

Michael G Law  
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association  
Removed VNCA

Dear Michael

We met at the Quad A meeting in St Louis this past spring. At that time you expressed some interest in a book we were starting to put together about the Battalion. At the time I told you that I thought that we would be done by October when we were having our first reunion. But like so many projects this one has taken on a life of its own and has become a on going project that will be updated, worked on, expanded and then published every two years.

The working copy I am giving you is not even the finished product for this year but it will give you a good idea as to were we are and where we are going. The covers front and back inside and out will be covered with color copies of the Battalions patches, then of course there will be unit histories, lists, stories, and anything else we can find out about the Battalion.

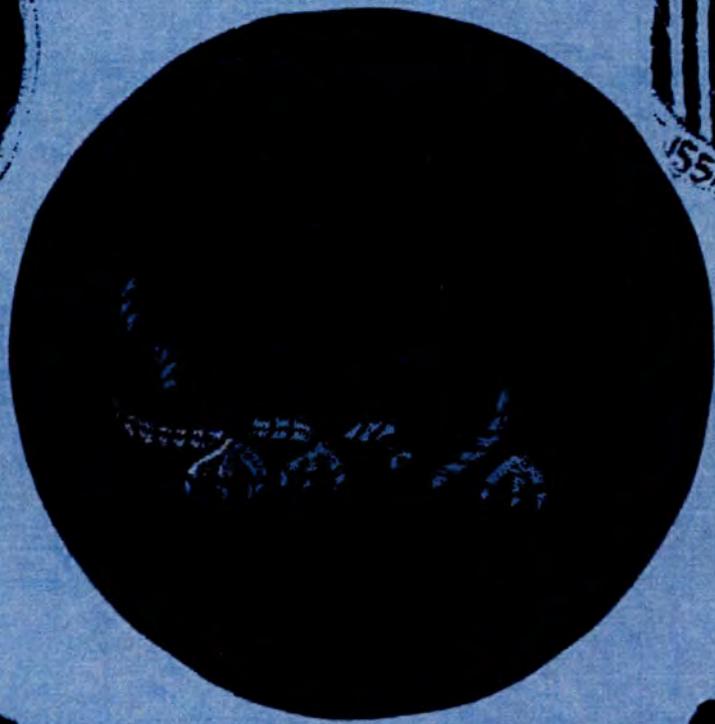
We had a great reunion this past October with over 60 former members and about 40 wives attending. Those 3½ days were really great. Our concept of sticking to Units assigned/attached to the 52D CAB and or those assigned /attached to Camp Holloway has worked real well. A common history, use of the same aircraft, bunkers, hooches, over that 9 year period of time that the Battalion Existed has created a feeling of belonging that most other Vietnam era organizations can't offer. When our Battalion meets it can and has included every one from cooks to Battalion Commanders and everyone in between.

Again I am sorry we took so long getting this to you and I  
hope you have a great up coming Holiday Season.

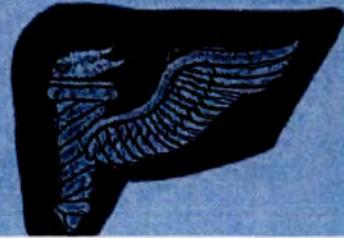
Sincerely

Vernon G. Gano Jr.  
President  
52D Combat Aviation Battalion & Camp Holloway Association  
**Removed VNCA**

PS What does this non-aviator have to do to get one of your  
membership books?



HEADHUNTERS



Dateline Pacific Stars and Stripes  
Vietnam

## PLEIKU AIRFIELD RENAMED

4 July 1963... The old Pleiku Airfield in the plateau area of central Vietnam has been renamed in honor of a member of the 52d Aviation Battalion, who was killed in action last December.

The field was renamed Camp Holloway in honor of CWO Charles E. Holloway who was killed while serving as a co-pilot aboard an H-21 helicopter on 22 December 1962.

The dedication ceremony was opened by a Vietnamese Military Band playing the Star Spangled Banner and the Vietnamese National Anthem. It was highlighted by a brief address by Brig. Gen. Joseph Stilwell, commanding general, U.S. Army Support Group Vietnam, and a flyover of four H-21s.

Other honored guests were Col. Hal D. McCown, II Corps senior adviser, and the Vietnamese province chief for Pleiku.

Camp Holloway is used as a base for helicopters and light aircraft.

### About the Man

Mr. Holloway was married and the father of five children. He was an ex-enlisted man who was convinced to attend flight school, even though he was almost too old to attend. He has been in country about two weeks when he died. He had little or no insurance, so the unit took up a collection for his wife and children. What a terrible Christmas that must have been for his wife and children in 1962... losing their husband and father three days before Christmas. Mr. Holloway was the first of many who, while serving at that camp in the Central Highlands, died while doing his job.

The 52nd had a distinguished and proud service in three wars.

### *World War II*

*Naples-Foggia  
Rome-Arno  
North Apennines  
Po Valley*

### *Korean War*

*UN Offensive  
CCF Intervention  
First UN Counteroffensive  
CCF Spring Offensive  
UN Summer-Fall Offensive  
Second Korean Winter  
Korea, Summer - Fall 1952  
Third Korean Winter  
Korea, Summer 1953*

### *Vietnam*

*Advisory  
Defense Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase II  
Counteroffensive, Phase III  
Tet Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase IV  
Counteroffensive, Phase V  
Counteroffensive, Phase VI  
Tet 69/Counteroffensive  
Summer - Fall 1969  
Winter - Spring 1970  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase VII  
Consolidation I  
Consolidation II  
Cease-Fire*

## Decorations

Presidential Unit Citation (Army), Streamer embroidered DAK TO DISTRICT  
(52d Aviation Battalion cited; DA GO 38, 1971)

Valorous Unit Award, Streamer embroidered PLEI ME  
(52d Aviation Battalion cited; DA GO 20, 1967)

Valorous Unit Award, Streamer embroidered DUC CO  
(52d Aviation Battalion cited; DA GO 40, 1967)

Meritorious Unit Commendation, Streamer embroidered EUROPEAN THEATER  
(204th Quartermaster Battalion cited; DA GO 39, Fifth Army, 1945)

Meritorious Unit Commendation, Streamer embroidered KOREA  
(52d Transportation Truck Battalion cited; DA GO 68, 1953)

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, Streamer embroidered KOREA  
(52d Transport Battalion cited; DA GO 83, 1954)

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1963-1966  
(52d Aviation Battalion cited; DA GO 46, 1968)

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1966-1967  
(Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 52d Aviation Battalion, cited; DA GO 22, 1968)

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1967-1968  
(Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 52d Aviation Battalion, cited; DA GO 21, 1969,  
as amended by DA GO 43, 1970)

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1969-1970  
(Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 52d Aviation Battalion, cited; DA GO 6, 1974)

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1970  
(52d Aviation Battalion cited; DA GO 11, 1973)

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1970-1972  
(Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 52d Aviation Battalion, cited; DA GO 6, 1974)

Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medal, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1970  
(52d Aviation Battalion cited; DA GO 5, 1973)

Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medal, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1971  
(52d Aviation Battalion cited; DA GO 32, 1973)

## 52d Aviation Battalion (Combat)

Arrived Vietnam:	19 March 1963
Departed Vietnam:	28 April 1972
Previous Station:	Vietnam
Authorized Strength:	HQ and HQ Det
	<span style="margin-right: 10px;"><u>1964</u></span> <span style="margin-right: 10px;"><u>1966</u></span> <span style="margin-right: 10px;"><u>1968</u></span> <span style="margin-right: 10px;"><u>1970</u></span>
	<span style="margin-right: 10px;">137</span> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">111</span> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">111</span> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">108</span>

The following is a list of aviation units and the dates they were assigned to the Battalion. Though probably not totally accurate or complete, it is a starting point.

<u>Troop or Company</u>	<u>Type</u>					<u>Battalion Service/Remarks</u>
3d Avn Co	AHC	Sep 71	Mar 72			Inactivated 20 Mar 72
57th Avn Co	AML/AHC	Oct 67	Apr 72			Transferred to 17th Avn Gp
58th Avn Co	ASH	Sep 71	Mar 72			Departed Vietnam
117th Avn Co	AML	Aug 65	Oct 65			Transferred to 10th Avn Bn
119th Avn Co	AML/AHC	Jun 63	Dec 70			Departed Vietnam
155th Avn Co	AML	Aug 66	Aug 68			Transferred to 10th Avn Bn
161st Avn Co	AML	Dec 65	Aug 66			Transferred to 14th Avn Bn
170th Avn Co	AML/AHC	Dec 65	Apr 71			Departed Vietnam
179th Avn Co	MH	Dec 66	Jul 71			Transferred to 223rd Avn Bn
189th Avn Co	AML/AHC	May 67	Mar 71			Inactivated 15 Mar 71
196th Avn Co	MH	Jan 67	Jun 67			Transferred to 14th Avn Bn
219th Avn Co	Surv L	Jun 65	Aug 66			Transferred to 223d Avn Bn
219th Avn Co*	RAC	July 71	Dec 71			Departed Vietnam
238th Avn Co	Escort	Mar 69	Oct 69			Transferred to 268th Avn Bn
282d Avn Co	AML	Jun 66	Aug 66			Transferred to 14th Avn Bn
355th Avn Co	HH	Jan 68	Mar 69			Transferred to 268th Avn Bn
361st Avn Co	Escort	Aug 68	Apr 72			Transferred to 17th Avn Gp
Tp B, 7th Sqdn,	Air Cav	Jul 71	Apr 72			Assets to Tp H, 17th Cav
Tp D, 7th Sqdn	Air Cav	Jul 71	Apr 72			Departed Vietnam 17th Cav

\* Indicates second tour of service with battalion

## HHC 52D CAB

Martin H. Brooks  
Ken Creed  
Henry S. Crumb  
Bill Dennis  
Ralph B. Doyle  
Leonard E. Finn  
Roger G. Flygar  
Otis R. Hayes  
Robert J. Heitger  
Roger Heller  
Melvin A. Hocking  
John W. Hood  
Danny R. Houk  
James M. Huebner  
John R. Jones  
Charles Lewis  
Arthur Mack  
Robert E. McKown  
Ron Merrit  
George Murry  
Royce Owens  
Don Palczynski  
Albert Stratton  
William Trimble  
Jerry Worthington  
Charles A. Yarborough

Removed VNCA

## Thought from the past

I got to thinking the other day about those bad old days in the spring of 1968, and about an Ambush that could not happen. Most of you who were there probably only know about the second half of the story. The part where Dragon 6 got on the security net radio and sent the following message: "Dragon, Dragon, this is Dragon 6 -- I want all gun platoons in the air, I repeat I want all gun platoons in the air, reply in order, over." I've wondered for years how many of you guys were rousted up from your well-deserved sleep in the middle of the night to answer that call. I also wonder how many of you know the real story as to why you left your warm bunks that night.

It all started about a week earlier, those of you who were there then remember those times, rocket and/or mortar attacks almost every night and just when we thought we had things figured out, a couple of sappers would try to sneak through the perimeter fence to keep things interesting. The ground surveillance radar section attached to the security platoon spotted a large group of NVA moving into the Montagyard village, located just to the east of Camp Holloway, north of the highway. I believe it was called Plei Monu. Several times in the past this had been a route used by NVA sappers and mortar men to attack Camp Holloway. They would use the huts in the village and the tree line surrounding it as cover to approach within 2,500 meters of our wire.

We wanted to shut the door on these guys, trapping them in the village, before we placed fire on them and they scattered to the winds. So we called the 4th Division and asked them to release their armored reaction force to cut around behind them and prevent them from re-crossing the highway. The Division duty officer at Camp Enari refused to release the reaction force, his stated reason was he was afraid that they would be ambushed enroute. To make a long story short, even though we reacted with indirect fire and then gun ships, the NVA scattered, took to the ground and eventually got away, without taking any serious casualties. The only things I know killed that night were a cow and a pig in the village.

So here we were several days later and the 4th Infantry Division was getting hammered by rockets in the division base camp. The Duty Officer at Camp Enari wanted us to release our standby guns to help them out and break up the attack. Our Battalion Commander at the time refused, giving the classic answer, that he was afraid if he released them they would be ambushed on their way to Dragon Mountain. Within minutes of this message, the 4th Infantry Division CG came on the radio and ordered the Battalion to support his division, and thus came the call, "Dragon Dragon, this is Dragon Six ...."

I wonder how many of you remember the mass confusion that night. Every gun on Camp Holloway was put in the air and turned over to a very confused Camp Enari base camp defense. They had no idea what to do with a single gunship, much less 60 gunships, especially, since the attack had been over 15 or 20 minutes already. You guys still had to fly missions the next day, did you not?

## **52d Security Detachment (Infantry)**

52d Security Detachment (Infantry) occupies a unique position among other companies of 52d Aviation Battalion (Combat). It is the only infantry company in the battalion. Originally organized under GO #742, and reorganized under GO #396, further changed under TDA P5W1ZJ2AA00, dated 4 September 1966, and assigned to the 52D Aviation Battalion (Combat).

Originally organized in reaction to the attack against Camp Holloway in 1964. The company took over the responsibility for base camp defense and eventually supplied troops to help both Bam Me Thuot and Kontum. With some slight differences the unit consisted of rifle squads/platoons, mortar platoon, security/gate guard section, 68th Infantry Ground Surveillance Radar Detachment and Headquarters/Command Operations Center.

Some, but not all, of its duties included day and night ambush, reconnaissance patrols, and the manning of three combat outposts located 2000 meters outside the camp perimeter. The 81mm mortar section that provided counter battery fire, illumination of perimeter and H & E firing from the seven guns. The security section police, who manned the front gate, consisted mostly of short timers getting a little break before going home. The radar detachment was used to pick up movement on approach routes to Camp Holloway and then to coordinate fires on this movement, by the standby gunships and 81mm mortars.

The men of the 52nd Security Detachment played a vital role in the defense and survival of Camp Holloway and the 52nd CAB.

### **52D SECURITY PLT**

Removed VNCA

Lerry Alderman  
Stan Brantly  
Claudie Chandler  
True Duncan  
Asa Eliot  
Loren J. Gersch  
Paul M. Noggle  
Linford S. Schleicher  
Patrick R. Seger  
Ralph E. Williams  
Vernon G. Gano, Jr.  
Tom Walker  
John A. Weaver

## Ambush Patrol

Remember the rainy season at Camp Holloway? It wasn't a heavy rain, more like an ever-present mist. Remember how we could never get really dry and everything smelled of mildew? It was during this time, when the clouds hung so low that at night you could reach out and touch them, that this story took place. That night, as on every night, an ambush patrol was planned and executed by the security platoon's rifle squads.

Sgt. Larry Linert, a good friend, led the patrol on that evening. His squad had only been on the move for about 30 minutes and had not yet reached the pre-selected ambush site, when the point man observed a row of trees opposite his location where no trees had grown before. As he crouched to get a better look, the trees crouched too and both he and the tree tried to fire their weapons at the same time. The AK misfired, the M-16 did not. The second man in line had the M-60 and the climb of that weapon as it fired saved a lot of lives that cold, foggy evening.

Facing that squad that night was a reinforced NVA Company coming down to attack the airfield. They had been blinded and were without knowledge of what was to their front, because of the burst of machine gun fire. They outnumbered the Security Squad about ten to one and the night sky was filled with orange, green, and white tracers. One hellish firefight took place, with the good guys at a decided disadvantage. The rate of ammo expended was very high, with re-supply seemingly impossible, the ambush squad and my friend were in big trouble.

The Cobra had just been introduced into the Central Highlands and two of them from the 361st were on standby night. Because of the low cloud cover, we supposedly could not get any gunships into the air. I remember hearing the Cobras warming up and thinking "... are they nuts trying to take off in weather like this?" Just then, they headed north down the runway, clearing the perimeter wire by a few feet, going to the aid of that pinned down squad. They had to fly out about 3 clicks to find the squad, and they did it with a ceiling of only 15 to 20 feet. Some how they made it.

Meanwhile, the mortar section was getting some light on the battle, even though a) they were outside of conventional 81 mm mortar illumination range, b) they were using unconventional time settings and added charges not in the book, and c) a full half the rounds were separating or blowing apart before they reached the ambush site. Someone finally took over this duty, and I have to say it, but I don't remember now whether it was our standby flare ship or a Spooky being vectored by New Pleiku AFB.

Larry later told me how impressed he was with the Cobra's marksmanship, their first burst of fire had torn up the trip flares used to mark his squad's position. Those guns suppressed the enemy long enough for the Security Squad to get itself sorted out on the ground, but a shortage of ammo shortage was becoming a very large problem.

When the Cobra pilots heard this, one of them landed to the rear of the squad and told them to pull a tray of 7.62mm used for his mini-guns, so that they had ammo for the M-60s, and that he would be back with ammo for the rest of the squad's weapons. Those two ships and their crews

did the impossible that night, flying back to Holloway and picking up small arms ammo and returning back to the squad re-supplying them with ammo and giving fire support until the enemy withdrew. Yes, another quiet night at sleepy Camp Holloway.

## **PATHFINDER DET**

Removed VNCA

**Raymond Arceneaux**

**Robert Atkinson**

**John Bohl**

**Henry Bouska**

**Francis Bowles \*\*\***

**Edward G. Brodey**

**Robert E. Cawthorn**

**Gerald E. Coone**

**Gladstone Edds \*\*\***

**William D. Flood**

**Larry Fuhr**

**Rudy Gonzales \*\*\***

**Clyde Hinson, Jr. \*\*\***

**Walter B. Hurt**

**John K. Issel**

**Zane T. Parker \*\*\***

**Joseph C. Parsons**

**John C. Robertson**

\*\*\* Denotes this soldier is now deceased, having passed away after returning from Vietnam.

## **57th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter)**

On 10 February 1967, the 57th Aviation Company was reorganized from an Airmobile Fixed Wing Company (CU-2) to an Assault Helicopter Company by General Order 52, Headquarters, Third US Army. In October 1967, the unit was deployed to Vietnam and by December 1967, it was operating out of its new home in Kontum Airfield.

The 57th Assault Helicopter Company provided tactical air mobility of combat troops, supplies, equipment and attack helicopter fire support for the 4th Infantry Division, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Field Force, MACV and various units. The area of operation was the II Corps Tactical Zone.

July 1969 saw the 57th distinguish itself at the siege of Ben Het and Dak To by getting urgent re-supply into the compounds and evacuating wounded under intensive enemy ground fire. The 57th did this with a minimum loss of aircraft and personnel by using tactical maneuvers and experience gained from working for the 5th Special Forces. Once the enemy had been forced to break the siege and retreat back across the border, the 57th resumed its normal missions. The monsoons had moved in and flying conditions had deteriorated to the point where missions were cut in half. November saw rumor control strike again with word being put out that the 57th was to prepare for a move. This was taken with mixed emotions, as many of the people had seen Kontum Airfield develop from an abandoned airstrip into a small city. Fortunately for many, the move never materialized until March 1970. It was then that the 57th moved to An Khe to support the 4th Infantry Division. It wasn't long before the 57th was flying once again in the Kontum area as a strong NVA force was attempting to overrun Dak Seang.

On the 3rd of April, the 57th led the first flight of slicks to insert troops to break the siege. Intensive ground and mortar fire made the insertion extremely hazardous, but the mission was completed with the loss of only one aircraft, and it was from another unit. The entire month saw the 57th at Dak Seang inserting troops and re-supplying the battered compound. For the 57th, twelve aircraft suffered combat damage and one was destroyed. Six crew members were wounded, but none were hurt seriously and there was no loss of life. After Dak Seang, there was to be no rest for the 57th because Cambodia was to be the next objective. On the initial insertion of the 4th Division into Cambodia on 6 May, heavy enemy contact was made causing four of our aircraft to be damaged and one destroyed, but once again the 57th's luck held out and no one was injured. After the initial insertion, contact with the enemy became light and the normal business of re-supplying, inserting troops and bringing back captured equipment was carried on without any mishaps. By early June, all the US forces that the 57th was supporting had been withdrawn from Cambodia and An Khe became primary area of operation.

The men of the 57th took pride in knowing that they met and completed all missions given to them in a professional manner that exemplifies the highest traditions and standards found in Army Aviation.

## 57th AHC

Irwin Baeder \*\*\*

James A. Booth

Removed VNCA

Bud Brown

Patrick J. Cahill

Al Carline

Kim Dille

John Flynn

Michael A. Gulick

Steven J. Hayduk

Edward O. Hepler

Carter C. Higgenbotham

William E. Holt

Edward J. Icouitti\*\*\*

Bob Madich

Richard Madore

David M. Millard

Samuel D. Moore

Daniel R. Neal

Terry Ophahl

William Pfeister

Harry Platt III

Kevin J. Quinn

William F. Quinn

Douglas Reed

Willis Robertson

Edward Thompson

Stephan H. Wilson

Stan Wisdom

Kevin Stancer

Lee Westbrook

Melvin E. Wylie

1SG Ybarbo

\*\*\* Denotes this soldier is now deceased, having passed away after returning from Vietnam.

## **119th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter)**

When first constituted on 14 June 1944, the 119th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was designated the 81st Transportation Company. Following activation at Brisbane, Australia on 5 July 1944, the 81st was active in the Pacific Theater and distinguished itself by providing key logistical support to ground troops engaged in the bitter island fighting. On 1 March 1945, the unit was redesignated the 81st Transportation Harbor Craft Company, a designated position it held until it was temporarily deactivated on 15 May 1946. Five days before Christmas 1946, the unit was reactivated in Manila and given the mission of supporting the Philippine scout personnel, a mission it completed with distinction until 1 June 1949, when the unit was once again deactivated.

A span of almost eight years elapsed until on 12 September 1957, the activation order was given and the 81st Transportation Company returned to active duty status receiving twenty-one CH-21C helicopters at Fort Riley, Kansas. During the next four years of training at Fort Riley, the unit participated in many activities throughout the midwestern United States, gaining recognition for its participation in civil action and emergency relief programs. In October of 1961, the company began a westward journey that was to eventually end on the central plateau of South Vietnam. An interim stop was made in Hawaii, where the company was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division. With pre-deployment training completed, the unit received alert orders for a PCS move on the third of August 1962. From 31 August to 15 October 1962, the 81st Transportation successfully moved men and equipment to its new home in Pleiku, RVN.

On 14 June 1963, the unit was redesignated the 119th Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) and the infusion was dedicated in honor of CWO Charles E. Holloway, the first 81st Transportation Aviator killed in action, December of 1962. In the period from 1963 until 1970, the 119th supported units within the Two Corps tactical zone. In January of 1969, a MTOE change redesignated the unit the 119th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter). As the second oldest Aviation unit in Vietnam, the 119th "Alligators" continue to maintain the highest standards of professionalism crew members and support personnel in the world of army aviation. On 8 December 1970, the 119th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was deactivated at Camp Holloway, Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam, and its colors retired.

## 119th AHC

Removed VNCA

Randy M. Bender  
Gene Cabiges  
Richard Carey  
Michael Cece  
Alan S. Clough  
Joe C. Collins  
Legrand Evans  
George Ecker\*\*\*  
Ernest A. Ferreira  
Spencer Gardner  
Greg Hahn  
Thomas B. Hallett  
S. Lee Hallquist  
Paul Hammond  
Bob Heisterman  
Melvin A. Hocking  
Jerry A. Hodges  
Robert F. Jonta  
Dennis E. Kilimaszewski  
Pat Kelly  
Robert Kilpatrick  
Stephen J. Lawis  
Michael V. Lesher  
Ron Lewis  
Pete Markisich, Jr  
James McAndrew  
Thomas M. Miller  
Alan E. Mixer  
Tim Moon  
Ken P. Neyhart  
Robert M. Nillus  
James S. Novak, Jr.  
David J. Paduan  
William Padgett  
Bob Pearson  
Paul k. Penny  
Keith A. Pipoly  
Donald Prentis  
Joseph Puglisi  
Michael H. Reber  
James E. Roberts  
Paul Schmitz  
David Singer  
Donald Smith  
Rich D. Stevenson  
Eugene Tetreault  
Jim Tinney  
James H. Varney  
Lee Westbrook  
Michael Yhelka\*\*\*

## **125th Air Traffic Control**

**125th ATC** Removed VNCA

**Larry D. Davis  
Mike Isabelle  
Bob Micalizzi**

## **155th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter)**

### **155th AHC**

Removed VNCA

Augie M. Acosta  
Cliff Allen  
Al Arredondo  
Arthur Bonevich  
Kenneth A. Byrnes \*\*\*  
Carroll (Frank) Clay  
Mark Cornwall  
F. Wayne Cranford  
Dennis Current  
Richard Dale  
Roger Elliot  
Kevin J. Farrington  
Jim Ferris  
Earl J. Fields  
Robert Frost  
Alexander L. Gaul  
Tom Hunt  
William C. Jennart  
Larry Mathews  
George Mcavoy \*\*\*  
Mike McElveen  
Cecil R. McGee  
Richard P. Metcalf  
Tom Mullen  
David Nelson  
David A. Przbylski  
Ronald O. Randall  
Sandy Reed  
Victor Rossi  
Howard Ryder  
James Stallard  
Dave R. Skoog  
Mark W. Stuart  
John Vagnini  
Dave Wyatt

\*\*\* Denotes this soldier is now deceased, having passed away after returning from Vietnam.

## **170th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter)**

As the final company commander and soldier of the 170th Aviation company, I signed the last DA-1 Morning Report of that unit early the morning of the 16th of March, 1971, on the hood of the final Bikini jeep, at Pleiku, Vietnam.

Later that sunny day, March 1971, the final flight of a Vietnam Bikini helicopter was flown. We returned in a Bikini Charlie model gunship home to Kontum where the unit had been stationed until becoming too small to defend itself against ground assault several weeks before.

Three of us were present when that Bikini Beach was signed over to the ARVN. Following that formality, we departed, went up the valley and circled over Dak To and then Ben Hat. We did not go to Dak Seang nor did we fly back into Laos or Cambodia that day. I only had five days left in country. Just one final flight for the 170th and it's heros.

When the skids touched down back at Camp Holloway, the 170th, born in 1965 at Fort Benning, Georgia, became history to the United States Army. But the soldiers of the 170th, it left a proud heritage of American heroism in the air and the memories of those who died.

The 170th, organized as part of the 12th Aviation Battalion, joined the 52nd Aviation battalion, the Flying Dragons, in 1966 when the company deployed to Vietnam. The unit provided support to the 5th Special Forces Group (ABN), Command Control Central, the 22nd ARVN Division and other associated units throughout Military Region II.

Included in Phillip D. Canary's collection of premiere aviation units of Southeast Asia in LIFE OF THE LINE the 170th proved to be one of the elite army helicopter units of the Vietnam war. That book's opening dedication is a poem written by a Bikini, killed in action in Cambodia.

The men of the 170th earned the Valorous Unit Award in May 1966; the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm in March 1967; again in March 1967 through May 1968; and again from April through June 26, 1970. The Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Metal, First Class was awarded for the period of July through October 1970.

Their heroism did not end. Christmas day and the truce, 1970, saw the Distinguished Service Cross being earned by a Warrant Officer of the 170th for his actions in Laos. His slick was returned to the Beach slung under a CH-47 helicopter. That young WO was also the Army Aviation Association Aviator of the Year, 1970.

Through February, 1971, the 170th's primary mission was insertion and extraction of Special forces led Montagyard long range patrols on the Ho Chi Min Trail network in Laos. But Bikini's ACs trained and graduated South Vietnamese pilots 16 days early. Bikini maintenance personnel rebuilt battle damaged Bikini H model slicks to a better-than-new standard of the VNAF program. They defended Bikini Beach against the NVA infantry until there just was not enough Americans to cover the perimeter. One last perilous motor march south to Pleiku brought the 170th to the safety of Camp Holloway and into the dust of history.

## 170th AHC

Removed VNCA

Franklin C. Yates  
Dean Adkins  
Alton Averetta  
John P. Barrett  
Raymond B. Beard  
Mike Beason  
Thomas Bennie  
David Bittman  
Bob Black  
Vince Bradley  
Edward G. Brodey  
Randy Brook  
Bill Carr  
Jimmie Carter  
Lewis Carter  
John Clifford  
Joe Colatruglio  
George S. Crawford  
Doug Dausch  
Robert L. Dill  
Jeff Eick  
Charles Elliston  
Star Elton  
Russel Feco  
Earl J. Fields  
John Flynn  
Carl Garske  
Richard Hale  
Donald Hall  
Joseph L. Hanebrink  
Michael Harding  
Ronald Harper  
Joseph Harrilla  
Thomas Haynes  
Charles Heberle  
Roger Heller  
Paul Henderson  
Roy Henley  
Frank Hesselmeyer  
Robert W. Hettiger  
Richard Higgens  
Phillip E. Hill  
Ted Hinkle

## 170th AHC

Removed VNCA

Thomas Hoffman  
Glenn Hogan  
David A. Hoskil  
Alfred Hotchkiss  
Calum Howard  
John Hyde  
James H. Johnson  
Howard Jones  
Joseph Kane  
John Kawa  
Johnny Kemper  
Charles Kernodle  
Jerry King  
Mark Kirby  
David Kisling  
Gary Knight  
Wesley Komulainen  
James Lake  
Stephan J. Lawlis  
Larry Leonard  
Pat Leone  
Don Lewis  
Mark Lindamood  
Tom Lynch  
Wayne Lynn  
William Macburney  
Dennis Manning  
Norman Marcus  
John P. Martin  
Ed Mathews  
Jack Mccown  
Arthur McGheee  
William McGrath  
Anthony Mediate  
Bill Messerli  
Bob Micalizzi  
Thomas M. Miller  
Garry Moffatt  
Jr. John Morgan  
Russell Mowry  
George Murry  
George A. Nielsen  
Nick Nikitin

## 170th AHC

Removed VNCA

David C. Nolan  
William Odom  
Don Palczynski  
Lee Palmer  
Herbert E. Perkins  
Frederic W. Petze  
Joseph Puglisi  
Thomas Reeves  
Ernest J. Reinert  
Karl R. Renz III  
Jr. William Rheams  
Bill Ringer  
Stanley Risk  
Will Robertson  
Kenneth Roth  
Tom Roy  
Wallace Royles  
Thomas Schaub  
Michael R. Schneider  
Andy Shakulah  
Harry Shively  
Dean Short  
F. Simmons  
Robert Simon  
William Slaydon  
John P. Smith  
Bob Snead  
D.C. Robert Sones  
Randy Speidel  
Rick D. Stevenson  
Roger Stockham  
David Strom  
Robert Talmadge  
Donald Tanner  
Edward Thompson  
Robert Utecht  
Edgerton Vaughn  
William Watson  
Roger L. Weaver  
Thomas Weeks  
Michael Wilson  
Roger Winterrath  
Charles A. Yarborough

## **179th Aviation Company (Assault Support Helicopter)**

The company was established in September of 1966. It moved to Vietnam in November of 1966, and arrived at Pleiku in December of 1966. From that time on, the unit has established records of achievement that would make any Aviation Company proud.

Being the only CH-47 Chinook Company in the Central Highlands, the 179th has been instrumental in all of the major offensive operations in the II Corps area. There were an average of four major assaults a year supported by the "Shrimpboat" company. The "Shrimpboat" operated as far south as the area of Ban Me Thout. It was involved in the operations at Vu Prang, assisting in the rescue work and support of the infantry and artillery units and in the north, Ben Het, Doc Seiang, and Doc Pek, where there was bitter fighting. It was a "SHRIMPBOAT" aircraft that first crossed into Cambodia for the initial assault in that country. Tons of food and weapons were flown back and turned over to the Vietnamese by the company. The unit worked many long hours, re-supplying the fire support bases in support of the operation.

The company has a safety record second to none. The Chinook company had over twenty safe flying months and over 16,000 hours without accident. While it was not out to set records, the professional attitude displayed in its operations and fulfilling its missions to the units in the II Corps area was its main objective.

The 179th was the first company to be supplied with all "C" model Chinooks. This requirement had to be met because of the Higher Density Altitude in the Central Highlands.

### **179th ASHC**

Removed VNCA

Jasper (Jap) Champion  
Michael A. Cucci  
Rodger D. Fetters  
Roy L. Jacobs  
Donald B. (Don) Joyce  
Arlyn A. Krause  
James Mcadams  
Roger Lesch  
Stanley E. Neckermann  
John Pirkle  
Peter J. Smith  
Walter E. Warren

## **189th Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light)**

On 19 September 1966, by Fifth Army General Order #236, the 189th Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) was activated by the Department of the Army to be organized on 1 November 1966 at Ft. Carson Colorado. On 9 December 1966, the 189th was reorganized under TO&E 1-77G (modified and was established with a Headquarters platoon, two airlift platoons, a gun platoon, and a service platoon). The unit was provided additional support by the 604th Maintenance Det, the 519th Medical Det, and the 6th Signal Det. From 9 December 1966 to 1 March 1967 the unit trained for deployment to the Republic of Vietnam at Fort Carson, Colorado. From 16 March to 21 April the company departed Ft. Carson for Sharp Army Depot, California enroute to Vietnam. The unit arrived at Cam Ranh Bay on 25 April 1967. From Cam Ranh the company was sent to Pleiku where it arrived on 27 April. On 15 June, the unit became operational as part of the 52d Aviation Battalion Combat, and was given the mission of supporting the 4th Infantry Division, and 5th Special Forces, as well as local regional/popular forces. The missions assigned were command and control, re-supply, and combat assault. On 1 April 1969, the unit was redesignated the 189th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter).

The company adopted the call sign "Ghostrider" for the airlift platoons and "Avenger" for the gun platoon. Both the "Ghostriders" and "Avengers" earned the respect of all the units in the Central Highlands. In 1967, they fought at Dak To I. In 1968, they participated in the battles at Dak To I and in the Dak Poko Valley, and in 1969, the significant battles fought at Ben Het and Dak To II. In 1970, they were a key element in the allied success at Dak Seang, and later in May they spearheaded the Cambodian offensive with Major George A. Morgan as Air Mission Commander. They were the first Company in the Central Highlands to give combat training to Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) pilots. In this program, the 189th excelled and surpassed all expectations setting the standards for the entire 1st Aviation Brigade.

## **189th AHC**

**Robert E. Baker**  
**Jim Benka**  
**Delbert N. Cornell**  
**Ward W. Dunning**  
**Frank Hesselmeyer**  
**William E. Holt**  
**Edward J. Icovitti\*\*\***  
**Larry Kennah**  
**James R. Kruetz**  
**Bob Madich**  
**Hamilton J. Meyers**  
**Jacque A. Morigeau**  
**John P. Miller**  
**Dennis J. Neely**  
**Douglas Reed**  
**Seth Robertson**  
**Thomas L. Tucker**  
**Jack R. Ward**  
**Joseph W. Winder**  
**Roger Winterrath**  
**Michael Yhelka**

Removed VNCA

## **219th Aviation Company (Utility Airplane)**

The 219th was one of the most dispersed, as well as unique units in Vietnam. The Company Headquarters and 1st flight platoon were located at Camp Holloway in Pleiku. One section of the 1st platoon spent the majority of 1970 at An Khe in support of the 4th Infantry Division, while two pilots and two aircraft of the 1st platoon were located in Cheo Reo in support of Phu Bon Province. The 3d flight platoon was based in Qui Nhon with one section working out of LZ English. The remaining 4th platoon was located at Ban Me Thout. This dispersion was necessary because the 219th was one of only two O-1 companies in the Second Military Region, and was responsible for the northern portion of this region.

Going along with the vast geographical diversity was the equally diversified list of missions and supported units. Units supported by the "Headhunters" included Pleiku Province, 52d Artillery Group, Task Force Ivy, Phu Bon Province, 4th Infantry Division, Kontum Province, Binh Dinh Province, 173d Airborne Brigade, Darlac Province, CCC and CCS. The "Headhunters" performed a variety of missions including visual reconnaissance convoy escort, artillery adjustment, forward air control of helicopter gunships and tactical air force, and numerous classified missions for CCC and CCS.

### **219th Avn Co**

Removed VNCA

Leslie J. Bush  
Martin H. Brooks  
Robert N. Lindsey  
Don Palczynski  
Joseph C. Parsons  
Frank Wooten

## **361st Aviation Company (Escort)**

The 361st Aviation Company (Escort) "Pink Panthers" supports free world forces in the II Corps tactical zone out of Camp Holloway, Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam as a part of the 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat), 17th Aviation Group (Combat) with AH-1G HueyCobra army helicopters. The 361st was organized and activated on 1 November 1967 at Fort Hood, Texas. At the same time, the 6665th Transportation Detachment and the 621st Signal Detachment (Avionics) were formed and attached to the 361st as supporting units.

The "Pink Panthers" were originally organized as a Charlie Model or UH-1C gunship company. The Pink Panthers arrived in Vietnam on 6 April 1968 as a Charlie model gunship company and was initially deployed in Di An with the 269th Aviation Battalion.

From Di An the 361st moved to Camp Holloway, Pleiku, in the Central Highlands of Vietnam and joined its present parent headquarters. The dense jungle and treacherous mountain terrain was in complete contrast to the open and flat rice paddies of the southern III Corps area which the Pink Panthers had become used to. The new area required completely new tactics; however, the Pink Panthers quickly adjusted to the new situation and mastered techniques for finding and fighting the elusive enemy.

Upon arriving in the Central Highlands one of the missions, a high percentage contact mission, assigned to the unit was the convoy escort of logistics along route 19 through Mang Yang Pass to An Khe. The Pink Panthers foiled many an enemy ambush attempt with their accurate and devastating army helicopter fire. The convoys usually reached their destination unscathed because the Pink Panthers were always there to see that the enemy could not threaten the critically needed supply line.

On 1 September 1968 the Pink Panthers began supporting the 5th Special Forces. The mission, because of its very dangerous nature and the high percentage of battle damage sustained by the Cobras has meant many long and arduous hours of maintenance. But all of the Pink Panthers pride themselves in the knowledge that the maintenance and safety records of the unit are unexcelled anywhere in this war torn battlefield.

The Pink Panthers are probably best known and remembered for the outstanding armed helicopter support provided to the Free World Forces during the Ben Het-Dak To battles in May, June and July of 1969. Almost daily, the Pink Panthers aided entrapped ARVN units to break out of enemy encirclements and suppressed or destroyed enemy automatic, rocket-firing and anti-aircraft weapons positions. Confirmed kills were difficult to corroborate, but the 361st is credited in official records with well over one hundred enemy kills. By this time, the Pink Panthers has been flying Cobras for quite some time. The Cobra in the sky was feared and hated by the enemy. The simple presence of a Pink Panther Cobra over an embattled position rallied flagging offensive action in friendly forces and caused the enemy to be extremely cautious.

Ask anyone who has been supported by the Pink Panthers what armed helicopter unit they would pick to support them from all of the weapons companies in Vietnam and that answer would be the story of the truth and ability of the 361st Aviation Company.

## 361st Avn Co

Removed VNCA

Joe C. Collins  
James B. Fee  
John W. Hood  
Jack D. Jordan  
James R. Podolan  
Charles J. Savage, Jr.  
Bob Whitford

## Miscellaneous Companies

### **Misc**

**Steve Barton**

Removed VNCA

**Kip Becker**

**Butch Bookout**

**Howard L. Clark**

**Jim Clayville**

**Dennis Dingman**

**Bruce Dyer**

**Joseph F. Franklin**

**Paul Grant**

**David Greer**

**Les Klevinger**

**George Mchugh**

**James Mcnight**

**Thomas Meador**

**Harold Miller, Jr.**

**Warren Novak**

**Bob Paine**

**Charlie Parker**

**Fred Patterson III**

**Richard Schuster**

**John Shanks**

**John K. Shryock**

**Dave Silk**

**Steve Snyder**

**Russell Stansfield**

**Tony W. Surles**

**Mervyn C. Thompson**

**Lowell Walton**

## Farewell old friends

The warriors came home, some carrying their shields, some walking erect but hurting inside, and some laying on their shields, their wounds much more visible to the eye. They went back to their lives before the war and somehow they survived. Now, slowly, one at a time, they are joining those who went before them.

These are our brothers. Some were heroes, some not so brave, some needed alcohol or drugs, but they were there with us and they tried. They were our brothers. Whether they drove the garbage truck, cooked the food, manned the fire trucks, or fixed and flew the helicopters. They are leaving us now for a second time, joining those who went before and we must say "farewell old friends" for the last time. This, then, is our final farewell. We will miss you.

*Irwin Baeder  
Francis Bowles  
Kenneth A. Byrnes  
George Ecker  
Gladstone Edds  
Rudy Gonzales  
Clyde Hinson, Jr.  
Edward J. Icovitti  
George McAvoy  
Zane T. Parker  
Walter A. Stossel, Jr.  
Michael Yhelka*