



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, Jr.



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.



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.



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.

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.