

Dear Mr. Greenhalgh:

Received your RFI on my background and experiences as "DustOff 88" in RVN from 6/68 to 6/69.

- Graduated Flight School WORWAC 68-5, 2nd WOC, on 21 May 1968, Appointed WO-1 with 217 hrs.
- Graduated from essential medical training for MSC Aviators BAMC, Ft. Sam Houston Tx. Class 68-6, June & July 1968 enroute to RVN.
- Assigned to 44th MED BDE, 498th Medical Co. (Air Ambulance), Lane Army Air Field, RVN; Jul 1968, Commanded by Ltc. Scott. Don't Remember what my call sign was there. Got some really good right seat time and pulled many missions from LZ English to Anh Kai (SP ?) down to Tuy Hoa and out to Ban Me Thuot. Spent most of my time from Aug - Dec '68 assigned to support the 91st Evac, the 173rd Airborne and the ROK's around Tuy Hoa and a few A Camps along the border out at Ban Me Thuot.

I remember flying with an AC (CW-2 Bob Arcan or Arcand) who taught me how to fly for survival ("keep Charlie thinking you are going to crash and he probably won't shoot at you!"). I remember one of my first missions was to support a troop insertion at an A camp at Duc Lap along the Cambodian border where I saw Slicks fall out of formation burning and remember seeing NVA or VC elephants on the ground with mortars strapped to their backs. I got very proficient at hoist missions in the triple canopy jungle around Ban Me Thuot.

- In Dec '68 CW-2 Peter Burnett (one of my old AC's) and I were detached & reassigned to 68th Medical Detachment (Hel Amb), in Tuy Hoa as "Experienced Aircraft Commanders" I think I had made AC the week before. The unit had just come into country and was commanded by Maj. Thurman M. Pittman, MSC. (1st Unit News letter attached with a lot of unit history, don't have any others or remember if more were published)

Tuy Hoa was a great place if you had to be in Viet Nam, it was on a beautiful beach, had a stone officers club and wooden hutches. The 91st Evac had some great nurses (45 I think) and a strange CO that like to shoot village dogs in the middle of the night! The chief nurse, a female Ltc., loved to stop arguments when some of the more boisterous 173rd officers came in and had a little too much hootch and couldn't generate any interest from the nurses. Something about being LEGS or pill pushers or band aid jockeys or something like that!

One memorable mission was a night extraction of a snake bite victim off a mountain top south of Tuy Hoa. We had to hover on the peak to pick the guy up and as we flew away the ground contact was asked what kind of snake had bitten the guy, he replied not to worry the snake was onboard with us! That caused some concern till we located a gunny sack in the crew chief's area. Yep! The snake was alive and well!

I remember pulling a hoist mission west of Duc Lap (we weren't supposed to be out there) to extract what was left of a Huey crew that had been shot down during a LRRP mission. Triple canopy jungle, with bad guys all around and two AF Huey's with Mini guns in a tight circle laying down a lot of fire taught me the true meaning of "Pucker Power". Got a "V" device for my Air Medal and a chewing out by some SF full Bull for being "West of the line", he later and unofficially thanked me and my crew.

When I left Country in June 1969 enroute to a teaching assignment at Ft. Wolters Tx. Cpt. Thomas Ely MSC was commanding

- Rated in OH23D, UH1-ABDH, TH55A, TH13T, OH58A
- Flew 863 Combat hours, 900+ sorties, evacuated 1300+ (Lost one and had one borne on board) and received;  
Air Medal (18OLC) with V device  
Army Commendation Medal  
Vietnam Service Medal w 4 Bronze Stars  
Vietnam Campaign Medal

If you have any information about the Dustoff Association I would appreciate hearing about them, Didn't know there was one!

Sincerely,

  
Rodger A. Pickett  
Harris Corporation  
Air Traffic Control Systems Division  
Information Resource Manager