



Mekong Express Mail

Volume 1, Issue 1.

Greetings from the President

This inaugural issue of the Mekong Express Mail (MEM) is a great milestone in the development of our cherished Thailand Laos Cambodia Brotherhood, Inc. It is intended to reach out to those Brothers and Sisters who don't communicate via the Internet. We want to share the rich give and take of memories and historical knowledge that makes the Brotherhood enjoyable on a daily basis for so many of us. And we view MEM as a way to spread the word about some of the activities and personality of the Brotherhood to everyone, in a form you can keep or pass along to others. It is a voice of our Brotherhood I have looked forward to starting for a long time, and I have great hopes that it will fall into the hands of many folks out there who are *one of us and just didn't know it*.

A recently-joined member told me this story about how he found us. His daughter was demonstrating the things he could do on the Internet, if *only* he would give it a try. Being an indulgent father, he pretended to be interested. She opened the browser and asked him what he would like to learn about. Since he had once been in the Air Force, he suggested that it be something about airplanes. As the screens flipped by, a glimpse of Thai writing and the letters "RTAFB" caught his eye! It reached inside him and set off a signal. He exclaimed, "*Stop right there!*" And there was our TLC Brotherhood website, NKP, photos, stories, and all the rest, and the long-forgotten experiences came flooding back to him. Most of us have experienced the same feeling to one degree or another. For weeks after the initial little email came from John Sweet I was on nostalgia overload—you may have had it happen to you.

In this and future issues we will also tell you about how your Brotherhood works, and what our dreams for the future are. We have come very far since the little group of old pals got together in West Virginia a few years ago. Now we are incorporated, have tax-exempt status with the IRS, and we have a Board of Directors and a group of committees doing the work you want done. I'll describe the committees briefly in this issue.

We honor our lost friends—and our regard for our Southeast Asian comrades—through charity. This activity is the main reason we have tax-exempt status, and it is one of the earliest functions of the Brotherhood long before we organized. We have a key committee, called *Assistance*. With the local help of Tommy Thompson and Post 10249 of the VFW in Udorn, Thailand, this committee solicits charitable funds and makes sure they buy things that will help unfortunate children and adults in that region.

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Don't Miss Colorado Springs!

By Leigh Hotujec

Little did I know some two and half years ago that a chance meeting on line with an NKP Vet would lead me to where I am today, the Secretary of the TLC Brotherhood. Like many others, my years in Southeast Asia had a profound influence on my life. Like many of you, I was searching for my "roots", a connection to the past, and the camaraderie and bonds that I missed with others who shared a common history. Those who know me will tell you that you can take the girl out of Southeast Asia but you can't take Southeast Asia out of the girl!

I arrived in Asia when I was barely 8 years old in May 1962 and departed a young married woman in June 1974. I lived in Thailand, Taiwan, and Laos and was a frequent visitor to Vietnam, Cambodia and a variety of other countries in the region. Along the way I attended various international schools, lived in and out of war zones, worked for civilian and government agencies including the U.S. Military, lost my father (a veteran CAT/Air America pilot) to the war, and gained a husband from the Army who spent four and one half concurrent years on assignment in Laos. So finding what was then a very small group of TLC vets on the Internet was like finding a gold mine. Better than that it was "coming home". I signed on to the server without hesitation at the end of March 1998, sent our (mine and my husband's) joint bio out, and you've been stuck with me since!

I missed the reunion in Dayton due to last minute scheduling conflicts and was consoled by telling myself that I probably wouldn't miss much because I didn't really "know" anyone who was going to be there. When the stories started flowing from

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From the Editor

Welcome to this first edition of the *Mekong Express Mail*, a new way for the TLCB to keep all members informed about matters of mutual interest and about the activities of our board of directors. The newsletter team will publish it quarterly. We will carry photos from the Colorado Springs Reunion in the next issue. We plan to publish good stories about SEA that will give information about how everybody's task fitted into the greater picture. The perspectives provided by Jimmie Butler and Larry Clum in this issue start that. An article by Darrel Whitcomb, based on his book *The Rescue of Bat 21*, explains the hazards faced by such men as the crew of Jolly Green 67 when attempting to rescue downed pilots. Larry Hughes lays out the riches on the CD he put together for the *Call Sign Project*. We want to publish interesting stories about every job that supported and carried out the mission in SEA. If you have an idea for an article, let me know.

Dave MacDonald

TWO-PRONGED MISSION IN LAOS

By Larry Clum

There were two objectives in Laos. The first obvious one was to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail, destroying material or delaying its arrival into South Vietnam. Millions of tons of supplies were destroyed during the 1965 to 1975 period using millions of tons of bombs. The trail was not one wide boulevard, but a series of parallel trails starting at the North Vietnam border and snaking down the border of NVN/SVN and Laos. At its southern extremity, it curved into Cambodia and then turned east into SVN. Above the Cambodian border, the trail broke off at various points, turning east. This series of drop off points ran all the way up to the 17th parallel. In some areas this trail system was 10-15 kilometers wide, maybe more. The North Vietnam Army paid dearly in bearers, troops and material, but the sheer mass of the effort kept some goods out of the hands of the Viet Cong. Estimates vary as to the percentage of material destroyed, but the best guess is about 30% over the years. Efforts to stop the flow of goods did not rest completely on the Air Force or the airborne FACs patrolling the trail from on high. There were road watch teams and LRRP units scattered the en-

tire length of the trail. We may never know how many of these brave troops lost their lives in Laos or Cambodia. They not only gathered intelligence to facilitate better knowledge of where the bad guys were, but they booby-trapped a few trucks themselves. Many of the Arc Light missions (B-52 strikes) were guided by these teams, sometimes at great risk to themselves if the Buffs were a little off on their coordinates. There were some "black ops" missions apparently, but I only know of their existence, not their mission. Someone else may have a better handle on that phase of the war.

The question was asked about the percentage of bombs dropped on a target. Let me give an extreme example of what kind of tonnage of ordnance we dropped. At Mu Gia Pass, there was (and I emphasis WAS) an area at the south end of the pass where the road/trail curved around a high cliff area. Below the road was a river/stream. This area had been bombed and bombed, but when the reconnaissance film was analyzed the next day the bicycle tracks were coming through as if nothing had happened. I viewed many of these photos. Some wise and far-seeing General at 7th

Air Force in Saigon decided we should bomb this peak into powder, so we did. I think there were 3 or 4 aircraft (CRS) shot down during this mission. Some estimates suggest we reduced the elevation of the mountain by 700 feet, dropping it across the trail and into the river. We, in our little shop, estimated we dropped at least a million dollars in bombs and lost another 10 million dollars in aircraft. The next day, there were bicycle trails traversing the moonscape. Truck parks, POL storage, and suspected truck parks and POL storage areas were bombed out of existence. Targets of opportunity existed mostly at night and the night fighters did a hell of a job whacking trucks and some troops. Once in a while someone would find a nice little virgin target (I was the proud father of a couple) and it would be fragged as a tertiary or dump your ammo before Return To Base. The only problem lay in the fact that once the target was fragged, it stayed on the frag for days or weeks. What ever was there was beat up in the first few drops, but the ROE (Rules of Engagement) wouldn't let the guys drop too far from the target or other restrictions came into play.

The second objective in Laos and the one that I hold dear is our effort to keep the NVA from overrunning Laos entirely. This was "The Secret War." The political scene in Laos was complicated and would make another complete story, so I will

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Larry Clum says about himself:

"My experience with the TRAIL comes from my work as an intel guy in 1967-68 with the 8th TFW, where my big boss was Robin Olds. I did mapping, briefing, debriefing, photo interpretation, etc. We beat up the trail as a secondary target most of the time. If the primary target was weathered in, in NVN, the crews were briefed on stuff along the trail, mostly interdiction (blowing rocks around). On my second tour at Udorn in 1969-70, I was with Det I, 7/13th Directorate of Intel. Its mission was to support the efforts of our little friends in Laos. We worked with the Air Attache in Vientiane, the Raven FACs at various Lima Sites and anyone else that stumbled in the door. Got to go up-country to work directly with some dedicated men, both American and Hmong. Our entire focus was keeping the PDJ in friendly hands. That made for a very interesting 18 month tour."

A Message From the TLCB Chaplain

First of all let me say, "Welcome Home" and God Bless you all. I would like to congratulate all involved in this project of the first official TLCB newsletter. Many milestones have been crossed for us to reach this point. It is a reflection of our past, our lives, and our common bond as Brothers. It also serves as a steadfast reminder of the servicemen and women who lost their lives in South East Asia, during the Vietnam War. May this Newsletter always serve as a reminder of the ones who made the ultimate sacrifice, so that we could enjoy the freedom we have today.

Welcome Home, to all the members of the Brotherhood, and to the new members of the TLC-Brotherhood, and to our off-line members, and may the peace and joy of our Lord, be with all of you. We pray for continued success, and growth of the TLC-Brotherhood.

*Best Regards,
Rodney Bell
Chaplain TLCB*

not dwell on that fiasco. We ended up supporting the Royal Lao Government, which was weak and had basically no defense of it's own. The Royal Lao Army was indifferent, led by tin generals trying their best to save face. The only warrior they had was Gen. Vang Pao, a sometimes ruthless little guy, now living in Orange County, California. He was a fighter and his people, the Hmong or Meo as they were called then, held off the NVA for many years. We helped with money, ammo and the Ravens, who directed air support for the Hmong. The PDJ (Plain of Jars) was taken and lost by VP several times from 1960 to the capitulation in 1975. The North Vietnamese hated the Hmong and visa versa. All the Hmong wanted was to be left alone, but the NVA wanted the mountaintops. That is where the Hmong lived. Thus a problem existed for the NVA. The 1962 Geneva Agreement on neutrality for Laos, totally ignored by North Vietnam, their refusal to acknowledge they were even IN Laos, the dicey diplomatic ways of our embassy in Vientiane, all figure into the picture. The bottom line for me is that we abandoned them in 1975, caused the uprooting of a beautiful culture. I and many others involved with Laos took the defeat personally. I still get angry when thinking about it. Probably will be that way the rest of my life.

Others may add to or detract from what I said and that is good, because the truth of our involvement should be out there for everyone to see, warts and all. I am proud of my part in it. Would do it again in a heartbeat.

The TLCB's Call Sign Project

By Larry Hughes

The Call Sign Project began with a Call Sign discussion on the TLC (Thailand, Laos, Cambodia Brotherhood) net in January 1999. It was suggested that someone keep and organize the information to preclude it from once more slipping into history's forgotten archives. From that simple beginning things started getting out of control and the need for more than simple listing

became apparent. More information was solicited and stories were added

Many programs were used to put the information together and this caused a problem as not everyone has, for example, Power Point. It was decided to convert everything to PDF so that it could be read using the Adobe reader. When printed the hard copy comes out to 370 pages, plus. Included are 452 Call Signs, 250+ Programs, Projects and Operations, Lima Site List, Victor (Vietnam) Site List, TACAN List, Medal of Honor Section, Laos Section, Bases of Thailand, Patches, Picture Pages, Stories by TLCB Members and others, Bibliography, and the list goes on. The CD version is 57.6 Megabytes.

The Call Sign databases, while listing the aircraft Call Signs, also include the Radar Site, Security Police, Maintenance, Command Post and any other Call Signs that were contributed. The list is very extensive and wide ranging. Ever wonder how rice got from the docks in Bangkok to a hamlet in northern Laos? Mac lays out the whole process. Want to know how a Nail FAC spends his year? Bill Tilton lays it all out. Ride along with Amos in a RF-4C. Read about the guns on the Ho Chi Minh Trail as seen by Jimmie Butler. Mark Berent will take you on a night mission over the trail. Randy Ryman talks about the guns on an A-26. Ride along with Russ O'Neil in a Jolly Green during the rescue of Marlin Lead on 5 May 1967. Read Jungle Jim Traywick's chronology of Takhli. Darrel Whitcomb tells us the story of the final mission of our war. This is just a sample of what's in there. Oh yea, there is a copy of **WHAT THE CAPTAIN MEANS**.

The CD was offered for sale at the 1999 reunion in Washington, DC and to all TLCB members at a cost of \$15, plus postage. So far more than 70 copies have been sold with the proceeds going to the TLCB Assistance Fund.

The basic purpose of the Call Sign is to make radio communication simpler. The Call Sign may be assigned for a single mission or used for years at a time by a unit or group. Some, such as SANDY, JOLLY GREEN, SPOOKY, NAIL and NIMROD have become legend. More than just a means of radio communication, they describe the missions the aircraft

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[President's Greetings, from front page]

Assistance is so important to us that many have thought that's what we were *all* about, but there is much more that we do. The History Committee has many parts (see article, this issue). For instance, one member is building a detailed map of the TLC region, and others are collecting and validating key historical facts about combat in Laos and Cambodia, and archiving the many many memories we share with each other. There are special historical projects, such as Thai and Lao base histories, unit histories, and the struggle over the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The Communication Committee is the core Internet enabler for us all, and provides the capability for our daily electronic interchange as well our display case: the TLCB website. This committee consists of the Webmaster and the Listmaster. The Membership Committee tracks members, seeks and welcomes new members, and works with all the rest of us to extend our contacts and find those thousands and thousands of people who need our message and camaraderie, but just don't know we exist. All committee chairmen help the Board as members of the Budget Committee, and we have a Shopkeeper to handle sales and shipping of the shirts and coins and other "logo items" we like to get. And the Cyber Store earns a little extra for Assistance sometimes.

Reunions don't just happen; they require months of planning and hard work, and the vice president leads that effort, as permanent national chairman. Next month we will feel that power of Brotherhood again—in Colorado Springs!

The Publications Committee is our newest, and is working on national exposure for our message, as well as helping us with local publicity, and producing this newsletter. The *Mekong Express Mail* is one of the ways to extend our contacts and share with our friends. I certainly hope you enjoy it.

Bill Tilton

[Call Sign Project, (from page 3)]

flew and the caliber of those who flew them. Mention the name SANDY and all who were in SEA immediately conjure a vision of 10 years of Valor. Lesser known are the Call Signs of the people who made the aircraft fly and controlled them in the air. There were the troops in the perimeter bunkers who made it possible for us to sleep soundly and safely at night (or during the day), and all of those with radios had Call Signs. Behind every radio was a person and without the people a radio is worthless.

I would like to thank the members of TLCB for their contributions to this project. The authors who provided copyrighted material give an insight into those behind the radios. I would especially like to thank Mrs. Draughn at the Air Force Association for the kind permission to use articles from the VALOR Series in Air Force Magazine

As you wander through these pages, please remember that everything in here was paid for in blood, the blood of those who carried on the fight from their cells as POWs, the blood of those who gave their lives and the blood of those who never returned, the MIAs.

"CHARGE YOUR GLASS, RAISE IT HIGH, DRINK TO THEM", Dick Jonas 1969

Beginnings of the TLC Brotherhood

By Jimmie Butler

Since I've been in the TLCB from before it came into being, Dave asked if I might offer a few thoughts about us and how we came to be. Part of our heritage traces back to a conversation Paul Lee and I had in a parking lot at a Colorado Springs motel in 1997. He revealed that he and Dick Anderson had felt like second-class veterans for all these years, because they had Only

served in Thailand. I was astounded. As a combat pilot with more than 200 missions over the Ho Chi Minh Trail, I had never considered that our support troops wouldn't have understood how important their contributions were.

The catalyst for that conversation was the publication of my novel, *A Certain Brotherhood*, by my sister, Jacque Sue, and I in late 1996. Dick and Paul had read the book and suddenly had a new appreciation for their part of the Thai-based air war. The following is an excerpt from a combat scene, in which Mitch McCall, a Forward Air Controller flying Cessnas out of NKP (Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand), is moved once again by the gathering of the brotherhood to try to save a pilot who had been shot down by North Vietnamese anti-aircraft artillery.

"The words sent a shiver through Mitch. A fullness in his throat told him tears of pride would come if he let them. He always felt the same emotions whenever the radios told of a pilot being down-and of scores of other Americans rushing to risk their lives to save the one in danger.

The feeling of mutual loyalties was mystical. A special camaraderie united him with fliers he'd never met-but he knew they'd try to save him, and he'd try to save them. It was a certain brotherhood that draft evaders who fled to Canada would never experience."

My response that evening to Paul Lee was something like: You don't have anything to be ashamed of. You went where your country sent you. You didn't run away to Canada. If it hadn't been for all of us in Thailand doing the duties assigned to us, they would have had to build a much bigger Wall in Washington, D.C.

The brotherhood I referred to in the novel extended far beyond those who offered to throw themselves into the fiery cauldron when one man was down. We can readily see links to the troops on the flight line who gave me a good airplane to fly and

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helped get me loaded aboard my tiny Cessna for each mission across the river (Mekong) into the unfriendly skies of Steel Tiger (Central Laos). I took off and returned in the red dust and heat of the northeast monsoon, the deluges of the southwest monsoons, and in the dead of night. Never once were the troops absent who safed my rockets after landing. When I taxied into the Cricket's little PSP parking ramp, I was never alone. The rain might be pouring, but a marshaller was always there to bring me to a stop. Another half dozen drenched maintenance troops would grab my little Bird Dog and push it where they wanted it among the line of planes on the edge of the ramp. They'd do their best to keep me as dry as possible between the aircraft and the pickup we drove to Personal Equipment to turn in our gear. I never once pulled in and saw a sign saying: Closed until morning.

Because our missions in our secret war over Laos were classified, we never talked specifics about our flights beyond any maintenance problems. The maintenance troops had been there when some Bird Dogs didn't make it back, and some of us had seen how .50 cal slugs had ripped through metal of one of our O-2s that made it back. I had always assumed that the flight line troops (and the likes of Paul and Dick who served in the same squadron a year or two later) had understood that we were all part of a team that had an important mission to complete.

Hundreds of other jobs were critical as well. Joe Wilson, who set up the initial TLCB Website, was an Army trucker throughout Thailand. Supplies on the docks at Satihhip by U-Tapao south of Bangkok weren't much good to us flying the air war out of NKP, Udon, Korat, Takhli, and Ubon. Troops like Joe brought us the bombs, rockets, bullets, fuel, and the less esoteric commodities like toilet paper, etc., etc. There were chaplains, medics, security police, cooks, paymasters, intel analysts, Red Horse construction troops, etc., etc., etc. Whatever your job was, someone thought it was essential or you wouldn't

have been sent half way around the world to do it.

Thailand wasn't a free ride. We're all honored to be associated with the Udon Memorial VFW Post 10249, named in honor of nine Americans who died at their duty station at Udon when a crippled RF-4 crashed into the AFRTN Station.

As we grew and defined ourselves, we took the TLC name to acknowledge that a great deal of blood, sweat, and tears was offered up in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. We don't minimize the sacrifices made in the in-country war. But, we acknowledge that we were a significant part of the team. At the

2nd TLCB Reunion last year, I was proud to be a part of the reading of names before The Wall. We stood in the sunshine on the grassy knoll in front of The Wall and read nearly 1,430 names of Americans who died in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia as part of the War in Southeast Asia.

We understand that many Vietnam Vets are with us today because you or me had a part in keeping the bullets with their names on them from making it all the way

down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Through the TLCB, many of us now have a better understanding of that fact even though some of those who would have been on the receiving end may not yet understand.

Few of us received the Welcome Home we deserved from a nation that should have been grateful. But among ourselves we know we did our duty when called on under some difficult circumstances. We did not turn away when our country called. We have every reason to be proud of our service and proud of the heritage and brotherhood we share. And among ourselves we cheerfully offer the Welcome Home we all earned.

All gave some. Some gave all.

The Best Time to Visit Thailand

This is advice from Mac, who lives in Thailand, to TLCB member Ken Chabert about visiting Thailand:

When I was in Khartoum (boo) '87-'89, someone asked me when's the best time to visit Thailand, to which I replied, as compared to Khartoum, just about anytime between April and March is fine!!

My favorite time over the years has always been August, get a decent amount of rain, with some sunshine. It's before the big flood season, if there's going to be one, in Sept and October.

Other than that, I agree, for weather, late November and early December are best, rains have mostly ended, the dry has started, as has the cool season, yet things are still mostly green upcountry. Fine time.

Mac Thompson

Please send in an absentee ballot if you are not attending the Fling in the Springs. It is vital to the TLC Brotherhood's tax-exempt status that we adopt the amendment shown on the ballot. See next page.

The Mekong Express Mail

Is the official publication of The TLC Brotherhood, Inc., a non-stock corporation in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This newsletter is furnished to all active member households in furtherance of the Brotherhood's objectives. The registered address is TLCB, Inc., 7813 New London Drive, Springfield, VA 22153. The TLC Brotherhood, Inc, is a tax exempt, non-profit charitable organization under IRC Section 501(c)(3).

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Far East Editor: Jim Michener
Production: Hank Maifeld
Layout: Bill Tilton





Help Write the Real TLCB Story

By Dan Decker

Who are you? Where do you live (city and state only, please)? Where and when did you serve in the Vietnam War? What was your outfit? What was your job, your rank, your service? What are you doing and what have you done since the end of the war? What did you do before joining the service? These questions and any additional personal information you want the Brotherhood to know are solicited from you by the History Committee. The History Committee is tasked with the function of compiling the history of the members of the TLC Brotherhood. This includes what you did during your assignment to TLC, before and after that assignment, and since you left the service. Dan Decker, committee chair, collects all of the e-mail containing relevant historical data. Other members of the committee are working on various volunteer projects, e.g., Larry Hughes' continuing project with Call Signs and Jim Henthorn's detailed maps of Southeast Asia. Individual unit and base histories are being compiled by other members. The members include Leigh Hotujec, Alan Moore, Dick Anderson, James Bozeman, Jim Geddes, Larry Hughes, Les Strouse, and Mike Thompson.

Why is this being done? Members of the TLCB possess unique knowledge about the Vietnam War. Noticing that military personnel from other American wars are leaving us at the rate of 1500 per day, it was decided by consensus of the TLCB members that what we know should be collected and eventually written in various forms in order to share the information with the world before it is lost forever. There is a ton of misinformation out there about the Vietnam War and very little information of any kind about the war in Laos and Cambodia. It's up to us to tell the truth about our experiences. We most definitely can't count on the liberal media to do it for us. With the formalization of TLCB, the History Committee was created and the things the Brotherhood have been writing back and forth to each other have been compiled every day since.

The subjects discussed by the TLCB are amazing in number and complexity and seriousness. We have talked about baht bugs, snakes, lizards, bears, monkeys, tigers, and elephants. We've talked about bars, food, women, various forms of alcoholic beverages, Bob Hope, and music. We've talked about airplanes, tanks, ships, guns, crossbows, knives, night vision devices, and anti-aircraft artillery. We've talked about diseases of several different types, golden bee-bees, silver bullets, and blood chits. We've talked about flying missions over Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam, Thailand, and South Vietnam. We've talked about refueling, bombing, strafing, passengers both human and non-human, bomb damage assessments, allies, enemies, and aerial dogfighting. And we've talked and talked about thousands of other things. So far, more than 25.4 Megabytes of e-mail have been saved and more than 94 Megabytes of photos. Messages have been saved from 193 members. We even have a fledgling virtual museum of TLC artifacts. There are more members than that, but perhaps some of them are shy,

TLC Brotherhood Coins

By Jim Bartholomew

The TLC Brotherhood will soon have Memorial coins for sale. The first 100 coins are serial numbered. They will be offered for sale by auction at the July TLC Brotherhood reunion in Colorado Springs. Members not attending the reunion can bid by email. Coin numbers 1 and 21 are not available for bidding. Prices for the unnumbered coins are \$8.00 at the reunion or \$10.50 shipped priority mail. Coin design is pictured on the web site, www.tlc-brotherhood.org.

BIDDING

To bid electronically, you need to send an email to: jim.bart@gte.net All email bids must be received by July 4, 2000. You may also mail bids to the reunion:

Please Hold for Jim Bartholomew (arr 7/7)
Radisson Inn Colorado Springs North
8110 N. Academy Boulevard,
Colorado Springs, CO 80920

1. Your bid must include your name, the coin number(s) you want to bid on, and your highest bid.
2. If the coin(s) you bid on are sold at the reunion for more than your bid, you will be notified you were outbid no later than July 14th.
3. If you have the winning bid, and the coin you want was bid on at the reunion you will need to pay the amount of the highest bid at the reunion plus \$1.00. For example, you bid \$20.00, and the highest bid at the reunion was \$15.00. Your cost would be \$16.00. If the coin number you bid on is not bid on at the reunion you will need to pay \$12.50 for any numbered coin. You will be notified of your winning bid by July 12, 2000. Your coin(s) will be shipped upon receipt of payment.

Objectives of the TLC Brotherhood, Inc.

Article II

1. To provide a benevolent, non-partisan association primarily for veterans, both military and civilian, of the era of United States involvement in the armed conflicts in Southeast Asia, with a primary interest in service outside the Republic of Vietnam, and open to all who contribute dues, if any, and agree to support these objectives. Association shall be facilitated by provision of means of communication among members and to the public for educational purposes. These means may include internet member lists and websites as well as periodic newsletters for members not using the internet.

2. To provide charitable assistance through endeavors that the membership may select from time to time. Financial assistance using TLC Brotherhood funds shall be limited to charitable causes or organizations and shall not inure to the benefit of any individual member of the TLC Brotherhood.

3. To honor the service of those described in Objective 1, and the memory of those who died or are missing in action as a result of their service.

4. To collect and preserve the history of the service of those described in Objective 1, and to promote public knowledge and understanding of this service through educational activities.

waiting to test the waters.

Someday, all of this information will be used as a database for writing about the secret wars in Laos and Cambodia, as well as the Vietnam War. Is what you have to contribute important? YES! So, if you have yet to give your personal info to Dan Decker to establish your history folder, send it in. His e-mail is ddecker@brooksdata.net and snail mail is 206 W. Arcadia, Alpine, Texas 79830. Don't be concerned if you can't sit down and engage in total recall of everything you did in Southeast Asia. We all are getting older and suffering from various stages of CRS and CRAFT, but a unique phenomenon occurs in the TLCB; we continuously remind each other by our message traffic of things that spark a memory of incidents that occurred more than 25 years ago; and we share those memories. Join the fray!

How TLCB Helps Thai Children

By John Sweet

Thanks to the generosity of the TLC Brotherhood members over \$16,825.00 has been raised to help children in North-east Thailand in memory of our Brothers who did not return home. Every dime of which has been exchanged into Baht without a currency exchange fee due to the participation of Udon VFW Post 10249 and Quartermaster Tommy Thompson.

Rice has been delivered to blind children, wheelchairs to handicapped kids living in dire conditions, clothing and toys, Santa and shoes, blankets and balloons, even musical instruments to Thare! Over 2100 children this past Christmas alone have benefited from our outreach projects conducted jointly with Post 10249. Recently however, Tommy suffered a massive stroke from which he barely managed to survive. Hundred of people in the local community and many more throughout the world sent prayers and e-mails for Tommy who continues to improve and recover daily! Those who perhaps are thinking of making a donation to the Assistance Fund will be encouraged to know the TLC Brotherhood has achieved non profit status and their contributions are now tax deductible. Thank you for your support Brothers!

Absentee Ballot

To the right is a ballot provided for those members who are unable to attend the Annual Meeting of The TLC Brotherhood, Inc., in person. The bylaws provide for absentee voting and require that votes be received by the Secretary by the day preceding the meeting. The Board of Directors is providing this ballot to facilitate your vote.

Ballots cannot be sent electronically, as an original signature is required. All ballots will be verified, one per member household and not attending the meeting.

Official Ballot of The TLC Brotherhood, Inc. Annual Meeting July 8, 2000

Having been recommended by an official Nominating Committee to the members, the following slate is offered for the positions shown:

1. President. Bill Tilton (incumbent)
2. Treasurer. John Sweet (incumbent)
3. Board Member. Jim Henthorn (incumbent)
4. Board Member. Larry Hughes (incumbent)

There were no further nominations during the nominating period, which closed on June 7, 2000.

Your signature below will signify acceptance of the slate as presented, except for any positions for which you write-in the name of another active member in the blanks provided here:

Position: _____ Name: _____

Position: _____ Name: _____

Position: _____ Name: _____

Position: _____ Name: _____

Amendment 1 to the Articles of Incorporation

Add to Article II. Objectives:

"The organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and/or scientific purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code."

I vote to accept the amendment _____ (initials)

Signature of Member: _____

Printed Name: _____

Ballot verification:

Nominating Committee Chairman _____

Secretary _____

You may send the ballot with a member who can hand-carry it to the meeting, or you may mail it to the chairman of the nominating committee, addressed:

Please Hold For: John Loftus, due 7/7
Radisson Inn Colorado Springs North
8110 N. Academy Boulevard,
Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Please note the amendment included on the ballot. This exact wording was prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service as a condition of receiving tax-exempt status. It is necessary that 2/3 of the active members (households) vote to accept the amendment in order for adoption. Thus it is important that you vote by absentee ballot if you are not attending the reunion at Colorado Springs.



The Flight of Jolly Green 67

By Darrel Whitcomb

Jolly Green 67 was an HH-53 long range rescue helicopter assigned to the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS) at Da Nang Airbase, South Vietnam. It was downed by enemy ground fire on 6 April, 1972, while attempting to rescue two American airmen who had been shot down and were hiding behind enemy lines.

This was one of the key events in what would become the largest rescue operation of that war, the rescue of Bat 21. Bat 21 was an EB-66 electronic jamming and reconnaissance aircraft. On 2 April, it was hit and destroyed by a North Vietnamese surface to air missile as it and another EB-66, Bat 22, escorted three B-52s as they bombed advancing North Vietnamese units invading South Vietnam at the beginning of what has come to be known as the Easter Offensive.

Only one crewmember, Lt Col Iceal Gene Hambleton was able to eject from his stricken aircraft. His personal call sign for the rescue operation was Bat 21 Bravo. Immediately, US Army helicopters tried to rescue Lt Col Hambleton. But the North Vietnamese guns drove them off and downed one - a UH1 Huey, call sign Blueghost 39. Three of its crewmembers were killed and one was captured. The captured soldier was released by the North Vietnamese a year later. The bodies of the other three were eventually recovered and buried in Arlington National Cemetery in April, 1994.

The next day, Jolly Greens from the 37th ARRS made two attempts to pick up Bat 21 Bravo. Both times, they were driven off with heavy damage to their aircraft. Additionally, an OV-10, call sign Nail 38, was hit and downed by an enemy missile. Its pilot Capt Bill Henderson, was captured. Its navigator, 1Lt Mark Clark, call sign Nail 38 Bravo, was able to hide and await rescue like Lt Col Hambleton.

For two more days, rescue forces fought the weather and the enemy forces to try to rescue the two airmen. They could not get in. Instead, hundreds of airstrikes were put in to beat down the enemy gunners.

But the 6th of April, dawned bright and clear. So, after 42 more airstrikes were put in, a rescue force of four HH-53s and six escorting A-1 Sandy aircraft launched to make another attempt to recover the two evading Americans. They were assisted by several forward air controllers in O-2s and OV-10s and numerous other support aircraft.

Jolly Green 67 was designated to make the rescue attempt. But as it came to a hover over Bat 21 Bravo, it was raked by heavy enemy fire. The escorting Sandy A-1s tried to engage the enemy guns. But they could not get them all.

And they could see what the ground fire was doing to the helicopter. So several shouted for the crew to fly out of the area. The crew of Jolly Green 67 aborted the rescue attempt and tried to maneuver their stricken aircraft to safety. But the enemy fire continued and so damaged the craft that it crashed in a huge fireball a few kilometers south of the survivors. The fire was intense and lasted several days. There were never any indications of survivors.

The Sandy pilots were shocked by the turn of events. The

other helicopters were ready to move into the area and make another attempt. But Sandy 01, the leader of the taskforce was not willing to risk another aircraft. He aborted the mission. It was just too dangerous.

The next day, another OV-10 supporting the rescue, call sign Covey 282, was shot down in the same area. The pilot, 1Lt Bruce Walker, call sign Covey 282 Alpha, was on the ground and evading like the two earlier airmen. His crewman, US Marine 1Lt Larry Potts, was never heard from. With this news, General Abrams, the overall US commander in Saigon directed that there would be no more helicopter rescue efforts for the now three downed flyers. Instead, a ground team was formed to attempt to infiltrate through enemy lines and pick them up. It was planned and directed by US Marine Lt Col Andy Anderson, and led by US Navy SEAL LT Tom Norris. From 10 through 12 April, the team operated through enemy lines and rescued 1Lt Clark and Lt Col Hambleton. They also intended to rescue 1Lt Walker. But on the 18th, he was discovered by Viet Cong troops and killed. The rescues were over. Later, Lt Tom Norris would get the Medal of Honor for the mission.

This was the largest sustained rescue operation of the war. Over 800 airstrikes, to include B-52s, were put in in direct support. Numerous helicopters, A-1s and forward air controller aircraft were shot down or damaged. A total of eleven men were killed. But it was all done in the best traditions of the rescue forces. Their motto was: That Others May Live. During the war, they rescued 3,883 downed American or allied airmen, sailors, marines and soldiers and made it possible for them to return home.

And finally, we welcome you home, Jolly Green, and salute you proudly for a job well done.

*Next Issue: September 15th. Don't Miss It!
Submit change of address ASAP.*

[Hotujec, from first page]

those who had attended however I knew that I had really missed something special. Memories, kindred spirits and bonds were cemented - there were no "strangers" there. I was determined not to miss out again and in August 1999 attended the "The Call to the Wall" in DC. I encourage you to make plans to be with us this year in Colorado Springs! You won't regret it!

It has been an honor and privilege to be a part of the TLC Brotherhood during the "growing" stages of this organization. I was further honored to be elected as your first Secretary and I will do my best to never let you down. The officers, board, and committee members that I have the pleasure of working along side of have, with the support of the membership, molded and developed the TLC Brotherhood into an organization that we can all be proud of. We could not have accomplished these goals without the support and devotion of the small handful of men who started it all when they too reached out for the camaraderie that they missed from their experiences in SEA. I thank them, and you, for letting me be a part of this - another "one of the guys" - and I look forward to seeing you in Colorado Springs!