

Rose, Gary US Army

[00:00:16.54] GARY ROSE: I was born on October 17, 1947 in Watertown, New York.

[00:00:23.56] JOE GALLOWAY: Who were your family members?

[00:00:26.11] GARY ROSE: Well, there was my mother, Rosanna, my dad, Raymond, who was a veteran of the Marine Corps in the South Pacific during World War II.

[00:00:35.98] JOE GALLOWAY: Siblings?

[00:00:39.07] GARY ROSE: I had an adopted sister, but she passed away about 20 years ago from leukemia.

[00:00:44.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh. Where did you grow up and go to school? What do you consider your hometown?

[00:00:55.04] GARY ROSE: Well, I grew up in San Fernando Valley in California, specifically Panorama City, Van Nuys area.

[00:01:05.45] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:01:06.37] GARY ROSE: And I went to Chase Street Elementary School. And then my parents put me into a private school called Hobby Horse Ranch School. And then I went to Robert Fulton Junior High School. And I graduated from James Monroe High School in Northridge.

[00:01:28.12] JOE GALLOWAY: What did your dad do?

[00:01:30.17] GARY ROSE: My father was a model builder for the aircraft industry.

[00:01:33.57] JOE GALLOWAY: Wow.

[00:01:36.05] GARY ROSE: You know when they test aircraft in wind tunnels?

[00:01:39.23] JOE GALLOWAY: Right.

[00:01:40.09] GARY ROSE: The models that they use are, I think the scale was 1 to 10. And then he would literally build those, cut the metal, and put them together, and he would travel to the various wind tunnels when they would test aircraft.

[00:01:56.58] JOE GALLOWAY: Ah. Very cool.

[00:01:57.61] GARY ROSE: Interesting side note, because he walked around with specifications in his head for a lot of our military aircraft, when I was submitted for a background investigation, they submitted it and mine came back in about six weeks, which they just couldn't believe. And

what I found out later is my dad had to have his top secret clearance updated periodically. And one of the things that they did was--

[00:02:28.48] JOE GALLOWAY: Looked at you too.

[00:02:30.22] GARY ROSE: --the FBI kept track of where I was. And so they knew where I was. So it was almost a rubber stamp.

[00:02:43.48] In 1967, I was in the North Hollywood draft area, or whatever they called it.

[00:02:53.26] JOE GALLOWAY: Selective Service District.

[00:02:55.48] GARY ROSE: Or whatever it was called. And they were heavily drafted in the Marine Corps. And they were not granting student deferments. So I talked to my father, who had been in the Marine Corps. And he said, if you're going to join the Marine Corps, join the Marine Corps. But he said based on his experience at Parris Island in 1942, he said, I don't recommend you be a draftee in the Marine Corps.

[00:03:24.64] And I looked. And no offense to the Navy, and I've said this before, they're a great service and I love them dearly, but I'm not really a big fan of salt water. So Navy was getting draftees. You couldn't get in the Air Force because there was a two-year waiting list. The Coast Guard had a five-year waiting list or some ridiculous thing like that.

[00:03:45.26] So I looked at my options and I said, well, I'm going to get drafted. So I'm going to join the Army. And that was the best at the time, I guess. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

[00:03:59.50] JOE GALLOWAY: But you enlisted.

[00:04:00.93] GARY ROSE: Yeah, I enlisted. And I went in on 4 April, 1967.

[00:04:09.52] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, the Vietnam War was well underway by then. So you must have been quite cognizant of that, that you were likely going to end up in a combat zone.

[00:04:20.71] GARY ROSE: Yeah.

[00:04:21.16] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:04:22.51] GARY ROSE: It wasn't exactly a highly guarded secret.

[00:04:26.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:04:32.96] JOE GALLOWAY: Where did they send you for basic training?

[00:04:35.15] GARY ROSE: Fort Ord, California.

[00:04:36.89] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. And once you got that out of the way, how did you end up a medic?

[00:04:43.67] GARY ROSE: Well, I went to AIT infantry at Fort Gordon, Georgia. And when you go in the Army or any of the services, you take that, I don't know what it's called-- I can't remember that.

[00:04:59.51] JOE GALLOWAY: AIS or something.

[00:05:02.13] GARY ROSE: Yeah, whatever they call it. I don't think they called it back then, but it was that. All I know is I remember the first question on the test. A dog is an animal, vegetable, or mineral? But anyway, you take that, and you get a score, right?

[00:05:17.96] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:05:18.35] GARY ROSE: Well, they called I think about five of us out of formation one day and said, you're going down to talk to this sergeant. OK. But in 1967, if you were told you're going to do something, it wasn't a suggestion.

[00:05:32.84] JOE GALLOWAY: You weren't volunteering. You went.

[00:05:34.79] GARY ROSE: Yeah, we went. So we went in there, and we came into this room, we sat down, and this sergeant came in with a green beret on. I had no idea what Special Forces was. I had no idea what a green beret meant. Never, never-- not a clue, right?

[00:05:52.58] So he said, we want you to take a test. And again, it's another one of those things, OK. So if you're told to take a test, you take a test. So I take a test. Well, at the end of my AIT training at Fort Gordon, Georgia, they called us out of the formation. And I had orders for jump school, parachute school, and then follow-on orders to go to Fort Bragg.

[00:06:17.46] So I went to parachute school. Then they put us on a bus, all the people going from Fort Benning to Fort Bragg, because the 82nd was there. And so all the brand new, newbie parachute guys. And I got off the bus, and there was somebody waiting there for us.

[00:06:39.08] And they called our names out and they said, you five get over there. And they put us in the vehicle and they took us down. And I remember we got fed, and a place to sleep, and then the next morning they got up and said, you're going to take another test. So we took another test. And then they called us out and he says, Rose, you're going to be a medic. OK.

[00:06:59.93] JOE GALLOWAY: Had you any thought or desire to become a medic?

[00:07:03.77] GARY ROSE: Never entered my head.

[00:07:04.97] JOE GALLOWAY: Never entered your head.

[00:07:06.74] GARY ROSE: So I went--

[00:07:07.97] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you even know at this point that it's the Special Forces that are taking you on?

[00:07:15.08] GARY ROSE: By then, I had an idea. Because I started asking questions, you know? So I spent from about October '67 to about October of--

[00:07:38.06] JOE GALLOWAY: '68?

[00:07:40.34] GARY ROSE: --'68, yup, going through training, medical training.

[00:07:43.36] JOE GALLOWAY: And down at Fort Sam Houston.

[00:07:45.71] GARY ROSE: Then in those days it was Fort Sam Houston. You went down there for about 15 weeks. And then after, you rotate. You took classroom instruction from doctors and nurses. And then they sent you to OJT for I think eight weeks. And I went to Fort Knox and worked in the hospital up there for eight weeks.

[00:08:06.00] Then you go back to Fort Bragg for another 10 weeks of training, which included-- in those days we called it Dog Lab. And then after that you graduated. And then after that, you went and finished up with all the other MOS's-- you went on what they call the Q course. And then you were done.

[00:08:26.10] JOE GALLOWAY: Finally you've got all your training out of the way. Did they hit you with orders?

[00:08:31.50] GARY ROSE: Well, I went to the 7th Group-- 7th Special Forces Group. And I stayed there from October. And then I decided I wanted to get out of there, Fort Bragg. So I re-enlisted. You could do that, re-enlist. And I went to the 46th Special Forces Company in Thailand, which really was a boon,

[00:09:04.60] because in that year, I had a lot of practical hands on experience when I was in Nong Takoo, which was in northern Thailand-- axe wounds, and typhoid, and all kinds of neat stuff-- plague and what have you. Well, then after that, I got orders for MAC-SOG, and I went.

[00:09:32.10] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you volunteer for SOG? Or did they just--

[00:09:36.81] GARY ROSE: Well, my year was up in Thailand, and I volunteered for the 5th Special Forces Group. Well, when the orders came in, they were for MAC-SOG. And so I went in to MAC-SOG. I got there in April of '70.

[00:09:52.41] JOE GALLOWAY: This is transferring from Thailand to Vietnam?

[00:09:54.66] GARY ROSE: To Vietnam. And then after that, I got to there. And in June, I went on my first operation.

[00:10:09.88] I was with B Company Exploitation Force, Command and Control Central, which was located in Kontum.

[00:10:17.83] JOE GALLOWAY: In Kontum.

[00:10:19.15] GARY ROSE: And we launched out of Dak To. Dak To was about five minutes by air from the border.

[00:10:29.05] JOE GALLOWAY: Describe your friendships with and your impressions of the guys that you were soldiering with, and living with, and operating with.

[00:10:38.03] GARY ROSE: Well, we have remained friends for almost half a century if that kind of explains it.

[00:10:50.11] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:10:53.08] GARY ROSE: In fact, I'm concerned about our captain who later retired as a lieutenant colonel, McCarley, who was the ground commander on Operation TAILWIND. He's well into his 80s now. And I just talked day before yesterday to one of the other fellows on the phone, Dave Young, who lives in Michigan. We've remained friends. I have a high regard for these guys.

[00:11:18.27] GARY ROSE: When you stand in a shield wall with somebody, especially on an operation like that where we really didn't think we were getting out of this. I think the unit kept fighting because we just weren't going to give up. I really believe that if it had not been for the Air Force, and the Marine Corps, and the fact that we had gathered a huge amount of intelligence hitting that logistics center--

[00:11:57.02] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, we'll get to that in a minute. What did you do for recreation or off duty time?

[00:12:03.15] GARY ROSE: Well, we had a club.

[00:12:05.30] JOE GALLOWAY: We drank a little.

[00:12:07.43] GARY ROSE: Adult beverages. And we had movies. But it was like every day as a medic, we had a dispensary there, and we were treating the locals. So every day, you got up--

[00:12:25.00] JOE GALLOWAY: You got sick call.

[00:12:25.92] GARY ROSE: You had sick call every single day. And after a while, I really could tell you that it was hard to keep track of what day of the week it was. You kind of measured it by certain activities. Like on Mondays, we took dapson and chloroquine for the antimalarials. And that was the thing that you kept track of time with.

[00:12:54.39] JOE GALLOWAY: It's orange pill day.

[00:12:56.08] GARY ROSE: It's orange pill day, yeah. Like, I think dapsone was originally developed-- it was an anti-leprosy drug. I can imagine what that stuff--

[00:13:09.13] JOE GALLOWAY: Does.

[00:13:09.91] GARY ROSE: But malaria is very lethal, especially if you get falciparum cerebral malaria. That's one of the malaras you either get over it or you don't.

[00:13:25.78] JOE GALLOWAY: Or you die.

[00:13:26.61] GARY ROSE: You die.

[00:13:27.58] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, they called it malignant malaria.

[00:13:30.10] GARY ROSE: Yeah, malignant malaria is what they called it.

[00:13:34.63] JOE GALLOWAY: Could you describe the quality of the leadership that you found in Special Forces and in MACV-SOG?

[00:13:49.06] GARY ROSE: I'm convinced personally that our captain, Captain Eugene McCarley, is probably one of the finest infantry company commanders this country has produced in 230 years. To show you an example of the leadership we had, he's up to his eyeballs in controlling air strikes, and moving us in a direction trying to get us in defensive positions, and coordinating everything,

[00:14:22.52] but he would come by when I was doing my thing, and he would come by and he'd say, Mike, how are you doing? He wasn't asking me how I was doing as far as being a medic. He was asking me how I was doing. Am I OK? And he was doing that with everybody.

[00:14:45.54] And the First Sergeant Adair was doing the same thing, our first sergeant. The company was comprised of 16 Americans and about 120 Montagnards. And the Hatchet Force, or Exploitation Forces-- they were referred to as Hatchet Forces, but they were Exploitation Forces-- our main function was to interdict targets in Laos and Cambodia.

[00:15:10.07] There were three organizations. There was Command and Control North, Central, and South. South was all in Cambodia. The Central was northern Cambodia, about the Parrot's Beak, and up so far into Laos. And then CCN went northern Laos and North Vietnam. And our job was to interdict targets in and along the trade routes or the supply routes.

[00:15:41.02] JOE GALLOWAY: You're talking the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

[00:15:43.18] GARY ROSE: Trail, yes. And we were in there to disrupt things. Now, we had RTs, long range reconnaissance, which was another thing. Their job was to get into areas to see what was in there, photograph, take soil samples-- maybe eight-man team. And the successful ones would get in and get out without anybody knowing they were there.

[00:16:08.63] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:16:11.57] GARY ROSE: The really successful ones really got out of Vietnam without too many combat awards, because they were able to get in, and do their job, photograph, do whatever, and get out without being noticed. But it's hard in that part of the world. When the helicopters show up, it's obvious who they are because the other side didn't have helicopters.

[00:16:37.34] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:16:39.59] GARY ROSE: We were told, or I've been told, that from 1965 through 1972-73 time frame when that unit existed, which was a classified unit-- in fact, the government really didn't even acknowledge that it existed until 1998 time frame-- there were only about 5,000 assigned to that during that time frame, and only about 900 at any one time between the several locations. I know there were people in Saigon and what have you, but I'm not counting them.

[00:17:18.86] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:17:19.22] GARY ROSE: But they tell us that we tied up about 55,000 infantry trying to guard rear areas because we were such a nuisance. They had a price on our head. I have no idea what the price was. I don't think it was a price like a personal-- like a wanted poster on the post office wall. But if they were able to capture or kill a MAC-SOG, then they would be financially rewarded.

[00:17:55.83] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:17:58.18] GARY ROSE: And that's what the unit was, was to disrupt. The Hatchet Forces, we were a disruptive unit on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

[00:18:11.90] JOE GALLOWAY: You made mention of Operation TAILWIND.

[00:18:15.44] GARY ROSE: Yes.

[00:18:16.88] JOE GALLOWAY: Describe that operation. What was it?

[00:18:20.81] GARY ROSE: Well, everything I know about the operation I've learned since 1998. And the reason for it is if you understand classification, you have a need to know. So I, at my level, was only told what I absolutely needed to know.

[00:18:41.15] Now, I'm not the brightest bulb in the room, but I can figure things out. And when you figure out that you're going to be, I'm told, whatever you normally take on an operation, which usually lasted maybe two or three days, they told me to quadruple the amount of medical supplies.

[00:19:09.09] The guys were taking a lot more ammunition than they normally would carry. And so you knew something was up. If you're told to take a whole bunch of additional resources, you're not--

[00:19:24.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, did they ask, order you, or suggest that you take particular medical supplies that you wouldn't normally carry?

[00:19:33.53] GARY ROSE: No, because we were trained. And we know what we need to take. All I was told is take the usual stuff, but only increase the amount.

[00:19:50.49] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Five times more or four times more.

[00:19:52.76] GARY ROSE: And I did things like I made everybody in the unit, all the Americans, and some of the Montagnards, like Kuchar, my Montagnard medic, carry extra bandages. I owned all the Americans' left breast pocket, that belonged to me, because I used to stuff them full of morphine and other little things that I might need. You did stuff like that.

[00:20:27.21] We wore those field pants, and I had those things stuffed with bandages. And I did carry a lot of morphine. I think I carried five syrettes of atropine. And the reason that I carried that was in those days, we didn't have all that antivenom. And well, you've been in that part of the world. And you get out in the jungles and everything that crawls, flies, moves--

[00:20:57.98] JOE GALLOWAY: Is poisonous.

[00:20:58.58] GARY ROSE: --is poisonous. And atropine was about the only thing you could give somebody in case they got snake bit or insect bit. And it wasn't just the animals. It was some of the vegetation out there. People think poison oak is bad. There's some stuff out there that, whoa.

[00:21:19.22] So I carried a few syrettes of atropine. And they were not the injectors like people think. They looked like little tubes of toothpaste with a needle. They were called a syrette.

[00:21:36.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, this Operation TAILWIND is the operation you earned the Medal of Honor for?

[00:21:46.48] GARY ROSE: Yes, sir.

[00:21:47.05] JOE GALLOWAY: OK. Talk us through that operation, and what the objective was, and what the location was, and how it all went to hell.

[00:22:05.27] GARY ROSE: Now, everything I'm about to tell you is what I've been told since, because at the time I didn't know. So here's how the story goes as far as I understand it now. The CIA was running an operation north of Chavane, which is a town in-- well, a city in Laos, south central, more toward the Thai border than Vietnam. And so they wanted to relieve the pressure on that operation, so they wanted to put us in south of Chavane as a distraction, demonstration.

[00:22:41.00] And so what happened was we didn't know when we got put in there that there was a very large logistics center, an enemy logistics center, the North Vietnamese. Yes. And so we got in there, and we started setting charges and blowing stuff up. And the information was

sent up, and the Air Force also went after it after we left. And my understanding, there were secondary explosions for several days.

[00:23:16.37] And I've been told that they think that the North Vietnamese thought it was a major incursion into Laos because of the destructiveness that we had created hitting that logistics center. Plus, funny story, when we were in the logistics center, they had a class-A telephone. And it rang.

[00:23:41.18] JOE GALLOWAY: Did you answer it?

[00:23:42.23] GARY ROSE: No. Captain McCarley, he picked this thing up. And he said, hello, Captain Eugene McCarley with Special Forces Group, how may I help you? And to this day, I tell him, sir-- Jesus, sir. And I can just imagine the consternation on the other end of that phone call.

[00:24:08.34] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, exactly.

[00:24:09.04] GARY ROSE: Because I'm sure the guy did not expect to get a response in English with an American accent. So they came at us. Oh, I mean, they came at us big time. And we basically had a running gun battle for four days.

[00:24:27.08] JOE GALLOWAY: How many casualties did you take on your side?

[00:24:31.04] GARY ROSE: Well, there were 16 Americans on that operation. There were 24 Purple Hearts issued. Everybody on that operation was injured to some degree.

[00:24:42.46] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. And your Montagnard force?

[00:24:46.15] GARY ROSE: Yeah, same thing.

[00:24:47.27] JOE GALLOWAY: Same thing.

[00:24:49.42] GARY ROSE: Somebody asked me about the casualties--

[00:24:51.01] JOE GALLOWAY: And there's one medic, and you're him.

[00:24:53.68] GARY ROSE: Right.

[00:24:55.00] JOE GALLOWAY: You were a little busy.

[00:24:56.11] GARY ROSE: Yes. I didn't get much sleep or eat much during that four days. And I went through every single medical supply, belly bandage. In fact, two of them were so bad, they were split from the hip to their knee right down to the--

[00:25:15.10] JOE GALLOWAY: Eh.

[00:25:16.12] GARY ROSE: And we didn't have litters, so what I did was I had them cut bamboo poles. We put ponchos and slung rappelling ropes underneath them to support the poncho. That was our problem was the reason we were in there for four days is because every time they tried to get-- this was a CH 53. I keep wanting to call it a sky crane, but it's a Marine Corps large helicopter, a large rotor. It has a rear--

[00:25:51.64] JOE GALLOWAY: Tailgate, yeah.

[00:25:55.54] GARY ROSE: The antiaircraft fire in there was so bad that every time they tried to get in-- we tried it one time, and we ended up losing the helicopter. We were carrying our wounded. And I started doing a lot of things that just violated all kinds of training that I had.

[00:26:17.74] I was running out of morphine syrettes, and we had enough wounded. And so the wounded that could walk, assuming I doped them up a little bit, I would take one syrette, and hit three people, and squeeze a little bit just to take the edge off the discomfort.

[00:26:40.20] And then we would tie their hand to somebody's pack, and they would stumble along. And you would keep prodding them. And when I mean prodding them, I don't mean in a bad way. I mean because you don't leave anybody alive behind.

[00:26:59.40] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. Had you taken any KIAs?

[00:27:02.73] GARY ROSE: Yes. We had two. And that's the one thing that-- I'm sorry, I may cry on this again-- I gave the order to leave the three KIAs we had on that operation, which is an amazing-- I mean, if you don't believe in God, then you should. If you were with us on those four days, trust me, everybody I know believes in God to this day that was on that, because there is no reason why any of us are alive today.

[00:27:37.65] You can look at it from a mathematical standpoint or situationally. We should have never gotten out of there. We should have never survived. We would get hit and nobody would be killed. We would have injuries, but nobody would be killed. We lost the three. And what bothers me is we lost the three, two on the second day and one on the helicopter crash, one on the third ship that came out.

[00:28:09.15] And I'm the one who gave the order to leave the three of them behind. And it troubles me half a century later. I don't know their names. They were Montagnards. I don't know if they were Buddhist or Catholic.

[00:28:24.30] But one of the things that has always gotten me is we were able not to bring them out because they weren't able to get, whatever their cultural way of burial and bring them back to their families, so their families has at least the solace of being able to bury their loved one. And it has always just bothered me that I did that.

[00:28:47.07] But I know rationally I made the right decision, but you have that little thing in the back of your head saying, this was not the right thing to do. And it bothers me that we had to leave three behind. And they're still there.

[00:29:02.59] My rational thought process is there's a point sometimes, even though the idea of you never leave anybody behind, but sometimes the living take precedent over the dead. And that's the rational thought process. Because nobody was getting any sleep, and if you've ever tried to move through that part of the world-- and off the Ho Chi Minh Trail, we were moving through jungle that was so thick that I couldn't see that picture from where I'm sitting right now that's on that wall over there about 10, 15 feet from me.

[00:29:46.02] If you were quiet, I wouldn't even know you were there. And we're hacking our way through. The ground's uneven. And we're constantly taking small arms, and B40 rockets, and mortar fire. And so you have to keep the wounded moving. And the several of them that were in really bad shape, I reserved the morphine for them, because, one, I wanted to keep them quiet for two reasons.

[00:30:16.58] One, you didn't want them making noise. But the other thing too is the quieter I kept them, the less chance it was because when I had finally got the bleeding stopped on the really bad ones, the last thing you want them to do is to break those-- start the bleeding again.

[00:30:37.18] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. How did that operation end? Where did you-- you got to a place where the helicopters could come get you?

[00:30:48.64] GARY ROSE: Well, Captain McCarley, this is what's so great-- he kept us moving day and night. And we did R-O-N for a little bit. And that kept them confused where we exactly were. Because sometimes there would be mortar rounds coming, and it wasn't hitting us. That's because I think that's where they thought we were.

[00:31:15.91] And on the fourth day we were down, we were running out of ammunition, we were exhausted, we had gone through elephant grass. I don't know if you're familiar with elephant grass, but that stuff's like walking through razor blades.

[00:31:35.53] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:31:36.07] GARY ROSE: It'll cut your uniforms, it slices you up. And fortunately for us, on the fourth day, A-1E pilot had CS gas, riot control gas, with him. And we were about to get hit with a battalion-sized charge. And he came down and just dumped that stuff all over that unit, and it stopped the charge or we would have been toast.

[00:32:01.50] But Captain McCarley kept us moving, and he finally got up to a knoll that was somewhat empty of large trees and what have you. They brought in the first helicopter, and fortunately for us, we got most of the wounded up on that one and a lot of the Montagnards came up. That thing was so overloaded, I don't even know how it got off the ground.

[00:32:26.67] The second one came in, and we put more on. And then by the time the second one was gone, there were only about 35 of us, 30 of us on the ground. And we were out of ammunition. And the third ship, by then they knew where we were coming in, it lost one engine and there was hydraulic fluid already going every which way.

[00:32:51.46] And so pulling out, he lost the second engine. And he got it up to 4500 feet. And the reason I tell you why he got it up to 4500 feet-- we have the recording of the pilot talking to the covey. And this guy's talking to this guy like he's ordering a pizza at a pizza parlor.

[00:33:17.60] And he's saying, well, I'm at 4,500 feet, both engines are gone, hydraulics are gone. We're going in. I'm going to try to put it in some place. Maybe we can survive the crash. And he came around the corner, and there was a river, creek, whatever. And there was an empty bank, and he decided to put it in there. And we understand about 50 feet in the air, the main rotor came off the helicopter.

[00:33:48.82] JOE GALLOWAY: Did it crash?

[00:33:50.17] GARY ROSE: Oh god, did it ever crash.

[00:33:51.94] JOE GALLOWAY: Did it burn? Did it kill everybody aboard?

[00:33:54.57] GARY ROSE: No.

[00:33:55.04] JOE GALLOWAY: No? What happened?

[00:33:56.41] GARY ROSE: Only one died.

[00:33:58.15] JOE GALLOWAY: One KIA out of a catastrophic crash landing?

[00:34:03.79] GARY ROSE: Yeah, and the thing was on fire too.

[00:34:05.59] JOE GALLOWAY: Were you on that bird?

[00:34:06.97] GARY ROSE: Yes.

[00:34:08.92] JOE GALLOWAY: God in heaven. Describe the crash.

[00:34:12.68] GARY ROSE: Well, I remember getting back up. The last two people on that ship were Captain McCarley and First Sergeant Adair. And I stepped on just before the two of them got on. And I sat down on the tailgate with Bernie Bright, at the time sergeant first-- later a retired first sergeant.

[00:34:36.01] And Bernie put his arm around me. And to this day, we're not sure which one it was. And as the bird was just-- he was trying to control it. It would dip. And the tailgate was damaged so he couldn't get it up. And Bernie or I, one of us said to the other, we're going to crash. And the other one said, yup, we're going down. And we were just sitting there watching the ground come.

[00:35:00.52] And about that time, somebody tapped me on the shoulder. And it was this Marine. And it was a Marine Corps captain who was controlling the things. And this guy looked like right out of a recruiting poster-- the starched jungle fatigues, the spit shined boots. I

remember that. I don't know why I remember that, but the guy looked just like-- and the rest of us looked like-- shot at, and hit, and shit at, and hit.

[00:35:45.28] God, what a mess comparatively. But the Marine gunner on the right port .50 had taken a round through the neck, 12.5 round.

[00:35:57.94] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh lord.

[00:35:59.11] GARY ROSE: And this is what is amazing me. This is why I say, when you don't believe-- this is to me physical proof that there is a God. It didn't hit anything vital. Now, his head was flopping around. And I think I used a kerchief and a shirt sleeve to stabilize his neck.

[00:36:26.98] And that's the last thing I remember. Because then he and I went out the left gun port and landed on the sand. And the next thing I remember is this big grayish thing coming at me, which was the helicopter. And I don't know if it stopped five or ten feet from me.

[00:36:44.17] JOE GALLOWAY: What, you fell out?

[00:36:45.58] GARY ROSE: No, I was thrown out with the Marine.

[00:36:48.01] JOE GALLOWAY: And then the chopper's coming toward you?

[00:36:50.71] GARY ROSE: And the A-1E, one of the A-1Es says, yeah, you could see these two guys thrown out. And we hit the sand. And what happens next, I don't remember. I'm told this. I don't remember this, because the next thing I consciously remember is getting on the fourth helicopter, getting away from the crash site. But this is what I've been told.

[00:37:19.61] JOE GALLOWAY: So they had another-- trailing after?

[00:37:20.72] GARY ROSE: They had a fourth chopper. Well, it was a fourth one because they anticipated having to use four helicopters to get all of us out. We'd already gone through two others. I was told that the Marine Corps helicopters that survived needed major maintenance afterwards.

[00:37:44.78] The one we were on in the crash was full of hydraulic fluid and blood. Anyway, this is what I've been told. From what I'm about to tell you is what I've been told. Apparently, I stand up and I walk over to Colonel-- well, Captain McCarley at the time, and I looked at him-- and this is what he's telling me I told him-- I said, sir, that helicopter's on fire. We've got people in there. We've got to get them out.

[00:38:18.92] And he said, oh yes, we do-- or words to that effect. This is what witnesses are saying. I go back in and climb into the helicopter. Now, I know it was not a door because it was laying on its side. So the top of the helicopter was ripped. It had to be.

[00:38:35.54] And we climb on that thing and start extricating equipment, and rifles, and whatever. Because by then, all the people were at the bottom and all the equipment was on top.

So we were throwing stuff out any opening we could to get at the individuals. And I know one of us went over, and I was told that I went over and I drug two of the pilots out of their seats and out, or one of them, because the other one got out of the helicopter and started-- the Marine Corps, they're all infantry-- and he started organizing a perimeter.

[00:39:14.82] The one was in bad shape, so we pulled him out. And we got everybody out. And the thing is full of smoke and fire. And McCarley told me later that when he got out, he remembers in the helicopter, and then he's not in the helicopter. But we think when the helicopter went down, he went face first into the hull because he lost 15 or 16 teeth.

[00:39:47.53] Well, when he got on the helicopter, he had 30-some teeth. When we got back to base, he was missing about 15 teeth.

[00:39:56.67] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh, dear.

[00:39:57.88] GARY ROSE: And he said when I got off, he said the first sergeant was standing waist deep in this little river we were up. And he says his thought was, boy, it's an odd time for the first sergeant to go swimming. But that just goes to show you that our bells were rung so bad.

[00:40:16.18] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:40:16.63] GARY ROSE: And by then, I think we were just operating on--

[00:40:23.61] JOE GALLOWAY: Adrenaline.

[00:40:23.99] GARY ROSE: --adrenaline, because I don't remember. Like I tell you, I remember sitting on the sand, and the next thing I know is getting on that fourth helicopter. And I don't remember anything in between. And everybody was just-- we were fortunate we'd gotten further enough away that there wasn't any enemy activity.

[00:40:54.60] And we had A-1Es above us, and we had Cobras. And they were just pounding the jungle around us so that fourth helicopter could come in.

[00:41:07.14] JOE GALLOWAY: So in the end, except for three KIAs, everybody was gotten out?

[00:41:13.59] GARY ROSE: Yes. And Hagen tells me that one of the guys that was split from his hip to his knee, the last time he saw him he was playing basketball. And the Marine, I do remember this-- at that time, I didn't have any morphine, no bandages, nothing. And he was bleeding like crazy.

[00:41:44.23] And he was going into shock. And I got him up on his knees because I was afraid he was going to aspirate blood into his lungs and drown. And so I was holding him, and I got him up on his knees. And I knew he was going into shock.

[00:42:04.95] And the only thing I could think of is if somebody is really badly hurt, one of the things I've found that works very well-- it's not a nice thing to do, really-- you get them pissed at you, make them mad at you. And I got down in his ear and I said, listen, you stupid son of a bitch, if you were going to be dead, you would already be dead.

[00:42:33.08] Captain McCarley, in the late-'70s, I had dinner with him up at Fort Devens, I think. And he said all he had was two scars about the size of a half dollar under both ears. And so when I was told I was going to get the medal, and they asked me if there was anything-- I said, I'd really like to have-- and I found out the man's last name was Stevens-- if you could find him and invite him to the ceremony, because I would really like to meet the man.

[00:43:16.50] And the Army found him, but they came back and said, well, we're sorry, but we found him and we found his grave marker in Florida. But if this is any solace to you, this is what the one sergeant told me. He says, the date of his death was 2012.

[00:43:37.44] JOE GALLOWAY: He had a long life. GARY ROSE: So whatever I did that afternoon-- of all the things in the last year that I found out about, that really makes me feel great is that that man lived another 42 years. And all I did was wrap his neck to stabilize it and call him a stupid son of a bitch. But he lived another--

[00:44:05.24] JOE GALLOWAY: Make him mad.

[00:44:05.87] GARY ROSE: Make him mad. And that is one of the things of that whole thing, the medal ceremony that really sticks out in my mind is when I stand before my good Lord and you have to have those scales weighed, I hope that's going to be one of the things that's going to be weighed in my favor. But that really makes me smile to think.

[00:44:30.53] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, you've described what I'm pretty sure is one of the worst days of your entire life, much less combat tour.

[00:44:41.07] GARY ROSE: It was a 96-hour day.

[00:44:42.92] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:44:48.61] GARY ROSE: The best day I think I had in my tour would be when we got people out. And I can't say it-- it's one of many days. When people got out of a bad situation that was in the unit, and we got them out, and they didn't have to go to the hospital. They may have ended up wearing a bandage, or a sling, or something-- but the fact that we got them out and nobody got killed.

[00:45:36.15] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:45:38.07] GARY ROSE: That's the best day. When you're in that situation, you watch movies, and mom and apple pie-- but it's with the guys you're with.

[00:45:56.01] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:45:58.28] GARY ROSE: And you form a bond with these guys. And even individuals that you personally don't get along with or are not-- how do you say, your personalities don't jive or sync with-- you're cordial, you're friendly, but you can work well with, and that's one of the things I found with the way the training, and the leadership, and the way these individuals were. Even individuals that particularly didn't care for each other worked extremely well with each other and--

[00:46:37.31] JOE GALLOWAY: Still willing to give up their life--

[00:46:39.46] GARY ROSE: --for each other. Yeah.

[00:46:40.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:46:45.55] GARY ROSE: It's hard to put it into words. Even though you don't particularly care for that individual, because everybody has personality rubs with other people-- your personalities just don't get along. But you would. If they're in trouble, you're going to do everything you can to get them home to their family.

[00:47:11.54] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. You received the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for combat, valor, and heroism. But only recently. When?

[00:47:25.09] GARY ROSE: Last October-- October 23rd of 2017. Yes sir.

[00:47:30.97] JOE GALLOWAY: Why did it take them so long?

[00:47:36.44] GARY ROSE: Well, I can only tell you what the supposition of that is. Well, the first 30 years, it was classified. The unit wasn't even really acknowledged that it ever existed until '98 when finally they recognized the unit with the Presidential Unit Citation.

[00:47:58.39] And then at almost the very moment we were in Laos doing our thing, President Nixon was on the television telling people we had no troops in Laos. So stuff gets buried.

[00:48:21.92] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:48:22.40] GARY ROSE: And one of the funny things about this award, when a gentleman who I have a great, high regard for, respect, is Neil Thorne. Neil works for FEMA, he's an actuary, and he's a National Guardsman. But he has taken upon himself to get members of the military recognized for what they did in service.

[00:48:50.99] And he's gotten 70-some people from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and even Afghanistan and Iraq, I understand, recognized for some of the stuff that they did. Simple things. You wouldn't think it'd be difficult to get somebody a Purple Heart, but sometimes it's more difficult than you think it is after the fact.

[00:49:14.94] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:49:16.35] GARY ROSE: And Neil, Colonel Sadler tried back in '98 to get this upgraded.

[00:49:23.41] JOE GALLOWAY: What, you had a DSC?

[00:49:25.57] GARY ROSE: Yeah, I had a Distinguished Service Cross. Yes.

[00:49:28.18] JOE GALLOWAY: And he started in '98 trying to raise that.

[00:49:31.66] GARY ROSE: And then about six years ago, Colonel McCarley called me and said, Mike, I got a guy named Neil Thorne. He's interested in trying to get your award upgraded. And so he said, do you mind if he tries? And I said, sure, let him go. Never thinking--

[00:49:56.08] And at that time, my life had moved on. Things had gotten away, raising three kids. And I was busy trying to make it to the point in time where I could quit working for a dollar. And so I never thought anything would come of it.

[00:50:19.42] And so he did all the paperwork. He worked on it for a couple of years, several years. And then he submitted it to Fort Knox, to the review board. And they approved it. And I went, whoa. Then it went up to the Department of the Army. And the Secretary of Defense under Mr. Obama approved it. Then the next step was he got it through, because there's a time limit, he had to go talk to Congress.

[00:50:57.18] And he got it into the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. And once Mr. Obama signed it, it was just a matter of time. And they thought Mr. Obama would probably do something sometime early-2017. But with the election, and the changeover, and everything-- and with the new administration, you replace people.

[00:51:27.66] And then in July of 2017, I get a phone call from this colonel saying that we're going to send people out to your house because for two weeks, we're going to teach you how to talk to newspaper people and answer questions. And then they stuck cameras in your face to get you used to getting cameras. Those things are intimidating, especially that thing with the red eye.

[00:51:57.37] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:51:57.73] GARY ROSE: It always reminds me of a Cylon from that space movie with the red eye going back and forth.

[00:52:05.05] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, exactly.

[00:52:07.20] GARY ROSE: So it happened. And it's just absurd. But to be honest with you, I personally think that even with the Distinguished Service Cross, that I was way over the top recognized for what I did. Because from my perspective, what I did in those four days was what I expect of myself. If I had not done what I did, I would have failed myself, the Montagnards, and the men I was with, the Americans. I would have failed my unit, the 5th Special Forces Group, and the Army.

[00:52:49.65] JOE GALLOWAY: Would you describe for me your thoughts about the Montagnard soldiers that you worked with?

[00:52:59.70] GARY ROSE: They are probably some of the finest infantry soldiers as you can get. They're courageous. I don't think I ever met one that was much more than, what, maybe 140, maybe 150 pounds. That would be a very--

[00:53:18.49] JOE GALLOWAY: A very big Montagnard.

[00:53:19.86] GARY ROSE: And their ladies are--

[00:53:24.96] JOE GALLOWAY: Little bitty things.

[00:53:25.90] GARY ROSE: --little bitty things. And they're strong. Oh my god are they. I saw with an a-frame the stuff that these little women would pick up. They'd use that a-frame.

[00:53:42.51] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:53:43.56] GARY ROSE: And they'd pick up something that the four of us in this room wouldn't really want to pick up and they'd walk off with it. And they were very kind, and very loving, and very generous. Now, the one thing about the Montagnards, I think their actual name is Degars.

[00:54:02.85] JOE GALLOWAY: I've heard that, yeah.

[00:54:04.77] GARY ROSE: And the word Montagnard is a French word meaning people of the mountain. But they're a collection of-- they're not a single--

[00:54:14.07] JOE GALLOWAY: Right, they're different tribes.

[00:54:15.60] GARY ROSE: Yeah, there's Ra Glai, there's Bru, and what have you. And they were the people that occupied what is Vietnam initially. And my understanding, the Vietnamese were kicked out of southern China by Kublai Khan in about 1215. And they went south into what is now Vietnam.

[00:54:35.19] JOE GALLOWAY: And displaced the Montagnards.

[00:54:39.00] GARY ROSE: Because the Vietnamese in 1215 technologically were way advanced. Because some of these individuals were still hunting with crossbows in the 1960s. And the Special Forces has done a lot to get a lot of them into this country. And there's a huge population of them in-- well, a very large portion of them-- not all of them, obviously-- but a big number of them in North Carolina.

[00:55:15.54] JOE GALLOWAY: In North Carolina, yeah.

[00:55:16.77] GARY ROSE: And these are people whose grandfathers were in loincloths and crossbows that are graduating from VMI. And somebody told me, and I'm not sure, one of them is at one of the academies. They're very intelligent, very smart.

[00:55:39.90] When you think the environment they live in, they can survive in that environment without all the technology we have. We couldn't survive without all the technology we have. So they're very astute. They're great people. And they're very appreciative.

[00:56:00.27] And they're very opening to what I would consider strangers, or foreigners, or people coming in. I guess they presume you're OK until proven otherwise.

[00:56:18.91] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:56:19.47] GARY ROSE: Great people.

[00:56:24.46] JOE GALLOWAY: Now, did you just do the one tour?

[00:56:27.49] GARY ROSE: Yeah. After that operation, I was put in initially for the medal, and they wouldn't let me go back to the field. So I did my tour, my tour ended, and I got orders for the 8th Special Forces Group in Panama.

[00:56:54.25] JOE GALLOWAY: Tell me about going home.

[00:56:57.16] GARY ROSE: Well, I got on an airplane, flew to Bangkok, because I went back and visited some of my buddies at the 46th Company. And we had a good time for a couple of weeks. And then I got on an airplane and went down to Patyo?

[00:57:13.23] JOE GALLOWAY: Pattaya, the resort area in Thailand?

[00:57:17.29] GARY ROSE: But there was a name. Udorn. Udorn.

[00:57:18.77] JOE GALLOWAY: Udorn.

[00:57:19.81] GARY ROSE: The air base.

[00:57:20.65] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[00:57:21.10] GARY ROSE: And I caught a C-130 to, where was it-- we stopped someplace, and then we landed in Hawaii.

[00:57:34.96] JOE GALLOWAY: Philippines?

[00:57:36.34] GARY ROSE: Yeah.

[00:57:36.60] JOE GALLOWAY: Clark?

[00:57:37.17] GARY ROSE: Clark. I think we went from there, to Clark, to Hawaii. And then there was a route-- I don't know what they were doing. But I got into Hawaii, and got onto a commercial flight to Los Angeles, and went home. This would be April of 1970.

[00:57:57.85] I never got really spit on or anything like that, but you'd be in uniform, and people weren't overly friendly to you, or avoid you, or whatever. I think that they weren't hostile. I think the whole situation by the 1970s had gotten to the point where I don't know if it was an embarrassment.

[00:58:35.83] JOE GALLOWAY: Well, the draft had ended.

[00:58:37.39] GARY ROSE: And I really can't really describe the situation, one, because it's been so long. But it wasn't a hostile environment, but there were no bands playing. Let's leave it at that.

[00:58:54.13] I had about a year left on that enlistment that I had done to get to Thailand. And when I got home, inflation was, what, 17, 18%?

[00:59:08.26] JOE GALLOWAY: 17, 18%.

[00:59:10.23] GARY ROSE: There were no jobs. My stepfather at the time said, Mike, jobs are just hard to get right now. And he said at least you've got a paycheck coming in. And he recommended I ship over. So I said, OK.

[00:59:33.16] So I was going to get out, but I went looking for jobs. And people would say, where have you been for the last whatever? And you would say, well, there's nothing. Nothing. It got to the point where they wouldn't even give you an application to fill out a job application.

[00:59:51.13] So I decided, well, I'll just go down to Panama for a year and wait. Well, in the meantime, when I was home on leave, I met Margaret Mary Cottsman. And she's about three miles that way some 48 years later. So we've been married now 48 years.

[01:00:09.89] And so in order to bring her down to Panama, we got married in July. That was April. 89 days after I met her, we got married. And in order to bring her down to Panama, I had to extend for two years.

[01:00:25.07] JOE GALLOWAY: Oh my.

[01:00:27.38] GARY ROSE: So now we're talking-- beyond the year I would-- because I would have gotten out. So by then, I would have been eligible to get out in --

[01:00:38.69] JOE GALLOWAY: So you're talking '75.

[01:00:41.29] GARY ROSE: Close to '75, which would put me right at about eight years in service. And then I didn't know Colonel Sadler, who was the commander of the MAC-SOG at

the time I was in Vietnam. And it's like I told General O'Connor not too long ago-- I said I spent most of my military career trying to avoid officers.

[01:01:11.92] So I met Colonel Sadler down in Panama. He was the deputy commander down there. But he knew who I was. He knew, obviously, because I had been on that operation that he was in charge of.

[01:01:39.49] And this is my personal opinion, this guy called in a lot of chips to get the air assets to get us out. Because there was actually a discussion of just not even attempting--

[01:01:55.35] JOE GALLOWAY: Not even trying.

[01:01:56.30] GARY ROSE: --to get us out. And I think that operation and the chips that he called in to get us out I think probably is the thing that caused him not to make general. I think he would have made general if it hadn't been for that. But that's my personal opinion.

[01:02:12.27] And you know how opinions are, they're like noses. Everybody's got one. But he talked me into going to OCS. So I go to OCS at Fort Benning. And so now, you get commissioned. So now by the time you get paying back all that stuff, every time you get promoted you owe another two years.

[01:02:38.33] JOE GALLOWAY: You owe God another two years.

[01:02:39.64] GARY ROSE: So by the time I got promoted to captain, I had almost, what, 12 years in.

[01:02:47.46] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah. You're getting right near a pension check.

[01:02:51.39] GARY ROSE: Yeah. So I just stayed in. And then by then, I had orders for Germany. So I went to Germany. And the kids-- you've got the kids and the family. And we weren't making a lot of money. In fact, my son-in-law, who we lost, it'll be, oh, come this next May, three years, he died as an active duty staff sergeant in the Marine Corps.

[01:03:22.86] As a staff sergeant he was making-- his housing allowance as a staff sergeant was more than my base pay, housing allowance, and everything as a captain back in my day. We had some great assignments. And I will tell you about--

[01:03:44.67] JOE GALLOWAY: What rank did you retire at?

[01:03:47.07] GARY ROSE: Captain.

[01:03:47.70] JOE GALLOWAY: As a captain.

[01:03:48.81] GARY ROSE: Yeah, I kind of went toe-to-toe with a colonel about an issue. And I told him if he wanted me to do it, put it in writing and I'll do it. Otherwise, I'm not doing it. And they hit you with-- what do they call those?-- velvet clubs in an OER. But I will be honest with

you-- when I hit 20 years in the Army, I think I had reached a point in my life with the Army that it was a mutual agreement that it was time for us to part.

[01:04:26.22] Because when I came in, a Spec-4 ran the Army. They tell you to jump, an E4, and on the way up, you'd ask how high. And then when I-- by the time I made lieutenant, I had graduated from officer basic course and I got to my first assignment, which was in B Company, 4th Battalion 4th Field, which was part at the time of the 75th Group. Now they're called artillery brigades.

[01:05:02.01] And so the first thing they tell you to do, you've got to down and pass your safety test, which-- to safety the guns. So you would go down, pass this test, which was easy, because it's just simple gunnery. Well, then all of a sudden you find out that you're spending three and four days a week on a gun sight safetying some unit's guns.

[01:05:28.71] And then you had to go back to the unit and do all the other stuff that you were responsible for as a second lieutenant. And the thing that got me was my first unit that I safetied was a battery on an ORT. And here I am, a brand new second lieutenant, field artillery, is going to tell a staff sergeant who's been in the Army probably ten years on a gun that, OK, you can fire your gun because it's safe to fire.

[01:06:00.03] And at the time, I'd say, you know what? If that staff sergeant can't have the safety T-- somebody can compute the safety T for them-- or the safety-- left, right, range, and short, and long. And then you compute the quadrants for those, and the charge, and everything.

[01:06:24.93] As long as he gets a gun order down that if its quadrant falls within that safety T, the elevation falls within that safety T, and the charge falls within that safety T, why does he need an officer to say shoot?

[01:06:42.30] JOE GALLOWAY: Shoot.

[01:06:42.62] GARY ROSE: And the guy knows more about that gun than I'll ever know, you know? And it got so bad that back in '73, '74, '75 time frame, OCS and the two-year ROTC guys, they only had a two-year commitment. They weren't even sticking around to make first lieutenant.

[01:07:11.58] And it got so bad, if you were getting out and you weren't going to take your first lieutenantcy, you had to go up to see the post commander, a major general, and explain to him why. And then not too soon after that, they did away with the safety officer.

[01:07:23.94] Well, we didn't even have enough people. We would go to the field. Our battery had four 8-inch guns back then. And we didn't have enough people to road march tactically all four guns. We would do it with two, set the guns up at a firing point, then we'd load the necessary people that you need for the gun. And then you had to have a vehicle in front, and a vehicle in back to administratively bring the other two guns out and set them up.

[01:07:57.87] And you had a sergeant-- this is what got me-- you had a staff sergeant, he signed for the gun and all the equipment that goes with it. You're talking about an E-6 signing for, what, half a million dollars worth of Army equipment? And then he's responsible for 13 men.

[01:08:17.97] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:08:18.85] GARY ROSE: And then you're trying to tell him that he can't look at a sight, an elevation sight and a quadrant sight, and turn around and look at the fuse and the charge to say it's good to go? But the '70s, I don't know how much you were familiar with the Army in the '70s.

[01:08:38.08] JOE GALLOWAY: It was a mess.

[01:08:39.98] GARY ROSE: It was a mess. It was a low point.

[01:08:42.01] JOE GALLOWAY: Once you left the military, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

[01:08:49.24] GARY ROSE: No. I guess I'm one of the lucky ones. I don't know. I think everybody who has ever been in combat has some element of PTSD. You just can't see that stuff and what goes on and not be-- unless you're really a whack job.

[01:09:12.43] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah, exactly.

[01:09:14.38] GARY ROSE: I think that some of us just kind of, I don't know if you bury it or what you do. But you just push it out of your mind. You don't think about it. I don't think about it.

[01:09:32.06] And I've thought more about it in the last year, year and a half than I have probably in the previous 40-some years.

[01:09:39.53] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:09:40.73] GARY ROSE: Because I had children to raise, I had lawns to cut, rooms to paint. I ultimately ended up taking care of a mother and a sister-in-law. So you have responsibilities. And I'm not saying they're easy. And I'm not saying that I couldn't be a better father, I could have been more patient with my kids, my frustration level maybe been higher to get to that level if I had not been. I can't say that's not true.

[01:10:18.18] My wife has always said that she thinks that I suffer from an element of PTSD or whatever you want to call it, but not to the point where I don't think I need counseling. I'm probably the idea where if somebody does have PTSD, that you get to a point where you're fully functional. I never was beyond that. And I was one of the lucky ones.

[01:10:44.97] But it's really funny is most special ops people that I've known in my lifetime are like that. I think you go on an operation, the operation is done, you just get up and go about your business. I think that's their mental-- they're fortunate.

[01:11:12.43] And I will tell you this much from personal experience, that if you have somebody you think is suffering from PTSD and you think they need help, it's better for you to try to interject yourself into that situation and have them mad at you, even if they never want to talk to you the rest of your life, than the fact that if they do have PTSD, and you don't do anything, and they do something tragic like take their life or something-- I would rather be wrong and have somebody mad at me than not do anything.

[01:11:52.97] And it's just not PTSD. There's also what they call moral injury too, which is another serious thing. You raise a child up to be good and kind, and then you put them in that situation. And that situation violates all their religious, moral principles that you've raised them with.

[01:12:15.13] And one example, I know that the Knights of Columbus has interviewed a mother whose son had moral injury. And what happened was he was in Fallujah kicking in doors. And one of these big tall Taliban guys-- and I guess Afghanistan, Iraq, that part of the world is real dusty, and especially when you're firing, and weapons are going off, and smoke, and everything else.

[01:12:41.95] Well, he came into a room, and he killed a Taliban. But what he didn't know and couldn't see was the guy was using a 12-year-old girl as a shield. And he ended up killing the girl too. So it took him seven years to get over that.

[01:12:59.80] And the net results of moral injury or PTSD are the same. The person goes down the road with alcoholism, or drugs, or just can't seem to function. And it is real. And we lost our son-in-law to PTSD.

[01:13:27.02] He just had too many tours. And he just couldn't handle it anymore. So I understand that it's a real problem. And it's not something that people can just push aside. And I think the biggest problem we have with it is every individual, it's different. There's not a common thread for PTSD or moral injury.

[01:13:54.44] What might bother you, I won't even-- what are you talking about? I won't even understand what you're talking about.

[01:14:01.68] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:14:01.91] GARY ROSE: And so since you don't have a common thread, it's hard to get to a treatment point or create something that would hopefully prevent that from happening.

[01:14:21.49] JOE GALLOWAY: How do you think the Vietnam War is remembered in our society today?

[01:14:28.29] GARY ROSE: I finally think that people have finally realized that the Soldiers that fought it, we didn't start it. How we got there and how we got out of there was not the Soldiers' responsibility. And I think that the American people, or a vast majority of them-- I won't say all of them-- realize that the people that fought in Vietnam were serving their country honorably, and with distinction, and with pride.

[01:15:15.28] And there was fallout from it because the resources the Russians were using, vacuuming out of Eastern Europe to send to Vietnam, ultimately I think put a strain-- was another strain on the fall of Eastern Europe. So we served with honor and pride.

[01:15:40.89] And if you served in Vietnam, or if you served in Afghanistan, if you served this country in the military, you should honor the individual, honor the Soldier. If you don't like what Congress is doing, that's another horse of a different color.

[01:15:59.29] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:15:59.92] GARY ROSE: But it's not the Soldiers', that's not their venue. And I think they finally realize that--

[01:16:06.69] JOE GALLOWAY: Are there lessons you took from your service in Vietnam that you think are worth passing along?

[01:16:15.67] GARY ROSE: Well, I was talking to General Buford, an acquaintance of mine, and he has been talking to a lot of special ops, and to Marines, and the Navy, and whatever. And a lot of the things that we did in Vietnam shaped the Army of today.

[01:16:52.41] And one of the biggest things that has happened, the biggest lesson, is when you go into another location, another place on the planet, or whatever, look at where you're going. Don't fight this war based on how you fought the last one. Or if you're going to run an operation, don't run this operation based on how you ran the last one.

[01:17:20.80] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:17:21.94] GARY ROSE: And that's a big lesson. We've learned that lesson too many times. In the early days of World War II we got clobbered because we had people that were still fighting like it was the First World War. We somewhat did that in Korea.

[01:17:44.95] And then when Vietnam started, we somewhat did the same thing. But now the leadership realizes that every situation, every part of the world, and every operation you're going into, you've got to look at it as a separate entity.

[01:18:03.69] JOE GALLOWAY: As itself.

[01:18:05.32] GARY ROSE: Yeah. And there are a lot of training things that you can pull from the past, of course. The way you use equipment is the same. But you just can't operate and

deploy troops the same way you did in the last operation without really taking a good look at what's going on.

[01:18:33.92] And the other thing that is a really big lesson I've seen happen with the military is we have an Army, we have a Navy, we have a Coast Guard, we have a Marines. When they go into an operation, they look at that operation and say, what assets do we need? And they will pull the assets from whatever service they need to get the job done.

[01:19:02.27] The guy in charge may be a Marine, but he may have Army troops. Or you bring in Air Force, or you bring in Navy, or you bring in Coast Guard people that have the skills and the talents you need for that operation. And this rivalry between the services is not like it-- they talk to each other. They communicate with each other.

[01:19:31.21] GARY ROSE: I've been there about three times, yeah.

[01:19:33.10] JOE GALLOWAY: What are your thoughts when you go there?

[01:19:38.67] GARY ROSE: I always go to the panel and look at Sergeant First Class David Hayes' name.

[01:19:46.88] JOE GALLOWAY: Why?

[01:19:49.63] GARY ROSE: Well, David Hayes, he was Special Forces. He was a commo guy. And he came to MAC-SOG C&C Central, and he was going to be in charge of all the communications and fitting people for the field. So he wanted to understand exactly what goes on, because he had never been to Vietnam before in that capacity. So he went to the field, and he was killed in action.

[01:20:31.36] JOE GALLOWAY: So he was on an educational-- self education.

[01:20:33.82] GARY ROSE: Yes, because he wanted to find out what you guys-- he wanted to truly understand what we needed in the field. And he felt the only way he could do that is one time, at least, go to the field with the guys.

[01:20:46.92] JOE GALLOWAY: And he got killed.

[01:20:48.16] GARY ROSE: And he got killed. And I always remember that, that this guy, he got killed because he was trying to make sure that when he started doing his job on a daily basis, a weekly basis, that he had a good understanding of what the troops on the ground needed, not what he was being told second hand or third hand.

[01:21:14.77] He wanted to understand. And I always remember. I don't know why, I just remember that. So I always seem to go to that panel, look at his name, and say, thanks, David.

[01:21:35.95] JOE GALLOWAY: Yeah.

[01:21:41.36] JOE GALLOWAY: You've heard about the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration. You're part of it today.

[01:21:47.54] GARY ROSE: Yes.

[01:21:48.47] JOE GALLOWAY: What do you think of that?

[01:21:51.06] GARY ROSE: I think it's great, because I think people are starting to understand the sacrifices that a lot of people-- not only the men who fought it, but look at the sacrifices that the families had. That's the thing that I don't think historically we've done too good a job of is that when you deploy troops into combat, whether it's the Revolutionary War, or Civil War, or whatever-- communication is a lot better.

[01:22:23.30] Because my son-in-law when he was in Iraq and Afghanistan could Skype and talk to his kids, right? God, we were using snail mail back in Vietnam. So communication is a lot better.

[01:22:36.44] But over the decades, that separation puts a strain on it. The spouse that's left at home with the children, she's got to deal with the measles, and the mumps, and the vaccinations, and the football games--

[01:22:50.33] JOE GALLOWAY: And the plumber and the electrician.

[01:22:51.80] GARY ROSE: --the electrician, the car-- the transmission goes out. And although the troops are paid a lot better than they were, even most people in this country, if a transmission falls out, that's going to put a dent in your activities over the next--

[01:23:15.47] JOE GALLOWAY: Big time.

[01:23:16.92] GARY ROSE: So I think the sacrifices now are recognized. It's not just the guy who goes. And the other thing I think is better too, is that we deploy troops and the troops know that their families are going to be taken care of.

[01:23:36.04] JOE GALLOWAY: Thank you for coming in, Mike.