

DISSERTATION

PAUL MILLS IRELAND III

PORTRAIT OF A SOLDIER

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores the life and identity of Paul Mills Ireland, III. The qualitative study was conducted using the portraiture approach and was further developed by incorporating the holistic content approach of analysis in narrative research. This fifth generation soldier was the product of a strong military lineage, most of whom were senior military officers serving as career professionals. Despite early road blocks and personal struggles, Paul established his own military career and defined success on his own terms. A decorated Green Beret and Vietnam Veteran, Paul explored life, returned to his roots, and experienced struggles with his personal health, moral choices, and tragic loss. Regardless of his problems or the mistakes he made, Paul was almost universally loved and admired. He continued to serve his country, reaching the rank of Sergeant Major in the Army. With his health failing him, Paul refused to retire. In November, 2006, he died while on active duty.

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I. Prologue

In the world of ancient classic theatre each play began with a speech to the audience. An orator stood before those gathered in an open-air theater. His voice carried across the evening air as he introduced the impending theatric performance. The introduction provided the requisite background needed for the audience to understand the context of the play. Classical performances fell into one of two categories: a work of comedy or tragedy. Plays had common themes with traditional role players and structures, which were familiar to the audience, and they expected to see a performance containing the same elements each time. A hero was the central figure, a male usually of noble birth or an elevated social standing. Regardless of their position in life and the greatest of intentions, they would endure difficult hardships or an untimely end. This protagonist was the focus of the story. In the tragedies of old the central figure would fall from grace and glory through human weakness. An antithesis was included to ensure the hero would not easily triumph. This antagonist was a person who the audience could associate with the elements of evil. Human imperfections, mistakes, or poor judgment were the traditional elements that led to an eventual downfall. The catalyst often manifested in some form of hubris, jealousy, or temptation. Regardless of their flaws or weakness, these heroes were admired because of some charismatic quality. Even in failure, those watching loved their heroes and hoped for a favorable outcome though all knew one would not come.

Life today is much like the great theatre of ancient Greece. It is full of drama, triumph, and tragedy. There has been and will continue to be an infinite number of actors and actresses playing their individual roles on various stages provided for or formed by the participant. Whether hero or aggressor, the continuous change in characters rising from birth, death, desired or imposed role, and the ever changing environment lead to an infinite number of possible

performances on stages around the world. Many of these worthy narratives will never be chronicled. The valuable lessons learned, experience gained, emotional turmoil endured, and the joy and glory that may be derived from either victory or defeat will not be realized by the greater masses. Yet there are almost always small groups of acquaintances or a friend who will remember and share the stories of a friend's life. These stories will continue to be told so long as there is interest, opportunity, and more importantly, someone to tell it. I have seen how the passage of time places some of the important people in my life in the distance past. Even more so, those who were mere acquaintances or minor footnotes in my own activity barely form a mental image in discussion. Lunch conversations, which begin with the phrase, "do you remember?," happen far too frequently. This does not make the events of one's life unimportant or their story unworthy of being told. Their individual triumph and tragedy existed, is real, and has a value that others may learn from long after the character has departed this life. Even for those whose life ends early, the opportunity to love, laugh, and share their talents with friends creates a story worth remembering. It is for this reason, sharing a story worth remembering, that I have chosen to present the subject of my study in this manner. I will not explore his life using historical accounts alone, but facilitate the portrait as seen through the eyes of his family, friends, and comrades.

The organization of this study differs from the conventional doctoral dissertation. The reader who wishes to first delve into the structure of a traditional dissertation should now turn to appendices at the end of this study. There, the reader will find the common elements of a dissertation. The appendices that follow the portrait are labeled individually and include the introduction, a literature review, methodology, findings, and conclusions. The references will be located at the end of the story as they encompass literature found within both the story and its

appendices. For those who wish to explore the life of Paul Mills Ireland III as crafted using the portraiture approach within the qualitative research paradigm, continue through the prologue and into the story.

The structure of the portrait is that of the traditional Greek play. Following the prologue is the *parados*. This is my narrative view of Paul as I knew him. Eight episodes are presented next. This is the portrait of Paul presented in a chronological form. At the end of each episode a *stasimon* recaps the key points of the episode. The *exodus* provides a conclusion to the portrait and *précises* Paul's life.

Background

While working on a project for an earlier course within my doctoral studies, I accidentally stumbled upon the portraiture approach. I incorporated some of the elements and methods into a course paper purely by accident. I did not in any way implement the broader concepts as presented by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffman Davis in their 1997 publication, *The Art and Science of Portraiture*. In fact, I have always migrated toward less abstract methods of constructing what I perceived as the "concrete truth." It was much easier for me to understand the precise measurements and analysis of numbers tallied from fixed responses to a limited survey. The entire concept of quantitative studies seemed neat and tidy, at least upon the surface. Yet in many of my previous projects, some portion of the larger truth appeared to be missing. That is when I decided to look more closely at the idea of using the portraiture method in my study. I began with an article by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005). In it she reflected upon a time in her life when she posed for a portrait. She told of how her expressions and imagery were captured on canvas. This painting was complete, somewhat uncomfortable, and accurate in a way that seemed to reveal her true identity. It was this experience that lead her to pursue the

same imagery in writing. In this piece she explained what she sought to achieve and how she would approach it:

I wanted to develop a document, a text that came as close as possible to painting with words. I wanted to create a narrative that bridged the realms of science and art, merging the systematic and careful description of good ethnography with the evocative resonance of fine literature. I wanted the written pieces to convey the authority, wisdom, and perspective of the “subjects”; but I wanted them to feel as I had felt, that the portrait did not look like them but somehow managed to reveal their essence. I wanted them to experience the portrait as both familiar and exotic so that in reading them, they would be introduced to a perspective that they had not considered before. And finally, I wanted the subjects to feel “seen” like I had felt seen – fully attended to, recognized, appreciated, respected, and scrutinized. I wanted to feel both discovery and generosity of the process as well as the penetrating and careful investigation. (p. 6)

What Lawrence-Lightfoot expressed in this short paragraph struck a creative chord in my often parochial thought process. I could approach my project in a whole new manner. This was precisely the type of study I wanted to do; one that would capture the spirit and nature of the person. I could develop through the eyes of many, a work so complete that the reader feels as though he or she knows the subject of the portrait personally. Moreover, if they know the subject, they would see him in new ways. I wanted to create depth in this study, constructing the clearest most illuminating portrait possible. I believed that I could produce this more comprehensive and rich description by interviewing persons who were close to the subject at various points of his life. This would include my own personal experiences. My exploration would review both historical documents and records, which could reflect upon and enhance the study. I hoped to acquire multiple sources and perspectives to weave into this portrait, one that shared the rich fabric of the subject’s life. I fully understood the magnitude of this project and was excited by the challenge. It was the potential of this research method that led me to select this project and what I hope will be a unique application for this study.

As I continued to review the portraiture methodology and looked deeper into my project, I began to see a type or level of detail not present in the larger biographical works. I have read many biographies over the years. They have been a source of inspiration and knowledge on leadership. Most have been on political and military leaders. Some have been on the historical events where noteworthy figures participated to some significant end. The structure of these works seemed linear in that they presented a chronological view of the subject's life, decisions, and actions. They rarely provided any real depth or sought to discover the nature of the subject. This was an important consideration as I began to look at specific techniques for gathering data. I needed an approach that could accurately integrate the voice of the subject as part of a larger vivid image. I wished to capture more than just the verbal exchange of an interview. I wanted to incorporate all elements of expression present, including the environment, the actions, and the emotions of the subject. Without that imagery, I felt that the total essence of the subject could not be fully understood or appreciated. In looking at this approach, it was important for me to consider similarities to other biographical approaches found in research traditions.

Creswell (1998) identified six forms of biographical studies that seek to tell a life story. These study types include: (a) biography, (b) autobiography, (c) life history, (d) oral history, (e) classical biography, and (f) interpretive biography. On the surface, the interpretive study seemed comparable to the portraiture approach. Both approaches address traditional sources for data collection and the fact that writers must acknowledge that their bias and values are present in the overall production. These biographical forms differ from the portraiture method in that they lacked the element Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) called "aesthetic expression" (p. 3). Aesthetic expression separates the portraiture method from other study approaches in that it presents emergent themes, which allow the reader to experience the story as though they too

were present. Portraiture gives the reader access to the attitude and feelings of the subject; they are immersed in the imagery and atmosphere of the subject's experiences as seen through the subject, participants, and researcher.

In essence, the basis of this study is a biography through use of interpretive narrative. This method forms the base of the study. The way in which I will form the story and present those discoveries, however, is through portraiture. This approach brings the story to life. This method of documentation is "designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 3). It does so by creating an environment where subjects share their life experiences with the researcher. Others who participated in common threads of these experiences add depth and texture. A collaborative relationship is developed where these experiences are transformed to blend art and science in the development of the final portrait.

The decision to redirect my study came about as a result of two factors. The first being a desire to step out of my comfort level and work with a qualitative study. Exploring the portraiture method was both challenging and new for me. I liked the fact that it fit nicely into the realm of education and historical research. This continues to be an area of interest for me and supports my desire to further develop my own skills in preparing for the future. By completing this study, I could go beyond just completing a program requirement. I could involve myself in a study unlike anything I had done before. Secondly, I identified an opportunity where I could further explore, understand, and tell the story of a man whom I consider to be somewhat of an enigma. I could attempt to discover through portraiture how he was seen, understood, and regarded by himself and others. I could describe one man's choices and how others perceived

both him and his influence on their lives. It would allow me to capture the essence of the subject through his life experiences, stories, artifacts, and a review of available documents. It was with these considerations in mind that I chose my subject.

My Subject

I attended an orientation for the United States Army War College at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in February 2007. I gathered all the requisite information I needed to make the move to a new duty station where I would spend a year working to master the fundamentals of strategic studies. As I drove the local area looking for a suitable place to live, I passed by a large facility just outside the post gates. It was the United States Army Heritage and Education Center. A large banner was hung across the bricked exterior that immediately caught my attention. This banner displayed a motto that gave me reason to pause. It stated simply, "Telling the Army's Story, One Soldier at a Time." I immediately thought of a story I could tell and an instrument to present it. I would present a life story of one soldier who spent the largest part of his life in the service of his country. I would cultivate the image of a fourth generation soldier whose great grandfather was Major General Merritte Weber Ireland, Surgeon General for "Black Jack" Pershing. It was an opportunity to portray a comprehensive image of a man whose grandfather worked to establish a cancer center in Pennsylvania. A man whose father would take his family with him as he attended the United States Army War College and eventually take them to Vietnam as dependents in the early sixties.

Sergeant Major Paul Mills Ireland III was an interesting individual. As a youth he spent time as a military dependent in the Republic of Vietnam in 1963 and 1964 and traveled across Asia and the United States. He would later return to Southeast Asia as a Special Forces weapons sergeant during the Vietnam War. United States Army Special Forces soldiers were better known

as “Green Berets,” a name that came from the distinctive headgear worn by members of the regiment. Previously banned by United States Army leadership, even after President John F. Kennedy requested its wear for his visit in to Fort Bragg in October 1961, the beret became a symbol of excellence and an award recognizing successful completion of training and acceptance into the Special Forces Regiment. In April 1962, President Kennedy sent a White House memorandum to the Department of the Army Directing its wear. That letter is currently on display in The United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

Upon discharge, Paul found such occupations as a beer salesman, woman’s rugby coach, a college student; eventually, however, he returned to military life in 1986 where he served until his death in 2006. A respected member of the Special Forces community, Sergeant Major (SGM) Ireland was average in many ways. He had no physical features that set him apart from the crowd. He was not flamboyant nor was he overly reserved or content to hide in the shadows. Many who met him thought he had a casual attitude towards life. Some considered him caustic. Others saw him as stubborn and difficult. Most found him relentless in issues he saw as important. Yet in the end, this man’s strength, wisdom, and character made his death one of the most difficult his colleagues, friends, and family had ever experienced. Paul Ireland, for all the rich lineage and medical accomplishments of his forefathers, succumbed to Lymphoma less than four months from reaching a well-earned retirement.

It is the rich and diverse history of Paul Ireland’s life that makes him a good candidate to explore through the use of the portraiture methodology. The core rationale for selecting Paul for my study is the respect and high regard in which he was held by those who knew him. Paul was not a typical leader in the military sense. Though he did not reach the high rank and position of his family line, he did reach the top ranks of the enlisted corps. As a Sergeant Major he garnered

the support and respect of those with whom he worked closely. More often than not, senior officers who met Paul for the first time did not care for him. Yet it seemed he changed those impressions over time. This anomaly is the disparity between Paul's leadership ability and his position and personal conduct.

Access to persons and information enables me to effectively develop the portrait that forms the heart of my dissertation. My sincere desire is to create a work that resonates with the reader, one that compels the reader to "feel some sense of connection or identification with the story" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 15). The portrait I will develop comes from the words, actions, and artifacts of Paul Ireland. His friends, acquaintances, fellow workers, and soldiers will add to the texture through their own experiences with Paul.

The following chronicle of my personal and professional experiences and how they form my values and biases will help the reader understand the lens through which I view the elements in this story.

Researcher Perspective

Personal Experience.

Like anyone else, I have my own values, passions, and individual biases that become part of any endeavor. These preconceived notions are based upon personal, professional, and academic experiences. Successes and failures determine our thoughts about the world around us. The perception of our own existence and role in a sometimes ambiguous, complex, and unpredictable environment is driven by how successfully we apply lessons from the past. It is by understanding that which forms our own thoughts that we can employ our expertise in fulfilling our role as a researcher. It is this sum of this knowledge and experience that is central to the success of the researcher in the role of portraitist. "The identity, character, and history of the

researcher are obviously critical to the manner of listening, selecting, interpreting, and composing the story” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 15). My personal experiences provide me with a unique perspective and motivation for working with this study. It is important that I provide some history of my own life and events that have shaped my value system making me the person I am.

I will now share my personal history and that which forms the lens through which I view the world around me. It is this blue print of my identity that will allow the reader access into my life experiences, biases, and values. Understanding who I am and how I perceive my unfolding events is a particularly important element in defining my roles and responsibilities for this study. I have two distinct roles in the development of this dissertation. The first is that of the researcher and analyst performing the requisite data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The second is my role as a participant and data source that will provide firsthand accounts of events and experiences that contribute to the study.

Having a common history as a soldier provides me with a unique ability to add essential context to the backdrop of the portrait in my role as a researcher. The researcher perspective illustrates how I view Paul’s experiences and actions in my role as a participant. It also provides some background on Special Forces training, which will be useful to the reader. It further serves to improve understanding and add meaning of emergent themes. My perspective comes from the fact that I share a number of experiences with Paul Ireland. First and foremost is our service in the army. Though I am currently an officer, I, like Paul, spent time as an enlisted man and noncommissioned officer. We share our experience as members of the Special Forces Regiment and the requisite training that has evolved, yet changed modestly over the years. We have served together sharing a common language, culture, and experiences that come from training soldiers

and deploying them into combat. This insight serves as an effective lens for analysis and development of the portrait.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) discuss the balance that exists in how a portraitist approaches his or her work. “This balance-between documenting the authentic portrait of others and drawing one’s self into lines of the piece, between self-possession and disciplined other regard, between the intuitive and counterintuitive-is the difficult, complex, nuance work of the portraitist” (p. 86). As previously discussed, this is but one role in the study. The role of researcher and portraitist in this methodology engages and draws the portraitist into the work. The complexity of this method presents a significant challenge that is further complicated by the fact that I knew Paul Ireland. I have contributions that are important in forming the final product. As a participant and source in this study, I will bring information into the portrait. Having been an associate, friend, and fellow soldier of Paul, I have personal knowledge of many events. This will allow me to add details that may otherwise be missing from the larger narrative. I will now present my experiences and the way they have formed my thoughts and values. In some ways these experiences have led me down the same path as Paul Ireland.

Early Life Experience

I was born in a rural agricultural community. Early on my family lived with my grandparents in Messex, Colorado, a place known mostly for its sugar beet elevator. The crops were mostly corn, beets, and alfalfa for the few head of cattle that were pastured there. Like most small diversified farms, there were sheep, hogs, and chickens. It seemed like everyone stayed busy. I was given jobs to perform, more to keep me in place and out of trouble than to produce any tangible effort. I can remember straying from my weed pulling in the garden to catch frogs from the irrigation ditch.

Before I began school, we left farming and the livestock behind for a moderately more urban life. My father was in his early twenties and my mother her late teens. They were not very well prepared for life. Our family of four seemed to struggle for a number of years. We moved often and I can barely recall the numerous school changes I made. The first jobs I remember my parents having were as a meat packer and a seamstress. Pipe fitter, meat cutter, service technician, and department store employee were some of the other jobs I recall. They both worked full time jobs and because of the hours, my sister and I would walk home and wait for them to rush home after work. There would come a time when it appeared my parents might achieve some measure of success. That success never really materialized. Though they both worked, it seemed we never really advanced beyond the lower tiers of the economic strata. Eventually the family would grow to five. My youngest sister arrived in the early seventies. This was about the same time my father obtained a job as a gas pipe fitter in Northern Wyoming. The pay was good enough to get us into our own home. This was an old log home with a more modern interior. It required a lot of work and though it was next to a ranch and community roping arena, it appeared we might have some sense of stability. My father's investment in a heating and air conditioning contracting business and some unfortunate decisions led to financial ruin and eventual divorce. The anticipated security never materialized.

I moved out on my own three days before my 16th birthday. I worked evenings making pizza and when summer came, I worked sheet metal. When school started up, I did some cooperative education work. This allowed me to go to school in the morning, work as a sheet metal worker in the afternoon, and make pizza at Shakey's Pizza at night. I rented a room from a woman I worked with. It was in a trailer park, but it was my room, and it provided the fullest measure of independence. The ironic part was that I had little time to enjoy it. I paid all of my

bills regularly and still managed to save a little money. I never got too far ahead, but it all seemed temporary. I still had a vaguely developed plan to get an athletic scholarship, some loans, and go to college. I do not honestly even remember thinking of life beyond that or a desired profession.

During my senior year I had a knee operation. Any hope of a sports scholarship was gone. My grades were average and worse yet, I was on crutches and living off my meager savings. It was during this time I received some good advice and encouragement from a retired Navy pilot. He had been around awhile and taken the hard route more than once. Starting as an enlisted Navy SEAL, he worked his way through the ranks to become a fighter pilot in Vietnam. His stories and ability to ask the right questions got me thinking about all types of possibilities. I realized staying in my hometown would have me working as a laborer in the mines or for minimum wage somewhere. I focused on finishing school and took a test for military service. I got a fairly high score and was subsequently stalked by numerous recruiters. I picked the one who never called me. I went in to see the Army recruiter hoping to be a Ranger and somehow ended up a construction equipment repairer. To this day, what happened to me in that recruiting office remains a mystery. The goal was to return home to work in the coal mines for big dollars. With six months to my ship date, I returned to work and began rehabilitation of my knee before my final army physical evaluation. I gave away most of my personal belongings, sold my car and unnecessary items, and went to basic training.

Special Forces Training

I have spent much of my life serving in the military in one capacity or another. I enlisted in the army as a private in 1979. I spent four years on active duty with the engineers, most of which was in the Federal Republic of Germany. I matured and learned much about life,

leadership, and people while in the military. I was able to take a few college courses, see Europe, and interact with people from around the world. The military school system is designed to develop mental agility, stress, and time management skills. These were much needed lessons for me. I always had big plans but lacked the tools to realize them. I learned to prioritize and accept the fact that some endeavors are unimportant and must be set aside. I learned mission focus and to count on fellow soldiers in conditions of hardship. I was more assertive. I felt much more capable of controlling my own destiny. This was problematic as I was essentially the property of the Army and as a Sergeant unable to rise to the level of my perceived ability.

I chose to let my enlistment expire and left the army for new opportunities. I wanted to continue my education and have some geographic stability. I got a job in heating and air conditioning. My extra work as a reserve soldier allowed me to earn enough money for school. That and a few loans helped me to get my Associates in Industrial Studies. My efforts at the community college facilitated modest promotions at work and gave me the minimum credits required for entry into Officer Candidate School. Seeing the importance of education, I continued working for my Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Master of Education. I was doing well financially and could not spend enough time in school or at work. This continued for about 10 years. I focused much of my time getting ahead in my utility, contracting, and military careers. I was trying very hard to provide for my family. It took me that long to see I was obsessed with work and success. I had been told this by an ex-wife, a live-in girlfriend, and in indirect ways by my kids. I just did not get it. Finally faced with a choice of corporate transfer and being separated from my kids I made the right choice and left my position with UtiliCorp. I would like to say it was all my idea but the care and encouragement I received from a seasoned marketing director helped me to sort through options.

Having had a rather lengthy break in active duty service, I remained in the Reserve Component or National Guard. Eventually I would choose to accept an active duty position assigned to a Special Forces unit in the Colorado Army National Guard. I was assessed into service on July 4, 1997. This would only be possible through decisions I made some 10 years earlier. The first of which was to pursue a commission as an Army officer. I completed Officer Candidate School in 1987 and received my commission as an infantry officer. After completing the Infantry Officers Course, I elected to attend the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course (SFAS). The United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center (USAJFKSWC) was able to provide the highest degree of physical and mental stress I have ever experienced. I left Fort Bragg broken and exhausted after only three weeks. Nonetheless, I met the assessment requirements and was selected for Special Forces training. With the various phases and requirements involved, it took roughly a year to complete the Special Forces Officers Course.

The Special Forces Course has changed over the years. Various iterations contain modifications in design and content. These changes stem from the United States Army Special Forces Commander's vision and the doctrinal analysis and philosophy of the Special Warfare Center. As one would expect, much of the training focuses on the individual skills required, assigned specialty, military tactics, field craft, environmental training, mission types and language. The course design is intended to make graduates experts in unconventional warfare methods.

The individual skills phase is around three months long. It contains the small units and Special Forces tactics, survival skills, and initial training on culture and the language assigned based on ability and follow-on assignment. Knowledge of culture and language capability is an

essential element in building a competent Special Forces operator. This training continues throughout the entire course.

Each soldier is assigned an individual skill based upon rank, aptitude, and ability. Being an officer, I had one choice, the Special Forces Detachment Commander's Course. Enlisted personnel spend more than four months mastering weapons, engineering, or communications. Select personnel receive comprehensive education, theory, and training in the medical field. All receive Special Forces common tasks, interagency, and other advanced training opportunities.

After successfully completing the individual training requirements, I, like all other Special Forces Qualification Course graduates, needed to complete two more major requirements prior to graduation. The language training that began months earlier now became the major focus. Based upon one's earlier success in gaining a working knowledge of his assigned language, it was possible to continue in a classroom setting for more than three months. Early in life I had significant exposure to both the German and Russian languages and took multiple languages in high school. This relieved me of what I considered a burden at the time. Over time I have come to view this as a missed opportunity. Generally, a native instructor familiar with the country, its customs, and language provides instruction through a total immersion methodology. Time outside the classroom is spent on physical training, combatives, and other military skills.

The next requirement is a month long field evaluation designed to assess our ability to operate in our role as part of a 12-man Special Forces Detachment.

This unconventional warfare exercise includes a realistic scenario, role players, and a challenging set of requirements. Experienced evaluators determine the candidate's potential for service in the Special Forces community. Finally, soldiers must complete the Survival, Escape, Resistance, and Evasion (SERE) course. Graduates learn valuable combat survival tactics. While

Paul and I each completed this course some 20 years apart, the content and requirements remain generally constant, the major difference being Paul finished the Weapons Sergeant's Course with a greater focus on Southeast Asia.

After completing the school in 1990, I returned to Colorado. I received my first Special Forces assignment as an executive officer for an Operational Detachment (Airborne). I have been a team, company, and battalion commander. I had planned, conducted, or led exercises and operations in Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal, Afghanistan, Russia, the Balkans, and Jordan. Since my return to active duty in 1997, I served in a number of command and staff positions. Though I had met the subject of my portrait some years earlier in my career, it was during my assignment in senior staff positions that I came to know him best.

Accepting a commission on active duty was challenging. This is particularly true when working with special operations units. There is a noticeable pressure that comes from being a Special Forces Soldier. That pressure comes from the expectations of peers having achieved the same standard, servicemen of other types, but more so from the demands we place upon ourselves. I cannot say all within our community feel the same compelling desire to perform to our greatest potential. Though by and large, it is a common characteristic that drove most of us to be part of the regiment. Hours spent in the office or on travel have been taxing. Officers and senior noncommissioned officers often have been faced with the dilemma of cutting work short in order to spend time with loved ones. This has forced me to change how I spend my free time. I now place a much higher level of importance on my family. I understand the value of communication with family and friends. I have little free time and feel like I have been wise enough to choose few, but quality, friends. Work still has to remain a balanced priority. When it is important, family slides ahead, but generally the military gets first bite.

Good Advice and Mentors.

There are many factors that shape us as individuals. Our simple day to day activities, education, and experiences provide us with opportunities to learn and grow. The value of these learning opportunities are enhanced by those in our life who take the time to coach and provided us with advice. I have been fortunate to receive good council and observe the conduct of others in school, athletic programs, work, and my personal life. How I view life comes from my family and what I have learned from friends and rare mentors found throughout the years. Often what and how well we learn is dependent on the relationships we build and the mentors we have selected; mentors who have felt it worth the time to provide guidance in either a formal or an informal setting. Having spent much of my life in rural and small town America, I have always believed in the bootstrap approach. I think much of who we are depends on what we experience and learn from our childhood. I have heard the excuse; “he is a product of his environment.” This never held water with me. I have always felt that people should be responsible for their actions, learning lessons from their experiences, good or bad. It is a matter of choice and discipline.

While I still feel strongly about individual effort and responsibility, I believe very few people truly make it on their own. The counsel or direction I have received from respected persons in my life has been essential at each crossroad in my life. My parents and siblings have always been supportive and provided the best lessons on life. By most measures, my immediate and extended family is relatively small. Yet I have learned many lessons both good and bad on how to approach issues in my life.

In recent years I have learned from my own family. I have been taught many lessons by women who have been part of my life. Today, my greatest teachers are my children. I attempt to employ some of the lessons I have learned from my past failures and successes. I try to recall the

valuable advice and direction provided to me over the years. Many of these formative lessons have emerged from relationships in my professional and academic life. I have been exceptionally fortunate in finding professional acquaintances, close friends, and wonderful mentors. I can safely say the subject of my study has always been in at least one of these categories since our introduction.

My Personal Bias

Wolcott (2001) cautions, “careful description calls for a sense of detachment” (p. 32). He suggests that we limit our account of events to what we personally see, hear, or experience. Great emphasis is placed on the slight but distinct difference in what one observes or infers. He does not present any mandate on the incorporation of feelings or perceptions provided such conclusions are based on the input of the participant or are qualified in statements by the researcher. In portraiture methodology the idea of the researcher and “self as the instrument” (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p.86) make this approach complex, but necessary in achieving the desired results. As Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) note, no method is without the risk of incorporating bias into the study.

Even though the voice of the researcher is purposely silenced in quantitative research where the structure and processes are relatively codified and routinized, it is important to recognize that the researcher’s hand is, nevertheless, evident. We see the researcher’s imprint in the selection of data. There is no voice, no soul in traditional quantitative forms of inquiry, but the researcher’s hand-revealed in the conceptual orientation, the disciplinary lens, methods of design (and probably in personal disposition)-is certainly present and shaping the work. (p. 86)

Values

It is difficult to list and define all of my personal values and issues of importance. It is even more difficult to prioritize them. I suppose the value list would include independence, personal courage, honesty, integrity, selfless service, faith, and discipline. These are the most important of what is likely a set of 50 or so guiding principles. These values guide my decision

making, motivate action, resolve conflict, and provide the framework for how I see the world around me.

I value my independence. Personal freedom is dear to me. I dislike artificial rules and restriction of my actions. The way I see it, my rights end at the tip of the next man's nose. If I want to express my thoughts and they are politically incorrect or insensitive, they are just as legitimate and valuable as the next person's. I expect reasonable privacy and, sans reasonable cause, expect no government intervention with my life and activities. This includes undue taxes and penalizing me for my efforts to support those who lack the desire and discipline to do what is necessary to sustain themselves and contribute to society.

Personal courage is something I see as essential. I once missed an opportunity to do what was right and noble. I was in high school and had several friends who were Crow. There was a time in Sheridan when having any Native American affiliation was not popular. A large group of redneck types were physically and verbally harassing one of my friends. Though I did not participate in any way in the harassment, the only help I rendered was to get a faculty member. I do not believe that I was afraid of physical harm. I felt more ashamed for my lack of action than anything. That was the last time I would ever sit on the sidelines.

Honesty is very important to me. It always seemed that regardless of where you stand in the economic food chain, you are respected if you are true to your word. I respect a person who looks you in the eye and stands on principle. I despise liars. It is not so much because of what they do. It is because they consider you foolish and believe you are not intelligent enough to detect a lie. More importantly, this principle is one that defines who we are as a people. It speaks to the nobility, integrity, and virtue of an individual. In the toughest times, these are people with whom I would gladly serve.

Integrity seems the most difficult to define. To me this value has a dual nature. It is the way I conduct myself in respect to my own values and personal code. The second is my interaction with others. It is doing what is right, not popular. It means doing what is often most difficult when required. Not because of glory or personal satisfaction but because it is right. I see this as critical for me. When my children are grown and remember my conduct, I wish to be a model to emulate not one to avoid.

I believe in selfless service. I think everyone who benefits from what this nation has to offer owes some debt of service. This debt may be through employment, charitable work, or offerings to church or organizations that focus on the physical or spiritual well-being of those in need. I do not believe in mandating this type of service because it detracts from its value. The religious term of time, talent, and treasure seems a viable reference. The motive is simple; it is a good and right thing to do.

Faith is of exceptional importance to me. I am no better in the eyes of God than any other man or woman. I will continue to strive for a more spiritual life. I have traveled to nearly every continent. I have lived in the most austere locations. I have lived with Muslim, Buddhist, Hindi, Shaman, and various Christian groups. It is safe to say there are good people around the world. Some of these same cultures exist in the United States. I welcome and respect these cultures. This respect must run both ways. Those who seek to remove references to God from our government buildings, currency, and courtroom aggravate me immensely. Based on my assessment of our declaration of independence and constitution, it was not our founding fathers' intent.

Individual discipline is a reasonable expectation. Every person should bear responsibility and be accountable for the decisions and choice each of them make. Those challenged by

disabilities and unable to care for themselves would be the exception. A compassionate society provides for the common welfare of these citizens. I am not however speaking of those who choose to do what is unwise. I expect them to assume responsibility for their actions. Assuming responsibility means dealing with the natural consequences of a bad decision. It is not the place of society to provide a safety net for stupidity.

Final Thoughts

I could throw many topics on the table for discussion. I believe the United States is a world leader and should fulfill that role regardless if it ruffles feathers. I believe there is a group of Americans who blame the United States for every wrong ever committed. These individuals are often poorly read and have never left their own zip code. I believe the little the old lady with a walker is not a threat and some logic exists in checking some groups more closely than others at airports today. We only have so many assets and must do what makes sense for the greater good. Hypersensitivity is not a civil right. Word use drives me nuts. I believe a hypersensitive word Nazi is creating what he or she and a few neo-bourgeoisie sophisticates believes are the right words for culture to use. I think using the word lady is acceptable. I believe that it is not condescending and is in fact appropriate in polite company. I believe in equality but not over equality or quotas. I believe everyone is equal and due proper respect.

Membership in the Special Forces community requires an appreciation of culture and the unique customs found in the places we travel. Adapting to these foreign environments is key in establishing rapport. With that said I believe there is a common American culture and fundamental belief that should be honored and accommodated. I believe it is possible to celebrate and perpetuate one's culture while assimilating into a prevalent American culture. The nation becomes stronger and richer for it. Being primarily of immigrant origin, I have seen the

adaptation of my own family in this regard and wisdom and value in the words of President Roosevelt:

In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the man's becoming in very fact an American, and nothing but an American. There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag ... and this excludes the red flag, which symbolizes all wars against liberty and civilization, just as much as it excludes any foreign flag of a nation to which we are hostile. We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language. And we have room for but one sole loyalty, and that is a loyalty to the American people. (Theodore Roosevelt, 1919)

I occasionally wonder if my perspectives on contemporary issues contributed to the strength of my friendship with Paul. Those of us in the Special Forces community have always found numerous issues worthy of heated debate. Yet, many of us found a high degree of common ground in our own views of the world. We belong to a unique brotherhood that possesses a certain set of core values. This is not a set of values one chooses to buy-in to or simply adopts. It is an inherent set of morals and sense of purpose, which have remained constant over time. It is sometimes hard to define but generally, we find unconventional thinking men of character who are willing to do what is right in order to make a difference for their fellow man regardless of hardship or sacrifice. This common sense of purpose and respect for what this organization does is who you are when you make a commitment to earn a beret. There are no magic or hidden rituals withheld from the public. While the public may look at us and evaluate our actions, we are our harshest critics. Though known for occasionally unorthodox approaches to solving problems, we pride our self on common sense approaches to complex problems.

The keystone of our organization is the 12-man operational detachment. These men are dependent upon each other to not only survive, but also thrive in austere situations. Supported by a complex structure at company, battalion, and group level, these units have worked with indigenous populations around the world. They work to provide stability and security in regions where conventional military units would find difficulty in operating. Whether it is to support legitimate governments or a subjugated population, Special Forces seeks to work with, through, or by indigenous peoples to provide freedom and security. Thus the motto, “De Oppresso Liber,” or to free the oppressed.

I knew Paul for several years. We were adversaries in some of our work relationships. In other assignments, we were part of the same team. Though he worked for me on multiple occasions, more often than not, I viewed him as a colleague. For most of our acquaintance, I viewed him as my friend. I first met him when we were assigned to the same military unit and our association was based primarily on work requirements. When assigned to a unit of this type for a number of years, a small core of active duty personnel tends to build strong friendships. With friendship comes the risk of looking at findings with a biased lens. The most effective guard against the entrance of bias into this study is my desire to provide an accurate portrayal of the characteristics of Paul Ireland. Because he is a true friend, the integrity of his image remains most important and foremost in my mind.

II. Parados

The Legend

The Special Forces community is small in comparison to what we call the “Big Army.” Considering the United States Army has hundreds of thousands of soldiers assigned around the world, it seems unlikely you would run across the same soldier more than once. Yet those of us fortunate enough to remain within Special Forces cross paths many times. I heard of Paul Ireland long before I ever met him. I believe it was in 1992 that I first heard his name. I was a Captain and an Operational Detachment Commander. I heard a Major on the battalion staff talking about Paul. He was saying something to the effect of how “the king of the north would have to bring his ass down for the meeting.” I understood the conversation enough to know that Paul was resisting the trip and figured it was a lack of preparation by the battalion staff. Paul did not like short term notification and excessive travel, particularly at his own expense. Paul’s company headquarters was a little more than 50 miles north of the battalion headquarters. He was refusing to make the drive because there were no published orders. Paul liked regulations, that is to say, when they made sense. It seems the military always has a way of making rules work against you. He was not one to let that happen to himself or anyone else. It was a matter of principle and perhaps the opportunity to take a little jab at an officer. Paul also had the ability to build coalitions with others. Attending the meeting late that afternoon, I noticed many were not present. Minimal detail was provided, but it was known that Paul was the reason behind the lower than expected attendance.

Commanding officers for Paul’s Charlie Company rotated about every two years. I call it Paul’s Company because everyone else was a transient in comparison to the senior NCO who always refused to move. He always had the Commanding Major’s full support. Many times the

leadership attempted to move him; they always failed. This was the unique ability of Paul Ireland. I remember being a bit curious about Paul. I manufactured a mental image of a man who had a high degree of personal power. I imagined a large barrel-chested Green Beret of imposing stature. I knew that one day I would have a chance to meet Sergeant First Class (SFC) Paul Ireland.

Our First Meeting

After what I imagined to be a high level of arm-twisting, Paul was assigned to the battalion staff in 1997. He served as an operations sergeant in the S3 section of the headquarters detachment. Some months later that year, I too received “the call.” I was extracted from my comfortable assignment as Special Forces Team Commander and sent to fill the recently vacated battalion logistics officer slot. Forlorn and faking enthusiasm, I showed up at the battalion headquarters early for my meeting with the staff and to receive my in-brief from the executive officer. I was told to see SFC Ireland to fill out an alert roster, and that he would connect me with my logistics sergeant. I looked around for the man of whom I built my mental image. There were many soldiers moving about the area but no Paul Ireland. The beauty of being in a job like this is we all have our last names embroidered on our shirt. First names are not necessary because we are all called by rank. Glancing around, I finally located him. Initially surprised, potentially mistaken, and frankly wondering how my perceptions were so far off, I extended my hand to introduce myself. He was not six and a half feet tall nor did he weigh the 230 pounds as I imagined. Before me stood a man with red hair, clear blue eyes, average weight, and nearly a full foot shorter than I had assumed. He had a pleasant smile and was considerate in our exchange.

Our contact was minimal during this period. The location of the support center (SUPCEN) to which I was assigned was such that our interaction was limited to meetings and the

generation of operations orders. Still, I watched Paul with admiration; he had the ability to control portions of staff briefs when he found it necessary. Whenever he had input or comments, a certain expression would come over his face. It was like concern meets disbelief. Paul could single handedly hijack a meeting filled with senior NCOs and officers with little difficulty. I cannot recall a single time when his input was not correct or had merit. In a room full of type-A personalities, Paul was an A plus.

Battalion Staff

I first served with Paul when I was assigned as battalion adjutant. I reentered active duty in July 1997. I wanted a chance to do more than my reserve military status allowed. I enjoyed my work and found it purposeful. I worked the personnel portion of the battalion overseeing the administrative, legal, medical, and pay sections. The work was rewarding and soon led to command of the battalion support company (BSC). I was second in rank only to the active duty Major. Paul had advanced to Master Sergeant (MSG) in May 1998 and assumed the role as senior NCO on site. My early encounters with Paul were generally uneventful. He had a good sense of humor, provided the support I required, and generally had the answer to the most complex of questions. His interaction with others was often a different story. He managed to have most of the higher headquarters personnel doing what he called "cheetah flips." His coined expression inferred a sort of anxiety laced with irritation, frustration, and a sense of vulnerability that almost always meant those affected had more work to do; work he created. Again he was almost always correct and took care not to celebrate his victories in a manner that prompted retaliation. It was not uncommon to find at least one current conflict simmering with a superior, peer, or subordinate. None was more common than his ongoing conflict with Major Massengale, the new battalion operations officer.

Major Massengale had a warped sense of what it took to be an officer. I am not certain how he ever completed the required training to be in the Special Forces Regiment. While he had a sense of right and wrong, he had no concept of fair or practical. He perceived himself as judge of all people and events within his sphere of influence. He often made incredulous comments like "I never lie." He seemed pleased to play the role of toxic leader. This is a trend the Army has identified in recent years. The label suggests a selfish, bullying, and often incompetent leader who micromanages and leads through abusive methods. This trait and a lack of requisite leadership skills made the environment difficult for Paul, soldiers within the command, and Major Massengale as well. He viewed Paul as an alcoholic, a smoker, a tobacco chewer, and an adulterer who was dishonest and irrelevant. He made no attempt to hide his disdain and often complained about MSG Ireland. At times his comments and concerns had merit, but his inability to garner respect and support from the soldiers and battalion commander prevented him from taking any action. Right, wrong, or indifferent, Major Massengale found himself unarmed in a battle of wills and probably wits as well with Paul. I cannot recall the number of counseling statements, admonishments, and arguments Paul had with Major Massengale. I do believe that the Major became Paul Ireland's favorite pastime.

Once I became an insider, I learned more about Paul. He had an interesting history. He joked about the counseling statements he received. One was for unilaterally deciding to take the company staff at Charlie Company duck hunting. It was during the holiday season; Paul was aware the headquarters had a social function. He reasoned that because they had a military party, he could have a hunting excursion. It was a morale building event. Paul always applied logic, presented a strong case, and managed to develop an argument that possessed a thread of some

issue or factor designed to make the aggressor look or feel foolish. Paul stored massive amounts of information in his mind. In fact his knowledge in a wide range of subjects was something to be admired. He remembered everything. During a conversation, he could recall an amazing number of world events. He also could place them in historical context naming concurrent, sequential events. Whether it was the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and culminating events leading to World War I, or discussing the Soviet space program during the year of Marilyn Monroe's death, Paul has something interesting to say. He was very sharp recalling every error or indiscretion committed by others. He called it, "keeping book." It never surprised me when he was quick to provide a story or embarrassing fact about someone. It was nearly always good natured and something that brought a laugh. Yet I knew that I never wanted Paul to have anything particularly embarrassing on me. I would say our relationship was a professional one, and it would take a short hiatus with my brief departure and assignment to a higher headquarters.

My Senior NCO

After serving in a conventional composite brigade level headquarters, I had the opportunity to return to the Special Forces community in 1999. I had worked hard to return to the Special Forces battalion. Most of my comrades were there, and I frankly enjoyed the company of those with whom I had so much in common. I returned with the rank of Major and assumed the job of executive officer and as it so happened, I assumed responsibility for MSG Paul Ireland. I was the senior active duty officer in the command, and I was excited about the challenge and opportunity to work with my comrades again.

The Special Forces battalion was a busy place and the operational tempo (OPTEMPO) occasionally had my head spinning. In that period of time much of what we did focused on the

Pacific Rim. Our unit in Colorado managed to deploy parts of our organization to Korea, Indonesia, Maldives, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal, Vanuatu, Tonga, Philippines, India, and more. We also ran large training events and exercises nationwide that included Alaska and Hawaii. It created significant pressure for all involved, but we always seemed to complete our missions successfully. We celebrated our victories, minimized and reorganized when we came up short, and moved on. We knew that we were part of something bigger, and we could always count on each other. We policed each other, imposed that cultural norm and philosophy of not leaving anything on the table. It was an expectation that unit members pulled their own weight, put forth the effort to achieve success, and did not disgrace the battalion. After working hard, we played hard. We accepted the little idiosyncrasies and occasional eccentricities that seem to be more frequent with the regiment. Though we protected our own, we also remediated or discarded those who were not able to perform at the required level.

None had higher expectations for a logical, well developed, and executed plan than Paul Ireland. He had a lower tolerance for wasted effort or unnecessary work. He liked the mission to be clear and everyone's lane to be clearly defined. He also clearly defined his boundaries and activities for which he was responsible. Once he owned a project or mission, he could be counted upon to see it through. In fact Paul was recognized for one mission in particular. Paul was primary planner and responsible for the execution of training the Maldivian Defense Force. In the 1990s the Maldives had a very small military force capable of minimal protection. His efforts working with and training them resulted in deterring an external insurgent force of superior size. Paul very much enjoyed his time there. His particular location did not have many amenities, but he loved the environment, and he returned with a very nice tan. Paul was able to identify an

opportunity in everything he did. I admired this quality. In fact it was during this period that I first started to see the many different sides of Paul Ireland.

Paul's most noticeable skill was the selective application of diplomacy. Regardless of how he viewed someone, Paul always sought to build a relationship and use reason to secure his objective. The duration of his patience and effort was directly related to his level of respect for the party with whom he attempted to work. His approach was consistent whether that individual was a member of the organization or not. It always began with building a strong support structure.

The most important skill any Special Forces soldier has is the ability to build rapport. Paul understood this. He also understood that one's ability to promote an agenda outside the organization was to have the full support of those in his unit. No relationships were more important than the Battalion Commander, Command Sergeant Major, and Executive Officer. Lieutenant Colonel Dave Bulman was in command when I returned to the battalion. He was a soft spoken man with a great sense of humor and a relaxed demeanor. He began his career as an enlisted man during the Vietnam War. Like Paul, he served in a Special Forces unit. This commonality cemented their relationship and improved Paul's support within the organization. Paul's relationship with the Commander also enabled him to tie more closely into the Command Sergeant Major. Much of the information on day-to-day activities passed through this informal line of communication. I had no issue with this as it seemed to relieve me from having to spend more time on updating battalion leadership. This was one of many ways Paul made my job more manageable. He eliminated distractions within the command and achieved some success outside the unit.

Paul had the ability to connect at key points in supporting headquarters. These contacts were not always the officer or noncommissioned officer in charge. It was that person who made the decision, held the influence, or had the ability to make it happen.

He was knowledgeable, competent, and had excellent communications skills. He understood that the time to build relationships was not when you needed something. He had strategic vision in this regard. He always seemed to know the right person at the right time. He was sincere in how he approached this. For example, he could not and would not pretend to be a friend and sit down over a cordial lunch with someone for whom he had no respect. I believe everyone who ever dealt with Paul knew where they stood with him. The time he spent building these relationships was significant. The time and effort it saved was immeasurable. His ability to perform or deliver in a pinch was not contingent on these relationships, however.

I saw Paul's magic first hand on a trip to Reno, Nevada. We attended a conference where the Air Force coordinates use of their aircraft in support of our training missions. We require the use of aircraft to practice movement, parachute, and resupply operations. After checking into the hotel, I met up with Paul. He gave me a briefing on how the process worked and my part. The basis of our success was the work he had already done. The key to closing a deal and garnering the multiple days of required support was the technique of securing the finalized dates, acquiring signatures, and validating the commitment. He provided me with a few valuable techniques and told me not to forget my wallet. This proved to be a particularly important part of the entire process. He had arranged for a lunch with key decision makers. We completed all the required coordination over lunch, streamlining the afternoon's activities. Upon completion of lunch, Paul grabbed the check and then handed it to me. It was a sizable amount and of course I was in no position to refuse. The deals were sealed, and we needed the aircraft for the unit to be successful.

Of course, I have always found that securing the support of a fellow service was never easy. In this case it was not cheap either. That evening I bought more than a few drinks. Paul picked a few up himself. After all, there was always the next conference to think about. When I left the assembly, I received a small coin issued to members of the conference. It said, "All Work and No Play, is Not Our Way." That coin cost me a little bit more than \$300.

Paul was promoted to Sergeant Major in February 2001. This is the top non-commissioned rank, just below the officer level. It is the culmination of an enlisted career and those fortunate enough to reach Sergeant Major are held in great regard. I was happy to see Paul make this rank. He was one of the most experienced soldiers in the unit. Seeing a Vietnam veteran reach the pinnacle of enlisted service brought everyone around him a sense of satisfaction. I cannot say it made him any more formidable. It did allow him to enter other venues to practice his influence.

Paul's interaction with me changed very little with his promotion. I rarely saw his temper; he still had his agenda and practiced a certain level of gamesmanship in the conduct of his duties. On occasion it seemed as though his actions were designed with intent to teach a lesson, perhaps it was entertainment. He had a good sense of humor and was not above playing a joke or two. He did have limits on participation and managed to avoid the more sophomoric tension breaking pranks others in the battalion executed. Paul often had a mature calming presence, but he was not without faults or bad habits. In the end I believe that this is what made him the puzzle that I could not solve. It would be unfair to suggest that Paul's shortcomings prevented him from doing his job. In fact, I was surprised he almost always managed to perform in spite of his vices.

Paul was a social creature. He could often be found holding court at a small bar a few miles from our unit. It was often that I found Paul as the first arrival to the bar. I could also count on anyone else who entered after him finding their way to his table. He was pleasant, social, and inviting. At least half of all conversations were business; the rest was sports, hunting, and a wide variety of interesting issues. Paul was always the center of attention.

Paul liked good Scotch whiskey best. He would have a beer, an umbrella drink, tequila, or whatever other drink the environment made appropriate. Paul and I often worked in Hawaii. Much of the planning for the Pacific Command occurs at the half-way point between Asia proper and the Continental United States. After a day of maneuvering and securing good position in the assorted missions in theater, we would meet by the pool at the Hale Koa Hotel. Paul would arrive first. He almost always footed the extra expense and brought his girlfriend. Both could be found at the largest table with a tropical drink. Paul would be smoking a cigarette with a Skoal Bandit in his mouth. Each new arrival would grab a chair and park themselves at the table. Even those with competing interests or our higher headquarters would find their way to his table. The subject depended upon those present. Being cordial was important, but we wished to ensure we could continue to exploit our success the next day by not revealing our agenda.

We occasionally did our planning and coordination in Korea. He felt at home wherever he travelled, but I believe that Paul loved Asia best. He enjoyed the food and culture. After duty hours, he showed me where the best deals could be found. Paul had an eye for quality. He also could negotiate for the best price. After shopping we would go to a local restaurant for Korean Bulgogi. This tasty marinated barbeque dish was his favorite. Of course Paul liked the local rice wine called Soju. Occasionally this evening imbibing would cause Paul to be late for the next day's activities. One such time was in Korea. After breakfast a fellow officer and I grew

tired of waiting for Paul. We walked up to his room and after a few minutes of knocking, Paul came to the door. He managed to find the smallest hotel-provided bath robe in the closet. There he stood, looking a mess, and obviously suffering. He invited us in and walked away with his backside hanging out. As he gathered his clothes to dress in the bathroom, I noticed a large chewing tobacco stain on the bright white pillow case. I waited a moment and told him that we would meet in the lobby in 10 minutes. The rest of the day went well. As always Paul did his part and as the day ended, Paul could be found in a gathering of comrades to finish the night.

Paul worked hard and played hard. On occasion his escapades led to problems with the leadership and periodically me. Annually the battalion leadership and the subordinate companies would assemble to plan the next year's training plan. The session is called the Battalion Training Management Seminar or BTMS. Paul and the Operations Officer were responsible for facilitating the planning process. I was told that the year prior to my assignment, Paul had conducted all of the preparation but failed to show for the event. I did not know the exact reason though I was told he overslept. The annual BTMS was scheduled within a few months of my arrival back in the battalion. All of the preparation was complete, and I had little concern about meeting the planning objectives. All of the participants arrived the morning we were scheduled to begin the seminar, everyone except Paul. He was nowhere to be found. After seeing his vehicle in the parking lot, I secured my pass key and opened his office door only to find him asleep on a fold out futon. Throwing a blanket over him and his guest, I then shook him until he woke up. After a few choice words, I left for the briefings leaving him to dress. It was these sorts of episodes that caused me concern; yet, my respect for him prevented me from doing more than having a candid conversation with him. I admit that anyone else may have been treated differently, but this was Paul Ireland and there was something about him that made him different.

Though generally of single mind, Paul and I occasionally found ourselves at odds. He was firm and respectful when he disagreed. Behind closed doors he argued professionally but with passion. On occasion he would walk away muttering under his breath. No one else was present and his words were barely audible. They were loud enough that I could hear them, but soft enough I could justify letting it go. It was important to know when not to take the bait. I suppose this is the type of interaction that made me occasionally taunt Paul. Though generally in good fun, I sometimes would get under Paul's skin. I suppose there was some personal satisfaction. I guess I also realized that it was necessary to keep the upper hand with Paul.

A Friend

I cannot say it was always easy to work with Paul. He was his own man. He valued his independence and often gave way to his vices. We built a professional relationship; one built on mutual respect. I cannot say that he always liked me. Perhaps my years of service as both a noncommissioned and commissioned officer did not quite measure up to the wealth of experience that Paul possessed. Over time our professional relationship turned to more of a friendship. We talked frankly and I received good council. He could be counted upon to provide me with what I needed to know. I trusted Paul and never questioned anything he told me.

I cannot remember when it was we finally reached the point where Paul and I became friends. I suspect it was around the time that Paul had issues with a Captain from a subordinate company. Known to be particularly caustic, I had tried to work with the officer. I had spoken to his commander in hopes of correcting his behavior. A period of time had passed and I was forced to field numerous complaints from my staff; I too had had enough. I found it necessary to be direct, aggressive, and without mercy. After admonishing the officer and removing him from position to interact with the staff, Paul came to my office. He told me that he was proud of what I

did. I suppose I should have felt a little offended. Yet he was not being condescending. He was sincere and though I rarely intervene in matters between officers and the enlisted ranks, I realized made the right decision.

9/11

Nothing quite cements a military organization like preparing for combat. A little before seven in the morning, I was listening to the radio on my way into work. There were initial reports of an airplane crash into a New York building. It seemed like some fluke accident, but as I completed the drive, a second airplane hit the World Trade Center. As reports continued, activity in the unit increased. By the time the third and fourth planes crashed into the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field we already had begun assessing unit readiness. The leadership had reported and we began predeployment planning.

Paul was calm. His focus was on preparing the battalion for deployment. The initial flurry of activity and effort would lead to the deployment of a single company from the battalion. The rest of our unit was pushed to the second wave. The preparation continued and eventually we would be scheduled to deploy. It was during that period we received a new commander. It was a familiar and unexpected face. Lieutenant Colonel Massengale returned to take the battalion to war.

I could write volumes on the deployment. It would not add to this study but there are a few points to consider. During this period of time Paul remained at home. The new commander chose to leave him in the rear detachment. I protested this move as Paul was a tested combat veteran. My argument did not persuade the new commander, and we completed our final preparation for deployment. I always felt it was Paul's candor and often dissenting opinion that lead to his being left behind. Others suggested it was Lieutenant Colonel Massengale's religious

view and attitude of superiority. Paul believed it was the star above the wreath. During World War II a unique award was developed for Infantry men. It was a musket on a field of blue encircled by a large wreath. It is reserved for those serving as Infantry and Special Forces soldiers. They must engage in active ground combat to be presented with this decoration. It is awarded once for service in any war. Subsequent awards for those in serving in a different war are denoted with a star at the top of the wreath. Paul had earned his first award in Vietnam. He felt that he was left at home so he would not receive that star.

Good Council

Paul once told me everyone has to grow up. I think he meant everyone but him. After my return from Afghanistan I was sent to do a brief tour as the Secretary of General Staff. It was not my preferred assignment and within a few months I was reassigned as a brigade executive officer. As fate would have it, Paul joined me in October 2003. He assumed the role of Operations Sergeant Major. I knew he was not happy with his new job; this was his first assignment outside of the regiment. Paul made the best of it though, and it was nice to see a familiar face in a sprawling organization with many different types of units. I felt it would be a challenge but manageable. This proved to be mostly true, but new units brought different challenges and it required significant effort. Many of these units were comprised of soldiers who were much younger than I was used to. Others had females. All operated a little differently than I was familiar with. I adapted and found that soldiers were pretty much soldiers. Paul also adapted and it appeared he did so effortlessly. He was not the duck out of water I would have imagined.

In his new role, I saw Paul as a superb teacher. He was a great coach and mentor. Soldiers walked in and out of his office looking for assistance and guidance. They truly enjoyed his company. Though Paul brought that personal power and charisma with him, I found his

efforts in developing the command's junior soldiers to be far more valuable. Every young soldier in the building looked at Paul like a wise sage or perhaps a parental figure. In many conversations I would hear the words, "Sergeant Major said." It made me smile. I think this attention brought a sense of purpose that invigorated Paul. I enjoyed his success and what it contributed to the headquarters' morale.

In November 2003 the mood would change. We received word that Paul's son was killed in an automobile accident. Paul Mills Ireland IV was a student in Laramie, Wyoming. He was driving to a function for his father when he lost control on the icy roads leading out of Laramie. I cannot say how Paul felt; he became a very private person during that period. As always his friends gathered around him. I felt that the best support I could provide was to ensure he was not disturbed by work issues. The deployment and return of units to the Middle East was ongoing, and I knew it would be a difficult with Paul's absence. After a period of time Paul returned. I do not recall how long he was gone. He occasionally spoke of his loss. He focused on work and I did not probe too deeply into the issue. I often thought about his loss. Paul had lost his only son and namesake. It seemed an abrupt end to a distinguished line.

Paul continued his work as resident expert and mentor. He represented the soldiers of the command in all manner of issues. Whether they had a pay, medical, disciplinary, or relationship problem, Paul was there. He was always a tough critic, but now I saw the advocate and champion that the soldiers came to love. He would spend 20 to 30 minutes each day in my office. He would bring me the pertinent issues and problems I needed to solve. He shared the state of the command and those issues that worked their way through the informal back channels. Some called it gossip. It was, however, the type of news that helped form decisions and head off potentially unwanted problems. Paul had these connections.

Paul also provided me valuable feedback. He let me know how my directives and decisions were perceived. He told me when he needed help with an issue. He came to me when I needed to intercede or detour a decision the commander made. Paul was candid and could be counted upon to tell me what others would not. One day he came to my office and stood in the doorway. I looked up on cue as he had planned. He sighed with raised chest, and I invited him to sit. I asked what the problem of the day was. He said the problem was me. He explained that I was causing stress among the staff. People felt like I was driving them too hard and watching them too closely. I asked him to explain. It revolved around the time that I was at the office. Not only were enlisted soldiers going to Paul with this issue, but officers as well. They felt they had to match the time I spent at the office. Many felt leaving early or coming in late was letting me down. They saw me looking out the window early morning. They assumed I was watching arrival times. I was unaware of this. Because the drive home was so far, I often stayed at the office because of the workload. I did not like staying there, but it was the only way that I could keep up. The morning glances out the window were with a cup of coffee while I admired the mountains as I prepared for the day. Something so simple caused so much stress. I would not have known had Paul not come to my office. Everyone knew Paul could talk to me. I changed my morning workout schedule and walked to a side door each morning hoping to lower the stress.

Paul did not show up just to provide me with bad news. He also came to socialize and discuss the high points and share successes. Paul came to my office shortly after I was projected to take command of the Special Forces battalion. He congratulated me and told me how happy he was that I was getting a chance to return. He told me that he believed I would go far. He gave me some advice on pitfalls to avoid. He had seen many officers fail and wished the best for me.

The Struggle

From my view, Paul's experience with the medical system began with frequent trips to a blood clinic. He required some type of filtering to remove excess iron in his system. He was often tired and spent many hours on medical appointments. He would schedule these appointments on his days off so as not to burden his section. He worked with many specialists identifying issues and working to get better. Even then he was making friends. One such new friend operated a blood bank. In an effort to support the blood donor program, Paul talked us into hosting the operation once a month. Without pressing too hard, he was able to line up the needed donors. It was important to him, and I am sure the donations were needed.

It was not too much longer before Paul's health began to worsen. There were a number of issues but the final diagnosis was a form of lymphoma. This meant Paul would need to begin chemotherapy. Still he showed up for work every day. He would schedule his appointments after work on Friday or Saturday. Working 10 hours a day on a four day schedule gave him Monday to recover. When he felt ill he would take leave. He did not want to be a burden the organization. Paul's appearance changed significantly in the month that followed. His energy level varied depending upon where he was in the treatment cycle. Still, every day Paul showed up to work, did his job, and tried to make a difference. It was as though he was attempting to secure a legacy.

I was worried about Paul's quality of life and suggested he pursue some form of retirement. Paul continued to work and I did not push the issue. I do not believe he had anywhere else to go. I think he needed the organization and the feeling that what he did mattered. Though I wished much more for Paul, I appreciated the company and perspective for the remainder of my time there. Early 2006, I returned to command the battalion.

While in command, I was making arrangements for travel to Thailand. A large portion of my command was part of a multinational, multiservice exercise. I was going to spend about a week inspecting training and participating in some of the briefings. As I considered the best person to travel and assist me with the work, I thought of Paul. He knew the work, was outside of the unit, which provided me with an exterior evaluation, and he had not been to Thailand since his was a child. It seemed good all the way around. Paul was excited about the invitation and receiving authorization from his command. After securing all the approvals, Paul scheduled all of his medical appointments and treatments prior to travel so he could feel at his best.

The long flight to Thailand can be exhausting. Seventeen hours on an aircraft and the time change can be difficult. Still the excitement of working with Thai military units, parachuting in the rich plowed fields, and seeing the exotic sites makes it all worth the time. An added bonus was the fact that I had given Paul a chance to return to an area of the world he loved. I thought he would retire in a year or so and wanted to reward him with this trip and a chance to see the unit working in the field. His observations and analysis of the training were superb. He enjoyed the fact that he was using his knowledge and providing input to improve the unit. This sense of relevance and purpose brought a spark to his eyes. His interaction with the Thai Royal Special Forces also brought him joy. The Thai people are very hospitable. After a few days passed, our hosts set up a few demonstrations for us.

As we made our way in the hot humid environment, Paul seemed to show signs of fatigue. Though he did not say anything, four or five hours appeared to be all he could handle. He continued to drive himself from training site to training site. Some sites interested him more than others. Two were of particular interest: the snake handling and improvised booby trap demonstration. There is something about the magic of seeing a poisonous cobra race around the

center of a circle comprised of men. The skill and ability of the handler was impressive, but every once in a while the snake made it to a spectator outside of the circle. As it sped within inches of Paul, I observed a certain speed and dexterity I had never seen before. After the laughing stopped, it was time to move over to the next demonstration.

This is one of those moments when I saw Paul in his element. The soldier setting up the demonstration was of Vietnamese origin. I am certain that Paul had not used his language skills for years. In a matter of moments, Paul and the sergeant were conversing in Vietnamese. It was an incredible sight. I saw his happiness and interest in the varied ambushes being set up. Many were familiar to Paul and I enjoyed his story immensely. But the entire trip was not work, and we had a few special excursions set up for Paul.

After a morning brief, I had plans to take Paul to Bangkok's Wat Phra Kaew, the key temple on the grounds of the royal palace. A several acre complex held many temples, museums, and points of interest to include several large statues of Buddha made from precious stones and metal. I had been there before and expected Paul would enjoy and appreciate the site. When we arrived, I learned he had been there once as a boy. He recalled his early trip very clearly and shared it with me. His father had taken them there once when his family was awaiting transport from Vietnam to Germany. His eyes lit up as he told the story. He moved quickly from building to building. We spent many hours out and about that day. Because of his health, I felt as though I should have practiced a degree of restraint. We hit other points of interest that day; I could not deny him anything. I had seen Paul's health deteriorate over the last few years. I had seen him ill and in pain. Those few days were different; I saw a happy and energetic Paul. That is one of a few images I see when I think of Paul.

The Interview

Though busy with my new command, I continued to see Paul as often as I could. Most of his comrades knew he was in a fight for his life. He was candid in this regard. He had endured so many treatments, taken so many medications, and endured significant pain during this time. He had changed specialists only to find his treatment was not as it should have been. A new doctor stepped in, but Paul understood it was too late. One day over a lunch at a Vietnamese restaurant, Paul said, “You know, they killed me; they fuck’n killed me.” That is the first time I ever saw defeat in his eyes.

Paul’s health diminished quickly. His time away from work increased. My chances to see him were limited as the battalion prepared to deploy to Iraq. I took every opportunity I could to speak with Paul. I enjoyed our talks and wanted to hear what he had to say. I was taking a qualitative analysis course that required an interview as part of the class. I thought perhaps Paul would be interested in sharing a story with me. I spoke with him and we agreed on two interviews. The first was supposed to be on his time in Vietnam. He had been there as a child and later as a young Green Beret. The second interview was intended to review material from the first and add his perspective on how today’s Special Forces soldiers compared to their Vietnam era predecessors. The first interview took place in October 2006.

I showed up at Paul’s door at the appointed time. He came to the door and with a big smile invited me in. He gave me a tour of his home and showed me some personal items of special interest. He was proud of his book collection, artwork, and some big game trophies. We moved to his living room where he sat down his large recliner. He offered me a Strawberry Newton while I set up the recorder and got things ready. His body had changed since last we spoke. The side effects of his treatments made him look very tired and older. The short muscular

legs that used to take the rugby field now looked thin dangling from beneath his loose sweats. This is was a very different picture of Paul, one that I did not believe that I would ever see. I completed my preparations and was ready to begin. I always enjoyed our talks and this would be no exception. It was an interview, but it seemed more like a talk or story. His voice was weaker than I was used to but his mind was clear, and he told me stories about himself that I had never heard before.

After we were finished that day, we spoke of the next interview. We agreed on a date and time. I thanked him for his time and I left him to rest. He was sincerely glad to have the company. He seemed very happy to have a chance to tell his story. I felt honored that he told it to me. We never got to that second interview. Paul's condition worsened, and he died the following month. I felt as though I had lost a great opportunity. Moreover, I lost a friend.

The Ritual

I have had the honor of doing many casualty notifications and assistance missions. I understood the sacred trust of performing this duty. I never enjoyed it, but once you are identified as being trained and dependable, it seems that you are considered a go-to guy. When doing the notification, I learned to speak slowly and be sure to look above the brow to avoid seeing the pain in the loved one's eyes. After a time I rose to a rank where I no longer was called upon to support these missions. This was a relief to me. In the Special Forces regiment we take care of our own. When Paul passed away, the men in my unit expected to take care of Paul's final arrangements. His closest friends cared for his family and final affairs. As the planning was conducted, I was asked to perform the military honors. As Battalion Commander and his friend, they asked me to present the flag to his daughter. I had done so many before, but this one was different.

Many people showed up for his service. It was the largest funeral that I had ever seen. Paul had many friends. The program moved by quickly and it seemed as though the humor and stories laced throughout the service would keep it light hearted. That was until they did the last roll call. The senior noncommissioned officer moved to the podium. He began to call the names of members in attendance. Each man called stood and responded with, "Here Sergeant Major." One by one they stood until finally, they called Sergeant Major Ireland. They called his name three times; the last was by full name and rank. The period of quiet following that last call was a long and memorable one. Paul never was one to be too serious. At the end of his service his family played one of his favorite songs. I laughed as I left the church to the sound of Lee Marvin singing, *I was Born Under a Wandering Star*. Of course Paul's desire was that everyone should gather at a pub in Fort Collins where he had a tab opened. The last drinks were on Paul.

My respect for Paul has been enduring, and my bringing his faults to light was a concern for me. In telling this story I have paused to reflect on how the legend of Paul Ireland will hold up with the conduct of my research. I considered whether the reader will see the same theme emerge in the portrait that is developed from the subsequent interviews. Will this base-line narrative resonate within the other interviews I conduct? As I go beyond the legend to determine which parts of Paul's legacy hold up, it is important to search for what Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) calls "goodness." Avoiding the temptation to search for fault and failure, portraiture is "an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins by searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9).

III. Episodes

It is here that I will create the portrait based on the similar and disparate stories told to me. Although I knew Paul for more than 10 years, it was almost always in his role as a soldier. Occasionally I was given a glimpse into other parts of his life, primarily when personal issues or open conversations would intersect with the day-to-day business of being a soldier. It was only towards the end of his life when I had gained enough trust that he felt like telling me more about his past and sharing some of his thoughts and experiences. The duration of our friendship was short compared to the many others who enjoyed his company for decades. The time friends, family, and comrades spent with him were filled with excitement, humor, hardships, and successes. These circles of acquaintances often overlapped through social gatherings or some purposeful outdoor event. Still, Paul managed to maintain a sense of privacy by keeping these groups separate in many ways. I was no different in how I was permitted to participate in his life. The crafting of this portrait required the perspective and experiences of many friends and family members. Without them, I would be unable to tell this story and share the different sides of Paul Ireland. His personality, passions, and contributions would be archived, fade from memory, and be lost over time. I will begin my story with Paul's early life and end with his loss in the fall of 2006. Through the accounts of others, I will present a portrait that I hope will not only resonate with those who knew him, but also reveal new images of this complex and exceptional man.

Formative Years

Much of who Paul was came as a result of his vast childhood experiences. The history of his family, encounters growing up, and exposure to a number of geographic and cultural occurrences formed a sense of curiosity and foundation of knowledge that would be present with him throughout his life. He was born December 24, 1948, in Nuremberg, Germany, to Betty Jean

and Paul M. Ireland, Jr. He was an only son and fourth in his line to serve in the United States Military. Before his death in 2006, a member of the Ireland family had served this nation continuously since 1891.

Linage

Paul was very proud of his family's contributions and service to the nation. The efforts of his great grandfather Merritte Weber Ireland laid the ground work for medical operations in the military and many initiatives and innovations in modern medicine. He served in the Philippines and World War I, continuing service until his retirement in 1931. Paul's grandfather, Paul Mills Ireland, was also a doctor and military officer. He served in World War II, but received much more recognition in his role as Chief Surgeon for the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Denver, Colorado.

It was Paul's father Paul Mills Ireland Junior and his mother Betty Jean who through years of service and moving around the world exposed Paul to the military and a life full of adventure. These experiences were ones that Paul recalled with great pleasure. Most memorable were his childhood memories of Southeast Asia.

Army Brat

As a 9th grader, Paul and his family received orders for Vietnam. It was early 1963 and Paul's father was preparing to report for duty at the Vietnamese Military Academy in Da Lat, Vietnam. The family's travel was delayed by the State Department due to events in Vietnam. Buddhist Monks seeking religious equality protested in the streets of Saigon. One such protest ended with a Monk committing an act of self-immolation. In light of this activity, the Ireland family would remain stateside while Paul's father travelled to Southeast Asia. The indefinite delay forced Paul's parents to make a number of choices, to include the family's temporary

lodging and Paul's education. They chose to reside in Denver with Paul's grandparents until travel to Vietnam was approved. The uncertainty of State Department approval meant he would begin school in Denver. Paul enjoyed his time in Colorado. He clearly remembered the newsworthy events of the time. He recalled and shared stories on the death of Marilyn Monroe, President Kennedy, and both the actions of a Buddhist Monk and the assassination of Vietnam's President Diem. It was with great pleasure that Paul recalled a tree lined Denver boulevard where he lived for a few months before being allowed to join his father in Vietnam.

The trip to Vietnam was a long one. Flying in the propeller driven C-126 was unlike the civilian jet liners of the time. The modified military aircraft took several more flight hours, and they lacked many of the amenities travelers today have come to expect. The aircraft also required several stops, further prolonging travel time. When the aircraft finally arrived in Saigon, Paul's father met the family and prepared them for continued travel. The trip would take the family another 200 miles northeast to Da Lat. This city was a much smaller and more remote city than Saigon. Still it was a sizeable city of nearly 100,000. The American presence in Da Lat was very small in comparison to the Vietnamese citizenry; there were only four American families in the area. The soldiers who brought their families to the region were assigned to support the training of Vietnamese officers. Da Lat was the home of the Vietnamese National Military Academy; it was modeled after the U.S. Military Academy, West Point. Like the American institution, it provided a 4- year degree and the training needed to perform the duties of an Infantry platoon leader. These Americans were not the only foreign nationals in the area. A number of other European youths were residing there as well. They were students of the Christian Academy. The region was remote but the well developed and the accommodations and conditions were pleasant.

Paul and his family took residence in a vacant French villa. It was some 8,000 to 10,000 square feet with stucco walls that were at least a foot thick and ceilings as high as 15 feet. The large sprawling floors were covered by tile, which caught the sun from the many windows in the villa. The windows had unique pull down bamboo-slats. These slats were three-quarters inch thick. The rigid material was more than an aesthetic and functional cover; they also served to prevent the Viet Cong (VC) from throwing a grenade through a window.

Though distant, The Vietnamese Military Academy was located in a beautiful area in the moderate but often cool mountain region of Vietnam. Dense woods of pine trees give way to jungle and a lush triple canopy of vegetation, which in turn opens to areas of tall elephant grass. Nestled within the landscape was the villa where Paul's family resided. A 5-acre plot of land surrounded by an 8 to 10 foot wall with glass security shards to protect them set upon a hill next to a Buddhist temple. Located a short distance below in a gully was a different lifestyle. Sitting in contrast to the French villa and located only a few hundred yards away was a small community of poverty housing with scrap metal, tar paper, and cardboard shacks that outlined the city. Just beyond this, in close proximity was the city of Da Lat. Paul did not recall having much free reign in interacting with the locals. Perhaps out of necessity, Paul's father kept pretty tight control of family travel outside of the military base. This did not always restrict young Paul's movements. Even at an early age he did not always adhere to the strictest interpretation of the rules and would make his way into the city without permission. He would go into town for a quick meal and walk the markets. Paul recalled hearing that the market in downtown Da Lat was the cleanest in Southeast Asia. With a small chuckle he added that it probably meant that when you walk up to Mr. Hanging Chicken, he was not black from days of hanging in the sun. He would seek out a small vendor and his favorite dish, which was a wonderful kind of barbecue

squid or something that was prepared in little hibachis over a fire. For him, Da Lat was a very pleasant place, a very nice place.

Even then Paul had little difficulty adapting. He recalled certain cultural differences that required getting used to; the bus system was one of them. He recalls that the buses did not have bathrooms, and if a passenger had to go, he simply told the driver. The driver would then stop allowing the passengers to step off the side and relieve themselves in whatever manner necessary. But life in the Ireland home was not so primitive. The villa where the family resided had a staff supporting the family. There was a cook, maid, and gardener for the home. Paul's father was provided with a driver and a day-guard who served as an aide. The aide would see that uniforms, boots, buckles, and other military gear was maintained, cleaned, and polished each day. Paul recalled long conversations with his father's Montagnard assistant named Jet. Paul saw Jet as a wonderful person, a man with whom he spoke often, and he respected him for his service. Paul recalled that he had served with the Americans in some past regional conflicts and as a result was some kind of war-hero. Each day Jet would leave and be replaced at night when Army of Viet Nam (ARVN) guards would assume their post at the front gate.

The food and supplies needed for the home came from a commissary catalog and were delivered by airplane. Once a week various military aircraft flew into Da Lat to deliver the required number of pallets needed to support the area. These were good-sized pallets, probably 3'x4'x4', and covered with heavy-duty insulation. The pallets contained only hard stores like cereals, breads, and canned foods. Meat would also be included in the pallets packaged frozen in dry ice. For produce, the family had to turn to the local markets. Paul recalled the difficulty associated with shopping for produce. The concern was that locals used human excrement for fertilizer. While the locals had developed immunity to this practice, foreigners had not. This

required that something like a head of lettuce would be put into a pretty harsh chlorine solution to soak for several hours. This ritual was required for all fresh produce.

Paul was also exposed to a unique experience in his schooling. Being part of a small foreign community meant Paul had one choice in education—the Christian Missionary Alliance School. The school was located right next to the jungle some two or three miles from the Ireland home. The student population numbered around 120 children. The students were the children of missionaries working throughout Southeast Asia; they spanned kindergarten through the 12th grade. Paul remembers that his freshman class was the largest with 16 people. He also recalled with a smile that the class consisted of maybe four guys and twelve women. He also added that his friend's senior class had only 12 students, 11 of which were women. Paul referred to this as “kind of cool.”

Paul's reflection about his school days in Vietnam was vivid. His thoughts on the missionaries and their efforts to spread the gospel in less travelled areas seemed to impress him. He appreciated their pursuits in the field, pride in their work, and the fact that they were not sitting back in the states taking some easy path. These were dedicated people who stayed while other families and children were more transient. Paul saw this as a very unique school where kids would arrive and stay for a lengthy period of time. Missionaries from areas like Burma, or areas where no infrastructure existed, would send their kids to the Christian Missionary Alliance School. Though not completely safe, Vietnam during that period was more secure and developed in some areas.

Of the four American families in the Da Lat., Paul remembered one in particular. He recalls that his father was a Lieutenant Colonel and the other three officers were Majors serving in various positions at the Academy. Paul remembers only the family with children in any

detail—the Quick family. The father, an Air Force Major, was an advisor to the academy. Major Quick was a wonderful and brilliant man; one that Paul respected immensely. Paul really enjoyed spending time with the Quick family. The family was Catholic and had many children, the oldest of whom, Mike, was Paul's friend and a high school senior at the school. Being what is often referred to as military brats, Paul and Mike spent a lot of time together. Their friendship began when the Ireland's arrived in Da Lat in November of 1963. Paul had begun the school back in Denver and expected to resume studies immediately upon joining his father. When he arrived in Vietnam, Paul was delighted to learn that school was on an extended break because all the missionaries wanted to have their children for the Christmas holiday. So all the kids had gone home and Paul would not meet them until the beginning of February. It was during this time that Paul learned to play tennis and spent time with his new friend. For some three months they hung out together. They would practice and play daily throughout the break and often make their way to the courts throughout the rest of their time there.

Paul was always a student of life. He had a hunger for knowledge and prided himself on being observant. He saw the buildup for the Vietnam conflict as much slower and less escalated than what has been represented by the press. He observed the struggle for religious freedoms and understood the friction between Vietnamese peoples of South Vietnam and the indigenous tribal factions that occupied the inhospitable terrain of the country. The small peninsular nation, already divided by the struggle between communist and democratic ideals, appeared generally peaceful during this period. The slow rising tide of a communist insurgency was in its infancy during that time. Still the threat of a VC was somewhat of a concern. The environment was such that Paul's father would place an M-2 carbine in the carbine holder between the passenger and the driver's seat of the jeep. The family would all get into the vehicle for a trip to town. With

Paul and his father in the front seats and mother and both sisters in the back, they would head down the mountains to Nha Trang. Paul's father, armed with one rifle, could dissuade any possible threat. As Paul put it, "father was the bad guy on the road, okay, with one M-2 carbine and a couple magazines."

Paul also met up with members of the Special Forces (SF) community for the first time. Some distance down the mountain from the villa was an SF camp. Many times the Irelands would invite them for dinner. Paul would have a chance to visit with them and the tribal soldiers of the central Vietnamese highlands. These Rhade and Koho peoples were often incorporated into irregular forces serving with the United States Military. They were a source of curiosity for Paul, and he spent quite some time reflecting on them over the course of his life. Paul saw the conflict and external threat as minimal during that time. It was the political intrigue and internal affairs of South Vietnam that changed rapidly. His family arrived in Vietnam on the first of November 1963; it was the day that President Diem was overthrown. Diem was killed the following day. President Diem and Madame Nhu were strong political figures who rose to power in the mid-1950s. President Ngo Dinh Diem was a devout Catholic whose popularity and recognition began as early as the 1930s. Upon election, he promoted economic growth and an improved education system. Although admired at first, his repressive treatment of the Buddhist majority led to a decline in popular support. His sister-in-law Madame Nhu was a wealthy descendent of the last royal Vietnamese dynasty. In marrying the president's brother she assumed a very powerful role that ended with her exile in 1963. Paul recalls that they were not too popular, but they were very rich. Paul and his friends would play in some of Madame Nhu's mansions. These were pretty extensive grounds perhaps some 10 miles around with well-kept jungle and unbelievable wealth. Paul assumed such obvious wealth was the reason that the

people wanted them gone; he believed the U.S. government assisted or at least stood by as the ARVN military counsel assumed power.

Paul was very curious and aware of events in Vietnam and around the world. While in Da Lat he recalls receiving letters from his grandfather with news clippings. On one such occasion he received an article reporting on killing and hostility in Da Lat. The report said students rioted and killed 75 people, causing damage and burning down a building in the area. Yet none of this occurred. He saw this as his first eye-opening experience on the press corps. According to Paul very little happened in Da Lat. It was sort of a noncombat zone for both sides, and it continued that way throughout the war. It was actually an in-country rest and relaxation area for the North Vietnamese. So Paul was certain that there was none of this fighting in Da Lat.

There came a time when Paul's father received orders for him and his family to be sent home. What seemed like a short tour of around a year would end. The timing was not the best for Paul as he recalls that he had developed a crush on a girl in his 9th grade class just as they were leaving. As Paul chuckled, "I think it was because I kissed her on the cheek or something. This was very traumatic, you know."

Paul's father had decided to travel to Madrid, Spain, to see family on the way to their next duty station. Once per week an aircraft authorized for dependent travel would fly west. The first week the plane did not have the capacity to take the family so they caught a flight to Hong Kong for the week for a short vacation. The bustling streets of colonial Hong Kong were similar to Saigon at that time. The infrastructure was more developed and the busy harbor was the major port of trade in the Pacific Rim. The skyline was growing rapidly and the city's neon lights left a glow against the night sky. It was an uncommon opportunity for most, but Paul and his family

were able to experience this booming city in the early years of growth. The short adventure would be the first of many in the Ireland's journey home.

The following week the aircraft again was unable to accommodate the entire family so they caught a flight to Bangkok where they hoped to make a successful connection. In the week the family waited for a connecting flight, they explored exotic Thailand. Known as the land of a thousand smiles, Thailand was filled with rich history and culture. Bangkok was a thriving city of more than two million people. It had many parks, museums, Buddhist temples, gardens, and retail shops. It was an exciting place to tour by day or night. Paul most enjoyed the palace and its large temple complex at the center of the city. The numerous temples, artifacts, and ornate carvings presented vivid images laced in gold, white, and rich palates of color. The excitement of this experience would leave a lasting impression on him. Another of Paul's favorite places was the Thailand Red Cross snake museum and medical center. Like all boys, he was fascinated by the large assortment of regional snakes on display. The love of animals and the mysteries of nature held big value for Paul. He enjoyed his time in Thailand and the memories he made with his family.

The Ireland's were finally able to catch a connecting flight through New Delhi, India, a place that Paul remembers as filthy, dusty, and less than pleasant. It was a brief layover for crew rest, and they were on their way the following day. Travel did not improve with a stop in Saudi Arabia. It was a refueling stop where the family spent 45 sweat soaked minutes in a hot unconditioned plane. But the family did make it to Europe where they had a wonderful time. This was not the typical childhood of an American youngster. The travel, exposure to culture, and freedom to explore was something Paul would continue to value throughout his life.

The trip around the world was not supposed to end. When Paul's father received orders for Belgium, the Ireland family believed that they would remain in Europe. As most of these tours were two or three years in length, the family fully expected to relocate with him. During this period the U.S. military was looking to move from Paris to Brussels as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) relocation. Establishing a larger presence and forming the NATO Support Activity and U.S. Army Garrison Brussels required significant manpower. For a brief time it appeared the Ireland family would spend some time in Europe as a result of the project. As it often happens in the military, the requirements are subject to change and the family was rerouted to a far less scenic location, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This would be one of the last few assignments where Paul would accompany his parents.

Fort Bragg is known for both its size and number of personnel assigned. Nearly 40,000 military personnel live, work, and train on the grounds of Fort Bragg. It is the home of the 82nd Airborne Division, United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), and the United States Special Forces Command (USSFC); it is the cradle for Special Forces training at USAJFKSWC. Though other units reside on the post, it is primarily an airborne installation. Like any other Army Post, there is a common culture. One or both parents serve in uniform but the whole family serves in that they are relocated and live the military lifestyle, which provides for few certainties. However, one could always count on a steady paycheck and long hours. The family would move in, unpack, and slowly meld into a constantly changing human landscape. Families just beginning military life, those with a little time under their belt, and those winding down a life of service intersect in this common culture. They reach out to establish new relationships, exchange experiences, and gain support in what is often a stressful environment.

Spouses are often gone weeks and months at a time. In periods of conflict, the time can extend to more than a year.

Unlike today, the Vietnam era was limited in forms of communication. Soldiers abroad were limited to the exchange of letters and perhaps a rare phone call to fill the void. Constant change, anticipation, and hope were common experiences for service members and those close to them. These were the families that made up the circle of friends and acquaintances Paul had as he moved from assignment to assignment. Yet for all its challenges Paul sought to follow in his family's footsteps and like the Irelands before him pursue a career in the Army.

It is difficult to say what issue really prevented Paul from pursuing an education at West Point. Normally his family lineage and his father's attendance would have helped secure a spot. Still, the physical standards were high and he would not be able to meet screening requirements. Many speculated in humor that it was Paul's height that might have been a limiting factor, but it was in fact a strabismus or misalignment of his eye. This was frustrating to Paul. He believed that those born into the military community were meant to serve. It is something his family had always done; it was something he was driven to do. His life was not going to be the way he had imagined. With West Point out of the picture, he understood that he would not follow in the rich tradition of the Army Officer. The preparation and conforming to what he believed was the proper conduct of a future officer was of no benefit. Lost and unsure about his prospects, he began to get into trouble.

Initially Paul became less focused in his studies. In time his school attendance dropped off. It was a confusing time for Paul. He was uncertain and lacked direction. In the middle of his dilemma, the family moved again. He and the family were stationed in Pennsylvania for a short period of time. His father was assigned as a student at the Army War College. This was the

pinnacle of Army education and a requirement for advancement to General Officer. It served as another reminder of everything Paul would not be. He became reckless and uncaring. He would do things unthinkable at an earlier age. He climbed to the top of a water tower at Carlisle Barracks to spray paint the words “Go Army Beat Navy.” Defacing government property is no small matter but certain courtesies are often extended provided restitution is made. Knowing that his father was disappointed in him, Paul packed up and ran away from home. He travelled across the country. Somewhere along the way Paul decided he would return home and finish school. He turned inward and never really shared this adventure or thoughts with others. His return to Carlisle was towards the end of his father’s course. This meant yet one more move with the family. His father received orders and the Irelands relocated to Florida.

In the summer of 1967 the family arrived at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. This was the home of the United States Strike Command, one of the first unified commands consisting of service members from multiple branches of the Armed Forces. Sunny Florida would not be the last stop for the Ireland family; it would, however, be the last time Paul would relocate with them. Unknown to his parents or anyone else, at 18 years of age Paul made the trip to Jacksonville, Florida, where he joined the Army. He entered service on the 22nd of August, 1967, as an Infantryman.

Stasimon

The way in which Paul was raised gave him a sense of honor and purpose. It was a comfortable life, full of adventure and the types of experience that few encounter. It was not a life of privilege. With all of its benefits and security, this life was filled with many sacrifices. Families were often separated, relocated, and suffered through many days wondering about the safety of their loved ones. All experiences good and bad formed many of the attributes and

values Paul displayed in his life. He had a true sense of selfless service and patriotism. He learned perseverance in the face of adversity. Paul understood loss and that not all dreams come true. He also came to love people and different cultures. He observed them and learned from them. What he did not learn in the classroom he learned through experience and his own personal pursuit of knowledge.

The Soldier

Determined to Serve

Everyone in Paul's family was stunned by his quick enlistment in the Army. It seemed that Paul, too, was a little surprised by the spontaneous move. He had always assumed that he would serve as an officer, but commissioning was not a possibility. The same physical requirement that prohibited him from entering West Point, however, would not prevent him from eventually coming to serve in the United States military's premier combat force. He was both destined and determined to serve, and this was the quickest and most direct route. I am sure that Paul understood that there were many other options for a prosperous future. In addition to the military many in his family had been physicians. There were family connections and other opportunities, but Paul was never one to ask a favor. He was independent and wanted to make his own way. The Army was his calling and he would answer.

It was natural as Paul saw it; young men born in military families almost always enlisted, never drafted. In his eyes, the 1960s were not what people today think. People were not rioting and protesting to the level portrayed, and it was not until the very late 1960s that the war became unpopular. It was still an Army of primarily volunteers. He could tell by the service numbers, which denoted the source of entry. They were Regular Army (RA), National Guard (NG), and Draftee (US). It was easy to tell who was who. Paul thought that maybe a quarter of the total

Army was drafted, but in his classes and training perhaps 95% were volunteers. He saw 1967 as a time where people were still very patriotic.

Paul went to basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. These initial few months were generally the same for all enlisted personnel. The training consisted of basic military skills like military drills, team building, physical training, combatives, field craft, marksmanship, and other basic soldier skills in a controlled environment designed to instill discipline. All soldiers regardless of the job they were to perform received the same initial training. Upon completing the initial entry training soldiers moved to their advanced individual training (AIT). Paul went to Fort Gordon, Georgia, to continue his Infantry AIT.

Fort Gordon was the hub for signal and communications training, but they had an infantry battalion located some 15 miles from the main post. Paul remembered it as being a rather miserable existence. Located in the middle of a range, the facility was a series of Quonset huts. These very old, metal, domed, cylinder shaped billets had wooden floors and were heated by drip kerosene heaters. Cautious of the fire potential, each night the trainees took turns pulling fire watch. In hour long shifts soldiers would sit awake observing the shadows of dark suet petals floating through the air as they landed on the bunks, pillows, and any horizontal surface within the building. Though inconvenient, the warm calm Quonset was a welcome respite and sanctuary from the cold.

Paul shared that Georgia was the coldest he had ever been in his life. It was a wet bitter cold unique to the East Coast. He recalls lying in the firing points for the M60 machine gun. Deep depressions were formed in these once level surfaces where thousands of soldiers learned to fire the tripod mounted machine gun. Constant and drizzling rain was a daily occurrence. All manner of training was affected, but he disliked lying in the cold water most of all. This was only

one of the many training stops Paul would make having enlisted as Airborne Infantry unassigned. He completed his training in weapons and infantry tactics before returning to Fort Benning for the Basic Airborne Course.

Basic Airborne training is three weeks long. Enlisted personnel normally show up a little early for training adding nearly a full week. Long runs and a structured setting contribute to rigid discipline and a safe environment. There is very little free time and repetitive drills increase mental awareness while building muscle memory. The progressively challenging and skill developing training is designed to instill competence and confidence in the soldiers, sailors, and airmen who attend this Army school. It serves to remove fear and prepare would be jumpers to commit the unnatural act of exiting an aircraft. The initial or ground week takes place in sawdust pits and a 34-foot tower. The second week is a series of jumps from one of the 250-foot towers. The final week takes students through the five qualifying jumps and receipt of their silver wings. Jumping was always in Paul's blood. He had a passion for it and went on to earn his senior and master wings.

Upon completing his training, representatives from the Special Forces Regiment scoured the Airborne courses for potential candidates. Paul was asked if he was interested in volunteering for Special Forces training. Paul certainly understood what a Green Beret was and having spent some of his youth observing these teams in Vietnam, found it interesting. He admittedly knew nothing about the program. As with most programs, courses, or initiatives in the Army, there is a briefing designed to inspire, motivate, challenge your manhood, and secure your bright-eyed and eager cooperation. Paul's hand went up and he volunteered for the opportunity. He completed his training at Fort Benning and moved on to Fort Bragg in hopes of earning a Green Beret.

Fort Bragg

As discussed earlier, the Special Forces Course has remained relatively consistent over the years. Paul often spoke of the modest changes to the program. He was amused that there were only modest adjustments or rearrangements made by some officer attempting to secure a comment for his evaluation report. Still he was proud of the system and felt it held up the high standards of the Green Beret. When Paul arrived at Fort Bragg, he was shipped out to Camp McCall. It was a small, austere installation with large training areas located in parts of some 18 counties. While the facilities might have improved, the rough terrain and unfriendly vegetation has not. Paul began the first phase with the individual survival training. After some classroom time, the trainees were taken to the woods and dropped just off of a trail. One by one each soldier was allocated a piece of terrain and left to survive without assistance. All were given a list of tasks to complete while securing food, water, and some type of shelter. Paul completed this and both the special skills and evaluation phase for a total of some 32 weeks of training. Language was not a requirement at that time and Paul was placed in the training group until he could be reassigned to the Seventh Special Forces Group.

Seventh Group was not well resourced and because it did not deploy, received very little funding for training. All resources and money were going to the war in Vietnam. So every other morning, Paul would break starch in his little pickle suit, a term which meant to pry one's legs and arms into a heavily starched traditional green Army uniform. He and his comrades would then march their highly starched and polished selves to morning formation. Sometimes there would be work to do. They would be sent on a detail to pick up pinecones and debris. Often, he and the others in his unit would hang out for an hour or so, and if no work detail was required,

they would be finished by about 9:30 or so; they would be done for the day. This was not the type of duty he had signed up for.

Paul became frustrated watching the soldiers come and go. He was stuck in Fort Bragg while other soldiers went to war. He understood that the combat divisions were gone; levies deploying individual soldiers from conventional units occurred daily. He recalled that his airborne class of 600 had only a handful sent to Germany or volunteered for training like that of Special Forces. In some way he wished that he had stayed with the standard replacement track. He would be serving in the 173rd or 82nd Airborne Division.

Paul and some other members of the Group had lots of time to think. Paul was a very persuasive individual and at some point asked his comrades if this was how they wanted to spend their time in the Army. He asked them what they would say if one day their kids asked, “What did you do in the war, daddy?” The last answer anyone wanted to give was that they ended their service in the safety of Fort Bragg picking up pine cones. Paul knew a number of men who made that choice, but he and his friends would not be some of them. Some of the best trained soldiers in the Army actually had to volunteer for Vietnam service and this group was determined to find out what it took. There was one woman who managed the flow of Special Forces enlisted personnel, and they were determined to find her. Everyone in the Group knew of Mrs. Alexander. She was an iconic figure in the community deciding who went where, when, and for how long. While it might not be possible to avoid being sent to Vietnam, finding a way in was another story. If the group could get past regimental leadership, Mrs. Alexander could facilitate their deployment. Paul, and as many of his friends who could fit in his car, made the drive from North Carolina to Washington DC. When the group arrived on a Monday, they found that it was her day off. They each crafted notes and left them in hopes of a timely response. Each explicitly

presented his desire to join the regiment in Vietnam. Sure enough the response came; Paul and the others received orders for Vietnam.

Receiving orders meant Paul had work to do. The main requirement was to complete the Vietnamese language course. It was a 4-month immersion course and Paul remarked on the simplicity of the language in terms of structure. He did find some of its tonal subtleties a bit challenging. Like many Asian languages, the same word could mean six different words depending on context and a minor change in inflection. He did not like the written portion much either. Some Frenchman had devised a method for using the Roman alphabet with a number of added characters to denote the accents. Paul figured it all out and somehow retained the language through his life. Of course he was able to use the language in Vietnam, but was forced to learn Cambodian in order to communicate with the soldiers he was working with. I recall being with Paul when he came across a Cambodian soldier. This was some 35 years after Vietnam. They had a 10 minute conversation, which was amazing to me.

Prior to his deployment Paul spent some time with his family. He took leave and saw both his parents and grandparents. They were very unhappy about his decision to volunteer for combat service. The conflict was escalating in Southeast Asia and his family was concerned for his safety. They shared their worries that he was not going to return home. Still, after a month's leave Paul boarded an airplane to Vietnam. The plane was one of the many charter flights dedicated to the transport of service men and women traveling abroad. Of all details to remember, Paul recalls the "big six-footer" stewardess who managed a number of these flights and had little patience for unruly travelers.

Vietnam

Paul arrived at the height of the hot season. The temperature was so intolerable that the new arrivals were given at least a week to acclimatize. They were given menial tasks like hanging laundry to keep them active as they grew more accustomed to the heat. Almost immediately upon exiting the building, clothing would be soaked with sweat and any activity would lead to exhaustion. Paul recalls showering and lying on the bed with a high speed fan blowing air on him. Still his back was covered with sweat and intolerable hives. After a week he slowly began to grow accustomed to his new environment.

After a week of acclimation, training, and in-country lessons, Paul experienced draft day. At least that is what he called it. A number of different projects were “coming around trying to draft your ass.” His described it as a very cordial affair where representatives like Delta or Command and Control (C & C) would approach him in the club and ask if he wanted to volunteer for their project. If it was agreeable, they would speed up the process. The other option was to sit as a replacement and eventually be assigned to a place which may or may not be desirable.

Some jobs were less desirable than others. Paul avoided anything to do with any C & C projects. The programs fell under the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group. The C & C projects were divided into North, Central, and South. He caught on quickly and realized this was sort of a nasty business with a potentially disastrous end. It was something along the lines of two Americans and three Montagnards being dropped into an area because they suspected it was occupied by a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment. This seemed a bit too foolish even to Paul. He said, “they drop you in. Well, yeah, it is an NVA regiment— isn't it?—because you're running your ass off, getting it shot off, and stuff like this. You know, I mean they were just terrible. Life expectancy is not good.” There were not many

openings so Paul had to choose wisely. Paul knew that there was a number of what he called “Mr. Cake jobs.” He made it clear that he did not get one of those jobs.

Paul did want to get a little macho and eventually made a choice. He spoke with great pleasure about the Special Forces A-Teams and the fliers that floated around the area. They too were recruiting new arrivals. He liked the idea of being out in the middle of nowhere with 400 Montagnards soldiers and their families. The older camps were sanctuaries, but also helped control the terrain as the locals understood how to secure their own territory. These camps were a little lean in resources and occasionally they had to call a Mobile Strike Force (Mike Force) for assistance. Paul thought this was a wonderful choice and really would have loved the chance to be in one of those camps. Opportunities were not available so he took the next best opportunity he could find; he chose the Mike Force.

He volunteered for the Mobile Strike Force Command. The command divided forces into four separate regions to support the Corps operational areas in the north, delta, mountain, and Saigon corridor. Another Mike Force was designated at 5th Special Forces Group Headquarters. That one was called the V Corps Mike Force or the “Flagpole” Mike Force. The general consensus was that it allowed the headquarters personnel to pretend they were really fighting the war.

Paul was assigned to the 3rd Mobile Strike Force in the Saigon corridor and was sent to Nha Trang. He received orders and was shipped out to A, Company A, in Bien Hoa. Upon arrival Paul was told he and four other selectees would attend the locally operated RECONDO School.

The RECONDO School was run by 5th Special Forces Group. It was located in Nha Trang, and on a small island called Hon Tre. The 3-week course was packed with courses on

combat tactics, air operations, patrolling, booby traps, combatives, communications, medical, and other soldier skills. Long 16-hour work days filled with rigorous and realistic training was intended to further enhance core competencies. The training specific to the Vietnam area of operations increased survivability and included Survival, Escape, Resistance, and Evasion (SERE) Training. The graduating exercise was a full combat patrol. These courses had a number of quotas that had to be filled. Based upon need and command guidance, different units were offered a number of slots they were expected to fill. When the designated units were unable to fill slots, another organization might be tasked to do so. As often happens, the hosting unit may be forced to pick up the slack. Based on the value of the course and number of new arrivals, 5th Group sent five soldiers to the training. Paul was selected as was another soldier who would later spend three harrowing days under enemy fire.

Sam Redman was also part of the 3rd Mobile Strike Force. He barely recalled Paul's arrival and attendance of the RECONDO School. Sam had just returned from a patrol and was "voluntold" he was attending the course. He recalled some of the activities, particularly the ones designed to make life less comfortable. For some reason the Army has a policy that no training is complete until everyone suffers. Running with rucksacks full of sandbags and numerous push-ups were among the favorites. Some schools provide access to a bar during off-duty hours. Though the work day is long and sleep may be scarce, soldiers have always found it necessary to rally at the bar. Sam rarely saw Paul during the off-duty parties and could not recall working with him until operations at Duc Phong. The men completed the training and returned to their unit. Paul then moved to the CIDG encampment in Long Hai.

Long Hai was a village encampment located on the southern coast some 18 kilometers from Vung Tau. Sitting about a quarter of a mile from the beach, the small community likely

came into existence with the arrival of the Cambodians to the area. Ethnic Cambodian families were brought from the delta regions when they enlisted for the Civilian Indigenous Defense Group (CIDG) program. These indigenous soldiers would serve in conjunction with Special Forces Soldiers forming the Mike Force.

The Mike Force was born out of necessity. They were established in 1967 because neither Vietnamese nor conventional military units would provide support to Special Forces and their CIDG soldiers. The Vietnamese Army would not help the CIDG filled Mike Forces because they were not Vietnamese; they said it was an American problem. The United States Army had a similar response. The only answer was to build a response force using the assets on hand.

The Mike Force was comprised of three battalions and an added battalion-size security force. Unlike the Special Forces Camps, U.S. personnel did not serve in an advisory role. Each battalion was commanded by a Special Forces Team. The Special Forces team leader was the battalion commander and the sergeants were company commanders. One battalion would be 500 Cambodians and perhaps as few as six Americans spread across three companies. The Cambodian company Paul was with was as large as 180 at one point, only two of which were American Special Forces. He paid them and supplied them with food, ammunition, weapons, uniforms, and required materials. He was the center of their universe and jokingly said, “a God.” Paul and a handful of other young men trained, equipped, and led this group in combat.

Missions generally began with a report of heavy enemy activity. Normally a Forward Operating Base (FOB) would be established in the region. It would normally be a battalion sized element. After 10 days a second battalion would move forward. Another would follow at 20 days. This put units in the field for 20 days at a time. This rotation continued until the enemy was

destroyed or moved out of the area. The unit would then return to the encampment outside of Vung Tau and await the next mission.



Figure 1. Early photograph of Paul M. Ireland III taken towards the beginning of his Vietnam tour in 1969.

Paul enjoyed life in the camp. To him it was wonderful because after you finished an operation, he could go into Vung Tau for recreational activities. He got all the good deals that an average soldier might not get. While Paul had frequent access, most soldiers got to the area one or two weekends in a year. Paul was there often and built the relationships needed to get special deals on everything. It was not always about the deal or party with Paul. Relationships and friendships were important to him and he liked to be around his Cambodian soldiers. He respected them and enjoyed their company.

Paul spoke of his Cambodian executive officer, Rung. At 20 years of age, the young American expert on combat tactics was paired with an older and knowledgeable Cambodian. Rung was well-seasoned and required minimal guidance. Paul trusted him explicitly and found him far more than competent. As Paul spoke of his time with the Cambodians he smiled and

showed a deep sense of sincerity. He loved them and respected them. They were warm and friendly. They were devoted and would have protected him from anything. Paul would walk along the line at night to inspect the perimeter. The best time to do this job was around dinner time. He enjoyed Cambodian food. The wonderful rations they were issued by the military were blended into the regional cuisine and resulted in a delicious fare. He would search for the battered yellow rice that would be with served packets of dried spices and mackerel in a hot red tomato sauce. It had a wonderful taste and for years to come Paul could be found with Sriracha sauce in his desk drawer at work. He carried sauce around the camp in his cargo pocket. He would be offered a little bite here and another at the next stop. They enjoyed Paul's company and he felt the same. He was connected to them and they in return made every effort to welcome him as part of their community. He always had a standing invite from just about anyone in the camp. He laughed and his eyes got glossy as he told this story.

And did I ever tell you the story about the first time I went over for dinner, and here's this huge pot. And, you know, you're just using chopsticks, and whatever you fish out you got to eat. Have I told you that one? I'd confidently stick my chopsticks in there, and I come up with this goddamn chicken foot, and I mean it's just like this with these big black fingernails on it, and you know that scraggily, you know—so I'm here. I'm chucking—eat this stupid chicken foot. I mean it's crazy. But they were wonderful, wonderful people.

Paul believed that they would do anything for him. In his eyes nothing compared to the loyalty he received from them. The Cambodian and Montagnard were exceptional people and the way they were left to fend for themselves was something that made him angry. It was as though they did not receive the same level of loyalty they gave. He believed that there was just nothing that could compare to people like the Cambodians and the Montagnards. He told me that he felt very strongly towards them. Paul was not blind to the fact he was the source of their sustenance.

Paul was discriminant in how he viewed his Asian counterparts. He never built any type of trust with those in the Vietnamese Army. He could never develop that trust in the Vietnamese. He felt that he could never know what they were thinking. He did not like the way Vietnamese treated the Montagnards and Cambodians. The Vietnamese were not even indigenous to that area. They had driven the original occupants out of the fertile farmlands. Paul knew this history and it did not make the Vietnamese any more likeable. They had a sort of prejudice that made them difficult to work with. To him they were cold and disingenuous; their cold “slant-eyed stare” was unnerving. He had no Vietnamese in his unit but was often accompanied by the Luc Luong Dac Biet. These were the Vietnamese Special Forces that would often tag along. He never really knew what they were doing because they never really integrated into the effort. They would assume positions in their own little foxhole within the perimeter.

Paul never really worried about the Vietnamese Army; he had his hands full with the Cambodians. He was their commander and though he was only 20 years old, Paul possessed the knowledge, ability, and position that warranted respect. He in turn respected them, cared for them, and very much enjoyed working with his Cambodian troops. This relationship made handling all the difficulties of training and managing every aspect of their sustainment and well-being easier. Still, this combat force was comprised of professionals who were compensated for the performance of their duties; he fully understood that part of this connection was dependent on his ensuring that they received the pay and benefits promised. He had no problem with this arrangement and felt very confident with leading them in battle.

Duc Phong

It was August of 1969. The Mike Force set up a forward operating base at Duc Phong near the Cambodian border. First Battalion went in on the 28th of August and the next day 3rd

Battalion was alerted for immediate insertion. First Battalion was beaten pretty bad and they needed relief. Sam Redman and Paul Ireland were placed in charge of the 2nd Company. Though both were only junior Sergeants, they were made commander and executive officer. It was the first time for each and Paul, slightly younger, took on the role as executive officer for this mission. The company had two Americans assigned probably because they were the least experienced. Neither Paul nor Sam remember the other companies having an American executive officer.

Upon arrival the men were briefed by the Special Forces Detachment at Duc Phong. Using this information, they picked the route considered to be free of enemy activity. They had hoped to link up with the battered First Battalion without making contact. They began the mission on September 1 and after an uneventful insertion, began movement toward their objective.

The initial contact was devastating. The unit was hit hard by NVA to the front and left flank. While the 1st and 3rd Companies immediately assaulted the enemy, 2nd Company held in place and was attacked from the rear. Unable to assault the enemy with the other two companies deployed, 2nd Company formed a defensive perimeter returning fire. The other two companies could not break through so they pulled back forming a battalion perimeter. 2nd Company alone had suffered 42 casualties in the first hour. They had 9 dead, 26 wounded, and 7 missing. After the perimeter was established events settled down for a time. Paul was placed in charge of the company while Sergeant Redman took a squad out to look for the missing. The Cambodians were scared and still reeling from the beating so Sam took point.

The patrol found some dead and wounded about 50 meters out and Sergeant Redman sent the patrol back to the perimeter. He and the radio operator continued to look and within another 50 meters they found a decapitated soldier and no other sign of lost personnel. After returning to

their company they attempted to evacuate their wounded by helicopter. The fire was too heavy so they dumped ammunition and the aircraft departed. They were pinned down and in combat for 4 days. The NVA continued to press and assault the battalion but were beaten back. When they were not attacking the isolated battalion, they harassed them with gunfire and mortars. Tempers got hot when the battalion asked for help from the 1st Cavalry Division. It was the Division's Area of Operations but they were busy. The question was, busy doing what? Their job was to find and kill the enemy. The Mike Force found them but did not have enough manpower to fend off the NVA Regulars. Outnumbered at least two to one, they knew they had no choice but to hang on without help from their fellow Americans.

Several questions came to mind. How had they managed to walk into the base camp of an NVA Regiment when the team from Duc Phong had recently patrolled the area? It was easy for Paul and Sam to deduce that the team had lied or had no idea what they were doing. The NVA were dug into the terrain with 6-foot overhead cover and had been there for a long period of time. Whether it was laziness or dishonesty, the fact remained that one Special Forces team had put the lives of his organization in jeopardy. Paul and Sam were not surprised that the Calvary had left them stranded; they expected that fellow American soldiers could not be counted upon, but this was different. It was another Special Forces team.

On the first night Paul and Sam were nearly killed by "friendly fire." The captain at battalion had called for air support from a Spooky gunship. He told the aircrew to dump their ordinance in a circle a certain distance outside of the perimeter, which he had marked with a strobe light. Since he never left his foxhole, he had no idea where his perimeter was. He assumed it was round and it was not. Spooky was firing in a circular pattern around the strobe light. With three 7.62mm miniguns, the aircraft was placing a round every few yards. It flew at such an

altitude that Redman, Ireland, and key Cambodian leaders were unaware of what was happening. As the group evaluated the situation, they heard the leaves rustle. When they figured out what was happening, they all dropped into the foxhole. Ireland and Paul were quicker and ended up at the bottom. The two Cambodian on the top were wounded by the “friendly fire.”

On the fourth day of fighting, the Mike Force commander finally commandeered the Duc Phong CIDG plus the FOB security force and fought through to the stranded battalion. The plan was to do a phased withdrawal of the main force, secure a landing zone, and get them out. The remainder was to get to a landing zone secured by the late arriving 1st Cavalry who actually agreed to secure a landing zone, which was 10 kilometers from the action. The plan was to leave a company on the line, in contact with the NVA, while everybody else withdrew. A new company from Duc Phong was chosen to stay and assume the 2nd Company’s defensive positions. Redman remained and Ireland took out 2nd Company to the rally point.

About half an hour after the main body departed, the NVA started shooting. A voice came over a loudspeaker, telling the Cambodians to abandon the Americans and surrender. The fire was not heavy, it was just harassment. Much to Sergeant Redman’s surprise the captain came running past him. The Cambodians saw the captain and also started running out of the area. Redman could not stop them. He searched the area and found he was alone. After four days of fighting, the trails and vegetation were so beaten and damaged he had no idea where they went. He heard movement around him. He had no idea which way to go so he did the only thing he could, which was to move away from the approaching enemy. Eventually he made his way toward the departure point.

Scared and alone in the jungle, Sam knew the NVA were on at least on side of the clearing, but he did not know which side. He waited for what seemed like an hour.

Upon seeing members of the Strike Force, Sam ran to the rally point and linked up with Ireland and 2nd Company. A CH-47 Chinook helicopter came to extract the company. The chopper started to lift off then crashed back down to the ground, a B-40 rocket came through the cockpit killing the pilot. The rocket took off the pilot's head and stuck in the firewall of the aircraft. It was a small miracle that the rocket did not explode, killing everyone in the aircraft. All the troops in the back were safe and staring at the protruding rocket. The hardened and experienced Mike Force executive officer just sat there looking at the projectile until he passed out. Paul found that pretty darned funny.



Figure 2. Photograph of Paul M. Ireland III taken after military action at Duc Phong in 1969. Photo originally labeled “An unidentified American advisor at Duc Phong.” Photo taken by Phil Gonzales, 1969, Green Beret Magazine 69-71. Image acknowledged by Ireland family, 2013.

This was not Paul's first combat action and he would participate in many more missions and campaigns during his tour. Most would never receive the level of recognition of Duc Phong.

Because of the nature of these missions and the fact operations conducted by U.S. troops were naturally of more interest to the American press, much of what happened with the CIDG remained unnoticed. This made the use of CIDG troops appealing to political and military leaders hoping to mitigate the damage of troop casualty reports. Paul noted:

look back on the late '60s and stuff, '68, '69, and '70, it'll always would be like that, lost 185, lost 192, lost. And what they would do is they go on operations, and if the First CAV got chewed up somewhere, you know, they wouldn't let other operations have them. I bet you never heard that one ... they're actually dictating the dead ... Okay ... they had decided politically was the amount of dead you could have per week. And it always ran, you know, 200 was pretty much the magic number. So there were huge areas of Vietnam where American troops would not go. And in other words, in a very famous one, in III Corp, the sideline Corp, was a place called "War Zone D," a triple-canopy jungle, and maybe some old Montagnard villages, and I'm talking hamlets, more like with maybe 10 or 15 people and little towns, but mostly just triple-canopy jungle for miles and miles, miles. And that was a responsibility of the 1st CAV, but the 1st CAV wouldn't go there. Why? Because if they went into a place like that, they could get chewed up. Okay. And not get as much bang for their buck, you know, and maybe exceed this 200 threshold.

The troops in Vietnam knew what was occurring on the ground and in these missions. Paul and his unit knew that their lot was to maneuver in those areas that would lead to large casualty numbers for conventional Army units. The Special Forces community understood the need and continued operations in these regions. If an A-Team needed assistance or a target in the region needed to be engaged, the CIDG was sent into resolve it. It was not a place anyone wanted to go; it was unfriendly terrain, unfavorable weather, and filled with hostile forces. These missions were long in duration. They were arduous and dangerous missions lasting up to six weeks. Paul joked it was like a never ending test of capabilities, persistence, and vigilance. He endured the hardship with his typical sense of humor and satiric witticism for which he was known. He did three long rotations in just a one-year tour.

Paul's unit was not the only one to conduct these missions. So long as the requirement existed it did not matter to the big Army planners how many CIDG forces were lost in combat. Even if an entire battalion was overrun, an event which happened several times, the worst that could happen is that only six people were added to the publicized body count number. The important weekly number of 200, which governed combat operations in Vietnam, ensured that the CIDG would remain gainfully employed in War Zone "D."

War Zone "D"

Successful operations in the region were dependent on a well-trained military force. As discussed earlier, the Special Forces soldiers in these units trained, equipped, and led this group in combat. Sustainment was a constant challenge for Paul and his teammates. Keeping the members of his unit combat ready meant sustaining the core competencies of current members while training replacements. It went beyond tactics and soldier skills. The Cambodians generally understood the employment of weapons systems, movement, and basic communications. The CIDG capabilities in planning and understanding the art of war was another story. There were issues with discipline under fire that come with the lack of experience or unfamiliarity with the operational picture. Comprehending concepts like adjustments in combat formations or defensive positions when a foxhole was taken out, how to maneuver when pinned down, or how to provide effective supporting fire was another story. There were constant drills that had to be practiced. Even with constant drills and rehearsals, events could get out of hand. Paul gave an example of the kind of chaos that could occur with a developing force of Cambodians.

The incident happened in the middle of the night during one of many missions. The unit was encamped deep inside a stand of rubber trees. There was little vegetation or underbrush; only sparse grass covered the ground under the tall rubber trees. It all began with the sound of

movement outside of the perimeter. Somehow security had not detected an encroaching patrol. Weapons were discharged and the flashes of automatic weapons lit up the patrol base. Unable to locate the source of enemy fire, CIDG forces blasted away at the darkness. As Paul stated, it was like World War III happened. Friendly forces reorganized and settled into a perimeter. The enemy force had been neutralized and they would wait until dawn to determine the disposition of the enemy patrol that had wandered into their camp. As the sun began to rise, the battlefield assessment began. The area was decimated. Rubber trees had been peppered by machinegun fire and the steel projectiles from claymore mines. The search for enemy dead continued. Finally the first casualty was found. The elusive enemy force was in fact Vietnamese pigs. The small slow moving sounder of wild hogs had gotten so close that their first sound alarmed a sentry who in turn fired in the direction of the pigs. This instigated a fire fight, which had everyone including Paul Ireland in a state he referred to as “scared shitless.”

This was an example of how things could go wrong even after days of training and rehearsals. Nonetheless, Paul was confident in his soldiers. They were motivated to do well and often received other incentives for performance and success on the battlefield. His Cambodians were compensated for capturing and bringing back weapons. It could be quite lucrative for them. There was a graduated scale of payment depending on the type of weapon brought in. An AK-47 rifle would bring in something like 1,000 piasters, a machinegun perhaps 5,000. Mortars and other heavy weapons might bring twice that. This made locating and successfully raiding an enemy weapons cache quite profitable. As Paul put it, it was like landing on Wall Street and hitting it big. This was the force that Paul would take into War Zone “D” numerous times, nearly always with success.

In Paul's opinion, War Zone "D" was the nastiest place to be. There was a constant enemy presence and whenever activity picked up in the region one of the Mike Forces was sent in to take care of it. One such incident occurred near a Special Forces camp located along the Cambodian border. The camp at Bu Dop had experienced a significant rise in enemy activity. The camp commander called for support and a sister battalion was tasked to move forward. The forces arrived with added support from armor personnel carriers. The unit conducted a reconnaissance in force, an operation intended to discover the enemy strength and disposition. The unit moved into a large rubber tree plantation. The unit encountered a large enemy force. The enemy was well prepared, firing from both sniper positions in the trees and machinegun emplacements throughout the area. The Mike Force moved forward only to find the enemy had established a network of spider holes. The enemy came crawling out of these one man fighting positions in force. Rising from the ground within the American forces, it was a chaotic and horrifying experience, which Paul compared to something from the movies. One Special Forces Captain was shot in the back by a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldier who popped up behind him. The Mike Force sustained a single casualty and was successful in eradicating the threat. Some 150 NVA lay dead after the operation, but the incident was something that stuck with Paul. This was a lesson he was able to learn without experiencing it first-hand, but he knew his turn would come.

Though Paul had several missions in War Zone "D," the most harrowing experience would come in early February 1970. The request for support came from a Forward Operating Base (FOB) near Rang Rang. The FOB was located near a small village barely large enough to be noted on a map. There were no residents in the village; as with most villages, the inhabitants were absorbed into the FOB or had migrated out of the area fearing conflict. The remnants of

the village and bustling FOB sat in the middle of an open field. It was surrounded by prairie grass and undeveloped parcels of farm land. There was very little cover or concealment around the camp. The improved visibility reduced the chance of an enemy force approaching undetected. This small active compound was the starting point for the Mike Force assignment. It was a reconnaissance in force and search and destroy mission. Paul's job was to find the enemy and kill them; he was good at this. He had a very simple and successful formula for locating them.

And if you wanted to find the enemy? It's real simple. You follow the blue line. So wherever you see where it says little stream, just flick and go—flip your ass along it, and you'll find them eventually. Okay. You'll run into them because they got to live there too.

Though successful, the formula was not without risk. The enemy was well prepared, knew the terrain, and if confronted on the ground of their choosing would fight from well-developed defenses. This is a substantial advantage, which normally requires an attacking force of 3:1 to overcome the advantage. Fully aware of the risk, Paul led his men out of camp and up the blue line. Moving through the sweltering heat with a full combat load including weapons, ammunition, and light rations was easily another 40 pounds per man. Keeping alert to potential threats under this load was a challenge. Only the threat of potential enemy presence kept the patrol in a ready state.

The unit sought the enemy and would not be disappointed. The unit came under fire from small arms. The volume of fire was light at first. Paul figured it was either a small patrol or what he referred to as "care takers." This small advanced guard was designed to delay an approaching unit, keeping them short of the main body of troops. Just three or four in number, this armed contingent could conduct sniper activities from hidden sites. They could also lay down intense fire forcing an approaching patrol into booby trapped or mined areas. Even with minimal

damage, the delay could create enough time for the enemy forces to assume fighting positions and assess the disposition of the approaching Mike Force. The care takers fell back, confident that their main force was well prepared for the American-led Cambodians.

Paul and his unit approached the North Vietnamese complex. The heavily fortified enemy position was within sight and the increased fire was so heavy that it decimated the point element. Several of the CIDG were killed and the fog of war ensued. At only 21 years of age, Paul was forced to make life and death decisions with little time for thought and only the limited information he had from his view of the battlefield. Seeing portions of the extended bunker complex, he led his troops forward through the heavy AK-47 and rocket fire. The enemy force was estimated to be of platoon size. Some 40 well armed and entrenched soldiers intensified their rate of fire and a failure to act would have cost many Mike Force lives. Paul made his move knowing that the best communication method for his troops was the example of action. He moved forward toward the enemy emplacements and his troops follow. Charging through machinegun and rocket fire, Paul made it to the fortifications.

He began to clear the entrenchments of enemy forces and as the fight continues more and more of his soldiers join him. His brave and ferocious actions pay dividends. Paul's force remains largely intact and most of the enemy platoon is fleeing the area. He pushes forward through the trenches and directs his troops to do the same. Continued fire and violence of action causes the remainder of North Vietnamese to break contact and withdraw. The action is not over as more of the complex is revealed. The sprawling fortification had large uninspected areas and the entire area was booby-trapped.

This required a significant period of time and the threat of an enemy reaction force was on Paul's mind. In addition to clearing and inspecting the bunker, Paul had to consolidate his forces and

prepare for a counterattack. He assessed his casualties and wounded as part of the process. The number of dead and wounded would certainly influence his course of action. The Mike Force had taken the objective and killed 10 enemy soldiers. The total number of enemy wounded was unknown as they had all fled. Paul got the reports on his casualties. He had lost one of his Special Forces comrades and the other four were wounded. The Cambodian force fared worse with 16 wounded and four dead. The dead CIDG members were killed attempting to enter one of the eight bunkers discovered in the raid. Most likely in an effort to locate potential weapons systems that could be turned in for a reward. This caused a fire, which destroyed the bunker's contents and risked igniting the other seven bunkers in the network. Paul had little time reflect on events and mourn the lost. Determined to finish the job and evacuate his wounded, he finished clearing the bunker hoping no enemy counter attack would occur.

The full on attack never came. While the wounded were evacuated, Paul and his Mike Force had to remain in order to secure the large cache complex. It took several days to inventory, remove, or detonate the complex contents. The heavily booby trapped cache was difficult to inventory and challenging to rig for explosion. Meanwhile the Mike Force was harassed by random mortar fire and Paul was still concerned about enemy attempts to recapture the cache. Paul was ready for this but not the invasion that would occur as news of the bunkers contents made the news. This was the second largest cache ever captured and it was getting lots of attention from the press and military leaders. The operation gained instant notoriety as news flashed through every military headquarters. Numerous officers and senior enlisted personnel in starched uniforms and spit shined boots descended in helicopters to observe events and possibly pilfer a weapon for themselves. The area was supposed to be restricted because friendly artillery was pounding the surrounding area in support of the occupying Mike Force. The constant flow of

helicopters and unwanted visitors was more than inconvenient, it was dangerous. Fed up with the activity, Lieutenant General Ewell, the commander of the III Corps Area, issued an order banning the souvenir hunters from the area.

The bunker number grew to 20, although weapons and ammunitions storage were limited to the eight larger bunkers. It would be some time before the contents were fully inventoried, but it was obvious why the enemy had fought so hard to secure it. The contents of the cache were intended to be a resupply depot for the entire region. As the count continued, the amount of inventory captured was higher than what was initially reported. The damaged bunker continued to burn and its contents would not be known. The other bunkers contained 3,000 SKS rifles, 31 AK-47 automatic weapons, one 7.62mm heavy machine gun, six 7.62 light machine guns, three .51 caliber machine guns, four 122mm rocket launchers, 122 122mm-rockets, one B40 rocket launcher, 15 B41 rocket launchers, 120 B40 rockets, 3,440 82mm mortar rounds, two 60mm mortars, 51 60mm mortars, 962 75mm recoilless rifles, 21 cases of assorted munitions, and 65,000 pounds of small arms ammo. Literally tons of weapons and millions of pounds of ammunition were secured by the Mike Force.



A U.S. Army Green Beret advisor and a Republic of Vietnam Civilian Irregular Defense Group soldier stand beside one of the two captured enemy 12-barrel 107mm rocket launchers.

Figure 3. Photograph of Paul M. Ireland III with member of Cambodian Civilian Irregular Defense Group after recovery of North Vietnamese Army cache at Rang Rang 1970. Photo copied from Paul's personal files. The source of the image is unknown.

All this success and recognition was because of the ingenuity and maturity of a 21-year old Green Beret. His heroic actions in the face of enemy fire turned what could have been a disastrous loss into a costly victory. Amazing events unfold when following the blue line.

Honors

Paul spoke very little of about his time in Vietnam. Like others in the Special Forces Regiment, they minimize their participation; they consider it part of the job and believe that is what was expected of them. When I spoke with Paul about Duc Phong and Rang Rang, he recalled little of note and responded that "I don't know what the citation—what I did to organize. I – I don't under- I don't know. I haven't read those things in years, so I don't know." He did

not talk in detail about his accomplishments after he left Vietnam. It was not that he did not have a sense of pride for his accomplishments; he just did not feel defined by them. Even in Vietnam, Paul did not seek glory. An example of his maturity and selfless service occurred after the operation at Rang Rang. He was the leader of this mission and responsible for successfully routing the enemy and capturing a regional supply depot. It was a substantial feat worthy of high recognition. The Army thought so too, but the Army is very judicious in its distribution of awards. This is particularly true when it comes to lower enlisted personnel. As important as the victory and capture of the cache in War Zone "D" was, only one Silver Star was going to be awarded. Paul believed that it should go to his fallen comrade. Laurels and recognition were not the reasons Paul served. Perhaps he sought this in the beginning, but in the end Paul had changed. It was a deeper purpose that perhaps even he did not reflect upon. His tour ended and the total of his contributions were summarized in a handful of documents. Paul returned home this time to Colorado where his family was now stationed. Presented for your consideration are the two citations awarded to Paul for heroism.

HQ, 5TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE), 1ST SPECIAL FORCES

APO San Francisco 96240

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 1905

24 November 1969

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR HEROISM

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

IRELAND, PUAL M. III XXX-XX-XXXX, SERGEANT, UNITED STATES ARMY
Company A, APO 96227, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces,
APO 96240

Awarded: Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device

Date action: 1 September 1969

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For heroism in connection with ground operations against hostile forces in the

Republic of Vietnam: Sergeant Ireland distinguished himself by heroism on 1 September 1969 while serving as a company executive officer with a Mobile Strike Force Battalion. Enroute to support another battalion, the Strike Force was engaged by a reinforced enemy battalion and came under heavy fire. Suffering 42 casualties almost immediately, the troops became confused almost to the point of panic. At once Sergeant Ireland set about rallying his men. Placing them into defensive positions, he continuously moved among his troops directing their fire and encouraging them by his own courageous example as he braved the withering enemy fire to move from position to position. Though Sergeant Ireland was drawing heavy enemy fire to himself by his actions, at no time did he display any sign of fear for his own safety. His actions are credited with instilling by example the kind of devotion to duty expected of his troops, resulting in a reduction of friendly casualties and enabling the company to recover all their dead and wounded. Sergeant Ireland's personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Special Forces and the United States Army.

Authority. By direction of the President under the provisions of Executive Order 11046, dated 24 August 1962

HQ, 5TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE), 1ST SPECIAL FORCES

APO San Francisco 96240

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 768

6 May 1970

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR HEROISM

1. TC 439. The following AWARD is announced.

IRELAND, PUAL M. III XXX-XX-XXXX, SERGEANT, UNITED STATES ARMY
Company A, APO 96227, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces,
APO 96240

Awarded: Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device (First Oak Leaf Cluster)

Date action: 7 February 1970

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Authority. By direction of the President under the provisions of Executive Order 11046, dated 24 August 1962

Reason: For heroism in connection with ground operations against hostile forces in the Republic of Vietnam: Sergeant Ireland distinguished himself by heroism on 7 February 1970 while serving as reconnaissance team leader, a reconnaissance in force, search and destroy operation in War Zone "D", Rang Rang, Long Khanh Province, Republic of Vietnam. While operating in search of enemy soldiers, the company discovered a multiple bunker and cache complex of Viet Cong.

As his elements advanced near the target, they came under heavy AK-47 and rocket fire from an estimated NVA/VC platoon. The enemy's fire was so intense that it wiped out the point element wounding several CIDG. Despite withering fire and with complete disregard for his own personal safety, Sergeant Ireland immediately led his element in an assault through entrenched enemy positions. Because of the superiority of friendly fire and fierce frontal attack, the enemy broke contact and withdrew. After routing the enemy force, Sergeant Ireland directed his element into an area of extensive enemy fortifications, which were previously undiscovered by friendly forces. He then moved along the heavily booby trapped complex, and immediately set up security for elements to search the enemy fortification. The operation resulted in 10 NVA/VC killed, over 200 assorted weapons captured and 20 tons of ammunition captured and destroyed. Friendly casualties were one USASF KIA, 2 CIDG KIA, 4 USASF WIA and 16 CIDG WIA. Sergeant Ireland's heroic actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Special Forces and the United States Army.

Stasimon

As a young man Paul had a strong sense of purpose and desire to serve. He possessed a great sense of adventure and desire to explore life. These were the same qualities and driven behaviors that led him into the Army, Special Forces Training, and to volunteer for combat in Vietnam. Paul had another side, which was his love for culture and people. It was these interests that helped him to build close relationships with his Cambodian soldiers. He felt like more of a friend and teacher than a leader. In many ways this was his family, at least for the time he was in Vietnam. While others chose to frequent the night life, he spent time wandering the camp, stopping to experience life and learn from his people. He grew close to the Cambodians; he built trust with them, and in times of great hardship and danger, led them in combat.

Paul was a hero. During uncertain times and under the strain of combat, he showed uncommon poise and bravery. His level of maturity and confidence allowed him to act decisively, but with restraint and intellect. He understood the obligations of leadership and his responsibility to his men. He acted with bravery, but not for his own recognition. Paul had changed; he left the service and returned home.

College Experience

Party 101

When Paul returned home he did what most young soldiers do, he moved in with his parents until he could get settled. His father was stationed at Fort Carson, just south of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Paul's father had been promoted to Colonel and he and the rest of the Ireland family resided in officer's family housing on Fort Carson. Paul was comfortable on post as he readjusted to life in the United States. He needed some time to explore options and think about his future. He spent time with his family and shared hours playing chess with his father. It was one of their favorite pastimes and provided ample opportunity to talk. The exchanges were something that they kept to themselves, but one could be certain that the conversations included Paul's Vietnam experiences.

Paul's father was busy the summer that Paul came home. Part of being an Army officer is the numerous social requirements. This is particularly true at higher ranks. As a West Point graduate, Paul's father had added obligations. A number of West Point Cadets came to Fort Carson between semesters. Paul's father invited them to the Ireland home for a party. Paul was there with his sisters Linda and Susie. Many of their friends were there as well. The girls had all attended the local Catholic high school and a few of the others had begun college. The house was filled with activity as the young cadets solicited advice from Colonel Ireland and built relationships that they hoped might one day gain them favor or opportunity. In between conversations, the young cadets enjoyed the relaxing environment and available beverages. One would have to imagine how Paul felt about the party. He was surrounded by future West Point graduates, an opportunity which he never had. Paul had to feel pretty secure about the value of his service and coming home safe. He was weighing many options and perhaps the young cadets

were of little matter. He had so many issues to concern himself with. Of all the ideas that could have crossed his mind, the one that stuck with him was a young girl at the party.

Paul had been dating one of the girls at the party but now had interest in another. There were several in attendance; all of them had been students at St Mary's High School and were part of the cheerleading squad. Four of the young ladies, including Paul's sister, were employed with the Base Exchange at the nearby Air Force base. This provided an opportunity for Paul to get familiar with them. The party was downstairs in the basement and Paul noticed a young lady running up and down the stairs to the bathroom. In the 1970s, Colorado sold 3.2 % beer to those 18 years of age or older. It was sold for takeout or in separate bar-like establishments. Paul remarked on the young lady's inability to hold her beer. Her name was Donna and he was teasing her and made an effort to get to know her better. There was still plenty of summer left and Paul had both time and money on his hands. He had made the decision to attend Colorado State University (CSU) and all that he really had to do was prepare for college. The remainder of his schedule was devoted to entertainment and the pursuit of Donna.

Each day Paul would make the 20-minute drive to ENT Air Force Base. Paul's sisters, ex-girlfriend, and Donna would get off work at five o'clock, regain their energy, and go out for the night. A preferred activity for the group was the drive-in movie theater. The entourage would pile in a car with some beer and head to the movies. Other nights the group would frequent any one of a number of bars in Colorado Springs. The pattern continued throughout the summer as Paul and Donna spent more time together. They started to see each other alone and enjoyed meeting at their favorite establishment. Whenever possible, they would meet at a little bar called Giuseppe's where Paul and Donna made plans to stay connected while they each headed off to college. Each night, the fun would end and the next day the couple or entire group would start all

over again. It was a perpetual cycle of beer consumption and recovery, one that caused Paul's parents a degree of concern. They wanted him to further his education and have a future.

Partying was not the college major they had in mind. They impatiently waited for summer to end. As it did, Paul moved to Fort Collins for the fall semester.

Paul was beginning his journey at Colorado State University and Donna would return to the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in Greeley. In a casual fashion Paul said, "Well, if you're ever up in Fort Collins, come see me." Donna responded with a simple "Oh, OK. I will." The two parted ways for a period of time. Paul settled in for school. It was a new start and like most first year college students, Paul was busy adapting to his environment. It was not until the end of the year that he was able to reconnect with Donna. It was during the annual College Days event at Colorado State. Each year before finals week, students would spend the week unwinding. Donna and a number of her sorority sisters decided to spend the weekend in Fort Collins. They made the drive from Greeley in anticipation of the annual celebration, which was known for its massive beer consumption and carrying on. One of the first stops they made was to locate Paul. After a brief search, they located Paul in Durwood Hall. Paul was happy to see them and gladly joined the entourage for an exciting weekend. Paul was happy to see Donna. As he wrapped up his freshman year, he rekindled his relationship with her.

Collateral Education.

Paul balanced his time well at college. He may not have balanced it wisely, but he did manage to pack every moment with the something of import or interest. He was doing what he wished to do in the proportions he chose. Paul moved into the Ramblewood Apartments complex just off campus. He was attending CSU as forestry major and participated in a number of activities on and off campus. In addition to his studies Paul was an avid hasher, which was a

combination of cross country running and beer drinking. He kept an active social life, and even though he attended school on the GI Bill, kept a job of some sort. All activities were in addition to maintaining a relationship with Donna.

Paul's relationship with Donna continued through his eight years at the university. During that period no one really knew how much of the time Paul was actually enrolled in courses. He was involved in so many events with so many different circles of friends that it was impossible to keep track of him. He travelled back and forth to Greeley to see Donna while she was still attending UNC. He was always out and about. He found new recreational opportunities wherever he went. He discovered a new past time that complemented his athletic abilities and beer drinking talents with his fun loving personality. He picked up the art of hashing. He loved the outdoors and running Colorado's trails; it made him happy and fed his spirit. At the end of these runs he also rewarded himself with some fine spirits. It embodied the Hasher creed; he was truly a beer drinker with a running problem.

Somehow between the sports, recreational activities, friendships, romantic involvement, and job, Paul attended school. He was a knowledgeable man. Many of those who knew him well referred to him as the smartest man that they had ever met. Several people that knew Paul told him how intelligent he was. They were amazed at his abilities to converse on nearly any topic. He was well read, aware of contemporary issues, but still focused on the subjects he loved most. His passion was the great outdoors and he loved everything about it. No matter how much time Paul did or did not spend in the classroom, he understood nature, he understood the forests and its inhabitants, and he was devoted to learning all he could about the topic. He retained everything he read or learned. He was able to carry on a conversation in detail on the dendrology of trees, management of forest, and ecological matters. He went to school and was learning. He

was very excited about the knowledge he was gaining. He always had a book in his hand unless someone offered him a beer instead. Paul wanted it all, and it was becoming difficult to manage all of his commitments. It was only matter of time before he figured out that he would have to make choices.

Paul was being pressured by friends, faculty, and Donna to finish school. A forestry degree would put Paul in a job that was tailor made for him. While others might have wanted the best for Paul they preferred his company at the bar, choosing not to give up their party friend. Everyone wanted a piece of Paul's time. They were drawn to him and desired his presence more than to see him successful. Towards the end of his program, it appeared that Paul would start the semester only to draw his GI Bill, and then after about a month or so not go to school anymore. He knew what was happening in the courses and understood the materials; he just chose not to involve himself in the classroom. A select few folks continued to hound Paul to finish school. Donna became more annoyed with him for not following through with his education. She saw the imbalance and how he preferred the parties and entertainment over the rigor of study and finishing his coursework.

When Donna graduated from college she pressured Paul on completing his education. She expressed her concerns and shared her thoughts on how much Paul had to offer. Donna observed a number of the Veterans like Paul. They were still attending school long after she had completed her degree. His heart was not into finishing school, and he continued along the same path of partying, sports, and work. Though she wanted him to finish school, she was reluctant to force the issue any further. She was unwilling to lose Paul over an issue that she felt little control over. Even if doing so would force him to finish his education, she would not take the chance.

Like many others, Donna enjoyed Paul's company on his terms. He had a certain charisma that kept her close.

Ladies' Man

Paul was known for his boyish looks and charisma. His smile captured the attention of just about any female in the room. He was interesting, funny, and possessed what many of his friends called "the silver tongue." He had the ability to connect with women in a sincere way. No matter what his motive, he was honest in his approach and dealings. This honest approach was something of interest to his friends who pondered his success in hopes of emulating his methods. The problem with Paul's approach was that he too was easily captured. He had a real weakness when it came to women. His friends use terms like: a moth to a flame, Achilles heel, ladies' man, and woman chaser. During this period of life he definitely had the potential to be a real Casanova. Instead, he seemed to be far more focused on other endeavors. Even though he enjoyed the attention and was not above flirting on just about every occasion, Paul was interested in Donna and the other activities that filled his life. In fact he could rarely choose between the two and often involved Donna in his undertakings. He invited her to every club party and event. She had a great time and rarely missed an opportunity to share in the fun. Eventually Paul made the decision to ask her to move into the Rugby House with him. She accepted and the two of them shared a single room and all the adventures that went with Ram Rugby.

Athletics

Paul was considered an exceptional athlete. He was not the type to dwell in the gym, but wherever there was a field, diamond, court, or pool, you could find Paul. He took every opportunity throughout his life to be part of the sports experience. His friends acknowledged his abilities and were sometimes amazed at his performance. One's first thought might be that Paul

was undersized. It was a short lasting assumption because he never played like it. Paul used the expression, “Go big or go home.” When Paul played sports, which was often, he lived by this slogan. He went into every event as big as his five feet and four inch frame could carry him.

Paul worked hard and played hard. Whatever he was involved in, he sought to do well. He was always looking to test and measure himself through competition with others. He enjoyed the uncertainty of the contest and how each challenge was new and fresh. Paul was competitive but sought far more than victory. Sporting events brought together many of the elements Paul valued in life. He appreciated the outdoors, the fresh air, hard work, and teamwork. He loved the atmosphere, camaraderie, and energy of sporting events. Paul would not pass up an opportunity to play any sport. He played them all recreationally, but enjoyed two in particular—softball and rugby. Early in his life he focused more on rugby. It was a unique sport with a great history. Having travelled Europe, Paul fancied himself as rather worldly and knowledgeable of the sport. Rugby was an exciting game. Being a mix of speed, maneuver, and physical strength, the game requires players of diverse talents. Paul had many of the required attributes and fit in well.

Paul was in great shape for most of his life. Though not large, he was smart and quick. He played very fast, which made him a natural for positions like the fly-half on his rugby club. He was a very spirited man. He worked very hard and eventually came to play what was essentially the quarterback position for the rugby club. Paul was always looking for a challenge and he loved a good game. It was less about who he played for then getting to play. When the CSU Club travelled to Boulder to play the University of Colorado (CU), the game was on the verge of being cancelled because CU lacked the number of required players. Paul volunteered to play for CU to make sure there was a game. With a quick uniform change, Paul took the field as a CU Buffalo. The first play of the game, members of his own team knocked him unconscious.

Rugby is a game of no mercy, yet no one wants to see a fellow player injured. The players circled Paul as they often do an injured player. They attempted to revive him with smelling salts. Paul finally started to stir. He rose from the field and briefly left the game to collect himself. There was some disappointment from Paul's CSU teammates. While the team felt bad about what happened, they really wanted him alert and back on the field so they could hit him again.

It was an interesting group of teammates and friends. The core group first came together in February 1970; this was some six months before Paul arrived at CSU. The team was newly formed with largely inexperienced players, recycled jerseys from the football team, and a hodgepodge collection of equipment. The team grew in numbers with the fall enrollment. The team quickly became one of the best in the region, winning the 1971 Eastern Rockies Rugby Football Union (ERRFU) Championship. It was a close-knit organization known for its hard work on the field and party culture. Paul formed strong relationships with men in the club. He entered rugby looking for sports and developed lifelong connections. These were strong friendships that would last his entire life. Some of the players who remained in the Fort Collins area eventually became hunting buddies, softball teammates, and pub associates.

Rugby was not just a sport. It was a culture. Participation in the postgame activities was nearly as important as the game itself and brought the players even closer together. The evening celebrations and functions matched those of Europe and Australia. It is said that rugby is "a ruffian's game played by gentlemen." There was an expectation of gentlemanly conduct in approaching the game. It was expected to continue into the after party where it eventually began to deteriorate in a dignified manner. The parties were held in a number of places. Often they were at the Durrell Center or wherever a space was available. Beer was readily obtainable to college students as early as the freshman year. Kegs of beer were brought in to supply the team and party

goers. The group sang all of the traditional rugby songs. They worked hard to parallel the rich rugby history that was adopted with the formation of the new CSU Rugby Club.

One particular song of note was the called “The Muffin Man.” It was the traditional old English song or rhyme, presented in an entirely new fashion. It combined singing, drinking, balancing, and dexterity for the purpose of entertainment. Paul was pretty adept at the song and activity. He would balance the tap beer carefully upon his head while singing “Oh Do You Know the Muffin Man.” As he continued to sing, the group joined in. With beer balanced, Paul began the next stage of the tradition, which is to undress without spilling the beer. Paul was rather skilled at completing the task. He brought the crowd to their feet in song and laughter. The festivities were filled with many other songs and games. Light-hearted banter and talk of the preceding match filled any void. Of course there was music, dancing, and seeking to impress any unescorted young ladies who might be in attendance. Others would try their hand at the balancing act as the gathering lasted until the beer was gone, something that could take several hours. Both Paul and Donna enjoyed the parties immensely. Paul was often the center of attention as was his way. Donna was proud of Paul accomplishments on the field, and like others, drawn to his charisma off the field. He was an exceptional player who was often referred to as the muffin man, a title he carried with pride.

Friend

Paul’s entire college experience speaks to friendship and the interpersonal skills Paul possessed. He was open to meeting people, making conversation, and speaking about anything. He had vast knowledge and real understanding based on his life experiences. Those he met were drawn to him because of his knowledge and charismatic nature. Some only saw the party side of Paul. They knew his big grin, laughter, and a unique cackle that is far too difficult to describe.

Others saw him around town, at work, or casual get-togethers. They appreciated the knowledgeable, common sense, and hardworking man that would do just about anything for people down on their luck.

Those who knew Paul called him a great friend; a very, very good friend that would be there with a helping hand if it was ever needed. He would take the time, money, and effort to assist someone in need or just a little down on their luck. He sincerely cared and listened to those who sought his ear. It was not always the material aid one thinks of; often friends wanted advice or just a little time. They were encouraged by Paul. He made those around him want to do better and to live a fuller life. He was an example who lived his life by seizing what he wanted. Paul was not influenced by the approval of others. He was more concerned with being happy. He held on to whatever he desired with a passion, putting his entire being into it. It was a level of commitment that inspired others. His passion was evident when he took the rugby field with others twice his size. It was obvious in conversations where his wealth of knowledge and calculated effort made his every argument persuasive. He was always deliberate in his communication with others. He connected in a sincere and caring way. It was difficult for those in his life to define or understand, but Paul was genuine in his approach to dealing with people. He drew them in with a frank and heartfelt way. Paul's friends felt that he had a way of making them feel important, and that what they had to say meant something. Helping others was something Paul sought to do. For whatever reason, he always looked to make someone's life a little better.

When it came to friendship, it seemed more important for Paul to give than receive. Doing good deeds for others made him feel good. He did so sincerely and without the knowledge of those around him. He expected nothing in return. He was not open to most people and needed

very little support or assistance. Paul had many who called him a friend, but had a much smaller group of close friends throughout his life. He valued them all and was content circulating amongst the various groups that he had established. He was willing to step into the lives of others, but was particular about those he let into his own life. It was on his terms and suited him just fine.

Working

Paul was known as a hard worker. He seemed to thrive on physical labor. He had a knack for understanding which jobs he would enjoy; this made applying himself a little easier. He had numerous part time or seasonal jobs during his time at CSU. It was important that employment did not interfere with his school and sports requirements. Some jobs were for the money, some were for interest, and others provided opportunities beyond the normal paycheck. He worked in small forestry jobs, firefighting in the mountains during the summer months, and as a beer representative for the Olympia Beer distributor. Regardless of the desired schedule, Paul always found work for the duration and hours he needed.

Paul enjoyed firefighting. It was a unique mixture of danger, hard work, and working in the environment he enjoyed most. As a member of the Inter-Regional Hot Shot Firefighting Crew, he travelled the mountainous regions of the west working in the forests he came to love. Working the fire line was hazardous for several reasons. Shifting winds could bring a raging fire back on teams at any time. Wearing bulky gear and carrying heavy equipment through the hot rugged mountain terrain could cause heat exhaustion. Brandishing heavy axes and chainsaws in dense vegetation under severe time restrictions could lead to horrific injury. It was as dangerous as it was fulfilling. Paul would return to base camp exhausted, filthy, and completely satisfied.

When the fire season ended, Paul returned to Fort Collins physically hardened, happy, and financially set.

Paul's second job was as a beer representative. He was the only Olympia Beer representative in the campus area. The reason he took the job was to ensure there would always be beer for the rugby club. Again Paul was practical in the application of his time. The beer company sponsored both the club and their Wednesday night parties. As it turned out, he was also a pretty good salesman. He had great interpersonal skills, was well organized, and a solid administrator. He made some reasonable money while providing for the Club's needs. Everything Paul did seemed to fit into his life the way he wanted it to. He successfully added work to his busy life connecting to sports and recreation.

Stasimon

Paul met his transition to civilian and student life with great enthusiasm. The time he spent at Colorado State University was not necessarily devoted to education, but nonetheless, it was a growing and learning experience. While Paul had mastered much of the classroom materials, he saw this as a time for fun and group interaction. This social and party like atmosphere was a part of nearly all Paul's undertakings. It was integrated into sports, work, and normal college activities. He was considered the nucleus of many of these activities and was certain to promote the festive atmosphere. He had many interests. He loved athletics, building relationships, and work. Each outside interest appeared to pare into the time that should have been devoted to his studies.

Gradually over time the focus shifted from school to other activities. Paul still loved to learn; his natural curiosity and thirst for knowledge was still present. He discovered the classroom was not the only place to find the knowledge he sought. He continued to read and fall

back on his earlier life experiences. He learned while working the fire line for the forest service. He gained knowledge as a beer representative. Life was a classroom and the degree was not important to Paul. He had a great sense of adventure and desired to explore new directions in life.

Paul set the Vietnam experience behind him. Even in his early years, he chose not to share the details of his time in combat. He found new friends and built a number of relationships. He was a strong and steadfast friend who could be counted upon. Always giving and never asking for help, much about Paul remained hidden behind his smile and charming personality. It is unknown what impact Paul's year in Vietnam had on his college experience. Since he never showed signs of distress or shared details, one is left wondering about his decisions. Was his lack of focus and gravitation towards the party life that of a normal dropout or some struggle to reconcile with the events of Vietnam? He did not complain or feel sorry for himself. Like the young but exceptionally mature Green Beret Paul was, he went all out in the pursuit of masculine activities and the opportunity to display his talents. He showed no weakness in his youth. His desire to live a full life and explore opportunities was evident but the fact he was content to remain in a small city was a bit puzzling. In time Paul might have moved on, but a change in circumstances forced him to make some hard decisions. Paul would become a family man and return to a life of service and new opportunities.

Family Man

Husband

Paul was not the reluctant husband. At least on the surface, he was calm and committed to the idea of doing what was right. Paul was a traditionalist. He displayed a balanced mix of his parents attributes. His mother was a sweet, warm, and loving person. His father was the logical,

regimented, and scholarly professional. His parents had modeled the traditional roles of husband and wife. He knew what was expected of the typical household male and provider. There was no doubt about doing what was proper when it came to family. When Paul discovered that Donna was pregnant, he immediately went into a mode of responsible behavior. He set out to create a secure environment and build a family in a way that he understood it. Two important matters that were on the top of his list were securing a job and marrying Donna.

Paul made several decisions with little input from others. He was decisive and never one to hesitate in taking action. Even though Donna had been with him for years, she had no idea that Paul was making so many changes in his life. They planned their wedding and prepared to move forward with their life together. On her wedding day, Donna was surprised at the all of the uniforms and unfamiliar faces at the celebration. She knew the Army was a big part of Paul's life. What she did not know was that Paul had enlisted in the National Guard and was actively pursuing full time employment. He had made the decision to sign on as a part time soldier and secure temporary employment until an active duty position opened. It would take almost a year, but Paul was patient and managed to find part time work on a consistent basis. It was as if a switch had been turned on and Paul felt a need to be responsible.

Paul was a man of conviction. His principles were generally unwavering and he was willing to share his views on any topic. Whether it was his personal or professional life, Paul was assertive and sought to control the environment. It was not an authoritative or high-handed control; it was more of confident, proactive, and decisive form of control. He had good intentions and wanted the best for everyone. It was as if he felt his intentions negated the requirement for approval or feedback from others. His relationship with Donna was no exception. He knew that he must provide for his family. He knew how to go about it and quickly moved to put the pieces

together. Donna might have been surprised by Paul's activities and decisions but she was pleased with the results.

Paul was a dependable husband with great potential. He was charismatic, intelligent, and hardworking. He was occasionally a little stubborn and perhaps spoiled. But the type of charm and loyalty he displayed made everything seem like it would be alright. Paul had entered the service, and the two felt a sense of stability and security. Donna and Paul were married and began their life together as husband and wife.

Much of the early success in Paul and Donna's marriage was due to the laughter. They simply had fun together. There was something about Paul's presence that made Donna feel good. She could not identify what it was that drew people to Paul. She like everyone else found Paul a compelling presence. He attracted all manner of people, and many were included in the day-to-day life that Paul and Donna shared. There was always some plan that involved sports, nature, home entertainment, or a night out on the town. For those who knew Paul, wherever he was holding court was the place to be. It felt good to be around him.

Paul's practical approach to solving problems and making decisions brought with it a sense of security. It was as if nothing could go wrong. Paul was not always about the party. He was knowledgeable on all manner of affairs. He understood finance and the importance of proper investments. He balanced the use of disposable income with his preparation for the future. Part of being a good provider was the planning for retirement. This meant securing an annuity, wise investments, and real estate. His goal was not compiling an obscene amount of wealth, but he wanted to be very comfortable in retirement. He did so by consistently putting money away for the future while taking care of today's requirements, neither of which would be in a proportion, which affected his social life or acquisition of life's pleasures. His logical approach to finances

appeared to keep the household in order. With very little input from his wife, he kept the household and family issues moving in a logical and successful fashion. Paul wanted it all and generally had a plan to get it. He understood what it took to be comfortable and gain security and was willing to work for it.

Paul was not afraid of hard work. He continued his seasonal work on the fire lines and did his best to impress decision makers when working with the National Guard. He was the type to show up early, stay late, and spend every minute between applying himself. He also remained engaged socially. Paul understood the politics of the military and being seen was a big part of securing a position in the full time force. He worked hard impressing leaders with his talent and experience. Still there were no openings and Paul would wait some time before securing a full time position. The temporary orders for special projects were enough to sustain him and his family. When the opportunities fell short of meeting family needs, Paul found other part time work. He was determined to be a good provider and was resilient in the pursuit of a full time job. The same persistence and desire to control the situation was also present in Paul's other dealings and professional life. He felt the need to manage events to achieve his desired outcomes.

Paul was persistent and patient in his endeavors. He was, however, not one to accept defeat. Paul was prone to stubbornness and calculated maneuvers to get what he wanted. He was subtle in his technique having mastered a graduated approach to influence. Nearly everyone fell prey to his charisma and logical approach to solving matters. Moderate resistance might be met with humor and an added measure of charm. Humor and an extended period of debate designed to wear down resistance would most assuredly follow. Any resistance at home would be met with much the same. He might inject a measure of pouting and manipulation. There were very few who did not bend to his will. Most were unaware of how controlling he could be. He was a

natural leader and had a very persuasive personality. Those unable to see issues his way most often accepted a draw or were sent on their merry way. If it was something Paul truly believed in, it was clearly a case of “My way or the highway.”

Father

To say that Paul struggled with being a parent would not be a fair assessment. He had enjoyed an adventurous childhood with two great role models. He had a loving mother and an intelligent father to nurture and influence him. He had the tools he needed to be a capable parent and by all accounts he was a good father. Early on it was easy for Paul to provide the attention and guidance his children needed. He liked spending time with his kids and included them in many of his own activities. They were very close and the children adored him. He enjoyed the laughter and energy they brought into his life.

Paul and Donna’s first child was a little girl they named Kelly. Paul was very proud of his little girl and of course her name was associated with the color Kelly Green. It flowed nicely with the last name Ireland. The couple shared responsibility for Kelly, with Donna initially picking up a larger role in her care. This worked fine for a time but circumstances changed when Donna found full time employment. Paul was still working a number of odd jobs and knew he would have to adapt to the change. Paul decided that it would be beneficial to remain at home with their daughter Kelly. He did so for about six months until he found a full time position with the National Guard. He enjoyed his little girl but of course jumped at the chance to secure the employment he waited so long for. Life was busy and was about to get busier. The Irelands were going to have another child.

Paul was happy about the new addition. He was going to have a son and the idea of another Paul Mills Ireland was very exciting. Paul’s pride in his lineage and the fact he had a

progeny to continue the name had him grinning from ear to ear. He was so excited that the pending birth actually caused him to take pause when considering his traditional hunting trip. Paul figured the timing and accepted the risk. He went big game hunting in January 1983. His expedition was interrupted when Donna went into labor. Unknown to Donna, Paul had cut his trip short. She was very surprised and excited to find that Paul had returned from his hunting trip to be with her. Even Paul's love for hunting and the great outdoors could not keep him away from Paul Junior's birth.

Paul included his children in a number of activities. Kelly and Paul were present at softball games, after parties, barbeques, mountain excursions, and every other event Paul attended and felt to be suitable for his kids. He was proud of his children and had a very strong bond with them. He enjoyed the time with his youngsters. At this point in his life Paul felt comfortable with his role as a father. Kelly and Paul meant the world to him and they were well behaved children requiring little direction. It was not until later that Paul had difficulty maintaining that connection.

As they got older, it became more difficult. No one in the family understood why Paul struggled with the children as they reached their teen years. He had been so capable of caring for them previously. His daughter thought he was a good dad and a sweet man; sentiments echoed by Paul's ex-wife. He was still proud of his children, but as they began to reach their teen years, Paul did not understand them very well. He had no idea how to influence them when they began to reason for themselves. They were making decisions and Paul had no answers. Paul found himself in an unfamiliar place. He felt helpless, uncertain, and did not know what to do. He had not been prepared to trust or let go of his children. He was ill equipped for that tough time and

could no longer control the events in his household. That is when Paul began to spend more time with his friends.

Friend

Marriage had not changed Paul very much. He was busier and more responsible but still found time for his friends and recreational activities. He had his circles of college and rugby friends. He had developed several new acquaintances in the hunting arena and now was connecting with a number of veterans and military acquaintances. His connection to the National Guard led him to a number of Vietnam Veterans and a number of other inexperienced soldiers.

Paul remained closest to his rugby friends at this point in his life. He had known them longer and his love for physical sports and recreation kept him engaged. Paul filled his free time with softball and other pick-up games like basketball. He could take the kids to the park, have fun, and then head to the bar for a beer with the little ones in tow. He would have his good friends over for evening entertainment. It was like old times, his friends and wife laughing and enjoying each other's company.

Paul's circle of friends remained largely separate. Not so much because he planned it that way; they simply had little in common. Occasionally there was some blending of the groups when it came to hunting season. The hunting group was in its infancy during this period of time. While Paul went often, he had not developed the roster, routine, or logistical structure that it would one day be. The elk and deer expeditions were the longer trips. Paul would also put in for numerous other big game seasons, but it was based on his time availability and the opportunity. He was eager for bighorn, mountain goat, bear, and any other chance to head to the mountains. Duck, geese, pheasant, or duck season brought other opportunities to head out to the field or wetlands. He could head out on the weekend or perhaps slide out on a work day. Paul would

answer the call from fellow hunters; he was available for most any trip. He also could muster the group for a day of hunting on the spur of the moment. Paul balanced his hunting excursions with work requirements. The fact he was building friendships within the Special Forces Company meant that they too were involved. On occasion the group colluded to come in late or slide our early in order to get some hunting in. The soldiers at the unit appreciated Paul's passion for hunting; in fact they found him to be a knowledgeable, intelligent, and skilled hunter capable of leading them to success.

Paul's past military service gave him immediate credibility in the unit. He was a known quantity who had proven himself on the battlefield. He was athletic, good looking, and able to hold his own in any environment. It was not the normal type of military unit. Typically those within the Special Forces Community have much higher test scores in a number of areas. They have superior scholastic aptitude, physical abilities, and exceptional talent in problem solving logic. Holding one's own in a group of Alpha males could be tough if you were the new guy, but Paul had no problem adapting and quickly made a number of friends.

Paul was always there for friends. He saw them as an extension of his family. He would take time out of his busy day to aid a friend in need. He would provide assistance in numerous ways. Money or support of any type was always available from Paul. He was quiet about what he did for others. It was a personal matter and he did not want to embarrass anyone by sharing what he had done. He also did not want the recognition. He shied away from attention. It would be years before anyone knew or had any idea of all that he had done for others. Even his closest friend did not know about Paul's many good deeds. He helped others out of the goodness of his heart.

Stasimon

Paul donned the mantle of family man with little resistance. It seemed like a natural step. Paul had grown up in a conventional family with traditional roles and values. In many ways his childhood environment promoted family every bit as much as it did military service. He was raised to be responsible and do the right thing and he did so. He became a responsible husband and father. He found employment and sought to put together a normal suburban household. It was not always easy, but Paul did his best to be a good family man and maintain his active social life.

A big part of Paul's life revolved around friendships and recreational activities. He incorporated his family into nearly all events. It was much the same as it was with his earlier college years with Donna. Wherever Paul went, Donna was with him. The children were often included, the exception being the hunting trips or some activity he thought to be inappropriate for them. In many ways Paul viewed his closest friends as part of his family. He needed his friends and the frequent interaction of sporting events, hunting, bar meetings, and other group get-togethers. He also felt compelled to assist them when he could. He was not one to do something for recognition or payment. He was generous and confidential with his help. He did not want anyone close to him to feel ashamed. He had no problem knowing what was happening in people's lives, but was never obliged to share the personal business of others. Nor did he want others to know too much about his personal life. He kept that to himself and the assistance he rendered remained largely unknown even to his wife Donna. It was years later when Paul's friends would approach her with stories of Paul's assistance and generosity. They would tell her what a great and generous man he was.

Return to Service

A Leader

Much of what defines an Army leader is written in various Army texts, field manuals, and circulars. It changes over time so that some sanctimonious senior leader has an opportunity to place his brand on a document that others will see. They do so in hopes of securing a legacy or positive remark on an officer evaluation report. If one scans the periodic changes over time, it is evident that the words remain largely similar and return to previous versions with a passing of time. Pick up any historical volume and you will see that it mentions a number of qualities possessed by Paul. Still they fall short of defining various combinations of attributes and personal characteristics that make an effective leader. Paul worked with thousands of soldiers in his career. He was a peer, supervisor, and subordinate, but always a leader. When those who served with him describe him, they use words like: confident, dynamic, competent, understood people, honorable, and a modest hero.

Paul possessed a high level of confidence. He exuded self-assurance and poise under the most extreme pressure. He was void of hubris or an air of superiority. He displayed a sense of calm and awareness expected of a military professional. He was respected by the soldiers he came in contact with. They followed him willingly, even when he was overly vigorous in the application of directives or the pursuit of an objective. Some humorously called him “the little general.” It was a term of affection meant to recognize his confident demeanor and inclination for decisive action. He was the type to take charge no matter what the situation. The troops would often say that with Paul it was “lead, follow, or get the hell outta the way.” There was never any doubt about Paul taking the lead. He was very good at organizing, and much better at

directing and giving orders. He was a natural leader with a high level of energy and dynamic personality.

Often one's physical stature is viewed as the measure of a dynamic or imposing presence. Paul was not tall, muscle-bound, or otherwise of dominating presence. He was unremarkable in this regard. There is little consideration for the unseen virtues and intangible qualities that inspire or move others to act. Paul possessed these difficult to define attributes. Whether they were developed or natural gifts, he had a dynamic personality and strong leadership skills. He was the type to take charge and accomplish the task at hand. Those who knew him used terms like charismatic, powerful, and energetic. His comrades called him "the little guy" and "the leprechaun" in humor or moments of comic relief. These same comrades also referred to him as larger than life. It was a trend that had continued since his early service years. He had always been perceived as too small. Whether it was for a military commission or on the rugby field, he worked hard to prove himself more than worthy. He had passion and the heart of a lion. One of his brothers in the Special Forces Regiment referred to him as the epitome of a barrel-chested freedom fighter.

When Paul joined the unit in Fort Collins, he was received as a subject matter expert on many military skills. He was a competent authority on weapons, tactics, and contemporary doctrine. He had credibility and displayed such a high level of knowledge that none would question his abilities. He was competent in all manner of military skills. His favorites by far were the crew-served weapons. In particular he loved working with mortars. This versatile indirect fire system was a valuable support weapon. It was an asset that had served Paul well in the past. The art of employing the weapon system was something he prided himself on. It was also a skill that he provided expert instruction on.

Paul taught members of his own company, other units, and soldiers from militaries around the world. Paul was an exceptional instructor. He was very good at instructing any subject that he put his mind to. One of the most valuable teaching experiences Paul had was sharing his knowledge with the Maldivian National Defense Force. It was a historic event in that they had minimal capacity to defend themselves prior to this. Paul's peers were amazed by his expertise and ability to connect with the Maldivian Forces. No one was better at working missions associated with foreign internal defense (FID) than Paul. He was back in his element; he had done much the same mission in Vietnam. He worked systematically through the operations of the mortars. His peers observed as Paul presented theory, practice, maintenance, and the employment of the weapon. They saw the satisfaction on Paul's face. They understood the respect and appreciation that the Maldivians displayed. As often happens with Paul's comrades, they also noted that Paul stood every bit as tall as his new island friends.

Paul's competence was not limited to teaching. He was devoted to his normal duties. He was intelligent, understood the organization, and was fully capable of running the Special Forces Company. As a member of small core group of active duty administrators, he worked as the proxy for the commanding officer who was a traditional National Guardsman in the rank of Major. Paul ran the company and was known for his superior knowledge and quality of work. He enjoyed being in charge and there was no doubt he was. He treated the traditional National Guard leadership who did their monthly drills, annual training requirements, and training with a high level of respect. He also made them look good. All they had to do was give him the latitude to do his job.

He was devoted to the Special Forces Regiment and the men in his unit. He displayed superior leadership qualities, which consistently placed him in the highest tier of evaluated noncommissioned officers.

Paul built up such a great reputation that his occasional absence and deviations from proper conduct went largely unaddressed. He had a clever and humorous talent that aided him in extracting himself from difficult situations. In fact his personality and talents also had him in high demand to support any number of subordinate unit missions. All of the young Special Forces Team Commanders wanted Paul to assist them in the planning and execution of their missions. These captains were eager to achieve mission success, and Paul was a known quantity who could smooth out the wrinkles of their overseas or otherwise complex deployments.

Paul secured a number of trips to include Alaska and exotic places like Thailand. Overseas missions and the logistics of moving men, equipment, and weapons were challenging. Add the coordination with embassies, country teams, and local facilities to support the soldiers and any failure could quickly cause the mission to unravel. Paul became a security blanket for some of the teams. He was training leaders senior to himself on how to do their job. He saw nothing wrong with this. He felt it was his purpose to pass on the knowledge he had gained. In fact it was the job of a Green Beret to train soldiers and to be the best at it. When he was not part of the team, it was not uncommon for him to be an evaluator or advisor.

On one occasion, Paul was able share his experiences with one of his teams that went to Guam. He shared his expertise and coached the members of the 12-man detachment. The team remarked on his expertise and recognized his high level of proficiency. He was comfortable in these remote places and in more exotic environments. It was almost a challenge to see how well he could live under the most austere of conditions. It was as if he belonged there, and it was

apparent to everyone around him. When the mission was over, Paul also mastered the skill of identifying the best recreation places. If there was time off to be had, his veteran senses could locate the best beach, hotel, or local hot spot. While he loved being a soldier, Paul also liked luxury and the finer pleasures in life. He understood the importance of relaxation and taking care of the one's self. He also knew that leadership meant great responsibility. He always ensured the soldiers were cared for prior to taking any opportunity himself. This was something many of those in leadership positions fail to consider and Paul knew this at the earliest part of his military career.

Paul was mature in his thought and ability to reason. He was very adept at seeing problems or issues in a wider context. He was a conceptual thinker who was good at quickly looking at problems or situations, analyzing them, and then coming up with a viable course of action, plan of attack, or solution. He was considered an answer man that many came to for solutions or guidance. He enjoyed his reputation as a problem solver. He used the same abilities to navigate through his military relationships and understand those with whom he interacted.

Paul understood people. He was very good at analyzing individuals and their personalities. He was a coach, trainer, counselor, and friend. He was able to identify the strong points and failings of others, allowing him to play to their strengths and weaknesses. He was able to assemble, train, and get the most out of any group or team. He had an ability to work with folks one-on-one. He was capable of connecting in a sincere and meaningful way when conducting his professional or performance counseling. It was not the smooth conversation of a trained mental health professional; it was the insights of a sage individual providing candid feedback or advice. He wanted others to do well and invested the time to aid them in their work or personal issues. He made those around him feel like what they had to say was of worth. His

use of his gift made those he spoke with feel important. At times his gift could be used to control those with whom he interacted on a regular basis.

Many of the soldiers around him wanted to learn from him. They wanted to soak up every bit of knowledge that they could. He had so much experience and was willing to share his hard learned lessons. There were few role models with real combat experience. So many soldiers left the Army after their service obligation expired. Most wanted little to do with the service. Many who remained on active duty were part of a larger dysfunctional military that was low on discipline and poorly equipped. Paul's proficiency in the service of arms and the confidence he projected drew people close to him. Some of those who knew him came to realize over time that they had become somewhat subservient. He was able to keep those around him busy. It was normally a very small task like retrieving a document, making copies, or running an errand. Even those that came to realize what had occurred continued with the program. Those who replied with a negative response or chose not to reply to Paul's requests were not ostracized. Paul would just do it himself with a shrug of his shoulders. It was as if, he did not realize what was occurring.

Paul influenced everyone around him. It was not done in a malicious way. It was just his normal attempt to get the job done. He moved with a sense of purpose and led by example. Following the path of least resistance was easy and Paul blazed that path. In setting a direction others naturally followed. When influencing people, it is difficult to say how much of what he did was a conscious effort. It seems certain that Paul was able to develop an agenda and compel others to support him in his efforts. At other times it was more of an incidental buy-in from those who were not consciously co-opted into the endeavor. He had many plans it just seemed logical to contribute for the good of the organization.

Many who knew Paul thought of him as an honorable man. There was a small minority of folks who did not like Paul for one reason or another. Even the majority of this minute group admired him and thought of him as honorable person. Most were aware of Paul's developing struggles with alcohol. They set this issue aside as a minor portion of a great man who was devoted to his profession, comrades, and friends. They admired him for who he was. They respected him for what he had done. Those who knew him will tell you that he exemplifies the ideal of honor and service to one's country and the Special Forces Regiment. He was a man's man who was always there for those in the unit. His word was always good. He made promises sparingly and kept them regardless of the cost or personal discomfort. He always displayed this trait and based on his earlier service, it was not a new concept to Paul. He worked hard to do what was right and present himself in a modest fashion even when talking of his earlier service.

Paul was a modest hero. He was not boastful or one to advertise his earlier service. He opted to let others do it for him. He was one of those Vietnam Veterans who did not see what he had done as heroic. This was a trait that seemed to be consistent with others Special Forces soldiers serving in Vietnam. They expected to work harder, accomplish more, and do better than others. It was the job that they were supposed to do. Paul saw it as part of the profession and service to his country; this too was a part of what others considered to be honorable conduct.

He never blamed his experiences in Vietnam for adversely or detrimentally shaping his personality or life. In fact, he rarely spoke to others of his of Vietnam service unless it was a teaching point. It was as if he had no desire to move beyond sharing the mechanics of what he learned. Others might have felt it necessary to bemoan times past and seek pity for their hardship, but not Paul. He had no obvious specters or issues to resolve, at least that he was willing to display or share. There were times when the topic of Vietnam did arise. It would be

during a time when an individual or very small group would directly ask a question or elicit advice.

On those rare occasions Paul would open up a little. It could be after work, at lunch, a coffee shop meeting, or over a camp fire. The timing had to be right and Paul would let his guard down a bit. There also had to be a reason for bringing something up in the context of Vietnam. It would be a lesson or teaching point. He would present a vignette with enough detail that he could provide an adequate lesson on the topic. He did not like to go beyond a certain point in these conversations. It was rare that he ever spoke outside of this context.

On occasion Paul might let something slip about his time in Vietnam. It was so rare that the sum total of his friends could rarely recall more than a few incidents. One such occasion took place during preparation for hunting. The group began packing up for hunting camp and Paul was loaning a close friend an old Army footlocker. He spoke about a buddy in Vietnam. He explained that his comrade had been killed and that this footlocker belonged to him. It meant something to Paul because it was his friend's locker. He kept it because they had a shared experience and Paul wanted to remember him. He shared little more than this on a few other occasions. At work, socially, or at home, Paul minimized the value of his service. He did not wish to be defined solely upon his service in Vietnam. The assessment of others was not of the greatest importance. If anyone was to form an opinion, he would prefer they think of him as a good friend, soldier, and teacher.

Mentor and Teacher

Paul had become a fixture at Company C. He was not advanced in age, but his unique role in the organization had many people turning to him for guidance. He worked with a handful of people on a daily basis, but was responsible for the support of more than 80 unit members. A

number of the unit members saw Paul as a good teacher, but there were others that grew closer to him. In speaking to them, you hear the term mentor, brother, and even father figure. It was an informal sort of leadership that was safe and comfortable for those working with him. This fellowship promoted a sense of loyalty and a stronger bond of brotherhood. Brotherhood within the Special Forces Community is based on interdependence and knowing your fellow team member is a competent, skilled, and capable warrior. He can carry his own weight in battle and when necessary assist a fellow soldier in need. It is an expectation that no matter what the circumstance, a fellow Green Beret will be there for his comrade. If a brother should perish, he would do so knowing that his family would be cared for. This is what Paul believed; it is what he promoted.

Even as Paul began to struggle with choices in his life, his comrades preferred to focus on their relationship with him and the positive qualities he possessed. These close friends seemed to minimize Paul's drinking and carousing. At this early stage perhaps they did not understand the depth of the problem or where it was going. It is possible that it was seen as a soldierly trait and to be expected. It was a different time and this was an all-male unit filled with clever and energetic personalities. He was a soldier that they could indeed count upon. Regardless of his vices, he was there for them.

Friend

Paul continued to value his friendships. Remaining in Fort Collins made it easy to continue with his college and hunting relationships. He now began to make a number of new friends in the military circle. He connected with them on a number of interests outside of the military: hunting, firearms, history, sports, and world affairs.

Paul was a really good friend. Those who knew him referred to him as empathetic and dependable. He would stand by a friend in times of need. He would give anybody a chance. On one occasion, a close rugby friend was struggling. He was also a part of the hunting circle and members of both groups were attempting to shut him out. He had problems with alcohol and associated behaviors. The collective group called him crazy, a mean drunk, and an unmanageable problem. He was difficult to be around. Paul managed the hunting trips and other events. When the guys pressured Paul to drop him, he would not do it. The discussion and pressure began to build, but Paul held his ground. He would not relent because it was not in his nature to abandon a friend, even when pressured by other friends. Paul wanted to give him one more chance and did so over the objections of others. He was always loyal even when it was not popular. He understood individuals made mistakes and accepted them for who there were. He was not judgmental and preferred to look at the good side of people.

Perhaps it was this loyalty and respect for Paul's principles that rallied people to his side. He had so many other qualities to admire. He was intelligent, had a great sense of humor, and was empathetic. He was a patient man. He could get angry, but never lost control. He remained calm in anger. It was a cool and managed emotion that appeared on the surface to be little more than irritation. None the less, the anger was there. He had a way of understanding that time was on his side. He would eventually be able to square things with the offending party, or in a very diplomatic fashion, remind one of when they failed to observe his council.

Stasimon

In returning to the military Paul again found himself at home. It was a natural place for him to be. He enjoyed his role and began to establish himself in the community. Many new personnel would come and go. They would be promoted up into the higher headquarters, move

to other units across the country, or simply let their term of service expire. Paul was promoted too; he eventually took control as the senior enlisted person in the company. The core manning structure of most National Guard units are active duty soldiers who provide all the required training, logistical support, and personnel processes. Paul was a natural for the lead position. He was organized, efficient, and capable of securing the confidence of the senior leadership of these organizations, which were normally traditional Guardsmen. He was more than just an administrator. He was an excellent leader, mentor, and friend to those around him.

The Good Years

Friends

As Paul got older, he became very comfortable in his role as Readiness NCO and senior full time representative of Company C. He enjoyed the authority of the position and had managed to establish himself as an organizational celebrity. Regardless of where a soldier was in the battalion, they knew of Paul Ireland. He was a Sergeant First Class at the time. He was senior enough to cut through any extraneous tasking or directives passed his way from higher headquarters. He could avoid the complications of ideas formed by junior officers as well as defuse any problems arising from the senior non-commissioned officer chain. With all that, he was still low enough in grade to elude the numerous and often never ending meetings held by leadership at the battalion, brigade, and group level.

Paul managed to carve out plenty of free time between work and travel. He was also quite capable of planning his normal work requirements, temporary duty trips, and even annual training requirements around his sports, hunting, and other recreational activities. Many weekend drills and summer events for the entire organization were planned around Paul's hunting schedule. Most everyone knew it and figured one day was as good as the next. Often those Paul

worked with were part of the excursion. They had been incorporated into the event long before scheduling had occurred.

Paul was a known quantity and a person of character; he was also known to be a character. People liked him and many loved him. Even as a he grew a bit more caustic, his integrity, loyalty, and devotion to those around him made him likeable to most and tolerable to others. He was accepted for who he was. It was not through effort or caring cultivation of reputation that Paul was liked. He was just being who he was. What others thought seemed to matter very little.

It is difficult to know for sure if Paul was concerned about how he was perceived. He never appeared to care if people liked him or not. He did not seek favor or look to build relationships with those of importance. To the contrary, he built friendships with those he had much in common or liked to be around. These were often the simple, hardworking types that enjoyed athletics, hunting, fishing, or other manly endeavors. He was not the pretentious type. In fact he was a bit of a rebel that prided himself on candor and letting others know where he stood. It was as if he was an average man who advocated for what he called the “little guy.” Perhaps that is why people liked him so much. Paul experienced no sense of peer pressure; in fact, it was as if he had no peers. He had a strong sense of self and was determined to live life on his own terms. He lived his life to the fullest. He love the adventure but also enjoyed sitting down and having a beer with someone and getting to know them. It was important for him to connect with people. He loved to learn about people and understand who they were.

Paul’s friends always knew that they could count on him. Those closest to him said that he was the type of man that “would have your backside or be there if you needed something.” They also acknowledged his problems by adding “unless he was passed out drunk somewhere.”

The sincerity was there and his friends knew if they were standing there shivering in the cold, Paul would give you the shirt off of his back if he thought that they needed it. He was always concerned with ensuring others were taken care. Even in group events like his annual trip to elk camp, Paul took the reins to ensure everyone was well equipped.

He loved the outdoors, hunting, and spending time with friends. This was the perfect recipe for the large group hunting expedition that Paul planned each year. It was an important event for him, the chance to get away from work and home life. Each year he awaited the event with great anticipation. He could not wait to get to the mountains. He enjoyed the outdoors so much that on the coldest days, he often slept with the windows open. The feeling of freedom and connection to nature was something that infused him. It gave him a sense of freedom and an opportunity to relax. Living in Colorado made it easy to experience nature and Paul took every opportunity to do so.

His preparation for the trip was meticulous. He understood the logistics of the camp very well. He would calculate the amount of food, square footage for lodging, briquettes for cooking, fuel for lights and heating, and any number of other necessary items for those attending. He was meticulous about the menu. He enlisted support from Donna to ensure he put the meals together correctly. They would review the menu together and because Paul despised shopping, the two of them would go to the market.

With the menu planned, Paul turned his attention to the travel plan. He determined the amount of room required for the group's movement to the camp and anticipated the potential for extra room should anyone harvest an animal. He provided checklists for sleeping gear, clothing, and sundry items. He provided clear guidance, maps, and specific instructions for assembling the convoy. Movement to the campsite was a pleasant and grand event. He and his group were free

to eat, drink, hunt, and enjoy the great outdoors. They were liberated from the day-to-day activities of work and family life. They told stories, jokes, and reflected on the common events of their past. They celebrated their freedom and on occasion, a successful hunt. When the week was over, they returned to their families and reality of the workplace.

Family

Paul had always included his family in events involving friends. Sport activities, or the bar and grill, it made no difference. It seemed natural to bring those close to him together. He also enjoyed the company of his friends at home for an evening of fun. Paul's longtime friends or young men in the unit were often invited over for dinner and a few beers. They may number a few or arrive in large numbers. It made no difference; they were welcomed into the home for an evening of fellowship. Donna and Paul's children enjoyed a special relationship with Paul's friends. Donna would prepare dinner for the group and they would sit at the table drinking and conversing. Many would often stay the night to ensure their safety. Paul loved his family and enjoyed the time he spent with his friends. He wanted it all and thought very little of the potential friction or inconvenience that might result from constantly inviting his friends to the home. Fortunately Paul's friends enjoyed the family and for the most part, guests were welcomed.

These were fun times for the Ireland family. Donna enjoyed the company even though it meant extra work for her. She was happy to contribute because it made Paul happy. She and Paul had defined their relationship in a more traditional way. Both Paul and Donna grew up in an age where the husband and wife each had defined roles with which they were comfortable. They wanted the stereotypical role where the husband worked and the wife stayed home with the children. The roles were mostly defined this way. Donna did work and both made their best effort to take care of their respective home responsibilities. It was a comfortable existence and

neither seemed to complain. They felt that they had a great family and a wonderful future. Like any family, there were a few issues. Paul's occasional late night out or spending a little too much money might cause a little trouble. His frequent travel for work was also an issue, but like a good married couple, they tried to work through the problems.

Paul's work caused a bit of difficulty. He travelled quite often and the trips could vary significantly in length. Paul could be gone between a week and several months depending on the requirement. He could be conducting a mission abroad or attending a school at Fort Bragg. He could easily be gone between two to six months a year. The break was not always bad; it gave Paul a chance to reflect on his family. He would often call home to speak with Donna and the children. He would share all the activities of his day and ask them about them about what they had done at school or around the house. Paul would tell them how much he missed them and eagerly await travel home. Everyone was happy to see Paul return home. He was excited to be with his family and would be on his best behavior for a while. As many friends as Paul had, it was inevitable that one would call asking him out for a night on the town. He could not resist and would return to the same behaviors. Paul was starting to become more predictable in this regard. He would most often continue in the same old pattern of behavior. That is until the next trip. Regardless of behavior, the kids loved having Paul at home.

Paul and his children were very close in their earlier years. He involved them in everything that he did. He continued to bring his children to all of his sporting events. The groups of people gathering at the ball field were guaranteed to be a good time. The children would play and run about, but not so much as to miss the events of the game. The children were proud of their father. He was a great athlete and very serious about his sports activities. The long season of the competitive softball league gave everyone several opportunities to see his skills on

display. Paul always found himself on a top tier team. In one particular instance, Paul and his team were vying for the last playoff spot. Everyone knew Paul was fast. Even with his short legs, he had a sprinter's speed and there were few faster in the league. Paul was on first base and the batter hit the ball out into center field. Without hesitation, Paul took off. He knew it was safe to run and he was moving like a locomotive. His cleats dug in as he rounded third base for home; a shout came out from the crowd. Someone yelled that he had not moved so fast since someone said there was only one beer in the cooler. Paul made it home, scoring the winning run. After dusting himself off, he made his way through the cheering teammates to the cooler. Of course he wanted to see if there might be one more beer left. After a game and long day at the park, Paul and his children joined the team at the local bar to celebrate.

The kids cherished this time. They always had so much fun. They loved sports a well. When Paul was not playing, the Colorado Rockies were. He loved taking the kids to games. He understood all manner of sports, but the atmosphere of baseball made for good family time as he talked the kids through the game's mechanics. He was kind and gentle with his kids. He was every bit as proud of them. Paul's daughter shared one important memory; it was the sound of Paul's laugh. It was a lifting, contagious, and festive laugh. Difficult to describe, it was a blend of a chuckle or cackle mixed with a measure of mischief. It was accompanied by a huge smile and sparkling blue eyes. This was a unique and memorable image that many shared.

Paul had an incredible sense of humor. One felt comfortable and happy in his presence. He was just one of those people that everybody got along with. He was a funny guy. He enjoyed making people laugh, and noticed when someone was feeling down. He could hold his ground in conflict and be serious. He did so out of necessity. Paul preferred to be the one to elevate the

spirits of those around him. The same was true in his personal life. Paul wanted to avoid serious topics or discussions at home. This was particularly the case when it came to his children.

Paul's children noticed that Paul never shared much about his earlier life experiences. He had a very interesting life, but seemed a little ashamed to share many details about his past. He had gotten in trouble during high school and much of his life did not work out as he planned. He still did not speak of Vietnam or other military trials. Other than some photographs on the wall, Paul avoided the subject. Even when asked directly, he would minimize and curtail the conversation. His daughter remembered seeing a number of scars on his arm and shoulder. She asked "Oh, daddy, what is, what are all these?" As was his nature, he avoided the topic. He replied that they were just something from the war. He quickly changed the topic and moved on to a more pleasant subject. The children were used to seeing the positive, light hearted, and caring side of their father.

Throughout their childhood, the Ireland children heard his laughter and the merriment of his friends. Paul and his comrades would set around the table exchanging stories and jokes. The laughter was often so loud that Paul's daughter would chide them for keeping her up on a school night or the day before a gymnastics competition. Being a gymnast requires a high degree of discipline, practice, diet, and proper rest. To get that rest, the young 12 year old would occasionally have to march down the stairs to assert herself. She announced that she was tired of being the responsible one, that she had important things to do the next day, and ask them to be quiet. The kids enjoyed the company and extra attention, but occasionally the party did get out of hand. Adjustments were made or the party continued at a more reasonable and courteous volume.

Courtesy and proper manners were important to Paul. It was a trait that was formed during his more traditional upbringing. Patience was an important element in dealing with

people. It allowed one to build rapport and keep matters civil. Even under the most stressful circumstances, Paul had the ability to manage his emotions. He passed these lessons on to his children at home. He tried to set an example through his own actions at work and home. He taught his children proper manners and respect for elders. He wanted his children to be successful. It was also important that they understand how to conduct themselves properly in life. He shared what it meant to be a responsible adult and a good leader. He often spoke of putting oneself second. He demonstrated at work and at home what it meant to be a good leader. Others were always served first. Officers and more senior noncommissioned officers always wait until the soldiers collect their food before lining up for rations. The higher ranking personnel stand at the end of the line. The children thought it odd that Paul did this even at home. He would wait until everyone had taken their portion or ate before doing so himself. It was not like the family did not have food or could not afford to eat. The children noticed that he put himself second on many occasions.

In strange contrast to his generosity, Paul had a subtle way of securing the obedience of others. Like those who felt somewhat subservient in his professional life, those in the Ireland household had a similar experience. He was king of his domain and all who lived there. He guided his family in a way that was unnoticeable. If he needed a cup of coffee, he called out during the day and someone in the family came running. It was sort of expected. No one ever thought much about it. Father went to work each day to provide for his family and he deserved to be cared for as well. Whatever the task, Paul got an immediate response. He asked very little and to run to the refrigerator for a beer was not such a big task. Paul's family loved him and wanted to make him happy.

Paul also loved his children and wanted the best for them. He protected his kids and was guarded about his home life. Only his friends and soldiers close to him at the unit knew about his family. Except for a trusted few, he rarely shared details about his personal life. Even when he struggled with issues involving his children's health or interactions with them, rarely did anyone know. The children understood that Paul tried to keep parts of his life separate. It seemed easy for him. He managed his separate circles of friends balancing time with rugby, hunting, and military activities. He allocated his time at home and handled family challenges in much the same way.

One challenge Paul struggled with was the health of his son. When Paul returned from his hunting trip for the birth of his child, he was given a wonderful bright boy named in the family tradition. Paul Mills Ireland IV or Paul Junior was a big source of excitement for Paul. He represented the family line and though he never spoke of it, Paul had big plans for his son. As any parent would suspect, Paul and Donna were saddened to learn that their son was challenged with a hereditary blood disorder. He was born with hemophilia, a blood clotting condition that can make even simple cuts and bruises potentially dangerous problems. The disorder was a problem for Paul Junior. He was restricted from many activities that the average child participates in. The same activities his father cherished and wished to share were now impossible. Furthermore, he would never be able to join the military. Paul had not been able to become an officer, but was able to serve with distinction. His son would be denied the opportunity to do either. It was hard for Paul and his son. Growing up, Paul Junior looked at his father with pride. He wanted to be like him; he wanted to carry on the family tradition of service. A regimented lifestyle of service was engrained in the children. It was part of who they were; the Irelands were a military family.

With Paul Junior's options limited he struggled, and his parents struggled with him. Not many people knew of Paul Junior's condition. It was the 1980s and there was concern about the threat of AIDs and all the pain Paul Junior suffered through in his transfusions. Even the fears of what could happen when their son went out to play with his friends kept them on edge. Young Paul's sister felt like their father had closed himself off to some degree. It seemed that he immersed himself in his work and activities. Keeping himself busy was his way of coping with issues. He still loved his kids and tried, whenever possible, to be with them.

As much time as Paul spent with his kids, he seemed to avoid his daughter's gymnastics meets. It was difficult for her to understand. As close as he and his daughter were, Paul seemed to miss her competitions. Although she had been participating for some time, he had not attended any of Kelly's gymnastics meets. It was frustrating for Kelly and Paul knew it. She recalls a state meet where her father finally came to watch her. The competition was held in Fort Collins and Paul showed up. He stayed to watch a few of her events, but did not remain for the duration. He told her that he felt like his presence was distracting and he worried that he would jinx her. Perhaps it was a level of tension he could not tolerate. Nonetheless, Paul told his daughter that he was proud of her. He was not always generous with praise. What he said he always meant. He was a sincere man in all of his dealings.

Day at the Office

The longer Paul remained at Company C, the bigger his legend grew. New personnel rotated through the organization on a regular basis. They were quickly screened for potential and either transferred or assimilated into the Special Forces Regiment. Paul was responsible for much of this assessment. His experience and ability to evaluate potential was an important part of selecting the right personnel for the organization. Those meeting him for the first time

considered him to be a bit intimidating. He was barely 40, but was considered a crusty old Vietnam veteran who was sage-like in presence. Something about him immediately commanded respect. One could assume it was the combat infantry badge sewn over his left pocket. This badge, signifying his real-life experience in the harsh reality of combat, lay just above his master parachutist wings. This would be the case except Paul generally avoided wearing the prescribed uniform opting for a t-shirt, uniform pants, and combat boots. He determined what was important and what was not. No one second guessed him, and it was apparent who was in charge. This was the case even when someone outside of the community entered the company headquarters.

His everyday activities were generally the same. He arrived at work, made coffee, and developed the morning report. He provided direction for his small staff and went to work on the big picture items. He was good at prioritizing tasks and completed the essential projects first. He was an experienced noncommissioned officer and knew that there were certain requirements that must be met and others that could possibly fall off the table. There were also senseless tasks that may fade away, and he provided pushback against them. Paul knew which ones were which and how best to approach the individual levying the requirement. He rarely failed to influence the tasking party, thus relieving himself and his unit of the obligation.

Many serving with Paul were amazed that he could be so forceful and caustic without alienating those around him. Despite the fact he cared very little what people thought, he was quite popular. Only a small number of people did not care for Paul. So few that fellow soldiers rarely were able to recall a man or woman who did not like Paul. They respected the fact Paul was a man of conviction and without any hidden agenda. He did what he thought was important. He always accomplished the mission, but did so with the welfare of the soldiers in mind. He focused on accomplishing his job in an efficient manner with minimal waste of time and

resources. That is not to say he picked the easiest way or took shortcuts in his work. Nothing would be further from the truth. Paul would do the mission correct way. His principles would not allow him to perform in a substandard way. While he cared little about being liked, he did care about his reputation as a soldier. He would not risk this for quick and easy completion of a task or mission.

Paul understood his environment. He was an experienced, unconventional soldier who knew how to connect with those around him. He had a strong sense of purpose and though he might have offended others on occasion, it was out of what he perceived as necessity. If there was something worth fighting for, Paul would be at the front of the vanguard. He was normally successful because he was always prepared and well informed. Paul knew that information was a power. It went beyond his search for knowledge. Beyond his normal studies, Paul mastered the regulations, publications, and manuals that guided his craft. He used the information to advance his position on a number of issues. Sometimes the information went beyond that in the book. Paul had a very active network and knew all there was to know about those around him.

When required he also had the ability to solicit information about others. Paul was always in the know. He understood that identifying the weakness and shortcomings of others was useful. It was not for the purpose of blackmail, but more for understanding and influencing the human landscape. He was formally trained in intelligence and counter intelligence operations. Paul enjoyed employing his techniques of elicitation; he was a master of his craft. He could extract the information he wished to know in subtle ways. He could also be heard on the phone with his contacts. It sounded a bit like gossip as he would say “give me the skinny.” He mentally cataloged all of his findings for future use. It is what he referred to as keeping book.

He was an organized and efficient representative of the organization. While he had the ability to influence others, he did not do so for personal gain. He consistently put the unit and soldiers he served first. His tactics may have been a little unorthodox or perhaps borderline unscrupulous, but he got the job done.

Stasimon

Paul Ireland ran the unit on his own with varied degrees of guidance and oversight depending upon the level of involvement of the Company Commander, a Major who was rotated every 18 months or two years. The active duty battalion staff was an hour and a half drive away, leaving Paul great latitude and autonomy in running the organization. He was doing an exceptional job with little scrutiny. Not only did the leadership trust him, the soldiers in the unit looked up to him. This allowed him even more latitude in the performance of his duties. His higher headquarters preferred to avoid conflicts with Paul. Not only could he make circumstances difficult, he was generally correct. His expert management of company affairs was successful and better left undisturbed.

Paul's management of home affairs was becoming a little less successful. His family was still prospering and enjoying the social interaction. As it always had, the Ireland family remained at the center of Paul's exciting and busy world. He liked spending time with his children, but was experiencing difficulties in dealing with them as they approached middle school age. Concerns over his son's health issues weighed heavy on him. It was something he could do nothing about. Still he was not one to speak of problems, opting instead to fill his life with numerous social activities.

Paul continued to enjoy a robust social life, which was only now beginning to encroach on his work. It was also starting to have an effect on his family. The separation between family

and friends was negligible. He began to take away some of his private time from his children. He was enjoying time with his distinctly different circles of friends that only occasionally touched. Each group generally saw only a single side of Paul. It was the good hearted friend who could be counted upon. He was the humorous hero with athletic talent and a wonderful family. He was the father trying to maintain a traditional family. It was as if none of his friends were able to see the demands on his time as he was pulled into various events or social gatherings. Nor did his friends see the escalating consumption of alcohol as a problem. Paul was still balancing his time with some degree of success, but his life was starting to unravel.

Losing Balance

Ireland and Scotch

There are those who think soldiers should be judged in every aspect of their life. They believe judgment should include events outside the duty station to include one's bedroom. It is sort of a hypocritical view that has been developed over the years. It is an insincere position in that it has largely overlooked prohibited behaviors to accommodate social pressures. Some military leaders often turned a blind eye on the conduct of those in higher positions when a benefactor felt compelled to protect their own. This observation and belief is widely held by a number of military professionals. Some of these professionals knew Paul well. They believed that the military often focuses so much on a soldier's image that they lose sight of a soldier's value. Most good leaders think we should concentrate on what a soldier contributes to the organization. It is not about being pretty and subservient. Instead, it is about selfless service and putting forth an honest effort. In any case, his peers believed that Paul was a man of honor who was devoted to his duty and the protection of his country.

Still, his friends now noticed the changes in Paul's life. Shifts in his behavior were more noticeable to those he worked with on daily basis. He was still telling jokes and playing pranks around the office. He was the happy-go-lucky person he had always been. Many of his friends called him Mr. Energetic; he was always on the go. They admired his view of life. For him the glass was always half full of beer. He remained an optimist and inspired others to do the same. Paul continued to look for the good in any circumstance or person in his life. For this reason, it seems others continued to focus on the good in Paul.

His family had seen some of changes a little earlier. The children were older and now attending middle school. They viewed their father as less settled and harder to connect with. For whatever reason, it appeared that he struggled with guiding them. He had struggled at the same age. Because of it, Paul seemed to feel as though he had nothing to offer. It was evident that he still loved them, but was unable to connect with his teenagers. Both the kids and Donna saw that he was absent more often than usual. They also noticed that he had started drinking far more frequently.

When his friends and family considered Paul's vices, alcohol was at the top of the list. There are those who believe Paul drank to forget or reconcile events in his life. Since he never complained about Vietnam or used it as an excuse, these assertions are merely conjecture. None-the-less, he was consuming more alcohol and everyone knew it. He enjoyed the leisurely after work drink. An occasional beer with friends over dinner or during one of the many sporting events would have barely been noticed. Paul was going far beyond that. He was beginning to go on frequent benders. He would spend nights on the town and come to work not knowing how he had gotten home the night before. The men he worked with would invest hours helping Paul scour the town in an effort to locate his vehicle. It was becoming less humorous, even though he

was still performing at the unit. If not for his work, his friends were concerned about his health. He could drink himself into oblivion one night and walk into the office like nothing happened the next morning. He was a functioning alcoholic with each day repeating the cycle. He worked all day and at quitting time, he picked up a 12-pack of beer and begin drinking again.

It was difficult for those who knew him to step in. Paul was a mentor to guys in the unit. He had essentially become a permanent and iconic figure. It would require some degree of audacity to insert oneself into Paul's personal business. The problem was less obvious to his college friends. Paul was still the little general to them. He would still muster the group for the hunting trips. Like General Patton in the movies, he stood there with his hands on his hips. He would bark out orders, direct traffic, and tell folks what to do. Perhaps the serious nature of hunting might have had bearing on his more moderate behavior. His drinking was less obvious to those in the hunting group. The problem was more obvious at work. Back at the unit, even those from other parts of the organization were seeing trouble with Paul.

Paul's soldiers had many stories. Most consist of the same types of events with minimal thematic diversion. On one occasion the staff from another Company talked Paul into running the mortar training and range fire for their unit. Paul was recognized for his abilities, and requests from other units were not uncommon. An exercise was taking place at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming. The staff from Company A was scheduled to meet Paul at his unit for transport. They arrived at the unit and asked the staff where Paul was. They replied that Paul was in his office. They checked his office but Paul was not there. They looked around the unit for a while but he was nowhere to be found. His car was there, but Paul was not. The group returned to his office and found Paul sprawled out on the floor behind his desk. He was inebriated and totally unprepared to travel. His fellow noncommissioned officers quickly organized to get Paul

showered, dressed, and ready to go on time. The group arrived on time and Paul delivered the best mortar training that the group had ever had. Inebriated or not, Paul always delivered.

Even those in local leadership understood there was an issue, but may not have comprehended the degree of the problem. He showed up for work and delivered what was expected. His loyal staff worked hard to ensure he did not fail. Paul was preparing for a new commanding officer. A fellow Vietnam Veteran was being promoted to Major in conjunction with his change of command ceremony. The party was held at the conclusion of two long days of training. There were massive amounts of alcohol and many of the unit members drank until early the next morning. As events drew to a close, the soldiers moved off to their respective team rooms for the night. Everyone had been asleep for some time when the company Sergeant Major woke up startled. He was wet and confused. It was the middle of the night and someone was standing over his cot urinating on him. The lights came on and there was Paul. The Sergeant Major screamed “the crazy drunk is peeing on me. He doesn’t know what he’s doing.” Still drunk from the festivities and weaving from side-to-side Paul responded “Oh, I know exactly what I’m doing. I’m getting even. I’m peeing on you, brother.”

It was difficult to get Paul up the next morning. Not because of his shameful conduct the night before. He just struggled getting up after a drinking spree. Waking him was a little easier for his friends who knew the combination. The first step was to light a cigarette and hold it in front of his nose while he slept. You then handed Paul the cigarette and regardless of his position, he would accept and begin to smoke it. Whether he was in a sleeping bag or bed, he managed the cigarette without dropping a single ash. At some point, Paul would come to without burning himself and swing his feet over the side of the bed. This day was no different. Paul completed most of the cigarette and mustered enough strength to move. Paul finally sat up,

began to dress, and slid on his boots. Much to his dismay, the Sergeant Major had exacted his revenge. He had filled both of Paul's boots with urine. Slowly it soaked up his pant legs. Paul just sat there; he was a little stunned. He was surprised and unhappy to be caught off guard. He was a good sport about it all. He had started the exchange and understood that he had it coming.

The full time staff at the unit had begun to cover for Paul. It was becoming increasingly difficult. They were loyal and refused to let him fail. He had done so much for them over the years; they could not let him down. They also cared about him. The thought of intervention was tough. It meant standing up to their mentor. His life was visibly unraveling. Though his staff was unaware of the cause, they saw the result. He was drinking hard and his work ethic had slipped dramatically. They wanted to help him, but they were also tired of covering for him. The soldiers were also not happy with the increased workload. They knew that what was occurring was not right. Soldiers believe in standards and Paul was falling short. The Army culture demanded that they have the moral courage to address the issue. They worried about Paul and his rapid decline. He had crawled into a bottle and it scared them. By now, Paul looked unhealthy. He was less involved in work and focused his attention on drinking and spending time with the ladies. His friend and second in charge stepped forward; he called it tough love. He was direct with Paul and shared the issue with the higher headquarters. The situation escalated, putting Paul's potential for future promotion at risk. Paul did not take the move too well. His relationship with some of the staff was stressed. He kept communications professional, but had no desire to talk with those he believed betrayed him. Paul was struggling and he looked for support outside of the unit.

Eye for the Ladies

Those who knew Paul understood there were two weaknesses that could get him in trouble. The first was alcohol, the second was a woman. The fact he loved to socialize put him in

proximity to both on a regular basis. Donna knew that he liked the ladies. While Paul was vulnerable, he did not always act on his desires. He often enjoyed the chase and the attention. He could be at the bar, a restaurant, a store, or even a child's birthday party, and manage to find himself talking to a woman. He was called a skirt chaser and womanizer, but in reality he chased far fewer than some imagined. He was content with the attention and a few beers only to return home to his wife.

Paul and Donna had a long and established relationship. Paul understood the obligations of marriage and needed Donna. Donna was much the same except that she felt like she was the mature responsible partner. She also believed that she loved him far more than he loved her. It was not an equitable relationship. She felt far more committed and exposed emotionally. She acknowledged that her assessment might be wrong, but the relationship was playing out in support of her observations. Paul was reserved with his emotions. He did not share his feelings with others no matter the relationship. Paul loved Donna and the kids; she worried that he did not love them enough to overcome his problems with alcohol and women.

The marriage was becoming increasingly strained. Their relationship was changing for the worse and there was no solution in sight. Paul had always been more closed emotionally. When they were younger, it seemed of little consequence because Paul and Donna were always so closely connected. They seemed to understand each other so well. Now they did not talk. The laughter was gone and the couple existed only because neither knew what to do.

Paul was maintaining a weak relationship at home while spending most of his time out on the town. He did not let go of Donna and the kids. It was as if he felt responsible for his family. He loved his family and was proud of them, but that did not seem like enough. It was unclear whether he needed to provide for the family out of a sense of commitment, or he needed the

security that Donna provided. They were together for many years, and she had been his best friend. This was a difficult decision and Paul opted not to make it. He wanted it all and continued on the same path in hopes of maintaining the status quo. If the relationship were to change, he would not be responsible for the decision.

Paul was normally in charge at home. Over time, Donna's responsible nature and care for Paul created a change in the landscape. She had become more powerful and wrested control from Paul. She had grown stronger. She knew Paul loved her and the children. She knew that their lives could not continue the way it was. She also understood that ending the marriage would be traumatic for both of them. While they still had feelings for each other, Paul was slipping away and little could be done. Donna felt as though she was merely a caregiver. She was security for Paul. She had become almost a mother figure responsible for his care and feeding. She kept the house afloat and cared for the children. Paul was drinking more and as difficult as it was, he finally slipped away.

It was really hard for each of them to manage the transition. They considered themselves a good family. Donna had always thought of Paul as a reliable family man. She never imagined that Paul could become so lost in his drinking. As close as they were, the rapid rate of his decline was surprising to even her. Like so many others, she saw the best in Paul. There was so much good in him. She was aware of what others were thinking. She believed that they thought her unrealistic and viewing life through rose colored glasses. She was no fool. Donna understood there were inequities in their relationship. She also knew that Paul had been her best friend and regardless of what anyone else thought, he respected her. He was lost to something outside of his control and there was nothing that could be done.

Donna reflected on their past. She saw the whole picture. She achieved a sense of clarity as she considered their life together. She recalled the friendships and key events in their lives. The slow transition and rapid descent made sense to her. She was sad for her loss, but had to remain focused on caring for her family. As in all divorces, there is some level of conflict as couples sort issues out. The Irelands were no different.

Paul was a bit surprised that Donna stood her ground. He did not recognize the shift in power that had occurred in their relationship. He thought she would be the subservient wife and give him what he wanted. He was taken aback to find that Donna was willing to press for what she thought fair. He was surprised at seeing this side of Donna. She believed that it was a side of her that he should have seen earlier in the marriage. Paul was in no condition to continue the fight. He was drinking hard and had been seeing a younger woman named Carrie. Paul relented in some of his legal pursuits, favoring other distractions. This minimized friction during the divorce. While the process was not easy, it was complete. All that was left was sorting through some of the belongings and of course dealing with the fallout involving the children.

The relationship between the newly divorced couple was not terrible. Despite everything that had occurred, Paul trusted Donna. It was not always in big or obvious ways. For example, Paul had lost the house but left most of his treasured belongings there for safekeeping. He was still getting organized and felt comfortable leaving his most valuable possessions with Donna. These were his family heirlooms. These were items that had belonged to his father, grandfather, and great grandfather. He left other personal items of great value in her custody. Much to Donna's surprise he also relinquished numerous items of value. He left gifts from his family to include a silver tray. These seemed like trivial things in light of all that had happened.

After a period of time Donna was ready to move on. Paul's reluctance to retrieve his items was becoming increasingly irritating. Donna saw them as constant reminders of his ongoing relationship with the trashy drunk that had hooked on to him. She was unsure how long before the divorce Paul was seeing her, but knew she had travelled on a number of his work trips, which did not set well with Donna. Donna also knew that Carrie had a drinking problem, which only exacerbated Paul's difficulties. Donna pressured Paul to remove his belongings. She no longer felt like being trusted. She was having a difficult time being a good friend. Donna leveraged an insurance policy to force him to remove his items. He was unhappy with the tactic, but she held his money until he acquiesced to her demands. There was little he could do but load his personal items. Donna was setting upon her desired path without him.

The woman who once believed they were soul mates continued to cut the strings that once connected them. Donna did not want to be his security blanket. She understood that they were completely off-track and given a chance, Paul would continue hang on. She believed that he still loved her. She thought perhaps it was more a case of need than love, and she was not about to have him around while he carried on with his girlfriend. While alcohol was a major problem for Paul, he stood no chance of recovery while in a relationship with Carrie. It was one of several bad choices he was making.

Bad Choices

Paul's choices were having consequences. He was receiving pressure from all fronts. He had been transferred to the battalion headquarters outside Denver, lost his wife, struggled with both his girlfriend and his health, and his daughter was not speaking with him. These were all natural consequences of his continued drinking.

The transfer would likely have happened anyway, but any hope of remaining in Fort Collins with a promotion was lost due to his drinking problem. He struggled to remain in Fort Collins. He tried every angle and called in favors to avoid the reassignment, but when it became perfectly clear that he had lost the battle, Paul moved on. He agreed to work in Denver, but chose to reside in Fort Collins. There were a few others with whom he was able to carpool. It was well over an hour commute each way, so sharing the expense and burden of driving was helpful. Paul was assigned to the operations section of the battalion headquarters. As expected, he was an asset to the organization. Everything he had done for the company he was now doing for the battalion. Each of the companies benefitted from his expertise. Paul also cut back on his drinking. Between the drive and long work day, it was hard for him to maintain the old behaviors. The guys in the car pool headed straight home. That meant Paul had a 13-hour window each day where he could not even consider alcohol.

Paul was not perfect by any means. He still found himself drinking nearly every evening and weekends. Occasionally he would stay at the unit after a trip down to the local bar. He drank after duty hours on every temporary duty assignment he was sent on. He made choices that allowed him to continue the dependency. Even his time with Carrie served to keep him close to the bottle. She too had a drinking problem, so her presence was welcomed. She was never too far from Paul. He even managed to fund her travel to places like Hawaii. He would be there on duty with lodging already funded so all he had to do was purchase the extra ticket. Each day she got an early start by the poolside bar and Paul would join her after work. Carrie was normally quiet and reserved around strangers, but was prone to being a belligerent drunk. This mattered very little to Paul, her promiscuous nature and willingness to enable his drinking problem made it worthwhile.

There were times when the two of them would meet near the office. On occasion Paul would bring her back to the unit. More than once they were found sprawled out drunk on the futon in Paul's office. He was admonished, counseled, and shamed for the act and still it seemed difficult for him to stop. Carrie slipped away quickly with little regret or embarrassment. It was as if she did not care. It was a strange relationship that often became violent. It was sort of a one sided altercation. When Carrie drank too much she got mean. Her temper was such that she would attack Paul.

One occasion Paul showed up to a meeting with Donna. The entire side of Paul's face was torn up. The scratches were long and deep. Carrie had raked the side of his face so badly that it took weeks to heal. Paul struggled to formulate a lie, telling Donna that it was the result of an airborne operation gone badly. Donna like everyone at the unit knew the truth. Paul did not make any attempt to lie to the men at the battalion. He knew that they were not that foolish. In addition to the scratches, they saw the remnants of broken statues and other objects in Paul's office. Paul continued the relationship for a long time. It would be years before he would attempt to distance himself.

To make circumstances worse, Paul was dealing with health problems. He was developing complications from hemochromatosis. Paul's system was absorbing iron at a much greater rate than it was supposed to. The high volume of iron was toxic to his body. It was damaging his organs, the liver, heart, and pancreas among them. To prevent the condition from poisoning his organs, Paul underwent periodic blood transfusions and filtering. What he did not do was reduce his drinking. The risk of cirrhosis and other liver problems were increased by this behavior. He kept much of this to himself or the pressure from his peers would likely have mounted. Paul seemed unconcerned about the situation. He did his job, went home, and drank.

There was no one with enough influence to alter his behavior. He was grown man and could not be forced to change.

Paul had other problems. His daughter Kelly was not speaking with him. She was so upset by Paul's extramarital affair that she ignored any effort Paul made to contact her. He reached out periodically and Kelly would have nothing to do with it. In betraying their family, Paul exposed a side of himself that she had never seen. She did not like the man her father had become and began to question how she felt about him. Kelly had had been in college for a few years and Paul was totally unaware of her progress. She made no effort to see him. She refused to answer the infrequent attempts that Paul made to contact her.

Only a few saw Paul's meltdown in its entirety. He had become selfish, irresponsible, and less effective at work. His behavior was destructive, and he compromised several of his close friendships. On the military side, those he had known for years were alienated because they pointed out his behavior. Some were threatened for carrying on lifelong friendships that they had with his ex-wife. It was much about what Paul wanted and little else. Still there were those who hung on. They still saw his contributions to the organization; they saw the good in Paul and were unwilling to let go of their friendships. These were friends that would be there when life began to worsen for Paul.

Complications

Paul's life was becoming more difficult. His health was starting to get worse in ways that were not immediately identified. The hemochromatosis was becoming more difficult to manage, but Paul took it in stride. He continued to successfully battle the issue with some degree of discomfort. Despite his struggles, Paul continued to advance in rank. On his worst day, he was able to outshine most of his peers. Even with a hangover, Paul delivered. He rose to the rank of

Sergeant Major in 2001. He was subsequently enrolled in the Sergeants Major Academy and was on track to complete the course in 2003. This would provide him with the credentials needed to achieve Command Sergeant Major. Paul still struggled with the same issues, but managed to control himself to a degree. He secured two promotions and stayed on track for continued service and a successful career. It seemed as though his luck would hold out. It was during this time that tragedy would strike and Paul would have to face great challenges in his life.

Paul was faced with two major crises during this time. First was that he was diagnosed with a form of lymphoma. It was something he felt was manageable, and as Paul often did, he minimized the problem, opting to pursue treatment in private. He did not like to show weakness and saw this as no one's business. Paul would schedule his appointments late Fridays or Saturdays as not to impact his work. He was undergoing a form of chemotherapy and generally spent much of his weekend ill. He did this so that he could return to work the following week without drawing attention to himself. It was hard to define, but Paul was starting to change some of his behaviors. Perhaps he was scared, maybe he was just mitigating risk, but Paul was working hard to beat his newest health challenge. This was the least painful issue that Paul would endure.

In November of 2003 Paul received bad news. He learned that his son Paul was killed in a car accident. His son was travelling the back highway between Wyoming and Fort Collins during a snowstorm. He was attending school in Laramie and was going to his father's graduation from The Sergeants Major Academy. The young son that Paul loved and cherished so much was now gone. It was truly the end of the Ireland dynasty. Paul said very little and retreated for a time. Life had grown so difficult for him. Those around him saw only the shell of a man. He was not the Paul Ireland they knew. He had not been this man for some time. Now it

was noticeably worse. The look on his face was not a grimace of pain or look of anguish. It was more a look of defeat or exhaustion. The man who once stood so tall and confident now looked beaten. Those with whom he worked saw his suffering and understood that he needed help. There was very little that could be done except to give him the time that he needed. While they knew little about Paul's new illness, they did understand this loss. They offered the only support that they could; they contributed by picking up his work load during his absence. Those closest to him stood by him and provided comfort to the family. Paul was left undisturbed as he laid his son to rest at Fort Logan Cemetery.

Stasimon

Paul's loss of balance was a result of several factors. He made numerous bad choices. Some were the result of personal decisions. Most were exacerbated by his dependence on alcohol. His drinking grew increasingly worse and only his family and those working closely with him saw the dramatic increase. Others who might have noticed did not look beyond Paul's happy and charismatic exterior. It was as if they chose not to know or lacked the courage to step forward. There were a handful of people who talked to Paul. Others reported his behavior for self-preservation or because he was not carrying himself as he should. The wives of some soldiers actually called to tell his supervisor about his behavior. Those calls were of a more meddling and prying nature. All of this was for nothing. His marriage fell apart; he alienated his daughter; and he was under the influence of a woman with the same addictive behavior. It was not until he was transferred to an even higher headquarters that Paul made some level of improvement. He was now under more scrutiny and felt a need to perform at a higher level.

Paul was also the victim of bad fortune. With his health in question and the loss of his son, Paul was struggling in a way he never had. He was always the one to assist others in need.

He expected or wanted very little support. It was as if he did not know how to ask for help. Whenever it was given, it was some benign level of assistance that he could feel comfortable with. Still Paul recognized who his friends were. He knew that they were there for him and that is all that mattered.

Making it Right

Reconciliation

A real test of a man's character is his response to adversity. Paul had always answered the most difficult challenges and difficulties with his best effort. He had done so with great success. This time many wondered how Paul would react. The severity of his health issue was now known by most. Able to retire, Paul refused. There was nothing else for him. The Army was his reason for his existence. He needed to be there. He needed to contribute. He had come to the point where he was unable to continue on the same path. He was thinking more clearly and his drinking slowed. He realized his mistakes and understood that he may not have enough time to set everything right. He had nearly lost his closest friends; his relationship with his daughter was nonexistent; and he was feeling remorse over how his marriage ended. He was not so concerned about what others thought, but he was now his own biggest critic. He reflected on what he had accomplished over the years and seemed reenergized. He was filled with a greater sense of purpose.

Paul returned to work after he laid his son to rest. Many danced around the topic. The most any one could offer was an expression of sorrow and condolences for his loss. Soldiers struggle with the idea of insincerity or excessive emotion. They just wanted Paul to know that they cared. Paul kept himself very busy during this time. Despite his ongoing medical care, and problems with an earlier hip replacement, Paul was always at his desk. He was occasionally

fatigued but relentless in the performance of his duties. He was now at the brigade level headquarters and responsible for five battalions. The work he did influenced nearly 2,000 soldiers each day.

It was not uncommon to observe him teaching a young soldier how to navigate through military software program. Everyone joked about Paul's two finger typing method, but there was nobody who could deny his proficiency in the systems. He was teaching, correcting poor processes, representing his battalions to the higher headquarters, and holding people to a standard. He inserted himself where he felt it necessary; he did this often. On one occasion, Paul came to the aid of a young single female who was struggling to make ends meet. She managed to get on temporary orders pulling door security at Paul's headquarters. She was an excellent soldier, but was told she would be terminated because she was pregnant. Those in charge felt she could not do the job in that condition. Paul understood the regulations and while pregnant females could not deploy, he found her suitable for the security task. Paul was like a lion; he spent the better part of half a day working the chain of command. He was blasting field grade officers for allowing their Lieutenants to run rampant. Before it was over, Paul got what he thought was fair treatment for the young lady. It was refreshing to see him with such a sense of purpose. Still one had to wonder what he felt inside and how he was handling his loss. Ample time was set aside to talk with him. My door was always open for discussion. Paul would not step through; he was determined to move on.

Moving on did not mean quitting. Paul had lots of work to do. Some of this work included making past transgressions right for his friends. One of his closest friends had stuck with him over the years. That friendship had remained intact even though there were periods when the two did not speak. His friend Don was always loyal, even when the two did not see

eye-to-eye. It was not a matter of right or wrong. It was a younger soldier coming into his own and those growing pains creating conflict in the relationship. Over the years Don matured and started to advance on a path to become a peer to Paul. Don could be every bit as stubborn as Paul. There was a natural friction in the relationship. There was also some difficulty arising from the perception Don and his wife were meddling in Paul's personal life. It was resolved over time and the two progressed in rank. Don followed behind Paul in a number of assignments. He was less experienced, but more disciplined. Each capitalizing on their strengths, they both advanced to the rank of Sergeant Major. They had become equals and in order for Don to advance, Paul guaranteed that he would step aside if Don were promoted. The move ensured Don's promotion and a deployment. Paul wanted the best for those he developed, and he was happy for Don. Paul left Special Forces for another unit. It was the first time since his return to the community. It was all that he had ever known. He told Don that it was his time to shine. Paul knew it was time for him to move on and find another place to serve. It was hard for him to do, but he understood it was the right move. The conversations between the two served to reconcile issues in the past. Much of what Don did helped Paul through some tough times in his life. He was thankful for the help during those difficult times.

Paul tried to make the situation better with his family. He wanted to connect with his daughter. She knew he was ill and found it difficult to hold him at a distance. She knew he was an incredible and complex man. She understood how much he meant to her. She also knew how important he was to others, even if she did not understand why. She saw that he really just loved people, and he wanted the best for them. He would help his sister when they were experiencing difficulties. He would make even the smallest gesture if he could help another. Even during chemotherapy, Paul would take friends to medical appointments if they could not get there by

themselves. She was seeing the father she was so proud of. He was a caring person. As Paul's own health continued to decline, Kelly decided to care for him. It was a very difficult six months, but she grew closer to him and got to know him better. He was still a jokester in her eyes. She saw him as a sweet man and came to see how caring he really was. Kelly saw him try to resolve issues and how he struggled with some of the problems in his life. A particularly difficult issue was his girlfriend Carrie. Paul was not interested in continuing the relationship and Carrie moved out. He still wanted the best for her and tried to help her with the transition. He was also sensitive to the fact she could be trouble and wanted no conflict with his daughter and ex-wife. Paul was very worried about this. Having endured Carrie's wrath, he understood that an issue could arise. He was proud of his daughter and appreciated his time with her. He knew that she graduated from college and intended to pursue further education in the medical field. He had reconciled another part of his life.

When Paul sobered up, he understood where a number of important issues in his life fell apart. He might not have wanted to change them, but he needed to resolve issues from his past. Being sober allowed him to talk with Donna about a number of issues. There was a time when Paul's ex-wife considered him a deceitful person of terrible character. She thought that Paul was coming to his senses and now realized what he had lost. She and others certainly believed that sobriety provided a very accurate picture of the woman he had left her for. Donna came to grips with how she was hurt by what she considered a senseless loss. The fact that they had such a long and close relationship made it difficult for her to remain angry. She preferred to reflect on the great years and how proud she was of Paul's service. When he remained sober, she saw some spark of the person he was. Conversations with her daughter gave her material for reflection. They had been a great couple. She was a dutiful wife and he was this incredible husband. Donna

had to sort through so much hurt before she understood what she felt for Paul. Her image of Paul changed. She saw him as a good man who tried to be fair. He was a man who struggled with alcohol, but was still a loving, giving, and honorable man. He was trying to make amends for the bad deeds that he had done. He even discussed remarrying her so that his life's work and pension would not go to waste. Donna was unsure about this and Paul never retired. No one would benefit from the many years Paul served his country.

Preparations

There came a point when Paul accepted that the final chapter of his life was nearing its end. He had considered all that he could have done better. He assessed his legacy and now began to prepare for what was coming next. He was spending more time with his daughter and touching base with his friends. It was as if he was saying good-bye.

His mind was still sharp and he was thinking about all of the people who were important to him. He was putting his affairs in order. He revised his will and included a number of considerations for events after his passing. He wanted to ensure his sisters were not burdened by travel and hotel costs for the funeral. He considered his daughter and the potential for conflict with Carrie. Knowing Carrie's temper and problem with alcohol, Paul made sure that his daughter and sole heir did not have to deal with executor duties.

He went to great lengths to ensure Kelly and her mom were cared for. Their security was important to him and he reviewed the details of his life insurance with great care. He considered the value of Carrie's companionship and the time that they spent together. Paul chose his longtime friend Don to deal with the military and funeral arrangements. He understood how much Don cared for him and trusted him to do the right thing by him. He also knew Don would have no shortage of help as he was connected to all of Paul's military friends.

The time he spent with Kelly was very important. There was great degree of closure that needed to occur. She was able to tell him how much she loved him; she did so frequently. Kelly thought about the many issues she needed to talk with him about. She really wanted to have deep conversation with her father. There was so much that she did not know about him. She wanted to sit down with a tape recorder and ask him about his life. She thought the two of them would have more time. Much to her disappointment, that conversation never occurred. When they were together at the hospital, she was able to tell him how much he meant to her. He realized that they had made amends.

Paul knew he had very little time left. He took advantage of every opportunity to revisit the activities that he loved most. His close friend Don drove him to Rocky Mountain National Park a few months before he passed. Paul was an avid big horn sheep, elk, and deer hunter. The beauty of the Rocky Mountains, the challenge of the hunt, and time he spent with his closest friends was such a big part of his identity. He loved to hunt big game and had not been able to make it to the mountains for some time. It was rutting season and the elk were in frenzy. The mating activity of these beautiful animals filled the air with the sound of male bugling. It was like music to Paul's ears. It was a moment that he wished would never end. It was getting late and Don could not get him to leave. He wanted Paul to enjoy this moment. He waited patiently; watching Paul sit there with a smile on his face. He knew that he was reminiscing about past hunts and all of the good times he had shared with his friends.

Strength

Paul was strong in the end. He continued to work as long as he could. He had recently returned from an exhausting trip to Thailand where he was an evaluator for a battalion exercise. Paul had recovered from his trip and was now looking forward to sharing time with his family.

His mother was having a cruise for her 80th birthday. Paul wanted to be there. He was not one to pass up a family event, particularly when it involved travel. This was to be a very important trip for Paul; he felt that this would be his last chance to be with his entire family. All of his sisters and their children were going. Paul's mother remarried some years after the death of his father. Her husband also had numerous children and grandchildren so the group was extremely large.

The trip got off to a rough start. Paul completed his chemotherapy just prior to departure. The treatment made him feel terrible as he always did. He refused to let anyone know how bad it was. He would not complain and only Kelly understood that there was any discomfort. He would vomit in the cabin prior to cleaning up and donning his tuxedo. He put on his best face and head down to join his family for a formal dinner. He wanted to be with those he loved and wished to do so without distraction or sympathy.

It was his vacation and he wanted to enjoy it. He wanted to scuba dive with his daughter. It was one of the activities that he loved to do. He was a proficient diver and saw great beauty in underwater life. He shared his experiences and what he saw in previous dives. One he remembered most was in the Maldives. He shared that dive with some close friends. He saw absolutely wonderful sea life and landscape; he could not wait to do it again. Unfortunately the dive did not work out exactly like they planned. He was a bit frail so they ended up snorkeling instead. He wanted into the ocean so badly. With some assistance he slipped into the water. He wanted to hold Kelly's hand. She recalled their time together so clearly. They floated in that water holding hands and enjoying the beauty. It was calm and peaceful. It brought them both a great deal of joy. That was an incredible memory for her.

Everyone in Paul's life thought that that he would have more time. His friends hoped that he would hang on longer or perhaps he would recover. Paul knew better; he understood that he

had run out of time. He was dying and needed to speak with those close to him. He asked for his friends Don Lewis, Allen Jefferson, and Johnny Husker. It was the call they all dreaded. Each man prepared himself as best he could and made his way to the hospital. His first request was that they plan his funeral. He then provided them with some other last minute instructions. They assured him that it was unnecessary to talk about such arrangements at the time. They did not want it to be necessary. They did not want to let go. At the same time his friends understood the time had come they sat and listened to his wishes.

Stasimon

With clarity and great sense of purpose, Paul planned to meet his end. He sought to mend the wounds that he had inflicted on others. He recognized that somewhere along the line he lost track of who he was. In submitting to alcohol, he ruined relationships with nearly everyone that meant anything to him. He had wasted valuable years of his life, missing out on pursuits that were once the center of his existence. He did not like the person he had become. In reconciling with his past, he sought to change all of this by reconnecting with his friends and family. He reunited with those he cared about. This energized him and gave him the strength to complete the many tasks that would allow him to move on in peace.

He thought long and hard about the future. Not so much his own future but the future of those he cared so much about. Methodically he went through his affairs looking for ways to make the lives of others easier. He was once again was the good friend and family member everyone knew him to be. He was kind and thoughtful in his dealings with others. He considered the needs of those he loved and meticulously set out to find ways to meet them. It was not just for reconciliation or repentance. His desire for forgiveness was part of the journey, but he also needed this precious time to prepare. His preparation included the pressing administrative and

estate issues. More importantly he needed to connect with the many interests he enjoyed in his life. He was creating new moments and memories, some of which were with others. Maybe he did it for himself; perhaps he did it for those he loved. In any case, he demonstrated the strength and perseverance he was known for. He managed to set affairs in his life right while quietly fighting his private battle with lymphoma. One felt like he left no loose ends.

When Paul passed, his closest friends and loved ones were with him. They assembled at his side for the last few hours of his life. With their presence, they sought to honor this frail, emaciated, and unconscious man who once stood larger than life. They sat patiently and reverently as the time passed. These were Paul's final hours; he would soon lose the fight. They knew it was a fight because Paul had never given up on anything. He laid comatose and unresponsive for what seemed like an eternity. His friends did not want to lose him, but they desperately wanted his suffering to end. This drawn-out and agonizing process was very difficult for them. Slowly Paul's body functions began to shut down and his lungs started to fill with fluid. It was only a matter of time before his body succumbed and Paul was at rest.

His friends felt relief, pain, and anger. They did not believe this was how a warrior should pass. To them it seemed improper and somehow lacked the dignity Paul deserved. It was a moment of great sadness and loss. Each man experienced a sense of emptiness. The man who had been like a father and brother to each of them was gone. Paul died November 6, 2006, at the age of 57.

IV. Exodus

Paul Mills Ireland III was buried with military honors in Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado. He was laid to rest with his son Paul who had passed away three years earlier. It was a large affair; the attendance fitting for a man who had so many friends and a loving family. It was truly a testament to his character and the way he touched the lives of so many others.

In his final days one has to ask if he was left wondering about his legacy or if he had accomplished anything of great value? This might be the type of question Paul would ask. Others, however, would not. To friends, family, and the many others whose lives Paul touched, there was no doubt that this man accomplished so much. He was a generous and giving man who enjoyed life and devoted so much to the nation he served.

Many remember this kind and caring man who never really took stock of his contributions and minimized his efforts whenever they were mentioned. He was a complex man with a generous nature. He did not like to reveal or be exposed for his good deeds. It was as if he was embarrassed by them. Most of what he had done would go unknown for years. No one really understood the scope of Paul's generosity and influence. The record of his acts would not be revealed until after his death. It was only then that Kelly and Donna would learn of what he had done for people. The support that he gave, level of influence, and what he meant to people was truly surprising. His daughter and ex-wife were seeing an entirely different side of Paul. They were constantly approached with stories about Paul and how he had helped someone. So many different types of people from very different walks of life knew him. They might have experienced his generosity, or benefitted from his advice. His family was surprised at how this part of him went unnoticed. They observed some of these activities over time, but had no idea of

the magnitude of his contributions. It was becoming clear that they did not know as much about the man as they thought. They believed no one really understood what type of man Paul was.

For years Paul was a good husband and father. He was a responsible provider who loved his family and did his best to care for them. His life and marriage was full of laughter. The couple complemented and supported each other. They were a social and outgoing couple with a very full life. Paul enjoyed spending time with his kids and included them in many of his own activities. He felt close to them and they adored him. They brought laughter and energy into his existence. Paul's family was the center of his universe. This would all change when Paul's struggles with alcohol and addictive behaviors cost him his family. When he finally managed to quit drinking, it was too late. He was sober but could never recover the family life he lost. His wife had moved on; he had alienated his daughter; and his son was dead. He had to work very hard to make amends for what he had done.

Other parts of Paul's life were not so complex or mysterious. It was obvious that he enjoyed life. Someone once said it was as if he grabbed it by the throat and beat the enjoyment right out of it. He loved sports, hunting, the outdoors, and all other manly adventures. He had a hunger for knowledge and an adventurous spirit. He was an intelligent and influential individual man. He had charisma and the ability to connect with others on a higher level. He experienced so many unique events and wonderful sites in his life. He had also devoted much of his life to serving the nation.

Paul's brothers in arms appreciated him for the soldier he was. Each November and on other special occasions they meet by his headstone and exchange stories about him. It has become tradition to pour each in attendance a Scotch whiskey. It is always the good stuff because Paul would not have it any other way. A toast is given and glasses are lifted. The final

drink always goes to Paul. There is small bare area in front of the headstone where the grass will not grow; evidently grass has a low tolerance for whisky. A pack of cigarettes is left on the headstone along with a quarter from each in attendance. The bottle is left by the headstone. Paul holds a special place in the hearts of those with whom he served. The lessons he taught are passed on to others. It is in this way he is remembered.

The Army has a way of summing up the total contribution that a man makes in his life. It is normally done on a final form referred to as a Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; it is often called a DD-214. The formal document is reviewed by the service member when they depart military service. A retirement award often provides an overview of the soldier's service. In anticipation of Paul's retirement, a request for decoration was forwarded to higher headquarters for consideration. The recommended award was the Army Legion of Merit. The decoration is rigorously scrutinized and the supporting document reviewed for accuracy. Paul's award was approved and arrived three days after his death. It honored him, but fell short of fully capturing the contributions he made to his country.

Paul's Legion of Merit reads as follows.

Sergeant Major Paul Mills Ireland III is nominated for the Legion of Merit for his exceptionally meritorious service as a Special Forces Non-Commission Officer from 22 August 1967 through 1 October 2006. His numerous contributions over thirty years of service have made a difference in every unit with which he has served. His devotion to duty has made a profound impact on the combat readiness of this command and the 1,800 soldiers who have deployed in combat operations since November of 2001. He served as a warrior in the jungles of Vietnam, a trainer and ambassador in nations throughout the Pacific Rim, and as staff planner and training manager who prepared thousands of combat ready soldiers over his career.

SGM Ireland began his military service in 1967. Having spent several years in Vietnam as a Department of Defense dependent, he voluntarily entered service in the United States Army Special Forces in 1967. His unique language ability and knowledge of the indigenous culture made him a natural fit for service in Vietnam where he served from 1969 to 1970. In September of 1969, SGM Ireland served as a Company Executive Officer for a combined Special Forces and Cambodian force. He was awarded the Bronze

Star Service Medal with “V” device for heroism during a costly engagement where over forty of his soldiers were lost to heavy direct and indirect fire. He maintained control and led his force in a counter attack preventing its total destruction. He received the Purple Heart for wounds acquired during this action. He was awarded a second Bronze Star Medal with “V” device while operating as a team leader in the 3rd Mobile Strike Force. During this action he led a combat force which attacked an area of extensive enemy fortifications where he recovered large caches of enemy weapons, munitions and killed several enemy combatants

In 1980 SGM Ireland returned to the Special Forces community joining 5th Battalion 19th Special Forces Groups (Airborne). During his service as Company Operations Sergeant he planned and prepared soldiers for deployments to Haiti, Thailand, Philippines, and Guam. Of significance was his training of the Maldives National Security Service. The PACOM Combatant Commander praised SGM Ireland for providing the training which prevented the Tamil Tiger overthrow of the Maldivian government. While serving as Battalion Operations Sergeant Major, he successfully prepared of battalion forces for deployment in 32 Joint Combined Exercises for Training, 8 Joint Chiefs of Staff Exercises and 2 combat rotations to Afghanistan.

Since 2003 he has served as Brigade Operations Sergeant Major for 89th Troop Command where he insured the combat readiness of five battalions with nineteen subordinate units spread throughout Colorado. These units include Special Forces, Aviation, Space, Medical, Military Police, Engineers, and Maintenance. Regardless of the type of unit, he provides sound training guidance, keeping training relevant, realistic and challenging. His focus on improving strength and duty MOSQ have contributed to lifting the Colorado Army National into the top ten for growth in strength. His efforts on insuring the timely qualification of soldiers assigned to his brigade has reduced the overall number of non-qualified personnel in 89th Troop Command from over twenty percent to less than ten percent and reducing the average qualification time from fifteen months to eight. As Operations Sergeant Major, he has been involved in the deployment and redeployment of all assigned units within the 89th Troop Command serving in combat operations for both Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. He planned and executed operations in several state emergencies and provided essential support for operations and disaster relief in Louisiana.

SGM Ireland’s outstanding performance in the United States Army and Colorado National Guard has contributed to United States security both at home and abroad. His service has been nothing short of outstanding. He has earned the admiration of his superiors who turned to him for the wisdom of his years of experience. He has the gained the respect of his peers who know he can be counted on in the most difficult of circumstances. Most importantly, he is held in reverence by the soldiers who look to him for guidance and mentorship. He is a warrior, trainer, tactician, mentor, operator, and advocate for the soldier. Paul Mills Ireland III has made an immeasurable impact that will last for years to come. Through countless hours of hard work and superb leadership, SGM Ireland has achieved excellence. His service brings the greatest credit on himself, The Colorado National Guard and the United States Army.

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Appendix A: Introduction

Having spent the greatest part of my life as a soldier, I have had the opportunity to serve with many gifted, diverse, interesting, and sometimes unusual people. Each of them was both an individual story and part of a larger narrative. Most whom I have known did their very best to serve this nation and in the process gained a sense of accomplishment and pride few others will ever experience. I cannot say all of these men and women left the service understanding what they have gained. Through even modest introspection, most would find that they had developed a sense of comradery and greater maturity than when they first entered the service. As I considered my own career and the people I have known, I often thought about the many stories that will never be told. These stories are not about famous figures in history, but those who have made differences in the lives of others. Remaining unseen and unheard, they are part of a greater narrative of service, which made the true difference in how each of us lives our lives today. In this section, I will present the context, purpose, and focus of my inquiry.

Synchronicity: A Pilot Study

At this point it is important to discuss a fortunate occurrence. This opportunity led to the only recorded interview of Paul Ireland and was the genesis for a manuscript I wrote in 2006. I had an opportunity to sit down with SGM Ireland and record the interview as part of a narrative inquiry course. The manuscript was the result of an exercise in coding as part of the qualitative research method. The outcome caused an abrupt change in direction for my dissertation topic. Although I had previously spent the greater part of three years studying tribal colleges, I decided to pursue this qualitative study in the portraiture approach. This chance encounter allowed me to see the value and contribution that a single person can make. One afternoon with Paul taught me that much of a person's identity is not seen or truly understood. Looking into his eyes as he

told a story, I came to appreciate the knowledge and wisdom that was being lost. I believed that I had known him well, but learned differently in his final days. I saw a whole new dimension in our final talks, one he had not revealed or perhaps went unnoticed. I am not sure if it was Paul's wish to be more open as his health diminished or my own desire to render the respect and understanding he deserved.

When Paul agreed to do the interview, we had to schedule around appointments and the fatigue he was experiencing. I was sensitive to this and wanted to complete the interview and spend a little personal time with him. I did not want to waste his time, so I spent considerable time thinking about what questions I would ask. I narrowed it down to either his experiences with the Vietnamese culture or how he viewed the Special Forces soldiers of today in comparison to the Green Berets of Vietnam. I chose the culture question, fully intending to get back with Paul later on the generational difference of Special Forces soldiers. This was an individual learning exercise, where I attempted to practice interview techniques and apply some principles of analysis and coding in the qualitative methodology. I experienced some success in this endeavor. I generated a coherent paper using the single interview but was unable to conduct a second interview as Paul passed away November 6, 2006. I did not integrate any third party interviews, historical documents, or records for this particular project. I did, however, assess the availability of documents and other materials for a follow-on study.

I completed a complete assessment of historical records and documents. There was a significant volume of historical documents and artifacts available for analysis. The information available included photographs, press clippings, and the contents of Paul's military record, which spanned some 38 years. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I conducted a complete inventory of those personal effects, records, and materials available to me.

I also reviewed my previously developed list of individuals who knew SGM Ireland. Based upon the duration, depth, and nature of their relationship, I prioritized them, and moved to schedule interviews. Using the contact script previously approved as part of the human subjects process, I phoned, mailed, and when asked, e-mailed the request. I then established an interview order for those persons who were agreeable to participating in this study. During the interview process, I was able to find additional contacts and resources for use in the study. I had no difficulty finding cooperative participants for my research.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand, through the application of portraiture methodology, the identity of SGM Paul Mills Ireland III. This study allowed me to facilitate a deliberate and credible process where a story emerges and an authentic image of a man, his experiences, and how he influenced others' lives was captured. Without this endeavor, this obscure yet arguably valuable historical knowledge would have been lost forever. I have accomplished this using his words and actions. I have melded the views, words, and images shared by him and others close to him. Through these stories, artifacts, and documents I have produced an extensive and thorough portrait, which captures the essence of Paul.

Research Questions and Focus of the Inquiry

O'Brien (1999) said, "great questions have their source in an imaginative and respectful understanding of a person's life" (p. 2). With this thought in mind, I chose the central question in my study. My research question simply asks, "Who is SGM Paul Mills Ireland III?" This simple question was the basis and compass for my inquiry. Creswell (2003) talks about the importance of not limiting the inquiry of a qualitative study by developing too narrow a research question. Ensuring that the study is not unduly limited as a result of an ill-defined or misdirected question

is of significant importance. This was my reason for asking an expansive research question. Strauss and Corbin (1990) state “the way that one asks the research question is extremely important because that determines to a larger extent the research method that is used” (p. 36). The way this question was best answered was through the portraiture approach used in this study. As illustrated by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffman Davis in their 1997 publication, *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, this approach best facilitates the discovery and presentation of the narratives that emerge from the broad based research question. These questions facilitated my success “in navigating the relationships with subjects, in witnessing and interpreting the action, in tracing emergent themes, and in creating the narrative” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 13). Portraiture was essential in clarifying and pursuing these new narratives, as they became known. Seeking to discover, better understand, and interpret these narratives was a necessary part in the successful development of the portrait.

Research Context

Research Contributions to the Field of Study.

The result of my study was consistent with my original vision: to develop and submit a quality study on the subject that I selected. I accomplished this through what I consider a unique application of the portraiture method. I applied the method to a single individual involved in the profession of arms with complex issues and challenges as a result of a lifetime of service. I have found no other study of this kind. The criteria for success were thus two fold. First is to apply the portraiture methodology in a unique and effective manner. The contribution to the research field is in fact the application of this method, the manner in which the themes were developed, and the final portrait was unveiled. Secondly, it was intended to produce an enduring image of Paul Mills Ireland III. This was dependent upon emerging themes and what form the portrait took. If I have

achieved these goals upon completion of my dissertation, then I will consider my study successful. I will contribute a document to the United States Army Heritage and Education Center. I will have told the story of one American soldier.

Depth of Research in the Field.

The literature that I have reviewed reveals a large number of biographical studies across a spectrum of diverse subjects. Some of the earliest work by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) develops life stories for individuals to explain relationships to groups and institutions. In her work, *The Good High School; Portraits of Character and Culture*, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) uses the portraiture approach to examine the educational community and how the involvement of local actors and shared meaning are the key elements of a successful learning community. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1995) explores the lives of six African-Americans in *I've Known Rivers*. She looks at the encounters and life experiences within these individual narratives. She goes beyond the simple description of events and achievements often used to describe one's life. Through portraiture she creates a deep texture that speaks to her subjects' loss of connection to racial identity, family, and community in the pursuit of success and personal growth. It is works like these that create the depth in research and value of the method.

Since 1995, various works in the portraiture approach have been developed. These include individuals, groups, and institutions. They occur in journals, book form, and dissertations, which will be discussed in Appendix B. These efforts serve to develop the method further. With so many subjects available, earlier efforts and works in the approach have little impact on any single subject. The unique nature of portraiture is that each study is its own. Not only will the subject be unique, but also the journey of discovery will reveal its own emerging themes. Therefore, while the method and various applications are well documented, there

appears to be many options for analyzing data and thematic development. More importantly, the subject of this portrait is unpublished, unique, and interesting.

Appendix B: Literature Review

Introduction

The focus of the literature for this study is on the method itself. The literature presented establishes a connection between the portraiture approach and its practical application to the subject. It is not intended to be a review of Paul Ireland's life but the suitability of portraiture in this study. I have searched and assessed the available literature on portraiture and found it adequate, but not necessarily abundant. I identified three sources for literature in my study: the primary works I will use in the method of analysis, dissertations that explore and implement the methodology, and peer reviewed journals retrieved from Academic Search Premier. I will begin with an extended introduction and then continue with an overview of the works used in implementing the method. This will be followed with a discussion of dissertations that use varied techniques to implement the portraiture approach, and then by peer reviewed literature that critiques the validity and application of portraiture as a qualitative method.

The majority of literature accessed is in the form of studies conducted in areas of little or no use in developing my dissertation. Much of the existing literature, which is relevant, focuses on the legitimacy of portraiture as a qualitative approach to the conduct of a qualitative study. While I expected some level of discussion on the validity of any methodology, portraiture seems to have a higher level of debate because of its artistic nature. This debate is most apparent in the way it is laced within the text that advocates for the portraiture approach. These reoccurring messages focus on the importance of scientific rigor, while stressing that the absence of analyzing the complex issue of context in analysis is void of real understanding. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) discuss this position repeatedly, adding that it is essential to accuracy and true insight.

In exploring the methodology of portraiture, researchers will find a similar challenge in realizing the field's "demand for accuracy" and the portraitist's "urge for poetry." It is in the resolution of this generative tension between the requirements of responsible research and the potential of artistic expression that the portraitist will successfully create an aesthetic whole—a portrait that tells the story faithfully, but in such a way that it holds interest for the general as well as the specialized reader. Portraiture strives to resonate beyond the particular that has so preoccupied science to the universal that echoes throughout art. (p. 37)

I have included a portion on the dissenting view as it presents arguments on potential pitfalls in exercising this approach. The most critical and well developed critiques were those of English (2000). The concerns addressed in his work are discussed under the "Opposing View" section of this appendix. The concerns of his assessment are attended to in the methodology section located in Appendix C. These issues become important considerations in the development of my study in that they allowed me to critically assess potential shortcomings in my study.

Portraiture, as described by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), is most often applied in the field of education. My review of literature and the different databases seems to confirm that trend. Hackmann (2002) researched a 13-year history between 1989 and 2003 and found 40 studies in the education field using the portraiture methodology. Many of these studies focused on elementary and secondary education programs and settings. He also found 13 studies for doctoral requirements, which focused on education leadership and administration. Hackmann (2002) placed these dissertations into two categories. Some "focused on qualities of exemplary educational leaders ... the remaining studies consisted of portraits of individuals, which probably permitted the researcher a greater degree of creative license" (p. 56). Only seven of these projects focused on qualities of exemplary educational leaders (Hackmann, 2002, p. 56).

Principle Works

This study required that I place a greater emphasis on what the literature said about the methodology I have chosen as opposed to the subject. This is true for three reasons: the first being that much discussion regarding the validity of this method appears in literature; the second being that many people believe that the complexity of this method is such that only the most experienced researchers can successfully grasp the concepts of portraiture; the third being the fact that the subject of my study is not part of any published works.

While the focus on the literature is about methodology and many of these works focus on the application of portraiture in education, I believe it is possible to apply the same method to an individual study, or to what Creswell (1998) calls an interpretive biography. The literature on portraiture does not specifically address this type of study, but infers that it has the capability for wider application. In this case, portraiture becomes the post practical qualitative approach to develop an understanding of the identity of SGM Paul Mills Ireland III.

The primary source for conducting this study was *The Art and Science of Portraiture* by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997). This book is the principal framework for the technique and its application. It provides great insight into all aspects of the portraiture method. Although it is not a recipe per se, it provides the considerations needed to conceive, prepare, conduct, and develop a rich and textured study.

Complementing the portraiture approach is the narrative research of Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998). This work provides an approach for content analysis where a person's life is examined in its entirety and parts of that history is examined in relationship to the broader narrative. A theme is discovered within a piece of the content as it relates to the whole. This theme is used to determine how the narrative is constructed and its meaning.

Dissertations: Analysis of Doctoral Works

In my own inquiry, I used the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. Using the advanced search option, I queried dissertations cataloged since 1997. This date was selected as it marks the year that *The Art and Science of Portraiture* by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) was published. I used the search parameters of portrait or portraiture in the citation and abstract fields. I added the additional search criteria of Lawrence-Lightfoot or methodology in the subsequent fields. I found 403 dissertations in a wide variety of fields. I placed them into 18 separate categories by subject or study type. I further divided them into group, individual, subject, or institutional studies based on the scope of the study. In some cases, the dissertations could fit into more than one category. Where a theme, such as gender studies, was more prevalent than subject group, I placed it in the gender type under the group category. In a circumstance where the study included an additional consideration of race, I used the primary focus of the study and placed it in only one category. Most frequently, I was able to ascertain the scope of the study by reading the abstract. This was not true in all cases. I then pulled up the study in order to assess its content. While I focused on the theme and development of the study, I also looked at the structure of studies to identify potentially unique elements.

In order to analyze the meaning and composition of portraiture dissertations, I have looked through eight doctoral works of particular interest. I found significant differences in the content, structure, and references used. Some studies paralleled the traditional structure of a qualitative dissertation. They contained an introduction, review of literature, research method, research findings, and conclusion with suggestions for further research. Some studies had subtle differences in the overall structure. These included an added chapter for findings where multiple subjects existed. On occasion, drawings were included as literature or data. The larger

differences included abbreviated introductions, literature reviews of 8 to 10 pages, and moving the methodology to the appendix of the dissertation. Studies ranging in length from 109 pages to 244 pages included metaphors in midlife change, faith and leadership for Christian college presidents, solitude for educational leaders, gender portraits, storytelling, teachers, portrait of a magnet school, and an individual life history. This vast scope of work all effectively integrated elements of the portraiture methodology in presenting their findings.

There were 89 dissertations with the content focused primarily on education. Of these, only 13 focused on an individual as opposed to a group. Of all the study types reviewed, individual portraits received a substantially lower count than group studies. Of the 403 studies across 18 categories, only 65 looked at individuals. In these studies, researchers identified and implemented elements of the method. I did not analyze the depth in which they incorporated their own perspective into the study. Of the studies reviewed, none focused on military professionals. I identified three studies (Currah, 2005; Patterson, 2000; Rivera 2006) where the researchers closely identified with the elements found in Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997).

Currah (2005) conducted a study on a first grade male teacher. In her work, she looked at the male experience in a predominantly female profession. Her own expertise as an educator contributed to her insight during the story. Patterson (2000) did a life study on an influential figure in education. As a teacher, she had an opportunity to meet and work briefly with her subject. Impressed by his knowledge and reputation, she conducted a study filled with rich emergent themes from a variety of sources. Rivera (2006) is not a study about a single individual, but about three storytellers. Unique in his approach, he adds himself as a fourth storyteller and devotes one chapter to his own experiences.

Supporting Works

Dixson, Chapman, and Hill (2005) state that, “through portraiture, researchers can demonstrate a commitment to the research participants and contextualize the depictions of individuals and events” (p. 17). It is this commitment to capturing the aesthetic whole that inspires the researcher to maintain the rigor of academic research. Though the work of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) uses a different vocabulary, it is not void of structure. The framework they present may not be considered traditional in nature but nonetheless provides ample opportunity for the incorporation of critical analysis. In fact, the authors attempt to show a framework, which provides a wider lens through which to view the subject. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) does not advocate abandonment of the scientific method. She attempts to improve upon the results by adding perspective. “I wanted to create a narrative that bridged the realms of science and art, merging the systematic and careful description of good ethnography with the evocative resonance of fine literature” (2005, p. 6).

Hackmann (2002) notes that, “a portraitist minimally is concerned with problems of replication” (p. 55). This does not mean that the study could not be conducted again with the same results. In fact, Hackmann (2002) suggests that if another researcher were to conduct the same study, though the voice may be different, the themes that would emerge would remain consistent. The findings of Bloom and Erlandson (2003) support this conclusion on the validity of portraiture.

Working as a narrative portrait means among other things that it communicates a complex human whole (whether a person or an organization) at many levels to its readers in a manner that is not necessarily identical to but is consistent with the intention of the portraitist. (p. 877)

Opposing View

English (2000) shows particular concern over the heavy influence of the writer in the portraiture product. He asks the question, “Who gives the portraiture the authority to designate a single metanarrative and to define its meaning for us in the process” (p. 23). In essence, he is saying that the truth told is that of the writer. The writer chooses what content is incorporated into the final work. Bloom and Erlandson (2003) believe that the portraitist does in fact have great latitude in content, but no more than what is found in other work. Researchers have the ability to select which information is relevant and to be included in overall study. In either case, the issue of ethics remains paramount in the final production and “the final product that emerges still must be objective and must reflect the researcher’s unbiased understanding of the truth”

(Hackmann, 2002, p.55). I would concur with English (2002) and his assessment of portraiture as a complex methodology ill-suited for an inexperienced researcher. Reviewing the literature on this process reveals a somewhat loose structure, which can be unnerving for a doctoral student looking down the barrel of a dissertation. Dixson et al. (2005) casually suggest that it is possible to remain congruent with the elements of portraiture and still modify the method to fit their individual design. Lightfoot-Lawrence and Davis (1997) present numerous roles throughout the research process, which challenge the novice portraitist in developing a quality study.

Conclusion and Transition

I integrated additional references that serve to define significant points in Paul’s portrait. These may include but will not be limited to social issues during the Vietnam War, historical articles that define Paul’s family and life in the military. The volume of literature that I have

identified and reviewed is adequate for the study I have selected. I believe that the quality of the material selected supports the conduct of my project, and development of the final portrait.

Appendix C: Methodology

Appendix C presents the qualitative methodology that was used to complete my study. I will begin with the portraiture genre of qualitative research, its application, and provide my rationale for selecting a qualitative study and use of the portraiture approach. I will then describe the framework of the inquiry and the elements of trustworthiness in this research method. Finally I will discuss the data sources and their collection, the analysis of the data, thematic development, and the composition of the final portrait.

Portraiture Approach and Rationale

My view of portraiture is that it contains some of the same research characteristics of ethnography. Both qualitative approaches are holistic and broad based in their means. They rely on observation, the recording of events, and calculated levels of researcher participation in the research environment, all culminating in interpretation and a descriptive explanation of data in an attempt to achieve understanding. A significant difference between an ethnography and portraiture is the researcher's stance in shaping the story.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) assert portraiture 'is a much more active, engaged position in which one searches for the story, seeks it out, is central in its creation' (p. 12). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) state that, "ethnographers listen to a story whereas portraitists listen for a story" (p. 11). Miles and Huberman suggest that ethnographic methods are descriptive observations drawn from varied sources of data, the objective being to "condense them, with somewhat less concern for the conceptual or theoretical meaning of these observations." (1994, p. 8). An ethnographer writes the event down, changing it from a passing event to an account. These observations are recorded for future review and analysis (Geertz, 1973). This seems to be more about the description and interpretation of behavior and less about the discovery and

meaning of individual or group identity. Portraiture in contrast does not pursue documenting what one does and the reason for it the behavior. It is more about understanding how the subject being described is personified. The portraitist is concerned with aesthetic expression and the pursuit of a “meaning that goes beyond simple representation” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 28). I see a key element in my study as being the blend of both the subject’s voice and mine with the support of other outside narratives that add color and definition to the final portrait. The successful development of a portrait is contingent on continuous examination and incorporation of these voices in shaping a rich and descriptive narrative.

Dixson et al. (2005) suggest that “portraiture is best described as a blending of qualitative methodologies—life history, naturalist inquiry, and most prominently, that of ethnographic methods” (p. 17). In this description the words life, history, and inquiry signify a story. The development of a story and use of narrative inquiry to craft a portrait requires constant examination and adjustment. Clandinin and Connelly (2002) propose that narrative inquiry is less about determining the solution to a problem and more about “a sense of continual reformulation of an inquiry” to identifying themes and experiences of interest (p. 124). The basis of this design is the incorporation of the recorded, observed acts, and historical events to create image. This differs from the way I originally perceived the method. I always thought of the term portraiture in a more physical sense. That is to say, an image on canvas or perhaps a collection of photographs strung together to create an overall collage type image. I had not imagined portraiture as a tradition of qualitative inquiry where words are substituted for visual art to create an image of the individual. Yet this method can be used to identify and interpret emerging patterns that shape the narrative.

Understanding the features of portraiture is imperative to shaping the narrative.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) explain five key structural features in the main body of their work. The application of this method revolves around the implementation of these five features with a focus on “engaging the process of portraiture (collecting data and interpreting data) and rendering product (the portrait)” (p. xvii).

These features include the context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole. Understanding these features allows for connection of the portraiture process to the portrait itself.

Framework and Development of a Portraiture Study

The best discussion of framework for portraiture is found in chapter seven of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997). The framework begins with a holistic view of the story. The intent is to view all data within the scope of interaction with those involved in the study. From there, emergent themes are organized in a fashion that constructs the overall result. The overall portrait is constructed by addressing four dimensions outlined by the author. They are (a) conception (overarching story), (b) structure (organization of emerging themes), (c) form (unfolding narrative), and (d) coherence (integrity of the study; p. 247)

Identifying the overarching story is essential in developing a broad research question. In its earliest stages, the story and initial concept provides an unrestricted framework that may be flushed out and further developed as emerging themes are identified. It is the identification of these themes that serve to increase a sense of structure, which guides the direction of the inquiry. As these themes are organized, the narrative becomes increasingly visible, guiding the researcher in the refinement of data and subsequent composition of the portrait.

As previously discussed the portrait begins with a basic overarching story. It is loosely developed in its initial stage and forms the basis of my inquiry. I chose to deviate from the more

conventional dissertation structure by presenting this story in the Prologue of my proposal. It is a rather unique organization that serves to honor the portraiture approach by providing the reader with my base-line perspective of Paul Ireland. It is this perspective or *Legend* of Paul Ireland that was analyzed, developed, and then presented throughout the various Episodes, Stasimon, and final Exodus in the forward of my dissertation. It is this concept that is tied to and supports my research question. The restated research question as presented in Appendix A asks the question, who is SGM Paul Mills Ireland III?

In order to answer this question, I began with the general structure, the initial story. This background provides the level of insight needed to identify potential sources of information and perspective for the study. The depth and integrity of the data gathered provides for the organization of emergent themes in their proper context. It is from this basis that the subsequent formation of a coherent and well-crafted portrait can be formed.

Trustworthiness

Lightfoot-Lawrence and Davis (1997) tell us of the importance of listening for the story and the use of the narrative and metaphor in portraiture. To successfully develop a legitimate portrait, it is important that data be collected and thoroughly analyzed. The researcher cannot filter and assemble a story based upon a personal agenda. Researchers must involve the interviewee in a role where they become a co-creator. In this capacity; those interviewed reduce potential error, consider and adjust previous material, and validate the content. This occurs throughout the normal course of the interview and in subsequent meetings to conduct a more formal member checking session. Miles and Huberman (1994) ask the following three questions, which address validity and credibility in a study. “Do the findings of the study make sense? Are

they credible to the people we study and to our readers? Do we have an authentic portrait of what we are looking at?” (p. 278).

There are four areas by which aesthetic wholeness may be judged. Vallance (1998) praises Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis’s criteria as applicable “to any portraiture, written or otherwise” (p. 69). She boils these criteria down to four questions, which serve to define people, places, or events: “Has contextual information been included in the backdrop throughout the portrait? Is the author’s voice informative without distortion? Are relationships among the players respected? Do the emergent themes resonate accurately” (p. 69)?

I believe that portraiture is not only the most suitable approach in conducting this type of study, but it is the most legitimate in that it seeks to establish a believable and authentic narrative that resonates with the actors, readers, and portraitist. The very nature of the portraiture methodology depends upon a cooperative exchange between the research and interviewees to produce a genuine portrait. I also believe that the existence of ample information in terms of interviews, photographs, miscellaneous documents, and military records supports this tradition and the creation of a portrait for Sergeant Major Paul Mills Ireland III. I believe this study meets the portraiture criteria outlined in Lightfoot-Lawrence and Davis (1997). The portrait developed from this research does in fact result in a portrait that will resonate with the reader.

Data Sources and Collection

Lightfoot-Lawrence and Davis (1997) state that having a predefined conceptual structure does not mean the researcher does not have to remain open to the fact data could take them in another direction. While I had a clear understanding of where I wished to go with this study, I understood that once I began my work, the constant organization, analysis, and interpretation of the data would guide subsequent collection efforts. Still the changes in direction were purposeful

and the identification of data sources and subsequent collection was a “disciplined, empirical process—of description, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis—and an aesthetic process of narrative development” (p. 185).

My initial collection efforts included the acquisition of documents related to Paul Ireland’s military service, photographs, or other pertinent activities. These materials were secured from private parties using formal requests approved by the IRB and a request made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). I then conducted a series of interviews with family, friends, and associates. I also used an earlier recording of an interview with Paul and artifacts that were relevant to the portrait.

Documents

I was able to draw upon relevant document and artifacts, which served to provide insight into Paul’s past experiences. Such items included military records, photographs, clippings from a personal scrapbook, and excerpts from books discussing particular events in Vietnam. I requested and secured copies from friends, associates, and from Paul’s daughter and ex-wife. Of particular interest were award citations and pictures of Paul’s early military career. The total volume and content of useable documents was substantial and further validated in my selection process. All sources used were corroborated through a review of official records. In many instances, activities were confirmed in interviews and by cross referencing military reports on combat action to include another soldier present with Paul in Vietnam. All materials were acquired in one of two ways. Primarily, I asked for an opportunity to review these items as part of the interview process. When I was unable to secure documents or items on federal military service from the family, I requested them under The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). I provided a copy of the items to the family upon their request.

Participants

Though deceased, Paul Ireland is more than the subject of this study. He is also a participant. His influence on others and the legacy of his service consistently shaped the ensuing narrative. With Paul's death in November 2006, the recording made during our 2006 interview was the only existing verbal input at my disposal. It is a genuine piece where Paul's candid and somewhat raw thoughts were captured during a conversation that lasted a little more than an hour.

The identification and selection of other participants was critical to both the development and depth of this narrative. The diversity of those selected was limited only by the nature of their relationship with the subject. In order to understand the identity of SGM Ireland, I spoke to those who had definitive relationships on either a personal or professional level. These associations and the resulting point of view were judged in terms of duration and depth. Though time is not necessarily the paramount measure of a significant relationship, it is realistic to expect that those who knew Paul for a longer period of time were able to understand or build a usable perspective. Based on the evolution of my own relationship with Paul, those with longer associations developed the level of trust necessary to establish greater rapport. I sought out family, close friends, and those who knew Paul through his civilian or military careers. The number of truly valued candidates was not limited. There was no random generation in my selection. I began with relatives and those who had worked with Paul in the military. The pool of potential contacts was expanded based on new information emerging from the individual interviews. I approached new interviews assessing the potential for added materials, and where required, provided the requisite forms prior to conducting the interview. As previously discussed, I too was a source of data for this study through my own experiences with Paul and the Service of Arms.

I will present my method of tracking and developing this input after I finish discussing other candidates and my procedures for contacting them. I have identified, contacted, and interviewed the key participants for this portrait. These included his daughter, ex-wife, historical, and contemporary military sources. I also had an opportunity to interview those who knew him in the college, athletic, recreation, and social realms. The initial number of candidates considered did not exceed 15. The actual number of interviews used in the study is seven. Having quickly reached the point of saturation, I determined additional interviews would not add depth to the study. The only areas where I identified voids in perspective are during Paul's time in Vietnam and other early post-Vietnam military service. In order to cover these areas in more depth, I used the information identified in the awards and evaluations document secured through the FOIA.

I contacted each participant first by letter of introduction. This letter provided the intent of my study and outlined the expectations of the participants. I also defined my responsibilities and explained the follow-up coordination. I then contacted each participant by telephone to schedule the interview. Subsequent coordination was made by both phone and e-mail. I left the option for telephone interviews open, however, this method was used for one interviewee who also added a narrative from his recollection of events in Vietnam. Initially I had concerns over the use of telephonic interviews. My apprehensions were that I might conceivably miss out on key visual cues and selected settings, which would have added to my understanding of the participant. The passion and crisp narrative provided by the participant removed any concerns in this regard. At the beginning of each interview, participants were provided with an informed consent form. I discussed my project in detail providing additional expectations for a follow-up visits to clarify any points of the interview that might have been unclear. I also explained the

potential need for subsequent interviews to clarify responses or seek a form of triangulation with other interviews where themes might have converged.

I left the option to conduct member checking of results through subsequent interviews by whatever means was most suitable. These methods included face-to-face, telephonic, and e-mail contact. The preferred method remained in a personal setting, but simple clarification was also conducted by phone and e-mail message. The latter remained an effective method of tracking and documenting responses.

As previously discussed, I too was a data source for this study. I have chronologically outlined the events of my association with Paul in the Prologue. I used memos and diagram as methods discussed in Strauss and Corbin, (1990) to capture additional experiences and interactions with Paul as they arose during my work. I have often thought of Paul since his death. In my daily life, some activity creates a context where I recall some event worth contemplating or considering for my study. I have noted most of these; I have forgotten others. This process has shown me the importance of capturing memories and significant issues as they occur. It also allowed me to identify key issues, themes, and other potential participants that contributed to the depth of the study.

Interviews

I collected data for this portrait by conducting in-person interviews. I scheduled each interview for a period of 60 to 90 minutes. I asked broad questions designed to illicit the story that the participant wanted to tell. The use of open-ended questions encouraged participants to prioritize and present their most memorable stories as they chose. It reduced the potential for limiting the participant's response. The way in which the participants presented their stories of personal and professional experiences with Paul developed multiple themes and a strong

indication of how the collective group viewed him. That is to say, the stories shared by the group consistently portrayed similar attributes and behaviors; these stories reveal rich details that added further depth to the portrait. I conducted all interviews and collected data at the location or by the method selected by the participant. 1

There was one additional interview included as part of the study. As discussed in an earlier section on previous research, I had already conducted one interview with Paul Ireland. It was for a narrative inquiry class where I sought to gain experience in interviewing techniques, transcription, and coding. Paul spoke in detail about the time he spent in Vietnam as a dependent and later as a soldier. Some of the questions I asked were focused on a specific incident that resulted in Paul's awards for valor and wounds received in combat. I noted that several documents regarding Paul's service were readily available. Some were in the possession of his daughter, others were in the hands of close friends or maintained in his government record.

Settings

The issue of settings was considered in two ways. The first being what Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) call "Illumination: Framing the Terrain" (p. 41). Second was the idea of "Implementation: Setting the Site" (p. 60). Both were essential in that they each served to identify, understand, and define the contextual framework in which I was to work. Context creates depth in understanding. "In fact the portraitist insists that only way to interpret people's actions, perspectives, and talk is to see them in context." (p. 11). I believe the two concepts of framing terrain and setting the site differ in terms of use. The first is being able to understand the environment in which the activity takes place. The second is an understanding of the environment, interaction, and presence of the researcher that takes place during the interview itself. In essence I had to look at, and clearly define, the difference between the context of the

narrative in which the action occurred and the context in which my activity and interaction shaped the direction of portrait.

The concept of context in framing the terrain is significant in that aids the researcher in relating activity to the “physical, geographic, temporal, historical, cultural, aesthetic—within which the action takes place (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p.41). This is particularly important to my study due to the level of rigor in the environment and human experience in which my subject resided.

The idea of setting the site differs in that I “consider practical strategies for discovering, including, and representing context as it is located in literal space and time” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 61). Issues associated with my own perspective and experience as it related to the subject and those I interviewed demanded a high level of awareness. It is this awareness that “stimulates insight into the process; the direction of the process actively shapes the finished product” (p. 60).

The interviews generally took place in the locations where Paul Ireland worked, lived, and conducted leisure activities. These areas were primarily within the state of Colorado. There were, however, other potential locations identified. These included Texas where Paul’s mother resides and Nevada where one of Paul’s Vietnam comrades resided. One interviewee relocated and preferred to do a write-up followed by a phone interview. Based on the information collected, I found it unnecessary to interview Paul’s mother. I attempted to review information with Paul’s sister, but she was unavailable for the study.

Data Analysis

“The development of emergent themes reflects the portraitist’s first efforts to bring interpretive insight, analytical scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data” (Lawrence-

Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 185). This process of searching the data for patterns that can be woven into coherent themes requires that “the portraitist comes to the field with an intellectual framework and a set of guiding questions” (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 185). This framework is an adaptive model capable of supporting changes in what the researcher hears or observes in the field. Lightfoot-Lawrence and Davis (1997) discuss the importance of using memos on anticipatory themes in order to guide research in the field. These themes provide a clear course, which provides integrity to the framework. This does not dictate a rigid formula for analysis, but rather a firm foundation for ongoing collection, examination, and synthesis of data. This broader framework supports a more holistic view of analysis. This prevents the oversimplification or dilution of the reality being examined. This holistic approach is essential to creating “a document that is both authentic and evocative, coded and colorful” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 243).

Lieblich et al. (1998) discuss the concept of looking at the complete life story and understanding its meaning using a holistic approach.

In the holistic approach, the life story of a person is taken as a whole, and sections of the text are interpreted in the context of other parts of the narrative. The holistic approach is preferred when the person as a whole, that is, his or her development to the current position, is what the study aims to explore. (p. 12)

I collected hundreds of pages of documents and interview transcripts. These formed a large body of rich data which formed the basis of the portrait. Successful analysis and true understanding of the content required significant focus and multiple reviews. I read through the materials several times. Some documents were reviewed as many as twenty times in their entirety, parts of documents several times more in an effort to fully understand the meaning. In reviewing these pages, Lieblich et al. (1998) states that the researcher may analyze the text “along myriad dimensions, such as contents; structure; style of speech; affective characteristics;

motives, attitudes, and beliefs of the narrator; or her or his cognitive level” (p. 9). This approach was congruent with the shaping of a narrative through identification of emergent themes as discussed in the portraiture methodology. Using what Lieblich et al. (1998) calls content oriented approach is one technique of analyzing the Narrative. The holistic

content oriented approach aims at getting to the implicit content by asking about the meaning that the story, or a certain section of it, conveys. What traits or motives of the individual are displayed, or what a certain image used by the narrative symbolizes. (p. 12)

This method of analysis was time consuming and complex. English (2002) and Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) discuss the high level of expertise required in the successful application of the portrait method. Developing the competency to extract data in this process was in the forefront of my thoughts in considering the portrait methodology. I originally considered using more traditional methods of analysis to manage data. Lieblich et al. (1998) describe the categorical approach of analysis, whereby data is pulled out of the narrative, categorized, and grouped for analysis. This approach dissects the narrative for analysis irrespective of the entire story. It does not observe the story as a whole. Instead, I approached the search for patterns discussed in Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) by using the “holistic-content perspective” discussed in Lieblich et al. (1998).

Classifying Concepts

I did not establish codes or a framework of analysis prior to examination of the interviews, documents, and events recorded during the study. Instead, I let the voice of the subject and others interviewed build emergent themes, which were contrasted with the contents of military records and documents. In using the portraiture methodology, it was essential that I as the researcher look at all information from every angle and in as much detail as possible. Strauss and Corbin (1990) talk about the use of techniques, [to “open up” the data and set free whatever

degree of creative ability and theoretical sensitivity you have.] (p. 94). Using the holistic content approach in conducting a portraiture study is an exceptionally open and creative technique. Success of the portraiture method is predicated on the writer as the primary instrument of analysis.

Portraitist as an Instrument

The concept of the portraitist being the primary instrument of analysis for portrait development is essential to the success of the researcher. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) suggests that the portraitist makes decisions that determine how context is used to impact five key factors in the research process.

The first use of context depicts a detailed description of the physical setting; the second refers to the researcher's perch and perspective; the third underscores the history, culture, and ideology of the place; fourth identifies central metaphors and symbols that shape the narrative; and the fifth speaks to the actor's role in shaping and defining context. (p. 44)

The portraitist must be attentive and adaptive in conducting the study to ensure accurate reflection in pursuit of the aesthetic whole.

In many regards, my study is unique. While I have not set aside a chapter where I am subject, I am a primary source of information throughout much of the study. My parallel experiences in military service and the Special Forces Regiment make me an essential element in analyzing the earlier military life of SGM Paul Ireland III. Finally, I am also the researcher who has developed the portrait.

Data and Thematic Development

Significant to the overall success of developing an accurate and vivid portrait is the writer's ability to take the emerging themes, analyze their meaning, and arrange them within the portrait. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) discuss the idea of identifying and connecting these emerging themes.

The portraitist draws out the refrains and patterns and creates a thematic framework for the construction of the narrative. She gathers, organizes and scrutinizes the data, searching for convergent threads, illuminating metaphors, and overarching symbols, and often constructing a coherence out of themes that the actors might experience as unrelated or incoherent. This is a disciplined, empirical process-of description, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis-and an aesthetic process of narrative development. (p. 185)

In order to capture the content of the interviews, I taped the exchanges with all participants. This included initial interviews only; subsequent interviews were not conducted. The tapes were transcribed for review with the participant and subsequent analysis. Discrepancies or questions of understanding were followed up with phone contact and written exchanges as needed.

Prior to beginning the study, I was confident that the data collected would be adequate to provide some key themes and attributes, which would serve to capture the essence of Paul Ireland. As anticipated, the emergent themes presented a clear construct of the type of man SGM Paul Ireland was. While the information analyzed presents well-defined indications of his character, it does not cover all portions of Paul's life. Nonetheless, the themes remain consistent and present a logical flow over time. Strauss and Corbin (1990) write about the identification and clarification of a storyline in the selective coding phase. While this discussion revolves around developing structure for a phenomenology, it is equally important here, the difference being that I was able to search for a series of attributes or groups of behavior as opposed to one central core theme. These themes were placed into chronological order for analysis. As previously stated, there was some deviation in order based on the nature of the grouping and expected overlap that served to connect the revealed themes over a period of time. Creswell (1998) suggests that a deviation from the chronological approach provides a more diverse structure. This was not the case for my study. Upon final analysis, I determined that the most practical form of presentation

was by the distinct phases or events in Paul's life. These significant time periods were initially revealed while conducting the interviews. Subsequent readings of individual interviews and the body of interviews as a whole provided more clarity.

Continued readings resulted in the identification of distinct foci within the text. The emerging themes became readily apparent. Paul's characteristics, choices, and conduct began to correlate with events in Paul's life. The results of these initial readings helped me to form what Lieblich et al. (1998) call an "initial and global impression" (p.62). The global impression is a when the body of composition displays characteristics that are consistently present and serve to illuminate the storyline. The global impression emerges from reading documents with a discerning eye, considering the context of the activities, and questioning the meaning of these events. As discussed earlier, each interview was read individually, and the global impression of each was logged in researcher notes. This was an important and useful step in the process. Working with multiple interviews and documents became rather complex and proved more difficult than I originally anticipated. The organization of thoughts and tracking of thematic data required not only notes, but also a method for viewing and organizing the emerging foci within each interview. It was also an effective approach in comparing the interviews, gathered documents, and photographs.

Though I developed my own coding sheet for this purpose, I incorporated both the seven research goals and four criteria used to evaluating narrative studies located in Lieblich et al. (1998). My rationale for using these elements was twofold. First, by beginning with the standard for a finished narrative, I could more effectively craft the portrait. Second, these elements provided added insight into the meaning and integration of the data. The seven research goals identified in Lieblich et al. (1998) are the essential elements I considered in the portrait of Paul.

These goals include: insight and feeling for the person, understanding how the subject understands their life, deepening the reader's sympathy or empathy for the subject, portraying the context of the world in which the subject lives, illuminating the causes and meaning of events, and presenting an evocative or compelling read. The goals were guiding elements in crafting the portrait at the front of this study, but I required additional assistance in relating this approach in analysis with what Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) calls aesthetic expression. In addition to the research goals, I added the four criteria for evaluating narrative studies as outlined in Lieblich et al. (1998). The criteria include: Width—Comprehension of Evidence; Coherence—Parts of Interpretation Create and Complete Meaningful Picture; Insightfulness—Sense of Innovation or Originality in Presentation of Story; Parsimony—Ability to Provide an Analysis based on Concepts; and elegant aesthetic appeal. Both sets of considerations were reflected upon in the analysis of interviews and documents.

With these in mind, I went through each interview and collected text line by line. I extracted key words, phrases, and sentences from the documents and placed them into the coding sheet. Each line was identified with the category or foci, and where needed, associated impressions for the entry. Careful care was taken to notice salience, contradictions, frequency, duration, and when foci appeared in the different periods of Paul's life. This method further supported a time sequenced approach in presenting the portrait.

There are other aspects of the story that were more difficult to interpret, form, or lace within the story. The categorical framework developed in my coding sheet provided a place holder for disparate details, which might be of use. These key words or phrases were compared to my initial global impressions. This served as an effective outline for shaping the narrative and incorporating valuable details into the portrait that might otherwise be lost.

As discussed in Lieblich et al. (1998), I noted the beginning and end of particular themes in Paul's life. While Paul had distinct and identifiable phases in his life, exterior factors such as alcohol, women, and illness appeared at different frequencies, intensity, and duration. The elements may have always been present, but the desire and tendency to act on them is often undetermined. Initially, I considered that a lack of information could present a liability or gap in the timeline. Important data that arose infrequently could, at first look, have no relationship to the global impression. That was not the case in the study. Even though certain characteristics or activities were not always consistently present in the data collected, there was a logical thread connecting the material over time. In order to ensure that smaller pieces of important information were not omitted, special care was taken to note them in the coding document and consider them in forming the portrait. Another important concern was identified during the analysis. This was how to best to present the findings in appendix D.

The focus of the study is the presentation of a well-crafted portrait of Paul Ireland. In order to provide the scientific portion of the study, I determined the best approach was to add a second write up of the global expression in the findings labeled appendix D. Essentially, I am providing two separate write-ups. I developed the global impression using the same general format in Lieblich et al. (1998). The findings include the impression with emerging themes or foci. This structure provides the reader with the required data and a clear understanding of how it supports the portrait presented in the forward portion of the study. The consistency between these two parts serves to validate the legitimacy of the portrait.

Pen to Canvas

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) describes the portraiture method in this way:

portraiture is a method framed by traditions and values of the phenomenological paradigm, sharing many of the techniques, standards, and goals of ethnography. But it

pushes against the constraints of those traditions and practices in its explicit effort to combine empirical and aesthetic description, in its focus on the convergence of narrative and analysis, in its goal of speaking to broader audiences beyond the academy, in its standard of authenticity rather than reliability and validity, and in its explicit recognition of the use of self as the primary research instrument for documenting and interpreting the perspectives and experiences of the people and cultures being studied. (p. 13)

Although I considered a structure based upon emerging themes for the portrait, I chose the chronological approach instead. I did however find that a thematic presentation for the global impression was best. I paralleled the presentation method outlined in Lieblich et al. (1998). My original assumption was that the periods of interest would include his youth, early military service, civilian occupation, and education as well as his second period of military service. I also felt that understanding both his personal and professional relationships would be defining elements of the study. The addition of the second thematic write-up was an unanticipated and necessary change to the study.

In summary, the method selected for this study was appropriate for the topic. The study ended with a comprehensive portrait of the subject enriched by incorporating the voices of those involved in the study. This approach required significant effort to further identify methods for analysis of data collected. The results required continued effort in weaving the emerging themes into the narrative. The results provided an accurate reflection of Paul that resonates with the reader. It resulted in a “narrative that is at once complex, provocative, and inviting, that attempts to be holistic, revealing the dynamic interaction of personal values, personality, structure, and history” (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 11). In accomplishing this, I will have met my obligation to a man whom I hold in high regard.

Appendix D: Findings

Introduction

It is here that I present the global impression. This is not the final product of the study. It serves as holistic-content picture of Paul that reveals patterns and emergent themes identified during multiple reviews of the research text. These patterns and themes will resonate with the reader, mirroring the content contained within the portrait of Paul Ireland. As stated earlier, the global impression emerges from reading documents with a discerning eye, considering the context of the activities, and questioning the meaning of these events; the global impression is the result of reading the content of collected materials in a holistic manner, searching constantly for particular plots or patterns. Lieblich et al. (1998) provides a summary of the steps in crafting this impression and its content.

Put your initial and global impression of the case into writing. Note the exceptions to the general impression as well as unusual features of the story such as contradictions or unfinished descriptions. Episodes or issues that seem to disturb the teller, or produce disharmony in his or her story, may be no less instructive than clearly displayed contents.... Decide on special foci of content or themes that you want to follow in the story as it evolves from beginning to end... follow each theme throughout the story and note your conclusions. Be aware of where a theme appears for the first and last times, the transitions between themes, the context for each one, and their relative salience in the text. Again, pay special attention to the episodes that seem to contradict the theme in terms of content, mood, or evaluation by the teller. (p. 62)

Here is my impression, followed by a presentation of identified themes and a discussion on the findings.

Impression

The story of Paul's life is intricate. It is filled with multiple themes, which depending upon one's relationship with Paul, may or may not have been readily apparent. A consistent thread present in the study is that of selfless service and devotion to traditional ideals. The notion

of doing what was honorable and expected grew out of repeated expressions of sacrifice and caring actions, many of which were rarely shared amongst the many people who were part of Paul's life. Many did not emerge until long after his death. This includes his heroic service in Vietnam and other attributes that will be presented. These lifelong themes of quality in character and humility were in stark contrast to Paul's constant struggle to control his vices. Though not always present in the life story, these vices appeared in varied degrees with a high rate of consistency. The intensity and duration of Paul's struggle with alcohol and women depended upon the environment and challenges he was confronted with. This was an expected result as Paul endured many hardships, including Vietnam service, the loss of his son, contending with physical ailments, and battling a life ending disease.

The idea of environment extends beyond the physical location involved; it speaks to the context of the relationship, perceived expectations, and how Paul and others understood his role. Though Paul continued to help, assist, coach, mentor, and work hard to meet expectations, it does not appear to be for recognition or acceptance. He had a strong sense of independence and his own understanding of what was right. He proved adept at all endeavors. He was successful where he chose to be; he did so to meet his own sense of purpose and what he believed was right. Outwardly, he shied away from recognition, preferring to avoid praise. In contrast, he seemed to relish being the dissenting voice to those in higher positions. Meanwhile, he was an advocate and champion for those who could not represent themselves. It is hard to understand if this visible display matched his inner feelings, but his convictions and sincerity appeared to ring true.

Paul made choices; he did not do anything that he did not wish to. As most requirements in life are legitimate, he tended to them in proper fashion. He was not a contrarian, seeking to undermine the establishment or defy authority recklessly. In fact he was a staunch supporter of

what he viewed as rightful establishments. Throughout his life he actually supported the traditional institutions of family, marriage, service, God, and country. He did so even when it they conflicted with his own personal vices. In failure, he acknowledged shortcomings and felt remorse. When assuming a destructive path due to excessive alcohol consumption, Paul acted without care or apology. He chose instead to harbor feelings of guilt and privately inflict a sort of self-perdition. While he may not have sought to undermine the establishment, he did defy and seek to defeat those in positions of power when he believed that he was right. Paul appeared to clash with the absurd and ridiculous. He enjoyed autonomy, preferred to work without interference, and was not afraid to share his perspective on micromanaging officers. It seems as though he felt shorted in life. He believed himself far more capable, and worthy of higher station and purpose. This is not presented as an errant assumption on Paul's beliefs. In fact, success in his many undertakings suggests that he was correct in his assessment. In either case, the desire to make his mark is present in the body of the data. It appears in his early pursuit of military service and ends with his effort to makes things right, leaving a lasting legacy.

Another theme that was consistently present was the social and interpersonal attributes Paul possessed. He was charismatic and either liked or loved by nearly everyone. Even those with whom he had bad dealings somehow saw his better qualities as redeeming. He weighed and measured the individuals that he met. The interaction depended largely on how he viewed a person. He mirrored the other party's approach. When confronted with force he could be forceful, but was respectful in the exchange. Cordial communications were met with like conversations. He understood people, and sought to build rapport. He was able to make people feel important because he listened to them. He was sincerely interested in what they had to say. These conversations were opportunities for Paul to influence others. He inspired them with his

knowledge, wisdom, and charisma. This charm and intellect were additional themes that first arose in his Vietnam service.

With only one exception, all interviews and documents reflected a high sense of praise and acknowledgment for these qualities. The only outlier was a fellow Green Beret in Vietnam who had similarly distinguished service. Men of this elite regiment often minimize their contributions, seeing them as expected and unremarkable. Every other interview or collected document consistently and repeatedly commented on Paul's thirst for knowledge, intelligence, wisdom, and competence. They shared themes of heroism, honor in his dealings, caring, and the type of goodness described by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997). These commonly acknowledged qualities were in conflict with Paul's failings. These faults were known to all. They were not ignored or diminished; they were, however, set aside, seemingly less important than what Paul had to offer. He was held in reverence for his positive attributes. Like his devotion to service and charisma, Paul's wisdom and intelligence far outweighed his shortcomings. This was true in both his personal and professional life.

I will look at these characteristics and how they played out in Paul Ireland's life. As mentioned earlier, the traits appear in varying degrees over time. The best way to understand them is to categorically frame the behaviors within the different roles of Paul's life. In many ways, the content of the narrative remains the same regardless of role. The image presented becomes fluid; changes are dependent on how successful Paul was in controlling his weaknesses. The categories presented include his military or professional role, the traditional roles of family man, friendship, and zest for life and recreation.

Major Themes

Soldier, Service, and Leadership

Paul's story is one of ideals and service. From early childhood these qualities were recognized as part of the Ireland family tradition. Moral values formed in Paul's early years revolved around concepts such as duty, sense of honor, and purpose. He was driven to pursue and satisfy these principles. Medically disqualified from commissioned service, Paul enlisted in the military so that he could fulfill his perceived duty. He had a true sense of selfless service and patriotism. Such convictions and a charismatic disposition made him a natural leader. Two years of specialized training and experience in the Special Forces Regiment had already set him well above others of a comparable age. He had endured great physical challenges, and received training in survival, combat, tactics, weapons, and leadership. While he joined the service knowing he would be in Airborne Infantry, he ended up in Special Forces by chance. Only by circumstance did Paul meet up with representatives looking for Special Force volunteers. He accepted the challenge with little reservation. He completed the rigorous course and was randomly assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It was an easy assignment that failed to satisfy Paul. He was not fulfilling a purpose by sitting at Fort Bragg. His honor and desire to be relevant drove him to take extraordinary measures. With no regard to potential dangers, he actively sought to secure a combat rotation in Vietnam. This seems congruent with his desire to serve to the highest level of his abilities. It is unclear whether his motive extends beyond this. One has to ask if he seeking to compensate for lost opportunities in his earlier life or it is a pursuit of recognition or glory.

Upon Paul's arrival in Vietnam, he was selected for even more rigorous training. This not only tested his body, but expanded his knowledge. Paul had an increased sense of self-

confidence. Paul flourished in the harsh South East Asian environment; his leadership experience, understanding of people, and developing competence in tactics grew as he was given increasing difficult positions of responsibility. This marks the beginning of Paul's military legacy. Much of how Paul was viewed throughout his life was a result of how he performed in this year of Vietnam service. It is important to note that the knowledge gained and his distinguished service formed the basis of what I earlier termed the legend of Paul Mills Ireland III. At the age of 20, he was one of the most well prepared servicemen in Vietnam. This young Green Beret was responsible for the care and employment of up to 180 foreign soldiers in a hostile foreign environment. He was on par with village elders and indigenous men who had fought in these jungles for years. His capabilities and presence was inspiring. He displayed strong leadership qualities and his men trusted, obeyed, and followed him into combat.

Paul was devoted to military ideals and an obligation to serve, but remained modest in the execution of his duties. This was the theme that continued through most of his life. Though he received recognition for his service, he did not seek it. Those who worked with him universally acknowledged his desire to be part of the team. It was "important that he was always productive in adding value, a positive influence." He acted responsibly, fulfilling his duties without unnecessary risk for his soldiers. He did so with a great degree of humility. This was particularly true in Vietnam and Paul's early years of service. Later in life he would return to military service with the same sense of humility. This was true with some caveat. Paul understood that there were rumors about his service and enjoyed some of the notoriety. It was as if he wanted to be considered competent but not celebrated.

He never spoke of his service in Vietnam except to share something learned or perhaps an anecdote. He never talked of his successes and the honors received. Much of what he had

accomplished was shared as a result of personnel specialists gossiping about his files. In reviewing the contents of his military file, I found them generally complete and the most significant documents of his earlier service were present. Any activity in terms of file maintenance, promotions, assignments, or discipline would have been affected by the contents. The contents of the file, particularly the accounts of Paul's Vietnam service, were up front for the user's review. The contents formed a distinctive pattern of exemplary performance.

His early service through Vietnam was void of the struggles Paul seemed to have later in his career. The consistent tone was that Paul appeared to be in control of any failings he might have had, or the vices had not yet developed. There was no discussion of heavy drinking or illicit sexual behavior. It was never mentioned in Paul's interview, and those serving with him did not see him in the local bars with any regularity. Paul was a military professional who preferred the company of his Cambodian Soldiers. As a leader he was responsible to care for, train, and lead them. His stories tell us that he loved the people and their culture. He respected them as soldiers and felt compelled to serve them in his role as commander. He enjoyed learning from them as well. While others chose to frequent the night life, he spent time wandering the camp, stopping to experience life and to learn from his people. He came to love the Cambodian people. This was a term he used several times in our discussions. This cultural experience fed his personal pursuit of knowledge. His sense of adventure and desire to try new things made him popular with the Cambodians. His charisma and ability to communicate with them helped him to build close relationships. He felt like more of a friend and teacher than a leader. There was a sense of belonging, and in many ways this was his family for a time. In one year, Paul built relationships he would carry with him throughout his life. He kept every newspaper clipping and carefully wrote the names of his Cambodian soldiers in the margins. He was able to recall their names

more than 35 years later. He kept several pictures, but the one he seemed to value most was a picture of fellow Green Berets and Cambodian soldiers in front of a defoliated hill outside Rang Rang (Figure 4). He reminisced on the friendships and the wonderful people he loved and trusted. When he left Vietnam it was an abrupt end to these friendships and his term of military service. Paul broke from service for a number of years; that is until interest or necessity brought him back.



Figure 4. Photograph of Paul M. Ireland III with Cambodian Civilian Irregular Defense Group by defoliated hill near Rang Rang 1970.

It is difficult to determine if Paul's second stint of service was born out of desire or necessity. He had been attending college, working, and playing sports. He was involved with the woman he would marry and the conception of their first child forced him to make some tough decisions. Paul had a strong sense of responsibility. Doing the honorable and responsible thing was in his nature. During his eight year break in service, Paul had connected to a number of

Vietnam veterans. The continued theme of social and interpersonal skills led Paul to a Special Forces unit in Fort Collins, Colorado. Hard work was nothing new for Paul. He had numerous jobs and held a few simultaneously. He reached a decision point in his life and made a commitment to serve in a full time capacity in the National Guard. Either because he missed the brotherhood of arms or as a result of the surprise pregnancy, Paul volunteered and was placed on orders to support the unit. In either case, Paul showed a continued tendency to make decisions based upon doing the right thing. He had other employment choices but chose what he knew. He could have made other decisions in his personal life, but chose marriage and a commitment to family. Based on observations of Paul's earlier life, it seemed clear that he was settling into a situation similar to what he experienced as a child.

Paul continued service was consistent with his earlier performance. He was viewed as exceptional, competent, and experienced. A complete review of his performance and conduct evaluations paints a picture of the consummate professional. The daily requirements of his service were separated from continued school, family, athletic, and pursuit of other recreational activities. Roughly half of the personnel in the unit had served in Vietnam. Most of the veteran group had served in Special Forces. The balance of the force was Special Forces qualified or scheduled to attend the lengthy training. Paul more than held his own with officers and enlisted personnel alike. He was quickly recognized as the "go to guy" and listed to support each significant mission or overseas deployment. Those with lesser experience felt comfortable with Paul. He had a way of communicating and mentoring without looking down on others. These continued displays of interpersonal relationship skills and charisma remain a constant thread in Paul's life. The idea of service and purpose seem like a natural fit. In fact it seemed the preferable and correct fit, even when other options presented themselves.

For 12 years Paul remained in the same Special Forces Company. He enjoyed the autonomy of the position. He was serving in a way that he wanted. There was little supervision. The higher headquarters was several miles south and he was able to limit conduct by meeting reporting and product requirements. He had significant authority and independence in his job. He worked very hard and exceptionally smart.

There is a point in Paul's career where his social drinking started to become a problem. Once a modest drinker, Paul began drinking every day. He was drinking to the point of passing out and it became a problem both at work and at home. The amount he drank was such that he began to make numerous bad decisions that were not congruent with proper military conduct. Towards the end of his stint as the senior company administrator, it became a significant problem for his fellow full time staff. No one else appeared to notice as his comrades had been covering for him. Those working with him felt that he was still a great supervisor. Despite his trouble with alcohol, they looked to him for support. His staff believed that "unless he was passed out drunk, you could count on him to have your backside or be there if you needed something." There were some rumors at the higher headquarters about Paul and extra marital relationships. The performance of his team and fact the information came from an informal source placed doubt in the minds of Pauls' supervisors. There was no inquiry but the topic of moving Paul arose. Senior personnel had rotated out of the battalion and they needed someone of Paul's talent.

Paul struggled when he was told that he had to change duty stations; he could no longer remain in Fort Collins. He was assigned to battalion headquarters located an hour and a half from his unit. Paul normally accepted orders without question, unless of course they appeared to be lacking in common sense. He was not happy with these orders but understood it was inevitable. The thought of commuting three hours each day wore on him. He fought and delayed the move

for a few months hoping to secure added concessions. Paul's autonomy was slipping away. He had always showed strong traits of independence and was not used to close supervision. It seemed at odds with military service and the concepts of duty, honor, and country. He had redefined how all of this fit together with his role as a noncommissioned officer. He was used to being at the top, forming the solutions, and being successful without interference. He remained competent and devoted to duty but is prone to periodic failures in meeting his obligations.

The balance between meeting military obligations and dealing with his personal problems became increasingly difficult. Paul was not happy at home. He wanted to meet his responsibilities, but the increased use of alcohol and the bad decisions that followed tore his life apart. He appeared lost and unable to control his drinking. The military provided the only stable framework. It seemed to provide a place for Paul to anchor himself. He worked very hard and accomplished a great deal for the organization, which seemed to overlook the occasional missed assignment or breach of good order.

Paul began to partition work, family, friends, and how each connected. His work was the cornerstone of his existence and it seemed to bolster his sense of worth. He continued to struggle and could not overcome his addiction to alcohol. At times it seems work was a place to frequent between happy hours. His coworkers saw him drink all night and "taking care of business at work, like it never happened." He tried hard to control the problem, but he was now missing some fairly important work requirements. It never seemed so substantial as to permanently impact Paul's reputation. Many of the failures drew little in terms of disciplinary action or reprimand. It was a strange dichotomy in this environment. It was as if he was too valued and honored to be punished.

He was generally effective in the performance of his duties and sought out for his wisdom. He seemed determined to pass on his knowledge. He was also a vehement supporter of the soldiers. He reached the top enlisted rank and felt responsible for their welfare. In the beginning it was as if he was trying to offset his rash of failings. Paul found out that he was ill. Despite the illness Paul continued to show up for work and battle through life's problems. Paul revealed to a select few that his fatigue was due to a newly diagnosed illness. Paul had a form of lymphoma that had not been treated correctly. In essence, he admitted that the medical staff's failure had probably cost him his life. He was calm in his discussion and while he talked of hope, one realized that he knew it was not going to end well for him. Paul displayed an uncommon bravery. He made the decision to continue service beyond the date required for retirement. He was devoted to the Army and acted as if he had nothing else.

Misfortune seemed to follow Paul. He was crushed when his son died in an automobile accident. The loss was devastating. It was his only son and the last of the Ireland line. He took substantial time off from work to bury his son and reconcile all of the catastrophic events in his life. He was a difficult time for a man who had managed to control most of the events in his life. Disease, loss of loved ones, alcohol, and relationship problems were plaguing him. When others might have completely fallen apart, he did not quit. Paul returned to work with a different attitude. He said very little about his son. He closed off his personal life and focused on his work. Paul strove to keep busy and was engaged in working with the younger soldiers. He remained strong in the face of adversity. Paul appeared to throttle back on the drinking and concentrated much of his efforts on soldier care. This was something Paul was devoted to. Any cause that supported young men and women in the service was important to him. He was an amazing advocate, teacher, and leader. His entire military career revolved around this skill set. He related

to soldiers of all ages; they trusted him and believed he had their best interests at heart. He was a respected and trusted professional who could control the learning environment. Soldiers set eager and willing as they absorbed every word Paul said. He was working to the point of fatigue, but seemed to be happy. He also became slightly more approachable in personal conversations provided they did not probe too deeply.

Traditional Roles and Responsibilities

Paul displayed an affinity for traditional familial roles. It was something he was exposed to as a child and it nested neatly within the values demonstrated by his military family. He also observed the dutiful way in which his parents approached their respective roles. This display of discipline and responsible behavior resonated with Paul. It became part of his who he was. It was a contributing factor in the decisions he would make throughout his life.

Paul's earlier military service speaks to his responsible nature. While it might have been perceived as an expected choice for a young man whose lineage included generations of military officers, it was still a choice. Paul seemed attracted to jobs, activities, and recreational pastimes that were deemed suitable for males. The level of devotion to his military service displayed a high level of discipline and a sense of responsibility. He made other significant commitments while in the service. He followed through with each of them, displaying an exceptionally high degree of efficiency. He was more mature than most in his peer group and applied himself in ways most men his age were incapable of.

In college Paul displayed some divergence from his normally responsible nature. He completed his first year without difficulty but started to choose less productive activities. He was no longer as committed to his studies preferring athletics, work, and college parties. In the beginning it appeared that Paul was capable of spreading his available time across multiple

activities and personal responsibilities. He had not left the college recreational activities and circle of friends behind. He still played sports, spent time in the outdoors, and found ways to involve himself in the many different circles of friends he had established. Over time the activities in Paul's life started to blend together. There was a shift between responsibility and the desire to participate in typical male activities. Slowly Paul migrated away from his education goals. In following years he did enough to keep current for sports and student life. His participation grew increasingly worse as he failed to meet classroom requirements. It appeared to be a conscious choice that put his future at risk.

Paul demonstrated a commitment to traditional values when he finds that his long-term girlfriend was pregnant. He asked her to marry him and actively pursued steady employment. Paul's ex-wife believes they shared the same values and perspective on marriage. "Paul grew up in an age where the husband did this and the wife did that—the stereotype. We were kinda like that. We both wanted that kind (of life)." He set up house and devoted himself to married life. He was not reluctant to do so. In fact, the choices he made seemed natural and he was comfortable with the course he was taking. Paul does not sacrifice his social life. He continues to intermingle past activities with his home life. It is a comfortable life as his wife has traditionally been part of his social life.

In an effort to be a good husband and provider Paul reentered the military. He makes the decision with minimal feedback from Donna. Making decisions of this type seemed natural for Paul. In assuming the role of husband, he also became the head of his household. The roles were well defined and his new bride shared his perspectives on married life. Both grew up in households that maintained traditional male and female family roles. The male works and the

wife assumes the majority of home requirements even when she herself obtains employment. This arrangement sustained the marriage and supported the couple's goals.

Paul felt comfortable in the remote Special Forces Company. He set down roots and began to grow in rank and status. There was an air of stability in Paul's life. It was something he had not previously experienced. He was in Fort Collins eight years prior to reenlisting into military service. The commitment to remain in Colorado was a big step for Paul. He spent the larger part of his life moving from place to place with his parents. Choosing a career with the National Guard made remaining more of a certainty. The transient experience was coming to end; he would never relocate again. This was another form of commitment to his family. He wanted the stability for his wife and children even if it might conflict with his sense of adventure.

He remained the good soldier with all the devotion to duty and competencies. He was a good father and loyal husband who cared about his family. He spent substantial time at home or out with his children. He was proud of them and had no problems exposing them to his friends. Paul could be big on formal and proper behavior. His children were taught respect in dealing with elders. "He taught (children) to greet someone with a firm handshake and look them in the eye." He filled what little free time he had with the pursuit of knowledge or with friends. These were all the great qualities that people came to admire. He was someone that everyone wanted to spend time with. Friends were welcome in the Ireland home. Having frequent company was normal to the couple; the friends seemed like extended family. Many of the guests were long time acquaintances. Both Paul and Donna knew them from college sports. Friends from Paul's work and other activities outside of the home also had spouses and similar values. Paul and Donna made a charismatic and pleasant married couple. It appeared that they had everything going for them. They had a beautiful family, good jobs, and lots of friends. They frequently

interacted with the people that they knew. This interaction created an environment where Paul felt comfortable. It also exposed him to alcohol on a consistent basis.

Nearly all leisure and recreational activities involved the consumption of alcohol. Hunting trips, softball, rugby, home parties, after work drinks, and relaxing at home were all great times to have a beer or Scotch. Paul was in his 40s, married, and had two children. His family was often with him in these activities and his wife participated in all of the home socials. His wife was well liked by his friends and she supported and encouraged these activities. Neither she nor Paul saw that a problem was developing. In fact most friends and family saw it as simple fun and he was encouraged to continue the behavior. Slowly but surely Paul's drinking got worse. He was still meeting his obligations at home, but changes in his behavior were noticeable. The frequency, duration, and amount of alcohol consumed had greatly increased. The environment and value system of both his family and circle of friends was not conducive to intervention. In fact, few recognized that it was becoming a problem.

Respect for Paul and the fact no one saw fit to intercede were part of the more rational values system and adult rules one finds in the military. This mind set had a detrimental effect in that it undermined or failed to support the conservative values most important to Paul and the military at large. Drinking led him to irrational behavior and numerous poor choices. He was not meeting familial obligations, was distancing himself from his wife, and it was getting worse. Blackout drinking and nights away from home were not the type of decisions that Paul had historically made. It was a distinct departure for his normal behavior. It was the major factor in the failure of his marriage. Donna seems to think it was an involuntary choice Paul made. She was certain that he had no control of his behavior and he felt great pain in his decision. "I knew he loved me ... really hard for him to divorce me and leave the kids." He moved forward with the

divorce and in the process lost his relationship with his daughter who was frustrated with his infidelity. Nothing in his life was congruent with the value system he had lived with. He severed connections with nearly everyone except his girlfriend.

Paul would get worse before he would better. He met no personal responsibilities and was acting in complete opposition to his normal behavior. At work he was meeting the big requirements. He did so in order to continue flying under the radar. Friendships were tested as those closest made observations about his behavior. He did not want to be saved or corrected on his conduct. He functioned well in between the binges. Work was one of the areas he was able to function in. He may not have been at top form, but he was still better than most. He possessed a keen eye and strong intellect. Most shortcomings would be the result of missing work because he was either still drunk or too hung-over. On those days, he would call in for a day of leave or sick call. He had minimal control over his actions. It was only when his illness made him unable to drink that he returned to his more normal self. He was an exceptionally proud man so apologies were not really a necessary part of his reconciliatory efforts.

Paul was more a man of action. For him it was works and deeds that spoke loudest. He had rebuilt his relationship with his daughter and reached out to his ex-wife. He was doing his best to make up for his shortcomings and leave them in the best situation possible. His daughter understood everything he was attempting to do. She said that "When he started to get ill, he wanted to make sure I was taken care of." She was the only child Paul had left and having divorced Donna, Kelly would receive his insurance and property. He also attempted to do the right thing for Donna. In the interview Kelly said that "He wanted to make sure my mom was taken care of. That was an important

thing for him.” Paul attempted to meet all of the responsibilities that he had failed in over the previous years. The effort was more about doing what was right than securing forgiveness. He was largely successful in achieving both.

Friendship and Caring

Making friends and maintaining friendships was easy for Paul. He had several circles of friends in his life. They were formed around the events Paul most enjoyed. They only occasionally intermingled leaving Paul to move from group to group as the various sports, hunting, and other recreational seasons commenced. These were close relationships, but it appeared that Paul was able to keep his friends at a slightly greater distance. Those who knew Paul seemed to be more attached to him than he to them. It was not a one-way relationship; Paul gave in different ways. Paul valued and appreciated his friendships. It also seemed that he needed these connections. “He was comfortable ... he wasn’t looking to get rich ... he just wanted to live comfortably, and if he could be around friends, chat, and socialize.” These relationships were not without a sense of commitment but it was a more of a free arrangement; it was comfortable and safe.

Being a good friend was easy for Paul. He enjoyed the company of others. A close friend said that Paul “was easily amused by people, and... that’s why they liked him.” While he measured coworkers in the performance of their duty, he made no such assessments of his friends. This was a trend he displayed throughout his life. He did not judge his friends or set large expectations. In fact, he required very little except honesty and a degree of loyalty. Without exception, those interviewed said that “He’d give you the shirt off his back” before he would take care of himself. He did not even have to know someone well to extend a helping hand. Interviews constantly revealed themes of support or assistance to friends. Even those Paul

did not know well benefitted from his compassion. His daughter explained how they came across “this guy... my dad took him under his wing...got to be friends with him. Seems like he’s kind of down.” Large or small, various degrees of aid and moments of compassion, Paul managed to connect with people in memorable ways. Those interviewed believed that “he had a way of making one feel important. Like what they had to say was worth listening to.” He was honest in his dealings with people. They knew what to expect from him. He was there for them even if he may not feel the same emotional connection. It seemed a safe relationship that Paul was comfortable with. It made keeping friends at a distance or pushing them away easy.

Paul was patient and tolerant. There were few reasons for which Paul would excommunicate someone from his circle of friends. Honesty was paramount, but loyalty was an essential element. These themes were reinforced through interviews. In fact, there were few instances when someone was cast aside and it was only for a brief period. His close friend Don had found himself in disfavor over a series of infractions in Paul’s loyalty code. He contacted Paul’s supervisor hoping to get him to stop drinking and do his job. Don and his family also continued their relationship with Paul’s ex-wife. Paul drew a line and demanded that Don make a choice. Paul did not appreciate the way Don’s wife continued her habit of interfering in the affairs of others, particularly his. Don acknowledged the stresses in their relationship. He said that there were times when “our friendship took bad turns, or where I thought he treated me or my family poorly. I never really chastised him for it; he respected that.” Paul knew what a good friend Don had been. Don also forgave Paul. He was a loyal friend who stuck with Paul during his toughest times.

Paul was not one to advertise the various kind acts or assistance he provided. He preferred to conceal his generosity as if it would ruin his rugged reputation. The interviews were

filled with discussions of generous acts that were largely unknown. His daughter believed that he was uncomfortable with the recognition. She thought that “he did not let a lot of people see

that (sweet-side) but he really always cared a lot about people.” He was giving and even after Don incurred Paul’s wrath for demonstrating a lack of loyalty, Paul felt it necessary to forgive perceived indiscretions in order to get him promoted. With one position senior enlisted position available, Paul opted to abdicate for the sake of his friend. Paul said, “you know, it’s your time to shine. It’s my time to move on and find another place in life.”

The reverence with which Paul’s friends observed him speaks volumes to the value of his friendship. The stories of his many deeds demonstrate his caring nature. The way in which his friends viewed him in varied familial roles reveals the many ways in which he connected with others and filled needs within their lives. He was a dependable friend who others counted upon during their own hard times. His close friend spoke of the good advice he had received. He could always turn to Paul. He expressed the significance of that loss and how it remains with him several years later. Once Paul passed away, “there was no more Paul. It was very difficult I didn’t have ... that sounding board.”

Zest for Life and Subject to Vices

Part of Paul’s charm was his adventurous and outgoing personality. At home, outdoors, or in the office, Paul always had his sights on the next exciting event. He put everything he could into his endeavors. Everyone that knew him understood how much “he truly lived the life of a Special Forces soldier. He worked hard and he played hard.” Interviews and a review of Paul’s various activities show a man who was involved in numerous sporting and recreational undertakings. He was adventurous both at home and work. He kept busy with sports, hunting, and other social activities when at home. Most evenings and weekends were filled with some

recreational exploit. His work required travel. Some trips were routine military exercises, schools, or administrative trips. He was also afforded many opportunities to travel around the world. During these travels he explored the local culture, sights, and partook in events unique to the area. He was not the typical tourist and was not afraid to step off the beaten path. While he enjoyed a few of the typical sites, he was eager to observe people in their natural environment and enjoy the simple trappings.

Paul was willing to work hard in having fun. Fun could mean hard work for Paul. He put so much effort into his recreational activities that one could scarcely call them relaxing. Friends discussed how competitive Paul was. His teammates “liked him as a competitor, because he was a very, very tough competitor.” They saw him as a man who was “always working hard.” They believed that this was as a result of habits learned in the Army. Those close to him also recognized that Paul had problems applying himself at times. He preferred the pursuit of his vices over his own education. For a period of time he focused far more on sports than his college education. They noticed “when he got out of Vietnam, he was more concerned with partying than sitting down and studying and working in school.”

Paul was given numerous opportunities for travel in his new job. The stimulation and adventure of travel was very important to Paul. His travels to the Pacific Rim, remote Islands, and throughout the United States were frequent. Those who travelled with Paul understood that he had mastered the frequent flier and hotel reward programs. He travelled in style securing all potential upgrades and charming the staff for additional benefits.

He had been all over Southeast Asia, so rookie travelers clung to Paul. He knew how and where to get the best deals. He always got the work done. Every mission he ran was successful. After the work was done, Paul was off to a nice dinner and the bar. When time allowed he would

set out on an adventure or shopping. He might be found in a jade or jewelry shop. On longer days he could be found diving, riding an elephant through the jungle, or visiting various temples and religious sites. Only those in his inner circle knew what other activities Paul participated in.

Paul's final military trip was to Thailand. He was very ill at the time but accepted the offer to serve as an evaluator for part of a military exercise. It was a long difficult flight, but Paul endured the discomfort of the trip. Of course he was able to secure an upgrade to business class making the longer leg of the flight a little more comfortable. The staff and I understood that this would likely be Paul's last opportunity and we wanted him to feel special. I was able to control the number of mission requirements expected of Paul. We also set aside plenty of down time for him. Paul worked his way through all of the work centers setting things right and making notes for the after action reviews. It was an impressive sight for those in the unit. He displayed a little more stamina than we thought he might. He loved the environment and even the sweltering heat could not keep him from doing his job. The real fun came when we took Paul to see the various temples and other sites familiar from his childhood. His eyes lit up as he told the stories of his earlier adventures and compared the sites of Thailand to the many other areas he had visited.

Many spoke of all the good times they had with Paul. The interviews always focused on his quality of character, military service, friendship, and the many adventures that they shared. He is always presented in a favorable light. Even when those interviewed discuss his problems with alcohol or women, it was done in a light-hearted way that minimized the issue. It was as if he was not responsible for his loss of control. His bad decisions almost always begin with the first drink. Without fail, those interviewed always listed Paul's problem with alcohol as his biggest vice. They used terms like "drinking, carrying on, out drinking, drank a lot, or partier." As if to be loyal, all interviews except one avoid using the term alcoholic. Paul's friends and

family also minimized his adulterous activities. They chose terms like “womanizer, wandering eye, ladies’ man, chased ladies, or let his eyes stray.”

These faults were known to all. They were not ignored; they were however set aside, seemingly less important than what Paul had to offer. He was held in reverence for these attributes. Like his devotion to service and charisma, Paul’s wisdom and intelligence far outweighed his shortcomings. This was true in his personal and professional life.

Discussion

The way in which Paul was viewed by friends, family, and acquaintances remained constant. I identified no inconsistencies in how he was viewed. Even those who had reason to harbor ill feelings provided an objective narrative on how they regarded Paul. They identified the same strengths of character, positive attributes, and preferred pastimes. Participants had a clear and uniform view of Paul’s vices and shortcomings. Paul’s positive and negative attributes changed over time. There was an obvious relationship between excessive consumption of alcohol and the problems in his life. Excessive drinking affected his health, ruined his marriage, disrupted familial and personal friendships, and derailed some life goals. The narrative of Paul’s life was altered by his struggle with alcohol and the choices that accompanied his lack of coherent thought.

He was a difficult man to read. Those in his life were only shown a portion of the man’s character. Generally it was only the piece he chose to reveal. Friends and family saw Paul in a particular context, which might have hidden the degree to which he struggled with alcohol. He compartmentalized his life and separated his many circles of friends. This fractured view shadowed many of the events and activities in his life. Significant changes in his behavior periodically occurred, many of which could have caused even more significant damage to his

personal relationships or career. Either through wisdom or necessity, he worked to remedy mistakes and reconcile with those he cared for. As his daughter stated, “people had different views of my dad. I think towards the end of his life, he tried to make it better.” To those interviewed, Paul’s many positive attributes and what he contributed far outweighed his shortcomings. This was true in his personal and professional life.

Appendix E: Conclusions

The stated purpose was to answer a single question. My research question simply asked, “Who is SGM Paul Mills Ireland III?” This simple question was the basis and compass for my inquiry. In answering the question, I also sought to determine if the legend of Paul Ireland held up in a review of collective interviews, records, documents, and other artifacts. In order to accomplish the expressed objectives, I conducted a qualitative study using the portraiture methodology. This study allowed me to facilitate a deliberate and credible process where a story emerged and an authentic image of SGM Paul Mills Ireland III, his experiences, and how he influenced others’ lives was captured.

One story or view of Paul begins with an image located within my researcher perspective. It served as a baseline view that was formed from my own interaction with Paul. The main product of the study is the portrait of Paul, which is presented in the episode section of this study. The portrait consists of the melded views, words, and images shared by him and others close to him. Through these stories, artifacts, and documents, I have produced a portrait that is remarkably consistent with the researcher observations. More importantly the portrait captures the unique characteristics, contributions, and qualities of Paul.

The methodology portion of this study outlined the approach for developing a portrait as presented by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997). This methodology was complemented by implementing the holistic content approach of narrative analysis as outlined by Lieblich et al. (1998). The resulting narrative is located in the findings section of the story. The findings provide a thematic representation of the traits, motives, and activity of Paul as observed by study participants. The narrative reflects the content of the portrait and serves to focus on the more common themes described by those interviewed. Readers are able to see Paul form numerous

perspectives and while they may differ in terms of activity, the characteristics of the man remains largely the same.