

**Gary W. Hogan
Narrator**

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Researchers**

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M.R: Could you give me your Full name date of birth and place of birth please.

G.H: It's Gary W. Hogan; I was born June 28 1943 in Mineola, New York.

M.R: What was your educational Background Prior to entering the service?

G.H: High School.

M.R: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

G.H: enlisted.

M.R: Why did you enlist and why did you select the Army?

G.H: Well I liked the army and I have been around the military all my life, because my father worked for Pan Am. And I lived in Turkey for five years. I've been around the military and I kinda liked it. And I figured I needed to straighten out my act, so I did. I went to Fort Dix went through basic training and then went to Rader school in El Paso TX. Then I got stationed in Key West Fl. For two and a half years tough assignment. It was right after the Cuban Crisis. And I volunteered for flight School then, because I always wanted to fly.

M.R: Have you ever flown that much before that?

G.H: No, not at all.

M.R: AHH

G.H: But I always wanted to do it so I said I'd try it and I made it. So I went for the interview up at Fort Rucker. The Interview was interesting; this officer asked me what the range was for a hawk missile was. I was in the hawk missile battalion. So the Officer asked what the range was and I said, "Your not a need to know I can't tell you". And we went back and forth. And he said, "Who

invented the first helicopter"? I said, "Leonardo DiVinci and he died". He said No, I said no. He goes of course he got the first contract in 1943. Divinci designed the first one. We went back and forth until flight School. That's how I ended up in Vietnam.

M.R: Now can you tell me a little bit about your training so you think In retrospect, your training was adequate for Vietnam?

G.H: No! I had 210 flight hours through the whole course and to go to Vietnam on 210 hours is not ... Your never ready and when you get there they taught you how to fly.

W.C: Now did you train at Ruckers or Fort Walters?

G.H: I went to Mineral Falls, Fort Walters and my advanced flying was at Fort Ruckers. That's how we got into the UE's and did the instrument flying. After that, I went home for thirty days then went to Vietnam. But I think you can have 1000 hours but it's not enough. You have to be shot at and be in combat to know what it is like and the guys that were there, that were aircraft commanders, they were the ones that taught us how to really fly. And when they left, we were ready to be aircraft commanders. The companies that were there, they came together so they left together. So six weeks after I was in the country I was a aircraft commander at 23 and I flew different people every day that came into the company, to train them how to fly. And It was very interesting what you can do when your 23 years old when you want to. So I was a Slicker Pilot I did that for several months. It was the 68th Assault helicopter company.

M.R: Now when were you in Vietnam?

G.H: May of '66 to May of 1967. I went for Slicks; they were troop carriers to the gun ships. And I flew for people on the UE's and they transitioned to the Cmal-UE's and I flew them until I felt. I wanted to be in guns because I was tired of being shot at, and it was time to shoot back. I felt my time on the ground was... It was time to be in the air a little bit because you get shot at so much your gonna be hit. I got shot down once out side of TayNinh. I had a Major with me, we were doing a aerial he was a spotter for the artillery. And the man that was with me, I had made him a aircraft commander and now he was my company commander. He kept flying the same altitude and air speed. And I had said sir you have to change it. We are going to be hit by a quad of 50, it ripped out the fuel cell and all the fuel came out, I took over and flew back to the artillery base camp. And after that, we did a secret operation with the Special Forces that we trained for. And what we were doing was going into Cambodia trying to capture North Vietnamese Officers for interrogation. So we worked together with a team and two Sergeants and four Cambodians to go in , take them out... what we did was take them in and pull them out. And that was when ... it was the first, was the first of my friends got killed. Sergeant Anson and Newburg, what happened was they were down with the Cambodians and they got compromised and the Viet-Kong killed Anson and Newburg and the Cambodians got away. And when I went into get them, I said where are Anson and Newburg, they said dead. So I took them out. And we set up an operation and went back in and got them. We

landed back on the Michelin plantation, which is a French ----- plantation, I sat on the skid and cried, I never made another friend. I had acquaintances but no good friends because you just couldn't do it. That same operation we dropped two sergeants and four Cambodians and I wasn't the lead ship, I was the chase ship.

M.R: What do you mean by being a Chase Ship?

G.H: What happens is that with this operation there was always another helicopter behind you so if they had a problem, so if they couldn't get the troops out the guys on the ground cause they got hit then we could get them. Or if they couldn't get the troops on the ground cause they got hit we would go get them. So this time they got compromised and one of the Cambodians got shot, and getting dark but I knew cause I followed the track. I know pretty much where they were, cause they were off an old French road. So I got the Sergeant on the phone, I said when I pass over you stick a pen light in the air and it was so dark you couldn't see anything and he did. So I stopped at a hover and I dropped down these McGregor Rigs , A McGregor Rig is a rope about 100 foot long and its got a rig on the bottom of it that you sit in and you put your wrist in a D String so if you fell it still has you . So what happened is we got the two Cambodian out then we had to get the Sergeants. We couldn't get them out so we dropped the rope ladder. We got rid of the McGregor Rigs and got lower and every time I got lower I was in a bamboo grove and what was happening was the blades were hitting the bamboo it was cutting them up and filing them I get

down low enough and drop the ladder and they got on . First, the Cambodian went up then the two sergeants held the other one that was wounded and I climbed out. All that time I was getting shot at by the VC and I just couldn't move I just stayed there. I didn't even know that I was getting shot at , I was just concentrating on what I did so everybody got out . And I got back to the base camp and I just sat on the ground and I just couldn't move, the adrenaline was going through my body and this Colonel by the name of Kelly that was from Forest Hills he a full bird Colonel with the special forces came up and said how ya doing, I said I can't get up, he said why, I said I just wet my pants sir. I was scared so he went back and got a bottle of Bourbon and I sat on the ground and drank it until I was straight. But these people, we all took care of each other. I think it was the worst thing that happened to me was I got target fixation and about a week before coming home and we were down in the plan of reeds, I could find a VC anywhere. I got very good at finding them ... There was a tree in the middle of no where there was a guy sitting underneath it and I saw him, so I went down and did a gun run and I went right on him and I was looking right at him . And finally I fired the rockets but I was so close when I fired and I broke off It was an ammunitions dump and everything went up in the air. My helicopter was full of mud and it was a mess. But we got out of there, but that was the last time I flew in Vietnam it was time to come home I got 1230 combat hours there and it was time.

W.C: Now what rank were you at, at that point?

G.H: Chief Warrant Officer

W.C: CW2

G.H: Yes CW2 , So I came back to Mineral Wells and became a instructor Pilot and they wanted someone with gun ship time to be a test pilot on a Colbert project so I volunteered for that and did that for seven months and I actually crashed the prototype in a peanut field in Alabama . It didn't work that day. And I walked away from that too. Then I went back to Mineral Wells and finished my services as a instructor. And two months after I was going to get out... as a commissioned second Lieutenant, I laughed at him and said why would I want to do that, I am already a Chief Warrant Officer. So a week before I get out somebody called me from Washington and asked If I wanted to stay in and they'd make me a first Lieutenant and I asked where am I gonna go . They said the code company in Vietnam. I almost did it, then I changed my mind. I loved the service, but it was time for me to leave. And that's it.

M.R: How do you think the rules of engagement What do you think of the rules of engagement that you had to work under?

G.H: Terrible, terrible, sometimes we couldn't fire into a place because there were people there because they said they were friendly's and I know they weren't One time I did a gun run on this person that was running across the field and they called me off the commanding crew hook and told me not to fire, so I broke off the target When two gunships flew together. When I broke off the target this one that was suppose to be a woman carrying a baby ... There was no

baby it was a bundle full of clothes cause they all had long hair , He came out of the tree line and got my partner that bad of a guy .

Then once I was down south of Duc Hoa went down on a simple combat assault that was when I was flying Slicks that the combat assault lasted 3 days , found that the North Vietnamese the NVA the regiment down there we got into a fire fight that lasted three days that was a mess. I went in another guy that was a North Vietnamese regular he jumped into one of the hooch's ... the houses came out the other side dressed in a saf and robe and I killed him. And when I did that the commander of the crawl ship saw me, and told me to go back to the staging area I was in trouble. So what I had to do is have my wingman over me and I went back, grabbed the body, and throw it into the helicopter. At the staging area I threw this guy over my shoulder and I walked up to the Colonel and said Sir told him my name told him I was reporting as directed and dropped the guy at his feet . , I said see his uniform Sir ... He is NVA. There was a guy in civilian clothes standing next to him I said who's he, they won't tell me. The Colonel apologized and looked at me and said I'm really sorry. I said you guys could have gotten me killed, I turned and walked away. The civilian said what are you going to do with the body, I said you want you wanted him you got him. But that's what you had to do the rules of engagement stunk.

One time when I was in the gun platoon, we had to take the tracers out, cause every fourth round was a tracer, so they couldn't see where we were shooting. One of my crew chief of the gun shot somebody that was suppose to

be in big trouble , so at night we'd sit and take out the tracers so they couldn't get after us. Because you work in the Special Forces which I did, I was in Combat assault everyday and you couldn't take the chance. And I use to tell my guys if he is wearing black Pajama's and doesn't stop shot him. Tell him to stop and they don't stop then you hit him. What they use to do is the South Vietnamese sometimes with the combat assault they would jump out of the helicopter and they thought they were gonna have a problem with the VC they would shot at us. I told my crew chief and gunmen, if they turn around shot 'em. One day this guy with a M79 grenade he was gonna let us have it and they killed em. In fact, they got the whole squad. I got back that night and the first sergeant said the old man wants to see you. So I went in and reported and told him what happened and I told him, "I'd do it again Sir. These men are not going to get killed because those people decide to change sides." I said, "They are going to die." And I did it. When I was in the gun platoon I started counting, I killed 130 people and I know I did they were the ones I saw I killed. And that gets ya, because I started to like it a lot. I didn't write home at all anymore finally a month before I was gonna get out red cross said my mother wanted to talk to me. But I wouldn't talk to her I was silent on the phone and I said I'm not coming home, she started to cry and I snapped out of it. Cause I was gonna stay as long as I could to do what I did well. Then I got home and I was upset because I thought I let my friends down. Because I could take care of them when they went into combat assault but they had others. I didn't realize that,

they had other guys there that did a better job than I did. But I always felt bad leaving them there. But then they came home and left some else too so it was just amazing. But that's how you feel. Once I got home, it was okay I didn't like what they did to us when we got home. When I got to Travers Air force base we got out to come home and that night three of my friends ... that I went to flight school with two of my friends Larry and Ray and I rented a room in a motel cause we had to leave the next day there was a bowling alley across the street and all we had was our uniforms. So we go across the street, we are sitting at a table, and we ask for a drink ... Nothing ... So I went to the bartender and said can we have a drink please. He said we don't serve people like you in here I said what are you talking about. He said you what right do you have killing people, your baby killers. So I broke his nose. Got three drinks, sat at the table and this policemen comes in and said why don't you guys come with me. We did went outside and he said look nobody likes you here why don't you take your beer and what ever you want and go back to your motel and stay there until tomorrow. And he was a retired Sergeant thank god we got him. I got to the airfield to get on a plane remember how they use to have the airfare cards for the military but we had priority over them. So when I got there they took my ticket and put it on top this kid says what are you doing, He says he is military he is priority. He looked right at me and spit on my ribbons. I had no idea why.

W.C: So you weren't aware of this?

G.H: We heard of it, but we couldn't believe it. So this guy from American

Airlines pulls me across the counter and put me on the plane. I'm sitting on the plane and guess who is sitting next to me. The guy that spit on my ribbons and I hit him in his solar plexus. I got up and they put me in first class As soon as we landed into Kennedy the stewardess said we are gonna pull up to the gate you get off now when I tell you too cause this guy is gonna call the police and he did and then I went home. I didn't understand, I never did. all we were doing was our country wanted us to fight a war, A war that we shouldn't have fought but we did what we were told to do as soldiers and what we were trained to do after that I would not salute the flag . Stand with my hand over my heart anything, but I stopped that, that was stupid of me. Then 9-11 came and I was a funeral director, I had a couple of business and I sold them. Before 9-11 happened, I volunteered for this mortuary disaster team so if something happened we'd go help them. Well 9-11 came up, I ended up working in the public health service, and I worked with them all during 9-11 doing DNA and stuff like that. I'd work seven at night to seven in the morning. This is they guy that hated the United States for what it did to me I started working again. Then after 9-11, we were part of homeland Security, Federal emergency authority under homeland Security. So I trained, I go once a year to Albany for training and then the stuff on the computer. And if there is another disaster, I go. But one more year and I'll be sixty-two and I'll quit. But that is what I do for now but that's it.

M.R: You don't think you received adequate training until you went over there, on the job training actually?

G.H: No, No we didn't. I think the training they got now is much better, but I mean this was the beginning of helicopter warfare and they didn't know. So most of the things we did in Vietnam except for the president ford helicopter warfare they didn't know. So I don't blame them, I just don't think they knew and we didn't have enough flight time or experience or training. But that was the beginning of helicopter warfare for the United States.

M.R: What do you think about the equipment, the helicopters themselves?

G.H: The helicopters were fantastic the UE's you could do anything to them, they were unbelievable. I loved those helicopters and they were good. You could do most anything to them and they'd still fly. One time the hydraulic system went on my helicopter, I was extracting people from a landing zone, and we had to go back in, so I gave the crew chief my holster, my 45 holster and he made O-rings out of it. They lasted longer than the rubber O-rings and they worked well because they stayed moist.

M.R: Now what kind of side arms did you carry?

G.H: I carried a 45 and when I was Flying Slicks, I was carrying a carbine or a riot pistol hung over the seat. I used the 45 the most cause the planes had armor plating on both sides and the bubble in the front. I use the 45 here to help out with armor. (Showed between his knees) Because when your flying it wasn't much good to you anyway. But when I went to gunship's I went to just 45's and that's all we had we didn't have anything else. But the side arms we had, I was a sharp shooter with the pistol and the 45 and expert marksmen with the M14 and

never shot them again. I used the pistol when I was flying just to keep myself trained just by shooting every once and a while.

M.R: I know you also talked about this in a way but what was your feeling about the Republic of Vietnam's Army?

G.H: They were terrible, and they were so corrupt that it was unbelievable and the officer's got underpaid. I mean the Cambodians and the Chinese Nuns that worked with us got more money, then a first Lieutenant did in the Vietnamese Army. And you'd put them in on a Combat Assault when you stopped at a staging area. They'd walk back to the staging area; every time we went to pick them up, we were compromised. If they stayed, we were shot at. There was no way in the world they did anything. And that was one of the things we resented a lot. We fought that war for them and I knew when we left it was over. Because that war was over, they couldn't win it and they didn't have the adequate arms either. But we trained them and I don't think they really wanted too. All they wanted was to stop the war and go on with their lives. And that war was fought since WWII and Ho Chi Minh after WWII asked us for help and we didn't help them and that caused a lot of problems. That's when he decided to take his country back from France and then we got involved.

M.R: How do you feel about our involvement, I know you said you were there to do the job you were supposed to do. But do you think we should have been involved now that you've been back?

G.H: Now if you take the domino effect that they keep telling you about, that

wasn't true. The Vietnamese people would have stayed under Communism and would have had better living conditions because what we did caused a lot of horrible problems and now it's over and they have hotels over there. They had no cars during Vietnam, so they would have had that a lot earlier and a lot of people didn't no have to get killed. But you fight a war because your country says you have too and I think that's what you have to do . The draft dodges I saw , when I got out I was a civilian Pilot at LaGuardia Airport, this guys comes up to me because he was looking for a charter for his son to go Canada because he was going to be drafted. I said you are talking to the wrong guy . You better find someone else. Because I'll turn him in and I would because that's not right, your country is your country in America and that's why I went to 9-11 we got problems here and that's a new problem. If I was 25 years old again and a helicopter pilot I'd be in Afghanistan or Iraq doing what I'm suppose to do because this is our country and that's what we are fighting for now. We are fighting a war to stay alive in this country, to stay as one because now we have big problems and the terrorist; this is a very different war. We just have to make sure they don't get in here, their already here as far as the cells are concerned. But I think we are going to be able to stop it, I hope so.

M.R: Could you hold these pictures up in front of you and tell us when and where they were taken?

G.H: This one is Bien Hoa 1966 that is when I transitioned from tube ships to the gun platoon.

This one is when I was on a mission when I was with Special Forces that's why I had the fatigue on that was December maybe January.

M.R: Okay there is another one too.

G.H: this one is basically the same thing when I was in the gun platoon this was January.

M.R: Now the Special Forces mission, you were in jungle fatigues, you didn't carry any other weapons just in cases?

G.H: Yes, I had a 45, in pockets, I had survival gear, and I had another gun. I had a Riot gun, a shotgun. Charlie had a Carbie when we went down you had to get out of there quick. One thing I used to tell my crew, if we get shot down what do you want me to do. If I'm wounded I want you to shot me, what do you want me to do for you. Cause I didn't want to be captured. If you can't run what do you want and we did what ever they wanted. It never happened Thank God. But I was worried because especially us gunship pilots they didn't like us much.

M.R: Did you ever join any Veterans organizations?

G.H: I belong to the VFW, the air vets, and the helicopter Pilots Associations.

M.R: Did you ever stay in contact with anyone that was in service with you.

G.H: My friend John Clifford is in Alabama now. Then I see the guys at the conventions. But we don't hang out, but we talk. Its amazing the commemorative you have when you go to one of those helicopter Pilot Conventions you can talk about things you haven't talked about in years. When you can get it off your chest its great. It feels good.

M.R: How do you think your time in the service had changed or had a effect on your life?

G.H: It made me a lot better person. I was in the service when I was having a lot of problems. When I joined the service, I became an Officer and it changed my whole life. For the Good. I liked the service I liked it a lot but when I got out of high school I was headed for trouble and the service straighten me out. Then when I got out of the service and I went to school as a Funeral Director. I owned a business in Ohio a crematory. If it hadn't been for the service teaching me discipline I wouldn't be where I am now and it was very good to do that.

M.R: Okay thank you very much ...

G.H: Thank You.