

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Terry Hairrell

Part of the Illinois Public Media ([WILL radio.tv.online](http://WILL.radio.tv.online))
Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project

Interview # VRV-V-D-2015-070

Terry Hairrell, who served in the Army in Vietnam and was awarded the Purple Heart, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 4, 2015 Location: WILL-TV Studio X, Campbell Hall, Urbana, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Gwendolyn Pepin and Erendira Franco

Technical Support (videographers): WILL Staff

Transcription by: Illinois Public Media staff

Edited by: Illinois Public Media staff

Total Pages: 32 pgs. Total Time: 1:19 / 1.32 hrs.

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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Terry Hairrell, *Veterans Remember*, VRV-V-D-2015-070

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Terry Hairrell was born on April 19, 1948 in Libertyville, Illinois and lived in Waukegan, Illinois at the time of this interview. He was drafted into the Army in March 7, 1967 and served until March 8, 1969. After being drafted, he went to Ft. Knox, Kentucky for eight weeks for basic training, then was sent to Fort Polk, Louisiana and then on to Panama for advanced infantry training. Hairrell then went overseas to serve in Vietnam for a year and was assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, part of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. The unit operated in the Chu Lai region of South Vietnam. During the Tet Offensive in early 1968, Hairrell was still in Company A, but he was then transferred to Charlie Company where he became a squad leader. Hairrell's basic training skills include setting up booby traps, claymore mines, and fields of fire. Hairrell's firsthand account of the Tet Offensive and his recovery from his experiences during war, provide insight into what war is truly like. He was awarded a Purple Heart after being wounded by friendly fire in Vietnam that also killed one of his sergeants. This is one example of the many close calls that Hairrell experienced over in Vietnam. When he came back to the United States in the 1970s, he went to school at Western Illinois University, but was also struggling to deal with his wartime memories, which led him to drugs and alcohol. He says that meeting his wife in 1975 saved him. He has since reunited with some of his war buddies who continue to struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Subject Headings/Key Words: Terry Hairrell; U.S. Army infantry during Vietnam War; PTSD; Purple Heart; PTSD and substance abuse; Tet Offensive; combat; Waukegan, Illinois; Chu Lai, South Vietnam; booby trap; spider hole; Hué, South Vietnam; north Vietnamese Army (regular soldiers); Viet Cong; Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam; Company A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade; 25th Infantry Division

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