



**NATIONAL MUSEUM**  
**OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE®**  
**Wings & Things Guest Lecture Series**

## **Recalling the MISTY Years**

*World record setting pilot Lt. Col. (Ret.) Dick Rutan discusses his Air Force service, specifically his time as a forward air controller during the Southeast Asia War.*

Well, we've got a room full of warriors. Thank you. This is great. It's always a pleasure to come to this museum. Actually, being an Air Force member, this is the Air Force Museum and I'd like to congratulate General Metcalf and his staff for an outstanding job. One thing they did quite some time ago was to not just display an airplane, they wanted to put the human touch on it, to find out what it was like for the people who flew it and what they did. It brings a lot more meaning to maintaining the historical significance of what our past was and to remember that. I want to congratulate you; that was an outstanding job. Being an Air Force guy, I'm always real proud to bring them to "my" museum and show it off to a lot of people.

How many warriors do we have in the audience? Raise your hand. Wow! There's more of you and I want to recognize somebody else here this evening too. It's not just the warrior that goes off with fire on his tail to do mortal combat with his fellow men in support of his country. I didn't realize this until I got older and my hair got gray, and I have a sibling that's in harm's way myself. I realized there's another thing, another area of people that need to have every bit as much recognition as the warrior that goes off to war, and that is the people that stay home. Those are the ones – the family members – that sit and worry about that blue car that's going to drive up in their driveway. If you're a spouse or a parent of somebody who's in harm's way, then you know exactly what I mean about sitting there and waiting for that blue staff car that pulls up in front of your house. It's not going to be very good news. I think those are every bit as big a hero in support of this nation's interest as the guy that goes off to war. I just want to make sure that those of you are recognized for that.

What I want to do to start with is to try to understand the psychology a little bit about the warrior and also put it in perspective about the times in Vietnam. Then we'll tell a couple of war stories, and then we'll have a question and answer period where we can talk about something that may interest you or something that I obviously forgot in my talk that you'd like clarified. So with that in mind ...

If you'll forgive me to talk about myself for a little bit, and that is, what happened. How did I end up in Vietnam and being a MISTY pilot, and about the psychology of war a little bit. At my age, I grew up as a little kid basking in the glory of World War II. I was always interested in those guys that would climb into those airplanes, those Liberators and Flying Fortresses, that would fly over Nazi Germany, and three out of four of them were casualties. How in the world somebody could do that time after time? If you're the only guy that gets back in your squadron, and all your other comrades are gone, how in the world do you get in that airplane the next day and go and do that? I thought, how could anybody do that? That's the interesting part ... how is

that happening? But the biggest question this little kid had was could little Dickie Rutan do that? As I grew up, I had to find out the answer to that. I had to find out if I could do that or not. So when my mother took me to the first air show that I can ever remember going to and standing there looking at that big jet fighter – I think it was an RF-84F – and that pilot, he was standing there all really hot with this G suit on and his flying suit on. I stood there and looked up at that guy and thought, “Wow! This guy can’t be from any species that I’m a member of. He has to be some other special species to be able to do that.” My mother realized that and she said, “Would you like to do that?” And I said, “Oh, would I!”

*[recording cuts out]*

... Myself and my brother, you’ll know that both of those guys achieved something that most people thought was not possible. My brother said that 50% of all the knowledgeable people who would tell me whatever your next project is, is not achievable, unless they can find that, he says, well, I didn’t shoot high enough.

My mother did something really interesting and I realized that in later years. What she did was she did two things, and it’s kind of a formula for life. Number one is she found something that little kid was really interested in, something he had a passion of. Now he’s a little kid and has a lot of years go by before he can achieve that great dream. One thing, she identified a goal and she reminded him of the goal as he grew up. Another thing she did that was really neat is she managed the motivation. If you manage the motivation, then you can achieve anything you can dream about, no matter what you try to do in life. The little kid is going to go out and play with his buddies instead of doing his homework, and she’d grab me and say, “Dick, remember that F-84? Remember what it would look like at the pointy end of that contrail high in the stratosphere back in the ‘50s and wonder what it would look like from up there?” And I’d say, “Yeah, okay, I’ll do my homework.” So what she did, she managed the motivation.

Vietnam, Vietnam ... Good God in Heaven, it’s Vietnam. Those of you that have gray hair like I do, you can remember those days. A lot of you already know this, but I’ll just try to remind you of what it was like. The state of a warrior back in the early ‘60s was not something that was looked on high by the citizens of our country. And all those warriors – and most of them were drafted, they didn’t want to go. But because their country called, they went and they served their country wherever it was at that time. If you remember, those kids that came home from Vietnam, they weren’t received by a grateful nation. They were received by a bunch of long-haired, dope smoking, flea-infested hippies who spit on them and called them baby killers. That’s what they came home to, to put it in perspective.

Years later, I was at a meeting or some event that we had in Oklahoma shooting quail or something, and Norman Schwarzkopf was there – “Stormin’ Norman” – and somebody made the mistake to come up to that kick-ass general and say, “Hey, I really appreciate what you guys did in there in Vietnam, and I want you to know that I supported you guys when I was at home, and I really felt the best for you and I didn’t like what those hippies were doing.” I can’t tell you what the general did to this guy because I don’t ever want to be chewed out that bad although he was directly the focus of the general’s rage. But I was standing close enough by and as we said, there’s collateral damage sometimes. He allowed that he was a lot more pissed off at those

Americans who stood at home and let those hippies do that to define who this nation was, and you sat at home and did nothing. He said I'm a lot more pissed off at you than the enemy we were sent to fight.

When I went in the Air Force right out of high school, back in the days of Elvis Presley, I had dirty jeans hanging on the last hair on my butt and a long duck's ass haircut – you know the crease in the back – and I got off that bus at Lackland Air Force Base in the heat of the summer, and they were really mean to me. I don't know how this guy knew about it that I was chewing gum, because when I got off the bus, I was so damned scared I don't think I was moving anything. And he came up to me and said, "Mister, are you chewing gum?" And I said, "Yeah." And of course after we went through the drill about how you answer, then he looked at me and said, "Swallow it." Oh, my God, do I want to go home to my mama. What a culture shock! Can you imagine? And nobody briefed me on what it was like to go through pre-flight at Lackland in San Antonio, Texas in the middle of the summer.

There was one thing that I remember and it's called the Code of Conduct. This is right after Korea and they had to do something different about how you would conduct yourself as a prisoner of war. So they came out with a thing called the Code of Conduct. It's about surrender and it's a lot of different things, but there's one thing I memorized at the time and I had no idea of the significance of what it said. And I'm sure a lot of you guys with hair the same color as mine will remember. And it goes like this: "I am an American fighting man, and I serve in the forces which guard my country and my way of life, and I am prepared to give my life in their defense."

Remember that? Now what is the significance to some kid with an Elvis Presley hair cut and some little teenager fresh out of high school what that meant? Boy, I was going to find out what it meant. If you're an American fighting man and you're prepared to give your life in its defense ... that's a profound statement. That's a profound code that a warrior would live by, and we're going to find out about that later on. At that time, it didn't really mean much.

That was really interesting. I wanted to go home to my mother, and of the 72 guys that got off that bus that day at Lackland, there were only 12 of us that made it. Not that I was anything really great. The only reason that I really made it was six or seven of the guys who were more courageous than I was got up and said, "Screw you, I'm going home to my mother." And they let them go. I wanted to go down and do the same thing but I was too scared to walk down to the Orderly Room to tell them.

Every time we had a test on the Bell Curve, the ax fell literally behind me every single time. But I graduated with that class and NAF school and then went on to fly backseat F-101s at Klamath Falls, a detour in Iceland in the F-89. Then I applied for pilot training. While I was waiting I got to fly C-124s over the ocean, and during that period of time, I learned a lot about what it was like to fly an airplane. Oh God, I said the wrong word – I've got to stop this – airplane. Are you all aware about the new century? The new political speak? In the 21st Century, some of you old guys may not know this. It says you are not authorized to say "airplane" anymore. You know, we used to call them drones. You know what they call them now? UAV's – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. Now those of you who are going to make the mistake and call all these things airplanes

– shame on you! From now on, they will be known as Manned Aerial Vehicles. So be really careful about that.

The thing that I really wanted to find out is what was going to happen when you found yourself on a two-way firing range, the very first time you're going to be shot at. I really wondered about that. What would I do, being in combat and somebody's going to shoot at you? I made a survey later on – and I'll talk about that in a minute – but I figured I wanted to be a fighter pilot and so of all the 360 guys in our class at five different bases, I had a pretty good head start in pilot training, having been a navigator and learned all about the military stuff. When I went into pilot training, I was actually a civilian flight instructor. So I was bound and determined I wanted to go Air Force pilot training so bloody bad, that I didn't want anybody to know I was already a pilot and maybe they would skip something. Now I'm a little kid that likes lollipops, and I wanted to make damn sure I had an opportunity to lick every part of that lollipop. I didn't want to miss anything so I never said a word.

But I tell you what, I was pretty damn good. I graduated number one in the class and I told everybody that I was going to get an F-100, and in those days, nobody ever said there was going to be an F-100. They don't give it to guys right out of pilot training. It's a difficult airplane to fly and takes a lot of experience for pilots to fly F-100s. And I kept saying I'm going to get an F-100. I was really arrogant about saying that.

When the time came, we all went into a big room and they opened up a curtain and all the assignments were up there. I tell them I don't care. As long as they have one F-100, I'm going to get it because I'm going to be number one in the class. Arrogance goes a long way with fighter pilots.

You know when a fighter pilot comes into the room? Within 30 seconds, he'll tell you! Another one is: What do fighter pilots use for birth control? Their personalities.

So anyway, the curtain came apart and I looked up there and there was nobody more surprised than I was. I was shocked! There were two F-100s. So I got up just like, "Yeah, I knew it all the time." Until I got up and picked out my F-100. I sat down and I thought I couldn't bloody believe it! That hasn't happened in a long time. So nobody was more shocked than I was.

I went through gunnery school at Luke after graduating, and there were about six of us. I'll show you a picture here in a minute. One day I found myself in the Officer's Club at Luke right in the middle of the war, 1966 or '67. There were guys coming back from combat and guys going to combat and there was one hell of a party going on. I participated in the party for a little bit but pretty soon I sat over in the corner, and I looked and surveyed the whole thing. I reflected about what happened. Why am I here at this time? In my pocket I had a set of orders – F-100, Phu Cat, Vietnam, and I was going to get to find out the big question in my life.

I surveyed that thing and I looked back and thought about my mom, and I thought about that day at that air show and standing beside that guy from a different species. I thought, "God, look at this." There was no place on planet Earth I'd rather be than standing right here at this time. And I was going to find out.

After survival school and into Vietnam, I checked in and now this was the big time. I was going to find out. The very first mission I went on – of course, you're assigned a target – it's bloody war! This is war. But it still seemed like kind of a game to me and so forth. You take off to the target area and there's the target. I roll in on the target and I look over here and some son of a gun has the audacity to shoot at me. And the tracers are coming by. Now what happens at that very moment will define you as a warrior. Some of you that have been in the situation probably will agree with this.

What are you going to do at that very instant? The tracers are coming right by you. Are you going to duck down behind the 032 aluminum siding? I mean, the canopy gives you more protection than that thin aluminum but you know, the psychology of head, whatever. Are you going to cry for your mom or are you going to curl up into the fetal position or do you become totally debilitated by fear? What are you going to do?

Now what I found was almost universal. All the fellow fighter pilots and a lot of other people that I've talked to, kind of an unofficial survey ... the first thing was I looked over there and I thought, "The audacity of that son of a bitch to shoot at me! Well, I'll fix you!" Number one, the audacity, and number two is "I'll fix you!" Okay, in this particular situation, it was like taking a pin gun or a pin knife to do battle with 15 guys with AK-47s. But he shot at me, so I'll fix you. So I rolled in on this other guy and fortunately I'm standing here today because my flight lead had enough sense to know, "Rutan, what are you doing?" I said, "I'm going after the gun." He says, "What?" I said, "He shot at me!" He says, "Get the hell out of there!" And he saved my life.

So now I found out something. As combat went on, I found out something else too. Why do people get in these airplanes and do this thing over and over again? This is my own theory. I have a theory. I found that in your body there's adrenal glands. You know if you're being chased by a Bengal tiger, you can run really faster than you could normally. It's adrenalin and here's a gland that medical people know all about. Let me suggest that there's another gland in your body. I think it's back in your neck someplace, I'm not sure. But it only starts pumping out this endorphin when you're shot at.

The greatest adventure of all time was the Lewis and Clark expedition. Meriwether Lewis, after he spent three years on that incredible journey out to the coast and back again, reports to President Jefferson in 1803, I think. He tells him the greatest experience, the most exhilarating experience a man can have is being shot at and missed. That's really exhilarating!

Now what happens ... this gland only works when you're being shot at. It's very addictive. And this gland starts working when you're being shot at and the more you shoot at, the more it pumps through your system. When it pumps into your system is the most incredible endorphin than you can imagine. Another thing is, it's not only great, it's extremely addictive ... extremely addictive. I've seen guys in fist fights, throwing each other's parachute out of the airplane, when we come up with an extremely high risk mission. They guys were fist-fighting to go on the mission.

You know, we count up in ops the missions that you have. The guys would sneak in there at night and they would change the number to a lower mission, a lower number so they could fly more. Now what is that? Now I'm beginning to understand why those kids could jump in those B-17s and go back and do it again ... that's a warrior, and that's why they go and do it again.

What defines a warrior? Looking back on these things, certain defining things ... the curators here have recognized that. I'm really impressed with what they've done out there. They have focused on some really significant events. One of them to me is, I really like profound statements – people who make simple, profound statements. Like when Kennedy said he was going to go to the moon ... we're going to do it, not because it's easy. We're going to do it because it's hard. That's a profound statement. It defines who we are and what our goals are and what the risks we are to take and do things.

Jeremiah Denton, he gets off the airplane at Clark Air Force Base and that airplane is parked right out there – the Hanoi Taxi. He gets off the airplane and he sets foot, after being tortured for five or six years as a guest of the North Vietnamese. He steps off and what does he say? He looked around and he said, "I consider it an honor to have had the privilege to serve my country under difficult circumstances. God bless America!" He said he thought it a privilege and an honor to be able to go and let the North Vietnamese beat the hell out of him for five years. I mean, where do we get people like that? Think about the profoundness of that. To me, that statement defines all you warriors. As long as we have people that will go and endure that, and consider it's an honor to serve my country under difficult circumstances, that flag will still fly free.

There's a guy whose name is Bud Day, and I'll talk about him in a little bit.

Let me talk about the MISTYs and where it started. When I got over there I was flying ... I was an F-100 pilot and we were flying close air support for ground troops, mainly in South Vietnam. We take off with our ordnance load and we fly and we contact the FAC in a little Cessna down there. I could tell there was a lot going on down in the jungle. There was a war going on down there and they needed our close air support. And the FAC, pretty soon it was our turn, and he'd lay a smoke rocket down and we'd go drop our bombs and then we'd want to leave. I thought, Wow! I'm here and dropping my bombs but there's a war going on down there. There's some interesting stuff going on. Why am I leaving? I'd like to be part of that for some reason.

Then, when I first got to Phu Cat and I checked in, there was a guy named Bud Day. Bud Day and I went through gunnery school together – he went the short course and I went the long course. But anyway, he left a couple months before I did, and he left his family. His family – his wife, Dori Day, and a couple twins, and his kids were kind of small and they were our neighbors. When he left, he left Dori with the two most incredibly junky cars that almost couldn't run. I spend all my time fixing these damn cars. I said how could a guy run off and leave his family with that kind of broken down transportation. When I get to Phucac, same place Bud went, I'm going to have a little talk with him about that. So I went up to the MISTY headquarters, walked in and said, "Where's Bud Day? I've got to talk to him!" They said, "Bud just got killed yesterday." That's our term for being shot down.

Bud Day started the MISTYs, and Bud Day was our first commander, and he was the first guy to get shot down. They were down, and they got shot down, and he was in the back seat checking out a new pilot. The front pilot got a little excited and blew Bud out of the airplane. He ejected him. Bud wasn't ready, he was doing the radio or something and it tore up his arm really bad so he got down and got injured. Anyway, both of them were down on the ground and the helicopter – the Jolly Green – came to pick them up. Here Bud is in a crater, and he's hiding out because they're shooting at him, ground fire. And here comes the helicopter, and he sees him going over there and picking up his other pilot, and they turned and headed right toward Bud. As they come to him, he stood up on the side of the thing and started waving like this although his arm is all torn up. He started waving and the helicopter literally came right up to him, and nobody in the helicopter saw Bud. He was that close to being rescued, and they turned it left. Boy, what did they leave him to ... you know, six or seven years of brutal torture. Bud conducted himself with honor as a prisoner of war, and he was awarded our country's highest honor, the Medal of Honor.

Bud Day was our commander. He was the MISTY commander. He started that thing and his leadership, even though he wasn't there, his courage and leadership was something that sustained us. Our boss was in jail, and we couldn't let him down. He was our leader, and after we left, we had practice reunions and we were never going to have a reunion until Bud got out of jail. Then we would have a real one. So all those years we had practice reunions and pretty soon, in 1973, he was released and he came home. This little small group of people that flew those high risk missions over North Vietnam, we had one hell of a reunion when our leader got back. Think about that as leadership. Here's a guy that's in prison. He's not ever there, but he was our leader.

The MISTY thing started out with F-100s. In fact, we used the two-seat version of the F-100. Here's our gunnery school class. Can you recognize yours truly? Boy, a bunch of eager guys going to combat. There's little Dickie Rutan. I thought that was neat about some of the guys that got shot down and killed, and I pointed out that is myself and over there is Howard Williams. Howard Williams was my best friend and the top gun of the class. I talked him into going to MISTY. He got shot down in his first check-out mission, and he had a gun fight with the people on the ground. When he ran out of ammunition, they came up to him and chopped him apart and buried him in a shallow grave. We didn't know about that for almost 20 years after it happened. We got to pick up the remains of Howard, and the book that we wrote is called *Bury Us Upside Down*. *Bury Us Upside Down* is about myself and Howard Williams. It starts with his funeral. We sat there graveside and watched the interment of Howard, whatever they could find of him after a jungle animal dug him up and ate most of him. It's a great ceremony at Arlington. If you've ever seen that, it's very awe-inspiring and fitting of a warrior. When I last saw Howard, he left and he had a little boy about this big, about six years old. We sat there at graveside and watched the interment of my best friend, Howard. I looked at my side and Howard was standing there – he was the spitting image of his father – his mannerisms, just like he looked. I thought God, Howard would be so proud of that boy.

This is Vietnam. The demilitarized zone is up here someplace. It's called the Ben Hai River. That was the demarcation between South and North Vietnam. Our base was Phu Cat. We called it something else, you can imagine what we called it. Phucat down here by Qui Nhon and Pleiku down in Tupon. Most of our area of operation was in the southern part of North Vietnam into

this area. So the missions we flew were by ourselves, and that's neat. You know, I was always kind of a solo guy and I liked to go and do things by myself. Here I didn't have to be a flight leader or a wingman. We were autonomous. We would take off from Phu Cat early in the morning. We'd fly up and we'd refuel off a tanker. That was our tanker sitting over there. Our mission was from dawn all the way to noon. We'd cycle in and out of North Vietnam looking for targets, doing a lot of reconnaissance work. Also when we'd find targets, we'd either mark them or we could round up fighters that would come and hit them. Anyway, that was kind of our mission.

Now what they call this is the Camouflage College. They would try and camouflage things. It was really funny because here's somebody that's trying to camouflage their truck. So they'd cut vegetation – there's a lot of vegetation around – and they'd cover every square inch. They'd probably stand back when they were done and if they could see a square inch of their truck, they'd go over and put something on it. But from the air, it was a perfectly square vegetation. I don't know as I ever saw a gun physically or saw a truck but I'll tell you, I never missed one either. It's one thing they didn't know. We called it the Camouflage College. But something they didn't know was if you take a plant or any kind of leaf and when it's right side up, if you turn it upside down, it has a slightly different hue of green. We'd go over and see the gun sites, and they would put them in perfect Russian-style circles like that, little pits around. Then we'd look at them, and here's six or seven things that had slightly different colors. Then they'd have a road that ran out to them and kind of disappear. Ah, there it is! From the very first time one of those guys shot at me, I took a lot of pleasure in killing guns, especially if they were good. Now if they were bad, and we had some bad gunners, and we were up there so much every day that we got to know all the different gun battalions and we'd give them pet names and things. We had one kid who was called "Kid on the Carse" and he was over in Laos. He had a single .50-caliber tracer. I don't know how he got up in this little wedge of Carse, way up in the top, and every morning when you'd come up and say good morning to the "Kid on the Carse" and he would shoot exactly in the opposite direction that we were. If we would fly around the circle this way, he'd shoot the other way. So we'd take new guys up there and show them what a .50-caliber tracer would look like. We'd wave at him and we'd drop box lunches to him, deliver his mail and stuff, metaphorically speaking. We wanted to take care of him.

Sometimes we'd be up there jinking back and forth, and all of a sudden we'd be looking at something and we'd miss a gun site. If your belly was up, they would occasionally just open up and shoot at you. With the tracers coming by and the big 37- or 57-millimeter anti-aircraft things, you could actually hear the shock waves as the bullets went by so close. You'd roll back and then, oh, there he is. I missed him. Well, they knew what the drill was then. As far as I was concerned, we had to take that gun site out. So you eliminate the good people and take care of the other ones. Anyway, when a flight would check in, and I'd say, "Hey, I've got an aggressive, highly accurate prolific gun site for you to take out," there would be silence. What? Radio failure ... hello ...

To put the Vietnam War in perspective again, one of the first missions in North Vietnam I flew by, and we always had a little camera and we took a lot of pictures out of the cockpit, there was a whole bunch of lettering on the side of the road. It was about this high and there was a big long stream of letters. So I took a photograph of it and it didn't mean anything to me. I went back to

our interpreter, and he looked at it and he really couldn't make it out either so he gave it to a Vietnamese indigenous people. Next day he came back, and he said what it said was very crude, you know, crudely written. But he said basically what it said – now think about this, this is 1967. We went to Vietnam because we had tanks and guns and fighter planes, and what did they have? They didn't have hardly anything. Obviously, we could beat them easily. But what this message said in 1967 was profound, and the Vietnamese, I think, had a lot of experience with this because they took and kicked five different major powers out of their country in their history. I don't know why we thought, hey, maybe it's our turn. Hey, we get our butts kicked, OK, send us in. Well, what it said is "We will be victorious because you will tire and leave." Holy bananas! I mean, think of the profoundness of that, of who they were and what their motivation was. They didn't care how many people they lost or how many years it took, and all the bombs and planes you could send over there were not going to really win ultimately. But somebody missed that. I think his name was – I forget his name – McNamara, something like that ...

That was our mission. We'd cycle into North Vietnam and we'd stay about an hour, because you're low altitude and going really fast. A guy says, you talk about speed in combat. What is fast enough in combat? I've been trying to out climb all the tracers around me, and I'd think I was going in molasses, and I'd look down and I'm going 500 knots. But man, that wasn't fast enough when you're getting shot at. So here's enough speed. If you're a warrior going into combat, you come in at the speed of light and you kick their butts and you leave before they see you coming. Now you're fast enough in combat.

However, they did something different. They're doing it at the speed of light but they're doing it a lot different. There's a profound change coming in your warrior class now in the Air Force, and that is the warrior sits in a nice box drinking coffee in a box at Creech Air Force Base outside of Las Vegas, and he's flying combat missions halfway around the world. He's doing it at the speed of light, right? Light speed up, turn, identify, launch a missile. I don't know what's going to happen because how can you be a warrior when you don't get shot at. I'm trying to figure that out. And the thing that really bothers me is maybe we'll lose the courage to fly through the flak in support of your flag. If nobody has the courage to do that, then we have this class of warrior that when the time comes when they need to do that, maybe nobody knows how to stand up and do that. I don't know what's going to happen, but I tell you there's a profound change going on.

What a great mission! You're in there all by yourself. I remember, you fly up there at night and every morning at Phu Cat there was a MISTY, his afterburner would light and that solo airplane would climb out into the mist about three o'clock every morning. He'd fly up there and refuel at night, and just as the sun was coming up, just as twilight would come over, he'd come back off the tanker and he'd turn towards North Vietnam. We flew with each other so much nobody really said too much, whether you were front seat or back seat, but I think that every one of them knew, and you did a double check to make sure your lights were off and your transformer was off and the target and hill site was set, and your chin strap was connected and all your parachute straps would be on. And you remembered the breakfast you had to gag down at three o'clock in the morning of jungle food. I'd look at the powdered eggs and stuff and think, "Dick, this may be the last decent meal you're going to have, so you'd better eat it, no matter what."

We'd back off the tanker and turn and descend from 20,000 feet to hit the coastline right on the deck. It was really eerie and calm. You'd sit there and once everything was done, you had a handful of minutes before you penetrated North Vietnam, and you wondered what the next five hours of my life was going to be like. It was really kind of eerie and scary. However – and they always saw us coming – the whole coastline would open up with ground fire. When that first tracer came at us, that little endorphin right here, he started pumping, and then, baby, war was on. And it was combat. If you think about the psychology of combat, you know all testosterone-laden males – of course, I date myself – but anyway, there's a part of this ... human beings, we're all competitors. You know, we compete in cards and we compete in sports and we do a lot of competitions. That's the essence of who we are and how we live. I think it's an animal instinct because, like the American Indian, he'd go to combat and if he came back with the most scalps as a big warrior, do you know what his reward was? He got to breed with the better females. So maybe there's some of that instinct in me. I tell you, in the world of competition and the human competition, the epitome, the pyramid, the ultimate in competition is wearing your mortal combat with your fellow men. Because the competition is if you lose, you lose your life. There's something about that little combat thing that's in the back of your neck that starts pumping. Boy, you're off to the races.

Another thing you think is that cockpit you sit in is sanctimonious. That thing is golden and nobody is going to penetrate that. Now my airplane got hit a lot of times and one time failed, but I never physically got hit. I guess it worked.

This photograph here is right up in this area. A river called the Kien Giang River Valley, a major river that came up off the coast of North Vietnam or the Gulf of Tonkin. And right up there was a truck parked one day and that was my nemesis. I'm on my 105th mission and I was in the back seat. I was on a champagne flight with Chuck Sheheen, a guy who we called a "Crazy Arab." That was his last mission and he was going to put on a big show, he'd come back a big hero on his last mission. There were five guys at a party that night, or a couple days before, and was their going-away party and Chuck was one of them. As it ended up, four of the five guys were shot down out of that party. So after that they said, okay you guys are not going to know when your last mission is so I don't want you to go out shining your butts for the last mission. Now you'd think if it was your last mission, give me a milk run or something, give me an easy one. But that's not what happened. The guys did a bunch of really stupid things. Remember that endorphin pumping?

Anyway, we flew up the valley and there was a truck parked beside the river and a big carse, and the fighters we put in, they missed the damn target, and they were our own guys, our own other F-100 pilots. So what we did is we ended up in the weeds strafing the truck. None of the guys we put in could hit it so we strafed it. There was a big bang and a big fire behind me and we pulled up. I always thought that the F-100 could give me 20 seconds. If I got hit, it could fly me 20 seconds to a place where I could always turn toward the jungle and get out or at least make it to the Gulf of Tonkin. We pulled off that day and I looked around and 20 seconds were not going to get us any place. I thought, the rat up in the Hanoi Hilton, here we come. I had a premonition about that.

Anyway, the airplane burned and burned and burned and Chuck Sheheen and I bailed out right there, right off the coast and just barely made it. On the way out burning because I'd done two tours in MISTY and I said, "Please if they just get out and bail out, I'm not coming up here any more." And no one was ever concerned that I cowarded out early because of almost two full tours in MISTY. Anyway that's what happened.

We got out there, ejected, got in the raft, got picked up. Kind of an interesting side note is that we had an F-105 pilot down one day, down in this area, and he'd ejected and I was the only guy that could find him. I just saw his parachute go into the jungle when he disappeared. So I was the only guy who knew right where he was. I got there just in a split second and I came around again and the parachute was gone but I kind of memorized where it was. So I pulled up and the only way I could talk to this guy was in a dive bomb pass. I'd dive at him like that and could ask him a question, release the mic button, and he would answer. You know, I got a broken back, come and get me, cry, cry, cry. So we'd pull off and call and call him and no answer, and I'd dive. I was really the only guy that could talk to him.

Okay, so we get the forces up and the Jolly Greens come in and the Sandys come in and kind of a long story short ... he got shot down just before night. So anyway, I talked to him and it was too late to get any forces in so I put him to sleep – put him to sleep, yeah, how do you sleep in conditions like that – go to bed, hang in there and we'll be back at first light to pick you up. He said "OK, good night," and this has happened many times as a MISTY, that we're on scene when planes get shot down. About half the guys I could talk to on the ground initially, we'd come back the next morning and there was no answer. Some of them we could get them out and that was kind of neat too.

Anyway, this particular guy was down there in the jungle and we put him to bed, and we went back and arranged all the forces that night and after being up at 3:00 the morning before, and flying all day and into the night and then only three hours of sleep trying to organize this thing. We get in the airplane the next morning and I come across him with the afterburner on. I pull up and do the dive-bomb pass at him, and I call him, and he's still there. He's still complaining about his back and he can't move. I say, okay, McDonough, we'll get you out. So all that morning, they put in two helicopters that got shot up. They found him during the night and set a flak trap up for him. The helicopter would come in to hover; they'd open up and just shoot the devil out of them. They shot down an A-1 and killed the pilot. So we lost three airplanes trying to get him out.

It was a big battle all that morning. I was so anxious about trying to get him out that I couldn't understand why the Jolly Greens wouldn't come across the border into North Vietnam and pick him up, and I said something really inappropriate, something like, "Why don't you guys get up here and earn all those medals you got" or something like that. Not appropriate, right? Later I found out the reason they didn't come up was there was some snot-nosed brat that was on the staff of President Johnson, and he was in the basement of the White House and nobody wanted to wake him up. He was the only guy who could give permission for the Jollys to come into North Vietnam. Isn't that a hell of a war to fight? What kind of crap is that? I was really sad that I said that. Now the Jollys, they didn't take that too lightly, and they went around and found out who that MISTY bastard was that said that by name and they knew who he was. Fortunately the

MISTY pilots didn't fly with their name. They flew with different call signs, so they really couldn't identify who they were.

So anyway, two Jollys got shot up, an A-1 got shot down; we're trying to put forces in ... it was really unorganized, it was really a goat rope all that morning. Now, the agreement that we have is if I'm down on the ground or any pilot and he has a radio and he can talk to somebody and is physically free, we'll do anything, we'll spare no expense, to get you out, no matter what. That's the agreement. If I can talk to you and I'm free, you will always come and get me and you will absolutely never abandon me, even if you have to dig a canal and sail the Missouri up to get me. And that agreement, I said that's a pretty good deal. I'll go up and fly your combat for you. That's my agreement.

So at noon that day there's a call come from Crown. Crown was rescue headquarters that coordinate all the rescues. He comes up and he says, "All right, pull the forces out. Pull the forces out. Abandon the rescue." What? You've got to be kidding me. What do you mean we're going to pull out and leave this guy there? There's no way they're going to do that. That's not my agreement. He's still talking to people. I don't care what it is. We never leave a warrior. That's part of the code. He says, "Nope." So I ask him who made the decision, and he said Crown did. I said I want to know who at Crown made that, who the individual was, little Captain Rutan. They came back after my insistence and they identified there was a general officer in Saigon that made that decision. He said we've lost too many airplanes and the chances of getting him out are pretty remote and we're going to cancel the rescue attempt. I thought there's no fine way that's going to happen. How could they do that? They violated the code. What is this? Who the hell is this guy to cancel this thing?

Then all of a sudden I realized, guess who's going to have to tell Don on the ground that we're pulling out and leaving him. Broken back, can't move, what the North Vietnamese are going to do to him. I'm the only guy that can talk to him, and it's up to me to tell him that we're leaving him. And I said, oh yeah? If that general, if he made the decision, he can bloody well tell me the words to use to tell the guy that we're leaving one of our fellow warriors behind. You think the words up. You made the decision, and you make the words and I'll have to relay them to him.

Everybody caught up on this and said, "OK, we'll ask him too," and all the forces that were there waiting thought wow, that's pretty neat. We're going to wait and see what the general said. A handful of minutes went by. The afternoon MISTY came up and checked in. I briefed him, and I was really sad because we're going to leave somebody up there that's still talking. I fly back to Phu Cat and I'm pretty shook up that somebody is going to leave somebody. I was thinking the hell with you guys if you broke that code. Let the general go and fly the damn missions.

So I'm sitting in the bar about sunset, in the bar all by myself lamenting this situation over a beer. The guy that relieved me, Wells Jackson, walked in the door and he saw me sitting over there and he had a smile on his face. I thought, "How can you smile in a situation like this?" Wells walked over and I looked at him and said, "It's too bad about Scotch 03." He said, "Dick, they got him out." I said, "What? You guys got Scotch out?" He said, "Yeah. It seems the general could not come up with the words." He couldn't come up with the words to tell a fellow warrior he was going to abandon him.

Now when they came back that afternoon to get him, the two guys that were in the Jolly Green got the Air Force Cross but they really should have gotten the Medal of Honor. If there was ever a Medal of Honor to be given, it should have been to those two guys. The guy that was flying the HH-3 and the PJ ... the pilot was a Coastie, we call them. They were change officers. Coast Guard came and flew with the Air Force in this rescue mission, neat guy. His name is Nixon – no it wasn't, Nixon picked me up. Anyway, names aren't important. If I could remember it, I would, but unfortunately the man is not alive anymore because I wanted to thank him and meet a hero. The PJ, brand new kid, three striper, just out of PJ school, he'd just gotten to Vietnam, he'd been there four days. This was his first mission. They went over realized when they got in the area – no one was shooting at them yet – they all knew if they shot and the helicopter got away – now they were going to wait until they got the hook down and they can't get away and they're going to open up at them. That was the plan. This is really neat. I've got it on tape and it bleeds your heart out to hear this guy. Anyway, he comes in, he hovers over, the guy's hurt on the ground so Sgt. Tanney is his name, gets on the hook and he goes down into the jungle. Then he lets the hook off and goes up in the air and then he hunts around for Don, the pilot with the broken back and he finally finds him. Then he vectors the helicopter over ... forward, forward ... it's all on tape ... really neat. There's other things happening with the rescue forces and there's 37 millimeter dropping lobs of ammo, anti aircraft. Anyway, they're down there and the guy's in a hover. He pulls over and puts the penetrator down and Sgt. Tanney gets a hold of McDonough with the broken back and everything and gets him on that little paddle down and the little strap around you and stuff – and the tape is great, unbelievable. Then Sgt. Tanney says, "I got him. Pull me up."

Everything's routine, going on, and a handful of time later, Sgt. Tanney is on the radio again, screaming, and in the background you can hear intense automatic weapons fire. What Tanney is saying is, "Cut me loose, cut me loose, take it out, take it out!" So he's hanging in this thing and as it's slowly coming up slowly through the 100s of feet of jungle canopy, he's hanging on the bottom of this thing and he's screaming to the helicopter to cut him loose, take it out, take it out. Now as soon as they started up and as soon Tanney called on the radio to take me out, they opened up. They were all around him with automatic weapons zeroed in on the helicopter. The guy's name was Don Egan in the helicopter, the Coastie. He sat there in hover and they blew his windshield out, there were rounds coming through, they punctured all the fuel tanks, there was hydraulic fluid and fuel pouring down, Plexiglass raining down on the airplane and hydraulic fluid, and he sat there just like it was a Sunday afternoon in hover. His finger on that little switch, bringing those guys up out of the jungle, and Tanney's screaming, "Cut him loose, cut him loose, take it out, take it out."

Anyway, they got him out of the jungle, they translated over, landed at the rock pile where there's a Medevac and they got him out. The airplane was shot up so bad it never flew again ... incredible story. I got to meet Sgt. Tanney years later at Hurlburt. He was in the club and I said wow, Tanney's there. I've got to meet this guy that had the courage to say something like that. It's just typical of a PJ, a warrior like that. I congratulated him and I told him about who we were and what we did and he looked up at me and said, "Oh no, sir, you don't understand, sir. I was hanging there and I was looking up and I saw the helicopter being shot to pieces. I'm no hero. I

just didn't want the damn thing falling on me." I said, "Oh sure, Sgt. Tanney. You wear that medal proudly because it's an honor to meet you. You're a real, true hero in my estimation."

When I got shot down off the coast ... I'm off the coast looking at Bad Guy Land and stuff, and I'm wondering when the helicopters are going to come and about three hours later they did come over the horizon. One of them broke off and landed. I remembered what I'd said about those helicopter guys. I thought, God Almighty, if they knew it was me, they'd throw me out. So anyway, they landed and picked me up. We take off and head for a couple hour flight back to Da Nang. I'm sitting in the back now. Now my combat was over. I'm totally relaxed now and there's no more combat for me. I made it. I'm done. I'm alive. I didn't think I was going to be alive. I sat back and almost went to sleep in the helicopter. In fact, I did later, but I thought maybe I ought to go up in the cockpit and say, "Hi guys. Thanks for coming to get me." So very reluctantly I walked up and stuck my head through the companion way and the two guys were sitting there ... these old crusty, you talk about old crusty helicopter pilots, these guys were something else, a different breed. This one guy looked up at me and looked at my name tag, then he said, "Rutan, you son of a bitch. They finally gotcha! Ha!" I was really relaxed because he wasn't going to throw me back. Then later on I found out the truth about that. The fog of war and combat is an interesting thing.

Looks different, doesn't it? Anyway, we had a "go to hell hat." We were flying dangerous missions up there and you talk about a bunch of guys who didn't have anything for Air Force rules or uniforms or forging papers to go on extra R&Rs and all the other crap we did. Nobody messed with us. We said, "Hey, if you don't like us, you go fly these missions."

Anyway, we had a rocket pod down here that had seven Willy Pete rockets on it that we could use for marking. We could fire them individually. My outfit was kind of unique because I had a Tom Mix leather belt, a pistol belt, and on the right side down there – most guys had their 38s in their vests. I put my 38 down on my leg. See right there. It's a rawhide string to hold the butt of it down. So you talk about being a cowboy with his "go to hell hat" on ... I had a quick draw with that 38, a real cowboy.

Anyway, the radio was really important so we carried two radios in the vest. Some guys were up there a long time and I didn't want my batteries to go dead so all the guys carried three or four batteries in their G suits down here. I think we were so heavy when we went into the water, without an arm preserver, we'd keep right on going. Anyway, that was the get-up that we flew.

Here's one of our commanders, Stanley Manlock. He's called "Stanley Sockhop," we called him. He didn't really want to come up to fly our mission, but once he got up there he fell in love with it and we fell in love with him because he was really a great leader. Anyway, if you look down here there's a hole in the horizontal slab. A 37 millimeter round came up through that, and it had a delay on it so they want it to blow up inside the airplane. Anyway, it went up and blew up about three feet high and it seared the whole back of the airplane. Of course, we've got to take a picture of combat damage.

We pulled into the chocks that day after this mission and they activated the Air National Guard. So these guys were just coming in from the States and they pulled in the DR area and they had

the white helmets and stuff and they're looking around and they open the canopy and they take their first whiff of Vietnam and gag. We pulled in right beside them and here's these old, two crusty guys in this airplane with their big handlebar moustaches. So I take my mic button and get one guy's attention and I looked at him. He looked at me and I went like this – for your eyes – then put the slab up, turned around and looked back like that, and the guy turned around and looked at me and he looked back and then he looked straight ahead. He never moved after that. He says, "Holy sugar, what's going to happen now?"

Anyway, you can see the moustache doesn't satisfy 35-10. Is that 35-10 they still have? The vermilion of your mouth and all that other crap.

Anyway we have a hundred missions, not a hundred missions, because a hundred missions to MISTY didn't mean anything. We didn't get to go home early or get a counter. Anyway, here's Carroll Williams on one of his champagne parties after one of his flights and that's Dick Rutan. I kind of wish I was that skinny now.

Here's a group and I show you this picture for a couple reasons. A small group of guys got together and took a photograph. Remember I told you about Howard Williams, my really good buddy that got shot down and chopped apart. And there's Dick Rutan hiding out over there. Here's a group of guys that were there at that time, a little small group of people, a small little outfit, but we did very interesting missions. Lanie Lancaster got shot down. This guy here, Brian Williams, was with Howard Williams when they got shot down and, of course, Howard got killed. Brian got rescued. Here's Mick Green, the guy who flew my first combat mission up there with in North Vietnam. Boy, was that an eye opener. Anyway, there's Jonesy Jones. He was the first guy to fly 100 missions, and he got shot down on his 100th mission. He went and got rescued but he got back and he says, "I can't get credit for 100 missions because I didn't return the airplane." So anyway he flew one more mission to get his. P.K. Robinson ... we flew together and he ended up a prisoner of war. He made a mistake of going back and flew an F-4 Phantom. Anyway he got shot down over North Vietnam and became a prisoner of war. Don Shepherd wrote the book called *Bury Us Upside Down*, an excellent book about this whole thing in detail. Risinger is in the picture and I'll show you that in a minute.

Who is this? Lanie Lancaster on his 100th mission. He's really a character. Anyway, it's really neat because you get to drink champagne at the edge of the ramp occasionally when somebody finishes their mission.

Anyway, we flew the F-100F, the two-seat, and the front seat pilot, it was his mission and he would fly the mission, and he was the mission commander and the guy in the back was the secretary. We'd do all the work about checking the fighters in, recording all their ordinance, finding out if they hit the target or not, and then a lot of reconnaissance and photographs, so both of us were really busy. And to keep this thing away from the commander and the co-pilot BS, every other mission you swapped seats. Because of that, the guy in the front, it's his mission. Boy, he's getting all excited about doing this stuff and you're sitting in the back watching this for a while, thinking, hey, that's enough. Let's get these guys out of here. It's not worth it anymore. So we had a really good relationship.

Another thing is on display, this is really neat. Here's an airplane. The photograph was taken of this airplane over North Vietnam on a combat mission. You notice the tail numbers – 837. Notice the tail number up there – 837 – on this one. Ed Risinger flew his last mission, 67th mission, and Dick Rutan right there was looking at the hole in the horizontal stabilizer. He took a small arms round through the stabilizer and that's Brian Williams. He got shot down with my good buddy as you remember.

Anyway, this is a really neat picture and I'm really glad this was taken because, guess what – 837 with the rocket pods and the same tank. The actual airplane is on display. I mean, think about that. What a great job! Somebody, and they told me the story about it, somebody found this airplane and knew which one it was. I stand there and look at that thing and think I flew combat in that thing. We probably took some rounds in it one time or another. And there it is. It's on display in this museum.

There's a great story there about the photograph and a lot about the MISTYs and what they're trying to do here is put a human touch on it. I mean you could look at an old F-100 sitting on a museum someplace, but if they tell what it did, they put it in a human perspective. It's so much more incredibly valuable to the display. Congratulations, gentlemen.

How many people recognize this patch? There you go, and it's very popular with the 105 guys. You figured it out yet? Now little Dickie Rutan got shot down in his 105th mission. So it's supposed to say 100 missions in an F-105. I thought that was a pretty neat patch so I stole it from the F-105 guys and I changed that number (105) to that number (100). Everybody looks at it and just assumes it's a 100 mission, 105 patch. I tell them no, by the way, this is a unique patch. There's only one patch and one guy in the world that can wear the patch because nobody flew 105 missions in an F-100. Anyway, the MISTY logo and North Vietnam ... I kind of stole it.

If I know anything, I'm a patriotic guy. I'm a fierce patriot for my country. After I was in the sidelines of watching somebody be chewed out from Norman Schwarzkopf, after experiencing that, I made a vow to myself about people that sit on their ass and let a bunch of people defile my country. I made a promise at that time: I said never in my life will I allow anybody to disgrace my precious flag in my presence without me doing something about it. There was no way. If you're going to disgrace my flag, I'm going to come and read to you from a special book that I have about the meaning and significance of that flag.

Anyway, so I painted up my home-built airplane. It's called a Bear-Coot. Can you see right there, on the nose? I told you that fighter pilots were egotistical to no end.

The meaning of a lot of things ... and all of you know who this is and what this is and where it's located. That old gray-bearded warrior has two of his grandchildren sitting on his knee and he's pointing to a name that's on that wall, Howard Keith Williams. I go to Washington, D.C. very often and I make a point of doing two things that I never fail to do. First thing I do when I get to Washington, D.C. is go to the Wall. Those six people, my really dear friends, have their name on that wall. I go down there and rub my hands across their names and I thank them for their sacrifice. And because of their sacrifice I was able to live a full life.

The next thing I do is go over to the National Air and Space Museum and look at the Voyager hanging in there. I look up and say to that airplane – you know I wish I had time to tell you the Voyager story – but I stand there and look up at that airplane, and I think, you know I built that thing with my own hands because we never had any money. Although we turned down two million dollars worth of tobacco money, told them they didn't have enough money. I stand there and look up at that thing and say to myself or out loud, I built that son of a gun and I flew it around the world. My experience after the Voyager flight was a bunch of lawyers and Hollywood agents took two naïve people, incredibly naïve about the world outside of the military, and stole everything we had. I realize the only thing that was really important was that I could stand in the National Air and Space Museum in our nation's capitol and I could look up and say those words. None of those damn lawyers or agents, they couldn't steal that, and that was the only thing that actually mattered.

Our leader, Bud Day, Medal of Honor winner ... if you want to read his book, it's called *Return with Honor*. He was the only guy to escape from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. He was standing at the edge of the special forces camp in Kon Giong just south of the Demilitarized Zone. Some of you know where Kon Giong is? He was standing down there looking up at the Marines guarding that thing and trying to figure out how he was going to get in there because you don't walk up to a special forces camp from the woods. They frown on that. So he was standing there and there were two young teenagers who had AK-47s and they caught him. He said, "I have an appointment with my wife for R&R in Honolulu, Dori Day, next week and I damn well am not going to miss that appointment." So he took off running and they shot him. Hit him in the leg and the arm and flipped him over and hauled him all the way back to Hanoi and beat on him for five years.

Now two times, he was standing there looking at that camp, so close to freedom and rescue but he stood on that bunker, that crater, and looked at that helicopter that just didn't happen to see him. So close, but he didn't make it. Bud and Dori Day ... I don't know if you know it or not, but Dori Day did a lot of work with our government. Our government at that time, they just wanted to ignore the prisoners. They just wanted to forget about them. They were a pain in the neck. She went and she brought the plight of them out and did a whole bunch of work to get our government to get off their tail and do something about that.

Anyway, here are the old gray beard guys. The guy I got shot down with, the guy he got shot down with – there's old Dick. Don Shepherd wrote the book, *Our Commander*. The guy that got shot down with my best buddy prisoner of war ... anyway, an incredible bunch of people to be in that little outfit.

Jack, here's that picture I was telling you about. Anyway, Hicksling came out and he wanted to do a painting of Vietnam and there's the MISTY putting in a smoke rocket with anti-aircraft fire, and there's the old 105 mission patch and the guy with the "go to hell hat" on and the funny moustache. Anyway, I thought it was kind of a nice rendering.

*Bury Us Upside Down* ... the book defines what it is and it says how do you – why is a book called *Bury Us Upside Down*? Then when I read the book, I realize why he named it and he couldn't have named it anything else. The book starts with the funeral, the interment of Howard

Williams, and so forth. And it talks about five guys of which I am one of them. He also talks about those six guys ... they went back to North Vietnam about 30 years later. All the warriors returned to the battlefield to try to remember what it was like and so forth. I wanted to do that too, so I rounded up these guys and we went back to North Vietnam to go to the battlefield. And I wanted to stand where that damn truck was from their perspective, and there were some other battlefields that a lot of people got killed in and I wanted to go and visit those sites too.

So this was a solemn thing. Here're these five warriors and every time I would penetrate North Vietnam it was really a strange feeling and it was a very eerie feeling. I wondered what was going to happen. This is enemy territory and they were shooting at us all the time. So we drove up Route 1 from Saigon to Hanoi. As we crossed the Ben Hai River at the old demilitarized zone, there is a bridge there, two bridges, and one of them is an abandoned railroad bridge. So I had the guy stop the van, and I said I'm not driving across this bridge into North Vietnam for the first time. I said, "Gentlemen, let's get out." So we went over the abandoned railroad bridge. I said, "Gentlemen, come to attention, line abreast, forward march." And we marched line abreast into North Vietnam.

I tell you what, it was a spooky feeling. Not to be too crude, but war is war and sometimes strong language is part of that. It's how people deal with the horrors of war. But we all did something in unison that we wanted to do for the last 30 years. As we came across the bridge and stepped foot on the soil of North Vietnam for the first time, we all did a right wheel off the road and we all urinated on North Vietnam. Then we got back in the van and drove up the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

I tell you what, we were rock stars when we got back there. Now this is off the main road and back into this combat area where our AO was. They hadn't seen any Americans at all. You talk about rock stars ... we'd go into these little villages and these little market places and we were Americans. They thought we were really something special. The reception we had ... one thing I found is that the people had nothing, but they were really proud, hard working people. They were very innovative and creative with what they had. You'd see the women walking down those little dirt roads or on a bicycle and you'd think they'd just come out of a Walmart store with beautiful clothes on. They were very proud of what they had. Even the villages that were out of electricity with dirt floors and stuff were all positioned very beautifully and the stuff they did with almost nothing was just really incredible.

And I realized, I don't think we could have beat those people. Our drive up the Ho Chi Minh Trail, we found storage areas that were huge and massive and things that we never saw. I don't think we stopped 10 percent of all the supplies that were headed for South Vietnam, not even 10 percent. I think about all the guys that died on the ground and in the air to try to stop that with absolutely, almost nil effectiveness. It was really kind of sad.

Don Shepherd ... in the Buddhist style, there was a brand new cemetery that was built up and they wanted to recognize their warriors. I mean it was their country, and they told all the stories from their point of view, especially the museums, about the atrocities and horrors of war. The guys would say that isn't true, that didn't happen and I'd say, "Hey guys, cool it. If you win the game, you can paint the ball any color you want it." So we went to this Buddhist cemetery. It was a massive thing, laid out over acres and acres of hillside in North Vietnam. In the Buddhist

style, they have every grave, a little plot about this big that stands above the ground about that high and has dirt on it, and the end of it has a little plaque. The little plaque will say the name of the individual, the date of his birth, and the location and the date that he died. We're out there walking, and General Don Shepherd ... we're out walking through the cemetery and I saw Don way over there and he was standing and looking at one grave. He stood there for the longest time, and I went over there to him and said, "Don, what is it?" He said, "Dick, look at this." And it looked like the hundreds and thousands of other graves that were there. He says, "Look at that, Dick." I said, "Yeah, what is it?" He said, "Dick, I know, I remember the date of my last mission and I know exactly where I flew. Dick, I probably killed this kid." It was really profound to Don to put that in perspective on that day and I'm really glad we went back to North Vietnam. I have a totally different perspective about those people and who they are and their willingness to succeed and work. It's a tribute.

Now a lot of you visited countries that I call the Third World S-Hole Countries. These countries are like that because the people who live there are lazy. They don't care. But let me tell you something. Vietnam is not one of those cases. Those people are doing incredible things with almost nothing and their long term future is very ... in fact if you go into a store, a clothing store ... you guys ever go shopping with your wife? I did a couple times and I go around and look at all the labels on all the things and where they're made. A lot of them are made in Vietnam, for crying out loud.

*Bury Us Upside Down*, the last paragraph, the last paragraph of the book says ... it talks about these old six warriors that went back to the Rex Hotel. The Rex Hotel was very famous during the Vietnam War and they had all the press conferences and all the dignitaries stay at the Rex Hotel and it had a very nice restaurant up on the roof. So we're sitting up there and talking about old times, about our government that sold out an ally in the middle of the war and about how they conducted the war. We all agreed that even understanding all that, given the chance, we'd probably all do it again.

As the evening closed down and they were trying to clear the tables and we found ourselves the only ones, one of the MISTYs stood up and said, "Gentlemen, a toast." And we raised our glasses, and he said, "When our flying days are over, and from this world we pass, may they bury us upside down, so the whole world can kiss our ass."

The last sentence of the book, it says that the six MISTYs left Vietnam the next morning. As the airliner taxied out for take off, they looked out one of the windows and there was a six-position, 57 millimeter anti-aircraft site, only this time it was not pointed at them.

It's a great book. It depicts not only the combat that we did, but it depicts a lot of the government and a lot of the things after, how they went back afterwards to try to find our guys. They found all of them except two guys, Overlock and MacLahan. They went out MISTY-ing one day and they disappeared from the surface of the planet. We never knew what happened and never found their remains.

How we doing on time?

There was one general officer to die in the whole 10-year conflict. One general to die in combat, and I was sitting right on his wing when he died. His name was General Worley, and of all the SAC generals – fighter pilots don't think a whole lot of SAC guys – the bomber guys. Anyway, the whole war was run by a bunch of SAC guys, SAC World War II generals, and they couldn't understand why the fighters had to dive at the target. They didn't understand that. Why don't you just fly over and drop your bombs like we did in World War II? There was a lot of stuff like that. Anyway, there was one fighter pilot. His name was Robert "Bob" Morgan – no, that was the *Memphis Belle* pilot. This guy's name was Robert Worley, Bob Worley. He was one of the fighter pilots among all the general officers down there. I want to play the audio of him, watching him burn alive in the cockpit. Here's how the story went. The MISTY, we were just off the tanker. We went out to refuel one day and were just coming off the tanker and we heard him call, "MAYDAY." It was Strobe-Zero-One and he said, "We just took a hit in the caisson area and we're coming out feet wet and we're climbing to flight level 2-0-0." I heard that, came off the tanker and so I inquired where he was, and we got a rendezvous and we met him head on, we turned and we joined up with him.

So we're sitting on his wing. It was an RF-4 and I knew one thing about the reconnaissance guys. Those guys that flew those long missions, they flew at 500 feet and they flew wings level, something we'd never do. I mean, we pulled Gs all the time and all the veins in my lower leg, if I would show it to you, you could tell why. Anyway, we were always jinking around all over the place so they could never really track us. These guys would come down 500 feet and get going as fast as they can and make a long run out there, click, click, click, click, click, taking pictures. We'd go up and watch them sometimes at higher altitude and I'd say, boy look at those guys. They've got a whole bunch of balls. But I knew one thing: that was not a mission that was going to be for field grade or above officers. This is all the company grade guys, the lieutenants and captains with second lieutenant navigators in the back. That's who flew these things.

So I met this guy head on and he was just coming feet dry, and I joined up with him and as we looked at him, he looked okay to me. I said, "OK, hold it steady and we're going to take a look at you." He said he was losing hydraulic pressure and he had a lot of heat in the back seat. Now I thought I was talking to the lieutenant or the captain in the front seat, to put this in perspective, and I was looking at that captain, the pilot of that thing, not even paying any attention to the back seat. In this case, the front seater was a general officer and the back seater was a C&I major. His name was Bob. He was a major and a C&I guy and had to take care of his general, and that's who was doing all the talking. But I thought I was talking to some captain in the front, not a general and a field grade officer.

So we turn parallel to the coast and try to head down to South Vietnam and I came in beside him and looked close and I could see up in the nose area he had some fire. It was burning a little bit, not a bad fire, and when we told him they were on fire, they pulled out to the side and they acknowledged the fire and said, okay, they were going to go ahead and bail out. You can make up your own mind about this – the motivation. Here's a general officer that was on his last mission. He was flying in to an area that was totally prohibited for general officers to fly, which is North Vietnam, because the last thing they want to do is get a general officer shot down as a prisoner of war. But he needed an extra counter. If he went to North Vietnam he got a double counter and he'd get another air medal, whatever.

Anyway, they came out and they joined up and they were on fire, a little fire, not too bad. So they said they were going to bail out. So anyway, hey, this is really cool. I've seen a lot of guys bail out and get shot down but it's been kind of far away. But this time it came out and close, and backed off to route formation. And we're sitting there and I say, "Wow, I'm going to see a normal ejection out of a fighter. This is really cool. I've never seen it up close." About a minute and a half later, the back seater ejected. Now during that minute and a half, they were arguing in the cockpit about where to set the command ejector handle and he said the general really didn't want to bail out because he's going to get in a whole bunch of trouble. Tomorrow he's going to go home and they're going to write a report on him. Now he did something illegal, and he's going to lose an airplane, and he's probably really going to get frowned at from the SAC guys. So here's his motivation. He didn't really want to go, I don't think. But anyway, they decided and argued about going and so forth and we're sitting here waiting. They're on fire, why don't they bail out? They took a long time.

So finally – and this is the coolest thing I've ever seen – the back cockpit, the canopy comes off and it clears the tail, really cool. Wow, that's neat! The canopy comes off. And we're about 280 knots, under control, just a perfect, ideal condition, out over the water. Then the back seat fires, and it comes up the rails and you could see a little rocket motor ignite. The seat comes up perfectly stable. Soon as the little drogue shoot opens, it comes out. The guy pitches up on his back. He's on his back. Now the drogue shoot pulls out the main parachute and the main parachute starts to inflate. The seat separates. The seat keeps going, the parachute opens and there he is. Wow, that was really cool!

I looked back at the front cockpit and it was full of fire and the canopy was still on it. The fire was so intense, the fire was all around him and it looked like two huge blow torches down by his rudder pedal wells. It came through him and it came out the canopy that was missing in the back seat and there was fire all the way down across the top of the airplane. It was actually burning the vertical stabilizer. Here's this white helmet just sitting there, like he just doesn't know what's going on.

Think of the psychology of this. I'm going to play the tape in a second so you can listen to it. But the psychology is, why didn't he bail out? What's wrong, how could he sit there on fire? Doesn't he know he's on fire? And the horrific-ness of it – you can write that word down. It's so profound, that I've got to tell him. I've got to tell him to bail out. So you hear on the tape that Dick is hollering and screaming, "Bail out. Strobe-One-One. Bail out. Bail out." Just begging him to bail out. And now, I think he's just sitting there and he won't bail out. I think, what the hell's going on? I know what's going on. I'm too far away. He can't hear me. See, I'm 30 feet away but the radio generally goes farther than that. And I'm thinking that maybe that's the reason he's not bailing out, because I'm too far away and he can't hear me screaming at him, begging him to bail out of this burning airplane. So I think I've got to get closer to him. So I drive my old F-100 in as close as I can and I hit it. Figuratively – I think maybe I hit him – I don't know. But anyway, it got so close that the air pressure rolled the airplane up. Now the airplane made a perfect 90 degree turn and headed right back towards the beach.

I backed off enough – and here’s this guy – and I backed off enough and I’m still screaming at him to bail out, to bail out. Then at about 500 feet, it’s burned so bad and it’s so black that I can’t see his white helmet anymore and there’s just smoke coming out of the back. There’s blistering of all the nose area and the liquid oxygen does explode and blows panels off the airplane. It’s just a hideous sight to watch. But it’s a captain, right? And the lieutenant bailed out. At about 500 feet, the old Phantom, with smoke pouring out of it, it pitched up like that and it pitched over. I didn’t want to leave him. I just didn’t want to let him go. I came in and we’re heading right for the beach, and Harlan that was with me in the airplane said, “Dick, God damn it.” I looked up and at the last second pulled out and watched the airplane crash right on the beach.

A handful of years later, I got a call. This was written up in our book and I wrote it up really graphically. I got a call from a lady who was Bob Worley’s daughter. She called me up and said we’re going to go back to Vietnam. There were a lot of people who lost their husbands or fathers in Vietnam and they wanted to go back to the place where they died. There was a group of people that were going to go back and they wanted to know where he died. Now I didn’t remember that, exactly where it was, so I got my old maps out and tried to look at the area. I knew what they wanted. She was going to go back there and she needed to say this is the place where my dad died and stand there and have closure. Although I didn’t know exactly where it was, I made up a story about where it was. I crossed my fingers and said, “God, I hope they don’t find out anything different.” But I made my best guess. They went to Vietnam and I said drive down this little road and there’s a fishing village and if you turn right, then maybe within 400 yards is where your dad hit on the beach. So they went down there and they built a little monument of rocks, and she sent me a nice photograph with his two daughters hugging each other and they told me thanks.

Later on, after listening to this tape, I heard in the background the lacks of the range and bearing of actually where it was. I said, oh, this is going to be embarrassing so luckily I went and plotted it and I was close. If they’d of turned left from the village 400 yards instead of right, they would have been in the right place. But for all practical purposes, it served its purpose.

Let me see if I can ... you’re not going to be able to understand this because there’s a lot of people talking, but you can hear the intensity of this kid that’s screaming on the radio for this guy to bail out. Now that you know the circumstances, maybe you can appreciate the flavor of what’s going on.

*[Plays recording, difficult to make out words]*

Okay, what’s happening here is the recorders that the MISTYs carried, we can hear our inner phone and we can also hear the radio transmission. So whatever goes into our headset is being recorded. Now I play a little bit of this so you can hear all the confusion and stuff. Now I’m going to fast-forward to the time they’ve been told they’re on fire and I’m waiting for them to eject. There will be a big “bwwwww” and the radio tells for some reason when they eject and the general is beginning to be emulated.

*[Plays more of recording]*

Anyway, I played a little bit but it goes on, and there was another really sad thing that happened on this thing. The water boy ... one of the radar sites called and said, "MISTY, go back and check if there's any chance of survival." I don't want to take your time, but later on in the tape the MISTY comes back and says, "Negative survival, negative survival." The strange part of it was everybody was interested in this crash site. Most of the crash sites I've seen, they just write it off, they don't even go to bother. But all of sudden they're setting up perimeters and Medevac were coming in and out. I thought that was really strange for some reason.

Then we went out to get the back seater who was still hanging in the parachute and we shot up a sampan and went out to pick him up. Then he was picked up by the Jolly Green. So we went about our mission cycles and when noon came, we went on back and landed at Phu Cat. When we taxied in, every colonel on the base, here were these O-6's, about a half dozen of them, waiting for us. When we taxied in, I said, "Harlan, I don't know what we did, but we must have really screwed something up," having no idea who it was. Then when the canopy came open and the first colonel up the stairs was screaming at me. He said, "Damn it, what are you doing here? Why are you at Phu Cat?" I'm thinking, "This is my base. I generally come back here." He said, "You were supposed to go to Saigon. You were directed to land in Saigon. They want to talk to you about Strobe-One-One." I said, "What?" Then it finally dawned on the guy and he says, "Wait a minute. You don't know who was in that airplane do you?" I said, "No, sir." When he came up and started screaming at me I said, "Harlan, it's worse than I thought." The last thing that I wanted to do was go down some rogue pilot, up country guy go down to Saigon and talk to a whole bunch of generals. Anyway, I had the tape and I gave the Colonel the tape and he said, "You got a tape of it?" And I said, "Yeah, it's all recorded right here." And he held it like, wow, I've got the tape. And he says he didn't know what to do with it so he gave it back to me, thank goodness. He gave it back to me and said, "Go and get your Class B uniforms. There's going to be a Scat Bat come up and he's going to take you down and all those guys want to talk to you down in Saigon."

I thought, oh my goodness. Now a lot of it made sense. So on the way down there, I played the tape. And I said something on the inner phone extremely inappropriate. So my tape has an 18-second gap in it, and it's very similar to the 18-minute gap that Nixon has. There's only two people that know what was on that tape and one of them is dead. Yours truly is the only one who knows what was on the tape and he will take it to his grave.

Anyway, we went down there and we got to talk to a lot of generals, which I didn't think was all that neat. But they found out something about the F-4, a deficiency and how the canopies come off and so forth that nobody ever knew before. Now there's a lot of recce airplanes that never came back, and only the back-seaters got rescued. Nobody had a clue what happened to the pilots, but they couldn't get out of the airplane, as so in that case. But that was the only general officer to die in the whole 10 years in combat.

Anyway, that's about all I have.