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Director of Operations

Houston, Texas



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Dick,

Sorry it has taken so long to get back to you. I apparently did not receive the letter that you mentioned sending to me about a year ago. Anyway, I was talking to former Black Widow "Guess Wager", aka Wes Gager, yesterday and remembered that I needed to respond to the letter I recently received from you.

As for being medevac'd out of Nam, it's a strange story. During basic training in 1966, I was sitting in a bleacher at a Fort Polk gunnery range when it suddenly collapsed. I sustained a broken femur which was repaired by inserting a metal rod. In February 1968 at Dau Tieng, I was pre-fighting an aircraft early one morning when we came under a rocket attack. One of those fuckers landed right next to the aircraft I was standing on top of, knocking me off. I didn't receive any shrapnel wounds but sure hurt the hell out of my leg from the fall. The leg pain went away about a week later.

After we moved to the glorious LZ Sally, I had a strange lump develop on my leg. I didn't really know what to think of it except that it would probably go away in time. It didn't, however. On May 25th, John Gurica and I landed a slick on top of a mountain west of LZ Sally. While offloading, a mortar landed right in front of the aircraft showering us with shrapnel. One piece of shrapnel came through the windshield splattering my face with plexi-glass and stuck in my cheek. Nothing too serious, but I bled like a stuck pig. We managed to get the aircraft (looked like swiss cheese) back to LZ Sally. I went and seen Doc who pulled the small piece of shrapnel and numerous pieces of plexi-glass out of my face. After bandaging me up, he released me to go back to flying. At this time I mentioned the lump on my leg to him. He looked at it and gave me hell for not coming to him sooner. When I was blown off the aircraft at Dau Tieng, the fall tore the metal rod in my leg loose and eventually something very serious called "Osteomylitis" took root, thus the lump. He immediately put me on the next flight to the hospital in Danang where I was told I may lose the leg. Never made it back to LZ Sally. From there I was sent to Camp Zama, Japan and then to Fort Sill, OK where surgery was finally performed on my leg. After spending three months in the hospital at Fort Sill, my leg was saved and I finished my active duty time at Fort Riley, KS. Never did receive the Purple Heart Doc promised me. Most of my stuff (including flight records) was lost in transit back to the U.S.

Currently, I am Director of Operations for a helicopter company based in Houston. Believe it or not, we operate two helicopters in Vietnam. They are based in Saigon at Tan Son Nhut.

Still flying with the Texas National Guard. I drive something that I wish we would have had in Vietnam - the AH-64 Apache. Mean bird! Just about ready to hang up my Army wings and retire though.

My address and phone number are:

Bob Spradlin

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Work:

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I showed your letter to Wes Gager. He will most likely contact you soon. He advised me of the location of another Black Widow - Bill Stubbs. You may remember, he was in country about a month before being injured during an engine failure near Cu Chi (Jan 68). If you don't have his address, I will get it for you.

Good to hear from you. Maybe see you in Orlando!



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