



BAN ME THUOT BARB

Remembering the 155th Assault Helicopter Company
& all the Ban Me Thuot Guys



Sortie 83

June 2022

JUST A NOTE

Rex Burton, Maintenance Officer, 1970

This is just a note to say thank you for all you do and for talking to my wife and answering my eight year old great-grandson's questions. My adult granddaughter often reads the *Ban Me Thuot Barb* when visiting me. I haven't paid any dues lately, hopefully the enclosed check will keep me in good standing.

I wish I could remember more names. There was the warrant officer who played the guitar, and another who had a picture of a cow on his desk. The one who played guitar was wounded and shipped to Germany, I heard. He was OK, but unsure if he could still play or fly. The cow guy was still flying and healthy when I left, anxious to get home. And there was a cook who walked around with his arms above his head – to protect himself, he said - for two weeks. The doctors finally sent him home.

Oh well, 50+ years ago. Thanks again.

PALLETS OF BEER – AND A SWIMMING POOL, TOO

Gary Gale, 2nd Flight Platoon

Sometime in '66, a convoy arrived at our encampment with a pallet of beer for us and two pallets of beer and a swimming pool for MACV. The convoy commander was a 2nd Louie who had been in-country for two weeks. Somehow he was told that he was 10 miles from the MACV compound, the road had not yet been swept for mines, and that he could offload everything and we would see that it got delivered. He agreed. I don't have any idea what might have happened to the pallets of beer, but the swimming pool became our next big project.

A few days later a MACV Major came by and said that they were going to take the pool, since we didn't even have a hole dug. Our CO got hold of an entrenching tool, scooped out some dirt, and told him, "There's the hole." The next day the manager of the rubber plantation brought in a dozer and made a real hole for us. Some of the troops used shovels to finish it, and then the pool was installed. Sadly, I never got a chance to use it.

TAPS



Mark Hayes of Missoula, Montana, passed away back in November, 2020. Mark was a Stagecoach pilot during '66 and '67.

Bill Zierdt died in March, 2022. Bill was a pilot during '65-'66, and served as the Operations Officer in '66. He also authored several articles about his time at BMT for the *Barb*.

155 AHC 2022 REUNION PHOENIX

When: 19 – 23 October 2022

Where: Crowne Plaza San Marcos Golf Resort - Chandler, AZ (suburb of Phoenix)

Room Rate: \$149.00 (with tax \$174.00) Includes free parking and Internet.

Reunion Cost: Estimated to be \$100.00 which includes banquet

Hospitality Room: Available from 1500 on Thursday 20 Oct - 1200 Sun 23 Oct. 155 AHC Ass'n will provide snacks, beverages, and adult beverages.



Banquet: Saturday 22 Oct. 1800 – 2200 Hrs.

Transportation: 18 miles from PHX, no airport shuttle. UBER estimated at \$55.00

Registration: Phone: 877-685-5594 - ask for “155 Assault Helicopter Block”

On-line link –

https://www.crowneplaza.com/redirect?path=hd&brandCode=CP&localeCode=en®ionCode=1&hotelCode=phxqq&_PMID=99801505&GPC=qwf&cn=no&viewfullsite=true

NOTE: If you have trouble making a reservation with the above link, PLEASE, call the hotel at 877-685-5594 and make your reservation. And then please read this Special Note: When receiving a confirmation letter after making a reservation online or through our call center, it will automatically show a resort fee. This is an IHG standard, however, since this has been waived per your contract, the hotel will absorb that fee upon check in. This last paragraph is important. Let me give this example: our per night fee when you register will be \$188.89. When you go to check in, the \$15.00 per night resort fee will be deducted, and your per night fee will be \$173.89.

Cut-off date for reservations for our room block is Monday, September 19, 2022.

Optional Excursion: A visit to Falcon Field, Friday 21 Oct:

Arrangements have been made to visit Falcon Field in Mesa, where we will have a docent-led tour of the Commemorative Air Force Museum (CAF) and the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation Facility (AAHF). After the tour we'll have lunch at the Steak and Stone Steakhouse & BBQ Restaurant near the field. Tour Cost: \$15.00 per person Lunch Cost: TBD

Time: Leave the Resort at 0830, tour the CAF Museum 0900-1100, visit the AAHF facility from 1130-1230. The AAHF offers UH-1 “Huey” rides at \$100.00 for vets and \$110.00 for others, with a front seat of an AH-1F “Cobra” price at \$600.00. Lunch from 1300-1400, and we return to the Resort at 1430.

If you are interested in the tour and/or lunch, please contact Jim by 1 August.

Questions: Jim Cunningham, phone xxx-xxx-xxxx

E-mail: -----@yahoo.com

“OF THE TROOPS, FOR THE TROOPS”

THE ROUNDUP

Official Newsletter of the
18th Military Police Brigade

Vietnam
December 1969

SENTRY DOG HELPS REPEL SAPPERS

Alert Guards Foil Assailants, Slay 1

The VC sappers crept forward stealthily and halted, waiting for the diversion they knew would come. Then the moment arrived; and RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) round landed inside the compound causing temporary confusion. They proceeded to carry out their deadly mission, but the plan failed because of the one element they did not take into account – a sentry dog. The alert dog and his quick-thinking handler teamed to spoil the early morning attack. One sapper who penetrated the compound perimeter was killed in the ensuing skirmish, and the others fled before they could accomplish their mission.



When changing shifts, Spec. 4 **Rush N. Mortimer**, a sentry dog handler at the 981st MP Company (Sentry Dog), 97th MP Battalion, was informed by another handler, Spec. 4 **Gary M. Walker**, that his dog Mac had alerted several times during the night to noises and movements to the north of his post, outside the perimeter. Later, Spec. 4 Mortimer was walking along his post with his sentry dog, Axel, in the PA&E yard at Camp Coryell (Ban Me Thuot), when his dog suddenly alerted to a sound at the north edge of the perimeter. A moment later Mortimer observed a small red flash coming from the edge of the perimeter. He quickly alerted the security guards in the tower overlooking the yard. Then a rocket-propelled grenade exploded in the compound.

Spec. 4 Mortimer began firing his M-16 in the direction where he had sighted the red flash. Mortimer assisted the security guards in the tower by directing their fire along the perimeter. Instantly, Axel alerted his master to an enemy inside the compound and others breaching the perimeter.

Simultaneously, Mortimer spotted the enemy sapper to his left, carrying explosives and a rifle. The [dog handler] yelled to a (tower) guard . . . to shift his fire to the left as he fired several rounds at the enemy sapper. After the attack subsided, one Viet Cong sapper laden with several satchel charges lay dead inside the compound not more than 30 meters from the guard tower.

AS WE REMEMBER IT, 50+ YEARS AGO

Rush "Mort" Mortimer and Mark Schulthess 981st MP Company (Sentry Dog)

Mort: **Gary Walker** and his dog Mac had the first shift that night. My dog Axel and I relieved them just after midnight. When we talked during the shift change, Gary told me it was the first time Mac had a strong alert. On patrol, I talked briefly with the tower guards, and found they had heard noise all night – and Axel immediately alerted. I told the tower to call it in for backup, then headed to the corner of the compound facing the cemetery. I raised my M-16, chambered a round, and the show started.

The VC were already in the compound. I saw one sapper (who was a possible sergeant) and fired. Unsure as to whether the enemy soldier had been hit, I fell back to protect the tower and be in a position to cover both sides of the storage building. I saw four more sappers outside the fence and fired again. (Later, blood trails were found.) I never made it to a bunker. Instead I got behind a roll of chain link fence below the tower. I yelled to the tower that sappers were inside the perimeter. It wasn't long before the rest of the guys (*ed. – the QRF*) got there. **Larry Moore** stayed with me at PA&E until we were relieved at 0600.

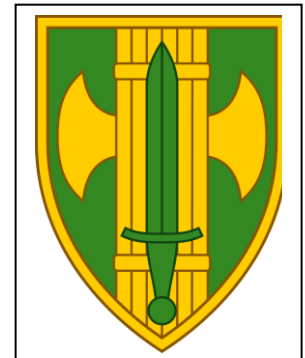
Mark: The VC did a nice job of setting us up that night. They peppered the PA&E yard with mortars and RPG's, destroying several vehicles. An acetylene and propane truck was on fire, spewing a lot of smoke through the area and hindering visibility. One truck parked in front of the tower had been hit and was burning, causing two legs of the tower to catch fire.

Sergeant-of-the-Guard **Wally Waldron** came by the Dog Handler bunker (this all happened at the change of shift) and said we need to go and make sure Mort was alright. When we got there, we saw a dead enemy soldier on the ground, and we found that Mort and his dog were safe. We visually checked the fence line and saw nothing. Thankfully Mort and his dog saved the day!!!

Later somebody pointed out that the burning truck had never parked next to the tower in the past. It caught the tower on fire. and we could not believe they all survived it. Was parking next to the tower part of the plan? We never knew.

Sorry, I don't remember who the others were on the QRF other than Wally Waldron, Gary Walker, and me.

Ed: Rush "Mort" Mortimer received the ARCOM/V for his actions on 10 Nov 1969.



18th Military Police
Brigade shoulder
patch.

WEASEL COFFEE ANYONE?

Early BMT guy **Mike Benge** met up with 155 Historian Les Davison a few weeks ago to drink coffee and go back in time. Mike was in BMT two years before Company A/1/1 got there, working for USAID. He had a ring-side seat for the Montagnard FULRO revolt in 1964, and then had a starring role in the '68 Tet offensive. He was taken prisoner and marched to Hanoi – and didn't taste freedom again until the 1973 POW release after the Paris Peace Accords. Mike is working on a book, and I can't wait to read it.

2rd EDITION of LUFÉ AWARDS –

A chance to strut your (old) stuff! Call it the BMT Fashion Show. Some of you will remember LUFÉ, the little elephant who lived on the compound outside the latrine. To honor her, we've named our Fashion Show after her. Here's your chance to model something you wore in BMT, OR in the army OR in the style of the day. Some of us have old uniform parts, accessories, caps, Stagecoach shirts, etc. Very few can button all the buttons or zip up the pants. The difference in sizes between then and now will make for some hilarious moments. Wives, girlfriends, boyfriends, etc. are welcome to enter and wear something from that period in the 60's or 70's! Strut your stuff!

After dinner, each contestant will have their moment to strut, walk, wiggle or vamp down the runway to the music 'The Stripper' while the audience roars their approval, accompanied by the MC's announcement and running commentary. (Will the now world-famous Bob Beaudreault do the honors again this year?) At the end of the 'runway' will be a 'red carpet' area which will allow for a spin, a curtsy, a bump, a flirtatious turn, a twerk, etc. The audience will decide, at the end of the show, the winners. Categories might be: best saved souvenir, most enlarged trooper, worst fitting, best strut, etc.

There will be awards for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Booby prizes. Winners will get award certificates. Bring your old stuff to put on (in secret) after dinner. Last time we did this we had 8 contestants and a huge amount of fun. Let's make the 2nd LUFÉ AWARDS an event to remember! IMPORTANT! To pull this off, we need to know how many contestants will be doing their 'struttin'. Let me know by August 1st if you're in the running for a LUFÉ AWARD. To reserve your spot, or for questions, call **Bruce McInnes** 917-514-7562 or blmcinnes@aol.com.

HOLLOWAY MORTAR ATTACK

Al Fitzgerald, Falcon 10

January '67. I was on standby the night the ammo dump and airfield were attacked. We were launched about when we heard the first incoming mortar rounds. We had two UH-1C gunships, I was a relatively new copilot in the lead with **Lt. Harrison** as the Aircraft Commander, and a 155th slick flare ship launched with us. We took off to the east and immediately saw flashes from the mortar tubes as well as the rounds landing almost beneath us along the runway. Besides the door gunners with their M-60's, we only had a 40mm grenade launcher for armament, we did not have any rocket pods installed. The 40mm launcher was less than reliable, it jammed after a round or two when fired in the fixed aiming mode. We were preparing to engage the mortar positions, but were told to clear the area immediately as preplanned artillery was inbound. We orbited to the south for at least 15 minutes - still no artillery. By the time we were cleared back into the area, the mortar attack was over. We tried to locate some of the firing positions from the light of the flares and memory, and did get one minor secondary explosion from the door gunners using their M-60's. After refueling, we again went back to the area where the attack came from, by that time the bad guys were long gone.

Just for information, the next morning I saw the artillery battery commander getting

ripped by a general on the ramp, apparently his guns had not been preset to provide immediate fire support. One additional side note, all of the pilots involved were initially recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, a bit of a stretch, in my opinion. The awards were later downgraded to DFC's.

SHARING COMMO

Grant Wheaton – Another great Barb, thanks for all your work.

Sam Belshaw – How time goes by! 57 years ago on this day (May 1st) the USS Iwo Jima landed in VN. I was also thinking of all the brothers we have lost.

John Ahearn – I’ve been trying to find Pterodactyls (185th RAC, the Bird Dog guys at Camp Coryell) to personally invite them to the reunion – but I’m not having much luck. If you have contact with or know the whereabouts of any of those guys, please message me at “jahearn@cox.net”. Thank you.



“Flags-In” at Arlington National Cemetery: Memorial Day, 2022 Davison photo.

Mike Tindall - Just logged on the Home Page, I was a Dog Handler, got to BMT just in time for Tet '68. Some of my best memories are flying as Door Gunner with the Stagecoach guys.

Thomas De Simone –I was a door gunner with the First Platoon in 1966-67, then did a second tour as a pilot with the 114 AHC Knights and Cobras in Vinh Long in 69-70. My memories of the 155th include helping dig the swimming pool, getting mortared at Pleiku and filling sandbags for the next week, the Crossbow club, flying with **Lt. Sperling** on a rescue mission, Martha Ray, getting drunk on Nam Pei with the Yards, the Bungalow, and downtown Ban Me Thuot.

Denny Fenlon – I just made reunion reservations! I’m looking forward to getting together with MANY friends from long ago.

Chuck Markham – It’s hard to believe – but I made yet another birthday! And my lovely wife

got me the BEST PRESENT EVER - an hour flight in the simulator at Bell Helicopter. I’ll let y’all know how it goes – **if** it goes well.

Ken Donovan – 23 May; we lost “**Hondo**” **Ramirez** and **Santiago Quintana** across the fence in Cambodia fifty-three years ago today. Good men, not forgotten.

THANK YOU FROM MRS. WAYNE JOHNSON

How kind of you to send the December *Ban Me Thuot Barb* with the story about one of Wayne’s flights. It certainly depicts his readiness to help and his courage. He almost never discussed Vietnam, except with a crew chief, **Mike Baucom**, who became his lifelong best friend. He lived his life with a remarkable calmness, and unparalleled humility. It is special for me and his children to know a bit more about his time in Vietnam. Thank you so much. It was an unexpected, wonderful gift.

Sincerely, **Tansill Johnson**

*Ed: Thanks again to **Wes Timmons** for his story about a mission he flew with Wayne.*

NOTES FROM THE WALL

One Saturday last month, an Honor Flight Vietnam vet walked up to me and asked me to look up the location of **Clyde Love**. I told him I didn't have to look him up, I know exactly where Clyde is on the Wall. We got to talking, he said he is Clyde's cousin. I told him that Clyde's brother **Tom Love** and I flew a lot of missions together when Tom was a Falcon crew chief. I said to him, "The next time you see Tom, tell him a close friend did the rubbing of his brother for you."

Ed: Clyde was a Chinook pilot on his second tour when he was lost on 18 May 72. He's one of the guys I always "check in with" when I'm on station at the Wall. **Les Davison**

ASH and TRASH



Tourist photo from 2006.

Death in the Highlands: the Siege of Special Forces Camp Plei Me by J. Keith Saliba

The book details the action at Plei Me, just southwest of Pleiku, during late October, 1965. Stagecoaches and Falcons of A/1/1 were there – and Chuck Markham tells me that some of you are named in the book. Check it out if you're interested.

EDITOR'S WRAP: Hope to see lots of youse guys at the reunion. It's been four long years since we gathered at Reno; too long! Safe travels everyone.

155TH AHC Association Officers

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Cover Photo by **Gary Gale**, 2nd Flight Platoon: "**The Vulture**", the BMT Maintenance bird in '65 or '66. Note the white strip with black diamonds above the nose art. For a short period of time, all 155 helos sported one white strip with black diamonds just below the windscreen (as here), and another white strip with black diamonds around the tail boom.



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