

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:

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

HODGIN, JOHN K. John K. Hodgin 23 NOV 81
 Name (last first middle signature date)

Specific Information

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

1. Ranch Hand service: From ITS ORIGIN - 2 YRS. to . Where? SAIGON
2. RH/C-123 training: Where/when? POPE AFB 1960
3. Rank while in RH? 2LT - 1LT Present/retired rank? MAJ
4. Duty(s) while in Ranch? NAVIGATOR dates? 4-6 MONTH TOURS FROM 1961? - 1963?
5. Other Vietnam service? Where/when? MULE TRAIN-SAIGON 62-63; 5TH AIR COMMANDO
6. If aircrew member: SA. NHA TRANG 1964-65?; C-130'S OUT OF TACHIKAWA 67-69; C-130'S OUT OF KADENA & YOKOTA 1975-1978.
 - a. Number of missions: RH ? Other (specify)
 - b. Combat flying hours: RH OVER 1200 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.

NOTE: At present, I don't have time to research all the names and dates. I have pictures, orders, etc. all over the house. I am presently in college and don't have much free time. If you need the info later, I'll be glad to find it.

7. A. Was in first C-123 to go to Saigon when Ranch Hand began (with total of 6 aircraft).
 B. Flew from Saigon to Iran & Afghanistan to spray locusts. From there - across the Atlantic to become first C-123 to go around the world. Charles Hagerty was the Pilot. (I have picture & newspaper story).
8. No decorations received as a result of work with Ranch Hand (they weren't giving any in the early days). Flying C-47's with the 5th Air Commando's and later, C-130's gave me 18 Air Medals, 4 Commendation medals, 1 DFC and some Vietnamese participation medals.
9. Was in Ranch Hand when first coup took place. The palace was bombed by 2 aircraft. Was there for other minor coup attempts.
10. A month or two after we got to Saigon (first time) my pilot (Larson I believe) was scheduled to practice spray runs in the delta. I was to be his nav. Life magazine showed up to take some pictures from

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 another launch hand aircraft. I asked to go with them. While flying in the delta we saw heavy smoke. We flew to it and discovered it was from my crew's aircraft which had crashed & burned. This was the first aircraft loss.

Later, when my pilot was Major Overman, I was told to accompany them to ~~the~~ Dong Ha. I was in the middle of the month and I already had over 60 hrs. that month. I asked to stay in Saigon. Overman went with only his copilot (Frankson). They landed at the wrong airfield and crashed while trying to take back off (no injuries).

11. see item 10.
12. no
13. The procedure in the beginning days was very slow. We didn't average a mission a month. The area to be sprayed had to be requested by the Vietnamese Province chief to the Vietnamese military who passed it to U. S. army who requested it from US Air Force. A photo mission was then set up to take pictures of the requested area. These photos were sent to the Joint Chiefs in Washington who eventually OKed the mission.

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14. I was selected by some unknown bosses at Tac Hq. after a written + flying tests. The nature of the mission at that time was Top Secret. I wasn't even allowed to tell my family (mother + father) where I was going. Wasn't allowed to write letters when I got there. Later, letters were allowed - routed through the Philippines. Address was Box 1 Apo 74, Calif.
15. Chemicals used at that time were called Purple. It was a herbicide widely used in the U.S. Was told it was completely safe.
16. The whole Ranch Hand experience was the fondest of my career. We didn't have many rules to follow and had great people to work with.
17. Many. Capt. Kidd + myself designed the Ranch Hand patch in Saigon. He suggested the background + I added the Chinese symbol for Purple. We had to find a Chinese in Saigon to show us how to make it. Also, we talked the Army General over the defoliation mission into letting us wear green berets (Vietnamese style with VN rank). The special forces were really mad at this.

Another interesting event was when the Capital-Kim Do theater was blown up. Capt. Haggerty, Capt. (or Maj.) Darwin + another officer were planning to go. We agreed to

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meet in a bar after the movie. Only Hagerty made
the movie. ~~it~~ because Devlin & the other officers (can't remember his name)
got stuck in the elevator at the Rex Officers Club.

Hagerty was in the balcony & didn't get hurt, but
the theater was totally destroyed.

19. Quarters were cheap & readily available. At various times
I lived in: Vo Tanh Hotel, Majestic Hotel, Caravelle Hotel,
Apt. at 23 Tran Hung Dao, & apt. at 13 Ky Dong.

20. Talk to Charlie Hagerty, Mike Devlin & our commander,
Carl Marshall. The beginning & first 2 years
of Ranch Hand had to be unique. Time doesn't
permit me to amplify. - Also, ask Jack Spey.

I have pictures & other items somewhere in the attic.
Will be glad to research them at a later date.

John K. Hodgkin — the first Ranch Hand navigator.