

Capt John McRainey
Capt. Jack Fitch
McAllen Aviation

885 Magnolia Court
Marco Island, Fl 33937
January 24, 1985
tel 813 642-5324

Dear John and Jack,

I have set about on a one-man project to try to stir up interest in adding the names of our fallen friends killed in battle in Asia (while flying for Air America) to our beautiful black granite war memorial in Washington, D.C. Leon LaShomb of the Air America Club provided me with a partial listing of names. I have inclosed that list along with a longer more detailed list. I'm sure you will recognize those names and be carried back to those days we flew together. As you know but by some trick of fate all our names could well be on that list.

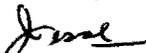
At the Del Rio, Texas Legion reunion last Fall I talked with Cash Helseth about the possibility of adding the names of our men to the War Memorial but Cash was doubtful saying that we were different from the U.S. military in that we could quit and leave and did not have to stay. Cash suggested a separate memorial, possibly at his museum site and he further commented on separate memorial in his Nov 1984 Poop Sheet (copy inclosed). It seems Cash feels only stars should be listed on a memorial instead on names for security reasons.

Many of the members of Legion Post #1 are military types and did not fly ^{with} and know Roy Townley, Harry Mulholland, Ben Coleman, Herb Clark, Cotton Davis, George Ritter, and all the others as we did thus they do not share our feeling that these men be honored in the same maner as others.

I have written to a number of friends sharing with them my feelings about this and I have asked them to write to their legislators to try to have the names added. I have written to my Florida congressman and senator (copy of letter inclosed). But I feel that it is very important that Cash Helseth join with us. Cash should be leading the effort and urging Senator Barry Goldwater from his state of Arizona to lend his strong political support and Cash should be urging the National Headquarters of the America Legion to suport fully the additional listing of names. But, I fear, that with Cash clinging to his idea of a separate memorial we can not expect help from the National American Legion and Senator Goldwater would be less inclined to hear us out. I have written to Cash about this and he knows my views but it is important for others like you John and Jack to help Cash see the light. I respect Cash. He has done a lot to keep us together but I feel he is off-base and does not understand the depth of our feelings on this. If we do not speak for our fallen friends then no one will and now is the time to do it.

It is always somewhat a revival of spirit when we meet after the years. How great to see you, Jack, at the reunion at Del Rio. And what a pleasure to visit with Ed Moreland and the others. I have now settled here in Southwest Florida and the welcome mat is always out for traveling friends. The fishing is good and the weather not bad but probably no better than what you have in South Texas.

How about give me a hand with this project. Together we can get the names listed. I am distressed that the government has omitted them. It makes me feel just the same as when John and I was standing in line for Pan Am tickets in New York and the clerk asked what airline we flew for and John replied Air America. Some passenger standing in line commented that Air America was an outfit in Asia carrying dope to our boys. Reelay bad. Best wishes...



COPY

885 Magnolia Court
Marco Island, Fl 33937
January 24, 1985
tel. 813 642-5324

The Honorable Senator Paula Hawkins
Suite 817 Federal Building
51 S.W. 1st Avenue
Miami, Florida 33130

Dear Senator Hawkins,

I have questions concerning the listing of names on our beautiful black granite wall honoring the men killed during the war in Southeast Asia.

For 18 years I was employed by Air America, Inc. an airline owned and operated by an agency of the U.S. Government. All of our flying operations were conducted in Asia. A small flying operation in the late 1950s, early 1960s Air America was to expand to a large flying operation as the war in Vietnam expanded. At the height of the Vietnam War Air America, in terms of aircraft numbers, was one of the largest airlines in the world. Flying unarmed planes and helicopters the civilian pilots and crews of Air America performed difficult and hazardous flying missions to further the American interests in Asia. When Saigon fell it was Air America that helped evacuate Americans from the fallen city.

The names of all the Air America pilots and crew killed in Asia during the war may never be known. It is said that Air America shredded their records when they closed their office in Taipei, Taiwan at the end of the war. I have inclosed a partial listing of the names of Air America men killed during the war. I hope to obtain a more complete listing compiled, I believe, by an insurance company. Also included is a copy from the pages of the book "Air America" by Christopher Robins in which he relates the deaths of Capt. Bill Pruner, Air America pilot, and his Chinese co-pilot and Vietnamese cargo-handler. Because Air America did not permit their pilots to carry weapons Capt. Pruner and crew were murdered without means to protect themselves.

Senator, having spent those years in Asia prior to active U.S. participation in Vietnam until just prior to Saigon's fall and knowing well the patriotism and dedication with which these men served I feel deeply offended that our government has not cared to memorialize their names on the Vietnam War Memorial.

It is true they were civilians and did not have to stay and fly and perhaps to die. But they did and that, in my view, is even more reason their names and memory should be memorialized in honor on the black granite Vietnam War Memorial.

Senator I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns with you. I would hope you would support an effort to add these names of fallen men to the black granite wall that we may honor their memory as we have others.

Sincerely,

Jesse Walton
Jesse Walton

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Circumstances</u>
N. N. Forte	8/13/61	C-46	LS-14	Crashed into mountain during airdrop (3 AFS also killed)
R. J. Sarno				Daniel A. Evans David Evans John S. Lewis
C. H. Mateer	1961	H-34	Laos (Pa Dong)	Flew into trees on approach to site (2 special forces onboard; one paratrooper jumped on impact and broke back
W. L. Wyzbowski				
H. S. Strauss	2/4/62	C-46	Laos	Shot down during airdrop; copilot Perry Lee (Chinese) killed 3 AFS jumped
H. F. Heinrich				
J. A. Rasmussen	2/10/62	B-26	Taiwan	Hit side of mountain
W. H. Beale, Jr.	4/6/62	L-20	Laos	Failed to clear trees after take off
G. R. Verney				
C. T. Deifenbach Dreiffenbach	7/22/62			
F. J. Riley	11/22/62	C-123-B	PDJ, Laos	Shot down by Pathet Lao
D. C. Hermitage				
G. I. Prudhomme				
G. A. Verdon	7/17/63	C-46	Laos	Hit mountain while dropping rice in bad weather
G. Newton				
A. C. Wooten				

C. G. Herrick					Unable to find DZ; shot down while following highway. R/O T.C. Yo and 2 AFS jumped. DeBruin survived crash and taken prisoner.
E. H. DeBruin	9/5/63	C-46	Laos		
J. C. Cheney					
H. Liu	12/27/63	C-45	Thailand		Rollled over on back during drop to BPP in south; Chinese pilot and R/O ^{T. H. Thich} _{L.S. Yu} killed.
A. Sandoval	8/24/64	Helio	Pakse, Laos		Crashed after T/O
H. D. Baker	9/12/64	C-123	LS 20A		AFS - floated out of cabin after load; not wearing parachute
C. D. Jones	3/5/65				
A. Scandalis	7/5/65	C-45	Saigon		Crashed shortly after T/O - either missile or grenade
J. G. Mahony	9/27/65	C-45	Bao Trai		Shot down on landing (2 or 3 par also killed); 7 guards killed by VC during night.
J. L. Oyer					
F. Muscal	10/3/65	C-123	LS-20A		Hit bulldozer on runway
R. H. Lieberth	10/12/65	H-34	Laos		USAID Par Michael Dyer - Michael Mahoney killed
F. D. Smith					
W. R. Pruner	1/14/66	C-47?	Vitank, SVN		Hit by groundfire; carrying ammunition.
W. W. Ensminger	3/6/66	Helio	SVN		Stabilizer cable broke on T/O; aircraft stalled into ground

J. W. Wilwot, Jr.	5/19/66	H-34	Laos	
F. Farthing	1/11/67	Porter	SVN	Hit mountain in bad weather
B. C. Massey	3/23/67	Volpar	N. of Daoung	Hit mountain in bad weather (pilot killed)
L. E. Pirkle	8/3/67	H-34		Flt mechanic; killed by gun fire on last flight before resignation.
E. E. Bruce, Jr. (flw)	2/8/67	H-34	LS-54	Hit mountain (accident report charged pilot error)
J. J. Cooney (pilot)				
R. Bijl	11/17/67	DO-28 (B-931)	My Tho, SVN (V-103)	Crashed after T/O (accident report blamed out-of-balance load)
J. C. Campbell	6/18/68	Bell 204	Saigon	Training flight
E. B. Hodgkins, Jr.	11/25/68	C-46	Savannah	Engine failed after T/O
J. C. Murray				
L. M. Porter	11/25/68	H-34	Laos	Shot down
W. J. Fraser (pilot)	12/7/68	Bell 205	LS-36	Off loading and pulled pin out of bag of grenades.
P. F. McCarthy (flw)				
H. W. Kelly	1/16/69	C-47	North of Daoung, SVN	Flew into side of mountain in bad weather
M. N. Matheson				
R. N. Crone	2/12/69			Ops Mgr. Laos

W. J. Gibbs	5/13/69	Beech 34	LS-54	Sniper round through window; copilot, ^{charlie} recovered aircraft
C. A. Booth	7/17/69	H-34	LS-20	Hit side of mountain on landing (flt mech. also killed)
N. A. Grammer (pilot)	8/14/69	Bell 204	PDS, Laos	Shot down
G. R. Woods (flm)				
R. S. Davis	8/19/69	Porter	C. LS 20A	Carrying 10 pax from 20A to 20; shot down by Meo; identified by VP; beaten, the dropped from Porter
J. C. Merkel	2/18/70	H-34	Xieng Khovang, Laos	Killed by ground fire; J. Ford landed helicopter
H. Potter	2/25/70	H-34	Red Victor Pad	Student ^{flm} - Potter IP lost RPM on approach; crashed. Died of burns in Japan 2/25/70
K. N. Cochran (pilot)	.	.	.	.
H. D. Rogers (copilot)	4/10/70	C-130	LS-20A	Let down through hole and hit mountain at 8000 ft. on approach to LS-20A
R. B. McKean (nav.)				
M. E. Smart (FE)	.	.	.	.
G. L. DeLong (AFS)	.	.	.	.
B. K. Hester (AFS)	.	.	.	.
K. A. Houp	3/17/71	Porter N 3932	C-40, Vietnam (U-17)	Midair collision w/Army Cobra at Houp approaching runway for landing - 2 Vietnamese killed
B. A. Franklin	3/21/71	Porter	LS-72	Stalled on climb

H. E. Mulholland	4/29/71	Porter	LS-46	Midair collision with FAC
H. W. Clark	6/2/71	C-46	LS-33	Shot down during airdrop (Chinese copilot killed)
G. L. Ritter (pilot)				
R. E. Townley (copilot)	12/27/71	C-123	Enroute to LS69	Aircraft disappeared during arms drop; crew missing, presumed dead - wreckage later found
E. J. Wiessenbach (AFS)				
L. I. Wierhdt	4/8/72	Porter	SVN	Flew into ground while flying cover for AAA planes that had been shot down
L. K. Randell	4/24/72	Porter	LS-20A	Flew into mountains in bad weather
J. E. Rausch	6/12/72	H-34	LS-69	Shot through head by small arms fire
B. F. Coleman				
J. T. Grover	7/25/72	DHC-6	Laos	Hit hill in bad weather (kicker survived)
W. E. Reeves				
J. M. Gudahl	8/27/72	C-123	Laos	Hit hill in bad weather
J. H. Bannerman				
C. J. McCarthy	11/23/72	C-7A	Pakse, Laos	Shot down by 37mm fire during airdrop

H. H. Boyles, Jr.

J. W. Cavill

2/9/73

C-123

Enroute Savannah Ga

Hit by missile (Thai
AFS survived)

J. H. Achley (pilot)

3/7/73

C-123

Laos

Disappeared over Chinese highw
(wreckage never found)

C. N. Driver (copilot)

T. D. Clark (AFS)

C. L. Osterman (AFS)

F. C. Thorsen

7/31/73

Volper

Laos

Shot through head while
in flight

Please send corrections, additional information,
etc. to:

WILLIAM M. LEARY
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
ATHENS, GEORGIA 30602

OFF: 404-542-2053
RES: 404-769-7473

PARTIAL ROSTER OF KIA AA AIR CREWS. COMPILED BY CAPT FRANK BONANSINGA

DATE	STATION	NAME	A/C	CAUSE	REMARKS
1965	SGN	OYER, BILL	C45	GRD FIRE SGN	OUTSIDE OF SGN
1965	"	MAHONEY, ?	"	"	"
1966	SGN	PRUNNER, J BILL	C47	GRD FIRE DELTA	VN DELTA, WPNS ISSUED TO CREWS AFTER THIS.
1966	SGN	FARTHING, FRANK	PORTER	HIT MOUNTAIN	N. CENTRAL VIETNAM
1966	SGN	MASSEY, BRUCE	VOLPAR	HIT MOUNTAIN	OUTSIDE DA NANG VO3. HIS ACCIDENT HAD GREAT INFLUENCE DUTY TIME. PX WERE EDUCATORS FORMER CHOPPER PILOT
1967	SGN	BIEL, ?	DONNER	SPUN IN SGN	
1967	SGN	CAMPBELL, BILL	UH1	HCPTR ACCIDENT	ASSIST CHIEF PILOT
1968	UDN	CONNEY, JOHN	H34	HCPTR ACCIDENT	SARAVANNE CAUSE UNK
1968	SGN	KELLY, HOWARD	C47	ACCIDENT	HIT MTN PHU BAI VN
1968	VTE	DAVIS, COTTON	PORTER	GRD FIRE ?	LS 20A LAOS
1968	UDN	BILL FRAZER	UH1	ACCIDENT	BILL CAMPBELL WAS HIS BROTHER IN LAW
1968	UDN	GIBBS, WILLIAM	H34	GRD FIRE LAOS HEAD WOUND	BOB CHARTERS CO PILOT SAVED AC AND FLEW TO UDN AF HOSP. THIS STRENGTHEN CASE FOR CO PILOTS ON COMBAT FLTS
1968	UDN	MARKELE, ?	H34	GRD FIRE LAOS	HEAD WOUND
1969	UDN	POTTER, HARVEY	H34	ACCIDENT LAOS L54 RET "T"	STUDENT PILOT ERROR. IP POTTER SLOW TO REACT TO STUDENT ERROR. DIED OF BURN INJ JPN SUSPECT LOSS OF BLADE
1969	UDN	GRAMMER, NORM	UH1	ACCIDENT LAOS	
1969	UDN	BOOTH, JERRY	H34	GRD FIRE LAOS	
1970	VTE	COCRANE, KIVEN	C130?	ACCIDENT LS20A	TACAN SUSPECT OUT CALIB
"	"	HUGHEY, ROGERS	"	"	CO PILOT FOR COCRANE
"	"	SMART, BOB	"	"	FLT ENG FOR COCRANE
"	"	MCKEEN, BOB	"	"	NAV FOR COCRANE
"	"	HESTER, BILL	"	"	KICKER FOR COCRANE
"	"	DELONG, JERRY	"	"	KICKER FOR COCRANE
1971	VTE	CLARK, GEORGE ^{HERS}	C46	GRD FIRE LS31	MOUNG PEUN, LAOS
1971	VTE	MULHOLLAND, HARRY	PORTER	ACCIDENT W/T28	MID AIR W T28
1971	VTE	FRANKLIN, BEN	PORTER	ACCIDENT LAOS	
1972	VTE	RANDEL, LLOYD	PORTER	CRASHED LAOS	CAUSE UNKNOWN
1972	VTE	RITTER, GEORGE	C123	GRD FIRE LAOS	NW LAOS OVER ROAD BUILT BY CHINESE
1972	VTE	TOWNLEY, ROY	"	"	RITTER'S CO PILOT THIS IS SAR MISSION RYHNE LOST LEG ON. CAUSE UNKNOWN
1972	VTE	WEIRDT, LEN	PORTER	ACCIDENT LAOS	CAUSE UNKNOWN
1972	VTE	COLEMAN, BEN	OTTER	ACCIDENT LAOS	FLEW INTO MTN ON DROP

1972 UDN RAUCSH, JIM H34 GRD FIRE LAOS HEAD WOUND. COPILOT
 SAVED AC AND PX

1972 VTE BANNERMAN, JOHN CARIBOU GRD FIRE LAOS SHOT DOWN @ SARAVANE
 " " MAC CARTHY, ? " " BANNERMAN'S COPILOT
 1972 VTE REEVES, EARL C123 ACCIDENT LAOS HIT MTN LS 20A
 " " GUDHAL, GERRY " " REEVES'S COPILOT.
 1973 VTE BOYLES, HOWARD C123 MISSILE FIRE MSLE HIT SAVANAKHET 39
 " " CAVILL, JACK " " BOYLES'S COPILOT
 1973 VTE ACKLEKY, JIM C123 GRD FIRE LAOS HIT OVER CHINESE RD
 " " DRIVER, CLARENCE " " ACKLEY'S COPILOT
 1973 UDN THORSEN, FRANK G VOLPAR GRD FIRE LAOS HEAD WOUND

~~1973 UDN THORSEN, FRANK G VOLPAR GRD FIRE LAOS HEAD WOUND~~

DATE	A/C NO	TYPE OF A/C	POSITION	CREW NAME	REMARKS
28 JAN 71	H78	UH-34D	F/M	E. M. CRUZ	
17 MAR 71	N393R	PC-6C	PIC	K. A. HOUP	
21 MAR 71	XW-PCB	PC-6C	PIC	E. A. FRANKLIN	
29 APR 71	N180K	PC-6C	PIC	H. E. MULLHOLLAND	
2 JUN 71	XW-PFL	C-46	PIC	H. W. CLARK	
2 JUN 71	"	"	F/O	T. THUTTANON	
27 DEC 71	57-6293	C-123K	PIC	G. L. RITTER	MISSING
27 DEC 71	"	"	F/O	R. F. TOWNLEY	MISSING
27 DEC 71	"	"	AFS	E. J. WEISSENBACK	MISSING
27 DEC 71	"	"	AFD	S. KHAMPHANH	MISSING
4 FEB 72	61-2393	C-7A	AFS	KHAMOUTH SOUSADALAY	
8 APR 72	N152L	PC-6C	PIC	L. I. WIEHRDT	
24 APR 72	391R	PC-6C	PIC	L. K. RANDELL	

these came from an AA Safety Letter.