

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.

Meadow, Charles Joe Charles Meadow 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 July 67 to July 68. Where? Bien Hoa
2. RH/C-123 training: Where/when? Hurlburt May 67 / C-123 Transition Langley Jun 67 / Spry
3. Rank while in RH? Major Present/retired rank? LT. Col.
4. Duty(s) while in Ranch? FP, Lead Pilot, Supply off. dates? _____
5. Other Vietnam service? Where/when? N/A
6. If aircrew member:
 - a. Number of missions: RH 370 Sorties Other (specify) Trash Haul - 155 Sorties
 - b. Combat flying hours: RH 476.3 Other (specify) " " - 96.5

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.

#7. After TET we went into the ~~trunk~~ hauling business for about 6 weeks.

Sure was great to get back to spraying.

#8 Vietnam Service Medal w/3 Bronze Service Stars, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross w/Palm, Air Medal w/3 - 11 OLC, DFC, Silver Star, Vietnam Senior Pilot Wings.

#9 Yes--Too numerous to detail. Especially after TET Offensive, Jan. 68.

Have details of many attacks in my diary. I guess the one that I'll always remember in addition to start of TET, is the morning of

28Feb. 1968 when they hit the hooch area. Estimate 60% of the

Ranch hooches went up in flames including the famous "Field Grade Hooch".

Even our bunker caught on fire which we had to stay in until the attack was over (smoke was much better than shrapnel). Direct hit on bunker across

the atreet from Ranch hooches--don't remember how many were killed but

estimate 15-20. After the attack, managed to salvage Akai tapedeck and tapes before hooch was engulfed in flames. Lost everything else including brand

new Kenwood Amplifier still in box. Ranch latrine was pretty banged up

including a direct hit on the septic tank. (I have both black & white and

color slides of the aftermath of this one. Also have a stereo tape of several attacks.) A side note to this attack-- I had a zippo lighter from the

Korean War, ^(12th TAC Recon. Sq.) I got in the habit of putting this lighter on the throttle pedestal during each mission. It soon became a good luck piece. In fact

one navigator became vèay upset when he learned I had lost the lighter in the fire. Well, that afternoon after the bulldozers had cleaned up all the

~~debris~~ ^{debris} and there was nothing left of the ~~ole~~ hooch but a concrete slab, I

went back and sat on the slab in the approximate area of my "cubby hole"

and began sifting through the ashes on the edge of the slab. Lo and behold

I found one more burned up and slightly melted zipo. I still have this

lighter--one of these days I'll send it back to Zippo for repair.

- #10. -24 May 68: Target was southern tip of Delta. Formation had completed spray run and climbing when smoke was seen coming from left nacelle of #3~~(E)~~. Suddenly aircraft banked slightly and went straight into water. Lost LTC Emmett Rucker, Major Lee Shanks, and Sgt. Schmit.
- #11. In addition to above, Major Bill Mahone and 2 others were killed. All passengers in a trash hauler which clobbered into the side of a mountain in wx. Oct 1967. The sad thing here is all three were FIGNO.
- #12. Direct hit in nose by fruit bat on Fox bat--(have picture of bat and damage)
- #13. Only as a lead pilot-- on afternoon before mission studied target area with lead navigator and planned best approach, based upon terrain etc. Briefed crews.
- #14. My first assignment to Vietnam was the Skyraider ("Sandy"). Upon hearing of this, I proceeded to Hq. AFSC hopefully to ^{convince} ~~convince~~ them that I was strictly a multi-engine type and knew nothing about dropping bombs or firing guns. Upon asking what the criteria was for the Skyraider, their answer was "a warm body". Well, I guess my trip convinced someone-- received a call while I was at home with a case of mumps (both sides) stating my orders had been changed. I would first go to Hurlburt for (-123 transition (great) and then to Langley for spray training. (Oh. Hell!!) I had heard enough about the Ranch missions to know that the pucker factor could get very high. As it turned out, the "Ranch" was the best assignment I ever had. Something I was extremely proud to be a part of.

#15. Both before and in Vietnam the only thing I recall being told about the chemicals used was that they were nothing more than a strong weed killer.

#16. My happiest memory of the Ranch is just the association with a great bunch of guys. We worked hard and we played hard together.

Saddest time would have to be the loss of a Ranch Hand and other friends both in Vietnam and out of Thailand.

#17. Although it wasn't very funny at the time, the day we got the "Smoke the BEAR" award. We were #7 in a seven slipper-- target: A little mountain just east of Bien Hoa. Frag called for making two runs starting at the top of the mountain and going straight down the side. As #7, Lead wanted us to throw a smoke bomb to mark for his next run. As we started the run I told the flight mech to throw the bomb-- he did, but missed the door. Here we are, going straight down the mountain at 50 foot altitude, and I couldn't even see the instrument panel much less # 6 on the ground.

Major John Brady said I looked like "Puff the Magic Dragon" with smoke coming out my nostrils and mouth as I excitedly began shouting orders to the crew. Talk about flying by the seat of your pants!!!!

18. Another funny was also with John Brady-- While going through the pre-spray check list, Big John reached on top of his head to pull his visor down and all he got was finger nails full of skin and a bald head with four bloody streaks. Yep--he forgot his helmet.

19. QUARTERS - "Field Grade Hooch" from July 67 to Feb. 68. Very comfortable after we remodeled (insulated sides with styrofoam, converted two rooms to lounge, and air conditioners at each end.) Each room was approx

imately 8 x 8 feet. After the hooch went up in flames and until departure, quarters were cruddy. Room approx. 6x6 feet, hot, humid and dusty.

ROUTINE DAY: Up at 0300 or sooner (rocket attack), eat breakfast, brief, fly two missions, back to hooch around noon, cut a few zzzz's, to club for a few, dinner, back to hooch, letter to "what's her name", to bed by 2100.

PARTIES "Hit parties" and Ranch-Ins were great-- helped take the edge off.

#20. The Ranch was unique in that it was the one and only Squadron of it's kind. Started and ended in Vietnam. Will never exist again. Made up mostly of dedicated, career middle-aged men. First Lt.s were hard to find, L/Cs were a dime a dozen. The esprit de Corp and camarade was something envied and respected by all including the fighter jocks. The saying was that we had to have brass elephant balls to fly the mission we did. "There are old pilots and there are bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots".

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE SILVER STAR

TO

CHARLES J. MEADOW

Major Charles J. Meadow distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near An Hoa, Republic of Vietnam, on 29 May 1968. On that date, Major Meadow was flying his unarmed aircraft on a low-level defoliation mission when the formation was struck by intense hostile ground fire which caused the aircraft directly ahead of him to sustain an engine failure. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Major Meadow maneuvered his aircraft perilously low to the ground and under the remaining good engine of the damaged aircraft. By so doing, Major Meadow provided a protective shield for his fellow airmen and sustained two hits which might otherwise have struck the disabled aircraft. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Major Meadow has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS
(FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER)

TO

CHARLES J. MEADOW

Major Charles J. Meadow distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as a UC-123 Pilot at Phouc Vinh Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, on 7 March 1968. On that date, while transporting combat essential cargo, and just after landing, Phouc Vinh Air Base came under hostile mortar attack. Despite the hazards involved, Major Meadow calmly and professionally assisted in the rapid offload of his cargo, and the onloading of a large number of Vietnamese women and children who were awaiting evacuation. As mortar rounds continued to fall nearby, he then taxied out and made a safe takeoff, thereby extracting his passengers and crew, and a valuable aircraft from this extremely hazardous situation. The professional competence, aerial skill and devotion to duty displayed by Major Meadow reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.