

Veteran: **AMADOR, Antonio**
Service Branch: **MARINE CORPS**
Interviewer: Amador, Y.
Date of Interview: April 25, 2001
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Transcriptionist: Terry Moore
Highlights of Service: **Vietnam; Sniper; Wounded in Action**

Interviewer: Today is April 25, 2001. I am interviewing Mr. Antonio Amador. I want to know how you got into the service.

Veteran: I was drafted in the Army really, but I volunteered to go into the Marine Corps. That was in January 1966. We first went into San Antonio, and, I don't know, spent eight or ten days there. My training—boot camp was in Camp Pendleton in San Diego, California, and that lasted about twelve weeks. And then we had four weeks of what they call rifle training, and they go to the rifle range and they teach you how to shoot. And then after that it was maybe two more months of actually just basic training. And I think it was by June I was already in Vietnam.

Interviewer: How old were you?

Veteran: 19. And we flew over there. We left out of El Toro, California. We went to Anchorage, Alaska, and then from there we went to Okinawa, Japan. From Okinawa they flew us into Vietnam, and that was a thirteen month tour. I was over there thirteen months.

Interviewer: Thirteen months. So, a year and one month.

Veteran: And some days.

Interviewer: What was your position? You know some people are trained in specific areas.

Veteran: It was what they call infantry mainly, but after I was over there I was trained to be a sniper. That's what I did most of the time I was over there.

Interviewer: A lot of people don't know what "sniper" means. Can you explain it?

Veteran: Well, they train you how to shoot a high powered rifle.

Interviewer: Long distance.

Veteran: Yeah. And that basically was my job; I want to say the last eight months.

Interviewer: You know, when you're over here thinking there's the war, but once in it, what were you thinking? What was going through your mind? Did you wonder if you were coming back? You might not make it?

Veteran: Once you get over there, it's sort of a different thinking, but I always thought I was going to come out, but of course there's a lot of luck involved in coming back, and you really need to pay attention to what you're doing. That's part of it, but like I said there's a lot of snipers over there, too. You can be the best if you want, but a sniper can take you. But I always thought I was going to come back.

Interviewer: Did you get hurt really, really bad?

Veteran: Not really bad, but I did get shot?

Interviewer: You did get shot. Where?

Veteran: In the leg.

Interviewer: But you were never in a coma?

Veteran: No.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to recuperate?

Veteran: A couple of weeks. It was just sort of like a flesh wound.

Interviewer: Did you always have water to drink and food to eat, or did you starve?

Veteran: Oh, yeah, there's a lot of water out there. It also rains a lot. They always carried iodine tablets, I think is what they called them, and they'd get water from anywhere and put one of those tablets in there, and in ten or fifteen minutes you can drink it. It sort of purified it.

Interviewer: Did ya'll ever starve?

Veteran: No, and actually all the time I was over there I never lived in any towns. We were always, always out in the field, so we always had food. We had our C-rations. Once in awhile, maybe for one day, you'd go with one box, which you're supposed to get three a day, but once in awhile we'd get a hot meal. They'd bring it in a chopper, and we'd get a hot meal.

Interviewer: You know, a lot of people when they hear about Vietnam they think, "oh, they were doing drugs and alcohol." Did you ever do something like drugs?

Veteran: I don't know anything about drugs in Vietnam. Like I said, I didn't live in a town. We used to go on weekends into town, but I never really lived in any town. We were always out in the field—like real small villages and things like that.

Interviewer: Were ya'll always informed about what was going on. You know, if ya'll were winning?

Veteran: Yeah, we got the *Stars and Stripes*, which was like a little newspaper that the Army puts out, and it tells you a lot of things like the big battles that were going on, and this one lost so many people, or you won this, and things like that.

Interviewer: And so ya'll were pretty much informed.

Veteran: Yeah, pretty much.

Interviewer: How did the war affect your life?

Veteran: When I got out in 1968, for awhile I used to think about it, but not any more.

Interviewer: Did you used to have nightmares and things like that?

Veteran: Yeah, but it wasn't a very long period. Maybe like a year, year and a half after I got out.

Interviewer: Do you ever talk about your experiences to your family, to your sons? Did they ever ask you?

Veteran: No, but I really never talked to anybody. I never did talk to a whole lot of people. Just the guys that were out there with me, because there were some people in McAllen that were with me.

Interviewer: Do you still have friends over there?

Veteran: Not lately, but when I got out we used to visit each other. Then I went to Illinois for twelve years, and I haven't heard from them in a long time.

Interviewer: Have you ever gone to reunions with the people that were over there?

Veteran: No.

Interviewer: Do you encourage your sons or your daughter to go into the service?

Veteran: I have not encouraged them, but I wouldn't be against it. In a non-war situation, I think it is a very positive experience for somebody to go into the service. I think you do a lot of growing up. I mean, I personally know some people that have been in problems, you could say, when they went into the service—like the judge would get them an option to go to the service or you stay here and go to jail.

Interviewer: The service or the street.

Veteran: The service or jail, really. But I think that it is good. I think it would be a positive experience for anybody to go in.

Interviewer: Do you think the war you went to was worth fighting?

Veteran: Well, it was weird, because it was never a declared war. It was just fighting, and if you look back, we actually lost the battle. We didn't reach our objectives. It just went on for too long, and people just got tired of it and started protesting. I think a lot of people, if they had to do it again they wouldn't get involved in something like that. And actually I think that that has helped a lot of like these conflicts like we have now, they really don't want to get involved or they don't want to get into a real long war like that one.

Interviewer: Did you lose a lot of friends?

Veteran: Yes. I lost of people that went into boot camp with me, and went to training with us. We lost a lot of people.

Interviewer: You've answered all my questions, and thank you for helping me.

Veteran: OK.

Interviewer: What is your serial number?

Veteran: My serial number is 2227899.

{END OF INTERVIEW}