1 March 1968 SP5 McClatchy

Today we pause to remember SP5 Jeffery McClatchy, Jr who was KIA on March 1, 1968 when his own claymore detonated. SP5 McClatchy, a SF combat engineer, was TDY to FOB-3, Khe Sanh, on a Snake Bite Team from 1st SFG(A), Okinawa. He was working as a Hatchet Force Advisor, conducting a security patrol outside of FOB-3, when the explosion took his life.

21 year old McClatchy, from El Campo, Texas, graduated fifth in his class at Westside High School and earned honors as an all-district tackle. He was married just under a year when he died and his only child, a son, was born just weeks later. Businesses in his small home town closed down during his funeral in his families plot in Pine Grove Cemetery, Warda, Fayette County, Texas.

SP5 McClatchy's older brother Percy, was KIA in Saigon in August 1966.

1 March 1969 CPT Campbell

Today we pause to remember CPT Clyde William Campbell, who was on March 1st, 1969. Originally carried as MIA, his remains were repatriated in 2009 and identified in 2010.

Then 1LT Clyde W. Campbell, a member of the USAF 602nd Special Operations Squadron, was the pilot of a Douglas A-1 Skyraider J-model “Spad” on an operational mission over Laos on March 1, 1969. His role on that day was a strike mission in northern Laos. His wingman was MAJ Harry Dunivant. Both aircraft were armed with eight 500-pound bombs. They flew to northern Xiangkhoang Province near the city of Na Khang. This area was in Military Region II and on the northern edge of the Plain of Jars region. FAC (Forward Air Control) in Laos was conducted by RAVENS, who were volunteers clandestinely stationed in Laos to support anti-communist efforts in that country. Na Khang was the location of Lima Site 36. North Vietnamese forces had been building towards an attack on Lima Site 85 (some 150 miles to the north) for several weeks. Lima 85 was the northernmost site and was the base for radar and radio equipment used to direct air traffic over North Vietnam. Lima 36, the next base south, was used at this time for a staging area. Indigenous troops were flown out of this site and aircraft could refuel here. Lima 85 was overrun and taken later on March 18, 1969. Following the fall of "the Rock", Lima Site 36 was taken. Enemy activity in Military Region II was greatly increased during this time period, and U.S. aircraft were brought in from neighboring Thailand in great numbers. At a point about 10 miles west of Na Khang, Campbell's aircraft went down. The FAC transmitted over the radio, “That A-1 just went in!” Dunivant looked down at the target area and saw a ball of fire. Neither Dunivant nor the Raven pilot saw a parachute or heard an emergency beeper. They were unsure if the aircraft had been hit by ground fire or whether he didn’t pay close enough attention to his minimum release altitude and flew the A-1 into the ground. The Air Force listed him Killed in Action, Body Not Recovered. In 1997, a joint United States-Lao People's Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) team investigated a crash site in Houaphan Province, Laos, within 330 feet of the last known location of Campbell. In addition to human remains, the team located aircraft wreckage and military equipment, which correlated with Campbell's aircraft. From 2009 to 2010, additional joint U.S.-L.P.D.R. recovery teams investigated and excavated the crash site three times. Teams recovered additional human remains, military equipment--including an aircraft data plate--and a .38-caliber pistol matching the serial number issued to Campbell. Scientists from the JPAC used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools in the identification of Campbell. [Taken from pownetwork.org and the book Cheating Death by George J. Marrett]

Airman Missing From Vietnam War Identified

The Department of Defense POW Missing Personnel Office announced today June, 2012 that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Air Force Capt. Clyde W. Campbell, 24, of Longview, Texas, will be buried June 21, at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On March 1, 1969, Campbell was a pilot aboard an A-1J Skyraider aircraft that crashed while carrying out a close air-support mission in Houaphan Province, Laos. American forward air controllers, directing the mission nearby, reported hearing an explosion which they believed to be Campbell’s bombs and later learned Campbell’s aircraft had crashed. No parachutes were seen in the area.

In 1997, a joint U.S. Lao People’s Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) team investigated a crash site in Houaphan Province, Laos, within 100 meters of the last-known location of Campbell. In addition to human remains, the team located aircraft wreckage and military equipment, which correlated with Campbell’s aircraft.

From 2009 to 2010, additional joint U.S.L.P.D.R. recovery teams investigated and excavated the crash site three times. Teams recovered additional human remains, military equipment—including an aircraft data plate—and a .38-caliber pistol matching the serial number issued to Campbell.

Scientists from the JPAC used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools in the identification of Campbell.

2 March 1967

On 2 March 1967, one of the worst tragedies to befall the Special Forces CIDG program during the war occurred. Two U.S. Air Force planes released napalm ordnance mistakenly on the village near Lang Vei, which spewed exploding fire over the camp, landing zone, minefield and village. 135 CIDG and native civilians were killed, and 213 were horribly wounded, burned or disfigured.

2 March 1969 SGT Evans & SP5 May (RT Plumb)

Today we pause to remember SGT William Anthony Evans (1-1) & SP5 [Michael Fredric](http://www.dixiestones.net/details.php/listing/728)k May (1-0), RT Plumb, and three indigenous who were KIA (bodies not recovered) on March 2, 1969.

A Det B-50 recon team (RT PLUMB) was inserted into the SVN/Cambodian border area north of Tonle Cham, SVN, on 02 March 1969. As the team, which reportedly included 11 US and an unspecified number of ethic troops from Project Omega, moved through the area they approached a wood line, and several members of the team heard the sound of rifle safeties being clicked, followed by a blast of weapons fire from the front and left flank. It was later judged that the team had been hit by a battalion-size NVA force from its base camp. The team fell back 60 meters to a mound located in the area. A perimeter was formed, and the enemy closed in on the position.

Gunships were called in to repel the enemy advance. Later that day, a projectile thought to be a B-40 rocket exploded directly over the team's position resulting in wounds to 8 of 11 men. SGT Evans at that time sustained a lethal head wound and died shortly thereafter. SP5 May received multiple wounds to the head and chest and died 30 minutes later. The surviving members of the team moved about 60 meters from the area, leaving the remains of Evans, May and three ARVN team members behind. After the air support ended at nightfall the NVA renewed their attack, forcing the recon team to withdraw further, but they were unable to bring their dead with them. The team was recovered on the following day, but it was not possible to attempt to recover the dead. One account of the action states that medical evacuation teams conducted an aerial search during which aerial photos revealed the Americans on the team had all been killed. Another account reports that the nine American members of the team survived.

Although the American government offered an apology to the Cambodian government for the cross-border incident and requested their assistance in recovering the missing team members, nothing came of the request ... the Cambodian government didn't control the area; it was occupied by the North Vietnamese Army.

The remains of Sergeants Evans and May have not been repatriated.

4 Mar 1969 SFC Warczak

Today we pause to remember SFC David James Warczak, who died of a self inflicted gunshot on March 4, 1969. SFC Warczak, a member of B-50, died in Phong Dinh, South Vietnam. We do not have records or further details about the incident.

SFC Warczak had spent time as a Recon Team Leader (RT 5), had been in the Army for 18 years (1951-1969), and was married. He was on at least his 2nd tour with MACV-SOG, having served as the S-2 NCOIC at CCS in 1967. He also received a Silver Star for action on 3 Oct 1966 while serving with B-50.

SFC Warczak is buried in Arlington Cemetery. The citation for his 1966 Silver Star follows:

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Sergeant First Class David J. Warczak, United States Army, for exceptionally valorous actions on 3 October 1966 as team leader of a four-man Special Forces recon-naissance patrol that had penetrated deep into hostile territory. Having made contact with two squads of Viet Cong, Sergeant Warczak and his patrol were engaged in an intense firefight when his assistant team leader was seriously wounded. Without thought for his personal safety, he ran through devastating hostile fire to the wounded man, dragged him into a position of relative safety, and administered first aid. When the extraction aircraft arrived overhead, he realized that it would be unable to help the team at its present location due to the impenetrable vegetation. Sergeant Warczak lifted the wounded man and carried him through the thick brush toward a clear landing zone. Constantly subjected to intense hostile fire, he moved over one hundred meters to the landing zone, waited until his teammates had been extracted then boarded the helicopter. His courage against a numerically superior enemy force turned the tide in what could have been a fatal situation.

5 Mar 1969 SGT Himes and SP4 Jones

Today we pause to remember SGT Earl W Himes and SP4 Sanderfierd A Jones, KIA 5 Mar 1969. Both men were assigned to CCN and taking part in OPERATION DEWEY CANYON.

SGT Himes was point man on a MACV-SOG recon patrol in the A-Shau Valley in Laos when he was ambushed and killed. SP4 Sanderfierd (Sandy) Jones ran to him despite attempts by SSG (later 1SG) Charles Gray's to stop him. SP4 Jones was hit multiple times with AK-47 rounds to the legs, chest and one to the head that killed him instantly. Both SGT Himes and SP4 Jones were awarded the Silver Star for their actions during Operation Dewey Canyon.

23 year old SGT Himes was born October 10, 1945, the son of Mr. And Mrs. Francis Himes of Spring Hill, PA. Although a native of Phoenixville, he spent most of his life in the Spring City area. Earl was a member of the Spring-Ford High School’s wrestling and football teams and graduated in 1964. He had worked as a die caster for the Doehler Jarvis Division of the National Lead Co., Stowe. Despite being severely wounded by a VC-placed bamboo spike in 1967, while making a parachute drop and spending several months in Army hospitals for the leg wound, he asked to be sent back to Vietnam in July of 1968. He is buried in Limerick Gardens of Memories, Limerick Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. He was survived by his parents, several brothers and sisters and a young daughter, Michelle.

SP4 Jones, 22 years old, was born 22 Feb 1947 in Dallas, Texas. In 1965 he graduated from Wilmer-Hutchins High School and attended Texas A&M University for two years. He joined the Army in May 1967. He was survived by a wife and his parents. He is buried in Edgewood Cemetery, Lancaster, Texas.

Silver Star citation for Sanderfierd Jones.

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Specialist Fourth Class Sanderfierd Allen Jones (ASN: RA-15884605), United States Army, for gallantry in action while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force while serving with Command and Control North, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, in the Republic of Vietnam. Specialist Fourth Class Jones distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 5 March 1969 as a Squad Leader of a company of indigenous soldiers on a search and clear operation deep within enemy territory. When his company's point element was helplessly caught in an ambush, Specialist Jones moved his squad forward to assist his stricken comrades. The enemy realized his movement would block their retreat and shifted the greatest volume of fire on his squad, pinning his men down also. Aware that immediate action would be necessary to keep his troops from being annihilated, Specialist Jones moved from man to man, reassuring and encouraging them. He then led an assault on the hostile positions, inflicting numerous casualties on the enemy. As the communists began to withdraw, he was mortally wounded by hostile fire. Specialist Fourth Class Jones' gallantry in action, at the cost of his life, was in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Silver Star citation for SGT Earl Himes. CITATION:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Sergeant Earl W. Himes (ASN: 15955630), United States Army, for gallantry in action in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force while serving with Command and Control Detachment, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, in the Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant Himes distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 5 March 1969 as assistant leader of a reconnaissance team operating deep within enemy-held territory. As he and his comrades entered a clearing they were caught in an ambush and were pinned under the intense hostile fire. Seeing the point man shot by an enemy machine gunner, Sergeant Himes maneuvered forward to assist the stricken man and found that he was dead. With complete disregard for his personal safety, he charged the machine gun position, firing his rifle and throwing grenades until he was mortally wounded by the communists' barrage. His courageous act enabled his fellow team members to escape the enemy killing zone and reach cover. Sergeant Himes' gallantry in action at the cost of his life, was in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

5 Mar 1970

Today we pause to remember four of our aviation brothers from 195h AHC, who were KIA on March 5, 1970 while supporting SOG:

CW2 Charles "Gary" Garvin Dougan (aircraft commander)
SGT James "Larry" Laurence Howell (crew chief)
1LT Robert Ira Rabb (pilot)
SP4 James Delvin Smith (gunner)

On March 5, 1970, a U.S. Army helicopter UH-1C (tail number 64-14120) from the 195th Assault Helicopter Company, 1st Aviation Brigade was operating in Cambodia west of Quan Loi (in support of SOG) when it was hit by a RPG on a gun run and exploded 3 times before impacting. There were no survivors.

A Bright Light rescue team tried several times that day to recover the four men’s remains, but the area was too hot, everyone taking enemy fire. The bodies were recovered later.

CW2 Charles "Gary" Garvin Dougan (aircraft commander: "Gary" [nobody ever called him anything else] was the son of Charles Durward "Speck" and Mae I. Davis Dougan. They had the grocery store in Graham, Missouri and Gary & his younger brother Larry's footprints are still in the cement sidewalk in front. He always had a grin, usually mischievous, from the time he was a baby. He loved scouting, and earned the God & Country and Eagle Scout awards, among many others. Gary is buried in his hometown in Prairie Home Cemetery, Graham, MO and the community erected a memorial to him in the Graham Park.

1LT Robert Ira Rabb (pilot) was 23 years old and married to Peggy. A native of Pine Prairie, Georgia, he was a 1968 graduate of North Georgia College. At the time of his loss, his family was living in Darien. GA and he was buried in Saint Andrews Cemetery, Darien.

SGT James "Larry" Laurence Howell (crew chief) was born in 1947 at Lake Wales, FL. His family moved to Babson Parks Heights (Dade County, FL) in 1956. He graduated from Pasco Senior High School in 1965 and attended Norman Junior College in Norman Park, GA for one year, then transferred to Polk Junior College where he was a student when he joined the Army in August 1967. He was on his second tour of duty in Vietnam. He was survived by his parents and a brother Charles. James is buried in Lake Wales Cemetery.

22 year old SP4 James Delvin Smith (gunner), from Circleville, Ohio, was married to Pamela Hatfield Smith. A 1968 graduate of Circleville High, Smith entered the Army following his graduation and was sent to Vietnam in October 1969. He was survived by his wife, parents, four brothers and a sister. He was buried in Hitler-Ludwig Cemetery with full military honors.

6 Mar 1967 SGT Carpenter

Today we pause to remember SGT Howard Bruce Carpenter, KIA (body not recovered) on March 6, 1967. SGT Carpenter, a commo man, was assigned to a Hatchet Force company at FOB-1, Det B-50 (Project Delta)**.**

**Circumstances of loss: On 6 March 1967 there was a firefight between a Special Forces team and an unknown sized enemy force resulting in one unaccounted-for American. On 5 March 1967, a CH-46 helicopter crashed attempting to insert a Special Forces Team. No one was killed or seriously injured in the crash. After the crash, the Special Forces team and helicopter crew established a defensive perimeter around the helicopter. They were attacked by an unknown sized enemy force the next morning and the Special Forces team member was killed. The remaining team members covered the body with a poncho and hid it 20 to 50 meters south of the helicopter crash site. On 7 March 1967, the Special Forces Team and helicopter crew were extracted, but were unable to recover the remains.**

His story is best told by reading his Silver Star citation: For Gallantry in action while engaged in military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Sergeant Carpenter distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 6 March 1967 while serving in the Special Forces as a radio operator on his units defensive perimeter during a Viet Cong attack. A probe of the perimeter by a group of twenty insurgents resulted in a firefight which left ten enemy casualties and three Americans wounded in the firing zone. When the Viet Cong withdrew to regroup, Sergeant Carpenter completely disregarded the danger of their presence and moved out to help the wounded. As he approached the two disabled men, he encountered several insurgents closing in on them. He rapidly killed two of the enemy and forced the others to withdraw, then carried one of the casualties to safety within the perimeter. Undaunted by his first encounter with the Viet Cong, Sergeant Carpenter left the perimeter to rescue the other man. Once more he found the insurgents closing in on the casualty and took them under fire. At that point his weapon jammed. Refusing to take cover and give up his comrade, Sergeant Carpenter fearlessly charged the Viet Cong and used his rifle as a club until he was fatally wounded by hostile fire. His selfless and courageous sacrifice saved the lives of two men in the face of attack by a numerically superior force at the cost of his own life.

Carpenter's remains were checked by another team member and it was determined that he had died from the wounds he had received during the firefight. Because of enemy pressure in the area, the company was forced to leave Carpenter's remains behind as they sought a more secure position.

SGT Carpenter was from Youngstown Ohio, unmarried and survived by his parents and brother Thomas. His family had deep military roots in America, dating back to the Revolutionary War. His older brother, Thomas, also served in the Army. SGT Carpenter's family erected a monument in his memory at Poland Riverside Cemetery, Poland, Ohio. There is also a chapel and local bridge named in his honor.

Prairie Fire Report: On 3 Mar two HF’s infiltrated VIC GOLF-6 to exploit reported enemy activity and vehicular movement VIC Route 922 and

attempt recovery of the body of a U.S. member KIA with ST Alaska

on 21 Feb. During the launch one of the helicopters was disabled

on landing and had to remain in the area. The helicopter incident prevented full exploitation of enemy activity astride Route 922 due to emphasis being placed on recovery of the helicopter. Enemy pressure and unfavorable weather forced the HF’s to abandon the helicopter and disengage from the enemy. Enemy contact resulted in 4 (1 US [Howard Carpenter?] and 3 VN) KIA AND 8 (2 US and 6 VN) WIA. The HF’s exfiltrated 8 Mar.

6 Mar 1968

Today we pause to remember LTC Robert Lopez, FOB-1 Commander, who was KIA (body not recovered) on 6 March 1968 in Thua Thien-Hue Province, Republic of South Vietnam. Also lost with LTC Lopez was USMC pilot Major William H Seward, member of Aviation Branch, Ops32 (Air Studies Branch). The men were aboard a CH-46 Boeing Sea Knight Cargo Helicopter, the lead helicopter of a flight of two CH-46's that were supporting the attempted insertion of a six man SOG recon team. It was reportedly the second insertion mission in the area and was approached with security concerns. The mission required the employment of a hoist to insert the ground forces through the triple canopy trees which were over 100 feet tall into a small opening on the side of a mountain. Previous teams had reported seeing North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Russian AN aircraft flying down that part of the valley at night delivering supplies and picking up wounded NVA or allied prisoners. While hovering above the jungle canopy, their aircraft started receiving enemy fire, started to descend and fell to the earth, exploded, and burned. Both Seward and the co-pilot were helplessly trapped in the twisted wreckage of the cockpit. The personnel who were able to get out of the burning aircraft (rear cabin crew and passengers) succeeded in freeing the co-pilot. MAJ Seward was unconscious and trapped in the opposite side of the cockpit. Every effort to free him failed. LTC Lopez appeared to be trapped between the aircraft and the ground, and efforts to free him were useless. Two hours later a recovery team arrived on the site, found the aircraft, and determined the personnel to be beyond recovery at that time.

In July of 1993 the 24th Joint Field Activity Team investigated what was referred to as (REFNO 1077) in Phu Thuong Village, Tua Thien-Hue Province. The JFA was a joint United States Socialist Republic of Vietnam operation developed to investigate possible MIA sites. The team interviewed one witness who provided first hand information on the crash site. The witness, Mr. Hoc, stated he was searching for aircraft crash sites to salvage metal in 1983 when he discovered a helicopter in the reported location of MAJ William Henry Seward's aircraft. The witness showed the team the location of the aircraft where he had located and reburied one piece of human remains. He retrieved one long bone fragment and turned it over to the team. Mr. Hoc also reported that an eyewitness to the actual firefight in 1968 was present when he found the aircraft. Mr. Nguyen Hai Hieu was subsequently interviewed. He stated that he was bird hunting in the vicinity and actually saw the helicopter shot down. He observed several individuals in the post crash aircraft, three of whom appeared to be Americans. In August 1994, during the 31st Joint Field Activity Team investigation, a follow up search of the original crash site and recovered more remains, articles from the aircraft which could be identified as belonging to a CH-46A Helicopter including the aircraft data plate of MAJ Seward's aircraft. The additional recovered remains were escorted to Hanoi where they were selected for repatriation to the United States. Custody of the remains was transferred to United States Officials at Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi on 4 October 1994. They were sent to the United States Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii. On 28 February 2000, the Scientific Director of the United States Army Central Identification Laboratory determined the remains to be that MAJ Seward and LTC Lopez. This was certified by the Commanding Officer of the United States Army Central Identification Laboratory on 2 March 2000.

LTC Lopez and MAJ Seward are buried together at Arlington National Cemetery.

6 Mar 1970

Today we pause to remember MSG James Warren Finzel who drowned on March 6, 1970 at the Marble Mountain Beach, while assigned to CCN.

The following was submitted by Col. Larry Greene: "I remember SGT McKee was swimming with SFC Finzel the day Finzel drowned. (Finzel) was a big, muscular guy who owned a monkey that had a taste for rum and coke (the monkey). There was another NCO swimming with them but I don't remember his name. He could have been Finzel's 1-1. I had just gotten to know Finzel before he died. Both of our teams had been at Phu Bai in isolation trying to get into the AO, but either the weather or activity on the LZs had prevented it. Finzel's team finally got in and stayed for about 5 days or so. My team got in and got shot out after a few hours. We had come back to Da Nang about the same time.”

MSG Finzel left behind a widow, three sons and a daughter. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

MSG Finzel received the Silver Star for action just three days before his death: CITATION: The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Sergeant First Class James W. Finzel, United States Army, for gallantry in action while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Command and Control Detachment, North, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. Sergeant First Class Finzel distinguished himself while serving as leader of a long range reconnaissance patrol during an intelligence gathering operation deep in enemy controlled territory. After helicopter insertion into the planned area of operation, Sergeant Finzel moved his team to a hilltop and there set up defensive positions for the night. The enemy probed the team's position all through the night but did not attack in force until first light in the morning. Sergeant Finzel rushed forward to meet the enemy's lead elements and swiftly cut down two of the adversary with rifle fire. He then dropped back onto his defensive perimeter and commenced to direct tactical aircraft in repeated bombing runs on the surrounding enemy, at times as close as twenty meters to his own position. Sighting a gap in the enemy encirclement, Sergeant Finzel led his team through the opening just as the air strikes lifted and the enemy launched another fierce assault on the hilltop. Met by a blocking enemy element, Sergeant Finzel single-handedly stayed off the attackers with rifle fire while his men rushed to cover and formed a defensive perimeter. He then rushed through a storm of enemy fire to rejoin his besieged team. Standing out in the open, Sergeant Finzel daringly exposed himself to hostile fire as he sighted enemy positions and directed tactical aircraft to them. At this time, he spotted one of his men lying wounded some thirty meters outside the team's perimeter. Firing his rifle on the run, Sergeant Finzel maneuvered to his comrade and aided him back to the team. While directing air strikes over their path of withdrawal, Sergeant Finzel then moved the reconnaissance team to an emergency landing zone where they were met and extracted by helicopters. Sergeant First Class Finzel's gallantry in action was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

8 March 1970.

Today we remember WO1 David Karl Erenstoft (pilot); SP4 Wim Goeree; 1LT Jacob Lee Kinser; SP5 William Robert Rogne (all members of 155th AHC) and 5 ARVN Troops who were killed while flying in an UH-1H (tail number 68-15540) that crashed into the tree line in heavy fog. The helicopter was flying out of Ban Me Thout enroute to Duc Lap with the crew and 6 ARVN troops aboard.

A total of four helicopters were flying in formation in dense fog. Due to limited visibility they had to fly under the clouds and follow a narrow road cut through the trees. The lone ARVN survivor said that the pilot lost sight the road. He banked right then left trying to relocate the road, but hit the tree line and crashed.

The other helicopters continued to their destination after losing radio contact with the Huey and seeing smoke in the area. On their flight back to Ban Me Thuot they spotted the wreckage and a medivac unit was sent to the scene, finding only one survivor.

9 March 1968

Today we pause to remember SFC Dale R Karpenske, 441st MI Det, 1st SFG(A) (Okinawa) who was TDY to Vietnam and serving with MACV-SOG. He died March 9, 1968 in Bien Hoa. His cause of death is listed as "accidental self-inflicted injury" and “accidental self-destruction”. Grenades he was wearing accidently detonated. SFC Karpenske left behind a wife and daughter and he is buried in Amery Cemetery, Amery, Wisconsin.

9 March 1969

Today we pause to remember SSG Tim Leroy Walters, OPS32 ALO-CCN and CPT Robert "Bob" F Rex, 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron, USAF. Both were listed as KIA BNR on March 9, 1969 when their aircraft went down. SSG Walters remains were recovered 1999.

Captain Bob Rex and Army Staff Sergeant Tim L. Walters were the pilot and observer aboard an O2A aircraft (serial #67-21425) on a combat support mission when it crashed for unknown reasons about 5 miles into Laos west of the DMZ on March 9, 1969.

After Rex and Walters' aircraft vanished, another aircraft (call sign Knife 55), reported that the aircraft crashed at about 1150 hours. A ground team inspected the wreckage and reported that both the occupants were dead. However, hostile ground fire prevented them from recovering the remains. Two members of the ground team did not personally know SSgt. Walters, but stated that both individuals were positively dead. An aircraft engine was on top of the NCO (Walters). The ground team recovered the weapons, map case and camera from the aircraft, but because of hostile ground fire, left the remains behind.

Bob Rex, still listed as ‘Body Not Recovered’, had a bright future when he graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1964. He was both coach and player on the Academy soccer team, and was affectionately known throughout the Wing as "Oed". After his loss, his parents accepted five posthumous award for CPT Rex to include two Distinguished Flying Crosses, one for extraordinary achievement on an aerial flight Feb 10, 1969 and the other for heroism on aerial flight March 9, 1969; the Air Medal (including six oak leaf clusters) for meritorious achievement in flights from Aug 21, 1968 to March 8, 1969; the Air Force Commendations Medal and the Purple Heart. His family placed a memorial stone for him in Odebolt Cemetery, Odebolt, Iowa.

Staff Sergeant Walters enlisted in the U.S. Army June 1, 1964 and completed basic training and infantry AIT at Fort Ord, California. He then completed parachute training at Fort Benning, Georgia and then was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.  He mobilized with the 101st to Vietnam in August, 1965 and completed his one year tour.  It was at this time, that Tim was recruited for service with the SOG.

Tim felt he belonged in Vietnam and kept extending his tour and he was assigned to the MAC-V Studies and Observation's Program beginning his second tour. He received training in counter insurgency and received most of his training in country and through on the job training.  A review of Tim's Department of the Army Form 20, Record of Assignments does not tell the story on what he did, while Tim's record was replete with assignments as postal clerk and publication's NCO, he was in fact operating in the top secret world of counterinsurgency and being the eyes and ears on these unconventional operations into Laos and Cambodia.  Many of these operations were code named "Prairie Fire" or "Shining Brass."  Tim would fly into these areas to provide communication and render what help was needed.  His awards and decoration citations reflect the true nature of his work.  Tim would remain in the assignment for the next 2 and 3/4 years.

Tim's remains were returned from Laos on February 16, 1999; they were positively identified using MCDNA on his teeth on August 11, 1999 and his remains were buried with full military honors in a service on October 23, 1999 at the Silverbrook Cemetery in Niles, Michigan.  He was laid to rest next to the memorial stone of his uncle, Captain Harry Leroy Walters, Missing in Action from World War II (remains were never recovered).

Tim was the recipient of the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Parachute Wings, Laotian Parachute Badge, Vietnam Parachute Badge, Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Joint Services Commendation's Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the Congressional POW/MIA Commemorative Medal. His name is located on Panel 30W, Line 97 of the Vietnam Memorial.

14 Mar 1969

Today we pause to remember 1LT James L. Ripanti, KIA on March 14 1969 while leading Recon Team New York (CCC) on a mission in Laos.

After leading RT New York for three days, outmaneuvering enemy tracker teams and a platoon of searchers while on a mission in Laos, 1LT Ripanti’s recon team came in contact with the enemy. After a quick exchange of fire, Ripanti was mortally wounded in the chest by AK-47 fire. Ripanti reportedly refused first aid and attempted to direct the defense of his team while on the verge of death. A Bright Light reaction force, code name for those sent to rescue recon teams in contact, was able to retrieve Ripanti, but he arrived at Dak To on the floor of the rescue aircraft in a fetal position, his jungle shirt dark with blood. He was dead on arrival. In a most daring act of valor, the Bright Light team was able to extract the other members of RT New York without further loss of life. [Taken from coffeltdatabase.org and the book “Secret Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines with the Elite Warriors of SOG” by John L. Plaster]

14 March 1970

Today we pause to remember CPT Dana A Dilley, 20th SOS, who was KIA on March 14, 1970 while flying in support of MACV-SOG.

The 14th Special Operations Wing (14th SOW) and 20th Special Operations Squadron (20th SOS) unit history states that on March 14, 1970, they were flying in support of a LRRP (long-range reconnaissance patrol) mission in the Duc Lap area when they crashed in the jungle due to suspected enemy ground fire. The aircraft, a U.S. Air Force helicopter UH-1F (tail number 64-15491), was destroyed. The pilot, CAPT Dana A. Dilley, was a fatally injured. The instructor pilot, CAPT Marvin R. Leper, received broken bones in one foot and cuts. Both gunners, SSGT John A. Thorburn and A1C David A. Carpenter, sustained major injuries. An Army helicopter on the same operation landed near the crash, retrieved the ground crew and transported them to Cam Ranh Bay where after treatment they were evacuated to the U.S. [Taken from vhpa.org]

14 March 1970

Today we pause to remember SSGT Thomas P O'Neill, USMC, Force Recon, Intel Sec, US Naval Advisory Det, Camp Fay, Da Nang, Opsa 31/37, KIA on 14 March 1970. As a volunteer member of an ambush team to capture or kill Viet Cong tax collectors, he was positioned as well as the other ambush team members by a Naval Ship Officer who had no prior knowledge of ground combat operations. O'Neill and a Force Recon Gunnery Sergeant were placed in a patch of bushes in the center of a trail. The main ambush force was placed along a ridge line overlooking the trails "Y" intersection. The Naval Commander anticipated the VC would enter the trail nearest the main ambush force; however, the VC tax collectors enter the trail on the far side of the "Y"; away from the ambush location. The ambush commander, fearing the VC would escape, gave the signal to open fire causing friendly fire to pass through the position where O'Neill and the Marine were located, killing O'Neill and wounding the marine. ADDED: By Ernest E Clancy RM1 USN Ret, I was at NAD from 26 Aug 1968 To May 2 1971 and was in house 10 Saigon 23 Aug 1968 intel report indicated that two tax collectors were coming across the bridge at a certain time, Gunny Brosch and SSGT O'Neill were placed in a brush on a ridge Lcdr Jose Taylor, Lt Strong seal, Lt Belding seal, an intel officer (new) unnamed and RM1 Bill Gow who carried O'neill back to the helo. When the tax collectors came across the bridge the VN seals were firing in the direction of the two marines. Tax collectors escaped. O'neill was due to DEROS 28 Apr 1970.

15/16 March 1966

Today we pause to remember MAJ Glenn David McElroy and CPT John Michael Nash (20th Avn Det, Pilot, OV-1) who were lost (KIA/BNR) in Laos on March 15, 1966.

On March 15, 1966, Maj. Glenn D. McElroy flew in from Saigon to accompany CPT Mike Nash on a photo reconnaissance run along Route 91 on the west side of the Se Nam Kok River valley northwest of Tchepone, Laos. Their radio call sign was "Ironspud". McElroy was the pilot of the OV1A Mohawk (serial #6313124) on this "Tigerhound" operation. McElroy was an intelligence officer assigned to HQ MACV J-2 in Saigon.

There was a large number of NVA in the area maintaining a truck park along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, as well as 6 gun emplacements (3AA + 3AW). At about 1:00 p.m., shortly before Nash and McElroy began their photo run on the west side of the valley, an Air Force O1E flown by Holmes was shot down on the valley's east side by at least one of the gun emplacements.

Another O1E, call sign "Hound Dog 50" was dispatched immediately, and

observed Holmes, apparently unconscious, sitting in the cockpit of his

plane. About 2:35 p.m., Hound Dog 50 also observed the OV-1 Mohawk flown by Nash and McElroy enter the line of enemy fire on the west side of the valley. The OV-1 was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed. One parachute was observed leaving the damaged plane from the right side, and from the crew placement in the plane, it is believed that Nash ejected from the aircraft.

Because of the plane losses and the discovery of the troops and gun

emplacements, F-4's (call sign Oxwood 95) and A1E Skyraiders were called in and the ensuing battle raged for 4-5 hours that afternoon in the operational area known as "ECHO".

On March 16, a search and rescue team flew to the crash site of David

Holmes' O1E and found that the plane was empty. Their report states that he was either removed from the plane or left under his own power. URC-10 emergency radio signals were heard four times in the next six days, but it was thought that the signals were initiated by the enemy as voice contact was never made. Holmes, Nash and McElroy all had URC-10 radios. McElroy and Nash were listed as KIA/BNR until 2008, when a search of their crash site yielded remains.

John Michel Nash was born on March 21, 1937. He grew up on a small farm in central Indiana, about an hour north of Indianapolis with his three brothers. His maternal uncle, Joe F. Surratt, was a member of the USMA Class of 1934 and served with General Patton. He graduated from West Point in 1959 and shortly after married Mary Jane Guttilla, who was from New York City. He earned his aviator’s wings and in 1966 was a Captain assigned as a fixed wing pilot to surveillance aircraft with the 20th Aviation Detachment.

His father, Indiana State Senator Robert Nash reported the family was notified that he was missing in action in Vietnam in 1966 and in 1967 received a telegraph from the United States War Department that his status was changed to presumed dead. His wife and son, who was born while he was in Vietnam, resided near Fort Benning in Georgia. Twice in 1988, joint United States/Lao People’s Democratic Republic (LPDR) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, surveyed the crash site and found OV-1 aircraft wreckage and crew-related equipment, including an identification tag bearing Nash’s name. Between 2005 and 2009, joint US/LPDR teams, interviewed witnesses, investigated, surveyed and excavated the crash site several times. They recovered human remains, more aircraft wreckage and crew-related equipment. In November 2011, the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced that the remains of Army Lieut. Colonel Glenn McElroy, age 35 and Captain John M. Nash, age 28 classified as missing in action from the Vietnam War, had been identified. Their remains were buried together in a single casket on November 30, in Arlington National Cemetery.

17 March 1966

Today we pause to remember CPT William H Craig, Jr., Nung Reaction Force commander at FOB-1 (Kham Du) who was killed on March 17, 1966 due to an accidental discharge of his Swedish-K sub-machine gun when it fell to the floor of the club’s bar and discharged.

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| CPT Craig, age 29, was buried in Arlington, National Cemetery as is his father, COL Craig, and mother Emily. He left a widow behind. |

18 March 1969

Today we pause to remember SFC Margarito “Chico” Fernandez Jr., CCS Company D, Det B-41 (Moc Hoa). He was shot by ARVN troops when he attempted to break up a fight between them and the Mike Force soldiers near the Moc Hoa airfield. Chico held on for several months but then died on March 18, 1969.

Henry Chauvin shares what he remembers about the shooting incident: "As far as SFC Fernandez, it was prior to noon, before chow, maybe 11:00 a.m., where we heard one or two live fire rifle shots from around the Moc Hoa Market (Cho) area near the Vam Co Tay River … next the customary rapid fire from the same area by a Vietnamese soldier to alert the town … then silence … maybe 10 minutes later heard rifle fire coming from the Mike Forces Cambodian Compound near the airfield ….. a few hand grenades were thrown, and SFC Fernandez had already immediately rushed out in a jeep and drove out to the nearby airfield …… a Vietnamese light armored vehicle came on the scene. A few more shots came, then a cease fire. After the cease fire we were lined up at B-41 Mess Hall door which faced south. I was standing behind MACV Cpt. & Dr. Goudelock. SFC Fernandez came to the chow line where Cpt. Goudelock asked if anyone was hurt. SFC Fernandez told us a Cambodian soldier was in down town Moc Hoa where he left a Vietnamese prostitutes shack without paying. The prostitute was screaming when a few Vietnamese soldiers came to help. This Cambodian soldier ran around trying to hide near a few shacks, and finally fled downtown riding a bicycle on the airfield going south towards his Mike Force Compound. Vietnamese soldiers were firing around him to try to stop him and Cambodian solders were returning fire. SFC Fernandez said when he walked out in the center, the firing stopped. After telling us this, he next raised his fatigue shirt to show Dr. Goudelock where he thought he was hit maybe with shrapnel from maybe a grenade. It was in his kidney area right above his waist line, and not bleeding. Dr. Goudelock looked very carefully, said nothing and immediately brought SFC Fernandez to his B-41 1st aid building and called for a medivac. Later that afternoon Dr. Goudleock told me he immediately saw green in and around the wound … it was metal oxidation from Vietnamese bullets that probably got wet … he said this was serious and he did not know if SFC Fernandez would survive an internal infection caused by same. We later heard he had died. So sad."

27 year old SFC Fernandez was from Pearland, Brazoria, Texas and left behind a widow and four children. He was buried in South Park Cemetery, Pearland.

18 March 1969

Today we pause to remember KIA (BNR) SP5 Barry Daniel Murphy, a member of MACV-SOG CCS. On March 18, 1969, he was acting as the assistant team leader of a ten man reconnaissance team inserted into Kampong Cham Province, located in south central Cambodia. Soon after leaving the helicopter and moving on to the objective, the team was ambushed by an unknown size enemy force. During the ensuring fire fight SP5 Murphy was shot in the head, neck, arm and chest, and upon checking him, the team leader and one other team member believed him to be dead from those wounds.

Three other team members (ARVN) were killed before helicopters could extract the survivors. Because of intense enemy fire, all of the dead had to be left behind during the extraction. An aerial search for all bodies was made, but none of the casualties were re-located.

His name is inscribed on the Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial.

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19 March 1970

Today we pause to remember three members of the 20th SOS – Green Hornets - who died while supporting SOG missions when their UH-1P helicopter, tail number 65-07944, carrying a four-man crew, was shot down by enemy ground fire southeast of Ban Me Thuot during a gun training mission. One gunner was thrown clear and survived, but three men died in the crash. Those lost were CPT Clyde Wilson Enderle (posthumously promoted to Major), CPT Carlos Alberto Estrada Jr and TSG James William Greenwood.

CPT/MAJ Clyde Enderle, age 33, was the second son in the Enderle family lost during military service. His brother Robert Enderle died in a plane crash in 1962. CPT Enderle was married with three small daughters. He was also survived by his mother and one brother. He is buried in Riverview Cemetery, Port Clinton, Ohio.

CPT Carlos Alberto “Roomie” Estrada left behind a widow and 21 month old daughter. CPT Estrada is buried in the United States Air Force Academy Cemetery, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

TSG James William Greenwood had been married for 13 years and left behind his widow and three young sons. He was on his third tour in Vietnam. He is buried in Fairview Cemetery, Denison, Texas.

20 March 1969

Today we pause to remember SFC Ricardo Gonzales Davis, CCN who was KIA (BNR) on March 20th 1969 while on a recon mission.

SFC Davis was the 1-0 of RT Cooperhead, a six man team operating west of Kham Duc, eleven miles inside of Laos when Davis was hit by rifle fire in the upper chest and face saying "Jim, Jim!" then falling to the ground. He was observed by team member SGT James C. LaMotte, who was only two feet away from SFC Davis, and another team member recovered Davis's weapon and ammo. It was reported that Davis was covered with blood. The Assistant Patrol Leader arrived some seven minutes later and checked for a pulse and respiration, but could find no signs of life. Due to an advancing enemy, the patrol was forced to leave the area. Davis was not seen again and no further search was made because of air strikes and the area was held by enemy forces from that day forward.

At the very least, Davis was seriously wounded in that battle. However, the United States Army did not place him in the "Killed/Body Not Recovered" category of American Casualties until 1974. Rather he was classified as "Missing In Action", one of 600 Americans to be so designated as a result of action in Laos during the Vietnam War. His wife and family still wonder to this day if the Laotians might be able to account for Davis, due to their strong presence in the area where he was last seen.

The story of Richard Davis took a strange turn in early 1994 when his were one of six sets of dog tags found in a bag, 20 miles from the former American airbase at Da Nang, Vietnam which is more than 130 miles from the spot in Laos where he was last seen. The dog tags were accompanied by a letter written in Vietnamese, which was translated by authorities in Washington D.C. The other five pairs of dog tags have all been accounted for as belonging to service-men who have long since returned to the United States. To date, this find has raised more questions than answers for Davis' loved ones, who wonder if he might still be alive.

His remains have not been repatriated. His name is inscribed on the Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial.

Learn more about SFC Davis and RT Cooperhead by reading this article written by John S Meyer: https://thenewsrep.com/40427/sfc-ricardo-gonzalez-davis-macv-sog-warrior-remembered/

22 March 1968 SFC Torres & SFC Martin

Today we pause to remember recon men SFC Estevan Torres and SFC Linwood D Martin, who were serving on RT Delaware from FOB-5, Ban Me Thuot in northern Cambodia when the team was destroyed by enemy actions on March 22, 1968. They were the first men from FOB-5 to die.

The following is an eyewitness of his final mission (Story by Terry Dahling) [Taken from macvsog.cc]: “SFC Martin was the 1-0 and I (Terry Dahling) the 1-1 on an operation which commenced on March 21, 1968. The team was Delaware and there were 9 Montagnards (indigenous soldiers) on the team. The operation was a recon of an area in country. It was requested by the commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division since his LRRPS were incapable. We were inserted in the afternoon and everything was more or less uneventful. We were looking for a road/train and possible crossing point of a medium-sized river. Around 1700 hours we came upon a classic high-speed trail. It was about 4-6 feet wide and smooth and clean. We also found some fresh bunkers looking over the trail and river. While the indigenous soldiers got water, I found some “rabbit holes” dug into the bank. These rabbit holes were squared off, apparently man made. It was getting late so we decided to pull back and observe the trail overnight. One of the yards planted a toe-popper (anti-personnel mine) on the trail. We heard the mine go off and decided to pull further into the jungle. One NVA happened upon us. We killed him and a small fire fight ensued until we could break contact and pull as far into the jungle as possible to RON (remain overnight). All night the NVA probed and threw rocks and sticks trying to get us to betray our position. In the morning they started making noise, beating sticks, blowing whistles, etc. They had us surrounded on three sides with the river being the fourth side. Martin and I discussed the situation and decided that the best course of action was to slip through a flank, rather than go where they were pushing us. We managed to evade without a shot being fired. Linwood decided to go back to the bunker complex and take pictures. I was dead against it. My every instinct said not to return to the hornet’s nest we had just left. I said that if they wanted pictures I’d draw some foogin’ pictures. Martin, being the 1-0 prevailed. Upon arrival at the bunkers we found the shoe of the individual who had stepped on our mine. It still had the foot in it along with a letter from home. We were just getting situated and setting up a perimeter when we took a high volume of fire. I was face to face with Martin and a round from the first burst hit him over the left eye. I was going to apply a dressing but when I reached behind his head it was obvious he was gone. I immediately panicked and started screaming on the radio. After a few minutes I realized the antenna was laying on the ground. I set it up and got Covey and we declared a Prairie Fire Emergency. We couldn’t go back into the jungle so we pulled into a clearing and set up a “wagon spoke” perimeter with me in the middle. I imagine we looked like Custer and his last stand from the air. We were in the center of a football sized field. We couldn’t go anywhere but the NVA had to cross the open to get to us. This exposed them to close air support and ground fire from us. I got support from gunships as well as 2 F-100 Super Sabres. The F-100’s had napalm and I for one liked it at the time. My standard correction was: ‘Put it in the same place but on the other side.’ After three attempts they finally managed to extract us. I grabbed yards by the collar and seat and literally tossed them into the choppers. After we lifted off, the crew chief wanted to know who was on the first ship. I asked him why and he said it had gone down. My stomach turned flips and I could see the looks on the yards faces. However, we found out the ship hadn’t been shot down. One of the indig caught his gear on an extinguisher and the crew saw the smoke and thought they were hit. They unloaded, realized the ship was OK, reloaded and joined us.”

SFC Linwood D Martin, Jr (1-0) was a 12-year veteran from Bassett, VA. He was 30 years old and had a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) of Radio Operator. He had started his tour in Oct ‘67. In addition to the DSC he was awarded for his actions on 22 March 1968, he had a Bronze Star for Valor award. SFC Martin is buried in Sherwood Burial Park, Salem, Virginia. His name location on THE WALL is Panel 45 E, Line 59.

SFC Estevan Torres left behind a wife, two daughters, a son, his father and a sister. He is buried in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio,Texas.FOB-5 was named “Camp Torres” in his honor.

22 Mar 1968

Today we pause to remember SP4 John C Wells, who died of wounds on 22 Mar 1968. He was wounded at Khe Sanh on March 11, 1968. SP4 John C. Wells served with Detachment B-50, Project Delta, Command and Control South (CCS), MACV-SOG.

The following is an excerpt from his Silver Star citation describing his final mission at Khe Sanh on March 11, 1968: “When the area was brought under siege by numerous North Vietnamese Army units, volunteers were asked to man the outpost and SP4 Wells courageously requested duty there. After his arrival, he repeatedly volunteered for security and reconnaissance patrols, and, each time, was placed in command, he demonstrated fearless and professional leadership. Details were extremely hazardous because of continuous incoming enemy rocket and mortar rounds. While performing one of these dangerous assignments, SP4 Wells was struck and mortally wounded by fragments of an exploding rocket.” (He died ten days later.)

SP4 Wells was on his third tour of duty when he died at the age of 19. His first tour began July 23, 1966 when he was 17 years-old. In addition to being awarded the Silver Star for his actions on March 11, 1968 he received three Bronze Stars for his actions February 21-March 11, 1968. He is buried at Cadillac Memorial Gardens West, Westland, Michigan.

23 Mar 1967 MSG Paul A Conroy

Today we pause to remember MSG Paul A. Conroy, Jr., FOB-2, who on March 23 1967, died of wounds received on March 18, when a white phosphorus grenade exploded in his hands during a training exercise. He was setting up a trip wire on the grenade when the explosion occurred. He was assigned to Recon Team Maine (Forward Operating Base-1), CCN, and detached to C & C Detachment, Kham Duc, Nung Camp, OPS 35. He was medevac'd to Japan where he died of burns on March 23 1967.

MSG Conroy was a veteran of World War II and the Korean conflict. He had spent 25 years in the service. He had been wounded three times and was the holder of a Bronze Star.

MSG Conroy was survived by his wife and two children (in Germany) and a sister. He was buried in Hosbach, Germany.

24 Mar 1970 SSG Boronski, SSG Harned, 1LT Pool (RT Pennsylvania) & CPT O’Donnell, CW3 Hosken, SP4 Becerra & SP4 Ganoe (170th AHC).

Today we pause to remember eight members of CCC/FOB-2 Kontum Recon Team Pennsylvania - SSG John Arthur Boronski, SSG Gary Alan Harned, 1LT Jerry Lynn Pool and five indigenous team members – and members of 170th Assault Helicopter Company ("Bikinis"), Capt. Michael D. O'Donnell, aircraft commander; CW3 John C. Hosken, pilot; SP4 Rudy M. Becerra, crew chief; and SP4 Berman Ganoe, gunner.

On March 24, 1970, helicopters from the 170th were sent to extract a MACV-SOG recon team which was in contact with the enemy about fourteen miles inside Cambodia in Ratanokiri Province.

The flight leader, RED LEAD, serving as one of two extraction helicopters was commanded by James E. Lake. Capt. Michael D. O'Donnell was the aircraft commander of one of the two cover aircraft (serial #68-15262, RED THREE).

The SOG recon team had been in contact with the enemy all night and had been running and ambusing, but the hunter team pursuing them was relentless and they were exhausted and couldn't continue to run much longer. When Lake and O'Donnell arrived at the team's location, there was no landing zone (LZ)nearby and they were unable to extract them immediately. The two helicopters waited in a high orbit over the area until the team could move to a more suitable extraction point.

While the helicopters were waiting, they were in radio contact with the team. After about 45 minutes in orbit, Lake received word from LT Pool that the NVA hunter team was right behind them. RED LEAD and RED THREE made a quick trip to Dak To for refueling. RED THREE was left on station in case of an emergency.

When Lake returned to the site, Pool came over the radio and said that if the team wasn't extracted then, it would be too late. Capt. O'Donnell evaluated the situation and decided to pick them up. He landed on the LZ and was on the ground for about 4 minutes, and then transmitted that he had the entire team of eight on board. The aircraft was beginning its ascent when it was hit by enemy fire, and an explosion in the aircraft was seen. The helicopter continued in flight for about 300 meters, then another explosion occurred, causing the aircraft to crash in the jungle. According to Lake, bodies were blown out the doors and fell into the jungle. [NOTE: According to the U.S. Army account of the incident, no one was observed to have been

thrown from the aircraft during either explosion.]

The other helicopter crewmen were stunned. One of the Cobras, Panther 13, radioed "I don't think a piece bigger than my head hit the ground." The second explosion was followed by a yellow flash and a cloud of black smoke billowing from the jungle. Panther 13 made a second high-speed pass over the site and came under fire, but made it away unscathed.

Lake decided to go down and see if there was a way to get to the crash site. As he neared the ground, he was met with intense ground fire from the entire area. He could not see the crash site since it was under heavy tree cover. There was no place to land, and the ground fire was withering. He elected to return the extract team to Dak To before more aircraft was lost. Lake carried the burden of guilt with him for years, and has never forgiven himself for leaving his good friend O'Donnell and his crew behind.

The Army account concludes stating that O'Donnell's aircraft began to burn immediately upon impact. Aerial search and rescue efforts began immediately; however, no signs of life could be seen around the crash site. Because of the enemy situation, attempts to insert search teams into the area were futile. SAR efforts were discontinued on April 18. Search and rescue teams who surveyed the site reported that they did not hold much hope for survival for the men aboard, but lacking proof that they were dead, the Army declared all 7 missing in action.

Michael O'Donnell was recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions on March 24, 1970. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart as well as promoted to the rank of Major following his loss incident. O'Donnell was highly regarded by his friends in the "Bikinis."

Crash Site and Recovery of Remains

In January of 1994, a joint search team interviewed Le Thanh Minh of Kontum. Minh reported that in April 1993 while searching for aluminum, he located a crash site in Cambodia. He stated he found human remains, three dog tags, a first aid kit and a rucksack. He also heard that people from Laos had discovered a watch, a gold ring and an AR15. He further indicated that the crash site was spread over a 100 meter area. He stated that the tail section of the aircraft was visible and engraved with the number "262". He gave the dog tags to the team, two were Berman Ganoe, Jr. and one belonged to John C. Hosken, (both crew members of the Huey).

In January of 1998, a joint search team entered the area of the crash site and this time they were successful in locating the aircraft. The remains of all of the crew and team members were recovered, along with dog tags, weapons and other personal effects. After many years, the brave men of Bikini Red Three and RT Pennsylvania were on their way home.

At 1300 hours, 16 August 2001, A group funeral service was conducted at the Old Post Chapel, Fort Myer, Virginia for fallen soldiers. Interment at Arlington National Cemetery followed the funeral service. There was one casket containing the remains of some of the above honored men. There were some family members who elected to have their loved ones remains interred near their homes of record. For instance, SSG Rudy Beccera's family had him interred at Greenlawn Cemetery in Rosenberg, Texas with full military honors on Sunday, 19 August 2001. Family members of both the aircraft crew and RT Pennsylvania participated in the services with full military honors. Seven National colors were presented to family members in a very somber interment service.

25 March 1967 1lt Mower & SGT Files

Today we pause to remember SGT Albert Clifton Files, Jr., MACV-SOG (passenger), and 1LT John Wayne Mower (pilot), USAF FAC, who were killed when their aircraft was shot down in Kontum Province on March 25, 1967. (Shot down during takeoff, **acft crashed at end of runway.)**

SGT Albert C Files, assigned to FOB-2, was 25 years old and from Monterey, California. He was single and is buried in King City Cemetery, King City, California.

First Lieutenant John Wayne Mower was from Wichita Falls, Texas and born on 4 March 1940. He was 26 and married when he died. Lieutenant Mower was an Elliot Forward Air Controller assigned to the 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron at Nha Trang. He and SGT Files were flying O-1E S/N 56-2509 from a landing site called Plateau, 20 miles northeast of Kontum in the Central Highlands when they were shot down while taking off. Lt. Mower had been a C-141 pilot prior to his FAC tour and had three years of service. He had served 56 days in combat. His name is located at 17E 046 on the Vietnam Memorial. 1LT Mower left behind a widow and is buried in Shannon Rose Hill Memorial Park, Fort Worth, Texas.

25 March 1967 Legate

**GSW to head, circumstances classified. PLATEAU GI SF CAMP 38 KM NE KONTUM**

Today we pause to remember CPT Richard Edward Legate, CCC, FOB-2, Commander of a Nung Company who was KIA on 25 March 1967. CPT Legate was on a mission with a Spike team when he was hit by an enemy round, which severed his femoral artery causing him to lose a large amount of blood. Legate became unconsciousness and died.

CPT Legate was a graduate of the Citadel, Charleston, SC (class of 1962) and planned to make the Army his career. He left behind a widow, small son, his mother and a sister and brother. He was buried with military honors in Arlington National Cemetery. Like so many SOG men, the actual location of his death is unknown. Casualty records only list South Vietnam, Province and Military Region Unknown.

26 Mar 1969 1LT Sheridan

Today we pause to remember 1LT Robert E “Ranger” Sheridan who was KIA on March 26, 1969 in Laos. He was working with CCC at the time, possibly at the Kontum Montagnard camp. 1LT Sheridan and several other SOG men from the ‘Yard camp, along with Montagnard troops, were part of a Hatchet Force that went into Laos to destroy a NVA way station found by an earlier SOG Recon Team. After the raid on the way station and POL area, the Hatchet Force was consolidating its perimeter in preparation to RON. There was a commotion in one of the NVA bunkers and it was discovered that an enemy soldier was still inside. 1LT Sheridan went into the bunker with intentions to take the solider prisoner, but was shot and killed. He was awarded the Silver Star for his actions. Once darkness fell, the remainder of the Hatchet Force was attacked resulting in many injuries.

1LT Sheridan is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, San Diego, California. When his father, MAJ Francis E Sheridan died in 2000, he left explicit instructions that his cremated remains be inurned beside his second oldest son, Robert, at Fort Rosecrans.

(Thank you to Vernon Ward for sharing the details about the death of 1LT Sheridan. Vern was a young 1LT also assigned to the ‘Yard Camp and on the Hatchet Force.)

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| 26 March 1969 On 26 March 1969 a UH-1 (tail number 63-13158) of the 20th SOS went down. While hostile fire was the suspected cause, the only certainties are that the aircraft was flying at about 4,000 feet when a severe vibration began. The pilot began an auto-rotation to earth, but control was lost during the descent. The main rotor came apart, severing the tail boom. The aircraft crashed and burned near Duc My, SVN, 12 minutes north of Nha Trang, SVN. Eight men died in the crash.Aircrew, 20th SOS, 14th SOW (Green Hornets)LtCol Frank A. DiFiglia, pilot, Commanding Officer, Burbank, CATSgt Jesse C. Bowman, Lexington, KYSgt Antonio L. Alho, Naugatuck, CTPassengersCol Donald G. Lepard, 14th SOW staff, Flint, MICol Joseph Bertrand “J.B.” Levesque, 14th SOW staff, Van Buren, MECapt Walter C. Booth, 20TH SOS Maintenance Officer, Waukesha, WICapt Robert W. Fields, Flight Surgeon, 14th USAF Hospital, De Land, FLMr. Green, US civilian, assignment unknownAccording to Jim Henthorn, who has compiled a history of USAF helicopter losses, there was one survivor – a Sergeant Joslyn. | 03 | 26 | O-2 1LT | Robert E. | Sheridan | 31542 | KIA | Laos; CCC, Hatchet Force, Co B; small arms fire |

27 Mar 1968 SSG Calhoun

Today we pause to remember SSG Johnny C *Calhoun*, FOB-1 Phu Bai. SSG Calhoun was the team leader of a recon team which had completed conducting its mission in Laos. ON March 27, 1968, while awaiting extraction, the team was attacked by a superior enemy force. As the team was assaulted, SSG Calhoun, realizing the futility of the situation ordered a withdrawal and then stood up between the enemy and the team. The assistant team leader stated in a board of inquiry that he saw SSG Calhoun hit by at least three rounds in the chest and stomach, fall to the ground and not move. He was last seen by interpreter Ho-Thong as SSG Calhoun slumped to the ground, he pulled the pin from a grenade and clutched it to explode among the advancing enemy.  He received the DSC for his actions.

Due to the tactical situation it was impossible to check on SSG Calhoun. It took about twenty hours after initial contact to extract the team, and due to the hostile threat in the area, a further search was not possible. SSG Calhoun was listed by the Department of Defense as killed in action, body not recovered. His name is inscribed on the Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial.

28 Mar 1968 SFC Brown, SGT Boyer & SGT Huston

Today we pause to remember the members of RT Asp, FOB-4, who went MIA on March 28, 1968: SFC George R Brown (MIA, remains returned), SGT Alan Lee Boyer (MIA Remains identified 03/2016), and SGT Charles Gregory “Greg” Huston (MIA).

They were conducting a recon mission 20 kilometers northeast of Tchepone, Laos when they contacted an enemy force of unknown size and had to be extracted by helicopter. Due to the terrain, the helicopter could not land and a rope ladder was used for the rescue. Six South Vietnamese soldiers climbed aboard. As the seventh Vietnamese climbed aboard, the helicopter received heavy automatic weapons fire. Two of the American team members began to climb the ladder, but when the helicopter attempted to leave the area, the ladder caught in a tree and was cut loose by the door gunner. When last seen the three Americans were alive and appeared unharmed. On April 1st 1968, a search team was inserted into the area, but failed to find any evidence of the three men. The Department of Defense listed them as missing in action, presumptive finding of death.

SGT Huston was born 29 September 1945 in Houston, Ohio. He entered service on 5 October 1965 at Cincinnati, Ohio. His family erected a memorial stone for him at Houston Cemetery, Houston, Ohio.

SFC George Ron "Ronny" was born September 19, 1935 in Daytona Beach, FL, to parents; Ronald and Mamie Brasier-Brown, and was a former resident of Holly Hill, FL. He was an Intelligence Sergeant, a linguistics expert, and held deep water demolitions, paratrooper, medic, and frogman certifications.  He was preceded in death by his parents and wife Ileen M. Mills Brown. He is survived by two daughters, three granddaughters, and numerous other relatives, and friends. A memorial stone was erected at Magnolia Park Cemetery, Dayton, Liberty County, Texas. **A single tooth was found and identified as belonging to SFC Brown in December 2001, but questions remain as to the validity of the conclusion. An Arlington National Cemetery burial was turned down. An empty grave at Arlington has been held him since 1968.**

SGT Boyer was the son of Charles and Dorothy Boyer. Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, he graduated from MacArthur High School in 1964. While attending the University of Montana, he enlisted in the Army. He completed Airborne & Special Forces training and volunteered for Special Operations with MACVSOG-SOG. Al Boyer was Missing in Action from 1968 until 2016 when forensic anthropologists of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) used DNA to identify his remains as those turned in to the U.S. government by a Laotian national. Al's surviving next-of-kin, his sister Judi Boyer Bouchard, was visited by representatives of Army Special Forces, DPAA and the chief of the Army casualty operations center. They presented Judi Bouchard with her brother’s awards, including the Silver Star, the third-highest military decoration in the U.S. Armed Forces. . He was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery June 22, 2016. He is survived by a sister, Judi Boyer Bouchard.

29 March 1967

Today we honor SOG Veteran SFC Billy David “Stick” Evans, FOB-2, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions 29-31 March 1967. Billy died 31 Mar 2002 and is buried in Harlow Cemetery, Texas County, Missouri.

DSC CITATION:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Sergeant First Class Billy D. Evans (ASN: RA-18268313), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Command and Control Detachment (Central), 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. Sergeant First Class Evans distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions from 29 to 31 March 1967 while serving as a Special forces advisor to a Vietnamese Army unit on a combat mission deep in hostile territory. Attacked by a numerically superior Viet Cong force during infiltration, part of the force was unable to land because of heavy automatic weapons fire. Sergeant Evans quickly organized the remaining men and led them to a defensive position through a hail of machine gun fire. Throughout the night he disregarded his own safety to direct the fire of his men on repeated enemy probes. Early in the morning a mass assault by the Viet Cong disabled all of the men in his sector. Receiving a severe wound, Sergeant Evans continued to repel the assault single-handedly until reinforcements could be shifted to his position. When a determined attack broke through the perimeter, he refused medical aid and fiercely charged the onrushing insurgents killing several and destroying a machine gun position from which deadly fire was inflicting numerous friendly casualties. His actions inspired his men to greater heights to defeat the enemy and allow exfiltration of the unit. Sergeant First Class Evans' extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

30 Mar 1967

Today we honor SFC Gerald V Grant, C&C, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions of March 30, 1967. SFC Grant served in Laos in 1960 with the White Star training Team and served in South East Asia with the 1st, 5th Special Forces Groups and the 46th Special Forces Company, Thailand until 1974. He passed away 8 June 1999, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

DSC CITATION:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Sergeant First Class Gerald V. Grant, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Command and Control Detachment, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. Sergeant First Class Grant distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions near Phu Bai. At 0700 on 30 March 1967, Sergeant Grant's section of the perimeter came under fire from an estimated six automatic weapons. The first burst gravely wounded the unit commander, but supported by Sergeant Grant, he retained command for another hour before losing consciousness. The acting commander called for medical evacuation, but the enemy launched another attack which penetrated the perimeter. Sergeant Grant organized a counterattack and drove the enemy from the perimeter. Upon arrival of the medical evacuation helicopter, he was attempting to place the commander on the jungle penetrator but enemy fire mortally wounded the pilot causing the aircraft to crash on him and the commander. Despite his injuries, he extracted the wounded co-pilot and the commander, shielding their bodies with his as a misdirected airstrike hit the friendly forces. Subsequently, he was placed in command of the decimated force and through inspiring leadership was able to move it to a landing zone by means of a diversionary attack which enabled the evacuation of all the wounded. Exposing himself to enemy fire, he continued to direct airstrikes against the enemy throughout the evacuation. After insuring that all living personnel had been evacuated, he boarded the last helicopter. Sergeant Major Grant's conspicuous heroism and actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army and reflect great credit upon him and the military service.

31 March 1967

Today we pause to remember USAF Huey pilot, Major Robert Lanoue Baldwin, 20th Special Operations Squadron – Green Hornets. MAJ Baldwin’s UH-1F helicopter was shot down March 31, 1967 in Laos. MAJ Baldwin was tasked for an ammunition resupply mission for a SOG reconnaissance team. While in a low hover, delivering the munitions via hoist, the helicopter was hit by 12.7 mm rounds. Major Baldwin, then commanding "E" Flight, was killed and the copilot was wounded by the gunfire. The Huey crashed, but the surviving crewmen escaped further injury and were rescued by the SOG team. MAJ Baldwin was the first fatality for the Green Hornets. He had previously served with the 606th ACS in Thailand on a TDY basis and was considered a very good Huey pilot.

He was awarded the Air Force Cross for his actions on March 31, 1967. Citation:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, takes pride in presenting the Air Force Cross (Posthumously) to Major Robert Lanoue Baldwin, United States Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a UH-1 pilot in E Flight, 20th Special Operations Squadron, 14th Special Operations Wing, in action in the Republic of Vietnam on 31 March 1967. On that date, Major Baldwin volunteered to pilot his unarmed helicopter to evacuate severely wounded American ground troops under heavy hostile fire. Despite intense and accurately directed automatic weapons fire which severely damaged his aircraft and inflicted serious wounds upon his person, Major Baldwin, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, successfully delivered ammunition and water to the beleaguered ground forces and began rescue of wounded personnel. Again devastating ground fire struck his aircraft, causing it to crash. Disregarding his own serious wounds, Major Baldwin attempted to save the other wounded until his loss of consciousness prevented any further action. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of hostile forces, Major Baldwin reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

He is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, San Diego, CA, Section 1, Site 24 and his name appears on the Vietnam Memorial, Panel 17E-Line 77.