



BAN ME THUOT BARB



Remembering the 155 Assault Helicopter Company – Sortie # 18 - July 2001

UPDATE OF REUNION 2002

Planning is continuing on the selection of a LZ for the 2002 reunion. The staff is diligently working on the location and time of year. The final frag order should be in the next newsletter.

We had a great turnout for last year's reunion and look forward to continuing the tradition. We also realize that members come from all parts of the country, our mailing list even has some that are outside of the US. We will get this information to you as soon as possible so that you can make your logistical planning to attend.

Jerry Burton

At the Vegas reunion we were reminded again and again that the 155th was different, I agree. Going over on the two Jima, I became the first Falcon 6, and later, Stagecoach 5, during the year.

First, after time and reflection I find that everything that I asked of everyone was done and done right, reflecting an attitude of professionalism, can do, will do, done. The following story is an example of how the 155th was different.

"THE LONGEST NIGHT OF THE FIRST YEAR"

This morning Commander Joe Parlus took all flyable helicopters on a three-day mission. This was a common situation which left me, Stagecoach 5, in charge of BMT. After the dust settled I walked down to the flight line where there was one helicopter being worked on by maintenance. I felt somewhat uncomfortable with NO flyable helicopter for the first time ever-emergency? I became more concerned when I found that we had only 4 machine guns left on the compound. Regardless, the day went OK, and as the sun sank out of sight, I was on the flight line checking on the one grounded helicopter. Then a Mohawk came over the compound at about 100 feet and proceeded South towards Saigon. At about 3 that night, my telephone on my cot rang. From the other end, "This is Colonel _____ in Saigon with the G2 office-I want to talk to the senior officer there." That's me, Captain Gilmer, sir, go ahead. "Do you remember that a Mohawk flew over your compound earlier this evening." Yes, sir. "We have developed the film, and you are hereby advised that there are about 3, 000 humans congregating about 2 miles West of you. I have alerted your Battalion, and we have alerted all our pilots, they are assembling, they will be briefed, and the first flight will be in the air 5 minutes after you tell me the firing has begun-This line will remain open-God be with all of you there."

Scared? Yes. To the West we had the burn, and they did not know that we knew. I awaken the 2 or 3 officers in my tent. Briefed them and directed that they awaken every person, brief them, and have everyone move to the burn-"there will be NO light and NO sound. Surprise is the biggest thing we have on our side. Move." I walked slowly to the center of the compound where I could see and hear. I did not hear a sound nor did I see a light.

Under these conditions we waited until daylight. It was easily the longest night of my life. The response of every person to this situation proves-The 155th was different.

Most to all who served with the 155th are rightly proud of our service to our country, I am

Charles Gilmer

13May67-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 here recently.

Lieutenant 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 900 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 Christobal, the copilot, and Sp4 Thomas Desimore, 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.

08Oct66-Pilot Hears of Son's Birth Over Radio

PLEIKU, (155TH AVN-IO) -

Chief Warrant Officer Robert E Weimer admitted to being a little concerned when his Commanding Officer ordered him by name to switch frequencies on the radio of his UH-1D helicopter, in flight.

"I knew there had to be something wrong," said Weimer, "especially when he called me by name."

Flying South of here for the 155th Assault Helicopter Company, 52nd aviation Battalion, Weimer tuned to the designated channel and 155th Commander, Maj. Robert V Atkinson, contacted him.

"Robert Weimer, Memphis, Tenn-wife Donna requests serviceman be notified she had a 7-pound, 13 ounce boy. Doctor advises both mother and child doing fine." This straight from the services of the International Red Cross.

Weimer's happy reply over the birth of his first born came back, "Thank you, thank you."

Co-pilot John Frosting said Weimer's sun visor was down and hid any expression on his face. "I was standing by on the controls in case he dropped them, though," Frost added.

27May67-VC Learn of Power of Hueys

BAN ME THUOT, (1ST AVN-IO) -

While supporting the Vietnamese 23rd Division, WO Jack Finn, pilot with the 155th Assault Helicopter Company, discovered there are some Viet Cong that are not aware of the power and capabilities of Army aviation.

Flying the command and control ship, he was taking the ground commander to a landing zone to observe the progress of a troop lift when he spotted five VC. His crewchief immediately opened fire as Finn maneuvered the aircraft safely out of small arms range. In relating the story, Finn said, "They didn't fire. They just walked down the road casually taking pot shots at us."

Turning to his most powerful weapon, Finn radioed an Air Force Forward Air Controller and directed him to the area.

"Sure, I've been fired at before, and taken hits," Finn reported, "But these Viet Cong didn't show the least respect. They've got a lot to learn about our innocent looking Huey's."

28Oct67-Chopper Company Celebrates Canada's 100th Anniversary

BAN ME THUOT, (1ST AVN-IO) -

The officers of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company were not surprised to find the Canadian Flag displayed prominently in their club here recently. The 155th proudly claims a Canadian among its ranks and helped him celebrate his country's hundredth anniversary as a Commonwealth.

The pilot, WO Stephen B Birchall, has been flying with the company since September 1966 and has always insisted on his identity as a Canadian. "In combat we're all brothers," he said. "I just happen to be a Canadian brother."

Birchall was born in England, but his parents moved to Canada after his birth, and it is that country which he considers his home.

He joined the Army five years ago as a helicopter mechanic, and his ambitions took him to rotary wing flight school in November 1965. He was assigned to the 155th immediately after he graduated from flight school.

He is presently flying an armed helicopter on combat missions throughout the II Corps tactical zone. He was decorated only two months after his arrival in Vietnam for his heroic rescue of an Air Force pilot who had been shot down and forced to eject deep in enemy territory.

"I don't think I have to prove anything to the Yanks," Birchall said of his fellow pilots. "We've flown and fought together too long for that."

10Jun67-'Mayday' Brings Quick Help for Downed Chopper Crew

BAN ME THOUT, (1ST AVN-IO) -

It was 7:40 p.m. as the hurried words, "Mayday," came over the radio at the 155th Assault Helicopter Company Headquarters at Camp Coryell.

Warrant Officer Dennis M. Trux, commander of the UH-1D Huey helicopter, and his pilot, Robert D Muldoon, gave their position as 20 miles southeast of here. The aircraft had a power failure at 9500 feet.

Within a few minutes the Camp Coryell standby flare ship, a wrecker ship, a standby gunship, and a medical evacuation helicopter became airborne.

Meanwhile, Trux was desperately trying to bring his craft down in the safest possible manner under the trying conditions. Determined to salvage the helicopter as best he could Trux maneuvered the aircraft to the only opening, a tight one in some trees. With his rotor blades clearing the bushy branches by inches, he made a successful touchdown.

On the ground, Trux tried to make radio contact but the choppers electrical system was dead. He next tried the survival radio from the aircraft's survival kit, but it was on the blink.

Since there had been reports that 400 hard-core enemy regulars were in the immediate vicinity, Trux marked the down ship's position with a blinking light and the crew moved away from the ship to take up defensive positions. Trux and his crewmember did not come into contact with the VC although they spent more than an hour on the ground.

At 8:30 the wrecker ship spotted the light. Flying closer, the chopper encountered enemy ground fire but confirmed the downed ship's location.

At 8:45 the flare ship began to illuminate the area. The pilot reported that the aircraft was spotted intact, and the crew had escaped unhurt.

The minutes later a chopper of the 498th Medical Company began its approach to the dimly blinking light.

Trux originally tried to wave the rescue craft off, electing to brave the hostile jungle rather than allow the ship to attempt such a hazardous landing. But the dust-off made it and the uninjured crew was safely extracted. The downed ship was recovered the next day.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

From the 155 web-site and emails to the newsletter

"I am trying to locate personnel who might have served with my brother Philip C Smith in the 155th AHC in 1965-66. Thank you for any help you can give me."

Alexis - buckwheat33@qwest.net

My parents (Frank and Mary Jane Erickson) are looking for any information regarding their son, WO Joseph F Erickson; he was with this unit from October, 1969 until February 23, 1970 when he died in a helicopter crash. They can be contacted, until Easter at 609 Highway 466, Lot #377, Lady Lake, Florida 32159. Phone # 352-750-2565. After Easter, they will be at PO Box 545, Central Lake, Michigan 49622, phone # 616-544-2661. Information could also be sent to them, C/O me. Thank you.

Frank and Mary Jane Erickson, burner@ic.net

Was a 117th pilot in late spring '67 when assigned to BMT to help the 155th look for 2 missing American missionaries thought to have been captured by the VC or NVA and taken into Cambodia. Through an interesting series of events, I met their son who is now a missionary doctor in Africa. Anyone remember the event? If so, an e-mail to me would be great to pass on to him. Thanks.

Ray E Johnson, Jr., rayj@breeze.net

My father was WO Paul Noble Larson who was killed near Cheo Rheo on April 19, 1968 on a combat assault mission. I would be grateful to here from anyone who knew my father. I was 4 1/2 and the oldest of 3 when this occurred and have learned that it is hard to find people to talk about it, but I must for obvious reasons, continue to learn as much as I can. Thank you from myself and my family for the web site and all the tributes for those who served!!

Scott W Larson, HOGHEADSWLARS@aol.com

I request you add the following name to the list or send me information as to where I might better search: Jan Shyrock who flew a bird dog out of 155 under the call sign "Pteradactyl 35" circa spring and summer 1968. Also how I might find a covey of slicks who rode to the rescue for a surrounded and highly outnumbered special forces operation north west of Ban Me Thuot and aprx 10 clicks south west of the border camp and operation launch site detachment A-231 at Tieu Atar on 17 August, 1968. There was a storm front that prohibited anyone getting through from BMT in time or even at all and a flight of about five or six (?) slicks had spent the night west of the storm at an SF camp or a firebase to the north. In the late morning they were trying to get back to Pleiku where they were based. "35" had flown south out to BMT to A-236 Bu Prang and crossed the border illegally to come up and re-cross near A-233 Ban Don/Trang Phuc and get over the operation. He had a bad feeling about them going out there at that time an always did something extra for the guys on the border. He was right and was over them after sitting down at Tieu Atar and saving fuel. When the battle began he was in the air and the slicks to the north could hear his half of the transmissions with the operation on the ground and they came south and saved the operation from being over run. They didn't land or do any extractions. I would be very grateful to make contact with anyone associated with that group and/or to find the where abouts of Jan Shyrock. Thank you for any leads or consideration.

T. Garvey

TGarvey702@aol.com

In late December 1970 or early January 1971, while assigned to the 243rd ASHC (Freight Trains), I was flying from Dong ba Thin to Ban Me Thuot when we received a "May-Day" call from a Bird Dog who was flying over a Charlie Model gunship that had crashed just north of DaLat. We were the only aircraft in the area and headed for the downed aircraft. As I recall it was fully armed and full of fuel and the Bird Dog pilot was afraid it was going to explode. We were carrying 1 UH-1 engines in the back which precluded us from dropping the rescue cable down through the "hole". My flight engineer, SP6 Joe Hickey told me to hover over the aircraft and he would throw the cable out the side door and slide down it. We had to hover about 100' to get to the crew. He stayed with them until the Medevac showed up and they could get them to the hospital. The crew was in pretty bad shape. Hickey and I just got in touch with each other after 30 years and, after hashing over old war stories, we were curious as to how the crew made out. Hopefully, they are all still alive and well. We believe they were from the 155th and thought you might be able to get us some info. You can e-mail me at PaulC17176@aol.com or Pete.Costilow@faa.gov. Any help you can give us will be appreciated. Thanks,

Pete Costilow
Freight Train 13

To the editors of the newsletter:

First off, I need to admit that I was aware of your 155 AHC website, but had a hard time building the courage to visit.

Today is the first day I have roamed around the website. Very impressive, and even though it brings back some memories that need to be forgotten, some of the memories are worth deeper thought. Those involved some of the guys I served with, fought alongside, laughed with, and cried with.

I just read your August 2000 issue of BMT Barb.

On the 20th of April 1970, the helicopter I usually flew on was grounded for maintenance, and the crew chief for Marlin Johnson/Darek Richardson's helicopter was sick. Since the crew chiefs and door gunners were usually kept together, Charles Bigelow (THINK that's the way he spelled his name) and I were directed to crew Marlin's. I was a door gunner at the time. Charles and I were the backseaters on the helicopter that Marlin Johnson and Darek Richardson were flying the afternoon we got shot down. It bothers me to this day that we had to leave their bodies behind.

We all knew the b-50 missions were dangerous. That proved itself out that morning when we were the first to go in and extract the crew of the chopper that got it's tail boom removed by an RPG. We were circling overhead during the extraction (number 2 ship). I watched the explosion and mentally counted 1&2&3& revolutions before the chopper hit the ground and spread the skids.

Lew Sain and Gene Breslin, it's good to put a name with two guys of the crew that had the courage to come in and pull us out later that day. I know everything that resembled a gauge up from was redlining that afternoon, and how we cleared the trees, God only knows. I don't think you remember the adrenaline in my voice that afternoon, but I do. I am the one that got the radio from the RTO on the team we were trying to extract and kept asking the spotter above us which direction to go for a clear LZ. Before I could get an answer, I heard the whoop, whoop over my left shoulder. I owe you guys a beer, or 10.

Bob Guthrie

155 AHC, 69-70

rgut3@mindspring.com

Request from the Editor

The information and articles that you read in the Barb come from other members that wish to share their stories. I would ask all of you to dig back into your memories and if you find an interesting story or just some information that you wish to share with other members of the 155, please send it to me via email or postal and I will get it published for you. Photos with a caption would also be good, but be sure that you don't send the last copy. The Barb is vehicle for all of us to share information and memories, so help me relay your thoughts to all the rest of the ole 155 ers.

Jerry Burton, Editor

MAIL CALL - sharing commo from our friends....

Chuck Farnan (c.farnan@worldnet.att.net) - I am trying to locate the 155th stagecoach and falcon patch, I am willing to pay for them. My address is 260 California Dr, Yountville, CA 94599. Thank you, any co-operation in this matter will be most deeply appreciated.

Jim Koch (stlln505@earthlink.net) - Flight, I am trying to find out what happened to my old ship 66-16505. It was transferred to the 155th from the 92nd just a few days before I was. It was destroyed on a mission, Aug 29, 68. That was my first day in the 155th. I have not been able to find out any details. Can anyone help? Stagecoach 13.

Thomas E Cook (grouse@flash.net) - I was on the helicopter that was shot down in Apr. 1970 with Beaudault and Wyllie at the controls. Would like to hear from these two.

Cris Larson (crisjill@earthlink.net) - I really enjoyed the reunion in Las Vegas, it will be a memory that I will hold dear for the rest of my life.

Pat Avery (arodeo@quik) - Sure had a great surprise the other day. My old friend and pilot H.C. (Nook) Watters stopped by. What a shock. I really didn't know what to say. But, to all the guys who flew me around everyday and got me back in 1 piece, I SALUTE you and thanks to you all. H.C., hope to see you again soon. Pat Avery

Roger L Brewer (brewerm@efortress.com) - Stagecoach/Falcon Crew Chief 66 - 67. Just read the updates of the new guest book and I remember when the swimming pool was put in....It was 66 for the Officers....Me and a couple of buddies would sneak over and swim in it after everyone was either passed out or asleep. Great Times.

Wallace McNabb (walleye@kans.com) - I know a guy who was stationed at Coryell, he was with the 8/26 counter rocket/mortar radar and he was there from 69-60. Any one know of this unit please email me, this guy would really like to hear from someone that was there...thank you.

James P Brainard (jimcluad@erols.com) - I was assigned to the 165th trans det. In Feb 68, which later became the 155th AHC. I served as a 67N20 mechanic on UH-1's, joined the sheet metal shop and later ETS'd out with secondary MOS as 68G20 on March 30, 1970. I would like to hear from anyone who served during this period at Ban Me Thuot, S. VN. This is my first attempt to contact anyone from my tour in Vietnam, I have many good and some not so good experiences to share, please contact me via email: jimcluad@erols.com

David M Holt (monrpe@cei.net) - I am looking for former 67N20 class members that were at Fort Rucker in Jun. and Jul. of 69. Their names were Marvin Lee Morris, Tim Northcutt, Robert H Frederick, Mark A McNeal, Rodney L Meier, David Jack Moses and William (Bill) Mills.



Yes Sir Di Wee Pullum, I did clean the pool!



It could be worse, I could be in the Jungle looking for food. On second thought that might be safer!!!

Dear Sarge.....

Received from an anonymous source.....

Dear Sgt. Who lives in Fayetteville now, but grew up in the state I live in, I want to apologize to you for several mis-truths:

1. You were right ,it was not a bird strike like I told you, my AC was letting me have some stick time and we were flying low level down a river near Lac Thien. As I was popping up over some Bamboo, my cyclic climbing technique could have used some more practice, I was however able to remove all pieces of Bamboo before telling you about the chin bubble. I'm sorry.
2. Those shrapnel holes I told you came from enemy mortars....well they were really just the Falcons and some "Close Air Support."
3. The blood all over my aircraft that day you asked was not from any medevacs, rather it was from the deer we had for dinner the next day. You missed the hair on the skids, I thought I'd been caught.
4. You were right to think I might have been flying when I, I mean we moved the ship into the revetment from the wash rack. My AC said he was tired.
5. You and I were sent to the same company after the 155 was shut down and again you didn't believe me when I told you about the enemy mortars, well you were right there as well, we were off the coast flying feet wet just south of the lighthouse, near Vung Ro Bay when we spotted the enemy whale those fishermen were trying to catch. Those holes.....Shrapnel from my M79....sorry.
6. Last but not least, I'm sorry for telling you we received fire during an assault, you were having trouble with that one because of the angle of the round which entered the inside roof of the ship dead center and went through the standby generator...you didn't believe me when I told you the round must have been deflected to go straight up without a hole in the floor. Well we were on an assault but we were empty you see an Air Force FAC had spotted two NVA on an island in the river where we were working and asked us to pick up the one he hadn't killed with his rockets. I got him in the ship okay but started to go back for the packs, the AC didn't see me go back, he thought I was on board so he pushed my M60 up against the seat pole and held on, during our climb out the operating rod got pushed in too far and the 60 went off, lucky it didn't hit the blades, huh. Well that's all sarge, I really am sorry for lying to you and all the work you had to do because of me. Thanks Sarge.

P.S. Bob when you receive this please pass it on to Les Davison for the Barb, I think all of us should fess up after all what are they going to do now. Thanks History guy for your help.

Anonymous

Submitted by Bob Alberts

155 AHCA officers are:

AJ Arredondo, Pres.

Dave Pollock, VP

Jeff Schrader, Treasurer

Bob Alberts, Historian

Dave Skoog, Sgt-at-Arms

Doug Kahler, Mbr-at-Large

Earl Baldwin, Net Guy

Tom Mullen, Founder

Jerry Burton, Newsletter

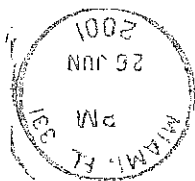
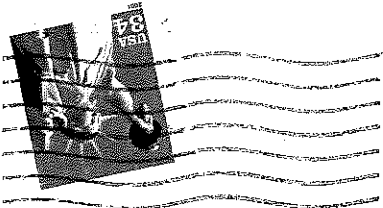
Les Davison, Advisor



155th Assault Helicopter Company



And everyone said Amen!



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