



Mekong Express Mail

Volume 1, Issue 2

The Thailand Laos Cambodia Brotherhood, Inc.

www.TLC-Brotherhood.org

IGLOO WHITE~~~~~ *And Unattended Counter-Infiltration Sensor Operations in Southeast Asia*

by Gerry Frazier

Prior to the 1965 US troop buildup in Vietnam, it was obvious that Communist North Vietnamese infiltrators were moving into South Vietnam with relative ease along jungle trails and roads through the Annamite mountain chain that runs along the border of Vietnam with Laos and Cambodia. Countering that traffic would be difficult because the dense forest, often described as 'triple-canopy' jungle obscured view of the ground from above. This jungle consisted of overlapping layers of trees and scrub that formed three distinct layers of upper branches. Normally, the leaves were too dense to see through. Not only was detecting infiltration groups difficult, but finding them with enough accuracy to attack them was doubly hard, and the trees also influenced weapon accuracy, by deflecting falling bombs and artillery, and providing some shielding from blasts at ground level. Worse, tactical reconnaissance photos could not see well through the trees, and film needed time to process and analyze after landing. To fight the infiltration war, we needed a system that reported immediately and accurately.

The Navy had such a system for finding and tracking ships and subs. They dropped hydrophones (or "sonobuoys") into the water from patrol aircraft, then monitored the ocean sounds to sort out those of importance. In Washington, the Defense Communications Planning Group (DCPG) was formed to exploit and build on the Navy's unattended sensor program in an effort to detect and help target covert Vietnamese infiltration from North Vietnam to the South. DCPG was placed in charge of a technology program called Duffle Bag, later changed to Igloo White.

Politics, both in Laos and the US precluded successfully building and manning a counter-infiltration "barrier" across Laos and Vietnam (the so-called McNamara Line). Instead, DCPG was assigned the task of building an infiltration detection system that could help find and target enemy activity beneath the jungle canopy. In South Vietnam, the US Marine Third Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) at Danang was tasked to monitor and stop infiltration through the DMZ. The Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos was assigned to the Infiltration Surveillance Center (ISC) at Nakhon Phanom. The ISC was better known as Task Force Alpha (TFA).

There were several types of sensors, but most were either seismic or acoustic. The original sensors were Navy sonobuoys with parachutes intended to snag in the trees and relay the sounds

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Brotherhood

By Paul Lee

Recently I was looking at the photo albums several of you posted from this year's reunion. It brought back the feeling of brotherhood we shared that weekend in Colorado Springs. I then got out my reunion pictures from last year in Washington and the year before in Dayton. If all those pictures were shuffled into one batch it would be difficult to separate one year from another. The common theme was Brotherhood.

There was actually another reunion that took place long before we officially became the TLCB. I believe most of you know the story but for the sake of the newer troops, I would like to talk about our beginnings. It involves some guys we do not hear from often but who are truly brothers. They are Dick Anderson, Jim Young, Kermit Wilkins and Jimmie Butler.

Dick and I found each other in June of 1996. Since he was in Ohio and I was in Virginia we got to know each other through letters and email. For both of us it was the first time since being assigned to the 23rd TASS (Tactical Air Support Squadron) at Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand in 1969 that either of us had talked of that time in our lives. After a few months Dick noticed an address in an ACA (Air Commando Association) newsletter for a Jim Young up in Pennsylvania and we added Jim to our small "group". Jim was excited about hearing from a couple of NKP guys with whom he could finally share his

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How I Got to Mukdahan

By Jimmie Butler

We were flying the squadron's once-a-month look at Sector 16, which was almost over to Khe Sanh, in our O-1s, when Cricket announced about 1:30 that thunderstorms were forecast for NKP from 1 p.m. on. I asked Cricket to check on current weather. In a few minutes Cricket called back and said a thunderstorm was over the field. (Since we have a couple of weathermen, Dick and Terry, in the crowd, I will not make any comment about forecasting other than the NKP weatherman obviously was going to have that one nailed. We might have been a bit better off if that forecast had been nailed about three

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(Brotherhood/Paul Lee, continued from page 1)

experiences. The emails between the three of us were daily. We had connected.

In October 1996 Dick made a small detour on his vacation and stopped by my house in Fredericksburg, VA. When we met face to face it was like we had known each other forever. One comment still stands out from that two-hour meeting. We were talking about NKP and Dick turned to his wife Cheryl and said, "see, I wasn't lying, he knows about it too".

The fourth to join was in January 1997, Kermit Wilkins in Delaware. Kermit had been Dick's supervisor in the OV-10 engine shop at NKP. Kermit did not have a computer so we wrote letters and printed emails to send him. It was then that we decided we needed to meet. A

plan was made to try for a meeting as soon as the weather broke and to find a place central to us all.

It was finally decided we would meet in Morgantown, West Virginia the weekend of March 8-9, 1997. Unfortunately, Kermit and Kiya were not able to join us due to the flu bug. The drive to Morgantown seemed to take forever. Along the way we pulled into a rest stop in Maryland. Patti had seen a sign saying it had a visitor's center and needed a break. As we pulled in I noticed a flag pole in a small garden with a plaque set in a large rock. It

was a memorial to those who served in Vietnam. We were definitely on the right road.

We pulled into the hotel and checked in. Dick and Cheryl had already arrived but were not in their room. I looked around and saw this tall guy who had a cap on with all kinds of pins in it. I told Patti "I bet that is Jim." Well I did not get very close to Jim and Linda before a hand came out then a big hug. About

Remember How It Felt?

My God, I never knew you existed. I was a medic in Udorn Thailand, in 73-74. I worked out of the Emergency Room. We had hundreds of SEA casualties, mostly Thais and Laotians. I also ran the morgue, which earned me the nickname, "Ghostman." My God, I have a Brotherhood. I can't believe it. I will send away, snail mail for my membership. No one believed we had a war there,,,,,,Thank God I have found y'all,,,,,,thanks again,,,,,

(recent Guestbook entry on our Internet website)

that time Dick and Cheryl walked in. More hugs.

We had each brought the photos and books we had collected and found a corner in the lobby and set up shop. We spent a day and a half sharing stories we had never told and looking at pictures over and over again. Jim mentioned he had not been to the Wall in Washington, DC and was not sure he could go. He knew too many Nimrods who were listed there. So naturally Dick and I started planning a trip to the Wall. That is another story.

One of the main discussions we had was about a book we had all discovered, called *A Certain Brotherhood*, written by the next member of our group, Jimmie Butler. We had been in contact with Jimmie since December 1996 when we all ordered his book. We were fascinated that someone had written about the 23rd TASS, someone who was actually there. When we told Jimmie about our planned meeting he wished he could have joined us. Dick told him it was going to be a meeting of the Jimmie Butler Fan Club. Jimmie had become our friend, our brother.

The ride home was very quiet. I kept replaying the weekend over and over in my mind, not wanting it to end. I know I do not have to explain what it was like to finally share my SEA experiences. A bond was formed that weekend - brotherhood.

The bond of brotherhood has grown from five in March 1997 to over 250 in 2000. There are times when I miss those early days of the TLCB but I would not want to give up what it has become. We have become a family of brothers and sisters.

The last stanza of a poem by Rod McKuen titled *Colors of the Flag* reads:

I love my flag
To me it stands for love
Kindness even to my enemy
And most of all, for brotherhood

From the Editor

The second edition of the Mekong Express Mail arrives with a different format to make it easier for TLCB members to read it and keep it in a three-ring binder. In addition to keeping you current with TLCB developments, this is your paper record of what you did in the Secret War in Laos and Cambodia, which saved many American lives in Vietnam. You can show it to your friends, relatives, children and grandchildren and to the many veterans who do not know this secret history. The main story in this issue gives an overview of Igloo White the code name for the secret program of unattended counter-infiltration sensor operations in Southeast Asia. Its goal was to monitor and block infiltration through the DMZ and the Ho Chi Minh Trail, with the Task Force Alpha base at NKP responsible for the Trail. Future editions of the MEM will carry first-hand accounts by those who were involved in making Igloo White work. We learn more this time about the origins of our brotherhood, about bad-weather flying into mysterious Mukdahan and about the perils of Korat's klongs at night. The vibrant TLCB Sisterhood line's beginnings are sketched and we have a haunting word picture of break of day for a helicopter crew during the war. And we see a combat mission through the eyes of a helicopter gunner.

Dave MacDonald

(Mukdahan/Jimmie Butler, continued from page 1)

hours earlier.) We decided it was time to head for the Mekong, which was about an hour away in an O-1 Bird Dog.

During that time thunderstorms built over the entire Mekong basin for as far as mattered to us. By the time we reached the river, we were down to about 300 feet. The winds at NKP were variable and gusty to more than 20 knots. NKP's metal runway was very slick when wet. (On 14 June I hydroplaned off the side with two wheels, left main and tailwheel, on the new and improved metal runway.) If we had continued to NKP on that 15 April 1967 mission, we never would have stayed on the runway.

The controllers told us an earlier flight of O-1s had diverted to Mukdahan. We did not have a clue where that was. However, I believe the radar site down there was Viking. We were told it was about 50 miles south and had a grass strip just west of the Mekong. My area map, which showed some of Thailand, Laos, North Vietnam and South Vietnam, was chopped off about 60 miles south of NKP. There was a little blue circle (I think it was blue) near the Mekong to represent an airfield, but that was not much help.

I was running low on gas, so we started south. We contacted Viking for their weather. They had thunderstorms all over them. We turned back north. NKP's winds were worse than before. We turned back south and decided there was no turning back from there.

We were told to fly down the river until we saw buildings on the Laotian side. That would be Savannakhet. Once we got there, we were to turn west and look for a big green field beside a lake. Actually I think they had a couple of radar domes at the site, but I did not notice those until after I got on the ground. We were flying at about 200-300 feet. The flight lead flew his O-1 down the middle of the river, and I flew the left bank to make sure we did not miss Savannakhet. The rain was so heavy I could not make out objects on the Thai side of the river. There was hardly any color to anything beneath the clouds. And, I would remind you we were flying in aircraft with no real capability for flying in the weather. We were equipped with an ADF (Automatic Direction Finding) navigational radio that could point to a selected ground station. However, our ADFs tended to point to the closest thunderstorm, so there was no help there. And, we were not lost anyway. We knew where we were. We just did not quite know where we were going, and the radar site did not have an ADF anyway.

Finally I saw some tin-roofed buildings, and we turned toward the Thailand side. I did not see much of anything besides the fuel gauge that was not very encouraging. I had already run one tank dry as normal procedure, so all I had left was what was in the tank that was showing nearly empty. Finally, the flight leader said he had the field in sight. We probably were not more than a half-mile or so from the river, but I cannot tell you much more about the field's location. If you have something that shows the location of the radar site, that is pretty close for the coordinates of where we landed.

The leader swooped down toward the lake and turned back to the northeast over this field that sloped up from the lake. I figured I would see what happened with his landing attempt.

Next Issue: December 15th. Don't Miss It!

Submit change of address ASAP.

*and,
no matter what else you do today...*

PLEASE mail in your amendment ballot!

He dropped a smoke grenade to get an idea what the wind direction was. At that point, I did not really care since I wanted to be down before I ran out of gas. I figured I would just fly my Bird Dog into the ground and handle whatever winds were there. I flew in low over the lake and came down as the ground came up somewhat to meet me. The landing was no problem. About then, I could see the radar domes and two O-1s parked up near them, so I put on some power to get out of the way of the leader's O-1.

I pulled up and some troops in ponchos that were whipping in the wind and rain helped get the bird tied down. We all got drenched. I ran into the closest building and the other two Nail FACs and local troops were waiting inside. The storms passed after an hour or two. We fueled up the four birds and headed back to NKP. After I got back to NKP I wrote up a letter thanking the troops for saving our birds. It was published a couple of weeks later in the NKP News and gave them some well-deserved credit for helping us out of a very dangerous situation.

The Brotherhood BX

By Jim Bartholomew

It has been about four months since Bill Tilton asked me to handle this year's reunion shirts. That has now snowballed into the Brotherhood BX. We have a business license from the City of Manassas, Virginia. We presently stock memorial coins, leatherette coin display boxes, hats, book bags, monk bags, patches, pins and reunion shirts. A golf shirt with the TLCB logo will be available soon. I will provide more information when the embroiderer provides me with a sample shirt. We are working on a new t-shirt with a large TLCB logo on the back. Most of you know the memorial coin sales are what paid for the plaque at the Air Force Academy. Since its inception, the Brotherhood BX has had over \$7,700 in gross sales. We are looking at more products to sell, and are open to suggestions and requests from all members. Send letters (and orders) to:

Brotherhood BX
8665 Sudley Road #115
Manassas, VA 20110-4588

The Shopkeeper



Your Brotherhood for 2000

I am pleased to announce the results of the election at the annual meeting on July 7-8, 2000:

Elected for two-year terms, per the bylaws, were:

Bill Tilton, president
John Sweet, treasurer
Jim Henthorn, member
Larry Hughes, member

There have been some recent board changes:

John (Amos) Parker resigned from the board this summer, and we have appointed Ed Miller to fill that position. Ed is also the chairman of the local committee for the Fort Walton Beach reunion in 2001 (under permanent reunion chairman Paul Lee).

Rich (Shadow) Verde, webmaster and chairman of the communications committee, resigned his board membership in early August, and the board has appointed Jim Bartholomew (also the shopkeeper) to fill that position.

The chairman of the history committee, Dan Decker, has submitted his resignation from that position owing to a heavy academic load in pursuit of his PhD. (See Dan's article elsewhere in this MEM, about the relationship he developed for us with Texas Tech's history department.) Recently-joined member Drue DeBerry has accepted this big job in Dan's place. History is Drue's career, and like Dan, he plans on asking all Brothers for input and help.

The following board members' current terms end at the time of the next annual meeting, to be held in September, 2001, at Fort Walton Beach:

Paul Lee, vice president
Leigh Hotujec, secretary
Rodney Keith Bell, chaplain
Ed Miller, member
Jim Bartholomew, member

Committee chairmen reappointed at the annual meeting, in alphabetic order:

Dan Decker, History (since resigned; new chair Drue DeBerry)
Woody Freeman, Budget
John Loftus, Membership
Dave MacDonald, Publications
John Sweet, Assistance
Rich Verde, Communications

Committee chairmen who serve per the bylaws:

Rodney Keith Bell, Memorial (as chaplain)
Paul Lee, Reunion (as vice president)

The leadership team of the TLC Brotherhood, Inc., continues to work hard to further the four objectives of our organization. We have a fine assembly of willing

and capable Brothers in these positions.

This issue of the Mekong Express Mail contains a ballot for you to return. The main item of business is an amendment the IRS requires us to adopt if we are to retain our tax-exempt status. **PLEASE** sign and mail back this ballot! Just sign, fold, tape or staple, and put a stamp on it...then mail it.

Please note, it is not too soon to mark your calendar for next year's reunion. From what Paul and Ed have revealed so far, it promises to be stunning! Details are still in development, but the committee has been working hard. It will be at Fort Walton Beach, in the Panhandle of Florida, September 28, 29, and 30, 2001.

Bill Tilton, President

Stay out of the Klongs

How not to start at Korat.....

By Jim Bartholomew

I first met Brother Jim Roth in March 1969 when we went to Survival School at Fairchild AFB, WA. Next, we went through EC-121R training at Otis AFB, MA. Then we went to Jungle Survival School at Clark AB, PI. That is where the fun began. We completed Jungle Survival School and were ready to go to Korat. However, it seems the Air Force needed fighter pilots more than it needed Combat Information Monitors so our travel priority was very low. All we had to do every day was check on transportation, then go to the NCO club and test the San Miguel.

I do not remember how many days we were stuck at Clark before a base flight C-54 was to take us to Korat via Danang. What a miserable flight. No one thought to order box lunches for the passengers. It was so hot we had to open the over wing hatches to get some breeze. They did have water aboard, but the only cups were pill cups that only held an ounce or two at a time. When we landed at Danang we were happy, now we could get something to eat. Wrong, we only had greenbacks and the snack bar wouldn't serve us without Military Payment Certificates.

We got to Korat around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. We checked in with our respective squadrons, Jim was assigned to the 553rd and I was assigned to the 554th... After moving into our respective barracks we met again for dinner at the NCO club; if we had anything to drink, it was at the most a beer each.

When walking back to the barracks (it was dark now) I decided to take a short cut. I stepped off the sidewalk into a klong and dislocated my left shoulder. I called out to Jim, who then helped me out of the klong and to the dispensary, which was only a block away. The medics took me to Camp Friendship for care. I ended up being DNIF (Duty Not Involving Flying) for the first 5 or 6 weeks I was there. The next day, I got chewed-out by the Squadron Commander. It seems at the last Commander's Call he told everyone to stay out of the klongs.

(Igloo White/Gerry Frazier, continued from page 1)

of nearby activity. These acoustic sensors provided useful feedback, but the most useful and common sensor type was the Air Delivered Seismic Intrusion Detector (ADSID). The ADSID was the simplest, cheapest, and probably most reliable sensor monitored by TFA. Many thousands of ADSIDs were 'seeded' over Laos and adjacent areas in both Vietnams. The ADSID was a simple round tube containing electronics and a metal 'slug' suspended inside an electric field. Vibrations through the ground caused slight motion in the slug, and made measurable changes in the magnetic field. The "strength" of these motions indicated how strong the vibrations were. The ADSID would free-fall through the trees from its delivery aircraft, and, with luck, bury itself up to its antenna. The antenna was covered with green plastic, and looked a bit like a sparse yucca or aloe plant. (The color was its best camouflage.) Even after sustaining hundreds of "G's" on impact, the ADSID could pick up very subtle vibrations through the ground, and report them instantly.

By 1970, a microphone had been combined with an ADSID to produce the ACOUSID. . With ACOUSIDS, a seismic activation alerted a monitor at TFA who could switch to the acoustic signal to assess it. Audio analysis techniques and equipment, also mostly from the Navy system, could determine if the noise was from a truck, a road grader, or an animal, or even from BATCAT, whose engines were clearly audible on the ground, and even had their own seismic signature. When a vehicle was detected, analysts could tell if it was a cargo truck, a jeep, or a heavy prime mover, such as a semi. They could even analyze the condition of the engine from its noise. They could also detect people moving on foot. Type, size, direction, and speed of the movers were calculated from the clues provided by the sensors. But the radio in all the sensors was low power, and was blocked by terrain. It needed 'line-of sight' to report.

Positioned over the sensor field 24 hours a day, every day, was BATCAT, an EC-121, military version of the Lockheed Super Constellation. BATCAT flew at about 25,000 feet, crewed by experts who monitored the sensors in real time, and alerted strike forces to significant activity. Simultaneously, BATCAT automatically relayed all sensor activations down to TFA at NKP.

The QU-22, a drone-modified Beechcraft Debonaire civilian lightplane, was intended to replace BATCAT as airborne relay, with no on-board analysts. The QU-22 was plagued by problems of engine reliability, and fear that a "drone" might crash at NKP and destroy parked A-1s and other mission aircraft. Thus, the QU-22 always flew operationally with a pilot aboard. The weight of pilot and necessary life-support equipment cut the QU-22s mission altitude from 25,000 ft to 18,000, and lowered on-station time from eight hours to five. Thus, the QU-22 never "paid off" as a replacement for BATCAT. However,

it served as a relay "gap filler" from time to time, so it was not a total loss.

TFA's job was to monitor and analyze the output from a field of as many as 1500 sensors, simultaneously. TFA, with a much larger staff than BATCAT, essentially duplicated their sensor monitoring mission, but also planned the growth of the sensor field, worked with reps from Sandia Laboratory and other defense contractors on the design of new sensors, and ran a target planning operation bigger than that at 7/13AF. The targets shop added sensor data to photo intelligence, airborne radio direction finding (ARDF), and more sensitive sources to find lucrative fixed targets.

Starting in mid-1969, TFA also ran a unique mapmaking operation. Using all available sources, TFA cartographic personnel overprinted the routes of new branches of the Ho Chi Minh Trail onto 1:50,000 and 1:250,000 scale maps. Later, at the suggestion of the 56th Special Operations Wing, TACAN radials and DME range circles were overprinted as well. These charts were known as Alpha-Topo Charts. "Alpha Topos" were prized by aircrews for their current information and 'all-in-one' presentation.

The early sensor field built on the experience of the Navy, who knew sensor operations at sea. So, it was logical to bring an anti-submarine unit to NKP to drop sensors in the Trail. Navy Patrol Squadron VO-67 operated OP-2Es, modified P-2V Neptune ASW aircraft that had already been phased out of fleet operations by the newer P-3 Orion. As most of us know, the P-2 was simply too slow to survive the growing AAA threat over the Trail, and VO-67 was phased out in mid-1968, but not before their valor, and their losses, were well respected by the Air Force at NKP.

At the same time, sensors were being dropped from Special Operations CH-3 helicopters. Helicopter drops were very accurate because they often dropped from a hover, but they placed the helicopter at risk. "Fast movers" were needed for sensor drops. From mid-1968 until the end of sensor operations, the 525th Tactical Fighter Sqdn at Ubon had the additional duty of dropping sensors over Laos. A special dispenser was designed and approved for use on the F-4. Sensor impact points could be plotted with reasonable accuracy using the standard KB-18 camera on the F-4, and the F-4's high speed made it much less vulnerable to AAA than the OP-2 and CH-3.

Overall, the sensor program succeeded as a targeting and activity alerting system, and undoubtedly played a role in alerting airborne FACs and strike aircraft to the presence of lucra-

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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 views expressed in articles published in this newsletters are those of the authors, and are not official TLC Brotherhood policy unless explicitly identified as such.

The TLC Brotherhood, Inc, is a tax exempt, non-profit charitable organization under IRC Section 501(c)(3). The registered address is TLCB, Inc., 7813 New London Drive, Springfield, VA 22153.

The Mekong Express Mail is entered as 3rd Class Mail at the Rumford, Maine Post Office.

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(Igloo White/Gerry Frazier, continued from page 5)

tive convoys that would not have been seen otherwise. The program wound down with the rest of the war, and was essentially out of business by 1974. After Vietnam, the Air Force abandoned use of these sensors, but the Marines did not. The USMC is currently taking delivery of a new generation of sensors that replace the last of the Vietnam era ADSIDs and ACOUSIDs.

American Pony

by Jim Michener

Often associated with dawn because the highland plateau was serene and quiet, daybreak broadcast imported noise. To begin with, the noise of metal on metal. The pulling of handles and the opening of cockpit and cargo doors, the latter sliding their length on mulish rollers. The pushing of camlocks as various compartments (like avionics and the tail rotor drive-shaft assembly) were inspected for irregularities. These were one-time sounds but they happened all around the chopper as its pilots, crew chief and door gunner prepared for the mission.

It was the exoticness of the place that made the noise conspicuous. Sounds carried themselves diversely in remote regions. If the jungle was near, they fell at your feet. If the undulating expanses went on forever, they echoed long in your ear. Unless it was the monsoon, there was little wind. Without wind, the environment was like a tuning fork. Once struck, the metal of the bird, its bullet-blemished skin patched fore and aft, carried a harmonic that invisibly entered your body and remained. It was an uninvited visitor in the subconscious. You only noticed it when it stopped.

Seats adjusted forward, back, up and down for a bird's-eye view of the war, armor plate brought forward (enabling us to live long enough, even if on a stretcher, to go home), helmets (wired for sound) and radios on so we could straightaway communicate the agony and the glory, the crew chief and gunner shouted "all clear."

A pilot triggered the start switch. The generator spun, followed by hissing—gas surging through turbine nozzles. Needles rose on the instrument panel. Slowly, a horizontal blade, limber (the only component that was) and inordinately long (for something so limber), swung counterclockwise overhead, its mechanical arc—which was graceful as it accelerated to a colorless blur—inducing synchronized vibrations in the airframe. Defying gravity as we would, God forbid if any of this rattling and rolling ever stopped in flight.

Once the engine and rotor became high speed (blade tips whirled near the speed of sound), the motion and vibration added a chorus of reverberations. I'm reminded of them whenever I hear disco music—not all, just the type with an usually fast, throbbing beat. It takes me right back to choppering in the Central Highlands. The pounding and jarring were commonplace, so ordinary that we paid scant attention to any of it until, shutting down, the uproar ceased. Walking away from a shutdown

chopper was like walking out of a movie theater: the make-believe was over until another mission, another day.

The land was one world but working in the sky was quite another. One was natural, real, and our birthright. The other was unnatural, an engineer's daydream if not a nightmare, and required imagination. If ever a machine was a contradiction of moving parts, a helicopter was it—it shouldn't fly. Of course we didn't know that it had lots in common with an old Indian rope trick. Hell, many chopper crews were hardly out of high school a year yet, let alone ever dealt with another country, another culture.

"Hover, American pony, hover," said the door gunner, 19, his hands lifting belts of ammunition towards his machine gun. "Take off, American pony, take off," said the crew chief, 20, his seasoned ears measuring the cadence of metal pounding against metal. "Climb, American pony, climb," said the pilot, 21, his hands steady on the controls as galloping hoofs cleared tree-tops. "Speed, American pony, speed," said the aircraft commander, 22, his eyes shifting between instruments and a horizon untold clicks away.

The metaphor (ponies) is hardly out of place, especially abroad. Fox example, Kipling used "pony" when describing Kim, an orphan whose father had been a British non-com in India. "Men are like horses. At certain times they need salt, and if salt is not in the mangers they will lick it up from the earth. Kim has gone back to the Road again for a while. Do not be troubled. It is as though a polo-pony, breaking loose, ran out to learn the game alone."

Bursting with spirit, challenging Fate head on, ponies sprinted to destinations uncharted, destinies unknown. Learning the sky game, the road became a long day's journey into night. Experience built bonds between the crews who manned the flying machines, to include the support troops who fixed, refueled and rearmed them. Because countless ponies and crews perished—many remains still unrecovered—those who survived to tell the tale are known as A Certain Brotherhood.

All About Our Logo

By Bill Tilton

Everyone I have ever asked has expressed admiration for our logo. Only a few Brothers know how it came about, and even fewer know the significance of the design. You can view it in color on your membership card or on one of the bumper stickers all new members receive. Last summer Jimmie Butler had it rendered as a design in bronze for our plaque at the Air Force Academy cemetery, and a replica of that design is on one side of our TLCB coins (see Brotherhood BX).

The logo is more than just a map of Southeast Asia. The basic map concept was first used by Bob Pruiksmas, inspired by a design that was used by Jeff Glasser. Brother Jeff was a very active early organizer of the TLCB. At the end of the second informal Brotherhood reunion in 1998 at Dayton, Jeff shouted for us all to gather together and proposed a resolution that the

Brotherhood get organized, then called for a vote. The board and corporation we have today grew out of that resolution, passed by voice vote in the monument garden next to the Air Force Museum after our memorial service.

Bob Pruiksma used Jeff's map as the inspiration for a shirt design for the Dayton reunion. The colors of the countries are now different, but it was a great design and still gets plenty of use around here—the logo was silkscreened on the back, real big and visible for a long distance. (Bob is working on another shirt like that, to sell in the Brotherhood BX.)

When we got a board elected, Jim Henthorn offered to design an official logo. The map idea seemed good, but it needed some refining and the colors needed to be changed. Each of these has a meaning. Starting with Thailand, it's the blue from the flag. Laos is the green of the lush jungle that covers so much of that mysterious country, and Cambodia is the saffron color of the monk's robes. North Vietnam is communist red, of course, and South Vietnam is the yellow from the old flag. I felt it needed a wreath, which Jim promptly added. It symbolizes two things: the memory of our fallen and lost Brothers, and our objective of caring for less fortunate people in the Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia area.

(Editor's note:

Occasionally members have enthusiastically prepared letterhead, signs, and posters, etc., with the logo and other symbols. Your TLC Brotherhood, Inc., owns the copyright to the logo—it is ours, and certainly members are free to use it as they see fit. But anything that represents the Brotherhood should be seen and approved by the Publications Committee first before being given out to the public.)

Green Hornets

By Jim Green

While assigned to the 17th SOS (Special Operations Squadron) word came down that volunteers were needed for in-country transfer to the 20th. I guess my youth craved more excitement so I volunteered and was accepted. Moved from Phan Rang to Tuy Hoa where checkout in the UH-1P (a UH-1F with guns) and formally part of the unit when in Thailand. The crew consisted of pilot, copilot, and two gunners, one was a 431X0 and the other a 462X0. We had pintle mounted Miniguns and two LAU-32 Rocket Launchers each carrying seven 2.75" FFAR (folding fin aircraft rocket). We used primarily HEAP (high explosive armor piercing) warheads but did get hold of some Flechette rounds, which were loaded, in the last two tubes of each launcher. Couldn't fire them before pickups for fear of getting the teams as well as bad guys. They provided wide area

TLC SISTERHOOD

By Sally MacDonald

When the TLC Sisterhood was first proposed by Annell Decker, after discussions among some of the TLCB wives, I, and others, immediately supported the idea of a women's line for us to be able to write about situations from our own, different, perspectives.

It is amazing and sometimes intensely emotional for us to see the guys connecting—most for the first time in the decades since they were in SEA. The women are a special, loving and supporting group, for the guys and each other, as our immediate connection has this first, emotional, base.

We call ourselves cyber-sisters in the strongest way, and laugh and cry together on the net; We have grown to care about, love and support each other. We invite all women connected to the TLCB to join us. My email is: Sn3macd@aol.com.

coverage with 7000 flechettes per rocket.

Our mission was direct support of SOG (Special Operations Group). We carried teams into Laos and dropped them off for their sneak-and-peek operations and then waited at FOLs (Forward Operating Locations) such as Duc Lap, Ban Don, Thieu Atar, and Loc Ninh. When time came for the team to return we picked them up. Usually this occurred after they had been detected and were being chased. The FAC (Forward Air Controller) monitoring each team would call and direct us to the selected LZ (Landing Zone). At the start of my tour they flew 0-1s and later 0-2s.

We flew in fatigues and wore survival vests. A Gunners Belt made of heavy canvas strapping secured us to a cargo ring on the floor via a snap link. The belt went around the waist and had two lengths that extended up the back and over each shoulder and secured in front by a quick release like used on aircraft seats. It was supposed to keep us attached to the bird in case we lost balance and fell out the door. Never fell out so do not know if it would have worked.

The Miniguns were mounted on pintle mounts in each cargo door and were aimable full forward, 60 degrees depressed, about 140 degrees aft with elevation just below the rotor tips. The rockets were mounted under deck level and outboard of the cargo door.

Typically we stayed at Ban Me Thuot Special Forces Camp for a week at a time. Bunked and ate there. Each morning at first light we would fly out to a Forward Operating Location such as Duc Lap, Ban Don, Thieu Atar, Loc Ninh, or wherever and be on alert for inserting or picking up the teams. The FACs maintained contact and would put us onto the LZ when needed. When launched we would launch two gun birds and a slick. The guns suppressed any enemy activity in order that the slick could go in for the pickup. For a lot of my tour Vietnamese King Bees were doing the pickups/inserts with H-34s.

When cleared in the guns would descend in trail and usually punch off a few rockets while getting to shooting level, which was at treetop. Gunners would talk the pilot across the LZ by keeping some distinguishable point in sight. The gun doing the shooting guided in on target, fired his pass and called the LZ as it passed six so the other gun could pick it up and make his pass.

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As the first bird came off the LZ and was making the turn the second bird would be making its pass. We flew a figure eight pattern with the LZ at the apex. When Charlie was eliminated or subdued enough the slick [unarmed Huey] would be called in. It was timed so that the slick would drop into the LZ between the two gunbirds. Only a couple gun passes would occur before the slick would call it was coming out. The guns would then cover the slick's withdrawal by emptying the Miniguns as we departed.

The physical demands on the gunners were considerably more than experienced on the 119s. We were in a crouch or bent at the waist depending on how tall you was. Some wore "chicken plates" which were molded ceramic armor plates in cloth covers, which had shoulder straps and Velcro fasteners at the waist. They weighed 35 pounds each. It only took me one mission to decide I wanted them on the deck and not on me. Another reason was the vision of a bullet coming up thru the deck and into the groin area. Imagine standing in the back of a pickup doing eighty miles an hour and turning as tight as possible, first to the left and then to the right while maintaining a target and your position over a specific area. You're pushing your head up and out to look over the top of the cab and, in the case of the helicopter in flight, you are exerting to overcome those G forces again. It was an intense and physical time but thank you Mr. Adrenalin.

Upon returning to the Forward Operating Location we would Hot Refuel and then park our bird. Then we would rearm with ammo and rockets and await the next call.

My time with the Green Hornets was the best of my career!

TLC Brotherhood and Texas Tech University

by Dan Decker

A few short months ago an opportunity materialized during an e-mail exchange between outgoing TLCB Historian Dan Decker and Stephen Maxner, Director of the Texas Tech University Vietnam Archives Oral History Project. Already the largest repository in the world of Vietnam War historical material, TTU is in the process of expanding the archives and is actively interviewing veterans of the Vietnam War in order to preserve the individual histories for posterity and academic research.

Initially the communication concerned only a proposed improvement in the questionnaires used by the Project to include all SEA veterans from all services and all ranks. The proposed changes were made and in the process Maxner became aware of the Thailand Laos Cambodia Brotherhood and the Secret War. His excitement at the discovery of our involvement and the existence of a group of veterans from that part of the war was inspiring and contagious. Eventually, the communication pro-

Army Transporters in Thailand

By Joe Wilson

As a former member of the 519th Transportation Battalion stationed in Thailand, our job was to transport cargo from the deep-water port at Sattahip, to virtually every military base in Thailand. The 519th arrived in 1966, and had units assigned at various strategically placed bases from Sattahip to Khon Kaen. We conducted a line-haul operation that covered over 1800 miles. We hauled general cargo and munitions to places like NKP, Ubon, Udorn, Korat, Takhli, Utapao, Lop Buri and Khon Kaen. We were all part of Task Force 116, and helped do our part of the Vietnam War effort. You can find out more about what we did and who we were by visiting my website The Association of US Army Transporters in Thailand at <http://www.pcisys.net/~jjwilson/trans.html>

cess resulted in a visit to the Archives at their location in Lubbock, Texas, and a proposal to make TTU the official repository of the TLCB History and Artifacts.

What does this mean for the TLCB? We have just made a quantum leap forward in establishing our credibility as a viable veterans' organization. We are providing information to the Archives of a previously unknown nature and in such detail that there will be some major revisions of the history of the Vietnam War that addresses the various aspects of the conduct of the war in Laos and Cambodia, in my opinion. We ourselves didn't know all that was going on even when we were there in the middle of it. Together we are shedding light on U.S. military activities in Laos, both in the air and on the ground, with similar possibilities for Cambodia. Our stories are being told, recorded, cross-checked for accuracy and corroboration, and made available to historical researchers worldwide.

What does this mean for Texas Tech University? There will be an increase in the amount of data available, further enhancing the status of the university as the authority for study of the Vietnam War. Future plans call for the construction of a separate facility for the Vietnam War Archives. Currently the archives share space with other historical collections. Land has already been set aside for construction to begin on the new archives and museum as soon as funds become available.

TTU and I offer our thanks to all the members who have participated by filling out TTU questionnaires and undergoing the detailed interview process. Members who have not yet sent in their questionnaires are encouraged to do so as soon as possible. This is a voluntary project on an individual basis. But, an important point to remember regarding the TLCB is the mutual desire to get our story truthfully told to as wide an audience as possible. We're the ones with the first-hand knowledge. If we don't provide the information, then that information will be irretrievably lost. This is our opportunity to make an impact on the history books. Please don't let your information become lost.

[Dan Decker was the first chairman of the History Committee. He recently stepped aside in order to study for his Ph.D. Ed]