

Excerpts
"In Search of the Warrior Spirit"
 by Richard Strizzi Heckler
 N. Atlantic Books
 Novato, California
 Copyright 1990

| New Guy | The Experience | The Veteran |
|--|--|--|
| | | Awareness |
| | | Loving Spirit |
| | | Peace |
| | | Contemplative |
| Inexorably drawn to face the abomination by Conrad | | |
| Heart of darkness | | |
| | Strength, integrity, defeating inner demons | |
| | NVA, small unit tactics | |
| | Simplicity, heart | |
| | | Courage, selflessness, loyalty, commitment |
| | | Myaguez, loss of warrior spirit, dignity |
| Vicit tecum | | |
| | A communication, layered meanings, brimming with moral questions | |
| | Christian fundamentalism vs. Asian philosophy "Many spokes to wheel" | |
| | Control follows awareness | |
| | Initiatory trial of harassment | |
| Glide, energy and intent | | |
| Graceful, daring | | |
| | | Reconciling feelings |
| | Enemy is to be killed, hurt, by caring, instinctive and trained | |
| | Life & death = love & power | |
| | Probe inconsistency, find vital point, unleash predator, measure response, express concern | |
| | | Phil Coputo "Death will not alter the course of war" |
| Fear, vulnerability, patriotism and duty | | |
| | SLA Marshall, social, logical and statistical level, not passion | |
| Human longing to experience courage, selflessness, heros, service, transcendence | | |
| Warrior ancestor skills | | |
| Discover what needs war answers | | |
| Taoist virtues-resistance yielding, effortless effort | | |
| | The opponent is within | |
| | | Dignity, compassion, integrity |
| Denial of vulnerability | | |
| | Avenge | |

| New Guy | The Experience | The Veteran |
|---|---|--|
| | Heroically suffering losses, some victories, no lucky breaks, scorned by public, nobility of suffering and path of self realization, integrity of facing own demons | |
| | | To embody our deepest values in the flesh |
| | | Compassion, to be vulnerable |
| Pursuit of danger to display physical courage | | |
| Not supposed to cry, endure, be strong, not carried away by emotions, keep bottled up | | |
| | | Asked to pay attentions to feelings, deepen and expand awareness |
| | To concentrate under pressure, common humanity, compassion on our humanity | |
| | Real experiences, mentally, physically | |
| | Consciousness = choice | |
| Sacred Warrior to serve | | |
| | Dark God of war to destroy me if I fall unaware | |
| | Not considering politics of science | |
| | Conflict | |
| | | Resolution of conflict |
| Perceived human need "incredible urge to be right" | | |
| | Conscious choice, paying attention, yellow light for intent green light of action | |
| | Pay attention, Stay awake, be aware | |
| | | Warrior Code |
| | | The imperishable elements of Loyalty, Integrity, Intensity, Compassion, Service, Calmness under fire |
| | | Patience |
| | Strength of will | |
| | Aware of limitations | |
| | We're all acolyte warriors until tested in combat | |
| | We beseech Mars, the God of War to deliver us to the crucial battle field that will redeem us into the terrifying, immediacy of the moment | |
| | We long for the encounter with what will ultimately empower us with dignity and honor | |
| | Spiritual emptiness, an inner hunger impels men into combat | |

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| | Where there is no fanfare about loyalty | |
| | Fatigued, exhausted, inside there is an aliveness, trembling, between dread and pleasure | |
| | | Showing fear |
| | | Comrades in arms |
| | | Unite in an experience and openness |
| Ethics of responsibility first start within us | | |
| | Commitment, Whatever it takes | |
| | Emotional life and death | |
| Official state of mind | | |
| | The conscious is disengaged from the chatter | |
| | | Inducive to excellerated learning, creative problem solving, over-effort creates muscle tension moves us out of multi-dimensional alpha state into a more linear beta state |
| | Combat veterans block the ties alfa state to cope against stress and to defend against openness, preventing relaxation | |
| | | Our society relies on war to fulfil certain needs and reflects a spiritual poverty of our society |
| | | The American military ending. Care and feeling are there, but don't get too attached. You'll have to leave |
| | Death, the ultimate fear, But only comes to claim you. Sometimes he appears, Maybe as a threat, Maybe as a warning, not claiming you. His brother in darkness, that malevolent spirit of war, known by many names, This time it was Vietnam. You saw his reflection etched in the faces Of those who faced him, with you. The closer the spirits swarmed, The more alive and determined I became, Not me, Not this time.... | |

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| | Determination, destruction, barrenness | |
| Deepening of faith through hopelessness, despair, resignation, acceptance, determination, duty, miracle of prayers answered or a question of experience and qualifications | | |
| | Acceptance of death is indeed the end of all things, circumstances beyond control | |
| | Laughter, released tensions, a rare sharing of human warmth | |
| | Senselessness and dreariness | |
| | Time passed in killing rats | |
| | | Could not reconcile war and religion |
| | Nearness of enemy brings changes in every man, the mysterious force brings alertness, aliveness, voices are different, bodies are full of readiness, animal reflexes on edge | |
| Drawn to embrace the action, drawn inescapably, irresistibly | | |
| | Tense waiting, watching, profound exponential growth in senses, an electric current of its own | |
| | Relaxed days, mission, alternated with danger | |
| | | Through the hell of war, sweetness of peace |
| | At the end of the day, the NVA had heart with a single pistol left, still shooting | |
| | | Moral decline, social wounds of war included VD, babies, drugs, fraggings and racial strife |
| | | Veterans share guilt of survivors, why me, why them, they returned prematurely aged with a reverence of life, a sense of emptiness, need to comprehend experiences as they relate to the individual, the war and the nation |
| Seeking manhood at the price of innocence lost, psychic wounds | | |
| | Drinking and sex to obliterate the meaninglessness | |
| | | Love, contentment, peace, happiness |
| | | Men of honesty, dignity, courage |

Excerpts from
"Achilles in Vietnam"
by Jonathan Shay, M.D., PhD
Atheneum
New York, 1994

Moral world of the soldier-his culture understands what is right, betrayal by commanders and leaders

The modern world - the meaning of dead to the defeated is a bitter, unhealed wound. The U.S. had been defeated but won every battle.

For veterans, the unanchored dead continued to hover.

The sense of betrayal equating defeat with abandonment by God and others.

Personal devaluation

For some, war was a cause. Willing to put your life on a line

What is at stake is lethal danger and fear of it

With distribution of risk ever unjust

Indignant rage

Soldier's rage

Indignant rage-from social betrayal-through violation of what's "right"

Soldier's grief-battle nourishes human attachment then amputates

There is a passion of care among men fighting together

Death of Nelson was a blow longer lasting since there was no opportunity to communalize grief

Suppression of social grief work

Rage replaces grief

Survivor's guilt enters

Grief-Guilt merge in a close relationship in a friend's death

Revenge-get more even

Reviving the dead

P. 138

The Vietnam era, generations, 53,100,000

Men ~ 26,800,000

Served in military during Vietnam era, 8,615,000

Served in Vietnam, 3,145,000

Served in combat, 776,000

Wounded, 321,000

Died, 58,000

Attributing blame, predictability is death

Flying by the book will get you killed when the enemy knows the book

Virtually all treatment methods direct a survivor to construct a personal narrative

Tragedy brings us to cherish our mortality, savor, and embrace it

War itself creates situations in which physical survival contradicts moral survival

The time horizon in the future has shrunk to a few hours and to the timeless shelter of death

Narrative time is built into the very structure of the family of languages to which English belongs.

This may form part of the enormous difficulty that many survivors of severe trauma have in putting their experience into words.

Survivors of severe trauma have difficulty in putting their experience into words, their experience is _____ in a language that insists on "was" and "will be". The trauma world knows only "is".

Peer recognition, which allows survivors of trauma to grasp that they are not freaks and "do not have to go through it alone", usually leads to communication of experience in words, not action.

When a healing community of combat veterans forms, the heralds staff can be picked up from the dirt and veterans find they can once again speak without acting.

Individual experience seems to be spoken and heard as part of the discourse of mutual affirmation and recognition.

The task is to remember-rather than relive and re-enact-and to grieve.

For veterans this means grieving not only the dead but also their own lost innocence in both its meanings, as blamelessness and as unawareness of evil.

"All who hear should understand that no person suffering can be measured against any other person's suffering."

Expand background

Expand descriptions early on

Expand history (Washington, _____, Peace Talks)

Describe FAC flights

October 19, hit burn, damaged _____ bad LZ

Expand Corp HQ Visit QuiNhon

Gordy Expand Beep down. Tell of mortar _____, tried _____

(TM - I can't read the middle of the page)

A defined risk is acceptable, even anticipated, planned

risk without control, exposure, is the ultimate terrifying reality,... uncontrolled risk is the most sincere form of mortality awareness, when events occur, time slows, to an unlifelike quality, every inch of the rotor blade overhead is visible with each revolution, tracers float by like neon green _____, at 900 feet per second velocity. Words are spoken with a _____ voice, but you don't need to hear them, you already know their message. Sensitive controls become slowed to static movement, is this it, when time slows to a stop.

_____ indignant wrath stemming from violations of what's right.

Horror, fear, grief are _____, Rage becomes a lifelong disability to some

Arising from a sense of social betrayal

Moral luck - Compassionate understanding did not exist. Death of friends teaches you not to be close.

RR-Expand _____ - you won't recognize your wife - expand - call home

Who's the audience

Put together personal exp/overall times/_____

Tripping up to _____

Use really too much

Want to feel like you're there

Explain terms/jargon

Tone

Verbs slip

more looking back

Seeking the conflict

Coming of age

Service, sacrifice, vulnerability

Attempt to change fate

Accomplished change

Attained _____ goals, the encounter

Witness to continued losses

Survivor's grief

Losses continue after return home

Indelibly etched in psyche

Haunted by sightings of Nelson

UHPA - shock, _____

Nelson, Moreira funeral - closure, anchored

Review of Lam San 719, _____ to Persian Gulf

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| Meaning, Depth, Resonance, Twist |
| Meaning to the experience |
| Acknowledge others |
| Lessons Learned |
| Message to relatives |

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Simplicity, heart

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Christian fundamentalism vs. Asian philosophy "Many spokes to wheel"

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Initiatory trial of harassment

Enemy is to be killed, hurt, by caring, instinctive and trained

Life & death = love & power

Probe inconsistency, find vital point, unleash predator, measure response, express concern

SLA Marshall, social, logical and statistical level, not passion

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 Sometimes he appears, Maybe as a threat,
 Maybe as a warning, not claiming you.
 His brother in darkness, that malevolent spirit of war,
 known by many names,
 This time it was Vietnam.
 You saw his reflection etched in the faces of those who faced him, with you.
 The closer the spirits swarmed,
 The more alive and determined I became,
 Not me, Not this time....

Determination, destruction, barrenness, War Evans

No pretext to _____

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| News, Stanly Karrow's series, my movies |
| Love, contentment, peace, happiness |
| Men of honesty, dignity, courage |

Questions for Ken Mayberry:

Was Ken wounded at Ripcord? Did he and Rayburn go back in a second Huey into the pick-up zone?

Come up no slack frequency - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Woodchucker

Woodcutter

Poopsie

Major Head/redhead, Rutledge told he can't have blade strikes anymore, then denied in LZ in fear of blade strike and Cunningham told him to go ahead and accept the LZ's and accept the blade strikes.

Kid named Mike Cunningham from Juno, Alaska, had a handful of medals ready to go home but not old enough to buy a drink. He won the soldiers medal for flying in 100 miles-an-hour winds, rescuing 20 and 30 Vietnamese civilians at a time during a typhoon.

Mears was a pilot on Ripcord with Doan, his co-pilot. Mears got on tail end of the Ghostriders circling and did not go into the landing pad. At that moment, Doan decided he'd never back off or refuse a hot LZ. It would cost Doan being shot down five times in the coming year. New Years was Baby Sanh's roommate in flight school.

Doan took a rocket the day he left. He pulled Rutledge into the bunker with him. Then, when no others hit, he calmly walked out, dusted himself off and left. Rutledge believes there was a "D" model converted to an "H" model, number 496 or number 469. He said the pitot tube was on the nose not on the top of the Huey fuselage. That was the difference.

When Rutledge came home, he watched on TV and saw the Phoenix hootches exploding as the ARVN's were attacked there in 1972. He said there was a Lt. Brea and a Lt. Fast Eddie Stafire there with him. Rutledge phone number is (805) 588-0861.

He said the Phoenix plaque was a large wooden plaque about 2 feet by 3 feet that hung over the stage in the officer's club. On the 28th or 29th, someone read a deal about the Phoenix renewing itself in flames. One of the last nights in Vietnam, a large number of them gathered in the club, a number of them were ROTC types with college backgrounds. They suggested burning it and returning it to the flames. Rutledge and others decided to include writing the names of those they could remember, as well as all the Phoenix call signs on the back of it. They toasted it as it burned.

July, 1971, a Phoenix Nighthawk was armed with 6 M-60 machineguns strapped together. The 7.62 mini-gun was inoperable, as was the night scope. It was a make-do thing with McKeane and Grau flying it. A medevac mission was called at night and it was a hot extraction. Because Cobras are not available, and there was bad weather, the medevac could not attempt the approach. General Berry had issued a general order that if medevacs attempted landing in hot LZ's without two Cobra gunships on hand, the pilot would lose his wings. This was because the pilots would have flown anywhere, anytime, under the auspices of medevac. They were simply losing too many aircraft. That became the general reason for the order. The grunt on the ground kept calling, "this man has a sucking chest wound." It meant he would die within an hour, or hour and thirty minutes if he was not taken to a hospital, only 20 minutes away by helicopter. Grau looked over at McKeane. McKeane with his proverbial smile said, "OK, let's do it." They commenced the mission, extracted the wounded GI and took him to the hospital. They would later receive a DFC for it.

Major Lloyd was shipped in from the States specifically to lead the largest airborne invasion since Normandy. The Phoenix company had been selected at general levels stateside to lead the airborne invasion. Words that still excite the adrenaline rush are clear left, fire, cleared hot, PZ, LZ, coming hot, redline and overspeed.

I need to expand the concept of moral luck. Expand Soyland. Soyland knew that they were extremely desperate to demand the hot extraction and have him shot down on top of them. The experience of Phoenix with gunships on either side, he accepted the call. The gunships can't help while at a hover.

The "word" of Soyland down believed killed was a kick in the gut. It was pain piled on top of Stewart, Doody, Nelson, Moreira, Baldwin and Finn. But, if it could happen to Nelson, I now believed anyone could get it.

Every disaster feared, happened.

The impact of age of combatants. The younger were more likely willing to do anything.

Nelson's death, travesty of fate, Phoenix ascendent, ascension, ascendancy.

Sloniker served with 174th Assault Helicopter Company while it was standing down in June, 1971. It included the Dolphins and the Sharks.

Families were angry at Sloniker, assuming he was part of the bureaucracy, keeping them in the dark.

Many veterans wanted to move on.

Hell of an experience with no social value, compartmentalization of Army, military bureaucracy related to the need to know.

Need to get the information on Alcorn and Amos surviving both crashes. The two crashes Alcorn survived were _____?

Ascension, survivor aspects of Huey, the nightmare, Amos and Alcorn, nobody left a trail like Mike King did. What keeps me there by Sloniker. Nelson not getting his feet wet in the monsoons.

____ Valley, ICorps, tribulation, travesty, transgression, seeked out, hunted, found, engaged and killed. Da Nang diary by Colonel Tom Yarborough. Covey FAC. Has good style in LRPS by Dennis Foley.

Published in 1994. At the Hurricanes Eye, by Greg Walker, is another good one. Desert Storm Special Forces, Chapter 5, is At the Hurricanes Eye by Greg Walker. The NVA headhunter battalions trained by Chinese.

Gary Wigle has an Airforce book, Cease Fire to Myaguez is a chapter in Search and Rescue.

Sloniker, through Don Peterson's tapes helped resolve the exact locations of Stewart, Nelson, and Soyland. They had found all three locations but they were confused in thinking the North Vietnamese were lying to them about Soylands location.

Glide path, imaginary becomes real and becomes one with the Huey.

Arlington, there was a sense of commonality with the families present there. Kids long hair, probably same music, college aspirations, missed family events for 20 years. In our political descent, we divided and conquered ourselves from within, forgetting the basic tenants of our resolution.

The Myaguez, Search and Rescue by Gary Wigle, Da Nang Diary by Tom Yarborough, LRPS by Dennis Foley, At the Hurricane's Eye by Greg Walker.

The most forgotten victims left behind in memory, left behind by the bureaucracy, with no recognition of their losses, and no attempt to reconcile their feelings. The families. Criticism for writers, where were you when the page was blank, what was your response when I asked you to help. Dealing with emotions 20 years later shakes up a lot of unwanted feelings and requires dealing with things that have been put aside for so long.

Probably half of all Sorties flown after 1967 were against the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Expand the concept of moral luck. The word of Soyland, down, believed killed, another kick in the gut, pain piled on top of other deaths. But if it could happen to Nelson, then it could happen to anyone.

Phoenix ascendancy
 Phoenix ascension
 Phoenix tribulation
 travesty of fate
 Phoenix sanction
 Phoenix apocryphon
 Phoenix resolve
 wages of war
 temptation
 tempest
 transgression
 travesty
 Woodstock One-Three
 Recon Six-One
 Phoenix Five-One
 Hummingbird 7

Both Ken Mayberry and Dean Grau want Clifford Baade's name out of the document. Grau wants any reference to Baade removed. He was intentionally listed as a non-combat casualty, ground related. It was assigned intentionally so that the Chaplain would have no idea how he died, even though it was suicide. Young 19 year olds had ostracized him as a REMF unintentionally. Rayburn's name needs to be out of the book, except when with Ken Mayberry. Davis and Mears, Mears agrees with the use of his name. Davis has not been contacted. Dean Grau said Major Lloyd, then 40 years old, was told to leave home in the States and lead the largest airborne invasion since Normandy. He told the Phoenix the night before, "I'll be in the lead aircraft, right seat, flying with you." He was a great American, according to Grau. Grau did not like him when he gave him his standards instructor pilot ride with the company.

Warrior spirits akin Carrie Dean, anti- and pro-war living together happily 20 years later. Grau and Doan had a near mid-air collision with a Loach, thought they had meshed blades. Close enough to see the cockpit lights as they passed. Doan considered that the closest to getting killed, even though he had been shot down five times.

The DFC flight with Grau and McKeane. A medevac could not land because of a lack of two Cobra gunships

on station, since it was adjacent the A Shau Valley. A general order by General Berry would remove the wings of any medevac pilot who landed without gunship cover. Since they didn't have two Cobras, Grau and McKeane were flying the Phoenix Nighthawk. The GI on the ground called, "You're a Phoenix bird, I know you'll come get him, he's got a sucking chest wound and is gonna die." The man had an hour to live and was only 20 minutes from the hospital. McKeane with his proverbial smile looked over at Grau, "Let's do it." They would receive distinguished flying crosses for it. It occurred on July 29, 1971.

The war effort. Politicians were simply interested in getting re-elected. That included both Johnson and Nixon. They were fundamentally dishonest from Grau's view. Captain Holmes was white as a sheet when he found Baade. Doody's death was an unsettling experience. Grau had a close friend who was also a close friend of Doody's. Grau had put off the phone call to discuss the death of Doody for six months. The day he called his friend, he found out that his friend had died that very day in a traffic accident.

Need to mail a copy to Pat McKeane.

Keep the name, address and phone number of Phil Rutledge: Phillip L. Rutledge, 2116 Jewetta Avenue, Bakersfield, California, 93312, (805) 588-0861.

According to Grau, the Phoenix were best at Camp Evans. The Phoenix "were better". They demanded better skills. The toughness of the missions demanded the highest skills. They had the best safety record and the worst environment in Vietnam. There was never a mutiny or refusal to accept a mission. Most casualties and aircraft losses were suffered by the Phoenix.

Don Mears had incredible luck in his tour. Dean Grau (612) 645-1679. Bobo survived Mears' crash but died with Stewart. Alcorn survived two jumps that killed the pilots. Describe Nelson daintily jumping over mud puddles.

The younger the man, the more likely he is to accept the death dare.

Need to mail a copy to Mr. J. Pat McKeane, 1251 Regency Place, San Jose, California, 95129. Need to get a letter to Alcorn.

Rutledge - Corregidor mentality in last months.

RIPCORD TAPE

Flight path Cathryn Gladiator _____

At 3:36, _____, with 30 seconds separation

Position call, POL at Camp Eagle inoperative.

VHF Dragon 0-3.

2-4 off Evans over Jack

South/southeast at Ripcord. Turn on lights to show lead.

House, "Keep the damn things going."

Sealed _____

Rider 1-6, 0-6, 1-0

Recorded in _____ Camp Evans of Ghostriders

Phoenix call 1-3-0 to right turn. 2200 at blue line

Phoenix 1-4 out of PZ 2-7-0, "This is Phoenix (House). The other briefers are not up. It's pretty strong (fire) west of Ripcord. I hate to keep this damn thing going, but give me your ____."

Ghostriders blue line by Phong Dien/blueline by Jack

30 minutes to go. Approximate 2,000 feet, 30 second separation.

Black widows will be lining up. They're back at Camp Eagle now with no orders.

Home route of earlier draw left of Drew. Will have to sneak in through the fire. Lightning - 3 suppressive fire out Chalk 1-3 up off 5-13 off 5/13th. Redskin 2-4. Lightning-2. Griffin 9-3 Echo.

State high ground, due east of Ripcord is where we want the rockets. Pretty white stuff on top of Ripcord according to one Ghostrider. Ghostrider 1-6, "Mortar fire hitting all areas of pad, 5 to 10 meters of pad, all the

way down the hill." Lightning-3, "Going top pad, drop off one more hit just right beside the pad. Going around" Lift Master Comanchero 1-1, Griffin 9-3 Echo, "Did a Slick just get shot down." "No, he was hit by a mortar sitting down."

Chalk-7's taking small arms fire. 100 meters out of LZ. They're leading it on the pad. Abort. No, I've aborted three times already. I'll just continue on.

I'll leave it up to you, go in if you can. Ghostrider lead.

Two birds going in. Others around. Background roar is jamming of radios by NVA. Liftmaster, "going to 1-5-5 position. Can't get in there for Chinook. Going to 1-5-5 north of position north of Chinook. Chalk-10 just took mortars in the LZ. Chalk-12 taking fire, short final. POL just went up with a mortar hit."

Lightning-3, "Next ship, top pad, logger pad, north of Chinook area. Got mortars, aircraft hit landing. At 50 minutes. 6-3-7 short final. Heading POL in top at POL. 6-4 half mile final. Ghostrider 2-4 taking hits. Heading back in the Charlie med. Don't follow me. Aircraft has stuck pedals. Gonna put this thing down on the middle of the active."

One going to med, one aircraft Evans runway without pedals. _____ is hit. _____ is shutting down at Currahee. Checking for hits.

Expand comments.

Cataldo, LAM SON 719, had 120 helicopters in one mission. On March 4, 122 UH1's were hit and 20 destroyed. On March 3, and 20th of March, the two worst days in Army Aviation history. 29% of all UH1 losses occurred. 21 destroyed and 85 derossed.

"Someone went down, someone went after."

Lessons Learned, 101st Airborne Division

Detachment B-52, 5th Special Forces group (A) Operation Barbara Glade. Started May 15. Deep covert reconnaissance tactical exploitation. Withdrew from Ripcord due to casualties, indirect and anti-aircraft fire. There were enemy ground attacks. Withdrew and then began offensive in the Airborne Bradley area where supplies and Chache sites, logistic locations of NVA, were located. The US 2nd Battalion 506th Infantry was extracted on July 23. Helicopter crews in a three month period lost 29 killed, 70 wounded. April 1, 1970 through July 30, 1970.

Aerial flame Sorties were eight to ten 55-gallon drums. On May 30, LZ's were flames. Six Sorties caused 27 large secondary explosions. Bulk CS2 missions carrying 55-gallon drums were dropped from 4,000 feet. CS was dropped against suspected mortar and automatic weapons positions at LZs.

The B-5 DMZ front. Enemy had telephone lines running from Laos, northeastward into Quang Tri Province, north of the A Shau. O1D Bird Dogs were giving nighttime missions for sighting mortar flashes. They directed artillery and airstrikes, which reduced the intensity of the attacks.

The 101st Airborne had 424 aircraft authorized.

Engineer Battalion constructed LZ's, cleared fields of fire, constructed bunkers, landing pads, logistic pads, and any other construction necessary.

*****WTM: You stated on the tape that you have a table for me to type here. I did not get one.*****

Acoustic sensors monitored. The NVA and VC were heard monitoring US forces radio. Engineers started prefabricating bunkers, latrines, showers and other structures and then lifted them to firebase. They were positioned by helicopter after dozers had cleared the way.

On the 28th of April, Company B of 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry killed 15 NVA, recovered an M-60, M-79 and PRC25 radio.

On 17th of May, a CH47 was shot down with five KIA west of Nancy. On the 18th of March, a Phoenix bird went down with four crewmen and two passengers. Five died south of O'Riley. A crewchief was thrown from the wreckage. On the 19th of May, two trucks, a 2.5 ton and a 5 ton, were destroyed by Rangers east of Torch, southwest of ____ Tavern.

Gary Alcorn survived Soyland's crash and a chase by the NVA. An angel, the voice of a dead aunt, told him

it would be okay. He survived the night and was picked up the next morning. Phone number is (913) 796-6941.

Mike (Walter) Amos, (304) 755-5310, was crewchief with Herndon and Swanson. Captain Herndon was killed and Captain Donald Swanson was killed on the 18th of May, south of O'Riley.

Neil Dody, (301) 273-7571

Bruce Bender, (602) 425-4123

Don Davis, (708) 668-1533

Between June 26 and July 7, 1970, page 1-69. 117 aircraft hit, one shot down, 12.7mm, 19 derosed as salvage. July 1, through July 7, 160 rounds of 60 and 82mm mortars hit along with 75mm recoilless rifle fire. 21 US wounded. 30 NVA were killed in action with US casualties, 13 killed and 104 wounded. On July 1, 15 rounds of 82mm, 15 rounds of 75mm, 4 rounds of 82mm had 15 US wounded, firing 105mm counterfire. On July 4, page I-72, US unit was overrun by NVA sapper company. 15 NVA were killed vs. 7 US KIA including a company commander. 6 were wounded, 1 missing in action out of the platoon. The Company Commander was killed outright. The medic organized defense. It was a night out of the movie, Platoon. July 8, the NVA occupied Hill 1000. Believed to be the source of mortar fire from bunkers. Companies C and B from the 2nd, 506th Infantry could not dislodge them. M72 Law destroyed only one of several bunkers. 2 US KIA, 4 wounded in action. July 10, 8 attacks on Ripcord, 2 US killed, 17 wounded. July 11 - 16, ground action in the hills 1000 and 805 suffered 10 US killed, 52 wounded versus 12 NVA.

Page I-78:

July 21, 2nd Battalion, Airmobile 502nd Infantry was removed to Camp Eagle from the ground surrounding the lowlands of Ripcord.

On July 23, the 3rd Brigade directed extraction of the 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry from Ripcord and vicinity. Extractions began at 0545 and ended at 1214 hours.

Company D, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry, was inserted to assist in the extraction of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 506th. The hot extraction began at 1305, completed without casualties or damage at 1401 on the 23rd with TAC airstrikes underway during the move.

There was 74 US Airforce, Marine, Navy, Air Sorties. Continuous ARA and tube artillery. Troops returned to Evans, Ripcord had received 34 standoff artillery attacks in four days. On the 19th through the 22nd, 51 TAC airstrikes were used with 74 total TAC airstrikes being used on the final day during the evacuation. On July 21, one medevac crashed and burned in the field below Ripcord. A second medevac took fire, killing one crewmen

and wounding another, returning to Camp Eagle in an unflyable condition. A third aircraft from A Company, 158th, was hit, caught fire in the pickup zone and crashed. Six others took hits and returned unflyable.

On the 22nd, 12 US KIA, 61 wounded. During the extraction, one CH47 was shot down, 8 took hits, that left 4 _____ unflyable as salvage only. At 7:45, the extraction delayed by mortar fire, delays until 9:35 due to airstrikes and artillery. Infiltrating one UH1H at a time for the evacuation on July 23. Several hundred rounds impacted in 4 hours. 3,000 meters, 12,000 feet. Two miles is the 80mm mortar range.

Baldwin received ground fire, middle of the DMZ. Position YD113725 on September 20. There were nine US killed, one wounded in action. Company C, 158th Aviation Battalion. The Ranger team of the 1st of 5th Infantry Mechanized, page 79. One US wounded, August/September 1970.

Monday, January 9, 1995

Phone conversation with Gary Alcorn (Rt. 2, Box 50, McLouth, KS 66054... (913) 796-6941)

I talked with Gary Alcorn tonight. He told me that he had a basically good memory of what went on. He said he was thrown or blown out and only flew with the Phoenix four or five times, but it was the last time he flew with them. He had to go out as door gunner then help the crewchief at the end of the day. Then he had to go work on his own Cobra at the end of the day. His Company Commander was not happy about him flying with the Phoenix.

He remembers the aircraft descending and was told to look for hand signs to show him where the guys were on the ground. As they came to a hover, he said, "I've got them at the 630 position," meaning the three green berets were opening their hands to the sky to give him the signal. At that instant, Dale Pearce had thrown his hands up in the air as he was apparently hit in the chest and then he collapsed forward. In the same instant, a B-40 impacted the rear of the aircraft behind the doorgunner blowing him clear of the aircraft as it folded the tail boom alongside the fuselage. The aircraft rolled to the right. Gary was knocked unconscious. He thought he had lost his right eye because it was covered with blood. He woke up with his head lying downhill in a fetal position with his feet pointed uphill. As he rolled over his side, he found a flashlight. His gun was lost with the aircraft. The aircraft was no where in sight. He said the hillside was so steep he had to keep his feet planted to prevent from rolling or falling down the hill.

He had been knocked unconscious and he had no idea for how long. He found a piece of heavy brush that he thought was good concealment. At dark, he heard AC130's flying overhead and all night long. He also heard helicopters. He picked up a banana leaf and tried to use it with a flashlight to funnel the light like a strobe light. Another team had since been inserted at the aircraft wreckage downhill from him. He did not hear any airstrikes coming in or any other fire. He gave an SOS by flashlight towards the AC130. Coincidentally, the green beret team was doing one at the same time. The aircraft overhead told him to turn it off so they could shoot up the other one, thinking it was NVA trying to draw him in, thinking Alcorn was the NVA. As fate or luck, he didn't turn his back on and he didn't get shot up. He heard one gun shot and saw people running through the brush so he headed back up to the original LZ.

He climbed up and began resting on a ravine bluff. He saw a building in the valley and saw a man running with a white t-shirt on, jumping between banana plants going down the steep hillside. Rockets impacted all around the west around him, so he went further westward to a stream and climbing up and crawling where he could to get away from the fire. _____ exploding at the bottom of the hill on a little _____. He went down the hillside in the elephant grass. The elephant grass would interweave itself in the wind to create small tunnels so he could crawl through. It was a very large field, about 1,000 to 1,500 meters wide. As he was trying to get through the

elephant grass, a B-56 Airforce Canberra bomber came over at the treetops dropping napalm at eye level to him. He slid down the hill on his belly and crossed a small trough towards a tree that was five or six inches in diameter and 15 feet tall. A wall of fire came running his way from the napalm. He was praying it wouldn't get him. The aircraft was shooting up the ground front of the wall of flame in case any NVA were trying to run out of it. He had flames on one side of him and aircraft shooting up the ground on the other side. He began crying and praying and in his words, he heard a "voice speaking in my head". His grandmother's voice, who had died a couple of years earlier. "It'll be all right. It'll be all right." She had said it to him twice. At that point, a sense of calm came over him.

*****Earlier you said it was his Aunt*****

As he looked up, Skyraiders were bombing at the edge of the flames. He ripped off his boxer shorts from his pants and he could see the face of the Vietnamese pilot. But the pilot did not see Gary. With more guns coming out of tunnels, pointing to the sky, and then hiding from the bombers, Gary decided to wait until the fire reached the ravine he was in and jump through it. He was totally exhausted and ready to die. He closed his eyes and laid back. Then he looked up and saw an Airforce O2 Skymaster. He waved at it and then the aircraft banked off. A few minutes later, a Phoenix helicopter picked him up. Who was the Phoenix who picked him up.

He thought he was there for two nights and it turned out he was there for only one night. He believes that it was attributed to being knocked out and unconscious for a while.

Charlie Hawkins Ripcord Association

History 1961 ____ CIA, _____, 1963 Kennedy Assassination, 1962 Cuban Missle _____
 1964 Anti War _____ Johnson, _____

Army conclusions, LamSon 719

Introduce relatives letters

Son Tay, Payback whether intended or not, no loss of life, teams went out, never came back, _____ after Dec. 1970

Change name of Officer in Baade

1st Bry 5th Mech, Ranger _____ Baldwin

Grau Name of buddy who died in car wreck

Mayberry only purple heart among Infantry men

Expand engineers A Shau, Ash & Trash

Risk of opening firebases, mine cleaning, LZ opening, road cleaning

RLO responsibilities/O.W. flying

Early Phoenix Harold Smith Zephyrhills

Crystal clear waterfalls due to continuous rain, spectacular beauty

CCN pad describe in detail (bldgs, people, launch)

Sloniker get details on Kingsmen, Commancheros losses April/May 71

Seriousness, professionalism, gravity, serious as death

Khe Sanh _____ red clay, darker than _____, Alabama

Combat the ultimate gamble, all or nothing

For Slick pilots, it was safely getting in and out of LZ

Alcorn unstrapped, _____ to get out

Describe 1 of 5th _____

2 weeks alternating other lift companies

Lunch at CCN taking fire!

Resonance, basal tones, vibration of Huey

Thomlison, ARVN bleeding all over Loach

Gut check/ball check afterward

Schwab swimming in S. China Sea

TM DEROS review a/c accidents, incidents, flak, _____ fire, hits, mortars, rockets, sense of adrift, unrelated to history, unanchored spirits on my mind

Inverter failure N.D.

Mayberry's Huey 67-17606 _____

Call Glennon

Gary Alcorn wants to meet who picked him up

Jack Glennon visit Amos Frenchie Hosp. ship

The Phoenix, _____, Rule, Criterion, Consecration

Writing is a catharsis, an erotism

Anger over senseless losses

Rage over POW haunts spirit of unanchored souls, never released to place of rest or peace

Vile disgust with LBJ

_____ disgust over Richard Nixon

Henry Kissenger, _____ with Hoover

Nixon had basic international political decision and military moves fight

Dishonesty at home killed it

In the worst A.O.

We understood our service was at risk for our lives

Everyone knew a withdrawal (drawdown) not a defeat, was underway

There'd always been a willingness to step up to the line if Americans were in need, but ARVN's were our Allies, losing badly

Americans at home did not understand the feelings of those overseas, in a foreign land, given hopeless tasks, maintaining composure, continuing on.

They had no need for POW's in _____, no CCN POW's

The Phoenix _____ of honor, commitment, self sacrifice, if you go down, I _____ in the Philippine and God is my copilot

The feeling among the Phoenix, transcended the mythology of an ancient bird, renewed at death in fire

Warrior spirits were living in the Phoenix

_____ sense, sacrifice, heroism

If one went down, another came to get them, unheralded accomplishments, known only to those present.

Pro-service - anti war

Pro institution _____ need in an _____

Antiwar - the worst device of mankind - politician

The _____ of need _____

What is the military? What is it there for?

John Wayne was a cliche for macho man

Watching John Wayne movies as a kid made you want to go outside and play war

In reality, Vietnam is impossible to understand when Hollywood makes its horrible, deadly, no moral meaning

War mixes the feelings of society, race, wealth, politics

The John Wayne frame of reference in WWII didn't fit in Vietnam

A story needs a simplistic element of moral unity

Disintegration of American experience redefining meaning - memory of war, killing of prisoners a fact borne out

Death of characters we care about, no moral meaning

Society's _____ got us in and defeated ourselves

The Phoenix sanction

Pat McKeaney came in-country with Larry Baldwin

Both assigned to Phoenix

Asked what Platoon Baldwin suggested he'd take first, McKeany agreed _____

McKeaney date came in-country, date at Phoenix

Was McKeaney birthday the date of Soyland's loss

One peter pilot refused to go transferred out the following day

the Phoenix bond

a bond of understanding

total dependence upon each other

if they went down, would you come?

Sensors diversions

at end of 1972

Summarize statistics

5,968 helicopters

Trying to relate stories to the larger historical canvas

A picture to give more meaning, related as participants in history

Softens anger over losses

Sgt. Dale Dehnke, Da Krong Valley, KIA May 18, 1971

The Phoenix sanction

The Phoenix were volunteers

pilots, crewchiefs and doorgunners

All highly trained and capable

learning continuously with each hour of flight

The Phoenix pilots, were well trained, seasoned combat veterans, there was, however, a criterion which had to demonstrate the earning of aircraft commander orders

the enemy took no prisoners, in the worst area of operations, oath sworn commitments, were simply hollow words,

to receive A.C. orders a transcendent understanding was required.

The sanction was received from the other pilots only when the unspoken was intuitively answered, "If I go down, will you come?"

The consecrated bond of mutual dependence, to the point of self sacrifice, was when co-pilots become aircraft commanders,

A declaration of sacred commitment among warriors, the Phoenix Sanction

The consecration of warriors, Americans, radiated from them to carry Americans in need of a Phoenix bird.

Gary Linderer

Palladen Press

US Military Institution Press

use postcard to notify mailing list

cost is 35% total value

Amplify no POW's in SVN Laos

Democracy reforged in the experience and losses redefined in the anger of vets

Jim Fairchild did a "book" weekend in 1985 in New Jersey with Charlie Hawkins Ripcord Association

Army conclusions not without fact interpretation impact upon doctrine

Introduction to relatives letters

SonTay was payback whether intended or not with no Green Beret loss of life, for teams that never came back

Expand Baade, need a haircut? drunk

RLO responsibilities WO flying specialist

Crystal clear rivers, falls due to constant rain

describe CCN Lunch

Mike Sloniker get details Kingsmen, Commancheros, Redskin, _____ April/May/June 71

Alcorn asked to unstrap get out and help if necessary.

TM reflect during flight home

AC accidents, losses

incidents of ground fire

mortars, rockets at night

CS in hootches

Flak, taking fire, _____

Left Army sense of adrift, unrelated to history _____ spirits in my mind

Laterite clay, mind, rust, orange

Tributaries of Ho Chi Minh Trail

rapid fire 37mm

radar guides 57mm with incandescent pink _____ rounds

The Air Force also chose not to list badly damaged aircraft as losses

At the end of 1972, 8,500 aircraft had been destroyed over 1/2 of 8,000 a/c losses resulted in casualties

2,571 Air Force

5,968 helicopters

Expand POW computation

Helicopter shootdowns are generally catastrophic p.70

French Mobile 100 regmt, An Khe 6/5th

Ho Chi Minh sensors described p. 109

dimension

My Lai p. 256 kids sitting on bodies underneath

p. 189 bombing the trail

65 hours in country Huey time 245 pilot time

10' hover at flight idle

_____ Huey - KY28 _____

Ted Olsen

Collective up _____

McKeaney came in-country with Baldwin

Dean Grau _____

McKeaney's B'day

Soyland down on his B'day

One guy refused to go - transferred

bond of understanding, dependence upon each other if they went down, would you come?

Myth: War Criminals

Response: There are many myths, fantasized by movie scripts and simple lies, most are those who were never there, never did it, or are "wannabee's".

Myth: Baby Killers and Massacres

Response: Machinegunning civilians from helicopters in the movie Full Metal Jacket was not reality.

Myth: 1968 TET was a military loss

Response: The 1968 TET resulted in the destruction of the VietCong infrastructure throughout South Vietnam. From that point forward, only North Vietnamese Army regulars were capable of conducting military operations of any significance in South Vietnam.

Myth: Killing Prisoners of War

Response: To my knowledge, I know of no instance in the 101st Airborne Division, where Prisoners of Wars were thrown from helicopters or executed.

Myth: GI's fighting each other in the field or in base camp, as in the movie, Platoon

Response: I know of only one publicized incidence of mutiny or rebellion in the barracks, which occurred in 1969 and no incident in 1970 or 1971.

Myth: The NVA were not well supplied or armed

Response: The Ho Chi Minh Trail was an excellent supply network. In December, 1970, over 15,000 vehicles were counted by the Air Force, on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, in one day.

Myth: Laos and Cambodia were neutral territories

Response: The Ho Chi Minh Trail was maintained and occupied forcibly by both North Vietnamese Army Conscripts with Laotian and Cambodian civilians pressed into service of the NVA.

Myth: B-52's bombed Hanoi regularly

Response: Only during April through December, 1972, were B-52's used over Hanoi and Haiphong.

Myth: We militarily lost the war

Response: Fact: Politicians placed limits on airstrikes in the north (beginning with President Johnson) and prohibited U.S. troop movements across the Cambodian and Laotian borders where the North Vietnamese had supplies, training areas, and rest depots (the Cooper-Church Amendment).

The Generals and Admirals accepted the restrictions to the detriment of the effort.

We could go anywhere in force, but staying there was another thing.

Myth: There was always high tension between enlisted men and the NCO's, tension between NCO's and RLO's, and tension between the Warrants and RLO's

Response: There were periods of tensions or stress, but I believe they were job related or mission related, rather than hatred, class warfare, racism warfare, or other anger.

Myth: People got shot at every day

Response: Well, not every day.

Myth: People in "the rear" were always safe

Response: The most heavily impacted area of 122mm rockets was behind the Phoenix officers hootches and the Charlie Med Pad in 1970 and 1971. The Redskins and Griffins ready pads, also near the Phoenix officer's club, were the favorite choices of NVA mortar teams.

Myth: NVA and VC always took prisoners and treated them well

Response: The Defense Intelligence Agency in December, 1972, had estimated that there were 317 MIA's and probable Prisoners of War in Laos. The prior estimate had been as high as 354, based upon survivable crashes of airplanes and helicopters.

On March 10, 1973, ten Americans were returned from Laos. Of the 317 believed to have survived crashes at Laos, only seven military personnel returned alive.

Myth: Firebase Ripcord was not in danger of being overrun

Response: The last 18 men extracted alive from atop Ripcord could see hundreds of North Vietnamese coming through the wires approximately 100 yards below the mountaintop. "They looked like ants on a sugar cube," one soldier was quoted.

Myth: The Laotian invasion could never have been successfully accomplished

Response: In June, 1970, the Cooper-Church Amendment, which had been enacted in response to the Cambodian Invasion, precluded the use of American ground troops in Cambodia or Laos. Had American advisors been with their Vietnamese counterparts in Laos, the story would have had an entirely different ending.

This was a continuation of the limitations placed upon the armed forces by the politicians.

Myth: The experience of LamSon 719 was so disastrous that nothing could be learned from the experience

Response: For the following 20 years, Army aviation, planning, weapons development, and aircraft evolution benefited greatly from the experiences observed in the various helicopter roles. Laos was the first mid-intensity warfare environment.

Myth: The Army reported 108 helicopters shot down during the 45-day Laotian incursion.

Response: When considering aircraft shot down and destroyed, those shot down and slung back by Chinook, or those that flew back to forward base areas (such as Khe Sanh) then sling-loaded back to Phu Bai and found to be not repairable, a total of 444 aircraft were effectively destroyed by enemy anti-aircraft fire in 45 days.

Most of the losses occurred on March 3, 5 and March 20, 1971.

Myth: Only Spec-4 Easterling survived two Phoenix crashes by jumping from helicopter

Response: Gary Alcorn also survived two. He was derosed with a broken leg after the second one in 1970.

Other Questions

If any of you have any knowledge of those killed during 1970 and 1971, I would appreciate any comments, stories or remembrances of them.

I am also interested in your experiences. Do you have any memorable adventures on CCN in Laos or North Vietnam?

I am also interested in any other comments you have regarding your life experience since then and how you feel the Vietnam experience affected you.

Any comments are greatly appreciated. I hope you find the time and interest to assist me.

Responses will be compiled, printed, and shared with those who contribute.

Inside Hanoi's Secret Archives

Green berets were in Laos after the war ended. _____ had 36,979 prisoners of war captured between 1945 and 1954. The French only had 10,754 POW's returned. This was less than 1/3. At least 60% died in captivity. Many were executed by the Viet Minh (later NVA). However, the French were even more ruthless with their Viet Minh prisoners. 90% of the POW's the French had died in captivity.

In December, 1972, the Pentagon, Defense Intelligence Agency, listed 620 American Prisoners of War. There were 2,000 missing in action or killed in action with body not recovered. In 1972, the Defense Intelligence Agency estimated 554 POW's remained. In January 1973, the DIA listed 317 MIA's in Laos, down from the previous estimate of 354 survivable crashes.

Later, the Pentagon estimated 41 POW's remained in Laos alive. On January 27, 1973, the NVA released a list of 586 total living prisoners, along with 55 names of those who died. On February 1, 1973, none were in Laos. the 10 names of POW's in Laos included 7 military and 3 civilians.

On March 10, 1973, the last 10 Americans in Laos returned. They were NVA POW's. Not Laotian prisoners of war. A total of 587 POW's were accounted for. 317 known servicemen to have survived crashes in Laos resulted in 310 dead and missing and 7 returned alive. A total of 591 U.S. prisoners of war returned home alive.