

Item #21

RANCH HAND HISTORY PROJECT

Form No. 8264

Please type or use pen to provide the requested information. This data will be used for the Ranch Hand History Project and then placed in the Archives at Texas A&M. It is your information. If you wish to restrict any part of this material, please indicate so.

I hereby authorize the scholarly use of the following information, except as indicated.

Name De Luchi, Denis Signature Denis De Luchi Date 14 Nov 81
(last) (first) middle

Specific Information

Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided. Be specific.

1. Ranch Hand service: From 9/68 to 9/69. Where? Bien Hoa
2. RH/C-123 training: Where/when? Hurlburt - Summer 1968
3. Rank while in RH? MAJ Present/retired rank? MAJ
4. Duty(s) while in Ranch? Rec'd Awards & Decs OFF dates? Oct 1/69 - 8/69
5. Other Vietnam service? Where/when? NONE
6. If aircrew member:
 - a. Number of missions: RH 222 Other (specify) _____
 - b. Combat flying hours: RH 370 Other (specify) _____

Narrative Information

On a separate sheet(s) of paper, please answer the following questions with as much detail as possible. Write too much, rather than too little. Use names and dates, if possible. If you want a name "blacked out" before this goes in the archives, just circle the name. On the sheets, indicate the number of the question you are answering, and put your last name and the form number in the upper right-hand corner of each sheet.

7. Special missions/operations participated in? (name, when, where, what, who else)
8. Decorations? (If Purple Heart, DFC, or above, give date and details of the act. If you have a copy of the narrative justifying the medal, please attach a copy.)
9. Were you present during an attack against the base, Ranch site, or quarters? Explain.
10. Were you present when a Ranch aircraft was shot down or crashed? Give all details.
11. Were you present when a Ranch crew member was killed or wounded? Give as much data as possible, even if you didn't directly observe it or are not sure of date or names.
12. Did you ever see or repair unusual battle damage (more than routine skin holes)?
13. Did you ever help plan RH missions? If so, what was the procedure?
14. How did you get into the Ranch? What did you know about the mission beforehand?
15. What were you told about the chemicals used? In Vietnam? Before Vietnam?
16. Other than something already discussed (or going home), what is your happiest memory of the Ranch (or Vietnam)? What is your unhappiest (saddest)?
17. What unusual, odd-ball, weird, funny, etc., thing happened to you in VN or training?
18. Same as question 17, but you saw it happen to another person(s).
19. What were your quarters like? Your routine day? Your parties? Anything else?
20. We know that the Ranch was unique. What should I tell the reader that will help him understand why this was a special outfit of special people? What or who should I not talk about?

Other data: Do you have any good pictures (especially of RH members), any journals, notes, diaries, letters, briefing notes, maps, etc., that I could copy? If so, DO NOT SEND THEM with this form. Repeat...DO NOT SEND THEM!!!! Describe the items on a separate piece of paper, with your name and form number on it. I will write and give you instructions on when to send them, or how to get them copied, at a later date. All materials will be protected and returned to you!!! Thank you for your help and time.

Please return this form and the narrative sheets in the enclosed envelope to Texas A&M.

9. TET - 1969. THE SQUADRON EVACUATED TO
PHAN RANG, SINCE THERE WERE NO REVERMENTS AT BIEN
HOA. BILL MUENICK AND I WERE LEFT BEHIND, SO THAT
WE COULD PILOT A SICK BIRD TO PHAN RANG WHICH IT WAS
READY TO FLY. THE ATTACK WAS NOT NEARLY AS STRONG AS
INTELLIGENCE HAD PORTAYED, ALTHOUGH IT KEPT BILL AND I UNDER
OUR BUNKS ALL NIGHT, CLUTCHING OUR .38'S AND M-16'S. WHEN
A MORTAR HIT A NEARBY SMALL ARMS AMMO STORAGE AREA, IGNITING
WHAT SOUNDED LIKE A FIERCE FIRE-FIGHT, BILL AND I WERE CERTAIN
WE WERE GOING TO BE FORCED INTO THE INFANTRY. ULTIMATELY, THE
ATTACK TURNED OUT TO BE NO MORE SERIOUS THAN THE GARDEN VARIETY
MORTAR ATTACK WE EXPERIENCED FROM TIME TO TIME.

12. I HAD AN AMOR PIERCING SLUG PENEATATE THE #1 PROPELLER
DOME, CAUSING THE BLADES TO MOVE TO FULL FLAT. THE AIRPLANE
NEARLY SWAPPED ENDS. WITHOUT JETS, I WOULD HAVE HAD TO
LAND IN THE JUNGLE. I NURSED IT BACK TO BIEN HOA, UNABLE TO
CLIMB MUCH OVER 2000' AND, WITH FULL RUDDER TRIM, STILL
FLYING IN A SKIN.

I ALSO HAD A 50 CAL NEARLY SEVEN A MAIN WING SPAR.
THE AIRPLANE WAS ON THE GROUND FOR MONTHS, BUT IT FELT LIKE
ANY OTHER SO HIT WHEN I RECEIVED IT. ONE COULD PUT HIS FIST
UP THROUGH THE HOLE.

13. LEAD PILOTS ON THE MISSION PLANNING, ALONG WITH NAVIGATORS,
THE DAY BEFORE. THE MAIN CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE TYPE OF FORMATION
AND PENETRATION TO BE EMPLOYED WERE TERRAIN AND EXPECTED
RESISTANCE. THIS PROCEDURE MEANT AFTERNOON WORK AND EARLY
RISING FOR THE LEADERS, BUT NOTTING DEMANDING, EXCEPT DURING
TET. THEN, A TYPICAL DAY FOR THE LEAD WOULD BE: UP AT 0430,
TAKEOFF BY 0600, PHAN RANG TO A DELTA TARGET, RETURN TO
BIEN HOA FOR REFUEL AND RE-ARMING. TAKEOFF ABOUT 1000, RETURN
TO BIEN HOA FOR REFUEL AND REARMING AFTER SECOND DAULY SORTIE
BACK TO PHAN RANG BY 1400 OR 1430. DEBRIEF AND MISSION PLAN
UNTIL ABOUT 1800. AFTER THE FOUR-ON/ONE OFF CYCLE REACH THE
DAY OFF, LEADS WERE PRETTY TIRED. I SLEPT THROUGH A VERY
BAD MORTAR ATTACK, WITH THE HELP OF SOME LIQUID RELAXER

14. I VOLUNTEERED. I WAS LOOKING FOR A SPARING ASSIGNMENT OUT OF APIT AND RANDOLPH TOLD ME THAT I WOULD FLY RECON IN SEA, SINCE I WAS DRIVING GOONEYS WHILE AT OREGON STATE. I TRIED FOR A-26'S, BUT THE TIMING WAS WRONG. A 5000 FRIENDS HAD JUST RECEIVED A RANCH ASSIGNMENT, SO I JOINED UP.

15. WE WERE OBVIOUSLY TOLD THAT THEY WERE HARMLESS TO HUMANS AND HAD NO PERMANENT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT. STUDIES CONDUCTED WHILE I WAS THERE SUBSTANTIATED THE LATTER, BUT, AS A SCIENTIST I WAS AND AM SCEPTICAL.

16. HARDEST - SKIN DIVING AT CAM RANH BAY
SADEST - SPRAYING A MONTAGNAZO CALICO ON AN ELEPHANT.
THE SYMBOLISM IS TOO HEAVY TO FORGET.

17. ON A THREE SHIP MOUNTAIN SORTIE, WE ENCOUNTERED A LONE ENEMY GUNNER WITH A CREW-MOUNTED 30 CAL. WE COULD SEE HIM DOWN IN A CREEK. WE WERE SCHEDULED FOR SEVERAL PASSES, AND SINCE HE SEEMED TO BE A LOUSY SHOT, WE MADE THEM ALL, JUST TO TAUNT HIM. WE WERE SO SURE THAT WE HAD NO RATTLE DAMAGE THAT WE FLEW A 360 OVERHEAD, IN NIGHT FORMATION, AT PRO CAT, WHERE WE WENT TO REFUEL AND REARM. MY BRAKES FELT A LITTLE SOFTLY WHEN I TAXIED IN, AND WHEN THE FM WENT TO LOWER THE CARGO DOOR, IT PLOPPOD ON THE RAMPS, IN A BUSH OF HYDRAULIC FLUID. THE PLANE THEN JUST BLEW TO DEATH, AND THE FEARLESS WARRIORS WERE BACK TO BISCUIT HUA IN THE CARGO COMPARTMENT OF ANOTHER SHIP. THE GUY HADN'T BEEN SUCH A BAD SHOT AFTER ALL.

18. REX STONER, THE FEARLESS SQUADRON COMMANDER WAS LEADING A SORTIE DOWN IN THE DELTA. WE HAD SOME NIGHT FLYING F-100'S FOR ESCORT, AND USED THEM TO TRADE FIRE FOR FIRE WHEN WE ENCOUNTERED SOME RESISTANCE. ONE PROVIDED VERY CLOSE COVER, DROPPING A 750 IN THE CANAL RIGHT AHEAD OF STONER. I LOOKED UP IN TIME TO SEE HIM DISAPPEAR INTO A COLUMN OF MOU. THE REST OF HIS MISSION WAS IFER.

19. QUARTERS AT B-70 IN 1968 AND 1969 WERE NOT
VERY PLUSH. HOWEVER, MY HUTCH WAS COMPOSED OF A VERY RESONABLE
BUNCH OF GUYS JUST OUT OF AFIT. BY HOOK AND MUSKET CROWD
WE TILED, PAINTED, INSULATED, AIR CONDITIONED, AND EVEN INSTALLED
PLASTIC WINDOWS. IT MADE LIVING A TAD MORE PLEASANT.

20. THE RANCH WAS WHAT IT WAS FOR SEVERAL REASONS.
IT WAS ANARCHISTIC, NOT WHOLLY MILITARY, AND PEOPLED BY
SLIGHTLY CRAZY SOULS WHO UNASHAMEDLY PLAYED A ROLE
IN A PARTIAN WEIRD PLAY. THEY CONSTANTLY EXPERIENCED THE
CATHARILLIAN EXHILARATION OF BEING SHOT AT, AND WERE
ALLOWED TO OPERATE IN A FASHION TOTALLY UNRELATED TO THE
RULES OF KOREAN AVIATION. CONSEQUENTLY, THE MORALE WAS
STRONG, THE ESPRIT GREATER, THAN ANY I HAVE EVER
WITNESSED.

Denis De Lucy

I HAVE SOME SLIDES OF HUTCHES, AND THE NARRE
SCHOOL WE SUPPORTED, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.