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BAN ME THUOT BARB

155th Assault Helicopter Company & All Units serving at Camp Coryell; Central Highlands; II Corp; South Vietnam; 1965–1970

Inside this issue:

The Resupply of LZ Kate—31 Oct 1969

LZ Kate—1969 1-7

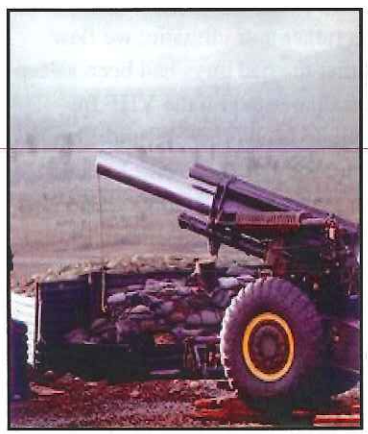
A Last Salute	8
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2008 Reunion Information 9-10

Officers on Duty 10

155th's Mission Statement 10

Mike Stark in the XO's Office **Cover**



155 MM Howitzer at FSB Kate

The other night, Les Davison and I were discussing the emergency resupply mission into LZ Kate in October of 1969 and he suggested I write up the mission for the BMT Barb. The mission into LZ Kate was to be one of the more significant missions during my time with the 155th AHC.

The mission into LZ Kate was part of the overall battle of Duc Lap and Bu Prang which started in September with the movement of thousands of NVA troops across the border and ended in December with their withdrawal back across the border. Several fire bases had been established to support the overall battle with LZ Kate to be the last fire base standing in late October as the other bases had been abandoned due to heavy enemy pressure. For anyone interested I would refer you to Reginald H. Brockwell's excellent write up (www.bravecannons.org) of the battle for LZ Kate. Mr. Brockwell fought as a 2LT on the ground at LZ Kate. His perspective on the ground is much different than what we experience as pilots and aircrew. His write up indicates the NVA committed the 66th and 28th Infantry Regiments, elements of the 40th NVA Artillery Regiment and the K-394th Artillery Battalion.

On the night of the emergency resupply mission into LZ Kate, I was moving aircraft over to BMT East Field. We were moving aircraft to East Field due to the large number of supporting aircraft at BMT City Airfield, and as a protective

measure due to the increasing number of mortar attacks. As I was flying an aircraft over to BMT East Field, I got a call to report to operations as soon as possible.

As I walked into operations I noticed several other very senior Aircraft Commanders already in operations. Someone indicated we were going to conduct an emergency resupply into LZ Kate. This information really got my attention. The entire area around LZ Kate and Bu Prang was like the "Wild West" and the Shoot Out at the OK Corral. The area had a large number of 12.7mm AA positions and Dave Bennett (Dustoff 62) took 37mm fire near LZ Kate at 10,000 feet. The overall situation had gotten so bad; aircraft had not been able to get into Kate for about the last 48 hours. The large number of ground attacks resulted in a severe shortage of small arms ammo, hence the need to resupply LZ Kate. By the night of the resupply all US artillery at Kate had been knocked out by NVA 85mm and 130mm artillery fire. 2LT Brockwell and his men would fight as infantry from that point on.

As I remember there was some talk of using sling loads to get the ammo into LZ Kate, much to my relief the "Old Man" Major Dean Owen killed that bad idea rather quickly. Major Owen then indicated the 155 had been tasked with an emergency resupply of Kate. The assembled aircraft commanders would be flying, and that we had the pick of the rest of the unit for our pilots. (I would fly with Jim Hitch,

The Resupply of LZ Kate—Continued

after getting him shot down on his first mission in Viet Nam in August, which he seemed to handle OK, I figured he was a good choice.) He then indicated there would be another briefing for all pilots later.

At the briefing for all the pilots, the overall game plan was that the ammo carrying slicks would report to BMT East Field to pick up ammo and two SF personnel per slick to kick the ammo out. (To this day I still do not know the names to the two SF guys that were on my aircraft.) There were four ammo carrying slicks (I flew as Chalk 4), we were escorted by 4 Falcons (2 guns on either side of the formation), and we had one slick as an overall command and control and recovery aircraft. During the briefing, Major Owen established himself as one of the best commanders of my 28 year career—he informed us he would be flying lead with Jim Abbott, a class move, and what I consider to be an example of leadership at its best.

After reporting to BMT East the ammo was loaded in the doors and we departed for LZ Kate. For me the take off from BMT East was probably the scariest part of the mission. At about 500 ft we ran into a broken cloud layer and went IFR in formation. I remember seeing chalk 3 flash in and out of the clouds. Jim Abbott who was in lead called out “climbing at 60 knots and 500 ft”. A short time later we broke out on top in rather bright moon light. By the time we got to LZ Kate the weather was clear, and it did not play a factor in the rest of the mission.

While en-route to Kate I had the crew chief and gunner give their helmets to the two SF guys to brief them on what to do when we got to Kate, and what to do if we got hit and went down. My game plan was that if we got hit going in and there was any doubt as to our ability to fly it out of the immediate area, I was going to plant the aircraft in the middle of LZ Kate and then wait for pick up by the backup slick. (If we went down short of Kate, things would have been rather interesting.)

As we approached LZ Kate Lead established comms with the guys on the ground. The plan was to shoot an approach to a strobe light that had been placed in a shallow hole in the ground so that it could only be seen from above from an aircraft on approach. I remember a call from an Air Force Specter gunship reporting he was moving out of the immediate area. I now believe the fact a Specter had been working the area was an important element of our success that night and

had made the bad guys very gun shy. During the briefing, there was some discussion if we were going to go in hot or cold. The decision was we would stay cold until we took fire.

During our first approach we could not see the strobe light for some reason and had to make a go around!!! Nothing like announcing to the world “here we come”, we made a left hand orbit and came around to line up for our second approach. We were able to spot the strobe light and started to descend out of altitude. I fully expected that at any time the whole area was going to light up, being chalk 4 the last guy in I was not really fired up about this prospect. (At the time of this mission, I was on my extension, and had only about 30 days left in country. JC Cole, also on the mission and I were scheduled to leave on R&R the next day.)

I was able to watch as each of the first three aircraft made its approach in and out of Kate; I was amazed that we still had not received any fire. We really did not land at Kate, I made my approach down to about 20K and 20 feet, when I was able to see the strobe light between my feet through the chin bubble I gave the order to kick the ammo. My next call was “Chalk 4 climbing out!” I told Jim Hitch, “Let me know when I hit 48 pounds.” I then pulled the collective up under my arm pit. Again, I was amazed that at no time during the approach or climb out did any aircraft take any fire. (I believe I can claim to be the last aircraft to approach LZ Kate—the next night the 21 year old SF commander E&E his entire force out of Kate)

The rest of the mission was rather anti-climatic; we flew back to BMT still amazed that the bad guys had been asleep. I do remember more chatter than usual on the VHF frequency the slicks used to talk to each other. JC and I landed, got 3-4 hours of sleep, got up and left for R&R. I would continue to fly missions for about another month and ended my combat tour when I came home on 5 December 1969. I understand shortly after I left, the battle of Bu Prang was over when the NVA forces moved back across the border.

Les Davison and I have discussed this mission a number of times. Looking back on it after almost 40 years a few things stand out in my mind. First, given the number of NVA around LZ Kate, and the amount of fire we took in the area on a daily basis, this was a very serious mission. I remember a somewhat somber mood—I think most of us believed that

The Resupply of LZ Kate—Continued

we would come back with fewer aircraft than what we went out with. One of the reasons I am so proud to have served with the 155th is the fact that even believing that this would be a very difficult mission, all of the aircrews still climbed into their aircraft, and there was never any question of that fact. Second, we had great leadership at all levels, all the way from aircraft commander, Platoon Leader, and Company level command.

Ken Donovan, Stagecoach 28

Thanks for your contribution, Ken. You have an amazing memory, and I don't think you will need to worry about Alzheimer's like the rest of us. *The Editor*

***LZ Kate—www.bravecannons.org
by Capt. Reginald H. Brockwell***

From about 15 Sep – 21 Sep 1969, the various platoons and sections from the different battalions began to stage into their locations. Guns and crews were moved from their original bases to Ban Me Thuot, Duc Lap or Bu Prang and then moved out to FSB (Fire Support Base) Kate (YU581548), Annie (YU484513) and Susan (YU514432) as air assets were available. As each base was occupied a company of Montagnards with their Special Forces advisors were inserted. At Kate a company advised by Team A-233 from Ban Don with their Special Forces advisor SFC Arbizo and a company from Team A-236 from Bu Prang advised by CPT Barham secured the perimeter. In the beginning of this operation, there was little activity on the firebases except the normal fire mission in support of Camp Bu Prang and its patrols. Later intelligence offered a reason for this in that the NVA had not done a reconnaissance of the area for several weeks and were unaware of the three new firebases. Upon discovering the locations of these three firebases, things began to change. On Oct. 27 SGT Dan Pierelli, a 22 year, old relieved SFC Arbizo. CPT. William Albracht, the executive officer at Bu Prang, arrived the following day to relieve CPT Braham, who was leaving for R&R. CPT. Albracht took over as senior ground commander at Kate. He was 21 years old at the time. This coincided with the NVA recognizing the new threat from the firebases and their determination to address that threat. At this time there were about 27 U.S. artillerymen on Kate along with Albracht, Pierelli and about 150 Montagnards.

On 28 October, CPT Albracht and SGT Pierelli started saturation patrols and an intensive effort to fortify the perimeter. Around 9 to 10 p.m. , the Montagnards set an ambush site on a

This hill became known as "Ambush Hill". It was about 800 meters northwest of Kate. It was bald with the exception of a small clump of trees on top and the base was surrounded by jungle. The approach to Ambush Hill from the bottom of the hill on Kate's north side led through a 10-12 meter gap in the jungle. The clear part of the gap and hill consisted of waist high grass. About midnight a firefight broke out on the hill. The Montagnards soon returned reporting "many VC"; however, they had actually encountered the lead elements of a large NVA force. Spooky (C-47 gunship) was called in to work around Ambush Hill and the two 155MM and one 105MM Howitzers fired around the area.

On the morning of 29 Oct. FSB Kate took some incoming rockets and mortar rounds. One artilleryman was wounded. CPT Albracht, SGT Pierelli and about 40 Montagnards went out on patrol to the ambush site to check enemy activity. There they found an NVA pith helmet and blood trails. They followed the trails to where the Montagnards had made contact the night before. Albracht was near the front of the column and Pierelli was in the middle. As they peaked the hill near the site and started down, the column was fired upon from about 30 meters within the tree line. As they fought their way to the tree line for cover Albracht called for air support. On regrouping they determined they had three wounded and one missing. CPT John Strange (Pterodactyl 10) from the 185th Recon Aviation Company and a Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) came on station. The gunships arrived, worked over the area and Albracht decided to try a flanking maneuver to determine what they had encountered. The LOH pilot informed them that the NVA were moving to cut them off and they better leave. As they began moving back up Ambush Hill, one of the pilots called that he had found the missing Montagnard either dead or wounded. With the column providing supporting fire and SGT Pierelli firing an M-79 Grenade launcher, CPT Albracht and about three of the Montagnards went to retrieve the body. Under intense fire they retrieved the wounded man who had been shot in the head; however, he died before reaching Kate. The two pilots reported again that there were targets everywhere and that a large force of NVA was trying to encircle the column and that they had better move quickly to get off the hill. The column then withdrew back to Kate. The battle had started in earnest now as mortar and rocket fire began to pound Kate. The base was fired on by mortars, recoilless rifles, RPGs, B40s and later in the battle there was evidence that 85 and 130mm field guns and even 105mm Howitzers from both

LZ Kate— "www.bravecannons.org by Capt. Reginald H. Brockwell — Continued

fired direct fire in support. A ground attack about 9:30 a.m. comprised of 500 NVA was beaten back by the Montagnard infantry, direct fire from the one artillery piece left and Joker gunships from the 48th Aviation Company. Air Force F-100 jets dropping 500 pound bombs also flew in support. One gunship was shot down by enemy RPG fire that hit the tail boom sending the ship out of control. The crew, consisting of CW2 Nolan Eugene Black, CW2 Maury William Hearne, SP5 Douglas Hugh Lott Jr. and SP4 Clyde Lee Roy Canada, were all killed on impact within sight of the firebase. Because of the increasing danger, this marked the end of helicopter gunship support during daylight hours. Future air support would come only from jets. After the assault, the 105mm howitzer was replaced by a flying crane. CPT Albracht spotted an artillery piece firing at Kate. He used the tracers fired from his M-16 to guide the 105mm howitzer to a direct hit causing some secondary explosions. The firing of tracers as marking rounds became an effective, yet dangerous way to let the FAC know exactly where to put marking rounds for airstrikes. The jets worked all day with napalm and 500 lb. bombs keeping the NVA at bay. Three other gunships and one CH-47 were hit by ground fire with the CH-47 dumping its load of supplies into the jungle. Resupply was becoming a problem. Both small arms ammunition and water were running low. Each time a supply helicopter or dust-off came in, it took heavy cover from gunships to keep the NVA from shooting it down. A supply helicopter finally dropped another trailer container of water and the Montagnards now concerned more with survival than discipline all rushed for it. CPT Albracht held them in check, making them go one at a time. After the Montagnards, the artillerymen got their water. About 7 p.m. the NVA launched a massive attack that was held back by jets plus Spooky. The NVA were still able to penetrate the perimeter. 1LT Mike Smith of 1/92 Artillery was wounded and evacuated. Up until this time the artillery had been underutilized so the artillerymen told Albracht and Pierelli that they would start developing their own Harassment and Interdiction targets and begin firing more for self preservation. During the night one of the artillerymen accidentally shot another in the arm. SGT Pierelli was called to help. First Aid had been administered by the artillery medic. Pierelli told him to give the man, who was in great pain, another shot of morphine, he marked his forehead with an "M", and then he had him evacuated. During the evening of the 30th, FSB Martha, which had been under constant small arms attack, was moved back inside the Duc Lap compound. FSB Kate was now the main target.

On 31 Oct. things got worse. Albracht and Pierelli were constantly moving about the perimeter checking defenses and trying to observe enemy movement. During darkness the men could see flashlights and hear the NVA "digging in" closer and closer. The jets continued to work the area but after every airstrike the base would be shelled again as if to say "We're still here". About 10 a.m. the firebase was told to take extreme cover as the B-52s came in to drop 2000 lb. bombs. This Arc Light (B-52 strike) once again broke up the NVA attack plans and bought the FSB time. The hot shrapnel from the airstrikes would rain down on the defenders. The 23rd ARVN Division continued to refuse to provide any reinforcements. This began to demoralize the Montagnards who discussed leaving. Kate was being hit from 360 degrees. There were constant artillery battles with the howitzers firing both direct and indirect fire. Finally, both 155mm howitzers had been knocked out and the 105mm howitzer could only fire at a limited elevation. The artillerymen were now being used mostly as infantry. The lack of sleep and constant firing was taking its toll with some of the men becoming immobile from stress. Two of the artillerymen broke under the constant strain and had to be evacuated. During one barrage as CPT Albracht and 1LT Ron Ross were running from bunker to bunker across the base, 1LT Ross was hit by shrapnel from a B-40 rocket and killed. CPT Albracht commented that he had died in his arms while he tried to stop the bleeding. Added to this tragedy of Kate was the fact that 1LT Ronald Alan Ross 5/22 Artillery had recently been notified that he had become a father. Sleep was limited to 2-3 hours each night. During the night, sometimes, everyone would get on the radio for comfort. Spooky 41 (The Alabama Boy) was constantly reassuring that all would turn out alright but from Bu Prang and Ban Me Thuot the outlook was becoming bleaker.

At 2:00 AM on 1 November, an emergency resupply mission was carried out with 5 gunships and 4 slicks from the 155th Aviation Company. Each slick carried about 1000 pounds of supplies and the mission was successful. Before dawn incoming began again from all directions and continued. Ground probes increased dramatically. The remaining artillerymen with no tubes to tend became spirited infantrymen. Most everyone was walking wounded and the dead were stacked in body bags like cordwood on Kate's LZ. Early in the morning an Air Force reconnaissance plane intercepted a message

LZ Kate— "www.bravecannons.org by Capt. Reginald H. Brockwell — Continued

from the NVA that a large force was being assembled to overrun Kate. The same morning it became obvious that the NVA had the base zeroed in as a barrage moved from south to north hitting several bunkers. During this time LT Mike Smith returned to the firebase and alerted the group of their predicament which they knew only too well. CPT Albracht continued to try to get a relief force to the firebase but when a Mike Force unit tried to put down nearby they had to withdraw under heavy fire. More Arc lights from B-52s hit in the distance around Kate for protection. Suddenly Kate was being hit with airburst from a 105mm howitzer or a 130mm gun from Cambodia. The enemy's heavy artillery had started. This was the last straw as the men were beginning to believe that none of them would get out. CPT Albracht asked MAJ Lattin, who was flying cover, to call in a strike on the gun but Lattin replied that it was "across the fence" in Cambodia and he would have to declare a tactical emergency. Albracht replied that this was such an emergency and MAJ Lattin did the rest. Since it was obvious that Kate was no longer a firebase but an impact area, as CPT Albracht described it, he asked for immediate reinforcements or permission to abandon the base. This request went through channels and the 23rd ARVN Division was still unresponsive as far as offering reinforcements or allowing the firebase to be abandoned. Albracht sent his request through Special Forces channels who began planning for another Mobile Strike Force (Mike Force) insertion. The F-100s and now an A1E Skyraider began to strafe the base of the hill. By this time the Montagnards informed Albracht that they were leaving the firebase and the Americans could come with them or stay. Further contact with Special Forces hierarchy yielded a decision late that afternoon by the ARVN command to accept Albracht's decision to abandon the firebase. Preparations were begun to escape and evade that night. CPT Albracht informed the Montagnards of the plan. Australians attached to the U.S. Army Special Forces would lead a Mike Force relief team out of Pleiku. A Spooky and Shadow (C-119) gunship would be on station at 9:00p.m. to cover the escape. The 155th Aviation Company airlifted a relief force from the 252 and 253 Mobile Strike Force companies to an insertion point about 2-3 kilometers northwest of Kate. However, when they got about one kilometer northwest of Kate they ran into heavy contact and withdrew into a defensive perimeter. The defenders at Kate saw the Mike Force coming into the insertion point and were able to contact them. SGT Pierelli contacted Shadow and informed them that he was placing an infrared strobe in the center of the firebase so that they could see the area they needed to circle with fire. When a check was

made, Shadow which had infrared capability reported they saw the strobe. The artillerymen destroyed all remaining equipment and sensitive material with thermite grenades. Then everyone assembled on the north end of the firebase which was the only side with a gentle slope. Upon hearing that the air cover from Spooky would be delayed because of mechanical problems, Albracht walked to the south end of the firebase where he heard what he thought were NVA moving up into the wire. As he went back to the north side the NVA walked another mortar barrage from south to north. One more Montagnard was killed. At the same time the NVA popped an illumination flare that illuminated the entire firebase. At this point they felt they could not wait any longer. The air cover was supposed to continue firing around the firebase to make the NVA believe nothing was happening and the base was being defended. The Skyraider, low on fuel and ammunition, continued to make passes to keep the NVA at bay. As they started down the slope through the wire, someone hit a trip flare and everyone thought this was the end. They dropped to the ground but miraculously nothing happened. As they moved forward in a column, the Montagnard point man stopped at the gap separating Ambush Hill from Kate for fear of an ambush. Because of lack of time and choices, Albracht took the point. SGT Pierelli with his always calm demeanor covered the withdrawal with the back half of the column. Well into the gap the point man took the lead again but instead of skirting the left of Ambush Hill, as called for in the evacuation plan, he went right. Albracht figured he might know something the others didn't and the majority of the column was committed, so he followed. After leaving the gap, they entered the pitch black jungle. Sure enough the original route had a machine gun emplacement near the top of the hill. The heavy machine gun atop Ambush Hill opened fire but it was shooting too high. Albracht originally thought this was Spooky but after confirmation he realized it was the NVA .51 cal. machine gun. The troops who had not entered the jungle ran to avoid the enemy fire. Despite a major effort by Pierelli and Albracht, about half the Montagnards had panicked, scattered, and run leaving Albracht, Pierelli, the artillerymen and about 20 Montagnards. This is where SGT. Pierelli feels that PVT Michael Robert Norton may have become missing in action (MIA). It should be noted that one of the artillerymen followed the separated Montagnard contingent at this time, since he could not tell who was who in the dark; however, he made it back to Bu Prang with them safely following a different route. Spooky was now on station and

LZ Kate—*www.bravecannons.org* by Capt. Reginald H. Brockwell — Continued

on order began firing on the top of the hill. The column reformed with Albracht near the front and Pierelli near the middle. With all the confusion, Albracht was not sure about their location but continued to move in what he thought was the right direction. About thirty minutes into the escape and evasion, Pierelli heard someone call "Sarge, we're lost". SGT Pierelli stopped everyone and told them not to make a sound. He realized that the back half of the column had become separated from the front but he could hear movement in the distance. He told the remaining men to stay quiet and hang on to the web gear of the person in front of them. There had been a little ambient light when they left the firebase, but in the jungle it was now pitch dark. He led his half of the column in the direction of the sound and after stopping, listening, and reorienting several more times he caught up to the front of the column. Pierelli's calm professionalism had averted a potential disaster. At one point, Albracht heard movement in the opposite direction about 10 meters from them. He contacted the Mike Force telling them he had detected their movement only to be told that the relief column was not moving and this was an NVA force. The group walked from a little past 8 p.m. until after 1 p.m. before they found where they thought the Mike Forces had established a perimeter. After the column stopped for a while, SGT Pierelli worked his way forward and found CPT Albracht. Although they were close to the Mike Force it took another 30-40 minutes before Albracht could coordinate moving into their position without being shot by friendlies. Albracht had to cross a 50-60 meter open field to get to the clump of trees where the Mike Force had formed a defensive perimeter. The Mike Force would not acknowledge Albracht until he was in their midst for fear he had been compromised. He was then told to get everyone in quickly as there were NVA everywhere. After another hour of waiting, the Mike Force took over and moved out walking from after midnight until noon before making it to Bu Prang

. Radio contact between the Kate defenders, the Mike Force, and the air cover was essential to the successful completion of this escape and evasion. MAJ Lattin often flying that air cover plotted their course northwest from Kate into Cambodia, then turning west and finally back south into Bu Prang. He also helped coordinate air cover from the Skyraider to fire behind the column so that following them would be difficult. Later that day an airstrike using F-4s and 2000 lb. bombs was called in on FSB Kate, eliminating anything that was left. Upon arrival at Bu Prang the men of C/5/27 Artillery realized that they were missing PVT. Norton. Over the next several weeks numerous

searches were conducted for him without success. He was posthumously promoted to Sergeant First Class (SFC) and declared a casualty of the war May 1, 1978.

The article goes on. I have added this story because I believe that it is important to remember "why" we did what we did to support other units in Vietnam. It is at times easy to get lost in our own experience over there and not look at the overall picture. What Ken and others did during that mission was to put their lives on the line for their brothers on the ground. That firebase would have been overrun had it not been for the resupply mission and the brave men of FSB Kate. These folks would more than likely have ended up on "The Wall" without this combination.

I want to thank the 1/92 Field Artillery Association—Vietnam, with a special acknowledgement to Reginald H. Brockwell for his excellent account of the preceding historical events. *The Editor*



Courtesy of the 1/92 Field Artillery—Vietnam

A Last Salute to Old Friends & Comrades

Captain Mike Stark . . .

Tribute to a Man

I have decided to write down a few memories and thoughts of Mike Stark upon his passing. His time here may be over, but I know in my heart somewhere in the universe he's hoisting a martini and regaling someone with a tale of high jinx and adventure. I always felt more alive when he was around. Mike was my Gun Platoon Leader in BMT, and he was always there for me. Many of my mornings were brightened when, seated at my desk in my office, the door would burst open, and there would stand Mike with that goofy grin and two cups of coffee. His greeting was always the same, "Morning Boss, got anything for me?" If I had a job that involved either gun ships or a party, Mike was the guy. Mike's loyal friends are legion. He has touched more lives than any man I know. He never met a stranger and could charm the pants off of a stone statue. He spent more nights in Flag Officer BOQ's and got more upgrades to 1st class flights than anyone in history. He never seemed to age, at least in my eyes. When we were reunited at a 155 mini-reunion in Canton, I couldn't believe it. He still looked and acted 25 years old. On our recent motorcycle ride through the Colorado Rockies he exuded his wonderful enthusiasm at every new vista, and we were constantly waiting for Mike to finish a conversation with a stranger so we could renew the journey. He plunged into the job of treasurer after the last reunion, and we talked a lot on the phone about matters related to the association. He took those duties very seriously and will be missed in that

capacity. There is a great empty place in my world, but a place in my heart that is so filled because of a man who never asked anything of me and always did his level best to make my experience as good as it could be. Mike pulled pitch on earth for the last time, but he's got a helicopter somewhere with rockets and mini-guns blazing, and he's having a wonderful time.

Chuck Markham

Please accept my deepest sympathies to you and members of the 155th on the news of Mike Stark's death. I met him up in Maine a few years ago. He had driven cross-country for a mini-reunion. I had attended to meet more members of the 155th, folks who wrote to the website. He made me very welcome and even this past year was encouraging me to attend the reunion in Texas. I have a deep admiration for the gentlemen of the 155th for their camaraderie, and was glad to know some of his closest friends from the 155th could be there with him. He was much too young to be called home. He will be missed by all of us.

Sincerely,
Carol Daigle

I had known Mike since 1997. I miss him already—I have lost a good friend and fellow comrade. It hurts. *The Editor*

**Another passing . . .
Robert Guthrie**

We are sorry to report that Bob Guthrie passed away 1/25/08 in Albemarle, N.C. Matt Mathews and Wayne Coward attended Bob's funeral and represented the 155th. We extend our sympathies to the family.



The words to "TAPS"

*Day is done.
Gone the sun.
From the lakes
From the hills.
From the sky.
All is well.
Safely rest.
God is nigh.*

*Fading light.
Dims the sight.
And a star.
Gems the sky.
Gleaming bright.
From afar.
Drawing nigh.
Falls the night.*

*Thanks and praise.
For our days.
Neath the sun
Neath the stars.
Neath the sky.
As we go.
This we know.
God is nigh*

Reunion Information



Radisson Hotel San Antonio Downtown Market Square
502 West Durango, San Antonio
Texas 78207
Reservation Info: Room rates are \$89.00 per night -plus tax

Cut off date for reservations is **Oct. 3, '08**. Reservations received after this date will be honored on a "space available only basis".

You **must** identify yourself as being with the **155th AHC Reunion Group** and request the group rate for the reunion. To make reservations for any or all of the dates - Nov. **6th, 7th, 8th, 9th** - you may call the hotel's toll free number at: **800-333-3333** -You may also make reservations on line from the hotel's website at: <http://www.radisson.com/sanantoniotx> Fill in the dates and number of persons per room. On the rates page in the 'promo code' box to the right type in **155AHC** for the promo code. The discounted rates will then be displayed.

Note: If you intend to arrive **prior** to the 6th or stay **after** the 9th the special room rate will also be available. In order to receive the discounted rate for extended stays you must call the hotel directly at: **210-224-7155**
Check-in time is 3 PM
Check-out time is Noon



Reunion Info-

There will be a hospitality suite available for the reunion. Hospitality suite will have drinks (beer, liquor, coffee, soft drinks, etc.) and snacks (chips and dip, etc.) available for the duration of the reunion.

Welcome Reception : 7 Nov. from 6 PM to 7 PM - cash bar

155th AHC Banquet : 8 Nov. from 7 to 10 PM. Tex-Mex Buffet - cash bar
There will be a registration fee of \$30.00 per person. The registration fee will cover all the costs for the hospitality suite, the welcome reception and the buffet dinner.

General Info:

Two blocks from Market Square, this hotel is in the downtown commercial district, across the street from the University of Texas at San Antonio. San Antonio's famed Riverwalk and historic district—home of the Alamo—are within a mile.

Amenity highlights: The hotel provides many complimentary amenities and services, including shuttle service (subject to availability) to six downtown destinations, on-site parking, wireless Internet access in public areas, and snacks in the lobby bar Monday through Friday.

Located two blocks from the hotel is Market Square/El Mercado, touted as the largest Mexican marketplace outside of Mexico, with more than 100 unique shops, boutiques, restaurants, and music. Shoppers can find fine examples of Mexican folk art, authentic textiles, and silver jewelry in El Mercado.

Hotel Amenities

- * Swimming pool - outdoor
- * Spa tub
- * Concierge services

- * Complimentary newspapers in lobby
- * Fitness equipment
- * Restaurant(s) in hotel
- * Room service (limited hours)
- * Bar/lounge
- * Breakfast available (surcharge)
- * Parking (free)
- * Internet access - wireless
- * Internet access in public areas - complimentary
- * Safe-deposit box - front desk
- * 24-hour front desk
- * Express check-out
- * Security guard
- * Multilingual staff
- * Number of floors: 6
- * Gift shops and/or newsstand
- * ATM/banking
- * Laundry facilities
- * Dry cleaning service
- * Air-conditioned public areas
- * Elevator/lift

On-Site Dining at the hotel :

Café Chameleon -Casual indoor or outdoor dining restaurant with adjoining bar. Southwestern cuisine served. Specialties include huevos rancheros, Southern fried chicken salad, roasted duck quesadillas, and gumbo. Courtyard seating available by the pool. Open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Room Service from 6 a.m. - 11 p.m. daily.

Breakfast 6:30 am-11:00 am
Lunch 11:00 am-2:00 pm
Dinner 5:00 pm-10:00 pm

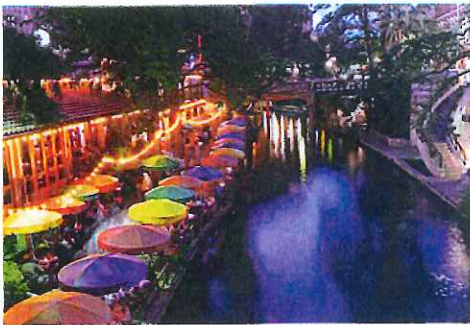
Lobby bar features a large screen TV with quiet atmosphere as well as pool side service. Happy Hour features drink specials and complimentary snacks from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm - Monday through Friday.

Nearby Points of Interest

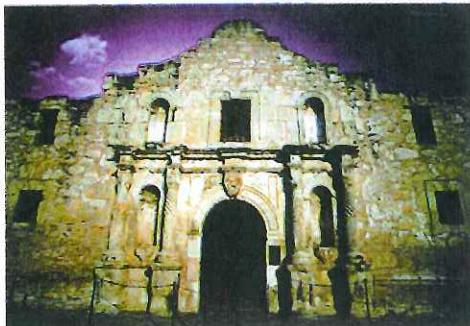
El Mercado (Market Square) - 2 blocks
Riverwalk - 10 blocks
King William Historic District - 0.5 mile

**Reunion Information—
Continued**

- The Alamo - 1 mile
- Botanical Gardens - 1 mile
- Splashworld Water Park - 5 miles
- San Antonio Zoo - 6 miles
- SeaWorld San Antonio
- Six Flags Fiesta Texas



Riverwalk



The Alamo

San Antonio International Airport (SAT): 10 miles from the hotel

Thanks, Mary Baldwin for laying this out!
The Editor

**Follow your compass and
join us in San Antonio for
the Reunion!**

See you there!!

**We are on the web at
155thAHC.COM**

155th AHCA Officers:

President: Chuck Markham; 11028 City Rd

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**Gentlemen, thanks for your stories. You
have made another newsletter possible. We
need more stories to go forward.
*The Editor***

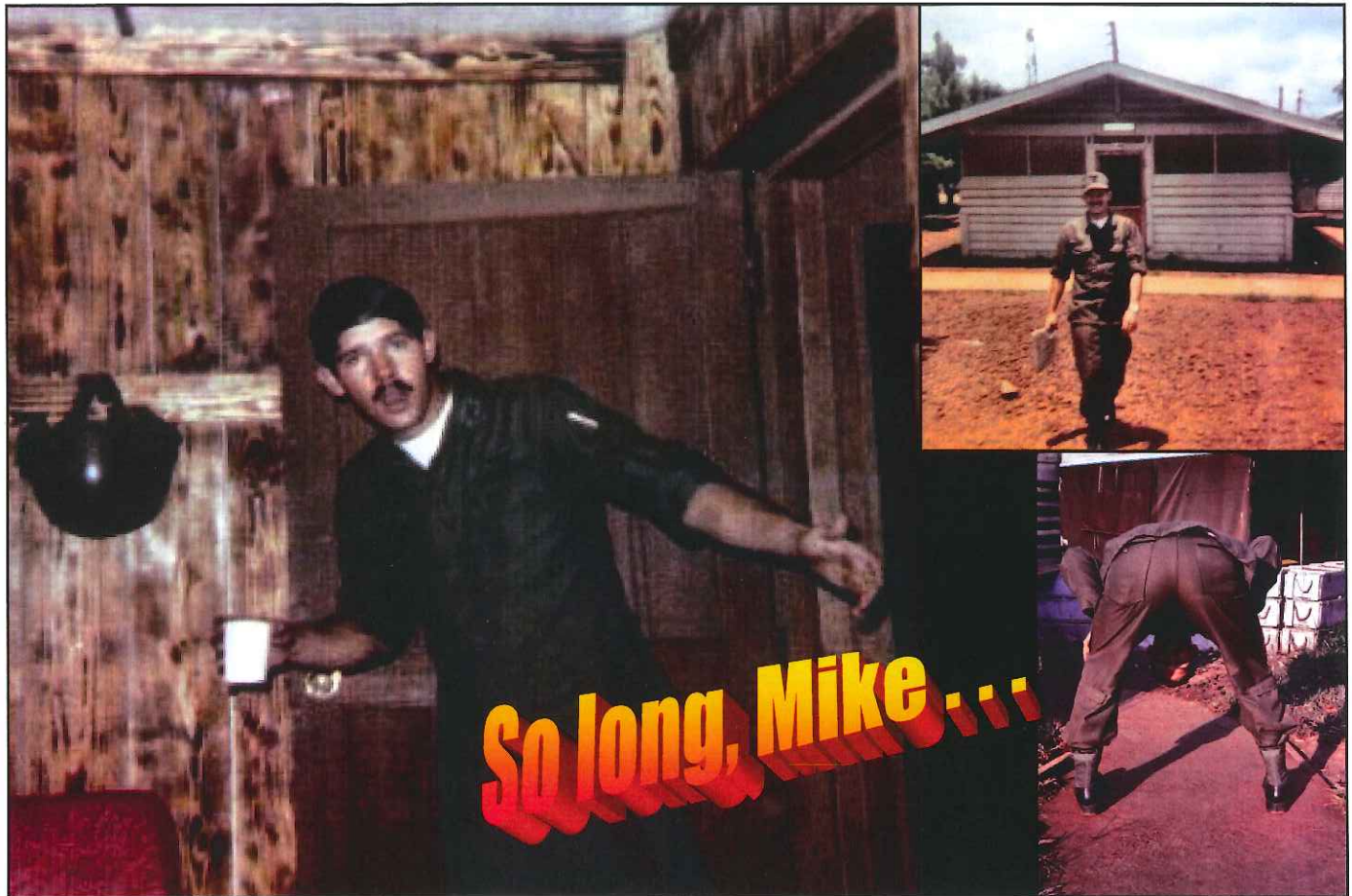


This quarterly newsletter is dedicated to the men of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company and the many other units that served alongside us in and around Ban Me Thuot, Central Highlands, II CORP, Republic of Viet Nam.

These are stories submitted by those that were there. The horrors, sadness, esprit de corps, camaraderie, humor, fears, loneliness, heroics, bravado--false or real, the confusion and bullshit of war, are all expressed in this quarterly. We hope that some find solace in its content, others find lost friendships, and still others find themselves once again within the pages of this publication and our organization.

This is our mission today, and we endeavor to meet this mission with all the compassion and commitment that we to gave those other missions so many years ago.

The 155th AHCA was founded in Washington, D.C. in November, 1995. Annual membership dues of \$30 are appreciated but not required. The dues help defray the costs of this publication's mailings, inventory such as hats, t-shirts, etc. and reunions. Payment by check or money order addressed to the 155th AHCA and mailed to the Treasurer is preferred.



155th Assault Helicopter Company Association

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I Want You!