

DATE: April 27, 2016
TIME: 4:00 PM
PROJECT CONSULTANT: Hartford Gongaware
INTERVIEWEE: Larry Lucas
INTERVIEW LOCATION: Olney Station, Ellabell, Bulloch County, Georgia (Live Oak Loop)

FULL NAME: Larry Lucas
D.O.B.: August 26, 1944
BORN: Savannah, Georgia
WHERE DID YOU GROW UP: Savannah, Georgia

TOPICS:

00:30	About Olney Station
01:39	Purchase of property...
03:00	Growing up in the swamp.
04:12	Growing up in the swamp
06:30	Brown's Fishing Camp / Boats
07:52	Fishing Camps / Meldrim Accident
11:00	Father's views on education...
12:30	Family, Brothers
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20:00	Falling into a Peat Bog
23:50	Flooding / On Flood Insurance
25:30	Flooding / More re: property...
28:37	Military Service – Jumping out of a Plane
30:00	On Joining the Army
32:45	Friends
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43:50	Learning the River
44:30	Fish / Eel
56:25	Long Range Patrol in Vietnam
1:00:00	Preparing for Patrol
1:05:00	The Powers of KimChi
1:08:09	On King Finishing
1:11:20	On 2011 / Drought
1:22:01	Building a Pole Barn
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1:27:17 A Method for Deer Hunting
1:29:00 Regarding Hog-Bears

00:30

(Re: Olney Station)

The Indians lived here at one time and there was a, when you first come in, when you turned in on the right hand side, [there was a] pavilion like what I got here but it was on a concrete slab that was already there. There used to be a watering station, a water tower there and wood and stuff, because all of 119, Eldora Road, and 280 was all a railroad track. There's a dirt road right along it... but it was a watering station, fueling station, used to be for the railroad, right on the railroad.

1:39

(When did you buy this property?)

In 92 I think... 91, 92... 92 I think... was nothing here... was nothing here... we used to camp under that oak tree over there. See that tent over there? Where we're sitting now couldn't even walk through here.

I'll show you in the back it was all virtually jungle, and you couldn't even walk through where we're at now. It took us a year or so to clear out a big enough place to put the trailer in. The trailer originally was going out here. I'm glad we didn't 'cause to big trees has fell.

And I just cut down some... that big stump right there, and the big hickory nut tree in the back. So I'm glad we put it where we did when I did.

02:53

(Is there a particular reason you were attracted to this property?)

Well, I always loved the swamp. I was virtually raised in the swamp. Living in Savannah, whatever, my father used to take us out... drop us off on 204 in the swamp on the river... and my cousin, friends, whoever... and we would fish, hunt, whatever.

We were kind of poor, you know.

My father wouldn't mind us. Because when he came to get us two, three days later... I mean... he'd drop us off. We had no insect repellent—we didn't know what it was—didn't have... {????}... pot and a pan maybe. Maybe a bag of potatoes. Part of a bag of potatoes,

whatever we could scramble up. Then we'd fish. We'd get our own food. Pretty much learned to survive like that.

Later in the Army, it came in handy. Go through survival training, I told them things about the swamps that they didn't know.

04:12

(He's a veteran of the Vietnam War, born in Savannah)

Well, over the years, we were always coming around in the area, you know, on the river. In my wildest dreams I never figured once I'd be living up here, in this area, but between Morgan's Bridge we used to go there camping, fishing, whatever, and they had the old wooden bridge there... and uh ... and then uh... my brother-in-law, back then his father was the caretaker for this back swamp back in here. There was hunting clubs all back in here... cabins and all...

We used to camp and fish and hunt and everything else in these swamps.

So, it's just familiar. Other people want to go to the movies and go out with their girlfriends and all, we wanted to go to the swamps. And everything was really good 'til we seen *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, the original, the "*Lagoon!*" used to jump out of the big cypress tree... and grass and stuff growing out the bottom and all, I dove out the tree and I saw... >laughter< I see that log here with that sound... sounded of like *Jaws*, something, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*. (Swamp Shark) Well, *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* was a half-man, half-alligator, whatever it was.

(What year was that? 60s? 70s?)

It was in the 50's, late 50s, mid-to-late-50s – when my father used to drop us off in the swamp, we wasn't that big. We was 10, 11 years old.

6:30

(And so when your father was taking you to the swamp, was that the Ogeechee River?)

Yeah, there was a place called **Brown's Fishing Camp**, used to be on 204. He ran a laundry or dry cleaning service or something in Savannah – my father knew him – so sometimes he dropped us off there.

Every time the river would flood, which meant boats would break loose – everybody had bateaus, you know, then – they'd rent them out, you know, and paddle or whatever you want to do with them. But they would break loose when the river would flood, and you'd find them floating up and down the river, so me and my cousin decided, we started, we'd catch the boats and if it had a number written down and we'd call people up and

they'd pay us a reward for finding the boats... for returning the boats...

Anyway we found one without anything on it, so we put it in a hamlet [sic] in the swamp little island. We kept it upside down and put it on stilts, right, build us some stilts, so every time we'd go to the swamp we had us a boat.

7:52

(Do you remember the owner of Brown's Fishing Camp?)

That was **George Brown**, I'm pretty sure, yeah. He owned a dry cleaning service in Savannah – my father was a bus driver – and he dry cleaned, you know, the uniforms and stuff like that. Washed them, did laundry, you know, whatever, I don't know how you, how you phrase it but...

And they had another place there called Jones Lakes, where, uh, campground is... used to be Safari Camp Grounds... I think maybe it still is, I'm not sure... right there before you get to 90 - well – on 204 there, you got – then you had Shad's Fishing Camp, which is closed off now, had cabins there. All the places then had cabins they'd rent out.

(So it sounds like the river was extremely active...)

One morning we went to, me and my father, and an uncle of mine went to **Meldrim**, we was going there to go fishing, but it was too crowded. So we pulled out and left, and there's a railroad trestle crosses right there, back then, so we pulled out and we come back out on 80 – and there were police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, everything was going everywhere, we didn't know what had happened. Find out that a train had derailed, carrying some kind of fuel like butane or something, and when it derailed one of the tanks busted, and they said it was like a cloud going down the river. And it exploded. And the cars were there with people inside, the handles melted off the cars, and there was people just fried. And there were people grilling and everything else, some people was in the water and they seen it coming, and they dove under the water and some got away from it, and some ran along the banks that were fishing, got away from it.

(What year do you think this was?)

Around 55-56, 54-55, somewhere right in there... you can check on that...

(How old would you have been? You were born when?)

In '44... 8-26-44...

(That's an incredible event...)

I forgot, I can't remember the number of people, but there was a lot of people killed, a

lot of people injured. That's the worst thing, that I can remember, most massive thing that ever happened around here. In my years...

11:10

(To stick with your experience with your father, what was your father's name?)

C.C. Lucas. Clarence C. Lucas. Savannah Transit Authority...

(How did he connect with the river?)

Well, just he liked to fish. He liked to fish. And so, now, he knew everybody. My father knew everybody. And he was a wise man, as it goes, believe me. He told me when I was a kid, said, "read reader's digest, and you'll get an education," and I always believed him. He said every word you hear, you don't know the meaning, look it up in the dictionary and you'll remember. And I've done that all my life. I work crossword puzzles every day. I do both puzzles. I do the word puzzles, the word jumbles... I believe that any words you hear, that you don't understand, remember, or write it down, and look it up in the dictionary, and you'll educate yourself.

12:30

...And then if he wasn't driving a bus, he was painting houses. Roofs. Painting houses, he was a painter too. My uncle was a painter. I had another one who was a contractor. I grew up painting, roofing, and building, so to speak...

Every chance I got I was fishing, fishing or playing in the water, or just boating.

(Just because of that paternal connection, your father, being with him, and being with in the swamp, is that something you think about just in terms of just your fondness for all those memories in the swamp?)

Well, for me it was a natural attachment, probably the best way I can put it. Because my brothers, the did somewhat, but nothing like I did. I mean, I was just a born swamp rat. That's what we call swamp people, swamp rats.

(How many brothers did you have?)

Two

(Any sisters?)

Yeah, three sisters.

I don't have any brothers now; two sisters left. I was the youngest brother, but I outlived both of them years-wise.

(And were they here in Savannah as well?)

My brother Hal, my oldest brother, he spent a hitch in the Marine Corps. Then he went in the coast guard, and there was a total of 32 years in the military, and, uh, he was in the golf cart business for years after he retired, in Hardeeville, Atlantic Golf Carts. In Hardeeville. And the property he got it for nothing, but everything boomed in Hardeeville in all the years he was there, so he sold it for a fortune. Used to live up the road in Tusculum, right up the road here.

And my brother Jimmy, he retired from the railroad. He lived at Tybee.

My nephew James, he has his house now, and he's a hell of a guitar player, my nephew is. He works out at the Ports Authority, Georgia Ports. He's got a band and all that stuff.

(What's the name of the band?)

I don't know.

James Lucas is my nephew, but I c'ain't... They was here just the other day. But, uh, no, they've got a hell of a band. He can play *anything*. He wrote a song for my brother's funeral, and played, you know, a CD, at my brother's funeral...

(Must have been very moving...)

Yeah, it was... Death is part of life. It's like eating breakfast in the morning and going to bed at night, dying is something you have to do. You can't get around it... it's part of the cycle. So there's nothing grievous or sentimental that bad about it, it's just something you've got to do.

16:45

(And in my own experience there's nowhere that's more evident than in the swamp.)

You go in a swamp, if you don't know what you're doing, you don't survive in the swamp. You got to know the swamp, or you stay the hell out of it. 'Cause I carry people into the swamps – and I'm at home – on the waterway or in the swamp, I'm at home – other people I've carried in there, "Get me the hell out of here!" They don't... I can show them what to eat... {what kind of bows? } are good...

Kids usually get me, want to take a walk through the swamp. My grandkids, nieces, nephews, "Uncle Larry," "Grandpa," whatever, "Would you take us through the swamp?" I say, "Yeah. Come on!"

I take them through there, "Is that a good bug or bad bug?" "That's a bad bug!" "That's a good bug," and I tell them, I say, "Watch out for a place like this, now that's a gator den."

Or “That’s a place where snakes’ll be hanging out.” I would teach ‘em these things like I was taught.

It’s an experience, but if you don’t know the swamp, you’re not comfortable in the swamp. Everything in there is scary to you. To me, it’s natural.

18:26

(What are the distinguishing features of these swamps?)

(How do you know when you’re in a swamp?)

When you hit water, you in a swamp. When you hit water, you in a swamp. The vegetation. The vegetation around, you in a swamp, it only grows *in* the swamp.

We don’t have quicksand in America, I mean, that’s unheard of. In the Westerns and all that, you have quicksand, but that’s bull. But in the swamps you’ve got peat bogs, which is actually worse. Because a peat bog, they can be anywhere from 3 feet to 20 feet and it’s constantly wet, but the only trouble with a peat bog is if you step in-to it, you, you go down. But everything grows like this [Larry makes a motion with his arms and hands curling them in together and down] everything grows down, so when you try to come back up, you hooked, and you can’t. Can’t fight it, and it’s *hot*. I mean, it’s hot. Peat bogs are hot. They develop their own heat.

That’s the reason the Indians, in the swamps, in their boats, instead of using paddles they always used poles, for the simple reason... if you go out the boat. And had to walk across something, you would carry the pole like I carry a shotgun or whatever, a rifle or whatever, if I was carry it, don’t—not slung over your shoulder. If you’re in a peat bog and you’re falling, it will stop you. I know it’ll keep you from... standing up...

Cause if you ever go over your head, you just vanish from the face of the earth. Nobody’d ever find you because you decompose so fast.

20:40

This has been about 10 / 12 years ago now, but I was in the swamp by myself, and being the dummy I am, I decided – I knew better – but I decided to take a shortcut – I knew the peat bogs were there. I was going and all of a sudden I ... I said, uh-oh...

Should’ve backed up... cause everywhere I tried to go then I was already in the peat bog... and I took a couple more steps to my left and when I did I went up above my chest, but I had my shotgun, and it caught me ...

And here I am... nobody knows their way in the swamp... nobody can get back there to me... and if they come out there they ain’t going to find me. So... I know what I had to

do, I just keep pressing on the shotgun, a' wiggling, wiggling wiggle up a little bit at the time, and it's hotter and hotter, and you watch the snakes, the bugs, deer, coon, possum, foxes, whatever walking around you, cause you ain't no danger to them.

It finally took me, that was early in the morning, and it was late that afternoon when I come back out the swamp.

We got a bell out there my wife rings if company's coming or something, I can hear it in the swamp. Generally, I'd fire my shotgun, let her know, hey, you know, I'm coming, you know, whatever, you know... but it was real clogged with stuff, there was mud and stuff you know I was scared to try and shoot, you know what I'm saying? ... near blow up in my face.

Anyway, finally I got out. Using my shotgun, when I got it fair parallel, I'd use it, and slide across, like a snake, shotgun down, crawl some more, pull myself with the shot gun... then peat bog... I got dry land, then finally come out, made it back up.

Out the swamp...

I was blistered from here to my toes from the peat.... The acid in it... had nothing but old cutoffs on, tennis shoes, didn't have no shirt on.

It's a mistake you make one time, if you're lucky.

I am very particular about peat bogs believe me.

I showered, I rubbed myself down, was clean and all that stuff, and took me about a week to get over.

23:50

(How far does your property go back into the swamp? And how much is just river?)

It goes back in there a good ways. I'll show you back there. Probably 100 yards back that way before you get to the swamp, before it really starts dropping. But when you walk right back here to where the treeline is, the jungle, you look back up, you actually looking up at the trailer, the trailer is uphill and you actually looking up.

We are 27 1/2 feet I believe, 26 1/2 or 27, 26 1/2 above river stage, so we never flood here. If we do I can't call to Savannah for help because they're going to be flooded. And we're 60 – 62 feet above ocean stage.

They tried to sell me flood insurance when we first got the place, when I first got here, and I said, "I don't need flood insurance." They said, "Yeah, you do," I said, "No, I don't. You got a topographic map there?" I said, "Look at a topographic map." Cause I'm 60

feet above ocean stage. 26 1/2 feet above river stage. I said, "If I flood, who the hell am I going to call? Y'all can't help me."

25:30

'93 and '94 it rained for like 40 – for like 43 or 44 days – and these culverts through here looked like rapids, this is dry, I mean it was all wet, naturally, but it looked like rapids coming through this big culvert over here. Bloomingdale, Pooler, parts of Pooler, Bloomingdale, Falkville, Eden were flooded, knocked out the roads in places.

(What time of year was that?)

It was in early, early winter really. I mean late winter, probably that spring time, but we have flooded—if you go down 80 there's a big church over there on the right, it was that deep in water. Everything flooded. Except here. We wasn't flooded here. But it knocked out a bridge right up the road up here, a little spillway like right there where the Dip 'n' Dash, the BP station is? Washed the road out right there so you had to go around, it had washed the road out.

(So that was the just first or second year you had been here...)

We wasn't even here yet, that was when we would come out here and camped. We were clearing for a year and a half to where we could move up here. Took a year and a half to get a place big enough to put the camper, I mean the trailer.

(You said there was a watermelon patch here?)

Right across the road here, that clay road, that was all a watermelon field. All the pine trees you see around here, were not here, down {????} all around everywhere else, all the pine trees? They were seedlings, a guy named **Jack Walls** owned the land and planted pine trees. Then **Thomas Knight** bought it from him and developed this... and I bought my property—really, this was lot 13—but 13 was always lucky number.

That was my number on my helmet, first time I jumped out a plane I was 13. Nobody would trade numbers with me. I don't know why...

But the first time I jumped out a plane and my number was 13, and, oh, hell...

28:37

I had never been on an airplane before so I was scared to death of that anyway. On my stick, or my side, I was like the fourth man on my side. I kind of leaned around a guy I

looked out the window, I had never been on an airplane before! And I had damn sure never jumped out of one.

{??????}

And my jump master that my wife met, he's dead now... he used to be a bridge tender at President Street Bridge going to Tybee, Islands Expressway. That's where he died at finally, he had diabetes or something, but anyway, but he used to come out to bars in Savannah, said, "Yeah, that, that Lucas," he said, "Tell them about the first jump you made." And I said, "Man, don't anybody want to hear that." He said, "I'm going to tell them anyway." Ah... damn.

I got to the door, came my time to go out – had these rails on these side, kind of like the handicapped ramp, you know, how they got rails? I got to the door and I did like this and I said, "WHOA," and I backed up and he kicked me right in the back and I went out.

Anyway, that was my first jump.

(Jim Wilson was his jumpmaster)

30:00

I'd just turned 18. Just. Turned. 18.

(and were drafted?)

I joined.

Got drunk on St. Patrick's Day, to be honest with you. Got drunk on St. Patrick's Day. It was all great, went past the post office had all this "Join this!" "Join that!" You know, the old post office up on Bull Street in Savannah. St. Patrick's Day parade and all. We'd been to the Knights of Columbus drinking and all that. Old Bull Ross said, "Hell, let's go up there and join something." I said, "All right!" So we went in there and wasn't no body there, and two army guys come walking down the hall, said, "Y'all looking for somebody?" "Yeah, we want to join something!" "Come on in!" So...

We wound up joining the army. They had the Corps office right across the street.

{Briefly, more about the day he location where he joined...}

Automatically, if you joined and you was from the south, you was either infantry or airborne, seemed like. If you was from anywhere else you was a cleric or logistics for this or that or whatever, but if you was from the south you were infantry or airborne.

They said, "Do you want to join airborne?" I said, "Does it pay more?" "Yeah, it pays more." "Okay, I'm airborne then." I didn't care. As long as it paid more money, I didn't

care.

32:30

{He was in the Army two and a half years and went to Vietnam.}

(You had said that your experiences here served you well in the swamps...)

32:45

I could not get lost.

{Introduction of Stan Fox (pawn shop owner) and Wes Babaloni who was killed in Iraq while working as a contractor... Larry couldn't go because of gout in his feet...}

They used to come here blow their horns three or four o'clock in the morning. Virginia'd say, "Your buddies are here." I said, "I hear 'em." I used to keep a pile of wood piled up back there in the back and a can of diesel fuel over there. They'd come out there with their coolers, bottles, guns from the pawn shop (they got all kind of fancy weapons) we'd go back there and shoot 'em soon as it got daylight. I'd fire the fire up, drizzling rain, it didn't matter to us, and we'd sit out there talk about old times, you know, this and that. Cause we was all together in 'Nam. Then mercenaries and this and that later."

{More about his friends – they were from West Virginia, as is his wife... went }

36:15

I just had a natural thing for swamps. I mean, knew swamps from the time I was a kid, I guess growing up in the rural south. If we was ever in the swamp lost I would climb a tree. I look for pine tops. If you see pine tops, it's dry land. So I go back down, we head for the pine trees. Sometimes there'd be a hammock or something, so you'd climb another tree and look for pine tops again. If you see cypress you know it's swamp. If you see pine trees, oaks, hickory, anything you know it's dry land. But don't get 'em mixed up with gum trees, 'cause gum trees grows in the swamp, tupelo, gums, and all grow in the swamp.

See, you have to kind of know the swamp, but maybe that's what you looing for. Tree tops in the distance. Climb up a tree and you can see, you know.... High around... Your surroundings. Can't see nothing down here, you got to get up where you can see...

(How far is the river from the house?)

3/4 of a mile. All of that's under lowland protection act behind me so I got a hell of a backyard. But I know all the owners and they friends of mine. Like I said, I used to give people, speculators or whatever, wanting to see the swamp... they would call me up and

ask me to show ‘em. I’d take ‘em back there and show ‘em you know...

Every time I carry somebody back there, and after say, “Well, we’ve seen enough. Let’s get out of here.” They always head off in some direction, and I say, “Where you going?” They say, “We’re going out of here.” I say, “Not that way you ain’t.”

...

I say, “No, you got to go this way.” They say, “That’s not the way we came.” I said, “Yes it is.” I say, “Everything in here is like an optical illusion. Everything looks the same. Everything looks the same. You remind, you got to watch... and make notes of certain things when you’re going through a swamp so you can find your way back out.”

{Larry talks about his photographic memory...}

39:30

I can remember, if I’ve been someplace one time, I know where I’m at. Can find my way around.

40:00

It varies from year to year, the swamp this year has flooded three times and the water has stayed up higher this year than I’ve ever seen it. It just stayed – took forever to go down – you see, if the river floods during the colder months, if the river floods during the colder months, the trees and the vegetation aren’t absorbing the water. Now, in the summertime, when the river floods it’ll go down quicker cause all the trees are drinking the water, and all the vegetation is absorbing the water. But during the colder months the trees are dormant, so the water doesn’t really have no place to go. It’s amazing how much water these trees and vegetation will absorb. It’s amazing.

Cypress, pines, oaks, hickory, gum. Of course gum grows in the swamp. And all the bush and foliage, everything, all of it adds up. All of it adds up, all of it absorbs water, but if its cold months when everything’s dormant, the water has no where to go and it stays flooded for a long time.

(And so in those months what are you doing out in your back yard.)

Shooting deer.

Fill the freezer every year, shooting.

I know exactly how many I need and a buddy of mine down the road... {????} ... him and I we shoot whatever deer we need. I process it myself. Get my freezer full, get his freezer full and we’re good until the next hunting season.

42:26

In the meantime, we catch fish. Always had a garden, it's the first year I hadn't had a garden out here, but everybody I know has gardens. So... We all, people on the river we all look out for each other. People giving me more stuff than I can grow so what's the sense in it?

We all look out for each other. It's one thing about the river – it's a natural bond. We don't lie to each other. We help each other. And damn sure don't steal—nobody—nobody on the river likes a thief. If you're ever branded a thief, you're not welcome on the river. I mean, you have no friends on the river. Word spreads fast.

We always help each other. No questions asked. Drop whatever it is you're doing, man needs help, go help him. Man needs anything—you know he needs it, he don't have to ask... you automatically go do it or help him to do whatever he needs to do.

43:50

More or less river people have always been that way.

In fact, me and my cousin when we were young used to camp on the river, that old river rat that used to catch fish, used to be at fishing camps and they'd pay him so much, you know, for the fish, and he furnished them with fish.

He showed us how to make fish traps and where to put fish traps and all that so, it was like a regular old mountain man teaching the young mountain man, so to speak, you know what I am saying?

He showed us how to do it and we learned quick, you know.

{indecipherable about fishing traps for pay} they'd give us a percentage so they could fish more traps. The river then was just full of fish. All those sloughs, where the sloughs come into the river, we knew exactly where to set the traps. And we learned that real quick from old timers, so we teach younger ones to do the same thing.

44:51

(Who was the old river rat? Do you remember his name?)

I have no earthly—I cannot remember, Jack...

44:35

Whenever when you get a lot of rain, and then the swamps fill up, and you always got the spillways. Black creeks. Coming back to the main river, coming back to the river, so you know where you set your traps.... Cause the fish come down have no where to go...

I'll show you some traps in a few minutes...

When they go in they can get in but they can't get out.

I've set my traps out in places, I've actually had to leave them, come get somebody else to go with me because I couldn't pull them up by myself. Cause that's how many fish were in there.

(What are you catching then?)

Bream, crappie, perch, bass, catfish, eels – I was always catching eels – eels are good to eat, but they're a pain. (Why's that?) You've got to skin them and all. Skin em like you do a catfish. The meat is good itself. That's why they got all the sushi restaurants. The main course is eel. Eel at dinner ... eel is, uh, unaga in Japanese. Unaga. Eel.

Eel's are good to eat... if you're hungry, they're good.

(You were saying the rivers were full of fish when you were growing up?)

Well, it's going to be fan-tastic this year because the river stayed full so long. The fish had a chance to stay up in the sloughs in the swamps, learn how to grow. Springtime the river's still high so the river gets a chance to reproduce the bed. And reproduce. We all hope the river stays up longer.

48:00

I've got this phobia about the bomb plant. The runoff.

I know a guy, a diver, goes in to clean out the bottom of that thing.

{Indecipherable regarding the bomb plant runoff}

There's some weird stuff down in there now. You know there's a certain amount of runoff goes in there...

{Story about killing wharf rats on River Street in Savannah}

50:00

{More army stories... volunteering for a hand-to-hand combat system and going to Fort Gordon for training in same.}

Mama should have never let me do this. (51:50)

You'd get so hot and tired your nose would bleed, and all they would do is kick you in the butt and tell you to move. And they called us all kind of names and doing all that...

(52:45) Virginia: *"The first time he jumped out of an airplane, he had drunk too much*

the night before and threw up all over the guy down below him.”

“I didn’t tell him about that part.”

“When I hit the ground, worse beating I ever had in my life.”

“I puked my guts out, didn’t have enough left to fight with.”

“They beat the hell out of me.”

“I loved it after that, but that first one was a doozey.”

56:25

They wanted volunteers for LRPs, which, anything that payed more money I would volunteer for... you know what a LRP is?... Long-range Recon Patrol... some of them put Long Range Patrol, some of them put a “u” in it depending on the outfit.

We was trained at a place called Natrang with the Fifth Special Forces Group, we trained with them, so we were Special Forces until February of ’68 then they incorporated the LRPs into the Ranger Battalions, which we didn’t like.

But we were LRPs, we didn’t want to be Rangers... but we were...

What were the special duties of the LRPs?

Recon – they would drop us off – generally, as a rule, six-man team, sometimes we’d be two-man, could be three, four, five, sometimes six, if it was a strong team it would be 12 men, but you would hit two or three LZs, landing zones, {?????} Charlie {?????}, the Dinks, the VC are watching you – sometimes they are sometimes they not – you never know when they are when they’re not Hit two or three LZs and all of a sudden we hit one and we was out... choppers were gone...

‘Nam we’d sit there – what we call in the LRPs is “lay dog” – and just lay there in the jungle, lay in the bush or whatever and wait and see if we had company. It didn’t take long if they’d seen us come in before we had company quick. Indians would come in – that’s what we called them Indians – ‘cause if you’re in a hot zone, say man, “We got beaucoup Indians round here. We’re in Indian territory.” This was times when the VC was there, the NVA, wherever we happened to be...

And if nothing happened within a few hours, then we’d head out on patrol. Sometimes we’d break up and have rendezvous points and sometimes we’d stay together but spread way out. And if we got in a firefight, because it was such a small group, we got no support from nobody or nothing, we on our own... and so we got in a firefight, we stumble on them, they stumble on us, whatever, got in a firefight... anyway...

The tactic was to constantly move, that way, cause if they get you in a group, pinpoint you, they'll annihilate you quick, but you keep moving, they can't group up to annihilate you. A lot of us would carry AK-47s, our weapon of choice was a CAR15 – was a AR15, CAR15 we used then – held 10 more rounds and {???sixteen bullets???}.

Anyway, when it started getting dark and we was in a firefight, at a certain time, we'd all look, and at a certain time we'd switch the CAR15s for the AKs which they was using. We'd throw a grenade, they'd throw a grenade, we shoot and they shoot, and then we'd ease on out... hell, we'd be a half-mile down the valley, and we hear all these damn explosions, shooting, they shooting and fighting each other, they think we're still there.

Kind of we played cat and mouse. That's what LRPs did. We played cat and mouse.

1:00:45

We'd take guys out and test them before they could ever go on a mission with us, because a lot of people couldn't handle the stress or the strain.

Sometimes... {?????you might look over?????}... he come that close to you. Walk by...

You got to be still. Can't say nothing. Any movement. Bugs eating on you. Ants biting him. Leeches biting him. You can't move a muscle, you can't do nothing, can't even breathe hard.

And usually two or three days before we'd go on a mission—if we knew it was coming—sometimes they just, we'd be eating or drinking or something. They'd come in, they say “All right, A Team, come on, you got to go!” And we just grabbed what we could.

Another team would be in trouble so we'd grab what we could, jump on the choppers, and take us out...

But if we knew we was going on a mission, all we would eat was what they eat for two or three days, wouldn't shower, bathe. Never use underarm or aftershave lotion, or shaving cream, or none of that stuff. We'd eat dried minnows and rice and all just like they did, that was their main diet, the soldiers... and so, we would eat the same thing they eat stuff like that, the kim-chi. Lot of garlic in it. Shoot, I used to love that. I still do, but she hates it... I love kim-chi.

But anyway, so we'd smell like them—smell like the jungle.

First thing we'd do was a bog, roll around in the mud and stuff, you know, so you smell like the jungle. So you're undetectable so to speak.

That's if you had a chance to do all that...

We had a lot of fun too, we partied our ass off!...

Everybody hated us, so to speak, but nobody wanted our jobs.

1:05:00

So do you use insect repellent now?

...But if you eat kim-chi the bugs don't bother you!

{laughter and discussion with Virginia}

(1:05:48) With all that garlic stuff, but the bugs don't bother you. I got people go in the swamp with me, I say, don't put on no damn underarm rollon, aftershave, and all that if you're going in the swamp. No hairspray, or nothing, don't put none of that shit on, you know.

All that just draws em to you. It draws the bugs to you.

"Everybody likes my clock. They say, "What time you start drinking?" I say, "Just look at the clock."

"We ain't got much, but we enjoy it. We enjoy life."

01:08:09

The river got so low that year, it wasn't much more than a ditch. In a lot of places, like a ditch, and before that King Finishing up there had been dumping stuff in the river forever. Forever. And what happened was, they were dumping the same amount, no more no less, but it was so concentrated, and the fact that when the river gets that low, there's a lack of oxygen if there's a lot of fish. So fish naturally die from lack of oxygen. And with what's coming out of King's Finishing coming down so concentrated, along with the fact that there was not enough oxygen in the water, no rushing water or nothing, that's what killed the fish. That's what killed the fish. It was just so concentrated, but they'd been dumping it forever.

People said they saw dead deer.

Well, I don't think the water killed the deer.... The water would not have killed the deer. The deer are immune to everything in that swamp. How many deer I killed back there?

Before y'all leave would you like a deer burger each?

01:11:20

Well it was the end of a 7 year drought. Bout 7 year drought. That year, the year that the fish kill was so bad. (2011) Right in there just about. I'd have been guessing. I don't keep track of time. I never have. She does.

{Re: his nephew Alvin and Alaskan fishing seasons}

{Re: his own experiences in Kodiak, Alaska}

Regarding the neighborhood...

Jack Walls had it. Thomas Knight had it. His grandfather owned WTOC...

He liked the river. I would see Thomas Knight occasionally. I bought the land from him... do you know where the Cone family cemetery?

{Regarding the Cone family cemetery.}

{Regarding people in his neighborhood...}

"Egotistical as hell. Typical New York Yankee."

{Tour of his backyard to the jungle... }

01:22:01

I had a chicken house out here. Had 180 chickens, but I got rid of all them and tore it down. I always wanted a pavilion out here so, I got out here one day, Virginia woke up one morning, I was digging a hole in that damn corner. Had a little lumber. Virginia said, "You going to build it, ain't you?" 'Bout 3 or 4 years later put the slab in.

See, with a pole barn you don't need no permit. Put a slab in it, you gotta have a permit. Well, if the pole barn is already up, you can put a slap in it, close it, do anything I want to to it. Don't need a permit...

{Tour of his backyard, including an 83 foot well... }

01:23:45

I'm in an aquifer. The water is crystal clear and ice cold. Had a botanist check it out at Fort Pulaski, and he said, "That's as good or better than bottled water." Clear, no sand, no nothing in it. No iron, no nothing.

01:27:17

See that corn back there? Deer will come up here all during the season while I'm cooking. I put corn back there and the deer come through here, and they eat the corn... and they eat that corn and we sit up there at the window sometimes and watch them.

Deer'll eat the corn, and they get goofy. They're hopping around, turning, jump up in the air and turning circles. Twist around and all. Run into the trees. "Damn!" That's what my buddy says, "Lucas, you got the only damn deer I've ever seen that's tenderized before we kill them."

{Groover, Patrick, Birney, Bell – names of nearby landowners and owners of Ivanhoe plantation}

01:29:00

We used to have the hog bears. I tell people about it; they say crazy as hell. My sister right over next door, course she's dead now but... They had the old trailer over there, and she says, calls me up, she said, "Bubba! Bubba!" She said, "I thought you was lying about the hog bears! There's one on the walkway on the back." She was fixing to shit.

But the hog bear, looks like a bear but has got a snout on it like a hog.

No, they're at Fort Stewart and all. They're around here. They got 'em. Yeah, they're rare but you'll see them. We have several of them around here for some reason.

{Indicates an old Civil War trench, where he's found an axe blade and bullets.}

"The good old days... they'll be good until you ain't got no more."