

December 23, 1994

Mike,

I enjoyed our conversation this week about the article you are trying to put together. I thought I would send you a couple of photos for your collection. We talked about the photo I took from on top of my "D" model slick on the morning of 22 Feb. 67 at the staging point for Junction City at Tay Ninh. My aircraft was third in line with my Company (71st AHC) lined up at the far left in this picture. The choppers were literally as far as I could see, with more arriving as this shot was taken, hence the haze in the background. As I told you on the phone, the lead a/c was crewed by my platoon leader, Major George Jackson (Rattler 16), with my regular aircraft commander WO Jerry Shirley (Rattler 10) flying as peter pilot. The crew chief was SP/4 Louis Becker and PFC Tom Knapp was the gunner. This a/c was downed by ground fire in the first LZ, with Major Jackson receiving a shoulder wound and both enlisted men slightly wounded by shrapnel.

My a/c was crewed by aircraft commander WO David O'Quinn, peter pilot WO Ken Wiegand, crew chief PFC Ron Seabolt and gunner SP/4 Larry Smith. Ken Wiegand has a slide taken in the LZ of the lead a/c. What in the hell a peter pilot was doing taking pictures in a hot LZ is beyond me, but as I remember it this was his first combat assault and maybe he just did not know and better!

The second photo was taken at our reunion in Memphis, TN in February, 1993. On January 5, 1968 one of our Fire Birds was shot down West of Chu Lai and three of the crew captured. These men were POW's 63 months. WO Frank Anton was the aircraft commander and WO Frank Carson the peter pilot. Carson managed to E & E for a couple of days and located friendly forces and was back flying within a week of the shoot down. When the POW's came home in 1973, Frank Carson was able to see and talk to Frank Anton at Fort Knox for about 10 minutes. Carson told me that Anton was in pretty sad shape mentally and really acted like he was in a fog. I think at the time that Carson thought that Anton was mad at him because he escaped. Anyway, 20 years passed and we were able to re-unite these men under much more pleasant conditions. This photo was taken as they met at the door and Anton said "Quick, someone take a picture before Carson runs." I believe this remark stung Carson, because it brought back thoughts of what Carson felt at Fort Knox in 1973. As you well know, to successfully E & E, you gotta run. Frank Carson retired as a full Colonel on 1 July 94 after serving 28 years.

I think you said you had never met Frank Anton. In the photo, he's the one wearing the 71st Assault t-shirt. My Brother-in-law, Wilkie Boyd, is my official photographer.

I can make no promises, but I will attempt to get you some Rattler-Fire bird stories from '66-'67 for your project by the end of January.

Ron

PH. 214-226-4252



HELLO  
ADULT

FEB 12, 1993

FRANK CARSON AND FRANK ANTON

MEET AT RATTLER - FIRE BIRD REUNION  
MEMPHIS, TN.

PHOTO BY WILKIE BOYD



FEB 22, 1967

STAGING AT TAY NINH  
FOR OPERATION JUNCTION CITY

PHOTO BY RON SEABOLT