

MR. JAMES F. THURMOND

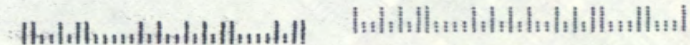


MIKE LAW



Give back
to Mike

Removed by VNCA



①

Mike Law -

In response to your request for information about who was where when:

I was a "charter member" of the 48th AHC in 1965. The 68th AHC & 48th AHC were activated at Ft Benning mostly from European assets as far as the pilots were concerned.

The 48th had thought of using "Old Pro" as the unit call sign. This was based on the amount of flight time each of us had. The standard comment was "If you have less than 2000 hrs you pull K.P." The "Old Pro" was a character in a beer commercial so a letter was written to the beer builder asking permission to use the character as our call sign - we did not get approval. The call sign "Blue Star" was assigned by the tower operator at Vung Tau as an identifier to locate our ships as they were unloaded. Later in time we were directed to change the call sign for "security reasons". Charles Drummond (ACE) said "ok, as soon as 'Dust-off' is changed too". Ace was the company commander who activated the company - He had been the Airfield operation officer at Grafenwhor (SP) & had the reputation of being a real horse's Patoot.

Anyhow back at the ranch - This is from rumor, Fact is underlined. The Commanding Officer of the 10th ARVN BN came back to Ft Benning for some reason. When he found out who the company commanders were he told the people at Ft Benning that the 48th was to go to Nam at Cam Ranh Bay (Dong Ba Thin) & the 68th was to go to Vung Tau. With this in mind all equipment was marked for these destinations & shipped out.

Because my Branch was Transportation Corps - Guess who ACE had for Movements Officer, OIC Rear Party - To close out at Ft Benning & OIC Advanced Party to meet the Troops in Vietnam. My biggest gripe here was that Lt William Ragan, Capt La Rue Rosengent & myself had our overseas ~~st~~ Tour start later than the rest of the company & because they went by ship & we flew, we spent more time in Vietnam.

When we got to Saigon & reported to 1st AVN Bde we were told that the 48th was to go to Vung Tau & 68th to Cam Ranh Bay. When I told them about the way the equipment was stored they decided to switch companies. When the Advanced Party of the 48th got to Cam Ranh - The USAF Base Ops was in a tent. A chopper came over from 10th BN & took us to a place aptly named Camp Swampy. This was on the east side of the road at approximately sea level at low tide. The Battalion moved across across the road to their permanent location after the area had been overlaid with approximately 5 feet of fill.

It was decided that the 48th location would be in the Phan Rang area ~~and~~ and a site was chosen at Thap Cham Airport. To the South was an engineer battalion, to the West was 1st Bde 101st Abn (The rest of the div was still stateside) & Phan Rang AFB was being constructed. The over the road move from C.R.B. to Phan Rang was somewhat scary as you can well imagine, we closed at Phan Rang 26 Nov 65.

We began operational training as soon as our Aircraft arrived. With a new air lift capability in the area, the People from R.M.K, B.R.D. who were building the airbase became friendly & we provided limited support for them by bringing critical items from CRB to P.R. we got heavy lift & sling experience, not to mention many favors

From them, not the least of which was an ice cream maker commercial size!

ORGANIZATION Chart

10th BN

Assigned to
10th Bn

11 Dec 65

484th AHC

286th Med Det

390th Trans Det

279th Sig Det

256th Sig Det

296th Sig Det

238th Counter Mortar Radar Det

Pathfinder Det

1498th HQ Co

28 Sep 65

117th AHC

— Activated in country from 8th Trans Co (LTHel)

130th Med Det

140th Trans Det

COs. 10th BN

LTC Gregory Olney 965-766

LTC B.L. Harrison 7-66-

10 Oct 65

129th AHC

433d Med Det

394th Trans Det

48th MAJ Charles (AOE) Drummond 7-65/4-66

MAJ Harry McK Roper 4-66/9-66

MAJ Joel Williams 9-66/12-66

19 Jul 66

281st AHC

483d Trans Det

499 Sig Det

117th MAJ Harbin Constance 9-65/3-66

MAJ HARRY Zellmer 3-66/10-66

MAJ Kenneth L KETZLER 10-66/12-66

180th ASHC

403 Trans Det

129th MAJ Leon Wiggins 7-65/1-66

MAJ Robert D Stearns 1-66/7-66

MAJ Lavere Bindrup 7-66/10-66

MAJ Ronald Merrill 10-66/12-66

See below

~~281st~~ 281st MAJ EVERDUS HACKETT 10-65/7-66
William Griffin 7-66/12-66

2-12-66

180th

LTC Thomas F Perkins

3-66/12-66

This Data extracted From "Unit History, Vagabonds of Vietnam
Tenth Combat Aviation Battalion 1965-1966"

As you noted All Commander data ends 31-Dec-66 - That was the end of the history as I have it.

281st was first 145th Airlift platoon of 145th AVN BN arriving in 1964. Platoon reassigned to 52d AVN BN 6 JAN 65 to provide ^{AVN} support to HQ, I Field Forces, Vietnam. Assigned 10th BN 25 Dec 65. In Feb 66 145th Airlift platoon, 6th AVN Platoon 171st AVN Co were combined into 2d Platoon, 171st AVN Co. From cited History above P III - 7 "The mission of the 2d Platoon, 171st Aviation Company was to provide helicopter support as directed by 5th SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AFVN) with headquarters at Nha Trang, RVN. The 281st was organized/activated 7-OCT-65 & ~~Asst~~ 2d PLT 171st was integrated with 281st who assumed 2d PLT 171 mission 14 Jul 66. This may help explain helicopter units / Special Forces affiliations / Functions -

During my assignment with the 48th we flew one operation that moved 3 battalions of 1st Bde 101st Abn & 3 battalions of ROK Marines in one day - At the end of the day every soldier/marine was in his correct LZ & I was tired, 64 missions that day. The mission was to relieve in place & to change sectors of the two brigades involved, This was at Tuy Hoa. 1966 -

The 10th Battalion ran a training maneuver one night - TOTAL TOTAL TOTAL Blackout Combat assault on a questionable LZ. The lift was to be made by 3 lift elements - Not only did it misfire, some 3d lift elements joined 1) Gunship flight, 2) 1st lift element, 3) 2d lift element when we landed without troops still ~~aboard~~ aboard we were asked our opinion & were advised that if we did not feel it was safe we did not have to try the second attempt I declined to fly the second try.

Shortly thereafter I was assigned as 10th Bn Liaison to the ROK Brigade & later to the 28th RC, T. of the ROK Whitehorse Division - I decided better an old pilot rather than ~~was~~ use the red hot turbine blades of the ship ahead as primary navigation/Flight instrument.

Other so called blackout missions were flown w/ some lights until the final turn into the LZ & They were much better.

I'm Trying to find out what happened to the 15th Transportation Corps Battalion of 1st CAU - I've even been to Ft Hood & nobody knows.

Thanks for your time

Jim Thurmond

MAJ TC Retired

State of Texas Vet Employment Reg. Bd.

MR. JAMES F. THURMOND



Bindrup, Laverne W MAJ, Broman Ralph W (MARK) MAJ, Brophy, Edward
maj, Clemens, Paul J cpt, Cox, Louis T Jr cpt, DAVIS, Warren C maj, Delius,
Robert D III cpt, Domenic Ralph CW3, Drummond Charles maj, Fisher, Glade
WO1, Greer Wayne F, CW2, Green Windell V 1LT, Guccione, Dominic CW2
⁽²⁾
~~GRANDAKER FRANK cpt~~, Hagen, ARTHUR cpt, Harrell, Archie A CW2,
Hill, Kenneth CW2, Horne, John H 1LT, Jenks, John D cpt, Jones Carl D
cpt, Kelsey, Donald E cpt, Lalumiere, Paul R cpt, MAHER, DAVID CW2,
Markle, Ross E CW2, McCarth James CW3, McCoy Gerald CW2, Miller,
Andrew S Jr cpt, Mitchell, MAX H cpt, MOEN ARTHUR D cpt, MOORE, William E
CW3, ~~Morris James Jr CW2~~, Paulson Thomas R CW2, Price James F cpt,
Purcell Robert W cpt, Radford James T cpt, Ragan, William T 1LT, Ripoll
Vincent C cpt, Rosengrant Lorne R cpt, ~~Silberberger Paul 1LT~~, Smith Robt
Robert T 1LT, Smith Willis maj, Stearnes Robert D maj, Steenson Morris R
cpt, Swanger Eugene CW2, Swift IRAN C cpt, Temple, Sharon L CW2,
Thurmond James F cpt, Tidwell Sam E CW2, Tilgner Armit C CW2,
Williamson Thomas L maj, Wilson Benjamin F CW2 -

The Above individuals are the Charter
members of 48th AHC Blue Stars

From HQ 104 AVN BN SO #1 2 JAN 66,

- ① Former Air America Helicopter Pilot
- ② Only Pilot Fatality in 1st year assigned to 48th at time of death
- ③ Was Pilot in French AF. & Patrolled as PLT LDR in Foreign Legion -
- ④ Non Rated

 = Deceased

OVER

ON 5/5

Other Charter members - 48th - already
Transferred within Theater before order on
reverse was cut.

Zellmer, Harry, Maj

Parker, Velma, F MAS

Scheider, Augustus L MAS

Garrett Curtis Maj