

**Montgomery Area Chapter**

**Military Officers Association of America**

**Vietnam Veterans Salute**

**November 8, 2018**

The Montgomery Area Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America is justly proud of its current members who are Vietnam Veterans. For the luncheon, each individual’s experience was shortened to a few lines. Here is the full, unedited text of each member’s submission to us detailing their Vietnam experience. Again, this covers only their Vietnam experience. Almost all of these remarkable individuals went on to have full and important careers.

**Lieutenant Colonel Gordon M Amsler:** I served two tours in Southeast Asia. From Dec 1966 to Dec 1967 I flew missions from Tuy Hoa and Phan Rang Air Bases. In Sept 1972 I was deployed to Tahkli AB, Thailand and flew missions into N. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. I flew the F-100 during my first tour and flew the F-111 during the second tour. I completed 286 combat missions flying the F-100 and flew 75 missions in the F-111.

**Col Jeffrey C. Benton:** I was never stationed in Vietnam, but I flew over it as well as Loas and Cambodia. As a KC-135 navigator I flew numerous missions from RTAB U-Tapoa, Clark AB, Andersen AFB and Kadena AB, refueling B-52s and fighter aircraft flying combat missions into Vietnam. I was also had a one-year assignment to the 16th Special Operations Squadron at RTAB Udon as an AC-130 gunship crew member flying combat missions into Vietnam as an AC-130 Gunship crew member.

**Lieutenant Colonel Peter G. Brambir:** Flew numerous support missions as a navigator for several Military Airlift Command units. Flew the C-118 on approximately 30 missions while assigned to the 18th ATS, McGuire AFB, NJ from 1954 to 1958. Flew the C-124 on approximately 34 missions while assigned to the 50th ATS, Hickam AFB, HI from 1958 to 1962. Flew the C-121 on approximately 24 missions as an Air Advisor/Navigator while assigned to the Wyoming Air National Guard from 1963 to 1967. Flew the C-121 on approximately 18 missions while assigned to the New Jersey Air National Guard from 1968 to 1973. Destinations included Saigon, DaNang and others not to be named. Many long days and nights, low and slow, for about 2400 flying hours.

**Colonel John A. Brantner:** As a Captain, John Brantner served with the 14th Special Operations Wing as an Avionics Officer with the AC-199K Gunshiip aircraft at Phan Rang Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam from December 1969 to December 1970. Additionally, in 1971 Captain Brantner was assigned to Pacific Air Forces Headquarters in support of the AC-119K and AC-130 Gunship aircraft. During this assignment he went TDY to Vietnam and Thailand seven times in direct support of the Gunship aircraft. I am married to **Colonel Karen Brantner** who served as an Administrative Officer with the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing, Korat AB, Thailand. The Wing flew EC-121R “Batcat” aircraft to provide essential and timely surveillance in support of the Vietnam war effort. As Administrative Officer, I supported the Wing’s six squadrons and three staff agencies.

**Lieutenant Colonel Paul C. Butcher:** Served as a C-130 navigator assigned to Clark AB, Philippines from April 1968 to April 1970. Flew missions into and over Vietnam during four campaign phases.

**Lieutenant Colonel Albert D. Byrd:** My Vietnam service was with the Air Force assigned to the 601st Photo Squadron, U-Tapao Royal Thai Naval Air Field (RTNAF).  I was a 2nd Lt in the command section in 1975.  Our Mission was combat photography in Southeast Asia.  We photographed Air Force actions in the evacuations of Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Saigon, South Vietnam during April 1975.  On 15 May 1975, we photographed the final battle of the Vietnam Era:  the rescue of the Mayaguez cargo ship from the Cambodia's Khmer Rouge.

**Colonel Douglas B. Cairns:** Following four years as an instructor pilot at Craig Air Force Base I was sent to George AFB in 1966 to transition into my dream airplane, the McDonnell Douglas F-4C Phantom II. Dee, our two kids and the dog moved to Northern Virginia to be near her folks. In November 1966, after Jungle School in the PI, I caught a ride in a C-130 into Ubon Royal Thai AFB where I became a member of the 555 Tac Fighter Squadron of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing.   On that same C-130 flight was Colonel Robin Olds who would then take command of the 8th TFW and whom I would soon meet. The Wing’s mission was to fly into North Vietnam for both air-to-ground bombing and air superiority missions. It was an exciting time for me as I was one of the younger front-seat aircraft commanders amongst an outstanding group of men and future Air Force leaders. I was privileged to fly a number of times north to Hanoi with Colonel Olds, on his wing and in his flight, and return home relatively unscathed. I returned home to CONUS in August of 1967 after 130 combat missions, 100 of them over North Vietnam.

**Colonel Kenneth C. Carlson** I was sitting in my office in the MAC HQ Command Post Computer Center in early summer of 1969 when I received a call from Personnel saying I had orders to report to Vietnam in October of that year as the only pilot assigned to the MACV Data Management Agency in Saigon. It became a joint assignment as I was going to work for a “fragged” naval commander who worked for an Army colonel who then reported to an Air Force general. None the less the job was interesting and I helped many computer systems to aid in the fields of military police, logistics, transportation and prisoner identification. Ironically, the job had nothing to do with my flying skills or capabilities. I did manage to complete 12 semester hours towards my degree with the University of Maryland. After all that, I landed back at Travis AFB at one year and five minutes of my departure.

**Colonel Rhon V. Carleton:** Chaplain Captain Rhon Carleton received three sets of orders in 1965.  First to Osan AB, Korea.  Second, Natrang, Viet Nam.  And, third to Takhli AB. Thailand.  The final set of orders gave me three weeks to report to Thailand. My fiancé at that time was Carolyn Breckenridge.  We planned to marry in November 1965 but had to plan the marriage in one and a half weeks.  We were married in the Norton AFB Chapel on August 13, 1965 and I left for Takhli AB, Thailand for a year's isolated assignment twelve days later.

At Takhli AB, I visited all organizations on the flight line, support organizations, and arranged for a hooch on the flight line which became our "Spiritual Maintenance Chapel" with services at 0930 and Protestant services in the base theater at 1100.  We developed a Protestant Men of the Chapel (PMOC), Chapel Choir, and an Afro American Gospel Choir which sang every Sunday.  The PMOC took a R&R trip to Chaing Mai, Thailand visiting the umbrella, silver and pottery making villages, various missionary missions and the United Church of Christ Thailand Christian Seminary.  The choirs gave concerts for the Prince Royal Academy for Boys and the Dara School for Girls (elementary Christian schools).  They were a great hit.

The president of the Protestant Men of the Chapel, Captain Norman McDaniel, failed to show up for the field trip to Chiang Mai.  Upon our return I found out that he had been offered an extra mission over the North (to get the 100 missions under his belt before returning home) and had been shot down.  He was MIA.  I wore his MIA bracelet for seven years.  When the POW's were released on February 12, 1973, I was teaching at the AF Chaplain School at Maxwell.  I was also responsible for briefing the returning POW's on the many cultural changes that had occurred during their imprisonment. Norm was sitting in the group in front of the speaker's stand in the Senior NCO Academy's auditorium.  I spoke to him saying, “Is that you, Norm?” He responded, “Sure is, Rhon.” I said, “May I see you following this program?” He agreed and after the presentation I gave him the bracelet I had worn for seven years.  He told me he felt that his “shoot down” and capture had been God's will because he became the "chaplain of the Hanoi Hilton." He was elected the POW Chaplain because he had more scripture and hymns memorized than the others. His ex-wife was among the Viet Nam protesters who traveled to Paris, France for an international demonstration against the war. His present wife is Jean Carol and they have two children and four grandchildren.

There were many battle losses.  We flew F-105 Thuds, B-66 Electronic Warfare planes, F-4 Wild Weasels and KC-135s.  I was able to hitch one ride on a B-66 mission over North Viet Nam before the Chief of Chaplains sent a nasty letter saying such chaplain combat missions were a violation of the Geneva Convention because chaplains are non-combatants.  Just about all of our B-66's were lost to enemy fire including Captain McDaniel’s.

Many of the Thud pilots requested that I pray for them before every mission.  I procured a bicycle and arrived in the weapons arming area often before 0500 hours to pray for their missions and tried to be on the flight line during their return (or not). One afternoon a Thud pilot landed with the left side of his flight helmet blown off, his canopy gone and a hole through his wing big enough for a man to pass through. The left side of his face was only bruised.  He climbed out of the plane and said to me, "When is the next chapel service?"  I told him Catholic Mass would begin at 1700 (10 minutes from then.)  He ran toward the base theater and the Mass.  He was a Protestant.  I prayed a prayer of thanks to God for saving his life.

I returned to the US in August 1966. My mother-in-law hugged me and my wife, Carol, shook my hand. We began getting reacquainted and now have been married 52 years with two daughters, three grandchildren and one great-grand child.

 **Col Ralph O. Clemens:** Served at Korat Royal Tailand AFB from May 1971 to June 1972. Flew an F-4E Phantom II on 163 combat missions**.**

**Lieutenant General Charles “Chick” Cleveland:** From May 1966 to June 1967 served as the Executive Assistant to General William Westmoreland, Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Saigon, Vietnam.

**Lieutenant Colonel Leland W. C. “Lee” Conner:** I was stationed at Nha Trang Air Base in 1967-1968 flying EC-47s. After that from 1968 to 1971, I flew C-124s from Hill AFB and later C-141s from Norton AFB into South Vietnam and Thailand.

**Colonel Eugene F. “Gene” Crooks:** During my time in Command of the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, I mostly flew the UHID equipped as a Battalion Command and Control Aircraft.  When the battalion had two or more companies supporting an operation I flew as the Air Mission Commander.  When the Battalion was not serving as the Air Mission Command I often flew with a subordinate company in a troop lift UHID.  One of the Companies of the battalion was under operational control of the Special Forces and conducted classified missions.  I sometimes flew with that company in the UHIC gunship as copilot gunner.  In addition, the battalion had a U6 Beaver which I flew when appropriate to the mission.  I cannot tell you how many missions I flew but I was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross and eight air medals for missions flown while in the battalion.  the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion during the early portion of my command was supporting the two South Korean Divisions.  Later we supported the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne/Air Assault Division.

**Commander Ronald P. Davis:** **–** I served on the aircraft carrier USS America (CVA-66) from December 1969-January 1971. We were positioned at Yankee Station in the South China Sea off Vietnam. I served as the Surface watch officer (bridge, radio, radar & maneuvering), Officer of the Deck, and Educational and Training Officer. I retired from the U.S. Navy in 2001 as a Lt. Commander.  My home port was Norfolk, VA.

**Colonel Joseph “Joe” Decker:** Served as a KC-135 Pilot and Aircraft Commander in the 11th Air Refueling Squadron from June 1971 to April 1975. In four deployments to Utapao and Takhli, Thailand flew 150+ missions in support of Young Tiger Task Force, Linebacker I and Linebacker II.

**Colonel R. Dean Delongchamp**: I served from October 1967 to March 1969 as a navigator on C-124C’s at Kelly Field, Texas, in the 19th MAS, flying in and out of Vietnam on a TDY basis. From July 1979 to June 1970 I served as a navigator on C-123K’s at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam in the 310 TAS flying airdrop resupply missions in country.

**Colonel Win E. Depoorter:** Win served two tours in Vietnam flying 657 combat missions in the A-1 Skyraider. From June 1965 to June 1966 he was assigned to the 602nd ACS and operated out of several bases in Vietnam. Later, from February 1968 to February 1969, he was assigned to the 6th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) based at Pla Ku and provided air cover for infil/exfil of special operations teams monitoring activities on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, mainly in Laos.

**Lieutenant Colonel William B. Desmond, Jr.:** Vietnam April 1964 - 1965. OJT Adviser to VNAF at Tan Son Nhut. Was not on flying status but still came back with 300 combat hours flying with VNAF monitoring flair kickers!   On the C-47 planes that dropped flares there were tubes where they placed flairs to drop. Many in Nam used the expression. Instead of saying they dropped flairs they referred to it as “kicking them out”!

**Colonel Mark J. Dierlam:** Between 1970 and 1094 I spent 29 months in Southeast Asia flying combat missions in several types of aircraft. I flew B-52 missions out of the U-Tapao Royal Thai Naval Air Base, Thailand; Kadena Air Base, Japan and Anderson AFB, Guam, with a mission over North Vietnam in December 1972. I concurrently flew other aircraft to Yokota AB, Japan; Taipei, Formosa; Hong Kong; China; Tan Son Nhut AB, South Vietnam and Don Muang IAP, Thailand.

**Lieutenant Colonel Michael Dietvorst:** I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force after graduating from high school. From June 1971 to June 1972 I was assigned to the 1972nd Communications Squadron at DaNang AB as an enlisted Air Traffic Controller. I was 19 years old.

**Colonel Clark B. Dorsey:**  I served at Tan Son Nhut AFB, from September 1969 to September 1970.  My original orders said I was to be the Commander of the Defense Communication Agency, Southeast Asia Mainland (DCA-SAM) detachment at Danang.  But, DCA was a joint service outfit using Army personnel rules.  Therefore, all new troops went first to the main unit, where the in-country commander decided where he wanted to use you.  Since I had just completed my MBA at Ohio State (and maybe he liked my smiling face) the CO decided to keep me in Saigon to run his analysis section.  I briefed the MACV J6 weekly on the status of all Comm systems in the SEA theater and published a weekly written report.  So, I fought my war with statistics.  Did get to go TDY to Pleiku, Danang, and Hue/Phu Bai.  On the negative side, the highest award I got was the Joint Service Commendation Medal.  Again, Army rules.  If you weren’t exposed to hostile fire, you didn’t get a Bronze Star, as almost everyone in an Air Force unit did.

**Lieutenant Colonel Walter F. Dzialo:** Served in the 8th Aerial Support Squadron, Ton Son Nhut AB, from August 1970 to August 1971.

**Col Michael D. Edwards:** While assigned to Carswell AFB as a B-52 aircraft commander, I had three deployments to Guam, Okinawa and Thailand to fly bombing missions into Vietnam. The first deployment was for six months in 1969 and the others were in 1971 and 1972. While I never set foot in Vietnam, I sure dropped a lot bombs on it and the other countries in the area. I flew a total of 144 combat missions.

**Colonel Frederick T. Enslen:** I served in Vietnam from June 67-June 68.  I was a 1LT upon arrival and departed as a CPT.  I served with a unit designated as Aviation Electronic Support Company North (Provisional) which was a rather large Company headquartered in Nha Trang and commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel.   It had three Platoon/Detachments located in Nha Trang, Qui Nhon and Pleiku led by either a CPT or Major.  I had the Pleiku Platoon which provided aviation electronic maintenance support for Army aviation assets in the Central Highlands of RVN.

**Colonel Robert B. Goldberg:** Served as an intelligence officer Sept 1967 to Sept 1969, USARPAC/RVN, provided Air/Ground Recon from CRB to DMZ for target acquisition.

**Colonel Theodore C. “Ted” Hailes:** In 1969 was pulled from F-4’s to attend Forward Air Controller (FAC) school then off to Vietnam in 1970 for one-year tour with the 101st Airborne Division in Northern I Corps accumulating 550 combat hours. Returned to Vietnam in 1973 working with the VNAF transitioning into the f-5E and then back again in late 1974 shortly before the final fall.

**Colonel Robert L. Hill:** Served as Dental Officer with the 44th Medical Brigade from October 1968 to October 1969.  Assigned to the 437th KJ Team at Cam Ranh Bay and later to the 219th KJ Team in Chu Lai, RVN. Provided General Dentistry Services for US military forces.

**Colonel Walter E. “Walt” Hines**: Served two tours. First in 1965 in the 33rd Tactical Group, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Thailand where he flew C-54s, VC 123s, VC 47s, VC 118s and U-3As in missions all over South East Asia. His second tour from 1966 to 1968 he served as a member of the 33rd ARRS assigned to Naha Air Base, Okinawa, Japan. He flew HU-16s staging out of Danang Air Base, Vietnam providing rescue cover for air strikes on North Vietnam. He flew 166 combat missions, 12 combat support missions and made two combat water rescues of downed pilots.

**Lieutenant Colonel William C. Hutchinson:** I served from Jun '68 to Jun '69 as a gunship Navigator (AC 47 "Spooky") logging 220 combat missions & 880 hrs. From Jun to Nov '68 I was stationed at DaNang then Nov '68 to Jun '69 at NaTrang as Wing Nav, 14th Special Ops Wing. Overall, it was a very rewarding year simply because of the support we gave to the small Army and Marine units each night.

**Major Jacques Jarry:** Served in Northern I Corp in the First Brigade, Fifth Infantry Division (A Separate Brigade), with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion 11th Infantry from August 1969 to August 1970.

**Captain (USN) Bill D. Johnson:** I deployed to Vietnam four times: Jul ’66, Oct ’67, Mar ’71 and Sep ’72 with Navy Patrol Squadrons; the entire squadron would deploy for six months.  We flew P2V Neptunes out of Tan Son Nhut Saigon the first two tours and P-3 Orions out of Cam Ranh Bay the other two tours.  Our ocean surveillance air patrols were in support of Operation Market Time which was an “at sea” barrier around Vietnam.  The North was trying to bring in munitions and supplies by sea in 100’ steel hulled trawlers disguised as fishing vessels.  Our mission was to detect, identify and track these ships and sink them when they left international waters.

**Colonel Robert W. Kline:** From January 1969 to December 1969 I flew 162 mission out of Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon. The RFC motto was we flying alone, unarmed and unafraid. (I am not so sure about the last one.; I was shot at but not shot down). Our job was to get visual pictures or radar images of enemy locations: the guy in front flew the plane while the guy in back captured the images.  Speed was our best defense against heavy enemy fire. ("We Killed EM with FILLEM")

**Captain Richard C. “Craig” Kneisel:** As a 2nd Lieutenant, he served initially as a Signal platoon leader at Ben Hoa Army Base in III Corps, Vietnam and subsequently as his Company’s XO. He was transferred to HHQ, 36th Signal Battalion. At Long Binh, becoming the battalion Radio Signal Officer and subsequently Acting Battalion XO. The 36th Signal Battalion was responsible for much of the Army’s radio communication in Army III Corps. With signal sites from the Cambodian border (Song Be) to the South China Sea (Vung Tau). Lieutenant Kneisel was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal and the Bronze Star Medal for “outstanding meritorious service in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam.”

**Colonel Joseph L’Abbe**: In 1962 I joined, as a navigator, the 146th Tactical Airlift Wing of the California Air National Guard, at Van Nuys, a suburb of Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley. I remained in that unit until 1972. During that time period I took 7 cargo flights to Vietnam, 6 flights into Tan Son Nhut AB in Saigon and 1 flight to DaNang.

We left Van Nuys and flew into Travis AFB just north of San Francisco to onload cargo. From there we flew to Hickam AFB in Hawaii, about a 12-hour flight in the low and slow C-97 four engine prop plane. After overnight crew rest we went on to Wake Island, refueled and went on to Mactan AB, a new base being built on a small island a short ferry ride from Cebu City, the second largest city in the Philippines, about three hundred miles south of Manilla. For the first couple of flights the base was a tent city, except for the flight terminal. We spent a couple of days resting at a hotel in Cebu City. From there we flew across the South China Sea to Vietnam. A typical round trip required 10 days and 70 hours of flying. The vast distances involved for logistical support of the Vietnam conflict put a tremendous strain on the Military Airlift Command that was forced to rely more on the large jet military and commercial aircraft. As the Vietnam war wound down, it was realized that the day of the heavy piston driven transport was about over.

**Colonel Allen D. “Al” Lang:** After finishing ACSC in 1971, I was assigned to Udorn RTAFB.  My unit was the little known 7/13th Air Force Headquarters commanded by M/G DeWitt R. Searles.  The 7/13th had Special Operations helicopter and A-1 aircraft assigned as well as a pilot training unit which trained Allies.  We did most operations in Northern Laos, known as "Barrel Roll".  Many of the people we worked with (Air and Ground) were only known by first names. The 7/13th also had administrative responsibilities for all US Air Force Units in Thailand.  I remained there until late April of 1972 when I returned to CONUS on Emergency Leave when my father passed away. When I got ready to return the Air Force elected to send me to my next assignment in the States as I had less than the time required to return to Thailand. An interesting aside, the 432nd was also assigned to Udorn and the commander was then Col Gabriel.  The Vice commander was then Col O'Malley.  Also at Udorn was JUSMACTHAI commanded by M/G John Vessey (Army).  Gen Vessey became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen Gabriel became CSAF, and Glen O'Malley was killed when Commander of Tactical Air Command.

**Colonel Edwin K. Livingston:**  I served as Scout platoon leader in the 2-22 Mech Infantry Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, from August-November 1967.   I was transferred to the Brigade’s tank battalion in late November for the balance of my tour.  I commanded a tank platoon (5 M-48A3 tanks) in Co. C, 2-34 Armor battalion until March 1968, then transferred to Battalion staff as S-2, (staff intel officer), then as S-2/S-3 (operations officer) until end of tour.  The 25th Division was located in III Corps, headquartered in Cu Chi, about 60 miles NW of Saigon.  3rd Brigade was located in Dau Tang, about 20 miles NW of Cu Chi.  Operations I took part in included convoy route security, security for forward located field artillery units, search & destroy missions, & base camp perimeter defense. The largest operation I participated in was Operation Yellowstone, a multi-national force search & destroy attempt to interdict NVA regular forces infiltrating III Corps via the Ho Chi Min trail through Cambodia.  It was ongoing when the Tet Offensive broke out in early 1968.

**Colonel Malcolm R. McLellan, Jr**: Served as Team Chief, Mobile Advisory Logistics Team, Advisory Team 6, DaNang, from April 1970 to April 1971 training Vietnamese Reservists in I Corps.  Also supported Operation Lam San 719 incursion into Laos.

**Lieutenant Colonel Lynn F. Oborn:** Served at Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center, Lackland AFB, Texas from 1973 to 1974 as a physical therapist caring for wounded servicemembers returning from Vietnam.

**Colonel William L. “Nick” Palmer:** 19 February 1959, William L. Palmer, began his career in the United States Army as a Recruit (E-1) and retired 19 April 1991 as an Infantry, Colonel (0-6), US Army.

Served in the Republic of Vietnam from 13 July 1969 to 15 September 1971, one tour with two extensions. His service in the Republic of Vietnam is as follows:

1. 13 July 1969 – 20 May 1970, 5th Special Forces Group; Commanding Officer,

A-236 (Camp Bu Prang), 5th SFG, 1St SF, Quang Duc Province, II Corps, RVN, 23 September 1969 to 20 May 1970.

 13 July 1969– 22 September 1969, In-processing, assigned S-5, B-23, 5th SFG, Ban Me Thout, II Corps, RVN.

 (B)21 May 1970 to 30 March 1971, 173rd Airborne Brigade; Commanding Officer,Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 173 Airborne Brigade, LZ Up-Lift, Binh Dinh Province, II Corps, RVN, 01 July 1970 to 23 January 1971.

 21 May 1970 – 30 June 1970, In-processing, 30-day Extension Leave - Valdese, NC, including travel time.

 24 January 1971 – 30 March 1971, assigned Assistant Operations Officer (S-3), 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 30-day Extension Leave – Johannesburg, South Africa including travel time, Out-processing.

 (C) 01 April 1971 to 15 September 1971, Airborne Division Advisory Detachment; MAC-V Team 162, Battalion Senior Advisor, 11th Battalion,ARVN Airborne Division**,** (I, II and III Corps), RVN, 16 April 1971 to 15 September 1971.

 01 April 1971 – 15 April 1971, In-processing, Assigned Assistant Battalion Advisor, 11th Battalion, ARVN Airborne Division.

**Lieutenant Colonel George R. Partridge:** I served in Vietnam three times for a total of thirteen months. 1961- Mobile Radar Controller at Tan Son Nhut AB, Saigon (five months).  1965 - Forward Air Controller – ground and air - with US Army First Infantry Division, l Corps (five months).  1972 - Fighter Duty Officer at the TACC, Tan Son Nhut AB, Saigon (three months).

**Lieutenant Colonel Charles “Bruce” Pickette:** Served as Operations Officer in the 1st Signal Brigade Headquarters in Long Bien from January to November 1972.

**Lieutenant Colonel Gordon K. Pickler**: I was assigned to the 360th Electronic Reconnaissance EC47 Unit at Tan Son Nhut AB in Saigon from June 1971to August 1972 to be in charge of the Vietnamization process for a composite unit of Vietnam Army and Air Force and USAF personnel picking up enemy transmissions. I flew 250 combat missions with them. I regretted leaving but later found out that the all trained Vietnam crews were 70% as effective as the all-American crews. Some of the Vietnam AF officers and their families escaped with our EC-47 and later arrived at a resettlement camp set up at Eglin AFB. I was unable to help them resettle in Alabama.

**Colonel Robert “Stan” Phillips:** From August 1968 to August 1969 I flew C-123’s first out of Ben Wah AB spraying Agent Orange, then out of Tan Son Nhut AB moving personnel and cargo within South Vietnam and Thailand.

**Major Lloyd J. Probst:** I served in Vietnam from July 1966 thru Sept 1968 while based at Clark AB in the PI.  Our squadron crews would go to Vietnam for 15 days at a time and had to be out on the 15th day, otherwise we "were based in Vietnam."  I flew as a copilot on the C-130B at Tan Son Nhut and later upgraded to Aircraft Commander with the 773rd Tactical Airlift Squadron.  I flew 1,248 combat sorties, accumulating 1,048 combat hours.  Probably the most exciting missions were delivering combat material and evacuating wounded and KIA from Khe Sanh during the seige of that outpost. I was awarded the DFC and 8 Air Medals.

**Colonel James C. Poole, Jr:** Doug Cairns and I were flying F4s in VN as aircraft commanders. I flew out of Udorn AB in Thailand from Jan 1968 until Oct 1968. I completed 100 missions over NVN and had 22 over SVN as an aircraft commander in F4Ds. There are some very interesting dynamics about that time frame, about the ordnance we used, and the ridiculous constraints in our activity over the north. Doug was mentioned in Robin Olds book, *Fighter Pilot*, when his plane took an 85MM shell through the wing as he was flying in Col. Olds flight over Hanoi – a harrowing time.

**Lieutenant Colonel Joan E. Powers:** From Nov 1961 – Nov 1963 I was assigned as a flight nurse to the 9th AMES at Tachikawa AB, Japan. This unit was responsible for all of the medical intra-theater flights in that area. In May 1962 Army Special Forces were assigned to Vietnam as advisors. Our unit then added Vietnam and Thailand to our scheduled flights. The SEA flights left from Clark AB in C-130s carrying cargo. After enroute stops were completed, the aircraft were reconfigured for patients and a return to Clark AB. At that time, most of our patients were received from Natrang and Tan Son Nhut.

In Oct 1965 several AE (Air Evac) teams were identified from stateside hospitals and sent TDY for 120 days (1 Nov 1965-28 Feb 1966), “Operation Patch Up.” I staged out of Hickam AFB with the 10thAMEG. The first big Tet offensive took place during this time. Most patients were transported back to CONUS via C-141 aircraft. So many traumatic injuries! We got some of them back to their families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Summer of 1968 once again AE teams from stateside hospitals were sent to SEA (“Operation White Eagle”) TDY for 90 days. I staged out of the 56th AMES, Yokota AB, Japan. We were there while they awaited assigned medical replacement personnel. Still many casualties enroute to CONUS.

In 1973 while at March AFB, California as supervisor of the ICU I had the privilege of meeting some of the returning POWs when they came to the ICU post-operative. From 1962-1973 I had the honor of meeting some of America’s real heroes.

**Lieutenant Colonel Jack N: Reed:** During the Vietnam War, I served as a Weather Officer supporting the 8th TFW at Ubon RTAFB from May '66 to May '67. Notables with the 8th during that time were Robin Olds, wing CO, Chappie James, DO, and Vermont Garrison (WWII and Korea ace), CV.

**Lieutenant Colonel Thomas B. “Tom” Reinhart: S**erved in the 310th Air Commando Squadron at Nha Trang Air Base, Thailand from June 1965 to June 1966. He was an instructor pilot in C-123s and his primary mission was in support of the Army’s 5th Special Forces. He flew 865 hours and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

**Colonel James E. Salimen:** I served in Vietnam from Jun 67 to May 68.  Flew RF-101s with the 45th Tac. Recon Sq. at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Siagon.  Was a Captain then and flew 183 combat missions with 100 of them over North Vietnam.  Received 2 DFCs and 14 Air Medals. I wrote a book about my flying experiences titled "My Quest To Fly and the Planes I Came to Love."

**Colonel Lewis G. Simons:** Served as a personnel officer at Da Nang Air Base from January 1967 to January 1968.

**Colonel Edgar L. “Ed” Smith:** Lt Ed Smith was sent to Vietnam in 1967 and served as a rifle platoon leader with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Air Assault) in the Central Highlands where he received a North Vietnamese Army Marksmanship award (AKA Purple Heart Medal). Later, his company commander was killed and Ed was again wounded by small arms fire and was again transported to division rear headquarters. Upon returning to his unit he assumed command of Company b, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry (Air Assault). In March of 1968 he assumed command of Company A and led the rifle company north in the Cavalry Division’s relief of Khe Sahn.

Ed returned to Vietnam in 1970 and was assigned as the Commander of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry (Air Assault) 1st Cavalry Division. In October 1970, he was selected as the aide-de-camp to Gen Michael Davison, Commander of II Field Force Vietnam. In June 1971, Capt Smith was the advance party of one to Heidelberg, Germany before Gen Davison arrived to Assume command of U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army.

**Colonel Nelson “Smitty” Smith:** Served in the US Army 101st Airborne Division from June 1968 to January 1970, first as an Interrogations Officer and then Battalion Intelligence Officer (S-2), 1st Battalion, 327th Airborne Infantry.

**Colonel Carl B. Stevenson:** I arrived at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in October, 1965, just after a rocket attack by Charlie.  I was assigned to the MACV Flight Detachment as an Army Aviator.  Our mission was to support the MACV Headquarters, MACV Advisers, and Special Forces Detachments throughout South Vietnam.  The aircraft I flew were the single engine U-6 Beaver and the twin engine U-8F Queen Air.  Generally, we flew to locations where larger aircraft could not land.  I flew approximately 440 hours, a low number, since I was the Assistant Operations Officer for the unit during my last 5 months, after I was promoted to major.  I received four Air Medals and a Bronze Star Medal for combat operations in Vietnam. I departed Tan Son Nhut Air Base in October 1966.

**Colonel Brian D. Strickland:**  I was assigned to the 433rd TFS, 8th Tac Fighter Wing, during 1967-1968.  I flew 141 combat missions, 100 of which were over North Vietnam.  I was there at the same time as Robin Olds and Chappie James, Robin the wing commander and Chappie his vice.

**Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Stults:** Entered active military service on April 25, 1968 and served in Vietnam until May 1, 1970. As most enlistees during the time frame, attending Basic and Advanced Infantry Training but then assigned to and commissioned through Infantry Officer Candidate School, Fort Benning, GA. After completion of jump school, I was assigned to the 3rd Special Forces Group (ABN), Fort Bragg, NC for eight months where I completed the Special Forces Officer Course prior to serving in Vietnam. The US Army now having a seasonsed 2nd Lieutenant, assigned him on November 22, 1969 to the 2/8 Mechanized Infantry Battalion; 4th Infantry Division, Vietnam as a mechanized infantry platoon leader. The battalion also assigned him the additional duty of “Pather Platoon” leader, a ready reaction force used in case any battalion units came in contact with the enemy. My platoons operated between An Kne and Pleiku, in the Central Highlands then relocated with the Battalion to LZ Oasis near the Cambodian Border. During the first months of 1970 North Vietnam prepped the Cambodian border in anticipation of an eventual invasion which did not occur during 1970, even though only minimally successful. While operating in this area, I was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in action, February 25, 1970, during a search and destroy mission and was reassigned to the United States for additional convalescence and recovery.

**Col Robert M. Taffet:**  I flew 170 combat missions in Laos and North Vietnam as an F4 Aircraft Commander from January 1969 through December 1969 while stationed at Ubon Royal Thai AFB as part of the 435th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8th Tactical Fighter Wing.

**Colonel Robert D. Thornton:** I served in Vietnam from Feb 1970 to Feb 1971 as a US Army Signal Corps officer.  During the first six months of my tour, I was the Operations Officer of B Company, 369th Signal Battalion (Long Lines South).  We operated a string of ICS sites across the country in the III Corps area from Phan Thiet on the coast to Tay Ninh on the Cambodian border.  During the second half of my tour, I worked for the First Signal Brigade Engineer as his power engineer.  In this capacity, I worked major base camps over the whole country.

ICS was the Integrated Communications System.  It was the primary communications system linking major base camps and tying into the world-wide military communications system which included satellites and the undersea cables linking back to the US.  We tied into the phone systems and Communications Centers on the base camps.  High priority communications from the major headquarters like USARV and the Embassy communicated to DOD, DOS and other Washington headquarters over these systems.  It was the military equivalent of the Bell System at the time.  The system also tied into the “tactical” systems that operated at the smaller base camps and tied to the unit type systems. Our company had sites at Phan Thiet, Long Binh, Bien Hoa, Dian, Cu Chi, Phu Loi and Tay Ninh.  We linked to Vung Tau where a major node tied into the undersea cable, to Saigon and to long links to Cam Rahn Bay, Pleiku and into Thailand. The 369th Signal Battalion (Long Lines South) was located in Vung Tau and operated the system in the southern half of the country.  The 361st Signal Battalion (Long Lines North) was located in Da Nang and operated the northern half.

**Lieutenant Colonel Jay VanCleef:** Jay was a C-130 pilot stationed at Cam Duc in the Republic of Vietnam in 1968. He received a DFC for something that happened in May 1968.

**Colonel John M. Vickery:** Spent the Vietnam War assigned at RTAFB Udorn in northeastern Thailand assigned to the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron as an F-4D Aircraft Commander. I few 190 combat missions in North Vietnam, Laos, and South Vietnam. Combat missions included: Combat Air Patrols, Air Interdiction, Armed Recce, Close Air Support, Fighter Escort, ECM Mission Support and Reconnaissance Missions. My tour of duty began in August 1968 and ended in August 1969.

**Capt George E. Wilson:** George reported to HAL-3 in Vietnam in January, 1972.  His time there was very short.  The squadron was decommissioned on 16 March, 1972.  It was an all-volunteer Rotary Wing Aircraft Unit commissioned on 1 April, 1967.  It was the only rapid reaction armed helicopter squadron ever commissioned in the Navy. We had close friends (Navy Chief Master Sergeant and his wife who was a WAVE) who were stationed in Vietnam at the time George was there and he visited them during his short time there.  She's in her 90's now and one of her favorite stories is about her husband and George driving around the Mekong Delta in his red convertible.  I wish I knew more about his time there, but I was busy getting moved from CA to VA and getting our oldest child enrolled in kindergarten there after he'd started school in CA and spent time in school in MS while George attended training at Ft. Rucker while the kids and I stayed in MS with George's mother. George returned and we moved to Key West.  It was a busy few months!

**Colonel Robert H. Zannini:** I was assigned to the 99th Bomb Wing, Westover when we learned about our upcoming 6-month tour to Arc Light was coming up. Arc Light had just begun as a tour for all SAC B-52 Outfits.  My crew was selected for TDY to Guam in advance to learn what it was all about.  We went for a short tour (about 6 weeks) with the objective to fly a few missions, learn about the Command requirements of 57th Air Division and indoctrinate our crews when we returned.  The wing then deployed for its first 6-month tour the following 1 September 1967 (I believe it was ’67 but could have been ’66 - - my feeble mind).

It was definitely different - - when U Tapao opened, we even rotated out of there as well as Guam. Sorties were about 13:30 hours long and then add station time about 4 hours prior and then debrief after landing - - sleep and then wake up and check the frag order for next fly mission - - Day after day.

About half way in the tour, my crew received an incentive trip to “in country” Vietnam to spend a week with the Army at several Artillery sites, near Michelin Plantation ground forces, witness a B-52 strike from the ground (awesome!),  we actually got to fly a “people sniffer mission in “Hueys”.  Spent a few hours in a bunker with the Queen’s Royal Sabers, Thai elite ground forces and also received a briefing from MACV before winging home to Guam.  MACV did NOT hide the truth about how the conflict was mismanaged by Washington.

After returning to the grind at Guam, things continued until rotation.  Upon return to CONUS, I was assigned to Castle to establish RTU (Remote Training Unit) in order to train other B-52 crews augmenting Guam forces on individual crew basis from other units.

From Castle I went to ACSC. Then after graduation, it was back to Thailand (Korat) for one year flying the EB-66 as ECM support for Arc Light attacks and ECM recon capacity.  That was the year of ending our responsibilities in SEA and rotating back tom CONUS.

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**Lieutenant Colonel John W. Chapman**: From 1964 to 1968, while assigned to Clark AB, Philippines and Naha AB, Okinawa, he flew several C-130A missions into Vietnam and Thailand delivering troops and supplies. He also was deployed for a short time into Thailand to fly Forward Air Controller missions over the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

**Colonel Dennis M. Drew**: In 1966-1967 served as a Personnel Officer for a Tactical Fighter Wing at Tuy Hoa AB, Vietnam for seven months, then was reassigned to a base in northern Thailand for the remainder of his tour.

**Colonel Charles V. Durham:** Served in Vietnam May 1972 to 1 March 1973, as a Weapons Controller with the 619th Tactical Control Squadron in Saigon. After the treaty was signed in March, he was reassigned to Det 5, 621st Tactical Control Squadron at NKP, Thailand to complete his 12-month tour.

**Lieutenant Colonel Donald F. Giglio:** Served in Vietnam from January-March 1972 as part of Project CHECO writing the Southeast Asia history at 7th AF, MACV and MACTHAI.

**First Lieutenant Glenn Jones**: From August 1966 to Aug 1967, he was assigned to the 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division near Pleiku in the central highlands of Vietnam. He was in charge of the Brigade’s section of the 704th Maintenance Battalion. He led resupply convoys to An Khe on the coast and forward fire bases on the Laos and Cambodian borders and went with contact teams to Montagnard villages.

**Lieutenant William B. Mack:** In 1967 while assigned to the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing at Ubon Royal Thai AB, he flew an F-4 Phantom on 100 combat mission over North Vietnam.

**Commander George E. Mingledorff**: While serving aboard the destroyer, USS Cone as the Main Propulsion Assistant, the ship was deployed to the Gulf of Tonkin from November 1972 to March 1973. The crew provided naval gunfire support off the coast of Vietnam, aircraft carrier plane guard duty and participated in Operation Linebacker II strikes in North Haiphong Harbor in December 1972.

**Colonel Jerry L. Sailors:** From July 1967 to July 1968 flew 353 missions in A-37’s out of Bien Hoa and Pleiku with the 604th Air Commando Squadron supporting allied ground operations with CAS and interdiction missions. Also, flew C-130 and C-141 Southeast Asia support missions from Travis AFB, CA in 1965-67 and 1968-71, including numerous air evacuation flights.

**Commander Robert N. Scruggs**: As a Naval Flight Officer in VW-1 and VP-17, he had several deployments to Vietnam and flew out of Chu Lai and Thailand. He flew Navy AWACS ops in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1967-68 and surveillance in 1971-73.

**Lieutenant Colonel Rex K. Snider**: Served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968 and was assigned in Saigon, Can Tho and Bin Tuy.