

IN MEMORIAM  
 155th Assault Helicopter Company Stagecoach Slicks and Falcon Guns  
 VIETNAM

1. PFC Michael E. Davis	21 Oct. 65
2. WO/1 Joseph S. Huwyler	21 Oct. 65
3. SP/5 William J. Johnson	21 Oct. 65
4. 1LT Harold A. Preisendefer	21 Oct. 65
5. WO Eugene W. Caswell	27 May. 66
6. WO Michael N. Coryell	30 Nov. 66
7. PFC Richard E. Dabney	27 May. 66
8. WO Raymond L. Ford	29 Mar. 66
9. PFC Gregory L. Miller	20 Dec. 66
10. WO Phillip C. Smith	29 Mar. 66
11. PFC James Walker	30 Nov. 66
12. WO Wilmer J. Willingham	30 Nov. 66
13. SP4 John W. Wood	30 Nov. 66
14. Sgt. Keith D. Griffin	16 Mar. 67
15. SP5 James G. Patterson	16 Mar. 67
16. WO Terrance Nelson	23 May. 67
17. WO Willis W. Smith	19 Apr. 68
18. 1LT Dennis E. Painter	19 Apr. 68
19. SP5 James Miculus	19 Apr. 68
20. SP4 Frank L. Freedle	19 Apr. 68
21. WO Paul N. Larson	19 Apr. 68
22. WO Herbert Hayashida	19 Apr. 68
23. SP4 John R. Brooks	19 Apr. 68
24. SP4 Oran B. McCardol	19 Apr. 68
25. 1LT Fred O. Pratt	26 Aug. 68
26. WO William P. Harwood	08 Sep. 68
27. WO Redlick S. Kopple	08 Sep. 68
28. WO Richard C. Pugh	28 Dec. 68
29. SP4 James D. Budahazy	24 Jun. 68
30. SP5 William Eister	06 Feb. 68
31. SP4 Edward Milan	04 Mar. 68
32. SP4 James Swann	04 Mar. 68
33. SSG Robert Pinkston	13 Mar. 68
34. WO Ronald McCrary	03 Jan. 69
35. SP4 Richard C. See	08 Jan. 69
36. WO Terry L. Crawford	27 Feb. 69
37. SP5 Armando Rameriz	23 May. 69
38. PFC Santiago V.E. Quintana	23 May. 69
39. SP5 Rick R. Medaris	05 Nov. 69
40. SP5 John Payne	05 Nov. 69
41. SP4 Richard G. Bauer	05 Nov. 69
42. WO Joseph F. Erickson	23 Feb. 70
43. WO Paul E. Dolik	23 Feb. 70
44. SP5 David J. Nachtigall	23 Feb. 70
45. SP4 Calvin E. Serian	23 Feb. 70
46. 1LT Jacob L. Kinser	08 Mar. 70
47. CW2 Marlin J. Johnson	20 Apr. 70
48. WO Derik N. Richardson	20 Apr. 70
50. CW2 William G. Hasselman	29 Apr. 71



# BAN ME THUOT BARB

Nov 97

## A TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR ALL

The cover page of this issue is a copy of the 155 AHC tribute that was placed at the base of the Wall in Washington, DC on Memorial Day and Veterans' Day of this year by Mike Sloniker of the VHPA. Mike lives and breathes Vietnam helicopter stuff, and he does this for a number of aviation units. He plans to continue to place the 155 AHC tribute at the Wall on those special days each year. If you ever run in to Mike, please tell him, "Thank you." Rest in peace, friends.

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## A SLOW BOAT TO . . . WHERE IN THE HECK IS SOUTH VIETNAM???

The 155 was formed from the personnel of D Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, at Fort Riley, KS. I was a scout pilot in D Troop, at the time commanded by Cpt. Lilly. Cpt. Charles T. Gilmer and Cpt. Fred R. Michaelson were in command positions also. I think Michaelson was the XO, and Gilmer took over as the first 155<sup>th</sup> gun platoon leader while on board the ship on the way over. By that time I was one of the pilots assigned to the gun platoon, and I remember him briefing us aboard the ship and telling us that he was going to get the Medal of Honor while in 'Nam. I thought about that and decided I would not be comfortable flying with or behind someone with that in mind, so . . . I volunteered for a transfer (to the 119<sup>th</sup> at Pleiku for the DEROS adjustment, so that the whole unit would not rotate home at the same time) just before the 155<sup>th</sup> became operational. I think I left in late May or early June, '65.

Back to the beginning. D Troop had flown to Fort Irwin, CA for maneuvers. That's where we were alerted for 'Nam. I was a scout pilot, we flew OH-23G's with an M-60 mounted on each skid. We left Fort Riley with Cpt. Lilly in the lead flying a UH-1B, with the rest of us in loose formation behind. I had the crew chief aboard, and our baggage. It took us 2 or 3 days enroute (CRS). At Fort Irwin, the WO's were billeted in old WWII wooden barracks, and the RLO's were somewhere else - probably air-conditioned! A six by six five ton truck would come by to pick up the Warrants in the morning, while the RLO's traveled in an air-conditioned bus. One morning the bus came to pick us up. We figured someone decided to treat us WO's with the respect we deserved - but when we got on the bus Cpt. Michaelson stood up and read a list of names and told us that those persons were going to Vietnam. One of the Warrants commented that he suspected some shirt like that when he saw the officers' bus coming for us rather than our truck.

We left the aircraft at Fort Irwin, packed our bags, and were transported to SUU or Los Angeles (CRS again) for a commercial flight back to Fort Riley. Shortly thereafter, personnel began arriving from all over the country to make up the three air mobile companies that would go to Vietnam aboard the Navy helicopter carrier Iwo Jima. I don't remember the exact date, but all personnel departed from Fort Riley about midnight aboard Greyhound or Trailways busses. They took us to the airport at Wichita, and from there we went by commercial contract air to San Diego. We arrived in San Diego the next morning, then were bussed to the Iwo Jima that was tied up at the quay wall just a short way out from the dock. There was a launch to transport us from the dock to the ship. Myself and three of my buddies were the first group to go aboard. As soon as we found our cabins and stowed our gear, we went back topside, caught the launch back to shore, and then took a cab to the Mexican border crossing. We crossed the border, had a great steak dinner to celebrate our coming adventure, and then went shopping for things to send home. Of course, some of the guys scummed to the ladies' requests for paid entertainment, so we split up and agreed to meet at a certain bar at 11 pm to go back to the ship together.

We all met as planned, went to the border, and found that there were no cabs. We were offered a ride by a devious individual that had in mind games with another man. We played along with him leading him to believe one of us would go home with him after dropping the others off at the dock. He thought that was great, so off went. When we got to the dock area, we ALL got out of his car and ran for the gate calling over our shoulders, "Thanks for the ride!" On boarding the ship, we learned that everyone had been restricted from going ashore. I'm sure we had left

the ship before the order was circulated, because no red-blooded young troop would even think of violating an order not to go ashore. Ha! At high tide the next morning, we cast off for Vietnam.

On board the Iwo with us were the first UH-1D models to go to Vietnam. They were tied down aft on the flight deck; the main and tail rotors had been removed and boxed for transport. All the gear for the three new aviation companies was stowed in conex containers on the hanger deck below. During the trip over, all of the pilots took their meals in the Captain's mess. One of our guys, CW2 Edward A. Reisinger (Ed and I were flight school classmates, and had even car pooled together during Phase II at Fort Rucker) knew the ship's Captain. It seems that he and Ed had been in the same unit as Navy pilots during WWII. Needless to say, we were all treated very well aboard the Iwo Jima.

A few days out from San Diego, we learned that one of the ship's fuel tanks had been contaminated, and that we would have to put in at Pearl harbor to have it pumped and then refueled. Sounded great to us! Docking at Pearl, all the Army personnel were directed to dress in class A uniforms and stand at parade rest all along the rail. Dockside, a band was playing to welcome the three Army helicopter units to Hawaii. We tied up about 7:30 am, and were given immediate shore leave (not to leave the base) and told to be back aboard by 4 pm that afternoon. The Navy opened its officers and EM clubs at 8 that morning, just for us. Of course, we all ran for the telephones to call our wives and families at home. When boarding that afternoon, it was quite a sight to stand at the rail and watch those that had had a few drinks try to negotiate the gangplank. One of the crew chiefs apparently had more than a few drinks, because he fell off into the water between the ship and dock. Fortunately, he was pulled aboard without incident and taken below - squishing all the way. The band was there again as we sailed out of Pearl Harbor. Next stop, Vung Tau!

The remainder of the trip was uneventful. We had classes every day, largely to keep us out of trouble on the ship. We did learn about all the dangerous critters and things we might encounter in South Vietnam; snakes, ground hornets, all sorts of diseases, etc. When we were about three days from Vung Tau, the platoon leaders began holding daily briefings. And about the same time, the maintenance guys began to put the aircraft back together. As each was finally assembled, it was moved forward on the flight deck. When all were assembled, a crew list was posted; two pilots were assigned to each aircraft. After reading the list, I climbed in "my" ship to get familiarized. Having flown only A and B models before, this D looked large as a Greyhound bus - and it sure sat with a funny nose-up attitude. I wondered if it flew like the A's and B's I had flown. Soon thereafter I met the other pilot, and he too was new to the UH-1D. But we were young and crazy. We were confident that we could learn to fly it, even though our first lesson would start from the elevator of an aircraft carrier.

The ship anchored about a mile offshore from Vung Tau. At the appointed hour, each aircraft took off for the beach from either the port or starboard elevator. We departed the starboard elevator without incident, and easily completed the ten-minute flight to the airfield. Piece of cake! And then we split up. One company went to Bien Hoa (I think), one to Ban Me Thuot, and I've forgotten where the other one went. Leaving the aircraft and maintenance crews behind (to do a thorough inspection), I was among the group that boarded a C-123 for the flight to Ban Me Thuot. We landed at the City Airport, and were trucked to the edge of the rubber plantation where we were to establish the 155<sup>th</sup>. Upon arrival, we found concrete pads all poured, and tents pitched. Phil Misner and I took up residence in one of the tents, and we did a lot of forgettable stuff for about a week while we waited until we could go back to pick up our aircraft and the maintenance crews. Then the fun would begin.

*Bill Staubach, an old guy who CRS (can't remember shirt)  
Early BMT gun platoon, later Alligator 009*

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**CAN YOU HELP US FIND . . .** Falcon CE's **Dave Mitchell** (from Texas), **Hedrick**, and **Lawrence**, all '70; pilots **Frances K. Henson** and **Ronald T. Bayhan** from '67-'68; **Steve Owens**, also '67-'68. If you have any idea as to the whereabouts of any of these guys, please contact any 155 AHCA occifer.

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**IN MEMORIAM** Bill Lumas died at his home in Pasadena, CA last September. Bill was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon gunner and crew chief in 1969.

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## FLASHBACK: 1967 - Three Are Rescued After Jungle Crash

Pleiku (1st AVN - IO) "I saw the ship going down with flames billowing from the engine compartment. Then it hit the trees and fell through the canopy." This is how 1st Lt. Richard Sperling described the crash of a sister Huey helicopter after a combat assault operation near here recently.

Lt Sperling, of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company, was piloting a UH-1D "slick" in support of a 4th Infantry Division assault during Operation Sam Houston. The 155th had deposited the assault troops in a "hot" landing zone and were taking off when the other ship was hit. It managed to fly only about 800 meters before crashing.

"We noticed a small clearing about 300 meters from the downed ship, took a chance, and landed," the lieutenant said, describing the rescue that followed. Sperling and his crewchief, PFC Michael Baucom grabbed their weapons and rushed through the jungle to the crash site. Remaining behind with the helicopter, WO William Cristobal, the copilot, and Sp4 Thomas DeSimone, the door gunner, waited hoping for their safe return.

Lieutenant Sperling described the crash site saying, "One man was dead, two wounded and one uninjured. Mortars, rockets, and small arms fire were hitting all around us but we managed to get the three crewmembers back to my ship. We flew them out of the small clearing in a maximum performance takeoff and back to the base for medical help."

"It's things like this that make us all proud to be members of the 155th "Dragons," said WO Jerry Johns, pilot of the downed chopper after the day's action was over.

*The Army Reporter, 13 May 67*

*Did the 155 call sign used to be "Dragons?" Can anyone elaborate?*

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### MAIL CALL - sharing letters from our friends:

**Rick Erickson** - Just received the August newsletter, and it's another great edition. It also was a reminder and a motivator for me to get my dues check off to you. *Stagecoach 17*

**Dale McClure** - The gathering in Ohio was great, and as a result I have now talked to an old crew chief (Glenn Best) and a stick buddy (John Zanis). I'm looking forward to the reunion in Fort Worth next summer.

**Bob Albracht** - We've got a great little flying club up here just outside Toronto. All Stagecoaches & Falcons are welcome - and the eats are on me. I was Stagecoach 3 during '67-'68.

**Bill Cristobal** - Thanks for sending the roster to me in New Guinea. I should be spending some time in the States during the next couple of years, and hope I can make it to one of the 155 get-togethers.

**Tony Giordano** - I can't explain how much it meant to me to see you guys again at Danny's place, and how much it means to me to be welcomed back into the 155 fold. Each of us is joined together by our time spent over 27 years ago in Ban Me Thuot - a very important time for all of us. *Stagecoach 3, '69*

**Calvin Hilton** - Thanks for finding me. I was Stagecoach 25, my tour was August '67 to August '68. How can anyone have a favorite C-rat other than peaches and pears?

**Rein Hofgesang** - At the Ohio party, when Tony told me he remembered the day I got hit and he could see how much pain I was in, that just really gave me the shivers. That day will always stick in my mind because I never felt so helpless and out of control in my life. Getting together with all you 155 guys again is very special for me.

**Norman Swafford** - Just received the newsletter and enjoyed it very much. I have marked off my calendar for the Fort Worth reunion next June. Wild horses could not keep me away. *Stagecoach 4*

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**THE GATHERING IN OHIO** - Gil Terry rode his Harley in from Georgia. Dale and Donna McClure drove muchos miles from Nebraska. Orrin Messinger kissed off his boss' wedding. Sonny Hampton says he hit \_\_\_\_\_ mph (censored, for those of you in law enforcement) on one lonely stretch of Indiana highway. Terry Westbrook wasn't even on the roster of found 155ers, but he and his wife made it. Bob & Sara Alberts came all the way from Gosh Golly, Maine. Doug Adams came up from Ol' Kaintuck, and Tony Giordano drove out from the Big Apple to represent ex-RLO's. Wade & Annie Hall, Mary & Tom Mullen, Mary & Alex & Earl Baldwin, Rein Hofgesang, Pat & Jeff Schrader, Howard Wiggs, Geoff Jones, Steve Herbruck & his wife, & Les Davison all made the scene. Pam & Danny Lauer were definitely the hostess & host with the mostest!!! A few of the guys played golf, Earl fished in

Falcon Swamp, Danny & Steve took several of us for a private showing of the H models and Cobra belonging to the Firelands Museum, and we ate VERY WELL at the cookout provided in the backyard of our gracious hosts.

And we spent many hours looking at pictures and slides of young strangers (they were us, and we are them) with full heads of hair, tan bodies, and slim builds. War stories began to break out and the old bantering of slicks vs. gunnies was overheard from time to time. Company parties, the rubber plantation, Camp Coryell, the Esso station, the graveyard, T.R.'s bungalow, the rainy season, the dust, Pterodactyls, Duc Lap, Dalat, Gia Nghia, Dong Ba Thin, Pleiku, Bu Prang, Lac Thien, Nha Trang, mama san, slope shop, left banks, right breaks, hovering, autorotations, M-60's, mortar attacks, Filipino bands (remember 'the gleen, gleen glass of home?'), hot starts, red 'X's', the operations board, 0400 getups, fourteen hour days, standby, one hundred degree days, beer runs, C-rations, P-38's, C-4 . . . this could go on and on. Walking among the various gatherings of folks, you could hear all of this and more. Did we really do all that stuff? Oh, the experiences we had! Wish you all could have been with us. Don't miss Ft. Worth.

*Jeff Schrader, Falcon 7, '69*

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**SEEKING INFORMATION ON CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS**

Mike Law is the editor of the annual VHPA membership directory. Besides membership info, the directory each year includes a section on a particular aspect of Vietnam helicopter operations: for example, Lam Son 719 was featured one year, Cav operations another. For my money, those sections are as well researched and as well written as anything you'll find in the bookstore. For next year, Mike plans to focus that portion of the directory on cross-border operations: North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. From several previous contacts with 155 guys, Mike knew that we had flown some of those missions, and he sent a letter specifically asking the 155 AHCA for help. He's looking for any and all information from guys involved in that sort of thing. If you have information on flights into North Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia, standard operating procedures for such flights, war stories, typical missions, humorous incidents . . . whatever. And don't be put off just because it's VHPA. Mike wants to hear from anyone that has knowledge of such things and wants to contribute; backseaters, operations people, intelligence(???) personnel, support guys - and pilots, too. Mike is looking for pictures from those ops, too. Mike's letter mentioned two specific incidents he would very much like to know more about: May '69 when Sp5 Armando Ramirez and Sp4 Santiago Quintana were lost west of Duc Lap, and April '70 when Marlin Johnson and Darek Richardson were killed west of Duc Co. Send info to Mike Law, 6969 W. Yale, Unit 72, Denver, CO 80227.

And, by the way, if you do send something to Mike, please send a copy along to 155 Historian Bob Alberts, too, for our own history files. Thanks.

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**AN OLD GUY'S REPORT (or, I was there when the flush toilets and showers were built)**

I arrived in-country in May '67. We'd formed up as the 199<sup>th</sup> Boomerangs at Ft. Bragg for the last six months and flown all our aircraft to Stockton, CA, in April for the ship trip to RVN. The people all went first to Long Binh via commercial air charter, to Bear Cat by bus for two weeks to do nothing except listen to 8 inch artillery rounds whistle over our heads (outbound). For me, it was then on to Cu Chi for two weeks to fly with the 116<sup>th</sup> AHC, and finally up to Nha Trang, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thuot. Home.

It was just us there in May '67, along with a few ARVN perimeter guards who liked very much to hold hands as they walked down the road. The Pterodactyls didn't move in until the November-December time frame, I think. We still had the six-hole outhouse and the pool was in great shape. The Esso station across the road still sold gas.

Somewhere around the middle of July, construction started on a new building. We speculated for awhile on what it was because no one had bothered to tell us peons. When we found out it would be a latrine, there was rejoicing in the street (not really, but it was a hot topic of conversation). Imagine, no more stinking outhouse; no more sitting in the dark, wishing you could read something; no more wondering what you were sitting on (in) at two AM (there were no lights in there, if you haven't guessed); and no more having to take a cold shower in a dirty little room that wouldn't pass for any kind of field unit today. We would actually have hot water, flush toilets, lights, and real sinks with mirrors. It would be great when it was done.

The construction seemed to go on forever, but it really wasn't all that long before they were ready. Shortly after the new building opened for use, the old outhouse disappeared. I think I was TDY to Bao Loc when it happened. Someone told me that the place was just sitting there stinking up everything, so, after ensuring no one was actually

still inclined to use the place, someone dropped a grenade down the center hole. When I got back it was all covered over like it hadn't ever been there.

When the Pterodactyls moved in, they brought their PSP, built their ramp and taxiway, and built new hooches, offices and mess. They shared the O-Club and showers with us. I remember their maintenance captain well, except for his name. When we got mortared sometime around March of '68 (we were mortared often, but this particular time was unusual, as you'll see) maybe even February, shortly after Tet, one of the guys had a tape deck recording the party they were having. When the first round hit, all the drunks were immediately sober (I wasn't there, mind you, but I have a copy of the tape). The slurred words were now crystal clear and thinking was obviously much better than before that first round. A glass fell without breaking, Bernie Swafford's guitar dropped to the floor, and you could hear people scrambling to get to the bunker. One guy was reported to have gone tea kettle over apple cart as he went out the door at a full run, forgetting about the waist high anti-mortar wall outside the door. The maintenance captain, however, elected to stay there. "Get under the bed," he yelled. Someone asked if he shouldn't go to the bunker. "This is just as good as the bunker," said Maintenance. Then he looked out at the window and saw his ramp. "They're sure forking up my ramp." "Yeah," said his buddy, "They're forking up a bunch of helicopters, too!" Someone got on the .50 cal and started hammering away at the perimeter. After several minutes, the rounds stopped falling, the .50 got quiet, and finally the all clear siren sounded.

When you listen to the recording of this attack with stereo speakers set wide apart, you'll notice that one of the speakers will quit working as the mortar rounds are still falling. That's because a piece of shrapnel from a close round hit one of the microphones and "killed" it.

Where was I? You have to understand something: The VC had never hit us after 10 pm and being after 10:30, I thought I was safe. I went to the shower. You guessed it. Fully soaped down, I just heard the rounds coming out of the tubes outside the perimeter from the plantation. After a VERY quick rinse, I grabbed the towel and headed out the door for the bunkers roughly 75 yards away. I was already running, but let me tell you, when that first round hit a real sense of urgency enveloped me and I doubled my speed to the bunker (I still want to run every time I get too close to a fireworks display). My shower shoes came off somewhere along the way and my towel was in my hand instead of around my waist! The bunkers between the hooches were relatively new and the entrances were a little different for each - and I couldn't find the entrance! I yelled several times and someone finally yelled back to tell me to come inside the hooch on the left to find the entrance.

Inside, it was pitch black, but I could tell the bunker was full. Finally, I had made it to safety. The guy next to me gave me a little room and remarked as how I was all wet. "Yeah," I said, "I was in the shower. I'm naked, too." Then he gave me a little more room. At least it had been a warm shower.

*Keith Lane, Stagecoach 21 & Falcon 5, May '67 - '68*

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**TREASURER'S REPORT** Thanks to the following dues-payers this quarter: Richard Erickson, Howard Wiggs, William Goodness, John Coonce (Hi, Jack!), Frank Miceli, Dennis Harris, and Vincent McDonough. We tip our rotors to you, and thank you for promoting our growing efforts. Annual dues are \$25, make checks payable to 155 AHCA and send them to me at the address below. We've been using your dues mainly for search fees and newsletter copying and mailing costs. I'll do a full accounting for 1997 in the next issue.

*Jeff Schrader, Treasurer*

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## **ASH & TRASH**

**THE REUNION IN FORT WORTH** Mark your calendars NOW!!!! **June 26 - 28, 1998.** Plans aren't finalized yet, but the dates are set. The VHCMA convention is also in town that weekend, we're trying to decide whether to officially link up with them. Look for more details in the next issue. And the '98 VHPA convention will also be in Fort Worth, the following weekend.

**GUNNIES ONLY** The September VHPA calendar had a nice shot of a UH-1C gunship from the 135<sup>th</sup> AHC. A part of the caption read, "The Charlie model was an extremely popular gunship because of its power, speed, and its door gunners." I only remember one of those three as being true. What do you think, Falcons?

**UNIT HISTORIAN** Bob Alberts has graciously volunteered to join the exalted executive leadership council of the 155 AHCA as the official unit historian. As the unit historian, Bob wants to collect and catalog any and all information relating to the 155 AHC. He says nothing is too small or insignificant - if it relates to the 155 or its parent commands (52<sup>nd</sup> Battalion at Pleiku, then 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Dong Ba Thin), send it off. Bob has already done some excellent research on his own; the "Flashback" news clippings in recent issues of the *BMTB* are the results of his scroungings. Great work, Bob!

Bob promises to organize and store that information, and then use it as a resource to answer questions about the 155, from members and/or others. And, of course, the information he collects will be available to be shared with 155 AHCA members. Orders, articles, decorations, citations, mementos, memorabilia, pictures, whatever - if it's 155, 52<sup>nd</sup>, or 10<sup>th</sup>, we'd very much appreciate it if you could send it along to Bob (address below). And, if you've got questions, send those to Bob (or any other officer), too.

**155 ON-LINE NEWS** "MEMBERS.AOL.COM/MELCANADY/INDEX.HTML" is worth a look. Mel Canady was a dog handler in BMT in '65, there's some pretty good pictures on here.

Earl is trying to develop our very own 155 AHC home page. Sounds like a great idea to me. Ideas and/or assistance would be welcome.

**BEST WISHES TO THE NEWLYWEDS** Congrats to Mr. & Mrs. Falcon 6. (No, this is not left over from the last issue, it's a different Falcon 6.) Jim Cunningham and his new wife Lynne tied the knot in Hawaii on September 6. Rumor has it that Lynne saw the Mike Starks' wedding announcement in the last issue, and gave the big guy the big ultimatum. *BMTB* is checking that rumor, and hopes to have a full report in the next issue. In the meantime, welcome to the family, Lynne.

**BOOK REVIEW: "SOG" by John L. Plaster** I'll not mince words here - this is probably the best book I have read about Vietnam. "SOG" stands for "Special Operations Group," the innocuous cover name for the Special Forces guys who went into North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The author was one of those guys. The stories in here just defy description. They truly come to life for the reader, because Plaster talked to many of those who were on the operations. Included here is the story of our own honorary 155er, Mike Bengé, the USAID worker who was captured in Ban Me Thuot during Tet, '68. (The SF guys were trying to rescue him, and I'm told some of you flew those missions.) And did you know a Ban Me Thuot helicopter pilot won the Congressional Medal of Honor? USAF Green Hornet Jim Fleming's gutsy rescue of a SOG team in Cambodia is in the book. Specific helo units and/or crews are rarely mentioned, but Kingbees, Marine, Air Force, and Army copters all play a big role. **READ THIS BOOK!**

**SWEAT & SANDBAGS - FROM THE EDITOR'S BUNKER** My plea for info from Old Guys had barely cleared the outbox when Bill Staubach's excellent story came in. And not long after, Keith Lane sent in another. A wealth of riches, to share with all! Special thanks to Bill and Keith for their great efforts. Please, Old Guys, don't stop - send many more stories. And special thanks, too, to Pam & Danny Lauer for their wonderful hospitality in Crestline.

**COVER PHOTO** The Esso station, June '69, photo by Dennis LaJoie or Sonny Hampton (editor CRS). If you look closely, it appears that one or two (perhaps more) of the dings in the concrete may be M-60-related. If you ever shot up this gas station, please notify the IRS so that remuneration can be arranged.

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