



# BAN ME THUOT BARB



Remembering the 155<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company - Sortie # 19 - Oct 2001

## OPERATION DISNEY REUNION 2002

**GREETINGS!!! From Fran and Laurie  
Tiner in Sarasota, FL**

The breadth of the following communication was written before the horrific events of September 11, 2001. Our heart-felt sympathy and condolences go out to all affected by this terrible tragedy. After much thought, we feel that the best course for U.S. to take is to continue with our lives; i.e. to stay with our existing plans for **Operation Disney Reunion 2002**. Let's hang tough, consciously move life forward, and create a great reunion.

Preparations for **OPERATION DISNEY (August 1-4, 2002)** are underway! After doing reconnaissance at Orlando area hotels, we have negotiated a great rate for our event. The **HILTON** in the Walt Disney World Resort, a Four Star, Four Diamond Hotel agreed to give us \$100 per night rate. This hotel provides **FREE** ongoing shuttles to the 4 Disney Theme Parks as well as **FREE** scheduled transport to the 3 Disney Water Parks. It is literally across the street from Downtown Disney; an area with shops, restaurants, **GOLF**, nightlife, and more! We will also be eligible for group discounts to Disney attractions. Please bring your kids and grandkids, family, and friends and give them the opportunity to meet the guys you shared your Vietnam Experience with!

The proposal requires a contract stating that we (155<sup>th</sup> AHC) will be blocking a certain number of rooms. We'd like to get some feedback ASAP on who is interested in coming for this great adventure! Please let us know by October 15 if there's a possibility of your attendance. Email address is [Ftiner@Prodigy.net](mailto:Ftiner@Prodigy.net); phone: 941-953-3640.

We urge every one of you to draw on your resources to seek out other members of the 155<sup>th</sup> and support teams and contact them to join us. Let's build on the previous reunions and make this a great one too!!!

P.S. If you're wondering who the Tiners are, Fran Tiner was voted the best Falcon Gunner there ever was, and his lovely wife, Laurie, is the gal who was lucky enough to marry him. And the legend continues.....

[Ftiner@Prodigy.net](mailto:Ftiner@Prodigy.net); phone: (941)953-3640

### **LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.....**

The newsletter is a great instrument for all to keep in touch and current with the announcements.

This is "your" newsletter. Please send in your stories, announcements, etc., for all to see. If it is interesting to you, it will be interesting to someone else.

There are many members receiving the newsletter that some of you have been trying to locate. Please send in your inquiries and we will print it in the next issue.

*Jerry Burton*

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6Mar67-Aviation Camp Dedicated to WO Coryell  
**BAN ME THUOT, (1<sup>ST</sup> AVN-IO)** - Camp  
Coryell dedication ceremonies were held here  
recently in honor of a warrant officer who was shot  
down last Oct. 30 on a resupply flight.

Warrant Officer Michael N. Coryell, his co-pilot,  
and his crew lost their lives when shot down by  
enemy small arms fire on a mission near Plei  
Djereng, 25 miles west of Pleiku.

Unit orders naming the 155<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter  
Company compound were read and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry  
Division (ARVN) band began the Star Spangled  
Banner as the American colors were raised over  
Camp Coryell for the first time.

The band played the Vietnamese national anthem as  
the Republic of Vietnam flag was also hoisted above  
the aviation compound.

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03Sep66-Bird Meets 'Bird" Pilot Loses Out (also  
in 17Sep66 issue)

**NHA TRANG, (17<sup>TH</sup> AVN-IO)** - Army  
chopper pilot George Harrison wants to know if you  
can get the Purple Heart for a bird wound.

Assigned to the 17<sup>th</sup> Aviation Group's 155<sup>th</sup> Assault  
Helicopter Co. 52<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Battalion, the lieutenant  
was in a formation of UH-1D's at low level over  
Vietnam's Central Highlands when he heard a sharp  
crack and felt a heavy jolt against his leg.

Looking down, Harrison saw broken pieces of his  
Huey's plexiglass chin bubble splattered over the  
cockpit floor. He also noticed blood trickling down  
his leg.

Harrison had been in Vietnam only about a month  
and said that at that moment he felt certain he'd taken  
his first enemy bullet.

"I felt that blow on my leg and saw the blood and I  
was sure I'd been shot," he recalled.

"We broke formation to avoid drawing any more  
fire, then I looked down again."

Further investigation revealed that it was not a  
bullet wound the 24-year old aviator had suffered by  
a direct bird hit. Crashing through the tough but  
vulnerable chin bubble of the aircraft, a large bird  
had been cut by the sharp fragments and then truck  
Harrison's leg.

Harrison couldn't identify the fowl by species, but  
smiled when he said, "It must have been one of  
theirs!"

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06May66-II Corps-Well Covered by 52<sup>nd</sup> Avn. Bn.

**PLEIKU, (USARV-IO)** - Its headquarters and  
major base is 2500 feet above sea level in the Central  
Highlands, an old French airfield, now known to  
everyone as Camp Holloway. From it, the Army's  
52<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Battalion flies in support of all  
American and allied troops in the II Corps Tactical  
zone.

The II Corps area covers 84,000 square kilometers-  
more than 45 percent of South Vietnam's land mass-  
and contains every type of geography found in the  
coastal plains, jungle war in the dense rain forests of  
Binh Dinh and Kontum Provinces, mountain  
operations on the Annamite Chain and more orthodox  
warfare on the rolling plains of the central plateau.

The Winter Monsoon begins on the coast when the  
Summer Monsoon ends in the mountains and plateau.  
It is always raining somewhere in the II Corps.

But the 52<sup>nd</sup> has been in the highlands a long time.  
The pilots and crews have written the book on flying  
in this area.

The battalion arrive in Pleiku from Ft. Ord Calif in  
the spring of 1963. Pleiku was occupied then by the  
81<sup>st</sup> Transportation Company (now the 119<sup>th</sup> Avn  
Co.), flying CH-21 "Shawnees", the old "Banana"  
choppers. Three other aviation units, the 8<sup>th</sup> TC (now  
117<sup>th</sup> Avn. Co.) in Qui Nhon, the 18<sup>th</sup> TC in Nha  
Trang and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Warfare Aviation  
Detachment (armed OV-1 "Mohawks"), were  
assigned to the battalion.

The base was called Old Pleiku, to distinguish it  
from the new strip being constructed for the Air  
Force a few miles away. More informally, and with  
heavy irony, it was called the "Country Club."

On the Fourth of July, 1963, it was dedicated Camp  
Holloway, after CWO Charles E Holloway, who was  
killed during an aerial assault with the 81<sup>st</sup> TC on  
Dec. 22, 1962.

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*From the 155 home page -* At 0300 hrs. on August  
23, 1968 approximately 3000 North Vietnamese  
Regulars launched a fierce ground and artillery attack  
on the tiny U.S. Special Forces/CIDG Camp at Duc  
Lap. Air support was immediately launched from the  
155<sup>th</sup> as flare gun crews were scrambled to their  
ships. Many heroic deeds were recorded during this  
period. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August while supporting  
ground troops near the Duc Sub-Sectors  
Headquarters near the Cambodian Border,

(continued on page 3)

Page 2

WO1 Gilbert N. Terry, crew unknown, observed heavy ground fire originating from some buildings in a small village near the tree line.

Permission to engage those targets was granted and rockets and mini-guns found their marks, but the Falcon aircraft had been hit by the intense ground fire and was rapidly losing power, after the ship came to rest Mr. Terry managed to free the pilot from the ship and together they carried the crew chief, wounded in the leg, to the MACV compound under heavy automatic weapons fire and incoming mortars. When they reached the compound they learned of a serious shortage of machine gun ammo. Mr. Terry elected to return to the downed aircraft with 2 people from the compound to retrieve the remaining mini-gun ammo. The enemy fire had not ebbed nor the impacting mortars, moments later he returned with the badly needed re-supply. It was only then that he realized that he had been wounded. The crew was extracted several hours later while under intense ground fire.

On August 24, 1968 again supporting the besieged Special Forces Camp at Duc Lap 1LT Fred Pratt was wounded.

The setting was the same on August 26, 1968, the enemy had captured half of the camp and LT Pratt and the crew of the Falcon gun ship, Captain Ruthledge A/C LT Pratt co-pilot, SP/5 Cliff Allen and gunner SP/4 Hammond Parks were again supporting the ground units under siege by the North Vietnamese when their air craft came under fire from a large enemy force using automatic weapons and .50 cal, machine gun. LT Pratt was mortally wounded and the Falcon aircraft was forced to land because of damage caused by the ground fire. WO1 Gilbert N. Terry flew his aircraft to the downed ship, landed and placed LT Pratt in his ship and took off, while in the process of taking off the Aircraft Commander of Terry's ship was wounded. WO1 Terry was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart for his Heroic actions. LT Pratt was given credit for 600 enemy KBA on August 25, 1968, the Flight Simulator Center at Fort Rucker, AL., is named in his honor.

As the siege of Duc Lap continued many hundreds of flying hours were recorded, on September 8, 1969 while flying as a command and control ship, Stage Coach 149 was shot down killing WO1 Redlick S. Kopple, WO1 William P. Harwood, U.S. Col. Sage and ARVN Gen. An. The crew chief and gunner survived.

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One of the most memorable stories was when a Falcon had been brought to me to see if I could find what was causing a high-frequency vibration. It had been putting the pilot's feet to sleep. Usually this was caused by either the tail rotor blades being out of track, or the transmission and engine not being in proper alignment. I tracked the blades and they were fine, so I spent all day doing an alignment of the engine to the transmission until it was perfect. I even tracked the main rotor blades just to be certain that we had covered all the bases. About 8:00 PM that evening on a warm clear night the bird was finally ready for test flight. I went up with the test pilot and the pilot who had been complaining about it. I wish I could remember their names. Anyway, we were circling the compound at about 2000 feet and sure enough the vibration was still there. I couldn't believe it! My TI and I had checked everything we could think of. But, I was even more astonished when I was looking down at the compound and I saw the flash of an explosion, then another, and another. I mentioned it to the pilots and then they got word at the same time from the base that we were being hit with mortars. As you probably remember, it was a pretty rare occasion when the gooks would hit us before 11:00 PM or so (it was more usually around midnight). We could see tracer rounds coming into the compound and going out from our perimeter bunkers. We knew we were under a major attack. We went up a few more thousand feet and watched the fireworks from above. Our gunships were scrambled quickly and soon were working out with rockets and miniguns a blazing somewhere near the compound. It was an awesome sight at night. They finally told us to come down and allow the crew to arm our ship because all of the other were just about expended. I watched all the excitement and was completely enthralled by it all. But, my awe was soon to turn to stupefied amazement. We landed and the crew loaded the ship. As the ship (that I had just left only moments before) was taxiing down the approach to the main runway, there was an unusual noise and the tail rotor suddenly went flying completely out of the compound perimeter. The pilot reacted quickly as the bird began to spin in a circle. He set it down so quickly that it spread the skids too far that the belly was touching the ground. Fortunately, no one was hurt. We learned the next day that the high frequency vibration had been coming from a hairline crack underneath the tail rotor housing. It could not be seen without completely

removing the housing, so we had no way of knowing that it was there. I thanked God when I found out that if either we or the regular crew had lost that rotor while in actual flight the chopper would have gone into a wild spin unless a speed of 60 knots was maintained to streamline it. I shudder to think of what it would have been like trying to land that thing at 60 knots on just those two skids! The next day I received the dubious honor of replacing the skids (which required someone to slide underneath the belly of the ship while it was precariously held up by one of those cranes mounted on a 5-ton truck. The truck was tilting so badly that no one would go under there, so I easily squashed like a bug!) Anyway, I would really like to talk to some of the men on that crew if they are still around. I'm sure they remember the incident. Unfortunately I can't remember their names. I would also like to thank those Falcons for saving the compound that night.

*Letter in part by Jim Henderson*

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In October of 70 my aircraft with Roger Thompson as AC, Bill (Zero) Hassellman, PP an unknown Gunner and myself as CE landed at the VIP pad for a day of work. We were to meet with a Major who would give us our RF mission for the day. I approached the Major when he showed, (within minutes of landing) and he stated we were going Tiger Hunting in the Ia Drang that day (Seems he wanted a Tiger Skin for himself). I plugged back in and told Roger what he had said, No way in Hell was the response.....The Major stood on the Skid shoe and repeated what he had told me, to Roger, who was on intercom. After tactfully explaining to the Major, that NO it was not HIS Aircraft and yes he could bring this matter up with the CO, though my mother might have something to say about Who Owned My Ass. At this moment I happened to look in the engine compartment and noticed that the fuel filter had not been safety wired, my mistake and to make matter worse, I did not have any safety wire.....oh well Circle Red X.....One time flight back to the Corral.....The company clerk met with Mr. Thomson and explained that Maj. Steele would like to have a word with us. While standing outside Maj. Steel's office, I might have overheard what was said, suffice it to say that we did not fly a Tiger Hunt mission that day or any other. Thank you Maj. Steele

*from Bob Alberts*

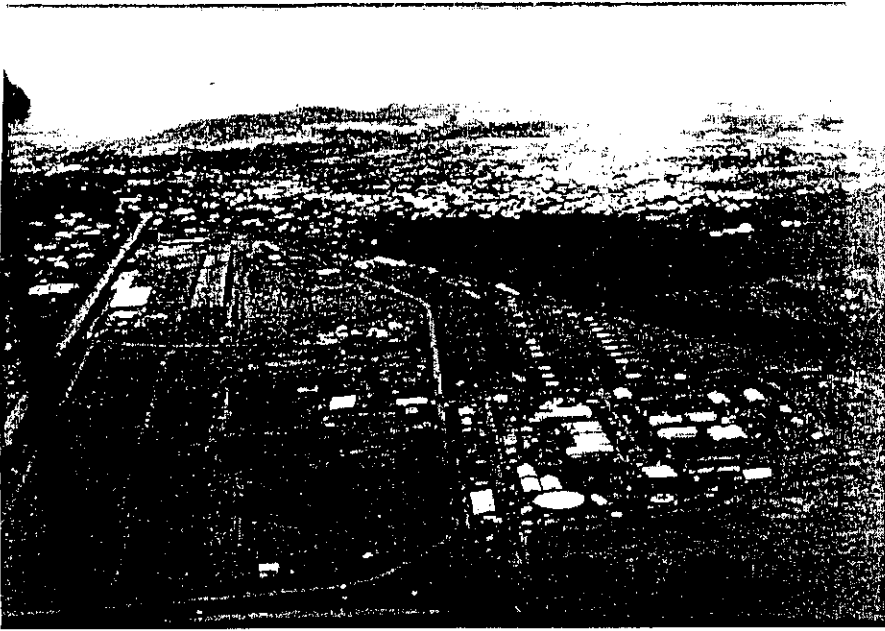
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Some of the best and worst times of my life. Looking back, I really enjoyed that tour. But, while I was there sometimes things weren't so neat. Such as the time when Ramirez and Quintana went down in CAMBODIA (where we were not suppose to be). Everyone knew they were beyond this world, but as far as their families knew they were MIA (false hope). There's a whole lot of people out there that don't really know what was going on over there. I stayed in the army (aviation) for 20 years plus always in the maintenance field. Retired as the aircraft maintenance NCO for the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, NC in 1985. I don't remember too many names from then but a few may bring back memories to some folks. SP/5 Tim Grimland (TI), who also still owes me \$50 for a refrigerator I bought from him before I went on re-enlistment leave. He decided to sell it to SFC Al Moist while I was on leave, and of course Tim had D!

EROS'd before I returned from leave. Test pilot's WO Ebenge (sp), WO Melvin, 1Lt Gary Butler, 1Lt Sobel (By the way, those two Lt's cleaned the clocks for a bunch of other officers from the 92<sup>nd</sup> AHC in the Sands officers club at Dong Ba Thin for some negative remarks that were made about the 155. And then there was WO Green, as a TI I remember more than once telling him that it would be OK, it would not fall off the aircraft and if it wasn't pilot error, he would make it back to Camp Coryell OK. There are so many things that come to mind while sitting here behind this computer I would be here all night if I tried to tell of all I experienced at BMT. One last thing, does anyone remember 1Lt Lemon? He was a gung ho type that should have stayed infantry. He picked up a load of ARVN's down at the ARVN pad, pull the collective up into his armpit, did a pedal turn, and destroyed the tailboom on a power pole. The CO had him on the carpet and told him that none of his mechanics would repair his screwup. Of course, the tailboom was non-repairable and a new one was ordered. When a new tailboom is received it only had a coat of zinc chromate on it. The CO ordered Lt Lemon to paint the new tail boom and install it with minimum assistance from anyone that knew what they were doing. Needless to say, Lt Lemon walked around the compound OD in color until the CO took him away from the aircraft and gave it back to the maintenance folks.

*Mike Lovell, (155 website)*

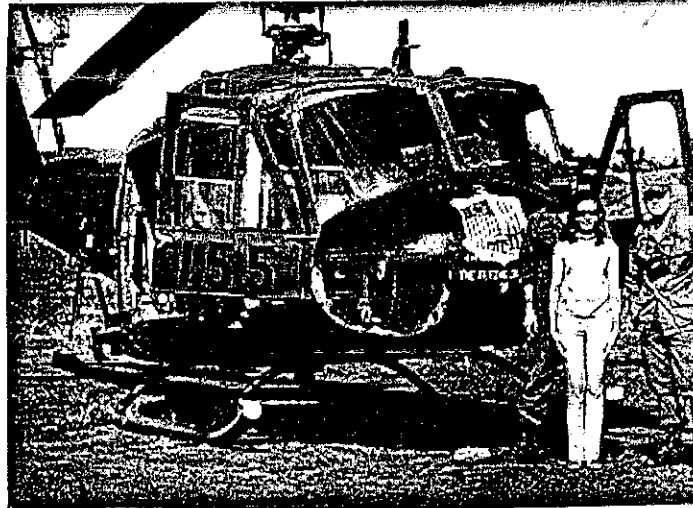
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Looking West toward Ban Me Thuot City



I fear nothing, I have my Chicken Plate on!!



This was definitely a visitor to our Base!  
Anyone remember who it is?

155 AHCA officers are:

Al 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

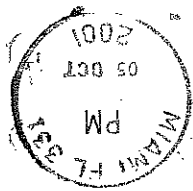
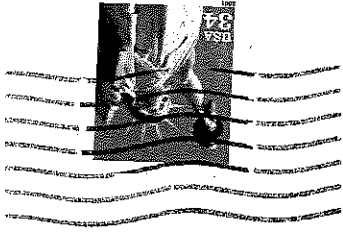
Tom Mullen, Founder

Jerry Burton, Newsletter

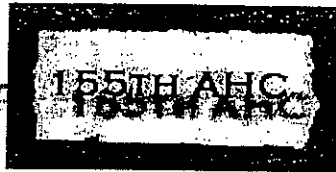
Les Davison, Advisor

22203  
don St.

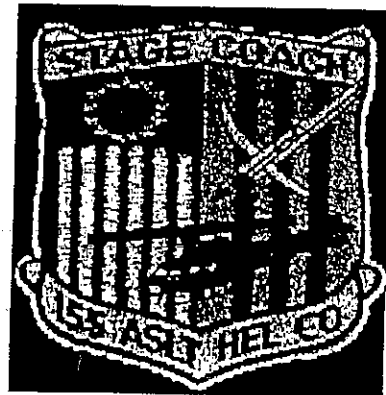
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