

To: Whom it may concern  
From: CW5 Ernest J Walker, US Army retired.  
Subject: Richard Detra, US Army Viet Nam, Door Gunner

I served as a helicopter gunship pilot with the 188<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company in the Republic of Viet Nam from November 1967-July 1968. During this tenure, I had the privilege of having a door gunner and a crew chief that I owe my life too for the several times we were engaged in hostile action with the enemy, got shot down, crashed, but always managed to get back to our base camp in one piece.

The average flying time was about 100 hours a month of combat flying time as supported by my military records of logged pilot time for that time period. During those 100 hours we were subjected to numerous situations where we had no ear protection (other than flight helmets which did not protect us from subsequent hearing loss).

The constant machine gun fire, noise of fire fights, and the noise of our own artillery, which was located next to our tents, damaged my hearing and I am sure the hearing of my crew. Mr. Detra was a crew member on my aircraft.

I am on a VA disability at the present time and have been for several years due to this permanent and increasing hearing loss. I am sure the numerous months of combat flying and combat noise have affected Mr. Detra as he was with me 90% of the time.

If there are any questions on the matter, please contact me at [REDACTED]



Ernest J. Walker  
FAA Inspector, Air Carrier-Operations, AFS-900  
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