. I'd say my average sleep—not only myself, all of our people—was two hours. And the intensity—we were getting medevacs and resupply runs about every evening. And it was sad. We'd have people come in—and you could tell 'cause they'd come in and clean and use facilities and shave. And they didn't look like the rest of us bums. And they'd get off the helicopter absolutely scarred to death. I can remember I would try everything in the world including putting my arm around these eighteen-year-old boys and say, "Keep your helmet on. Keep your flak jacket. I'm assigning you to a good squad leader. Do everything he says. Stay down in that foxhole. Do what you're told. I will not put you on point. I will not put you out there. Get snapped in." Anything I could say to them to calm them down. And I'd put them in a foxhole that night and the next morning throw their body in a poncho and put them on a helicopter—gone. One day and it was so tragic—not good. It's certainly not something to brag about. I'm only reflecting facts that are in the book, and it's an honor to be able to talk about it. It's almost like an entitlement. You know, I can't imagine reflecting on something so sacred if you weren't there and visually participated and saw it. [It's] certainly not anything to brag about.

PIEHLER: What about—you mentioned on the most memorable day you lost two corpsmen who—one was right beside you ...

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: How good was the corpsmen—and you experienced Army medicine—excuse me, Naval medicine—Marine, Navy, because you have Navy corpsmen ...

SHORE: Navy corpsmen that's right ...

PIEHLER: So you experienced the Navy/Marine medical system. How was it? The different stages from the perspective as a commander seeing them get it—but also you personally went through the system.

SHORE: Outstanding. Corpsmen will always have a place in my heart. The corpsman was highly respected in the infantry. And I've seen corpsmen over and over lay down their life. I had several corpsmen killed that particular night. Doc Gregory who was right near me and Doc Tamagini—we called all corpsmen "Doc"—that was his first night in Vietnam. One night—so sad. But a wounded Marine—I never saw a corpsman hesitate. Usually the corpsman was not all the way up on the front and usually when you got in a fight the ones on the front were the first ones to get it. And always you can hear the word, "Corpsman up." And I never failed to see corpsmen run all the way to the front. Doc Dodsworth who—there was talk that he was going to be recommended for the Medal of Honor. He was never recommended for anything. He was from Chicago, Illinois. In an open field—he made four or five or six runs out into open field and drug a Marine back each time and somewhere—I don't know, I didn't observe it exactly—sometime around the fifth or sixth trip out there to drag a wounded Marine back he was fatally killed. And to me that's things that are deserving a Medal of Honor. Um, we lost our whole staff structure and he was never recommended for any award. But invariably—"Corpsmen up." They didn't pay any attention to their life. They didn't worry. They were right up there on the

front. I can remember one Marine being shot in the head and he was killed. But he didn't die immediately. And Doc Gregory—who was killed the night of the 15th—and this would have been three or four days before that. And it was in the afternoon and I ran down there and Doc Gregory's entire face was blood. I mean he was—and I run down there, and when I saw blood on him I thought he was the one. And he'd been trying to resuscitate the Marine that was shot in the back of the head and it came out right here and he had equally as much blood on him as the other one. And to carry it one step further—and I did spend quite a bit of time in the Naval support activity, which is the hospital in the rear, recovering from my wounds. And they had limited medical doctors. They put you on an assembly line. I happened to have an arm, shoulder, back and buttocks wound, and they sewed you up with wire. The reason they do that because of all the secondary infections over there. They'd undo the wire and open it and swab it out and put it back together and redo the wire again so the sutures over there were wire. And they had you on an assembly line. They'd roll you—where they'd go in your arm—boom. Roll you down to the next assembly line. They worked on your back—boom. Roll you right on down to work on other areas. But uh, typically what they would have happen is one medical doctor walking the assembly line. He'd be walking up and down. And all the actual surgery was medical corpsmen. I never saw a doctor do the operating. It was medical corpsmen—cutting and suturing and doing the work. Under the supervision the doctor would have depending on the time—twenty, forty. And he'd be walking up and down observing and looking and the corpsmen would be the ones doing all—and just recently, you—well you're not really that much experienced in Maryville. Dr. Tom Holder right here in Maryville just passed away. He was an eighteen-year-old corpsman on Iwo Jima. He came back and went to medical school. And he had beautiful Iwo Jima stories. But he was never sent out front. He was in the rear. And the reason he was kept in the rear is because his talents as a surgeon were so good that they didn't want him out there. They kept him in the rear operating on these thousands of Marines. So medical corpsmen have been—I saw them do everything from deliver babies to help the indigenous—but the dedication of medical corpsmen is extensive work. Most of 'em worked twelve-hour shifts seven days a week. But I can absolutely say from first hand experience. When there was a big battle and an excessive number of wounded Marines came in they didn't stop working at twelve hours. They worked twenty, twenty-two hours doing extensive—like multiple shrapnel wounds on my legs. I have seen a corpsmen fish for shrapnel in legs. And the leg would be all covered with iodine. And I have seen a corpsmen work on one Marine's legs for multiple shrapnel wounds—six, eight, ten hours—just very methodically trying to take metal out of the legs. So hats off. Highest of marks for the medical corpsmen.

PIEHLER: You felt like if you—and you were wounded—that you ... knew you were going to be taken care of?

SHORE: Yes. And I think I can say, too, the confidence level for the average Marine was great for the medical corpsmen really. And the confidence level in the rear—especially the Vietnam War. We had good medicine. We had quick medical evacuation. I have friends—double amputees—where in World War II they wouldn't have been alive. So they were able to do some wonderful things.

PIEHLER: On a more somber note—what about grave registration? Because in Vietnam—we don't bury our dead at the battlefield. They're evacuated. What's that process like as a commander?

SHORE: I wouldn't have had that job.

PIEHLER: No, but I mean—this is a very basic question, because most of my interviewing has been World War II so with Vietnam I always feel like I don't the know quite the questions—to ask the same way ...

SHORE: Okay. I'll tell you how it worked. One of my very close colleagues—who visits here and we visit him in Michigan—was an engineering officer and he was also graves registration. They had more depictive terms but what they done is freeze 'em. And they would stay frozen in massive big freezers. And in a big battle like the spring of '68 in Hue City—and they couldn't process them all so they bagged them and tagged them and froze them, and then waited until the proper time to process them. That was a job—I had one Marine come to me out of graves registration and he said, "Oh, I want out of that job." To this day if I walk around to the back of a truck and if somebody's laying in there I can't—it's one of those things I won't hardly look, because trucks were quite often the way we—trucks or tanks were usually the only way that we policed battlefields. And you just threw them up in there. And if it's a dead person there feet and legs are always distorted. They never—and if you walked around a truck in Vietnam, it's like I never wanted to look, 'cause if you saw those distorted feet and legs I there you knew they were dead. They were very effective at it, and what happened the resupply runs that came over—primarily C-141s bringing gear—they had metal coffins, and they didn't just designate big shipments out. When a resupply run would come over then that plane was filled. The bodies were frozen and processed for proper timing and then put on a -141 and shipped back to Dover, Delaware. That's where they all came in. So like in the spring of '68 there were so many KIAs that even into the fall of the year they were still processing them timely and sending them back. Back you're absolutely right. We don't leave people. And I think there's a big morale boost to that.

PIEHLER: You think it's done in part—soldiers want to know that if they die they're ...

SHORE: Oh, absolutely. And there's strange little things that go on in young Marines that I don't think I really understood or identified. It meant so much if a Marine died heroically fighting to the colleagues and the comrades around. After the battle they'd sit in there, and they'd talk. "Well PFC Jones died heroically." And I'm sitting there thinking, "He's dead. He's gone." And by the same token, if one would hide and show cowardice and die—oh, he was ostracized. And to me I never could sort out the difference. He's someone's child. He's an important person and he's dead. Now what distinguishes the difference? But so often that was the way they looked at it and I never felt that way. One thing—and you didn't ask me this—at the Basic School they said in World War II and Korea one out of every three active infantrymen would not shoot their weapon ...

PIEHLER: They did tell you the S.L.A. Marshall study [*Men Against Fire*]?

SHORE: Yes.

PIEHLER: Yeah that was—oh, interesting and ... What were you supposed to do to prevent that?

SHORE: They would tell us that and I was sitting there saying, “Nope. They lie.” (Laughter) “It ain’t true. There ain’t no way in the world.” You put me in front of somebody trying to kill me and I’m going to try to kill them first.

PIEHLER: So you were skeptical?

SHORE: Yeah I didn’t believe it. There were a few other things that I found to be absolutely true that I did not believe. I think I referenced in there. They taught us at the Basic School [to] shoot low ‘cause natural tendency is to shoot high. They were absolutely right. They were absolutely right. But some company commanders and battalion commanders would not let their lieutenants carry a rifle. And I never had one of those company commanders or battalion commanders. I always carried a rifle. And the reason for it was I don’t want the lieutenants participating in the firefights. That’s fun, that’s easy, that’s not your job. Your job is to direct the fire of fifty other Marines. And one of the first fights I was in—and it was just like a light come on. We were in a ditch line and we had a defined enemy and they were shooting us up real good and we were supposed to be shooting back real good. Well, initially I jumped right over in that ditch boy and I was shooting along with them, and it’s just like that ain’t your job. That’s not what you were trained. Back up here, direct the fire, and see what’s going on. And it was the most vivid thing. I backed up and I looked in that ditch line. I had Marines laying down praying. I had Marines laying down shooting at—holding it real high up like that shooting six foot in front of them. (Laughter) I had Marines shooting that weapon straight up in the air. Literally I found that probably that one-third was true. Absolutely shocking. But they would not shoot.

PIEHLER: And they had automatic weapons.

SHORE: Oh yes.

PIEHLER: I mean one of the things the military had done because of S.L.A. Marshall is move to automatic weapons ‘cause they figured it was easier for men to ...

SHORE: Easier and it’s less discriminate. In early wars it was unchivalrous, barbaric, whatever—the Battle of the Belleau Woods was where this first changed in World War I—to take aim and shoot your adversary. It was macho to shoot indiscriminate, and they found out it was a lot more effective. And the Japanese really showed the effectiveness of very discriminate marksmanship. And even myself—I found it easier. I participated in firefights. I had six hundred rounds the night of the fifteenth. One minute later I was totally empty. I did not have a single round left. And I found it easier, too, to shoot the automatic—the indiscriminant—instead of saying can I take aim and ...

PIEHLER: Kill one individually?

SHORE: Yes, and kill a person. So I agree wholeheartedly that it’s ...

PIEHLER: But it’s striking because there’s been a lot of controversy over S.L.A. Marshall. Where did he get that number one out of three?

SHORE: I can say my experience verifies him. And talking with other people of similar responsibilities—company commanders, platoon commanders and platoon sergeants—it was my experience that every one of them would verify the same thing. In fact I saw one Marine get shot. He walked up on a North Vietnamese soldier. North Vietnamese soldier was wounded and he was bringing his rifle around like that and instead of kicking the rifle out of his hand or killing him or something he stood there and looked at him. And the North Vietnamese soldier shot him in the abdomen. He did live. Another Marine run up there and killed the North Vietnamese soldier, but rather than ... If he didn't want to kill him, kick the rifle—he was wounded—out of his hand. But he just stood there. Wasn't going to take his life and came that close to giving his own life. One thing along that, too ... The big, bad Americans—the Marines—oh, when they saw little children it melted their hearts. And lots of little kids gave their lives indiscriminately in war. But I can say without exception that those big, bad Marines when they get those two and three year old children they show the proper ...

PIEHLER: Well that's interesting 'cause I've had a lot of students who speak as eighteen-year-olds knowing more than I do. (Laughs) Maybe some of the ROTC students—and one of the things—and I bring this up in discussions about laws in war and invariably they'll tell them the story—I mean they will portray it because they've seen enough movies or read enough accounts—that every child is armed with a booby trap in Vietnam.

SHORE: No. Oh, oh sad. I talk personal response to Marines and I talked respect for the indigenous people and that was an uphill battle. I wasn't always well received for teaching that. Uh, this is the best way I could explain it. Ten, twelve year old boy—his father had been killed—maybe his mother. Older brothers, other siblings had been killed by the bad Americans. A propagandist, a North Vietnamese soldier, a political leader, a Vietcong leader says to the ten, twelve-year-old boy, “Look. You're defending motherhood, country. Look what these bad Americans done. They killed your mother. They killed your father. Now here's what you can do. You're a child. You can take a hand grenade underneath your clothing—your wrap. You can walk right down in the middle of ten Americans, pull that hand grenade, and you are defending motherhood and country.” Properly handled how many ten, twelve-year-old boys would accept that challenge? Not only exclusively boys. Girls—most often it was boys. How many would accept that challenge? Would any US serviceman—Marine, Army, whatever—be proud to have killed a ten-year-old boy for an act like that? Would they have been? I dare say not.

PIEHLER: But you also told me a story that there were just a lot of kids who Marines really—they were not the enemy and ...

SHORE: Oh, absolutely. And even in the toughest of combat situations little kids—and I can say this almost without exception—melted the hearts of the big bad Marines. They don't have milk over there. And the real small children—infants weeks old—they're totally dependent on the mother's milk. That's the only form of milk. I have seen mothers killed—indigenous and indiscriminant—and that would leave a two, four-week-old baby. And their only other food really was rice. Occasionally a little duck or pork, but primarily rice. Another mother would take this two or four week old babe and they would chew rice in their mouth to what they thought was a palatable consistency and take their finger and take the rice out of their mouth and

put the rice in a four week old babe's mouth. And normally what happened is a brutal death of starvation. In another two to four weeks that two to four-week-old baby was dead. Anytime we saw that we tried to—or I would set up to—you come right here to the back of this gate every morning at 9:00 and you get a quart of milk. So we tried real hard to help those kids. We had inoculation programs. Plague, bubonic, cholera—oh, they had entire villages ... get wiped out from the diseases. And most of those we had vaccinations against and we would announce through a helicopter—leaflet drop—postings—that we'll be at the village square at 2:00 a certain afternoon and we will give medcaps—vaccinations for all the children. And I've seen little bitty kids and their arm wasn't as big as your finger and they would come through to get the vaccination—you know, our kids don't like to have shots. But these kids knew the importance of that shot and their little arm would be bleeding from the stick and you'd have to watch both arms because they thought if one would save them two was better. (Laughter) They turn right around and get right back in line to get a shot in the other arm. You tell that to six-year-old kids now—uh, uh. No shots. Period. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: It's interesting 'cause I once talked to—one of the people I interviewed had invented the Epipen for injections and he said—I mean it's a great story as a counterpoint—he said the reason this was invented because they couldn't get soldiers, the Marines, to give themselves shots for nerve gas. ... You could give them—you could say, "We're going to give you a weekend pass." They wouldn't do it. I mean they would not ...

SHORE: I can remember on Okinawa before you go down—you walk down this big old Quonset and literally shoot you four or five times, four or five times in that arm and all the way at the end you got the GG—the gammaglobulin—in the hip. And I kind of remember—and it didn't bother me to take shots—but I can remember big old two-hundred pounders about half way down that line—boom. Falling over just like a light. I mean passing out—kathug Hit that deck and could not handle, I guess, the visual image of those injections.

STAFFORD: Well you were talking about a lot of the civic programs like the medcaps ...

SHORE: Yes, very dear to my heart.

STAFFORD: You worked as an agricultural advisor?

SHORE: Yes.

STAFFORD: How was it that you had this change, I guess, of roles and what were some of the things that you did?

SHORE: After being wounded on June the 15th I was convalescing in the hospital. And I knew I didn't want to go back to the infantry. I had enough of that. I was concerned. Survivability takes over. Would I be able to do my job? And in the military was pretty adept to that. And normally if you were wounded two times—if you were an officer—if you were enlisted you were wounded three times. They get you out of there and send you back to the States. But if you got two significant wounds and you'd seen—you'd been there six months and seen your part—they did have compassion. They would get you out of there. Well I was looking for another assignment—actively looking. And a message came out looking for a company grade

officer—which is second, first lieutenant [and] by then I was first lieutenant, and captain—and it was looking for one with a bachelor of science degree in agriculture to be a Vietnamese—or to be an agricultural advisor to the Vietnamese. Oh, I saw that I was so excited. I won it by default. I was the only one in the 1st Marine Division that had a degree in agriculture. So I welcomed that job and I pioneered it. I was the first. The Vietnamese society was 98% agrarian, so we needed to appeal to the agrarian society. I had no guidelines. I had no written procedures to do. The commanding general who was a Texas A&M graduate in agriculture back in the '30s—an unbelievable individual. He basically said you're the pioneer. Just do something that works and helps these people. And I had great latitude. I could go and come and I had support from U.S. companies—corporations. I brought over sewing machines, anthelmintics—which are for internal parasites. I got swine imported from Iowa. We—I worked with CORE, CARE, USAID. Catholic Relief Society was probably the most cooperative one of the bunch. They seemed to have ...

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO-----

PIEHLER: This continues an interview with Ed Shore on April 16th, 2001—though I think I've said on all the tapes April 16th. It's really April 17th, but we'll correct that in the transcribing phase. April 17th, 2001, but to be consistent—in Louisville, Tennessee with Kurt Piehler and ...

STAFFORD: Shelley Stafford.

PIEHLER: And you were saying that you'd gotten both sort of Marine support but also you were able to get private support and aid support. And you were saying ... you had one—there were some accomplishments you had.

SHORE: And I am quite proud of those. And it needed to be in a sequence. Being in a destructive side of it the first half made the constructive side of it very, very rewarding—and there's another little caveat here too. When I would go out into Marine infantry units to talk to the Marines about don't kill the people's chickens and pigs. Respect the indigenous people, their values. And I would go out to implement agriculture programs. Oh I was not that kindly. I would have Marine lieutenants say to me, "What are you doing here? I'm here to kill these people. You're a coward. You're not a real Marine." And by the fact that I had achieved my own success as the destructive side—as a combat infantryman—I could handle it. Now if I tried to do it in reverse the first one of those Marines that were saying to me, "What are you doing here. You're a coward. You don't belong. You're not a real Marine." I couldn't have handled that. So it needed to fit in the right sequence. But I did have—ABC shot a program on me on—and basically what we done, we had an indigenous pig that at full growth may have thirty, forty pounds. At weaning six weeks a first generation crossbreed with a purebred swine from Iowa would be double the size of the mother at six weeks. Oh and then we showed the picture—the graduated scale—the picture of the purebred swine from America. And I even used bartering items to get them to accept my crossbreeding program and one of them was—they had no wood over there—so ammo crates were readily available if you got in the rear around artillery units and I would give ammo crates to get them to accept my program. But once they accepted it and they saw that first generation of pigs be double the size—which means twice the amount of pork—oh you didn't have to tell them any more. We introduced a hybrid rice. It was called IR-8. And one of the biggest problems they had with rice over there was lodging, meaning the

stalk—the stem was real tall. And it would fall over in the water, thus useless. So the hybrid rice was real short. The stem was short. And they equated that the taller rice had more value to them when it was exactly opposite. Our IR-8 would increase their yield sixty-six percent the first year. But they didn't want to do it because of the short shank. We done everything in the world to get them to accept the IR-8 rice and again after that first year—oh they'd come looking for it. But we went so far as to try to use their military to get them—force them to use the hybrid rice. Well that seemed to be counter of what we were there for: to help them and then using their military to force them. But we had lots of good programs like that. The battalion commander of the MPs—if they caught indigenous people with U.S. currency they took it away from them. And if they caught the Vietnamese with military payment certificates they'd take them away and say, "They weren't authorized." So—and I kept good accounting. They would give me the military payment certificates to use in my program and I would go to the Base Exchange to buy goods for the people. And the two items that all the Vietnamese liked the best were the Salem cigarettes. They were menthol cigarettes—oh they loved—and I'm a nonsmoker. I never bought cigarettes but that was their number one choice. They also liked Seagram's Seven whiskey, which I never gave either. (Laughs) And the other favorite one was Ritz crackers. So, strange little foods that they liked. Occasionally we would have—we would feed the populace or a part of them. And we would set up a table of food or continuous—three or four tables of food like we would do here. And whatever the food—you know, you'd have different foods—salads, breads, main course, desserts, vegetables, whatever—and they did not know how to eat it. The first food that they came to—that's the only one they would eat. They had never been exposed to foods like we had.

PIEHLER: Where you eat several different foods at the same ...

SHORE: You would have to show them how, because if your first food was salad, that's all they ate. (Laughter) And they would literally eat until you would just see that their stomachs puff up—but they did not know to sample the different foods, so it was real, real interesting. I learned a few Vietnamese words. *Nuoc da nuoc* was ice water, and ice was a real, real delicacy over there. You paid five bucks for a small piece of ice because you just—nothing was cold. And in a hundred and thirty degrees—when I would go into villages to implement the programs they always wanted to impress you. They wanted to give you the Seagram's Sevens or cigarettes or Pepsi cola, and I learned to say, "*Nuoc da nuoc*—give me ice water." (Laughter)

STAFFORD: Well I'm interested—the show that ABC did about the pigs. Did that air in the United States during Vietnam?

SHORE: Yes it did. It came out in some magazine somewhat later and somewhere I have—and it just had pictures of the three different pigs and an interview as to what I was trying to implement. Along about the late '60s in the war—this had been early '69, late '68—there was specific emphases on winning the hearts and minds of the people—not the devastation forcing them. And it fit with our total mission, but it was not easily implemented. Many, many military commanders felt, "I'm a fighting machine. I am graded on how well I execute, how well I commanded, and how many I killed." And that to me is very sad. Our mission over there was to help the people and allow them to govern themselves and how best do we accomplish that. And I was a real, real strong advocate of winning the hearts and minds, but ... I'll have to say I was in

a minority. The commanding general—oh, he always supported me when others got after me or ...

PIEHLER: I'm just curious. Who was your commanding general?

SHORE: Ormond R. Simpson. Outstanding. He was just—if I ever patterned anyone a role model, it would have been him. He had unbelievable regimentation. He was in his late 50s then. He worked twenty hours a week. He was on top of it. He knew how to run.

PIEHLER: And he was a ...

SHORE: Major General.

PIEHLER: But he was not an Annapolis man?

SHORE: No, Texas A&M class in the '30s. He is still alive today or was in his late eighties at least in the last year or so he's still alive. And he had great compassion and he knew the value of military tactics, but by the same token he knew the value of winning the hearts and minds and that was the ultimate way to win the war. I got to brief then Secretary of the Navy John Warner, who is now a U.S. Senator from Virginia. I got to brief him in '69—early '69—on what—and he was interested, too—and specifically what our programs were to win the hearts and minds. And that was such a minor part of the whole emphasis in the war and if we were going back to that war again, in retrospect, we should have had much, much greater emphasis on meeting the people's needs instead of the force and the destructive side. And I believe in that so strongly.

PIEHLER: Well, Because it's actually among historians it's been very controversial and I—is the body count and how it was used to measure success, and I've often—organizations develop ways to measure success and you know—and the body count. It was very seductive to measure. I can see why it was done but also you're saying that that ...

SHORE: It is the wrong evaluation tool. It was an absolute farce of a joke—absolute farce. I can remember very specifically calling artillery major—indiscriminant artillery—and pounding an area real good. Maybe just a reconnaissance or an H&I—harassing and interdicting—and invariably five minutes after the firing mission was over they're on that radio, "How many bodies?" And I would say, "I ain't out there. It's three hundred yards ahead of us. I don't know." And the message would come back, "Well we expended four hundred rounds of artillery. Our chart that we have to fill out here to justify four hundred rounds of artillery. How many KIAs? How many bodies?" And I never succumbed to it. I never did. But I had colleagues and friends that after a while they'd say, "Oh, what the heck. Five, eight. What kind number do you want to hear?" And I never did it—never one time. "I don't know—and put all the pressure on me that you want to. I don't see any bodies out here. I don't know. Now if you got to fill your report out you fill it out, but I'm not going to pull a number out of the air." But oh, it was done. And to me again—and even this night of the 15th—I don't know where they came up with that twenty-four. I don't know. Just recently, just Sunday, I was talking to a Marine that was also awarded the Silver Star. He lives in Endicott, New York. And he and I were reflecting. He was right there, and he did not get wounded—but you know since I was wounded I was medevaced a little earlier—but he said to me, "I think there was probably fifteen

of them. What do you think?” And I said, “Fifteen to me seems like a better number than twenty-four. I don’t know.” And I don’t know to this day who pulled that number twenty-four out of the air. There were a lot of them. And Jim Wojisek and I, who should have been the two best ones to count, and he thinks there were fifteen and I think fifteen is probably closer than twenty four. But they used the wrong evaluation stick. And I think this can be attributed to McNamara. He was an analyst, and he revolutionized Ford motor company. How much does it cost to put a fender on? Everything had to be analytical to him, and somewhere he said if we spend four hundred rounds of artillery you got to have four bodies to produce. And that’s not the nature of war. I think if it can be attributed to anywhere it was his statistical analysis that says everything has to be analyzed. One very interesting sideline from that. Schwarzkopf, who I really admire—wow. Great, great, great leader, and I think history will reveal that as time goes by maybe right up there with the very greatest. And one thing he said from the start, “There will be no report of body counts in this war. Period. Go on to the next question. That will not be a part of the evolution process in this war.” It wasn’t in World War II, Korea. And I have to attribute this analytical thing to Robert McNamara—and disgusting. It made a farce out of the actual happenings.

PIEHLER: Were you ever interviewed during the war by a journalist—well, you were interviewed for the ABC series. Were you ever interviewed in any other cases, or were you ever given—interviewed by a Marine Corps historian?

SHORE: Yes, in a bed in a hospital in Da Nang sometime late June. I never saw documentation after it. I never saw it air in anything. But I did—and I did not like the nature of the interview. At that point in time I had nothing but absolute dedication, patriotism, and loyalty to what the mission was. And the nature of the interview was a little bit more sarcastic and it wasn’t a long interview. I guess they figured out I wasn’t going to say the things that they wanted. And I didn’t like the demeanor and you know—I basically very quickly said, “I’m a Marine officer. I’m here to support. Don’t you question loyalty, patriotism, mission in anyway.” And very quickly they went on to somebody that was going to tell them a little more. We had correspondents that would go out with us on operations. We had two women in Hue City. And wow, were they brave or crazy! (Laughter) They’d get right up there where the bullets were. I personally do not recall giving an interview with either one of them. I know several Marines that did. And I’ll say this, too, on those two—and I respected that. They did not want to interview lieutenants, captains, or majors. They wanted to interview privates, and I respected that. They are the queen of combat. That’s where the action is. And if you really want to know how it is that’s where your interview needs to be. And these two girls—boy, they were right up there and they would—and they loved the privates. And I guess that’s where they got what the true feelings were, not what you were told—indoctrinated.

STAFFORD: Did you get R&R?

SHORE: Yes.

STAFFORD: Where did you go for R&R?

SHORE: Yes. I was scheduled to go on R&R the first time the 18th of June. I was wounded on the 15th. I was able to get the message to my wife not to go on to Hawaii without me. After

going through the healing process I was able to meet my wife in Hawaii on the 22nd day of August. The 23rd day of August—even though I was gone—was very, very memorable. My platoon sergeant, Sergeant Thedford, who was awarded the bronze star the night of the 15th, was killed that afternoon. Squad leader Corporal Jenkins was killed that afternoon. My replacement and very, very close colleague Lieutenant Collins got his shoulder shot almost completely off. That was his third Purple Heart. And several other members of my platoon—which wasn't my platoon any longer but to me they were still mine. And needless to say R&R was absolutely great. It was a tough time on my wife. She lived with her mother. Economics forced that. My son was born December the 19th, 1967, so she had a very small child. And we had several other lieutenants—and she would hear from wives—were getting killed and mentally it was very, very difficult on her. But R&R was absolutely great. Then when I transferred back to the rear I was able to get another R&R. Probably wasn't authorized, but when they asked me if I wanted it I didn't turn it down. (Laughter) So I went to Okinawa for nine days on the second R&R. Again, you aren't authorized to but I changed units and they asked me if I wanted to go and I didn't say, "No. Wait a minute I've already been on one." I said, "Sure, why not."

STAFFORD: Well, I have questions—I've read about the rotation system and I was curious—I read accounts that towards the beginning of the war it was something that improved morale because people thought they would just be there for one year, and then towards the end of the war it damaged morale because people didn't want to feel like they were, you know, spending a year and they didn't know when it would be over. Do you agree with that? What do you think of the role of rotation?

SHORE: That was often discussed. And first of all, all Marines were thirteen months.

STAFFORD: Okay.

SHORE: All Army, Navy, and Air Force was one year. I don't know why the Marines go thirteen months. I spent exactly thirteen months and all fortunate Marines did. You know, in World War II you were there for the duration. I have mixed feelings. The first day you get there you write down 384 days left—321—and boy, when you get down to the last couple of weeks it's obviously a momentous time in your life. It gave me something to look forward to. I think it did most. I think it was morale building to have the rotation system. And along that same line though—this is so very interesting. You would have twice wounded combat Marines that just absolutely couldn't wait to go home. He would go home, get put in a garrison type atmosphere where you had everything inspected everyday and you were not anything important, whereas in combat you were somebody. In that atmosphere you were important. You were the go-to guy. And they would stay twenty or thirty days back here and you'd look up one day and you'd see them right back over there and I'd say, "You crazy thing. You were so anxious about going home." And they would say, "I'm somebody over here. I'm important. I don't have some corporal hollering at me and telling me to shine my boots and get my hair cut. I'm back over here where I'm somebody important." And I kept on thinking, yeah; you're back over here where you're enhancing your chances of getting killed. (Laughs) When I came back home did I ever want to go back? No way.

STAFFORD: Well I guess we can move on to when you came home unless you have any more questions about ...

PIEHLER: Well I guess—you arrived in January ...

SHORE: Yes. Late January.

PIEHLER: Just shortly before Tet.

SHORE: No, I got there right after Tet. Tet had already started.

PIEHLER: That's right—so you landed into Tet.

SHORE: Yes. I reported into the 1st Marine Division rear, and all officers got accorded a small briefing from the commanding general. And myself, one more lieutenant and a major came in together. The commanding general—you know, he was very busy. It was a very simple briefing. And he said all Marines coming in, all Marine officers are going to Hue City—5th Marines. He said they have corporal company commanders up there. He said there killing all lieutenants. They're snipping them off the citadel. And I remember him looking at me and the other lieutenant and he said, "That's where you're going and chances are you're gonna get killed." And I'm thinking, oh wow—scared to death.

PIEHLER: But he was also pretty honest.

SHORE: Oh, very honest, and that's the way he needed to be. Well we get up to Phu Bai—we take a helicopter up to Phu Bai that evening. And the Marines had not been paid and had not had mail forwarded into Hue City. Phu Bai was three or four miles away—a staging area—regimental headquarters. And they said, "Does one of you want to stay over here tonight and be the paying officer and deliver the mail for tomorrow?" And I said, "Oh yes. Me!" (Laughs) And the major—Major Jay Stahl—I'll never forget him. He was career Marine, and when we were checking into division rear I was thinking I ain't in no hurry to get up there. And the other lieutenant was just like me. And this major was just going wild. When we got into Phu Bai he ran out there on the helicopter pad to figure out how he could get into combat that night. And the poor guy got killed that night, too—that first night. But I arrived right—actually Hue had been really a big battle and I got there after the biggest battle had been fought. And my real sign that there was only one bridge left over the Perfume River. And we had a full rifle company—two hundred plus Marines. We had very distinct orders—hold that bridge because if they had blown that bridge, and the Marines were hemmed in—oh no—in Hue City. The only way off was by air, boat, or something—there was no way back. So we defended the bridge and we had some pretty good fights. They wanted to blow that last bridge. My—I don't want to over glamorize my experience in Hue City. It was holding one silly bridge. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: Didn't you want to ask a question about rifles? The M-14 to M-16—yeah, which is a good question. I often forget to ask about weapons.

SHORE: And I'm very opinionated on that.

PIEHLER: Oh, good. I'm glad I reminded—let me compliment you—it was a sign you've really done your homework.

STAFFORD: Thanks.

PIEHLER: And I often believe that I'll forget to ask about weapons, which I know I should ask more ...

STAFFORD: Well I was interested because—I almost asked it when you were talking about how people would—you know, when the machinegun started being more in use because people wouldn't want to take, you know, one shot and shoot another person per se and more just the spray. What kind of effect did the M-14 to the M-16 have on troops and the way that they fought or the way that—I guess the morale—if it affected that at all?

SHORE: I can speak very, very opinionated to that. When I came back to Camp Pendleton—I don't know what ever happened to it—but I did have an extensive interview. And they choose like six or ten, I don't remember—lieutenants. And part of the criteria was you had to be wounded and you had to be recognized with something—Bronze Star, Silver Star, some kind of citation to document—to substantiate that you had first line action. Oh, I spoke into a tape—very long. I never did hear about it anymore. And they said at the time it would go into some kind of ...

(Tape Paused)

PIEHLER: You were saying—sorry to pause.

SHORE: I spoke as opinionated then as I will now. And I'll give you a little bit of background. When I first got to Vietnam we had three, four, or five guys who just absolutely did not want to carry the M-16. They wanted to carry the M-14. Well they knew I was not that strongly opinionated. I'd have to listen to them. I had not drawn my own conclusions. I did not know. So that was alright with me to have—and I think it was only three or four or five guys that wanted to continue to carry the M-14. I can't pinpoint the timeframe but within two or three weeks—certainly not over thirty days—they absolutely would not have anything to do with the M-14. Did not want it under any conditions. It was heavy, cumbersome, clumsy. The ammo was a whole lot heavier. They couldn't carry half as much ammo and they did not like lugging that big old clumsy rifle around. And they absolutely discarded it. From three to five guys demanding it and that's the only weapon. Two to three weeks later you could not have forced them to carry that thing. The M-16 was so light you could, depending on how you had your canteen, it would almost carry itself. You could do anything in the world with it. And I have no doubt in my mind the M-16 is the best, greatest assault weapon ever. The AK-47 was pretty good. It really was. We had fam-fires [familiarization fires] and shoot offs. And the AK-47 was good—a lot better than the M-14. Now by the time I got there in early '68—the first thing you looked for if the barrel of your M-16 was a C. The C meant the chamber had been chromed. Now if you didn't find that C on there, throw that thing away. And I do understand that early on the ones that didn't have the chrome chamber had much, much more problems jamming. I can say with extensive trials by fire, I can never remember one time, I can never remember one Marine saying his M-16 jammed on him. And I can remember carrying these things through swamps, mud, filth—and we would fam-fire them—familiarization fire them after three or four days of mud and filth. And most of the time when we would fam-fire, I was a big proponent of

if you can get a resupply run get all brand new ammunition. Don't take a chance. Throw it away. Detonate it, because if you had been carrying it around four or five days in the swamp, in the mud, don't take a chance on it jamming—messing your weapon up. So quite often, if I could schedule a full resupply run, and it's just throwing it away or detonating it—we'd shoot it up. And sometimes it was with the purpose—it was continued marksmanship. And it was with the purpose of seeing—this is the three or four grungiest rifles in the unit. Get them up here and shoot a thousand rounds and see if that thing is going to jam. And I'm very happy to sit right here thirty-two years later and report that I can never see a chromed chamber M-16 jam. It had a tremendous wallop to it. It didn't have true rifling. The M-14 had true rifling. The M-16 had rifling at an angle. And they would say you could hit someone in the finger—because of the way the rifling was—it tore their whole arm off. It really packed a wallop. I always carried six-hundred rounds myself because I had other goodies to carry. But I had lots of tested combat Marines—early on you couldn't get them to carry a thousand rounds. You couldn't force them to. If they run out of ammo one time they'd carry a thousand rounds every time after that. (Laughter) And I had many, many Marines that would carry one thousand rounds of M-16 ammo. If you can carry four hundred rounds on an M-14—those big old cumbersome magazines—then carry the M-14, you would have been a real strong, exceptional Marine. So any contrast that I would make with the M-14 and the M-16 would be to the horse and buggy and the Lexus.

STAFFORD: Okay. I guess just one last question about your time in Vietnam that I'm interested in—did you notice any change from the time that you arrived in Vietnam to the time that you left in the morale of the troops or of people who you—military personnel, whether Marines or anybody else that you encountered?

SHORE: Good question. Morale in combat is not a continuous thing. You can be in a fight and—the measuring stick in combat—I see the winners of the Super Bowl and the exhilaration. Now I've obviously never been to a Super Bowl, but I can equate and I can say the exuberance and the jubilation after a firefight where the stakes are much higher than winning or losing a sporting contest—the stakes are death or severe injury. And to survive—to come out of something like that, the morale and the jubilation, the camaraderie—whatever you want to term it—can be the absolute highest in the world. The highest you ever get from anything. I survived. I'm alive. Yet you can continue the operation—fifteen to thirty minutes later in the same setting you can get in a fight again and literally get your rear end kicked and death and despair and bodies lying around you. And as fast as that morale was sky high, oh, it can go to the depths of despair. I mean just within short times. So morale in combat is not a continuous thing. There's so many variables, and it's so up and down. Morale also is such a direct result of the strength of the leadership. If the leadership is poor in quality the morale can be very low. But for me to speak specifically to that question I would say I observed no real difference that I could tell. And then again recognizing morale can be specific to units. Some would have good high self-esteem, self-confidence, high morale. And others who didn't have confidence in their leadership would have low self-esteem and low confidence. And it's amazing, and the word travels. You can put two units together. In our battalion C Company was referred to as Cinderella Company. Literally. They did not have—and even when we get together today the topic will come out. Well old Cinderella Company was always our weak sister. So within a battalion or even within a company you had such varying degrees, but overall my observation would be no appreciable difference. Before we leave this let me speak to one other thing. I like

to evaluate how people react and what motivates people. It's the interpersonal dealings during such trying and stressful times, and one thing that amused me or intrigued me was how you could—what procedures you used—not necessarily used—were used to motivate people to almost terminal missions. And it's amazing the way it could be handled—and it had to do with morale and confidence in the overall situation. And one that I saw used over and over—and I think you can—you being a war historian, both of you, in World War II would see this. You could appeal to, "You are selected for this mission. There's only one reason you are selected. You are the best." And it is the thought of my position within my peers—sustaining that position. Survivability being the strongest—I will walk into a terminal situation because my peers look at me as the best. And I've often thought to face almost your death—that one simple thing. You're chosen because you're the best. It'll motivate young men. I don't think it would motivate old men too well. (Laughter) But it will motivate young men to accept almost sure, or terminal missions. And that one motivational factor has been used throughout the history of war and combat. And sometimes if you need—like in flight missions you need two airplanes to fly this mission, and there's ten pilots there and six of them says I want to go. And the two usually that win out and go are the two that enjoy that high position of esteem within their units. I always found that intriguing how people tend to use that to motivate people to such extremes.

PIEHLER: I'm curious how much contact did you have with say, the South Vietnamese Army and other—and say, any contact ever with the South Korean or Australian or other forces?

SHORE: Good question. Limited experience with the Australians. They were more in an advisory capacity. They'd have two or three within a battalion. Now I'll tell you what the Australians were noted most for in Vietnam. I've never been to Australia, but they have a real powerful beer. It's so much higher percentage alcohol than our beer. (Laughter) They would have these two or three within a battalion, and there was always a challenge to see who could drink down an Australian. And I can remember one gunnery sergeant coming from the U.S. and he was big—like 245, and he was up in his thirties—and he was bragging about what he can drink. So the Australians get their three or four supporters and the Marines are going to see this drinking contest. Well, the Aussies never lost a drinking contest. (Laughter) So that's what I remember about the Australians.

South Vietnamese—I'm glad you brought that up. We had many, many joint operations. I was not impressed. We would go out on a joint operation and normally they would be less than half of them mixed with half Marines. They had a different mission for the day. They were going home to their families for the evening. And they were looking for a pig to kill to stuff in their sack to feed their family that night, or chickens to kill. We weren't having to feed a family, so they had a different goal. I'll tell you this. A very, very funny thing. And it was on Operation Allenbrook between the first two weeks in June, and we had South Vietnamese integrated right into our platoon. We've set in a night defensive perimeter. It's a circle just exactly like this table, and in the center would be the command structure—your forward air controller, corpsman, platoon sergeant, platoon leader, whatever—mortars. And I can remember setting up this perimeter and drawing it out in the sand—Marine, Vietnam, Marine, Vietnamese—all the way around that thing. Well it gets dark and real close to me I hear all this Vietnamese. And I'm saying, "What's going on? These guys are supposed to be on their perimeters?" So I go over to my counterpart the Vietnamese lieutenant. I draw in the sand again just like that and I said, "Marine, Vietnam, Marine, Vietnam." All the way around through there and he erases that out

and he draws a big old circle like that and he says, “Marine, Marine, Marine, Marine.” And right in the middle he says, “Vietnamese.” (Laughter) And that kind of typified it. I said, “Uh uh. You get your infantryman out there. And that’s the way they were. Plus see we fought thirteen months and came back. Their forces fought indefinitely. And they had their families there. They weren’t motivated—they didn’t have the discipline, the training, the patriotism—they were an inferior force. Now the North Vietnamese—wow. They were good. Anyone that every faced the North Vietnamese Army in a dug out confrontation—hats off! The North Vietnamese regulars had a mission, a goal. Well trained, well equipped and would fight you to the end. Very, very good. I cannot speak very favorably of the South Vietnamese fighting forces. Graft, corruption, and all the things that go along with it was rampant within the South Vietnamese Army. And you cannot have a fighting force where you have those kind of things. The North Vietnamese did not have it, but the South Vietnamese—it was awful. It was deplorable. In retrospect we could not have enabled them to win the war. We could have won it. But there to support them, to train them—they weren’t interested. They didn’t have any of the criteria to be a fighting force to oppose a real fighting force like the North Vietnamese.

PIEHLER: I’m curious, what do you think of the whole POW/MIA issue that’s—I mean there’s still people who are convinced that the North Vietnamese—the Vietnamese have Americans held captive.

SHORE: I don’t think so at all. And here’s a little scenario. I had a classmate—John R. Hagan. He was from Savannah, Georgia. He was a Vanderbilt graduate. He was an aerial observer in an OV-10. And the plane was [in] flames going down and crashes. They never found his body. They never found anything. Do you know to today he is listed as an MIA? Now I’ll give you another one. We had ...

-----END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE-----

SHORE: ... that was in our battalion. They were not in my company—my platoon. I did not know them. We were on a bridge south of Da Nang. Now two Vietnamese girls came up the river on a little old boat—pontoon—and they encouraged two Marines—all the other Marines on the bridge saw them get in the boat, go down the river. Those two Marines were never seen, never heard from again. They were listed as MIAs. What is the likelihood of those two Marines being MIAs? This long, this timeframe—and you know there’s still thoughts of, “Oh, there’s some POWs in Korea, too.” I don’t think there are any. There’s some unaccounted for people, but I don’t prefer to have them as prisoner of war/MIAs. They’re unaccounted for casualties. That’s my say so.

STAFFORD: Well, I guess if you want to talk about maybe the last week or so that you had in Vietnam and knowing that you were going home. What was going through your mind?

SHORE: Ecstatic. I was at division rear. And probably—we had six of us slept to a strong back tent. I had a fan and I had one of these little two-foot by two-foot refrigerators. I ate three meals a day. And it was good duty—period. But there were always—we did get mortared, though limited. And there were those stories of sappers being in between. So about the last two weeks I dug me a very deep bunker right outside the old strong back and slept in that every night. I said I don’t want to go through all this and get this close and get wasted through some silly mortar

round or some sapper. And I remember in the evenings, and it was fine, I'd go out there and crawl in that well entrenched bunker. So call it whatever, that's the way I spent my last couple weeks—ten days or whatever—in Vietnam. Really looking forward to returning home. And looking forward to reuniting with family and friends and getting on with the rest of my life, but also looking back on the most demanding, trying thirteen month period of my life and being able to reflect with extreme pride, honor and confidence at what I had achieved and had been recognized by the awards that I have received. Totally fulfilling, exhilarating at that point in time.

STAFFORD: As you were about to go home had you heard any reports of what was going on in the United States about any of the controversial issues of civilians—with civilians about the Vietnam war. Did you know kind of what to expect?

SHORE: Yes, had heard that and when I went over in January of '68 I flew into Treasure Island, San Francisco. And that was Haight-Ashbury, the hippy capital of the movement of the world. Now—and we had been told to prepare our young Marines. And the hippies were there and they would grab these eighteen-year-old Marines—and they're soul desire was to get them to miss a movement. Missing a movement in combat is punishable by general court marshal and the regulations say you can be executed for it. Of course no one in Vietnam was, but the sanctions for missing a movement in combat are—in your way to Vietnam—was serious. Well these girls would grab these young eighteen-year-old Marines coming off the plane and they would say go with us. Make love not war. Now I actually saw some of those hippies. They didn't hassle Marine officers because they knew that was a useless cause. (Laughter) But eighteen-year-olds—and oh, you'd be surprised how many of those guys fell for it! And then they would take them out and hold them two or three days and then they'd say go on your way now. We've accomplished our objective. And then these young Marines would come down, and they'd be AWOL and they'd send them on to Vietnam. And I've had them come in and they would say oh, I thought we were going—and I got tricked. And most of the time after the Marine Corps figured out what was doing they just looked the other way. Oh, we'll fine him twenty-five dollars and send him on to Vietnam and put in his record that he was late or tardy. And that was the end of it. So yes, I did know about those movements.

PIEHLER: What happened when you came home? Where did you come home to and what happened? Who greeted you?

SHORE: I flew in to Edwards Air force Base, LA—or near LA And immediately went to LA airport. I'll say this on a note of laughter, I guess. When I left in January of '68 ladies wear was dresses below the knee. (Laughs) I came in to LA in '69, and the styles had changed. It was miniskirts. And after thirteen months in Vietnam I had never seen anything like it. It was great. (Laughter) But I know that's not what you were asking, but I had to throw that in there.

PIEHLER: No, no. I think it's a great ...

SHORE: It was an experience. Again, I personally had the greatest of confidence, self-esteem, and nothing was going to change that to sway my resolve in my self-confidence. I never one time encountered any difficulty, any animosity, anything other then good vibes period. Now I do understand other colleagues—and I've heard they were called baby killers and whatever.

PIEHLER: But you never were? You never had a civilian go up to you and ...

SHORE: Never, never. Not one single time. And I don't know whether it was the air—wearing the uniform of an officer or—I don't know. I do know that some were approached with adversity. Never, not one single time, did that happen to me. And I guess I'm thankful. I could have dealt with it because nothing would have affected my confidence or my resolve, but it never happened one single time.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, did you vote in the '68 election?

SHORE: Yes, I did. Voted in Vietnam. The last Democratic president I ever voted for.
(Laughs)

PIEHLER: So you voted for Hubert Humphrey over Nixon?

SHORE: I did vote for Hubert Humphrey because I was still in this bleeding heart for feeding the populace in this society, and I can absolutely say that's the last—well I still vote for Democrats in local elections, and I voted for one Democrat governor—McWhorter in Tennessee. But I'm very, very conservative somewhere after that.

STAFFORD: Well, what—you mentioned the change in the styles once you returned home. Where there any other impressions of home that you noticed that were just significant changes?

SHORE: Never really thought of it. And just to answer that right off, not any that I can think of right on the spot and I don't think it would have been significant.

PIEHLER: Except the miniskirts.

SHORE: Oh yes. (Laughter) I remember that very distinctly. I'd never seen anything like that.

PIEHLER: You would stay in—I guess my question is how long did you stay in the Marines after actually landing back in LA, because you ended up going back to the Air Reserve unit? Is that ...

SHORE: Yes, yes I did. I got back March of '69 and my normal ETS was first day of June, 1970. I stayed at Camp Pendleton, and we'll have to say that I was a better combat Marine than a garrison Marine. I did not particularly like the spit and polish and the degree of regulations and the total conformity. And in retrospect had I chosen to stay in the Marine Corps, even though I had a tremendous combat record, I would not have been a successful Marine officer and I know that. I don't think it's a reflection of my abilities. I—even to this day, I like working for myself. I would not have fit in and I do not—I have a tendency to want to march to my own drum. I set up a very high set of standards for myself—extremely high. No one has to set my standards for me. And I have a habit of achieving them, but—in the Air National guard I got short stopped. I got out as a major. I took some very strong opinionated issues and the Air National guard is a highly political—it is very, very motivated political—it's not a reflection of your talents. Who do you know? And I have a habit if I believe in something strongly I will say it. I don't set in a

square and follow the norm, so—and I would not have been a high-ranking Marine officer. Left in combat—if I hadn't been killed—I think I could have risen to high levels. In garrison, political type atmosphere—I didn't drink. I didn't smoke. I didn't fit a lot of the typical images of Marines so ...

PIEHLER: Which it sounds like in Vietnam that's a common—drinking and smoking are ...

SHORE: Totally. There were two lieutenants in the whole 1st Marine Division. The other was Lieutenant Wilson. He was a Mormon. He was from Salt Lake City, Utah. He and I were—oh, you're that other lieutenant or you're the only two lieutenants that don't drink in the whole division. (Laughter) And that was all right with me. I wasn't swayed by the peer pressure. That was my own set of standards. I grew up in a family where my father was a total alcoholic and I said well, alcohol is not going to be a part of my life under any conditions. And to this day I have stuck to that. I saw what it done and what it can do. And it didn't bother me that I was one of the two. That was my chosen way.

STAFFORD: Well I guess—once you came home when did you start looking for a job outside of the military and what was that like?

SHORE: Okay, I was in a casualty company at Camp Pendleton and we were all awaiting medical evaluation so we did nothing. We absolutely done nothing. We played ball. (Laughter) We done whatever we wanted to and collected our government check. Which ... after what I'd been through that's all right. I didn't have to back up to the pay line. Send me that check. I paid my dues. So we had lots of time to seek interviews, to write letters, to do whatever to pursue a career after the military. Every one of us had a goal not to accept less money then we were making when we were being discharged as second—or first lieutenants. That was—first lieutenants were making eight hundred and fifty dollars a month. Oh, that was big. Three years earlier we was making two hundred dollars a month. So that's the time frame when military pay started to jump. And you could live comfortably at that point in time on that. And I was the only aggie. So ... we were all sitting around there and we would all share our interview experiences and everyone had the same goal not to back up. And everyone's saying, "Shore, you're an aggie. You'll get hit harder than any of us. What's an aggie gonna do?" Well I had several interviews and I had several offers. I was kind of intrigued by the drug industry. So I had an offer from Pfizer, Atlas Chemical and the Upjohn Company, and I choose to accept the Upjohn Company's offer. And the starting salary was eight hundred and sixty dollars a month. (Laughs) And many, many others—and I was proud to go back to the unit and say, "I didn't back up. My starting salary is more." But many of them had to back up to seven—seven fifty or whatever. I found two things in the interview process. If you were interviewing with a veteran—a World War II veteran primarily or even earlier Vietnam veteran—just a veteran with military experience, and he had an open mind or maybe [he] related, and he looks on your records and sees your awards then it was a real plus. If you were interviewed—I interviewed Roche—the company was Fritz Hoffman-La Roche at that time—big drug company. They paid better than anybody. And the guy that was interviewing me flew out to LA from Chicago and he—I detected right early that military awards meant nothing to him. And I did not have a good interview. I have my standards. I would probably have chosen Roche over Upjohn all factors being equal, but the guy that flew out from Chicago to interview me—he and I—and I would not have worked for him. Period. So I found if you happen to get in a company that put emphasis on

that, then the better your military record the better off you were. But the opposite, too. If they did not like the military then it could be a detriment. So my particular boss—he was a Cornell graduate from upstate New York and he had been in the Strategic Air Command. A great individual and he was impressed with military achievements—and that wasn't the only reason I got the job—but that was certainly a help to me in employment.

STAFFORD: How long did you—how long did you stay with them before you decided to either go back to school or start your own business. I'm not sure which one came first.

SHORE: I was going to graduate school when I was out at Camp Pendleton. It was something to do. And I went to work for the Upjohn Company straight out of Pendleton—June of '70. And I stayed with them until June of '76. When I was hired I was transferred back to Middle Tennessee and one year later I was transferred to Fort Worth, Texas. Then I went through the Corporate Development Program of the Upjohn Company and a part of the Corporate Development Program was you were allowed to get a masters degree. Well I went to Western Michigan University as part of the Corporate Development Program. And probably about half way through it the best job in the whole Upjohn Company came open—western regional sales manager living in Denver, Colorado. And the director asked me, "Do you want to stay here and complete your corporate development program and complete your master's degree or do you want to go to Denver and be the western regional sales manger?" It didn't take me long at all to say send me to Denver right now. So I went to Denver, and I was very successful at the company for one reason: hard work, long, hard work. And after being out there—I had three small children and literally I flew in on Friday evening or Saturday if I got hung up and flew out on Sunday or Monday morning and set at my office desk all week long recruiting, doing reports, and writing interviews or whatever. And somewhere in early '76 I said if I'm going to work like this I'm going to work for myself. Period. And I made the decision to phase down—to sell the house and to get positions. And in mid-'76 I resigned. Came right back here to Maryville and started my own construction business and have enjoyed it ever since.

STAFFORD: Did you use the GI Bill for anything other than your education?

SHORE: Yes. Oh, no just education. Well, I've had two or three GI loans. The VA loans are the same. And one primary reason I was going to graduate school when I was in California—I went to Chapman College. It's because I was drawing that GI Bill. And then I was really dipping at Western Michigan. The Upjohn Company was paying me full salary. They were paying full college tuition, books. And I was drawing four hundred and forty dollars a month with three kids. The GI Bill, so—I was more interested in drawing the money then I was getting a masters degree. I felt like at some point in time I'd be working for myself, and how much good would a masters degree do me today or have done me? And I was—I was never a real good student. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: Well, I guess—why construction? I mean why construction company?

SHORE: Well, when I came back here I had no idea what I was going to do. So we had—through all these moves and buying and selling homes we'd accumulated some assets. So as soon as we get back here I said to my wife I'm going to build us a house. We've never built anything. I can, I can do it. So I did. Bought a three thousand dollar lot, which now would be

thirty-three thousand and built a modest house. The total cost was twenty seven thousand dollars, but I enjoyed it. I put on the roof, I hung the sheetrock ...

PIEHLER: So you actually literally built the house?

SHORE: Oh, yes. Enjoyed it. And I said, “Hmm, I like this. This has potential.” Twenty-five years later I’ve built three thousand. So that’s basically how I got into construction. I’d say almost inadvertently and it just kept growing and growing and now I’m trying to grow it the other way—smaller.

STAFFORD: I guess how do you feel that the government, beyond the GI Bill, helped veterans readjust once they returned to America from Vietnam? Do you think that they did a pretty good job or all that they should have done or could they have done more?

PIEHLER: Or what could they have done?

STAFFORD: Right.

SHORE: Well, I’m not typical. I’m not normal. The greatest experience of my lifetime was to serve in the armed forces, and more specifically in combat. It was an honor. It was a privilege. And I could have gotten some government disability from connective wounds. I did not want it. I do not want it to this day. Never would, never did. So I think it’s more of an individual thing. The government didn’t owe me anything. Again, and I say with all due respect—this is the greatest country in the world. Where could a young boy growing up on welfare and in the atmosphere that I did—where could I have reached the heights that I have? Only in this country. You’re limited by what you see I the mirror only—nothing else. And I feel like this system is worth preserving, fighting for, whatever. So the government didn’t owe me anything. And I have probably too strong of an opinion about the government not having obligations to veterans. Now let me clarify that. Obviously maimed, severally wounded veterans—society and more specifically the government, the arm of the VA, has an obligation to them. One thing that I’m seeing more and more and more of—and I have a friend who was a private in Vietnam. He is now a neurophysiologist with his PhD from Wake Forest. His post-doctorate was done at Harvard. He’s really into PTSD [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder] and he’s helped me—he’s visited right here—helped me to take a little bit softer stance toward this, you know ... I know what I saw in combat. It only made me a stronger person. It didn’t make me a weaker person. And I have a stronger opinion toward reality therapy. These people that are looking for disability—and incidentally they draw three thousand dollars a month. I know several of them. And it’s my opinion—take that three thousand dollars away and tell them to get out here and survive. They would survive. So I think in more cases the government and the VA has done more for people than in cases they have done too little for people.

PIEHLER: But I did want to—earlier you said you were very distressed to learn that two of your sergeants just couldn’t make it in the real world.

SHORE: And I still don’t understand that.

PIEHLER: Yeah, 'cause you said they were natural leaders. Yeah, you—before we started the interview you just talked glowingly that they ...

SHORE: Yes. One was mentioned in the book as my absolute leader and he calls here every too often wanting a handout and it saddens me that from the position—he was the informal leader in the platoon period. And now he is ... homeless. He's applied—he draws thirty percent VA and he's applied for a hundred percent. The friend of mine who's a retired police chief in Oakland, he was very seriously wounded but he's done quite well. Well he sent two policemen in Compton, California, out to see this guy. And I asked him to. I called and I said, "Hey get me a"—you know policemen know how to do that. And it took him a while and he said, "I'll call back". And he called back and he said yeah, I had two policemen go and visit with him and gave me a pretty well detailed report. But he doesn't work. He—and I don't understand. He was never wounded. I mean you know, he saw basically the same thing I did 'cause he was right beside me. But he was one of the fortunate few that never got wounded. And I don't understand from being so aggressive and such a strong leader to being so passive now and just look for a government handout or a handout from anyone I can get. I don't understand the mentality and I don't know what made the great change. You know if he had been that way all along it would have been easier to understand.

PIEHLER: Have you joined any veterans' organizations or have you ever joined any veterans' organizations?

SHORE: No.

PIEHLER: American Legion, VFW ...

SHORE: No, I'm a member of the 1st Marine Division Association. I'm a member of the Marine Corps Association. I'm a member of the NRA. I send in just to support, because I believe in the right to bear arms. When guns are outlawed only outlaws will have guns. And you're a historian. The first thing countries have done to take over is to disarm society. Hitler—you know, Europe's full of disarmament as a predecessor to total control and I'm very, very strongly against that, or I'm in support of the right to bear arms. I guess that's the limit—we were trying to get a Purple Heart order together here in Vietnam—Vietnam Veterans—and it didn't work. There were maybe only ten or fifteen identified, and we didn't have a defined goal and objective. A few phone calls and a couple of meetings—'cause there are some chapters in some towns—larger towns I guess that do some good and it's a fraternity, but it didn't work here. It didn't go. And I think it's probably lack of numbers and lack of defined goals.

PIEHLER: Were you ever approached when you came home to join the American Legion or VFW?

SHORE: No.

PIEHLER: Or even when you came and settled in Maryville?

SHORE: No.

PIEHLER: No, never ...

SHORE: No. Can't recall. Don't think so.

PIEHLER: And never any interest in say joining the Vietnam Veterans of America or ...

SHORE: Never been approached. Don't know that there's a local chapter. Wouldn't know how. And dependent upon their goals and if they did constructive things for the good of society, then I would be interested. But I guess until very recently—but I still for my age still have what most people would consider a very, very heavy workload. And I think coming from such poverty the resolve that I had to succeed and recognize and there are a few key essentials—one I mentioned the education but most of all nothing but hard work. My life has not been real well balanced. I think all my kids would even say that. It has been too work oriented. And I don't—how do you take that resolve out. That's one of the reasons that I've never been involved or affiliated with hardly any other outside organizations. My life has been too—too much of the time has been spent in pursuit of work and career. And I'm not bragging about that. It has liabilities to go with it. Families suffer and I could be a more well-rounded person if I had other social activities. I've never golfed, fished or hunted. Don't do any of those. Never have. At some point in time I probably need to develop some sort of ...

PIEHLER: My wife keeps telling me about hobbies—that I need some hobbies so ...

SHORE: You like war history. You like history.

PIEHLER: Yeah, but that's also my work and so, you know. It's weird when you also like your work so much.

SHORE: Sure. I do. And that's my enjoyment. If I went four hours on the golf course it would be drive, drive, drive, drive. (Laughter) You know I'm out there on that job seeing that things are getting done.

PIEHLER: I'm curious of the many Vietnam films that—have you seen many Vietnam films?

SHORE: Yes, seen most of them. Can be highly critical.

PIEHLER: Of the movies you've seen what's the most accurate or at least accurate to your experiences? Is there any that really you could say—no film is exactly—I don't think films can exactly—but this can give you some sense of either the mood or ...

SHORE: There's some actual good footage. I can absolutely say the worst.

PIEHLER: That's also very useful.

SHORE: Well I can say two was the worst. *The Green Berets*. (Laughter) What a joke. I mean what a farce. And secondly—my two sons and I saw it when they were small and I couldn't hardly sit through it. It was about a surfer. Martin Sheen—it was about surfing. How high was

the surf in Vietnam. Oh, my goodness, and you can tell what an impression it made. I'll recognize it ...

PIEHLER: *Apocalypse Now*.

SHORE: Ah that's it. (Laughs) What a joke.

PIEHLER: You didn't ...

SHORE: Oh it was deplorable. It was a farce to anyone that has ever been in combat to be concerned over how high is the surf when men are fighting and it's serious and they are dying. Now that to me was bad, real bad. So I can name the two worst. Did you ever see *Platoon*?

PIEHLER: Yes.

SHORE: There were many, many scenes in *Platoon*—and my sons and I still—we went to see the *Thirteen Days* just recently and we enjoyed that. But as *Platoon* comes on they're sitting in an ambush—very, very real. The clothing, the towels around them, everything. And the military advisor to that was Gunnery Sergeant Ermy, and he still advises on a lot of films that have to do with war. The scene in Hue City—how they would wound a Marine to get others to come after him. Quite a few things in *Platoon* was obviously very real. The ambush settings and some of those things—very, very real. *Full Metal Jacket* there were some—again ...

PIEHLER: So in other words no movie—I almost get the sense that there's no one movie but there's scenes in certain movies that are able to capture ...

SHORE: Absolutely. One thing that so often happens in movies—and I guess they do that to sell. They glorify, glamorize it—and it's not a sexist statement but quite often even in combat scenes they will mix women. And I never saw that. But I guess it helps to sell. Quite often you see a love scene—and you even see that a whole lot in World War II. And I—that was not my experience. Never saw that, but so many times they do mix that in. But I have seen several very, very good scenes. Now, the latest Hanks is—Normandy—there's another name for it ...

PIEHLER: *Band*—not *Band of Brothers*.

SHORE: *Private Ryan*—*Saving Private Ryan*. I never made a beachhead assault, thank goodness. Some of the old men that did make the beachhead assault say that that was very real. I'm not qualified to comment on that. I never made one. I was not at Normandy, but they say that was very, very real. Now what I do feel very strongly qualified to comment on is the ensuing days after *Saving Private Ryan*. There was like a twelve-man patrol in daylight hours just continued to move out through Germany. What a joke. I mean you move out through if they get a bead on you; they come in at night and they kill you. Period. End of it. Not day after day moving like that. And close to the end of the war they're in this town. There's twenty or thirty of them and the Germans are coming with tanks and they're talking about making sticky bombs out of socks to take out these tanks. If you're in the infantry and you see tanks coming like that get in the lowest hole, run, do anything. Don't dare. I mean how ridiculous to see infantrymen running up there throwing socks and taking out tanks. Did not happen that way.

Tanks take out whole cities. So seemingly the beachhead invasion had some reality. The squad moving through the open day after day—no way under the sun—no way. And twenty or thirty infantrymen taking out five tanks with hand-made sticky bombs? (Laughter) No way.

PIEHLER: Well I partly—I'm particularly—I try to ask veterans a lot about movies because particular students who are one of the big consumers eventually of these interviews when they're on the internet—for them movies are reality. One of my goals is to teach them that it's maybe one side of reality but don't base your understanding of history. And so I find it very intriguing what movies—some movies do capture some scenes, but you are very correct about *Saving Private Ryan*. It's two different movies. The first twenty-six minutes and then the rest of it.

SHORE: Based on the people that were there I can believe the beachhead assault as being very real. The rest of it—having been in similar situations—I never faced tanks from an adversary. We had some tanks on our side, especially in Hue City. I know what tanks can do. Oh, my goodness. This house right here. Two shots from a tank and there wouldn't even be a wheelbarrow left of the whole house. And to think infantrymen running up there facing that tank with a sticky bomb and knocking it. (Laughs)

STAFFORD: I don't know that I have anything else to ask, unless there's something that we didn't ask you—or that—unless you have something...

PIEHLER: Yeah, well I—how long—I just out of curiosity—but how long have you been in this house?

SHORE: Three and a half—well yeah, August I think is four years.

PIEHLER: And I guess—you've been a home builder. Where have you built your homes? Since you ...

SHORE: The largest subdivision in Blount County and the largest subdivision in Loudon County is called Allenbrook. Named for the operation. Lots of street names of subdivisions—we have a Chesty Puller, a Smedley Butler. (Laughter) We have a Guadalcanal and we do have a lot of World War II. We have Ploesti, Dunkirk, the Hürtgen. My daughter lives on Belleau. Most people don't know what—you know, the Battle of the Belleau Woods—most people don't know. We have Argonne. So we name lots of subdivisions and streets for military historians and famous battles. I named one subdivision in Knoxville and they made me change all the names. I think I had Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Tinian. I don't remember but it was a whole group. They approved it and I put the signs up. Next time I go back to the subdivision all the signs were changed. So they just went out there and changed my names.

PIEHLER: Why did they change? Did they ...

SHORE: One told me that it was too sensitive for our Japanese community. But I didn't question it. They changed them.

PIEHLER: When was this?

SHORE: Oh well, maybe two years ago.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay.

SHORE: Wildwood Gardens is the subdivision out on John Sevier Highway.

PIEHLER: Well we've really enjoyed this.

STAFFORD: Yes.

SHORE: Did I wear you out?

PIEHLER: No, no. This has been very enjoyable. And I didn't even get a good night's sleep so I really ...

SHORE: It was all my pleasure and thank you. I would hope that if anything good could possibly come out of it is the devastation that war causes. That somewhere people would come to their senses and negotiate differences and not commit young lives and not have the devastating effects that war causes. Historically it's never happened, but we are on a good roll and a good course so let's just continue to hope.

PIEHLER: Well let me thank you again officially.

SHORE: Thank you.

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