ORAL MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM "BILL" MARTIN

An interview conducted on

March 23, 2018

Interviewer: Steven O'Dell

Angelo State University

West Texas Collection

"War Stories: West Texans and the Experience of War, World War I to the Present"

LEGAL STATUS: The oral memoirs of William Martin are unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on March 23, 2018.

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The electronic file and complete transcript of this interview were processed in the Department of History at Angelo State University and are available at the Dr. Ralph R. Chase West Texas Collection, Angelo State University, San Angelo, Texas.

O'DELL: So, for the purposes of the recording, we'll just go ahead and introduce ourselves again.

MARTIN: Okay.

O'DELL: My name is Steven O'Dell, and I'm an Angelo State University student, and you are . . .

MARTIN: I'm Bill Martin, a retired Vietnam-era veteran.

O'DELL: And we are in the Porter Henderson Library at the stated location where the interview takes place.

MARTIN: And, uh, the date and time.

O'DELL: And the date, yes. Today is March 23rd, 2018, and it is about 9:47. I believe 48. I can't see too well.

MARTIN: Forty-three.

O'DELL: Is it?

MARTIN: Yeah.

O'DELL: Okay, 9:43. Okay. So, when and where were you born?

MARTIN: I was born in, uh, 1948, January in a little town in Northeast Iowa called Charles City, Iowa.

O'DELL: How was that?

MARTIN: Pardon?

O'DELL: How's your hometown?

MARTIN: Well, the little town of about 8,000 probably shrunk down to 6,000 by now. It used to be the main manufacturing location for Oliver Corporation, who manufactured tractors back in the day. And they fell by the wayside, poor management probably. Uh, in 1968 there was an F5 tornado that went through and changed the entire face of that town and killed thirteen people.

O'DELL: Wow.

MARTIN: I was downtown at the time it happened. I lived through an F5 direct hit.

O'DELL: That must have been really scary.

MARTIN: Very traumatic. I was . . . I was . . . I mean, we didn't call it that back then, but PD . . . PTSD. For probably fifteen to twenty years afterwards, every time a storm would come in I could feel myself reliving portions of that experience. But it was a good town to grow up in, a good town, as they say, to raise kids. Uh, I left after I got back from the service and headed south though.

O'DELL: Okay, so speaking of the service, uh, when and where did you enter the armed forces?

MARTIN: Okay, after . . . I have an older brother—two years older than me—and he and I, uh, were going through about the same type of decision-making process. Vietnam was becoming hotter and hotter as far as a military campaign issue—not political or any of that, but just the fact that it was expanding and becoming some pretty serious business. We witnessed from our TVs the body bags being loaded on and started hearing about former classmates coming home in a bag. And um, scary times—it was the time of the draft, not the lottery. Um, I stayed in school as much as I could, but it was such a distracting thing for me that I decided to simply volunteer, get it over with. If I make it back, get on with life. There were no options about, oh, running off to Canada, which a few did. Some faked injuries. I knew a guy who shot himself in the foot to get out of going in. Uh, that type of activity was also going on, but the majority of guys were drafted. I mean it wasn't their choice, but they got drafted and the branch of the service they . . . wasn't their option to select. Their training, their final deployment in no way was any decisions of theirs. So uh, they were brought into the service as I was in January of '69, 1969.

I left a place called Fort Des Moines, Iowa and headed down to Fort Polk, Louisiana—flown down there in a training facility called Fort Polk, North Fort, Tigerland, whatever they call it. And found out that in the basic training area they were in phase three of spinal meningitis and couldn't take anymore trainees, so our plane was redirected to Fort Benning, Georgia. Uh, that's where the airborne . . . the Army trained their airborne. That's where they trained their Army Rangers, Green Berets, all their special forces, and I was in the basic training camp that was right next to the special forces then called Sand Hill. Uh, I did my . . . believe it was six weeks of basic training, and then my orders were to go to Fort Polk, Louisiana for my training at North . . . uh, at Tigerland. And I got all my jungle training, if you will, at Fort Polk, Louisiana. And then, after completion of that—that was called AIT, Advanced Infantry Training—and after AIT, my orders were for Fort Knox, Kentucky, where I had been ordered to attend armored personnel school.

Well, that was all fine and good, and then another three or four weeks—I can't remember how long our training was—but I wouldn't be deployed for at least another three or four weeks. So, I was thankful for that, but I wasn't really excited for the armored personnel school because at AIT when we were being trained on a .50-caliber machine gun, our targets were armored personnel shells out in the field that we drew our sights on and fired rounds into, and you could literally hear it hit and then bang around or ricochet inside of it. And uh, also, what we did at Fort Polk, we did land mine training—different types of claymore mines, some regular mines, C-4 explosives, all that kind of stuff. And uh, armored personnel carriers at *that* time—I don't know how they are now—but at that time the fuel tank was below the floor. So, the bad news was that the Vietnamese knew the quickest way to dissemble an armored personnel carrier was to eliminate one of the tracks, or wheels if you will, but it was a track. They just do something, usually explosives, to blow the track off the gear. They take it down and then you can attack it, and that's how they did their thing.

After Fort Knox, I got . . . received my orders for Korea, South Korea. And that was the first time I said, "Korea! What's going on in Korea?" And uh, I was flown out of Fort Lewis, Washington into Korea. I think it was about June, maybe July of '69, uh, within less than six months after the *Pueblo* Incident. If you're familiar with the Pueblo Incident, that was a so-called US spy ship off the coast of North Korea that was captured . . . captured by the North Koreans, and I think there were nineteen hostages including the captain taken. Bucker was the captain's name—B-U-C-K-E-R, *Pueblo*, P-U-E-B-L-O—on the USS *Pueblo*. It was like a PT boat, but it was a spy ship. And they were doing what we had been doing for the last . . . up . . . even through today some . . . what? Some sixty years later we're still spying on North Korea. Only the means have changed, but we're still doing that as they are to us. And anyway, I was flown from Fort Lewis, Washington to Seoul, Korea. And my first impression of Korea was getting off the plane and, uh, smelling the air, and it smelled like an outdoor bathroom. I mean, extreme urine smells, feces smells, terrible, overwhelming, almost-burning-the-nostrils kind of smell, watering the eyes. And I said, "I'm never going to get used to this."

Well, little did I know that I was being sent up to the so-called demilitarized zone in South Korea. Well, it's not really in South Korea; it's between North and South Korea, which is by road, about a sixty-mile road up there, but as the bird flies it's only about twenty-five or thirty miles. But we got in a . . . what'd we get in? I think it was something called a "deuce and a half," which is a big truck. We got in the back of that. And uh, after, we got all kinds of shots for malaria and all kinds of shots. Then they put us on a truck and said, "These guys are going to such and such a location, and these guys are going here, and these are going here." So, the driver knew what his drop-off points were, and up the road we went to the demilitarized zone. I was stationed in a . . . at a location in Musan-ni, Korea. That's uh M-U-S-A-N space N-I. Short is Munsan, Korea, which is about a mile and a half from the actual demilitarized zone with the Imjin River separating us from the demilitarized zone. So, we were in the northwest sector of the demilitarized zone. Um, that's where my home base was for thirteen months in Korea. Um, one gets used to the smell—I can tell you—within a relatively short period of time. You either do or you're going to be miserable for thirteen months and probably sick.

O'DELL: Can I ask, why . . . why did it smell?

MARTIN: Well, because there was, at that time . . . things have changed *a lot* in sixty years. Well, for me, fifty years because I was there in '69 and '70. Things have changed a lot, but back then the vast majority of South Korea, in particular that close to the demilitarized zone—remember by as the bird flies, thirty miles—anything north of that was . . . [sharp sigh] inhabited not only by the US Army and the ROK Army over on the west border of the zone, it was inhabited by people who were involved in . . .

[Interruption: Someone brings interviewee water. Interview resumes.]

MARTIN: They made their living in various occupations ranging from black marketeering, prostitution, to illicit drugs. And then at the bottom of the chain were the poorest of the poor farmers up there—the poorest of the poor. They lived in mud houses with thatched roofs and no plumbing—nothing. So, if you had to "use the facilities," as we say stateside, you'd simply do it wherever you were. If you were inside, you would always go outside and, uh, relieve yourself *anywhere* in front of *anybody*. It was just common; that's what you did. And uh, getting used to

that sight, was a matter . . . a matter of cultural evolution. It took about a month, month and a half because there were other more important things that you had to pay attention to than somebody squatting and relieving themselves.

I remember how beautiful the country was. In the area I was in it was mountainous with valleys, and I say mountainous . . . maybe . . . maybe, uh, 2,000 foot, 4,000 foot in areas. And then the Imjin River and then a valley on the other side that ran about, probably looked like about ten miles maybe less, and then more mountains over in North Korea. Uh, but the scene there was pretty if you can get away from the compounds, away from the military compounds and away from what we called "GI villages," which were there solely at the pleasure of the US military—black marketeers, whores, blah blah. And go over hills, down into valleys where the rice paddies were and usually there was a hamlet or two in that valley. And in that valley was the farmer. That's where they lived. That's where their family lived. It was a sort of like family operation: my grandfather, my uncle, my sister all had little hooches around a rice patty. And there was like a general store, if you will, uh, which was kind of a central meeting place where I can envision them. I mean I didn't spend much time out there, so I didn't like spend an entire day in the village, but you can imagine them getting through in the fields and coming in and sitting down and having a glass of rice wine and maybe some food and then going home kind of like some people do here. It's sort of a ritual.

Um, I found those villages to be very interesting. The life was simple. They were used to military being there. I mean, it was only less than like twenty years when I was there when the hard, heavy fighting was going on and people were being killed by the hundreds, by the thousands every day in that area of Korea. They were used to that. They were raised in a war state. They were kind of like Israel, but they were used to it. They just figured, "If I don't bother them, they won't bother me," kind of thing. And uh, lived their lives very simple. Seemed like very happy people. Um, but again, I think I only went out of those compound gates for non-military reasons probably less than six times the entire time I was there. It's just too dangerous. There was a midnight curfew. *Anyone*, *anyone* caught out after midnight, no questions asked you were shot. You were killed there, period. That's all there was to it. And the reason for that is there was quite a high volume of infiltration of the North Koreans at that time. Tunnels were being dug. One tunnel ran from North Korea underground all the way to Seoul. And again, that was thirty miles, underground!

There's . . . between North Korea and South Korea, even back then, was the demilitarized zone. We call it "no man's land," and it's roughly a mile and a half wide and 180 miles long; that's the zone. The border of the zone was primarily, at that time, concertina wire or really a barbed wire on steroids kind of thing. It was razor wire on it, and that was it. There were no lights. There were no hard walls, just concertina wire, and that would be on our side. The North had their version of the same with roughly a mile and a half between them; it was called "no man's land," and in no man's land, they had—I don't know how many—land mines, but it was estimated in the hundreds of thousands of land mines were put there. So, if you try to go there, you're going to get blown up. If you try to come here, you're going to get blown up. And the only way you couldn't, for the most part, was to tunnel underneath it. There were some that tried to get around it. There are squads, platoons, companies of military on our side, and I'm sure they've got it on their side or had it on their side that were demolitions experts ranging from actually making them, to installing them, to removing them. So, there were . . . we had teams that would go out there and remove land mines from the fields, and the North had people to go out there and remove it. But keep in mind, that it wasn't just after midnight you were shot on the

zone . . . in the zone you were shot, *period*. If you were in that no man's land, no questions asked. And the only way you can get to the side was covertly. That was the *only* way you were going to get to the other side. So, to do that on the ground you had to . . . you had to unman land mines, and people got killed doing that. That simple.

People got killed protecting the zone, and we have troops up there on the zone that all they do is . . . uh, twenty-four seven is guard the actual physical gate on . . . the wire gate . . . fence on the south side of the border by staying in jeeps and ton-and-a-quarter pickups—I guess you would say "military pickups"—armed to the teeth with .50-caliber, .60-caliber, light automatic weapons for the most part, some M16s. But when I was there, there was a lot more M14s—another type of rifle—than there was 16s because the majority of the 16s were going to Vietnam. That's where they were going. So, we got . . . we were kind of the stepchild of the Army at the time because we . . . it's a . . . and still is to this day on the demilitarized zone. That's a combat zone. Troops on the demilitarized zone in Korea got . . . and still receive today although I don't think we have any on the zone today. I think that's all ROK Army protected now, but at the time, the US protected probably two-thirds of the demilitarized zone. But the 2nd Infantry Division, another division called 7th Army Infantry, and I think there was another support group in the back called I Corps . . . I can't remember. Well, I mean it's not like you want to remember.

Um . . . but, uh, their job—as I got away from—was to patrol along the fence and make sure there wasn't any breaks in the fence, uh, catch infiltrators, that type of thing. Well, I hadn't been in-country more than—I want to say—six months in-country when a unit right next to ours, their patrol . . . they had a patrol doing just that—cruising along the demilitarized zone—and they . . . all occupants were killed in the jeep with automatic weapon, grenades. They were killed by North Korean infiltrators who had gotten across. Probably thought they were going to be detected and acted—I might add—just as we would have if we were in the North. They acted in the manner they did because they did not want to be detected. They wanted . . . they had bigger fish to fry. They were headed south. There was a lot of efforts back at that time to assassinate the president of South Korea. There were many attempts made on his life.

It was . . . it wasn't as much . . . it . . . it was a combat zone tour of duty. I did draw combat pay. I did have a weapon. We were on so-called alert and there were various stages of alert from low-risk to high-risk, and we were on high-risk several times during my tour of duty. In terms of the number of people killed in my unit, I think we only had one guy killed in our unit. But in units around—I think for that year I was there—we had probably six or eight people killed. Doesn't sound like much when, you know, when Vietnam it was probably closer to 6,000 a year and not as small as that. But tell that to the families who lost a loved one, you know, anywhere. Explain that it's no big deal to them. And it's still going on today. We still have fighting going on in the zone.

I used to lay in my rack, or my bed, at night. You always kind of slept with one eye open. You could hear automatic weapon fire on . . . on the guarded posts . . . from the guarded posts on the demilitarized zone. What it would be is some guy [laughs] would be sitting in this box or a fox hole on an outlook point and, you know, you do that for a few hours in total darkness. I mean total darkness. I had never been anywhere where there was absolutely no light, no light *at all*. And at night, you'd be looking out in front of you mostly. Yeah, you're looking, but what you're doing even more than that is listening. There was a limited amount of night-vision equipment used back then. We had heard about it.

There was some units that actually had it that were even more advanced than we were. The units I'm talking about were special ops, black ops, whatever you want to call them. They were a more skilled special services, special force—Berets, SEALs, Rangers—that were actually going into North Korea, and to this day I don't think there would be an official . . . elected official and probably military that would ever admit we were in North Korea. But yeah, it's just like in Vietnam. They never admitted we were in Thailand and Cambodia, but we were. My brother was there. He was Army Ranger there in that part of Vietnam.

Uh, the military was tough—certainly not the comforts of good ole USA. I served thirteen months and two days, or eighteen months and two days total in the military. Thirteen of it deployed in South Korea demilitarized zone. Uh, I had the hell scared out of me several times. Uh, I laughed several times. I cried several times. I saw the carnage more than I wanted to see it. That jeep I was talking about, that . . . that's etched in the brain. You'll never get rid of those images. Uh, I am proud I served rather than desert. I got through with my service, and I got out. I'm, like I said, proud, but I wouldn't do it again. I mean, don't press your luck Bill [laughs]. Don't press your luck. Uh, I went in as a . . . as a grunt . . . as a trainee with no stripes, and I came out as a sergeant at the end of, like I say, thirteen months, which is not bad. Uh, I know guys that went in for twenty years, and they were still like a private or something, you know. They just screw up all the time. They'd raise up a rank and get busted for something. You know, getting drunk or smoking pot or something like that. Get busted back down again. But anyway, I got out and it took me a while to . . . I can't remember what the word would be, but to . . . to . . .

O'DELL: Readjust?

MARTIN: Yeah, decompress kind of thing. Um, I . . . uh, had some trouble adjusting stateside again. Roughly a year, I went back to my hometown. I was greeted at the airport in Des Moines. Well, that's . . . that's as much about the overseas as you've heard me talk about, but do you have any questions about that?

O'DELL: Just, you know, for things that happened overseas, uh, would you mind just explaining like what was your most memorable like experience?

MARTIN: Coming home.

O'DELL: Oh, coming home.

MARTIN: Yeah.

O'DELL: How was that?

MARTIN: Glad to be leaving that area. I mean, there was nothing fun about it, you know, *nothing* fun. Um, this, as I said, was a war zone. It wasn't a Goodfellow Air Force Base tour where you could walk off the base in civilian clothes, come in . . . come down and interact with civilians. That wasn't happening there. Well, if it was, it was only for a few hours. It was not a vacation. It was a deployment to a combat zone. Uh, not as bad as Vietnam, although there were some . . . I knew guys that were in Vietnam that never held a weapon, were never shot at, never around fighting, but were in Vietnam, okay. That's going to be the same anywhere. I think it's

only like twenty percent of those in the military are actually in a hostile-fire-zone-type of war situation. Um, the rest are administrative, medical, whatever. It takes more than just the ground pounders to make an army, okay.

But now, I . . . my fond memories were standing down, uh, being off of . . . it's kind of like your hours off duty. Uh, you don't stay on . . . well, you do, but standing down means you don't . . . you don't have to be carrying a weapon. You don't have to be armed and ready to fight. You got to be *close* and ready to fight, but you're standing down. You're relaxed and decompressing. Uh, and during those decompressing times with buddies, guys they . . . they used to . . . uh, we all used to hang together, and it was regardless race, color, creed; it didn't matter. I mean, we're all on the same dumb boat—same bad luck to be where we're at. And all of us had loved ones at home.

Some guys had marital issues at home. I mean, he goes off and is deployed for a year, and his wife is tired of waiting. She's a young woman. They're divorced. And he's overseas, you know, dealing with those type of tragedies there that have nothing to do with fighting but had everything to do with home. And guys that were dealing with that kind of stuff psychologically are usually turning toward something—"self-medication," we'll call it—alcohol or drugs. Self-medicating because you didn't just pop up and walk down to the doctor's office. Our doctor's office was about fifteen miles away.

Um, so anyway, uh, those were good times. The fellowships there, the camaraderie that we had was good. The . . . just realizing that we're all brothers and sisters, you know. We had an expression: "Don't color me white. Don't color me black. Color me green." And they'd pull up their uniform and say, "I'm green, see? I'm green." And uh, I've carried that with me all my life since then. I try not to form an opinion of someone and . . . at all and let their own actions and words be my thought pr . . . fuel my thought process, but I'm proud I served. If asked to do it again, which someone would have to be a madman or woman to say, "Hey, Bill, you're seventy years old. We want you to go over there and fight." An . . . and I probably would, but I wouldn't want to. Nobody wants to. Well, unless you're a marine. They're kind of . . . [chuckles].

O'DELL: Yeah, [chuckles] my grandfather was a marine.

MARTIN: Yeah, once a marine, always a marine.

O'DELL: Yeah.

MARTIN: Uh, a lot of my friends I graduated with were Marines, and for some reason they would volunteer for the draft and enter the Marine Corps, and I never understood. Why would you guys want to do that? You know, to risk putting yourself right there. I mean, everybody's there anyway, but the Corps, they're led by some pretty gung-ho people.

Uh anyway, I was getting away from the subject. Uh, in terms of memories, uh, Korea. Oh, a memory! Whether people know it or not, it gets very cold on the Thirty-Eighth Parallel demilitarized zone, and it would rival if not surpass the cold experience . . . the cold I experienced in Northeast Iowa with snow falling. I . . . I would guess the average snowfall is probably three to four feet a year and temperature is . . . in the winter, would moderate anywhere from . . . there might be a mean temperature . . . yeah, a mean temperature of five to ten degrees Celsius, but a range of—I would say—twenty degrees either side of that. So, it could get well below zero, and you're in that country at that time. There were no . . . insulation was something

that was unheard of, okay. The military, we had Quonset huts, which were dome-shaped metal buildings without insulation. And so, the only provision for heat were kerosene stoves at one end of the hooch or the other, and that was it! And, yeah.

[Interruption by unknown person sending a file. Interview resumes.]

O'DELL: Okay, pause.

MARTIN: . . . of what was going on in the United States in '69 and '70.

O'DELL: Um, were . . . did you hear a lot about what was going on . . . ?

MARTIN: No.

O'DELL: . . . in the United States while you were in Korea?

MARTIN: No.

O'DELL: No?

MARTIN: No TV.

O'DELL: Yeah.

MARTIN: There was something called the *Stars and Stripes*, which is a military newspaper, but you . . . I think the whole time I was there, the thirteen months I was there, I saw a *Stars and Stripes* maybe three times, you know. I'm sure the officers got the *Stars and Stripes*, um, but they didn't share information about what was going on stateside. Kent State, uh, tragedy. Absolute tragedy. I think there were four people killed at Kent State. Can you imagine that happening here?

O'DELL: Not really.

MARTIN: Uh, a lot of protesting the Vietnam War. Uh, I think the majority of the American people were definitely sick and tired of fighting in a war that no one really understood why. All they knew is it was the first war that the United States was involved in that you could see live and in color on NBC, CBS, ABC. And uh, people got tired of watching that. Not . . . not caring, kind of indifferent about it, but they were very upset about, "My son's over there. My daughter's over there. My brother's over there. My sister." You know, they were tired of seeing that kind of carnage every night. It was like every day w . . . well, I can't say every day, but there were days where we would lose twenty or thirty people *a day* in Vietnam. That's 6,000, 7,000 a year. That's 58,228 names on the wall, you know. Um, they were tired of it. Tired of no real explanation. Tired of the lies about what was going on in the, even to a lesser extent, Kennedy administration. Johnson administration was lying through their teeth about it. Nixon was just as bad. Maybe not as bad about the war, lying about it, as Johnson's administration was but, boy,

I'll tell you what! To say they had it under control was the biggest lie. There was . . . are you back on?

O'DELL: Yeah, I'm back on.

MARTIN: Little known fact about Korea and fairly well-known fact about South Korea: both were, and remain to this day, areas that were contaminated by defoliants . . . very dangerous defoliants that manifest themselves years after one is exposed in some of the worst ways you can imagine: heart disease, cancers . . . um, pass through the genes to your babies with birth defects. All because of b . . . the biggest one, the most infamous one is Agent Orange. Uh, I don't know why it is any more known than the others. That wasn't the only defoliant that was used. They were all very toxic, *very* toxic. And the disposal of the barrels . . . they usually came in like fifty-five-gallon drums, and what do you do with a fifty-five-gallon drum after it's done? And used in the quantities it was used in? Army's idea was—at least in North and South Korea—was you bury them. So, they buried them. And, of course, the ground water . . . all the moisture goes down, rusts them, rusts the contents, spreads the toxins into the soil. People plant their food; their food is contaminated with it. Their water table is contaminated with it. We left Korea in a bad way, real bad way. And all that spraying in South Korea started even as early back . . . it's hard to find the information on it, but even back in the '50s when the war was going on. But then the war kind of tapered off. The activity tapered down, and then it was like in 1968, seemed like somebody put a match under it again, and it ramped back up. And the combat infiltration, even more so, you could see . . . have an even clearer field of vision, defoliants were used.

O'DELL: On the DMZ?

MARTIN: On the DMZ, oh yeah. Um, 2nd Division on the zone . . . I better clarify. That was the . . . and I think there were segments of the 7th Army as well, but . . . uh, other segments of the 7th Army that were on the demilitarized zone that were sprayed with Agent Orange up there. And so, the veterans are eligible now for disability, uh, if they can show they were affected by Agent Orange. It's a . . . it's not, "Are you sure you were exposed to Agent Orange?" kind of question. It's, "You were." You're presumed exposed to Agent Orange, so I'm an AO person. That's the breaks, you know.

But, um, coming stateside, I flew in from Seoul. That was in September of '60 . . . uh, September of 1970. I flew into Fort Lewis, Washington. I was debriefed, told what I could talk about, what I couldn't talk about in, uh, Fort Lewis, Washington. Flew out of the Seattle airport to go home. Um, [chuckles] we had a drop-off point in Denver, and I was still in my military greens. I was in my dress greens, and I hadn't worn them since the day I graduated from basic training I don't think. And, uh, people stateside—a lot of the younger people, uh, my age and younger—didn't like the military. Didn't like it for any reason. And they were usually for . . . they were fired, inspired, or whatever by some of the atrocities of war.

Uh, there was an incident in South Vietnam, uh, called the My Lai Incident. That was *tragic*. But it's war, fellas. Guys and girls, it's war. That's what happens in war. It . . . it's not real particular when you're out there being shot at to sit there and make a decision, "Should I shoot that person or shouldn't I?" You don't have that kind of luxury or time to make, uh, a more informed decision. You react. That's what training is all about: how to react instead of think. React because if you think, you're dead, period. At least, that's how you're trained. In a lot of

instances, that's what actually happened to some of those 58,228 people that are on the wall. They thought instead of reacted. I'm not saying that was the only thing. Maybe five percent of them, that's what happened to them. Um, but stateside, that was part of what Kent State was all about: the war protesting and a lot of the, uh, love child, hippie, "Strawberry Fields Forever," San Francisco. All . . . all of that was happening stateside. A lot of drugs, too. Beaucoup drugs were going on there and pretty much in the open.

But anyway, when I came back, I flew into Denver. I was still in dress greens, and we had about a half hour until the flight . . . reboard the plane to go to Des Moines. I went into the restroom in the airport. I immediately took off my cap, my jacket, my tie, thinking, "Well, now I don't look like a serviceman. I look like a civilian!" Because I was tired of being told I was a . . . something less than a child of God by a lot of people, um, showing huge disrespect, verbally, and sometimes physically. It was not a good . . . didn't make you feel real good. And you really don't want to do to that to someone who's just come back from . . . from a hostile environment because they could just go *bing!* and spin off, you know, and do something really stupid. That we would view as stupid now, but to them was totally justified.

They're still in a PTSD mentality. I know guys to this day, my age, that are still suffering from PTSD. It's . . . it's a kind of a disease of the mind, if you will. Um, they never learned how to get past some things that happened—just get past it. Uh, but a lot of guys coming home were facing that, and that was a very dangerous situation on either side of . . . of . . . of the point of views. But, I . . . anyway, I, uh, took off my coat and my tie, and uh, I think I pulled my shirt out—anything I could do to look non-military because it's pretty obvious. The pants you're wearing, the shirts you're wearing, the shoes you're wearing are all military issued. It's pretty obvious. But to me, I just wanted to look civilian, so I got out . . . came out of the restroom and the first person that meets me is a buck sergeant. No, he was a spec 4. He was one rank below me, uh, MP. He goes, uh, "You just come from Fort Lewis?"

I said, "Yeah."

He said, "They tell you you was discharged?"

"Yes, I'm discharged!"

He said, "No, you're not. Not for twenty-four hours. Get your gear back on, troop, or I'm taking you in."

So, I had to go back in there and dress back up again and what a drag that was, but . . . then flew into Des Moines, got off the plane, met my family, got in the car, got out of that airport area, and off comes that again. I got out of it—emancipation. Um, I stayed at home for a while. Like I said, I had issues readjusting, reacclimating, to the states. But I did. I had no reason to spend money when I was overseas, and you are paid in the military, but I would have all my money paid. I got paid in bonds, US savings bonds, and I had them sent home. I would take no money every month because I had free clothes, free food, free lodging. What do I need money for, you know? You don't need it!

O'DELL: Yeah.

MARTIN: Even haircuts—didn't need it! Not that I got a lot of haircuts. But, uh . . . so, I had a pretty good nest egg I'd say by the time I got back stateside. Uh, at least in those days that was a lot of money. Enough to buy myself a GT350 Cobra, and I got that, and I just [mimics car sound]. I was gone and off to see service buddies that I was very good friends with that had

gotten out and went home an . . . because you always say, "I'll see you on the other side," when somebody goes. "I'll see you on the other side."

"Oh, yeah, see you there."

And you're thinking, "Sure you will. Sure you will." But, I did. I went, and I . . . I went to see my friends in Dearborn, Detroit, Rochester, Buffalo, New York . . . Rochester, New York, um . . . and then I was going to go down to Mississippi where my closest friend was. And I drove down to Mississippi to see him and stayed with him for a night I think it was. And then I drove from Mississippi to Bakersfield, California through Oklahoma and, uh, Muskogee. I saw the sign and Merle Haggard, who'd just recorded that song, Muskogee . . . "Okie from Muskogee."

And, uh, [chuckles] so there I was in Muskogee, and I thought, "Hell, I'm going to have beer." And I drove over there, went to a redneck bar, and I walked in there, and I was in an army fatigue jacket. I had an American flag, and my flag was turned upside down, which means you're in distress, okay. Now, that's a universal sig . . . signal. But I turned it upside down, and I went in that bar wearing that jacket and I think every redneck in Oklahoma was in that bar. And that was a *very* uncomfortable feeling, and I did *not* have a beer at that bar. I got up to the bar, and I kind of checked it out and saw—well, sure—a lot of eyes on me. Wonder why . . . and I thought, "Oh, God, it's my *jacket*." And so, I got the hell out of there, got back in the car.

O'DELL: So, were they angry about the flag . . . ?

MARTIN: Oh, yeah.

O'DELL: . . . being upside down, yeah?

MARTIN: Yeah. If you're running down our way of life, "you're walking on the fighting side of me."[1] You know, because a lot of rednecks were like that, okay. Rednecks were not peaceniks. They were the polar extreme. They were 180 degrees the other direction from the hippies and the love childs and all that liberal stuff. Uh, but I got in the car and went out to California. Drove up to San Francisco Bay area. Had a friend up there, down to LA and Sacramento, and down the coast to San Diego. And then inland to, uh, El C . . . El Cajon, Lakeside, California. Stayed in Lakeside for—yeah, it was Lakeside—for a while . . . um, couple months.

Then finally returned home with, "I'll go back to college now." And I went back to college, and I had uh no idea what I wanted to do. I really didn't feel like I fit in, uh, because I was at that time . . . I was probably twenty. Well, in '79 I would've been . . . '69, '70. I would've been twenty-one going on twenty-two-years-old. And in college, freshman . . . twenty-two's an old man, you know, as a freshman. I wasn't ready for it, so my friend in Mississippi that I told you about, he had called me a couple of times saying, "Man, come back down here. Come back down here. I got this band I'm forming . . . rock and roll band I'm forming. Come down, be in the band."

And I thought, "What the hell? Why not?" So, I went back home and parked my Shelby and . . . uh, because I didn't want to take it down there. Number one, I had no job, and you don't run that Shelby Cobra free. It costs money to drive that thing. So, I left it parked at my parents' house, and I put a pack on my back and hitchhiked down to Mississippi. Um, it took me a day

[1] From Merle Haggard's "The Fightin' Side Of Me"

and a half to get down there. Uh, spent the night sleeping somewhere in Missouri on some farmer's side of the road. And then, got up and boogied down to Mississippi. I got there at like midnight one night. Well, it wasn't *one* night, it was, uh, like the sixth of July, something like that . . . of, uh, 1970. And, uh . . . no, '71. And, uh, my buddy picked me up, went back to his house, and we sat down and talked. He and his wife and I talked and drank beer and smoked pot and just had a grand old time that evening, and I woke up in the morning—they let me sleep on their couch—and I woke up in the morning and rolled over, looked in the kitchen, and this guy . . . my friend's wife was fixing another lady's hair. She was frosting her hair. And at that time, frosting the hair meant you put on what looked like a rubber swimming cap that had holes in it, and women pulled their hair through the holes and then bleached it. And that's kind of how it worked. And uh, I saw them, and I just said . . . she . . . both of them said, "Hey, Bill. How you doing?"

And I said, "Fine." And, the smell was terrible, uh, some kind of hair stuff. So, I got up and left the house, went out and had a smoke, walked around the neighborhood. And I'd heard that . . . uh, my best friend had told me . . . you know, Fancher had told me his brother was KIA, killed in action, in Vietnam in April . . . April 21st of that same year. He was brought home and buried in the cemetery. So, I walked up the road, and I did see a cemetery in the place I was in. The town I was in was pretty small, so it's not like they had a half dozen cemeteries. I walked in there and was kind of just looking for the most fresh graves there. You know, the first grave I got to was Stan's, his brother, and just said a prayer over him and respected him, that kind of thing.

I walked back to the house, and we were fixing breakfast or something, and I was introduced to the lady that was there who was Stan's wife at the time. And so, it was the . . . Brenda was Fancher. My buddy was Fancher. His wife was Brenda. So, it was Brenda's sister-in-law, Linda. Okay? Linda, today, is my wife. So, I married her. That's how she got the Gold Star, husband was with the 1st Air Cav. in Vietnam—killed in an ambush. And that's, uh, kind of it, and we . . . I went back to school on the GI Bill after Linda and I got married, which was about six or seven months later, less than a year since Stan was killed. But we . . . in that six or seven months, I was messed up. Linda was messed up. I helped her, and she helped me, and together we struggled past all that. And then figured out when we saw the daylight of our journey, our very short journey, uh, that we were actually good for one another and didn't really want to, uh, end that relationship.

Uh, then in January I got a, uh, telephone call from I think one of my brothers. It was either my parents or one of my brothers told me that my grandfather was, uh, on his death bed. My grandfather and I were very close. And I told Linda, "I've got to go see him."

And Linda said, "You're not going to see him without me."

And I said, "Well, why don't we just get married then?" Because I didn't know how long I was going to be up there, you know, and I didn't want to live quote "in sin" because I was a good Catholic boy, too, and she was a Southern Baptist. So, we got married, and . . . uh, in Linda's parents' home, in their living room. And her family members were all there in this little living room with the exception of her father who was sitting one room away because I was a quote, "Damn Yankee, carpetbagger, hippie," um, because I was in a band, and at that time I had . . . not terribly long hair, but I had long hair and a beard. And yeah, I guess I kind of looked like a hippie whatever that means. But none of my family members were there unless you would call the members of the band family members. And, uh, the bass player was my best man. Fancher was my best man. And the rest of the band members, the drummers and the rhythm guitar, were there as well. And then after . . . uh, staying after . . . after the actual wedding ceremony, we

stayed there for a couple hours and piled everything in the world that we owned on top of a Ford Maverick and headed up to Iowa.

O'DELL: Wow.

MARTIN: Put it all on top of a little camper on top of the car, everything we owned [chuckles]. And, uh, went up there, and it was winter. It was probably one of the worst winters Iowa had had in a number of years, like hundred-year storms and stuff like that. But I could remember going across the . . . the Mississippi bridge going from Memphis, Tennessee to West Memphis, Arkansas and telling Linda . . . we were looking at the water flowing and I said, "Yeah, when we get up to about St. Louis, you're going to see frozen chunks of ice coming down that river, and I mean *big* chunks of ice."

"Oh," she said.

"And by the time we get to my home, the river will be frozen solid and there will be people probably driving pickup trucks on the Mississippi River." Because they used to have pickup races on the frozen Mississippi because the ice would get a foot thick up there if it gets that cold.

O'DELL: Wow.

MARTIN: And I promised her, "Baby, I promise you, when we get to Charles City, Iowa, I'm going to take you to the river, and you will walk on the river. You're going to walk on water." And sure enough that's exactly what she did. She was bundled up like an Eskimo, but, uh, I took her over to the river, and she walked on the Cedar River, and we stayed there for about five months before she got so homesick she had to get home.

She was a mama and daddy's girl—baby girl—and had been through a lot. And from a parent's standpoint, I could really appreciate. Now, if my daughter had married the quote "love of my life high school sweetheart" and then . . . oh, gosh, six months later he's dead, brought home in a bag from Vietnam, put in the ground. She's beside herself in a lot of different ways. As a parent, that's got to be terrible to watch your child hurting that bad, and then here comes this yahoo from Iowa down here and sweeps her off her feet and, "God only knows what he's doing to the girl," kind of thing. And in less than a year they're married, and he's going to take her back to Iowa. I mean, her daddy was . . . I was not a favorite of her daddy's at all. Then she had two old other brothers who one was a 'Nam vet and the other was a . . . I . . . I guess it . . . no, Jean didn't. He . . . he'd served in the military but wasn't in Vietnam. Uh, both really didn't care for me. They tolerated me, but they really didn't care for me, okay. Uh, watch their sister get in the car and away they went . . . we went. Five months up there, homesick, came home. I, uh, worked for a mirror manufacturer for about nine months . . . uh, nearly a year to save up enough money to pay for the first three or four months of college because when you get your GI Bill you're don't get . . . you're not funded immediately.

MARTIN: So, in . . . uh, '72 . . . no, in '73, I went back to college. And . . . uh, on the GI Bill. We lived on campus in married-student housing. Had one of our kids, and Linda was pregnant with the other one when we graduated about two and a half years later. Uh, I went year-round and was taking a full load and working. Then got out of school, got a job in Memphis, and went up there and worked in tax accounting. I majored in accounting, minored in finance. And uh,

worked in Memphis for a tax season. Decided I didn't like tax accounting and decided I really liked managerial accounting more than financial accounting. So, I wasn't going to be a CPA or a . . . a . . . any . . . any public accountant. I'd be going into manufacturing, so I went into manufacturing. And for the next thirty-five years or so . . . thirty-seven years, I stayed in that career path and retired about five years ago . . . five or six years ago.

O'DELL: Mm. That's nice.

MARTIN: So, what kind of questions else do you have?

O'DELL: Um, well, other questions would mostly, like, deal with the Cold War. So, um, as you said . . .

MARTIN: Define "Cold War" for me.

O'DELL: Um, basically, you know, just why were we over there in Southeast Asia . . . ?

MARTIN: Oh, that wasn't the Cold War. Nobody really knows why or wants to say why. Why were we in Vietnam?

O'DELL: Well, because a lot of politicians wanted to say, "Well, we're here to keep communism from spreading," and, yeah, that . . .

MARTIN: Yeah. Well, that's the party line, okay.

O'DELL: Yeah.

MARTIN: I personally believe, because there were a lot of, uh, minerals in South Vietnam with the platinum, tin, some of that metal stuff. Uh, I'm convinced most wars, ultimately, aren't over, uh . . .

O'DELL: Politics.

MARTIN: . . . politics at all. They're over money. Come on. Follow the money. And probably sixty or eighty percent of the wars that go on that the United States has been involved in, it was over money, uh, when you get right down to the dirty little secret. And that doesn't mean I'm anti-American or anything. That just means that's the way it is. Uh, there was talk about fighting communism, keep it from spreading, uh, bigger threat than Vietnam could've ever dreamed of being was the Soviet Union.

O'DELL: Yeah.

MARTIN: In fact, it was Nikita Khrushchev back in that day that sat in . . . in a desk at the United Nations beating his shoe on the desk during a speech, and he basically told the US, "We're going to bury you without firing a shot." That was Nikita Khrushchev. And yeah, they haven't buried us. In fact, that Soviet Union is no more. It's a new Soviet. Um, unfortunately, the

American people were, and still are to this day in my opinion, extremely naïve. Uh, most of the people in this country have never been any farther away from their home than say a thousand miles, you know, at the most. Never been in a foreign country or a so-called "third world country." Never seen how the vast majority of this world lives at all. Never had to live and interact in that kind of society. Have no . . . no understanding of it at all other than what they read in *Texas Monthly* [chuckles], you know, *National Geographic*, through other printed and sometimes the video sources. But hands-on real-life experience? No, they haven't got a clue about it.

They haven't got a clue that this is the best country in the world in terms of living, quality of life. There are going to be . . . it has its blemishes but name me a country that is perfect—no blemishes. You've got the freedom to go from one end of the United States to the other without going through a border or a check point, without a permit other than if you're driving, a driver's license. But there's a lot of people that do it and they don't have a driver's license. Uh, freedom of movement. Opportunities are there even in, you know, I . . . I would say even the poorest have opportunities to advance in this country. Is it easy? No, unless you've got a silver spoon in your mouth. You've actually got to work for it. You got to put out some effort. You're going to have to sacrifice. You're going to have to make choices. But you can do it in this country. You can. There aren't a lot of countries where your future is really more up to you than anybody else. Other countries that . . . your future's already been predetermined when you were still in diapers, you know. "You're going to work on the farm. You're going to do this. You're going to do that." Um . . .

O'DELL: And was that the way for many South Koreans while you were over there?

MARTIN: Oh sure, in that part of the country where I was at, you know. They had no money to go to school. Th . . . they were the pilgrims. The farmers up there were the poorest of the poor in South Korea—the poorest of the poor. Like I said, mud-walled thatched-top hatches . . . hooches. No paved areas, period. Everything was a dirt something: a dirt path, a dirt road. No vehicles . . . no motor vehicles. No electricity. No indoor plumbing. You know, just look around the room. There was none of this, none at all. Now put yourself in a four-walled area that's made entirely of mud and put a bunch of bushes on top of it. That's your home. Uh, you walk out of it and you're in a . . . out your front door you can literally see a rice patty and the cane all . . . all around you. Uh, how do you make your living? Well, to them, making a living means producing enough food through their rice patties and through their own bartering of what they can produce to feed themselves. Their whole life effort was to stay alive; that's it. It wasn't about accumulating wealth. They didn't even know what . . . they had no concept of that—none at all. This is my stuff. Are you kidding? They didn't have that! TVs, radios—no, they didn't have that.

So, if you've grown up in that environment, and you've never been exposed to anything else, that's all you know. It's real simple. When you sit down and you look, kind of just scope out the situation, what's happening? Understanding your environment, that's what's happening. And you don't have to go to Southeast Asia to see it. You can go 600 miles west of here into the heart of . . . of Mexico, for example, and I'd be willing to bet you'd see the same thing. Where people had never been any further away from home than maybe five miles. Their entire life, you know, and all they knew was this one little square of probably less than a hundred foot by a hundred foot if it's even that big. That's their world, their entire world. Um, interesting. That's the treasure I got out of the service: a . . . an opportunity to really see how . . . I wouldn't call it

the rest of the world, but, uh, at least one aspect of civilization beyond the United States, *way* beyond the United States in terms of standards of living—how they lived, how they survived. Were they happy? Were they sad? They were content where they were. They were very content.

O'DELL: And did they give you any cultural training, like, before you went to . . . ?

MARTIN: [Chuckles] No!

O'DELL: No?

MARTIN: No.

O'DELL: Nothing about how Koreans lived and . . . ?

MARTIN: I didn't, no. They gave you a little book. I may have it, and it may be back at my parents' house. A little book about that thick and it was all the . . . nothing . . . nothing about the history of the war where I was going, but about the people and the country. "The Land of the Morning Calm," is what it was called . . . is called to this day. Uh, no my . . . cultural education, uh, training for it was zero. Uh, it was kind of hit the ground running.

O'DELL: Okay.

MARTIN: See, all my training was for Vietnam, and it wasn't a cultural type of training.

O'DELL: Yeah.

MARTIN: It was how to kill them.

O'DELL: Mm-hmm.

MARTIN: That's . . . you were trained to kill! It's that simple. But that . . . that's what you do when you're in the infantry. That's what you're trained for: how to survive and how to kill.

O'DELL: Now, and while . . . during your service, were you ever wounded or had anybody really close to you and, you know, you've . . . ?

MARTIN: Yeah.

O'DELL: Yeah. You . . . you did mention the one person in your . . . in your, uh, unit.

MARTIN: Yeah. Well, he was, uh, wounded in the village. He was knifed in the village. There were four in an adjacent unit. It'd be like somebody in . . . living in San Angelo but in a different neighborhood so to speak. Uh, another unit, uh, four killed from them. Did I personally know them? No. I didn't personally know that guy that got knifed, but, uh . . .

O'DELL: Was it by infiltrators?

MARTIN: It was by . . . well, nobody knows who it was by. They assume it was North Korean. Do I know the guys that were killed with automatic weapon and grenade? Yeah, those were North Korean. Um, now, all you see is the carnage from it: the jeep with holes, steel pots, helmets with holes in them, and [coughs] brain matter spattered all over the place. Blood all over the place. Uniforms come back and a lot of them were cut, you know, to get at the wounds. Holes all over in them. Blood all over the place. Yeah, I got those memories, too.

I got friends that had friends that were in Vietnam that were killed over there that came home, were post-traumatic, killed themselves. One of my best friends was a marine, stepped on a land mine, blew off both his legs. He lost his legs above the knee, and, uh, after his therapy, and he got home, got all depressed. His high school sweetheart and he were supposed to get married and, uh, both became depressed. And uh, ended their lives in a . . . sitting in the motor car with the garage door down—carbon monoxide. Uh . . . yeah, uh . . . I've got a brother two years older than me who's a Vietnam vet that is just now after fifty-something years, fifty-five years since he's gotten out, is just now beginning to talk about Vietnam. I don't really talk about Korea, like, this is the most I've *ever* talked about Korea.

O'DELL: Thank you.

MARTIN: Mm-hmm. I just . . . what's the point? Most people don't understand anyway, you know. They don't understand war. They don't understand the things that can happen in a war. Um, so what's the point of telling them? What are you trying to do, you know? Uh, but anyway, that's . . . next question [chuckles].

O'DELL: Hm . . . so, were . . . I believe you got into this earlier about how South Koreans reacted to, you know, the military presence from the United States there. Um, were most of them . . . were there any with any negative feelings towards the United States being there, you know, as a result of the Korean War?

MARTIN: Well, understand that I wasn't around the regular civilian population.

O'DELL: Yeah, mostly rural, right?

MARTIN: It was all rural. Very rural. But it was the poor farmers that were there that could care less whether you were there or not. Our being there didn't affect the way they lived at all, but you could go . . . I could go into the village. I don't know if everybody could. I could go into the village, and by the time I'd left there, the little hamlet, I knew who they were. They knew who I was, and we would wave and, uh, talk in broken English, Korean to one another, laugh, that kind of thing.

But the rest of the people were there—black marketeers, illicit drugs, prostitution weren't there because they liked you, you know. They were there because they could earn a living off of you. They were the parasites, the blood suckers, the worst of the worst were there. Black marketeers, uh . . . did they like you? I guess you could say kind of in a perverted way because that's how they made their money, you know. They didn't like you. Well, there's still probably a strong case of argument that they didn't like you, so they stripped you of everything they could, you know. Did they want you to go? No, they don't want you to go. Not because of anything other than the material benefit you provide them in the way of money. Um, not the protection

from the North. Uh, some of them were old enough to have gone through that war experience and knew what would've happened if the US wouldn't have been there in the '50s. Uh, they would've been a name on a tombstone somewhere. Uh, and so there is an appreciation for that, but that was lost, you know, over a generation that had passed since the war, since I'd got there. Um, but like I never really saw "thank you." I never heard "thank you" in Korea or, for that matter, stateside until it became popular again, five years ago or so, where someone would involuntarily come up to you and say, "Thank you for your service," you know. That's the first "thank you" I'd heard in well over two, three, four decades. You get in and get out. You don't talk about it because people don't understand it, most of them don't appreciate it, so . . .

[Interruption: Someone notifying interviewer the office will need to be vacated soon. Interview resumes.]

O'DELL: Well, I guess for my last question, um, how do you think things are going with the situation in Korea right now?

MARTIN: I think that . . . no, I pray that there's not a military option exercised in that country because it won't be just a few ten thousand, twenty, thirty thousand people killed in a situation like that. It'll be *millions* of people killed. Seoul, Korea is . . . um, artillery gun . . . within artillery gun range of the North. Certainly, within ballistic missile range of the North, and they don't have little M-80 fire caps on the end of their weapons. They've got . . . they do have nuclear arm . . . armaments. And they've got intermediate-size missiles that've already been used to carry those armaments. They can hit Seoul and literally turn it into nothing. Vaporize it. There's millions of people. I mean, tens of millions of people that live in Seoul.

And all area north of Seoul, aka "the zone," demilitarized zone is where US Army instillations are, Republic of South Korea, ROK Army instillations are. Those units on the ground would be exterminated, okay. The only reason they're there is to provide enough buffer, enough resistance, to where air and sea can get into strategic positions to fight, to be offensive. Because they're not the . . . there are no Air Force bases, US Air Force bases right on the zone. That'd be, militarily speaking, that would be about the stupidest thing you could do. Uh, Navy ships, one of the stupidest things you could do is . . . is that. So, you've got them way off. Japan, Guam, um, even as far south as the Philippines. Uh, so all the infantry was there for was to provide certain resistance. They called us a "buffer," that's what we were called, "buffers." Um, sort of an impersonal [chuckles] description, but that's what we were.

Uh, the situation is not good. I think I . . . I have a very deep distrust of North Korea, of the inhumane treatment of their own people, the majority of their people. Uh, there's nothing really good I can think about that. I think a country that treats their people like that is evil, okay. I think the less we have to do with them the better, but I do think there's . . . power brings with it greed, and I think Kim Jung-un is greedy enough and is . . . his legacy is at risk. He'd betray his father and his grandfather. Basically, the Korean War era and forward, uh, they dream to take over the South to make them one country again, back to their ancestors again. That could happen. I could see it happening. Uh, but I think it'll be more of a civil war in the South wanting to become part of the North because of the propaganda that the North will be feeding the South and is starting to create radical elements. Now, maybe the South can get their hands on it and, uh, police themselves up to where those radical elements don't metastasize, but who knows?

I mean, can the US do anything about it? Yeah, you can sit there and back the South if there's an invasion. I'd say take North Korea completely off the map, just take them off the map. And Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, eliminate it. Take out the leadership of North Korea any way you can. Reduce their army, which is I think like the third or fifth largest in the world—uh, North Korea. Um, knock them down several steps. Don't go north of North Korea. Don't . . . don't go north of Pyongyang. But basically, anything south of Pyongyang, all for that 180 miles is going to be peasants. Their own version of black marketeers, and whores, illicit drugs, nothing real good other than the pilgrims. But, in military terms, in human terms, the loss of those poor peasants would be considered collateral damage. It sounds cold, "collateral damage." That's what the entire 2nd Division was in . . . in Korea—collateral damage. When . . . if . . . if we would've been invaded, we would've lost close to 5,000 or 6,000 of us up on the zone. Collateral damage. That's the rationale. That's the cold hard truth of war. You cannot have war without collateral damage.

O'DELL: And do you think that there's any possibility that it could be resolved diplomatically?

MARTIN: No.

O'DELL: No.

MARTIN: No. If . . .

O'DELL: Not with . . . ?

MARTIN: If . . . if it is, I'll put it this way, Steven, if it is resolved diplomatically, it should be entirely, completely without the United States being involved in that effort.

O'DELL: So just between the South and the North.

MARTIN: Between the South and the North. That's their country, not our country.

O'DELL: Mm-hmm.

MARTIN: We're there to protect and serve, okay, not to rule and dictate. We have, uh, no business trying to influence that. If the people . . . I mean, what we saw in our own American Revolution was people that realized they couldn't get what they wanted where they were, and they left the Europe mainland for America. They found a home here, and then they were willing to fight the British to keep that home and to keep them from governing the United States. They resolved it themselves, okay. Civil War—same way, same way. We resolve our own, although there is history—I think it was France that was involved in the Civil War on the South side . . . I think. Something like that. Uh, you hear stories like that where they were supporting . . . not . . . not in terms of militia but financing that type of thing. Uh, the United States has got no business doing that, but they unfortunately have been in that covert activity for . . . probably since World War II . . . starting with, to some extent, Korea. To a more extent, Vietnam. To a more extent, Middle East. I mean, if we continue, we're going to do nothing but get bigger and bigger and

bigger and more percept . . . and perceived more as a bully and dictator than a leading nation, as a . . . as a good thing. We'll be perceived more as a bad thing.

So, I think you can carry a big stick—Teddy Roosevelt—but you don't have to swing it unless you're going to do some damage with it, period. You don't have to make somebody do it, you just have to stand there and . . . just like if you're in a neighborhood. You're . . . you're . . . say you're in a neighborhood. You've got a bunch of little kids that are playing or other adults that are gathering, and you've got this bully going around hurting people. And it's your neighborhood, and if nothing is done about him, these people can't . . . they could even band up and there wouldn't be enough to take care of him. What would you do if you knew you could go in there and physically remove that person? Would you not go in and for the betterment of everyone and remove the malignancy? I think, yeah, you would. If you got cancer, you go in and cut it out, or you treat it with chemicals. Something . . . do something to destroy it. Destroy what's growing inside that person. You don't stand there, "No, that might be a good thing." Nah, it's a bad thing. Get rid of it! So, metaphorically speaking the . . . if you eliminate cancer, regardless of its . . . of, uh, where it's at, you eliminate it, period. That's all there is to it. You can't be passive about it or your complacency is, in effect, aiding and abetting that malignancy. So, that's . . . that's my soapbox.

O'DELL: All right. Well, thank you for coming in.

MARTIN: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.