



**TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE**  
**COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Voices of Veterans: U.S. Army Veteran Ken Wallingford Shares His Story of Service**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner and Veterans Land Board (VLB) Chairwoman Dawn Buckingham, M.D., is proud to introduce the next installment of the series highlighting VLB's Voices of Veterans oral history program. In this episode, we spotlight the service of U.S. Army Veteran Ken Wallingford, who fought during the Vietnam War and was held as a Prisoner of War (POW) in Cambodia for ten months.

Wallingford grew up in a military family and moved around the country as his father was stationed at different bases. He was drafted two years into his college education and knew it was "only a matter of time" before he was given orders to go on his first tour of duty to Vietnam, doing so in August 1970. At the completion of his first tour of duty as a sniper, Wallingford volunteered for a second tour of duty as a military advisor with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam.



## VOICES OF VETERANS

name

Wallingford, Ken

military branch

Army

rank

conflict

Vietnam

date interviewed

08/14/2009



interview  
available on  
[voicesofveterans.org](http://voicesofveterans.org)

Ken Wallingford served in the U.S. Army from 1969 until 1973. He attended paratrooper school at Ft. Benning and Special Forces, phase one training, at Ft. Bragg. Mr. Wallingford was sent to Vietnam in August 1970 and was assigned as a sniper with the 25th Infantry Division.

One year later, he volunteered for a second tour of duty as a military advisor with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam. He was captured on April 5, 1972 when his unit was overrun and spent ten months in a tiger cage in a POW camp in Cambodia. He was finally released on February 12, 1973. Mr. Wallingford was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts among numerous other decorations.

He was captured by Northern Vietnamese forces six days shy of his discharge date in April 1972. After hearing the sounds of mortar and artillery rounds, his unit of five Americans and 200 South Vietnamese soldiers realized they were wholly outnumbered by "30,000 NVA [Northern Vietnamese Army] and Viet Cong soldiers."

Wallingford was hit and injured by shrapnel from an explosion after the camp and artillery commanders surrendered, and he attempted to hunker down in a secure position. He wound up in an underground bunker with other men but was forced out by the enemy pouring gasoline into the short-lived haven.



## VOICES OF VETERANS

VLB CHAIRWOMAN, DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

"I can remember again to this day walking out, no food, sleep or water, totally spent. Later on, I had seventeen shrapnel holes from the bridge of my nose down my legs and so on... It's just one of those feelings that is hard to describe... I was wounded, I didn't know what was gonna happen to me, and I just felt God's presence."



He was kept in a five-foot by six-foot tiger cage made from bamboo by the Northern Vietnamese. Wallingford spoke at length of his experiences while being held as a POW but told VLB that he always had faith he would one day return home.



**VOICES OF VETERANS**

VLB CHAIRWOMAN, DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

He endured unimaginable hardships as a POW but made sure to show his enduring respect for the other men and women of our military.

"I think anyone, men and women, that volunteer to serve our country are to be respected [and] appreciated for their service because it's something that they don't have to do, but because of the love of the country that they are doing it today and will do it in the future."



**VOICES OF VETERANS**

VLB CHAIRWOMAN, DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

Following his service, Wallingford served the Veterans of Texas as a Veterans Liaison for the VLB for more than 20 years.

To listen to U.S. Army Veteran Ken Wallingford tell his story, click the button below:

[U.S. Army Veteran Ken Wallingford's Story](#)

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Veterans can email [VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov](mailto:VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov) to tell their stories. Please note that the Veteran must be a resident of Texas at the time of their interview.

Voices of Veterans is a state agency's first Veteran oral history program. It records the stories of Texas Veterans through their time in service and after returning home from combat.

The VLB records interviews with veterans over the phone or in person. Their interviews are then permanently archived in the Office of Veterans Records at the GLO, where they join the historical documents of other Texas heroes such as Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Barret Travis.

Veterans' interviews are also available to researchers, historians, genealogists, and the public. These precious records inspire future generations and remind us of our Veterans' sacrifices.

To listen to the over 500 archived stories of Veterans documented through the GLO's Voices of Veterans oral history program, click the button below:

[Voices of Veterans](#)