

Tom

# VHPA HISTORICAL PRESENTATION

JULY 3, 2009



DIGITAL ANTHOLOGY - THE PRICE OF EXIT, Tom Marshall, Random House, 1998  
Post Office Box 2808  
Orlando, FL 32802

NPC DIGITAL, L.L.C.

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## HISTORICAL PRESENTATION TO VHPA

JULY 3, 2009

<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
000:00-02:20	History –Much more than our experiences	<b>Personal film and National Archives</b>
02:20 to 04:36	Khe Sanh 1 – 1968 Army Major McGuire, became Lt. Col. McGuire at Khe Sanh II, 1971	
04:38 to 06:40	Camp Eagle Gate, view toward 163 <sup>rd</sup> Avn. Company looking over Kingsmen Castle, B Co. 101 <sup>ST</sup> AVN. Btn.	<b>Archive Footage</b>
06:40 to 10:40	Hamburger Hill, Dong Ap Bia, May, 1969, excellent views of fighting positions	<b>National Archive footage</b>
10:40 to 21:10	Firebase Ricord, covers 8, 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> of July, 1971, 120mm mortars impacting as 105 howitzer crew returns fire, July 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2 men KIA and 6 wounded in chow line by 120 mm mortars	<b>National Archive film footage</b> <b>Archive Audio</b> <b>of Senators discussing the</b> <b>Cooper Church Ammendment, June 1970</b>
	<b>Audio from the Ghostriders, A Co., 158<sup>th</sup> Avn. Btn.</b>	
	Digitally compressed audio tape, courtesy of Rick Wickbolt, who saved the tapes in 1971. There is a total of 40 minutes audio covering the July 24 <sup>th</sup> extraction. Capt. Randy House, Phoenix lead, says " I hate to be the one to keep this damn thing going, but give me your pos." He retired as Major General House after the first Gulf War.	
24:40	An Khe, WO1 Marshall and his OH-58A, on an artillery spotting mission, while assigned to Headquarters Company, 1 <sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Div., October, 1970	<b>Personal film collection</b>
25:50	Phoenix, C Co., 158 <sup>th</sup> Avn. Btn., 101 <sup>st</sup> Abn. Div., departing Engineers pad at XXIV Corps, Da Nang River, bay, Hai Van pass in background	
27:00	Quang Tri Airfield, Covey FAC taking off, QT tower and GCA radar dome	<b>Archive Footage</b>
27:40	CCN Pad, Special Operations Group Compound	
28:05	1 <sup>st</sup> of 5 <sup>th</sup> Mechanized Inf. Div., very respected soldiers, according to many Phoenix crews who flew support for them	
29:19	WO1 Marshall, starting an OH6-A at 163 <sup>rd</sup> Aviation Company, 101 <sup>st</sup> Camp Eagle	
29:42	OH-6A at Vandergrift, mortar fire mission, Ghostriders lift troops to clear Rockpile, after two Chinooks dropped fougasse on it.	<b>Personal film collection,</b> <b>Door gunner shot with Marshall's camera</b>

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Dennis Fujii **film interview** by Marshall at Las Vegas VHPA in 2002

Fujii was shot down on Ranger North in Laos, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, directed AC-130 gunships above him, at 12,500 feet, Phoenix CO Major Jim Loyd and Cpt. David Nelson, my former platoon leader, got him off. They were shot up and crashed in flames on Hill 30, just south of Ranger North. They were rescued by two additional Phoenix birds that resulted in one more Huey left in Laos. Fujii spent one more night there, directed a FAC to bomb Ranger North. Fujii may have accounted for some 2,000 NVA losses due to AC-130 and fastmover jet strikes. Major Raydean Patterson, Ghostriders CO and "Hog," his crewchief told Marshall the story of not taking fire as they departed the Firebase. "Hog" told Marshall in Colorado Springs in 2008 "it was

*Nelson*  
*32:50* weird, I saw *hundreds* of NVA running, in the direction of our aircraft, with weapons down, (with the free hand) pointing fingers at our Huey. They didn't shoot and I didn't either."

35:00 Loss of Captain David Nelson, WO1 Ralph Moreira, Spec. 4 Joel Hatley

and PFC Mike King March 5, 1971, Tchepone

**Cpt. Dale Peterson Audio,**  
**174<sup>th</sup> Robinhoods**

37:00 Typical truck resupply column at Vandergrift,  
heading to Khe Sanh, Feb. 18, 1971

**National Archive footage**

37:00 Loach (OH-6A) fight with Cobra (AH1-G) and Air Force OV-10 assisting.

Best ground level footage of a Loach in action Marshall has ever seen.

**Professionally Digital enhanced**  
**Archive footage**

37:10 Col. Rich Johnson was interviewed by **Aviation Branch Historian, Dr. Jim Williams, in 1999.**

March 18, 1971, Johnson was a Cpt. With the 174<sup>th</sup> Robinhoods. He tells the story of the loss of Music 16, Capt. Keith Brandt and Lt. Alan Boffman, in a Cobra at LZ Brown

*Khe Sanh audio*

**Source: Archive Film and Army Avn. Branch**  
**Historian, Dr. Jim Williams**

44:20 CW2 Harold Smith, attempting to rescue the crew of a Joker gunship, March 19, 1971.

**Filmed by the Aviation Branch Historian**

Harold Smith tells of the experience, followed by audio from Cpt. Dale Peterson with a 174<sup>th</sup> cockpit recording. Captain Baker, a former Phoenix, was acting CO of the Ghostriders. You hear Cpt. Baker calling "we're hit" Lt. Col. Peachey radioed him "are you ready to go in?" The replacement Ghost rider lead, after observing two Blue Stars shot down, a Joker gun shot down and his lead shot up, replied "Rodger, give us the word and we'll be rolling in." The Ghost rider then took hits from the .51 calibre machinegun and Lt. Col. Peachey called it off. A short while later, Lt. Col. Peachey was shot down by a .51.

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*52:55*  
*Jim Marshall*  
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Spec.4 Paul Langenour, door gunner on the gunship was the sole survivor. He walked out with ARVN soldiers and Marines 13 days later.

53:00

Clips from PBS documentary

"MIA: A SOLDIER'S HOMECOMING."

The Story of Major Jack Barker and Crew lost going back in for a third attempted extraction at Firebase Brown, March 20, 1971. The Ghostriders had 6 of 9 aircraft shot down in the morning mission. The remaining 3 were shot up rescuing the 6 shot down. Lt. Jon Evans and WO1 John Madden, Black Widows, C Co., 101<sup>st</sup> Avn. Btn., volunteered as Chalk 2, immediately behind them.

01:00:00      Scenes of a Skycrane and Chinooks, then a combat assault with US soldiers,      **Archive footage**  
 Ghostriders and 174<sup>th</sup> Asslt. Helicopter Company Robinhoods. Check out the cigar smoking AC.  
 Appears to be into the western border area of RVN, just south of the DMZ.

01:05:10      Shadow of what appears to be the shadow of an F-4 Phantom providing close air support  
 Followed by personal slide collection, including last photographs of WO1 Ralph Moreira, believed taken between February 26 and March 3, 1971, after LZ Lolo. Given to Marshall by his son in 1999.

#### ***Historical observations and thoughts:***

The Cooper Church Amendment was the predominate factor in the Laotian defeat of the ARVN, by the NVA (PAVN). The ARVN lacked their US advisors accompanying them on the ground. The lack of guidance and english communications was very simply, caused by the US Congress passing the Cooper Church Amendment. There were other contributing factors, but none as obvious.

Captain Jerry Crews at LZ Lolo and Dennis Fujii at Ranger North were the proof of that observation.

The singular importance of an American on the ground with the ARVN's was demonstrated by Sp. 5 Fujii at Ranger North and Hill 30. The fact that the NVA were ordered to let him go, was one of the most surreal events in military history.

In the Easter Offensive, 1972, 17 NVA regiments swept into Quang Tri Province. They were halted by one battalion of south vietnamese Marines at Hue, aided by a river and a US Marine Air Naval Gunfire Liason Company, which had men at Alpha-2, Dong Ha and Hue.

By June, 1972, two south vietnamese Marine Battalions fought to take back Quang Tri with US air and naval gunfire support. They retook the city of Quang Tri and the Citadel in September, 1972.

Whatever private agreement President Nixon and Henry Kissenger had with SVN leaders Thieu and Ky, ended with Watergate and his resignation. There was no air support from the US in 1974 through May, 1975.

Saigon fell, directly as a result of the US Congress, cutting off military assistance. A Political Failure for the U.S.

Finally, the total commitment to accomplishing the mission for Allies by Music 16, has gone unrecognized far too long in the Army Aviation family.

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***Recommended reading:***

**VIENAM AT WAR**, Lt. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson, 1988, Oxford University Press

**DA NANG DIARY**, Col. Tom Yarbrough, St. Martin's Paperbacks, 2002 edition, contains declassified information

**RIPCORD** published 2000, Keith Nolan, also **Into Laos**, published in 1980's. Nolan in his 40's, died earlier this year.

**WHERE THEY LAY**, by Earl Swift, Houghton Mifflin publisher

**THUD RIDGE** by Jack Boughton, 1969

**IN SEARCH OF THE WARRIOR SPIRIT**, Richard Heckler, updated since 1990

**Blood Road: The Ho Chi Minh Trail** by John Prados

**THE PRICE OF EXIT**, Tom Marshall, Random House – Ivey Books, 1998

***Recommended films:***

**MIA: A SOLDIER'S HOMECOMING, 2008**, GUERRILLA DOCS, may order on the web at guerrilladocs.com, a PBS documentary

**TWO DAYS IN OCTOBER, 1967**, a PBS documentary, excellent history of the origination of the anti-war movement, which was really anti-draft / selective service

Check out **CHPA, Combat Helicopter Pilot's Association**, a multi generational organization, you would enjoy.

Special thanks to:

Lt. Col. Michael Sloniker, USA (ret.) for his historical support and advice while I was writing **THE PRICE OF EXIT** and his subsequent service to VHPA ,

to Lt. Col. Robert Clewell, USA (ret.) who after the Kingsmen Ceremony at Arlington in 2006, rekindled the spirit within me, to build from the experience,

to Gary Rossome and the Kingsmen Vets, who let me experiment with film and audio at their Colorado Springs Reunion, 2008,

and to all of you,

Thanks!

Tom Marshall

Cover: Phoenix, C. Co., 158<sup>th</sup> Avn. Btn., 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, award ceremony at Khe Sanh, Feb. 28, 1971, with Gen. Berry, from Cpt. Don Davis, 6<sup>th</sup> from right

Back Cover: Ham Gnia AAF (Khe Sanh) Approach Plate

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