

**Captain John Alexander House, II**

**United States Marine Corps  
Marine Aviator  
Vietnam War  
April 16, 1939 - June 30, 1967**

**-Son, brother, husband, father, friend and Marine-**

**-This is Jack's Story-**

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April 16, 1939 - June 30, 1967  
-Son, brother, husband, father, friend and Marine-  
  
**-This is Jack's Story-**

***"Have you forgotten yet?  
Look down,  
And swear by the slain of the War that you'll never forget."***

**"Aftermath"  
by Siegfried Sassoon  
1919**

**Requiem in Pace**

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**{September 27, 2018}**



*It is not something that can be inherited,*

*Nor can it be purchased.*

*No amount of money will buy it.*

*It is not for sale and it may not be borrowed.*

*It isn't a birthright and it doesn't come easily.*

*It must be earned.*

*It requires honor, courage and commitment.*

*Its reward is the result of hard work and even spilled blood.*

*It is a sacrifice.*

*It remembers those lives that went before.*

*Once earned, it can never be taken away.*

*You and the brotherhood of the Corps,*

*Maintain it forever:*

*The Title*

*United States Marine*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**For many, war and combat are welcome and probably comfortable abstractions. Few of us are directly involved while most of us who served suffer its ill-effects as well as the blessed comradery of serving with our brothers.**

**1967 was a challenging year for the American military and the 485,600 men and women serving in the Vietnam War as we lost 11,153 killed-in-action. 1967 was also a turning point in the conduct of the War as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division faced regular army divisions that crossed the Demilitarized Zone in force (including the 324B, 95C, 304, and 325C divisions, among other major enemy maneuver units, supported by heavy artillery and protected by sophisticated anti-aircraft elements).**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division (3<sup>rd</sup> MarDiv) was, at the time, the largest American division to be committed in combat. It was very ably supported in 1967 by Marine helicopter squadrons from the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Air Wing, including HMM-265, Navy aviation and some Army units (including the 8<sup>th</sup> Radio Research Field Station which conducted radio and electronic intelligence collection).**

**The 8<sup>th</sup> RRFS (my unit) was co-located with 3<sup>rd</sup> MarDiv and much of our work involved locating North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units - providing for artillery, air strike and B-52 strikes along with area designations for Marine Force Reconnaissance missions.**

**The 8<sup>th</sup> RRFS was fortunate to have an Officer's Club, a rare luxury in the Phu Bai combat base area. And one evening in the early months of 1967 a couple of Marine officers arrived at our door. Since I was a junior Captain in the 8<sup>th</sup> it was my duty to meet and greet visitors – and that is why I was fortunate to meet Captain Jack House.**

**Jack House and I became good friends, enjoyed cocktails and cigars together and regaled each other about our families-in-the-making. While Jack's loss on June 30, 1967 was a tragedy for his family and the Marine Corps, it also affected me deeply – a friendship never to be forgotten.**

**When I think of Jack House and all the many people whose lives he influenced I have found it appropriate to think about Stephen Spender's**

poem which was referred to by President Ronald Reagan at ceremonies to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings at Normandy:

**The Truly Great  
by Stephen Spender**

I think continually of those who were truly great.  
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history  
Through corridors of light, where the hours are suns,  
Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition  
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,  
Should tell of the Spirit, clothed from head to foot in song.  
And who hoarded from the Spring branches  
The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious, is never to forget  
The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs  
Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth.  
Never to deny its pleasure in the morning simple light  
Nor its grave evening demand for love.  
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother  
With noise and fog, the flowering of the spirit.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields,  
See how these names are fêted by the waving grass  
And by the streamers of white cloud  
And whispers of wind in the listening sky.  
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,  
Who wore at their hearts the fire's center.  
Born of the sun, they travelled a short while toward the sun  
And left the vivid air signed with their honor.

Jack was 'truly great' as well. While Jack's final mission with Team Striker did not go according to plan, he was able to save lives through his heroic efforts as Pilot-in-Command, recognized posthumously with award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for his outstanding courage, superb airmanship and valiant devotion to duty in the face of overwhelming odds.

And Captain Jack House service in Vietnam should not be focused just on his last mission. During the 'Hill Fights' around Khe Sanh in April 1967, it was Jack and his equally heroic crew that successfully evacuated the Team Hawk patrol, saving the lives of all eight Reconnaissance Marines.

This is Jack's story. He made a wonderful and lasting, eternal impact on all of us who knew him or were with him in combat. It is also my great honor to hold his family closer – as well as it is my high privilege to connect with and to better know those who served with Jack -- heroes and magnificent Marines, every one.

God Bless America and God Bless you all. Semper fidelis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. House". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

## **BACKGROUND ON THE SITUATION IN I CORPS SOUTH VIETNAM - 1967**

**The general situation in I Corps Tactical Zone (I CTZ) in 1967 was the most intense and complex combat environment during the entire Vietnam War.**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division (Reinforced) was engaged with a growing and more active regular North Vietnamese force, augmented by improving tactics and weapons.**

**A great deal of effort was expended in I Corps to construct and defend the McNamara Line (also known as "Dye Marker"). Construction began in early 1967 with the order to bulldoze and clear a 500 meter wide strip from Gio Linh westward towards Con Thien. This became known as "The Trace" and was thought it would prevent infiltration by NVA forces from both North Vietnam and Laos.**

**The Line would cross South Vietnam from the South China Sea to the Laotian border south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The eastern portion included fortified combat bases with Khe Sanh as the centerpiece, along with areas where roads and trails were monitored by the high-technology acoustic and heat-detecting sensors. The consensus was that the barrier concept, while interesting, did not work very well at all.**

**Meanwhile, after suffering massive casualties, a stalemate on the battlefield, and destruction of the North Vietnam economy by U.S. bombing, there was a growing realization in Hanoi that, if current trends continued, the war would be lost.**

**Planning for a winter-spring offensive to be conducted during 1968 (the "General Offensive - General Uprising,") had then begun in early 1967 into early the following year and accounted for the increase in NVA combat units in I Corps Tactical Zone -- and understood by American intelligence who was reporting troop buildups and distinct attack probabilities.**

**The confrontation at Khe Sahn was, most likely, a strategic diversion intended to draw American forces north and away from the larger cities, allowing "Tet 1968" a greater chance for potential success. Even Phu Bai and Thua Thien province experienced increased NVA activity, primarily 122mm and 140mm rockets, from the southwest and within 6 to 10 km from 3<sup>rd</sup> MarDiv headquarters (and in the general vicinity of where Capt. Jack House and the reconnaissance team were shot down).**

**Marine helicopter squadrons, both attack and transport, became the backbone of Marine operations in I Corps Tactical Zone -- providing for supply, casualty evacuation, troop deployments, reconnaissance insertions and extractions and the tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel.**



## SOUTHEAST ASIA



The Vietnam War was a long, expensive and divisive armed conflict that pitted the communist regime of North Vietnam and its southern allies, popularly known as the Viet Cong, against South Vietnam and its primary ally, the United States. At that time many thought that communism would engulf Southeast Asia, and to a limited extent it did.

The War, which became increasingly unpopular in the United States (many Americans found it difficult to 'separate the war from the warrior'), ended with the final withdrawal of U.S. forces in 1973 and the unification of Vietnam under Communist control two years later as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. More than 2.1 million civilians were killed, 1.1-million enemy combatants died and 58,220 Americans were killed in action.



**NORTH VIETNAM  
and  
SOUTH VIETNAM**

**Now a unified country known as the  
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC of VIETNAM**



# I CORPS Tactical Zone Vietnam III Marine Amphibious Force 1967 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Air Wing (MAW)



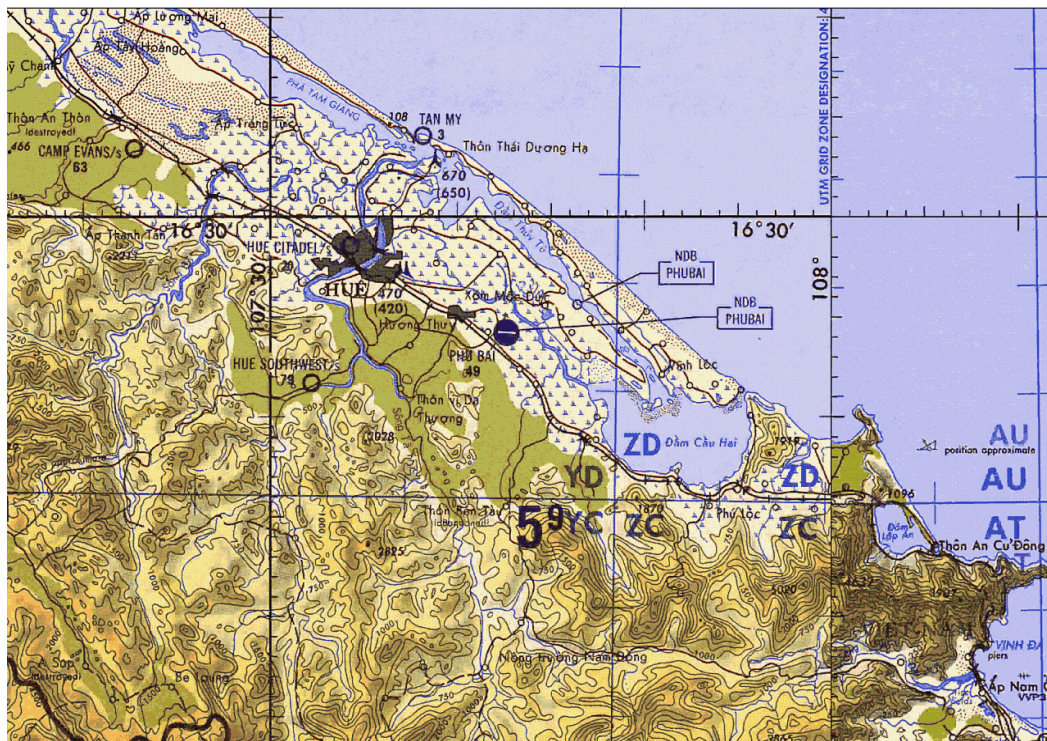
The 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Air Wing experienced a sharp increase in the scale of Marine helicopter operations during 1967. The sorties rate increased by more than 20% over those of 1966 and 1<sup>st</sup> MAW helicopters flew 510,595 sorties, carrying 628,486 personnel and 70,651 tons of cargo during the year.



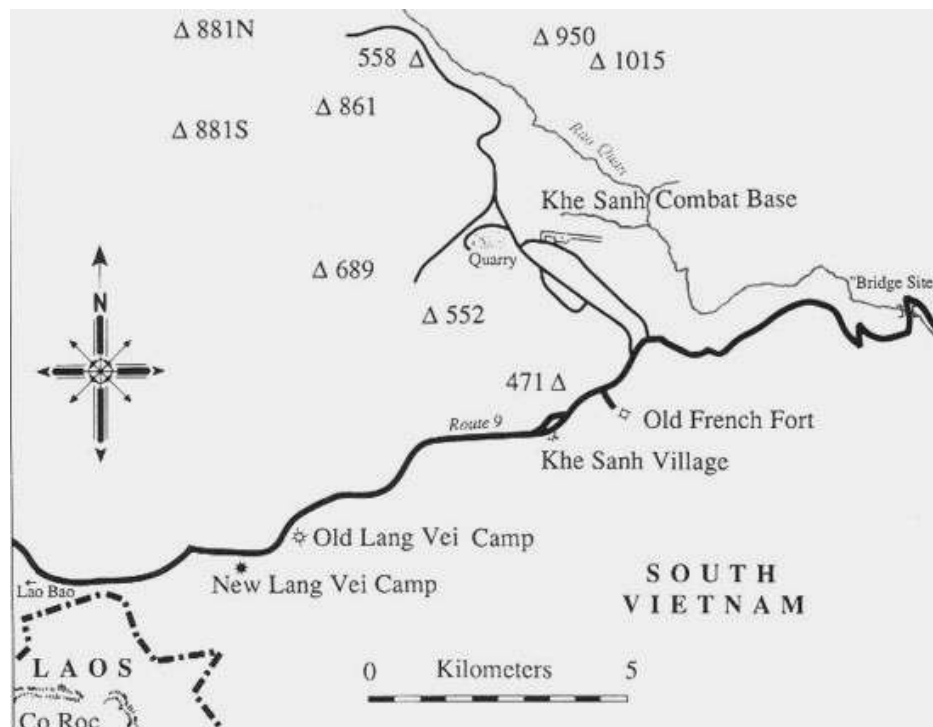
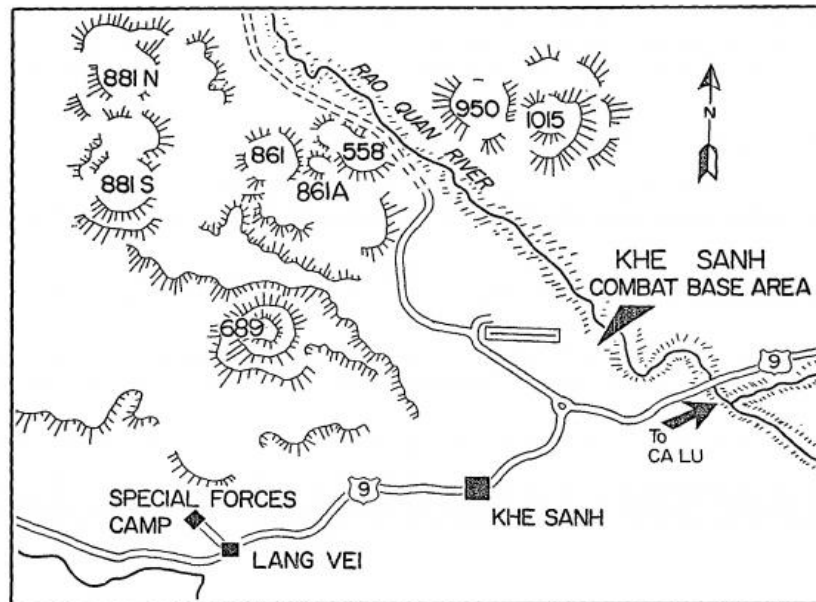
# I CORPS Tactical Zone Vietnam

## 3rd Marine Division 1967

### Northern Provinces and Phu Bai



# The Hill Fights Khe Sanh Spring 1967



## **Hill 861 - Khe Sanh - Spring 1967**

### **USMCVietnam.net**

**"Battle for Hill 861 - In 1967, Bravo Company, 1st battalion, 9th Marines went to search for caves on Hill 861. After a skirmish, the company attacked up the hill without knowing that it had encountered a large enemy force. Most of Bravo was wiped out and the survivors were pinned down until rescued by Kilo company that night.**

**Deadly struggle in the hills: the first battle of Khe Sanh: in the spring of 1967, elements of the 3rd and 9th Marines clashed with the North Vietnamese Army in the "Hill Fights." The Battle of Hill 881 was a battle during the Vietnam War between the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN, or in US sources "North Vietnamese Army" or NVA) and United States Marines.**

**Conducted in I Corps it became known as "the Hill Fights", involving Hill 881 North (16°41'26.5"N 106°39'34.5"E / 16.690694°N 106.659583°E / 16.690694; 106.659583), Hill 881 South (16°40'18"N 106°39'45.2"E / 16.67167°N 106.662556°E / 16.67167; 106.662556), and Hill 861 (16°40'36"N 106°41'13"E / 16.67667°N 106.68694°E / 16.67667; 106.68694).**

**The Hill designation in this case actually refers to a "hill mass" or a collection of ridges and saddles, the numbers to the elevation the highest point of the hill masses in meters. The first contact made with the NVA occurred on Hill 861 when 5 American Marine forward observers were ambushed in a bamboo, 4 of which were killed by gunfire.**

**After this contact, two companies of Marines advanced on the hill 861, encountering heavy fire from entrenched NVA positions, constant mortar barrages on potential landing zones prevented evacuation of wounded and fog cut off most air support. Separated, burdened with wounded and dead (it is American Marine Corps tradition never to leave corpses behind) both companies set up hedgehog positions until relieved by other marine companies.**

**Even after skinning the hill with napalm, white phosphorus, 500 pound bombs and Huey runs, NVA snipers and machine guns would cut down advancing marines. Entrenched NVA troops would wait until the marines were 20-30 yards from their positions firing on them, bombarding them with 82mm mortars hidden on the reverse sides of ridges and then pursuing them through the burnt trees.**

**After a constant day and night bombardment, Marine forces managed to take hill 861, the closest hill mass to Khe Sanh. Dug into the hill they found 400 foxholes and 25 bunkers. The bunkers were often fortified with up to**



**6ft of earth and logs making them all but impervious to the 250-500 pound bombs of Marine aircraft.**

**Having taken hill 861 the marine forces advanced against hill 881 South covered, as they found later, with 10 times as many foxholes and bunkers than 861. Despite the discovery of the well-entrenched bunkers on hill 861; Marine aircraft used 500 pound bombs in the bombardment of hill 881 south for fear of hitting themselves with shrapnel when they flew low over their targets to avoid monsoon cloud.**

**With hill 881 South insufficiently bombarded, Marine infantry found the going even harder than the previous hill often taking fire from bunkers they had passed effectively being surrounded on hills and ridges that their own artillery and airplanes had cleared of cover.**

**After the marines had suffered heavy losses on hill 881 South, a new commander ordered the marine air force to break with tradition and use 750, 1000 and 2000 pound bombs on the heavily entrenched NVA forces. With the hills properly bombarded, American forces managed to take Hill 881 North and South in the same day. After beating off a fierce NVA counterattack on Hill 881 North, the Marines could finally claim victory in what had become the bloodiest battle of the Vietnam war so far.”**



**\* \* \* \* \***

**“Remains of MIA Marine Capt. John House Found in Vietnam.”  
Pelham Plus Newspaper, Pelham, New York  
May 10, 2017**



**U.S. Marine Captain John A. House, II**

The remains of Captain John A (Jack) House II of Pelham have been recovered in Houng Phu Village, Vietnam, according to the U.S. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency at the Pentagon. Captain House was a Marine pilot whose helicopter crashed on June 30, 1967, almost 50 years ago.

Jack was the son of John and Dorothy House of Pelham and went through the Pelham School system, graduating from Pelham Memorial High School in 1957. He is survived by his wife Amy and son Eric, both now from Hawaii. In addition, his brothers Robert and Mark now live in Meridian, Idaho and Pelham, NY respectively.

Following High School, Jack attended Penn State and Oregon State University, where he met the love of his life, Amy. He enrolled in the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps as a prelude to becoming a chopper pilot in the Marine Corps to follow his passion for flying.

By the time his training was complete, Jack was ready for combat, and assigned to “The Dragons,” otherwise known as HMM-265, a Marine Squadron of CH-46A Sea Knight Helicopters based near Da Nang. Many of the Dragons’ missions were to insert Reconnaissance teams into heavily protected Viet Cong strongholds.

On the fateful day of June 30, 1967, Captain House was flying 11 other Service Men into a Landing Zone, and received heavy enemy fire. He aborted the landing, but with the craft mortally damaged. He was able to fly a short distance with the chopper on fire and crashed into high tree cover on a hillside.

Seven Marines survived the horrific crash and all testified in their

debriefing that if it weren't for the calmness, skill, and training of their pilot and brother Jack House, that they wouldn't have made it out alive. Based on their reports, Captain House was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, in addition to other service medals.

The coordinates of the crash-site have been repeatedly excavated and searched over the past 50 years. Early this year, the Defense Department concluded its report that Captain House's remains as well as two other Marines were finally found together and will now come home.

These three Marines will be buried together at Arlington National Cemetery. As of this date, the burial has not been set, but will probably be this fall.

\* \* \* \* \*





**HMM-265**  
**Helicopter Marine Medium Squadron**  
**now designated as**  
**VMM-265**

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265 (VMM-265) is a United States Marine Corps transport squadron consisting of MV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft. The squadron, known as the "Dragons", is based at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan and falls under the command of Marine Aircraft Group 36 (MAG-36) and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW).

**Mission.**

Support the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Commander by providing assault support transport of combat troops, supplies and equipment, day or night under all weather conditions during expeditionary, joint or combined operations.

**Early years.**

HMM-265 was commissioned on October 1, 1962 at Marine Corps Air Facility Jacksonville, North Carolina. Originally flying the UH-34, the squadron deployed to Memphis, Tennessee shortly after commissioning in support of the Mississippi Crisis, a critical moment in the American civil rights movement. Following that, HMM-265 began a series of deployments testing new helicopter tactics such as the night raid. The squadron's commanding officer, Lt Col Beeler, developed innovative new helicopter tactics and became a legacy in the "Dragons" and in helicopter aviation.

The day of destiny for HMM-265 occurred on June 29, 1964 as BUNO 150942 was flown for 3.4 hours to the squadron's home at MCAF Jacksonville by Lt Col Beeler. By July of that year, the squadron began accepting Sea Knights and is the first Fleet Marine Force squadron to fly the aircraft.

To commemorate their new aircraft, the Dragons of HMM-265 unveiled a new insignia on October 1, 1964. This design, created by PFC Charles D. Lyles, was the official unit patch until 2007, when a new design was adopted, based on the Japanese Shinjitai for dragon. On February 4, 1966, as HMM-265 became the first Marine Squadron to log 10,000 accident free hours in the CH-46A. This is a great achievement in an era when the CH-46 was going through the growing pains that occur when a new aircraft is fielded.

**Vietnam War.**

In April 1966, HMM-265 boarded the USS *Boxer* (LPH-4) in Norfolk, Virginia. On May 22, 1966, the squadron arrived in Vietnam at the Marble Mountain Air Facility located southeast of Da Nang Air Base. The squadron had 22 CH-46As and was assigned to Marine Aircraft Group 16, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.



**HMM-265 Vietnam-era patch**

**On July 15, 1966, during the first day of Operation Hastings, HMM-265 had two of its helicopters crash. The first crash was caused when a CH-46A struck a tree during the initial insert of Marines from 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines and the second occurred later that evening when aircraft EP-171 was hit at 1,500 feet by 12.7mm fire resulting in the death of 13 Marines.**

**In addition to daily missions transporting Marines and cargo, HMM-265 and its Sea Knights flew in support of Operation Macon from July 4 through October 27, 1966.**

**HMM-265 along with HMM-164 conducted multiple battalion insertions to allow the 3rd Marine Division to conduct multiple search and destroy missions in the An Hoa region. 12th Marines artillery and Marine A-4 Skyhawks fired on landing zones prior to the CH-46s landing.**

**The other major operation in 1966 was Operation Prairie (August 3 - September 13). The Dragons supported the 4th Marine Regiment as they battled for the Nui Cay Tre (Mutter's) Ridge. Landing in "hot" zones under heavy enemy fire marked this battle, a harbinger of future battles in Vietnam.**

**In July 1967, HMM-265 became the Special Landing Force (SLF) helicopter squadron embarked aboard the 7th Fleet's Amphibious Ready Group. As the SLF squadron, the Dragons were tasked with conducting heliborne search and destroy missions against Viet Cong targets along the coast. During this time, five major operations were conducted with names such as Bear Chain/Fremont, Beacon Guide, Kangaroo Kick, Beacon Gate, and Cochise.**

The Dragons resumed duties as the SLF squadron aboard the USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH-2) in May 1969. They conducted amphibious raids in support of Operations Bold Pursuit (June 27 - July 6), Mighty Play (July 10 - July 20), and finally Defiant Stand (September 7 - September 18). After three years in Vietnam, the squadron was relocated to Marine Corps Air Station Santa Ana, California on October 10, 1969 leaving their helicopters with other in-country squadrons. A total of twenty-seven HMM-265 Marines perished in the war. HMM-265 was rebuilt using a few squadron personnel returned from Vietnam and the Marines of HMMT-301. The CH-46A helicopters left behind in Vietnam were replaced by the CH-46 Super D from overhaul. The squadron was deactivated on November 13, 1970



\* \* \* \* \*

**HMM-265**  
**Helicopter Marine Medium Squadron**  
**I Corps Tactical Zone (CH-46 pictorials)**









## **COMMAND CHRONOLOGY HMM-265**

**Last Known Activity  
Incident Date 670630  
HMM-265 CH-46A –  
BuNo 152515+ / EP-168 –  
Crash, burn, automatic weapons fire during recon insertion**

**House, John Alexander CAPT Pilot HMM-265 MAG-16/1stMAW/IIIMAF  
670630 (vvm 22:087)**

**Allen, Merlin Raye LCpl Passenger HMM-265  
A/3rdReconBn/3rdMARDIV/IIIMAF 670630 (vvm 22:086)**

**Judd, Michael Barry HM3 Corpsman-Pass HMM-265  
A/3rdReconBn/3rdMARDIV/IIIMAF 670630 (vvm 22:088)**

**Killen, John Dewey LCpl Passenger HMM-265  
A/3rdReconBn/3rdMARDIV/IIIMAF 670630 (vvm 22:088)**

**Perry, Dennis Mitchell LCpl Passenger HMM-265  
A/3rdReconBn/3rdMARDIV/IIIMAF 670702 (vvm 22:090)**

**Runnels, Glyn Linal CPL Passenger HMM-265  
A/3rdReconBn/3rdMARDIV/IIIMAF 670630 (vvm 22:090)**

**30 June 1967: An HMM-265 aircraft, EP-168, piloted by Captain J. A. HOUSE attempted to insert an eight man recon team, code name NETTLE RASH II, at YC904962. Upon completion of the zone prep and the UH-1E's checking the zone, the aircraft approached the landing zone from the north through the valley. As Captain HOUSE's aircraft was about to touch down, it received heavy automatic weapons fire from all sides. Captain HOUSE waved off, but the aircraft had been hit and set afire. The aircraft began to burn intensely, so Captain HOUSE was forced to land in 80' trees about 1000 meters from the recon zone [YC896956]. Captain HOUSE and four members of the recon team were killed in action. The three remaining crew members, 1Lt TED R. Pittman, LCPL G.R. SMITH, LCPL J.A. MICHAELSON and the remaining four members of the recon team were injured and subsequently rescued.**

**Concurrently Captain M. R. MILLER, the wingman, was on the radio talking to the DASC and MAG-16 S-3 (FWD), setting the wheels in motion to rescue the survivors. Airborne FAC's, more UH-1E's and additional fixed wing attack aircraft were on station within minutes.**

**After a hurried brief at Phu Bai MAG-16 FWD, a 65 man SPARROW HAWK was inserted at YC894957 by four CH-46s and five UH-34's from HMM-163. It was hoped that the ground force might be able to reach the crash site.**

**Meanwhile, the airborne FAC's and UH-1E's spotted pencil flares and**

signal tracers from the crash site. Upon completion of the SPARROW HAWK lift, the lead CH-46, piloted by Captain D.M PETTEYS went to the location and hoisted out the seven survivors and flew them to "A" MED at Phu Bai. However, as Captain PETTEYS moved off the crash site, his aircraft was followed by a number of air bursts but reached Phu Bai unscathed.

After the fate of those aboard the downed aircraft was learned, it was decided to retract the SPARROW HAWK. Four CH-46's, from HMM-265, led by Major D.E. SCHNEIDER [New Executive Officer of HMM-265] and five UH-34's from HMM-163 made the retraction without incident.



\* \* \* \* \*



## **HOUSE, JOHN ALEXANDER II**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>John Alexander House II</b>
<b>Unit:</b>	<b>HMM-265, Marine Air Group 16, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Air</b>
<b>Wing</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	<b>16 April 1939</b>
<b>Home of Record:</b>	<b>Pelham, New York</b>
<b>Date of Loss:</b>	<b>30 June 1967</b>
<b>Country of Loss:</b>	<b>South Vietnam</b>
<b>Loss Coordinates:</b>	<b>161349N 1074301E (YC 896956)</b>
<b>Status I 1973:</b>	<b>Killed/Body not recovered</b>
<b>Category:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Aircraft:</b>	<b>CH-46A Sea Knight</b>

**REMARKS: DED/CRSH BRN/SOM RECOV/NT SUB - J**

**SYNOPSIS:** The Boeing-Vertol CH46 Sea Knight arrived in Southeast Asia on 8 March 1966 and served the Marine Corps throughout the rest of the war. With a crew of three or four depending on mission requirements, the tandem-rotor transport helicopter could carry 24 fully equipped troops or 4600 pounds of cargo and was instrumental in moving Marines throughout South Vietnam, then supplying them accordingly.

On 30 June 1967, Capt. John A. House was the pilot of a CH46A Sea Knight helicopter from HMM-265, MAG-16, 1st Marine Air Wing transporting members of the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. The recon team was to be inserted into the hotly contested, forested mountains south of Hue/Phu Bai Airfield. The passengers included Cpl. Glyn L. Runnels, LCpl. John D. Killen III, LCpl. Merlin R. Allen and HM3 Michael B. Judd, the team's corpsman, who comprised a Marine recon team being inserted into an area where Viet Cong (VC) troops were believed to be operating. Their mission was to locate and report on enemy activity in their area of operation.

As the helicopter approached the landing zone (LZ), it came under enemy small arms fire. The aircraft was hit several times, exploded in mid air and crashed. The location of loss was approximately 1 mile west of a generally north-south road that branched off of Highway 1 and ran south through the mountains before angling back to the east and to DaNang. It was also 1 mile east of a river, 12 miles due south of the Hue/Phu Bai Airfield and 34 miles northwest of DaNang, Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

Later, a search and recovery (SAR) team was inserted into the crash site to search the area for possible survivors and to recover the dead. The team found no sign of survivors in or around the area. They examined the helicopter's wreckage and successfully recovered several sets of remains, which were transferred to a military mortuary for examination and identification. At the time the formal search was completed, all members of the aircrew and reconnaissance team were listed Killed in Action/Body Not Recovered.

Later remains of the Sea Knight's co-pilot and crew chief were positively identified along with some members of the reconnaissance team. These remains were returned to their families for burial. Unfortunately, no remains were recovered that could be identified as belonging to Capt. House, HM3 Judd, LCpl. Allen, LCpl. Killen, or Cpl. Runnels. There appears to be little doubt that John House, John Killen, Merlin Allen, Michael Judd and Glyn Runnels died in the crash of the Sea Night and, under the circumstances of loss, there seems to be little chance that their remains are recoverable. However, each man has the right to have his remains returned to his family, friends and country if at all possible. Likewise, if any of the men were able to escape this devastating loss, they most certainly would have been captured by the same communist forces who shot down their aircraft. Their fate, like other Americans who remain unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, could be quite different.



Phu Bai, Vietnam airfield.

**Recon Team Striker  
Alpha Company 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion  
United States Marine Corps**

**30 June 1967  
and  
Search and Recovery Report**

Today Jeff Savelkoul and Mariano "Junior" Guy, who are the only surviving members of this patrol, march on as proud Marines. Team Striker is still carrying out it's mission by bringing together the families of their Fallen Brothers.

Capt. John A. House II	Pelham, New York	22E 87
Sgt. Eugene Castaneda	Honokaa, Hawaii	24E 102
Cpl. Merlin R. Allen	Bayfield, Wisconsin	22E 86
Cpl. Glyn L. Runneis, Jr.	Birmingham, Alabama	22E 88
LCpl. John D. Killen, III	Des Moines, Iowa	22E 88
LCpl. Dennis M. Perry	Perry, Georgia	22E 112
HM Michael B. Judd	Cleveland, Ohio	22E 88

(name, hometown and placement location on Vietnam Wall Memorial)

Team members Allen, Judd, Killen, Runnels, and the pilot House were Killed In Action/Bodies not recovered on 30 June. Perry died of wounds on 02 July. Castaneda was later Killed In Action on 12 August 1967.

The following is taken from the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion Command Chronologies on file at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, DC. Note: This is the entire Official Record of this event from the war. During a search of the records at the Historical Center the following statement was found, misfiled and buried in the records. 301630H June Map: YC997963

During attempted insertion of patrol in the vicinity helo started taking SA, AW, AA fire from the general area. Helo took a hit in the fuel tank causing the helo to crash and burn. Results of this were 4 friendly WIA and 4 friendly KIA's from the recon team. The survivors moved to high ground directed at the gunships and fixed wings as they made strafing runs in the area. The survivors fired pen flares to mark their location and were extracted by sling. Prior to extraction team leader checked area of destroyed helo for weapons and their equipment. All weapons were believed destroyed with the helo. Patrol did observe assorted SA ammo scattered throughout the area. From the amount of flack in the air at the time patrol leader feels there was at least (3) AA weapons in the area. Castaneda Sgt. Co A

**From "Never Without Heroes": Narrative from "Never Without Heroes" by Lawrence C. Vetter, Jr. 1996, Ivy Books.**

**"On June 30, the team was again in the air, heading back in the same direction, but this time it was preceded by fixed wing aircraft that bombed and strafed the landing zone area. Members of the team didn't understand why jets would strafe the LZ and announce their coming, but theirs was "not to reason why."**

**As soon as the jets were finished with their runs, the lumbering 46 flew down toward the landing zone. Junior [Mariano Guy] was positioning himself to be the first out and saw the tall elephant grass in the valley floor fast approaching. [Jeff] Savelkoul was back farther in the patrol, adjusting the extra weight of the radio on his pack.**

**When the chopper was within a few feet of the ground and Junior was about to leap and run, he was knocked off his feet by a, sudden rocking and shaking of the aircraft. Still inside the chopper, the Marines sensed their first nervous fear; they knew that their helicopter had dropped into an ambush and was being battered by heavy weapons.**

**Enemy fire penetrated the metal skin and ripped past the Marines inside. As the helicopter lurched and shuddered, the pilot fought for control and tried to pull the aircraft out of the kill zone. Savelkoul said I was toward the rear end, and I felt the chopper try to rise and turn around. As we went up higher, we were knocking out the portholes and firing our weapons or dropping grenades through them, trying to aim where we thought the VC were. The chopper was taking a lot of hits. Then I saw the round that took us down. I saw it fire from the ground and like a tracer streak toward us. It exploded a ten-inch hole through the side of the aircraft right next to me, and it caused a loud cracking noise. It exited through the roof and shattered a fuel line. But it was like the fuel pump was still surging and spraying its fuel through the broken line out onto us. The fuel ignited, and we were in the middle of this firestorm, and there wasn't anywhere to hide from it." Junior stated that he and "Cass," [Cpl Eugene Castaneda] the patrol leader, had run to the front and were firing out of the window next to the gunner. He said, "I heard guys in the chopper screaming. The fire was burning up the place, and Marines were on fire." Even though 46s had survived severe damage in other battles, this old sky tank had been hit by an antitank round and it was starting to break up.**

**The chopper was fatally wounded but straggled upward about two hundred feet. Stuck in the rear, Jeff Savelkoul was being enveloped by fire and smoke and was gasping for air. Savelkoul stated: "I needed to get air and stuck my head out of one of the broken windows. I got the air, but a piece of burning plexi-glass stabbed into my face. Then I heard somebody yelling, "Get up to the front; we're going down!" I had to run through that wall of fire. I remember throwing off my pack because it was on fire. All my clothes were burned off except for one boot and my cartridge belt. In the confusion, I didn't realize that my hat was on fire, but when I finally knocked it off, my head was badly burned. My backside was particularly burned from my heels to my head. It was chaos. We were taking enemy fire through the chopper as well, and there was just nowhere to hide. I**

remember seeing a pile of bodies on the floor and Cass and Junior to one side.

"The pilot, Capt. John A. House II, was struggling with the craft, trying to reach the top of a hogback ridge very close by, and away from the VC. But it couldn't be. The surviving Marines saw daylight through the roof of the chopper, and then the back section of the helicopter cracked completely off and fell away from the front. The front section of the aircraft crashed into the top level of ninety-foot-tall trees.

Captain House had made it about three fourths of the way to the top of the ridge and had given the team's survivors some breathing room. But he was dead and his copilot wounded Junior said, "We hit those ninety-foot trees and really went into an uncontrolled crash, falling through the trees. We were frantic to get out of there and started pushing out through the windows on the right side." Savelkoul, Junior Guy, Castaneda, and [Dennis] Perry leaped into the air out of the falling, burning wreck, but they were still high up in the trees. Each plummeted, being battered, spun around, and flipped by branches. They hit the ground hard. Savelkoul said he remembered seeing Junior stumbling around dazed for a moment, trying to get his bearings.

"The helicopter smashed into the ground nearby and looked like a watermelon that you had dropped on the sidewalk. It just splattered on the jungle floor." The wounded Marines found themselves on a jungle hillside. Junior and Castaneda were in the best shape, and they tried to help Savelkoul and Perry up the hill. Savelkoul and Perry were burned badly, raw and charred flesh hanging off them. Finally the two healthy Reconners struggled to the hilltop with Savelkoul and Perry, then started back down the hill to see if they could find more survivors. Of course, the VC were coming up, firing at the rescue helicopters that hovered and buzzed over the tall jungle canopy, trying to catch sight of any survivors.

Savelkoul explained: Junior and Cass pulled Perry and me away and started us up the hill, and then they ran back down. Perry was in really critical condition. I was trying to pull him and hand-over-hand pull us up the steep slope. It hurt! The skin on my hands was pretty much burned off, my ears and hair were also burned off, and all down my back and legs my body just screamed. You could hear the VC down below us shooting, and you could hear our choppers over the tops of the trees. I guess the desire to live keeps you going.

Junior Guy continued: Cass got to the cockpit and crawled through the burning wreck to rescue the pilot. But he was slumped over, strapped in and covered by the fire. It was no use, but we managed to help the copilot, who was wounded and banged up, away from the burning wreck. Everything else was just obliterated. Everybody was dead. We got back up to Jeff and Perry with the copilot, but wanted to go back down and try to find some weapons. Our rifles had melted, but maybe there was something to fight with.

The VC were making their way uphill through the jungle toward us, and we were having to rush. We had one .38 pistol from the copilot and one grenade. Cass took the .38. Before he and Castaneda went back down the

hill to the wreckage, Junior took the one grenade, put it into Savelkoul's hand, and pulled the pin. He told Savelkoul not to dare let it go, but to use it in a final fight against the VC if they got up to them.

Savelkoul explained his feelings at that moment: "My hand was burned raw. The nerve endings must've been exposed. When Junior wrapped my fingers around that grenade and pulled the pin, the pain was fierce. Perry was lying in my lap. I watched Junior and Cass running from tree to tree, trying to get back to the wreck without running into any VC." They made it down, but there were no more weapons to be found, and time was running out. They climbed back up, but had no radio on which to call for help. Then Cass found pen flares on the copilot and started firing them through the canopy overhead trying to signal the rescue birds above.

By a stroke of fortune he was able to hit one of the ships on the windshield. It was a Huey slick, which did a dip nose-down signal to let the Marines 'on the ground' know that he had received their message. The crew immediately lowered a sling toward the Marines. The enemy could still be heard and they were closer. The race for survival was not going to be easy; there was just no way that the ropes could descend through trees, without getting hung up. Junior Guy still had his machete, so the young native of El Paso climbed the problem tree, hacking away at branches faster than the VC could climb the hill. He cleared a path for the slings; then slid back down. With the enemy closing and firing at the helicopters, trying to beat them to the team, the Reconners started their ascent.

The copilot, Perry, and Savelkoul, were each tied in tightly and went up, one at a time. They, were followed by Junior Guy and Cass two in one loop. The last two stayed together, each not wanting the other to be the last on the ground. "The sling was just a loop in a rope; and you had to tighten it so you wouldn't slip out," said Savelkoul. "That line dug, deep into me. At the time, I couldn't see my back, but that rope made me feel how badly burned it. was. It really hurt, but I held on as tight as I could."

By the time the VC clambered up to the crash site; the Marines were all safely aboard the Huey, and the birds swiftly turned and sped back to Phu Bai with the injured. Back at the camp, during the time of the battle, Acosta, Junior's brother, was being kept away from emergency radio transmissions by well-meaning friends who knew that Junior was in deep trouble: But once the team had been pulled out and Junior was known to be among the survivors, Acosta was told, and he got over to the medical company as quickly as he could. Doc Zink was also there to receive his friends. He learned that his replacement, Doc Judd, had been killed, and it was an emotional experience for him. Perry, badly hurt, was carried in on a stretcher. He died two days later in a hospital in Japan.

Jeff Savelkoul had burns over two thirds of his body, mostly third degree. He hurt so much that he lie on a stretcher, so, naked, he walked away from the bird. Savelkoul said, "The last thing I remember in Vietnam was talking to Doc Zink and asking him to take care of me. He gave me a glass, of water and promised that he would. After that there was only a couple of vague moments that I remember before, two weeks later, I woke up in the burn unit of Brooks Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas."

Neither Eugene Castaneda nor Mariano "Junior" Guy was so severely injured that he had to be hospitalized. And although Junior was at first scheduled to go back to the bush in three days, the battalion decided to transfer him to Okinawa for the rest of his overseas tour. Corporal Castaneda was also transferred, but to another in-country unit working with the Vietnamese. On August 12, 1967, he was killed while on duty."



\* \* \* \* \*

**A MEMORIAL SERVICE OF HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE**  
**At Headquarters Chapel, Phu Bai, Vietnam**  
**On Saturday, 1 July 1967, at 1400**

This Memorial service is held in honor of our fellow servicemen from 3<sup>rd</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, FMF Pacific, who have lost their lives during the month of June 1967 in our nation's efforts to preserve the blessings of peace, freedom, and the dignity of man while serving in the republic of Vietnam. May the Heavenly Father make sacred to our memories the sacrifices and devotion to duty which they exemplified.

**THE ORDER OF WORSHIP**

THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION	Chaplain E. Davis
THE LORD'S PRAYER	In Unison
SCRIPTURE PASSAGES READ	Chaplain
THE MEMORIAL SCROLL OF HONOR READ	Captain A. Ward
WORDS OF MEMORIUM	Commanding Officer
THE HYMN "Eternal Father"	Congregation
THE PRAYER OF CONSOLATION	Chaplain F. Urbano
THE PRAYER OF COMMITAL	Chaplain
THE SOUNDING OF TAPS	The Bugler

**THE MEMORIAL SCROLL OF HONOR**

Corporal Glyn L. RUNNELS, Jr., USMC, A Company  
Lance Corporal John Dewey KILLEN, III, USMC, A Company  
Lance Corporal Marlin R. ALLEN, USMC, A Company  
HN3 Michael D. JUDD, USN, A. Company  
These servicemen lost their lives on 30 June 1967.

**SINCEREST SYMPATHY**

The sincere and heartfelt condolences and sympathy of the officers and men of 3<sup>rd</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, are extended to the families and loved one of the deceased.

**THE DIRECTORY**

Major J.R.A. REHFUS, Commanding Officer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion  
Captain A.K. WARD, Commanding Officer, "A" Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Recon  
Battalion  
Chaplain F.J. URBANO, Catholic Chaplain  
Chaplain E.B. DAVIS, Protestant Chaplain

At the conclusion of the service, all personnel present are asked to quietly file from the Chapel as a continuing tribute.



**Captain Ted R. Pittman, USMC  
Jack House Co-Pilot  
Events of June 30, 1967**

**Telephone Discussion on March 25, 2017  
(between T.R. Pittman and M.D. Mariska)**

Jack's co-pilot, Ted Pittman, just called from Dallas and we talked about the shoot-down on 30 June 1967. The following are most of the details that Ted provided:

1. Marine CH-46 helicopter (Jack in right seat and Ted in left seat), loaded up with a Marine Recon team (Team Striker).
2. "Waved off" from first two insertions because of heavy NVA activity.
3. They were making final approach on third site and received heavy small arms fire (and maybe an RPG).
4. Crew Chief reports that they are taking fire AND on fire.
5. Jack tries to fly the helicopter up the hill to a "safer" landing area.
6. There is fire and smoke in the cockpit between the pilots.
7. Lost power and lift and went into triple canopy trees. It happened in only seconds.
8. Once they hit the trees, the helicopter fell from about 80-100 feet to the jungle floor.
9. Ted, who was quite injured, said he lost about an inch in height due to compression fractures, along with other injuries.
10. Ted tries to exit left side, tangled in his microphone wire, gets his door open and falls out.
11. Ted thinks Jack is doing the same on the right side, but can't see through smoke and fire, but the CH-46 air-frame is canted to the right and against a tree (which Ted did not know or see at the time).
12. Ted and the 5 or 6 survivors move up the hill.
13. The helicopter explodes.
14. Ted sends 2 Recon Marines back down to check to see if anyone is alive and to secure weapons to defend themselves.
15. The Marines report no one alive and helicopter burning.
16. The rescue mission took a long time, according to Ted.

17. Ted was evacuated to A-Med at Phu Bai, then to Danang and then to Pensacola where he was hospitalized for 3 months and flight-restricted for 12 months.

/s/ M.D. Mariska

On Mon, Apr 3, 2017 at 6:49 PM, Ted Pittman <[tedatlake@aol.com](mailto:tedatlake@aol.com)> wrote:

Mark,

Thanks for sending that portion of Never Without Heroes. I look forward to receiving the book. There are two other books which mention the incident: Bonnie Sue by Marion Stuskey and Marine Helo by David M. Petteys. Petteys was the pilot that flew the single CH-46 to our rescue.

I read the version given in "Never Without Heroes" and of course there are a few differences in our stories. I very much appreciated the description of what was happening in the rear of the helicopter. Other parts I read with a grain of salt; such as the UH-1 picking up the survivors, the single grenade and pistol rather than seven grenades, a 45 and my 38, and team members helping me out of the cockpit.

By the way I kept the 38 in my possession until I was back in Phu Bai and pretty certain that I was being medivaced to the U.S. At that time I remember handing it to a young Marine in Phu Bai and telling him that he would have better use for it than I, if in fact I was headed home.

The SPARROW HAWK insertion is puzzling, especially the comment that it was hoped that the ground force might be able to reach the crash site. The location of the crash site should have been known. There was certainly enough activity right after our crash, before it became very, very quiet. It could be that SPARROW HAWK was ongoing while we waited. If so, I think that perhaps the 65 man SPARROW HAWK team was being extracted when Petteys started his search. When I asked David what took so long, he told me all other helicopters in the squadron were on other missions. He told me that squadron command forbid his search without a wingman. But he did it anyway.

Thanks Mark for reaching out and bringing this to my attention. I too have thought about Jack often. He was 4 years older than me and like the big brother I wished I had.

Ted



**The Final Mission with Captain Jack House**  
**June 30, 1967**  
**extracts from the book**  
**“We Live the Life We Choose”**  
**an autobiography**  
**by Captain Ted R. Pittman, USMC**

It was Friday, June 30 and I was thankful to be back at Phu Bai. I needed a rest and I needed to finish some overdue paperwork. So who comes up to me with the question, “Hey Ted, how about joining me on a little milk run to Da Nang? It’ll be good; we can blow off a little steam.” It was Jack House, the hero at Khe Sanh. But I figured I had had enough helicopter time without a “joy ride” or “milk run,” so I explained my situation and declined the offer.

Fifteen minutes later Jack returned and said that I had to join him; there were no other pilots available. So I put up my paperwork, changed into my flight suit, grabbed my gear and went to preflight the helicopter while Jack got our flight instructions. When he came back he told me that things had changed. The “milk run” was gone, the North Vietnam Army was moving in force into the area and our job was to insert a recon team. The team boarded. We flew to the designated landing zone and, staying high, looked down upon a large number of enemy troops right there, right where we were supposed to land. We flew back to Phu Bai. The team disembarked and Jack went for further instructions.

Twenty minutes later he returned with a map pointing to different coordinates and minutes later a different recon team joined us. We flew to the new designated landing area and guess what; it too was overrun with enemy troops. So back again to Phu Bai. Starting to sound like a broken record?

Third time’s the charm, they say. Third designation. Third team. But this time we (the top command) are going to help you guys (us in the helicopter) by prepping the site, by bringing in sortie after sortie of F-8s from the carrier and bomb the hell out of your landing zone. Then we’re going to send in the Hueys with their rockets to again clear the site and make sure there are no enemy troops hiding in ambush. Now remember my previous expressed thoughts about using “stealth” and my thoughts about the ability of the enemy, experts in the art of camouflage, to remain hidden from the air).

So here we were in a 5,000 foot holding pattern, watching the jets strafe the area and drop their 2,000 pound bombs time after time. Then watching the Hueys shoot their rockets and finally receiving the word that it is clear, time to go in. And so we do.

We were in flair at 30 knots and about 30 feet above the ground when one of our gunners came over the intercom with the report that we were taking fire. Not to worry we had been in that situation many times before, just add full power and get out of the area as quickly as possible while our two gunners returned fire. But then, then the voice over the intercom shouted

**“we’re on fire, the helicopter is on fire.” And that, my friend, is what made my heart jump!**

**We had to get down, but we had left the cleared area and there was nothing as far as one could see but a thick jungle of high trees. We were flying low, searching for a place we could land, but the fire was raging, flames were entering the cockpit, some Marines were jumping into the treetops. Chaos. No way out. Nothing to do but take her into the tree tops, a controlled crash. As soon as the rotors hit the tree branches they splintered and departed while the body of the helicopter began the 80-foot plunge to the jungle floor.**

**Jack was at the controls, which gave me an advantage. Each pilot had an emergency exit, mine on my left, Jack’s on his right. With flames in the cockpit and the chopper falling I was full of adrenaline and working the levers to open my escape hatch. We hit the ground with a tremendous amount of force, but I was still conscious and managed to push the hatch open and start my escape. The flak jacket I was wearing was covered in a heavy canvas and had a pocket containing a two-way radio. The protruding pocket caught the edge of the windshield frame and had me pinned until I lunged forward, ripping the radio from the jacket. I hit the ground and scrambled for cover away from the burning helicopter before she exploded.**

**The sky was full of action. I could see the F-8s flying nearby. Then the swirl of treetops as our sister helo moved in for the rescue. Then before the survivors could move out of their cover, she pulled away and left the area, and I remembered our copter leaving after our wing mate had crashed and exploded some ten days earlier. Did they think we were all dead and the area was too hot to linger? I didn’t know. But I was alive, hurt pretty badly, but alive and so were seven of the thirteen who were aboard. Jack didn’t make it. The odds of surviving were against us all.**

**Everything then became very quiet. The jets left, the Huey helicopters left, our sister ship left and we, the survivors, began to come out of cover and regroup. We started moving to the high ground, just a short distance away, when I heard the voice of the private behind me asking not to leave him. I dropped back behind him to assure that he made it up. Once on top of the small hill we took inventory and discovered we had almost nothing to defend ourselves with, only my .38 caliber revolver, the sergeant’s .45 automatic pistol, seven hand grenades and my one survival knife. If the enemy were to attack it would have been all over, but they didn’t and I think they didn’t because the explosion convinced them their job was finished and we were all dead.**

**Two of our seven had been burnt very severely, one with only pieces of his uniform and his boots remaining on his body. His companions with the first aid kits pulled out all of the morphine injectors and pumped him full. But it didn’t seem to help much, really didn’t help at all, and he continued to cry out in pain. My lips formed the words “He’s not going to make it.” The other burn victim was in a little better shape. I am jumping further into the story and tell you the first victim died that night and the second, once we were rescued and moved to Da Nang, regained consciousness in the hospital morgue, with burns covering 90% of his body.**

So there we were, perched on the top of the small hill with the sun moving across the sky, waiting. I knew the morphine-injected burn victim would not make it, and I knew that an attempt to move out with him and keep him quiet would be fruitless. Five of the seven were hurt. A move through enemy territory would certainly have a disastrous ending.

The odds were against us if we attempted to move out in search of a friendly Vietnamese village. And most of us were certainly not in a condition to move very far. So we waited and hoped for a rescue. Since we had moved away from the burnt and destroyed helicopter, since there was only a couple of hours of daylight left and since we were in the canopy of jungle trees and vegetation, there was the problem of being spotted if a rescue helicopter came. I had my burned survival knife and I had in my pocket two pencil flares, small flares with a spring-loaded launcher.

We waited. The Marine most severely burnt had passed out. No one spoke. It was quiet. Then the far-off familiar sound of the rotors breaking the air broke the silence. I could hear it was a sole helicopter, only one and one of ours. I tossed my knife to the sergeant and he began to cut tree branches trying to clear a passage for the flare.

We faced two challenges; one was timing, not sending the flare up too soon, or sending it up too late so that it would be behind the rescue helicopter. the other was getting the flare through the trees to the top of the canopy. I could tell from their sound they would not be on a path that would take then directly over us. then, when I thought timing was right I aimed and pulled the launcher switch. Nothing. Then I pulled the second and last flare. Success. And it made it through the trees. And was spotted by the helicopter's crew.

They hovered overhead and dropped the cable with harness attached. The most severely injured first. I'm the only officer so I go last. But when the sergeant, standing with his utility uniform still neat and looking freshly pressed (I don't know how that happened), insisted I go ahead of him, I did. things were cool once the last man entered the helicopter, but I jumped when the gunners opened fire and the though flashed in my head that we were under fire again and one again going down, but opening fire was standard procedure done just to keep the heads down of anyone wanting to take a pot shot at us.

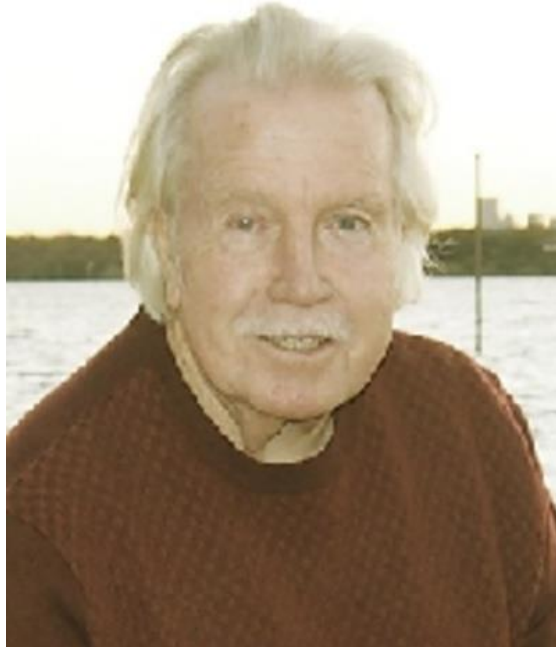
I could feel that we first went high then quickly dropped to a treetop altitude and started a series of "S" turns. Years later David Petteys, the pilot of the rescue helicopter told why he had done this. "They had fired a missile at us, we saw it and were able to avoid being hit and keep to the treetops to stay out of trouble," he explained. David flew without a sister ship. There was none other available. He was later awarded a Silver Star for bravery.

At Phu Bai I was standing watching those rescued being carried out on stretchers when the corpsman asked if I was all right. "No, I'm not," I said. They soon discovered that I had a compressed vertebra that resulted in a half inch shorter height, fractured ribs, and what they thought were second degree burns on my arms and face.

The food at Phu Bai as well as all the other Marine outposts was not particularly good. But close to Phu Bai, just a mile walk beyond a small village, was a U. S. Army communications post [coincidentally the 8<sup>th</sup> RRFS]. And there the food was delicious, the buttered toast was appreciated, and the spoons were of normal size (as opposed to the huge Marine spoons large enough to almost hold a cup of soup). Often, Joey, another pilot, would take the walk with me and Joey always came well-armed with his pistol and grease gun (the small machine gun).



## In Memory of Ted Richard Pittman (1943 - 2017)



PITTMAN, Ted Richard was born on April 3, 1943, in New Orleans, Louisiana, and passed away in the early morning of November 20th with his wife and four daughters by his side after battling melanoma cancer. Ted is survived by his wife of 53 years, Coco; brother James Mackie Cross; daughters and sons-in-law Kathy and James, Christy and Rob, Shelly and Matt, and Andee and Colin; and 13 grandchildren. Ted is preceded in death by mother Dorothy Jacqueline Cross and step-father James Hugh Cross; and father Ted Pittman who died during [World War II](#). Ted graduated with a bachelor degree from [Louisiana State University](#) where he met and married Coco (Edna May Grantham). After college, Ted joined the Marine Corps, achieving the rank of Captain. He served in the [Vietnam War](#) as a helicopter pilot, having received seven Air Medals and a [Purple Heart](#) after his helicopter was shot down.

Ted then went on to work as a Real Estate Developer, involved in 45 commercial developments primarily in the Dallas/Fort Worth area as the Owner of The Pittman Company, Dallas; Managing Partner for Ellis & Pittman; Partner in Second Century Investments and Owner of Pittman Commercial Properties. With a strong passion for running, Ted finished 17 marathons including the prestigious Boston Marathon. Following his sense of adventure, Ted and Coco enjoyed traveling and visited many places all over the world including Tanzania, where Ted climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. He wrote about his family, experiences and adventures in an autobiography titled Headwinds. Ted was an active member of St. James Episcopal Church and a loving son, brother, husband, father, and grandfather. He has touched many lives and will be greatly missed.

**Lance Corporal Jeffrey Savelkoul, USMC  
(personal recollections of June 30, 1967 and onward)**



**Thanks to all of you for turning out to honor those who paid the ultimate price to protect our rights and freedoms.**

**Today I'm going to tell you the story of Marine reconnaissance team "STRIKER", and the men that are my heroes. We were teammates, recon brothers, and shared that incredible bond that only front line combat can form. STRIKER was an 8-man recon team, we camoed up our faces, stuffed bushes in our hats and packs, and patrolled around behind enemy lines in the hills surrounding Khe Sanh, the DMZ, and the Ho Chi Min trail in Laos.**

**MERLIN ALLEN [our 1<sup>st</sup> radio] [and my best friend] from Bayfield, Wisc.  
JOHN KILLEN [rifleman] was from Des Moines, Iowa.  
GLYN RUNNELS [rifleman] was from Montevallo, AL.  
DENNIS PERRY [our tail-end Charlie] was from Perry, GA.  
EUGENE CASTENADA (CAS) - (our team leader) was from Honolulu, HI.  
MARIANO ACOSTA Junior] our point man was from El Paso, TX.  
MICHAEL JUDD (our Corpsman), was from Cleveland, OH.  
And I was 2<sup>nd</sup> radio and from Mpls, MN. This made up "TEAM STRIKER".  
Captain JOHN HOUSE II [was our pilot from Pelham, NY].**

**I don't expect that you'll remember their names, but I hope you will remember their story, and pass it on to others, so that they are NEVER FORGOTTEN!**

**We were shot down in a CH-46 Chinook helicopter on June 30, 1967 at around 4:00 in the afternoon. ALLEN, KILLEN, RUNNELS, JUDD, and HOUSE, were all killed, and were not recovered – for 46years their remains laid on that hillside in Vietnam. Perry and I were sent to the hospital in Japan with severe burns and wounds. I was with him when died there. He looked me straight in the eye, and just died! Cas was killed later on August 12, 1967 on another mission.**

**Junior and I survived, and are the only two living members of TEAM**

**STRIKER. For 23 years, neither one of us knew the other had survived - we each thought we were the only one left alive.**

**Jr. was probably in the best shape of all of us, and after a short time he was sent out of country because his brother Willie was in Recon on another team. Later, Jr. returned to El Paso, married, and has lived there ever since. Jr. suffers from chronic survivor guilt and PTSD. He feels he**

should have done more that day, when in reality he did everything he POSSIBLY could. Were it not for Jr's actions that day, Perry and I would not have survived. JR SAVED MY LIFE!

I was severely wounded, with many broken bones, and burns over 65% of my body. I was flown to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX. After 3 months I was transferred to the VA in Mpls. I spent a total of 13 months. in recovery. I married KAREN my high school sweetheart, and set about getting on with my life.

I knew all along I had to go talk to my best friend Merl's family, but I was afraid to have them see me - if I looked this bad, what would they think their son endured? I made four trips from Minneapolis to Bayfield [a 4 hour trip]. I'd get there and turn around at the end of the Allens' driveway and go back home. I JUST COULDN'T FACE THEM!

Finally, after 16 years I got up the courage and walked up to the house. It turned out to be one of the greatest things I've ever done in my life. I had no idea they didn't know our story, They got the standard telegram, and were still holding out hope-getting POW/ MIA information.

I met Merl Allen on the airstrip at Khe Sanh. I was gathering up my gear when this tall skinny kid with a big grin, "Says you here for recon? Name's Allen-from Bayfield, WI, How long you been in country? Oh, FNG huh? Recon's this way." That was the start of a short but everlasting friendship.

FNGs, were the new guys, they were frowned upon because they usually screwed something up right away. Also, you just never made friends quickly because it was too hard seeing them hauled off in body bags right away.

Hard to explain, but that's the way it was, a friendship was earned and just sort of established itself over time.

Merl was my mentor, he took me under his wing and he taught me about Recon and he taught me about Vietnam.....He was my friend when I needed one, that's how Merl was!

We had a lot in common, both from the Midwest, both took ships to VN, both radio operators, both BIG DREAMERS, we were both extremely proud to be in recon. We talked, constantly, about "THE WORLD " [home, girls, cars, hunting, fishing, Bayfield], -what we'd do later, --after Nam].

We laughed, and talked and dreamed-- Just like the TWO TEENAGE KIDS that we really were --- the war hadn't hardened us yet.

We had this big idea that we'd go home to heavy equipment school, and come back to Vietnam as civilian operators, not a bad hitch. They made beaucoupjng - tax free, plus they got PAID R&R every three months.

Merl was always scheming up something, and constantly writing letters. Recon's trade mark was the ace of spades. It had a significant PSY-OP value. The NVA were very superstitious and terrified of them and we left them in "very significant" places in the bush. We were hand making our own cards there in country and getting the company clerk to copy them for us. Merl got this idea and wrote to Bicycle Playing Cards Company. He

explained our situation and the next thing we know Bicycle sent Merl 52 decks of 52 aces of spades each. Merl was our hero. The rest of us carried a few to the bush, but Merl carried a whole deck.

In 2004 when the JPAC investigators went to our site in Viet Nam - one of the things they found was a deck of aces of spades, still wrapped in plastic-37 years later! I carry one of his in my wallet to this day.

By late June of 67 Alpha Co. was so beat up with casualties from Khe Sanh area they brought us back to Phu Bai to rebuild the company. We only had two teams intact: Striker and Nettlerash 1. Our A/O was the Co Bi Than Tan, an east-west valley just off the end of the infamous A Shau Valley. Military Intelligence [extremely loose term] neglected to tell us that this was the staging area for the 804th and 804B NVA Bn's [approx. 800 highly trained North Vietnamese troops] that were preparing for the TET offensive on Hue City.

Nettlerash 1 had been out in the bush, and on the run for 3 days, On June 29, they decided to send STRIKER out and do a flip-flop with the other team.

We didn't know it but we were under fire as we came in. We dropped into the Landing Zone, ran off the chopper and dispersed before Willie's team, could warn us. They had to get the chopper out of there and lifted off with the other team. There we laid in 4 inch tall grass like ducks in a pond. CAS yelled for the handset, a bullet landed right next to my arm. I looked to see where it came from and another hit so close it sprayed sand in my eyes and I couldn't see. I was terrified. We were in deep trouble! Just then we heard another chopper. This cowboy comes ripping around the tree line, drops right in the middle of the firefight and hauls us out of there. He thought nothing of it-he just had to get us out of there!

Our chopper pilots were our HEROES, and constantly risked their lives for us- time after time. The same pilots always flew for recon!

General Leanord Chapman commandant of the Marine Corps said "When a Marine in Vietnam is wounded, surrounded, hungry, low on ammo - he looks to the sky - he knows the choppers are coming!!" We always knew our choppers were coming, no matter what!

The next day, June 30, we were sent back out to the same area. It was a late day insert, cause they strafed the area with the jets first -- Just to let them know we were coming back, I guess. Some more of that military intelligence! -- but ours was not to reason why.

As we descended into the LZ, the tailgate was down and we were all in our positions for departure. Just above the ground we started to take SA & AA fire. The pilot lifted up and we were hit with a rocket. It blew a huge hole in the side of the chopper, severed the fuel line, sprayed jet fuel all over the chopper and us and ignited. This inferno and all the rounds we were taking, killed most of the team at that time.

The inside of the chopper was like an 8 foot culvert with a pile of burning tires in it -that thick, black, oily, smoke-like acetylene w/o oxygen. You

couldn't see and you couldn't breathe. EVERYTHING was on fire! I needed air. I stuck my head out a broken window and came back in with burning plexi-glass stuck to my face-but I got some air!

I could see streaks of light coming in where bullets were coming thru, but I couldn't see anyone else. How I didn't get hit was a miracle! My clothes were burned off and my pack was on fire. I remember thinking of the ammo & 12 frag grenades I had in my pack and that Merl would have his radio-so I threw off my pack! Our M-16's were already melted at that point.

The rest of the story has taken Jr. and me 40 years to piece back together. We are positive that this account is accurate.

Captain House, our pilot, tried to fly us over a ridge to safety, despite being already shot thru his left "collective" arm. This was the same pilot that hovered with one wheel on a stump, taking heavy fire while his crewman ran out and rescued all of Team Hawk in April 1967.

We were losing altitude fast and he couldn't make the ridge. About 3/4 of the way up the steep hill we hit the trees, sheared off the rotors, and free-fell 90ft to the jungle floor. When we hit the ground, the chopper split open, the air rushed in and exploded.

Those of us who were alive had worked our way up to the gunners opening on the right side of the chopper. Somewhere between the treetops and the ground, or when we hit the ground, we were blown out that small window. I remember flopping back down thru the branches of a big tree and landing in the dirt below. Jr. was stumbling around holding his head, Perry was laying in a heap, there was a leg laying outside the chopper, CAS was pounding on the windshield in frustration trying to get the pilot out, who was trapped and burning to death. All the other reconners were dead. We had no radio. We had no weapons - they had all melted. We had one hand grenade, 6 pencil flairs, 1/2 canteen of water and the co-pilot's 38 cal. revolver. The NVA were everywhere. You couldn't see them, but you could hear them coming! CAS and Jr. gathered up Perry and me and started us up the hill. We stumbled, fell, clawed our way to the top of the hill, I had to grab onto branches to keep us going, there was no skin left on my hands. We got up the hill and I collapsed leaning against a tree with Perry in my lap. Jr. came up to me and put our 1 grenade in my raw hand, wrapped my fingers around it, and pulled the pin. He stuffed my hand between me and Perry and told me not to let go unless the gooks [enemy] got to me- we wouldn't be POW's!

I kept passing out from the pain. I would lurch awake and tell myself. "DONT CLOSE YOUR EYES-YOU'LL NEVER WAKE UP". "I'll bet I said that a thousand times! My hand hurt so damn bad, but I held on to that grenade!

We were all gathered up on top of the hill, under the trees when a chopper came in and hovered over the wreck below us. We had no comms, so CAS fired 4 of the 6 flares -- they didn't see the flares and went back and reported NO SURVIVORS. About 2-1/2 hrs later we heard choppers again, one flew right over us and CAS fired the 5th flare - it was a dud! My heart sank, I WAS GOING TO DIE HERE!

Another chopper was getting closer so CAS fired the last flare, all we knew was that it went up thru the leaves. Years later I finally found the pilot who rescued us. He said he dropped a reactionary force in the valley behind us and was hover taxiing up the ridge to look at the wreck and go back. He glanced out his side window to check his rotor clearance and saw a flare. I told him it was our last flare. There was a long pause, he said, "IT WAS JUST A GLANCE."

He came over to where it came from and his crew chief yelled "there's guys on the ground, and I think their Americans"! They couldn't get the sling down to us through the jungle, so Jr. climbed up a tree, under fire, and chopped off the branches to clear the way. The chopper hovered there, under fire, as they winched each of us up the 100 feet. CAS and Jr. stayed to be the last two. Each put a foot in the sling and came up together. Neither wanting to leave the other. THEY SELFLESSLY RISKED THEIR OWN LIVES-PUTTING THE REST OF THEIR TEAM FIRST! As we flew off, 2more RPG's narrowly missed the rescue chopper by less than 5 feet!

Last year, the members of Team Hawk and I gathered in Washington DC to bury a fellow reconner. While there we went to the Marine base at Quantico and restaged the STRIKER sequence of events. We stood in a CH-46 exactly as we would have been that day. Without a doubt, given our positions relative to the rocket impact, we determined -- 1) Merl died instantly, 2) I was in the void behind Merl, and was shielded from the blast by him—My best friend! THE LAST TRUE MEASURE OF DEVOTION! Those of us who made it home from the war, no matter how bent and broken, are extremely grateful for the chance to live a full life. We know our lost brothers would GLADLY TRADE US for our very worst day. My teammates lives stopped at age19. I've lived every day since for them.

Just before Merl's mom passed away, she called me to her side. She told me about the day I came to her door -- what a difference it had made in her life. She said "Jeff, you go find the other mothers and tell them - you tell them the truth, that's what they want to know."I was afraid to share that story again, so two of the members of Team Hawk dropped what they were doing, left their jobs, and went with me. We went around and visited the family members and the headstones, and monuments of my teammates on Team Striker. Just as Eleanor had requested.

In 2004, at a joint reunion we had with the chopper pilots - the JPAC reps (the people investigating loss sites in Vietnam) presented me with my ROSARY, recovered from the crash site 37 years later--right under the tree. It fell down through! Along with it came a little bit of dirt and I feel the SOULS of my lost teammates.

I buried six of the rosary beads [one for each of the lost], some dirt from each of their markers and some dirt from the Khe Sanh airstrip along with an account of the crash at the foot of Merl's memorial on Lake Superior. The team is back home together, at least in spirit! My teammates' names are forever etched on the granite face of the Vietnam Wall. They start on PANEL 22E, LINE 86 - it takes two hands to cover them all! WE WILL NEVER FORGET THEM -- PLEASE REMEMBER THEM!!



**For 46 years, this was the end of Strikers story. (But) I received a phone call in February of 2013. The Marine Corps casualty branch notified us that JPAC had reopened our case for the 4th time and discovered human remains from 5 different sources. All of our missing we're accounted for. 2 of the 5 were positively ID'd, Allen and Judd, the other three are still listed as common remains at this time.**

**Last June I was deeply honored to fly to Hawaii and escort home the remains of my best friend Merl Allen. He was laid to rest at the foot of his monument, on his beloved Lake Superior--home at last! Will Rogers once said, "We can't all be heroes, some of us have to stand on the curb and clap as they go by." The men I mentioned here today are the heroes, and I'll always be on the curb clapping!!**

**PLEASE REMEMBER STRIKER- PLEASE REMEMBER FREEDOM  
IS NOT FREE!! THANK YOU.**



**\* \* \* \* \***

**MISSIONS with CAPTAIN JACK HOUSE**  
**April and June 1967**  
**extracts from the book**  
**“Bonnie Sue”**  
**A Marine Helicopter Squadron in Vietnam**  
**by Captain Marion F. Sturkey, USMC**  
**Heritage Press International 2010**

**1700 Hours:** HMM-265 got the frag: “Emergency medevac!”

Captain J. A. “Jack” House drew the HAC’s role. Jim Dalton crawled into the copilot’s seat on the left side of the H-46 cockpit. The crew chief, Lance Corporal Daniel D. “Dan” Delude, joined the gunner, G. L. “Red” Logan, back in the cabin. Within two minutes after leaving Khe Sanh they arrived over Hill 861. A Grunt on the slope popped a smoke grenade, and Jack bottomed the collective pitch lever and whistled down toward the Marines below.

Capt. J. A. House landed in a zone on Hill 861 northwest of Khe Sanh and immediately came under heavy automatic fire. There were seven medevacs in the zone and (they) were under heavy fire -- (HMM-265 Command Chronology, April 23 [sic, the date should be April 24], 1967).

The Bonnie-Sue helicopter touched down in tall elephant grass, and the first two wounded Grunts soon staggered up the rear ramp. The other casualties would not be able to make it to the helicopter without help, the two Grunts shouted to the crew chief.

Dulude disconnected his long-cord, dashed out of this helicopter, and ran 75 feet to a wounded Grunt. Dulude dragged the man back to the H-46, got him inside, and then he made two more trips to retrieve two more wounded men. NVA machinegun and rifle fire still whipped through the thick elephant grass on the slope of the hill, but Dulude ignored the danger. Red Logan, the H-46 gunner, would describe the mission to me many years later:

Dan left the aircraft to assist. I don’t know how many trips he made. I couldn’t see him due to the tall grass. I remember putting lots of three and four round bursts from the fifty [caliber machinegun] into every place that we drew fire, and I kept firing until all were in and ready to go.

With only one incapacitated Grunt left stranded, mortars suddenly began impacting in the LZ. A Marine Corps citation would later explain: “Undaunted, Lance Corporal DULUDE courageously returned to the last of the injured men and brought him safely back to the aircraft.” Corporal Dulude half carried and half dragged the last grunt up the H-46 ramp, and they collapsed in a jumble of arms and legs onto the metal floor of the cabin.

Logan screamed into his ICS mike that all were aboard. Up in the cockpit, Dalton hit the ramp toggle switch as House pulled in full power. They flew through a hail of enemy fire on takeoff, but they made it back to the medical aid station at Khe Sanh.

Meanwhile, on the southern slope of Hill 861, the Grunts expended all of their mortar rounds and withdrew. Their probe toward the top of the hill had revealed heavy NVA fortifications there, but still the Marine Command had not yet come close to realizing the full scope of the NVA buildup.

The next day: Hill 700, April 25, 1967, 1200 Hours: The eight men of the "Hawk" Recon team had been atop Hill 700 since April 20. They had been flown to their lofty observation point by helicopter, and already they were two days overdue for return to Khe Sanh. But secure and concealed, they radioed numerous enemy troop movement sightings back to base. Perched on Hill 700, Hawk had an excellent lookout point from which to observe enemy activity in the valleys and on nearby Hill 881 North and Hill 881 South. The men of Hawk were concealed in lush elephant grass near the base of a huge dead tree. Thirty meters away a wooded treeline paralleled the top of the ridge. With their position well camouflaged and hidden, Hawk felt safe and secure.

Suddenly the men of Hawk detected movement on the steep slope below their observation point. The Recon team leader, Corporal Robert Walker from Oklahoma, quickly laid out an ambush. Lying motionless in prone firing positions in the thick grass, each of the Recons waited as an unsuspecting NVA patrol inched up the side of the ridge. Each Recon would hold his fire until Walker cranked off the first burst.

Ever so slowly the NVA worked their way up the steep incline. Perhaps they would pass the Recons by without detecting them, the team members hoped. Lance Corporal Fred J. Baker watched as the first six enemy soldiers blindly blundered through the dense undergrowth toward their deaths. Years later he would recall that the NVA were wearing their standard tan uniforms, and their helmets were camouflaged with foliage. The unsuspecting NVA soldiers came within 15 feet – too close! Walker fired, and the other seven Recons instantly opened up. Baker would later be quoted in a newspaper article.

The expressions on the North Vietnamese soldiers' faces will never leave my memory, We surprised them. We killed about six of the regulars, but there were more behind them. The silence that was, was no more. The steady stream of automatic rifle fire was now all that you could hear.

The Recons lay prone and almost invisible in the grass and sprayed the terrain in front of them with their M-16s. Then the men of Hawk got up on their knees and hurled grenades in the direction of the retreating enemy. From the volume of return fire they knew that they had ambushed only the vanguard of a much larger NVA patrol. Why were the NVA soldiers pulling back?

The answer would soon arrive.  
A tremendous concussion: **BLLAAAMM!**

The airburst, most likely an 82mm mortar round, wounded all eight Recons. Four were rendered unconscious. Ray Raymont had his leg ripped open to the bone, and he crawled over to where Terry Burden lay unconscious with gray matter and blood oozing out of a hole in his head. The dazed and bleeding Recon radioman, Private First Class Wells, rolled over and keyed his PRC-25 to call for help. Helicopter support was only minutes away at Khe Sanh.

**“Emergency medevac!”**

The frag fell to two H-446s from HMM-265, and two Deadlock gunships would tag along to provide covering fire. Quickly the four helicopters launched from Khe Sanh and headed for Hill 700. In the first H-46 the gunner snapped together two belts of .50 caliber ammunition to create a 200 round belt. The plan called for both Number One and Number Two to make a high speed pass and give the helicopter gunners a chance to put suppressive fire into the NVA. Then Number One would land and pick up the Recons while Number Two and the gunships provided covering fire. But things would not work out the way they had been planned.

Number One made a 130 knot pass, and the gunner opened up with his fifty. But the extra linked ammunition slipped off of the ammunition box, twisting the belt. The gun jammed and could not be cleared. Deadlock also reported trouble. The gunship pilots refused to fire because the enemy was too close to the Recons. A Marine Corps report on the mission would later state:

Hawk had six men seriously wounded and two others slightly wounded, still able to walk. They were so close to the enemy that the gunships were unable to work the area with their rockets or machineguns for fear of hitting the team.

Aboard EP-173, the number two H-46, was the same crew that had made the daring rescue the previous day: House and Dalton in the cockpit, with Dulude and Logan manning the machineguns in the cabin. This time, however, even more risks were involved. The NVA soldiers were a lot closer to the Recons this time, and there were no friendly ground troops nearby in case the helicopter got shot down. Could they possibly succeed again? The fate of the Recons lay in their hands.

The H-46 copilot, Dalton, recalled: “Hawk’s voice on the radio was only a harsh whisper . . . .” The men of Hawk were truly desperate. Those still able to walk or crawl had dragged their comrades to a spot where they would all make a final stand. The NVA were slowly and carefully closing in on them. One of the Recons, Fred Baker, would later remember: “We had pulled our K-Bars [fighting knives] out and stuck them in the ground, because it was just a matter of time before we went hand-to-hand.”

High overhead in EP-173, the helicopter crew knew that they had no choice. They had to try. Red Logan, the gunner, was still confident. After all, he reasoned, they had done almost the same thing the day before. Although their H-46 had been hit repeatedly, none of the crew had even been nicked by enemy fire. On the ICS the four crewmembers quickly rehearsed the plan. Then House wrapped the helicopter into a shuddering

spiral, and the Bonnie-Sue H-46 screamed down toward the men of Hawk on the ridge below.

Nothing but tall grass and tree stumps surround Hawk, and the pilots could see no clear landing area near the Recons. As the H-46 flared and bled off airspeed to land, Dalton watched in fascination as one of the enemy soldiers “raised up and threw what appeared to be a grenade at the [Recons].” The men of Hawk were all lying down in the tall grass, but as the H-46 touched down on the spine of the ridge, two Recons stood up and waved their arms. They were 100 feet behind the helicopter and only two of them could move, Wells frantically radioed to the pilots. They could not make it to the H-46 with their critically wounded teammates.

Under increasing rifle fire from the North Vietnamese soldiers, Captain House hovered and tried to back the H-46 toward the Recons. Dulude ran to the rear ramp to give ICS directions to House, who could not see where he was backing the helicopter. Most of the enemy fire came from their nine o'clock position. The port gunner, Logan, tried to conserve his ammunition by ripping off short .50 caliber bursts toward the North Vietnamese.

The whole area was *exploding*, and your gunner was pumping off some heavy rounds (Fred J. Baker; years later, speaking of the helicopter crew).

Finally the helicopter could move no closer than about 45 feet from the Recons because of the terrain and vegetation. House plopped the H-46 back to the ground, and then he and Dalton began their most difficult task of all. They would have to sit there – under fire – until all of the Recons got onboard. They each squeezed back in their armored seats and tried to make as small a target as humanly possible. Their heads, arms, and legs stuck out, but there was nothing they could do about that.

In the H-46 cabin, Dulude did not hesitate. The Marine Corps narrative on the mission would later state: “After moving to within fifteen meters of HAWK, LCPL DULUDE leaped from the ramp to the aid of the wounded, since they were unable to move unassisted.”

Logan still fired from his gunner's station, but now incoming enemy rounds from the opposite side ripped into the H-46. Logan grabbed the crew chief's spare M-16, jumped across the cabin, and returned the fire. He could not understand why the NVA bullets kept missing him. Then his luck ran out.

SMMAAACCK!

Something slammed into Logan's arm just above his wrist.

I put my hand down, counted my fingers with my thumb, and [then] went back to shooting. I was afraid to look at my arm.  
-- (G. L. “Red” Logan; years later)

Logan stayed on his feet, and he emptied two or three more M-16 magazines at the North Vietnamese soldiers. then, abandoning the M-16 in

favor of something heavier, he manned the crew chief's .50 caliber machinegun and kept on firing.

Meanwhile, back behind the Boeing helicopter, Dulude dragged the wounded Recons one by one into the cabin. Wells, the Recon radioman, weighed over 200 pounds, but Dulude got him aboard. Fred Baker, although losing strength from his loss of blood, was able to help, and he stuck with Dulude. However, now a new hazard confronted the Marines. The Marine Corps chronology states: "As LCPL DULUDE was returning to the aircraft for the second time, the enemy began to hurl hand grenades into the zone."

Dulude ignored the grenades. With a strength and inner resolve born of sheer desperation, he kept dragging the wounded Recons into his waiting H-46. By now NVA rounds had holed the aft transmission, and hot transmission fluid poured down onto the metal ramp below. This slippery mess made Dulude's task more difficult as he pulled the casualties up the inclined ramp and into the cabin of EP-173. Despite his wounds, Fred Baker still helped Dulude, and Baker would later recall: I remember going back [to get wounded men] at least three times, and during one trip I stopped under fire to vomit.

Finally the last of the wounded men was inside of the cabin. Yet, thinking that someone might be left behind, Dulude ran back outside to make a final check. According to the Marine Corps account, "Dulude remained in the zone exposed to the hail of enemy bullets and grenades until he made sure that all of the Marines were in the aircraft."

Dulude dashed back into his helicopter, and Logan keyed his mike and yelled to the pilots that everyone was inside. As Dalton snapped the ramp switch forward, House snatched in full collective pitch and sucked in full topping power on the General Electric turbines. The H-46 lurched into the air as Dalton rode the controls with House, and they jammed the cyclic forward. The sturdy helicopter skimmed over the top of the elephant grass, rapidly accelerating. Back in the cabin, one of the wounded Recons bashed out a plexiglass hatch and emptied an M-16 magazine in the direction of the enemy.

With the Recons now airborne, Deadlock rolled in and rocketed the ridgeline. In the H-46, Logan stayed on his fifty and emptied the belt as House and Dalton sped out of range. Logan then turned around to help the injured Recons. Slumped back in a web troop seat, Fred Baker saw that Logan's face was beet-red and totally flushed. Many years later, Baker would remember how Logan excitedly screamed: "IT'S LIKE AN ANT HILL – I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY GOOKS!"

The aerial trip back to Khe Sanh took only three minutes. On the way, those who were conscious began aiding their friends, who were unable to help themselves. It was a pitiful sight – four unconscious and everyone bleeding (Fred J. Baker; describing the flight, years later).

The roar of the battle lay behind them now. The only sounds were the shrill whine of the engines and transmissions and the popping of the rotors. In the cockpit, House and Dalton kept a wary eye on the instrument



panel gauges, because they could only guess at the extent of the combat damage to their H-46. As they began a cautious descent toward the Khe Sanh airstrip, a round cooked off in one of the fifties, adding to the tension.

The damaged helicopter landed and was quickly shut down. Those who had been wounded were rapidly bandaged up at the aid station and then carried aboard a waiting C-130. They were flown to Da Nang for treatment at Charlie-Med. Later they would be sent to a more sophisticated hospital to complete their recuperation.

The four HMM-265 crewmembers aboard EP-173 each received decorations for their second daring rescue in two days. Three of these four Marines would eventually survive the war, and two of them would complete their combat tour in Vietnam. (Unfortunately, Jack House would be killed-in-action two months later in June, and Dulude would be severely wounded in October.)

The young crew chief, Dan Dulude, had left his helicopter two days in a row in order to drag wounded Marines to safety. On both occasions he had repeatedly exposed himself to heavy enemy fire, but miraculously he came through totally unscathed. The Grunts and Recons who survived owed their lives to Dulude, and they quickly praised his initiative and courage under fire. Supporting documentation was prepared and forwarded to MAG-16 Headquarters, and the Marine Corps eventually awarded the Silver Star to Dulude – twice! Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak signed separate citations that detailed Dulude's heroics on both April 24 and April 25.

Dulude earned his place in modern American military history books. He is reportedly the only member of the Armed Forces of the United States who has been awarded two Silver Stars for heroism on *two consecutive days* since the American Civil War in the 1860s. The text on both Silver Star citations begins as follows: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Crew Chief with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265..." (Dan Dulude's incredible luck would run out on October 14. On that day he would be shot twice during a helicopter rescue flight. He would survive, but he would get medevaced to CONUS because of the severity of his wounds.

Captain John A. House III, a New York native, had seen his share of close calls during his months with HMM-265. In April he had been the HAC on the two consecutive daring rescue missions for which Corporal Daniel D. "Dan" Dulude, his crew chief, had been awarded two Silver Stars.

Now, over two months later on June 30, House strapped himself into his Bonnie-Sue H-46 for what he assumed would be a routine flight. His copilot, First Lieutenant Ted Pittman, took his place on the left side of the cockpit.

House had drawn the HAC's slot on a frag to insert the Recons of "Nettlerash Two" at YC-904962, about ten miles south of Phu Bai. House planned to land in a small valley three miles east of the Song Ta Trach

River, and according to his map the nearest hamlet was miles away. With the usual aerial escort he took off and headed for the drop point.

As House started his approach, an NVA heavy machinegun took him under fire. The H-46 took numerous hits and caught on fire in the air. House crashed in 80 foot tall trees. Once the rotor blades shattered about 15 feet below the treetops, it was a sheer 65 foot drop to the floor of the jungle below.

The impact and fire killed House and four of the Recons. Broken and bleeding, the survivors helped drag each other out of the burning wreckage.

The wingman, Captain David M. "Delta-Mike" Petteys, raced down, hovered over the treetops, and his crew chief lowered the horse-collar toward the Marines on the ground. One by one the crew chief winched the injured men up through the hell-hole door and into the helicopter cabin. The most critically injured came up first, followed by those who were able to help themselves. As soon as they all were aboard, Petteys sped back to the field hospital at Phu Bai.

The battered copilot, Ted Pittman, and the two air-crewmembers, Lance Corporals James A. Michaelson and Gary R. Smith, were in critical condition. All three eventually had their medical status upgraded to "Condition Fair," and they all were medevaced to CONUS as soon as they medically could stand the trip.

The bodies of Captain House, the four dead Recons, and the lone corpsman were never recovered from the wreckage on the jungle floor.



\* \* \* \* \*

**MISSIONS with CAPTAIN JACK HOUSE**  
**April and June 1967**  
**extracts from the book**  
**“Marine Helo”**  
**Helicopter War in Vietnam**  
**With the U.S. Marine Corps**  
**by Captain M. Petteys, USMC**  
**Edizioni Egida 1995**

**25 April 1967**

What a day we had today! We got shot out of three zones! It was at Khe Sanh, about three miles off the western end of the runway. They had two platoons that stumbled onto a NVA battalion with caves, etc. They had two LZs, Bravo I and Bravo III. Both zones were on the northern face of the ridge line. The fixed wing and UH-1E gun ships had been working the area over for two hours.

We went into Bravo I with a load of troops, with the intention of dumping the troops and lifting out the medevacs. I came in from the north, then did a buttonhook so as to be pointed downhill. I could only set one wheel down, due to the steep slope. After what seemed like hours, they still hadn't finished loading the medevacs in. Then I heard fire crackling off to my left and right. I heard a crack and felt a whoosh on my left arm. I knew it was time to get the hell out of there. We had taken an armor piercing round through the left gunner's window and it had smacked into the linkage closest directly behind me. It turned out we had all the living medevacs aboard but had left four KIAs in the LZ. We also had on board two stretcher bearers that hadn't had time to jump out before I had lifted.

When we got back, they said that “Hawk” (a reconnaissance team) was in trouble and we had to run an emergency retraction. They were on top of the ridge, less than 30 meters from the tree line, from which they were taking automatic weapons and mortar fire, as well as hand grenades! Five of the seven men were severely wounded, so they couldn't move away from this tree line. So we couldn't out any effective strafe in there!

The poor kids! They sounded very frightened on the radio! They had been hit with a mortar, and they were all in shock. Finally, they hobbled through the 7 foot elephant grass to a point far enough away such that the UH-1Es could strafe. As they strafed, I was going to land and pick up the team, and all the while, I was going to have my port gunner spray the tree line while he loaded in the men. But as we touched down, his machinegun jammed! So I waved it off, thinking to unjam it, and go in again the next time around! Well my wingman [Captain Jack House - pilot and Captain Jim Dalton - co pilot, crewmen SSgt. Gareth Logan and LCpl. Dan Dulude], bless him said he'd give it a try. God! I could see the muzzle flashes in the trees so I flew past! Well, my wingman landed, and the team was in such bad shape that it took them ten minutes sitting in the LZ, under fire to get them aboard. We worked a little daisy chain while he was in the zone. The two UH-1Es were in a lefthand racetrack pattern, and I was in a righthand

pattern. Thus, while my wingman was in the LZ, we had a constant rain of lead in on the NVA!

When we got the team back, they were immediately treated with first aid, given transfusions, bandaged, etc. They were all white and gray with shock. Their lieutenant came over to us and thanked us with tears in his eyes for saving his men's lives. My wingman only took a hit in the barrier filter which wasn't too bad. The team was loaded a C-123 transport plane and flown to a hospital in Da Nang.

**30 June 1967**

I was coming home from Dong Ha when we heard over the radio that an H-46 had been shot down in flames! We were loaded with gear, so we sat down at Phu Bai and I dumped it off. Rosanne Bravo, the local air control, told us to come in for a sparrowhawk. They were going to put in some troops to try and reach the crash site. And guess who was the entire flight leader of nine aircraft! Me! We set out for the zone with 10 troops in each bird. We picked a zone and put the troops in. It was almost 4000 meters north of the crash site. Then, I went to the crash site.

What had happened, the plane had gone into the reconnaissance zone, and had been hit and set afire. It flew about 1000 meters before they had to set down because the aircraft was burning up. They crashed in the trees. Four out of eight reconnaissance men got out, and three of the four crew members got out. The rest were burned to death in the aircraft.

I saw the smoke from a pencil flare, and came to a hover. We lowered a horse collar (a padded loop that people can put around them) 100 feet to the floor of the jungle canopy and hoisted out the seven survivors one at a time. It took about 30 minutes.

As we got them all aboard, we started to return to Phu Bai. Suddenly my wingman said, "You're taking airbursts!" I nosed the aircraft over and picked up 140 knots. I got as close to the jungle trees as I could and poured on the coals. Later my wingman told me the first burst exploded 200 meters behind me. There were four of them, each a little closer to me than the last.

I think the fact that I dove, and got down in the hills kept that gun from tracking me. If I had tried to climb to altitude at 70 knots that gun would have nailed us for sure. That's what I usually do to avoid small arms fire. We flew all seven people to the Med station where they were cared for. We can all give thanks for our deliverance.



### **STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN J.A. HOUSE II, USMCR**

On 25 April 1967, at or about 1350 the aircraft that I was flying, EP-171, crew chiefed by LCpl D.D. DULUDE, landed at XD765503 to emergency extract a recon team under heavy enemy fire. Of the eight man team all were wounded and only two were able to walk. The aircraft landed about 60 meters up the slope from the recon team who were unable to move due to the severity of the casualties and the intense enemy fire. The ridgeline runs generally east and west and the aircraft landed on a northerly heading. LCpl. DULUDE, since his starboard gun was useless against the enemy less than 100 meters away in a wooded ravine, ran to the ramp and directed the aircraft to turn and back-taxi down the ridgeline towards the entrapped team. During the time the aircraft was back-taxiing down the slope and LCpl. DULUDE kneeling exposed on the ramp, he delivered fire with his service revolver at the enemy muzzle flashes. Upon reaching the first casualty he directed the aircraft to set down and LCpl. DULUDE exited the aircraft to assist the most seriously wounded Marines into the aircraft. He made a total of three trips down the ridge to assist the wounded in gaining the relative safety of the aircraft. Throughout this entire time in the zone LCpl. DULUDE was exposed to close enemy automatic fire from the woodline no more than 50 meters away. During the last two trips he was in the close proximity of at least four hand grenades thrown by the enemy now advancing up the ridgeline. Not until the last man was aboard the aircraft did LCpl. DULUDE return to the aircraft and deliver first aid and care for the most seriously wounded. Without LCpl. DULUDE's directions it would have been impossible for me to maneuver the aircraft into a position from which the entrapped team could be rescued. Throughout the entire time he remained calm and directed me with an extreme degree of professionalism and efficiency. His outstanding actions were instrumental in saving the lives of the entire entrapped recon team.

**CERTIFIED TRUE COPY**



**STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN JAMES J. DALTON II 090718, USMCR**

On 25 April 1967, Captain HOUSE and I were called for an emergency extraction of recon Team HAWK. We were flying Captain PETTEYS' Wing and we proceeded to the area just west of Khe Sanh for the pick up. The HUEY's were on station and had contact with HAWK. The team was located on a ridgeline next to a dead tree, which was about thirty meters from a tree line which ran across the ridge. The team had six men seriously wounded and two others slightly wounded. They were so close to the enemy that the gunships could not work the area with their rockets or machine guns for fear of hitting the team. It was decided that Captain PETTEYS would attempt the pick up where the team was located even though it was extremely close to the enemy lines. Captain PETTEYS made his first pass and was fast and his guns jammed, so he waved off the approach. We rolled in behind him for our approach and we were also fast and were forced to wave off, however we managed to make a tight turn and slide in along the ridgeline and set the helicopter across the ridgeline. We found that in this position the wounded personnel would not be able to get aboard. It was decided to pick the helicopter up and turn it and back down the long axis of the ridgeline in order to get as close to the team as possible. LCpl. DULUDE directed the pilot back down the ridgeline as close as possible to HAWK, then as soon as we dropped the ramp LCpl. DULUDE left the aircraft, under intense fire and within hand grenade range of the enemy to assist the recon team aboard the aircraft. Several hand grenades went off in the zone while LCpl. DULUDE was outside the aircraft. SSgt. LOGAN again brought his .50 caliber machine gun to bear on the enemy and suppressed a good portion of the enemy fire. During these two pick ups SSgt. LOGAN expended 1200 rounds from a single machine gun. Upon return to Khe Sanh with the extracted team they were all put aboard a C-123 Med-evac aircraft and flown to Da Nang, six were on stretchers and two were walking wounded. I have no doubt that, had we not been there, and LCpl. DULUDE had not acted as he did the whole recon team would have been killed or captured. I recommend an appropriate award.

**CERTIFIED TRUE COPY**

**STATEMENT OF STAFF SERGEANT G.L. LOGAN 1575449, USMC**

On 25 April 1967, LCpl Daniel D. DULUDE 2186420 was the crew chief on a CH-46A on which I was a gunner. We set down into a zone to effect the retraction of a recon team. The team was in about five foot high grass 50 meters from a woodline. They were under heavy fire from automatic weapons and small arms coming from the woodline. The team had taken such heavy casualties that it could not move from its present position. As we begin to set down the aircraft started drawing automatic weapons fire from the woodline which was then at our nine o'clock. As we touched down the crew chief saw that we were about 70 meters away from the Recon team, and had the pilot lift it into a ground hover and back it to within 15 meters of the team. While backing in, LCpl. DULUDE kneeled on the ramp and directed the pilot to the spot while returning enemy fire with his pistol. On touch down he left the aircraft and while under automatic weapons fire went to assist the wounded. He made one round trip under automatic weapons fire, and then made a second and third trip under automatic weapons fire while at the same time the enemy was throwing hand grenades in his vicinity. Without regard for his own personal safety he effected the rescue of the team. And not until the last man was aboard did he return to the safety of the aircraft, where he bandaged and cared for the wounded until the plane returned to Khe Sahn. Without the calm and professional way that LCpl. DULUDE directed the aircraft into the spot and his unhesitating assistance in the rescue of the team it would have not been possible, without damage or loss to the aircraft and crew, to have effected any type of a rescue of the team. His prompt action was instrumental in saving the lives of the entire recon team.

**CERTIFIED TRUE COPY**

## **TEAM 3A1 -"HAWK"**

### **Alpha Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion**

**A personal account of the mission of Team "HAWK," vicinity of Khe Sanh, RVN, 18-25 April 1967, by Team Member Ray Raymond.**

#### **HISTORICAL NOTE:**

Team Hawk's action is particularly significant to our history and the history of the USMC battle for the Khe Sanh plateau. It occurred on a dominant piece of high terrain overlooking the confluence of valleys running from the DMZ and Laos into the watershed of the Rao Quan River. These valleys were primary infiltration routes for the NVA 324B and 320<sup>th</sup> Divisions into the KheSanh/Route 9 area. They were equally significant to other independent battalion, regimental and divisional movement since they led directly to the infiltration routes for the Hue/Phu Bai area through the Da Krong and Ba Long valleys south of Route 9. Domination of Hue/Phu Bai and control of Route 9 and National Route 1 by the Peoples Army of North Vietnam would have cut I Corps in half. The populous, rice-rich coastal plain and Third Marine Division would have been effectively isolated from the bulk of U.S. and ARVN forces.

Team Hawk's observations were one of the indicators of the massing of North Vietnamese forces northwest of Khe Sanh in the spring of 1967. Two weeks later Company 'A', Team 3A3, "BREAKER," fought a bloody and heroic action on the same ground, as North Vietnamese forces consolidated after the hill battles. These actions occurred on terrain dominating the approaches to Hills 881N and 881S and 861, located five miles south of the HAWK/BREAKER missions.

The hills were the key to the defense of the Khe Sanh Plateau, Khe Sanh Combat Base, and western Route 9. Route 9 was the only trafficable route to the coastal plain and a strategic gateway to southeastern Laos.

The "Hill Fights," of 23 April – 1 May 1967 imprinted Khe Sanh and the Marine's struggle in northwest I Corps indelibly in the history of the United States Marine Corps and the history of the Vietnam War. It was a battle that continued through the "Siege of Khe Sanh" in 1968, lasting until the Third Marine Division withdrew from Vietnam.

The part that the teams of the Third Reconnaissance Battalion played in this theater of the war cannot be minimized. Our history is rich with the accomplishments of Reconners who located and engaged the enemy in the corner of I Corps bordered by Laos and North Vietnam. From the summer of 1966 through late 1969, 3rd Recon's teams patrolled the steep ridges and tangled valleys of Northwest I Corps. Frequently working beyond "friendly" radio and artillery range, we continually located North Vietnamese troop concentrations, infiltration routes, and base areas; engaging the North Vietnamese in some of the most difficult terrain in Vietnam.

Many of the stories of our effort in the Khe Sanh AO remain untold. However, the courage and skill of the Recon Marines and the USMC aircrews who supported us during the years we fought there stand tall within our proudest traditions.

## **TEAM HAWK**

Respectfully Submitted by

Ray Raymond

I was stationed with Company 'A', Third Reconnaissance Battalion at Khe Sanh Combat Base in April of 1967. We relieved a platoon from the Third Force Reconnaissance Company in late March. Our first patrols yielded a great deal of evidence of NVA activity, but we made no visual or physical contact. During the third week of April, we were assigned a mission in an area roughly ten miles northwest of the base and six miles east of the Laotian border. Our mission was to conduct an area recon then establish an observation post (OP) on high ground located in the XD 7553 grid square. We had no experience in the area, no intelligence of the Recon Zone, and did not have the opportunity for the SOP aerial recon (over-flight). The mission required the emplacement of another team between our location and Khe Sanh to serve as a radio-relay due to range and VHF line of sight limitations. Team Hawk consisted of:

Cpl. Robin Walker, Team Leader.

Cpl. Ronald Rudolf, Assistant Team Leader.

L/Cpl. Wayne Hurst.

L/Cpl. Fred Baker.

L/Cpl. Terrie Burden.

PFC. Tommie Bazydlo.

PFC. Ray Raymond.

PFC. Pete Morici.

We were inserted by an H-46 helicopter late on the afternoon of 18 April. Our LZ was located on the North Slope on a finger of the ridge that led to the dominant terrain feature, Hill 655. The hill was at the apex of several sparsely vegetated fingers leading up the southeast and southwest shoulders of the ridge, and provided good visibility of the valleys to the north. We chose a secure harbor site in heavy cover that would also serve as a patrol base, and set-in for the night.

In the morning, we moved down into the valley to conduct a physical recon of the area. Signs of recent North Vietnamese activity were so plentiful our team leader decided we could provide better intelligence by regaining our position on the high ground and conducting reconnaissance by visual observation. We returned to our night position and began the conduct of an observation mission.

We spent the next five days performing covert observation and reporting the location of enemy movement. We saw little during the hours of daylight, but at night, we observed numerous lights on the adjacent ridges surrounding us. The lights were consistent with a heavy NVA troop movement, but since the movement consistently occurred on the reverse slopes of the terrain in relation to the Khe Sanh Combat Base, we could not engage by fire. We were close to the range limitations of available artillery, and the rounds could not achieve sufficient maximum ordinate to clear the elevation between the howitzers and potential targets.

On the morning of 25 April, before our scheduled movement to the extraction LZ, we heard heavy movement in the thick vegetation to our immediate west. Cpl. Walker immediately deployed us in a hasty ambush formation. We set up in a 'U' shaped formation with Walker and L/Cpl. Burden on one side of the trail leading to our OP, while Cpl. Rudolf, Pfc. Bazydlo and I took the other. L/Cpl. Baker and Pfc.'s Morici and Hurst closed the 'U', and provided rear security with the slope leading to our LZ on the finger to their south. Cpl. Walker ordered us to hold fire until he initiated contact.

The NVA were completely unaware of our presence. Four enemy soldiers walked into the kill-zone, one of whom leaned his AK-47 against a tree as if he was about to take a break. We recently acquired the M-16A1 rifle, and the early version of that weapon was subject to frequent malfunctions. When Walker attempted to trigger the ambush, his weapon malfunctioned. Several other weapons jammed, and the NVA were alerted, but another Marine and I were able to put out enough fire to kill three of the enemy with one burst. The NVA reacted almost immediately. The team received such heavy automatic weapons and grenade fire we were pinned in the prone position. We were in extremely close proximity to the NVA - twenty to twenty-five feet - and judging by the heavy volume of fire, in contact with at least a platoon sized unit. We could occasionally catch glimpses of them through the brush.

Walker and Burden, who from their side of the trail had good observation on the deploying soldiers, threw enough grenades to neutralize their initial response. The firefight diminished and we could hear the groaning of NVA wounded. Our casualties were light. L/Cpl. Hurst was shot in the foot during the first moments, but the enemy forces seemed disoriented and the heavy fire ceased.

Recovering quickly, the NVA launched a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG-7) hitting a tree directly behind me. I lost consciousness. Upon regaining my senses, I realized that the explosion wounded the entire team. Walker was face down, covered with blood. Burden was unconscious and appeared badly hit. Concussed by the explosion, I was unaware of the extent of my wounds, but I was able to see that only four of us remained combat effective. Cpl. Rudolph took command of the team. Although we were in close combat and down slope from the LZ, Rudolph called for an emergency extraction. He ordered me to take Baker and find a route to the LZ. I was able to crawl to Baker who was administering aid to Burden and Morici, and told him we were moving out to secure a route to the LZ.

We moved out of the brush and onto the finger leading to the top of the ridge. As we made the finger, we heard aircraft approaching. L/Cpl. Baker, looking at the leg wounds I had sustained, volunteered to proceed into the LZ to identify it for the extraction helicopter. Behind us, the NVA had surrounded the team, and directed heavy fire at the gunships accompanying the H-46's. The first aircraft was unable to land, but a second H-46 hovered on the finger above us, and slipped backwards at low altitude while the gunships suppressed the NVA fire. The H-46 landed, and as Rudolf and Baker dragged the remainder of the team into the aircraft, I provided covering fire. When Baker signaled me that take-off was eminent, I attempted to run for the aircraft but my legs would not support me. Baker left the H-46, helping me limp the fifty feet to the helicopter. I distinctly recall how slippery the aft-ramp was from leaking hydraulic fluid and clearly recollect holes appearing in the fuselage as NVA rounds penetrated our helicopter on take-off.

I later learned that the enemy forces we encountered were elements of a battalion moving to reinforce the battle for the 881 Hills. I discovered that both the hydraulic system and rear rotor of the H-46 that extracted us was damaged severely enough that only superior flying skills enabled us to return safely to Khe Sanh. I also learned that fixed-wing strikes called in on our former position generated numerous secondary explosions.

After our return to Khe Sanh, I found out that the first H-46, commanded by Capt. Dave Petteys aborted the extraction because both door gunner's weapons had jammed. He remained, defenseless, in a low orbit over the LZ until the extraction was completed. Capt. House commanded the pick-up aircraft with 1stLt. Dalton in the right seat. The crews of the H-46's and gunships who participated in our extraction on April 25, 1967 have my eternal gratitude and that of Team HAWK.

When I reflect back, I recall the courage, tenacity, and professionalism of my team and the aircrews who survived that experience. It was a day on which personal bravery, loyalty, determination, and professionalism were displayed to their utmost. In my mind's eye, I still see Walker and Burden breaking-up an NVA assault with hand grenades. I see an H-46 sitting in a hot LZ, taking hits, but never wavering until the last man was safely aboard. I still see the look in a North Vietnamese soldier's eyes immediately before the first shots were fired.

I share my deep personal pride with my teammates recalling what we accomplished. I know I share scars and sorrows, as well. Team HAWK is a team still; and the men I fought with remain the finest I have ever known. We lost Pete Morici to cancer in 1993. We comforted his wife, Mary Lou, and carried him to his final resting place as a team. I have written this account of the April 18 to April 25, 1967 mission of Recon Team 3A1 "HAWK," for all of us.

**Team Hawk  
Company A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion  
HMM-265  
April 25, 1967**

**After Action Statements**

**Captain J.J. Dalton, USMC  
HMM 265  
March 17, 1989**

As the co-pilot on the emergency extract of team "Hawk" on April 25, 1967, I would seek to corroborate the statement of PFC Daniel D. Dulude. That day west of Khe Sahn will stay etched in my memory forever. We, Capt. Jack House and myself, were flying wingman on the aircraft, which was to make the extraction.

As our leader got over the intended landing site he realized he was too fast in his approach and could not land across the ridge, when the leader waved off Capt. House realizing time was critical came in and hovered along the ridge.

Our crew chief, L/Cpl. Dulude back taxied us down the ridge towards the disabled recon team. I was holding the brakes for our landing and looking through the passenger area of our aircraft to assist Capt. House in maintaining alignment with the ridge. As I looked back I could visually observe several enemy personnel throwing grenades in the direction of the team and the aircraft.

Within a very short period of time our crew, with the assistance of L/Cpl. Fred J. Baker, was able to get seven other wounded recon members on board our aircraft. We flew the entire team to Khe Sahn where it was determined that all eight members of the team were wounded and would be medically evacuated. As indicated in my official log book we continued for the next several days to fly normal missions.

At some later time we, HMM-265, placed award papers in the system for L/Cpl Dulude. We could not, at that time, get any information from the members of recon team "Hawk" because of their previous transfers to various hospitals either in RVN or Conus. We made the assumption that any awards earned would be properly recorded through L/Cpl Baker's unit on his behalf.

**PFC Daniel D. Dulude, USMC  
Crew Chief, HMM 265  
January 5, 1989**

This document is an eye-witness account and confirming corroboration concerning the April 25, 1967 Recon extraction of "Hawk" team in South Viet Nam. I was part of the helicopter team that was sent in to extract the



eight-man team. The following is my statement, with specific reference to the heroic actions of Lance Corporal Fred J. Baker and the part he played during the extraction.

On April 25, 1967, while temporarily assigned to Khe Sanh with HMM-265, myself and another chopper were launched to extract a team (Hawk) which had taken fire from a superior NVA force. The team was situated on a high ridge just west of the base. We were flying as chase, but were instructed to execute the extraction when the lead plane was unable to get into the zone. We landed about 60 meters from the team and were forced to back taxi along the ridge line and put down next to the closest team members.

During the back taxi, it became very obvious that all but two of the eight-man team would not be able to reach the safety of the helicopter without assistance. The enemy fire was intense and we did not have the luxury to wait for them to make their way to the plane. The first two marines were in the chopper. It was at this point that myself and one of the walking wounded decided to leave the relative safety of the plane and help the six wounded aboard.

I have since learned that the name of the wounded marine who helped the three men not accounted for in my citation for a Silver Star was Lance Corporal Fred J. Baker.

Baker and myself left the chopper to retrieve the first of the wounded. The enemy were in the tree line and were firing AKs and throwing hand grenades at the team. It seemed as if we had misjudged our chances of retrieving them. Time was of the essence and everyone knew it. We returned at the same time. The point is rather vivid in my mind because the aft transmission on the helicopter had been leaking transmission fluid on the ramp and made it extremely difficult for one person to crawl up. I remember the two of us pushing the medevac up the ramp in what seemed like an eternity.

We then left to help two others. Our paths led us to different wounded and we made our way back to the helo on our own. At this point a count of marines on board indicated that there were three missing. Two were wounded and the third was Baker who had already started back for one of them. I again left the plane to gather the last wounded man. We took another count, raised the rear ramp and left the zone. On the way back to Khe Sanh, I administered first aid until we landed.

I am convinced that if Lance Corporal Baker had not assisted me in retrieving the wounded that time would have run out. The enemy was so close that the gun-ships could not even work the zone over with their machine guns. In my own mind, Baker's help was the difference between success, capture or death. The team was medivaced to Da Nang and the extraction became another combat experience.

# Mission Report by HMM-265 (April 24 and 25, 1967)

DECLASSIFIED

## MARINEMEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 205

3003

MSN NO: 3003A FLT TIME 4.0 FLT CODE 1R6 IN SUPPORT OF 3<sup>rd</sup> MAR DIV DATE 24 + 25 April 67

PAX: US: 6 ARVN          VIP          VNCIV          TOTAL 6

BATTLE EVACS: US 8 ARVN          VIP          VNCIV          TOTAL 8

NUMBER OF A/C 2 POUNDS OF CARGO 1000 lbs BOUNDS EXPENDED (.50) 1000 (7.62)

NUMBER OF SORTIES/TASKS BY FUNCTION: TOTAL SORTIES 7 TASKS 2

AH( )	IC( )	TAB( )	RECON( )	OTHER( <u>3</u> )
CG( <u>2</u> )	SAR( )	M( )	PSY( )	2 Empty
GT( )	COM( )	T( )	VII( )	
LT( )	MED( <u>2</u> )	A/TA( )	E(CONVOY)( )	

A/C HIT: HITS RECEIVED 6 TIME 18.5 COORD XD 795455 TYPE FIRE 30 cal.

NARRATIVE: (NAME, COORD OF EACH LZ) UNUSUAL EVENTS)

ATD 1710 ATR 1935 FURTHEST COORD " XD 795455 "

3003  
DONG HA 3003A D- KHE SAHN D- XD 795455 D- KHE SAHN

D- DONG HA. " RECEIVED FIRE COORDINATES XD 795455 -

TOTAL SIX HITS "

OPERATIONAL DISCREPANCIES. REMARKS AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS (ENCLOSE LZ COND. USE REVERSE SIDE IF NECESSARY)

AIRCRAFT:	#1 <u>152</u>	#2 <u>173</u>	#3 <u>        </u>	#4 <u>        </u>
PILOT:	<u>NICK</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>		
CO-PILOT:	<u>FLEMING</u>	<u>DALTON</u>		
C/G:	<u>PAEGEL</u>	<u>DELUDE</u>		
A/G:	<u>LIPAS</u>	<u>LOGAN</u>		
OTHER:				

FLIGHT ( 2 ) STRIKE ( ) NUMBER OF MISSION CREDITS ( 4 )

FLIGHT LEADER (PRINT) Nick

FLIGHT LEADER'S SIGNATURE AFTER COMPLETE: Paul M. [Signature]

\*\*\*\*\*IF CORRECTIONS ARE NECESSARY, REWRITE REPORT\*\*\*\*\*

DECLASSIFIED

# Daily Mission Reports by HMM-265 (June 30 and July 1, 1967)

DECLASSIFIED

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON

DATE 30 June 67

MSN NO: 30-118 FLT TLE 1:0 FLT CODE 1RS IN SUPPORT OF 3rd MAB Div

PAX: US 8 ARVN        VIP        VNCIV        TOTAL 8

BATTLE EVACS: US        ARVN        VIP        VNCIV        TOTAL 0

NUMBER OF A/C 2 POUNDS OF CARGO 0 ROUNDS EXP (.50) 200 (7.62)       

NUMBER OF SORTIES/TASKS BY FUNCTION: TOTAL SORTIES 3 TASKS 01

AH( ) ( )	IC( ) ( )	TAR( ) ( )	RECON ( / ) ( / )	OTHER ( 2 ) ( 0 )
CC( ) ( )	SAR( ) ( )	M( ) ( )	PSY( ) ( )	Empty
CT( ) ( )	COM( ) ( )	T( ) ( )	VIP( ) ( )	
LT( ) ( )	MEN( ) ( )	A/L( ) ( )	E (CONVOY) ( ) ( )	

A? HIT: HITS RECEIVED        TIME        COORD        TYPE FIRE       

NARRATIVE: (NAME, COORD OF EACH LZ) (UNUSUAL EVENTS)  
 ATD 1535 ATR 1625 FURTHEST COORD " VD 904962 "

ATTEMPTED TO INSERT NETTLE RASH II

A/C ENTERED VALLEY, COMMENCED TOUCH DOWN AND WAS

FIRED UPON BY AUTO WPNS FROM ALL SIDES. WAVED OFF

TO SOUTH, CRASHED AND BURNED.

OPERATIONAL DISCREPANCIES. REMARKS AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS (ENCLOSE LZ COND. USE  
 REVERSE SIDE IF NECESSARY) NO ADEQUATE INTELL BRIEF. NO

IDEA WHERE ENEMY WAS. ZONE (LANDING) WELL PREPPED BUT

SURROUNDING AREA WAS FULL OF VC ORNVA. RESULT - 5 KIA

AIRCRAFT: #1 164 #2 168 #3        #4        7 WIA.

PILOT: MILLER HOUSE

CO-PILOT: LEE PITMAN

S/C: BROWN SMITH

A/G: PAGAS MICHAELSON

OTHER:       

FLIGHT ( 1 ) STRIKE (        ) NUMBER OF MISSION CREDITS ( 2 )

FLIGHT LEADER (PRINT) MILLER, M.E.

LIGHT LEADERS SIGNATURE AFTER COMPLETE: M.R. Miller

\*\*\*\*\*CHECK TO INSURE THAT ALL SPACES ARE FILLED IN CORRECTLY\*\*\*\*\*

DECLASSIFIED



# Daily Mission Reports by HMM-265 (June 30, 1967)

DECLASSIFIED

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 265 DATE 30 Jun 67

MSN NO — FLT TIME 12.7 FLT CODE 1R5 IN SUPPORT OF III MAF

PAX: US 65 ARVN — VIP — VNCIV — TOTAL 65

BATTLE EVACS: US 7 ARVN — VIP — VNCIV — TOTAL 7

NUMBER OF A/C 9 POUNDS OF CARGO — ROUNDS EXP (.50) (7.62)

NUMBER OF SORTIES/ TASKS BY FUNCTION: TOTAL SORTIES 20 TASKS 2

AH ( ) IC ( ) TAR ( ) RECON ( ) OTHER ( )  
 CC ( ) SAR ( ) M ( ) PSY ( ) MT (10) (0)  
 CT (9) COM ( ) T ( ) VIP ( )  
 LT ( ) MED ( ) A/L ( ) E (CONVOY) ( )

A/C HIT: HITS RECEIVED 0 TIME 1745 COORD YC 095970 TYPE FIRE AA

NARRATIVE: NAME, COORD OF EACH LANDING ZONE - UNUSUAL EVENTS  
 ATD 1645 ATR 1800 FURTHEST COORD "YC 095970"

Inserted Spanawhank @ YC 095905 and then hoisted  
7 survivors out of YC 095970 near site of downed  
H46.

OPERATIONAL DISCREPANCIES. REMARKS AND / OR RECOMMENDATIONS - ENCLOSE LANDING  
 ZONE CONDITION. USE REVERSE SIDE OF AFTER ACTION IF NECESSARY.  
WINGMAN SPOTTED AIRBURSTS FOLLOWING  
ME UPON LIFTING AWAY FROM HOIST POSITION  
POSSIBLY 14.5 cal or 37 mm

AIRCRAFT:	#1 <u>159</u>	#2 <u>164</u>	#3 <u>161</u>	#4 <u>—</u>
PILOT:	<u>PETTEYS</u>	<u>Miller</u>	<u>Dalton</u>	<u>Ruffely</u>
CO-PILOT:	<u>Paderson</u>	<u>Lee</u>	<u>Wanderhoff DM</u>	
IC:	<u>Hipscher</u>	<u>Brown</u>	<u>Tombs</u>	
IC:	<u>Filmm</u>	<u>FENNIS</u>	<u>Bonner</u>	
OTHER:				<u>V</u>

RIGHT (2) STRIKE ( ) NUMBER OF MISSION CREDITS (3) PETTEYS  
 FLIGHT LEADER (PRINT)

FLIGHT LEADER'S SIGNATURE AFTER COMPLETE: DM Pettys

\*\*\*\*\*CHECK TO INSURE THAT ALL SPACES ARE FILLED IN CORRECTLY\*\*\*\*\*

"PLEASE TAKE NOTE"

DECLASSIFIED



# Daily Mission Reports by HMM-265 (June 30, 1967)

DECLASSIFIED

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 265 DATE 30 June 67

NSN NO 3 FLT TIME 1.6 FLT CODE 1K9 IN SUPPORT OF III Division

PAX: US 24 ARVN \_\_\_\_\_ VIP \_\_\_\_\_ VNCIV \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL 24

BATTLE EVACS: US \_\_\_\_\_ ARVN \_\_\_\_\_ VIP \_\_\_\_\_ VNCIV \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL 0

NUMBER OF A/C \_\_\_\_\_ POUNDS OF CARGO \_\_\_\_\_ ROUNDS EXP (.50) \_\_\_\_\_ (7.62) \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF SORTIES/ TASKS BY FUNCTION: TOTAL SORTIES 6 TASKS 1

AH ( ) ( ) IC ( ) ( ) TAR ( ) ( ) RECON ( ) ( ) OTHER ( ) ( )  
 CC ( ) ( ) SAR ( ) ( ) M ( ) ( ) PSY ( ) ( ) Empty (3)  
 CT 3 ( ) COM ( ) ( ) T ( ) ( ) VIP ( ) ( )  
 IT ( ) ( ) MED ( ) ( ) A/L ( ) ( ) E (CONVOY)

A/C HIT: HITS RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_ COORD \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE FIRE \_\_\_\_\_

NARRATIVE: NAME, COORD OF EACH LANDING ZONE - UNUSUAL EVENTS  
 ATD 1854 AT 1900 FURTHEST COORD 907975  
1831 1900

Retraction of Sparrow Hawk Phubairp 907975  
B7 Phuba,

OPERATIONAL DISCREPANCIES. REMARKS AND / OR RECOMMENDATIONS - ENCLOSE LANDING ZONE CONDITION. USE REVERSE SIDE OF AFTER ACTION IF NECESSARY.

AIRCRAFT:	#1 <u>167</u>	#2 <u>167</u>	#3 _____	#4 _____
PILOT:	<u>Schneider</u>	<u>Bennett</u>		
CO-PILOT:	<u>Hicks</u>	<u>Berry</u>		
C/C:	<u>Hicks</u>	<u>Delude</u>		
A/G:	<u>Nesley</u>	<u>Mchols</u>		
OTHER:				

FLIGHT ( 1 ) STRIKE ( ) NUMBER OF MISSION CREDITS ( 1 )  
 FLIGHT LEADER (PRINT) MAJ. SCHNEIDER

FLIGHT LEADER'S SIGNATURE AFTER COMPLETE: [Signature]

\*\*\*\*\*CHECK TO INSURE THAT ALL SPACES ARE FILLED IN CORRECTLY\*\*\*\*\*  
"PLEASE TAKE NOTE"

DECLASSIFIED



# Daily Mission Reports by HMM-265 (June 30, 1967)

DECLASSIFIED

MAINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 265 DATE 30 JUN 67  
 MSN NO SPARROW <sup>HAUK 30-88</sup> FLT TIME 8.4 FLT CODE 1RS IN SUPPORT OF 3rd MAR DIV  
 PAX: US \_\_\_\_\_ ARVN \_\_\_\_\_ VIP \_\_\_\_\_ VNCIV \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL 0  
 BATTLE EVACS: US \_\_\_\_\_ ARVN \_\_\_\_\_ VIP \_\_\_\_\_ VNCIV \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL 0  
 NUMBER OF A/C 2 POUNDS OF CARGO 0 ROUNDS EXP (.50) 0 (7.62) \_\_\_\_\_  
 NUMBER OF SORTIES/ TASKS BY FUNCTION: TOTAL SORTIES 4 TASKS 1  
 AH( ) ( ) LC( ) ( ) TAR( ) ( ) RECON( ) ( ) OTHER( ) ( )  
 CG( ) ( ) SAR( ) ( ) M( ) ( ) PSY( ) ( ) EMPTY(4)  
 CT( ) ( ) COM( ) ( ) T( ) ( ) VIP( ) ( )  
 LT( ) ( ) MED( ) ( ) A/L( ) ( ) E (CONVOY)  
 A/C HIT: HITS RECEIVED( 0 ) TIME \_\_\_\_\_ COORD \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE FIRE 0

NARRATIVE: NAME, COORD OF EACH LANDING ZONE - UNUSUAL EVENTS  
 AT 1710 ATR 1750 FURTHEST COORD " YC904962 "

PHU BAI - YC904962 - PHU BAI

AIRBORNE SAR FOR EXTRACTION OF

A/C SHOT DOWN

OPERATIONAL DISCREPANCIES. REMARKS AND / OR RECOMMENDATIONS - ENCLOSE LANDING ZONE CONDITION. USE REVERSE SIDE OF AFTER ACTION IF NECESSARY.

AIRCRAFT:	#1 <u>160</u>	#2 <u>167</u>	#3 _____	#4 _____
PILOT:	<u>PITMAN</u>	<u>BENNETT</u>		
CO-PILOT:	<u>LLEWELLYN</u>	<u>BERRY</u>		
1st:	<u>CROSSLAND</u>	<u>NICHOLS</u> <u>MURRAY</u>		
2nd:	<u>GRAY</u>	<u>DELUDE</u>		
3rd:				

LIGHT ( L ) STRIKE ( ) NUMBER OF MISSION CREDITS ( L )  
 FLIGHT LEADER (PRINT) PITMAN

FLIGHT LEADER'S SIGNATURE AFTER COMPLETE: C. H. Pitman

\*\*\*\*\*CHECK TO INSURE THAT ALL SPACES ARE FILLED IN CORRECTLY\*\*\*\*\*

"PLEASE TAKE NOTE"

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# Daily Mission Reports by HMM-265 (June 30 and July 1, 1967)

DECLASSIFIED

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 265 DATE 30 June 67

MSN NO 30-11D FLT TIME 1.0 FLT CODE 185 IN SUPPORT OF 3rd Marine Div.

PAX: US 16 ARVN \_\_\_\_\_ VIP \_\_\_\_\_ VNCIV \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL 16

BATTLE EVACS: US 0 ARVN \_\_\_\_\_ VIP \_\_\_\_\_ VNCIV \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL 0

NUMBER OF A/C 2 POUNDS OF CARGO 0 ROUNDS EXP (.50) 0 (7.62) 0

NUMBER OF SORTIES/ TASKS BY FUNCTION: TOTAL SORTIES 4 TASKS 1

AH( ) ( ) IC( ) ( ) TAR( ) ( ) RECON( ) ( ) OTHER( 2 ) ( 0 )  
 CC( ) ( ) S/R( ) ( ) M( ) ( ) PSY( ) ( ) empty  
 CT( 2 ) ( 1 ) COM( ) ( ) T( ) ( ) VIP( ) ( )  
 LT( ) ( ) MED( ) ( ) A/L( ) ( ) E (CONVOY)

A/C HIT: HITS RECEIVED( 0 ) TIME \_\_\_\_\_ COORD \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE FIRE 0

NARRATIVE: NAME, COORD OF EACH LANDING ZONE - UNUSUAL EVENTS  
 ATD 1830 ATR 1900 FURTHEST COORD " YD 894957 "

PHUBai YD 894957 PHUBai

SPARROW HAWK EXTRACTION

OPERATIONAL DISCREPANCIES. REMARKS AND / OR RECOMMENDATIONS - ENCLOSE LANDING ZONE CONDITION. USE REVERSE SIDE OF AFTER ACTION IF NECESSARY.

AIRCRAFT:	#1 <u>164</u>	#2 <u>161</u>	#3 _____	#4 _____
PILOT:	<u>Miller</u>	<u>DALTON</u>		
CO-PILOT:	<u>LEE</u>	<u>WIEDENHOFF</u>		
C/C:	<u>Brown</u>	<u>DEWITT</u>		
A/G:	<u>FRANIS</u>			
OTHER:				

FLIGHT ( 1 ) STRIKE ( ) NUMBER OF MISSION CREDITS ( 1 )  
 FLIGHT LEADER (PRINT) Miller, M.E.

FLIGHT LEADER'S SIGNATURE AFTER COMPLETE: M R Miller

\*\*\*\*\*CHECK TO INSURE THAT ALL SPACES ARE FILLED IN CORRECTLY\*\*\*\*\*

"PLEASE TAKE NOTE"

DECLASSIFIED





**DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY**  
2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2300

May 16, 2017

LTC Mark Mariska (Ret.)  
96 Woodbine Road  
Stamford, CT 06903

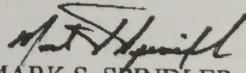
Dear Colonel Mariska,

Thank you for your letter dated March 20, 2017 concerning the status of Captain John A. House II, USMC. As you are aware, Capt House was killed in action on June 30, 1967 while piloting a CH-46A helicopter which was inserting a Marine Reconnaissance Team in Thua Thien - Hue Province.

Over the course of four missions, recovery teams excavated Capt House's crash site where we discovered human remains in 2012. Remains recovered at the crash site were sufficient to identify two of the five men lost in this incident. The three other individuals lost in this incident, including Capt House, were recently accounted for through a group identification. Capt House was officially accounted for on April 10, 2017. Obviously, we would have preferred to make individual identifications of each of the five servicemen, but that was not possible in this case.

Thank you for contacting DPAA about our efforts to find your friend and return him to his family. As military men, you and I understand the lasting impact the loss of comrades leaves on those who survive. Thank you for your military service to our Nation and the sacrifices you made in her defense. Should you have any additional questions, please contact Mr. Johnnie E. Webb, Deputy Director of Outreach and Communications, at [johnnie.e.webb.civ@mail.mil](mailto:johnnie.e.webb.civ@mail.mil) and he will do his best to provide you a timely and complete answer.

Sincerely,

  
MARK S. SPINDLER  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Deputy Director

## **DPAA Memo: Marines Missing from Vietnam War Identified.**

**Subject: Marines Missing From Vietnam War Identified (House, Killen, Runnels)**

**Date: Mon, 10 Apr 2017 11:41:44 +0000**

**From: Duus, Kristen L SSG USARMY DPAA EC (US)**  
**kristen.l.duus.mil@mail.mil>**

**Dear Sir/Ma'am,**

**The remains of Marine Corps Capt. John A. House, II; Lance Cpl. John D. Killen, III; and Cpl. Glyn L. Runnels, Jr., have now been accounted for. House was assigned to HHM-265 Marine Aircraft Group 16, and Killen and Runnels were assigned to Company A, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, when their aircraft crashed in Vietnam, June 30, 1967.**

**Two additional service members were previously identified from this crash, Marine Lance Cpl. Merlin R. Allen and Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Michael B. Judd. Their remains were returned to their families for burial with full military honors.**

**Interment services are pending.**

**For more information on DPAA please visit our website at [www.dpaa.mil](http://www.dpaa.mil), find us on social media at [www.facebook.com/dodpaa](https://www.facebook.com/dodpaa) or call 703-699-1420.**

**~Fulfilling Our Nation's Promise~**



**\* \* \* \* \***

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND  
MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.**

**UPDATE: April 1, 2017**

**AMERICANS RECENTLY ACCOUNTED FOR:** On March 28th, DPAA Statistics listed three USMC personnel as recently accounted for: Captain John A. House of NY, Cpl Glyn L. Runnels, Jr., of AL, and LCpl John D. Killen, II, of IA. All were listed as KIABNR on June 30, 1967, in South Vietnam. Their remains were recovered in June, 2012, and identification was authorized on December 22, 2015. DPAA has not yet published the formal announcement with interment plans.

On March 7th, DPAA released an announcement that Captain Daniel W. Thomas, USAFR, listed as MIA on July 6, 1971 in South Vietnam, had been accounted for. Remains were recovered by a Vietnamese Unilateral Recovery Team (URT) in August, 2014, and identified in August, 2015, as those of Major Donald G. Carr, USA, the other person in the OV-10A piloted by Capt Thomas.

Subsequent recovery efforts by the URT and repatriation of additional remains and material in April, 2016, brought the more recent ID of Capt Thomas. DPAA also listed on its website, under Statistics, the accounting for Colonel William E. Campbell, USAF, listed as MIA in Laos January 29, 1969. His remains were recovered April 17, 2014, identified August 29, 2016, and his name was placed on the DPAA website as accounted for on March 3rd. On February 22nd,

DPAA announced the ID of Capt Robert R. Barnett, USAF, listed as KIA/BNR on April 7, 1966 while piloting a B-57B over Laos. His remains were recovered June 18, 2015 and identified August 16, 2016.

Earlier this year, a Marine Corps Reserve officer, 1st Lt William C. Ryan, was the first person since June of 2016 announced as accounted for from the Vietnam War. 1st Lt Ryan was listed KIA/BNR in Laos on May 11, 1969. His remains were recovered January 27, 2016, and identified December 7, 2016.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Col. Mark D. Mariska, USA  
96 Woodbine Road,  
Stamford, Connecticut 06903 USA  
15 September 1997**

**Dear Megan,**

**A few times I have talked to you about Captain Jack House (John A. House, II), USMC, a close friend of mine in Vietnam. I wanted to use this letter as my memorial to him as well as a part of my personal history to pass along to you.**

**Recently, I was drawn, for some reason, to buy a paperback book "Never Without Heroes" by Lawrence C. Vetter, Jr. (1996, Ballantine-Ivy Books). This book highlights the story of the Marine Third Reconnaissance Battalion in Vietnam, 1965-1970.**

**Jack's story is in Chapter 12, "Team Striker." I have enclosed a copy.**

**I was assigned (from January to December 1967) to the 8th RRFS of the U.S. Army Security Agency at Phu Bai, which was a little south of Hue and close to the DMZ. We were co-located with the U.S. Third Marine Division and much of our mission was active intelligence support for tactical operations. The Division was commanded by Major General Bruno A. Hochmuth, a Texas A&M graduate (killed in November 1967 when his helicopter went down north of Hue).**

**Our combat base was organized so that we could defend ourselves and our weapons, including my 81mm mortar platoon, were integrated into the overall perimeter defense. We had taken over an old French facility with some permanent buildings and we added a great deal more. Our compound included a very sophisticated defense network, watch towers and well-built bunkers and trench lines.**

**For whatever reason, the Marine Corps rationed alcohol to grunts and even to officers. Our small Army officer's club (housed in one of the older buildings) was, literally, the only "bar" in the area. It was open to everyone and there was never, while I was there, any fight or big disagreement -- despite the fact that this little "Army intelligence bar" was frequented by a tough and combat-tested bunch of officers from the Third Marine Recon Battalion, Army Special Forces, Army Mohawk aviators and pilots from HMM-265, among others.**

**Jack was a CH-46 pilot with Helicopter Marine Medium (HMM-265).**

**From February to May 1967 we became good friends -- the special closeness that men often seem to develop in a combat environment.**

**Jack was from Pelham, New York, well-educated and witty. He was married to Amy, a Hawaiian woman, who was pregnant at the same time your mother was expecting you.**

We met frequently at the "Club," grilled steaks, watched movies and had a good time. Jack and his buddies told us about their work which was primarily in support of "insertions" and "extractions" for the Third Recon Battalion (we couldn't talk about what we did, although much of our work involved them and their combat missions).

After you were born on 4 May 1967, it took several days for the Red Cross to get word to me. It also took a few days for the news to reach Jack that Amy had given birth to his first child, Eric.

We had a big party at the "Club" and Jack and I had one memorable night and celebration, the details of which remain altogether blurry.

We continued to meet, as usual, through May and June for drinks, dinner and to swap stories and talk about our kids.

In late June of 1967, I was working on a special project and I had to go to MACV (Military Assistance Command - Vietnam) headquarters in Saigon. It was one of only three visits to Saigon.

The mission was so important to 3rd MarDiv that General Hochmuth gave me a special pass (which I have kept somewhere) authorizing me priority travel.

I came back to Phu Bai late on 1 July to be met at the flight line by my bunk-mate Captain Ken Kester. It was unusual for Ken to meet me and I could tell by his facial expression that something was very wrong (and I was afraid that it was something at home).

Ken told me, directly, Jack was dead and that there was no doubt. He had been Killed In Action on a recon mission southwest of Phu Bai. The news hit me very hard. I remember being quite upset and Ken holding me.

I was told that, because of the consuming fire, they could not get Jack's body out of what was left of the aircraft. Division tried to recover Jack but the area was a bad one. We felt terrible about that.

I talked by phone with Amy in the late Summer of 1967 when your Mom and I were together on R&R in Hawaii and we corresponded for a few years thereafter. Amy House once asked me to tell her about Jack and I remember writing her a long letter in 1968 or 1969. I have visited his name on the "Wall" in Washington, D.C. many times and you may remember when we visited the Punch Bowl in Hawaii in December 1985 where there is a plaque in his memory.

Eric is your age and Jack's only child. I hope that both he and Amy are doing well.

Something brought my attention to this paperback which was sitting on a shelf in the back of the store. I am thankful for that. This provides Jack's story for the first time I have seen it in print.

On 30 June Jack was the pilot on a reconnaissance "insertion" for Team Striker. This is an extract from the book and where I have finally come to

know the details of Jack's death. I did not know his co-pilot who survived, he was evacuated after the crash and I could not talk to him.

"When the chopper was within a few feet of the ground and Junior was about to leap and run, he was knocked off his feet by a sudden rocking and shaking of the aircraft.

Still inside the chopper, the Marines sensed their first nervous fear; they knew that their helicopter had dropped into an ambush and was being battered by heavy weapons. Enemy fire penetrated the metal skin and ripped past the Marines inside."

"Even though 46s had survived severe damage in other battles, this old sky tank had been hit by an antitank round and it was starting to break up. The chopper was fatally wounded but struggled upward about two hundred feet."

"The pilot, Capt. John A. House, II, was struggling with the craft, trying to reach the top of a hogback ridge very close by and away from the VC. But it couldn't be. The surviving Marines saw daylight through the roof of the chopper, and then the back section of the helicopter cracked completely off and fell away from the front. The front section of the aircraft crashed into the top level of ninety-foot-tall trees. Captain House had made it about three-fourths of the way to the top of the ridge and had given the team's survivors some breathing room. But he was dead and his co-pilot wounded."

Jack is a Marine hero.  
Jack is also my friend.

And even though Jack died more than 30 years ago his friendship and passing is one of the most indelible memories of my life.

I am almost 53 years old but Jack has not aged a day. My memory of him is still as bright now as it has always been. Not a week or a month goes by when I do not think of him. Every time I see, hear or read something about the Vietnam War I think of him and remember.

I have been able to live the future that Jack was not allowed to have.

I often silently offer him a salute and I confess I sometimes talk to him like we used to when we were sitting across a table from one another drinking beer and eating popcorn that Mom had shipped to me.

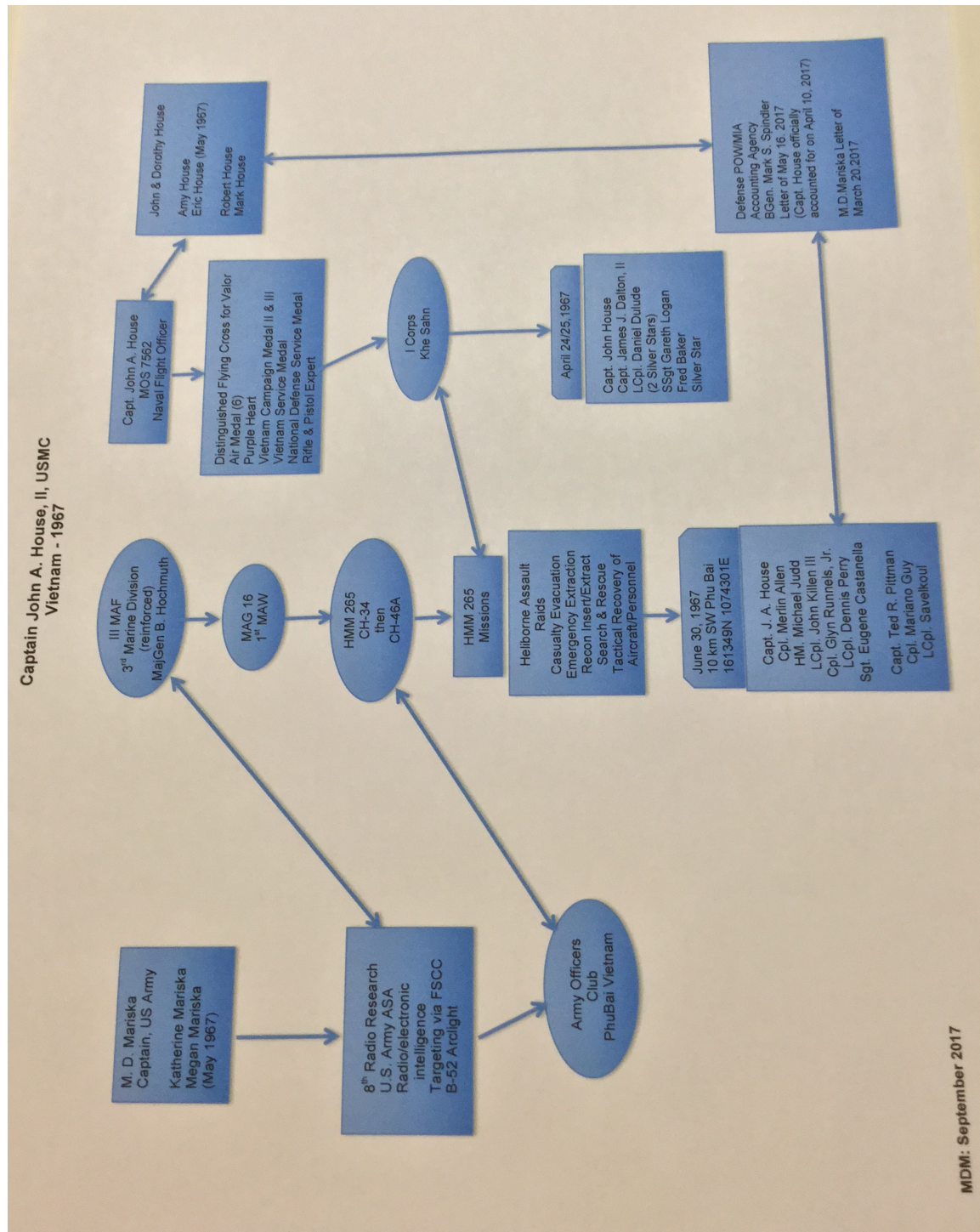
I would appreciate it if you would keep this letter as a testament to his memory.

War is a bad thing, but don't forget Jack. I am blessed to have him as a friend.

Love, *Dad*

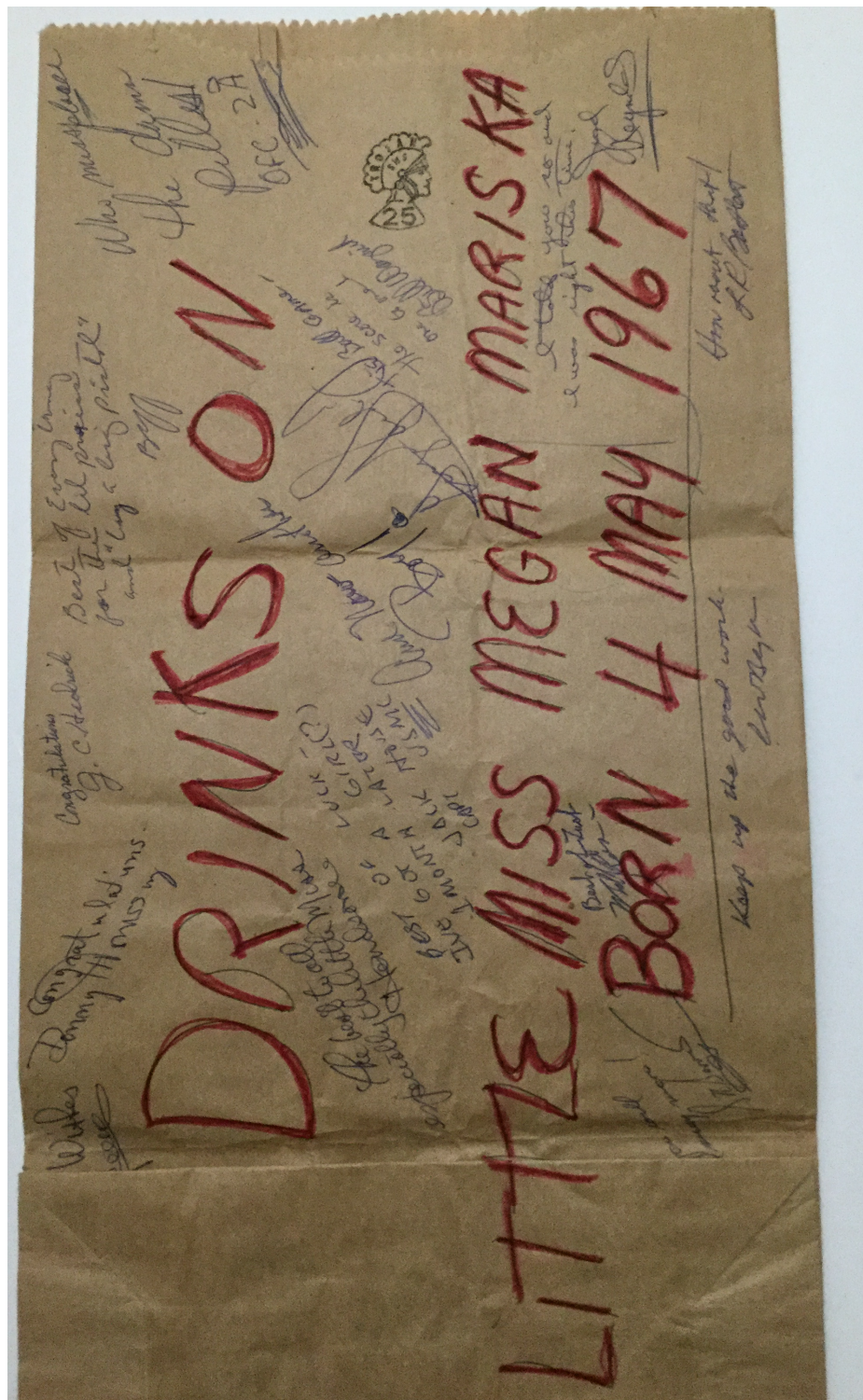


### 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, HMM-265, the 8<sup>th</sup> RRFs, Captain Jack House and their inter-relationships.





Copy of the Announcement of Megan Mariska's birth at the Officer's Bar, 8<sup>th</sup> RRFS (including Capt. Jack House personal congratulations - written in the center).





**Captain Jack House and Amy House**  
(circa mid-1960's)



**Captain Jack House, USMC**  
**(Chewing an inexpensive Cigar)**  
**(as both Captains House and Mariska enjoyed together at Phu Bai in 1967)**



**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**1650  
MMMA-3A  
16 May 2017**

**Subj            Verification of Awards and Decorations in the case  
                 of Captain John A. House, USMC.**

**Encl.           (1) Copy of CMC Memo 1650 MMMA-3A dtd 17 June 2015**

**1.        A review of Captain House's records revealed that he is entitled to the following awards, which are listed in order of precedence:**

**Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism and extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on June 30, 1967.**

**Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in action against the enemy in Vietnam resulting in his death.**

**Air Medal with Bronze Numeral "6" (Strike/Flight Awards) for meritorious achievement in aerial flight during the period March 13 to June 24, 1967.**

**Presidential Unit Citation awarded to 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing for service in Vietnam during the period May 11, 1965 to September 15, 1967.**

**Navy Unit Commendation Medal awarded to Marine Aircraft Group 16 for service during the period September 4, 1965 to August 24, 1966.**

**National Defense Service Medal.**

**Vietnam Service Medal with three Bronze Campaign Stars.**

**Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation Gallantry Cross with palm and frame) ribbon bar.**

**Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Civil Action Color with palm and frame) ribbon bar.**

**Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 1960 device.**

**Naval Aviator Insignia.**

**Rifle Expert Badge.**

**Pistol Expert Badge (Third Award).**

**2.        A further review of Captain House's records revealed that this Headquarters erroneously awarded him the Presidential Unit Citation awarded to 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division. Captain House is entitled to the Presidential Unit Citation awarded to 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing as indicated above. A copy of our previous awards verification is provided as the enclosure.**



**Distinguished Flying Cross**



**Purple Heart**



**Air Medal**

\* \* \* \* \*



**The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the  
DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS posthumously to**

**CAPTAIN JOHN A. HOUSE II  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**for service as set forth in the following**

**CITATION:**



**For heroism and extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as a Helicopter Aircraft Commander serving with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE in Vietnam on 30 June 1967. While attempting to land a small Marine reconnaissance party ten miles south of Phu Bai Airfield, Captain House's aircraft was taken under heavy fire and was badly hit and in flames before he could climb to safety. Realizing his aircraft could explode at any time, and with no cleared area open to him for landing, he selected the best available site and crash landed his helicopter into the tall jungle canopy on top of a ridgeline. Captain House lost his life in the crash but through his professional ability and cool courage, several Marines survived and were subsequently rescued. His outstanding courage, superb airmanship and valiant devotion to duty in the face of overwhelming odds reflected the highest credit upon himself, the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.**

**For the President,**

**Paul R. Ignatius  
Secretary of the Navy**

**U.S. Army Security Agency (ASA)  
8<sup>th</sup> Radio Research Field Station  
Phu Bai, Vietnam**

**(supporting both national missions and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division)**

The United States Army Security Agency (ASA) was the United States Army's signals intelligence branch. The Latin motto of the Army Security Agency was *Semper Vigilis* (Vigilant Always), which echoes Thomas Jefferson's declaration that "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

The Agency existed between 1945 and 1976 and was the successor to Army signals intelligence operations dating back to World War I. ASA was under the operational control of the Director of the National Security Agency (DIRNSA), located at Fort Meade, Maryland; but had its own tactical commander at Headquarters, ASA, Arlington Hall Station, Virginia.

Besides intelligence gathering, it had responsibility for the security of Army communications and for electronic countermeasures operations. In 1977, the ASA was merged with the US Army's Military Intelligence component to create the United States Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM).





Composed of soldiers trained in military intelligence, the ASA was tasked with monitoring and interpreting military communications of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and their allies and client states (Vietnam) around the world. The ASA was directly subordinate to the National Security Agency and all major field stations had NSA technical representatives present.

All gathered information had time-sensitive value depending on its importance and classification. Information was passed through intelligence channels within hours of intercept for the lowest-priority items, but in as little as 10 minutes for the most highly critical information.

ASA personnel were stationed at locations around the globe, wherever the United States had a military presence – publicly acknowledged or otherwise. In some cases, such as Eritrea, it was the primary military presence. One former Field Station, outside of Harrogate, England, in what is now North Yorkshire, was a primary listening post that was subsequently turned over to the British and became an RAF station. It is called RAF Menwith Hill and has been the site of peace protests.

Vietnam War.

Although not officially serving under the ASA name, covertly designated as Radio Research, ASA personnel of the 3rd Radio Research Unit were among the earliest U.S. military personnel in Vietnam; 3rd later grew to become the 509th Radio Research Group.



The first ASA soldier to be a battlefield fatality of the Vietnam War was Specialist 4 James T. Davis (from Livingston, Tennessee) who was killed on 22 December 1961, on a road near the old French Garrison of Cau Xang. He had been assigned to the 3rd Radio Research Unit at Tan Son Nhut Airport near Saigon, along with 92 other members of his unit. Davis Station, at Tan Son Nhut, was named after him. Although President Lyndon Johnson later termed Davis "the first American to fall in the defense of our freedom in Vietnam," a look at the Vietnam Veterans' memorial shows that he was nowhere near the first U.S. fatality.<sup>[3]</sup>

Most ASA personnel processed in country through Davis Station. Others attached to larger command structures prior to transport to Vietnam processed in with those units. ASA personnel were attached to Army infantry and armored cavalry units throughout the Vietnam War. Some teams were also attached to the Studies and Observation Group of Military Assistance Command Vietnam and special forces units. Assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) based out of Nha Trang was the 403rd Radio Research Group, Special Operations Detachment (SOD). SODiers deployed to Operational Detachment base camps throughout South Vietnam. Other teams were independent of other army units, such as the 313th Radio Research Battalion at Nha Trang. ASA personnel remained in Vietnam after the 1973 pullout of US Army combat forces and remained present until the Fall of Saigon in April 1975.

ASA MOSs include: Voice intercept operators, who are usually linguists with MOS 98G (plus a four character suffix (pLnn) to indicate proficiency level and language code), morse code high speed intercept operators ("Ditty Boppers", MOS 058 and later "Hogs" for their 05H designation), non-morse (teletype and voice) intercept operators (05K), communications security/signal security specialists (05G, "Goofies") direction-finding equipment operators ("Duffys" for their 05D designation), computer system operators (74E) who operated equipment at the NSA headquarters and out in the field; A K3 attached to the primary MOS meant the person was qualified to operate Jamming equipment.

ASA had its own separate training facilities, Military Police force, communication centers and chain of command. In 1976, all 33 MOS designations were consolidated into one field, 33S Electronic Repairman. The designation became Electronic Warfare Intercept Systems Repairman. Other specialists intercepted and analyzed radar transmissions or intercepted communications from missiles and satellites.

**These occupations, which required a top secret clearance with Special Intelligence/crypto special clearances, were essential to U.S. Cold War efforts. ASA units usually operated in four groups called 'tricks', using revolving shifts to provide coverage twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. ASA troops were not allowed to discuss their operations with outsiders – in fact, they could not talk among themselves about their duties unless they were in a secure location. Even today, some of the missions still cannot be discussed. ASA personnel processing out of sensitive operations were debriefed and signed a document specifying a thirty-year elapsed time before they could discuss what they had done or observed.**

**Owing to the sensitivity of the information with which they worked, ASA personnel were subject to travel restrictions during and sometimes after their time in service. The activities of the ASA have only recently been partially declassified. This turn of events has been accompanied by the appearance of a small number of ASA memoirs and novels.**



\* \* \* \* \*

## **Intelligence Collection by the 8<sup>th</sup> RRFS 138<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company**



**Beech RU-8D Twin Bonanza**

**This aircraft flew electronic (ELINT) and radio intelligence gathering missions in the skies over South Vietnam and Laos with the US Army 138th Aviation Company, 224th Aviation Battalion from the summer of 1966 until 1972. The aircraft above is one of two RU-8Ds usually flown by the 138th out of Phu Bai, South Vietnam in support of 3<sup>rd</sup> MarDiv tactical operations.**

**The mission of the 138th (with operational control to the 8<sup>th</sup> RRFS) was to provide support to the US Marine Corps in the form of ELINT gathering, intercepting enemy radio transmissions to locate their troop concentrations and movements and locating enemy transmitters and providing B-52 strike coordinates. That is why the aircraft is covered with antennas. The planes and pilots were called “spooks,” Vietnam slang for intelligence types.**

**The call-sign "*Lonely Ringer*" was assigned to the 224th Aviation Battalion (RR) which included the 1st RR, the 138th, 144th, 146th and 156th Avn. Companies (RR). The RU-8Ds had no armament and no armor protection. The brass plate on the right fuselage on this model is dedicated to four members of the 138th Aviation Company killed in action in Vietnam.**

**The RU-8D had a pilot, co-pilot (with M.D. Mariska completing 25 missions as an aerial observer) and an intercept operator, a maximum speed of 230 mph and a ceiling of 27,000 ft. (but usually flew at between 8,000 and 10,000 ft. in I Corps). The “8,” as it was normally called, had a range of 1400 miles, a wingspan of 45 ft. and a gross weight of 7300 lbs.**

**\* \* \* \* \***



The 8<sup>th</sup> RRFs (ASA) providing support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marines engaged with the 324B Division on September 21/22, 1967 (Memorandum to the MGen. Bruno Hochmuth, Commanding General, 3<sup>rd</sup> MarDiv, dtd September 23, 1967).

MEMORANDUM

23 September 1967

From: Special Intelligence Officer  
To: Commanding General, 3d Marine Division

Subj: Summary of joint services firing mission on the night and early morning of 21/22 September

1. On 21 September 1967 the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines were engaged with elements of the 90th Regiment, 324B Division to the east of Con Thien Combat Base. Special Intelligence provided indications that additional elements of the 90th Regiment would possibly be committed. Based on these indications, I requested that the US Army's 8th Radio Research Field Station, commanded by Lt Col Garrant, provide Drill-Press aircraft coverage with KY-8 (air to ground) communications capability during the late evening and early morning hours of 21/22 September. Approval was obtained from Saigon through the efforts of Captain Mariska, USA; Major Gentry and TSgt McCullough, USAF. The flight launched at 212345H.
2. During the flight, I was monitoring the KY-8, and was advised by TSgt McCullough, who was manning one of the positions on Drillpress, that he had observed muzzle flashes from an area above the DMZ. I requested a specific location in order to pass the information to the 3d Marine Division FSCC for targeting. Captain Hermes USMC, the FSCC representative, set up a conference call to the FSCC at Dong Ha Combat Base, where Captain Stanton accepted the target. He advised that the most suitable weapons system available was the USS Morton (DD) and requested that we adjust fire. I advised him that we would try but not to expect professional FO adjustments. The target was taken under fire. There were several rather jerky attempts to adjust the fire; however, since the mission of Drillpress is not conducive to forward observing (C47), no attempt was made to get the aircraft on the gun target line. The impact of our rounds was apparently relatively close since TSgt McCullough reported that the shore batteries returned Morton's fire.
3. This is probable the first time a firing mission has been conducted by an untrained airborne Air Force Technician through a Marine aboard an Army station, 50 miles from the target area, through two USMC FSCC's and employing a U.S. Navy ship as the weapons system.

WAYNE B. MASON  
1stLt USMC

**David Manville Petteys**  
**Home of record: San Diego, California**

**AWARDS AND CITATIONS**



**Silver Star**

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Captain David Manville Petteys (MCSN: 0-86421), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Pilot with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE (HMM-265), Marine Aircraft Group SIXTEEN, FIRST Marine Aircraft Wing, in connection with combat operations against insurgent communist (Viet Cong) forces in the Republic of Vietnam. On 30 June 1967, Captain Petteys launched aboard a CH-46A helicopter as Flight Leader of nine aircraft on a mission to insert a reaction force to rescue survivors and secure the crash site of a downed CH-46A helicopter. Forced to debark the reaction force over a mile from the crash site due to the dense jungle and rugged terrain, Captain Petteys realized it would take more than an hour before the Marines could reach the downed aircraft. Disregarding his own safety, he unhesitatingly volunteered to attempt an extraction of the survivors although his aircraft would be in full view of enemy positions, which were located approximately 150 meters from the extraction point. Arriving over the pickup site, he displayed exemplary airmanship by maintaining a steady hover above the zone for over thirty minutes until seven survivors were hoisted through 100 feet of dense jungle growth and assisted aboard his helicopter. After ensuring that all the men were safely aboard, he attempted to depart the area when his aircraft suddenly came under heavy anti-aircraft fire. Demonstrating exceptional aeronautical ability, Captain Petteys skillfully maneuvered his aircraft through the intense enemy fire and safely departed the hazardous area. His bold initiative and resolute determination were an inspiration to all who served with him and were instrumental in saving the lives of seven Marines. By his steadfast courage, calm professionalism and selfless devotion to duty in the face of extreme personal danger, Captain Petteys upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

**Action Date: June 30, 1967**

**Service: Marine Corps**

**Rank: Captain**

**Company: Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265 (HMM-265)**

**Division: 1st Marine Aircraft Wing**



\* \* \* \* \*



**Daniel Douglas Dulude**  
**Home of record: Cumberland, Rhode Island**

**Daniel Dulude earned back-two-back Silver Stars in daring medical evacuation missions on two consecutive days, one of those extremely rare cases in history where major awards were earned over the span of just two consecutive days.**

**AWARDS AND CITATIONS**



**Silver Star**

**The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lance Corporal Daniel Douglas Dulude (MCSN: 2186420), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Crew Chief with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE (HMM-265), Marine Aircraft Group THIRTY-SIX (MAG-36), FIRST Marine Aircraft Wing, in connection with operations against insurgent communist (Viet Cong) forces in the Republic of Vietnam. On 24 April 1967, Lance Corporal Dulude served aboard a CH-46A transport helicopter assigned an emergency medical evacuation of casualties from a company heavily engaged with the enemy nearly four miles northwest of Khe Sanh. Arriving over the area and learning that the landing zone was covered by trees and stumps and that heavy enemy fire would be encountered, Lance Corporal Dulude calmly directed his pilot through the terrain hazards to a safe landing. The first wounded Marine reached the aircraft and indicated that his companions would be unable to make their way to the helicopter without aid. With complete disregard for his own safety in the face of intense hostile fire, Lance Corporal Dulude unhesitatingly ran twenty-five meters to the side of an injured man and carried him to the aircraft. Braving the fire a second time, he located**

another stricken Marine and returned him to the helicopter. Although the Viet Cong automatic weapons fire continued to sweep the area, he ran again to assist the wounded, returning to the helicopter as enemy mortar rounds began to land in the zone. Undaunted, Lance Corporal Dulude courageously returned to the last of the injured men and brought him back to the aircraft. When assured that all the wounded were safely aboard, he instructed the pilot to lift off. Although exhausted by his efforts, he refused rest and immediately began administering first aid to the wounded en route to the nearest medical facility. By his bold initiative, courageous action and unswerving devotion to duty at great personal risk, Lance Corporal Dulude inspired all who observed him, was undoubtedly instrumental in saving several Marines from further injury or possible death and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

Action Date: 24-Apr-67

Service: Marine Corps

Rank: Lance Corporal

Company: Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265 (HMM-265)

Division: 1st Marine Aircraft Wing



Silver Star

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Award of the Silver Star to Lance Corporal Daniel Douglas Dulude (MCSN: 2186420), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Crew Chief with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE (HMM-265), Marine Aircraft Group THIRTY-SIX (MAG-36), FIRST Marine Aircraft Wing, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On 25 April 1967, Lance Corporal Dulude served aboard a CH-46A transport helicopter assigned an emergency retraction mission of an eight-man reconnaissance team heavily engaged with a numerically superior enemy force west of Khe Sanh. All members of the team had been wounded and only two were able to walk. Arriving over the area, the aircraft began its descent into a restricted landing zone along a

narrow ridge line. When the helicopter landed too far from the wounded Marines to effect their embarkation, Lance Corporal Dulude displayed exceptional skill and courage as he positioned himself on the open rear ramp, exposed to enemy fire only seventy-five meters away, and calmly directed the pilot through a difficult back-taxi maneuver to the first wounded man, all the while delivering fire on the hostile positions with his pistol. After assisting the first man aboard, he left the aircraft and ran under intense enemy fire to assist another casualty to the transport. Undaunted by the danger to his own life, he returned again to the fire-swept area and assisted another stricken man aboard. Throwing grenades, the enemy had advanced to within fifty meters as Lance Corporal Dulude courageously left the helicopter again to rescue the last of the wounded Marines. Only after he was assured that all the injured were safely aboard the aircraft did he embark and begin to administer first aid as the helicopter quickly lifted out of the hazardous zone. By his superior professional skill, courageous action and unswerving devotion to duty at great personal risk, Lance Corporal Dulude undoubtedly was instrumental in preventing the entire reconnaissance team from being killed or captured and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

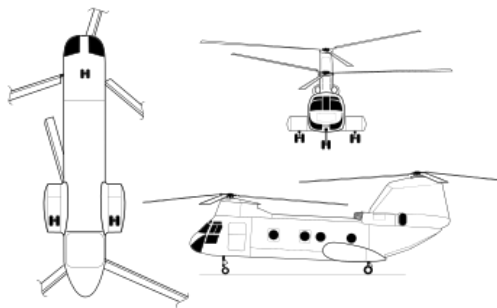
**Action Date: 25-Apr-67**

**Service: Marine Corps**

**Rank: Lance Corporal**

**Company: Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265 (HMM-265)**

**Division: 1st Marine Aircraft Wing**



\* \* \* \* \*

**Fred J. Baker**  
**Home of record: Piedmont, Alabama**

**AWARDS AND CITATIONS**



**Silver Star**

**The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lance Corporal Fred J. Baker (MCSN: 214711), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Member, Reconnaissance Team HAWK, Company A, Third Reconnaissance Battalion, THIRD Marine Division, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on 25 April 1967. The 8-man reconnaissance team while located on a ridge northwest of Khe Sanh Combat Base was nearly overrun by a sizeable North Vietnamese Army Force. During the attack, all members of the team were wounded by a rocket propelled grenade and required emergency extraction by helicopter. Lance Corporal Baker and another Marine crawled, leading the remainder of the Team to the designated landing zone to await the arrival of the helicopters. Noticing the extent of his comrade's wound, he entered the fire-swept landing zone alone to direct the helicopter while it landed on the ridge line. After assisting the Marine aboard the aircraft, he determined that the intensity of the enemy fire precluded the aircraft remaining in the landing zone long enough for the more seriously wounded Marines to make their way to the aircraft. Undaunted by the danger to their lives, he and a crew member exited the relative safety of the helicopter to help the other wounded team members aboard. Although the enemy had advanced to within 50 meters of the aircraft under the cover of a hail of automatic weapons fire and grenades, he courageously left the helicopter once again to rescue one of the**

remaining wounded Marines. Only after he assured himself that all the injured were safely aboard the aircraft did he embark and begin to administer first aid to the other wounded Marines as the helicopter lifted out of the landing zone. Lance Corporal Baker's courageous initiative, unselfishness, and unwavering devotion to duty reflected great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

**Action Date: 25-Apr-67**

**Service: Marine Corps**

**Rank: Lance Corporal**

**Company: Company A**

**Battalion: 3d Reconnaissance Battalion**

**Division: 3d Marine Division (Rein.), FMF**



**NAVY Commendation Medal  
with Combat 'V'**

**The Secretary of the Navy takes pride in presenting the NAVY  
COMMENDATION MEDAL with Combat 'V' posthumously to**

**SERGEANT EUGENE CASTANEDA  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**For service as set forth in the following**

**CITATION:**

**For heroic achievement while serving as a patrol leader in the rescue of members of a reconnaissance patrol and crew members of CH-46A helicopter in the Republic of Vietnam on the afternoon of 30 June 1967. At**



approximately 1530, the helicopter in which Sergeant Castaneda was a passenger was taken under enemy small arms fire during its final approach to a landing zone in enemy territory and struck in the right rear fuel tank, causing an immediate fire in the interior of the aircraft. The pilot successfully maneuvered the aircraft away from the enemy fire but the damage prevented the aircraft from clearing the surrounding hill mass. The pilot's attempt to negotiate a successful landing resulted in a crash and immediate explosion. Sergeant Castaneda, who was in the forward section of the aircraft, was thrown free by the initial explosion and sustained only minor burns, lacerations and bruises. Upon landing and realizing the situation, he began searching for survivors. Immediately he saw three survivors and took them to a position of safety and administered first aid. He then fired his pencil flare gun to alert a circling aircraft that there were survivors. Sergeant Castaneda and pilot [sic co-pilot] who had received only minor injuries, returned to the burning aircraft in search of additional survivors, weapons, and equipment. Upon reaching the flaming helicopter, Sergeant Castaneda saw the pilot, still in his seat, engulfed in flames. In complete disregard for his own welfare he attempted to enter the aircraft to bring the pilot to safety but was prevented from entering because of the intense heat and exploding ammunition. After being unable to reach the pilot, he began searching the area for additional survivors. When no others could be located, he continued to fire pencil flares until the rescue helicopter arrived over their position. By his prompt and courageous actions, and his outstanding initiative, Sergeant Castaneda reflected great upon himself and the Marine Corps and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

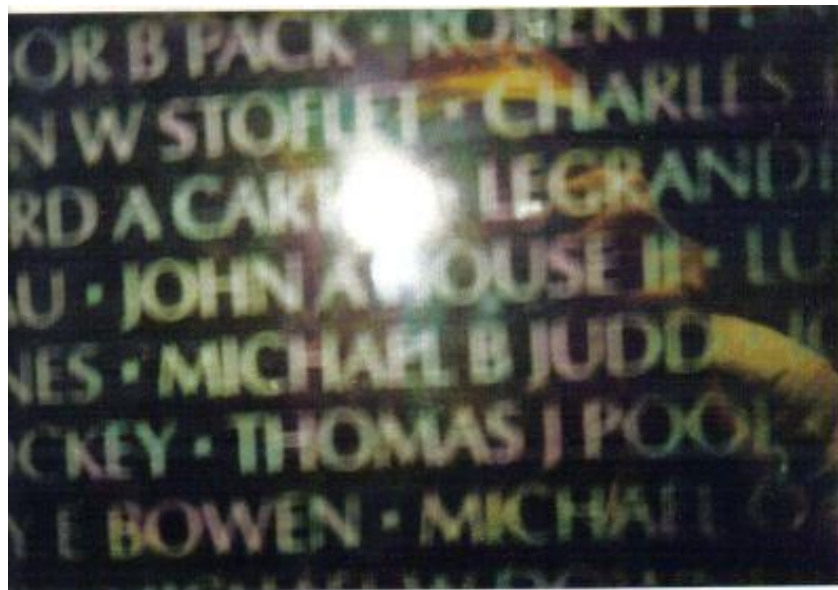
**PAUL R. IGNATIUS**  
Secretary of the Navy



**Fatal Skies**  
**(an extract and c. 1998)**  
**by Phan Cong Ton**  
**(Quantico room-mate, friend and Best Man)**

I enjoyed the reunion with my old military friends but my trip to The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington D.C. made a deep impression in my soul. On the dedication wall at the memorial, I was able to find the location of a close friend's name whose memory has haunted me for almost 31 years. The name and location of my friend on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Black Wall was written as follows:

John A. House II  
Panel 22 E Line 87  
The Black Wall, Washington, D.C.



In 1963, i had the opportunity to travel overseas and train in the United States. The team which traveled for training in America consisted of 5 Second Lieutenants, Le Van Khanh, Le Van Can, Vu Manh Hung, Nguyen Van Han and me the team leader, Phan Cong Ton. We were fortunate enough to take the train instead of flying from San Francisco, California to Quantico, Virginia. It made the trip much more scenic and enjoyable. During the train ride for 3 days and nights through the United States, we were able to keep each other company and enjoyed our time together. We finally arrived at the train station in Quantico on a beautiful sunny afternoon. At that time, Quantico was a small city about 35 miles South of Washington, D.C. Located there were many military training schools for officers of the United States Marine Corps and those of other ally countries. The Basic School was training for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants in order to become either Platoon Leaders or Company Commanders. In addition, there were other Staff Courses or Professional Courses for higher



ranking officers. That year, our team was there for the Basic School, United States Marine Corps.

According to the school tradition there were a lot of Candidate Officers who came to the Quantico train station to welcome us. Second Lieutenant John "Jack" A. House was among of them. He introduced himself as my new roommate.

School rules stated that Jack was responsible for assisting me while in school, as well as helping me outside of school. In school he helped and encouraged me through class lessons and even during all exercises or activities on military training fields. Outside of schooling, he introduced me to and made me familiar with social life, especially at first since I was dealing with a new environment and a strange unfamiliar culture. Throughout our daily activities, living in the same room, and especially since we were at the same age, Jack and I became the closest of friends. Jack was good-natured, easy-going, and kind, an honest man with consideration for others. It came as a surprise to me when I recognized his demeanor of affection and sentiment was very similar to Asians. Later on, I was happy to discover that Jack had a Japanese girl friend whose name was Amy, an elementary school teacher in Oregon.



Jack and I frequently discussed a plan we had created. After we finished our training course, we would drive to San Francisco, taking turns at the wheel, where we would part ways and say good-bye to each other. I would return to Vietnam and Jack would visit Amy in Oregon. According to our plan, at the second month of our course, Jack would begin modifying his red truck for the trip.



**After we formed the plan, Jack jumped right to work. During his weekends, instead of resting or going out with friends, he would drive his truck to a shop on Main Side in Downtown Quantico to work on his truck.**

**For more than a month everything was going smoothly but one day Jack suddenly pulled me aside in the cafeteria at school and told me some good news. He told me that after finishing the Basic School, he would be taking a training course in flying to become a USMC helicopter pilot and canceling our planned road trip. The most exciting news was that Amy would be moving to Quantico to teach and two months after that, Jack and Amy would be getting married.**

**Jack and Amy had scheduled their wedding to be held in Baltimore, Maryland and in attendance were family members and close friends. I was the only close friend Jack invited to his wedding from our USMC School and for first time in my life, I was the best man. Their wedding was orchestrated perfectly in the American tradition.**

**On Friday night before the wedding, those who lived afar like Jack and I would arrive at the hotel in Baltimore which was reserved for members of both families. Amy, the bride, would be flying from Oregon to Baltimore Friday evening. Others who lived in nearby states or cities would be driving to the wedding the next day.**

**On Saturday, August 17, 1963, the wedding was organized at a church by Noon and in the evening, the wedding reception was to be held at the hotel where we stayed. For their wedding, Jack, the Groom and I, the Best Man, would wear USMC and VNMC Officer's Dress white uniforms traditionally reserved for special ceremonies.**



**(Jack & Amy's wedding. Ton was in the middle as Jack's Best Man)**



**On Sunday morning everybody helped load all the wedding gifts given by family and friends onto Jack's truck. Following the American Tradition, gifts had been pre-chosen and placed on their wedding gift registry. After that everybody hugged one another, wished each other well and said their goodbyes.**

**From Baltimore I drove the truck back to Quantico while Jack and Amy sat in the seat beside me. When we reached the USMC School, I returned to**



the bachelors' quarters while Jack and Amy went to their new house which they had rented located about 5 miles from the school. Due to school rules, married officers have to rent separate living quarters off campus. I was saddened that from that day on, Jack would no longer be my roommate. Although I did get a new roommate, he wouldn't be as close a friend as Jack.

While living with Jack as my roommate, he was often influenced by what Jack referred to as "my French way". Meaning when I invited him out to eat, I paid for him. In return, when he invited me out to eat, he paid for me. I never liked going out to eat together when each person pays for himself, typical with the Americans I knew. It seemed impolite and not very friendly. Jack eventually got used to my ideas and joyfully applied "Ton's French Way", as he called it in joking with me.

After their wedding, Jack and Amy often invited me to their home fearing that I would be lonely. I myself did not want to bother the newlyweds, but they would insist that every now and then we should go out together. We became a happy team of three. When we could we went out together to eat, went to movies, or to shows. We also went on picnics, fishing and accumulated many fond memories hunting deer together in Virginia.

Since we often went out as a team of three, Jack had a new idea about "Ton's French Way". He reasoned it was not fair for us to take turns paying because I had to pay for two people, while he and his wife only pay for one. Finally, they made me agree to their final "win/ win" solution. The three of us would take turns paying when going out together. Over time we became the closest of friends. We were comfortable, joyous and care-free in our friendship.



(From left to right: Jack, Ton and Amy)

As the Vietnamese saying goes, "Days of joy shall pass quickly" and our training course soon ended. I then had to wave goodbye to all my friends and classmates. I also had to wave goodbye to Jack and Amy and return to Vietnam and the front lines of the war. The day of our farewell was extremely emotional for the three of us. While saying goodbye no one

**promised when we would see one another again in the days to come. Jack cried, Amy cried, as did I. From that day on, we were far apart!**



**(Ton was in an operation on a Navy Ship)**

**In 1964 I returned to Vietnam, the war had increased and I went back to the front lines for many different operations throughout all of the four Corps territories of South Vietnam. I tried to keep in touch with Jack and Amy by the only means I could, writing letters through the mail. Besides letters and pictures we also sent each other gifts, which were simple but expressed to each other the endless affection of our friendship.**

**When the 1<sup>st</sup> Vietnamese Marine Corps Battalion was at Camp Yet Kieu in Thu Duc, South Vietnam; I took a swim at the pool inside the camp and lost my Marine Corps ring that I bought in the United States at school during 1963. When Jack and Amy learned I had lost my ring, they sent a Marine Corps ring as a gift for me via their cousin, who was serving in the U.S. Army at Nha Trang (the coastal capital city of Khanh Hoa Province on the South Central Coast of Vietnam). Their cousin was not sure how to send me their gift, but before moving to another unit he asked a friend, who was a Vietnamese police officer to forward it to me. The police officer sent me a letter and informed me about the gift. I asked my sister from Dalat, my hometown, who went to Nha Trang to pick it up and send it to me. I finally received Jack and Amy's gift box with the ring about a year after they had sent it.**

**Every deer-hunting season after I returned home, Jack and Amy would send me some deer jerky and a souvenir deer tail they had hunted. From my side, sometimes I sent them local gifts from the areas I had stopped by during my military operations. One time I sent them engraved nametags made of marble, the specialty product of the Marble Mountains, Ngu Hanh Son in Da Nang. Another time, I sent them some wooden souvenirs from my hometown of Dalat when I went home for vacation.**



Once I also sent Amy a set of “ao dai” with trousers (a traditional Vietnamese woman dress and pants). There was an interesting story that accompanied this special gift. I had gone to Thiet Lap, a tailor’s shop for women’s dresses in Saigon. I asked the tailor how to take measurements for an “ao dai” and trousers. Then I wrote Amy with the tailor’s instructions on how to take the measurements. After receiving my letter, Amy followed the tailor’s instructions and sent them back to me. I returned to the tailor with Amy’s measurements and ordered the dress. When the “ao dai” and trousers were finished, I sent them as a gift to Amy. I asked Amy if she could send me some pictures wearing the “ao dai” and trousers. I wanted to see whether or not she looked like a Vietnamese girl wearing the “ao dai” and trousers.

Later on, I received a letter from Jack which I thought would contain Amy’s photos, but there was no pictures, but instead was some of Amy’s comments and questions related to the dress. The letter read, “My dear friend, when I put the “ao dai” and trousers on, I felt they were too loose and I was cold. Jack and I just discussed it but we haven’t been sure what kind of underwear is appropriate?”

I went and asked around for her, making sure I would have the correct answer. Some time later, I received their letter with some pictures inside. Before I opened it, I imagined that I would see a Saigon girl; but upon looking at the pictures, I burst out laughing because I was facing a Tokyo girl in a Vietnamese traditional dress. Due to misinterpretation of the instructions on how to take the measurements, the “ao dai” didn’t fit correctly. It was too loose and not accurate in fit as a result. Amy looked like a Vietnamese girl from the countryside and looked very funny.

Through their letters and pictures I knew that Jack had finished flying school to become a USMC Pilot. He had finally become a chopper pilot instead of a fighter pilot, just as he had dreamed.

In 1966 I received two items of good news from them: Amy was pregnant and Jack just received a promotion to Captain. In early 1967, Jack let me know some important news that sent shivers up and down my spine. Upon hearing his news, I was happy at the thought of seeing Jack once more, but scared that he would be in danger. It troubles me so and I did not sleep well for a many nights. The news was that Jack volunteered to go to deploy to Vietnam some times earlier than he had been scheduled. In his letter he wrote, “I would like to go to Vietnam sooner in order to see you.” Finally, Jack came to Vietnam in February/1967.

Jack’s squadron was located in the Phu Bai area, close to Hue, the citadel of the old Vietnam Monarchy. We had still not seen each other in person, although we still wrote to one another. Jack told me about his operational flights in Quang Tri, Hue, South West Phu Bai area and in Da Nang.

In one of Jack’s letters he wrote, “My dear friend Ton, every time I fly over any cities or locations with names you used to mention, I miss you a lot. I told Amy that I would like to see you again. I hope we get some days off together to visit Saigon, or go to Dalat and see your family, like I wanted. Amy always mentions your description of Dalat, your hometown with its immense hills filled with pine trees like those of Oregon, where she had

once lived!" In closing he wrote, "I described to Amy the beautiful shores I had flown over from which I had a dream. The beautiful sceneries I flew over and in skies above your country, soon at peace!"

My First Vietnamese Marine Corps Battalion returned to the Binh Dinh Province for the second time. During one afternoon, my unit stayed atop a coconut tree hill located at the foot of Phu Cu Pass where I received one of Amy's letters from Hawaii. This letter was unusually short compared to previous ones. As I read Amy's letter, I came to hear that Jack's helicopter had been shot down during an operation about three weeks ago. One of Amy's friends in Jack's squadron had called to tell her the bad news. Upon finding out, Amy suffered greatly with misery and was very flustered. She was frightened and prayed to God to protect Jack. She just hoped that Jack was still alive and was just captured, that way he could be traded as a prisoner of war sometime in the future. In her letter, she asked me if I could, go to the area where her husband was shot down to see whether I could find any witnesses with information about Jack.

I wanted to go, but I couldn't because my battalion was in the middle of military operations in the Binh Dinh Province. There was no chance I would be given permission to go to Phu Bai area (about 15 km or 9.32 miles Southeast of Hue) like Amy had requested. Right away, I wrote a letter to the Commander of Jack's Squadron. It was the best way I could to learn more details of Jack's situation. Over a week after I wrote the letter, I received a big envelope from the Colonel, Jack's Squadron Commander. The big envelope contained a letter sharing the sad news, some detailed information related to Jack's operation, a copy of the operation order, copies of maps of operation area, pictures of the downed chopper on the day it was shot and pictures of the area a couple days later.

Within the Commander's envelope and attached documents were additional details. Jack's mission was to insert Marine Reconnaissance teams into heavily protected Viet Cong strongholds, the Landing Zone (LZ) located at 12 miles South of Phu Bai Airfield. Just as Jack's chopper was about to arrive at their designated Landing Zone, it was shot down by Viet Cong machine guns and small arms fire on June 30/1967. Jack and other 4 Marines were possibly killed in action. The report also noted that seven people survived: one Co-Pilot and six reconnaissance soldiers, who were rescued by helicopter couple hours later about 2 miles where Jack's helicopter exploded.

The report also stated that two of the reconnaissance soldiers in Jack's chopper survived and were rescued the next day at a location about 10 Kilometers South of where the chopper was downed. Four of the crew and remaining six soldiers of the recon squad were possibly killed in action when the chopper burst into flames after being hit by Viet Cong anti-aircraft fire or other weapons.

The Colonel, Jack's USMC Squadron Commander, let me know that he also sent the same documents I received to Amy. Due to military policy, Jack was listed as a soldier missing-in-action since no body was recovered. As I read the documents from Jack's Commander, my hopes for his survival began to fade and my worst fears were confirmed. Jack's percentage of surviving the crash and subsequent fire was extremely low,

just like my hopes that he was captured alive. Even so, I wrote a letter to Amy with my heartfelt words of consolation and hinted at some fragile hope for her.

A few months later while I went out on an operation in Vinh Long province, a southern city, I received a letter from Amy. She let me know something happened in her family: In January/1967 Jack took her back in Hawaii, where her mother's family have been living and the next month, Jack went to Vietnam. I thought to myself a Vietnamese saying, "When things go well, one goes to their paternal side; when things go badly, one goes to their maternal side." Since Amy was originally from Japan, she undoubtedly applied the ways of living as an Asian woman! Jack had felt safe because during the time she was pregnant and especially when she gave birth, her mother would take care of her. She also let me know the good news: she gave birth her son Eric on June 2/1967 but she was still really sad and worry about Jack's destiny after she had received the letter from Jack's Commander talking about Jack's helicopter was shot down.

Receiving Amy's letter, I had a great feeling about her and Eric, anyway they were living under the good care of her mother's family. That was her farewell letter she wrote to me and was also the last one I ever received.

The next year, Mau Than, the Year of Monkey of 1968, we were involved in the most terrible year of the war. The Viet Cong had attacked and seized the old citadel of Hue couple days before that Lunar New Year. My 1<sup>st</sup> Vietnamese Marine Battalion had attacked and finally re-occupied the old citadel after Viet Cong seizing it within 28 days and nights.

I was wounded three times during the year of 1968 and it was the fourth one of my whole military career. The fourth wound I received in battle was the most serious of all and it meant some changes for me. I was no longer allowed to go on operations and was transferred to the Vietnamese Marine Corps Division Headquarters to become a G3 Staff Officer from 1969.

Then, the worst day of our Republic of Vietnam -April 30, 1975- came. I stayed in the country and began my journey of spanning many years spent in the so-called "re-education camps", the name for the forced-labor camps, in both South and North of Vietnam. During times of great suffering and when one's spirit falls down to the bottom of a living hell, I often thought of my fallen friends who sacrificed in the same units with me. I recognized that those lost friends, who had been washed from burden of a suffering life; they were completely rid of separation or sadness; they were rid of great misery and the maltreatment of human lives. During those trying times, I had many insights about the fragile border between life and death. It seemed to me that my body had melted away and my spirit was submerged in water, I swam to release myself from the pain of life.



**(A re-education camp on the movie “The Fall of South Viet Nam”)**

**During times of greatest suffering I thought of Nguyen Van Dang who went to the same high school in our hometown of Dalat. He was in the same unit with me, 1<sup>st</sup> VNMC Battalion, and he died in the Year of Monkey, few months after the fourth time I was wounded. Also during times of great suffering, I particularly remembered Jack. Jack had come to my country for his military operations but he had also eagerly waited for the day to see me, his old close friend. But the reunion-to-be was so cruel, sorrowful and full of tears; it ended dramatically with only separation and farewell!**

**Jack! Until now, I have not had a chance to go back to this city, the U.S. Capital of Washington D.C., where we once came. Nor have I enjoyed so much fun as we did some 35 years ago. While at the Vietnam War Veterans Memorial, all those old memories came flooding back to me in this saddest of places. The old memories haunted and lingered about this black wall of remembrance, they seemed to be: silent, cold and isolated. In the reflection of the immense wall, I can see you standing by helicopters and air fighters like in the pictures you sent me before from military flying school. But your face somehow looked so sad? During my military life in the fighting units, I had come to Da Nang, Phu Bai and Hue many times, especially in 1966 and 1968.**

**Today, it seems to me that I am standing here, at the Air Traffic Control Tower in Phu Bai Airport, looking at you flying by in your chopper carrying the Marine Recon Team on the way to the Landing Zone. Then I watch the enemy fire from anti-aircraft machine guns crisscross the sky, hit your chopper, causing it falls to the ground in flames, I see it catches fire then explode. I see everything in front of my eyes, unfortunately, I can not do anything to save your life.**

**Oh, my dearest Jack! Although your body has been blackened by the fangs of war it still enriches the soil Phu Bai jungle, making it better and greener place. As your soul soars high above my country you still fly there watching over the beauty of the land that you loved. I wondered if your dreams are my dreams. You time and time again wrote to me, talking of the beauty of the landscape as you flew over the countryside while flying the skies above my country. You always said how at peace it made you feel!**

**Continue to fly Jack, my friend, as you will continue fly in my heart ever so brightly.**



**(Yen at the Black Wall in DC in 1998)**

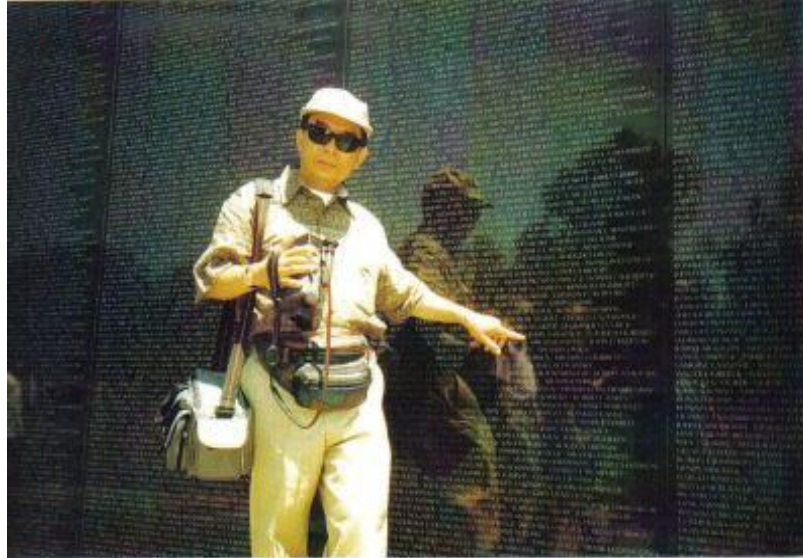
**I was standing there, holding a conversation with you while crying; the tears bearing my love, remembrance and regret. I cried just as I did when getting the bad news about you for the very first time, when I was at the foot of Phu Cu Pass years ago. I cried just as I did every time I thought of you while in the forced labor camps. I just continued to cry and cry, paying no attention to any footsteps or noises from the surrounding tourists.**

**I recalled so many memories, the first day you came to Quantico Train Station and welcomed me, all the training classes we had together in school or on the fields, at the obstacle training courses, tactical training courses, at the firing training fields, at training fields of operation at night, the three-day-operation training fields, boarding and landing operation exercises in Norfolk, you and Amy's wedding, our team of three going out together, and the joyful deer hunting season in the year we hung out together. While standing there the memories overflowed. I thank both Jack and Amy for the times we shared, our friendship in days of our youth.**

**I apologize to Jack for your sorrowful death. I apologize to Amy for becoming a young widow. I apologize to Eric, their son, who never knew the bravery, the greatness and especially the kindness of his father. I would like to thank and apologize to all 58,000 American soldiers named on this black wall. You came to help us and sacrificed your lives for freedom in my country, but it was all in vain.**

**Also, I would like to thank and apologize to all American Veterans during the Vietnam War; you came to serve and fought side by side with us; you were lucky to survive and return home. Due to the war, many of you had Vietnam post-war syndrome, related diseases, or were wounded in action. I would like to thank and apologize to all of you.**





(Ton with Jack's name on the Black Wall)

Today under Washington, D.C.'s sunny summer sky, as I stood in this sad park facing the black wall, I found my friend Jack's name and address. All the names listed on the wall had definitely been confirmed. For me, I was finally able to recognize my old friend Jack.

Over the past 31 years, there was a fog of doubt about Jack's fate that had hung on and haunted me. After I saw your name on the wall, the fog was lifted and the doubt was gone. But my heavy pain, my great loss and my deep regret still remained in my soul. Jack, you know that this wound will stay with me till the end of my life, don't you?

My dear Jack! We were once soldiers. We were on the same front line together. We dreamt of peace together. Unfortunately, our dreams didn't become reality. After more than 23 years since the fight ceased in my country, the land and the skies remained. Sadly, the true peace hasn't come to my Motherland yet.

Phan Cong Ton



**CH-46A Sea Knight**



## **CH-46 Sea Knight GlobalSecurity.org**

**"The H-46 is a twin-turbine powered dual-piloted tandem-rotor helicopter. H-46 aircraft are powered by two General Electric T-58 Series engines. The aircraft is 16 feet 8 inches tall. There are six rotor blades on the aircraft, each measuring 25 feet 6 inches. With blades spread, the aircraft is 84 feet 4 inches long. The average weight of the H-46 is 18,000 pounds, with a maximum lift capability of 6,000 pounds.**

**It can carry 25 combat-loaded troops, or can be outfitted to carry medical evacuation litters in case of disaster. It has the fuel endurance to stay airborne for approximately two hours, or up to three hours with an extra internal tank. The cabin contains provisions for accommodating 25 troops and crew members. The cabin also contains an integral cargo and rescue system.**

**Readily identified among current Navy and Marine Corps helicopters are the H-46 series Sea Knights, with their tandem rotor configuration setting them apart from the single rotor design of other Navy/Marine helos. Tandem rotors have been a feature of all production helos built by Boeing/Vertol, and its original predecessor company, Piasecki.**

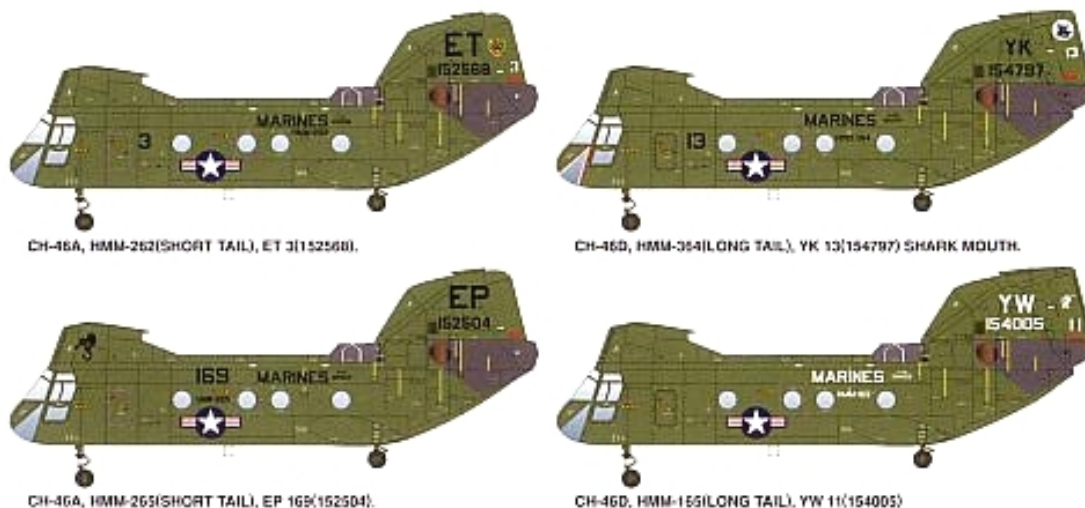
**The H-46 "Sea Knight" helicopter is one of the largest helicopters in the US Navy inventory. The helicopter has the ability to land and taxi in the water in case of emergency, and is able to stay afloat for up to two hours in two-foot seas. Because of its tandem rotor design, the "Sea Knight" is an extremely versatile aircraft. It is able to excel in various flight maneuvers, such as rearward and sideward flight, while other helicopters are extremely limited. This makes the helicopter ideal for its primary Navy mission of vertical replenishment.**

**The Sea Knight was originally designated the H-49. The Boeing CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter has served the US Navy and Marine Corps faithfully since the early 1960s. The Boeing Company Vertol Division, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, built H-46 aircraft in the 1960s and 1970s. It has had several major upgrades including: airframe conversions of H-46D and H-46F to CH-46E in the late 1970s, and the Safety, Reliability, and Maintainability Program which started in the late 1980s and completed in the early 1990s.**

**As a Marine Corps platform, the H-46E is used primarily during cargo and troop transport. The United States Marine Corps has been flying the CH-46 Sea knight helicopter, commonly known as the "Phrog," since 1962. The Phrog is a descendant of Boeing's first turbine-powered helicopter -- the Boeing 107 -- which first appeared in 1958, and which is still flying various**

missions throughout the world. In 1961, the USMC picked the CH-46 as its new medium-lift troop transport, replacing the ageing UH-34. Over 600 Phrogs were delivered to the USMC between 1962 and 1971. By the early 1990s fewer than 250 airframes were still flying in the Corps. USMC CH-46Es are scheduled to be replaced by the MV-22. The Marine's CH-46Es will gradually be reduced from the current 226 to 5 by 2015, the last year the H-46 will be in the rotorcraft inventory. Some sources mention an "RH-46" minesweeper and a "VH-46F" VIP transport, but these are very poorly attested and specifics are lacking. The UH-46A was a CH-46A modified for Navy vertical replenishment program, and the UH-46D was a CH-46D modified for Navy vertical replenishment program.

This venerable aircraft's primary mission areas in the Navy (as the H-46D) include Combat Logistics Support and Vertical Replenishment (VERTREP), Search and Rescue, and Special Operations. The unique tandem-rotor design of the Sea Knight permits increased agility and superior handling qualities in strong relative winds from all directions, allowing, in particular, rapid direction changes during low airspeed maneuvering.



The Army ordered three YHC-1As which were developed as GE-T-58-powered military evaluation vehicles under a Bureau of Aeronautics contract. First flying in August 1959, the YHC-1As were followed by an improved commercial/export model, the 107-11.

During 1960, the Marines evolved a requirement for a twin-turbine troop/cargo assault helicopter to replace the piston engine types then in use. Following a design competition with the [HR3S](#), Boeing/Vertol was selected to build its model 107M as the HRB-1, early in 1961. The official military designation of HRB-1 (H-Helicopter, R-Transport, B-Boeing) was given the 107 along with the nickname of Sea Knight. The HRB-1 followed the typical Vertol design having two rotors in tandem. Two General Electric T-58 shaft turbine engines, exactly the same as those in the HSS-2, were

The CH-46 Sea Knight was first procured in 1964 to meet the medium-lift requirements of the Marine Corps in Viet Nam with a program buy of 600 aircraft. The aircraft has served the Marine Corps in all combat and peacetime environments. However, normal airframe operational and attrition rates have taken the assets to the point where a medium lift replacement is required. The safety and capability upgrades are interim measures to allow continued safe and effective operation of the Sea Knight fleet until a suitable replacement is fielded.

In late 1966 and early 1967, Vertol conducted a series of experiments with an H-46 which had been converted into a compound helicopter similar to that which had created so much interest prior to the design of the CH-53. Short "stub wings" were mounted directly behind the cockpit and also on the rear tail pylon as part of the company's effort to improve speed and payload. The concept, as in all compound helicopters, was that in forward flight the wings would provide some of the lift necessary, allowing the rotor blades to move faster and give the aircraft a higher speed. Also the aircraft's rear rotor pylon has been moved aft and the forward one streamlined. Provisions were made for fuel tanks carried on the outside of the aircraft, and the entire fuel system was adaptable for inflight refueling. The helicopter was also used as a flying guinea pig to try out new ideas. After a number of successful flights, the aircraft crashed and was destroyed, but Vertol experimented with ways to improve the CH-46 series.

Production continued in subsequent years, along with modifications to improve some of the H-46's characteristics. With service in Southeast Asia came installation of guns and armor. Increased power requirements were met by installation of higher powered T-58-GE-10s in the CH/UH-46D models, which also featured new cambered (droop snoot) rotor blades. The final CH-46E, with further increased power, was preceded by the last production version, the CH-46F, before production was completed with delivery of the 524th H-46 in February 1971.

The early A models later served as search and rescue HH-46As. CH-46s equip Marine Reserve squadrons, and conversion of earlier aircraft to the new CH-46E version was completed with fiberglass blades slated added to its other improvements. The CH-60 Fleet Combat Support Helicopter will complement and eventually replace the Navy's aging fleet of H-46 helicopters. As a result of the advanced airframe life of the H-46 fleet, the Navy's helicopter force experienced a near-term inventory shortfall."

\* \* \* \* \*



Golden Eagles • Evil Eyes • Raging Bulls • Flying Tigers • Black Knights

Thunder Eagles •

Dragons • Fighting Griffins • Blue Knights •

Moonlighters • Wild Goose

Vietnam's Flying Death • Purple Foxes • Red Dragons • Sea Elk • Greyhawks • Lady Ace

# CH-46 SEA KNIGHT THE OLD BREED



MARINE CORPS  
BATTLE PHROG

1964 ♦ 2015

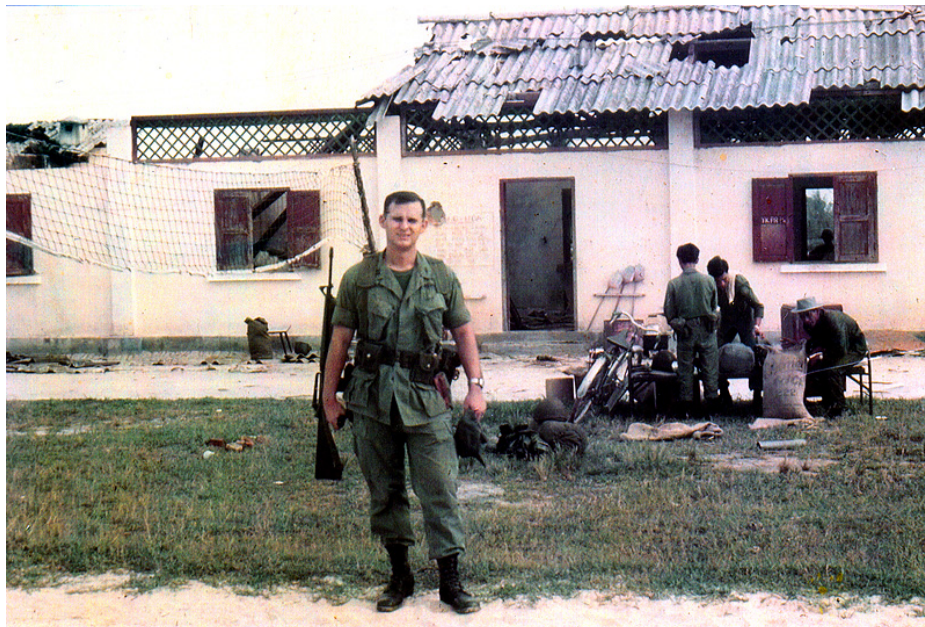
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*Stephen M. Knight Jr.*

# Mark D. Mariska, FLMI

## Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army (ret.)

Colonel Mariska enlisted as an infantry Private at 17, graduated from the Russian 12 month course at the Army Language School and was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant from Infantry Officers Candidate School at age 19. He served with troop units in the U.S. and then with 8<sup>th</sup> Radio Research Field Station (Army Security Agency), Phu Bai, Vietnam in 1967. He also served as a Strategic Plans Officer on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, resigned from active duty and spent another 19 years in the Army National Guard (including as G-2 of the 40<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Division) and in the Army Reserve. His military decorations include the Bronze Star, the Air Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (with 3 olc), the Army Commendation Medal and the Army Meritorious Unit Citation. His civilian career included executive assignments in the insurance industry, Chief Deputy Insurance Commissioner of California and USAA Chief Operating Officer. Colonel Mariska has since been engaged in private equity projects in the Russian Federation. He is a graduate of the Army Command & General Staff College, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, holds two degrees in Business Administration and is a Fellow in the Life Insurance Management Institute.



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