

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Peter Rafferty

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
Veterans Remember Oral History project

Interview # VRV-A-L-2011-064

Peter Rafferty, a Marine who served in Vietnam in 1964 and 1965 as a communications and radio operator in an infantry regiment, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's Veterans Remember Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Dec 15, 2011

Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Susan Seiber and Jan Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 77 pgs    Total Time: 2:38 + 0:51 / 2.63 + 0.85 = 3.48 hrs

Session 1: Rafferty's experiences in Vietnam w/the Marines in 1964 & again in 1965

Session 2: Reflections on experiences in Vietnam & dealing with stresses of combat

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 1, 2012.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in  
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# Abstract

Peter (Pete) Rafferty, Veterans Remember, VRV-A-L-2011-064

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Peter (Pete) Rafferty was born on October 9, 1944 in Springfield, Illinois. He grew up in Springfield, the son of a coal miner. His father died of black lung disease while he was still young, but Rafferty developed a strong desire to become a Marine, in part because of his uncle's WW II Marine experiences. Shortly after graduating in 1962 from Feitshans High School, he enlisted in the Marines and began boot camp in San Diego, California in early 1963. In May of that year, he received communications and radio training at Camp Pendleton, California. Following this, he was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, part of the 1st Marine Division.

In September, 1963, Rafferty's unit deployed for a planned thirteen month tour in Okinawa and spent some of the summer of 1964 at Chu Lai, South Vietnam, guarding an air base. His unit returned to California in October, 1964, but in May of 1965 they returned Okinawa. In July, the unit shipped to the I Corps area of South Vietnam, part of the first ground troops deployed to that country as America's military build-up started. The Marines received their baptism of fire in Operation Starlight at Van Tuong (August 17-24) against a Viet Cong regiment. Rafferty was involved in numerous combat operations over the next several months, until contracting a serious case of malaria, which led to his evacuation in December, eventually being medevaced to a hospital in the United States. Over the next several years, Rafferty struggled with guilt feelings over leaving his Marine comrades back in Vietnam but was reassured by his fellow Marines many years later when they gathered for reunions.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Communications and radio man with Marines in Vietnam War; Marine Corps boot camp; 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division; Camp Pendleton, California; service in Okinawa; Operation Starlight; Operation Black Ferret; malaria casualty from Vietnam War; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; unit reunions following the Vietnam War; treatment of Vietnam veterans by the public

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