

Name: Randy Bentley
Date of Interview: June 17,2021
Location: Helton Howland Park
Interviewer: Sarah Craig
Project: History of the Haralson County Veterans
Recording no.002; Digital

PART 1		
Time	Topic	Information
0:00:00-0:00:37	Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sarah Craig introduces the project, date, and interviewee. 2. Mr. Randy Bentley gives his consent to be interviewed
0:00:37-0:04:00	Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bentley describes where he was born and where he lived. For the first 66 years of his life Bentley has been a Haralson county resident. He then joined the military for 3 years and then moved to Loganville Ga. he then settled in Rome Ga. where he now resides. 2. Bentley speaks on his education and what life was like in Haralson County when he was growing up. Bentley states that he went to Steadman School in the first grade, Tallapoosa school in the second where he failed second grade, and then went to West Haralson School from the second grade to the 11th grade and lacked 3 months finishing the 11th grade. 3. Bentley talks about activities he did as a child such as floating in the river and fishing. 4. Bentley speaks about his work after he left school in the 11th grade. He first joined the army in Atlanta for 3 months then came back to Tallapoosa and worked at Bill McKenny's service station." He then joined the army.
00:04:05-00:07:00	Military experience. Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joined the military because of breaking up with girlfriend around Christmas. 2. Joined the army. Was trained as a Wheel and Track vehicle mechanic. Went to Fort Benning for basic training then went to Fort Jackson in South Carolina for wheel school. He then returned to Fort Benning for Track school. Then went from Fort Benning to Vietnam. When he was in Vietnam. He was in a 16 ft. fiberglass boat for 12 months. He

		<p>then went on to rebuild multi-fuel engines. For the rest of his time in Vietnam, he was in a boat platoon.</p> <p>3. The boat platoon was in charge of patrolling the rivers looking for VC. The platoon was not to engage if they found any VC but call it in for the 9th infantry division to take care of.</p>
00:07:02-00:17:16	Experiences in Vietnam	<p>1. Bentley shares a light-hearted story of the time he woke up in a rice mill thinking he was under fire when it was a US Helicopter sitting above the rice mill shooting a troop on the other side of the canal.</p> <p>2. Bentley tells of the time he and his infantry were moving artillery and they discovered they had been driving over a tripwire of a claymore all day without setting it off.</p> <p>3. Bentley tells a story that he has not told many people. He tells of the time that he almost died in Vietnam. Bentley and a young man named Bailey had orders to hold a bridge on one side of an island in Vietnam. The other side of the island was being guarded by the South Vietnamese. He and Bailey were told to hold the bridge for as long as they could then run. Bentley decided that he was not going to run when he told this to Bailey he also decided to stay as well. So, they left the bunker they were in to hold the bridge. Bentley said during that time he was praying to god asking him to allow him to live to see the morning. Then he says that the North Vietnamese then turned around and left them.</p>
00:17:20-00:29:10	Return to civilian life.	<p>1. Bentley talks about the challenges of returning to civilian life. He and his girlfriend got back together and were married in 1969. He spent the last 10 months of service at Fort McClellan in Alabama. He was able to keep in contact with one of the friends he made during service.</p> <p>2. Bentley talks about racial tension going on at the time and tells the story of Martin. Martin was an African American man from Little Rock, Arkansas. Who asked Bentley for a drink of his water. Bentley admits to a little bit of prejudice being there, but he gave Martin his canteen. By the end of the war, the two</p>

		<p>men were great friends and brothers.</p> <p>3. Bentley did not want to come back to Tallapoosa. He had a good job at the Anniston Army depot but his wife wanted to return to Tallapoosa to be near her family. Bentley quit his job at the army depot and went to work at the rubber plant in Tallapoosa. Bentley worked there for about one year and went to work at Don Smith's automotive shop. He worked there for about three years. He then went to work at Southern Can as a mechanic. He then went to work for 26 years at Stoffel Seals and retired from there.</p> <p>4. Bentley then talks about what it was like when he first came home from Vietnam. He states that he was given a new pair of class-A uniforms to wear. Bentley then tells of an experience that he had at the airport in San Francisco. At the airport, he met a navy soldier that for some reason would not stop staring at him. He approached the soldier and found out that he was a good friend of his brother.</p> <p>5. Bentley speaks about the challenge he faced returning to civilian life. He states " that if a recruiter showed up at his door he would have enlisted."</p>
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00:29:13-00:52:02	The veteran's association	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joined the veterans association when Sammy Robinson called him and asked him if he wanted to help set up the Military memorial park. The city gave the veterans association the land for the first phase. To pay for the park the association began selling BBQ dinners. Once the first phase was complete the association began to grow into what is now the Haralson County Veterans Association. For phase Two of the park the veterans looked into purchasing the two-story house that was located next to the park. They purchased the house and built the second phase of the park. To pay for this part of the park the veterans sold granite/ marble plaques that people could put on their or a loved one's name branch of the military and service dates. The next part of the park to be built was the medal of honor park , after the medal of honor park came the wall of tears honoring women that had served. 2. Bentley goes over the different services that the association provides for the veterans and the community. 3. Bentley talks about some of the opposition to the building of the park. 4. Bentley tells memories from his time in the veterans association.