

Michael Duffy

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Interviewed by Mike Winters

Transcribed by Sonix with corrections by Leah Cohen

Edited by Leah Cohen

Web biography by Leah Cohen

Produced by Brad Guidera

INTERVIEW STARTS at 8:00

Winters: [00:08:00] Well, just a bit of housekeeping. Let me, for the record, note that we're talking on the 10th of February 2017 and I'm talking with Mike Duffy. That's spelled D-U-F-F-Y.

Duffy: [00:08:15] Michael J. Duffy In case there's another one.

Winters: [00:08:18] Michael J. Duffy And I'm fascinated by your book¹ and wondered just in general, why did you think you needed to write a book about your service in Vietnam?

Duffy: [00:08:29] Right. When I got back I immediately went into college and I had all these memories of these horrendous days and some not-so-horrendous and just very interesting spots. And I didn't want to lose the memory. So it rattled around my head. And I graduated from college and with an art degree and began painting about those. And I painted stories about the Saigon Teatime chapter. And there's one called [00:09:09] Novaesi. [00:09:10] And these paintings were in a um, we, we had a gallery called the Vietnam Veterans Art Gallery. It was on Indiana Avenue, and subsequent to that, it changed hands. It closed down, they ran out of money. And now there's a museum on Milwaukee up in Portage Park called the Veterans Arts Museum.

Winters: [00:09:34] Yeah, I've heard about that. I still haven't got there.

¹ Duffy, Michael. *From Chicago to Vietnam: A Memoir of War*. [Portland, Oregon] : Inkwater Press, [2016]

Duffy: [00:09:35] Yeah. So all of my paintings that I did, which were really stories moved up there. So those same stories that I painted about, then I began keeping a journal. I should have brought it. It's a handwritten journal. It preceded computers. And I just wrote every, you know, all these stories out back in the late '70s. So I kept them and got married, had a family, and I couldn't do anything. But I thought, you know, 'Let me put these things together'. About probably twenty years ago, I decided to get serious about it. I didn't want to let it go. Those stories. And mainly for my children, "Hey, here's what it was like. Here's me or anybody." If there's any grandchildren in the future, who knows? And it was a matter of not wanting to have these stories disappear. And one thing that was really important, I still run a business. I run a-- I'm a manufacturer's rep. I drive all over Wisconsin and Illinois and in every county seat in Illinois, there's a statue of the Civil War guy.

Winters: [00:10:49] Yes.

Duffy: [00:10:50] But you know what? I saw one time down in Galesburg or wherever. Well, they moved him and then he was off the pedestal and then some of them get tarnished and then it'll be forgotten and they are forgotten. Nobody. The Civil War. What's that? It's kind of an abstract. And I thought, you know, if I don't write this down, we're all going to be forgotten.

Winters: [00:11:13] Well, it's a real gift to not only people like me but the younger generations, you know, my children and their children.

Duffy: [00:11:20] Well, yeah, thanks. I mean, I tried to make it interesting. It's not a diary. It's a memoir.

Winters: [00:11:28] So you were a young high school student in in North side of Chicago, let's say Rogers Park area. [Duffy affirms: Right.] And just take me through that process. What led you from high school into the Army? Did you join or you got drafted or--?

Duffy: [00:11:46] Well, I was a high school student but a very poor high school student. I didn't enjoy it. I looked out the window. I drew pictures. I liked art. We didn't have art. We had mechanical drawing. I just didn't care for it. I excelled in mathematics and geometry. I liked that. I liked a few other classes. So I got out and thinking, I was going to go to college, I really

didn't have the grades, or our family [didn't] have the money. So I was quickly drafted. And as soon as I was drafted, I was counseled by a fellow down at the railroad. I was working for the railroad then and he said, "You know, you might you'd better be careful. They're drafting Marines and they're drafting guys in the to fill the ranks of the Navy and the Marines. And you might consider talking to a recruiter because you can usurp the draft." I've already had my letter and my physical and-- "It might this way at least you can get a path to what you want to do." This fellow was a guy I worked with, an older man, a Second World War guy, and so I did that and I went down and talked to a recruiter. Took the L train down to Wilson Avenue and he said, "Take a test." And then he said, "You know, you did pretty well, you could be a surveyor." And I thought, 'Well, maybe I get a job as a surveyor when I get out.' So that was how it happened. I was drafted, but instead of taking a potluck, I was able to join the military and then get at least a path of using my skills in trigonometry and geometry, which I liked in the survey.

Winters: [00:13:39] So you might have a little more say in where you went.

Duffy: [00:13:41] Exactly.

Winters: [00:13:41] And then you ended up in the artillery.

Duffy: [00:13:44] Well, silly me.

Winters: [00:13:45] Was that a good assignment or not so good?

Duffy: [00:13:49] Well, I was naive enough to think a surveyor surveyed roads. And because I see him on up on Clark Street, you know, here they are with their [00:13:58] Seattleites. [00:13:59] And, well, what we surveyed were artillery targets. And I learned my survey skills out in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and did very well. I enjoyed it. And. What, what really came about was they asked me if I wanted to become an officer. In those years, you only needed a high school degree and a pretty good IQ test, which I had, and pretty good skills in mathematics. So I asked the most important question, "How much do they get paid?" I needed the money to go to college. And so they were, you know, from a private at \$75 a month, lieutenant, second lieutenant in Vietnam made about \$800. And I said, you know, "I'll do that. I'll go to OCS [Officer

Candidate School] for six months." All my other classmates from the Survey School went over to Europe.

Winters: [00:14:58] So you entered the Army in what year?

Duffy: [00:15:01] Uh, received my draft notice in November. October, November of 1965. And then went down and enlisted with this guy and he gave me a 120-day delay. I entered on March 14th, 1966, the day I entered.

Winters: [00:15:21] And that begins your six-month officer training?

Duffy: [00:15:25] No that was beginning of -- We all flew down to Fort Polk, Louisiana. It was your basic training. And then after that, you had what they call AIT [Advanced Individual Training] training. And that would have been out in Oklahoma. So that took. Uh, maybe four or five months, I guess, of that.

Winters: [00:15:47] AIT is what artillery?

Duffy: [00:15:50] AIT. Did I say AIT?

Winters: [00:15:52] I think you said that.

Duffy: [00:15:53] I think that's your advanced. I don't know what it stands for. It's an acronym, A-I-T Advanced Individual Training, something like that. And that would have been the survey portion. And it was there that I was approached by the captain and he said, "Do you want. Hey, you know, you could qualify if you want to be interviewed. We had an interview with three officers, seeing if you were qualified then to go on to OCS." So it was after that, about six months into the Army. Then I did it, joined, and then exactly one year to the date when I went in on March 14th of '65 of [autocorrects] '66, March 14th of 1967, I was commissioned a second lieutenant. [Winters affirms: I see.] Officer Yeah, yeah. So. Yeah.

Winters: [00:16:42] And you finally made your way to Vietnam exactly during the Tet Offensive. Is that right?

Duffy: [00:16:48] Yeah.

Winters: [00:16:49] That's what I remember from your book.

Duffy: [00:16:50] I was sent out. Right. I was sent out to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Well, correction: after I was commissioned, I was sent out to Fort Carson, Colorado. And I can't remember the red diamond was their patch. I don't know what division it was. I think even the 1st Division might have been out there, too. Twenty-fifth, I think. And I worked there for a year and we'd have field exercises with artillery and worked as a forward observer, worked as a safety officer, worked as a, um, you know, second lieutenant gopher, you know, "Get this, do this done", and just did my training there. And then...received orders in December to go to Vietnam. But that was pushed ahead because they sent me down to Panama for the jungle training course, which gave me a, I don't know, two or three weeks down there. I came back, landed, left Chicago, then out to Washington, McChord Air Force Base, I think, and then flew over to Cam Ranh Bay. And then the next night I was sent to Saigon because that's was the eve of the Tet Offensive and they were already attacking.

Winters: [00:18:13] Okay.

Duffy: [00:18:14] The VC started earlier. They didn't wait till the morning. They started doing things in that night. So they sent me down there and I landed when Tan Son Nhut was under attack, they were in, they were already breached the wire. There was fighting at the Newport Bridge, which was terrible. Chợ Lớn. They had breached the [US] Embassy not inside, but the walls of the embassy. So Saigon was already exploding.

Winters: [00:18:40] So you had quite a hair-raising introduction to Vietnam.

Duffy: [00:18:43] Hair raising? Yeah. No weapon either. Remember your weapons. You don't get your weapons until you go to the company level. So.

Winters: [00:18:51] Boy, couldn't have picked a better time to land in Vietnam.

Duffy: [00:18:54] Yeah. Frightening.

Winters: [00:18:59] So what was it like to be an artilleryman as opposed to an infantryman? And how do you think you contributed to the battlefield?

Duffy: [00:19:08] Well, you're infantry, of course, is on the ground. And they would move in into the jungles and they'd go into operations, slop through the muck, and then seek out the enemy. We in the artillery were behind them, and we stayed not too far because I had 105 howitzers, which only shot about seven miles out. So we would then stay behind or near them to support them if they became if they were under attack, which happened often. And I did walk. There was one chapter in the book called, 'Mid-day Deep in the Jungle', where I go out with the 9th Infantry Division on a patrol. And I don't know if you remember that it was like a two, three, four-hour patrol up. And then I got called up. A bunch of men got really very ill from dysentery, eating bad food, whatever, which was common also. And I brought in the smoke ground to get them out. I don't know if you remember that, but we brought some helicopters in and then we had to abort the mission. The captain, we turned around. And on a couple of other occasions, I worked as a forward observer with the infantry. Yeah. But then, you know, I was pretty good at what I did. So I became, I worked in the FDC fire direction control center along with our 105 howitzers and did that night after night all night. Sleep was impossible.

Winters: [00:20:51] So you had a real technological job in the sense that you needed to ensure artillery rounds landed right where they're intended to land. And you've got some infantry out there, right? If you make a mistake, why [Duffy exclaims: They're dead]. There's real consequences.

Duffy: [00:21:07] So how you do it was: there are grids on the map. And I don't know when I before we turn the cameras on, I had a large map here with grids on them. [Winters affirms: Yes.] And we have that map on the side of our fire direction control bunker. We had a sandbag bunker. And so did the infantry have the map but really in the little area where they were walking through and they would give us coordinates. And then we would plot those coordinates on a chart table with little push pins. They'd read them over; we'd read them back. We made sure it was right. Put the pin in right where the coordinates into the left, elevation, whatever. And then we'd move a straight edge over to get the distance from our guns to the target. And

then we would work up the elevation of the artillery tube with slide rulers. Slide rules, not rulers. Slide rules. [Winters affirms: Yeah.] And then we would also work up the deflection, which is the left and the right movement of the cannon tube from dead center. And then you'd check the figures again and you'd check them a third time.

Winters: [00:22:26] Do you have someone else check them also?

Duffy: [00:22:29] Everybody should be checking everybody. I was taught very well. Everybody has a responsibility to check besides the tube being raised at the right elevation and then the right deflection. Then the artillery round had seven charges with it, and then you would call out the charge and the crew chief would then count the charges and we'd lay them out on the ground charge. And there were seven charges and you'd see seven bags.

Winters: [00:23:01] So you always had seven charges or did that depend on the the.

Duffy: [00:23:05] No, if it was, yeah, the distance was far out and we use all seven. If it was closer in let's say oh three kilometers, four, you'd only use a charge three or a charge four. So the crew chief would look at the seven bags. This is critical stuff. And he'd say, "Okay, charge four." So then you would he would watch the artillery gunner, cut what they call cut the charges. He cut three bags off. [Winters asserts: Yeah]. And to make sure when you put the charges back in the canister that there were just there were four charges because if you had five, it's going to go farther or if you had only three, it's going to go not as far. And that's where you have friendly fire or you have problems, you know. So there are many, many. There were many spots where an error could occur.

Winters: [00:24:00] Yeah, there's a number of moving parts here, aren't there?

Duffy: [00:24:02] Yeah. Elevation, deflection, the powder charges, the fuze charges. You know the gun off. Is it? After you fire it? It moves, too. So now you're off a little bit.

Winters: [00:24:16] Yeah, I didn't realize that.

Duffy: [00:24:17] Yeah. Big.

Winters: [00:24:18] So you could bring a lot of hell right down on a spot, huh?

Duffy: [00:24:23] We Yeah, we did. And we would do that all night. What they call H & I missions- harassment and interdiction missions. And then if the artillery was needed for the infantry, you know, I remember them keying the mics, hearing in machine gun fire, screams, hollers, and then getting the numbers as this is going on to bring the artillery into where the enemy, the VC were, you know, attacking. And this happened every night.

Winters: [00:24:54] There's a lot riding on your skill.

Duffy: [00:24:57] A lot riding on my skill. Oh, yeah. And I took it seriously.

Winters: [00:25:01] And artillerymen were a little bit maybe smarter than average. I mean, you had to have, well, some mathematical skills.

Duffy: [00:25:11] They needed mathematical skills. They needed to read the, you know, your basic manual, which was important. I'm not saying they were any smarter than the infantry. They might think they were, but I don't know. You know, it's--

Winters: [00:25:26] Yeah.

Duffy: [00:25:27] --the infantry carried mortars with them and you needed those same skills to fire a mortar round. [Winters inserts: Good point.] Yeah. So that a mortar can go off and go awry also. So. But no, they needed to be able to set fuzes. It was, you know, and it was dark and these guys were tired and yeah, errors were not uncommon on the gun, but I caught a lot of them.

Winters: [00:25:54] Did you fire only at night?

Duffy: [00:25:56] No. We fired day. Night. Morning. Afternoon. But a lot at night.

Winters: [00:26:01] The Crosman [type of gun] were at night. Night?

Duffy: [00:26:04] Yeah.

Winters: [00:26:04] But. But at any time of day or night, you might get a call for a specific assignment.

Duffy: [00:26:09] But the infantry. The infantry would find an area where the VC might have had a tunnel or something, and then they'd call it into us. And then that night when they were active, then we would fire, you know, and they would fire back at us sometimes.

Winters: [00:26:26] How many 105s [105 mm howitzers] did you have in one emplacement?

Duffy: [00:26:29] A battery consisted of six 105 howitzers. Mine were split trails, which meant they had trails in the back, which would then go together and hook on to a deuce and a half truck, and then you could haul it away. They had logbooks that dated back to World War II, and these pieces were in Korea, World War II, and then finally Vietnam. Yeah, they were old guns.

Winters: [00:26:50] They've seen the world.

Duffy: [00:26:51] They did. Yeah. So, yeah, there were six guns, FDC, fire direction control. Um, I can't remember exactly how many men. Maybe about 100, maybe six, seven officers, crew chiefs. We had. Uh, we had some supply people, some mechanics, which also would work as a gunner, too. Okay, or a truck driver if we're moving out. Yeah.

Winters: [00:27:23] I noticed in your book you make reference to various pieces of literature. It sounds like you were pretty well-read, even as a as a young man. Did that ever stand in your way? I mean, did you did other soldiers look at you as kind of like a geek?

Duffy: [00:27:41] No, no, no, no, not really. You know, I like to read my novels. I think I mentioned. I read. I like Steinbeck. He was one of my favorite authors back then.

Winters: [00:27:52] You mentioned *Catch-22*.

Duffy: [00:27:54] Oh, yeah. *Catch-22*. Yeah. I remember some of the characters there. But no, you just. You do this in your off time. You do it alone. Maybe you were off and you sit in the sun and read. Um, there was not much else to do on the slow times. You know, when you're. Because you're there twenty-four hours a day. And they punched the tube in the morning, clean it, and then you have some downtime. And then I'd read *The Stars and Stripes*, which was our local newspaper. [Winters inserts: Yeah]. Listen to the radio. Read letters. Write letters. [Winters inserts: Yeah.] That was it. That was your day.

Winters: [00:28:32] And it sounded like you were pretty meticulous. I mean, you took that role seriously.

Duffy: [00:28:37] Oh, yeah, very. The guy that taught me. Just a tremendous teacher taught me. He was the first lieutenant. I came up now I was the first lieutenant. He trained me to be the XO, the executive officer of the battery, and he did his job well.

Winters: [00:28:58] You know, as the XO, did you ever run into conflict or trouble with other soldiers?

Duffy: [00:29:04] Oh, yeah. [Laughs] That's inevitable. Tempers flare. And yeah, we had some issues with oh, drinking, You know, guys drinking too much, then can't do the job. And then problems. We had issues down on the gunpits where two guys wouldn't get along. They'd usually come to me where I would have to mediate or try to mediate. And even I had trouble with some of the other officers that, you know, 'Hey, I was a young kid and some of them were older than me.' Just to get things done. You need to do this. You need to check, you need to double-check and. Yeah, yeah, lots of tension.

Winters: [00:29:54] So what was the most inspiring part of serving in Vietnam?

Duffy: [00:30:01] Working with the the really dedicated men who would really stand out and. The one fellow who was my mentor. He's just. He's gone now. His name was First Lieutenant Jack Bocker. I loved him. And he was phenomenal. Just seeing him and how he worked and how he operated. Very professional. You know, look through the lack of sleep, the filth that we lived in, and the rain and whatever, and just [said], "We must be professional here. We can't

afford to make an error." And it's, you know, this is our job while we're here. So the people were the most inspiring, Without a doubt.

Winters: [00:30:49] What was the most disheartening?

Duffy: [00:30:54] Well, you read the book. I have a chapter in there called, 'June 7th.' Having people not, not help when you need it to help. I had an incident in the book here where I went into the battlefield to carry some a wounded man off. And I had some senior people that did not help and they should have.

Winters: [00:31:19] You had a term for that, I think.

Duffy: [00:31:21] Well, they called them medal riders. They came out of the. They pulled me out of the field to fly over Saigon in late-- Well, all of May and into June. The VC [Viet Cong] were rocketing Saigon. They were just sending rockets from the jungle indiscriminately to terrorize the population of Saigon. They weren't killing, you know, they were killing so much the US Army of the South Vietnamese. They were just blowing up anybody on purpose to demoralize these people and under. So obviously, if the Americans and the South Vietnamese are there, but they can't stop the rocket fire, it questions our validity. So they called me in to fly, I can't I think it might have been Long Bình or Biên Hòa, one of the air bases. And we'd fly over Saigon and I talk about trying to locate the positions of the rocket fire. I'd see the rocket fire come in. But it was impossible. There was no benchmark. It was pitch black and I'd see the muzzle or not the muzzle flash, the rockets leave the jungle and then thirty seconds later they'd smash into Saigon. And. And you're in a moving helicopter, and I'd have them turn.

Duffy: [00:32:42] And it was just impossible. But with us would be rear echelon, mainly officers and some senior NCOs that were after some flight time, combat flight time to give an air medal. I didn't nickname them this, the pilots. I said the first night I went up, I said, "Well, who are these other people?" I'm here to be a forward observer with you. We had a I think we had two, two-door gunners and then there were two pilots and me. And all of a sudden the ship filled up with people. I said, "Who are these people?" And the guy snickered. He was a major. And he said, "They're here to-- they're here to get an air medal. If they get, I don't know, sixty-five, seventy hours, they can apply for an air medal." I said, "Oh, okay." And then he laughed and he

said he snickered. He said, "We call them medal riders." [Laughs] So I mentioned that in the book, but it's not my term. But they were rear echelon people and probably some of them career because you get your little medal.

Winters: [00:33:48] So they just needed time in a in a chopper?

Duffy: [00:33:50] I think it was sixty-five hours of combat time, you know, and my stint was two weeks to go through and then another and then I went back to the field, out into the bush, which I felt much more comfortable out there.

Winters: [00:34:06] And then so these medal riders were kind of discouraging to you, let's say, or disheartening to you because they were what?

Duffy: [00:34:14] They weren't disheartening or discouraging to me, but they got in my way and-- One night we landed in. There was a tremendous firefight going on along Highway One. The VC had attacked late-night convoy and blew up some vehicles. I just remember the firefight. You could see it from the helicopter. And there were two majors that were they were tough boys. They were tough guys. And they got the radio transmission. They decided to go in and pick up a wounded man because we were right there. You call the medevac, you wait, you know. Remember, it was the Tet Offensive and everything was stretched. You know, hundreds and hundreds of men were being killed every week. So we were there. And the majors, I had a helmet on and he said, "We're going to go in and pick this kid up." So I remember he flew over the battle scene. And then also then he flew around and they had two jeeps pull up, turn the lights on, and we landed there. I think I mentioned it in the book. Young lieutenant runs up to me and he's just frantic and he says, "I need help."

Duffy: [00:35:36] He's a big guy. Americans. We're big and even there, I mean, we were skinny, but this was a big guy. And so I jumped out, of course, and he says, "Let's go." He said, "No, no, this guy is big. We need help. You and I can't carry him." And I turned back in and the medal riders, well, they put their heads down. [Laughs] doesn't, wait a minute. And I remember saying, "Isn't anyone going to help?" Finally, the lieutenant grabbed my arm and said, "No, we got to get him. He's bleeding." So we ran in. You know, we ran into the battlefield. And then we we we got to where he was. He was on a mat. And. We had we recruited some women,

Vietnamese women. Remember, most of the villages were filled with women. The men were off in the war. So, you know, we told them, you pick up this end, you pick up that end. And we, we raised, lifted them on a reed mat. [Winters says: Yeah] because he's a big guy. Tragically, he did not live.

Winters: [00:36:43] And so these women were willing to pitch in?

Duffy: [00:36:46] Willing or maybe out of fear. We told them to, you know, I don't know who they were or what, you know, We just said, "Come on." And then they, you know. We were armed. They were not. And I don't know, maybe they did it. I don't think they wanted to. I mean, this was not a fun, safe job. So we had to then carry them out of this little enclave into the open and get them back to the ship. [Winters affirms: Okay.] So I don't know. You know, they did it whether they wanted to or not. We, they did it.

Winters: [00:37:22] So--

Duffy: [00:37:23] But we did it slowly because they just, you know, we we had them. We couldn't do it easy. They were they were small. They're petite.

Winters: [00:37:33] Sure, yeah, yeah. So all told you were in Vietnam for how long?

Duffy: [00:37:38] Uh, January, either the 29th, I think I landed on the 29th of January, 1968. I was scheduled to come home. January 29th of 1969. But. I applied to Colorado College in Colorado Springs. They accepted me and they let me go in in the middle of the year, 1969, January. So I applied for an early out and I was able to get out of the Army by about thirty days early in order to begin my classes. So I got home on Christmas Eve of '68. And then about a few days later, I just drove out to college because they started right after the first of the year. There was no extended break.

Winters: [00:38:31] So you were there eleven months, let's say?

Duffy: [00:38:34] Yeah, eleven months.

Winters: [00:38:35] More or less. When were you afraid?

Duffy: [00:38:45] The biggest fear came on the plane flying over and landing. That's where I had the most fear. What to expect. What? What? You know, am I going to make it out the front door of the airplane? Is it going to? You don't, you didn't know because all we had seen were the news footage from, you know, the news in ABC, NBC News showing firefights and this and that. So that would have been the, the height of my fear.

Winters: [00:39:33] So that was more frightening than being on the ground when things got hot?

Duffy: [00:39:37] I, I just did the job. And you don't the fear comes later when you start shaking. But I would just do my job. And the rocket attack when we turned the artillery and fired back, which is in the book there, we just did our job. And, you know, afterwards, you know, in the chaos and the burning vehicles and tanks and then, you know, then it's kind of you kind of shake a little bit and... But when you're doing your job, I the I mean, fear might be there, but I mean, I was just doing the job....You know, we were trained very, very well.

Winters: [00:40:23] Yeah. Now, at one point, you got a decoration, I think.

Duffy: [00:40:27] Right, I did.

Winters: [00:40:28] What was it like getting a what was it? A Bronze Star?

Duffy: [00:40:32] Yeah, the bronze Star. Was flattering. And I talk about that and how I got it. And I don't know if you remember the nuances of it but--

Winters: [00:40:41] I remember something about it. I can't remember exactly how--

Duffy: [00:40:43] At any rate.

Winters: [00:40:44] How you earned it.

Duffy: [00:40:45] Yeah, it was the next. Yeah, it was. We got a call And... meaning there were about five of us after this night of the attack, but it was probably three, four, or five weeks later. And they said a major was coming out to give some troops some medals. So they had a little formation of us. There were four or five of us. And that was it. I mean, it wasn't like a ceremony where you go up and get your diploma and everybody applauds. Helicopter flew in. The major got off with his aide. The aides were usually what they call butter bar A second lieutenant, and he was as tidy and clean, and now he was scared. [Laughter] He did not want to be out in the field. At any rate, then they pinned some medals on us. I remember Sergeant got one. A few others. And I got the Bronze Star. And that was it. It was all over.

Winters: [00:41:54] Why did you get the Bronze Star? What did you do that was courageous?

Duffy: [00:41:58] There wasn't courageous. It was, I believe it was a, it was a nod. It was a favor by a captain who I worked for. If it was courageous, they would have put the V on the Bronze Star. I did not have the V, and the V stands for valor. I received the Bronze Star, but not with the V for valor. It was for doing my job.

Winters: [00:42:31] I see.

Duffy: [00:42:31] And that's. That's all it was for.

Winters: [00:42:34] Now, at one point you got leave. You went to Australia, right?

Duffy: [00:42:38] We all got on R & R for one week and you could pick your spots. And I decided I wanted to get out of the heat. And so I went down to Sydney, Australia. Yeah, spent a week down there.

Winters: [00:42:56] I heard. That's a wonderful place to go.

Duffy: [00:42:58] Yeah, we saw about about an hour's worth of Sydney, and then the rest of the time was spent in the pub. Yeah, yeah. But I went out to a sheep ranch and stayed out there for a few days just to get out of Sydney. I never smoked and smoked. Cigarette smoke always bothered me and these guys might team up with a crew and your buddies and they did nothing

but drink and smoke cigarettes. And I have nothing against either vice, but I could never smoke as a kid. I tried it. I would get allergic and it just didn't work. So I didn't like to hang around the bars. So I decided, 'Well, let me go out.' And they had an opportunity to visit a sheep ranch or a ranch. This guy had an apple orchard up in a place called Goulburn, Australia. Beautiful, beautiful town in the Tablelands.

Winters: [00:44:00] That's quite a switch from Vietnam.

Duffy: [00:44:02] Yeah, it was very, very lovely. And the host family was gorgeous. And I remember the family that met me in Goulburn, the Healys just as gracious as they could be. Lovely people. The Australians were welcoming. I can't imagine. Like I was coming home.

Winters: [00:44:22] So you're a little bit of a celebrity when you went there, huh?

Duffy: [00:44:27] Well, in Goulburn, I was because they rarely saw an American. And on that Sunday I stumbled into a social club. The bars were all shut down on Sunday, but they had social clubs and I happened to go into one and filled with people. And as soon as I ordered a beer, I, you know, gave myself up as what they call a Yank. We were all Yanks. Didn't matter where you were, whether you were from Texas, Chicago, or Massachusetts. So. Well, the Yanks here. So that's when I became a celebrity for, you know, a half hour.

Winters: [00:45:03] Did they have a lot of appreciation about your service in Vietnam?

Duffy: [00:45:06] Very much. The Australians had many men that fought in Vietnam. Many of them were killed, many of them wounded. They had a big stake over there and they appreciated not only the men serving in Vietnam, they still memorialized the men and women that served in World War II under the under the you know, with the Brits. And they were in quite early. [Winters affirms: Yes.] You know, we didn't get in until the Second World War, until December of '41. They were in there with when the Brits had their you know, the Germans were raiding doing the bombing raids into London East. [Winters affirms: Yeah, yeah.] The East End and the Docklands early on in the war. So yeah, they really appreciated their soldiers very, very much. Yeah.

Winters: [00:46:11] Yeah. That's an enjoyable part of the book. It seems like it was really a satisfying trip for you.

Duffy: [00:46:16] Yeah, it was. It was wonderful. And, you know, but it was just. Yeah, it was tough coming back into the mess, and yeah, the grind of Vietnam and the filth and the dust. And by that time I think it was late in the year. So the monsoons had stopped. There are really only two seasons in Vietnam, the monsoon, the wet, six months, and then you have the dry six months.

Winters: [00:46:48] And which is the dry season?

Duffy: [00:46:51] Would it be our winter. It might start in late September and you'd get rains maybe in May, you know, But by the you know, certainly November, December, January, February would be just dry and dusty. Hot.

Winters: [00:47:09] Okay. Red dust.

Duffy: [00:47:10] Red dust

Duffy: [00:47:10]. Yeah. Yeah.

Winters: [00:47:12] How much contact did you have with Vietnamese civilians?

Duffy: [00:47:18] Not much until. Until we moved our. My first job, I think I mentioned, was on a place called Bearcat [Base]. And I would convoy ammunition up Highway One to our three artillery batteries. I remember one going up into a place called Xuân Lộc. Often we convoy pick up our artillery shells and then convoy up to Xuân Lộc unload, spend the night, and then come back the next day. I went up there a lot and I don't know why. I don't remember the other batteries supplying them as often. But then that happened to be my first job outside of the service battery. The service battery was the battery that brought in food, artillery shells, and ammunition. And then I was assigned to Charlie Battery, C Battery up in Xuân Lộc. So I spent time in Xuân Lộc. And then we moved to Bình Sơn Rubber Plantation, which is where we spent probably maybe two months, maybe. And as I mentioned, it was right in the middle of the

rubber trees. So they didn't spray Agent Orange on us. We were blessed that way. [Winters affirms: Yeah.] There wasn't much contact with the Vietnamese and Xuân Lộc. Bearcat was where the service battery was or in the Bình Sơn Rubber Plantation.

Duffy: [00:48:53] But when we moved to Nhà Bè in that area called the Tank Farm south of Saigon on the Nhà Bè River where the jet fuel was unloaded. That's when we worked with this artillery battery from the South Vietnamese army. And they had infantry there, and they would bring their families with them. So they live right in it. So there were a lot of children and there were women of, I assume, families from the South Vietnamese army. And so that's when I started to get in a lot more contact with the South Vietnamese people, the children. You know, you play with the kids. Yeah. Yeah, they were all barefoot. Poverty was rampant. There was very little money. And so we would employ some of the women to help us with some of the chores you have in an artillery battery or, you know, the dreaded scrubbing out pots and pans that nobody wanted to do. And so that's when I became friendly with them and got to know them, and my job was to pay them. So I was given the piasters and then every month I would pay our our crew work crew, which was all women.

Winters: [00:50:21] And piasters are the local currency?

Duffy: [00:50:23] Piasters was the local currency. And then we had the greenback, which was our US dollar. But in between the piaster and the greenback was the military's funny money. And that was to try to keep the greenback dollar out of the economy of the South Vietnamese government. You know, it didn't work because the merchants took everything. You know, they took a dollar, they took a piaster or they took the military payment certificate.

Winters: [00:50:57] What was your impression of the ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam, the main fighting force of South Vietnam]?

Duffy: [00:51:01] The ones we worked with. They had two guns. Two officers, probably thirty men. These men were extremely professional. They really were. They did their job well. They had two artillery pieces. They watched them like hawks, like I did. We checked each night. We sat down together. We made sure our guns were pointed not at each other or crossing each other. They were professional, dedicated South Vietnamese officers. Now they're enlisted men.

I didn't spend any time with. I mean, my job was to coordinate with them. And especially if we had something coming in of a helicopter coming in, we'd stop cease-fire or there were planes coming over, you know, we'd work together. I had respect for them.

Winters: [00:52:00] Yeah. Good. Yeah. Did you ever have an error, a mistake hit the wrong target?

Duffy: [00:52:08] Errors in Vietnam were very common. Whether it would be an M16 going off by mistake, you know. Or an accident with a truck going off and somebody getting hurt. That happened a lot. And I write about a mistake in my book. And yes, we did have a mistake.

Duffy: [00:52:35] If you can imagine, working mechanical dials on a I don't care what it is, a camera, a machine out in the pitch black where all you have is a flashlight, no illumination. You can understand where numbers, um can be confused. An eight could be taken for a nine whatever because all they were just etched in the metal. There wasn't a little digital nine or ten. So those errors were common. But when I was on the guns I could usually check. I double-check and catch. I used to catch the errors, and I did. I never made a mistake. However, I relinquished my command one night, and that's when an error occurred. It was under another officer, and it was a tragic error. Yeah.

Winters: [00:53:39] What was the outcome of it?

Duffy: [00:53:43] Well, the outcome was three dead civilians that really lost their life because of this error. Letters of reprimand investigations. I, of course, since I was not on duty, it fell to the other officers on duty. So I was a witness to this. And it was it was just horrendous. It was very, very troubling because I had to go in and into where these deaths occurred and and talk to the family. And, of course, I didn't talk to the family because I can't speak Vietnamese, but I brought an interpreter with me just to see the damage and whatever. You'll have to read my book. I'm not going to say any more about that.

Winters: [00:54:45] Yeah, I believe it's well covered in your book, but it sounds like it's still a painful moment for you.

Duffy: [00:54:51] Extremely.

Winters: [00:54:55] During your time in Vietnam, how did your impression of the Army change?

Duffy: [00:55:07] Well, I love the Army. I loved being in the Army. I loved working with the people in the United States and in Vietnam. But eventually, you realize not all people are equal. Not all people have the same value. As you know, not all people are as meticulous and dedicated as I thought I was. So the Army is nothing more than people. And as much as I [pause] loved this, my mentor, Lieutenant **Jack Bracher**. There were other people that I didn't love [Laughs] that maybe didn't do their job like they should have. And that's also mentioned in the book. But as far as the Army is an organization, I. I just embraced it. You know, another time. There's a word German word called zeitgeist. And it means, all of a sudden you're here. And in this time and in Vietnam or in. Maybe another era of zeitgeist, I would have stayed in the Army. The one thing that inhibited me and my friend **Jack Bracher**, my mentor. We were both enlisted men that came out of the enlisted ranks to become officers. So after Vietnam, they had what they call a reduction in forces or what they [use] - the acronym is a RIF. So, anybody who was an officer, I was offered captain's bars. Which I refused because I wanted to go back to school and get my college degree. They were then reduced from maybe a captain or a lieutenant to an E-5. So the risk of staying in the Army would have been you could have been mustered out early. [Winters inserts: Yeah. Yeah.] But. I think the Army as an organization is just for me, it was phenomenal. It really was.

Winters: [00:57:45] So you got home on Christmas Eve, 1968.

Duffy: [00:57:49] Sixty-eight.

Winters: [00:57:49] Yeah. Wow.

Duffy: [00:57:50] Or the day before, the 24th is Christmas Eve. Yeah. Or maybe the night of the 23rd. Really we, you know, early late night, the 23rd, I think the late night of the 23rd.

Winters: [00:58:01] It must have been a happy homecoming. What's the old cliché? I'll be home for Christmas.

Duffy: [00:58:07] Right. Now. It was not happy. No, no, it was uneventful. Of course, my family was there. My mom and my dad. My brother was still in the Army. It was. You know, I was still buzzing about Vietnam. And, you know, even at Christmas dinner, I, I couldn't - it seemed like this is too much food. I, you know, where's my paper plate? That's what we ate off of. It was a very difficult transition. And I only stayed home for a few days. And then I got... I bought a car and drove out to Colorado Springs to go, to begin as a freshman in Colorado College.

Winters: [00:58:51] Yeah. You were eager to get into college and get going.

Duffy: [00:58:54] Get going. Yeah.

Winters: [00:58:56] So what was your major and why did you choose that particular college?

Duffy: [00:59:04] Well, I was at Fort Carson. I'm going to answer your second question first. Why did I why did I choose that college? I was stationed at Fort Carson for a year before I went to Vietnam. And my roommate, a guy named Jim Avery, had a. Um. I knew about the school in the same town we lived in because Colorado Springs is really just north of Fort Carson, Colorado. So we were able to as officers, we lived in Colorado Springs and I told him I wanted to go to college. And he says, "This is a good school." [Winters affirms: Yeah] Very good school. And I didn't know anything about it. So I went down and walked through the campus and introduced myself and I applied and I applied to only one college. So I had they rejected me. I don't know what I what I would have done, but they accepted me and it was because of my friend Jim Avery and the location of Fort Carson that I went to Colorado College. I had no idea of their academic standards because coming out of the high school, I probably would have been quickly rejected. But they took a chance on me.

Winters: [01:00:31] Yeah. What was it like coming into or entering college at that time? I imagine the population; the student body were quite a different set of people than you were accustomed to dealing with in the Army.

Duffy: [01:00:45] Well, yeah, of course. A lot of hostility back then. It would have been 1969. And then, of course, I had four years of school ahead of me. And it just got worse after the Tet

Offensive. The whole thinking of the United States kind of shifted. Not maybe antiwar, but why are we here in Vietnam? What are we doing? Now, you do have you did have the antiwar fringes and then you had, of course, the radicals who insisted instead of protesting the real radicals, they went out and killed their own people as terrorists, like the Weathermen, and they murdered postmen or maybe a Guard out in San Francisco or. I remember. Yeah, that'll stir my blood pretty quick. And I won't name names, but at any rate, we had the same micro, I guess, the words microcosm of antiwar people on our campus. And I watched, but I kept my mouth shut, you know?

Winters: [01:02:05] How did you feel about antiwar protests when you got back?

Duffy: [01:02:08] Mmm. Mixed. Mixed. Certainly, I could understand and I still to this day can understand both sides of the coin. So I'd watch. I understood it, but I always drew the line on one thing. And that is when the war protests turned violent. I thought that was the line that never should have been crossed. And even our little school had an ROTC program and somebody firebombed the building. Yeah. So that's where I drew the line. And I still to this day think, you know, if you protest, it's, it's one of our rights. Thank God we live here, right? Yeah, but don't don't cross that violence line. You don't have to smash a Starbucks because you're angry at somebody like they're doing or they did a few weeks ago. Know?

Winters: [01:03:26] Yeah. So you proceeded through college and you did well there and--?

Duffy: [01:03:30] Right, Right. Yeah, I studied history and then worked in their art department and eventually got a Bachelor of Arts as a painter and a printmaker. And I worked, went to Denver, and worked as a set designer in a TV station up in Denver for a few years. Went on, kept doing, making prints and drawing and painting. Eventually...started selling those paintings in the '80s. Yeah, 1980s was a big, big market for the arts. Very popular. Yeah. But the arts is like a popular song. You know, it only lasts for a little while. And even your genre changes and even your purpose of making art changes...

Winters: [01:04:30] Now, during that three or four years of college in Colorado, how did your how did you emotionally process Vietnam? How did, what kind of transitions did you go through?

Duffy: [01:04:42] Right. The most difficult time after being back from Vietnam was not the first semester in college. I was just, you know, a student, twenty-four - seven, and loved it. But it was that summer when I came back to Chicago for the summer to work, and then I realized I've got too much time on my hands. This Vietnam War is kind of seeping back in and I'm having trouble sleeping and I don't know what's going on. And so I got a second job. That summer I was working as much as I could and couldn't wait for school to start so I could get back in. In Chicago, there was very, very little, especially up in the neighborhoods up by Rogers Park in that area. Very little war protest. I mean, maybe there was some at Loyola University... but I didn't even see it there. It was usually done on the large campuses.

Winters: [01:05:46] Right.

Duffy: [01:05:46] Or, you know, and then in the summer, there's no students on the campus anyway.

Winters: [01:05:52] So. So how did the average Joe say in Rogers Park or Edgewater react when they learned that you were a combat veteran in Vietnam?

Duffy: [01:06:01] Yeah, well, a lot of them knew it because I came out of the same neighborhood and we all went to high school together and they were cautious. We didn't know how to approach me because I didn't bring it up. "Hey, guess what I did", you know? No, I kept my mouth shut. Um. And on only a few occasions somebody would ask, "Well, what was it like?" But they wouldn't even ask that way. I remember once in a bar having a few beers and one guy, we're all talking, talking baseball. And this one friend of mine said, "Well, tell us what Vietnam was like. The conversation stopped. Everybody looked at me and I felt like I was on stage. [Winters affirms: Yeah]. And I just said, "I just don't want to talk about it." Yeah, it really nobody knew how to, you know, nobody knew how to talk about it, including me.

Winters: [01:07:15] So. So at that point, you were not ready or able or willing to speak much about it. And yet here you are and you wrote a book. Tell me about that transition from being very reticent to wanting to tell people about what took place.

Duffy: [01:07:35] Well, it took place in the paintings in college. I did a few Vietnam paintings and then destroyed them. And then when I got out, I painted some more. And then I started doing more and more and thought, 'What am I doing with a basement full of Vietnam paintings?' What? And I picked up a little newspaper one time about arts, and there was an art show in Chicago called the N.A.M.E Gallery N-A-M-E, and it was put together by a group here in Chicago called the Vietnam Veterans Arts Group. And some of the first guys in there, some great artists had this show. Ned Broderick, a good friend of mine, Joe Fornelli. Another great artist here from Chicago. Tom Gilbertson, who lives out in Reno. He was one of the first guys there. And I, I hate not to mention other names, but I just can't remember them all. There were only about a dozen and N.A.M.E. Gallery had the first show in the nation of Vietnam paintings. And this kind of gave me a home. Wow, I can show these here. They didn't know what to expect. It was still in the late '70s. They put guards at the door. You know, a couple of bouncer guys, just in case. We didn't want some, you know somebody coming in. And because it was just art, it wasn't about whether the war was good, right, wrong or bad. It was about the art.

Winters: [01:09:18] Yeah. And that was here in Chicago?

Duffy: [01:09:20] Here in Chicago? Yeah. And there was a woman who really helped put all these artists together, including me. And her name was Sandra Varco. And this was about 1977, '78. And she used her garage to collect all the art. And she helped. She was one of the catalysts here that brought this art to the N.A.M.E Gallery.

Winters: [01:09:54] So the art really helped you process?

Duffy: [01:09:57] Yeah, it was the first storytelling, in fact, because it was the first art show of Vietnam veterans, The New York Times picked it up and wrote a big article about it, either '77 [or] '78. Of course, it's pre-computer, so it might not even be on a disk. But yeah, they had a big article about this show at the N.A.M.E Gallery.

Winters: [01:10:23] Now, what do you think about the change over time in people's interest in Vietnam veterans? I mean, sometimes it almost seems like it's in style, you know, or ah--

Duffy: [01:10:37] Yeah, I mean. I. It was so difficult for me coming home and and just having the indifference and the college experience where you really didn't talk about it. You know, I didn't want to get slammed verbally by anybody. In the first big march, about ten years later, I was in New York City and I was going on and these were Vietnam veterans, and I happened to be there on business and I walked down on the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Bridge, and all these men were marching over and I had a flag and I wanted to join them, but I didn't. And I don't know why. I just didn't. And then there was another gathering in Chicago that I wanted to come to. By that time, I was married, had a family, and it just didn't work out. But. So that transition, even then, was uncomfortable and I never really, you know. The "Thank you for your service" we never got you know. Now you do. "Oh, thanks for your service." You know. You hear that. [Winters affirms: Yeah]. Now, we took our uniforms off and kept our mouths shut.

Winters: [01:12:04] Yeah, I think the appreciation has really grown over the years, it seems.

Duffy: [01:12:12] Well, there's a lot been written now and you know, the World War II era is kind of going away. I see. I read where Ken Burns is making a documentary about Vietnam. I think he's a fair man. I just hope it's not slanted.

Winters: [01:12:35] Yeah, I was curious about that, too. I'm looking forward to it.

Duffy: [01:12:37] You know, you, just I mean, we. We all know about the tragedy of the war and-- You know, but the real tragedy or it's the South Vietnam army who really fought gallantly to keep their country. Remember the the line from North and South Vietnam just didn't happen. After the French left, it went to the United Nations, and the country was cut in half because Ho Chi Minh wanted a Communist nation. And the South was ostensibly the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. And both Red China and the Soviet Union signed off on this. So they did have a standing army. They did try. However, it. Politically, it became corrupt. You had, you know, presidential assassinations within the South Vietnamese government. Corruption. And then you had the massive Tet Offensive, which then turned this zeitgeist, turned this thinking: Is there really a light at the end of the tunnel?

Winters: [01:14:03] Yeah. You know, I hate to boil it down to a one ounce question, but was it a good cause for America? Was America smart to get involved?

Duffy: [01:14:17] I won't say if one could hang the signs, smart or dumb on that. I really believe we became involved out of fear and we became involved out of fear of Communism. And I remember as a kid going to school when the Russians were putting missiles in Cuba. And I didn't think I'd see my parents again. And I know that fear, nuclear war, or nuclear missiles launching pads in Cuba. And they're aimed at Chicago, Washington, New York City, Kansas. This is what Communism comes to. Right at our doorstep. I remember watching as a kid the Hungarian Revolt against the Soviets in 1954 on TV. What's going on? And those tanks came in and they were crushed. [Winters affirms: Yeah]. And then during the '68, the year we were there, there was a Czechoslovakian leader named [Alexander] Dubček, and they just, the Soviets crushed him. Yeah. So I don't think we could say dumb or smart. I think fear, fear makes people do very strange things. And I really believe early on that it was to help this fledgling South Vietnam and maybe had President John F. Kennedy lived who really was a combat soldier in World War II and saved his crew, his boat was blown out of the water by the Japanese, maybe he would have done things differently. Lyndon Johnson was never in the military that I know of. I stand corrected if I'm wrong, Mrs. Johnson, or anybody that's family. But I don't think he was. He was a schoolteacher out of Texas. And I think the military said, "Look it. Give us another 200,000 men and Mike Duffy, and we'll win this war."

Winters: [01:16:42] Just send Mike over there.

Duffy: [01:16:44] Yeah. Just send me over there. And I don't. I think he believes that this could be done. But it was kind of a. It was a very difficult situation and in the end, it didn't work.

Winters: [01:17:07] Say it's 1965. Would you have been willing to send your son to Vietnam?

Duffy: [01:17:16] Well. A parent in 1965 did not have the ability or the power to send their son to Vietnam. What they did have. The one power they did have is taking a seventeen-year-old and signing a document saying you could go in the Army, but going into the Army doesn't mean you're going to Vietnam. All my friends from Survey School went to Germany. [Winters affirms: Yeah.] I had a lot of friends that stayed in the United States that were in the Army, that got drafted. I had many more that went to Korea. So if I had an eighteen-year-old son or a daughter today that said I want to go into the military, the only thing a parent could do --they

certainly can't say no. They could say, I think the smart thing to say, "It's your choice, but here's my opinion. Whatever that opinion may be."

Winters: [01:18:27] What would your opinion be?

Duffy: [01:18:28] I don't know. Mm. As I've never been faced with that. I don't know.

Winters: [01:18:36] So what do you most want the American public to understand about Vietnam vets?

Duffy: [01:18:48] Well. We did our duty. We were called to go. In those years we were drafted. Some enlisted and we did what we were asked to do. Go over to this Asian war and: Participate, fight a very stealthy, if that's the word, agile enemy who would give anything to kill an American, a South Vietnam soldier, a schoolteacher, as I wrote in my book or the civilians. I saw them do that. So. I appreciate when the first time a few years ago somebody found out I was in Vietnam. He said, "Well, thanks for your service." And I guess that's all we want, you know?

Winters: [01:20:00] Now, your book was published last year, I think.

Duffy: [01:20:05] September. Yeah, late September of last year. 19--. Listen to me. 2016. September. Yeah.

Winters: [01:20:11] It's called *From Chicago to Vietnam, A Memoir of War*, by Michael Duffy. What reaction have you gotten to the book so far? What do you hear from people?

Duffy: [01:20:22] Can I see it for a minute? So. People love the cover and I'll put that up there. The cover is a picture of my brother and me and we met in Vietnam. This is me. That's my brother. And we met in February of 1968, in a place called Bearcat. I paid as much attention to that book as I ever have, and it was probably the hardest thing I've ever done. And I wanted to make it, make sure it read well. I didn't draw from anybody. I didn't say, Oh, I'm going to read Shakespeare's *King Lear*, this tragedy, and try to make it work or read Steinbeck. I just did it from the heart. And as a storyteller, the Irish are good storytellers with a good oral history of

that. So. Um, I put it out there. I even tried to get an agent in New York. I called Frank McCourt's agent. Molly Friedrich.

Winters: [01:21:33] Oh, great.

Winters: [01:21:34] But I got a lovely letter back from her. She's the only one that wrote me back. Said thanks, but no. Remember, the Vietnam War is still the third rail of American history, and we haven't had too many war movies about Vietnam. We've had them still going into the World War II with *Fury* and a few others. But you know that Nazis versus the good guys, that's about that's always good for a movie.

Winters: [01:22:08] It's nice and clean.

Duffy: [01:22:08] It's really cut and dried. Yeah. But after I published it, it went on to Amazon and I looked one day and I thought, 'Oh, here's, here's a customer review. Somebody read my book. I sold one copy.' And it was a fellow by the name of Wise, W-I-S-E and it's, the review still up there. And he said, "You know, I normally never buy a book that doesn't have a review, but I took a chance on this and I won." And he said, "This was a great read." And I was very flattered.

Winters: [01:22:42] Well, that's great.

Duffy: [01:22:43] So I also have had a good review from the *Manhattan Book Review* in New York City. Five stars. Five stars.

Winters: [01:22:50] That's big time.

Duffy: [01:22:50] And the *Portland Book Review* gave me five stars. It's a good it's a good read. And I'm confident in saying that. I made sure it was you know, I had people I admire read it, and then I just said, "Butcher it. Tell me what's wrong, tell me how I can improve it." And then I rewrote it and rewrote it and rewrote it to make it work.

Winters: [01:23:17] So well. It was a satisfying read. I really enjoyed it.

Duffy: [01:23:20] Well, thank you.

Winters: [01:23:22] What else could we talk? What did I leave out? We're just about at the end of my questions.

Duffy: [01:23:28] Oh, okay.

Winters: [01:23:30] We don't have to hurry, but. No, no, no. I've just run out of well, things to ask.

Duffy: [01:23:35] Let me say a few words about the draft in 1965. It was quite unfair. And it is one reason why President Nixon went or the Army or the whoever decides how we draft soldiers went to the number lottery system. What happened in those years is a young man and only men were drafted, would fill out a three-by-five card at their local draft board, and it was local whether it would be in Rogers Park or out in the suburbs or Joliet, Illinois, or Milwaukee. And those three-by-five cards were put in a cabinet. And then the local draft board would be asked to send twenty men. We need twenty men to fill up quotas. This was done manually by people. It wasn't like a bingo game where you turn and the little or a lottery or-- Somebody physically went in there and took a card out and that person received a draft notice. I just want you to think about that and how unfair that is. Because. The local draft board was filled with local neighbors. Local people who had nephews, sons. Who had friends. It just it had it had the potential to be unfair. Not that they would pick my name like they did, but maybe the name they didn't pick. That's all. [Winters affirms: Yeah]. And I think the system of the lottery is very fair. And I, believe it or not, still believe we should have a draft. I think it would help some of these young kids that are floating around in life not knowing what to do straighten up. Doesn't mean they have to go in and serve in Afghanistan, but maybe some type of draft corps to get them into work at a public hospital or over at Cook County or help doing something but regiment their lives. It helped me.

Winters: [01:26:10] Provide some kind of local service or--

Duffy: [01:26:14] Anything. But you can do this. That's one of the I think one of the strong points of the military takes young man. It took young men and kind of made them stand up and straighten up, you know? Yeah. So, yeah. So I don't know what else. Good!

Winters: [01:26:30] I think that about covers it. All right. Unless there's anything else you can think of that you want to say.

Duffy: [01:26:36] But no. Let's see. Um. No, I think that's about it. Well, you know.

Winters: [01:26:49] It's been my honor to get to speak to you.

Duffy: [01:26:51] Yeah, thanks.

Winters: [01:26:52] We spent about ninety minutes here at the Pritzker Museum, and.

Duffy: [01:26:57] Now, did you introduce yourself?

Winters: [01:26:59] Well, I'm Michael Winters. I'm a volunteer with the Oral History Program here at the Pritzker Museum and Library. It's, it's a real honor for me to get to take part.

END OF INTERVIEW