

# Alan 'Al' E. Krause

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Interviewed by Leah Cohen

Transcription by Zachary Wright

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Cohen: Today is August 24th, 2018. My name is Leah Cohen and on behalf of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, I have the pleasuring of interviewing Sergeant Al Krause. Sgt. Krause served with the Recon Platoon in the Echo Company of the 5th Battalion 7th Regiment in the 1st Calvary Division in the Corps Area II in Vietnam close to the Cambodian border in 1970. We look forward to hearing your story.

Krause: Corps Area III.

Cohen: Corps Area III. Thank you. Well, let's begin at the beginning. Where were you born?

Krause: I was born here in Chicago.

Cohen: What was it like growing up here in Chicago during this time?

Krause: Well, my family moved to Oak Park when I was two. So, I grew up in Oak Park, contiguous suburb of Chicago on the West Side. You know, I had what I felt an uneventful childhood growing up in basically 1950s and early 1960s.

Cohen: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Krause: I have a sister who is two years older than I am. Living in Oak Park, we walked to the local grade school, walked to the high school. I didn't get involved in bussing. Everything was very close in the neighborhood.

Cohen: Sounds like it was kind of a close-knit community then.

Krause: Pretty much, so. I remember playing on the little league team when I was growing up. So, yeah. I mean, everybody was.... The grade school was certainly sectioned off. There's multiple grade schools in Oak Park. I don't know how many, maybe 300 kids in the grade school. About 3,000 in the high school.

Cohen: Which schools did you go to?

Krause: I went to William Hatch Grade School and then it's Oak Park River Forest High School.

Cohen: What did your parents do? What was their occupation?

Krause: My dad was a purchasing agent for a company called "Central Can Company." They made a lot of paint cans at that time and he was exempt from the draft in World War Two as an essential work employee because they made bomb fins and bomb casings during the World War Two. Then my mother was mostly a stay at home mom until we got old enough. Then she worked in retail stores.

Cohen: You mentioned your father was exempt from the draft because of his work on behalf of the war effort. Was there other relatives who had served in the military in your family?

Krause: My uncle, my father's brother, served with General MacArthur [General Douglas MacArthur] in Southeast Asia and Australia. He was a staff member, one of the thousands of staff members in that command. He's the only relative I had who served in the military.

Cohen: Well, what was going on in the country and the world when you were growing up and was it discussed?

Krause: No. My parents and the community were pretty much, I would say, apolitical. I mean, Eisenhower was, you know, the president for eight years and you know, Army hero, and those were pretty, as I remember them, peaceful times. But my family, yeah, we didn't discuss politics when I was growing up.

Cohen: When did you become more aware of the Vietnam War?

Krause: I went to college. I went to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, which is a state school. It's Southern Ohio, fairly conservative area. So, I started there in September of 1963. So, the war really got involved in '65, end of my sophomore and junior years. People started talking about it. There were mild protests, but it was nothing like you would see at, you know, University of Wisconsin or Berkeley [California] or anything like that because it was a much more conservative area. Miami was known for its business school and its primary and secondary education schools, home of the McGuffey Reader, the textbook that educated the West. Those are very conservative occupations. So, there wasn't real... People talked about it but it was more of a civil level. There was no massive protests or sit-ins or anything like that I recall. Obviously, you read it in a newspaper, but as college students, we were all draft deferred. I had 2-S [Deferred because of study] on draft deferment. It was something that really wasn't affecting people until graduation. Yeah.

Cohen: What was your opinion as to what was going on?

Krause: At that time, I had mixed opinions. I certainly wanted to believe in the government and believe what they said was true. LBJ, President Johnson, the president then. John F. Kennedy was assassinated in the fall of my freshman

year, so couple months after I got to college. So, you know, trust in the government and what the government was saying. At the same time, there's very logical arguments for the people who were against the War, but it was still early. There weren't the Pentagon Papers didn't come out when I was in college. The U.S. involvement, what I consider the major involvement, started in fall of '65 when we really landed a lot of basically combat troops. So, you know, things hadn't gone bad yet. Things hadn't gone south. I don't recall it that much of a big focus in college. It was mostly, you know, studying and everybody was worried what was going to happen when they were going to graduate. But at the same time, there's always this feeling that something you read about it or you see on T.V., it's not going to happen to me. I mean, you know in college, the saying at the time, I don't know if it was true or not, but for the girls, it was senior panic, "Am I going to marry someone? Am I going to get engaged before I graduate?" [both laugh] Because you're exposed to your largest pool of people from the other sex. Men were more concerned about getting job and what I was going to do? That impacted... Were you going to get a job or get drafted? What was going to happen? No one really knew. When I was a senior, I was a psychology major. A B.A [Bachelor of Arts] in psychology is pretty useless. I mean, you really had to get a master's degree or Ph.D. So, I applied to a lot of graduate schools. I got accepted into a couple of them. I made an anonymous call to my draft board and I said, "You know, what's going to happen if I go to graduate school?" They said, at the time, that they would allow me to finish - I was going to get drafted because the school sent the draft board a list of everybody who is graduating to end the 2-S deferment. So, I was going to get drafted and if I went away to school, they'd allow me to finish the semester or quarter or trimester or whatever I was in, then I'd have to - I'd be drafted. Since I was accepted to the University of California – Davis. I was engaged at the time. It was like, there was no point in moving all the way out to California for two to three months and then having to move all the way back. So, I didn't go to graduate school.

Cohen: Did you meet your wife at college?

Krause: Met my wife at, who's now my ex-wife, I met her at Miami University. So, my post-college trajectory was, I was graduated in April of '67 and then had my army physical for June of '67. Got married in August of '67. Then I started a job in Washington D.C. with the federal government of September of '67. Then I got drafted in October of '67, but I didn't go in the Army because the Army didn't make you... If you didn't live in your draft district, mine was Forest Park, Illinois and other western suburbs... If you didn't live there, the Army wouldn't make you travel to the draft district. They would allow you to go to your local draft board, wherever you lived. So, I was told to go to a draft board in Bethesda, Maryland, which is the local one to where I was living. It's just a suburb of

Washington, D.C. So, the process was that my physical and all my draft papers would have to go from Forest Park, Illinois draft board to Springfield, Illinois, the capital, to Annapolis, Maryland, the capital of Maryland, to Bethesda, Maryland which is the local draft board. I showed up for induction and my file wasn't there.

Cohen: When did you receive the induction notice?

Krause: It would have been.... I got my physical. I think you only get thirty days for your physical. The induction notice probably would have been around October? September? September, October. '67. So, I showed up in Bethesda, Maryland and there was no papers. So, they gave me a ninety-day delay for them to get the paperwork in order, find where my paperwork was. I was thinking, "Well, I'll be home for Christmas." You know, ninety days is January. So, that's one good thing. January came and went. I never got my induction call, my draft notice. I wasn't going to call them and say, "Why did you forget about me?" So, the ninety days turned into two years. While I was drafted in, let's see, September, October of '67, I didn't go in the Army until July of 1969. Of course, at that time, you know, I went out... I had my government job, but I didn't particularly like it. So, I went out looking for other jobs, but when you apply for a job, they only ask you one question, "What's your draft status?" If you said, 1-A, they just said, "Come back in two years." So, it was impossible to get another job. The government was the only person who'd hire, you know. I was from Chicago; my wife was from Maryland. So, of course, I wanted to move back to Chicago, but no one would hire me. So, I stayed with my job.

Cohen: Wow. So, when you finally were sent notice... how much time did you have then? Did you have a chance to go back to Chicago and visit your parents before you left?

Krause: I honestly don't remember how much time you had. It couldn't have been maybe thirty days. I just don't remember. Between the time... I do remember I had to go to Walter Reed Medical Center [Washington, D.C, disbanded in 2011] for some kind of additional medical paperwork. I don't remember what. I honestly don't remember how much time you had. It couldn't have been maybe thirty days. I just don't remember. Between the time... I do remember I had to go to Walter Reed Medical Center [Washington, D.C, disbanded in 2011] for some kind of additional medical paperwork. I don't remember what, but Walter Reeds this huge complex. And at the time, I went in there and they had stripes, different colored stripes on the floor. Blue, red, yellow, green, orange. That's how you found your way. You followed. So, I went into reception and said, "Here I am. I'm supposed to see this doctor for this procedure or whatever." And she said, "You follow the yellow line, you take two lefts and a right, then you switch to the blue

line, take two lefts and a right, then you switch to the orange line." Of course, none of this is written down. Needless to say, I got lost. So, I'm walking in Walter Reed. I turn this corner and it's the prosthetics department. There's this corridor that looked like it stretched forever. On both sides of the corridor were eighteen, nineteen-year-old men missing arms and legs. They're just all lined up on these chairs, waiting to be fitted with prosthetics. I looked at this and I thought, "This is life. Is this my future with the Army?" So, that was my first induction to the Army, was seeing all these poor guys missing arms and legs. It was a terrible experience.

Cohen: What was the reaction of your wife and your parents? Sister to you [interrupted]

Krause: Well, it was... I didn't have much contact with my sister because she was married and had a child and moved to Wisconsin, so. Everybody kind of knew it was happening. In some ways, it was while... It was finally time to get this over with. You know, the thought was, to the Army, what's going to happen to you? The belief was that since I was a college graduate, I would probably find... I'd probably be assigned to some, you know, higher echelon task rather than being combat infantry man. I remember reading at the time - my parents got the **Readers Digest** - it was an article against all these college protests. They said, "You know, why are all these kids protesting? This war is not going to affect them because the odds of college graduate actually getting drafted and becoming a combat infantryman were like one in a thousand. Why are they complaining?" So, I kind of had that mindset that you never know what's going to happen, but I really didn't think I'd end up as a combat infantryman. Here I am, one in a thousand. So, that's what happened.

Cohen: [laughs] You mention on the pre-interview questionnaire that you were sent to basic training at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. What was that like?

Krause: Correct. Well, Fort Bragg is this big, red, sandy area with lots of pine trees. Lot of physical activity. A lot of, you know, physical training. You know, they call it basic because it's really basic stuff. You know, marching and saluting, which you do in the Army and there, you... We probably shot rifles. They were using M16s and we were using World War Two M14s, so we weren't actually training. It was just the inductor. I can't remember, but it's only like six or eight weeks to get you involved. So, I think I do remember that most of the guys, they were black and most of them were, maybe high school graduates. But yeah. I don't have any strong memories of basic training. It was just, you know, which you did.

Cohen: Just something to go through?

Krause: Yeah. You just did what you were told.

Both: [laugh]

Cohen: I think you mentioned you went for the AIT, the advanced training in Fort McClellan, Alabama.

Krause: Right and so after, everybody who is in the Army, goes through basic training. After basic training, you get your orders. The orders is what sends you to your specialty, your advanced individual training. But, it's the Army. Who knows who makes these kinds of decisions? There's one guy in basic training. Was a chef, probably a short-order cook, but he's a chef. He got sent to telegraph school. Another guy worked for the phone company stringing telegraphs and he was sent to be a cook. 'Cause everybody is talking when they get their orders. No one knows and it's like, "None of this makes any sense." That's when I got sent to Fort McClellan, Alabama to go to infantry school. At Fort Bragg, actually, they split you up and have all these buses. Depending on what your orders were depend on what bus you went to. I was sent to the bus that would go from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to Fort McClellan, Alabama. It's advanced infantry training where you do more than shoot a rifle and shoot a pistol. There's shotguns and machine guns and all the other things, grenades and all the other things. They have a grenade course. You move small arms tactics and you know, how to work as a squad in a platoon and things like that. It was really focused on turning you into a combat infantryman.

Cohen: How long did AIT last?

Krause: You know, I think it was... Again, maybe eight weeks. It wasn't very long. Then it was while I was in advanced, well in Fort McClellan. Since I was the only college graduate in my platoon, there was a lot of pressure on me that they wanted me to volunteer to Officer Candidate School [OCS]. I didn't want to do that, for two reasons. Number one, it was a third year. Instead of being in the Army for two years, you had to be in for three years. The other thing is I didn't want to be responsible for sending other men to their deaths, which is what infantry officers do. When I look at it now, I'm kind of surprised that I had that much sophistication and self-awareness. I was so young. How could I figure that out? How could I have that much self-awareness or such knowledge? Apparently, I did. So, the one thing they could, you know, they can't make you go to OCS, but they could make you go to non-commissioned officer school to become a sergeant. And so, then, most of the guys, when we graduated from infantry school were sent to Vietnam.

Cohen: Straight away?

Krause: Straight away, yeah. Basic, advanced training, Vietnam. I and a couple other guys who must have scored well on Army test. We're sent to NCO [Non-commissioned

officer] school. That was at Fort Benning, Georgia. So, we got on another bus and were sent to Fort Benning, Georgia.

Cohen: What was the training to be a sergeant at Fort Benning? What did that involve?

Krause: Well, you know, there it was still lot of physical activity. There's much more classroom training. You know, you learned theory, you learned theory of combat, how to move troops, why you're moving troops. A lot of day and night patrolling. Had to learn how to read a contour interval map and compasses, you know. Go out in the middle of nowhere and try to find your way back. You learned all the practical aspects of leading men. They had, in the Army, they always had patches they put on your shoulders. When you're in NCO school, the patch said, "Follow Me." The theory being you're a leader people follow, you're not a leader if you say, "You go here, you go here, and I'll stay back." You teach people to follow you. Everybody had to take turns on these maneuvers and giving orders. Things like that. So, that was basically it. I think that was longer. That might have been like ten weeks and in there, the guys who were married, some of them, I think, could live off base if their wives came down. They could live off base. It was more... Basic training was 24/7, this turned into more of a forty hour a week job. I still lived in the barracks, but my recollection is we had at least one day off on the weekends, maybe two. I don't know. It was a little bit more like, non-training but regular Army life.

Cohen: Did you find the training interesting at that point? Like theories about how to move men and so on?

Krause: You know, I found it... I've always loved history. I read a lot of books on history. Of course, histories heavy on wars. So, I had that kind of a background. A lot of it was... Yeah, it was interesting. One of the things you had to learn was call in artillery fire. That was part of reading a contour interval map and everything like that. There were things obviously far different than civilian life, but I did find it interesting. Of course, I was paying much more attention to it because now, the reality kind of hits you that your life could be on the line here. At NCO school, I was trained as an 11F40, which is 11B40 is kind of like infantry. 11F40 is kind of like operations and intelligence. So operations is the movement of U.S. troops, friendly troops. Intelligence concerns the finding and movement of enemy troops. So, that was more interesting and so, you learned a lot more about, actually, the command structure, which is what I was trained to do - operate which they called a TOC, T-O-C, Tactical Operations Center. I was kind of trained to do that too.

Cohen: You also mentioned you've been sent to Fort Hood, Texas. How did that piece fit in after Fort Benning?

Krause: After we finished with our school, then you had to have the hands-on training. They weren't going to send you directly to Vietnam. We were supposed to go to Fort Hood, Texas, to be in charge of a squad. Which can be eight to twelve men. In theory, start putting to practical use what you learned at school. The bare reality was that didn't happen because, you know, you're assigned to an armored unit. I think mine was Old Ironsides. You spent a lot of time in the motor pool with, you know, tanks, armored personnel carriers. Some trucks. So, and again, there were a lot of us. Our squad was basically all sergeants. [laughs]. What we did, none of us knew anything about mechanized vehicles. We don't know anything about tanks or anything. It turned out to be another learning experience too. They didn't let us near the tanks, so we focused on the armored personnel carriers. It was operating them, driving them, you know, being in charge of several of them. Again, it rotated. One day, you were driving the APC and the other day, you were the track commander and you'd sit up there. The other day, you were the gunner who was in the back of it. Periodically, you'd be in charge of giving the orders for five or six of the tracs because we're all connected with a headset. But that was really a forty-hour work week. Most of the guys there were career men or people who had been to Vietnam, had come back and were killing time until they were discharged. There wasn't a lot of discipline there because those guys were kind of like, "What are you going to do? Send me to Vietnam?" And it's like, you know, there's nothing you could do. People just kind of left them alone. That's what we did. It was basically killing time because we're pretty much all sure we were going to get our orders to go to Vietnam. We were all pretty sure about that. The interesting thing is... So, most people when that eight or ten weeks was up, most people got their orders for Vietnam, but those orders were issued by a guy who's actually working at a tactical operation center or NCO school. So, anybody he knew from NCO school, he wrote a thirty-day pass so they could go home before they go to Vietnam. The guys he didn't know went to Vietnam. The guys he did know went home for thirty days before they went to Vietnam. We all got orders for Vietnam. [laughs]. It's just you got to report tomorrow or report next month. So, I apparently knew him because I was one of the guys who got thirty-day discharge. I went home for thirty days. It was a thirty day, not discharged, vacation, so I went home and stayed there for thirty days before I, you know, reported to California to go to Vietnam.

Cohen: While you were still at Fort Hood, did you... two things, why do you think that the training and practical leading infantry did not come about? That's one question I had. The other is what did you hear of Vietnam, like, from the people you were within the Armored division?



Krause: I had no idea. You'd drive yourself crazy trying to figure out why the Army does what it does [laughs]. A lot of it is so arbitrary. Look at this guy who gave me a thirty-day pass. That's totally arbitrary. Guy bunking next to me didn't get one. Why? He knew me. So, I have no idea why we went to an armored unit. Then, yeah, the soldiers who were there, a lot of them did come back. Most of the soldiers who were draftees were in the barracks with me. If they were career guys, they'd live off base because who wants to live in the barracks? Mostly, these guys told war stories and most of the war stories involved... a lot of them were combat infantrymen. The ones I remember talking to had been with armored units. So, mostly they talked about what they did, shooting and getting shot at, friends who got killed, APCs that got blown up, that kind of things. Of course, they generally were along the coast in areas where they had roads because these things are tracked vehicles. They weren't going to be out in the jungle. They told us about that, life on the bases, interactions with the South Vietnamese civilians - none of which were positive. That's what they talked about and of course, we were all wide eyed, saying, "Oh my god, I hope I don't experience that." But who knows?

Cohen: So, you have this month and you go back to Washington, I assume, and then you went to California?

Krause: Yeah, of course. When I went home, saw my wife and in-laws in Maryland. Went to Chicago to visit my parents. My wife, she had a full-time professional job. She's working as a social worker... Montgomery County, Maryland. So, yeah. It was kind of like, you know, it was like being on death row [laughs]. You're just waiting for the obvious. By that time, it wasn't like, you know, I'm going to go to Vietnam and have a desk job in Saigon. That seemed to be pretty remote, but here again, you didn't know. By that time, now, it's... you know, the Tet Offensive is coming on. You know, the country, everybody started turning against the war and you know, things started looking grim. It wasn't like, "What am I going to do? What am I going to risk my life for? You know. I hope I don't get killed and I certainly hope I come back with my arms and legs and fingers and toes, you know." It wasn't like a happy time, it was kind of like, "Well, what are you going to do?" Well... So, yeah, it was just... sitting around.

Cohen: So, what was the flight like to Vietnam? How was your journey?

Krause: Well, I reported to Oakland [California]. You process there. Twenty-four hours. So, again, mostly paperwork, hurry up, and wait. You do something and then, you know, just sit around for a few hours and go somewhere else, then sit around for a few hours, and everything is standing in line, waiting for turning in equipment or receiving equipment. So, what I did, I flew from... Oakland to Anchorage, Alaska. Plane refueled. Then we went to an air force base in Japan.

Then from Japan, we landed in, you know, Bien Hoa [pronounced "Ben Wah"]. And it was funny because, you know, when you land for refueling, everybody gets out of the plane just to stretch or maybe eat something because you're there for an hour or two. In Japan, they just had this huge, new, C4, C5 transport plane. It was monstrous. Biggest transport plane, ever. It was sitting there and at that time, I did bring a camera with me. So, I had my Kodak instamatic camera. So, it's like the biggest thing I've ever seen in my life, so I go to take a picture. The MPs [military police] come along. Said, "Top secret, top secret. No pictures, no pictures. Can't take a picture at this point." Okay. So, twenty-four hours later, or less than twenty-four hours, we land in Bien Hoa I guess. There was in-country processing and then there's lots of **Stars and Stripes**. This is the Army magazine. I guess they had a special edition for Vietnam. I don't know. But anyway, you open up **Stars and Stripes** and the centerfold is a big picture of the C4, C5 [laugh]. This massive public picture of the top-secret plane I couldn't take a picture of. You know, that's typical. So, then there we processed for a couple of days. You're in barracks with bunks and running water, toilets. I remember my job - they have to keep you busy - every morning, you had an assembly and you go on these huge tarmacs and get an assignment. I remember my first assignment in Vietnam is they had - Vietnamese civilians would come in and they'd drive garbage trucks. So, what they had to do was go around the base and fill up these garbage trucks. Well, each garbage truck had to have an American soldier with it. The purpose is so they didn't steal anything. You know, I was thinking, "So my first job in Vietnam is to make sure the guys picking up the garbage don't steal the garbage." It was like I'm missing something here. The garbage cans were these huge fifty-five-gallon drums and it was just a big open dump truck. So, the husband drove the truck. I'm assuming it's the husband. There's a woman. I'm assuming it's his wife in the back. He picks up the fifty-five-gallon drum full of garbage, hands it to her. She picks it up, dumps it out into the flatbed and puts it back toward me and puts it down. Then we drive to the next one. So, I'm just sitting in the passenger seat and of course, by the end of the round, she's standing knee deep in garbage as he's handling these drums and I mean, it was, you had to imagine [laugh]. It was food and especially milk, you put milk out in 120-degree weather - doesn't smell real good. I mean, really. Then they come back - and so then they dropped me off and then they left the base, go home for lunch, and to take the garbage wherever the garbage was. So then after lunch, you know, they come back and I get in the truck. When I come back, I noticed that the man, the driver, is now wearing an Army OD [olive drab] green T-shirt. So, you know, clearly, this was in the garbage. He picked it up, washed it, dried it, and he was wearing it. I remember thinking, "My first job in Vietnam was prevent him from stealing garbage and now, he's wearing garbage. I failed my first task in Vietnam and let this guy steal a T-shirt." [laugh]. Then after a day or

two, I got assigned. I came up when they called my name and I was with a lot of guys who I'd gone to NCO school. We had been to NCO school together, we'd been to Fort Hood together, we'd had flown over there together. Now, they called all our names and we were all assigned to the 5th Battalion, 7th Cav, 1st Air Cav Division.

Cohen: So if we could just backtrack a little bit? I think you mentioned in the pre-interview, the bus ride to Bien Hoa. Can you describe that [interrupted]?

Krause: Oh, yeah. Yeah. That was... When we landed in, we'd been travelling all night long, and we had been... when we landed in the airport, then the airport had to take us to this processing center. So, we were getting on buses, Army buses. The Army buses look just like school buses except all the glass was removed from the windows and around all the windows was chain-link fence. It was the crosshatch metal stuff that you'd find in a backyard fence in Chicago or you might find on a prison bus. When we left the airport, we went onto a highway. When we go on this highway, there's like thousands of motor scooters, some three-wheeled bicycles, some three-wheeled vehicles, a few trucks and cars. So we're moving into this massive jam of traffic. Somebody on the bus asked the driver, "How come there's no glass on these windows?" And the driver says, "That's so one of the guys on the motor scooter riding next to you doesn't throw a grenade through the bus window and kill everyone on the bus on their first day in Vietnam." That was kind of your entrance. That's why they put the cyclone fencing around so the grenades couldn't be thrown into the bus. It was like, you know, thousands of guys driving by on motor scooters and you shouldn't trust any of them. Then we went to another army base, the processing center.

Cohen: Was that Bien Hoa or Long Binh base?

Krause: Now that, I can't remember.

Cohen: That's okay, that's okay.

Krause: They're right next to each other. I think one of them is an airbase. I don't know if one of them is an airbase or if one of them is an army base. But they're right next to each other.

Cohen: There was something that wasn't totally clear about... Were you originally assigned to the 90th Placement Company and then later assigned to the platoon, the recon platoon?

Krause: I probably was since I have a picture of it. That was only for a couple days. You know. The Replacement Company was, again, it was like everybody who arrived in Vietnam to my knowledge, went to one of these replacement companies. From there, you were scattered to the wind based on the need. I have no idea

what happened to any of the other guys, but they weren't assigned to the 5th or the 7th [laugh] or else they would've been with me. So, they obviously went somewhere else, but I don't know where. It was maybe four or five days. I had no idea... It's got to be recorded somewhere on my medical, I mean my Army record, but I have no idea where. We were all assigned to the 5th Battalion 7th Cavalry. They put us on a bus, took us on a, I think it was a C-130 [Lockheed C-130 Hercules] airplane. Then when they flew us to this place called Song Be [pronounced "Song Bay"] in the Phouc Long province. That was the 5th Battalion 7th Cav's rear area. The C-130 is a big wide body cargo plane. There's no seats on it. So, what they do is they just had, well I can speak of the one I rode on. They had straps on the floor. You marched in in rows and sat cross-legged on the floor and held onto the strap. [both: laugh] Here you're thinking, on the way over here, you're in some chair on the airplane, you got to put your seatbelt on. Here, you just hold onto a strap. The door doesn't close in the back [laugh]. It does come up, but it doesn't close. That's how we flew out there to Song Be. So, Song Be is, we were there for, I think maybe a week. We had what they called "in-country training." I don't have much memory of that all. I'm sure we were assigned rifles. I'm sure we had to zero in our rifles on the rifle range and probably get acclimated to the weather and everything. Then they put us on another.... I can't remember.... Then they put us on another - we already our jungle fatigues, and all that stuff, our boots and things. Then they put us on another plane after that week. When I say we, I'm talking about the four or five guys I was with since NCO school. We landed at a place called, "Fire Support Base Snuffy" up along the Cambodian border. The U.S. invaded Cambodia, I think, in May '70 and probably pulled out a month or two later. We had arrived just as the unit, 5th Battalion 7th Cav, the combat arm of it, had pulled out of Cambodia. They were now on this fire support base Snuffy which was about eight miles from the Cambodian border. So there, you know, the 5th Battalion 7th Cav operating units, we had like Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta, four companies, that had about 120 men. They went out, looking to engage and kill the enemy. Then there was this recon platoon which wasn't part of any of the line companies. It was in echo company, E Company. It reported directly to the colonel. They did all sorts of things that the line companies didn't. So, all five of us were collectively assigned to the recon platoon. So there, that's when we got our backpacks and frames and all the stuff we need to actually function as an infantryman. Recon is defined as reconnaissance. It's where friendly troops go to an area that is not occupied by any other friendly troops to gain information and intelligence about the enemy. So, basically, in very simple terms, our job was to small unit patrol along the Cambodian border, looking for remnants of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and infiltration routes that would be coming from Cambodia into South Vietnam. This province, it's a huge province. Didn't have many people in it.

Maybe 47,000 people in the entire province. So, when I was an operation, I spent the vast majority of my time in country. I'm working at Fire support base Snuffy. So, when I was there, I never saw any South Vietnamese civilians at all. They weren't even there. We were out in the jungle. You know, I didn't have any interaction with the South Vietnamese at all and any civilians. Who's going to be out there? It's just jungle. You know, it's not like you could farm rice or do anything. So, that's what we did.

Cohen: Gosh... I'm wondering how we want to continue. Would you want to describe fire bases in general and the Firebase Snuffy...? I know we don't have the pictures here, but to give a verbal description of what you would show?

Krause: Sure. So, a firebase is... is a very small place. They were built out of the jungle. The terrain around the border was probably what you could single canopy bamboo jungle. We had lots of hills. Everything was up and down, up and down, up and down. The occasional rivers running through one of these hills. You know, the principle was you put your firebase on the highest hill in the area where you were building. So, what they would do is send in plows and the plows would clear an area and they'd flatten it and they'd push up all that dirt into a berm, about a six-foot high berm [narrow shelf of land serving as fortification] of just earth. It'd be just a circle. Outside that circle, they knocked down all the trees for a couple hundred yards so if they were attacked, the troops, the firebase would have, what we call, clear field of fire. So, the enemy that came out of the jungle, the tree line, you could see them and shoot them, and they wouldn't have any cover. In addition to this berm, you'd have the entire perimeter was surrounded by chain-link fence and the chain-link fence was probably ten or twelve feet tall. The purpose of the chain-link fence was so if the enemy attacked and they shot mortars or rocket propelled grenades [RPGS] or something like that, they would hit the fence and explode and protect the troops who're on the other side. Of course, that only worked once. [laugh]. After the first explosion, the fences are gone. Then the area was filled with barbed wire around the exterior of the berm. Barbed wire and booby traps and flairs... and a lot of the booby traps would send up a flair so it would light up so you would see if somebody tripped a booby wire. You could see where they were, assuming they were going to come at night. So inside, where the troops lived, were just bunkers. They had dirt floors and there was artillery on the firebase. So, there were a lot of artillery boxes because the shells would come in a box. You'd fire the shell and then you'd have all these empty wood boxes. So, what you would do is take the dirt and fill up the wood box and then stack the boxes two or three feet high. Then they had these metal culverts and you'd put the culvert on top of them and then you would put the sandbags on top. It's supposed to be three layers of sandbags on top the culvert. The whole thing had to be less than six feet tall because the berm was six feet

and the principal was all the buildings had to be lower than the berm. So, I'm six feet tall and it came up to here on me [motioning toward chest] so maybe they were five feet. They were big enough for two people. Since the monsoon rain, everything turned to mud. Create a floor of wood, wood pallets, because the pallets would bring in food and all that stuff. So, you put the pallet down and you could put two air mattresses, one next to each other and then you'd crawl in there at night and that's where you'd sleep. If you were lucky enough to have an air mattress because air mattresses get holes in them real easy. You don't just go down to the corner drug store and get a patch, local bicycle shop, because there aren't any. So, that's where we slept. The guys who stayed on the base all the time, the officers and I think there was cooks and artillery and mortar squad from Echo Company would stay there, they'd have more elaborate bunkers because they had time to build them up. As guys who came in and out, you know, we probably spent seventy or eighty percent of the time in the jungle and thirty to twenty percent of the time inside the firebase. I mean, we just slept. Someone else already created the firebase. It was all built before I got there. They weren't very big. You know, they could only hold like a couple hundred people at the most. The principle behind these firebases is the artillery pieces, 105, 155-millimeter howitzers, they could shoot about ten miles, which would cover all the jungle between Snuffy and the Cambodian border. But also, then you'd want to build one of these firebases about ten miles apart so that if one of the firebases got attacked, the firebase on either side could fire artillery and support it. So, that was the theory anyway. In practice, by the time I got there, the war was kind of winding down. So, in fact, I got there in July of 1970 and the 5th of the 7th was... the colors were sent home in April of '71. So, that whole unit was... they'd just send the colors back. The troops get sent somewhere else, but the colors go back so you know it was kind of dissolved. So, yeah. That's where we spent most of our time. Then you were out of the jungle, so it was much more secure. You could relax a little more.

Cohen: In the jungle?

Krause: No, in the firebase. You were out of the jungle. So, you could relax a bit more, but a lot of guys, especially in the Line Company, didn't like being on the firebase because the firebase was just overrun with rats. There were like rats everywhere. They came out at night and a couple of times when we were out in the jungle and you'd come back and I remember one time, the South Vietnamese unit was there. Well, they left all their food and all the hooches. That means the rats got used to going into hooches looking for food rather than going in the garbage cans. And so, I remember one time, right after the Vietnamese left, you'd hear the rats. I mean, you could hear them running under your air mattress because of the, you know, pallets sit up above this big. So, a rat would

run under there and their tails stuck up. So, you could hear their tails rubbing against their air mattress. It wasn't solid. So, that would keep you awake. One time, we began to keep our poncho liners to keep us warm and then also, had to put it up over our head, at least I did, because one time in the middle of the night and I had this rat sitting on my head, which was not the way you want to wake up. [both: laugh]. So, you know, I crawled out of there to try to get some sleep and I took my air mattress and I went up on top the bunker, kind of balance myself up there right on the middle of the curve. And then when they, my sergeant saw me the next morning, asking me what I was doing there. I told him. He said, "Well, you can get up. You can't sleep up there because you have to sleep with at least three layers of sandbags between you and the sky and if you didn't, it was an Article 15." An article 15 was a disciplinary action that basically was a fine. You'd owe money. You just had to make do. So, yeah, some guys really didn't like being on the firebase. Of course, we went out, spent a lot of nights rat hunting. It was the only way you could entertain yourself on the firebase and also try to protect yourself for a good night's sleep.

Cohen: Do you want to describe how the food and the water...?

Krause: Well, the water, Snuffy was up on a hill. There was a river that ran down below it. This all happened before I got there because the base was established. What they've done was dammed up the river to create a pool. From that pool, they would suck up the water. Engineers or someone had created a little processing, chemical processing thing, to try and kill all the parasites or whatever that was in to make the water drinkable because the water wasn't clear. It wasn't a clear stream. It was kind of... a grayish stream I guess or light green. It was the same stream we swam in and washed our clothes in that where we got our drinking water out of. So, they would process it down there and when it got done processing, they would put it in, we had these huge tanker trucks that were, they were just like in the United States, it'd be just like a truck you'd see delivering gas to your local gas station. Just a huge tank. They filled it up with water and they'd drive it up on top from the river up to the hill and parked the tank on the firebase and that's where everybody got their water from. So then... what was the other question you asked me? That was about the water.

Cohen: Food.

Krause: Food. Yeah. On the firebase, they did have a mess hall for all the people who were permanently there. We ate a mess hall twenty percent of the time. Most of the time, we ate combat rations, C rations. I personally lost twenty pounds when I was over there, combination of extreme physical activity in very hot climate and also rotten food. The food was... They gave you three meals. They came in boxes, but depending on what the meal was, you had your preferences. There's

something like scrambled eggs and some other things I just couldn't eat. It was easier to go hungry. You just couldn't stomach that stuff, but it'd come in a huge carton. It was probably, I think, twelve boxes to a carton. Each box had a variety of things in it. That's where your toilet paper was, so you kept... that was your number one thing. They also had cigarettes. So, we looked at the cigarettes... First things when you opened up the box and because you want to look to see what's in there because the box was labelled with whether it was beef or pork or chicken or franks and beans or something like that. But it also had these things in there and you didn't know what it was. Fruit. It could have been fruit cocktail, pears or peaches and little containers that might have crackers or might be pound cake or something like that in there. There were also cigarettes. I didn't smoke, but I always looked at the cigarettes first because if the cigarettes were unfiltered Camels, Chesterfields or Lucky Strikes, probably meant the food had been prepared for the Korean War and you might be twenty years old. If the cigarettes had filtered Newport's, Marlboros, or Winston's, that meant, you know, they had filters on them, so they're probably processed for the Vietnam War. It could be only a couple years old. So, you know, you always knew just how old your food was you were eating, and it was kind of like, "Aw, man." [laughs]. But that was another reason I suppose, it's not a question if the food was kill you. It was a question if the food tasted terrible. All preservatives. That's one of the reasons... I didn't drink coffee at the time, but they did have... hot chocolate. So, you know, one of my things for breakfast, I had hot chocolate. Even though we're in the heart of the jungle and it might be 100, 120 degrees during the day, the temperature did fall at night. You did sleep under a blanket. Even though if it felt like seventy degrees, it felt cold compared to 120 degrees. It was kind of like nice to get up in the morning and have something warm. I became a hot chocolate person.

Cohen: [laugh] Sounds good... You described in the past a number of missions like from the night one or the one with ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam], do you want to describe either like a typical mission or specific ones that stand out in your mind?

Krause: Sure. Like I said, we spent... most of our time along the Cambodian border, looking for infiltration routes. So, now, what I, you know - We'll start out, I guess, with what I was wearing because we didn't wear underwear... because in that kind of climate, if you have two layers of clothing, the monsoon season, you're going to get soaked. The monsoon season happened where we were. The rains rolled in at about three o'clock, every day. We didn't stop patrolling until usually five. That meant you'd get soaked to the skin every day before you had to go to sleep. So, if you get soaked to the skin and you're wearing two layers of clothing, the outside, which was some kind of fabric, would dry, the inside wouldn't dry



because it's not exposed to the air. Then if you're wearing wet clothing and you're hiking up and down trails and doing a lot of physical activity with your backpack on, you're going to get sores under your arms and then your groin. Those sores, you know, turn red and they blister, and they break. All sorts of things come out and then you get jungle rot, which is an infection [tropical ulcer]. Other ways you could relieve that is only wear one layer of clothing so your clothing would dry. So, that's what we did. Now, my boots, my socks, they had powder and the powder was like baby powder or talc. It was foot powder. It came in these little containers. For what I did, I poured an entire container into one sock and put it on. Put an entire can, container in the other sock and put it on. We tucked our pants into our boots and tied them all up. That's how I kept my feet - because I didn't take my shoes off in the jungle because if we got attacked at night, you don't want to be scrambling around looking for your boots while getting shot at because it's pitch black. The other thing is, you didn't want to end up having to through the jungle in your stocking feet because there's all sorts of things in there. Other guys did. You know, some guys said the chance of getting hit, such a small unit, was so rare they were going to take their boots off every night. But I didn't. So, then I had... I carried an M16 rifle and I carried twenty magazines, which had eighteen bullets, seventeen to eighteen bullets in each magazine. The magazines were made to hold twenty bullets, but if you put twenty bullets in them, they'd jam. So, therefore, you take two or three out and allow the spring to function better because the spring pushes the bullets up. So, I had, twenty times eighteen to... 360 bullets or something. Then I carried four fragmentation grenades, which... Fragmentations grenades are the ones that explode and kill people. Since we used helicopters, I carried four smoke grenades. The smoke grenades were used to mark your location, pick up for helicopters, but also if you were in contact with the enemy, it would allow helicopter gunships to know which side of the smoke you were on so they shoot the bad guys instead of us. I carried sixty-five-pound backpack. You know, that was, you know, your air mattress, your poncho, your poncho liner, all your food... I carried claymore mines and then, water. Now, water... I carried fourteen quarts of water. Water was basically about... two pounds a quart. So, my sixty-five-pound backpack, twenty-eight pounds was water. Of course, that's when we started out and as you drink the water, obviously your backpack gets lighter during the course of the operation. So, the only personal possessions I owned, I had a toothbrush, had a watch, I had a camera, I had a wallet, and I think that was it. Toothbrush, wallet, camera. Yeah. I don't think I had anything else. These were my sole possessions. If you couldn't carry it, you, you know, didn't have it. Later on, I got to be friendly with one of the cooks on the firebase, so I had a cassette recorder. Could listen to tape music because we were out in the middle of nowhere. There was Army or [U.S.] Air Force, there was some radios that

people along the coast could listen to, but there were no radio, you know, radios out where we were. It's just jungle. So, you know, people at home would send us cassette tapes for music. We could listen to those. I had an ammunition can that I put my cassette player and my cassettes in. Then I could leave that with the cook. And of course, he listened to them while I was gone so it benefitted him too.

Cohen: Did you keep the letters that you were sent?

Krause: No, I didn't. I wrote... I wrote to my wife, now my ex-wife, pretty much... maybe every day or every other day, even though they couldn't be mailed. Then I wrote to my parents about once a week. They wrote back, but there was simply no place to store them. If you carried them with you, they'd be soaked. They'd just disintegrate. Yeah, I didn't.... Friends wrote me too, but I don't have any of those letters... So, anyway, with the water, I carried one one-quart container because that's what had your metal mug in that you could cook your coffee in. Then I had four two-quart containers that I carried. I had one five-quart containers, which was just like a bladder. You know, these two-quarts or one-quarts, they're physical, but this is just like a bladder. You know, an air pillow or something, you know. You could use that as a pillow at night. It had its advantages. So, that's basically what I carried. So, what we would do is go on the edge of Snuffy and from Song Be, [Phước Bình] helicopters would come in and that was Huey helicopters [Bell UH-1 Iroquois] and we'd get into the helicopters and we would sit with our legs dangling out over the side. There weren't any seatbelts or anything like that. Then there we probably one, two, three, four, five, six troops in the helicopter, along with the pilot, co-pilot, two door gunners. That's how we, most of the time, flew into our missions because this is a single canopy jungle, it's very hilly. Periodically, there'd just be openings in the jungle and there would be flat areas. So, that's where they would land us. I mean, we were the 1st Air Cav, so we used helicopters to go into combat. Then, the way it worked was, they'd pick out... the officers, intelligence or someone would pick out a landing zone in the jungle. A lot of times, this was done by... they had these little Loach helicopters [Hughes OH-6]. Call them Loaches, but they were LOH, light observation helicopter. It just had two people in a bubble. They would scout around. They'd pick out these landing sites. We would go and the way it worked was, the artillery on the firebase would fire artillery in and around the particular landing zone that had been picked out in the hopes that if there were enemy troops there setting up an ambush, the artillery would blow them up. If there any booby traps in the open area, hopefully, the artillery would explode the booby traps. Then our helicopters, when we were operating as a platoon, there were maybe five helicopters for our platoon. We'd go out with a helicopter gunship. A helicopter gunship was, it was a gunship. It fired rockets. It fired

grenades. It had a 7.62 mini-gun. Once we got into the... too close to the landing zone. The landing zone, artillery fired in direct point. Point A or Point B. Firebase to the landing zone. The helicopters could not go and fly over... Point A to Point B because there's one in a million chance that one of those artillery shells could hit a helicopter in the air. That might have been one in a million. That might've been one in ten million. It didn't make any difference because everybody felt, if there was one in ten million, they were riding in the helicopter that would be one in those ten million. So, those helicopters went in a C, a semi-circle. So, the artillery's firing this way, we're riding this way. So, when we arrived near the landing zone, the artillery would stop firing. Then the helicopter gunships would go in and shoot up the area. They would fire into the tree line with their rockets and grenades and mini guns because they were much closer to direct fire. They could see exactly what they were doing. When the helicopters, our troop ships came on. There was a door gunner on either side. The door gunners would open up on the tree line as we flew in. So, as you can imagine, it's kind of announcing yourself [laugh]. This is a lot of noise in the jungle. So, we would fly in, then we would land, and the troops would jump out and the helicopters would take off. Of course, the goal is, you know, the helicopters would touch down for like two seconds. That's one of the reasons that you wouldn't sit inside the helicopter. You'd sit there with your legs dangling out because as soon as that thing hit the ground, you could just jump out. It was very, very quick.

Cohen: Just to clarify: The helicopters would touch ground and then just go up?

Krause: It was. As soon as the troops got out. It probably took a couple seconds for the troops to get out. So, the goal, of course, was to have a landing zone big enough so all five of our helicopters could land at the same time so they could come in, drop you, and they're out of there. That's when the helicopters are most vulnerable. Didn't always work that way. Sometimes, you could only two at a time. Of course, the worst scenario was if you could only land one at a time because if you could only land one at a time, the strategy was the Vietcong or the NVA [North Vietnamese Army] is that you'd let one helicopter land. Six guys are on the ground. Second helicopter comes in. That helicopter, they would shoot up. Now, that would block the landing zone because now you got a downed helicopter. So, now you got a few troops, some of who are wounded, trapped. The other helicopters are circling because they can't land. That means they're much easier targets, it the VC or NVA are the ground. That's why you'd just shoot the whole thing up. It worked when you have at least a platoon strength unit. Later on, when we operated in six to eight-man teams, there was just one helicopter. So, we all got in one helicopter and since that was ultimate stealth, there's no artillery, no gunship, no anything. Just the helicopter, flew in, landed. You got out and the helicopter took off. So, that was just sheer stealth

and surprise. One time, strategy was that, we had three helicopters. The first one had the troops in it. The other two were empty. The first one - and they'd fly just above tree level - the first one would drop down. We'd all get off. Then the second passed, the third passed, the first one is up, and it passes. So, theoretically, if there were some enemy watching these helicopters, they'd just see three helicopters coming and three helicopters leaving. It was trying to make sure they didn't know troops had been dropped on the ground because you know, six-man team can't fight their way out of a paper bag. They were very vulnerable.

Cohen: What was the strategy of just having the six men?

Krause: Well, you know, our purpose was, you know, as a platoon, twenty to twenty-four men, we would land... and we would patrol that area. If you drop yourself down to six-man teams, you could now patrol three times as much. One six-man teams over here, one six-man team over here, one six-man team over here. So, you can cover three times the amount of territory as a platoon. So, that was the strategy, just cover more terrain. More area I mean. Big huge jungle. No one knows where they are [laugh]. So, that was the start, that's how we started our daily life. One of the kids - I speak to students at a local middle school once a year about my experiences - and a lot of times, the kids will ask, "How many helicopter assaults did you make?" They were called combat assaults. CAs, combat assault. I said, "Well, you know, awarded an air medal if you made twenty-five combat assaults. So, after twenty-five, we stopped counting." [laugh]. I have no idea how many I went. More than twenty-five. So, what we would do is... we would start our patrol. A lot of times, we'd just be hacking our way through the jungle. I shouldn't say hacking. We were crawling our way through the jungle because as a recon platoon, stealth was important. We couldn't wear steel helmets. We couldn't wear flak jackets. We didn't want anything metal. In fact, even our rifles, they took away our slings. We didn't have slings on our rifles because slings can bang. They can catch... Also, if you don't have a sling, it guarantees you have one hand on your rifle at all times, which is very important. So then, we would start our patrol and the patrols were... a Line Company doesn't care if they make noise. Line companies have machetes and they're literally hacking their way through the jungle. We couldn't make that kind of noise. So, we would to walk around things and crawl over things and crawl under things and just work our way through the terrain which really made it really difficult to keep track of where we were going if there was no trail. Sometimes, there were trails but they're more like animal trails, so it wasn't like what you'd see at a national park or forest preserve. It wasn't actually a marked trail with bare dirt on the bottom that you would follow. It was just more, you

know, there's less vegetation going this way because the animals would rub against it and could kill a lot of the undergrowth with their feet and everything.

Cohen: Were the maps helpful at all?

Krause: Yeah. Oh, yeah. It was much easier. One time, we were in an area that was elephant grass. You know, they call it elephant grass because the grass grew seven or eight feet. It was grass, like in your front yard. But it was seven or eight feet tall. It was extremely thick. For us, the way we did it... the first guy would stand, you know, put his rifle in front of him and just fall forward. Now, he could only fall about forty-five degrees because there was so much grass. It was so thick that's all. So, then you'd move forward another inch and fall. Then you move forward another couple inches and fall. Sooner or later, that would go down and then, you know, that's how you worked your way. Of course, that's the first guy. The other twenty-five guys are sitting there, reading books or looking out at the jungle because there's nothing else to do. You could only do that for fifteen or twenty minutes. You were totally exhausted. So, you'd go to the back of the line and the next guy starts. Then he'd go to the back of the line and the next guy starts. We cleared this and obviously, you're creating a path. So, we cleared this path and for eight hours, we were working to clear this path. Then we got called that we had to support a line company. So, they were going to send helicopters to pick us up. We turned around and went back the path we created in fifteen minutes. It was eight hours out, fifteen minutes back. That shows you how thick that particular elephant grass was. It was terrible, exhausting stuff to go through. The single canopy bamboo jungle was much easier than that. So, we had a variety of different missions. Now, if we found a trail, and then by finding a part of the Ho Chi Minh trail, then it was really clear. I mean, then you had dirt on the ground and a real path through the jungle. It wasn't bamboo growing like this, leaves and underbrush and all that. It was really a clear path and I remember one time, there was a mountain there where they actually had chiseled footsteps into the mountain. This was a path. Sometimes, we'd be assigned to just sit there and see who would come up and down the path. We might sit there for three or four days. We put our claymore mines out. During the day they would be manned, but we would take turns sitting there. You would have this little clicker in your hand that'd explode because... there would be two or three sites. You might have three places set a part and each of these three might have three or four clickers, which means three or four, you might have twelve or fifteen claymore mines spread out across the trail. When they were manned during the day, that was so if the enemy came from the right, you wait until they got all the way to this spot, then this guy would click and everybody else would click. Or if they came from the left, this guy's not going to click, he's going to wait until they come all the way

until the right, then they click it and everybody else clicks. Or if they came from the left, this guy's not going to click, he's going to wait until they come all the way until the right, then they click it and everybody else clicks, so you get that whole patrol. That was the theory. At night, when they were unmanned because you couldn't see anything, we put a tripwire right in the middle... Seven or nine or ten claymore mines. If they were coming this way and tripped the wire, you'd get at least half of them to go off. If they were coming this way and they trip a wire, then you get this half. Whereas if you put it at the beginning and they were coming from this, this guy tripped a wire, all those guys are home free because they all go off and no one is in front of him. That was the best we could do. So, we had missions like that.

Cohen: Did you find a lot of infiltrators?

Krause: In that particular areas, no. These turned out to be really old trails, but we were only there for like three to six days. So, you know, it's just a shot in the dark as to whether or not anybody is going to come down there or not. We couldn't tell. There were a couple of times when we set up at night that they tripped our tripwires. We'd already set up a perimeter at night and these guys came by. At night, what we would do is... if we were following a trail, we would set a tripwire in the middle... then we'd go off the trail to make our camp. So, there'd be another little path that we made. We put another booby trap, tripwire up there, and then we'd sleep in a circle, and then every man would have his claymore mine put in front of him. So, there was 360-degree perimeter of claymore mines and then we had a guard post. We usually had a guard post at this end and at this end. So, you know, the principle was, you put your claymore mine out here, you'd run the cord to your sleeping position, then you put your air mattress on top of it. Then the cord this way ran to the guard post. So, that you wake up, you take turns. You're guarding depending on how many people are there, there's one or two hours of guard duty every night, but it's pitch black. I mean, you can't.... The first night I was out in the jungle, I took my hand and I went like this [holds hand in front of face] and I literally could not see my hand in front of my nose. This is dark. So, that's the question is how are you going to find where to go? So, they were just going to wake you up, it's the middle of the night, you're totally disoriented. Well, you could grab your claymore wire cord and you're on your hands and knees, and you're feeling this cord and you'd crawl and at the end of the thing is all the clickers. So, there was no one in the middle. Everybody was sleeping around the perimeter, so the middle was kind of clear. One night, pouring rain, and I was really tired. I was just dead asleep. When I woke up, it was my turn for guard duty. So, I grabbed the claymore cord and I got on my hands and knees and started crawling. I got to the end of the cord and I reached out and there was the claymore mine. I had walked myself out of the perimeter

and now, I'm on the wrong side of the claymore mine. So, you know, I have to turn around and really quietly go back into the perimeter and I knew at least one guy was awake because the guy I was relieving on guard duty, you don't fall asleep just like that, you know? So, I knew he was awake, and I knew he would hear rustling and you can't yell out, "Hey, it's me." So, I crawled back into the perimeter [laugh]. Found myself was able to crawl back and of course, you know, this is the monsoon season, so your hands are covered with mud, your knees are covered with mud. Everything is covered with mud while you're crawling around in the jungle. So, yes. That only happened once, but I remember it to this day. It was not an easy moment trying to penetrate your own perimeter in the middle of the night [laugh]. That's our basic task, was to find these trails, set up a booby trap them, look for infiltra... but most of the time, we were just hacking through the jungle looking for - and we'd come across abandoned bunkers. Sometimes, we'd come across arms caches where there'd be weapons in caves, in trees. We knew someone was around, but had no idea where, or when. So, that was basically what we did, especially as a platoon. As a six-man squad or eight-man squad, you know, our real job was to just look for infiltration because we didn't have a lot of firepower. And I should say that when we were in a platoon, if people did come across the enemy, you know, the goal was to never fire your weapon. The goal was just to set off the claymore mines because a claymore mine is just an explosion. No one knows if that explosion was done by a human being or that explosion happened because of a tripwire. If you fired your weapon, it has to be a human being. And we didn't have a lot of firepower, especially the six of us. We didn't have any fire power. So, if you fired your weapon, it was a signal saying, "Here we are, come and get us. Come over and run us and kill us all." Firing your weapon for a recon platoon was really a last resort.

Cohen: What was the... let's put it this way... Under which circumstances did you call in artillery support? You mentioned to walk it in and describe?

Krause: At one time... I'll give you a perfect example. At one time, there was an abandoned firebase. So, the Army had been patrolling that area and then they'd left. And that firebase had been abandoned for a couple months. So, they decided, there's no U.S. action there, let's go over and see if there's any action. This firebase was next to a river. So, what they did is we put one six-man team on this side of the river and another six-man on the other side of the river, and the third six-man team... well, actually, they had machine gunners, right at the firebase. So, we're walking down now. I was on the side of the river where the firebase was. There was a trail made by G.I.s [government issues], you know. So, we're following this trail and then the trail went this way. The river's here. So, we were saying, well, we couldn't... Our instructions were not to follow the path but

follow the river. So, we had to, you know, break trail and keep going this way so we can parallel the river. So, we were paralleling the river, breaking jungle and everything like that when we came upon another trail. So, we knew that in all the patrolling the other G.I.s had never found this trail. There were eight of us. So, we were following this trail. It was a pretty well-worn trail. This is one of the one that it's clear and there's dirt path there and it's like people had been using this... but we don't know when. We're walking along and there's streams flowing into this river. So, we come to one stream. It's got rocks on the top. We see the tops of the rocks are wet. Well, animals, they just cross the stream. Human beings, you know, if they get their feet wet, they're going to try to step on stones and the fact that the water hadn't evaporated, it meant that some human being just walked across this. Then we were really on our guard. We probably didn't go more than ten or fifteen meters when we heard dogs barking. Okay. So, now we know there's a village up there. This area is mostly Montagnard [i.e., Degar] and the Montagnard were the indigenous Native people to Vietnam, kind of like Native Americans were to English Colonists. They were a totally different racial stock. We figured there were Montagnards here. At that time, we dropped all our backpacks and we only had our weapons and our ammunition and grenades. So, we broke through this - you know, the jungle is impenetrable - and then our point guy walks through there and all of a sudden, there's this huge open clearing. Then we follow him, and we started yelling, "Chieu Hoi" [pronounced as "chew hoy], the Chieu Hoi program was actually a program in which U.S. encouraged enemy soldiers to give themselves up and go over to the side of the South Vietnamese. We used Chieu Hoi as "give up." [laugh]. When we yelled "Chieu Hoi," it was to everybody, even though of course, the Montagnards didn't speak Vietnamese. So, we started yelling, "Chieu Hoi." As soon as we came out in there, I mean, the dogs were barking, the pigs were squealing, and the babies were crying, and the women were wailing, and the men, by this time, we all had broken through because we were in single file and we formed a V... How can six guys form a V? Were just like this, you know? And the men, just all started running to this hooch on the edge of the river. There was a guy standing there, passing out weapons. So, these guys were all running by and passing them out... [unintelligible] Ed was on the left, I was next to Ed. Ed and I start screaming, you know, "They got weapons, they got weapons. Get down, get down." Of course, everybody gets down except for Ed and I [laugh]. So, they all hit the deck. We're the ones who are firing... because these other guys can't shoot because there's women and children and just chaos going around in front of them, so they can't shoot. So, we got direct line of sight. We're shooting just at these men... Who knows where we shot, but we didn't shoot them. They got their weapons and they disappeared in the jungle. So, then, things quieted down, and we looked around and counting the hooches, there were like well over 200 Montagnards



and V.C and NVA here and there's six of us... We can see, you know, we start looking around and we can see these hooches all have bunkers under them. So, I mean, they were prepared to fight. We scared them more than they scared us because it was like, who knows? So, then, we said, "You know, we're in big trouble." We're totally outnumbered here. The first thing we did was what they called "Recon by fire." Recon by fire means you don't see the enemy at all, but you fire your weapon anyways. So, we each took a magazine, gotten into a circle and just sprayed the jungle terrain because we knew these guys had weapons and we didn't know if they were running or circling back. So, we retconned by fire. So, the next step is to call in artillery. So... the way you call in artillery is you give them your position and it's a grid - you know, the contour interval maps have grids - and so you call in the artillery in to a specific grid point and then it's what you call "walking it down." You pick a grid point out there and you say, left or right, down, not up, until you get the artillery exploding. The way it works is six or nine artillery pieces on Snuffy. One fires, but all the others follows the same direction. So, once you get this one piece of artillery landing shells, then you say fire for effect and all of them fire in because they're all following the path. So, we call in this artillery. The artillery guy, we're on the radio, the artillery guy says, "Shot out." Then there's dead silence... and so the guys, you know, in the artillery is saying, "What adjustments do you want?" We say, "We have no idea," because we had no idea where that shell landed. Couldn't even hear it. We can't adjust the artillery, left, right, up, or down because we don't know where it is. No one wants to take a chance in the next round coming in right on top of us. Because were along the Cambodian border in this jungle, we felt like, you know, we could've been the first people since the dawn of creation other than the Montagnards to walk through this area. These maps? Totally inaccurate because you know they're shooting this artillery shell, based on the wind power and elevation and everything, exactly where it's supposed to go. But, you know, where it's supposed to go isn't where the map says it is. So, the next thing we say is, "Well, we'll call up helicopter gunships. Are there any helicopter gunships around?" Well, there were. So, we call in our location. Our helicopter gunships. The first thing we do is we throughout smoke. The helicopter is up in the air. They can see our smoke. They'll find us. Well, because of the jungle, the smoke just goes up and hits the tree leaves and just goes sideways. It doesn't go up. So, that's not going to work. So, the helicopter comes in and says, "Okay, we're at your site. We're at your location." I say, "At our location? We don't even hear you. We have no idea where you are." So, we decide, well the only thing we can do is because we're next to this fairly wide river and trees are growing very thick on each bank... but the trees go like this, which means right down the middle of the river, there's clear blue sky. All right. So, the only thing to do is to get a smoke grenade out in the middle of the river so the helicopters can see us. But

you can't just throw a smoke grenade into the river. The smoke will go just into the river, turn the river yellow, but that's not going to help. So, we took a stick and we tied the smoke grenade to the stick. Then by this time, we'd all been in country many months, but we had a new guy with us. New guys were called, "FNGs," which was "frackin' new guy." Everybody who's been in Vietnam has been a FNG at one time. Everybody knows FNGs know nothing, they can't keep you alive, but they can get you killed. So, if we're going to sacrifice somebody, we sacrifice the FNG. We give him, and his name also happened to be Al... So, we said, "Okay, Al. Take this stick, walk in the middle of the river, and then pull the pin out the smoke grenade and stand there." Well, of course, we all know that's also like walking out into river with a big sign that says "Shoot me first" because he's 100 percent totally exposed, but we had no other options. So, Al goes out, pulls the pin out the grenade, the smoke grenade... So then, the helicopters come and now they know where we are. Now, the other thing is in addition to the helicopter gunships, there's our other backup squad is on there... on these helicopters... because there's a couple of gunships and a troop ship. The helicopters fire up the area a little bit... But that's all they can do. We never get any return fire. So, thankfully, these people just totally disappeared. We're starting to relax. So, now what happens is the troop ship has to land somewhere. So, they have to look around. Now that they know where we are, they have to look around and find a landing zone, put that helicopter down and get those eight or ten guys off the helicopters and meet up with us. At the same time, we do have the squad on the other side of the river. Remember, there are two squads? Now this squad has to match up with us. But no one has any idea where that other squad is. They can't... So, and this is all radio talk, and so what they say is, "While the helicopters are there, have this squad cross the river. Get a couple of guys to stand in the river when you're crossing." So, we have one helicopter looking north, north, whatever. One helicopter looking upstream. One helicopter looking down stream, looking for these guys. These guys cross the stream and they're much farther down than we are. Okay, now you guys got to cross, and you guys got to come back towards this one but be careful because you're in the exact area all these armed V. Cs ran towards. Now, of course, we don't know where that trail goes. We don't know if that trail goes down the river or goes up, wherever it goes. So, these guys, get across the river and they're coming toward us. They have two concerns. One, are we going to run into all these armed ...? I don't know if these were all V.C.s or NVAs, but are we going to run into these guys? And two, they know we're here and they're in thick jungle, you know. Are we going to shoot them when they break the perimeter because we're going to think they're the V.C coming back? On the third thing, we have no idea where the troop ship went but they're coming in somewhere too. So, you know, they know we're trigger happy, they know we're trigger happy. The

helicopter gunship people, we don't know if they're trigger happy or not. So, yeah. Eventually, it's we're all talking and we're all getting on the same little wavelength so we're all talking to each other. The 5th of the 7th, their nickname was "Garryowen." The 7th Calvary was General Custer's unit. That didn't turn out well. But anyway, Custer had this song called "Garryowen," which I think is an Irish marching song or something. So, anyways, the 7th Calvary... the 5th of the 7th was "Garryowen." So, that became our password. These guys are coming down the river, every ten feet going, "Garryowen, Garryowen." [whisper laugh]. Every time we see a leaf move, it's "Garryowen, Garryowen" [laugh] because we weren't going to up to the clearing. We were going to stay back here, and we were going to keep a nice field of fire between us and whoever came, you know, broke the jungle there. So, eventually, we hooked up with them and the other troopships hooked up with us. That's one of the problems with calling in artillery and calling in helicopters when you're out in the middle of nowhere. No one knows where you are. I don't think we ever... Might have had a couple other times we might have tried to call in helicopters or artillery, but that was closest we came to really needing it because like I said, our job wasn't to engage the enemy. Our job was to find the enemy and have artillery rain on them. We're supposed to call the wrath of God down on them. We're not supposed to engage them. Now that I think about it, the same thing happened on another abandoned firebase. This firebase was being abandoned. It was, again, along the Cambodian border.

Cohen: Was that Moe? Firebase Moe?

Krause: You know, I don't remember which firebase... It could have been. But so, the helicopters all took off and the firebase had been destroyed, the recon platoon went on this little observation post. It was higher than the firebase, but it was so narrow you couldn't do anything with it other than just an observation post. So, we were in camp there. The theory was as soon as everyone abandoned the camp, the V.C would come out of the jungle and start patrolling the abandoned firebase, looking for anything the U.S. left behind. Weapons, bullets, grenades, food, clothing. Anything they could use. So, they knew this was going to happen because it always happened. Our job was to, when they came in, was to call in artillery. But what we wanted to do is soon as the Line Company abandoned the firebase, we wanted to zero in the guns, the artillery, right on the firebase so when the V.C showed up, we can call them in. The powers that be said, "No, no, no. We don't want to give away our idea." We want to do that. We know where the firebase is. We got it all locked in on our coordinates. We got our guns all locked in. Don't worry about it. So, these guys should have the experience with these maps [laugh]. So, we, sure enough, I think we sit out there about a second day, we see movement on the firebase. Sure enough, six or seven guys, come

out of the jungle and they're just like us. They get on a line and start walking across, policing the firebase. They're just going to sweep down, turn around, and sweep back, picking up everything. So, we wait until they halfway, right in the middle of the firebase and we call in our artillery, you know, call in to coordinate it. Once again, the artillery lands God only knows where, but not on the firebase. But this time, we can see it and hear it because we got a higher elevation. Well, soon as that first artillery shell lands, these guys scatter. By the time it takes to walk the artillery down until it actually fired on the firebase, these guys are gone. So, then it's a question of directing... artillery fire into the area where they went into the jungle. Well, that's the area they went into the jungle. We don't know if they went straight, left, right, where they went. So, that plan didn't work at all. Then, of course, we... they took us off the observation post and sent us into the jungle, but we couldn't find any of them. So, I guess that was the other time that we tried to call in artillery, but it didn't work because they were sure they had the coordinates of the firebase, but they didn't. [laugh]. So yeah, that was another adventure.

Cohen: You mentioned having come across this village of Montagnards, but I believe in the email, you mentioned there were several missions where you met maybe smaller groups or individuals Montagnards, and the application of the Chieu Hoi. Do you want to talk about that?

Krause: Yeah, what happened was our mission kind of changed. Well, the mission changed every day, but it started... the mission changed every mission. But there's two things that happened. One was like the VC or NVA in the area were using the Montagnards as slave labor. They were using them, I guess, to grow crops, although I don't know what kind - enough to keep them alive anyway. But also, you know, to fill bunkers and everything because when we went into the Montagnard s village, they had a bunker in every hooch. Even the Montagnard s didn't care about those bunkers, but I'm sure the enemy troops, they're digging the bunker and putting it under the hooch presumably if they got bombed or artillery hit, they could just jump under the hooch and run underneath it. So, there were other times when... Two things happened, we can stumble on in the jungle, a Montagnard village or a group of Montagnard s. The other thing that could happen is the Montagnard s could come to the firebase. They could just walk in the firebase, usually just one or two, because they said they were afraid if more of them showed up, they'd be shot at. But they thought one or two would give them a chance to be talking to us. They would come in and say, you know, "Vietcong were here. They used us as slaves. They're gone. We want to get out of here. Can you come rescue us?" In fact, this became such a common occurrence that they flew a jeep with a searchlight on it from Song Be out to Snuffy and so every night, this searchlight which shoots straight up in the sky so

that any of the Montagnards wanted to come, they could find us. Obviously, the enemy knew where the firebase was. It's not like it's some big secret. It's got a landing strip next to it. There's planes taking off and landing. So, it was to help the Montagnards come in. As a side, there was a guy who came with the jeep. His job was to, every night, flip the switch to turn the searchlight on and every morning, flip the switch to turn the searchlight off. That was job. During the day, he hid - he was a draftee - he hid from the officers, so he didn't have to do KP [Kitchen Police] duty or fill sandbags or do anything. He had two jobs, flip the switch and hide [laugh]. But that's another story. So, we had this searchlight, so these guys would come in. You know, they'd say follow us and sometimes they'd say, there's a V.C in the village, we'll take you to him or sometimes, they'd say there's no V.C. We didn't trust them either way, but then the recon platoon, our job was to go with these guys and to follow them out into the jungle and allegedly liberate the village, take the villagers to a landing zone where helicopters could come in and they could take them away. Now, the villagers thought we were going to rescue them from the the Vietcong or the NVA. They didn't know that rescue meant burn down your villages, take all your possessions and take you to some refugee camp where they were totally dependent on government handouts on the rest of their life, but that was the program. So, we would follow them, or we would fall into them and then that's what we did. Sometimes, we would go into their village... A couple of times, we spent the night. They have no sense of time or distance. Well, they have a sense of time, they had no sense of distance. You have a Montagnard who's speaking to a Cambodian, because we had a Chieu Hoi Cambodian - so this guy is speaking whatever Montagnard is to a Cambodian who is speaking Vietnamese to this Vietnamese who's speaking English to our intelligence officers. So, you know, what could possibly go wrong with four changes of language here between a Montagnard and the American intelligence officer? [laughs] So, a lot of times, you know, they'd say this is, two hours away and we'd walk into the jungle, and eight hours later, it's dark and we don't have food or water because we're not supposed to be there. It's only supposed to be a one-day mission. We'd get out, stuck in the middle of the jungle with just the water we had in our backpacks, but yeah. We ended up doing that quite a bit.

Cohen: What did you write in the pre-interview questionnaire, the quote unquote "liberation" of the Montagnard's' exemplified your service. Was it the absurdity of it all?

Krause: Yeah, yeah. You know, they had one expectation, that things would be the same, they'd just be safe. The reality was, no. Everything you owned is going to be burned to the ground and you're getting on some helicopter and you know, the South Vietnamese ran these refugee camps. In my opinion, based on what I've

read, I've done a lot of reading - I've taken a couple courses on American in Vietnam at the master's degree level... You know, the U.S would give the South Vietnamese enough food and supplies or money to build food and supplies for a hundred Montagnards. They'd pocket ninety percent of it and the Montagnard's would get food or clothing for ten people. It's actually the exact same way we treated the American Indians. You know, the Indian agent, you know, the government agent would take all the money and give the Indians, you know, rotten food or something. It wasn't supposed to be that way. I'm sure there were areas that it worked a lot better than what we were. At that time and place in the [Vietnam] War, which was almost what the War was like, you know... '63 to when was I there? '71? It was eight years old. A lot of changes had gone on in the country in America and everything by then. The U.S was wrong. It was like turning war over to the South Vietnamese who were corrupt from day one. So, yeah. I mean, the whole sense of their expectations of us and what we delivered was dramatically different... but that's war.

Cohen: On the subject of turning things over the South Vietnamese, I believe you said you were also involved in the plan to turn over, I think, Snuffy to ARVN and the building of roads? Would you want to talk about that?

Krause: Yeah. We were... as things were winding down, U.S. supplies were winding down. When I first got there in July, everything was combat assaults. But as we started winding down, spending less money, turning things over to Vietnam, they started limiting the blade time of helicopters because they don't do it by miles, you know, you didn't have an odometer on them, but they did have a blade time. They had a clock. That's what they use for maintenance and how long they can run and everything like that. So, we started actually more foot patrols. But the plan was the Vietnamese, the South Vietnamese, certainly didn't have the money or resources like the U.S. did to be flying helicopters all over this area on the daily basis. The plan was the South Vietnamese would take over Snuffy. Then they had to be supplied by a road. So, what the U.S. did was they built a road and they built a road from Song Be to Snuffy. Now, the map shows a highway, but the highway was... may have been built by the French in 1930 and hadn't been maintained since then. So, the highway was just an area where the jungle was that's thick. That was the highway. So, we had these huge Rome plows. They were called Rome plows because I think they were built in Rome, Georgia. They were big, powerful with huge blades. They could just go in and knock all this bamboo straight down. You just run these things. They get online and they run through the jungle and all the bamboo and everything would be knocked down. The tracks would turn up the underground and then they'd have a bulldozer that would flatten the area. So, they ran this highway from Song Be to Snuffy. And then, I don't know why, but it's my understanding they also and I

could be wrong on this, but they may run into closer to Cambodia. I'm not sure if that happened. But whatever happened is that then the 5th of the 7th left, the South Vietnamese did take over Snuffy. The problem is the South Vietnamese also brought their families with them. The soldiers and their families and they kind of expanded out Snuffy and they were all living there. Well, when the the NVA launched its massive attack in '75 to actually take over the country, they, you know, brought their tanks and armored personnel carriers out of the jungle right down this road. Well, the South Vietnamese Army maybe fought a little bit, but their priority was to get the women and children on trucks, get them back to Song Be and sooner or later, the soldiers went with them. So, the North Vietnamese tanks just went down this road the U.S. built from Cambodia right into Snuffy. So, Snuffy - I still have the [Chicago] Tribune article from 1975 - not Snuffy, Song Be, was the first provincial capital to fall to the NVA in the start of the takeover to the country. So now, forty years later when we go to the reunions, it's kind of like, and all this stuff - the emotional aspect has calmed down a little bit - it's like, "What was your major accomplishment in Vietnam?" So like, "We built this invasion route for the NVA so they can come in and take over our base camp [laugh]. So that's what we did." It's very cynical and facetious, but you know, looking back on it, yeah. That's what happened.

Cohen: What happened, happened... Are there any other types of missions we didn't talk about? I think, at times, we mentioned setting up fire camps.

Krause: Well, there were occasionally times when, you know, there were these abandoned firebases all over the Cambodian - Vietnam border in the province. We'll call it a province. So, occasionally, we would go in and they would decide, someone would decide, "Let's reopen that firebase for a month or two." I don't know how long and "then just start patrolling out of there, put some artillery in there and stuff like that." So, some of the things we did was assist in rebuilding that firebase and provide base security while it was being built - security for the artillery that was moving in because the first thing they did was move in the troops, move in the mortars because mortars were base security and then they'd move in the artillery. When that was built, you know... it wasn't really rebuilt like Snuffy Snuffy was permanently there for months. People were going to spend enough time to try to secure it, but it wasn't elaborate like Snuffy. They didn't have the.... they always had the fields of fire, you know, the fields of fire had been grown over by the jungle as it had been abandoned. They weren't going to set up the cyclone fencing and the barbed wire. They were actually, and I talk about it, they were pretty vulnerable, but once they got it built, they would bring in the line companies to patrol out of that area. It might be a week mission. Then we were gone and then someone else took it over. So, we didn't stick around to see what was happening on those firebases. We just came in and left. Mortars

stayed; the line companies stayed. We just went back to Snuffy. Now that I think about it, I don't know where the artillery came from because the artillery always stayed on Snuffy. Probably from Song Be. Probably another artillery unit.

Cohen: Just regarding Snuffy, you mentioned around the perimeter, land was cleared and that would be a free fighting zone - I don't remember the right word - but to have the visibility if [interrupted]

Krause: Right, right. The whole area where we worked, the whole province was called a free fire zone. A free fire zone in the province meant there were no friendly troops around and there were no friendly civilians around. It meant if it moved, shoot it. Obviously once you get there and see all these Montagnards, you're not going to start randomly shooting. At least, we certainly didn't. Clearing the fire base was called fields of fire. You wanted to have a nice field of fire which meant cutting all the underbrush down to grass level so there's no place for the enemy to hide. No place, you know, and you could easily shoot them. No place for them to hide, so if they ever came - In fact, Snuffy was very well protected. One of the things that happened, and this would have been now.... I think it was New Years. I can't remember if this was Christmas or New Years, but based on the '68 Tet Offensive, we knew that they're going to attack - if they're going to attack - they're going to attack on holidays, even if there's a truce. I was only there for one Christmas, one New Years, fortunately, one Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, I was out in the jungle, so I don't know what happened, but Christmas and New Year's.... They brought us into the fire base because they're expecting... if it ever was going to be attacked, and [it's a] very secured firebase. In addition to all this artillery, we had a quad .50 [millimeter] machine guns. It's four .50 caliber machine guns on the back of the truck. If that raked over - that would just eliminate hundreds and hundreds of people at one time. So, it was very secure along the .50 calibers and all around somewhere else. But if it was going to be attacked, it was going to be attacked on the holiday. That's what they figured. On either Christmas or New Years and the more I think about it, it was New Years - the recon platoon was brought into Snuffy. The line companies were brought in and placed in blocking positions around Snuffy. So, it's like the whole battalion was ready for any kind of attack. Like I said, we were on the firebase, so we had it made. It's kind of like someone is going to attack us, could go through the line companies first and that's probably not going to happen. We were sitting there on top of the bunkers because it was, you know, night. It was cool to look at the stars, which were beautiful because there's no ground cover. The sky in Vietnam that I saw was the most fantastic thing in the world. But we're sitting there on these bunkers and ten miles away, they hit another firebase. The reason we knew that was the U.S. has tracers. Our tracers were red. A tracer just means they paint every fifth round of an M16 machine gun with a chemical. So,



when it fires, the friction in the air burns off that chemical. It turns red. Our's turns red. The VC and NVA had green. I don't know why. But we could sit here and watch this other firebase light up. We couldn't hear anything, but we could see the green and the red, you know, shooting in the distance. It's kind of like.... Then you could see, you know, they must have had some kind of helicopters or anything because you could see light. So, it's kind of funny. I mean, we're sitting there and we're watching this. It's like, "What can we do to help?" And the answer is well, nothing. It's the middle of the night. We were just watching this light show. We're sitting there, drinking a beer while these guys are fighting for their lives and it's like, we can't do anything about it. But it turned into a horrible night because somebody decided that we were going to do a night combat assault to help this firebase. But that didn't mean recon. That meant one of the Line companies. So, that meant they would have to pull a line company out of the jungle onto the landing strip and then you would have to bring helicopters from Song Be as if they could find Snuffy, into Snuffy, and then load them up and send them to this other firebase. Well, they pulled the line company out but that never happened. The line company ended up coming up to the air strip, but the helicopters never showed up. So, the next morning, we knew some guys in the line company just because you run into them sometimes on the firebase. They're coming in, we're going out or something. So, we go out. You know, we walk out to the landing strip and you know, "What's going on? What are you guys doing here?" Because we don't know any of this. They're the ones who told us what had happened but what had also happened... and they were very upset because at night, they already set out all their booby traps and they had to pull in all those booby traps in the dark before they could move them. So, there was this new guy and he had never, and this is related to me by friends in the line company the next morning - he had set up the booby trap because they showed him how to set up the booby trap because you know, you're new, you got to learn this stuff, here's how to do it. Well, that meant he had to, in the middle of the night, go out and pull in his booby trap. Well, I mean, he was scared to death, he was crying. He says, "I can't do it." So, one of the other guys said okay, I'll help you. The booby trap was a claymore mine set here, got a piece of piano wire strung over here and here. So, you hit that piano wire, pulls off, blows up. So, these two guys... got shoulder to shoulder on their hands and knees and started walking down the trail. The way the booby trap is set up is the claymore mine is here, the tripwire is here, it's a plastic spoon held by clothespin. Then, it's connected to a battery, which is here. So, you disconnect the battery, the booby trap won't work because when you pull the trip wire, the clothespins got metal here and here, that makes the connection. Boom. Goes off. So, they're shoulder to shoulder, you know, crawling down here, feeling with their hands for the battery. It's a little three by five battery you would put in your smoke alarm.

Three-point-five battery. Real tiny little thing. So, you know, they're looking for this battery in the dark. Well, they miss the battery. They trip a wire and they're both killed. So, they're not happy. You know, these two guys died for nothing at all. It's just some [interrupted]...

Cohen: ...didn't even come.

Krause: Yeah, yeah. It's just some guy had an idea. So, they immediately, you know, brought in helicopters and flew these guys off to the middle of nowhere because, you know, they were afraid they were going to frag one of the officers; an intelligence officer or whoever it was came up with this crazy idea that got two guys killed. So, you know, that's what I was told. I do know they immediately set us off. The line company was gone, recon was gone. The firebase was undefended. So, you know, half of which you hear is true, half of what we here is rumor, but it's certainly... It was true about those guys getting killed for no reason at all. It's just a bad decision, but whether, you know, all the infantry was scattered to the winds because the officers figured they were going to be fragged, only the officers [laugh, unintelligible]. I don't know. But, you know, that's where we told. That whole scene kind of, next morning, turned out into a disaster. So, no one was happy about that.

Cohen: I remember you told me when jumping from the helicopters, you were told don't bunch up because of the whole danger of the tripwire from the danger of the mines that were put out....

Krause: Yeah, when we were... We spent most of our time in the jungle, so we couldn't be seen. It was kind of "see, but don't be seen." But there were times where we would land in these big huge clearings. Then we would have to, I mean they were huge, so we might have to walk a couple hours across this clearing to get to our entry point into the jungle where we were supposed to do. That'll be safe, of course. You could have gone into closest point and hacked your way through the jungle all the way around, but you know, it was a three-day mission. We could've spent the whole day trying to get to where the mission was supposed to start. What happens then is... in the jungle, you're on line. It was single file. One person. Sometimes the jungle was so thick that you would have to hold the backpack of the man in front of you to keep from getting lost because if you looked down, or tripped, and this guy around a tree, when you got to that tree, he's gone. Did he go left? Right? You have no idea. The jungle is so thick, we actually hung onto each other. But when you're in an open area like this, we had to spread out as far as possible. You'd have guys here, here, here and here... Wide ranges of being spread out. The point of that was that if there were any booby traps or landmines, or anything, the theory is that if one guy trips, he'll get killed and hopefully, maybe only a couple guys will get wounded. But if you're all

bunched together and somebody steps on a landmine or booby trap or something like that, you'd all get blown up. In any clearing we were forced to cross, we never wanted to be in a clearing, we never wanted to be in the open, you really had to spread out and take up the whole thing to avoid... the casualties if they happened. That's one of the things we did. Not often though.

Both: [laugh]

Cohen: You mentioned places where Agent Orange [deadly herbicide and defoliant] was used. Do you want to describe that?

Krause: Well, what I found... Agent Orange is the defoliant and at the time, Dow Chemical and the United States government said it has no negative effects on human beings whatsoever. It just kills plants. Forty years later, I found out there's public maps of spraying of Agent Orange. I was in one of the areas that had the highest concentration of use in Agent Orange in all the War.... Which makes sense because if you're looking for infiltration routes and the Ho Chi Minh trail, you want to defoliate the jungle so you can see the trail because in some parts, the trail was paved and it was big enough for trucks, you know, so... Especially toward Cambodia - lots of areas were fairly flat. So, the problem with that is then we'd go into one of those areas and the vegetation would start to come back, but we could get exposed by just touching. Our hands were exposed. If you touched leaves and things like that, it could get on your hands, but our biggest risk was that when the rains came, the rains would wash the Agent Orange off the vegetation, off the ground, it would then pour into a stream and that's a stream where we filled our canteens for drinking water. So, yeah. We could be drinking water laced with Agent Orange. So, you know, like I said, I didn't find out about any of this until after the War, forty years after the War... fortunately none of the guys I currently... Recently, we found and created a reunion with a bunch of guys I served with - there's about a dozen of them. Maybe ten. And none of the guys that I know have any effects of Agent Orange. I'm sure there's people from the 5th of the 7th who do... In fact, I guess... Now that I think about it, I take that back because a lot of the guys have prostate cancer. And prostate cancer.... is one of the diseases that directly related to Agent Orange. It's called a presumptive illness. So, if you served in Vietnam in one of these areas and you get prostate cancer, it's presumed your prostate cancer was caused by exposure to Agent Orange because Vietnam veterans have such a high percentage of prostate cancer compared to men who did not serve in Vietnam. So... Yeah. Now that I think about it, I know at least four or five guys in the 5th of the 7th who have prostate cancer. Including two from my recon platoon. So, I guess guys were affected by that. Never thought about that before. They probably didn't. That's another policy that makes absolutely no sense

because you have to set foot in Vietnam in order to be ordered to be eligible for Agent Orange. So, you have guys in the [U.S.] Air Force who's spent their whole lives taking fifty-five-gallon drums of Agent Orange, pour it off the airplanes, getting completely covered, head to foot, with this chemical that wouldn't wash off. They're not eligible for any Agent Orange benefits at all because they, you know, they were exposed to it much more than I was, but they never set foot in Vietnam. So all of those guys who were in the Air Force in Thailand weren't covered... It makes no sense, but it also makes no sense that, you know, no penalty for Dow Chemical saying for forty years, it doesn't harm human beings when forty years ago, they had evidence in their own files that shows it caused cancer in human beings.

Cohen: Yeah... It's not fair... Well, before we go on, is there something you would like to say more about this period of the War? I think after this, you mentioned the R&R [rest and recuperation] in Hawaii, but is there something in this period you would like to add?

Krause: Uh... Off the top of my head, I covered... Most of the stuff that took place. The only thing that I haven't covered before we leave in my tour in Vietnam is, I went to R&R in Hawaii in January. When I came back, I had orders to leave the 5th of the 7th and join the 15th Admin Company in Bien Hoa. I later found out, once I got to Bien Hoa, was what happened was that... this was in January and the 5th of the 7th is going home in April, so they needed people - there's a massive amount of paper work to be done because while the colors go home, the troops get sent to other units if they've still got X amount of time left in Vietnam. So, some Spec-5 got the idea that let's pull all the college graduates out of combat situations or the front lines based on Bien Hoa... bring them to the 15th Administration Company because if you graduated from college, you had to have known how to type. That was the theory. So, I was a college graduate. So I got these orders. It turns out in the 5th of the 7th, was comprised of 600 people and there five or six college graduates there. You know, the whole 5th of the 7th. So, I felt very guilty about leaving my friends, you know. I've known these guys since and had been with these guys since NCO school. Now, they were still in the jungle fighting for their lives and I was going to the cushy job. I felt bad but, you know, it's the Army. You don't have any choice. You just go. My mother saved the letters I wrote her and which I discovered just a couple years ago. My last letter, I told her about the transfer. Well, it's my mother and father, but my mother saved the letters. I said, you know, I remember reading, I said, "The war is over for me." So, it's like going from the 5th of the 7th to the 15th Admin company, I still had a couple months in country. I mean, being in Bien Hoa, I was living in a barracks.... I'm happy. I had a mattress and a bed and flush toilets. This isn't the war. I might as well be in any base camp in the United States. So, I

ended up typing for military citations. You know, it was silver stars, bronze stars, all that stuff. My job was to type name, rank, serial number and occasionally dates. That's what I did, all night long. It processed twenty-four hours a day. So, I was put on the night shift. So, I just sat at a typewriter and the interesting thing, this is the Army.... Obviously, my short-term experience wasn't that positive with the Army, but we had a sergeant who was in charge of us. He was like an E6 of something. There were several people. I don't even know what anybody's rank was other than this guy was in charge. So, it was a night shift. What he decided is the day shift would... there's a log. So, the day shift, which is [made up of] the top flight guys, the guys who did this for a living their whole tour, would produce X amount of certificates. There was a chart. So, his idea was, all we had to do was produce the output of the day shift and everybody is going to be happy because no one is going to come in and check on us. You know, he came in and he was an NCO so, he spent... I think we worked. There were three shifts. I think our shift started around ten o'clock. It started late at night. Ten or eleven. Well, we spent from the time we got out... to the time we reported for work, he was in the NCO club, drinking. So, he'd stagger in and he'd say, "Okay." And we'd all come in. And he'd say, "Okay. We got to produce 200 certificates." Then he'd sit down in his chair and fall asleep at his typewriter [laugh]. He was done. So, we just started typing. You know, we could produce 200 certificates in two and a half hours. So, you report to work, let's say ten o'clock. At twelve-thirty, you'd walk away. You'd say, "I'm going back to barracks and going to sleep." So, our night shift was, you know, I had a two-hour... I've gone from being, you know, on high alert twenty-four seven out in the jungle into putting two and a half hours of typing. This is the yin and yang of my service in Vietnam. I was bored to death. Just absolutely bored to death. There was nothing to do. Fortunately, I like to read and found some books. I read a lot. But that was my tour of the 15th Admin Company.

Cohen: Do you think in retrospect; it might have been a way to help transition to coming back to the United States? That you're still at a military base, but out of that sense of constant danger?

Krause: Well, in retrospect, I certainly didn't think about it after time. In retrospect, it was a month and a half, two months decompression. It might very well.... but I didn't think of it at the time. But that very well might be something that happened psychologically. I mean, by the time I got back, I was 100 percent against the War. It was like, "Okay. I don't care what anybody says. I had my own personal experience. It's like... We're not accomplishing anything here at all." So, yeah. I went to a couple of meetings of Vietnam Veterans Against the War in Washington D.C. They were very popular. They were talking to the (??, 2:50:56) Everybody was very anti-war then, especially in Washington D.C., the

government, you know. So, I'm kind of like not a joiner so... You know, I went to hear a couple guys speak. But, yeah. I was just wanting to disappear into the woodwork. I wasn't interested in any of that stuff, you know. You kind of come back and you process when you finally come back, you process in-country. Which is again, hurry up and wait. So, you know, you hear there's a lot of boredom. You're in this out-processing company and every time an officer or an NCO saw you, they'd say get a haircut. Well, that meant, you had to go stand in line because the Army wanted everybody's head shaved before they came home. Well, standing in line occupied your time. I think I had like six haircuts in two days... [both: laugh] when I was being processed in Vietnam to go home because, yeah, you'd just sit down, and your head is completely shaved. He's got to take his electric clippers over a bald head [laugh]. "Next!" You know. It's kind of like, "Okay." Allegedly, the purpose was to keep you out of trouble and hurry up and wait and stand in line. That's what they're all about. I remember that.

Cohen: Where in the States [interrupted]?

Krause: This just started... I thought it was a solid red line. It just started... did it always just? I just it's just over three hours.

Cohen: I know it's supposed to last over five.

Krause: Oh, okay.

Cohen: I'm not trying to wear you out.

Krause: Oh, I'm fine. I just didn't notice before. Okay, last five hours. I'm fine. I can keep going.

Cohen: Okay. I just know it's really long. Yeah. Yeah. So, where were you sent back to the United States? Did you have to go to a base when you returned?

Krause: I actually, what they called, DEROS [Date of Return from Overseas]. I can't remember what DEROS stands for. But, so I DEROS right out of Vietnam. So, when I left - I also got out - the Army had this program where you get out the Army, you're drafted for two years. You can get out of the Army ninety days early if you went back to school. They encouraged people to go to school. I had already graduated from college. So, that meant I had to get accepted to graduate school to get out ninety days early. Well, you can imagine what it's like to apply to graduate school from the jungles of Vietnam where it takes, you know, seven to ten days to get a letter from Vietnam to the United States then seven to ten days to get it back and your paperwork can get sopping wet... I can't remember if the monsoon was still going on - it's a process. So, anyway, I applied for multiple schools, including my alma mater - Miami University, because they did have a master's degree program. I applied to Miami and among other schools. One of

them, which was here in Chicago, which was then called Northeastern Illinois State Teachers College, which I think now is like Northeastern University or something. When you apply to college, you have to have references from your teachers. So, I had to write these three teachers from Miami, who I had no contact with for, you know, like five years, who I didn't schmooze with much anyways. I just took several of their courses, but I wasn't one of those guys who was hanging around the teacher after every class, you know. So, I wrote them, explained my situation and I always remember this letter - the favorite letters I ever got was from one of my professors called Reo Christiansen. He used to do op-eds for the Sun Times a lot. A political science guy. And he wrote me this letter and he said, "I've looked you up in the yearbook. I've seen your face. I've looked you up in my notes. You took four courses from me and got four A's." And he said, "I have no recollection at all like who you are or what you did. However, given your current circumstances, I have written you the highest letter of recommendation I have ever written for any student in my life." [both: laugh]. Anything to get this guy out of the jungle. I'll always remember that. It turned out, I got accepted to Miami. So, the Army had a ninety-day drop. What I didn't know until this experience was that they required you to be home for seven days before school started. Alright. Well, I would only be home for five days because the school started five days from when I'd leave Vietnam rather than seven days. So, my application for a ninety-day drop was denied. You always wondered, "How would your life change?" Those two days. How would my life change? I don't know. How would I have my life changed in '67 rather than '69? But anyways, I was accepted to Illinois State Teachers College and it was into a master's program teaching the culturally deprived. So, that was fine. So, I processed right out of the Army and so, I got to Oakland [California] and... Coming back, I went from Bien Hoa to Guam and then Guam to Oakland. So, I transferred out at Oakland and that was another circumstance where you were processed all night long and all day long. It was like a twenty-four-hour thing... and in the processing, they give you your final state dinner. They served everybody a steak dinner. See how wonderful we treat our troops? [laugh]. They give you a steak dinner and then you go into a line and they say, "This line will give you... You get your backpay, you walk out the door, and you're a free man." Okay. "If you have any medical problems that you think are related to the Army, then you don't leave. You go sit in the bleachers here and you're going to stay in the Army and you're going to be processed..." And there's a few lonely souls sitting in the bleachers here, but you got other guys who were like limping out the door. I mean, they clearly got wounds and everything, but it's like, "I'm out of here." I remember, I got 2000 dollars in twenty-dollar bills. I had this wad of cash. I looked like some gangster; you know. It was huge, but everybody got cash. They give you cash. Then I walked out the door and I was a free man. I had

my uniform on and I kept my uniform on because, you know, if you were in the military, you could fly military standby. I think that was free. I'm not sure if it that was free, but very nominal cost. Says you have to get your uniform and have to get a cab. I remember one guy was on in front of me in Oakland, he got a cab, opened the cab door and took off his clothes. Took off his uniform, his pants and his shirt. Sprayed it with lighter fluid. Lit it. Got into the cab and drove away in his underwear. I'm thinking, he's not flying a plane, I guess. [laugh]. I got to the airport, checked in. I was flying to Washington D.C. and I sat down, the airport was crowded. I was sitting on a bench with a bunch of other people. This young couple came by and they looked at me. Of course, I had my uniform on and since I was in the rear, I had all my medals and I had my sergeant stripes and all the stuff, I mean, there's a complete uniform. This couple stopped and they looked at me and said, "Did you just come back from Vietnam?" I said, "Yes, I did." They said, "Well, that's too bad you didn't get an arm, or a leg blown off for all the terrible things you did over there." So, yeah. I hadn't slept for like thirty hours, or thirty-six hours. Really? The person on my left and the person on my right got up and walked away. Then I had plenty of room to contemplate my welcome back to the United States, you know. So, then I was out of the Army. I was allegedly a free man there. It's kind of funny because, I guess, you're supposed to serve six years. I guess there's an inactive reserve. Or an active reserve or something, but I was never part of that. At all. In fact, I remember six years later... I got an envelope from the U.S. Army saying, "You are officially discharged." I thought, "I've been discharged for like four years." I don't even know what I did with that. But anyways, yeah, I guess you get a discharge after that six years comes to an end. So, that was my leaving Vietnam and returning to the States. Yeah.

Cohen: Well, I'm not sure how to put it. On the one hand, you're saying you felt the War was wrong, but on the other hand, you got unfair accusations when you returned after you put yourself at risk for the country for whatever reasons. What did you think about some of the medals that you have or some of the honors that you received?

Krause: Well, you know... I'm proud of the men I served with. I mean, you know, I speak to these middle school kids, I tell them that, you know - they ask you what you're fighting for, you know. I said, "You're really fighting for the man on your left or your right. It's a cliché, you know. But it's true. That's what it's all about." You're trying to survive and make sure you and everybody else comes home safe. I mean, that's it. All the other stuff, I mean, you can see from your own personal aspect, the other stuff is like, "Man, I had good intentions at one time, but sooner or later, good intentions, you know, meet reality." I mean, you know, at that time, the medals, some of them you feel you earned, others, I feel like... I don't know what they're for. I mean, like we might do the same thing every day. But all of a sudden, they're going to give you a medal because of today's rescue of the Montagnards. It's kind of like, "Well, we've done these thirty times." What makes today different? Was it because there were enemy soldiers there? We were shooting at them. They were shooting at us. I mean, I don't know. The medals, you know, they give you a lot of these meritorious achievement and meritorious service, you know, Army accommodation medals, bronze stars, that kind of thing. But it's like,



what does all that mean? They're pre-printed. So, they got your name, rank, and serial number. Since I worked in that department, it has to be a Silver Star or higher to get an actual individual description of what you did. So, you get a bronze star for meritorious achievement for two months service.... Or it could be meritorious service. I don't know what the difference between meritorious achievement and meritorious service is because they both cover; it might be a month period. So, yeah, they're there. I got a couple of them for heroism, but it's like, that should be for guys who were, you know, charging machine guns or something, you know. I don't know why we got those. I've talked about this with my fellow teammates who got the same awards. It's like kind of embarrassing actually. Now, the combat infantryman's badge, sure. I'm proud of that. That means that's only awarded to people who engage in ground combat with the enemy. It's worn above every single medal except the Medal of Honor. Okay, so that means something. I happen to know the history of that because one of the books I read, and I googled it. In World War Two, you know, they found out - they did a survey of who's happy and who's unhappy. Well, combat infantrymen were the unhappiest people in the world. Surprise. Because they had the rotten conditions, rotten situation, and rotten officers. It was a mess, and this was World War Two. So, the Army's remedy was to create these combat infantrymen because they found out the infantry, in World War Two, 10 percent of the military services, but they took 90 percent of the casualties. So, you know, the reward is this medal. They're not going to give you a pay raise. So, they just give you a medal, but it does mean something, you know?

Cohen: Just to mention, the camaraderie sounds like [interrupted]

Krause: Right. Yeah. Yeah. And we got, you get to be good friends and the unique thing about the Vietnam War, you go over an individual, you come back as an individual. There's no unit cohesion, whatsoever. You're just an individual. I kept in touch with one guy. Tom, who lives in Texas now. We kept in touch over the last.... What is it? Fifty years? Something like that. '70... Well, almost fifty years. So, we kept in touch and once we retired and he joined the 5th of the 7th - 5th Battalion 7th Cav Association - which is the largest unit association in the United States - and through that, we were able to contact several of the other guys that we have served with. So, in 2011.... Five of us met in Las Vegas [Nevada] and we had not seen or talked to each other in over forty years. So, we met, and you know, it was a good time. So then, we decided to go again and we met in, the next year, in New Orleans [Louisiana], and we picked up a couple more guys and after New Orleans, we kind of figured that, well, you know, "Even after forty years, nobody has turned into... We can't identify anybody as an axe murderer or serial killer," or anything like that. So, the next time we met, we brought the wives. So, now, we've collected a group, for those who have wives - three guys don't - but we've now got a group of probably ten people. With wives, it's almost twenty people - who have gone from guys who shared a combat experience forty odd years to really close friends. So, we all get together every year.

Cohen: It's kind of a rebirth of the unit.

Krause: Yeah. Yeah. We have our own recon reunion. Yeah. So, and we, when we talk about the old days, it's kind of like, you know, the only good thing that came out of the War was our friendship. Nothing else good that I can see came out of that War. So, you know... It's compounded by the fact that in Iraq and Afghanistan, we made every single mistake that we made in Vietnam. They just didn't learn a single lesson, just repeated it over and over and over again. I belong to a history book club. I read a lot of history, read a lot of novels about wars, and it's like, people say, "If you don't learn the lessons of history, you're doomed to repeat the mistakes of history." And it's like, well, people may say that, but here we are in the United States, in the year 2011 or whenever we invaded Iraq and Afghanistan, just repeating the same mistakes everybody else did. It's kind of like, we say everybody laughs at Hitler because, you know... Napoleon invaded Russia and got screwed. 100 years or 150 years later, Hitler invades Russia and got screwed, but the U.S. is just twenty years later, repeating all the same mistakes in Iraq and Afghanistan. It even more feels like "What is the point?" No one even learns the lesson of twenty years ago or forty years ago, whatever it was. But we have our friendship. [laugh].

Cohen: [laughs] That's enduring, eh?... Well, do you see any point to the point of the concept of the "Citizen Soldier" in light of what you're saying?

Krause: I think going to an all-volunteer Army is the biggest mistake the United States could have ever possibly made.

Cohen: Volunteer versus the draft?

Krause: Because you don't have citizen soldiers anymore. There are no citizen soldiers. They disappeared. They disappeared when they ended the draft. Citizen soldiers reflected the United States of America and all the citizens of the United States of America. Everybody was involved, one way or another. It focuses you on what actually is going on. I think 9 percent of the population was involved in the Vietnam War. Iraq and Afghanistan, less than 1 percent. They're all focused on military bases. You know, if you asked the man on the street, "How many wars has the U.S. engaged in as of today?" He'd maybe say zero. I mean, the whole concept of the United States going to war is something other people do. I think in the military, as well-meaning as they are, is totally separated from society. I mean, the military doesn't reflect the values of the United States of America... It reflects less than 1 percent of the United States of America. That's not to say their values are wrong. It's just to say - when you got a country that going to war is someone else's business, you've got a country that doesn't care. So and we've talked about this, and every one of the guys in my recon platoon that I'm still in touch with believes there should be national service. It's like the citizenry is simply not engaged at all in the government. It's not affected by terrible things that go on. Therefore, they don't know how to disastrous wars are. You think there are more... I read a good book about this... There are more soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan who have PTSD than ever in Vietnam. Almost twice as much. Most of the people from Iraq and Afghanistan - or Iraq - who have PTSD were truck drivers. It's because they were driving trucks from Lebanon to Iraq to the bases and they were attacked. So, they have PTSD. But what were they

driving in those trucks? Big screen televisions and air conditioners. So, the U.S. government is going to pay people disability payments for the rest of their lives because they got PTSD as a result of driving televisions? I'm a Vietnam veteran. What do air conditioners and big screen televisions have to do with war? These people have PTSD, you know, don't get me wrong, they have it. They deserve compensation for it. Okay. But you think about how did they get it? At one time, one-third of all the infantrymen in Iraq were used to protect the convoys bringing in air conditioners and televisions. Now, does the American public know that? Of course not. We don't have citizen soldiers anymore.

Cohen: You're saying, they're more citizen soldiers - if there was a draft, the American public could be more aware of decisions relating to wars and how they're carried out and have more of a voice?

Krause: Absolutely. The public would care. I mean, you know, if some professional soldier goes to Iraq, it's like, "He chose to join the Army. So, do I really care what happens to him?" Well, in the abstract you do. But if your son was drafted, you'd be paying a lot more attention to what was going on and that's what the U.S. has given up. The concept of citizen soldier no longer exists. It died when they abolished the draft as evidence by the fact of how many millions of people ran down to their recruitment station when the U.S. invaded Iraq? You always see these stories about guys, "Oh, I joined the Army after 9/11." But how many of those are there? They're not the turnout of World War Two.

Cohen: No... The attack on Pearl Harbor.

Krause: Yeah. You compare the attack on Pearl Harbor and the deaths of 9/11, and there is no uprising of the country. So, I'm repeating myself again, but there's no such thing as citizen soldier anymore.

Cohen: Do you think that serving in Vietnam cultivated either skills or characteristics that helped you with your civilian life afterwards?

Krause: [laugh]. You know... I laugh because it's another thing we always laugh about. They say, "Yeah, when I came back from Vietnam, I filled out a job application. It says, 'What did you do for the last two years?' It says, 'Professional Killer.'" It's what an infantryman is. I said, "How does that translate to a civilian job?" It doesn't. So, yeah, certainly guys like me, we don't learn any skills... Haven't set up a booby trap in forty-five years. I know how to do it. I'm real good at it. But it's not a civilian skill [laugh]. For me... My career, I was a government employee. I believe in government service. I believe the government can do good, certainly the agency I worked for, Federal Trade Commission does a lot of good. But in the Army, you know, I'm quite aware of the fact that the Army I served in Vietnam doesn't exist. The current Army is so dramatically different. Education level, the concern of the officers... I mean, one of the sad conditions of the U.S. is every generation has to have its own war. The 5th of the 7th was an association of Vietnam veterans. Well, unfortunately, now we're expanded to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. So, now we got these young guys joining and because of the miracles of science, they

get along very well, but they're missing legs, and arms, and they got prosthetics, and they're young.

Cohen: Hurts to see.

Krause: Yeah. Shouldn't happen. But it does. But I certainly don't begrudge them. I think they're doing a great service to volunteer, but at the same time, you don't like to see.... The association expanding because there's another generation of war veterans. That's a concept that doesn't sit well with me. So, the question was... You know, when you're so young, I think - now, I was twenty-four when I was over there, so I was four or five years older than everybody else. I'm sure that, for the younger people, it can have a very dramatic effect on their personality and attitudes for the rest of their lives.

Cohen: Interesting you felt that the four years, you have matured to a degree versus being an eighteen-year-old.

Krause: Yeah. I didn't feel it at the time because you're just one of the guys, but physically, as far as all we did... running and crawling and hiking through the jungle, twenty-four and nineteen doesn't make any difference. But, yeah, I think mentally, it can have a huge effect because they're just so young and don't know anything, especially the guys just out of high school, but for me.... I think, it certainly made me very cynical about the military - which I am to this day. At the same time, as an infantryman, I had a platoon leader who was a lieutenant and I had a company commander, who was a captain. That's basically the only officers I know. I know now, but I didn't know then, who the colonel was in charge of the 5th of the 7th. I had no idea who any of the guys were who were running the firebase. I mean, I feel these generals, they get their name out there like Schwarzkopf and all these guys, Petraeus, and all these guys, but I had no idea of who was in charge of the 1st Air Cav Division. Certainly a general was. I mean, you knew the guys all the way at the top. Westmoreland or Abrams, but only because you only read about them in the paper. I mean, there's no connection to the guys who are doing the fighting and the guys who are ordering it, in my experience. So, for myself... Yeah. I don't think... When I came back, I was fairly bitter. The reason I was bitter is, '72 was a huge recession. It was the worst ... At that time, it was the worst recession since the Depression we've since gone through. [laugh]. The problem with being old is you've been through several worse since the Depression, but there were no jobs. So... And not only were there no jobs, there were no jobs for white men. When I came back, I just wanted to be left alone. So, even though as a college graduate, I said, "Well, I want to be a mail carrier. I can work for a meter reader for the gas company or a meter reader for the electric company or be a telephone installer. I can just find a job where I just on my own." So, I went to all those companies and I applied for jobs. They all told me that, "We don't have any jobs, but if we did have a job, the government says we have to hire women or minorities. So, we can't hire you." So, that was, you know, my first four job application experiences and they, you know, it's the age of Affirmative Action. I'll always remember there was this Democratic congresswoman from Colorado, Patricia Schroeder, and she proposed eliminating veteran's preferences for veterans because women were excluded from having access to those benefits. Now, of course, you could

say, "The women could join the military, but they're too smart." [laugh]. They're not going to join the military...Of course, now, forty-years later, we do have. But I mean... I hated my job with the government. I swore I would drive a cab in Chicago before I went back. Of course, I found out you can't get a job driving a cab in Chicago because the whole medallion process. You have to know somebody who knows somebody whose got a medallion in order to get a job. So, yeah. I hated my job, but the reality was it was either go back to the job you hate or go on welfare and I wasn't going to on welfare. So, now that I think about it - and I don't think about it that often, never - yeah, I was very angry the government would send me half-way around the world to kill people and then that same government would actively prevent me from getting a job. I happen to believe in the Civil Rights and all that stuff, at the time, it was very personal because it's hard to come back and like the vets are now, they're coming back and have such a high unemployment rate because they can't find jobs. The only difference is, I didn't volunteer for the Army. The current veterans, unemployed veterans, volunteered for the Army, maybe because they couldn't find jobs. I was just.... very disappointed that I got stuck going back to the same job.

Cohen: Vietnam veterans had no support or proper benefits... It's not like the housing that was built for World War Two veterans, you know what I mean?

Krause: Yeah. Yeah. It's kind of funny that Bruce Springsteen song, "Born in the U.S.A." He says, "Went down to see my VA man, he says, 'Sorry man, you don't understand.'" I did go to the VA and actually, one of the guys was in the mortar platoon from Snuffy here in Chicago. I met him. But he said, "You know, you're a college graduate. The VA is not set up to help college graduates. Sorry." And they're not. They said, "College graduates are supposed to be smart enough not to get drafted." Yeah. It was a rough patch, but you can't go through life angry. It'll destroy your life. I eventually got another job, moved back to Chicago, connected with all my friends. That's fine.

Cohen: Rebuilt your life.

Krause: Yeah. Life goes on. Good life.

Both: [laugh].

Cohen: Yeah, that's good.

Krause: In retrospect, I can't complain, but that was a rough patch, especially since, your head is shaved. You got to hide in the house for eight months until your hair grows out, especially when men are wearing their hair down to their shoulders. It's kind of like, all anybody had to do was look at you and you were a veteran. They didn't know where you were or what you did, but they knew you were a veteran. It wasn't a positive thing to be. A bad few months, but eh, we're on our way. [laugh].

Cohen: Is there something you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask about?

Krause: I don't think so. Stream of consciousness. I don't know how you're going to cut this down to half an hour.

Cohen: But I really thank you. It's really fortunate you have, I think, a very detailed memory. It's very good.

Krause: Part of that is the pictures. Pictures are worth a thousand words; they bring back memories. But the other part is being able to discuss these things with the guys I served with. Every veteran I meet, I ask them, "Are you in touch with any of the guys you served with?" And like 99.9 percent say, "No." So, I'm very lucky. One of the things is, you get to talk about these things, and you tell stories, and people agree with you or they correct you. So, because surprisingly enough, everybody's experience is totally different. Even if you're side by side and experience the same thing, your memories are totally different. So, the correct memories get reinforced. The incorrect memories just disappear into the ether. Things are very... very important to other people like this one guy, one of my best friends now from Vietnam who I reconnected with, tells the story that he felt he was going to die. He said that he really felt the next time we stepped off that helicopter, "I'm dead." He said me and another guy, you know, took care of him and calmed him down and said, "Just stay with us. We'll stay on your left and your right. Don't worry, we'll keep you alive and all that stuff" which made a powerful impression on him. I had no recollection of that at all. But he said it. I believe him, but, yeah, no recollection of that whatsoever. So, here we are. Side by side, twenty-four-seven for all these months and his memories are directly different.