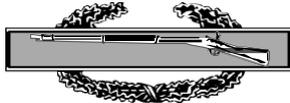


# JUMPING MUSTANG BUGLE

1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Division

September 2018



Volume 38

Issue Number 3

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Will you be there or be square? Do you remember that saying? Lol. Well it's almost time to meet and greet each other at our Colorado Springs re-union. The official dates are October 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> and our special rates will apply from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October to October 7<sup>th</sup>. I love the pictures of this hotel and believe we will enjoy their service tremendously. To see for yourself, go to [www.hotelegante.com](http://www.hotelegante.com). You must book by August 29<sup>th</sup> to get these special rates that include breakfast for two. Again I want to remind everyone of Glenn Sheathelm's word of caution about the altitude level of Colorado Springs (6,300) above sea level and its impact on our oxygen levels. Please check with your doctor about its impact to you and your spouse and what you can do to overcome this impact, ie: c-Pap, B-Pap and Furosemide.

I want to officially Thank President Trump for all he did to get over 50 remains of our soldiers who died in Korea, finally home. I trust that this gesture by North Korea will be the beginning of many more to come. To them I say "Welcome Home". Our lone MIA, Sgt Ellis is still MIA and our prayers go out to him and his family at every re-union. Remember "When one American is not worth the effort to be found, we as Americans have all lost" POW/MIA Slogan.

A lot of positive news on the VA lately including the appointment of Robert Wilkie as Secretary of the VA. Now we can get even more assistance in making them more accountable for their actions and treatment of Veterans across this nation. I can tell you first hand that the level of care from North Carolina to South Carolina

has been like night and day. In many of my dealings with NC, I would go quarterly but in SC I can only go annually. That should not be how a Federal program works. How about the statement, "why didn't you wear ear plugs" when you're being evaluated for ear damage? Or "I realize that you were shot in the mouth but that doesn't mean we are responsible for your dental work". These people who make these statements do not need to be a part of the VA system especially those who are making decisions on our disability ratings. Keep fighting and keep appealing if you run across stupidity like the above. If you have issues, don't forget the hot line directly into the White House, 1-855-948-2311 it is available 24/7.

I will sign off for now and hope to see you in Colorado Springs in just a couple of weeks.

**Honor and Courage**  
**Harvey J. Auger**  
**President**

## DECEMBER 2018 EDITION OF THE BUGLE

Did you have an incident happen to you in Vietnam that you would like to share with the other members of the Jumping Mustangs? Or, do you have some information that would be of benefit or interest to the membership? The Bugle is published each quarter to provide all members with information, as well as activities and articles. I strongly encourage each of you to send articles

or information to me that can be published in the December editions of the newsletter.

Please submit your articles or information to be included in the December 2018 Bugle to me no later than November 19, 2018. Thank you for your involvement.

Any views expressed are those of the individual who wrote them, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Jumping Mustangs. Articles about memories of events and experiences are not checked for accuracy. The editor can make changes to articles so they are more readable, remove negative remarks about individuals, or to remove vulgar or offensive language.

### **Jerry Prater**

### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Gregory J. Amaral C Co 70-71  
642 Wildflower Dr.  
Orcutt CA 93455-6099  
805-934-1637  
v.amaral@verizon.net

Rodger E. Thompson B Co 70  
652 Bailey Dt.  
Chase City VA 23924  
434-210-0010  
thompson139@verizon.net

### **OLD MEMBERS NEW ADDRESS**

Billie Jo Hair  
1300 Woodland Hills Dr.  
Whitehouse TX 75791-3754

Charles Bernstein  
400 University Park Dr Apt 68  
Pageb6@earthlink.net

Rowland (Skip) Keaveney D Co 67-68  
53 Percheron Lane  
Hilton Head, SC 29926  
435-901-2976

### **OLD MEMBER NEW CONTACT INFORMATION**

Robert L'ecuyer  
butubuta@gmail.com  
508-892-5225

John Evorik  
john@evorikelectric.com  
219-712-7438

### **TAPS**

Raymond Ortiz, A Co 8-65 / 8-66, passed away August 3, 2018

James Flanagan, B Co 1967, passed away June 2018

Gary Sturgill, D Co 2-69 / 2-70, passed away August 15, 2018

Cherie Donaghue, wife of John Donaghue

If you know of a member of the Jumping Mustangs that has passed away, please notify Jim Knafel at [jknafel@gmail.com](mailto:jknafel@gmail.com) or Roger Talmadge at [rogertalmadge@cox.net](mailto:rogertalmadge@cox.net) as soon as possible.

### **RAYMOND ORTIZ**

I just spoke with Raymond's son, David Ortiz, and I wanted to pass on to you his mailing address and email address. For the past several years Raymond had been in very poor health and had been living with David in Austin, Texas. David was very close to his father and is emotional over his loss, but greatly appreciated hearing from someone that knew and served with his father in the Army. If you would like to send David a card of condolence or contact him by email, his address is: 11627 Argonne Forest Trail # B, Austin, TX, 78759, or email at [ortizdavid3000@gmail.com](mailto:ortizdavid3000@gmail.com). I am sure he would greatly appreciate hearing from anyone who knew and served with Raymond.....

### **Bill Onstott**

### **MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Membership dues for the Jumping Mustangs are \$10.00 per year, payable at the date of the annual reunion. The dues paid at the date of the 2018 reunion in Colorado Springs is for the year 2019. All members who attend the reunion should include the \$10.00 dues on the reunion pay sheet, which is the last page of this edition of the

Bugle, and mail the payment to Jim Knafel. **If you are not going to attend the 2018 reunion, you can still use the reunion pay sheet to pay your dues because the address to where the payment is to be mailed is printed on the pay sheet.**

If you have not paid your dues each year, we ask that you pay the \$10.00 for each year in which you have not made payment. Membership dues are very reasonable, and they do help offset a lot of the expenses incurred as the result of the Jumping Mustangs activities.

Thank you for your membership, and thank you for keeping your dues current.

**Jerry Prater**

### **Current Email Address**

Currently, the Jumping Mustangs has approximately 350 members on the active roster. However, only 226 of the members have provided us with an active email address. About three weeks before the Bugle goes to press each quarter, I send an email message to all members of the Jumping Mustangs. This message informs members of the cutoff date for all articles or information that is to be included in next edition of the Bugle.

**If you are not receiving this email message, it indicates that you do not have an email address on my contact list, or that the email address you provided is not a deliverable address. Since the Bugle will not be mailed to members by the Post Office beginning with the March 2019 edition, we ask that you provide us with your current email address as soon as possible.** If you do not have an email address, I strongly encourage you to ask your children or grandchildren to create one for you, and train you on the basic operations of sending and receiving email messages.

Your current active email address can be provided to Jerry Prater at [jerryprater1018@yahoo.com](mailto:jerryprater1018@yahoo.com) or 214-263-4567 or to Jim Knafel at [jknafel@gmail.com](mailto:jknafel@gmail.com) or 260-244-3864

Thank you for your prompt response.

**Jerry Prater**

## **REUNION, COLORADO SPRINGS**

The October reunion is fast approaching! Just a reminder that if you are interested in the Fort Carson tour on Thursday, October 4, or the Dragon man's Museum tour on Friday, October 5, please contact us ASAP as each tour is limited to 40 participants.

Our contact info is [Jacobs501@aol.com](mailto:Jacobs501@aol.com) or 719-578-5124. (Please leave a message if we don't answer and we will return your call.)

**Shuttle Service** Hotel Elegante offers complimentary shuttle service to and from the Colorado Springs airport. When you arrive at the airport call the hotel at 719-576-5900 and they will pick you up. If you fly to the Denver airport, go to the website [FrontRangeshuttle.com](http://FrontRangeshuttle.com) or call at 719-897-2646 for the schedule and cost of shuttle from Denver to Colorado Springs.

Don't forget to dust off your boots and bring your cowboy hat! Looking forward to seeing everyone!

**Alan and Sharon Jacobsen**

### **TRIP TO HARRISBURG**

On 7/18/67 I arrived back in the states, then Philadelphia, and eventually I boarded a bus to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

“On the long bus ride west on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I thought about my train ride to California just a year before (during the 1966 airplane strike.). It sure seemed like more than a year with so many memories jammed together. Some of the days seemed like a month because they went so slow. In combat, minutes seemed like hours or even days, especially at night. As many others have said, combat was hours of boredom and seconds of terror.

The bus arrived in Harrisburg in the early morning hours. ... I had been in Harrisburg many times in the past, but now everything seemed new, as if I was seeing it for the first time. Everything fascinated me, from traffic lights to items for sale in the store windows. It was like taking a walk in a foreign country. I remember being deep in thought while standing on a street corner looking into a store window. None of the clothing was olive drab. Suddenly a truck roared by the intersection. I turned and was fascinated that the truck was painted bright yellow and red. It seemed so out of place. Then it dawned on me that it was me that was out of place.

I returned to the bus station and sat watching the few people in the station at that hour. I stared at their clothing

and what they carried. ... I grabbed a coffee and tried to find the gate where the north bound bus would load. ... It turned out to be a local bus that stopped in numerous small towns as it wound its way north along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. ... The weather was muggy and hot, but to me it seemed perfect. I drew only a few curious stares as I waited for the bus driver to pull my duffel bag out from under the bus.

I swung the bag over my shoulder and took off at a brisk pace. When the house came into view at the end of the street, it looked exactly as it did the day I went away. It was the same time of the year and the trees and flowers were in the same stage of their growth cycle. It was as if time had backed up a year and I had missed last year's experiences. If only that were the case.

As I approached the front door I knew would be unlocked, I replayed the scene in my mind I had visualized many times. I pictured everything in the house just the way it was when I left, except I now had to fit into my mental picture two sons instead of one very small infant.

I stood on the porch a few minutes, stared down into the garden and then grasped the screen door handle with my free hand. I paused in the doorway for a few seconds while my eyes adjusted from the bright outside glare to the cool, darker interior of the house. The room was empty, except immediately in front of me stood a little cowboy dressed only in red shorts, a big brown western hat and a holster. He stood there, not ten feet away, eyes staring into my soul for five seconds. Then he pulled his pistol, pointed it at me and pulled the trigger with a metallic click. He immediately turned and disappeared through the kitchen door as fast as his little legs could carry him.

I put down my duffel bag near the fireplace and walked to the kitchen, now more than a little apprehensive. As I turned the corner, the light streaming through the double window over the sink captured my wife, dressed in a halter top and shorts, washing dishes. The little gunslinger peered around the back of her legs, gun at the ready. An infant in a soiled bib sat in a high chair beside the table.

A second later she realized that someone was there, turned and uttered an exclamation as we moved to each other's arms. We held each other tightly, without words, for the longest time. I don't know what else I thought about, but I know I offered up a prayer of thankfulness at finding my family safe and myself once again at home. Eventually our closed eyed embrace was interrupted and we were brought back to reality by a

little presence pushing himself between our knees, accompanied by a wail from the high chair. Introductions were then quickly started, as I picked up one son and then the other, interrupting the process at regular intervals to give my wife another hug and kiss. I felt that I was close to heaven."

**Robert S. Franks**

**Excerpts from his Book Welcome Home, Bro  
Available on Amazon**

### **MY FLOOD OF MEMORIES**

When I received my copy of the March Bugle and read through the articles, each struck a nerve, bringing back a flood of memories.

The article by Patrick Dooley triggered the memory of our company commander sending out a new in country, first day in the field, instant NCO to be in-charge of a killer team. Unfortunately the team and the company suffered more that night than just the disappointment of a lost opportunity.

Regarding Mike Bond's description of the Battle of Tam Quan. I remember Sgt. Rudawick and his buddy, known only as Miller, recounting the events of that battle when I joined B Company 1/8 in February 1968. They took me under their expert wings guiding my transition into the forth platoon.

And sadly, Jerry Prater's excellent article recounting his return home. Painful memories we all share. Each of us have stories to share, lessons learned that can be passed on to others who will someday have to bear arms in the defense of our country, lessons that can save lives.

All the men in my family served in WWII, all did their best to pass the lessons they learned during their service on to me as they knew that eventually my turn would come.

I felt the horror of what they had been through. I tried my best to prepare myself mentally for what would come. Not knowing which service I would end up in, I read "Away All Boats", "Guadalcanal Diary" and the classic anti-war book, "Johnny Got His Gun" along with many others. My Uncle Tom, who served with the First Cav. in the Philippines, talked about small unit tactics.

My father had told me the following story about the German bombers targeting the ammo ships in Naples Bay. These ships were anchored far from shore for the

safety of all. "One night, under the bright light of the erupting Mount Vesuvius, the Germans got lucky. They hit an ammo ship. It went up in a tremendous explosion! Though my ship was a mile away, the concussion tore the screens off the port holes, blew them across the compartment and left them imbedded in the opposite bulkhead."

Years later I arrived in Bien Hoa, Viet Nam on a typical hot steamy night. As our plane circled the landing field, streams of tracers from the gunships below captured our attention. The Tet Offensive was winding down. I had orders for the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry, which were changed at the processing center where I became a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cav! My Uncle's old unit! After processing, we were sent to the barracks.

Back at the barracks while standing outside, chewing the fat with the rest of the "Cherries", a huge fire ball, straight out of a James Bond movie, erupted in the distance! A thought started nudging its way to the front of my brain. Something about a big explosion involving hundreds of tons of explosives? What was I missing? Concussion! The shock wave struck, knocking us off our feet, driving us into the barracks in a huge cloud of dust and debris! I would have to get my head in gear.

Fast forward to the middle of my tour, after seeing other poor souls experience the horror of "Johnny Got His Gun" and the blood and guts of "Guadalcanal Diary." I was plucked from the A Shua Valley to attend Combat Leaders School back at An Khe. After completing the course I was promoted to Sergeant and returned to my unit. Several weeks later when we were extracted from the valley, I was told that I would be assigned to Echo Company, a new company with a different set up, and Lt. Larios would be the CO. There would be only two platoons, a recon platoon (with many stories to tell) and a mortar platoon, both to be led by sergeants. I was the platoon sergeant for the mortar platoon, which would supply close in fire support. We would be assigned to other units as needed and serve various other functions.

We soon found ourselves on the peak of LZ Ann, west of Quang Tri City. The LZ consisted of a very steep cropped top mountain at the north end could be reached by walking up a very steep "road" from the wide saddle below on the south side of the mountain where an artillery battery of 105 howitzers were set up. Combat weary rifle companies rotated in and out of the fire base to provide security for the artillery.

One morning about 10 am, we heard the familiar "poop" of a mortar- 3 rounds in quick succession. Due to the small diameter of our position on the top of the mountain, we were not worried about being hit. The

artillery and infantry units below, on the wider flat saddle, were a different story. Fortunately they were not hit. The artillery did not have the down angle to return fire on the target, close but deep in the valley. If we fired, by the time our round completed its arcing trajectory and hit, the enemy would be long gone. We took note of where we thought they fired from.

The next day, at exactly the same time, from a position behind the same tree stump, we again heard 3 quick "poop, poop, poop". The rounds were getting closer and this was getting serious! This time we had spotted the faint mist as they fired from a position behind an old tree stump. This time something in my memory clicked! I remembered reading in "Guadalcanal Diary" about a Japanese plane flying over Henderson Field dropping a single bomb each day at the same time. The plane's engine sounded terrible, like a washing machine. The Marines dubbed him "Washing Machine Charlie". The question became - did I have a Washing Machine Charlie on my hands?

I hatched a plan. I called back to Lt. Larios on LZ Mustang requesting a 105mm (M40 106) recoilless rifle. The rifle came out on the evening supply chopper and the platoon set it up. Chick Osborn who ran an M-60 in B Company 1/8 was chosen to sight the rifle in on the target. Chick loaded the modified 50 caliber round into the spotter rifle mounted on the barrel of the 105. The 50 caliber round follows the same trajectory as the round of the 105 and emits a puff of smoke when it hits. Chick hit the stump on his first shot. Instructions were given to not touch the rifle. The next morning the sight picture was checked and confirmed.

We checked our watches- almost time! Would Charlie show? We made sure no one was standing behind the weapon. That, however, was not a problem. Like kids watching a sporting event eager to see if their team scores in the last second of the game, the entire platoon were lined up to watch and wait.

At almost precisely 10 am, we heard a "poop" from their mortar, a "blam" from the 105, a final "poop" from the mortar as our round in its flight sought its target and a "boom" from our round as it obliterated the tree.

Time forces me to forget who exactly fired the recoilless, I think it was Chick but I cannot say that with certainty. As to Charlie and his crew, they became part of the landscape.

Which bring me back to Jerry Prater's article. In his article he cites our lousy treatment and the Army's failure to help us acclimate into our new environment on our return. One of my biggest gripes upon my return was

finding that the Army published each month, a pamphlet called "Lessons Learned". If the Army was compiling information on enemy tactics and weapons that they were disseminating stateside each month, why were we not also privy to that information?

Wars contain common elements, pain, sacrifice, loss, emotional trauma. I did my best to prepare myself mentally for the horror that I knew was coming. It did not work. I did find that what I learned from the actual combat experience of others was very helpful during my tour as illustrated above.

When my nephew joined the Marines and deployed to Iraq. I wrote him a long letter with unwanted advice. He wrote his Mom telling her he read it to every member of his team.

All of us know of someone in the military, or someone who will serve. Your experience could be of value. You have been there, done that. Do it!

And my final note: Prep you pupil to know that combat will leave them with some form of PTSD, no matter how tough or bullet proof they think they may be. Teach them early it is OK to reach out for help, I did.

**Ed Shuttleworth**

## **CH-47 CHINOOK IN ACTION**

I don't know how many of you get a catalog from Squadron Mail Order, but they sell high quality plastic models, books, and modeling accessories. On page 2 of the winter 2018 catalog they feature a new book titled CH-47 Chinook in Action. Some of you who were at the 2017 reunion in Grand Rapids went down to see the LST-393 museum. On the tank deck near the stern of the ship was a display on the Vietnam War which had photos of the KIAs from Muskegon County. There was also dummy M-16s and AK-47s on the wall along with a mock-up of an infantryman in uniform. In the display case was the Air Force fighting clothing of Captain Roger Knopf, who flew F-4 Phantoms for half of his tour.

Roger had a different job the other half of his tour that meant traveling at a walking speed most of the time. He was the Air Force officer who directed air strikes for the 2/7 Cav on LZ Albany on November 17, 1965. There is a photo of him on page 85 in the book Valor in Vietnam, edited by Allen B. Clark, and more information about him scattered through pages 79-89. I

have known Roger for years because we are both on the County Council Honor Guard for VFW, and we have also been on the committee that organizes the Memorial Day parade for years. We also serve on panel discussions about the Vietnam War for school groups.

Also in the display case is a model of the CH-47 pictured on the cover of the book CH-47 Chinook in Action. You can verify it by the tail numbers. Since I built the model it isn't just a coincidence. The photo on the cover is of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon of D Company 1/8 Cav on New Year's Eve 1967, and was possibly taken by Dave Moore of B Company 1/8 Cav since it first appeared in his book The Vietnam Experience.

As you can see from the picture on the cover of the book, they brought a sling load of barbed wire, engineer stakes, and 3 replacements in the CH-47. I am the guy just beyond the open ramp with my radio still on my back, and sitting down with one knee raised to steady the binoculars. I was watching a sampan on the river several bends east of Bong Son that seemed to be avoiding some troops on the area.

**Glen Sheathelm**

## **THE FIRST HELICOPTER CRASH**

I was an infantryman on a platoon-size combat patrol in the huge Michelin rubber plantation near Quan Loi, South Vietnam, during the afternoon of August 14, 1969. I was considered a new guy, even though I had been in the field for a month, and I was still adjusting to my life as a combat soldier. The heat was almost intolerable, even in the shade of the trees, and the high humidity prevented the cooling evaporation of sweat from our soaked fatigues making the situation worse. We were hot and tired. Mosquitoes followed the men of Company C, 1st Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division, waiting for their chance to feed on us as soon as we stopped. We always stopped. We stopped to look and to listen for the slightest movement or sound from an enemy soldier. We knew they were nearby; several hundred of their best soldiers had attacked our large installation at Quan Loi, just two nights before. The NVA suffered the loss of many soldiers and their weapons but caused considerable damage to our artillery and helicopters during the battle that night. We also suffered casualties during the successful defense of the base.

The rubber plantation resembled a pecan orchard with the

trees growing in neat rows, but was in limited production now with waist high grass and brush thick between the trees. The undergrowth further hindered our movement and allowed the enemy soldiers cover to hide, watch and wait for the most opportune time to attack. Suddenly the distinctive sound of AK-47 bullets popping over our heads broke the calm silence and sent us to the ground. That was the first time I had been shot at directly by an enemy soldier, even though he was shooting at the whole squad, the war had now become personal. No one was hit and the Viet Cong sniper that fired those few rounds moved quickly back through the rubber trees to his underground bunker or to join the plantation workers in a nearby work crew. He was just letting us know they were always watching and always nearby. The trees were planted in precise north-south and east-west rows by the French plantation manager years before for reasons that could be explained by an agriculture specialist. The alignment of the trees was a valuable directional aid for the enemy soldiers to use to move quickly over a large area, day or night and the leaves of the trees gave them cover from being seen by our helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.

Our battalion commander decided to keep a platoon of infantrymen at that location overnight and to deploy ambush teams in the immediate area in case the enemy soldiers returned. The 28 men of 2nd platoon, company C, had come prepared for a daylight search mission with only their weapons, ammunition, two canteens of water, one meal of C-rations and their ponchos. They did not look forward to a night of rain, mosquitoes, cold C-rations and the proximity of the enemy soldiers. The situation would require half of the men to be on watch, awake and alert, at all time. The rest of the platoons from C company that had been on patrol nearby joined together at a predetermined map location and now numbering less than one hundred men, made their way the five kilometers back to the huge basecamp at Quan Loi. Hot chow and a dry cot in a perimeter defense bunker awaited them.

The 2nd platoon formed a defensive perimeter and prepared to receive water, C-rations, trip-flares and claymore mines by helicopter. Soon a UH-1 helicopter, we called Hueys, arrived overhead and hovered just over the rubber trees at an altitude of about 30 feet. There was no open area large enough to land, and the crew of the helicopter, with the help of our company supply men, "kicked out" our provisions. That is literally throwing the provisions out of the helicopter through openings in the trees. Some damage would occur to our supplies on impact with tree limbs and the ground, considered a necessary loss in this situation. As the helicopter moved into position and began to hover, the

engine lost power, either from heat, fuel contaminants or from mechanical problems, all of which commonly plagued helicopters in Vietnam. It began to settle into the brittle rubber trees as the pilots desperately tried to maintain a hover without success and the powerful blades tore into the trees. The helicopter spun violently on impact with the trees and became inverted, ejecting our supply specialist, the helicopter crew chief and one of the door gunners from the aircraft. Fortunately no one was killed but those three soldiers were badly injured. Our platoon medic and other soldiers rushed to their aid and to the helicopter to rescue the remaining crewmembers. The helicopter was on its last mission of the day and low on fuel but did not stop to refuel because we were so close to his base. Even though aviation gas leaked from the ruptured fuel tanks, it did not ignite and the helicopter did not burn. The other soldiers in the platoon maintained a vigilant defensive position, not sure if gunfire brought the helicopter down. Blade strikes on tree branches or bamboo often sounded like gunfire to already hyper-vigilant combat soldiers but this time no enemy soldiers were involved.

A medevac helicopter arrived soon after our RTO called the request for aid to our headquarters. An AH-1 Cobra gunship also circled overhead to protect the medevac during their mission. The injured soldiers were given first aid, carefully placed on litters and hoisted to the relative safety of the medevac helicopter by winch and cable. After the successful medevac, we raided the downed helicopter and searched the surrounding area for our c-rations, water and any other useful items. Our plunder included one intact M-60 machine gun (which we never returned) and more ammo than we could carry. We dug foxholes, put out trip flares linked by trip wire, covered by claymore mines, and prepared for the night. We heated our C-rations and washed it down with water flavored by Kool Aid to mask the chemical taste the water acquired when transported in the metal artillery canisters. Even as bad as the water from the canisters tasted, we drank it without hesitation when that was the only available supply. It was another sleepless, rainy, mosquito bitten night; but, there was no enemy contact.

The next day the crash inspection team from the helicopter group's headquarters arrived in two jeeps and an M-37 truck over an old plantation maintenance road that brought them close enough for a five-man team from our platoon to escort them to the crash site. They made their evaluation of the damage to the helicopter, which was quickly determined to be unrepairable, and gathered information about the cause of the crash. They also evaluated the damage to the rubber trees so the Michelin Rubber Company could be reimbursed for their loss of future revenue.

A helicopter arrived later to retrieve the engine and a few valuable parts that the team had cannibalized for other helicopter repairs. Once completed, the wreck of the once formidable flying machine was destroyed with white phosphorus and thermite grenades. The tremendous heat generated by the incendiaries reduced it to a pile of molted metal in a matter of just a few minutes, and it would remain too hot to touch for many hours. Our visitors left, we formed our squads into a combat platoon and as a single column, made our way back to the perimeter bunkers at Quan Loi, hoping to arrive in time for hot chow. We did not know that this was only the first of several helicopter crashes we would encounter during our combat tour.

**J. Edward Cannon**

## **MY HOMECOMING**

On what turned out to be my last night in the field, the company set up in a swamp. I'd been in some pretty uncomfortable places in Vietnam, but this was one of the worst. When the sun went down, the mosquitoes came out in full force. It got so bad that I put on my gas mask and could hear them bouncing off of it in a frenzy. The wet ground sort of swayed back and forth. It was a very long night.

The next morning, the Captain's radio operator, Dave Buterbaugh, told me that my chopper was on the way. I was going home!! Dave had come over with me 12 months before, so he could have gone as well, but he stayed another 2 months because he felt the company needed him. Dave was one of the many, many brave, selfless men I met during my tour.

As my chopper slowly lifted off the ground, I looked down at my comrades. I've never felt closer to men, before or since. I'd always thought that when veterans told "war stories", an element of exaggeration was to be expected. But I knew that if we simply told the truth, told exactly what had happened to us, people would think we were exaggerating.

On my last night in country, I got a 6 pack of beer and went down to the beach at Cam Ranh Bay. I decided to sleep on the sand that night. I'd slept on the ground for a year; and I'd do it one more time. As I drank the beer and looked at the sun setting over the South China Sea, I was in awe of all that I'd gone through in Vietnam. I knew that it had changed me in ways I could only guess.

The next day I boarded the plane that took me back home. When we landed at Fort Lewis, we were processed in, fed a meal, and issued dress greens to replace our jungle fatigues. We then took a bus to the Seattle airport. It felt odd that there were no wire screens on the bus windows to protect us from grenades. It was a Saturday morning, so families were driving around Seattle doing their weekend shopping. They were relaxed and happy. They were at peace.

Of course, I didn't know it then, but it would take another 10 years before I really came home. There were years of loneliness and isolation and anger. In many ways, I found it harder to be a veteran in America than to be an infantry soldier in Vietnam.

I don't regret having served. I couldn't have faced myself if I'd tried to avoid the war. And I can't help but think that men of my generation who didn't serve feel as Shakespeare portrays those who didn't fight with Henry V at Agincourt:

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition;  
And gentlemen in England now a-bed  
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not  
here,  
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any  
speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

**Tom Hallinan**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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## NEEDING PHOTOS

Of our 397 Jumping Mustang brothers who gave the ultimate sacrifice, these are the 16 men we have no photo for. Many of you bring photos to the reunions, and please continue to do so because perhaps another member will recognize someone.

### Alpha Company

Herbst, Thomas SGT  
Valadez, Timmy PFC  
Williams, Willis PFC  
Witcher, Samuel SGT

### KIA

July 10, 1969  
Sept 28, 1969  
April 11, 1967  
July 4, 1967

### Hometown

Santa Cruz, CA  
Los Angeles, CA,  
Savannah, GA  
Martinsville, VA

### Bravo Company

Diaz-Roman, Carmelo SGT  
Harmon, Charles SPC  
Johnson, Nathan CPL  
Martir-Torres, Julio PFC  
Ocampo, Robert PFC  
Pizarro-Colon, Marcos CPL

April 11, 1969  
March 25, 1966  
Oct 18, 1967  
Sept 28, 1966  
Mar 21, 1967  
Aug 11, 1970

Puerto Rico  
Detroit, MI,  
Mt Olive, VA  
Puerto Rico  
Los Angeles, CA  
Puerto Rico

### Charlie Company

Love, JC SPC  
Vinassa, Michael SPC

Oct 28, 1966  
May 22, 1966

Black, AL  
Los Angeles, CA

### Delta Company

Ferralez, Richard CPL  
Harrison, Thomas CPL

May 26, 1968  
June 20, 1968

Los Angeles, CA  
Granite City, IL

### Echo Company

Kerr, Wesley SGT  
Lopez, Ricardo CPL

March 21, 1969  
March 21, 1969

New York, NY  
New York, NY

If you have a photo please advise Mike or Sue Rice at 248-681-6184 or [sr6453@att.net](mailto:sr6453@att.net) and we will assist in copying, cropping and posting it in the Memory Books, Wall of Faces and online Findagrave site. Thanks to the many people who have previously offered photos of our fallen brothers.

**Sue Rice**

