



During his Air Force 4-year enlistment, Staff Sergeant Mike Homcha was assigned to the EC-47 airborne radio direction finding mission in South Vietnam. He flew radio reconnaissance missions with the 6994th Security Squadron out of Pleiku Air Base in 1970. Mike registered for the Commemorative lapel pin but stated that he would not be physically able to travel to the scheduled formal presentation ceremony on March 29, 2020. He requested his pin be mailed...and we did. Here is Mike's response upon receiving the pin and Certificate of Appreciation from our local Commemorative Partners:

"Thank you so much. The Certificate is beautiful and will get framed as soon as the world returns to normal. The proclamations from President Trump got my eyes welling up a bit, too. Warmest regards, Mike Homcha, April 24, 2020"

Mike wears the Commemorative Lapel Pin on one of his Vietnam Veteran caps (photos upper right) on the side that has his Combat Crew Badge, American Flag Pin, and USAFSS Pin. Above those hat pins is a bronze pin (photo lower right) of a soldier...a copy of the Vietnam Veteran Memorial in his home town of Reading, Pennsylvania. Welcome home, brother!





Vietnam Veteran, 1961-1966, US Navy, AX2 James Kitchens

Mr. Kitchens registered for the San Angelo Vietnam Veterans Day, March 29, 2020, Vietnam War Commemoration ceremony. He lives in Brady, Texas, and learned about the event through a local TV spot by the American Legion Post 572 event sponsors.

James is a Methodist Pastor at two churches and is obviously quite busy on Sunday's. He requested a mail-out packet and we forwarded the pin, certificate and other materials on April 27, 2020. Here is a quote and photo from Pastor Kitchens upon receipt of his Vietnam War Commemorative Lapel Pin and Certificate of Appreciation signed by the EC-47 History Site and Heritage Chapter-FTVA mail-out program sponsors:

May 3, 2020.

"To meet other Vietnam Vets that made it home shaken but still alive is something I always look forward to. I lost four cousins over there and it really hits hard that I survived and they did not. Thank you, Jim Kitchens, Brady, Texas."



Vietnam Veteran, 1970-1975, US Army, Spec-4, James Wanoreck

Mrs. LaDonna Wanoreck (both top left photos) registered her husband, James Wanoreck, to receive the Vietnam War Commemorative lapel pin after seeing an American Legion Post 572 spot on the San Angelo TV station. James suffers from stage-4 metastatic cancer and asked for an in-home presentation. These photos record LaDonna making the presentation during a family dinner and her brother-in-law, Paul Duff, adding his congratulations.

"...it was a surprise. James was so thankful and touched. He said he finally felt like he had been thanked! Thank you and your organization for doing this. It touches so many hearts."

LaDonna Wanoreck, May 28, 2020.



Mrs. Gail Parrish (above) is the surviving spouse of deceased US Navy Vietnam War veteran, Walter Parrish. Gail registered for the Certificate of Honor program through our online portal in late June. We were able to process her request and have the packet of materials mailed to her right after the 4th of July holiday. She sent us the selfie (above) upon receiving her deceased Vietnam veteran surviving spouse (DVVSS) Certificate of Honor and Blue Star commemorative lapel pin. These items are featured clearly in the upper left of this photo. Gail is pleased with the tribute materials and helped a Facebook friend register and received the same recognition. Our organizations sure wish the presentations could have been made during a more formal ceremony...but this works too!



Walter served as a machinist's mate on the USS Turner Joy. This Forrest-Sherman-class destroyer was commissioned in 1959 and spent its entire career in the Pacific. It participated extensively in the Vietnam War, and was one of the principal ships involved in the Gulf of Tonkin Incident.

Walter is pictured (right) with his son, Nigel, also a retired Navy veteran.

Senior Chief Machinist's Mate (MMCS) Parrish retired from service on the USS Kitty Hawk in 1984. He died on December 21, 2019.





*A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors
Our Vietnam War Veterans for Their
Service, Valor & Sacrifice*

Mrs. Wanda Iverson is the surviving spouse of US Army Vietnam War veteran PV2 Buddy Iverson. Wanda is from the same home town and same high school as Gail Parrish who is featured in the preceding story. They are Facebook friends and worked together getting Wanda registered in the Commemoration deceased Vietnam veteran surviving spouse (DVVSS) Certificate of Honor program too. We were able to get her packet mailed out within a few days following receipt of her registration and she sent us the above photo after receiving her DVVSS certificate and lapel pin at her Montana home on July 31st. We are so proud to be a registered commemorative partner and able to help recognize eligible surviving spouses like Wanda and Gail.



Army Private (PV2) Buddy Iverson served in the Vietnam War from April 1969 until August 1970. Following his Army service, Buddy became a career truck driver working out of Dutton, Montana. He died of cancer on Nov 23, 2006. He was only 55 years old.





Retired MSgt Alan Edmonds, aka Sunshine Kid, served in the Air Force from February 1967 to July 1991. The framed photo in the center of the snapshot was taken when he was 19 years old and attending his initial technical training. The framed certificate below the tech school photo is recognition presented to him by VFW Post 11447. Sunshine Kid is a life member of VFW Post 2485 and proudly added the Vietnam Commemorative Lapel Pin to his VFW cover worn in the upper left and right photos. He is also a life associate member of the Fleet Reserve Association, Branch 367. He is wearing the FRA cover in the lower right photo above.

Mr. Edmonds is retired in picturesque San Antonio, Zambales, Philippines. He registered for the EC-47 History Site Commemorative Partner Program mail-out program on April 2, 2020. The COVID-19 disrupted his US mail delivery, but he finally received his mail-out packet on July 24th. He is posing with the commemorative certificate and pin in the photo above left.

"Finally! The Philippines relaxed the lockdown enough that the Retiree Affairs Office was allowed to open. I have finally received my VFW magazines, backlogged letters and the package you so kindly sent to me. My wife was very impressed, as was I, and we thank you so much for your kind gifts." Sunshine Kid email, July 24, 2020



During his Air Force career, Senior Master Sergeant (retired) Kim Swearingen was assigned to the EC-47 airborne radio direction finding mission in South Vietnam. He flew radio reconnaissance missions with the 6994th Security Squadron out of Tan Son Nhut Air Base in 1971-72. Kim registered for the Commemorative lapel pin in April and asked to be included in our mail-out program. He is a VA-rated 70% disabled veteran. We did get his pin and certificate mailed out promptly but are just now updating his photo and service information.



Kim wears the Commemorative Lapel Pin on the left side of his 6994th Security Squadron cap (two above photos) between the Agent Orange and Electronic Security Command pins. Kim was curtailed just short of a full year

at Saigon as the Vietnamization program drawdown began. He was reassigned to the RC-135 reconnaissance program at Offutt AFB, NE. In addition to these Commemoration items, Kim is also very proud of the Vietnam medal, medallion and certificate signed by the Governor of the State of Kansas. It reads in part, *"On behalf of the citizens of Kansas and a grateful Nation I would like to extend to you our personal thanks and sincere appreciation for your contribution of honorable service to your country."* Welcome home, Kim.



Vietnam Veteran, 1964-1967, US Navy, EM3 William C (Chuck) Dixon

Mr. Dixon registered for the San Angelo 2020 Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration ceremony in early March 2020. He recently requested presentation of the commemorative lapel pin through our mail-out program.

Electrician Mate Dixon completed Basic Training, Electrical A & B Schools at USNTC San Diego, CA in 1964. He was assigned to the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Yorktown CVS-10 and spent most of his service in the “Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club” off the coast of Vietnam. The Yorktown, originally built during WWII, was eventually modernized as an antisubmarine carrier (CVS) and served many years in the Pacific. Her crews earned five battle stars during the Vietnam War. Congratulations, Chuck...thank you for your service and Welcome Home!



Vietnam Veteran, 1963-1965, US Army, Richard A. "Dick" Schiltz

"Nov 1963 - I received my draft orders from President John F. Kennedy to report on Dec 9th of '63. Received a physical, was sworn in, and was then on my way to Fort Leonard Wood MO. After basic, they boarded us on a bus to Fort Benning, GA for AIT...we were being trained for light weapons (infantry) and would be combat ready.

During this time of training, we qualified with different weapons. I ended up placing 2nd on the M60 machine gun with a score of 396 out of 400. I knew what my job was going to be! After AIT we were attached to the 11th Air Assault Division for helicopter training for the next year. We then got our orders to Vietnam. The 1st CAV came back to the US...and we were tasked as the new 1st CAV. We left the states the end of July 1965. We sailed on the USS Darby to Nam and made our way to An Khe by the first part of September. In November, I got malaria while assigned to Ia Drang. They sent me to a field hospital but the next day I went back to the base hospital after my fever broke from a high of 106.5. They sent me to Japan for further treatment. I left Japan on Dec 22, 1965 and went to California for discharge...13 days after my due date to be discharged.

PS: Most of our company was drafted for 2 years. I ended up with Agent Orange related health problems and receive my treatment from the VA. I am a Life Member of the DAV & VFW, and an annual member of the American Legion."

Dick Schiltz was raised in Bancroft, Iowa. He and I were classmates at St. John's for our 12 years of schooling provided by the Sisters of Saint Francis of Dubuque, Iowa. It is my honor to sign and present the Commemoration lapel pin and Certificate of Appreciation through this mail-out program. Welcome Home, Dick!

Tom Nurre, 9/19/2020



**Vietnam Veteran - USAF Major (Mustang)
1961-1984 John S. Jablonski**



John enlisted in the Air Force in April 1961. Following basic training at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX, he completed Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) technical training at Keesler AFB, Biloxi, MS. He was assigned briefly to the United States Air Force Security Service (USAFSS) headquarters at Kelly AFB before returning to Keesler for the first class of GLR-1 systems training. Jablonski was then assigned to Hof, Germany and the 6915th Security Squadron before moving on to Rhein-Main AB near Frankfurt. He did one more ELINT assignment at Trabzon, Turkey, before getting discharged and going on to finish college and AFROTC at North Dakota State University from 1965-68.

Second Lieutenant Jablonski was commissioned in June 1968 and immediately received orders for signals intelligence (SIGINT) officers training at Goodfellow AFB. From Goodfellow, Lt Jablonski served tours as a flight commander back at Hof and then on to the 6924th Security Squadron at Ramasun Station, Thailand. He then worked as the special security officer (SSO) while assigned to the 6th Strategic Wing at Eielson AFB working with the RC-135 COBRA BALL mission (top right).

John ventured out of the SIGINT world by volunteering for Minuteman Missile crew duty at Ellsworth AFB, SD, from 1975-1977. But he came right back from Ellsworth to the National Security Agency at Ft. Meade, MD. During this assignment he was on the G6 staff and served as the staff representative in the National SIGINT Operations Center (NSOC). Major Jablonski finished his distinguished career at Eielson AFB in 1984 following assignments as the commander for the 6941st and later the 6944th Electronic Security Squadrons.

It was our honor to welcome John back to Goodfellow and to thank him for his years of dedicated service, especially during the period of the Vietnam War. The 17th Training Wing Historian, Mr. Mark Howell (above right), pinned Jablonski with the 50th Vietnam War Commemorative lapel pin and presented him the Certificate of Appreciation. Tom Nurre (above left), the EC-47 History Site representative assisted with the tour of the aircraft and inside ARDF history exhibit. Nurre presented John the EC-47 ARDF History Exhibit challenge coin and an EC-47 Memorial Plaza patch and cap.



Photo Above: Spring 1967, Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN. (L-R) Mark Clanton and his classmate from Levittown High School, Ron Santino.

Photo Left: Ina Clanton, Mark's spouse of 52 years, lovingly pins on the Commemorative lapel pin as Mark poses with the Certificate of Appreciation.

Welcome Home, Mark!

**Vietnam Veteran - USAF
CMSgt (Retired)**

1965-1995

Mark Clanton

Mark joined the USAF on September 12, 1965 and retired October 1, 1995. His first duties were as an Air Cargo Specialist trained and tasked with planning, loading, and offloading cargo in support of USAF missions. This early training led to his assignment to the 8th Aerial Port Squadron, Tan Son Nhut AB RVN in November 1966-1967. In a later assignment at the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs, CO, he was the only enlisted faculty member from August 1973 until February 1977. Mark taught incoming freshman the academic skills needed to be successful at the Academy. Assignments in Enlisted Professional Military Education followed: Instructor, Air Defense Command NCO Leadership School, Tyndall AFB, FL; Air Force NCO PME Office, Randolph AFB, TX; Commandant, PACAF NCO PME Center, Yokota AB, Japan; and Chief, PACAF NCO PME, Hickam AFB, HI.

"My thanks to Tom Nurre for considering me for this recognition. I am privileged to have had such a rewarding career and becoming life-long friends with so many other patriots along the way. I will put this pin on my VN cap and will wear it proudly wherever I go."

Mark Clanton, October 29, 2020



USAFSS EC-47 aircrew members JJ Pitzeruse (L) and "JR" Barnes (C) present their Air Force buddy, Walt Ritter, a Vietnam War Commemoration lapel pin and Certificate of Appreciation during a USAFSS Rollcall mini-reunion in Wimberley, Texas, October 17, 2020. Photos by: Alice Kaus.



Inset photo: Ritter in a Pleiku AB bunker during a Viet Cong mortar attack, circa 1969/70.

Vietnam Veteran, 1964 –1993, US Air Force, CMSgt (Retired) Walter A Ritter

Walt enlisted in the Air Force in August 1964 and attended basic training at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas. His first assignment in Security Service was to the 6989th Security Squadron at Misawa AFB in 1966. He worked in the Hill CBPO in the in and out processing section and the records section collecting information on all the USAFSS personnel assigned to the hill. He also worked in the assignment, promotion and special actions sections. His clearance allowed him to work in the compound and assist members in their personnel actions without having to leave their work area in the building. Upon leaving Misawa in April 1969 he was transferred to the OLGB, European Security Region located at Kelly AFB, Texas.

In September 1969 he was transferred to Det 2, 6994th Security Squadron located at Pleiku AB, Vietnam. In April he relocated with the unit to DaNang AFB, Vietnam. Upon completion of his Vietnam tour he was again assigned to the 6920 Security Group at Misawa AB, Japan. In 1971 he was sent TDY to Goodfellow AFB, Texas to attend the USAFSS NCO Academy. In 1976 he was reassigned out of command where he spent tours at Loring AFB Maine and Lackland AFB, Texas. His next assignment in August 1981 was to Headquarters Electronic Security Command at Kelly AFB, Texas where he was assigned the task of Senior Officer Manager for all the Colonels and General Officers assigned within the command. He graduated from the SNCO Academy in August 1983.

In June 1986 he was again reassigned out of command and served tours at Osan AFB Korea and finished his distinguished career at the Air Force Military Training Center (AFMPC) where he served as the Chief, Separations Branch. Randolph AFB Texas. Walt retired December 31, 1993.



Ivey receives Distinguished Flying Cross medal at Misawa AB, Japan



Ray B. Ivey



Major Vernone presents the Air Medal to Ray B. Ivey



September 30, 2020: Ray Ivey (above) receives lapel pin and certificate at Goodfellow AFB EC-47 aircraft & exhibit. Above left inset: Ivey posing outside of tent city, NKP Thailand, circa 1969.

Vietnam Veteran, 1963 –1993, US Air Force, CMSgt (Retired) Ray B. Ivey

Ray Ivey joined the Air Force on 6 February 1963 and completed his basic military training at Lackland AFB, Texas. After Lackland, he went to Keesler AFB, Mississippi, for Morse code training. Following that, his first USAF Security Service (USAFSS) assignment was to Misawa Air Base, Japan. Two years later he was on his way to St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, for a one-year remote tour. After 12 months of misery, Ray returned to Misawa for another tour on Trick 3, Super 1. In December 1968, he left Misawa to attend airborne radio direction finding (ARDF) training at Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo, Texas. He also attended survival school at Fairchild AFB, WA in preparation for an assignment to Nha Trang AB, South Vietnam...arriving there in February 1969. Ray stayed in Vietnam for about 18 months flying as a Morse radio operator on EC-47 ARDF missions out of Nha Trang & Phucut, RVN, and Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand. At the end of his Vietnam assignment, Ray was reassigned back to Misawa for his final tour with USAFSS.

Ray got married and lost his USAFSS security clearance in 1973. This gave him opportunities to tour other parts of the Air Force. He served as the First Sergeant with the A-10 squadron during Operation Desert Storm. Chief Master Sergeant Ivey retired in March 1993 at Myrtle Beach AFB, SC. *"Believe it or not, I loved every minute of it."*

Ray B. Ivey, Dec 3, 2020



September 30, 2020: J.J. Pitzeruse (above) poses with his lapel pin and certificate at Goodfellow AFB EC-47 aircraft & exhibit. JJ in flight gear (right) at Pleiku AB, circa 1969.

Vietnam Veteran, 1963 –1993, US Air Force, J.J. Pitzeruse

To start, I was assigned to Det. 2, 6925th Security Squadron in January 1964. When I arrived there, we were working out of vans in the POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) area across the road from our dorms. It was an interesting year, and I was there during the Gulf of Tonkin incident. We lived in tents next to the runway and used drop tanks for our showers. I departed Danang in January 1965.

In 1968, I volunteered for airborne units in Southeast Asia (SEA). I received orders for assignment to the Det. 2, 6994th Security Squadron at Pleiku Air Base, South Vietnam. Before arriving, I attended worldwide survival training, water survival training and the airborne course at Goodfellow AFB, Texas. My first flight was on Feb. 2, 1969. I did some temporary duty at NKP, Thailand, setting up the new Detachment 3 operations. Overall, I ended up flying 161 missions from Pleiku and NKP before returning to Misawa for what would be a short, troublesome assignment.

I volunteered again for Vietnam, received new orders and was on my way to Det. 2, 6994th Security Squadron now at Danang. It was old home week when I arrived. Art Silvin, Mike Wilson, Don Boston, Wee Willy Christian, Junior Barnes, Curt Cross and some other outlaws were there, and it was party time. We worked hard and partied harder. As I look back, it seemed that we never knew if we were coming back from a mission, so we enjoyed life to the fullest (some more than others).

There are plenty of other stories, but they are not for children or the faint of heart. I flew my last EC-47 mission on Dec. 24, 1972.

Flying with the 6994th Security Squadron was the highlight of my career. We had a job to do and we did it above and beyond. I made many good friends for life ("friendships made during war will never end") and have the satisfaction that we did our best in a situation that was not popular with the majority of our country. I am proud to say that we were the most decorated unit in the history of USAFSS, and I was able to add my little contribution to the overall effort.

J.J. Pitzeruse, Dec 4, 2020



Dec 2020: Gary Chaffin with his Certificate of Appreciation & lapel pin.



DaNang Air Field: Chaffin is the guy with his hands greasy installing rubber donuts on an arresting cable. During an arrestment, it was common for these donuts to be ripped from the cable.



Above: The midfield location between the two runways where the barrier crews hung out and slept. Below: Gary Chaffin poses next to the BAK-12 engine at Ubon RTAFB.



13 April 1972: Chaffin photo of the 362nd TEWS EC-47 aircraft tail #102 destroyed by a VC rocket attack at DaNang.

Vietnam Veteran, 1962 –1986, US Air Force, CMSgt (R) Gary Chaffin

CMSgt Gary Chaffin completed Basic Training at Lackland AFB and subsequent training as an Electrical Power Production Specialist at Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, TX in 1962. He was initially assigned to Det. 100 of the 601st Tactical Control Squadron at Celle, Germany. In September of 1971 he was assigned to the 366th CES DaNang AB, RVN as an Aircraft Arresting Systems Technician and remained there until his transfer to Ubon, Thailand in April of 1972. He retired from the Air Force in 1986 having served his final four years as Electrical Manager of the NORAD Cheyenne Mountain Complex, CO.

Added Chaffin photo comments: **(Top Right)** "The slightly optimistic sign was painted by an unknown squadron artist. Our crews were slightly terrified at the prospect of sleeping out there as it seemed like a favorite target of incoming 122s." **(Middle Right)** "We counted the aircraft departing Ubon on bombing runs over the north as we knew that number would equal the number of arrestments should it be raining upon their return." **(Bottom Right)** The EC-47 History Site is the registered Commemorative Partner Program organization presenting the Certificate of Appreciation and Commemoration lapel pin. It seems ironic that then-technical sergeant Chaffin lived and worked so close to the EC-47 operations area. Click <http://ec47.com/rocket-city> for a related TEWS pilot story.



Above Top: Mission ready "JR" Barnes in the early days.
Above: (L-R) "JR" Barnes and JJ Pitzeruse present their ominous banana weapons during pre-flight check at NKP.

September 30, 2020: Tom "JR" Barnes (above) poses with his lapel pin and certificate at the Goodfellow AFB EC-47 aircraft following presentation by Heritage Chapter, EC-47 History Site and GAFB representatives. Photo by JJ Pitzeruse. Above cutout: "JR" dressed in the VFW Honor Guard uniform. Photo from his Facebook page, circa 2016. Left side of page photos from Barnes & Pitzeruse collections.

Vietnam Veteran, US Air Force, SSgt Thomas Richard "JR" Barnes

Tom Barnes enlisted in the Air Force in July 1964 and served two "hitches" before being honorably discharged in July 1972. After completing basic training in San Antonio and Morse code operator training at Keesler AFB, Mississippi, Tom went on his first 2-year assignment (1965-66) to Misawa Air Base, Japan. Following that tour of duty and a short stint at "Rerack" back in San Antonio, he was off to Nha Trang Air Base in South Vietnam where he flew as a Morse code airborne radio direction finding operator with the 6994th Security Squadron backenders and 361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (frontenders). By now nicknamed "Junior Barnes" or simply "JR" after the kids (Fat Albert, Old Weird Harold & Junior Barnes) of Bill Cosby's comic routine fame, Tom completed a year in the EC-47s before going on an assignment to Yokota Air Base, Japan, flying as a Morse operator on the specially configured RC-130 aircraft and the 6988th Security Squadron. Now Staff Sergeant Barnes, "JR" volunteered for another EC-47 flying assignment in Vietnam, this time being assigned to Detachment 2, DaNang Air Base located south of the demilitarized zone on the Gulf of Tonkin coast. At DaNang, "JR" and JJ Pitzeruse were roommates...and they are still best friends today. JJ and 'JR' were pinned together in this Vietnam War Commemoration ceremony...a fitting occasion of them together still. Overall, Junior Barnes flew about 475 EC-47 and RC-130 reconnaissance missions, amassing 19 Air Medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross. He is retired in San Antonio, Texas.



Medals in order of merit:

Australian Service Medal w/Thailand clasp
 Australian National Medal w/clasp 25 yrs
 Australian Defence Medal

Hidden on left breast:



Australian Ubon, Thailand Medal

Left: Feb 7, 2021: Sgt Bland poses with courtesy display copy of the Vietnam War Commemoration flag and commemorative lapel pin. He feels extremely honored to receive these items for display along with his other Australian and Thailand war mementos.

Vietnam Veteran, Royal Australian Air Force, Sergeant Greg Bland

Sergeant Bland was stationed at Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base providing crash, fire & rescue (CFR) services to the Royal Australian Air Forces assigned air defense responsibility for their area of responsibilities. The RAAF deployed F86 AVON Sabre's and flew with the T-28 Trojans of the 22nd Royal Thai Air Force. He also worked in harmony with a contingent of the US Air Force CFR crews. Here is an extract from his personal accounting:

Generally speaking, at the time, for a firefighter it was pretty easy as the USAF fighters hadn't arrived, even though with the construction going on it was easy to see that action wasn't long in coming by the time I left.

I interacted with the RTAF officers playing billiards with them at their camp and afterwards going for a meal in town. On these occasions one of them would give me their weapon. Can you imagine trying to hide or disguise a Colt .45 in tight trousers? Went flying in a T28 and the Choctaw helicopter a number of times when they went out to carry fuel up to radio monitoring stations. Visited Bangkok and Chiang Mai, both times flying in the RTAF C47.

In one particular instance, an Avon Sabre crashed and a fire occurred at the fuel farm next to the Aussie camp where one of the Aussie fire fighters was accidentally sprayed with CB extinguishing agent by one of the USAF firefighters. He was medevaced out to Australia in a bad way but he survived and resumed duties on recovery.

It was great working with the USAF personnel as it widened my scope on how things were done. The NCO i/c was Sgt Mc Coy, but I can't remember most of the other blokes names.

Greg Bland, RAAF, Feb 8, 2021



April 17, 2021: Pictured above, Mrs. Adele Nasso Heath is the surviving spouse of US Army Vietnam veteran **MSG William F. Heath**. Adele received her lapel pin and Certificate of Honor through the EC-47 History Site mail-out program. These are her comments paying tribute to her deceased husband.

"Billy was born in Ohio but moved to Bellaire, Texas next door to me, where I was born, when I was 6 and he was 10 years old and the rest was History. We were engaged at 16 and 20 years of age but His first tour of Vietnam got in the way. Thank God He returned home safely in 1966, we married and had our first son and then He returned to Vietnam in 1969/70 with another safe return. I lost my Beloved Billy in January 2013. He was Honored in Memory on June 16, 2016 by V V M F at the Vietnam Wall in Washington DC with myself and Granddaughter there to announce His name in person. We were stationed in Okinawa, Germany twice, Virginia, Iowa, Missouri, and Ft Hood Texas twice. The highlight of Billy's career was at Ft Leonard Wood, Missouri. as Senior Drill Sergeant for 3 1/2 years. We were married for almost 46 years. We raised two sons and at the time of his passing had 3 grandchildren, 5 extended grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. He was an Awesome Soldier First, My Best Friend and My Rock, A great Father but Strong and Strict. And always PaPa Bill to all the Little Ones. I love and miss Him so and still cry every day for my Blue-Eyed Soldier Boy."

"I received my Certificate of Honor today from the Department of Defense Vietnam War Commemoration and also the letters from President Donald Trump and President Obama along with my Commemorative Pin. Thank you so very much for getting it out to me so quickly. I am so proud to display it in my home. God bless all of you and please stay safe. You're in my prayers.

(Sent by:) A surviving spouse of a proud Army Retired Vietnam Veteran. The pictures I am holding (in my left hand) are of my Blue-eyed Soldier Boy given to me by the V V M F. The one in the background is also of my Billy."



Vicki Bennett

SSGT BARNEY BENNETT
USAFSS DITTY BOP
ALASKA - PAKISTAN
1961-1965

April 19, 2021: United States Air Force Security Service Morse code intercept operator and supervisor, SSgt Barney Bennett and his wife, Vicki, visited San Angelo for two days. They met with Barney's roommate from an Alaska assignment, Tom Nurre and his wife, Kitty. Barney and Tom worked in the same section at the 6981st Security Squadron on Elmendorf AFB, Anchorage, AK, for two years (1962/1963), and then again for 15-months at the 6937th Communications Group located near Peshawar, Pakistan. At the end of that assignment, Barney was discharged and went to work almost immediately for the DuPont Company in Virginia. He is now retired from there.

Although Barney and Tom lost contact for a number of years, they got together again through a reunion group that had veterans who also served in Alaska and Pakistan. This visit was the first time they had seen each other since April of 1965...56 years. They also met each other's spouse for the first time. Barney met his wife, Vicki, during one of his many trips to Mangla Dam. Located about 180 miles from Peshawar Air Station and a favorite R&R location for the local G.I.s, the dam was being constructed by the World Bank represented by several contracting companies from England, Japan and the United States. These U.S. families formed a large, welcoming community that hosted American visitors from all over the country...especially Peshawar Air Station! That is how Barney and Vicki first met. She was a teenager in the Wesson host family. She was still a teenager when they eventually married in Virginia after Vicki returned to the states with her dad and family when the dam was completed in 1967.

Top left photo: JJ Graham presents Bennett the Vietnam War Commemorative lapel pin and a Certificate of Appreciation that he is holding in the center picture. Top right, SSgt Bennett in Pakistan circa 1964. Bottom right: Tom shows Barney a replica of a bronze plate (see insert) that will be installed in the plaza as a tribute to his honorable service. Bottom left: Barney posing with his souvenir t-shirt depicting the Goodfellow AFB mural in downtown San Angelo.



May 10, 2021: *"First off, Tom, I just got home and stopped at the mail box and got the packet you sent. Needless to say, I was pretty impressed with the Vietnam recognition thing. Oddly enough, even I knew that all of us were in during the 'Nam era...over the years I'd never gave much thought about being a Vietnam vet."*

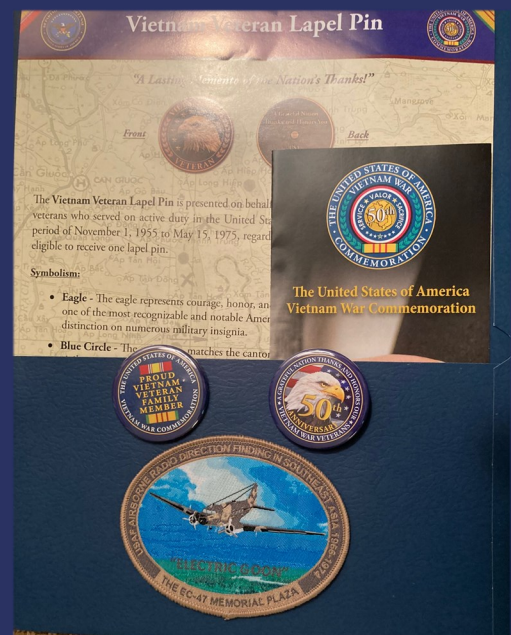
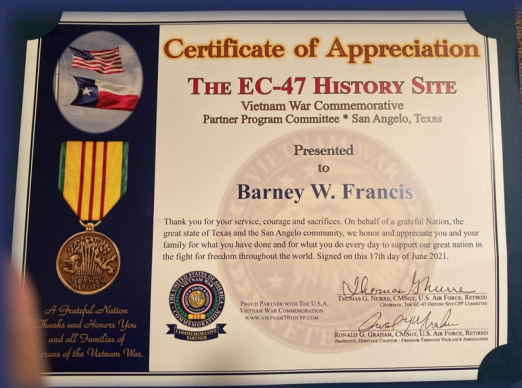
"Oddly enough, when I first tried to enlist in the AF in the fall of 1960, during the induction process at Jefferson-Barracks in St Louis, they rejected me. They found I had a kidney flaw-----not too serious at the time, but they said the AF did not have the medical system that dealt with that particular genetic flaw. So, I went home, then back to inform the recruiter---who asked me "how bad did i want to join". At the time, I told him it was my wish to join and make a career out of it. Partly because my oldest brother was in the Security Service as an Airborne Radio Operator---who was making a career out of the AF."

"Mac" went on to complete Morse Intercept Operator school at Keesler AFB near Biloxi, Mississippi. From there he was assigned to the 6981st Security Squadron located on Elmendorf AFB, Anchorage, Alaska. At this unit, he worked rotating shifts as a Morse operator monitoring Cold War high frequency communications used by the Communist military forces. At the end of his 2-year tour, the USAF Security Service began an involuntary overseas to overseas assignment program aptly named 2-T for "two tour overseas back to back". Within a few months, Mac and several cohorts from the 6981st found themselves together again in West Pakistan at the 6937th Communication Group located on Peshawar Air Station (Badaber). He never really liked the intercept job, but did the best he could and finally felt vindicated when he was assigned to an instructor role.

Photo lower right above: Even this blurry image clearly shows Staff Sergeant "Mac" McCallister (left) underdoing a severe personal inspection conducted by fellow 2-T Staff Sergeant Tom Nurre outside the PAS dormitory, circa 1965.



Cousins Barney Francis (left) and Bill Francis (right) enjoyed a Francis family reunion in Herculaneum, Missouri, over the June 27th weekend. Retired USAF Chief Master Sergeant Bill Francis has been active with the EC-47 History Site USA Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program committee since 2015. He presented his US Army veteran cousin the Commemoration lapel pin and Certificate of Appreciation.



June 27, 2021: Barney Francis was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1968. He was eventually assigned to an engineer battalion located south of Saigon, Republic of Vietnam. He was a carpenter. The following tribute to Army engineers is excerpted from the Foreword to the **Engineers at War** research work by Adrian C. Traas. It is a compelling summary of work that Barney was surely involved with...and is included here as a tribute to Barney's service.

"Military engineers who supported the U.S. Army in Vietnam wrote a proud record of achievement that spanned nearly two decades of war. Starting with a handful of advisers in the mid-1950s, Army engineers landed in force with U.S. ground units in 1965 and before long numbered more than 10 percent of the U.S. Army troops committed to the fight. Working in one of the world's harshest undeveloped regions, and under constant threat from an elusive and determined foe, the engineers met every test that came their way. They built ports and depots for a supply line that reached halfway around the globe, carved airfields and airstrips out of jungle and mountain plateaus, repaired roads and bridges to clear the advance for the combat infantryman, and constructed bases for an army whose communications grew in complexity with each passing year. They were often found in the thick of the fighting and fought as infantrymen as part of a long tradition of fighting while building. When the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War began to wind down, the engineers were given another demanding mission, imparting to the South Vietnamese Army their specialized skills in construction and management. They left in place a robust infrastructure to support the South Vietnamese as they vainly struggled for survival against the armored spearheads of the North Vietnamese Army. **Engineers at War** is the eleventh volume published in the United States Army in Vietnam official series. Like its companion volumes, it forcibly reminds us that the American soldier in Vietnam was courageous, infinitely adaptable, and tireless in pursuit of the mission. For the engineers, that mission and their comrades sustained them, in the best engineer tradition, even as the political and popular will to sustain the fight diminished. Their story and dedication should inspire all soldiers as they face a future of sustained operations around the world."

Washington, D.C. RICHARD W. STEWART 30 September 2010 Chief Historian



July 10, 2021: Photos provided by Cat Parker pictured (left) with her mom, Patricia Parker, following receipt of the In Memory Of yard sign and the Vietnam War Commemoration surviving spouse Blue Star lapel pin and Certificate of Honor mail-out materials. Pat presented the pin and certificate to her mom in a private ceremony in Patricia's home in Hendrix, Oklahoma.

Donald W. Parker, Jr., Major, USAF Retired, passed away on September 22, 2018, in Yarnaby, Oklahoma. Born in Bessemer, Alabama to Donald W. Parker and Rosa Belle Matson Parker, Don attended Bessemer High School (grad 1959) and met the love of his life, Patricia Ann Parker (née Freeman) in Cahaba Heights, Alabama. Together they raised two children, a passel of dogs and cats, and a lifetime of beautiful memories. Don joined the U.S. Air Force in July of 1961, and served his country for 30 years, then several more in the U.S. Civil Service. He served in Japan, Germany, England, Vietnam, Texas, Colorado, Virginia, Hawaii and more. A true believer in the power of education, Don received diplomas from Auburn University, and Howard Payne College. In June 1962, he attended Yale University Institute of Far Eastern Languages to obtain his certification in Chinese Language, and then obtained his Masters Degree in Business Sciences from Troy State University in 1985.

Don was proud to serve his country and loved being part of the Air Force Intelligence community. His dedication was recognized frequently ways official and unofficial. His people respected him, and he returned the favor. His medals and commendations include the Meritorious Service Medal with 3/OLC; Air Medal; USAF Commendation Medal with 1/OLC; USAF Outstanding Unit Award with three devices; USAF Organizational Excellence Award; USAF Good Conduct Medal with 2/OLC; National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal with 3/BS; USAF Overseas Short Tour ribbon and USAF Overseas Long Tour Ribbon with 2/OLC; USAF Longevity Service Award with 6/OLC; Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm; and a Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. Although a son of Alabama, Don was made an Official Honorary Texas Citizen in 1990. He served on the Heritage Chapter-Freedom Through Vigilance Association board of directions in San Angelo, Texas.

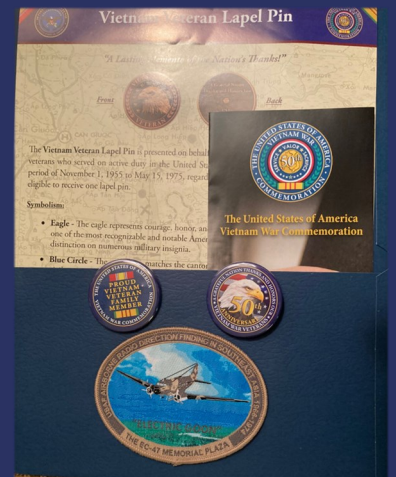


Photo (L-R): Roger Smith poses with Bill Francis after receiving a Vietnam veteran commemorative lapel pin and Certificate of Appreciation following his ceremony at Grady's Barbeque in San Antonio, Texas. Retired USAF Chief Master Sergeant Bill Francis has been active with the EC-47 History Site USA Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program committee since 2015.

September 10, 2021: Roger Smith is an old-timer in his 90's who enjoyed the attention he was given during this Vietnam War commemoration presentation. Smith was an Air Force Technical Sergeant (TSgt) during his assignment to Southeast Asia as a crypto maintenance technician. He was on permanent assignment to Clark AB, Philippines, but was ordered on multiple temporary duty assignments in Vietnam and Thailand. Lima Site 85 was a TACAN (radio navigation) station constructed by US and CIA personnel atop Phou Pha Thi mountain in Houaphank Province, Laos. The picture (right) is from the article by Lt/Col Jeannie Schiff, USAF - LimaSite85.us: The Destruction of Lima Site 85, 2002., Public Domain. Roger Smith was instrumental in maintaining the communications and navigation equipment operational during the most deadly periods of the war in Laos and Cambodia.





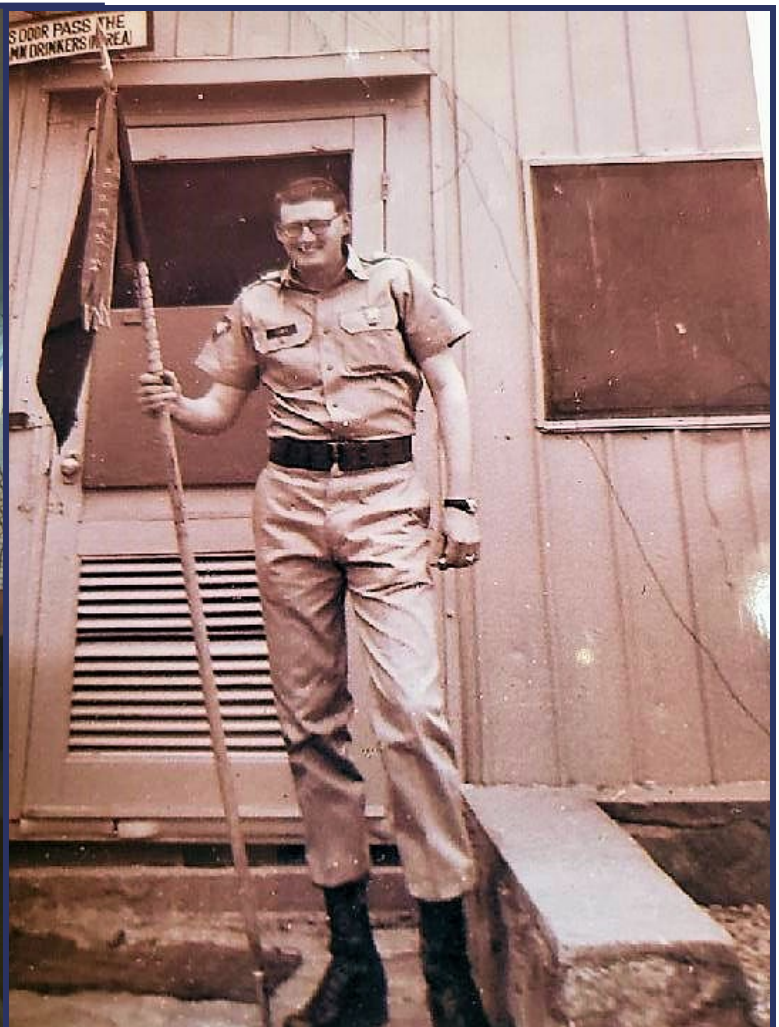
Photo (L-R): Lonnie Evers poses with Bill Francis after receiving a Vietnam veteran commemorative lapel pin and Certificate of Appreciation following his ceremony at Grady's Barbeque in San Antonio, Texas. Retired USAF CMSgt Bill Francis has been active with the EC-47 History Site USA Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program committee since 2015.

September 10, 2021: USAF veteran Lonnie Evers served two tours in Vietnam during the war. As an E-4 Buck Sergeant from April 1968-1969, he worked as a weapons loader for the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing and F-4 fighters out of Cam Ranh Bay, SVN. Following that tour, Lonnie was promoted to Staff Sergeant and had just about a year respite



before being tagged again in 1970-1971 for an assignment to Tuy Hoa. When it closed, he moved on to Phan Rang, SVN. SSgt Evers not only survived the Vietnam War, he went on to complete a distinguished Air Force career and retired as a Senior Master Sergeant in 1992. Evers is married to the step-daughter of Roger Smith who was also pinned during this ceremony and is featured in the preceding article.

Photo: 12th TFW F-4C Phantom circa 1964, USAF Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

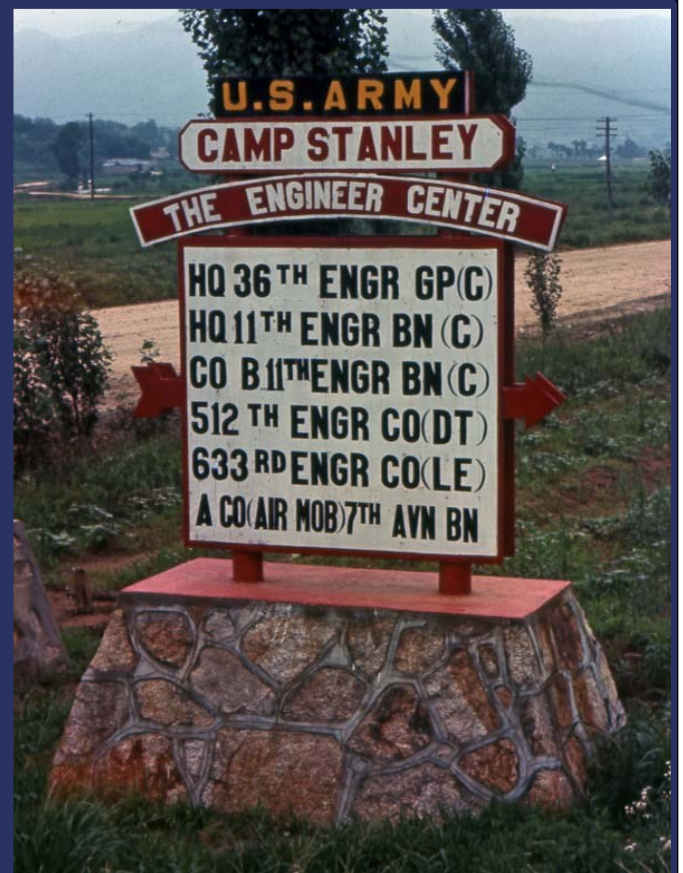


September 18, 2021: Sgt (E-5) John Dolph Lewis, U.S. Army 1965-1967, sent the above photos of himself following receipt of the EC-47 History Site Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program packet of materials that included the lapel pin and Certificate of Appreciation. Cassy Johnston of the Hannibal, Missouri, Heritage Chapter of the DAR and Kay Ellis were partners in this project honoring 8 veterans who served during the Vietnam War. We can't thank the Heritage DAR enough for their interest and participation in extending the Commemoration "Welcome Home" to so many veterans. Sergeant Lewis was first assigned as a mechanic & welder with the 505th Signal Company, Fort Lewis, Washington. He



was then assigned to the 512 Engineer Company at Camp Stanley, South Korea. His MOS was 63C40 - Truck Master.

Thank you for your service Sergeant John Lewis.





September 23, 2021: First Lieutenant Charles W. Flagler, Jr, U.S. Army Supply Officer, Cam Rahn Bay, SVN, 1965-1966, poses for photos during presentation of the EC-47 History Site Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program packet of materials by Bill Francis (right) at a favorite restaurant in Nashua, New Hampshire. Retired USAF Chief Master Sergeant Bill Francis has been active with the EC-47 History Site USA Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program committee since 2015. Photo upper left: presentation of the bronze Vietnam veteran commemorative lapel pin. Photo left: presentation of the EC-47 History Site Certificate of Appreciation thanking Flagler for his service, valor and sacrifice. This ceremony was part of a Welcome Home luncheon hosted by Bill Francis for other Vietnam War veterans.



September 23, 2021: Above left: US Army retired Lt. Col H. Kent Swanson, III, poses with the EC-47 History Site Certificate of Appreciation and commemorative lapel pin presented by Vietnam veteran Bill Francis. Chief Master Sergeant Bill Francis has been active with the EC-47 History Site USA Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program committee since 2015. Swanson was assigned to Military Region 1, South Vietnam as a Field Artillery officer 1969-1970. Military Region I, located in northern South Vietnam, contained the following provinces: Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai. This pinning ceremony was part of a Welcome Home luncheon hosted by Bill Francis for other Vietnam War veterans.





October 18, 2021: U.S. Army Lieutenant Gary Proscia arrived in South Vietnam in July 1970. Gary was initially assigned to Firebase Gladiator in Thua Thien-Hue Province as a Forward Battery Observer...and then as an Artillery Fire Officer. He rotated out of Vietnam in May 1971.

Photos - Left top: Gary Proscia (right) with an unidentified soldier (left) at a jungle camp in central South Vietnam.

Center top: Proscia poses with a Certificate of Appreciation and is wearing the Vietnam Commemorative Lapel Pin and Combat Infantry Badge that his uncle arranged for him to receive through this mail-out program. (See inset.)

Right top: 1Lt Proscia (front of formation) commanded a drill team at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ.

Above: (L-R) Proscia and a college buddy meet at a South Vietnam fire base for a brief reunion.

"Please express my deep appreciation to my fellow vets for this honor. I'm proud of my service and I thank them for theirs." Gary Proscia, October 17, 2021



Welcome Home Dwight Hawkins!

October 26, 2021: CMSgt (Ret.) Bill Francis (left above) presents the Vietnam War Commemorative lapel pin to U.S. Navy CM3 Dwight Hawkins, III, at a luncheon in San Antonio. Francis and Hawkins are posing for this second photo above with the Certificate of Appreciation presented along with the lapel pin. Dwight made some remarks following the presentation - reminiscing about being concerned about "getting warm for the Army draft" in 1966. He did not especially want to get drafted and surely end up in Vietnam, so he decided to join the Navy to avoid the war. Upon enlistment in the Navy, Hawkins was selected for the Navy Seabee's and ended up with a construction crew in South Vietnam in 1966. He survived his in-country tour and completed his enlistment in October 1969. Hawkins also mentioned how much he enjoyed some of the Navy sea duty, especially his visit to Australia.

Here is a bit of Seabee history excerpted from a Navy Times article by Tom Edwards in a Dec 18, 2018, Vietnam Magazine story. "By the final months of 1965 the Seabees had established large bases in Da Nang, Chu Lai and Phu Bai in South Vietnam's northern provinces. The bases provided combat forces the support required to increase their attacks and were instrumental in defeating Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army offensives around the Demilitarized Zone and Laotian border.

As U.S. forces in South Vietnam gradually increased, so did the need for Seabees to build facilities for those troops. In mid-1965 there were 9,400 Seabees in Vietnam, and that number increased to 14,000 over the next 12 months. By 1967 there were 20,000, and over the following two years the number peaked at more than 26,000."

"The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, passed by Congress in August 1964, gave President Lyndon B. Johnson the authority to send combat troops to Vietnam. On March 8, 1965, the Marines were the first ashore, landing at Da Nang in the northern part of South Vietnam. On May 7, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 10 was the first Seabee battalion in Vietnam after the introduction of combat forces, arriving to build an airfield for the Marines at Chu Lai."



November 17, 2021: Henry "Hank" Rodahaver and his wife, Beth, were hosted at a birthday party at Del Webb Spruce Creek and Country Club, Summerfield, Florida. Photos provided by Andy Fillmore and Denny Nurre.



December 14, 2021: WWII vet from Summerfield honored on big day

Andy Fillmore

For the Star-Banner

SUMMERFIELD — Henry "Hank" Rodahaver, a World War II veteran honored by the Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum for his role in the aviation industry was treated to a 100th birthday celebration on Nov. 17 at Del Webb Spruce Creek. Rodahaver and his wife, Beth, 86, were greeted at the party by a line of people giving a military hand salute, hugging and congratulating the smiling couple. "One hundred is just a number but it's a long time," Rodahaver quipped.

Rodahaver's first airplane ride was in a Ford Tri Motor in 1933 in Castle Shannon, Pennsylvania, according to the narrative, and he started flying lessons in 1940 at age 18. He soloed at age 19 and earned his private pilot certificate in 1941, the same year he joined the Army Air Corps, the narrative explains. He served as an aircraft mechanic in the Army Air Corps, a skill that "became a lifelong career."

US Army veteran and member of the Summerfield veterans group, Denny Nurre, tipped us off to this special occasion. We prepared a letter of appreciation and our special All Wars Commemorative lapel pin for Denny to present during this event. See photo upper right. Story lines above excerpted from the Ocala StarBanner newspaper. Read the full story [here](#). This is another special outreach of the EC-47 History Site Commemoration program.



L-R: USMC LtCol Henry A. Fortinberry, Jr. stands at attention as his son, Major Henry Alex Fortinberry, III reads the Vietnam War Commemoration presidential proclamation during a recent ceremony in Boerne, TX,



L-R: LtCol Fortinberry, Henry Fortinberry, and Henry's daughter, Hanna Fortinberry, prepare the lapel pin for presentation. A commemorative lapel pin and other materials were provided by the EC-47 History Site Commemorative Partner Program (CPP).



L-R: Major Henry Fortinberry, III presents his father, USMC LtCol Fortinberry, Jr. the United States of American Vietnam War Commemorative lapel pin. Not pictured, CMSgt Bill Francis, an EC-47 History Site CPP outreach coordinator in San Antonio, Texas, arranged all the materials.



L-R: USMC LtCol Fortinberry, Jr. with his son, Major Henry Alex Fortinberry, III posing for this picture with the Presidential Vietnam War Commemoration Proclamation. All above are family provided photos.

October 27, 2021 - April 25, 2022: USMC Lt Colonel Henry A. "Hammer" Fortinberry, Jr. (top left) was an F-4 WSO (weapon systems operator) stationed at Chu Lai, Vietnam from 1970-1971. He then flew off the USS America and USS Nimitz from 1972-1973, and 1975-1976, respectively. Family photos provided on 4/25/2022.



F-4 Phantom, Chu Lai (MAG 12) 1970 - Photo by Kilgore Collection