

AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: Glen Hager

CONDUCTED BY: John C. Hennen, Jr.

SUBJECT: WV Vietnam Veterans

DATE OF INTERVIEW: September 14, 1984

**TYPIST/TRANSCRIPTIONIST: Gina Kehali Kates
5/97**



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ORAL HISTORY

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Hager, Glen D.

John: This is September 14th, it's a Friday afternoon. I'm at the Veteran's Outreach Center on 6th Avenue. I'm with a staff member there. This is John Hennen, and this staff, the member of the staff here is going to tell us a little bit about the work he's doing here at the Center, what he's done since he returned from Vietnam and basic life history of the last several years. Okay, if you want to give us first, just a brief overview of the Center, when you began operations and what goes on here.

Glen: Okay, the Center originally started in operation in seeing veterans in spring of 1980. And I came aboard June of that year. And since we've been open, we've seen approximately 3,000 Vietnam Era veterans, about 50% of them, or...yes, 50% of them have been in-country Vietnam veterans. Now, our primary reason for being is to provide readjustment counseling to troubled Vietnam vets that have mainly the symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder, which is real common among combat vets. We also operate as an information clearinghouse and etc., etc. It seems that vets in our age groups prefer the informality of a storefront location like this rather than the formal and more traditional facilities of the VA. And as a matter of fact, we were, we came about because the Disabled American Veterans did a sort of a pilot project with an outreach operation. And they found that the Vietnam veterans would come to them for services and information, so forth and so on rather than to go to traditional sources that the VA had been providing. So...when that success was documented, Max Cleland, who himself was a Vietnam veteran, and was the director at that time under the Carter administration, decided that that would be worthwhile project for the Veteran's Administration to take on and that's how we came about, you know, through...through that project at the DAV.

And I think to sort of talk about myself I really should go back to and give you an overview of sort of the whole nine yards. I'm ordinarily from Logan County and the eldest of 5 children. And was brought up primarily due to my father's desertion. Then we moved to the greater Huntington area when I was age 14, where my mother took a job for \$150 a month and had to pay \$50 for rent and then clothes and fed and sent 5 kids to school. So in my senior year of high school, college was really out of the question. I...[pause]...wanted to be a responsible adult and a job, you know, have something that, you know...that I knew was the first, first ticket into becoming responsible. The outlook didn't look real great for me at the time, so I decided to volunteer for military service. I figured that was guaranteed employment.

John: Now this would have been about 19...('69)...'69, okay.

Glen: So I wound up just joining the Navy. And I was in the service 3 days after I graduated. And uh...I'd been an athlete in school, like in football games, I always wanted to be where the action was out on the field rather than on the sidelines. And my first assignment was aboard ship. And in fact, did make it off the coast of Vietnam and aboard ship, it was a destroyer and we did a lot of firing in to the VC territories, strongholds, so forth. But yet I didn't feel like I was on the field. You know...like a football game.... So I volunteered for shore duty and when we came back to the states I went through survival training school in Coronado, California, across the bay from San

Diego. Then I was on my way to Vietnam. And I was stationed about 6 or 7 miles out of Cam Ranh Bay out of the Cam Ranh Bay Air Force Base, on an old naval air facility there. And by this time, also, I'd begun to drink heavily. And uh...but, I...

John: Just to interject, was that unusual...?

Glen: No, just drinking was part of....I had started...I had been religious in high school and everything. I sort of got shocked by military regimentation. It began to affect my nerves, so I think that I did use alcohol for...some of it was peer pressure. But it did make me feel better, so I can say to some extent it was self-medication. But my basic duties there during the day were as a warehouseman, working in a warehouse that...parts for aircraft, so forth. Then my secondary duties were that of security, guard, watch tower, guard and bus guard duties. And at the naval air facility we did take about 3 rocket round attacks per week on the average. And I do remember seeing 1 decapitated officer that had been hit firing rocket or mortar round of attack. And also when I was there, there was a suicide squad of about 5 VC came in and blew up a plane. And they were, of course, killed. One of the things that did bother me, one of the other things that bothered me in Vietnam was the...I think I've always been a fairly sensitive person. But once when I was on bus guard duty escorting the South Vietnamese workers that we had in our compound out of our gates and to the little villages, we stopped at the gate and security searched everyone and searched all the Vietnamese and took out an apple from an old Vietnamese woman. Then it struck me that really, what the Hell are we doing there. These are the people that we were supposed to be saving. And I think right then a realization sort of set in on me. There was something that was really crazy about abusing people that we were willing to sacrifice our lives, our soldiers lives, for. So then I began to get philosophical about that.

At the same time I became involved with a Vietnamese girl who, she was just very beautiful. I think she had french ancestry and she had the long brownish/black hair. It wasn't real black hair, it was brown. And she had an elegance about her that to me it was like Ms. Universe. And in the meantime I also continued to drink heavily. And I got up to about 2/5 of rum a day. And they sold it to us very cheaply. There was...you'd get a glass of like rum and coke and you'd have three parts rum, one part coke, for 15, 20 cents. So...I...I began to have like blackout spells or where one time...I realize I'm rambling, but anyway. One time I just, I'd been drinking the night before when I hadn't had guard duty or anything. And all of a sudden I felt just a warmth come over my face and there was sun and I was outside the bunker, but laying in such a position that sunlight could come through the bunker. And I had apparently passed out. When I got to my friend's they told me that a rocket attack occurred but I was still on my feet but wanted to go to the bunker. And anyway, they got me there and I apparently passed out. Okay, to go back now to the girl, that relationship finally did break off. And I became very depressed about that and about my becoming a drunk, which I had associated with my father's identity, I didn't want to take that on. I realize I'm doing a

little self-analysis, but I did it even then and I have no thoughts about getting into this field.

But at any rate, one night I woke up in a hospital and I had slit my wrists to the bone. And it was meant really, as a real truth....

John: By this time, how long had you been in Vietnam?

Glen: About 7 months. Okay, I was in the country about 7 months at that time. Okay, I had a, in the Navy they give you quarterly marks for like grades and 4 is like perfect, as far as your performance. And I had always been a good worker. I had always done all my duties, even though I drank and so forth. But having done that...they took care of me medically down at the Air Force base at Cam Ranh Bay, and then put me in a psych ward for awhile. And sort of watched me. Then I was returned to my duty station at the naval air facility. There was some word that they might try to discharge me or their main reasons that...was the pressure of being in Vietnam, was the reason I slit my wrists. And I explained to them that it wasn't. And there was some talk, well, still, you're a danger, you're a security danger and you're depressed. And plus, we don't want to take credit for anybody hurting themselves. So anyway, time went on, 2 or 3 weeks went on and I thought things had cooled down, they'd more or less forgot about it. Then I was out stringing wire. And this was just an oddball duty day, normally I didn't do that. But I happened to be out doing this away from my compound. And a guy came out with the chief and then was supposed to report back. And orders to had come in that I was to be discharged. Well, I...that really made me feel bad. And I requested (was this a medical discharge?) well, yes. I requested a captain's mast, which is, that's a nerve wracking thing to do anyway, when you go to a...a Navy captain is much higher than an Army captain. But at any rate, I tried to convince him that it was just an episodic thing. And that's not the word they used at the time. But it was just due to drinking and didn't know what I was doing and it had nothing to do with being there. And I didn't want to use the girl because I didn't want to create a problem for her.

So he seemed to understand that. I thought I was going to get the orders reversed. And to insure that, I went to the chaplain, I also asked him to do whatever he could to say that I was all right. And previously a chaplain had helped me because when I was in Coronado in Survival Training School, Coronado, California, that's when there was going to be a pull-back of troops and they didn't know whether they was going to send us or not, some of us that was there. So I went to a chaplain and I told him that my sister had just went into college and that I needed to get the extra combat pay so I could help her out. And I did actually send money back to her to help her in her school.

But nevertheless, here I was now attempting to see if the chaplain could help me extend service and use whatever influence he could, and explained to him the fact that, you know, for my ego and for the....I did actually like the service, I liked the Navy. I didn't want to depart in that way. But nevertheless, all things failed and I came back to the state of Washington, Tacoma, I think, is where my discharge took place. And I was

really naive at the time. I was expecting a general discharge because I hadn't served my full term--I'd signed up for four years and I served around two. So when I got to the first class petty officer's desk where we, after we were processed out we were there to pick up our papers. I...there was a few left there and I started looking through them and I saw my name and it was honorable discharge. And I was so naive I asked the first class petty officer, I said, "Well, this can't be right, I didn't serve my full time." Well, that didn't matter. My naivete didn't hurt me in this case, because he explained to me that the quarterly marks were so high that [inaudible].... So apparently the captain's mass and chaplain and so forth, and my quarterly marks, had helped.

Also coming back I...I...even though I had my own reasons for opposed to Vietnam, the Vietnam War, I still didn't feel you know, that the purest were....I'll say it now without saying I'm a prejudice person, but the element, that's how I viewed it at the time. I didn't see them, those as being my peers, although they were for peace and everything. I looked at 'em as being for it because they were just cowardly, basically. So...so they're ideas and mine really were quite close. I still was angry at them for their viewpoints. You know...and at that point I was pretty immature and naive. Not naive. I certainly wasn't naive by that time that I got out of the service. But at any rate I was immature...narrow minded, that's the word.

But at any rate, I came back. My mother wasn't even...it was the day before Christmas (this is back in Huntington now?) right. And my mother wasn't expecting me because I'd been ashamed to tell her. I was really was ashamed.

John: So your family didn't know you were on your way back?

Glen: Right. And I...I got out of the taxi, well, when I arrived at the airport and took a taxi home. And it was just a real surprise, of course. And what they say about coming back alone, for so many veterans, that's true in my case. I did come back alone, and really wanted to just slip in. And my ego was pretty much shattered. I continued to drink. I needed help with that as time went on. And now, you know...I've went through that, worked that out. And I can take a drink and walk away. I haven't been intoxicated for years. But, okay, for a while, okay, the job situation was still bad. My ego was down more than ever. I got to thinking about like what could I do to earn some money. Okay, I knew I was entitled to the GI Bill. My attitude was, okay, I'll go to Marshall, I'll stay there as long as I can before they flunk me out, and draw the GI bill money at least. It just so happened that I happened to hit a few professors that really were gave me a lot of positive reinforcement. And I found that they were giving me credit for having some sense in class. In high school I played the part of a dumb jock. I...you know, I felt it was expected of me and I did it. But then I wound up believing that I was that dumb. And in a college course at the time, I went there with the attitude I probably would fail. But I didn't really want to. So some of my responses in class and so forth and in writing assignments and tests, I received a lot of positive reinforcement.

John: Did you have an idea of a specific field at this time?

Glen: I...I was still going by what I'd been, what had given me positive feelings before. I went there with...if I was gonna make it in my mind [inaudible]...possibly make it. And I still wanted to be a coach, because I still wanted to be the jock, or associated with athletics. And so I was majoring in...you don't really major in anything in your freshman year, but that was my idea. And I was taking...I think I just took one PE course that semester, the first couple semesters. Because I was trying to get the basics, you know, the English, and the...your general courses out of the way and so forth.

John: This would be like in '73, about that time?

Glen: No, no, '71. And but the thing, it's a good point that you make because I just could not get back into where I considered a game plan. And that probably was the wrong attitude, too, because now I can play again. But at that time it just seemed frivolous in a way. So I was losing inspiration as far as going to major in physical education, although that can be great. I know that now. But my attitude was that, was pretty frivolous and coaching and everything wasn't all that important. Because I'd seen much more than I felt like I should have seen at that age and had been through a lot of emotional things. So I really did want to do something that would be helpful to others. So...I took an introductory psych course and really got a lot of positive reinforcement from that. And so I thought, "Well, something in this line would be really great." And I took some sociology courses and counseling course. And the counseling, that was it. When I took my first course I knew that really was what I wanted to be. And so by that time I had, well, I think, I think, yeah, I still had the drinking problem. I had tried to curb it to some extent because as I was getting this positive reinforcement, and this was my sophomore year, each time I got by a semester, I was getting some success under my belt. And my ego was building. And so, anyway, the counseling courses actually helped me straighten myself out to the extent that I didn't have some of the problems that other Viet vets have, that they didn't get to talk about and resolve because part of our counseling was like to counsel each other.

John: Do you recall, were there other veterans in your course at this time?

Glen: Right. The first class I took was with a veteran. But we didn't identify ourselves as Vietnam veterans, just veterans. The classes, too, another thing, too, I left out.... But at that time Marshall had just got into the fact...the marches and demonstrations and so forth, and it was real crazy for a Vietnam vet to be there. And you didn't admit that you were one, necessarily. But you had your groups of people marching through the classrooms, just open up the door, you got 10 to 15 students marching through the isles and they'll make a circle around the classes, but all the while chanting, "Hell, no, we don't want your fucking war," (right in the classroom) right. There was no, they'd lost all respect for the professors and so forth. Which you could tell that that hurt the professors, their egos. But still yet they had a way of sorting of conning themselves. I

mean, I was pretty good about reading people. But them that were acting like everything was real cool and that was great, now, you know...the times are conservative, they're on that band wagon as well. So I guess I'm not putting them down for it. Maybe that was their way to survive, be flexible and bend with the times. If....

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Glen: ...but nevertheless...nevertheless, I did graduate, got a bachelor's degree in 3 years because I went summers. And then I...got married and the first time, I've been married twice. And but at any rate, I did get to graduate school and wound up with a master's degree in counseling.

John: Did you go right into graduate school?

Glen: Right, the next...I took off the summer, well, yeah, I took off the summer. And worked in North Carolina, at a plastics mill and went to graduate school. I still had some GI bill money left over because I hadn't used the entire allotment because I'd got my bachelor's degree so quickly. And uh...just, everything was going real great then. I developed a whole lot of friends through counseling classes because that's when you really get to talking like real personal stuff like what I'm telling you right now. And they'd get to know you, and when you were accepted, when people really know you, that's when you can start feeling good about yourself. That was true in my case. So my whole ego became very, very solid. And as a matter of fact, I went to the opposite extreme. I got egotistical. But nevertheless, I started making straight A's, it was straight...everything was A. And I did get a job as a psychiatric counselor.... I don't want to identify too much but it was [inaudible]...psychiatric clients. Actually about a week before I got my master's degree, and I've been pretty much employed since then. I came to work here as I said, at the beginning of June in 1980. And have won a performance award, outstanding performance. And what that means is the federal government, they grade your paperwork and everything like that. I also have got plaques from clients and service organizations and so forth, where I've helped clients with their claims, the VA, you know, interceded for them. I've went beyond just the role of counselor. And I am currently anticipating getting an MSW degree from WVU, which they offer it now for people to work at the Charleston Center through WVU, medical hospital up there.

So I'm completing application materials for that. The reason for another master's degree is the MSW seemed to have a much better lobbying organization nationally and they're more protected. And they're more recognized as being clinicians than having a master's degree in counseling, even though it is clinical counseling. Because there's just not.... That bothers me, too, because I know the reasons, the people in power and the counseling organizations are old bureaucrats that have degrees in anything but a mental health type of related situation. And they almost fought against giving me any kind of licensing requirements because they'd be cutting their own throats. So there's

so much in everything that.... And I think that's one thing that Vietnam vets are keenly aware of, for some reason. Maybe not just the Vietnam vets, maybe people in our generation, I don't know. But I can only say from my own self...being a Vietnam vet I started learning lessons real quick in Vietnam and in the service. And you know...I don't...I'm not trying to be as egotistical to say I'm psychic or whatever. But it seems like I can spot It really....and it's all around, it really is. And the system...the system really sucks.

John: Was that, that observation you just made, was that...would you say you had the same opinion while you were in Vietnam?

Glen: I developed that opinion when I was in Vietnam. When I seen...not us, but when I seen them break down the old lady and take that damn apple away from her like she was going to out and you know, use it to blow us up or something, that's a simple thing. Now, I seen worse than that. I seen decapitations and I seen guys get shot and I've been shot at and rocket attacks and so forth. But really, the thing that struck me was seeing that apple taken away from that old lady. [pause] There's plenty of people in power that will take apples away from old ladies. Currently my mother has lung cancer and can't get on social security, because they say she can lift 50 lbs. (Because they said what?) Yes, she can lift 50 lbs. That's one of the stupid son-of-a-bitch figured if you can lift 50 lbs. occasionally and 25 lbs. frequently, that was one of the conditions of work. And some secretary typed out that she could do that, even though her doctors say "no, way," and she's got lung cancer.... But of course, they have their own doctor and he did what they paid him to say. He said that she could, so...that's the way that is. And that's really, you know....when you learn all these things, it really.... I'd really be in bad shape if I'd seen a whole hell of a lot of jungle combat like most of my clients.... I'd be very bitter. Because what, you know...people that don't have their eyes open are living and existence. And we're very God-damned corrupt. Our system is and probably every system is. Every time you get a political system that's exactly what it amounts to.

John: How do you see, related to that, how do you see your role and the role of the Center here, the purpose, the function and also, their relationship say with the VA or....?

Glen: Okay, I'll tell you. We were probably originally brought in as the bastard stepchild of the VA. Max Cleland, having been a Vietnam vet and with a cripple amputee, forced it...forced it on to the VA. The hospitals originally offices were pretty much opposed to us at first, until they learned we could help them out. Because we did, we seen the troubled Vietnam vets that were beginning to organize anyway. And...and approached the VA and we could be a mediator. I...I know, the attractiveness of this program was, it was radical, but it could operate in the system for a change. And of course, I think, you know, I'm....as time goes on we are becoming

more and more like the system. And that's something that's bothering me at this point.

The other job that I had before with psychiatric patients was, it was real good. It was the only good part that I could see of an agency, a state agency. It was the only real good service that they provided because they'd rip the people off. It just provided them with shelter and food and security and counseling. And there's no charge or anything like that. Okay, there's...okay, how do I....I understand your question. How can I knock the system and be part of it?

John: No, no, I just wondered if you had any particular difficulties...is there a communications problem, see, between for instance, the Vietnam veteran....you do service here almost exclusively...(right)...I mean, not exclusively, but most of your clients are Vietnam veterans. All right, for instance, a communications problem between veterans of this era and veterans of another era. Or administrators of this era and administrators of another era?

Glen: There's some of that. And to a certain extent you do have to be a diplomat. You've got to be an interpreter. Like you can take this one fellow's anger that he's giving you, like I expressed a little bit of myself. But when you're talking to someone in power, they're the ones...they're the ones that can take that apple away from you. So you know that, and you...you just interpret for that veteran, his message, but you put it in diplomatic terms. So therefore, I feel good about my position here. I do intercede between a veteran and his position at the VA Hospital, for instance. Or his someone that's working on a case for him down at the regional office. And he can come and throw the anger out at me and then I can get the message, you know, without jeopardizing his apples.

John: What...I know this is a big question. You've obviously had a...I'm sure at times difficult, but it's a success story in my view, and meaningful and rewarding work, valuable work, invaluable work, I can't imagine anything more intense and at the same time I'm sure rewarding. But the veterans that you act as clients for, what sort of, generally, what kind of things have they faced? What sort of difficulties have...you said 4,000 clients and...

Glen: Almost 3,000. (Seems like an awful lot) Yes. Okay, first, my distress disorder wasn't really recognized by psychiatrists until the 3rd edition DSM, the DSM3, diagnostics and which is the bible for psychiatrists, and it's a listing of all the disorders that one can have due to mental or emotional pressures. It can be psychotic, neurotic, whatever. And post-dramatic stress disorder was listed. And therefore, it became.... And also, it can be delayed. In other words, it can have its onset many years after the traumatic incident or incidence occurred. It doesn't really just apply to Vietnam vets. It applies to survivors of the Buffalo Creek Flood, any catastrophe or rape victims, any victim of violence, or anything life-threatening or catastrophic. And uh, there's a whole host of symptoms such as reliving the experience

and that's like a flashback, as though it was real, as though you're dreaming about it but you can't wake up, and there's different degrees in which you can experience the disorder. And it can be just mildly irritating, causing some anxiety, some general nervousness. Or you can be completely psychotic in seeing Viet Cong around every corner and you know, flip out. And I've seen all different degrees. I've had to go on crisis intervention missions and being a little crazy myself, I've talked guys out of butcher knife, holding butcher knives and things like that.

So it's been a crazy four years.

John: Do you find that your clients come here on their own, or do they usually...are they encouraged by their families to come?

Glen: I'll tell you...most of our advertising, you know, it has been highly advertised. However, most of our clients have came through word of mouth, after we've made an initial outreach the first year or so. You know, we go out and just say who we are and where our office is located and would you like to come and just come there, it's a place for Vietnam vets. And also, if you're having any problems, you could talk, we have some professional staff that can listen to those problems. We've got a few that way. And then it just spread word of mouth, more than the advertising. No one really comes in as a result of seeing the advertisement on t.v. or something. Every now and then you'll get one. But by and large, it's...it's word of mouth. And also, I think that the Vietnam vets have helped each other. It's like a self-help group, too. We...I run a Thursday night group, which is the longest...it's been the, as far as duration of time, it has been on-going since...well, really I started it when I first came here, was just trying to start a group. I started out with one person, then me and him met for about three weeks. He trusted me and he brought a buddy and that buddy brought a couple, and then you know, it just snowballed. And we have about 11 guys that meet every week. And it's the longest on-going Vietnam rap group that I'm aware of, in the country, with the same members. And most of them are pretty much together now, in their heads. They've got things sorted out pretty well.

John: What geographic area do you all serve here?

Glen: Well, when we first came into existence, in all of West Virginia, we were the only vet center in West Virginia. And we had eastern Kentucky and southeastern Ohio, you know, we had like 66 other counties from Kentucky and Ohio. Because the closest vet center to us when we came in to existence, if you go through the Ohio route, would have been Columbus, and if you go through the Kentucky route, was Lexington. And so we covered places in between there, and as well as all of West Virginia. We even crossed over into the borders of Virginia to get a veteran that had went on a spree and got into a psychotic situation. We had rifle and was out in the hills.

John: I'm interested in one significance that you mentioned when you said you came

back to Marshall and you and a buddy would mention that you were veterans but not Vietnam veterans. Still...?

Glen: No, no, no, it's okay to be a Vietnam veteran; it's been okay for a couple of years. It's a bandwagon. For a while...it'll last for awhile. But it's just something that seemed normal to me to not, not to tell anybody you were a Vietnam vet because the thing then was love and peace and flowers. And if you are a Vietnam vet, people did get you mixed up with the war and the system as they called it, the establishment as they called it. And you were part of the establishment if you had had anything to do with the military. You didn't...you didn't really even admit you were a veteran unless you knew the other guy was. And you could almost...certain things tipped you off. If the guy had a haircut, you could figure...you could let him know that you were a veteran. And even if he was conservative enough at that time, you were looking at conservative people that weren't...because the people that were calling themselves liberal were real prejudice and it confused the enemy with us. And uh, the.... (Yes, it's a good analysis) The thing of it is is that and this phrase has been tossed around a lot, but they felt to separate the war from the warrior, they just couldn't do it. And it was a young people's movement. Even with the Vietnam vets, most of us were young. The average age and all that...the war went on for 11 years. It's the longest war that the U.S. has been involved in. Now, all this time, all the statistics compiled show that the average age of the military personnel that was there was 19 years 2 months. So it was a war fought by kids from this country, too. Okay, and also, the peace movement, they made their share of mistakes, too. Like confusing us with the establishment and so forth. We could have been [inaudible]...and I think in latter years you know, the Vietnam veterans against the war was an attempt to become allies with our peers that did not go to Vietnam. And there...it...it was somewhat difficult to come back and become a college student, to.... A lot of Vietnam vets came back and could not handle those demonstrations and things like that. It just blew their mind, so they dropped out. They never felt like they could fit it. I was just very lucky, I guess. I kept my mouth shut about it. I didn't, even though I drank, as I told you, I went to other bars. I didn't go to the college bars. But as a result, I got arrested a few times because it was okay for the college kids to drink and get drunk, but if I would go to a bar on 9th Street, see, where all the old drunks went, if a cop needed his quota, I'd wind up being a statistic.

John: Boy, that hits home. Because that's happened to me, too. Serving this...serving this area, which I guess you can roughly call Appalachia, part of it's Appalachia anyway, which is...difficult economic and employment times anyway. Would you say that hits the Vietnam veteran any more?

Glen: Yes, it definitely does. And we can't get much mileage out of that right now, because we are in a damned depression. Especially here in Appalachia. But back when times were better employment-wise, Vietnam vets had a much, much higher unemployment rate. Also, incarcerated veterans in prison we're talking about now, the

percentage of Vietnam vets was extremely high. When you make a study of per one hundred thousand vets, Vietnam vets, how many of them would wind up in prison as opposed to one hundred thousand non-Vietnam vets. You would find a real just an amazing high probability that a Vietnam vet would wind up in prison. And also unemployed. Well, you know, the unemployment picture was just the same. It was about 50% difference.

John: This question might be getting a little bit too much into ideology, but how do you, how do you, in your, you seem to be in a pretty good position to get a lot of feedback from the authorities, from the government, the administration, whatever. How do you view their relationship with this program right now?

Glen: Well, they have expanded. Originally, I think they were hoping it would die off. It was only funded for 2 years. And like I said, I think Max Cleland shoved it on to the VA. I think that when they passed the bill they were going to give some to Vietnam vets and then snap it back and say, "Well, we gave to that program for rehabilitation purposes, to get their act together." And you know, when Stockman came in, we were on the chopping block. We were supposed to end October of '81, and but there was so much mail, it was actually...even to this day, it was second only to when they were starting to talk about chopping off social security. At that time, there was more mail to save the vet centers. Because it had been well received among Vietnam vets. Not only the Vietnam vets, but to their families and friends, and so forth, that could see, yeah, it makes a hell of a lot of difference. The program is very unique and it just goes beyond a traditional service. It goes beyond 9 to 5.

John: Would you feel like then that it has gotten to the point where it's, there is no danger of it being cut off?

Glen: No, I don't feel like it's gone that far. I think as I said a while ago, the pressure is being put on to form, if something gets old, it has to take on traditions or die. And so, probably in the future I see it maybe becoming generic, just all veterans. Which there's nothing wrong with that. But I see it probably being owned by the hospital, and being inside the hospital territory. And I see them looking for personnel already who are more robot types, you know, VA middle management types that fit the mold. I see them recruiting people like that as vacancies occur, as burnout occurs among the original vet center employees. They are replaced more and more by the smooth bureaucrat, non-Vietnam vet.

John: So there is some staff that are not veterans? Is that...?

Glen: Yes, yes. And there's certainly a lot of staff that's not Vietnam veterans. That wasn't so...that wasn't so at the beginning. It's always been so to some extent. I'm just saying statistically that I can see that evolving and it has, it's in a process now evolving to that.

So there's two ways it'll go. It'll either fold directly, or Congress will withdraw funds in 1988, and that's how long we're supposed to be around. They'll just, by that time maybe they'll say, "Well, okay, you've done your mission." Or else the hospitals won't utilize us. Or the regional offices.... But it will become more traditional and I can see that happening as each month passes.

John: I couldn't ever imagine them saying, "Well, your mission's done." I mean I can imagine them saying it. (Yes)

END OF SIDE 2

END OF INTERVIEW