

12/26/94

W. Thomas Marshall, Jr., MAI  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Tom,

First I wish to apologize for dragging my feet. I didn't realize the magnitude of the project I accepted. I should have at least warned you I would be slow. This is the first week I've really been able to concentrate on your book.

All my comments are from my recollection which may or may not be accurate.

Pg. 5 ..... Par 1&3 ---I question 3-150ft ropes. A typical mission would consist of 4 UH1-H lift birds (2 insert/extraction, 2 chase), 2 or 4 Cobras (usually Redskins and/or Griffins or their 101 Bn counterparts), Covey (OV-10 Bronco) FAC, A-1E's and/or Fast movers on station. We carried 4 ropes, 2 for each side. Chalk 1&2 also carried 1-30ft ladder. I believe the first 2 Hueys had shorter ropes (120ft-?), Chalk 3&4 140ft-?.

Pg. 22 ..... Par 5-----I don't remember O'Reilly or Barnett falling as Ripcord did. However they were bad news for anyone having to resupply or CA those areas. They were eventually abandoned.

Pg. 50 ..... Par 5-----Wasn't the Vulcan 20mm-?

Pg. 65 ..... Par 3&4 ---Colonel Asshole-I realize your distaste for the man, but do you wish to use this term?

I'm surprised you were assigned a platoon at Battalion level.

Didn't you have to go through SERTS (Screaming Eagle Replacement Training) before coming in-company? The rest of us did.

Pg.66 .....Par4-----Don not Dave Mears.

Doody & Rayburn were not in our hootch (which was #22, painted on our front door was- Double Duce No Slack).

2nd platoon flag/guideon was a duck wearing aviation type goggles, a cigar hanging from his bill, and riding a whiskey bottle, Thunder Ducks, Bottles n Throttles were printed on it. I've enclosed a picture of the one I had made a few years ago which was copied from an old photo.

I remember Rayburn carrying his body bag. It was personalized with "TO BRENDA WITH LOVE DAVE". I ran into Dave & his wife in New Orleans. Before we were introduced I asked, "Is your name Brenda?" It was.

Pg.69 .....Par2-----Didn't you get a Checkride before being released to fly with the platoon? It was the normal procedure.

Pg.70 .....Par2-----Nelson was a CH54 Crane pilot who should have done his tour in Danang, but due to our shortage of RLO type pilots, well--the rest is legend. The warrants felt he'd been screwed.

Pg.74 .....Par1-----I was an IP in both contact and instruments. Stewart was the unit SIP.

Pg.75 .....Par1&2 ----The AC's always did a thorough post flight the nite before. They trusted each other and their crewmen's ability so they normally didn't feel the need to get up to preflight, one of the benefits of an AC.

Didn't Keeth have Blonde hair? Stewart had red hair.

Our flight line/revetment area was called the Phoenix Nest.

Pg.80 .....Par6-----I don't remember hearing about Cocaine. Marijuana and Heroin were popular.

Pg.83 .....Par5-----LC Gerard was 158 Bn CO not safety officer.

Pg.84 .....Par2-----Same as Pg. 83 above.

Pg.85 .....Par4-----I'm not comfortable discussing Baade. I've met his Wife (she's never remarried) and Mother. Your account is accurate. Wasn't Cpt Holmes the guy who found him?

Pg.89 .....Par4-----All our Huey's were H models. The unit formed at Ft Riley KS, the AC had consecutive tail numbers starting around 600. I'm not aware of any D models in the 101. With the availability of the L13 engine, I'd be surprised to find a UH1-D. We had a few replacement birds that were real dogs and required pilots & crews to be very conscious of the load/DA.

Pg.93 .....Par3-----Don't forget the Griffins C Btry 4/77 ARA. Their flight line was first, if landing north. (Giffins, Ghostriders Haunted House, Phoenix Nest). Charlie would walk mortars down the flight line of all 3 companies.

Pg.100 .....Par1-----Standby or Main?

Pg.102 .....Par1-----Finn was 2Plt leader then was transferred to 1st Plt probably about time Cpt House left (House was 1stPlt leader, not 2nd). Was good leader but always too serious. He was one off these "I won't ask you to anything I wouldn't do" RLOs. I think it got him killed.

Finn was flying a **Ranger** (based at Quang Tri) **LRRP** team insert, low level into the DMZ when he crashed. No survivors. 4-crewmen, 5 or 7 rangers. The ranger call sign was Killer \_\_, when they communicated on FM it was in a whisper, very eerie.

Pg.104 .....Par2-----A Starlight scope was mounted on, I believe, the search light. We flew Blacked out until a target was located by scope then the search light was turned on to illuminate target, then the mini hosed the area down.

Pg.115 .....Par4-----Stewart applied for a 6 month extension so he would be eligible for an early out. He took 30 day leave and went home for Xmas. His extension was canceled but because of his leave he missed his normal DEROS date & had to make up the leave time. He'd probably be alive today had he not taken leave.

Pg.116 .....Par2-----I didn't know Baldwin's Dad came over to visit the unit. I'm told Cole's father the summer or fall of 1970 was in the unit inquiring about his son.

Pg.125 .....Par2-----I ran into B Bender in Scottsdale. He resides in Globe AZ. Did you know he was a Phoenix pilot too.

Pg.135 .....Par3-----CW2 P Stewart--see my comments from Pg. 115 above.

Pg.136 .....Par8-----I don't think he would've said "my tail boom is gone"

Pg.150 .....Par1-----Are you certain they were still running CCN missions?

Pg.158 .....Par3-----Is Jim Saunders your friend or are you referring to the Phoenix pilot Nick Saunders who was shot down in the Ripcord area 18 May 70?

Pg.164 .....Par3-----**Pat** not Bob McKeany.

Pg.166 .....Par2-----I'd like to make a statement about Maj. Lloyd. I didn't really get to know him. He was one of my final "New-in-company" checkrides. The last 2 CO's had been 1-very poor and 2-mediocre. I could tell from my brief time with Lloyd the Phoenix were in good hands. He was transferred from the Redskins to us to lead the Phoenix during L719. I'm told the guys who served under him would follow him into Hell. He was one of the rare, good leaders to be found that late in the war.

.....#4 -----CCN during L719?

Pg.188 .....Par3-----Benning misspelled.

Pg.191 .....Par2-----Just a note of caution. I'm sure the 101Bn would debate their "lack" of combat experience. They were heavily involved in 101 ABN operations and L719. They may have done more work in the A Shau than the 158 in 1970.

Pg.196 .....Par5-----Are you referring to Bach Ma? I saw it once. Absolutely beautiful!!

Pg.226 .....Par4-----The actual crash site was along the Laotian border west of the A Shau (YD047275).

Pg.227 .....Par3-----This description disturbs me in that I had never heard this story told quite this way. I was not aware there were any witness to Soyland's end. I assume you are exercising some literary freedom here. Your story has been fairly factual to this point. Its as if I'm reading your dairy. Are you certain you want to mix fiction with fact?

Pg.231 .....Par3-----Are you referring to Soyland as the crew that crashed in the A Shau.

The Griffins provided us with a lot of good cover on CCN too.

Several crewchiefs survived crashes by jumping or being thrown out. A CE named Amos survived 2!!! CE Easterling, and one other, no one can recall his name, survived 1 each. Then Soyland's crew CE Parker & G Allcorn (Redskin cobra CE)

Source of the Phoenix burning ceremony via Kinkaid, Groover, Grau, finally Olson who had heard the story from his friend Phil Rutledge. Phil was present. I have not been able to talk with him yet but when I do I'll let you know. I understand they took the Phoenix out of the club. They wrote as many pilot names they could remember or heard about on the bird, then set it afire.

I wish to make one comment in reference to the Phoenix. When I left Nam I felt we were by far the best unit in Nam. We saw more combat, etc. I always felt we went where others wouldn't go. I discovered a few years ago that others felt that way about their units too. At the 101ABN reunion in Omaha the Kingsmen had a gathering, not unlike the Phoenix. In fact they accepted me as one of their own. As they told their stories I felt as if I were among the Phoenix. It made me realize that we all shared the same risks, flew the same missions, and yes even made the same, sometimes heroic, sometimes stupid decisions. I'm very protective of our image. Too many died wearing that patch. I don't wish to be glamorized to the point we alienate the other units, as the Cav has done. Do I make any sense?

This concludes my review. I hope my comments can be of some help to you. If I can be of further assistance, don't hesitate to call. I don't anticipate being pressed as I was in earlier this month and should be able to respond faster.

Again I appreciate your patience.

A really nice guy from Nebraska,

Ken Mayberry