

Borgeson, David US Army

[00:00:14.96] JOE GALLOWAY: When and where were you born?

[00:00:18.38] DAVID BORGESON: In New Jersey, in Orange Memorial Hospital in 1941, March.

[00:00:24.95] JOE GALLOWAY: March. You're considerably many months older than me, and mine's November of '41.

[00:00:31.71] DAVID BORGESON: Oh.

[00:00:31.91] JOE GALLOWAY: But we're both pre-war.

[00:00:33.77] [LAUGHS]

[00:00:40.55] DAVID BORGESON: I had a father, Carl Borgeson, mother, Theta Borgeson, and an older brother, Anders Borgeson.

[00:00:56.07] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, where did you grow up and go to school? What do you consider your hometown?

[00:01:01.85] DAVID BORGESON: Little Silver, New Jersey. It was next to Fort Monmouth.

[00:01:06.68] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. How did you come to enter the military?

[00:01:12.53] DAVID BORGESON: Well, my dad was ROTC at the University of Illinois. And I went to the University of Delaware, and I chose to stay in the ROTC. It was mandatory for the first two years, and then I chose to stay in. And when I graduated, I was commissioned a second lieutenant.

[00:01:34.75] JOE GALLOWAY: A second lieutenant. Where did you go for officer basic and advanced training, and what year was this that you graduated?

[00:01:45.32] DAVID BORGESON: I graduated in 1964, and I went on active duty in February of 1965. And I reported for duty at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

[00:01:59.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Artillery.

[00:02:00.41] DAVID BORGESON: Artillery.

[00:02:01.40] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. So you did officer basic there. And what other training did they give you?

[00:02:11.09] DAVID BORGESON: Well, it was basically a 10-week course in artillery. And then I was assigned as a safety officer with a 105 towed howitzer outfit. And in July of 1965, that

unit was assigned to the 1st Cav Division to go to Vietnam, and I did not go. So I was pending orders for flight school.

[00:02:42.68] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. And those orders came through?

[00:02:46.55] DAVID BORGESON: Yes.

[00:02:47.78] JOE GALLOWAY: And off you went to Fort Walters.

[00:02:50.27] DAVID BORGESON: I went to Fort Walters in October of 1965.

[00:03:00.21] JOE GALLOWAY: Of '65. Any excitement in the training at Fort Walters?

[00:03:05.31] DAVID BORGESON: Well, the only thing that was kind of unusual for me is I started breaking out in hives. And nobody could explain it, but my face would swell up and they're very itchy.

[00:03:24.64] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:03:25.59] DAVID BORGESON: And so they sent me down to Brooke Army Hospital down in San Antonio, and they did all kinds of tests. But it was all negative. And as soon as I left Texas, it stopped.

[00:03:37.47] [LAUGHING]

[00:03:39.09] JOE GALLOWAY: And you've stayed away ever since?

[00:03:41.07] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[00:03:42.06] JOE GALLOWAY: You go back and finish flight training in Fort Walters?

[00:03:45.00] DAVID BORGESON: Oh yes. Yeah, I didn't lose my place in class or anything. I just continued on.

[00:03:51.24] JOE GALLOWAY: And went on to Mother Rucker.

[00:03:53.61] DAVID BORGESON: Yes.

[00:03:54.96] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. And transitioned into Hueys there?

[00:03:58.68] DAVID BORGESON: Yes.

[00:04:00.24] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Now at this point, had you heard anything about ARA?

[00:04:04.26] DAVID BORGESON: No.

[00:04:04.83] JOE GALLOWAY: Not a word?

[00:04:05.67] DAVID BORGESON: Not a word.

[00:04:07.05] JOE GALLOWAY: Even at Rucker?

[00:04:09.03] DAVID BORGESON: Yes. At Rucker. And they allowed us to fire M60 flex guns, but not a lot of that.

[00:04:21.34] JOE GALLOWAY: No rockets.

[00:04:21.60] DAVID BORGESON: Certainly no rockets.

[00:04:24.06] JOE GALLOWAY: So where are you assigned when you get done at Mother Rucker?

[00:04:29.55] DAVID BORGESON: Well, upon graduation, we got orders, of course, for Vietnam, and that's when I learned I was going to the 1st Cav, 2nd Battalion of the 20th Artillery.

[00:04:42.45] JOE GALLOWAY: And has anyone yet talked to you about ARA and what the 2/20th is?

[00:04:48.18] DAVID BORGESON: No.

[00:04:48.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Not at all.

[00:04:49.62] DAVID BORGESON: Not at all.

[00:04:50.83] JOE GALLOWAY: So you get on a plane to Vietnam?

[00:04:53.94] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah, I actually had 30 days leave. So I went home, and my brother got married during that 30-day time period. And then there was some kind of an airline strike, and I left Fort Dix, New Jersey, on a National Guard flight-- Minnesota National Guard. It went to Minneapolis, and then it went to Sea-Tac. And then finally, we got down into the San Francisco area because we were going to depart from Travis Air Force Base.

[00:05:28.08] JOE GALLOWAY: And all of this is '65 still or '66?

[00:05:35.16] DAVID BORGESON: We graduated from flight school in May, the end of May 1966.

[00:05:43.47] JOE GALLOWAY: '66. So you've made it to San Francisco and you're going to get on one of those charter flights to Vietnam.

[00:05:52.17] DAVID BORGESON: Yes.

[00:05:52.89] JOE GALLOWAY: And where does it land?

[00:05:54.96] DAVID BORGESON: Pleiku.

[00:05:55.92] JOE GALLOWAY: Pleiku?

[00:05:56.94] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. It was a C-141.

[00:05:58.95] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow.

[00:06:04.46] DAVID BORGESON: And I remember that day because it was hot, and we're getting off the aircraft. And there's another group. The pilot never turned the engines off.

[00:06:15.80] JOE GALLOWAY: New group getting on.

[00:06:17.09] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah, and they were hooting and hollering, and we were wondering what the hell is going on. [LAUGHING]

[00:06:23.63] JOE GALLOWAY: They were welcoming the greenhorns.

[00:06:26.18] DAVID BORGESON: Yes, absolutely.

[00:06:27.74] JOE GALLOWAY: No doubt, with curse words and-- [LAUGHS] What happens when you get to Pleiku. You've got an assignment to the 2/20th, so they're going to pick you up and haul you off.

[00:06:43.91] DAVID BORGESON: They put us in a tent to get us out of the sun. And then an aircraft came in, and everybody that was going to the 1st Cav got on. And it was probably about a 30-minute flight to An Khê.

[00:06:57.14] JOE GALLOWAY: An Khê.

[00:06:58.79] DAVID BORGESON: And when the plane got there, there was a sergeant and a Jeep, and they took us to the 2nd Battalion of the 20th Artillery.

[00:07:07.07] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. Now, you're with the ARA and you know nothing about it. How did they go about correcting that deficit?

[00:07:16.55] DAVID BORGESON: Well, I was assigned to the 1st Platoon. And as you're probably aware, we had four aircraft assigned to our platoon. And I was in A Battery, and A Battery had a total of 12 aircraft assigned to it.

[00:07:36.09] And we started flying. I can't say the first day, I don't remember, but the first month was-- I felt we were pretty lucky because we were mostly in An Khê, we had a chance to fly the local area.

[00:07:52.77] They would take us out and-- some training on how to fire the missions, how to aim it.

[00:08:00.83] JOE GALLOWAY: How to shoot rockets.

[00:08:01.76] DAVID BORGESON: How to shoot rockets, get used to the local area, just in general getting used to being in Vietnam. So for at least the first 30 days, we were nowhere near combat.

[00:08:16.59] JOE GALLOWAY: Right. So it gave you a chance to transition to this new job.

[00:08:21.86] DAVID BORGESON: Yes. And all your senses became heightened, the sound, the smell, your sight. You started hearing the artillery fire at night, you hear the rounds going out on interdiction fire, and it was a whole new experience.

[00:08:41.91] JOE GALLOWAY: You were trained on the Huey. What was the difference between that and the Huey as an ARA bird?

[00:08:51.23] DAVID BORGESON: Well, the big difference were we had the rocket pods mounted on the side with 24 rockets on each side.

[00:08:59.36] JOE GALLOWAY: On each side.

[00:09:00.42] DAVID BORGESON: So we were-- with a crew of four and a full load of fuel and the rockets, we were at max gross weight. And you learned to be very sensitive about the altitude and the temperature and how that was going to affect the flight of the bird.

[00:09:23.63] JOE GALLOWAY: Right, or whether it flew at all.

[00:09:25.97] DAVID BORGESON: Right.

[00:09:28.52] JOE GALLOWAY: And whether the machine gunners were stashing extra ammo under the seats.

[00:09:33.98] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. We always carried a case of C-rations because when we started flying, if it got hot, you didn't know if you were going to get another meal or not, so it was good to have those C-rations with you.

[00:09:50.36] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, you're flying as a Peter pilot with an aircraft commander on these missions?

[00:09:56.78] DAVID BORGESON: Yes.

[00:09:57.32] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Now, did you have a second tour in Vietnam or just the one?

[00:10:03.05] DAVID BORGESON: I had just the one.

[00:10:04.76] JOE GALLOWAY: Just the one.

[00:10:05.57] DAVID BORGESON: And I only spent six months with the ARA.

[00:10:10.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:10:18.85] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, what were your living conditions like?

[00:10:23.71] DAVID BORGESON: Well, it was kind of primitive. When we were at An Khé, we inherited what the people that came in 1965 had established, and the canvas top of our hooch, and that was what we called our living quarters was our hooch, where it was rotting off. So we had to do a little reconstruction. And we added a front porch, we were able to scrounge some cement, and we got aluminum that we paid for from the village in An Khé and we replaced the canvas with the aluminum.

[00:11:09.07] JOE GALLOWAY: Ah, got a hard roof now.

[00:11:11.71] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. [LAUGHS]

[00:11:18.39] DAVID BORGESON: I found the whole A Battery was very tight, very close together. The people in my platoon, the pilots, were very close. We developed close friendships.

[00:11:34.29] And we had a captain, Stan Kass. He was a West Point guy. He was a little tough.

[00:11:44.37] And some of the guys didn't like that, but we kind of went along with it. And we would play cards or bridge or something during downtime. But we got along pretty well.

[00:12:02.13] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you form friendships with men from different racial and social backgrounds in the Army that you might not otherwise have?

[00:12:14.31] DAVID BORGESON: I think because of the closeness of the group and everybody is kind of a team that race couldn't be a factor or ethnicity couldn't be a factor. We were all in that bird together, all four of us. We had jobs to do, and we depended on each other. So it was a real team effort.

[00:12:38.88] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Now, back home in America, there are some social tensions and racial tensions--

[00:12:47.70] DAVID BORGESON: Absolutely.

[00:12:48.45] JOE GALLOWAY: --and things like that going on. Did any of that come over to where you were?

[00:12:54.90] DAVID BORGESON: Well, we'd hear about it, and the kind of newsletter that the Army would put out-- JOE GALLOWAY: Stars and Stripes. DAVID BORGESON:--was our primary source of it. So we knew there were a lot of people that were against the war. And our opinion was kind of if they don't want to fight don't send them over here--

[00:13:13.87] JOE GALLOWAY: Don't send them over there.

[00:13:15.45] DAVID BORGESON: --because we want somebody that's going to shoot back.

[00:13:18.36] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, did you fly with the same crew all the time.

[00:13:23.58] DAVID BORGESON: No, it would rotate within our platoon-- our 1st Platoon.

[00:13:29.82] JOE GALLOWAY: So you might have a different aircraft commander each mission?

[00:13:33.96] DAVID BORGESON: Yes. But there were a few times when we were a little disorganized. And a fire mission would come in and maybe you had to fly with somebody in 2nd Platoon.

[00:13:49.74] I remember one day a fire mission came down, and the guy went to the head, and so I grabbed my helmet and I said, I'll go. So I flew with somebody from the 2nd Platoon. And it didn't matter. The important thing was the mission. And if there were guys out there that needed our support, we needed to go.

[00:14:11.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:14:19.75] JOE GALLOWAY: Describe some of the techniques that you guys used that differed from the formal training you were given.

[00:14:28.48] DAVID BORGESON: Whoa.

[00:14:33.12] JOE GALLOWAY: Were you making it up on the fly so to speak?

[00:14:37.60] DAVID BORGESON: No, I think the big thing had to do with firing the rockets and the range of the rockets. We could hit the target, or when I say target, we were an aerial weapon, not a precise weapon. But we could put the rockets on target from a greater range.

[00:15:01.87] So we liked to fire from like 1,000 meters out. That would help protect us a little bit from small arms fire, whereas some of the other gunships with the M60 flex guns or something would--

[00:15:16.96] JOE GALLOWAY: They had to get closer.

[00:15:18.04] DAVID BORGESON: --they had to get closer. And the other thing was that we usually kind of went into a glide where we would start our rocket run and then we had a couple

of ways where we could fire side by side or we would do a trail formation where the one ship fires and as he breaks, the second ship would engage. And it kind of depended on the type of target.

[00:15:49.21] If we were doing an LZ prep, landing zone prep, we would go into side by side and we'd each put a couple rockets in the front of the LZ and then down the sides and in the back, and then we'd break and we would circle. Usually, we did that right in front of the lift ships. And then the lift ships would go in and we would circle off to the side--

[00:16:16.00] JOE GALLOWAY: In case they needed--

[00:16:17.95] DAVID BORGESON: --if they got engaged with the enemy, we were there to provide additional fire support. And the difficult thing then was the infantry commander never wanted to release us. [LAUGHS] And we would finally say, we have to go because we're short of fuel.

[00:16:37.03] JOE GALLOWAY: We're running out of gas.

[00:16:37.36] DAVID BORGESON: But they liked us up there.

[00:16:41.09] JOE GALLOWAY: Yes, indeed, because if you were there, the artillery didn't reach.

[00:16:47.23] DAVID BORGESON: Right.

[00:16:47.80] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Can you describe for us the quality of the leadership in the outfit as high as you could see it?

[00:16:58.66] DAVID BORGESON: I didn't see very high. The battery commander was usually the one that was the highest that we would see. And they were really good.

[00:17:13.27] They weren't-- it wasn't like it was real disciplined, but we respected them and they cared about what we were doing. The one thing, Joe, that kind of bothered me was that-- the rules of engagement. And we operated under "you don't fire unless you're shot at."

[00:17:43.66] And I can remember one day a Chinook had an engine failure and he went down in a rice paddy. And he said, I'm getting fire from this village. And it was out near LZ Hammond. We got called out, and we went into a trail formation, and the lead ship went in and I was the second ship. And as he turned, he said, I'm taking fire.

[00:18:14.74] I didn't see tracers, I didn't see anything. And so I didn't fire. And we came around and our commander, and I don't know which commander it was, but he said, I don't think you're taking fire.

[00:18:28.40] So we had to come around and do it again. He went in, he said, I'm taking fire, I still didn't see it, and the guy on the ground in the Chinook is saying, we're taking fire. And he's there. So we came around. Now, the commander said OK, you can fire.

[00:18:46.45] And we fired. Well, when that lead aircraft landed, he had 12 holes in the ship. So they risked the crew, the aircraft, the whole thing just to prove we were getting shot at. And so I was a little upset about that.

[00:19:02.86] JOE GALLOWAY: I would think that what the guy on the ground was reporting would have been enough.

[00:19:07.69] DAVID BORGESON: Yes. I would have, absolutely.

[00:19:10.57] JOE GALLOWAY: I'm sure it was enough for him.

[00:19:12.37] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[00:19:13.63] JOE GALLOWAY: He's hanging out down there.

[00:19:15.46] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[00:19:23.25] JOE GALLOWAY: Describe any cutting edge technology, science, medical, advancements that you witnessed during your tour or you saw employed.

[00:19:35.43] DAVID BORGESON: The most cutting thing that we had, some of our aircraft were equipped with an SS-11 wire-guided missile.

[00:19:47.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Right, the French made thing.

[00:19:49.17] DAVID BORGESON: Yes. And we had three mounted on each side. And it was really, I think, designed as an antitank weapon, but at that time there were no tanks in the area.

[00:20:01.56] JOE GALLOWAY: Lot of bunkers and caves though.

[00:20:03.21] DAVID BORGESON: Right. Well, they had a mission, which I think they kind of wanted to see what this thing would do for a cave, to fire at a cave. So I'm the pilot and I'm going to fire this thing. Well, we see the cave and we fire and this missile goes out, and as it goes out, the wire is going out and you line it up on the cave. But when you get out 1,000 yards, you can't tell how close you are to the target.

[00:20:43.32] So the first one I had just above the target. And when I dropped it, it didn't go in. It hit right above it.

[00:20:52.98] I fired a second one and I had that lined up right above the target. And again, the depth was so far that I hit right below it. But we had to-- they had a simulator, a little video game like thing and you saw this white dot go out and you try to get it on the--

[00:21:16.56] JOE GALLOWAY: Get it on the target.

[00:21:17.88] DAVID BORGESON: --get it on the target. But the depth was a real problem. And we didn't have a sight or anything. It was just eyesight.

[00:21:24.57] JOE GALLOWAY: Eyesight. Did you finally get where you could hit something with it?

[00:21:29.31] DAVID BORGESON: That was the only two I ever fired. [LAUGHS]

[00:21:31.81] JOE GALLOWAY: The only two you ever fired.

[00:21:39.67] JOE GALLOWAY: You talked about LZ Bird. Was that in this first part of your tour?

[00:21:44.35] DAVID BORGESON: Yes.

[00:21:45.19] JOE GALLOWAY: Tell me about that fight.

[00:21:46.69] DAVID BORGESON: Well, that was the most horrendous thing, and that's-- the whole event was what I'm most proud of. We were up on mortar patrol, we were flying around LZ Hammond. And so this LZ Bird was out in an area we referred to as the Crow's Foot, and it was where a bunch of streams came down from the mountains and they almost formed a horseshoe around where the LZ Bird was.

[00:22:28.00] Now, at Christmas time, there was a three day truce. So on December 26, we were flying low level because it was kind of monsoon weather, and it was a lot of rain and a lot of flooding in the rice paddies and everything. We actually refueled at LZ Bird. And as I was coming in to land at the refuel point, there were guys carrying big sacks of rice across one of the rivers and they were in water up to their chest and they had the bags over their head, and the infantry wanted us to fire.

[00:23:09.91] And there was a commander somewhere that heard this and he said you can't fire, it's the Christmas truce. And they were mad at us and the artillery was firing at them. But we went in and refueled, and they wouldn't let us fire, so we got out of there.

[00:23:27.04] Well, that night we were flying the mortar patrol and the call came in about 1 o'clock at night right after the Christmas truce ended. It was December 27. So the call was that they were overrun, we had a frequency to call, we're on the way.

[00:23:48.49] We're in a B model Huey. We nosed that thing over and, as you're aware, the thing is shaking like crazy, but we're going as fast as we can. So I called the radio frequency I had for the people on the ground, and there's a young PFC or corporal down there on the radio. And it's like a John Wayne Western in the background.

[00:24:13.54] I mean, you hear the machine guns going, you hear mortars coming in, you hear RPGs, you know something big is going on. And we're still at least 10 minutes away. So I said, we're coming as fast as we can, but we're coming.

[00:24:34.63] And in five minutes, we're still out, and I called again and he said, where are you Spark Gap? Where are you? And he said, we're overrun. And I heard an explosion and the radio went dead, and that was the last communication from LZ Bird.

[00:24:51.40] JOE GALLOWAY: They overran the whole thing.

[00:24:54.10] DAVID BORGESON: I guess. But we got there and you could see the river. Now, low overhead, raining. It's bad. We turned all our lights off.

[00:25:09.25] And we started in on a rocket run. We could see some things on the ground, some fires and stuff. And I was flying. The pilot was a Warrant Officer Charles White, good steady guy, really good.

[00:25:25.99] And we're coming in. We're armed, we're ready, we're in a rocket run. And I turned the switch off. I said, we're going to kill our own men.

[00:25:36.13] And as we turned, the bullets start hitting the aircraft. You know when you have that moment, here I am, the aircraft commander, and I'm supposed to be working the radios and everything, and I'm thinking, is it going to be through the head, the chest, where's it coming? And then I start looking at the instruments. Are they staying in the green, are we losing pressure, are we losing transmission fluid?

[00:26:04.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Being hit.

[00:26:05.53] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah, we're being hit. Everybody in the aircraft is OK. So as we swing around, now we're going live.

[00:26:14.17] JOE GALLOWAY: You know what to shoot at.

[00:26:15.61] DAVID BORGESON: We know what to shoot at. Well, on that second pass, we're getting fired at from an M60, and you can tell because there are orange rounds coming up.

[00:26:27.49] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:26:27.70] DAVID BORGESON: And we knew that guy got overrun and he lost his gun. So I had my crew chief engage him. So here's M60s going back and forth at each other.

[00:26:40.78] JOE GALLOWAY: Both ways.

[00:26:41.66] DAVID BORGESON: And as we swing around, I start seeing these green footballs coming up, that's a 12.7. And I get a little nervous about that. [LAUGHS] So we get back around, we fire more rockets.

[00:26:57.10] And the artillery from LZ Pony is talking to us, and they were firing illumination rounds. And they wanted to fire-- uh--

[00:27:11.41] JOE GALLOWAY: HE.

[00:27:12.40] DAVID BORGESON: Well, HE, but the ones that sense the ground. There's a term for it. I'm not thinking of it right now.

[00:27:20.53] But they asked us if we could-- VT, Variable Time. So they asked us if we could pull to the south and the west a little bit and let those rounds come in because we didn't want to be anywhere around where they're coming in right. So they fire a bunch of volleys in and we try to help adjust their fire a little bit to bring them in as close as we thought they could go.

[00:27:47.71] And then we called them and said, can you let us fire the rest of our rockets because we're getting low on fuel? Because we'd already been flying for mortar patrol. So we expended our rounds. We had more ships coming in and we departed the area.

[00:28:05.53] And our other ships were probably about five minutes away. So when we get back to LZ Hammond, the maintenance people look at the ship and they said, you're down. We have to inspect this during the day. Because we took a lot of hits.

[00:28:26.14] And so there was nothing else I could do. So we went to our tent and tried to get some sleep. But our unit flew the rest of the night, and I know they had Puff the Magic Dragon up there, they had Air Force jets coming in, they had everybody involved in that fight.

[00:28:48.52] Now, there was a Sergeant Jennings, who you may be aware. And he received the Medal of Honor that night, and there were a bunch of people that earned the Silver Star and other elements. So the next day or so, I went to our commander and I said, that was out of the ordinary. I said, I want to put my crew in for some medals.

[00:29:15.58] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:29:15.94] DAVID BORGESON: So he said--

[00:29:16.72] JOE GALLOWAY: What month is this?

[00:29:18.01] DAVID BORGESON: It was December.

[00:29:19.39] JOE GALLOWAY: December of '66.

[00:29:21.46] DAVID BORGESON: Yes, December 27, to be exact.

[00:29:24.28] JOE GALLOWAY: Right, just after Christmas, you told us.

[00:29:27.91] DAVID BORGESON: But I put in for the Distinguished Flying Cross. So I put in for the crew chief, the warrant officer, and myself, and we all received it. I got some push-back

about the crew chief, but I said, hey, he took an M60 on, he went through the same stuff we did. I think he deserves it. So they relented and they put them in.

[00:29:58.93] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, you were sacking out at LZ Hammond. What were living conditions like there?

[00:30:04.58] DAVID BORGESON: Well, it changed a little bit over time. In my documentation, there's a picture. But I'm in a pup tent with sandbags that I would fill.

[00:30:16.73] So we would fly maybe all day, and then we'd come back at night and we'd have to fill sandbags to protect our tent. But then after-- I spent quite a few months out at LZ Hammond, and eventually they got a big tent that we-- all the pilots slept in the bit tent.

[00:30:39.86] JOE GALLOWAY: Eating C-rats?

[00:30:42.32] DAVID BORGESON: They moved to field kitchen out for us. But I don't want to say anything negative about the mess sergeant, but it depended on what supplies he could get in. And there was a time when all he had were hot dogs.

[00:31:01.10] So he would fix the tube steaks and sometimes he'd put slices of pineapple or wrap them and bake. And so he tried to make them a little different each time. But sometimes when the supplies didn't come in, we had a problem.

[00:31:15.92] JOE GALLOWAY: You were at the mercy of the forklift driver down at the port.

[00:31:18.65] DAVID BORGESON: There you go. [LAUGHS] Yeah.

[00:31:26.14] JOE GALLOWAY: You were flying aircraft commander after Bird in a bird that crashed.

[00:31:35.29] DAVID BORGESON: Yes.

[00:31:36.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Tell us about that mission and what happened to you, and what happened to your crew?

[00:31:42.55] DAVID BORGESON: Well, that was January 24, and I had--

[00:31:47.83] JOE GALLOWAY: 1967?

[00:31:49.87] DAVID BORGESON: 1967, exactly. And I had been in country six months. And the Army in their infinite wisdom didn't want whole units rotating at the same time.

[00:32:03.92] So I had been designated to go to the 174th. And we were standing around and it was kind of like around lunchtime. And I thought we were going to get a bird to go back to An Khê and then somehow go to wherever this 174th unit was.

[00:32:25.09] So we were a little disorganized. But anyway, a fire mission came down and being a good guy I said, I'll go. I grabbed my helmet, and a captain, West Point graduate, Bill Hingston, was the aircraft commander. I was the pilot.

[00:32:45.01] And it wasn't very far from LZ Hammond. It was only a couple clicks from the LZ to where this infantry unit was engaged. And it was in the Soui Ca Valley. And we had been circling for at least an hour.

[00:33:08.98] And again the weather was right on the top of the mountains, and the mountains were like 2,000, 2,500 feet. But the infantry was on one side, we were on the other. So we were having trouble communicating with them.

[00:33:27.08] So there was the saddle in the mountain. So my aircraft flew through that saddle to get on the same side as the infantry. Now, other people that you've interviewed probably have a little bit of a different story that went on.

[00:33:49.03] But in my recollection, we went in to the valley, something happened. The aircraft commander, Bill Hingston, took control of the plane. I said as we went through that saddle, we shouldn't fly into this canyon. And he said, I'll take control.

[00:34:10.33] So he was actually flying the aircraft. And we had to be making a left hand turn and we were kind of low level. The hillside was on the left and we were turning to the right, and something happened.

[00:34:26.98] JOE GALLOWAY: You don't know what it was. Mechanical failure?

[00:34:30.43] DAVID BORGESON: No, no, it was enemy.

[00:34:32.11] JOE GALLOWAY: Enemy fire.

[00:34:33.16] DAVID BORGESON: The infantry said that we got hit by an AK-47 and we went down through the trees. And that's where things differ because I have no recollection of ever firing a rocket, but the other aircraft that we were flying with said we had fired. And when we came down through the trees, I remember branches and whatever we were hitting and the rotor blade hitting it all, and you tried to flare the aircraft so you came down tail first.

[00:35:11.98] And I think we were trying to do that to kind of cushion ourselves down. But I was knocked out in this crash. And I have no recollection-- was it 5 minutes or an hour or something-- I was unconscious.

[00:35:30.58] But when I became awake, your first instinct is to get out. And I'm trying to put weight on my arms and lift my legs up, and I can't move my left leg, and I thought I had broken my hip. But somehow, I struggled out of there and I got out--

[00:35:51.14] JOE GALLOWAY: You see what had happened to the other crew?

[00:35:53.80] DAVID BORGESON: I have no recollection at all. And I was worried about a fire, and somehow I feel there was a small aircraft up there, a small helicopter that dropped a fire extinguisher, and I went to look for the fire extinguisher and I passed out again. Now, people have told me it was about a six-hour period that, they had recovered three KIA's, but I was missing.

[00:36:26.13] And we used to put our pistol belt underneath the seat, and the seat we impacted so hard, that was lost. I had no weapon. So I'm wandering out in the jungle with no weapon. And I passed out again.

[00:36:45.54] JOE GALLOWAY: Somebody said they found you 100, 150 meters away from the crash site.

[00:36:52.02] DAVID BORGESON: I could believe that. And when I became conscious again, I heard voices. So I'm listening very carefully. Are they speaking English or are they speaking Vietnamese?

[00:37:10.94] And I know the enemy was in contact-- I'm sorry, our infantry was in contact with the enemy. So I know those guys were around.

[00:37:20.90] JOE GALLOWAY: They're around.

[00:37:22.31] DAVID BORGESON: So when I heard English, I called out and they got to me and I know I could say my name. And I was in a lot of pain. And I have no-- they medevac'd me to a MASH unit it LZ Hammond.

[00:37:39.59] I have no recollection of that. They had to lift me up through the trees to get me out of there. And they got me to this medical unit.

[00:37:50.15] JOE GALLOWAY: Physically what injuries had you suffered?

[00:37:55.07] DAVID BORGESON: I had broken my pelvic girdle, and I have seven compressed vertebrae in my back. But I had concussion, multiple contusions, my face was so swollen that one of the other pilots came over to talk to me and he said, I couldn't even recognize you.

[00:38:18.47] I had cuts and bruises and just a mess. But somehow I survived. And one of the things that I provided Mark is this video that I did about Bill Hingston and the crew as a memorial to them.

[00:38:38.24] And as a sole survivor, you're always-- I think about them every day, and it's been 50 years. And I'm sure you do about some of your experiences, Joe. And I don't dwell on it, I don't depress over it.

[00:38:59.69] JOE GALLOWAY: But it's there.

[00:39:00.76] DAVID BORGESON: It's there, and you only-- sometimes you ask yourself, why me? Why am I on this Earth? But--

[00:39:10.17] JOE GALLOWAY: Somebody had something in mind for you to do.

[00:39:13.62] DAVID BORGESON: Yes.

[00:39:14.37] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:39:16.69] DAVID BORGESON: But that was the worst. And I went to a field hospital in Quy Nhon, and then I was evacuated to Okinawa. Now when I was in Okinawa because I was complaining about my back they did a full X-ray or whatever they had, and they discovered I had the compression.

[00:39:41.92] But they also discovered I had a congenital defect in my neck. I was 4F. I never should have been in the service.

[00:39:50.68] And in the first two vertebrae, there's this little thing that sticks up. But mine never joined the second vertebrae, and so it's unstable. And I said to the doctor, how do you know that didn't happen in the crash? And he said, well, if it happened in the crash, you'd be dead, because that's what snaps when somebody is hung. So they took me off flight status.

[00:40:24.32] JOE GALLOWAY: How long are you in the hospital?

[00:40:26.40] DAVID BORGESON: I'm in the hospital environment for six weeks in Okinawa. And they wanted me out of the hospital, they wanted me walking around or going to the officer's club or whatever. They didn't want me laying in a bed. They wanted me moving and exercise.

[00:40:41.47] And the pelvic girdle was in place. They don't do anything for that. They just let it heal, which it did.

[00:40:52.39] So when it's time to go back to-- oh, and the doctor, they wanted to fuse my neck. I said, no, I'm not going to have that done. He said, well, you have to go back and finish your tour then. And you know they'll find--

[00:41:09.91] JOE GALLOWAY: Even though you're now 4F. [LAUGHS]

[00:41:11.41] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. They'll find an administrative position or something for you to do.

[00:41:18.61] JOE GALLOWAY: They pulled you off flight status.

[00:41:20.50] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. So I went to a unit called the Black Cats of Phu Loi, the 213th Assault Helicopter Company, which was part of the 1st Aviation Group. But they're Chinooks, I don't know anything about a Chinook. But--

[00:41:40.51] JOE GALLOWAY: [LAUGHS] The Army strikes again.

[00:41:42.34] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. But it was like a different war. They were-- Phu Loi was the name of the town where they were located. It was kind of off Bien Hoa, on the other side of the river.

[00:41:53.56] They had a pool, they had a tennis court, they had hooches that had a cement floor, cinder block, sides and screen and aluminum roof.

[00:42:02.38] JOE GALLOWAY: A real roof.

[00:42:03.88] DAVID BORGESON: It was nice. And the officers paid, I forget, I'll say \$20 a month, and you got a 3-day in-country R&R. You went to Vung Tàu, which was a beach town, and we had rented a house. So everybody got three days to go down to this place and--

[00:42:28.75] JOE GALLOWAY: To the beach.

[00:42:29.56] DAVID BORGESON: --to the beach. So no pup tents, no--

[00:42:34.07] JOE GALLOWAY: None of that.

[00:42:35.29] DAVID BORGESON: But their pilots were flying in the Iron Triangle doing ash and trash. And they were flying long hours. So those guys were working hard.

[00:42:47.98] So once I got reoriented being back in Vietnam, I went to the flight surgeon and I said, I want to go back on flight status. And he said, well, Lieutenant, he said, I have to send you to the orthopedic surgeon over in Bien Hoa at the big hospital. So they fly me over there to Bien Hoa, and I see the orthopedic surgeon.

[00:43:12.07] And I walk in, and he's got all my medical records. And he says to me, Lieutenant, you want to go back on flight status? I said, yes, sir. He said, well, you survived what you survived. I'm not going to stand in your way. And he signed me off.

[00:43:30.49] [LAUGHING]

[00:43:31.64] So now I'm back on flight status.

[00:43:34.06] JOE GALLOWAY: But you're with the Chinook outfit.

[00:43:36.16] DAVID BORGESON: But they had an OH-23, which I could fly. So I used to fly into Tan Son Nhut and do some business or something, and then I would fly back or I'd fly somebody somewhere. So it was kind of easy flying.

[00:43:50.47] It was like a different war for me then. And I'll tell you one story. This was kind of funny.

[00:43:59.41] That group, maybe it was the 1st Aviation Group or something, every month the senior officers would have a gathering where they all got together over a weekend. And they had a Chinook, and they built a plywood insert for the Chinook.

[00:44:22.82] So it didn't look like a regular Chinook. It looked like something different. And we had chairs in there and a bar and everything.

[00:44:30.20] And I was the escort officer. And we would go around Saigon and pick up Red Cross girls or people from different agencies that were there, and they would come back for this party for the senior officers, and you know, would you like a drink? Or-- and everything. So I was there to get them there, and then they disappeared as far as I knew. But I know some enlisted man wrote a letter to his congressman and things changed.

[00:45:10.07] [LAUGHING]

[00:45:12.12] JOE GALLOWAY: No more Donut Dollies in the specially outfitted Chinook.

[00:45:17.36] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[00:45:24.79] DAVID BORGESON: Very little, and that recalls something. I was flying with Roger. And they had areas called a free fire zone, and those were areas the Vietnamese declared an area a free fire zone. And by definition, a free fire zone was anything moving down there was considered enemy and you could kill it.

[00:45:53.92] We'd see women and kids, we wouldn't shoot. Our morals weren't there. But this one day we were out and there was a free fire zone and we were just kind of buzzing around, and we saw Asian males waist stripped out doing exercises.

[00:46:17.38] JOE GALLOWAY: Koreans.

[00:46:19.54] DAVID BORGESON: Well, we didn't know. They were in a free fire zone. We're thinking, is this possible? And we come around, we swing around, and it's almost like we're in a rocket run, and they're all waving their arms like no--

[00:46:37.09] JOE GALLOWAY: Don't shoot us.

[00:46:38.17] DAVID BORGESON: --don't shoot us. And fortunately, we realized it was Koreans. But we had-- the White Horse Division was operating kind of behind us, and we were supposed to be taking the brunt of it and then they would pacify the area. But we never talked to them or communicated with them.

[00:47:01.03] JOE GALLOWAY: They usually pacified an area by killing everybody in it.

[00:47:05.02] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[00:47:05.68] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:47:06.40] DAVID BORGESON: Cats and dogs included.

[00:47:14.38] DAVID BORGESON: I felt sorry for the Vietnamese, because in the area that we were operating most of them were rice farmers. And it was a pretty flat plane, and there would be some small mountains. And they've been farming that land for hundreds of years, and they just wanted to be farmers.

[00:47:40.72] JOE GALLOWAY: Leave me alone.

[00:47:42.04] DAVID BORGESON: I don't think they had a lot of alliance to Saigon. And if we occupied an area, it was quiet. But when we left, it would be a vacuum and the bad guys would come in, either the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese.

[00:48:00.82] And so they were caught between a rock and a hard point. And I felt really bad for them, because if we were firing in the village, the M60s would, if it was during the dry season, it would catch the thatch on fire and burn the house down.

[00:48:21.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Burn the house down.

[00:48:22.12] DAVID BORGESON: Or the rockets would set a cooking fire on-- yeah, the whole hooch would go up. And they just wanted to be left alone.

[00:48:39.28] DAVID BORGESON: I would write letters to my parents and my brother and his wife and my grandmother. I always-- she lived into her 90s and long enough to see me come home. And that was the main mode of communication. Now, when I got shot down, I think it's the Red Cross sends a message back, "your son has been wounded in Vietnam," And that's about all. It doesn't say--

[00:49:13.52] JOE GALLOWAY: How bad.

[00:49:14.16] DAVID BORGESON: --how bad or what. And my dad working for AT&T tried to get some friends to get some kind of a communication. But when I got to Okinawa, then I could make a phone call. And I went on two R&R's. I went once to Bangkok and later I went to Hong Kong, and I was able to communicate by phone then.

[00:49:44.71] JOE GALLOWAY: I imagine they were glad to hear from you in Okinawa.

[00:49:47.02] DAVID BORGESON: Yes, absolutely. They were very relieved.

[00:49:53.02] JOE GALLOWAY: How much news did you guys get about the war you were fighting? Stars and Stripes, Armed Forces Radio, that about it?

[00:50:02.32] DAVID BORGESON: Yes. Yeah, Stars and Stripes more than radio.

[00:50:13.40] DAVID BORGESON: Well, as you--

[00:50:16.97] JOE GALLOWAY: You still owe the Army time, or are they going to let you out?

[00:50:20.93] DAVID BORGESON: No, I had a three year obligation. So when I got back to the States, I had six months left. But as you become a short timer and you get close, you start wearing your steel pot to the shower or things like that.

[00:50:44.93] But the pilots that I had made friends with that at the 213th, they would all buy me a drink at the little officers club that we had and everything. But you're so excited that you're going to survive this thing. And you finally get on that bird and you're really nervous, and it's going to-- we went out of Long Binh, they get you there and you get in a processing center.

[00:51:15.80] And I remember the last night, there was a guy from my flight class from Rucker that I hadn't seen the whole time, and he was going home too. And we went to the club there and we were drinking, and the next day we get up--

[00:51:32.24] JOE GALLOWAY: Get a little hammered, did you?

[00:51:33.23] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. [LAUGHS] We get on the plane. Well, I think we stopped in Hawaii or something to refuel.

[00:51:41.36] But we landed at Travis Air Force Base, and I wanted to fly back to New Jersey to see my folks. And they tell us, don't go into San Francisco in military uniform. Change into civilian clothes.

[00:52:02.45] And I think I was on a bus or something that took us to San Francisco airport. So I really didn't get exposed to a lot of stuff. But I remember I was on an all night-- a red-eye to New York, and the guy that I was sitting next to started asking me questions, and-- you know, I was in the Army, and, oh, have you been to Vietnam? And I talked about Vietnam.

[00:52:33.68] And then he asked me, he said, what are you going to do when you get out? And I said, I don't know. But I have six months left and I have to get-- do job interviews because I wasn't career military.

[00:52:49.31] And he said, well, I work for IBM. And he said, you should interview with IBM because we're hiring a lot of people with college degrees that are getting out of the military. So when I got-- I was assigned to air defense unit at Fort MacArthur in San Pedro, and I was like a taxi driver for the colonel. And there were Nike sites around LA.

[00:53:17.63] JOE GALLOWAY: You were flying him around?

[00:53:19.61] DAVID BORGESON: I was flying him around. So when I started to interview I interviewed with IBM and they offered me a position and that's where I started my business career.

[00:53:32.00] JOE GALLOWAY: I'll be damned.

[00:53:33.32] DAVID BORGESON: But you are so excited about getting home, and once you get home, it's such a negative thing. I mean people-- you couldn't go to a party or anything. You're either for the war or against the war. And the thing since some of the decisions that McNamara made or LBJ made about picking targets in North Vietnam, they weren't going to let us win that war.

[00:54:08.55] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you feel that you had difficulty readjusting to life after combat?

[00:54:17.61] DAVID BORGESON: Joe, I'm in the American Legion now, and I see these young men and women coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan and they're really having trouble. And I think the fact that I was a little older, I was a college graduate, helped me adjust. I was a little mature-- more mature at that point in time.

[00:54:43.32] And I was driven, I had a focus. I wanted to get a job, I wanted to start earning some money and get an apartment, and do all these things. And I see these young men and women that are coming out of the service, and they're just not prepared. They're not ready.

[00:55:03.60] JOE GALLOWAY: They've done six or eight combat deployments.

[00:55:07.11] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. In my age, some of our members here at the reunion that have done two or maybe three tours, I can't imagine having to go back to Vietnam after experiencing what I experienced and having to serve another year. That would have been really tough.

[00:55:29.27] JOE GALLOWAY: I did four.

[00:55:30.27] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. And if you're--

[00:55:33.57] JOE GALLOWAY: But then I'm not sane. [LAUGHS]

[00:55:36.33] DAVID BORGESON: But if the Ia Drang Valley is any indication, you went through hell.

[00:55:41.50] JOE GALLOWAY: I'd say so, yeah. Did you stay in touch with people you flew with in Vietnam in later years?

[00:55:52.59] DAVID BORGESON: I do. Roger McAllister is one. There are some people that aren't here like a guy named Gary Adams. He lives up in Idaho.

[00:56:10.54] Billy Wood is a really good friend. We were all in the same flight school. And so there's a lot of people in this ARA group.

[00:56:25.09] I'm a past president. And you really get to meet a lot of people that you haven't met before, but you have shared experiences. And some of the stories you hear down there, you ought to come down to our hospitality room, you'd love it.

[00:56:43.03] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, when you went to work for IBM, were you still flying?

[00:56:47.47] DAVID BORGESON: Oh no.

[00:56:48.25] JOE GALLOWAY: That was it?

[00:56:49.06] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[00:56:49.82] JOE GALLOWAY: And you haven't flown since then?

[00:56:51.85] DAVID BORGESON: No. And I'll tell you the reason, Joe, is--

[00:56:55.15] JOE GALLOWAY: You ought to buy a helicopter.

[00:56:56.71] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. When you're flying every day, your proficiency is so high and good, your angles of approach, picking it up fully loaded, and sometimes it would settle down because of the heat and the weight, and you'd leapfrog over until you could turn and go into the wind and get transitional lift. You wouldn't have that. If I was flying the minimum hours to keep my license or whatever you had to do, I said, that's not for me.

[00:57:35.92] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, you'd lose that proficiency. And if nobody's shooting at you, it's not as funny. [LAUGHING]

[00:57:49.27] JOE GALLOWAY: Do you think that your time in Vietnam and all those experiences changed you and affected your life afterward for good or for less good?

[00:58:00.31] DAVID BORGESON: No, I think they changed them for good. When you're in a combat situation, you're pushing yourself more than you ever thought you could imagine. And I think in business, you kind of develop-- and I was in sales, so that's kind of competitive. You don't want to lose a sale, and you'd keep trying and trying and trying, and sometimes you get it and sometimes you didn't. But I think that served me well from that standpoint.

[00:58:37.19] JOE GALLOWAY: Did your time in Vietnam affect the way you think about the troops coming back from our wars today?

[00:58:44.89] DAVID BORGESON: Oh, I have a lot of compassion for them. It is with the IEDs and this thing, they could be going on patrol every day, past the same village and nothing ever happens, and then that one day-- JOE GALLOWAY: Until they blow up. DAVID BORGESON: Until they blow up. And that has to be very trying if you think about that.

[00:59:12.80] And there's a lot of young men and women that have PTSD, and the VA is trying. And I had a friend. We went through flight school together, and we were buddies.

[00:59:30.49] And he was with a lift company, I think either the 227th or the 229th, I'm not sure which one. And he did a couple tours, and one of the tours was Lam Son. And I read about Lam Son, and it was horrific for pilots.

[00:59:53.28] JOE GALLOWAY: Horrific. I did that one.

[00:59:53.68] DAVID BORGESON: I mean they were getting shot down left and right, and I think Joe Jermany was his name. He was a-- retired a lieutenant colonel. And he had a motor home, and he'd drive around and he'd stop in California.

[01:00:12.61] He lived in Port St. Lucie in Florida. And my kids loved him. They'd go out and sit in the motor home, and he'd be playing rock and roll music and talking to them, and they just loved that.

[01:00:25.69] But I think Lam Son changed him. And as he got older, he got depressed, and he had a heart condition. And he was about an hour from a VA facility, and finally he stopped drinking, he stopped taking the medication, he was depressed. And I forget which year it was, but in March, I went to see him, and anything I suggested that he try, he said, oh, I've done that and this and that. By June he had committed suicide.

[01:01:03.50] He was in his 70s. And I felt so bad, because he was such a good guy. And I think it was Lam Son. I think it was too much for him.

[01:01:13.57] JOE GALLOWAY: It was a dreadful operation and a dreadful outcome.

[01:01:17.92] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[01:01:19.33] JOE GALLOWAY: Crew chiefs would get axle grease and grease their skids in the morning before they took off because so many Vietnamese would grab on.

[01:01:30.58] DAVID BORGESON: Trying to get out of there.

[01:01:31.48] JOE GALLOWAY: They couldn't even lift off.

[01:01:32.92] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[01:01:33.85] JOE GALLOWAY: So they'd grease the skids and take off, and they'd be dropping them from 500 feet. Dreadful stuff. And the helicopter losses were horrendous.

[01:01:46.00] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[01:01:48.25] JOE GALLOWAY: I know there was one day in there that the Cav lost 12 or 15 Hueys.

[01:01:56.05] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[01:01:56.59] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:01:58.57] DAVID BORGESON: But I mentioned Joe because he had a live-in girlfriend, and she lives in Port St. Lucie. And before Dorian came in, the hurricane, I called her to see if she was OK. So we stay in touch.

[01:02:18.80] JOE GALLOWAY: Stay in touch. That's good. What do you think that war meant to you and your generation?

[01:02:28.72] DAVID BORGESON: Oh, that's a tough one. There's so many different ways to answer that, it's hard for me to get the right perspective, because I think there was a lot of mistrust in government then, and I think people question that a lot.

[01:02:57.49] JOE GALLOWAY: With good reason.

[01:02:58.57] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah. You were either on one side or the other. And I think it makes you want to pay attention to what you're-- the people, the president, or the Senate or the House is talking about. The American Legion does a lot to advocate for the veterans and to put pressure.

[01:03:25.33] We had a lot of problems with the administration of the VA in West LA, and people are in jail because they were misusing, they were renting property out. And I think a lot has happened to help veterans since then. But there's a lot that needs to be done in trying to keep these people from being homeless.

[01:03:51.89] You got to get them jobs, you got to get them off the street. If they get on the street, they're going to get hooked on drugs. And the opioid problem is rampant. And it's really terrible.

[01:04:07.88] JOE GALLOWAY: How do you think the Vietnam War is remembered in our society today?

[01:04:13.79] DAVID BORGESON: [LAUGHS] I don't think the young people even know what it is. But people that normally would not give you the time of day right after I came back, but now they always, like if you're in an airport and you're in uniform, people will say thank you for your service and they appreciate. It's not the soldier that's making the decision to go fight, it's the politicians.

[01:04:47.79] JOE GALLOWAY: If you're going to hate somebody, focus your fire at the right target.

[01:04:53.25] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[01:04:56.51] JOE GALLOWAY: Are there lessons you took from your service in Vietnam that you would like to pass along?

[01:05:07.58] DAVID BORGESON: I don't think there's anything, I don't have any strong message. I felt-- my wife was Canadian. She's now an American citizen.

[01:05:22.28] But we got married in Canada and we have two children, one a son and one a girl. And I said to her, don't give up your Canadian citizenship until he's old enough that he doesn't have to worry about it. I didn't want him to go on his service.

[01:05:44.18] And when they dropped the draft, then he wouldn't have to go in, and so she became an American citizen then. But I didn't want him to have to go through what I went through. If it was a national emergency and we mobilized like in World War II--

[01:06:06.56] JOE GALLOWAY: That's one thing.

[01:06:07.73] DAVID BORGESON: You and I were young kids, but I bet you can remember things about the war and rationing and things like that. And if it was that, if it was America against somebody. But--

[01:06:19.31] JOE GALLOWAY: That war had to be fought and it had to be won.

[01:06:22.28] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah.

[01:06:23.09] JOE GALLOWAY: None of the others.

[01:06:24.00] DAVID BORGESON: We were united, and it was different. And I think that George Bush the first, when he organized the Kuwait War invasion, that he had a group of allies together. He gave Schwarzkopf and the other-- who was the general?

[01:06:51.50] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, there was Admiral Stan Arthur and there was Air Force General--

[01:06:57.59] DAVID BORGESON: Well, he was a West Pointer, the African-American guy.

[01:07:02.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, Colin Powell.

[01:07:04.13] DAVID BORGESON: Yeah, Colin Powell. When he gave them the direction to go take Kuwait back, he let them fight it. He wasn't picking targets, he wasn't doing that.

[01:07:19.08] And that's the way you want to do. If you're going to make the decision to put your men in harm's way, let them win it. And they haven't done that since.

[01:07:29.78] I tell people that we never refused a mission. No matter what the weather was, what the conditions were, how many hours we had flown, when that fire mission came, we were going to go. And at one of our-- in fact, at our last reunion meeting, there was a general there, and he talked about what the ARA did for Army aviation and how the infantry gained so much confidence in what our capabilities were and the fact that we would always come when they needed us. And I felt really proud about that. I had been a part of that only for six months, but that's like the highlight of my time in the military.

[01:08:40.65] JOE GALLOWAY: You visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in DC?

[01:08:44.70] DAVID BORGESON: Many times.

[01:08:45.84] JOE GALLOWAY: What are your thoughts when you go there?

[01:08:47.64] DAVID BORGESON: Very moving. I always go to see the three in my aircraft that were killed.

[01:08:56.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Are they together on the Wall?

[01:09:00.09] DAVID BORGESON: One is on one line and two are on the line right underneath. They're all together.

[01:09:04.22] JOE GALLOWAY: They're together.

[01:09:05.46] DAVID BORGESON: And I have a couple fraternity brothers that were lost in the war, and I try to pick them out. And it's very, very moving. And I've gone there, and they used to have like a phone book. And you look up the name, and then you get kind of the coordinates where they are. And one of the people--

[01:09:30.60] JOE GALLOWAY: The guides.

[01:09:31.35] DAVID BORGESON: --the guides, he said, let me take you. And he took me right down to where they were. And my wife and son were with me and they were so proud. It's really-- and I remember there was a lot of negative feeling. It's going to be below the ground--

[01:09:52.23] JOE GALLOWAY: Black marble.

[01:09:53.34] DAVID BORGESON: --black marble and everything.

[01:09:55.95] JOE GALLOWAY: And they were wrong.

[01:09:57.24] DAVID BORGESON: They were. And it's so special to the veterans. There's people there that camp out there and protect it.

[01:10:13.47] JOE GALLOWAY: You've heard about the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration. You're part of it today. What do you think about that?

[01:10:23.40] DAVID BORGESON: Well, we're very supportive of it. And I say that because my American Legion Post last year in November, we had a dinner at the Bel Air Country Club as part of the 50th Commemoration. We had, I think, three Medal of Honor recipients there, and it was a very special night.

[01:10:50.22] JOE GALLOWAY: Have you received your Vietnam Veteran lapel pin? If you don't know, you haven't. And I'm going to fix that right now.

[01:11:00.60] DAVID BORGESON: OK.

[01:11:02.58] JOE GALLOWAY: When my dad and his six brothers and my mother's four brothers came back from World War II, they all wore what they call the Ruptured Duck, which was a lapel pin, discharge pin the Army gave them. It was a winged eagle with a little white enamel circle. If you didn't have one of those on your lapel in 1946, you couldn't get elected dog catcher in America. So we thought that the Vietnam veterans deserved their own lapel pin and we created one, and it says, Vietnam War Veteran with an eagle. But on the back is engraved these words, A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You.

[01:11:56.88] DAVID BORGESON: Oh, that's nice.

[01:11:59.16] JOE GALLOWAY: We're going to hook you up here If I can get up [LAUGHS] Crunch, crunch. There you go. Thank you for coming in.

[01:12:21.34] DAVID BORGESON: Thank you.

[01:12:21.80] JOE GALLOWAY: Thank you for the story.

[01:12:22.60] DAVID BORGESON: It's an honor.