

BAN ME THUOT BARB

First quarter of 2014

Sortie 54

OR, AS SPELLED IN SOUTH VIETNAM: BUON MA THUOT

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“Honoring those who have gone before and
Serving those who carry on the legacy.”

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NON FLIGHT STATUS COMMENTS

My time with the 155th was from March of 1969 to August 1970, and what a learning experience! I completed my 67N (single rotor utility helicopter repairman) training and after about 4 months of duty (after AIT) in Ft Lewis, Washington, was sent to South Vietnam. As I landed at CamRahn Bay, my eyes were wide-open, ears attuned to all that was about me, my heart pounding and a thousand questions going through my mind. As I processed through the various channels, I was eventually sent to the 17th Group. They inquired about my college education and military training. Being an FNG, I went where they told me, until I made a stop at 10th Aviation Battalion, in DBT. Again, they asked questions in several different categories and there I am – at the 155th Assault Helicopter Company. I remember there was about 10-20 of us lined up on the company street as we were given our duty assignments. When my name was called, they told me to wait off to the side. I was then told that I would be working in the orderly room. I was there for 17 months.

I was trained by Charles Petraka (from Ohio) and have not heard from him since. Chuck was very efficient, a good person to know, and an effective teacher. I also worked with Royce Campbell; I cannot remember the mail clerk's name, Greg Gilliland and Tommy Rutherford. Tommy passed away on April 23, 2012. Tommy truly enjoyed his job and always had a smile on his face. His Texas accent was prevalent and he carried himself well. I believe Tommy assumed the company clerk job upon my departure.

Not being on flight status and only having knowledge of bits and pieces of various sorties and happenings in camp, my stories are but fragments compared to the excellent stories that have appeared in the Ban Me Thuot Barb. My memories are of incidents rather than a lengthy happening. Some thoughts that I remember are:

- *INCOMING! INCOMING!
- *Listening to the choppers return and counting the quantity and attempting to see the tail numbers
- *Someone threw a frag or smoke grenade into the CO's hooch
- *Someone was shooting at the First Sergeant during incoming mortars
- *Who was sleeping with the hooch maid?
- *One of the pilots was bouncing the helicopter skids off the river
- *OER reports and conferences with the CO
- *12 copies and 1 perfect original, for a KIA Letter

- *Morning reports
- *Steaks were furnished as some of the troops had confiscated several AK-47s and traded with other units, steaks for guns
- *LUFU (little ugly ***** elephant) and the protective care that must be given due to their value
- *Sleeping on guard duty and the massive amount of paperwork for an Article 15
- *Urinating on the sandbags was a "No-No"
- *Stealing cookies from the mess hall after hours
- *Who shut the generators off and now there is no water in the showers
- *What! We cannot go off base anymore!
- *A .50 cal on one side and a 7 light cluster on the other side of a Huey – we will never do that again.
- *There were 12 incoming rounds of mortar received and the motor pool vehicles took a heavy loss
- *There were 7 rounds of AAA received and what a different sound from the mortar rounds
- *Who invited "Charlie" to our steak cook out and his 6 rounds of 122 rocket were not appreciated
- *A hooch maid was found pacing the distance from the front gate
- *Boy-son, the Mountain Yard teen that helped around the compound
- *The Red Cross has requested that soldier named "X" is to be sent home
- *While on R & R your wife/girl friend said that your relationship was no more
- *You have pain when you urinate, go see the doctor
- *Your flight assignment today is to take the Vietnamese shopping
- *Who wants to RON at DaLat
- *How did that rocket accidentally get fired while the helicopter was on the ground?
- * Told to dump the re-bar rods into the river
- *Troop "X" died from a self inflicted wound
- *While installing the clay more mines, one went off; several injured
- *We are supposed to be overrun by the NVA, mount a mini-gun on the North berm and add additional fire support
- *Clear the berm back towards the wooded area another 20 yards
- *3 VC were able to get through the compound wire and were shot
- *INCOMING, send up the gunships
- *Every time we would get attacked, somehow, the small gas station that was off base had taken hundreds of rounds of gun fire
- *Lock down the base as we are changing the money
- *During the rainy season, the snakes would be plentiful as they moved through the hooches from the rain and moving water
- *The 10th Battalion Commander is coming, troops and base need to be standing tall
- *What! Worms again on our lettuce
- *Edible and non edible garbage
- *Future fly-bys are not authorized due to the cost
- *The 1SG and NCOs are on a drug raid

- *The Huey had an engine failure at 2000' and will need to be sling loaded out
- *More bullet holes in the chopper to fix again
- *Latrine stall doors will be removed if the wall writings don't cease
- *One of our helicopters is down and the questions were never ending; suspense and concern were maxed out – all were in ops that night
- *East Field (Air Force Base) is being hit, does that mean we are next?
- *Red bed sheets from the dirt
- *On New Years Eve at midnight, what did the duty guards all do?
- *Short Timer
- *KIA and MIA
- *DEROS and
- *ETS

As we know, the 155th had a great deal of pride, proficiency and “fun”.
 Rod Waddell, Editor for 1st Quarter of 2014.

COMPANY, ATTENTION! – PRESENT ARMS!

WE HAVE LOST A COMMRADE. This is to inform you that we have lost another true soldier and 155th member. Word was received that on January 21, 2014, Tom Mullen had passed away. Tom was very active in the Falcons and was instrumental in starting the Barb Publication. Tom was pre-deceased by his parents and his brother. He leaves a surviving nephew. He served in the 155th during 1968-1969. Tom attended our last reunion, which was held in Atlanta, Georgia. His friends, family and those who knew Tom and interacted with him in years past and today will miss him. A great deal of thanks to Don Schneider for providing notice and information of Tom's passing and funeral arrangements.

PLEASE, let your family and loved ones know that we take an interest in you, for your past, present and future service and to let us know if your status should change. If you move, or if you should find other former members of the 155th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter), to let us know either by email, through the postal system or telephone to officers.

STATISTICS OF WARS

WWII (12/7/41 – 9/2/45)

Number involved	16,112,566 troops
KIA	292,131
Other Deaths	113,842
WIA	671,278
Cost	\$288 Billion

KOREAN WAR (6/25/50 – 7/27/53)

Number involved	5,720,000 troops
KIA	33,629
Other Deaths	20,617
WIA	103,284
Cost	\$54 Billion



VIETNAM (8/4/64 – 5/7/75)

Number involved	8,744,000 troops
KIA	47,382
Other Deaths	10,753
WIA	303,616
Cost	\$137 Billion



During the Vietnam conflict, the five (5) branches of service experienced the following losses:

Army	38,190	Marines	14,836
Air Force	2,583	Navy	2,553
Coast Guard	7		

CONGRATULATIONS TO GILBERT TERRY

Congratulations are in order to Gilbert Terry, who was recently named to the Board of Governors of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force near Savannah, Georgia. Gilbert has been a volunteer docent (a lecturer who is not a faculty member) for the Mighty Eighth for several years. Well done and thank you for your dedication!

HOME PAGE GUEST COMMENTS

Delmer Sayer says: OK, I am all set for the reunion and will spend Nov 6-12 at one of the world mark resorts in Las Vegas.

Denny Fenlon (Falcon 4) says: My wife and I are sitting in a café in Ban Me Thuot having a Heineken after 43 plus years. BMT is a very large city with 370,000 people. Everyone is super nice and no connection to 1969.

Rueben A Hunter says: I just found your website and have been on for hours. I have lots of pictures to share and hope to hear from those I flew with during 1965-66.

Frank Busbee says: I was in the prop and rotor shop from Dec 68 – Jul 69, when I was sent to 238th AWC at AnKhe, where I became a crew chief on a gunship. While at 155th I worked with a guy named Carson. I also remember Chappie and Williams in the maintenance crew. Lt Butler was the maintenance officer.

Robert Moore says: I remember Carson and Lt Butler. I too was in the prop and rotor shop from 69-70.

NEW BARB STORIES ARE NEEDED

It was in 1997 when the Barb became formerly active. Tom Mullen was the editor of a newsletter (Sortie 2), as dated August 12, 1996. A prelude to the Barb. Many members have provided stories for the Barb, however, your stories too would be appreciated, WE NEED YOUR HELP BY SUBMITTING YOUR EXPERIENCES, HAPPENINGS, AND EVENTS TO THE BARB. They can be sent to:

- 1.) [faded] [faded]
- 2.) [faded] Les Davidson
- 3.) [faded] rg Matt Matthews

If you will provide the contents or basic information, it will be reviewed, as all Barbs are, and changes made as deemed necessary to eventually be printed in the Barb.

We would love to hear from those who were in the 155 or assigned to Camp Coryell. Forty plus years have lapsed; consider sharing your experiences with those who served side by side with you.

LZ LAS VEGAS 2014

PLEASE, put on your calendar, computer, or cell phone that our **next reunion will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The dates are November 8 and 9.** You are always welcome to arrive earlier and stay later. The banquet will be held on Saturday evening on the 8th of November. All are anxious to meet those who have not attended prior reunions and always enjoy seeing and talking with those who are returning. Please contact an officer when you are there and introduce yourself.

The second quarter Barb will have hotel information. There will be a hospitality room and you can check with the front desk as to where and when. At the previous reunion of 2012, there were about 100 veterans and family in attendance. So, pack up your photos, movies or whatever and bring to the reunion for all to enjoy.

After the reunion in Las Vegas, the next reunion will not be until 2016, so please take the time to say hello to friends of the past, that are still with you and us today.

“SHOOT THE VILLAGE”

By Ken Donovan

The 155th had good rules of engagement, and we followed them. We did not shoot up villages for no reason. Here's my war story. It was summer/fall of '69, we were running a Sniffer mission really close to the border. Jim Cunningham was Falcon lead, I was the low bird, and Rick Menzel was piloting the C&C ship. He carried the clearance authority, who was an SF 2LT.

We were doing our thing when we came across a village, and were told we were cleared to fire. Say what? I asked Rick to check with the SF lieutenant to “confirm you want us to shoot the village.” In fact, I asked him three times – and got the same answer all three times. “You are cleared to shoot the village.” It still didn't feel right. I told the Falcons I was going to make a low pass and mark the target with smoke – and then I told my CE to throw the smoke short of the village. Then I radioed the Falcons to hit my smoke. When Jim's first rockets hit, all of a sudden you could see people running everywhere – and C&C was yelling on the radio, “Cease fire! Cease-fire! You are shooting friendlies.” I am certain that because the rockets were short, we did not hit anyone on the ground. The radios were mostly quiet as we flew out of the AO.

After that, we recovered to refuel at Duc Lap, or maybe Gia Nghia. I gave the aircraft to my Peter Pilot and ran to Rick's C&C bird. From the other direction, I saw Jim coming at a fast clip. We were both experienced vets with several months in-country, and we both knew how close we'd just come to being headline news – in a very bad way. And now we both wanted a piece of the lieutenant. I got there just before Jim, and told him the lieutenant was mine because I was there first. Jim said, “Out of my way, Mr. Donovan.” Might have been the only time Jim ever pulled rank – but I backed off. Jim told the lieutenant in no uncertain terms that before

GIVE A COPY TO YOUR EXECUTOR OR NEXT OF KIN AND TELL THEM WHERE THE ORIGINAL IS

- ALL REAL ESTATE, STOCKS/BONDS, BANK ACCOUNTS, VEHICLE TITLES, AND ANY OTHER TANGIBLE ASSETS SHOULD BE REGISTERED IN JOINT OWNERSHIP WITH RIGHT OF SURVIVORSHIP BETWEEN YOU, YOUR SPOUSE, AND/OR ONE OF YOUR KIDS
- MAKE AND PAY FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS AND PUT DOCUMENTS WITH WILL
- MAKE AND PAY FOR BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND PUT DOCUMENTS WITH WILL
- SET UP SAFE DEPOSIT BOX WHERE YOU, YOUR WIFE, AND ONE OF YOUR KIDS HAVE ACCESS
- GET RID OF ALL THE EXTRA 'GOOD STUFF' YOU HAVE BEEN STORING FOR YEARS IN THE ATTIC, SHOP, OR BARN
DON'T MAKE YOUR NEXT-OF-KIN SORT THROUGH ALL THIS STUFF
IF IT'S REALLY GOOD STUFF GIVE IT TO THEM NOW
- PAY OFF AS MANY BILLS AS POSSIBLE

NOTE: NOTHING HERE SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS LEGAL ADVICE. ELIZABETH AND I HAVE NO LEGAL TRAINING AND DON'T PRETEND TO REPRESENT OURSELVES AS LEGAL ADVISORS. WE ARE JUST RECOUNTING THINGS THAT HELPED US IN THE PAST.

WHEN MY DAD PASSED HE HAD EVERYTHING SET UP TO MAKE IT EASY FOR ME. BEING AN ONLY CHILD ELIMINATED A LOT OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND HIS ESTATE BEING BELOW THE AMOUNT WHERE ESTATE TAX APPLIES ALSO REMOVED A LOT OF INTERFERENCE. CONTRARY TO POPULAR OPINION, HE DID NOT HAVE A WILL. EVERY TANGIBLE ASSET HAD MOM, HIM, AND MYSELF AS JOINT TENANTS WITH RIGHT OF SURVIVORSHIP. HE HAD PREPAID HIS FUNERAL EXPENSES AND SECURED A BURIAL PLOT FOR HIM AND MOM. EIGHT WEEKS AFTER DAD PASSED MOM FOLLOWED IN HIS FOOTSTEPS. BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY I WAS ONE GRATEFUL SON THAT DAD HAD BEEN THOROUGH IN HIS PLANNING.

GENTLEMEN, IT'S YOUR CHOICE.. YOU CAN STEP UP AND ADMIT YOU ARE GOING TO DIE ONE OF THESE DAYS AND MAKE SOME TOUGH DECISIONS FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR SURVIVORS, OR YOU CAN LET SOME JUDGE DOLE OUT YOUR STUFF TO THE GOVERNMENT, A COUPLE OF LAWYERS, AND THEN YOUR KIN, IF ANYTHING IS LEFT!

ELIZABETH & BOB G

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NEW WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.155-th-ahc.org



122 Rocket Launcher

1st SGT Lawson after being “introduced”
to the swimming pool

155TH AHC ASSOCIATION

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