

Combat Helicopter Pilots Association



Happy Holidays and Peace to all in the new year!

Member Spotlight

The Christmas Crew

by LTC (Dr.) Patricia G. Baker



In the category of “You Can’t Make this Stuff Up” is a particularly unusual flight crew flying a once in a combat tour type of flight. In December of 2008, OIF had entered a steady state of operations; the kinetic force on force feel of the warzone during the surge in 2006 and 2007 had dissipated. As the Combat Aviation Brigade assigned as the Corps CAB under 18th Airborne Corps there were some unique missionsets flown by 34th Cbt Avn Bde. The brigade was based on the west side of Joint Base Balad and the subordinate battalions that hailed from Army National Guard units all over

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The Christmas Crew (continued)

the U.S. dotted the edge of the flightline. The brigade flew battlefield circulation, assault missions, VIP missions and even cargo from Kuwait via Sherpas. As a brigade staff officer I was assigned to fly on the ATP of the Louisiana assault battalion 1-244th, callsign Mojo.



The crew in this picture is the epitome of a Guard aircrew. The PIC was from the Virgin Islands and flew for an oil company in the Gulf of Mexico but drilled with the Louisiana National Guard. The crew chiefs were from Texas and Loui-

passenger. The Ambassador often repurposed his two UH-60s for missions that included diplomatic work beyond his travels.

Flights such as taking USAID workers to remote parts of the Northern Iraqi countryside or taking members of his staff to prep sites for upcoming negotiations were common, but this flight turned out to be very different. Our crew was instructed to be absolutely topped off with fuel because there could be no refueling stops in Baghdad upon landing at Washington Helipad nor en route to Irbil for the drop off. We also were instructed to fly in the middle of the day and to land at an exact time, remain at fly and not go to idle on the helipad. At Washington Helipad our two aircrews did exactly as the missionset instructed and a single well dressed man with an escort boarded the Blackhawk. We flew the entire span of Baghdad to Irbil in near silence except for some internal crew coordination such as fuel checks to monitor our burn rates. Arriving at Irbil on fumes, the helipad was vacant until touchdown when three black diplomatic Suburbans quickly drove directly out on the ramp and whisked the two gentlemen in business suits away. Kind of perplexed, the aircrews refueled and headed to Balad, RTB and mission complete.

At the time, none of us were aware of what the

... our Christmas crew had evacuated someone from the Iraqi Parliament who in the staffer's words would not otherwise "have lived to Friday prayers."

siana, and I hailed from Minnesota. To give the line pilots a day off, I flew Sundays with the Ambassador's crew. It took the BN SIP about six seconds to assign me this duty after reviewing my aircrew records and discovering that my first tour in OIF was as the C2/VIP Company Commander for GEN Odierno in OIFI. On a chilly Sunday in late December of 2008 our Ambassador crew was not tasked to fly Ambassador Crocker. Instead we were merely flying to the diplomatic helipad, called Washington ironically, to pick up a single unknown

mission we had flown really was about or who the Ambassador had us fly to Irbil. A few days into the New Year, I was flying with the same crew and learned that our Christmas crew had evacuated someone from the Iraqi Parliament who in the staffer's words would not otherwise "have lived to Friday prayers." My last flight with the Mojo crews was in February 2009, as my duties as the Bde S4/S8 took me away from the flightline and the brigade prepared to load out with the end of the tour in May. Ten years later, this mission really sticks with me. A seemingly boring Sunday afternoon flight

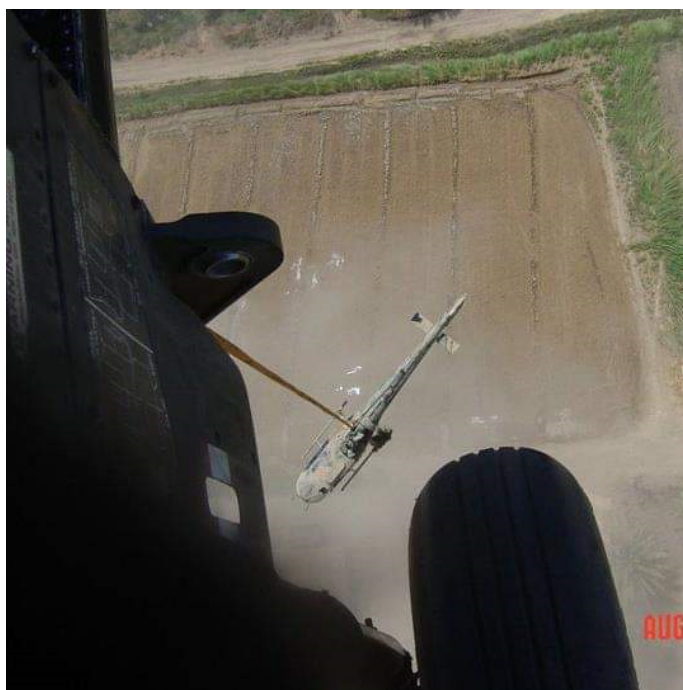
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The Christmas Crew (continued)

precluded the potential assassination of an Iraqi elected official in a struggling government almost five years to the day that the former dictator was captured. You can't make this stuff up, and I thought it would just be another Sunday logging 4.4 hours flying ash and trash.

Trish (to CHPA members and other friends)

On another day, Trish and her crew had a little fun with this slingload



This is my only photo of myself from Vietnam. Here's why. On Dec 17, 1969, I was wounded and medevaced to an Evac Hospital in Long Binh, then after surgery and stabilizing my lumbar vertebrae repair a couple weeks I was shipped onward to hospitals in Japan a few weeks then to Ft. Benning, GA for longer term recuperation. In that process all my many photos disappeared from the forward-ed locker of my personal effects, by mistake, an overcautious censor, or even theft, I don't know? I had lots of photos. I have this photo only because my buddy and fellow CHPA member, Graham Stevens, took the pic and sent to me years later when we found each other. We used his camera to snap mutual tough-guy pics that day.

Terry Garlock



Help the Editor

Send me your stories!

Every CHPA member has stories to tell, and our newsletter needs them to share with the membership.

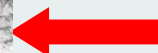
You can send me a draft and I'll help you with the polish. You can even call me to give me details by phone and I'll draft to send for your approval. So, you have no excuses.

Sharing your stories is one small thing you can do for CHPA. Let me hear from you.

Send me your photos!

To make the newsletter interesting to members, pics from your real experiences help fill in available space with images that mean something. Send me your photos to keep on standby, and of course your name with a caption helps to put pics in context.

Here's one of my own.



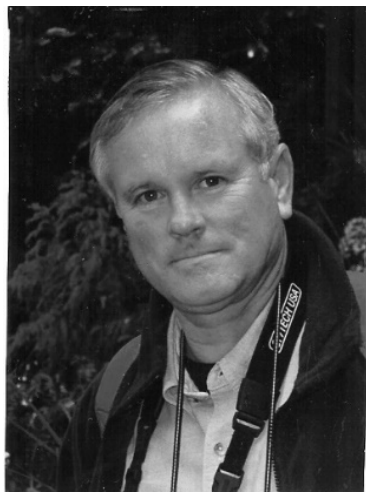
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One Day in the Valley of Death

Tony Armstrong's story

composed by Terry Garlock from interviews



Tony Armstrong

In the afternoon of April 19, 1968, from a cool 10,000 feet just above solid cloud cover, I was descending through a hole in the clouds for a second time that day with many other helicopters after re-arm/refuel, spiraling down to rejoin our combat assault in the A Shau Valley, Vietnam. Traffic was unsafely packed for the conditions and the pucker factor was high.

As we corkscrewed down, trying to stay in line and maintain separation while scanning for aircraft straying outside this loose trail formation, a flash made me look up from my Cobra cockpit as the tail boom was blown off a D-model Huey, about 1,000 feet above me at maybe 5,000 feet, hit by enemy radar-guided 37mm I assumed. The body of the Huey began to fall and spin, tossing out one of the American grunts who had been sitting with his legs dangling outside. He passed me on his way down a few hundred yards away, gripping his rifle with both hands, arms outstretched as if that might somehow break his fall. I watched this unknown soldier all the way down to his impact in the jungle far below.

My unit

I was with D Co., 229th, 1st Cav, based at LZ Sharon near Quang Tri and not far from the DMZ. Our gun platoon, Smiling Tigers, switched between B or C model Huey gunships and Cobras depending on the mission and available aircraft.

At 22 years old I was invincible like the other guys, but now and then we were reminded of our mortality when one of us was killed. That was burned into my memory when it was my turn to inventory and pack up the belongings of one our guys headed home zipped up in a black rubber bag. We discarded girly magazines or anything else inappropriate for his family to receive.



Tony 1968

A foreboding place

Surrounding LZ Sharon were lush, green rice paddies and farms, beautiful country, scenic villages that looked deceptively peaceful from the air. To the east was the city of Quang Tri, to the southeast the cultural capital of Hue, both cities on the coast of the South China Sea. To the west the terrain gradually became rolling hills, giving way to steep mountains covered in deep, triple-canopy jungle.

About 30 miles south-southwest from LZ Sharon was the A Shau Valley, very near the Laotian border, a triangular valley between exceptionally rugged mountain ranges with steep cliff faces, running generally north-northwest to south-southeast, about one mile wide and 25 miles long.

The A Shau Valley is one of those eerie places that makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up just by looking at it. The Valley advertises its own mystique by the misty darkness of frequent cloud cover and fog, prompting nervously shifting eyes to strain to interpret murky shapes, like kids trying to see the boo-

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One Day in the Valley of Death (continued)

geyman. Jungle cover is lush green from altitude, thick and hard to traverse on the ground with leech-infested streams, steep slopes, many varieties of poisonous snakes, unusual insects, and jungle so dense at the bottom of the ridge lines that one could not see more than a few feet. The valley floor might look clear from the air but swallowed ground troops in elephant grass nearly 20 feet high and countless bomb craters. There were tigers and elephants, too, but the danger came from the enemy.

Our enemy owned the A Shau Valley. They chose it as their own because it was naturally protective of their troops, just five miles from the Laotian border and the enemy supply line, the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The A Shau Valley was a distribution point for enemy infiltration into South Vietnam. In fact, the enemy built route 548, a road traversing the valley, as an extension of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, with cleverly hidden gas lines for trucks alongside the road. They forded small streams with PSP to keep trucks out of the mud and built bridges over larger streams and rivers. The road itself was concealed in many ways, with covered rest stops and supply depots, highly unusual infrastructure for an enemy who was infiltrating, constantly on the move and never settled.

Beginning in 1962, US Special Forces established three base camps in the A Shau Valley, but they were closed, one after another, in the face of relentless enemy pressure.

Assaulting the A Shau Valley was always difficult because of terrain and weather, and the enemy made it deadly even on good days. The valley was often crawling with enemy troops, and their defenses were strong with .51 caliber anti-aircraft fire and radar-guided interlocking 37mm guns, some on tracks for retraction into mountainside caves.

The A Shau Valley was the setting for some of the war's most intense and bloody battles. It's name prompted a stab of fear among US troops. Many called it the Valley of Death.

Operation Delaware/Lam Son 216

Periodically the A Shau was assaulted to interrupt enemy operations and infiltration. One of those assaults was Operation Delaware, otherwise known as Lam Son 216. On April 10, 1968, a nine day campaign to soften up the valley began with 21 Arc Light B-52 airstrikes, along with Air Force and Marine fighter-

bomber jets and artillery barrages pummeling suspected enemy positions.

The mission was to establish an artillery fire base on the top of a 3,580-foot ridge on the northwest edge of the Valley, to be named LZ Tiger. If successful, Tiger would command the approach into the Valley from Laos.



Tony relaxing at LZ Sharon

The night before our launch, when we were briefed on our mission and the foreboding place we would assault, my platoon leader, who had been to the A Shau before, said: "Fellas", this is going to be a bad one."

Like many others, I updated my will that evening and I wrote two letters, in case they should be my last, to my mother and father. I didn't sleep a wink that night and at breakfast I gave the letters to the mess Sergeant, quietly telling him to mail them if I didn't return to retrieve the letters from him.

The A Shau breaks in new guys

We were staged near Camp Evans, closer to the Valley than our own LZ. We stood by on April 19, nervously waiting for daylight and the word the lift companies were launching so we could accompany them to provide gun cover. When the word finally came, we discovered that Command & Control forgot to launch the guns when the lift companies launched the slicks.

They forgot? Now we were playing catch-up and the lead elements would go into presumably very hot

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One Day in the Valley of Death (continued)

LZs without gun cover.

They forgot!

The A Shau was socked in that day with cloud cover topping off at high altitude. We had to fly up to nearly 10,000 feet, the highest altitude I had ever been in a helicopter, search for a hole in the clouds and then spiral down into the Valley. When you combine the nightmare of an assault into the A Shau with lots of aircraft competing for airspace and limited visibility, we were tense. Add to that the briefing about listening intently to hear the first hum in our FM radio indicating radar-guided 37mm painting our aircraft, the second hum indicating a radar lock on, the warning to take evasive action to avoid the third hum which would mean we were a half-second away from being dead, well, the pucker factor was as high as I ever saw it.

Amidst all this tension, we were the guns, and we were late because the brass forgot.

The air was cold as we climbed higher and higher, flying west to the valley. The lead aircraft found a hole in the clouds and we began our corkscrew descent.

When we broke out below the ceiling and could see how to visually navigate the A Shau, we turned our attention to LZ Tiger, where the slicks had gone in without gunship cover and were shot up badly in a ferocious fight. By the time we got there, boots were on the ground securing the LZ for the next elements, but it could never be really secure. The enemy was everywhere in strength, it seemed, with fire coming at us from all directions. The lead elements landing into LZ Tiger took heavy casualties, aircraft shot down with small arms, machine guns, .51 caliber anti-aircraft guns and 37mm, some aircraft tumbling down the sheer cliffside into a fireball far below. Even huge flying cranes with artillery pieces sling-loaded were shot down. We made one rocket and gun run after another, and I couldn't help thinking all the while that if we had just been there a little sooner some of our dead troops might have survived.

We exhausted our ammo and, low on fuel, we re-

turned to Camp Evans to rearm and refuel. When we returned to the battle it was early afternoon. Once again we climbed high, found a hole in the clouds and corkscrewed down into the A Shau. When we were about 4,000 feet a flash made me look up to see the Huey's tail boom blown off, the soldier thrown out to



Tony at Marble Mountain

plunge to his death, and the Huey in a spinning fast descent.

We followed the spinning tail-less Huey down, doubting there was anything we could do to help. The Huey pilots and crew, and troops in the back, were surely terrified as they contemplated their own death just seconds away. It went down on the side of a mountain, landing right side up. It stopped spinning just before impact and seemed to slow its descent

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One Day in the Valley of Death (continued)

with the apparent cushion of a collective pull at the bottom, the impact breaking off the rotor blades and squashing the skids. On its way down enemy fire reached up to the spinning Huey and to our aircraft as well as all others, seemingly from all directions.

Miracles in the middle of Hell

When the spinning Huey hit the ground and came to a stop, the occupants scattered out of it like tiny bugs from our altitude, because the ship was likely to blow up from leaking fuel and would attract enemy fire. These guys were surely shaken and injured, terrified and startled to be alive. We would later learn they had broken backs, compressed vertebrae, broken arms, etc., and that when the AC stepped out of the aircraft he tossed aside his chicken plate just before an enemy soldier shot him in the chest, killing him. We descended as fast as we could, following them down to lay down covering fire to protect them. Enemy fire came from 360°, as if the A Shau had to live up to its terrifying reputation.

As we traded fire with the enemy and desperately tried to cover the downed men, I witnessed what seemed a miracle.

The commander of our operation ordered his pilot to take the C&C ship down to pick up the downed men from the spinning Huey. It was highly unusual for the C&C to get closely involved in the battle, the commander's role was to stay high, watch the operation and direct actions from a distance. They also carried a helicopter crew of four plus the CO and his staff and a radio console. The C&C pilot zipped down through enemy fire to hover with one skid on the mountainside and the other hanging in the air while at least seven men scrambled aboard one by one, and I

knew there was no way he could fly with that load, no way in the world.

As I watched, expecting him to roll into a bad wreck, the C&C pilot gently turned his aircraft and let it fall down the steep side of the mountain, just skimming the trees, letting gravity do the work of buying airspeed while he barely kept the skids off the rocks, finally hitting translational lift. We watched in disbelief as he traded altitude for airspeed, staying low over the mountainous terrain, dipping into canyons now



Tough work of hacking a firebase out of mountain jungle in the A Shau Valley

and then to gain more airspeed, and he found a way over a pass out of the Valley and headed east to deliver his impossible load to the hospital pad, barely clearing each obstacle as if God's own hand gave that helicopter a protective shield. He surely over-torqued the rotor head all to hell and back and probably went over the red-line limits on every instrument on board. I gave him a good luck wish when I saw him dip over the pass and I just knew when he arrived at the Medevac pad he would have to do a running, sliding landing with not even the remote chance of a hover. I thought it likely the aircraft was junked after that flight, used for spare parts.

And then we returned to the fight.

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A very tough enemy

The enemy in the A Shau were not VC, which were often local part-time farmers, part-time soldiers and terrorists. These were uniformed NVA, well-trained, organized, disciplined, well-armed, fierce and determined men, a very tough enemy.

We killed them and they killed us, and the blood ran deep in the Valley of Death. After a lot of shooting and killing and dying, we established LZ Tiger, and another Tiger at a lower elevation, so they were called LZ Tiger Upper and LZ Tiger Lower. Other LZs or firebases set up in this operation were Signal Hill, Vicky, Pepper, A Luoi, Stallion, Goodman and Cecil.

We went in with the entire 1st Cav Division, we kicked the enemy in the teeth, we paid a heavy price, we found and confiscated or destroyed massive amounts of war material like weapons caches and food storage in huge quantities as well as large weapons and equipment. Operation Delaware must have set the enemy's plans back substantially. During the operation we set up Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) instruments in the valley so we could descend through the clouds instead of searching for holes in the clouds. That raised my pucker factor even further.

When the operation was done I was very glad, indeed to cede the remains of the A Shau to the enemy, just my personal decision, you see, because I never wanted to go near that place again.

After the A Shau

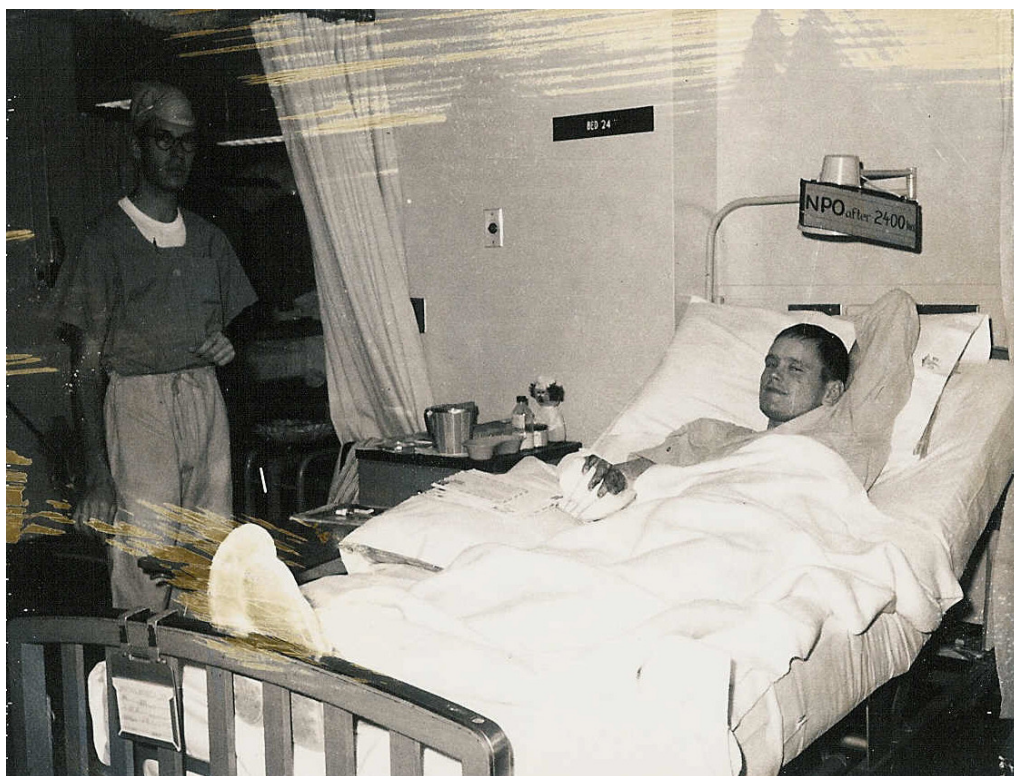
Every time I landed at the Marine base at Khe Sanh, we took enemy fire. Every time. That will scare the hell out of you after a while, but not quite like the fright awaiting anyone daring to enter the A Shau Valley. We flew a variety of missions and some were rather exciting, like covering LRRP teams in another bad place called the Rung-Rung Valley. Once in C-model Huey guns covering a LRRP team in trouble we exhausted our rockets and door gunner M-60 ammo, made a run at the enemy firing M-16s and other survival weapons, another desperate run firing just pistols out the door because that was all we had, and joked our

next pass we'd have to throw empty coke bottles, but we couldn't just break contact and leave the LRRP team. The slick was finally able to pick them up; we got them all out.

My excitement was about to end unexpectedly.

A hot refuel gone bad

On November 5, 1968 I was doing a hot refuel on a Cobra at a POL point with many 10,000 gallon fuel bladders. The POL point used gasoline engine pumps with a governor on it to run at a preset RPM to maintain fuel pressure. In the field we always kept the aircraft running while refueling because if the battery was weak we might be unable to restart without special help.



Tony in Brooke Army Medical Center at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas

I took the Nomex glove off my right hand so I could use my thumb to pull the release lever on the fuel cap.

The fuel nozzle was about 1½ inches in diameter, 18 inches long, angled slightly. While refueling I got a surge in the line and instinctively withdrew the nozzle from the filling receptacle. The result was that fuel sprayed me pretty good and flew up into the turbine intake where it flashed into flame, setting me on fire in the process.

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One Day in the Valley of Death (continued)

I remember saying out loud “This cannot be happening to me!”

My Nomex fire-resistant flight suit did not burn, but I did. A Jolly Green PJ on the scene rushed to assist, put out the flames, loaded me on the Jolly which took me to the *Sanctuary*, a WWII troop ship converted to a hospital ship, anchored off Danang. With 3rd degree burns over 42% of my body, I was treated aboard the ship, then in Japan, then at Brooke Army Medical Center at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas for intense

While at Ft. Sam Houston my 2nd DFC caught up to me, pinned on my hospital PJs by Hospital Administrator Col. Moncrief. My 1st DFC had been pinned on me in Vietnam after our A Shau Valley adventure by Gen. Tolson while he wore his pearl handled revolver.

Life after the Army

Little by little, my burns and skin grafts healed and my hand healed as much as it would after several surgeries. I was medically retired from the Army after six months in hospitals.

Life goes on. I had a family and a long career as a photographer. For all that time and even today, I have to be careful because my grafted skin is more tender than tough, easily scratched or torn. It is for that reason, not vanity, that I rarely wear shorts even in Georgia’s heat. My hand is frequently nicked with the little bumps of life and I still use a lot of band aids.

An unknown soldier remembered

I don’t know him, but I am told Duane Caswell was piloting Chalk Three in the Yellow One flight in the first wave of slicks to land at LZ Tiger in the A Shau Valley that day in April 1968, and that Duane said out of 60 aircraft his unit launched, 33 came back, though some of those men were rescued.

A lot of American men died in the assault on the A Shau that day. One of them was the soldier thrown out of the Huey when the tail boom was shot off, holding his rifle out at arms length all the way down while he had too much time to contemplate his own violent death. That was 50 years ago and I still think about him often.

I like to think every one of them are in a place of comfort and peace, which they deserve since they paid their dues in Hell and lost the chance to live out their lives. I like to think that and I won’t take kindly anyone telling me otherwise.

If you wish to contact Tony Armstrong to discuss these or similar events in Vietnam, his email is:
tony.525@hotmail.com



Col. Moncrief pins Tony's 2nd DFC

burn treatment.

Burn treatment, the scraping and grafting, is an agonizing and slow process. I'll spare you the details, except for this one. My right hand was swollen to the size of a football when the doc, without warning, stabbed it with a scalpel and cut a line real quick before I had a chance to beat him to death because it hurt so bad, and it leaked a bucket-full of foul fluids. Then he explained and got started with treating the wound. His sudden action spared me the anguish of knowing what he would do, and what seemed extreme and cruel at the moment actually saved my hand. While I was slowly healing, as you can see from the pics the fingers of my right hand looked like a batch of steaming French fries. I'd rather have reality than sympathy.

You earned it by your service!



Department of Defense Expanding Access to:

- Commissaries
- Military Exchanges
- Recreation Facilities

The Department of Defense is expanding commissary, military exchange, and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) retail privileges on U.S. military installations as specified in the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, included in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019.

Starting Jan. 1, 2020, access will expand to include **all veterans with service-connected disabilities**, veterans who are **Purple Heart recipients**, veterans who are **former prisoners of war**, and individuals approved and designated as the **primary family caregivers of eligible veterans** under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. While this expansion will extend eligibility to over 4.1 million new patrons, the Department expects little to no impact on current patrons in most locations. There may be some impact in areas with a high cost of living, but the Department is preparing to accommodate all new patrons.

"These new privileges recognize the service and sacrifice of these veterans and those that care for them," A.T. Johnston, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Military Community and Family Policy, said. "If you or someone you know might be eligible for these privileges, share the message," Johnston said. "Please help us ensure these veterans and caregivers receive the privileges they've been granted."

New patrons eligible solely under this authority should be aware that the law requires the Defense Department charge them a small user fee to offset the increased expense incurred by the Department of

the Treasury for processing commercial credit or debit cards used for purchases at commissary stores.

The Department of Defense is finalizing the details for these new privileges with the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security and the Treasury. Information will be announced soon regarding installation access and the authentication process for these privileges.



To learn more about the commissary, military exchange and MWR expansion, visit:

<https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/expanding-access-fact-sheet.pdf>

Revised qualification for Arlington . . .



Adjusting rules to preserve space

Acting Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy on Sept. 25 announced new criteria for interment (burial) and internment (preservation of cremated remains) at Arlington National Cemetery to keep from running out of space in the nation's most hallowed military cemetery.

Congress called on the Army to revise the criteria for burial at the cemetery in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, with the goal to keep it functioning as an active burial ground for another 150 years. That's not possible under present rules.

Today, some 95,000 burial spaces remain available, but with more than 20 million living veterans and 2 million military members currently serving, the population of potential eligibles keeps growing. Without changes to eligibility, the cemetery will be full by the mid-2050s, according to the Army.

Today, any Active Duty member or veteran with at least one day of active service is eligible for burial at Arlington.

Under the proposed new rules, below-ground interment will be limited to presidents and vice presidents, as well as military members or veterans:

- Killed in action, including repatriated remains of service members
- Awarded the Silver Star or service Cross or Medal of Honor
- Awarded the Purple Heart
- Suffering combat-related service deaths during "unique" military activities
- Formerly held as prisoners of war
- Or who served in combat and also served out of uniform in government and "made significant

contributions to the nation's security at the highest levels of public service."

Those eligible to be interned above ground must be either:

- World War II-era veterans, including legislated active duty designees
- Retirees from the military who are eligible for retirement pay but not eligible for interment
- Veterans who served at least two years on active duty and served in combat
- Or veterans who did not serve in combat, but did serve out of uniform in government service and "made significant contributions to the nations security at the highest levels of public service."

A notice of the new rules will be posted for public comment in the Federal Register within the next nine months, according to the cemetery.

At the same time, the cemetery is planning a large expansion of the grounds on the southern side of the cemetery, including the area surrounding the Air Force Memorial. The expansion will add another 60,000 new burial plots and a large new columbarium for cremated remains.



Book Review by Mike King



CHPA Member Rex Gooch The Aviators

Having just completed Rex Gooch's latest book "Aviators," I am reminded of the late great Yogi Berra when he said "It's like déjà vu all over again." That's because Rex wrote about the same unit I was with in Vietnam, in the same timeframe, some of the same people. He awakened some of my dormant brain cells.

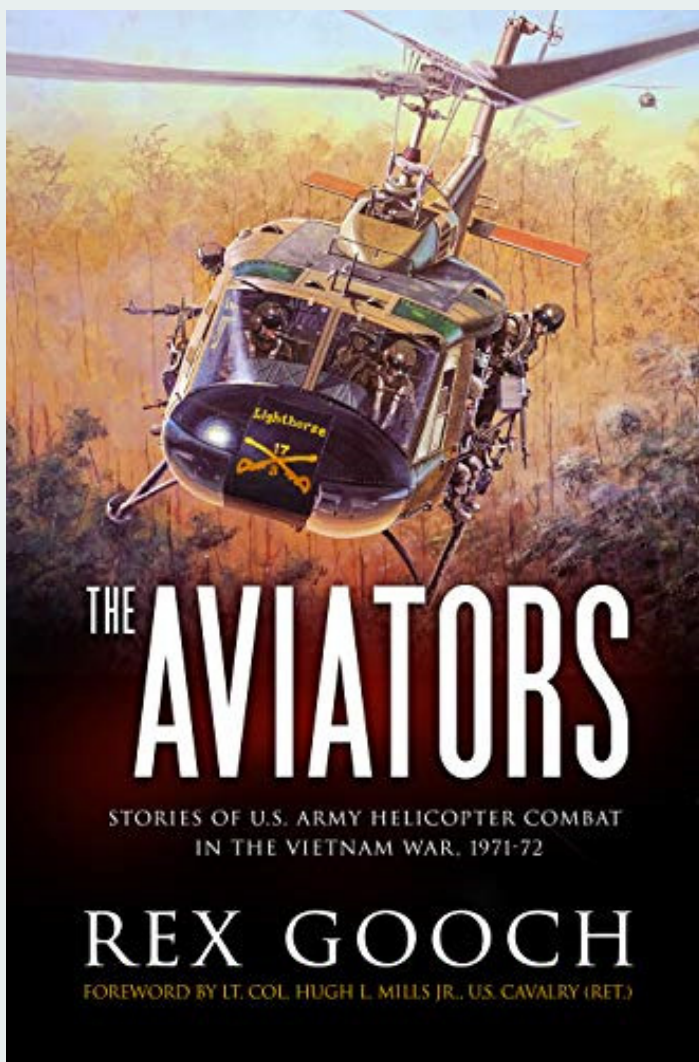
I spent the same timeframe flying out of Can Tho with Darkhorse C/16th Cavalry, and clearly remember all the old airstrips like Camau, Chi Lang, Dong Tam and Vi Thanh that were fading memories. Rex brought them rushing back. Areas like the Plain of Reeds and the U Minh Forest jolted unforgettable memories of events and the young men with whom I was privileged to serve.

Vinh Long was a busy airfield in my tour, and I had the occasion to spend nearly an entire day beside the runway after it had been totally abandoned in the late spring of 1972. Idling away the hours, my gunner and I, alongside our shot-up Loach, spent the day fishing in the ponds along the runway with hand grenades, a testament to how few of us remained in IV Corps.

Rex writes about the heroism and flying abilities of his comrades, and he takes the time to acknowledge their contributions after Vietnam in aviation or other walks of life, illustrating that Vietnam vets distinguishing our generation. I think many of the misguided souls who ridiculed Vietnam vets long ago now regret that role, but as my buddy Terry Garlock would say, screw-em, I hope guilt keeps them awake at night.

Oh, well, I got carried away for a moment, which is what happens when a good read like this book takes you back to places long left behind, but always close to us deep inside. I recommend this good read as part of your library on the subject of Vietnam.

Mike King
Darkhorse 14
1971-1972



CHPA Annual Meeting Sep 12-15, 2019



The 2019 Annual Business Meeting and Conference was attended by members from Colorado, Texas, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee, Louisiana and California.

CHPA was honored this year to have the North Alabama Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) in attendance for a joint reception on Friday the 13th.

This year's guest speaker was Colonel (R) Damon Reynolds, former Commander of the HH-60G squadron at the Air Force Weapons School and 563rd Expeditionary Group Commander in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Colonel Reynolds is a Command Pilot with over 2,800 flight hours in the HH-60G, UH-60L, and UH-60A. He holds a FAA Commercial rating in rotary wing aircraft.





2019 Treadway Award

Julie Kink

The CHPA Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Julie Kink has been chosen as the 2019 Robert N. Tredway Award recipient. The Robert Tredway Award is a biennial award, presented by CHPA to an individual who has demonstrated significant accomplishments impacting the military helicopter community, veterans, CHPA or the community at large.

A Gold Star family member, Julie lost her brother WO1 David Kink, killed in action in Vietnam on August 3, 1969. Julie spent a lifetime researching and understanding the war, service as a combat aviator and how families heal. That journey realized a lifetime of veteran and family advocacy, for which she is honored.



2019 CHPA Election

In accordance with the CHPA by-laws, the elected directors and officers for (OCT) 2019 - (OCT) 2021:

Jack Bailey - Chairman

James Wilhite - President

Al Major - VP, Membership

Pat Nash - VP, Administration

Jim Donadini - Secretary

JB Worley - Treasurer

Graham Stevens - BOD Member

Al Winks - BOD Member

Trish Baker - BOD Member

Clyde Romero - BOD Member

Barry Desfor - BOD Member

Craig Bond - BOD Member



HAPPY
Holidays