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August 15, 2012

Dear Bob,

Thanks for returning my call. It was so good to talk to you!

I've gone through my files and found that I was awarded Air Medals from three different Commands for my first tour (~~Apr~~ May 1962 - April 1963). The Commands were: Department of the Army; USA Army Pacific; and USA Army Support Group Vietnam. I've enclosed copies of the orders with citations attached for your information.

I ~~do~~ believe there was great reluctance on the part of the Kennedy administration to admit that we were in combat in the early days (Dec 1961 - Jan 1963). We were supposed to be confining our activities to "advising and assisting" Vietnamese forces. After Lam Son II, 30 August 1962 and Ap Bac, January 3, 1963 it was obvious that we were in fact in combat.

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The first air mobile operations started in Dec. 1961. By Jan or Feb 1962 at the latest air crews had flown enough missions so that recommendations for air medals had been forwarded through channels. However the first air medals that I know of were not awarded until Feb 1963. The command channels were changing early on. As I know it the chain of command was:

~~1st~~ Dept. of Army

AF Army Pacific

AF Army Ryukyu Islands

AF Army Support Group,
Vietnam

45th Transportation Bn.

93rd Trans. Co.

AF Army Support Group, Vietnam
came into being sometime in 1962. I suspect what happened is that requests for Air Medals and other awards were forwarded through channels with a stream of items in the command channel pipeline. Looking at G.O. 67, AF Army Pacific dated 14 Feb 1963, the author's line cites DA message 323747, 12 Dec 62

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as the authority to award the air medal. I suspect the ~~paper~~ request was probably there so AFMRY Pacific issued that order awarding me the 1st OLC.

Although the basic air medal was awarded to me on 12 March 1963 by the Dept of the Army. They probably awarded all that they had on hand at that time. And I received the 1st OLC before I received the basic medal.

The 2nd - 4th OLC were awarded by AFMRY Support Group, Vietnam on D.O.s 96, 97 13 May 1963. The authority line on the order cite DA message 329780 dated 21 Feb. 1963.

only As far as I know, AFMRY Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa) was an administrative headquarters and probably didn't award any decorations. However they were still issuing orders as late as 28 Feb 1963. We lost a machine gun in a hot LZ, 30 Aug 1962 on Tam Aon II when Maj Gray and Lt Flinn were shot down. Sometime ~~later~~ later, I was

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required to file out a lost weapon report to V/O RYD. One of the questions asked if I knew where the weapon was lost and if it was recoverable. I gave them an eight digit set of coordinates and stated the weapon was probably in the hands of some "forman", who probably wouldn't give it up without a fight.

After OP Box (Jan, 1963)
CWO Keith Borch, 93rd Trans,
was awarded the DFC.

Additionally I know that
following were awarded DFC:

Capt Jean ~~Curry~~ Curry

CWO Barnes

Raulston

Amiger

Barnes

Lamb

The DFC must have been awarded
by DA. I don't know who
~~was~~ awarded the DFC.

In looking over my awards
from 1967-68, I found that the
authorities from my Broze Star and
major medals (#6-10) were made

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by 1st Avn. Brigade. The authority cited was USA Army Vietnam message 16695 dated 1 July 1966. By 1967 the Army had done away with OLC for the Air Medal and had gone to the numerical designation.

I've enclosed a DF for the 93rd listing sponsors for the incoming aviators. It's interesting because the right hand column lists the original 93rd pilots left on 14 August 1962. I signed the DF as the acting C.O. in Myan Gray's absence.

One last thing in this epic letter. I recommend that you find and keep two books in paper back written by Ralph B. Jolley entitled "Army Aviation in Vietnam 1961-1963" and "Army Aviation in Vietnam 1963-1966". They have great writeups about the 93rd & 121st and gives you the "flavor" of those early days. Hope to see you at Ft Worth next June.

Best Regards
Best Love