

Alpha Troop News



December 2011

Seasons Greeting's,

I hope this newsletter finds everyone full of the Christmas spirit and looking forward to a prosperous New Year ! There are a myriad things to be thankful for at this time of year, but one sticks out above all the rest. This year our active duty members of A Troop will be able to spend time with their family's at home instead of being deployed overseas. We are truly blessed to have everyone return home in one piece after having performed such a dangerous mission in a very hostile environment. May you all make this one of the best Christmas's you've ever had and enjoy your time off .

A few words about this months newsletter. It is jammed packed with articles ranging from planning for the 2013 Reunion to self submitted story's by our members. They cover Veterans Day activities, the honoring of some of our fallen Hero's and even the landing of a Vietnam era Huey on the Ford Motor Company's World Headquarters lawn by one of our own members. We'd like to thank everyone who took time out of their schedules to contribute these articles for our reading pleasure and encourage others to share their thoughts so we may feature them in future newsletters.

“ 2013 Reunion “

It's never to early to start planning for our next get together. Right now we have boots on the ground doing some serious scouting in San Diego, California. We have received proposals from several Hotels and we are going over each one to decide which is the best fit for our particular needs. By the time the next newsletter rolls around we should have some concrete answers concerning the actual date and location. Please see Mike Mabe's article on page 4 for further information.

Remember, This new monument dedicated in May, 2011 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky is in honor of “you” and all who have served or will serve in the 17th Cavalry. Study the structure and notice the symbolism from the horseman, spurs, wings, rotor blades, motto and emblems.



Message from the President

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More than a few Alpha Troop Alumni members made a career in the military after their Troop A tour in Vietnam. Many advanced far into enlisted or officer ranks. These patriots retired and some entered gainful civilian employment and accomplished impressive careers in civilian jobs. One such man is Albert Moon who served in the troop in 1966, then became a Green Beret, returned to "Nam with SOG (Studies and Observation Group, or as 5th Special Forces Group referred to them as SOA which meant Special Operations Augmentation), entered Laos and was wounded in action there, joined HALO later and made 150 high altitude, low opening parachute jumps. He retired an E-8 and entered a civilian career in security at a nuclear power plant. Today, Mr. Moon lives in Mount Ulla, North Carolina near where he was born and grew up. There are many Alpha Troop members like Moon who can proudly reflect upon a similar history and patriotic life.

My point of this focus is to heighten awareness that in Alpha Troop Association Alumni we are among patriots who have given much to the country. So as you read these pages and look upon the pictures, understand the ongoing activities that many veterans are participating in today. I hope you will be uplifted and encouraged by being part of Alpha Troop. The association's leaders welcome your ideas, supportive involvement, and planned attendance at the 2013 reunion. Be a part of the planning and evolution of this gathering.

I salute you,

Mike Mabe - President

Greetings from Annihilator Troop

As we enter the holiday season and the final month of 2011, we hope this finds each of you and yours well and enjoying the season of thanks and celebration with your Soldiers.

A Troop has stayed very busy over the last several weeks participating in a few aerial gunnery exercises in August, September, and November. We've also supported numerous units of our infantry brethren with air-to-ground integration briefings and scout weapons teams as they conduct intensive live training here at Ft. Campbell. All of our crew chiefs and aviators have been working diligently and selflessly to ensure we meet and exceed the objectives for all of our training and support missions.

On October 31st, we conducted a reflexive fire and stress shoot with our M-4 rifles and M-9 pistols. The 2nd Platoon Leader, Captain Chris Wardlaw, planned, coordinated, and executed this event which saw 20 some troopers increase their personal weapon familiarity and confidence while focusing on close quarters engagement techniques and engaging targets with an elevated heart rate following numerous physically demanding stations. Chris did a fantastic job planning and running this range and all the soldiers trained gave great feedback!

We've also had the pleasure of promoting four of our crew chiefs to the rank of Sergeant in recent weeks! Congratulations are in order for Sergeant John Keawehawaii who was promoted effective November 1st and Sergeants Jonte Coven, Ryan Ebers, and Tyson Trahan who were promoted to E-5 effective December 1st. All of these newly christened NCO's are very deserving and we look forward to seeing them grow and develop as leaders in the troop!

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We also recently welcomed a new 2nd Platoon Sergeant, Sergeant First Class Gary Williams, who is coming to 2-17 Cavalry after spending several years in the cavalry unit in Hawaii. We are happy to have him on board as he will be an excellent addition to the Annihilator team!

Finally, we would like to publicly bid farewell to First Sergeant Jon Frerichs along with his wife and two children who, in mid November, departed for their next assignment at Ft. Eustis, VA. The Frerichs family spent over ten years as part of the "OUT FRONT" team and their service and dedication to the unit cannot be overstated...they will be missed! We wish them the absolute best in the future!

Happy Holidays to all !!

Captain Nick Stachler
Annihilator 6



Some maintainers and pilots push aircraft 606 into the hangar upon its return from Reset at Ft. Bragg.



1 LT Pereira prepares for a run-up on aircraft 536

Reunion Status

Representatives of the association are finalizing their study of a reunion place for May, 2013 and San Diego appears to be the obvious choice to meet for the first time on the west coast. Over half of Alpha Troop Association Alumni members live west of the Mississippi River so it seems fitting to have a reunion in their region. Thirty three members live in California, the second largest number of any state. (Florida is first) We expect to see many members for the first time at a reunion and excitement is felt among those planning the reunion.

In addition to the many sights and advantages around San Diego, Harbor, members are working to have on hand a Huey helicopter for rides. There are many plans in the works so we hope you'll put this reunion event on your planning calendar and schedule your attendance along with family members. It will be an unforgettable vacation.

Last Chance

Thanks to over 200 alumni who paid membership dues. The member roster will go to press in December and will be mailed to these members. This roster will be an updated list of Alpha Troop member names, addresses, phone numbers, dates in the troop and email contact info. You will want to keep this roster and lookup troopers who served with you and perhaps reconnect with them.

Those who haven't paid the \$25.00 member dues can rush their payment to Brad Winklesky at his address below and receive the roster and be a member in good standing with voting privileges next year.

Brad Winklesky
5189 Lupine Lane
Acworth, GA 30102

Alpha Troop Alumni Involvement around Veterans Day

Glen Veno



Ford Motor Company has an annual event on Veteran's Day and I was asked to attend. Since Ford allowed "American Huey 369" (AH369) to use their World HQ lawn as a landing zone (LS) during the Memorial Day parade this year, AH369 wanted to show their appreciation. They prepared a mounted picture of the helicopter in front of FMC HQ and I presented it to Ford Credit CEO Mike Bannister during the Veterans Day event.

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Joe Repya



Lt. Colonel Joe Repya surveyed the raised student hands at Burnsville High School's senior campus to see who knew someone who had served their country in the military. Repya addressed the students during two Veterans day assemblies at the Diamond Head campus with a speech entitled, "How do you want to be remembered?" . Along with Repya's speech, the students heard music from the choir and a speech from their fellow classmate. Photo by Rick Omdorf

Albert Moon



Albert Moon helped at the museum of military artifacts in his community of Mt. Ulla, North Carolina.

Mike Mabe



Mike spoke to four periods of students at Ronald Reagan High School about Veterans Day. He described military service, praised the service of all veterans, and encouraged the students about how they can best observe the national holiday.

Jim Hawthorne



Jim operated a ham radio at the Heroes Homecoming Celebration that took place in Fayetteville, NC.

More Than A Gunship Pilot.....

This man was a hero...

As the 40th anniversary of the loss of Ted (Tits) Taylor approaches, my memory of this great friend is as vivid and heartwarming as ever. Clearly, Ted Taylor was one of the bravest and kindest men I ever knew. It is time his incredible story of commitment and dedication be told. A day does not pass, after all these years, that my thoughts of Ted don't remind me how incredibly lucky I was to have known him. And how blessed I was to come home. On July 15, 1971 we lost Ted Taylor.

Ted and I bonded immediately as we both had pregnant wives back home carrying our first born children. The anticipation of being father's, and the overwhelming desire to get back home to be the father and husband we both aspired to be were passions we constantly discussed. We even had a bet as to which bride would deliver first; His son Saddler or my son Joe Jr. Ted's DEROS date was October 71, mine was September 71. He was Assault 29, I was Assault 24.

We flew together in the 101st Airborne's, 2/17 Air Cavalry, Alpha Troop in Quang Tri, Vietnam. We both flew Cobra's in I Corps with some of the very finest pilots ever to fly in Vietnam. Men like Herb hood, Gary Green, Mike Wise, Robert Baker, Vern Mushgrove, Davy Holman, Bat Masterson, Bruce Durgy, Bill Helmig, John Dorenberger, Marco Frye, Harvey Curry, and so many more great pilots and friends.

After Lam Son 719 and the fierce fighting in February, March, and April of 71, and the loss of so many friends and comrades during that conflict misery, we all hoped that the summer of 71 would bring some resolution to the war. Ted and I spent many nights in the thatched room hut we called the O Club sipping rot gut Rheingold Beer (yuck). We laughed and we cried every night, putting another X on the calendar before we flopped into our rat and bug infested hooch, a hundred yards down the sandy patch from the "club". But the next day always brought the call from the TOC to head back out to the AO... Kick the tires, light the fires and off we went.

On July 15, 1971 I was based for temporary duty in Dong Ha on the DMZ. I had been forced down by a fire at POL when I had my front seat refuel the Cobra after a mission. He was a new guy and not that familiar with the "pressure of the hose at POL. The force knocked him off the rocket pod but not before he sprayed the entire aircraft with JP 4, and the aircraft caught fire right there at Quang Tri Airport. Now, here we were, fire shooting thru the AC vents while I filled out the log book. 78 each, 17 pound HE rockets aimed directly at the 5th Mech's Division headquarters right across the runway. I guess 101st rules were that ONLY the AC refuels a hot aircraft. My punishment was to be grounded for two weeks while division ruled on my indiscretion. The little fire engine from across the runway arrived a bit late as the magnificent Cobra burned nearly beyond recondition. I had leaped out of the cockpit and away from the ship in record time. My front seat was no where to be found, his exit from the AO was even faster than mine.

At approximately noon on July 15, Ted was flying with a red team and a C&C ship just west of the Bong Song river and a few miles south and west of Khe Shan. At approximately 1500 feet AGL, Ted felt the horrible shudder and force of a 37mm. The force blew out the engine and forced Ted and his front seat, 6'4" Howard Becker, to make some rapid decisions. Severe pressure under the most difficult of conditions, Ted called out clearly "going down" as I listened from my radio perch in Dong Ha.

Surrounded by very steep and jagged mountains, Ted's rapid fire decision was to go either the road along the mountain side, or the Bong Song river. Ted chose the river because he felt the end of his autorotation would have been more dangerous to the road rather than to just settle into the water. Unfortunately he just did not know how deep the waters were beneath that raging river.

As the aircraft settled into the raging river the slick was right there for the recovery, the aircraft tipped quickly to the left and the two pilots scrambled to escape the sinking aircraft. I believe chicken plates weigh 16 pounds, neither Ted nor Howard had time to get rid of theirs. Both big men struggled to reach for the life saving Huey that was right on top of them. The slick and it's crew chiefs were ready and able to bring both pilots into the safety of the cargo door.

Completely exhausted, Ted reached up and had both arms on the floor of the cargo compartment. The fact is Ted Taylor was home free. He was going to be extracted safely and be back at the miserable thatched roof hut of the O club that evening.

Ted, in the arms of safety, looked back over his shoulder and saw the struggling 6'4" Howard Becker struggling badly and losing his battle to get to the slick. With crew chiefs struggling to keep Ted in the safety of the cargo floor, he yanked himself away and dove back into the raging waters to save Howard Becker. You see, Ted Taylor had not only integrity, he also had the courage to back it up. There is no integrity without courage. Ted Taylor, from Lancaster, South Carolina had an overdose of both. His act of bravery was not initiated because of panic, no, Ted Taylor was simply responding to instinct. He would never turn his back on a comrade. He struggled valiantly to get Howard into the slick. Exhausted and losing the battle of the rushing waters, both pilots were swept away.

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Ted Taylor was never found. A day or so later Howard's body was found and returned home. Ted Taylor was the best friend I had while stationed in Vietnam. His humor, his passion, his incredible commitment to his responsibility as a pilot, and his dedication to his family were the signs of one truly special man.

A couple of years ago I heard from Ted's son Saddler (now 40), (like my 40 year old son Joe). In our short conversation I tried to gracefully and respectfully explain how incredibly talented, loving and brave his father was. Ted's wife Muriel, I never did get to speak with nor any other members of his extended family. My purpose in sharing this totally factual event with the VHPA is only to reaffirm to that wonderful family back in Lancaster, South Carolina that their son, brother, father, husband and friend was the classiest and bravest man I ever met. He was truly a great warrior of that awful war. He was, and is the model of what a Vietnam helicopter pilot was all about. This family should know that he made a huge impact on everyone he touched. They should know how he treasured his wife, his parents and his friends.

I miss Ted every day of my life. I was blessed to get back and raise my own precious sons. When times are tough I always think of Ted and how he would respond to adversity. His friendship, his memory, his incredible passion for his family will be with me forever. The notion of hero is thrown around too loosely today. Ted Taylor, Assault 29, 2/17 Air Cav, 101st Airborne division, Quang Tri Vietnam. Now that is a HERO. Oh, God Ted how you are missed and I hope to one day again sip a Rheingold with you.

Joseph M. Sheridan

Assault 24 - 2nd Squadron/17th Air Cavalry, A Troop
Quang Tri, Vietnam - 1970 / 1971
www.joesh Sheridan.com

Page 8 The VHPA Aviator

A Footnote and final perspective on my memory of Ted Taylor, and the significance of his sacrifice... and yours.

Most of us VN veterans are now in our mid to late sixties. Our mortality awareness, and it's clock are ticking.

Unlike the liberal media's recollection, and irresponsible writings on our experiences, most of us returned from Nam and steadfastly assimilated ourselves back into family and society. We were not drug addictive basket cases demanding that the gov't heal our psychological wounds and line our pockets with "entitlements". We served like our forefathers in the Big war because it was our responsibility to serve. And like the incredibly heroic WW II veterans who served, we too returned by the thousands to build healthy families, businesses, and communities. My Dad before me, and likely your Dad before you, instilled a responsibility in each of us to protect our nation's hard won freedom.

FACT: We VN veterans are better off financially , psychologically, and educationally than our liberal peers who never Served! (Phillip Jenningspolitically incorrect guide to the VN war...)"

Ted's story of commitment, courage, and integrity is not only true, but it stirs an emotion in all of us who served in Vietnam, to quietly and humbly walk tall. The media distorted ALL the facts. Regardless of the medias ignorant slant on what happened in Viet Nam, in TET 68, in Lam Son 719 in 71, on Hamburger Hill and the Khe Shan, we KNOW what happened. We were not perfect, and as in any war, bad stuff happened. But there are thousands of stories like Ted Taylor's that never got told because the "perception" was that we failed in Viet Nam. Ted did not fail: we did not fail !!

Unlike the irresponsible media that likes to state that we lost in Viet Nam; WE WON THE WAR IN VIET NAM. And thus Ted Taylor's ultimate sacrifice, and the 58,000 others who died there should be remembered as winners, who ultimately gave the supreme sacrifice for their country. When we left Viet Nam we had won! Congressional Liberals later ensured that South Viet Nam lost by their completely ignoring their Paris Peace accord commitment to provide air and naval support to the South. All that we worked for was tossed aside and the communist went right back in after we left.

Our noble intention was to tell Ho Chi Minh and the, yes, Russians and Red Chinese who fueled Hanoi's rampage on the free democratic republic of South Viet Nam, to go to hell. If the communist could prevail in Southeast Asia, where else could their dehumanized pursuit of sick ideology prevail. For whatever mistakes we made in Viet Nam, they paled in comparison to the gross, inhuman, raping pillagers from the North. Communism was the bloodiest ideology the world has ever known!!

The communist lost 1 and 1/2 million men. Their soldiers were pawns, not ours. Their soldiers were put in harms way with zero concern for their safety. They would have sacrificed 10 million more men with no concern. Unfortunately, we lost 58,000. Do the math! They lost 30 and we lost 1, yet the media says we lost. Ho Chi Minh was every bit the despot that Saddam and Ghadaffi were. Communism ultimately failed.

Ted Taylor never failed. His memory and his courageous sacrifice hopefully will remind us all that we have reason for hope and optimism. He is just one man but he made difference in everyone he touched. Perhaps the 2nd of the 17th Air Cav could present an annual award in Ted's name, to a member who best exemplifies the qualities of sacrifice, humility, and honor that Ted Taylor carried with such dignity.

Joe Sheridan

How You Can Help

Send pictures of you for the next newsletter. Let us know what you're up to that might be interesting to the rest of us. Entertain us with photo's with faraway, exotic vacation scenes, an unusual setting where you live, special awards, art or construction projects that are extraordinary.

Also, please review your photo albums and find pictures of Alpha Troopers that we report as having passed away. Scan a couple good ones and send them to us for placement on Fiddlers Green on the web site. We need photos of Eric Lee Jr. and James Mitchell, both 69-70, who passed away earlier this year.

Here's the link to Fiddler's Green: <http://www.alphatroopalumni.com/Fiddler'sGreen.html>

In Closing

Happy Holidays TO ALL AND MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND THE 2013 REUNION!!!!

2011 Dues Form

Name: _____ Nick Name: _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

E-Mail Address _____ Wife's Name: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Please complete this form and send it along with a check for \$25.00 made out to "Alpha Troop Association" to Brad Winklesky, Treasurer, 5189 Lupine Lane, Acworth, GA 30102

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Alpha Troop News
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As time goes by one thing remains constant,
A Trp / 2nd Squadron / 17th Cavalry / 101st Airborne Div. will always be
“ OUT FRONT “



Blues in the A.O.



Sometimes
you get the bear,

