



BAN ME THUOT BARB

Remembering the 155 Assault Helicopter Company - Sortie #15 - Aug 00

ARMY HONORS STAGECOACH PILOT MARLIN JOHNSON

My family arrived in Watertown, NY on Tuesday, May 2nd. We were met by our military escort, CW5 Thomas Struck, who had arranged a tour of Ft. Drum for us. It was very surprising not to find a manned gate at the entrance to the base. I had visited my brother Marlin at the Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, GA thirty-one years ago and there was security everywhere. Fort Drum's entrance appeared to be like going into a state park, equipped with a deer and pine tree wooden welcome sign!

We had asked to see some helicopters like the ones Marlin had flown. Officer Struck had arranged for us to meet with CW5 Ernie Record, who had flown in Vietnam and was now an instructor pilot. We met him at the Emergency Evacuation (Medevac) hanger. This is where most of the Hueys are used today. He told us about various types of jobs that helicopter pilots had while in Vietnam. We had no idea what pilots did there and the amount of danger they were in on a daily basis. They also had a Huey set up outside the hanger that we were free to explore.

A reception was planned that evening on the base. It was here that we met many Vietnam pilots, including men from the 155th, and today's Army pilots, as well as the big "brass". I must say that every active soldier we met that evening seemed pleasant and genuinely happy. Even COL Joseph Smith, the Brigade Commander, always had a smile on his face. We heard many wonderful stories about Marlin and the 155th, including stories about the swimming pool and the pet elephant. My brother had never mentioned them. It has given us much peace to know that Marlin was with a group of fantastic soldiers who cared so deeply for each other.

The next day began at 9:00 a.m. at the 10th Aviation Brigade headquarters; it was dedicated as the WO Marlin J. Johnson Building, in memory of my brother. I had been told that the Army had a tradition for great ceremonies, and this was no exception. As I stood at the podium and looked from side to side, I wondered how I was even going to begin. On my left was the Army Band who had just finished playing the Army Song, in the center were the big brass and the invited families and guests of other honored soldiers, and on the right were Marlin's friends and many more Vietnam veterans. In a half circle in the rear, all the state flags were displayed. With the gentle wind blowing the flags in the morning sun, many soldiers stationed at Fort Drum were gathered to honor the past as well as their futures. It was indeed a beautiful sight! So, with a deep breath, I began to speak. Words were spoken, but words could never really express what was being felt.

There were four more buildings dedicated that day; WO Donald B. McCoig (281st AHC), CPT Larry R. Dewey (92nd AHC), SP4 John W. Littleton (92nd AHC), SP4 Gerald M. Lubbehusen (92nd AHC), and WO David Crow IV (48th AHC) were all remembered for their bravery. At each dedication there were speakers, both from family and fellow soldiers. Each honored soldier lost their life in a different way, yet we all shared common emotions and feelings whether we were the families of those lost soldiers or were their comrades in Vietnam. Everyone that attended that day would tell you all that it was a wonderful experience. We learned, shared joy, and shared tears. My family and I will never forget May 3, 2000.

Joanne Eppers

VAGABOND PARK

How proud I felt rubbing my hand over the bronze worded plaque. These men are such heroes and how proud I am of them. After a full day of learning about aviation battalions, pilots, co-pilots, and gunners, "Vagabond Park" finally fell into place.

My family attended the 10th Aviation Brigade Dedication ceremonies on behalf of my brother, Marlin Johnson. The aviation headquarters building was being dedicated in his honor and we were beside ourselves. Every building dedication that day honored not just one hero, but every soldier that served in Vietnam. And such an emotional day it was.

Of course when you hear the Army band play the patriotic songs, it brings feelings of excitement and importance. When walking up to the park we saw all of the marble columns were covered and no one knew what to expect. Guidons in fatigues encircled the perimeter, each holding a different flag. When everyone was seated, the Chaplain recited the invocation. A narrator proclaimed the Vagabond History. His voice resembled James Earl Jones. During the history, he announced each company name and its location. As he did it, the Guidon holding the company flag changed positions and posted their flag.

Speeches were given by MG James Campbell and LTC Charles Markham. I was mostly moved by Chuck Markham's words. "Innumerable Vagabonds rushed to the sound of the battle and placed themselves in jeopardy for the sake of the grunt on the ground" and "we would not let our country, our friends, our units or our commitments down." How brave the Vagabonds are. After his momentous speech, the band played the 10th Mountain Division and the Army song. That gave us time to dry our eyes again.

Our family was sitting in the second row, which enabled us to visit the memorial before the crowd. Then I read the company names. The first thought was "These were definitely picked out by men/boys". There were Polecats & Tigersharks, Star Blazers, Ghost Riders, Beach Bums & Warlords, just to name a few, with 24 in all. I immediately searched for my brother's company, which was "Falcons & Stagecoach." Now I know what the patch I wore stood for. I rubbed my hand over the words and cried, again. Every aviator and crew member of these companies so greatly deserve this. Two company units were on each column which is a square marble base about waist high. Each company had its own bronze plaque with the outline of the company's emblem. It was such a nice dedication to the Vagabonds of Vietnam that I felt it should be in Washington DC. I wanted everyone to know about the Vagabonds.

After the ceremony, you could see some helicopters up close that once flew in Vietnam - such as the infamous Huey. Everyone was snapping pictures. Our family was very privileged to have the Major General present his official 10th Mountain Division-Light Infantry coin to us. And yes, we learned to ask every uniformed Army personnel to see their coin and why to ask. They were very willing to switch coins with us. Unfortunately we didn't get any free drinks.

The Vagabonds were finally recognized and I must say in a very tasteful way. I was told that I could add the words "Vagabond of Vietnam" behind my name and to carry it on behalf of my brother. I will, but not only for my brother but also for every soldier of the sky. A last note, I would like to give special thanks to Bob Alberts, Bob Beaudreault, Gene Breslin, Les Davison, Chuck Markham, Lew Sain, Mike Stark and Ernie Record for sharing all their stories and helping us learn about the Vagabonds.

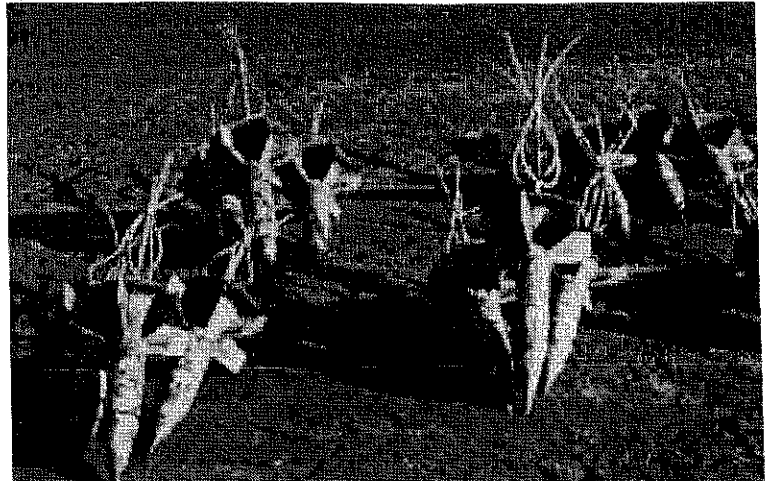
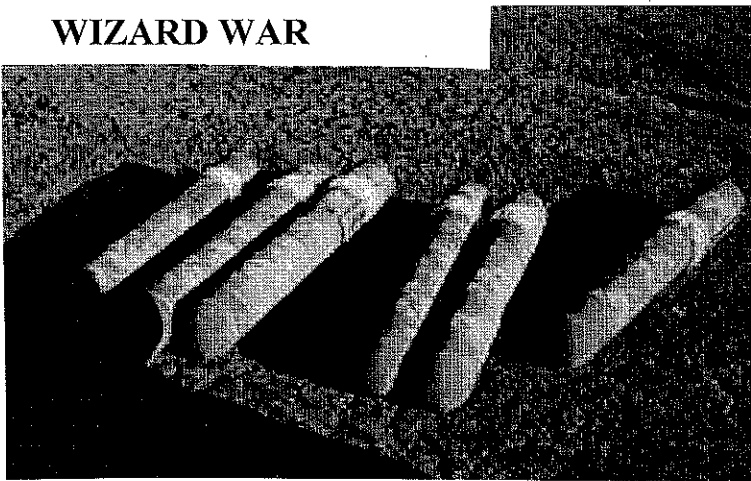
Alesia Bellak - Vagabond

IN MEMORIAM

Sadly, **Gerry LeCount** lost his battle with cancer last month. Gerry and close BMT friend Earl Baldwin had reunited at the Stagecoach Huey memorial dedication in Michigan a few years back. When Gerry died, his son called Earl to let him know. Gerry's son said that his dad would never, ever talk about Vietnam - he always held back. But, after seeing Earl (and other 155 guys) in Michigan, he said his dad seemed more at peace with himself, and even talked about Ban Me Thuot and the 155th some.

And incidentally, no one should say that Gerry didn't go out in style. Per his instructions, Gerry's body was transported to the funeral in the 50's-era hot rod Chevy truck he had restored. Fly high, friend.

WIZARD WAR



These photos show two types of sensors dropped across the fence on B-50 missions late in the war. Stagecoach Crew Chief Rick Farlow took the pictures, sometime in 1970. He thinks the sensors on the left were acoustic detectors that hung in the trees, and the ones on the right detected motion/vibration from the ground. The sensors relayed their findings via radio to orbiting aircraft or ground receiving stations. Falcon pilot Mike Stark remembers one mission escorting Stagecoach slicks on a sensor drop in the Tri-border area west of Ben Het.

CAN YOU HELP US FIND . . . ? LT **Tony DiBenedetto** of New Jersey; **Jerrell Woodward**, Falcon CE/DG from Oklahoma; Operations guy **Terry Patterson**, whose drawings were a big hit in Ops during '68 & '69; **Wayne Coward**, Falcon DG from S. Carolina; **Al Meadows**, '70, helmet painter extraordinaire. If you know the whereabouts of any of these guys, please contact any 155 AHCA occifer.

My name is Doug McMillan and Thom Cook gave me your e-mail address. In 1971 I lost my best friend in Vietnam; his name is **Dale Dehnke**, and he was at CCS (*Command & Control, South - the SOG guys*) from late 1969 until the summer of 1970, and then went up to CCN until he was KIA on 5/18/71. I thought I would drop you a line to see if you knew Dale. I started looking for soldiers who knew him about 4 months ago, and have been fortunate enough to find about 9 men who served with Dale at either CCS or CCN. Although it has been 29 years since he was killed, it is all brand new to me, as I have only found out about SOG in the past couple of months through John Plaster's two books, and through the kindness of the soldiers who served there. They have all told me about the bravery of the helicopter pilots who came into the jungle to save them many times. Hope to hear from you, all my best, Doug.

If you knew Dale, contact the editor and I'll put you in touch with Doug.

MAIL CALL - sharing commo from our friends.

Larry Wyllie - Just a quick line to let you know that I will be attending the reunion. The web site is absolutely unbelievable. My hat is off to all of you.

Jim Paulk - Thanks to John Grow for "finding" me and telling me about the 155 getting together again. I've really enjoyed the Home Page. It is great to be in contact with Leon Curry again. *"Bac Si"*

Bruce McInnes - What a huge amount of work you folks have put into organizing this website, the *Barb*, reunions, etc. I'm glad to be in touch. My dues will be in tomorrow's mail. Don't know about VHPA, but I have reserved a room in Vegas. And I hope I'm not too late for T-shirts.

Frank Uhring - I remember sitting around one evening with some of the other First Platoon pilots and we all came up with the idea of the Purple Gang - but then that is another long war story. *Stagecoach 19*

Chuck Farnan - On a scale of 1 to 10, the newsletter is definitely a 10! I'm going to try to make it to Las Vegas.

Pete Costilow - I think I spent a few nights in your bunker while TDY to Ban Me Thuot. As a matter of fact, I stepped in a large pile of elephant "stuff" one night while trying to sneak by that baby elephant on my way to the shower in my shower shoes. *Freight Train 13*

Mike McElveen - Wow! Steve McCartney called Monday night, and last night Les Davison called. It was great to hear from both after all these years. I'm checking my calendar, hope to be able to see lots of you at the reunion.

Jim Stotler - Good shot of the Bungalow in the last *Barb*. I remember one time drinking beer in downtown BMT at the Bungalow, when I felt something on my leg. I looked down and saw a large paw with huge claws - it was a honey bear. The bartender had been watching; smiling, he said, "If I was you, I'd give him some of your beer." I did.

Les Taylor - An ancient Chinese curse says: "May you live in interesting times." Tet of '68 was such a time. I'd love to hear from others who were there, and we'll share memories of those days. *Wojug, Stagecoach 11*

Jim Lombardo - The 155th has one of the best looking sites on the web, good work! *Security Plt., '65-'66*

John Geurin - I was with the advance party that went into BMT before the company arrived. The "Stagecoach" call sign was inspired by a real stagecoach that sat alongside the road in Salado, TX. I wonder if it's still there.

Carl Sypniewski - I am an original A/1/155th, helped organize the company plus detachments with Major DeLoach. I was the property book officer for all 5 original units. I would appreciate getting on the mailing list.

Mark Cornwall - I'm in contact with **Greg Bundros**, **Bob Stucke**, and now **Vince Waiwaiole** or rather "Wally" as we used to call him. I'm thinking it's time to attend the Las Vegas shindig. I'll see what I can do on this end to garner more attendees as well.

Alan Borsella - Can anyone put me in touch with Falcon door gunner **Wayne Coward**? I'd sure like to talk with him. I am planning to attend the reunion in Las Vegas. Would like to hear from anyone in the Falcons, '66-'68.

Pat Lundquist - I was in the 155th from October 1st 1970 until early January 1971, then was reassigned to 243rd "Freight Train" Chinooks in Dong Ba Thin when the 155th stood down. I was in maintenance as a 68G20 sheet metal repairman. I really enjoyed getting my first newsletter, when I get a chance I'll send some recollections. They won't be heroic war stories, just memories of the area from a maintenance newbie's perspective.

Curtis Lee - I do not know exactly how I started receiving the *Ban Me Thuot Barb*, but I am grateful. I just sent my dues to Jeff Schrader. Also, I am now back from Papua, New Guinea; here's my new address in Tucson.

Dale York - In '70 I was assigned to the Security Police platoon, and then the armament shop. When the 155th closed down, I went to the 192nd until I DEROS'd.

Wayne Cranford - Hi guys, just stopped in to see what's new. This has got to be the best site on the net, just like the 155th in Vietnam.

REUNION in LAS VEGAS - TAIL STINGER 2000

November 10 - 12, 2000 at Fitzgerald's Hotel in downtown Las Vegas; toll free reservations at 1-800-274-5825. A room for two is \$70 per night, tell them you're with the 155 AHC Reunion to get that rate. **You must make your reservations before October 12.** After that, you won't get the \$70 rate - and you might not get a room! If you're on-line, watch the Home Page for updates. Dave Pollock and Fred Williams are doing the work on this. Bring your photos, movies, slides, tapes, memorabilia of any kind - someone will enjoy looking at your stuff, I guarantee it.

Here's what we know so far. **155 AHC hospitality suite** will be open Friday through Sunday. **Dinner at the hotel on Saturday evening** will likely be a buffet, about \$25 per person. **Golf** is rather pricey in Vegas, but can be arranged. If you're up for golf, get with your buddies and arrange an outing through the hotel. Suggested time: Saturday morning. See Les Davison. **A Hoover Dam excursion** might be a fun group outing. Again, arrange through the hotel. Suggested time: Sunday morning. See Bob Alberts. Even the Grand Canyon is reachable from Vegas. Check notes and leave messages in the hospitality suite to see what others are doing - and to form 155 groups to do it together.

Of course, none of these is mandatory or anything like that; just come and partake of whatever you want, and mostly enjoy the company of old friends. We'll ask each of you to pony up about \$25 to cover our costs for planning, and maybe some of the hospitality suite tab, too. Some guys have let me know they're coming to town as early as Wednesday. If you do get in before Friday, check at the desk for Rein Hofgesang, Bob Alberts, or Les Davison. And finally, there will have to be a little business stuff, too. Officerships are largely ceremonial, but we'll need to consider some new ones. We can discuss use of the dues we've collected. And we're still looking for one or more volunteers to be the newsletter editor, to keep the *Barb* going.

THE STORY OF KIM DIN - PART I

Ban Me Thuot camp was a mess when we arrived. It was hot and dusty the morning of our arrival in a C-123 from Vung Tau. We were glad to be on solid ground - no matter how dusty - after being on the aircraft carrier USS Iwo Jima for 22 days. We had left San Diego harbor with eighty new UH-1D "Hueys" strapped to the deck and secret orders to a destination unknown. Rumor had it we were going to Korea. We were carrying winter clothing. Three days out at sea we were finally told our destination was Viet Nam, necessitating a stop in Pearl Harbor for medical supplies including Gamma Globulin, tuberculin skin tests, and other immunization material. That is another story though.

A red dust cloud hung over the airstrip a long time after the C-123 took off. Tents were being erected. Latrines were being dug. Duffel bags and cots were piled up beside the tents. Confusion was everywhere. Security was provided by Rhade Montagnards who were recruited by Special Forces to secure our camp perimeter. The Montagnards did not speak English. We were bordered on one side by a tea plantation, and on the other by a rubber plantation. We were uneasy if not downright scared about what we might expect from VC action upon our arrival. This was a new concept, to deploy a helicopter unit with supporting detachments of medical, signal, maintenance, and security personnel, in a far removed area from other American forces. We were solely dependent upon Vietnamese division forces and Montagnard natives for our defense. The dust did not last long. That afternoon, the rains began - it was the first day of the rainy season. We all remember well that May Day, 1965. The 6 inch layer of dust turned into a 9 inch layer of mud, red mud that was slimy, sticky, and everywhere, and persisted throughout the wet monsoon season. I arrived with my Army issue .45 caliber pistol, 2 clips, and a box of Bayer aspirin. A small metallic sliding box that held 12 tablets, it fit neatly in my pocket. No medical supplies. No equipment. And 280 or so U.S. Army personnel to take care of. Some 91 days later my five million dollars of medical supplies and equipment would arrive, but that too is another story.

The third day about 80 troops developed a bright red petechial rash associated with some bloody diarrhea. And here I was with my box of Bayer aspirin as my sole source of medical supplies. I was dispatched by jeep to the Bungalow, a large brown ironwood log house in Ban Me Thuot where Teddy Roosevelt stayed while Tiger hunting some 60 years before. The Bungalow housed the MACV compound where American advisors to the South Vietnamese Army lived and worked. I explained my plight to the MACV doctor and asked for whatever medical

supplies they could share with me, which were very limited. I was then dispatched by helicopter to the 8th Field Hospital in Nha Trang to beg more medical supplies. I met the hospital commander (later sent home in a straight jacket) who gave me *carte blanche* access to his warehouse where I selected supplies, crated them up, and by jeep was taken back to the airfield to beg a ride back to Ban Me Thuot. There I ran into the commander of the Transportation Company whom I had known back at Fort Bragg. After hearing my sad story, he graciously loaded my crates and me into a DeHavilland Otter and flew me back to BMT. Instead of some rare tropical disease, it was discovered the water had been over-chlorinated.

We survived despite the rain and the mud. Our new D-model Hueys came up from Vung Tau. We got a water buffalo filled up at Ban Me Thuot water works. We shaved and washed using our helmets and ate C-rations (some of my crackers had been canned in WW II, as indicated by the date stamped on them). We huddled around Major Bill DeLoach, our commander, for briefings that really amounted to commiserations. The MACV colonel from the Bungalow came out to visit, and in general created some ill feeling, the cause never really understood.

Several days into our stay there, we began to feel a little more at home. The generator was set up, perimeter lights were fashioned, and sandbags were filled to provide us a defensible perimeter. Trenches around tents were dug so that when we stepped off our cot we did not stand in a puddle of water as we had been doing. A "pee" tube was stuck into the ground so all of us could void in one place and not all over the compound. The cooks began to feed us class A rations within a few weeks. American ingenuity rose to the fore; things were looking up.

I used the big crate constructed for my medical supplies as my exam table, and sat on the smaller crate as my office chair, and opened up for business. Such was the environment initially at Ban Me Thuot. Survival was the theme. But after weeks of building our camp into our home base, establishing essential services, and getting to know one another better, we began to relax and enjoy each other's company. Jokes and tricks and humor became evident. But we missed being home. And we felt constantly on guard waiting for something - anything - to happen. Soon Vietnamese peasant women were hired to assist in the mess hall. All of the men took notice immediately, of course. Cute remarks abounded as they tried to communicate with them. Most were drab, quiet, and reserved Vietnamese peasants who did their work silently and intently, and never smiled or showed any emotion. We would call them underprivileged in our society, which accounted for their apprehensive countenance. But Kim Din was different. *To be continued.*

Leon E. Curry, M.D.....Flight Surgeon, CO, 8th Med Det, BMT, 5/1/65—5/1/66

ACROSS THE FENCE: B-50

My name is Thomas Cook, in 1970 I was on the B-50 mission for CCS. I went across the fence 30 times, and I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate you chopper guys - you never let us down. It was a good mission, but a dangerous one. Here's what I remember about 20 April '70.

I was part of a 12-man team operating west of Duc Co on a "snatch" mission. We had taken fire on the insert the day before, so we figured they had trackers looking for us. The team had set up on a small island to try to grab a prisoner. We could hear chickens, so we knew they were close. But when the NVA brought dogs out and they sniffed our claymores, we knew the jig was up. Our claymores took out the entire patrol, and we made for the PZ. Half of us got on the first chopper, and we looked to be home free - but just when we had gotten to the treetops, there was a loud explosion toward the rear (I learned later that we had been hit in the tail boom by a B-40) and we started settling back down. The new guy next to me was on his first mission into Cambodia; eyes wide, he looked at me and asked, "What happened?" I said, "I don't know, but I think we're going down!" And we did. The pilot did a heck of a job; we hit hard but we hit level, so everybody was more or less OK. I remember ripping a mangled cockpit door off the chopper to get one of the pilots out.

We got everyone away from the chopper and in one group, and got our sierra together. The FAC directed us to a new PZ, so most of our group headed out. Bau (my indig point man) and I were the rear guard. The immediate area resembled a football field, with Bau and I on one side and Sir Charles on the other. They were getting organized to come across, so I fired two LAWs - but both were duds. Man, I humped two duds, what a bite! And I was sure the third LAW wouldn't fire, because I had earlier dropped it in a stream. Of course, that's the one that fired! It hit a tree and felled it with a lot of noise and smoke, and that seemed to give the bad guys pause. After a little while, they did finally get on-line and charge. It looked like at least a thousand of them to me, but the FAC later said it was more like 200. Bau and I knocked down a bunch of them, and then the Air Force Green Hornet gunships showed up and had a field day. Bad day at Black Rock for Charlie! While the Hornets worked, Bau and I ran to join the others and made ready for the extraction. The Huey crew went out on the first ship, then our team went out on the next two slicks. All this took about one hour from the time we went down. Smiles all around - we got a bunch of bad guys, and all of us

made it out OK! A good mission! Only later did I begin to notice that my back was hurting. I found out in the hospital that I had a crushed vertebra in my back. It is truly amazing what a body full of adrenaline can do!

The FAC estimated the body count at 175 that day. After we came out, we figured out that we had been right between two battalion-sized NVA base camps. We didn't put any more ops into that area for some time after, it was just too hot. I can't begin to say enough about you helo guys. This part is a little crude - but we often wondered where you guys kept your "guts." We figured they had to be at least the size of grapefruits. You guys took a lot of hits, but you always got us out. Thanks, 155th!

Thomas Cook, SFC, B-50

Ed. - This mission was flown by Purple Gang (First Platoon) slicks and USAF Hornet gunships. Bob Beaudreault and Larry Wyllie were pilots of the slick Thomas was on when they were shot down. Marlin Johnson and Darek Richardson, Lew Sain and Gene Breslin, and Dan Fox and Rick Erickson flew the other three Stagecoach ships on the B-50 mission that day. All three went in to pull out the downed crew and the SOG team. Later that same afternoon, Marlin and Darek flew in to extract another SOG team in contact, and they too were shot down. Both pilots were killed instantly. Lew/Gene and Dan/Rick rescued Marlin's backseaters and the SOG team. We haven't been able to figure out for sure any of the backseaters on any of the ships that day; please provide info.

BATTALION COMMANDER, '68-'69

I am honored and grateful to be included in the Falcon and Stagecoach group. I first served with the 155th in late '65 as an honorary Falcon. I was assigned to the 161st at what later became known as Lane Field near Qui Nhon. I went to the 155th to learn how to employ gunships. I commanded the gunship platoon (Scorpions) in the 161st for the first few months, then went into Operations. I cannot remember the wild man I flew with in the Falcons. He was a first lieutenant who was an excellent pilot but had absolutely no intelligence. One of the missions we flew was in February '66, at Bong Son on the coast north of Qui Nhon. One of the units we supported was an ARVN Ranger outfit whose advisor was Major Norman Schwarzkopf. Yes, the 161st had a whole bunch of Majors. Anyway, I wore my Falcon cap with pride. Wish I could remember the names of the guys I stayed with then. In '68-'69 I was back on a second tour and commanded the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, the Vagabonds. The 155th was one of "my" companies, and it was commanded by one of the finest officers I have ever known - Dean Owen. I was lucky to have Dean and some other great men in the 10th. When I took command, General Williams (1st Aviation Group) rated the 10th at the bottom of his battalions. When Sam Patellos relieved me, we were at the top. By the way, Sam and I had been paratroopers together and were in the same fixed wing class (57-12). He visited me here in North Carolina some months ago. I live next to Myrtle Beach, so everyone visits.

Dean and some others of you might remember that I grounded someone in every company at one time or another for reckless flying. I can't remember his name, but the pilot I grounded in the 155 is unforgettable. I was flying south along Highway One, and looked down and saw a slick hopping over the auto traffic. A great display of excellent flying skills and (again) no intelligence. I pulled alongside, and suddenly the ship zoomed skyward . . . gaining altitude of which he had none when I first spotted him. Too late. I had his tail number, called him on emergency frequency, and had him come up the battalion frequency. I got his name, relieved him over the radio, and ordered the co-pilot to return to Ban Me Thuot and report to Major Owen. Sometime later, the pilot begged to return to flying status; he complained that he was under mortar attack every night in the motor pool - where Dean had assigned him after being grounded.

One of my most unhappy memories also has to do with the 155th. Dean's XO was CPT Al Castro. As the XO, he did not get to fly as much as he wanted so, like any good Army aviator, he complained. Due to his senior Date of Rank, the only spot I had to put him so he could fly was in the 192nd. So I had orders cut for him to transfer to Phan Thiet. He came over to Dong Ba Thin and asked me not to transfer him, because he loved the 155th too much to leave. I decided not to rescind the orders. Later, on a visit to the 192nd (we had lost a gunship the night before), I met Al and he flew alongside me back to Dong Ba Thin. There he refueled and had lunch, I believe. He was on his way to the 48th "Blue Stars" at Ninh Hoa. Later we found out his aircraft was missing; four crew and three passengers. I was back in the States for a long time before he was found. He flew into the jungle in bad weather, trying to get to Ban Me Thuot. I have spent a lot of nights wishing I had not sent CPT Castro to the 192nd.

I could bend your ear for hours about four 155 enlisted men. They wanted to surrender their citizenship and get out of the Army, because your First Sergeant was so mean to them. I believe it was the First Sergeant who wore white shoes at night, so you good guys wouldn't shoot him when he was chasing bad guys - or something like that. I

am proud of every man that served with me in the 10th, but the 155th holds a special place in my heart. Thank you so much for including me in your group. I look forward to seeing you all in Las Vegas.

Davey Stanley, Vagabond 6

ASH & TRASH

GETTIN' TOGETHER 155 guys (and their families) Dennis Lajoie, Wayne Cranford, and Bob Alberts visited Earl, Mary, and Alex at the Baldwin family summer estate over the 4th of July weekend. Since three of those were Falcon backseaters, I'm guessing that History Bob took a beating. Did anyone mention the Purple Gang patch, HB?

The same weekend at the VHPA convention in Washington, DC, 155 pilots Gene Breslin, Jim Cunningham, Mike Stark, Ken Acker, Jerry Bourquin, Roger Thompson, Robert Frost, John Guerin, and Les Davison got together to share stories of their times in Ban Me Thuot. Unfortunately, the *Barb's* lofty editorial standards ("nothing but the truth") prevent any of those from being shared in print. Even so, a good time was had by all.

THINGS WE DOES WITH YOUR DUES It came to the attention of the 155 AHCA officers that one of the guys who attended the Marlin Johnson dedication at Fort Drum, NY, had been down on his luck, job-wise. Even though money was tight, he felt he had to be at Fort Drum - for his friend Marlin. When we found out, the 155 AHCA sent him a check for \$200 to help defray his travel expenses. (He didn't ask, the 155 AHCA officers just thought it was a good use of the dues money we have collected from you all.) The 155 is still about helping each other.

FLASH!!! JUST ANNOUNCED!!!! BOO-RAY in VEGAS!!!! Due to popular demand, there will be Boo-Ray played by 155 guys - and maybe gals, too - in Las Vegas. (Boo-Ray is an easily-learned form of poker.) As was the case in Ban Me Thuot, the following list of rules will be strictly enforced: 1) no limits; 2) no IOU's; 3) no weapons!

"WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/PENTAGON/QUARTERS/1517" If the 155 Home Page ain't the best one on the whole gosh darn Internet, I'll kiss the ugliest showgirl in Las Vegas - several times, if she'll let me. Click on "Fort Drum" to see more on the Marlin Johnson Building dedication. Both Joanne's and Chuck's speeches that day are worth a look, so Log On!!!!

SWEAT AND SANDBAGS: FROM THE EDITOR'S BUNKER One of the sad duties that goes along with publishing this newsletter is telling you that another BMT guy is gone. This time it was Gerry LeCount; others of us will follow. The 155 AHCA is still growing; so far we've found about 300 guys who were at BMT - but we're getting older, too. Isn't it about time you picked up the phone and called that guy who was your very best friend 30 years ago? Even if you haven't talked since BMT, I can almost guarantee that you'll still connect after all these years. In fact, if you aren't glad you talked, send me the bill for your call and I'll cover it. But please, just make the call.

COVER PHOTO: Ban Me Thuot City Field and Camp Coryell, home of the 155 AHC. Official USAF photo from December, '68. Thanks to Frank Floyd, Operations NCO during most of '69, for sending in the photo. And thanks too for sending copies of some of the wonderful caricature drawings done by Terry Patterson that used to hang in Ops.

Since the reunion is scheduled for mid-November, the next issue of the Ban Me Thuot Barb will be (hopefully) published on or before mid-December.

155 AHCA officers are:

Dean Owen, Pres. Al Arredondo, VP Jeff Schrader, Treasurer Bob Alberts, Historian Tom Love, Sgt-at-Army

Earl Baldwin, Net Guy Tom Mullen, Search Guy Bo Atkinson, Newsletter Les Davison, Newsletter
L ?
" ".net"

155 AHC Assn.
610 Louisiana Avenue
Cumberland, MD 21502

