

REMEMBERING DAVID IVES

from Bill Carpenter

A few weeks ago, Bill Anton forwarded a request to me from the 75th RRA webpage from someone looking for some information about David Ives, KIA 23 Apr 67. Dave and I had come to LRRP together. John Simones, Doug Fletcher, Geoff Koper, Art Guerrero, and I were on the mission when he was killed.

It seems that the Donut Dollies of Vietnam were having a reunion. A film company was producing a then-and-now film for them. One of the women being interviewed for this film, Joyce Denke, was engaged to Ives when he was killed. They were looking for pictures of Dave when he was in Nam.

Well this request went through the men who served with Dave very quickly. Within 24 hours Joyce had contacted several of us. I talked to her on the phone for about 45 minutes. She found a picture of Dave that was taken the day before we went on that mission. It is now on the webpage. Needless to say this has brought back memories to all concerned. Work on this newsletter took a back seat.

At the time of this writing, Joyce Denke is seriously planning on attending the Riverside reunion.

We all have our specific memories of these women in the bullet-proof blue dresses, but the thing they really did for us was to listen, and listen, and listen, and smile. There are a couple of interesting facts I didn't know. There were 627 Donut Dollies who served in Nam. They logged about 2,125,000 air miles among them.

The film is called *A Touch of Home: The Vietnam War's Red Cross Girls*. This is Arrowhead's third Vietnam War documentary; the other two are *In The Shadow of The Blade* and *An Ocean Away: The Donald Matocha Story*.

The film debut will be held April 21 at the Marriott DFW Airport South, 1-800-228-9290 or 1-800-431-8162. Vietnam veterans who would like to attend dinner and the movie are invited to the banquet on Saturday beginning at 6:30 p.m. \$40 prepaid reservations can be sent to Jenny Young, 203 Hickory Creek Circle, Gun Barrell City, TX 75156. Those who'd like to come just for the movie are welcome to do that, gratis, but please rsvp to jennyyoung6@yahoo.com.

Forty years ago

By Joyce Denke

Thru a curious turn of events, I was recently put in touch with the LRRP's who were with my fiancee David A. Ives when he was KIA 23 April 1967. I have now learned that he was the first LRRP killed in enemy combat. I was 19 years old when I heard the news of Dave and was devastated. He had only been in Vietnam about seven weeks. I kept the copy of the letter his parents received from Cpt. James explaining the circumstances of his heroic death and that Doug Fletcher and John Simones stayed with him until the helicopter arrived. I kept the letters I received from Doug and John. I kept all of Dave's letters and remember his excitement over being selected for this elite group. Every few years, I would stumble across "Dave's box" and sit down to re-read the letters and look at our pictures. As the years went by the memories of our engagement faded. I married and started my new life, **never** forgetting that my fiancee had died for his country and often being reminded our times together, in particular when I heard certain songs from the 60's. I will die with some of these memories.

I volunteered to go to Vietnam for the Red Cross in 1970 after graduating from college. I did this as a salute to Dave and to thank him and others for what they had sacrificed. Recently, in preparation for a reunion of "Donut Dollies", I was being interviewed for a documentary and the film editor put me in touch with your web site and with Bill Carpenter. Lo and behold! The next thing I know I am talking to the man who last saw Dave alive.

What a range of emotions I have had since that day! Many sleepless nights, some mixed feelings of guilt, some hesitation to get involved again in this memory. I would have to say that it literally consumed me for two weeks!!! But, what an overwhelmingly positive response from LRRP's. I have heard from several on his team and from others who never knew him. I am more at peace now knowing that his team members were such a great group of guys and that you still see each other. I am especially proud that the picture of Dave which I shared is now posted on your website. In his last letter to me, he included this photo and said it was taken before they were to leave that afternoon for what turned out to be his first and only mission. The letter is dated April 19, 1967 and some of it reads: "Well, today is the day I find out if I learned anything in training. I don't have much time before we leave and rain is forecast the next two days. I only regret that I cannot take your pictures and I won't get any mail for 5 days. How do you like this crazy hat and uniform? I really do want to go on this mission."

I have seen your photos from the Kentucky reunion and can just imagine the comradery between you and all LRRP's. James Ross says it best when in an e-mail he stated, "It is the random chaos of combat that rules who lives and who dies". **23 April 1967 was random chaos.** He also said "If God were to send His Angel into this old group of stubborn warrior veterans to tend and heal old wounds, it would certainly be you". Well, to James Ross and all "old warriors", God sent me some angels and I thank each and every one of you for sharing! Joyce Rice Denke jdenke@earthlink.net

So why don't some of you Texas boys go give the Donut Dollies a big "ATTA GIRL".


