



BAN ME THUOT BARB

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

Sortie88

Sept. 2023

155th Combat Assault Company Reunion October 18-22, 2023



Location: Embassy Suites

4800 S Tryon St, Charlotte, NC 28217 • (704) 527-8400

THE 2023 REUION IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING:

Yes the ANNUAL 155th AHC reunion will happen in one of the most beautiful cities in the South east, Charlotte NC, October 18-21 2023. The venue is the Embassy suites Marriot, Charlotte. This is the Emabassy Suites on Tyron Street. Each room is a spacious, two-room suite, equipped with separate living room, mini fridge, and microwave. Overnight guests can enjoy complimentary made-to-order breakfast in our beautiful eight story, open-air atrium. Join us seven nights a week for the Evening Reception - serving free drinks and light

snacks. The first two rounds are on us! Flying-in to CLT? We've got your transportation covered with complimentary airport shuttle service. Our shuttle is available to local attractions, within a two mile radius, and for transporting people to the light rail station for access to all the entertainment, cultural and dining experiences in Charlotte. Complimentary, onsite self-parking is also available. There will be a hospitality suite for members and we will see that it is appropriately supplied with the "necessities".

The sit down banquet will be Saturday night. The food choices are Flank Steak or Chicken Breast with chef's choice accompaniments.

Reservations are open with some options.

Hilton Central Reservations: (800) 362-2779. Must Provide Group Code: 916
Embassy Suites by Hilton Charlotte Front Desk: (704) 527-8400 also need 916 code.



Reasons to Attend a 155th AHC Reunion

Larry“Matt”Mathews

2nd Flt Crewchief 1970-71

We are family. You’ve probably attended one or more “related by birth” family reunions. While those are important, in my view they are no more meaningful than the “family” we became when we joined the “Ban Me Thuot family”. For that short time (for some it wasn’t that short) when you were assigned to the 155th, or a support unit, all the guys there were your family. All the support personnel – the cooks, the medics, the maintenance guys, the MPs, the Operations personnel, the Supply guys, the Armorers, the headquarters guys (can’t forget the CO, XO, First Sergeant, and clerks), the Air Force guys, and all the flight crew members – we were all family.

- We depended on each other – we worked together as one.
- We trusted each other – with our lives
- We celebrated birthdays - we even shared birthday cakes and other goodies that were sent from home.
- We laughed at each other’s attempts at humor.
- We mourned “Ban Me Thuot family” deaths.

For all the years since I was at Ban Me Thuot (1970 and a few days in 1971) I've been trying to identify two officers:

- the pilot that was flying my slick (68-16923) when we lost hydraulics at the radio tower site at DaLat Lake and had to make a running landing at DaLat airport (pucker factor well over 10).
- the copilot that was with us on my slick (68-16293) September 3, 1970 when my gunner, Frank Mil, was shot. This is still a mystery. (If this was you, or you for sure know who it was, please let me know.

Joe Harrelson

68-69

In 1968, there was a mission to transport a new generator out to one of the Special Forces camps. WO Hiram C. (Nook) Waters had just arrived in country and needed a local area check out, so I "invited" him to go along. We went over to Ban Me Thout East to pick up the cargo and found it filling the back bed of a pickup truck and configured for a sling load. The generator weighed over 1,500 pounds but was well within our sling load limits. Personnel were standing by to hook the sling over our hook.

Hook-up was uneventful, so we got some altitude and proceeded to the camp. About 15 minutes out we called and asked where they wanted us to drop off the load. The guy on the radio had us stand by for a minute then said that because the generator was so large, and they had no way to physically move it, could we bring it into the camp and leave it outside the operations building.

We came to a hover and started to slowly move forward over the concertina wire perimeter toward the building with the many antennas. Now as a side note, at BMT we were getting mortared frequently so we were very familiar with what an incoming mortar attack sounded like.

Suddenly, there were several explosions in the camp that sounded just like an incoming attack. Personnel were seen taking cover and heading for the machine gun positions. All the while we were like sitting ducks at a 25 foot hover.

Then the crew chief then said, "Sir we are over a mine field and they are going off." It turned out that the concertina wire perimeter was interlaced with claymore mines hooked up to trip wires and our downwash was triggering them.. We got word over the radio from a very excited sergeant that we might as well take the generator back since it had too many holes in it to be useful. We took it back to Ban Me Thout East and since the

pickup truck was long gone, just dropped it off and left. We heard no further word about the incident.

At a later reunion, Waters told me that he never accepted a sling load mission after that.

SHARING COMMO

Matt Mathews “At the 2022 Reunion in Chandler, AZ, Wright “Wiley” Diamond and his wife, Charlotte Diamond, attended their first 155 reunion. I went over to greet them. I started to tell Wiley that I was looking for two officers. Before I got all the particulars laid out he interrupted me, “that was me, I was the pilot that day”. It’s been a minimum of 52 years since we were together as a family at Ban Me Thuot. We’re not getting any younger. Attend a reunion and catch up with some of your old “Ban Me Thuot family”.”

James Osbornn

PLT LDR 1970

I was a platoon leader and the tec supply officer at Ban Me Touot when the 155 was deactivated. I think that is when I served with you. I went on to fly Chinooks with "Freight trains 178 " and then went to ChuLi to fly Chinooks with the 243rd. I retired in 1988 after 20 years active duty. I taught High School JROTC for 20 years and now enjoy miniature horses, hunting and trips with Julie. We have been married 56 years.

Sorry we can't make the reunion

John Block I was a Sgt with the USAF & assigned to Detachment 619th Unit 1 & 9 that operated a portable WW 2 Radar & IFF / SIF Transponder housed in a Metal Building alongside the Airstrip. I Remember seeing incoming Small Arms fire coming from a abandoned Building across the road and Tracers going over my head I also flew as a Door Gunner for you . I have Photos of the Base and Helo flights.

Chuck Markham Got a call from Howard Wayne Humphries (that’s the way it is on my phone) He was Stagecoach 26 in 1970 while I was the XO. He is coming to the reunion.

Joe Harrelson

To those Ban Me Thuot Folks including the 155 AHC Falcons, Stagecoaches, Air Force, MACV, Recon Airplane Company, and all other former Camp Coryell residents, I bid you a mid- summer 2023 greeting.

The "Ban Me Thuot Barb" is a very important means of communication between all of us because it brings back often forgotten memories as well as brings us closer together as a 155 AHC Association Team. The goal is to publish four times a year and to do so we need input in the form of stories, events, memories and observations. **I believe we all have something to add and we need to take the time and effort to do so.** I have brainstormed some ideas and listed them below that might prod your memories to help come up with a story. I think all of us will have something that would be of interest to others. It is easy to submit a story. Les Davison at _____ is where you want to send them. Now, if you want to work on or develop an idea into a story and need assistance, I

will be happy to work with you to get the article ready to send to Les. I can be reached at Joe Harrelson, 26 silver Lake Drive, Rincon, Georgia 31326, 912-507-7657 or _____

Possible stories of interest:

Anything of interest that happened in Flight, Gunnery, or Maintenance school.

Anything from a CE or DG standpoint that happened during a Darlac Sector Mission

Interesting things that happened on camp Coryell grounds.

A day in the life of a CE or DG.

Where did you fly to out of base - Saigon, Dalat???

When did you actually see a NVA/VC?

R & R Stories. Where did you go? What did you do?/No forget that.

Medevac stories.

Pets on camp Coryell. Elephant, monkey, dog, Etc.

Major events from the stand point of CE/DG. I share an example. During the Reno Reunion, Nuc Watters and I were discussing a memory of a rather dangerous event when Nuc shared with me that after we sort of successfully completed the mission (resulting in a running landing at the runway at Gia Nghia, with 10 minutes of fuel left and with loss of directional control due to a damaged tail rotor), the CE told him that he was so absolutely sure we were going to crash that he seriously considered jumping out! I wish I had known it at the time. I think this was Nuc's first flight with the 155th.

Most valued package you received from home.

Hooch Maid stories.

What did you bring home as souvenirs.

Did you eat off base? If so, what?

What visitors came to Camp Coryell?

Did you ever attend religious services? What was that like?

Did you ever go on in-country R&R?

Did you ever transport captured VC? Did anything happen? For example, I once was transporting several VC when one who was sitting with his back to the console with his hands tied behind his back tried to reach my .45!

Weather Stories. Ever get "Weathered-in" at Dalat? I once landed on the beach due to a thunderstorm.

How about support facilities on base - Haircuts, Neck snap, PX, steam bath.?

How about aircraft damage during a mission? Ground fire, Falcons getting a bit close, parts of the helicopter falling off. I once lost the engine cowling on a Gunship, which took the cabin door off the hinges and totaled the right side horizontal stabilizer.

How about night flight either single ship or formation?

Things you learned on a mission that was not taught in various aircraft schools? Such as a descent from a 150 foot hover.

Any pranks? We once hung the CE on the stinger by his belt.

How about guard duty? Any probes or incoming fire?

How was navigation done at night (Maps, Heading and time, DF Steer, Pyramid Control , mortar flares)?

Thanks guys,

Joe Harrelson

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This picture was shared on the 155 facebook group page by **Kieth Gowdy** who was one of the Dog Handlers that helped keep the perimeter secure



This picture was shared on the 155 facebook group page by **Jim Ford**. This unit provided our ground communication support including the link that allowed us to talk with our families back home through HAM radio operators. Lonnie Schrader was a member of this unit.

Chuck Markham

Stagecoach 5 1970

“Pearly Shell 26, this is pearly shells 24” was the call I heard early one evening as the platoon leader of the 2nd platoon of B Company 1/69 Armor. We had just lagged on a small hill overlooking Route 19. Route 19 was the MSR (main supply route) between Pleiku and Duc CO, The Special Forces camp out on the Cambodian border. I was a very green Second Lieutenant. My Platoon Sergeant (PSG) Pearly Shells 24) was still trying to get me squared away.

“Could you check the perimeter and firing positions, I’m a bit tied up” he said. He wasn’t tied up he was simply reminding me it was getting late and I had not checked on our positioning for the night.

The sun was close to the horizon but I figured I could check out the positions and be back to my tank before it got too dark, I dismounted and made the rounds to all the tanks but when I got to tank B 24 the sun was very low. The PSG and I very briefly discussed the position and I headed back to my tank. I looked around and it was DARK.

We had a password for approaching a tank to let the guys know we weren’t the enemy. The password that night was probably something like CHECKMATE. I’m walking, alone two weeks in country, in the dark, in a war zone, surrounded by a forest, and I hear a twig crack near me. I frantically fumbled for my weapon, a 45 caliber pistol in a military holster on my belt. After a few seconds I finally had it in my hand and was waving it around trying to locate the hidden enemy while trotting toward my tank.. Then

it happened I dropped my weapon. I hear plop as it hits the ground. I bent down and while regaining my former quicker gate scooped the weapon off the ground and ran shouting at the top of my lungs

LT MARKHAM COMING IN, LT MARKHAM COMING IN. To hell with passwords. I leaped onto the back deck of the tank. Back with the crew I regained my composure and was able to tell the guys what happened. I probably omitted the dropped the weapon part



Dave Skoog

Maint 67/68

In 1968 during and after TET in the 155th in Ban Me Thuot when on the flight line we received a shot off the revetment and I hit the dirt. Other guys who had been there awhile just kept on working on their aircraft. I looked up and yelled “sniper!!” They said “Ya” and kept on working. This happened a number of times and I couldn’t figure out why they didn’t hit the dirt with me. Then they told me there was a farmer

who more than likely was sympathetic to the other side, used an old flintlock rifle from behind the Esso gas station. I said “let’s take him out!!” They said “no, he can’t hit sh—. He has never hit anyone and if we take him out, they will replace him with someone who had a newer rifle and is a lot better shot”. I slowly said “Ok, I guess that makes sense”. But I was always a little uncomfortable listening to shots banging off something close to us. He did go away after awhile and not sure what happened to him. Another something to remember at 18 years old.

155TH AHC Association Officers

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Chuck Markham - VP, etc
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155 AHC Association

Bucksnort, TX

