



# BAN ME THUOT BARB



Remembering the 155<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company, Sortie # 20, Jan 2002

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## DETAILS FOR THE 2002 REUNION TO BE HELD IN ORLANDO

**When:** August 1-August 4, 2002  
**Where:** Hilton Hotel at the Walt Disney World Resort  
**Room Rate:** \$100.00 per night (plus tax)  
**Reservation Phone Number:** 1-800-782-4414  
**Address:** 1751 Hotel Plaza Blvd. , Lake Buena Vista Fl

\*Important Reservation Info: Please specify the 155<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company group rate in order to get the special room rate of \$100.00 per night-single or double.

Reservation must be made by July 2<sup>nd</sup>, '02, in order to receive the special room rate.

Cancellations must be made 5 days prior to your arrival or you will forfeit the deposit on the room.

Check In Time: 3:00 PM  
Check Out Time: 11:00 AM

155 Hospitality Suite for 3 nights beginning on Thurs., Aug. 1 through Sat., Aug. 3-available to all AHC reunion attendees.

Special 155<sup>th</sup> functions to be announced when details become available.

### Hotel Amenities:

Complimentary scheduled transportation to the Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, Disney-MGM Studios, Animal Kingdom, and all five Walt Disney World golf courses.

Disney Surprise Mornings-One hour early admission to select Disney Theme Parks on a daily basis.

Baggage check  
Cable TV in room-with Disney Channel  
Handicap accessible  
Handicap equipped  
Health club facilities-additional fee  
Hot tub, Jacuzzi, sauna  
Laundry facilities-(valet service & coin operated laundry)  
Lounges/bars-4  
Refrigerators-additional per night fee  
Restaurants on premises-9  
Safety deposit box-located at the front desk  
Telephone in room-2

Activities desk/concierge

Game room/arcade  
Golf course-1/4 mile to nearest course  
Outdoor swimming pools-2  
Children's swimming pool-1

### Rooms:

1 king or 2 double beds Occupancy limits - 4 adults, 3 children, 4 total combined. All rooms include mini-bar, color TV with remote control, free cable TV and Disney channel, clock radio, and voice mail phones. Rooms with king beds can accommodate a rollaway bed.

### Special services for those bringing children and grandchildren:

Children 9 and under eat dinner free from a special children's menu at Finn's Grill when accompanied by at least one full paying adult. (Maximum of 2 children eats free.)  
Babysitting services-additional fee. Cribs, high chairs, children's menu, and children's activities.

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## ADDRESS CHANGE FOR EDITOR

My new address is 6745 Mediterranean Rd, Orlando FL 32822, telephone number (321)235-3468. Please forward all changes for addresses and articles to this address. The email address is still the same: judjer@worldnet.att.net

Jerry Burton

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### Correction to the Sortie #19

My thanks to one of our members for an error in the story about the Battle of Dun Lap in 1968.

The Stagecoach 149 went down on September 8, 1968. Apologies for the error. Additional information on that action as follows.

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## BATTLE OF DUC LAP 1968

James Koch.....

Due to a shortage of Aircraft Commanders when the battle began on 23 Aug, the 10<sup>th</sup> CAB Commander directed 3 other companies within the battalion to provide 3 AC's each for transfer to the 155<sup>th</sup>. The following AC's reported to the 155<sup>th</sup> on 26<sup>th</sup> Aug:

### 281<sup>st</sup> AHC

Cpt Frederick Chism  
WO1 Tommy Sowell  
WO1 Kenneth Kunke

### 48<sup>th</sup> AHC

1 LT John Williford  
WO1 Robert Gibson  
WO1 Thomas Fichter

### 92<sup>nd</sup> AHC

CW2 Lawrence Miles  
CW2 James Koch  
CW2 Robert Jorgensen

We were all given 1 day to assimilate into the unit and began flying missions on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The normal unit check rides for new members were waived and we immediately performed duties as AC's. You talk about an unusual feeling. Flying formation

with strangers was a new experience. The old SOP's were thrown out the door and we quickly went to task learning the 155 SOP. Duc Lap kept us quite busy. In my first 3 days I flew 19.2 hours!

Sadly, we were unable to make many friends until things slowed down at Duc Lap. Those of us from the 92<sup>nd</sup> were with the unit only 2 months. All three of us DEROSSED at the end of October.

You can read about my last combat flight on the 155<sup>th</sup> Home Page.

James Koch

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## FINDING FRIENDS

Some of you are looking for friends you worked with and served with in the 155<sup>th</sup> AHC. So, I thought I'd pass along some info concerning finding those people you are looking for. I recently located a friend of mine who I went to grammar school with and who also served as the NCOIC of our Medical Unit attached to the 155<sup>th</sup>. I won't tell you what he first said when I called, but he couldn't believe it had been more than 30 years since we had seen each other and it was nice to find out he was doing well. Well, enough of that, first off I need a complete name and any and all information concerning where they might have lived, wife's name, social security number, etc. The best source for this is from Orders including orders from before mid 1968 when SSN's were added to orders. Just having a middle initial helps considerable. When I locate someone, I try to get the person looking for them to contact them and let them know about the association, so they can join if they want to. Please take a look at the "looking for" list on the WEB site. For those of you without computers your local library or Grandchildren probably have access. If all you have is a last name, don't hesitate to call or write me, I have a partial list of names of people who served in the 155th which I will gladly e-mail to you as long as you can open a MicroSoft Excell program, all I ask is that you let me know about changes that I need to make to the list. Hey, come on send me the orders and find the others...thanks, Bob Alberts.

(address and email address on last page)

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## FALCON GUNSHIP FOUND ALIVE AND WELL

Falcon Gunship UH-1C 66-15217 has been found alive and well, cared for by the N.C. Chapter of the VHPA. David Churilla, Stagecoach 26 (69-70), has located one of our faithful gun platforms and requests anyone that may have information or old photos and stories of the action it may have seen, to please relay them to Jerry Seago @ 336 725-1371 Or email [jerrys@wrpc.com](mailto:jerrys@wrpc.com).

## TIGER MEN by Barry Petersen

I'm reading a book I thought you'd like to know about, unfortunately it's no longer in print and has to be obtained from an out-of-print book store. It's called **Tiger Men** by Barry Petersen, a former Capt. in the Australian Army who went to BMT in 1963 and stayed until late 65. He worked with the Ede or Rhade as we know them and formed a fighting force stationed at Boun Eao (sp) East of BMT and Dam San base out near the river on the way to Lac Thien, the Moung at Lac Thien were part of his force. He had a house in town and worked for the CIA. He has quite an eye opening take on who was who and what was what both in our area and with the indigenous people near BMT. I recommend it highly if you happen across it.

Bob Alberts

## GYRO COPTERS

Bob Alberts.....

While watching the news last night I saw a story on the use of Gyro-Copters for the upcoming Winter Olympics in Salt Lake and low and behold they are using Gyro-Copters for multiple purposes, including security....These Gyro-Copters...the brain child of Jan and David Groen....Dave a former PURPLE GANG Pilot from 70 with the 155<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company  
....another tidbit from your Historian.

One little thing I forgot to mention.....They cost \$295,000 for the four-place model

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\* INFORMATION REQUESTED \*

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Gentlemen.....I have run out of copies of Orders,...Do you have any??? I would greatly appreciate you checking and sending them along. We use these orders not only to document our history but to also help locate the whereabouts of

our members and friends....Oh you don't have any orders but you want them for your grandchildren...well let me tell you. I never got a copy of my 201, medical, or flight records and I tried to do what the VFW,VA, DAV and what other people had told me to try and filled out the appropriate forms. I then waited for two years without hearing anything. I then contacted my local representative,(sorry Mr Boswell), whose office took about 3 months to get most of my papers. Good Luck and thanks for your help.....

Bob Alberts

I would love to find out any information on 66-00868. If any of your people, pilots, crew chiefs, or door gunners flew this aircraft I would love to hear from them. The aircraft is on display at VFW Post 4641 215 Marshall Stuart Drive, Dickson TN 37055. Thank you.

Billy Johnson

Commander VFW Post 4641

[billyconnie.johnson@worldnet.att.net](mailto:billyconnie.johnson@worldnet.att.net)

Looking for a SGT Haupt that was a crew chief in the 155<sup>th</sup> around 69-70. He is from Pittsburg, KS.

W. McNabb

[walleve@ruraltel.net](mailto:walleve@ruraltel.net)

Looking for anyone who served with John R. Brooks, KIA 4-19-68, while flying with the 155 AHC out of Ban Me Thuot. John was flying as a crew chief on one of two hueys that had a mid air collision. His mother would like to talk to anyone who knew her son. John and I were friends and I am in continual contact with his mother. You can e-mail me at the address below or call me at my home: 407 784-2078 or 310 377-1854.

Bob Kubisiak

[JULIE.FLANNERY@TRW.com](mailto:JULIE.FLANNERY@TRW.com)

I'm trying to find anybody who knew a very close buddy of mine. His last name was ALEXANDER. He was from Los Angeles, and was with the 155<sup>th</sup> in 67/68. He was d Door Gunner/Crew Chief and had "CALIFORNIA" painted in yellow on his flight helmet. Sound familiar? Any info, any at all, would be a treasure for his family.

Chuck Larson

[chuck@kastle.com](mailto:chuck@kastle.com)

**Unit Historian**, Bob Alberts, is looking for orders, articles, decorations, citations, mementos

and memorabilia, pictures, etc. from the 155<sup>th</sup> AHC, 52nd CAB, or the 10<sup>th</sup> CAB.

He will organize and store all information and use it as a resource to answer questions from members and /or others. This information is also used for help in locating other members. Any and all information will be shared with other members.

Any original documents and photos will be copied and promptly returned.

**Bob Alberts**

**PO Box 291**

**Dover-Foxcroft ME 04426**

**Email:**

**[balberts@kvnd.com](mailto:balberts@kvnd.com)**

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**FREIGHT TRAIN 053-LOST ENROUTE TO  
BMT**

## **Freight Train 053 Return Home Five Soldiers to Rest At Arlington**

*Courtesy of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, May 25, 2001.....  
From the Arlington National Cemetery website....*

### **Freight Train 053 crew comes home The 5 soldiers were on a resupply mission in Vietnam in 1968 when their helicopter crashed**

After nearly four decades, the anguish of the Vietnam War will finally end for Makaha Valley resident Brian Main today and Memorial Day will take on another meaning.

On October 28, 1968, Main's childhood friend - Specialist 5 Chuck Meldahl - had a bad feeling about the resupply mission that they were about to fly; so he asked Main to switch helicopters.

"He just had this bad feeling that something would happen if he flew with this crew chief," said Main, who also was a flight engineer on a Chinook like Meldahl.

Both were members of the 243<sup>rd</sup> Assault Support Helicopter Company, whose nickname was Freight Train. Meldahl and four other members of Freight Train 053 -- the helicopter Main was supposed to be in -- never came back from that mission.

"It is as though he took a bullet for me," said Main, 54. "It's been something that has been with me all these years."

Today, the five soldiers of Freight Train 053 were finally brought home and buried in a single grave at Arlington National Memorial Cemetery.

Also a member of that crew was Warrant Officer Henry "Hank" Knight, who attended Waipahu High School in 1960 in his junior year, but had to spend his senior year in Bakersfield, California, when his father was transferred.

Pam Main said that Knight loved the islands so much he chose to return to Hawaii after graduating from North High School, spending two years at the University of Hawaii at Manoa studying marine biology until he was caught in the draft and Vietnam.

It was Knight's first Vietnam mission.

Listed as missing in action since 1968, the crew of Freight Train 053 will be given full military honors today, complete with a missing man formation flown by five Army Chinooks. A lone bagpipe player, a horse-drawn caisson and a Cherokee medicine man presenting "fallen warrior" honors will be part of the Arlington ceremony.

At a memorial banquet tonight for Knight and the other crewmen of Freight Train 053, Pam Main plans to show a video of her Makaha halau -- Ku'upua'ilimanoheaike' ala O'Laue O' Makana Kumu Na Tenorio -- performing near the shores of Pokai Bay last Sunday morning. The halau is led by Kumu Donovan Collier, Na Tenorio and Pua Kanealoha.

As many as 60 friends and family members of the crew of Freight Train 053 will be in attendance at the banquet when the 30-minute video is shown.

"It is to share this aloha with the families of the deceased and to honor the crewmen," Pam Main said.

She said Kumu Tenorio and Collier chose to include in the video a chant in Hawaiian of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and "I didn't realize until I got here that this

same psalm was inscribed on the inside of Freight Train 053."

"I never did think this day would come after the first 20 years passed," Brian Main said. "I was glad to finally find out what had happened ... At times I had been hoping that he may have survived the crash and was all right as a prisoner."

Brian Main said he always wanted to go back to the jungles of South Vietnam to try to find out what happened, "but I didn't know what to do or where to go."

Pam Main, who helped with her husband's search for answers, said things changed a couple of years ago. "It was November 1999 that the announcement was made that remains were being brought back from Vietnam to Hawaii."

Working with Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, she and her husband learned a few months later that remains of five soldiers had been identified.

"I became involved after hearing my husband and his friends sitting around the kitchen table at night discussing and wondering about the fate of Freight Train 053."

What happened was that on October 20, 1968, Knight's Chinook helicopter was lost on a resupply mission to Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam. The aircraft had been carrying medical supplies, ammunition and other equipment. The airship's commander had planned to follow a valley road to the Vietnamese city where Americans were under siege.

However, the weather turned bad. At 7 a.m. Knight's crew radioed that it was over Ninh Hoa Valley and was proceeding to Ban Me Thout. It was their last radio transmission.

A search was started, but halted eight days later.

In March 1994 the tail of the helicopter with an identifying aircraft number had been recovered, but

through the years most of the aircraft, which had burned on landing, had been scavenged or washed down the hillside. Excavation of the site did not start until a year later.

Anthropologists and other experts worked for two weeks at the mountainous site sifting through the dirt.

Seventy possible bone fragments and five teeth were recovered, but it took six years and DNA technology for forensic experts at the Army Central Identification Laboratory at Hickam Air Force Base to come up with a final answer.

Brian Main plans to visit the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C. for the first time today to search for the name of his friends. His unit will lay a wreath at the black marble memorial. Then he and his wife will return to his hometown of Monroe, Washington, for a special Memorial Day tribute to his childhood friend.

"I was a year older than Chuck. But we were always together -- through school and sports. We enlisted together under the buddy program to try to beat the draft and get into an Army school of our choice. We chose aviation because we knew it was better than being in the infantry."

"I know it's going to be sad," Main added. "But I'm glad to know what happened...what finally happened."



*One of those killed aboard the helicopter, nicknamed Freight Train 053, was Warrant Officer Henry "Hank" Knight, who attended Waipahu High School as a junior in 1960 but spent his senior year at North High in Bakersfield, California. He later enrolled at the University of Hawaii, where he spent two years studying marine biology before he was drafted. The doomed flight was Knight's first mission in Vietnam.*

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

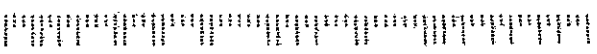
Tom Mullen, Founder

Jerry Burton, Newsletter

Les Davison, Advisor

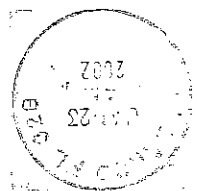


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