



BAN ME THUOT BARB



Remembering the 155 Assault Helicopter Company - Sortie #17 - April 2001

Dear 55 AHC Assn,

First of all I would like to apologize for not writing sooner, but I have been sick and laid up for a while. But, I finally got around to it.

I would like to thank each and every one for making our reunion a success. But, first and foremost, I would like to say thanks to Vince McDonough and the pilots of my Falcon for their heroism and professionalism in saving my life on September 25, 1967.

For the past 33 years, I have tried to keep that day out of my life, but it has been pretty hard. I couldn't think about my past because I had to try to figure out my future. I had to learn how to cope being a one-legged person in a two-legged world. I learned early on no one cared, what mattered was the two-legged world ate the sick, lame, and lazy, so I hid from it.

I always felt I had let my comrades down for getting shot up and leaving everyone else to go back to the war when I got to go back to the world. After a few years, I finally found myself telling people I had been injured in an auto accident. I was ashamed for failing my friends. So I didn't have to deal with the reality of letting my friends down. It seemed everyone had a war story, and I didn't. For 33 years I was so proud not to be recognized for being wounded, I never had to deal with it.

But, something changed after the first reunion in DC. I found friends who actually considered me kinda special and I should be recognized as that. At first it puzzled me, but I have two grown sons who told me how special I am, to them and my friends. So to have these friends come back into my life and help me. I just cannot say thank you enough. There are people who didn't know me from Adam, but were willing to go to bat and help me with the bureaucracy for something I never thought would materialize. It was wonderful for Mary and Earl Baldwin to get this ball rolling, and for Dean Owen to finalize the official recognition is just amazing.

I am so proud to be a Viet vet. I never thought I would say that. That six months and 27 days were the days that changed me forever. It made me who I am today. My gratefulness to men like Sgt. Jack Jarnigan and the Falcon platoon for voting me into an exclusive brotherhood. I will treasure this until my final day. I'm grateful for men and crews in the 2nd flight platoon, guys like Jack Jarnigan and Mr. Dennis Harris for teaching me how to be a good crew chief, and for their mentoring ways.

I will always be grateful for every man who served in the 155. To each and every member of the 155, I thank you for your compassion and for your perseverance in dealing with our lives since those crazy days. There are still guys out there we need to get back into our company to be welcomed and recognized as great warriors. They are not lost causes. It is comforting to know we are all brothers, and we need to help each other.



John Gann receiving his Purple Heart

Even if America thought we were wanton killers, we were only men who had a duty. We did our best, and now we want them to come home and be done with it. Peace to each and every person who touched my life, and Vietnam, and our reunions. I hope this makes sense, because it finally makes sense to me. Let your friends help. We are here for you guys to come home to. Tell us you will be at the next reunion. We will be waiting for you, hand extended, to say, "Well done. Thanks you. Welcome home." We are all in this together.

Thank you from my heart for helping me with this closure.

Falcons and 155 Forever,

John Gann

ADULT ONSET DIABETES

To qualify for VA disability compensation, a veteran must have a diagnosis of diabetes and evidence that it began or was aggravated during active duty or within one year of release from duty. VA currently is awarding disability compensation to more than 36,000 veterans with diabetes. On Nov. 9, 2000, VA announced that veterans who served in Vietnam and later contracted adult-onset (Type 2) diabetes might be eligible for disability compensation. VA officials are writing the rules to implement that decision, and eligible veterans would not begin receiving benefits under the new rule until sometime in the year 2001.

Recent medical information from the veterans administration - more on their website at www.va.gov

Provided by: Les Davison

A THANK YOU TO EARL BALDWIN

A write-up from a history teacher at Bourne High School: Presented to the senior class, December 21.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Earl Baldwin, a member of the 155 Assault Helicopter Company, for taking the time to speak to my Southeast Asia class at Bourne High School. The class focuses on the Vietnam conflict and his presence was well received.

Mr. Baldwin's presentation was a valuable tool for the class because it now gives the conflict a personality. Mr. Baldwin's experience and candor about Vietnam was appreciated by the class and myself. The telling of his and his friends' military experiences brought to life second hand knowledge that the students receive in and out of class. The video* of his quad will be ever present with the students and will illicit memories every time they hear a helicopter fly over. The sharing of web sites and books for the students to explore will gain them further knowledge of this period of history that may seem far removed from their lives.

Mr. Baldwin brought a fresh approach to this part of the curriculum and is a credit to all the men and women who have served and are serving on our armed forces.

*the video used was Tamara's tape.

Provided by: Les Davison

ANYTHING FOR THE TROOPS

PLEIKU, Vietnam- Although he remains anonymous, except to those who were there, one commander in Vietnam recently showed his men that he not only was looking out for their safety, but is concerned with their off-duty refreshment.

Recently a convoy of trucks was winding its way through the narrow Duc My pass toward Ban Me Thuot when three conexes tumbled off a flatbed truck onto the side of the road. Recognizing the possibility of ambush, the convoy commander decided to by-pass the three containers.

An O-1 Bird Dog aircraft from the 219th Reconnaissance Airplane Company, 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion, was flying security for the convoy and made a low pass to investigate the accident. When the pilot realized what the conexes contained, he immediately radioed the convoy commander with a plea that they be recovered.

The commander reconsidered, and Ban Me Thuot area's monthly ration of Liquor was saved without incident.

*I kept this article and it now resides in the photo album my wife made me put together after finding all my photos in the plastic bag. I had been keeping them. The album was a Christmas gift and while recovering from my latest ACCIDENT, I finished it.
Bob Alberts CE 155th AHC Purple Gang "607"
92nd AHC Stallions*

Hi fellow 155ers.

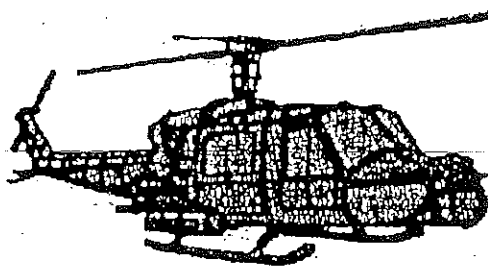
I just got my latest barb and really enjoyed reading it. Love Jim Bales' flare story.

I have often wondered but never found the company clerk that we had during the 67-68 time period. I believe his name was Hunter and if memory serves, he was from the K.C., MO, area. We talked a lot because he was from my home state and he was also a politician of sorts. Anyway, on the story, we were sitting around the supply room office that evening and I happen to say something about home. Hunter, out of the blue says, "Sir, how would you like to talk to the folks back home?????" I looked at him like he was crazy and he made me a bet that in less than ten minutes I would be talking to my home in Missouri on the field phone there in the office. I knew I had this one won. Well, Hunter picked up the phone, spun the little crank on it, and said, "Ban Me Tuot switch, give me Nah Trang routine official." A few minutes later, while waiting, he asked me for my states side phone number. Nah Trang came on the line and he said, "Nah Trang, give me Clark Air Force Base routine official." Well, Clark AFB came on and said, "Clark, give me the Manila commercial operator." At this time, he handed me the phone and said, "You take it from here. Tell the manila operator the states number you want and your call will go through." Two minutes later, I was talking to home. Needless to say, I lost the bet. I managed to do that two more times during my tour. On the fourth try, at the Nah Trang point in the chain, this damn Colonel comes on the line and says, "this better be an official call." My comment was, "Do you know who this is?????" He replies, "No." I said, "Good", and hung up the phone. It seems I was not the only one who was using the Nah Trang connection to talk to home. I went home a couple months later.

Norm Swafford, Stagecoach 4

FALCON SHIRTS

Anyone interested in a shirt, various styles, running about \$25.00 with shipping, contact Mike Stark at j_mike_stark@yahoo.com



155TH AHC

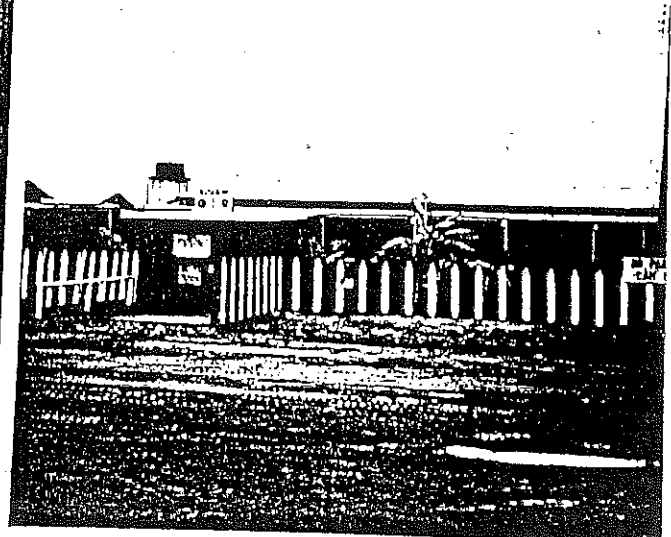
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BAN ME THUOT TRIVIA

Both of these photos should be easy for most to identify. The MACV was in the Early years, but ole mess hall is easier to recognize. Anyone have a good photo of the pool?

Grand Bungalow

Mess Hall



CHANGING OF THE GUARD

As Les retires to the ClubHouse, we all thank him for his dedication to Duty. It has been such a pleasure to work with him and he has passed on the baton in high fashion. It is always hard to take something over that has been so well managed for so many years.

I will do my best to keep up a great tradition. We certainly will be staying in touch with Les though for moral support and technical expertise.

We have moved with my company since the reunion and our Florida address and email address are listed below. I ask that all of you look back at any of the old stories about BMT and operations that might interest all of the 155th folks.

Jerry Burton

155 AHCA officers are:
 Al Arredondo, Pres.

Dave Pollock, VP

Jeff Schrader, Treasurer

Bob Alberts, Historian

Dave Skoog, Sgt-at-Arms

155 AHCA officers are:
 Doug Kahler, Mbr-at-Large

Earl Baldwin, Net Guy

Tom Mullen, Founder

Jerry Burton, Newsletter

Les Davison, Advisor

