

Tom Marshall

To:
Subject:

Ghostriders, A Co., 158th Avn. Bn., 101st Airborne Division, March, 1971

Hi Mike,

I hope you and your Dragon Lady are doing well.

This is intended for your eyes only.

As you may have heard, I gave a matter of fact, multi-media presentation to the Ghostriders, at their semi-annual meeting in Colorado Springs, CO in July.

It is pretty daunting to give a presentation to 60 or so combat veterans. It really was a "no bullshit" presentation.

I had a firm, Communications Concepts Inc., take my slides and movies and create chapters on a DVD, at a cost of \$1,220.00. They do adds for Lockheed Martin and Universal Studios, as well as covering space shots at Kennedy Space Center. My slides were separated into a mix of 1971 and veteran events like the lunch with Gen. House at Fort Riley in 1995. I also have a chapter with only CCN slides.

The question I get from the veterans I cross paths with is "how did you know what they said" so many years ago. I felt the presentation had to deal with the credibility issue. The fact is that I wrote it, in part, based on my letters home to my wife, with the mindset of a disillusioned 21 year old. The fact that I quoted personal stories told me of personal exchanges between pilots and crewmen, raised the credibility issue in many veterans minds. Ken Mayberry was instrumental in getting the Phoenix to share their stories. I would send him a chapter and he would copy it to everyone involved, then they would call or write me with corrections. I also had personal interviews and wrote many of the stories at VHPA meetings.

In 1995, when you overloaded me with excerpts of books and papers from the Pentagon Library, you really provided me the historical, factual side of the story. That story has withstood the scrutiny of critical eyes since it came out in 1998. I give you my most sincere personal thanks for that.

Few veterans know that I spent 10 years (1981-1990) on the Appraisal Institute's national faculty, teaching the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice, which deals with honesty and integrity in the real estate financial realm. I also have testified in state and federal courts regarding real estate cases. I understand the importance of factual correctness.

While writing the Price of Exit, which started in 1993, through 1997, I conducted basic research. It was applied research when I asked Gary Linderer to put me in contact with a Ranger, who could get me the names and hometowns of those who died with Lt. Finn and W. O. Harry Baldwin. It was stories like that that added to the effort.

I included in the slides, pdf's of a letter home and your sticky note to me in 1995 with the 101st casualty statistics, saying "I said to myself, self, what else can I do to mess with Marshall's mind? Self said, send Marshall all known casualty records for the 101st Airborne Division in Viet Nam."

I took the audio tapes and had them compressed and edited for interest in a six minute presentation. I kept your taped description of why you were doing the tapes and where you explained how Jim Fulbrook had recorded the action on March 19th when CW-2 Harold Smith was wounded. Captain Baker was acting C.O. of the Ghostriders. Smith had been an enlisted courier at Khe Sanh, first tour, in the Marines in 1968. They all recognized the voice of Captain Baker saying

"help Mr. Smith out!" Itty Bitty as he known by the Ghostriders was not there. Many also recognized Col. Peachey's voice.

I had the audio edited to play with my movies of the Chinook Flame Drop and CA onto the Rockpile. My tapes gave them a stroll down some familiar places. The Ghostriders were stunned that I had footage of them in the CA, where they came to a hover, the right skid tip touching the mountain while the troops filed off one at a time behind the copilot.

Then I played a six minute segment of my 45 minute interview with Dennis Fujii who was rescued by Lloyd and Nelson off Ranger North.

At the end of it, he said the man that got him off Ranger South was " Major Raydean, oh, I can't think of his last name. He was a Ghostrider and I gave him the belt of an NVA officer."

Those guys were coming out of their seats. Raydean Patterson was there and stood up and spoke about it. His Crewchief was also there. He is a Harley riding guy with the nickname "Hog."

After the evening presentation was closed, a former CW-2 came up to me and told me "Lt. Col. Peachey called me and Major Patterson into his office. He was on the verge of tears, highly emotional and said "How could you do that to me?! To refuse to go back to that firebase?" The former CW2 said that Lt. Col. Peachey described the events of that morning "as if he had been at another place." They had gone in once before that day and nearly didn't get off the ground because so many panicked ARVN's mobbed their helicopter. The Crewchief and Gunner may have actually shot some to get them off. They didn't say it but it sure sounded like it. It was a terrifying incident. Similar to what Jon Evans describes in MIA:A Soldiers Homecoming, which coincidentally, airs nationally in November on many PBS stations.

Lt. Col. Peachey relieved Major Patterson of command and actually filed the beginnings of a Court Martial proceeding against the CW2. A General ordered it stopped, 4 days later and he was back flying on the 21st. That is why Captain Baker and Mr. Smith were lead that day.

Hog, the crewchief for Major Patterson, came up and told me "There were only two people in this room that knew the story of that belt and officer's buckle, me and Major Patterson. Only then did I believe that was really him." I had adequately addressed the credibility issue with him. He said Fujii had been instructed to have his id card out to prove they really had him. Hog also said picking up Fujii was the weirdest moment of his tour. He said the NVA really wanted him off that firebase. " I saw hundreds of NVA running in the direction of the helicopter, pointing at the helicopter. They didn't fire and I didn't either." Fujii had been so effective with Spectre, they had to let him go.

Richard King, who told me of my flight school room-mate's death at Fort Bragg, came up and said "you made me the famous Ghostrider, because I was named in "The Price OF Exit."

Think back to that afternoon at VHPA in Washington D.C., 2006, where Gary Grow and Harold Smith were dog cussing Lt. Col. Peachey. I did not share their feelings. When you said "Lam Son veterans, Nam Vets on Steroids."

I told the Ghostriders, that since the first Gulf War, I have the highest admiration and respect for the military institutions that comprise our armed forces.

So now you have the rest of that story. March 19, 1971, was coincidentally the day Major Bunting called off his flight into the PZ as I described his account in the book.

I now understand that Al Fischer's account of being threatened by Lt. Col. Peachey was incorrect, for Lt. Col. Peachey was shot down on the 19th. Lt. Col. Bob Clewell, the Commanders CO, told me it was a Lt. Col. Riedel, at the Kingsmen's ceremony, at Arlington on April 12, 2006.

The Kingmen have very strong emotional ties and feelings regarding those events.

I have to hand it to Gary Rossomme, he is trying to get them more involved with VHPA, rather than their own reunion. Some of these guys still carry bitter emotions from that time.

John Madden (in the documentary) and Phoenix crewchief Larry Frazier were also there.

I am preparing a series of presentations with the multi-media DVD, to give to small groups, clubs and organizations, regarding the fallacies of the Viet Nam era and some facts not widely known.

I will give a one hour presentation on writing "The Price Of Exit" at VHPA in Philadelphia next year.

If you have any recommendations on content, like your description of the Wall, where it starts and ends, as well as statistics and firsts of the Lam Son 719 era, I would appreciate your thoughts and recommendations.

RLO will never again roll from the lips of this former warrant!

Best wishes,

Cleared Hot!

Tom Marshall