

Members of the USNA Class of 1963 Who Served in the Vietnam War.



Compiled by Stephen Coester '63



Supplement to the List of Over Three Hundred Classmates
Who Served in Vietnam

Phil Adams

I was on the USS Boston, Guided Missile Cruiser patrolling the Vietnam Coast in '67, and we got hit above the water line in the bow by a sidewinder missile by our own Air Force.

Ross Anderson

[From Ross's Deceased Data, USNA63.org]: Upon graduation from the Academy on 5 June 1963, Ross reported for flight training at Pensacola Naval Air Station (NAS) which he completed at the top of his flight class (and often "Student of the Month") in 1964. He then left for his first Southeast Asia Cruise to begin conducting combat missions in Vietnam. Landing on his newly assigned carrier USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) at midnight, by 5 am that morning he was off on his first combat mission. That squadron, VF-154 (the Black Knights) had already lost half of its cadre of pilots. Ross' flying buddy Don Camp describes how Ross would seek out flying opportunities:

Upon our return on Oct 31, 1965 to NAS Miramar, the squadron transitioned from the F-8D (Crusader) to the F4B (Phantom II). We left on a second combat cruise and returned about Jan 1967. In March or April of 1967, Ross got himself assigned TAD [temporary additional duty] to NAS North Island as a maintenance test pilot. I found out and jumped on that deal. We flew most all versions of the F8 and the F4 as they came out of overhaul. That good deal lasted at least through June 1967.

Ross served two combat cruises in Vietnam, the first flying F-8s, the second flying F-4s with the "Black Knights" Squadron. By the time he was discharged from active duty in the Navy from VF-103 in Oceana NAS, Virginia Beach, Ross had earned numerous awards and recognition, to include eleven Air Medals, two Navy Commendation Medals, a Unit Commendation Medal, two Navy Commendation Medals for Vietnam Service, and a Navy Unit Commendation for Vietnam Service. One of his Air Medals was earned while returning from a mission during his first Vietnam tour. The plane of his wing man had been badly shot up, and Ross maneuvered his F-8 under his buddy's and became the "wind beneath his wings" to "airlift" him back to their ship.

Bill G. Anderson

Hi Steve,

I hesitate to mention it but I was on Caiman SS-323 in the Tonkin Gulf in the late sixties. We never saw the coast of Vietnam. We were down there to provide sonar practice to the fleet. So we crept in, put up the scope and had at least two carriers in easy torpedo range. They were busy launching aircraft and fighting a war. We were there but we were bystanders.

Regards,

Bill (William G. Anderson)

Bear Astor

I served in Naval Aviation in Vietnam area from 1965-1969 in VQ flying super secret photo & electronic reconnaissance missions; off of several aircraft carriers & also recon missions out of DaNang, Chu Lai, Cubi Point, Philippines, and Atsugi, Japan. I was in air wings with several of the guys you already have on your list (and Tom LaMay - deceased - was also later my XO in VAQ-133 in Whidbey Island in EA-6's). I flew 500 combat missions over there.

Dick Augur

As a newly minted Ensign I went to the USS Providence (CLG-6) Admiral Thomas Moorer's 7th Fleet Flagship. In November of 1963 President Diem of Vietnam was assassinated. (shot to death) The Providence was taken up the Mekong River to Saigon to show the flag and recognize the newly installed Military President of Vietnam General Minh. Our Ambassador to Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge was flown out by helicopter to ride into Saigon with the Admiral Moorer to show the flag and officially recognize the newly made President. I was one of the JODs in full dress whites on the bridge for that 21 gun salute..... we were tied up in the same berth were the Card was blown up the month before which is yet another war story all unto itself and others, but yes, I was there and may well have been the earliest arrival over there.

Dick Bachmann

IUWG (Harbor Defense Unit Cam Ranh Bay)

Cliff Barney

From Cliff's wife, Edna: 26 years in the Naval Air Force with three missions in Vietnam during wartime, including one year in country. Captain William Clifford Barney retired from active service in October of 1998. Two of his sons also served as Naval Officers. His youngest son even followed his father's footsteps graduating from USNA, #8 in his class (if I remember correctly). Cliff and I married in June 1963, and are still together after 54 years.

Travis Beard

I made four deployments to the Gulf of Tonkin as a naval aviator. The first two aboard the Bennington, CVS-20, flying the S2E in VS-33, carrier based ASW squadron. During Vietnam war we were used in gun fire spotting with our destroyers and recon in the gulf of T, keeping track of all the ships /cargo headed for Haiphong Harbor. My last two deployments were aboard the Oriskany, CVA-34, where I was Catapult & Arresting Gear Officer. I flew the ship's C1A in/out of DaNang and made one strategic morale boosting trek to Thailand, where the Supply O. stocked up on jewelry and other gedunk and I ordered a pair of cowboy boots that were never sent to me! As you probably know, the Oriskany was purposely sunk in the Gulf of Mexico, becoming Oriskany Reef.

Also, I do know that my roomie W.C. Whitworth Jr. (Butch), served in-country as an USMC Officer.

John Bender

Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron TWO as pilot in command of an armored helicopter. Silver Star. See Valor page

Frank Bennett

I was MPA on the USS Berkeley (DDG-15) and made two trips to the South China Sea and Tonkin Gulf. Berkeley carried the Squadron Commander, except for the very brief period he shifted to Maddox for the trip up the Gulf that spurred the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. This was the act that let Lyndon Johnson send too many citizens to too early a death so he could get re-elected.

We were involved in an action at Hon-me (spelling?) island while providing cover for the rescue of the crew of a Phantom. I was the GQ OD. Being a target certainly gets one's attention.

My last job was aide to COM12, with an office in the old Federal Building in San Francisco. We had to dodge the protesters on the way in almost every morning. Turns out they were right. And if we had a draft today we would not be in the quagmire in the Middle East. We've made it way too easy for the politicians to send our wonderful military into harm's way.

Noel Bing

I was the Combat Cargo Officer aboard the USS Bexar (APA-237) from May '65 to July '67.

Bill Bradford

Spent 3 years in DD's followed by 175 missions Navy Air (mostly A-4's)

Ed Brady

My entry in the PDF is somewhat off. I was only in Vietnam "once" from August 1965 to April 1974— a single tour of almost 9 years !

Other than Infantry and Ranger school followed by the 82nd Airborne Division (where I commanded the lead Reconnaissance Platoon in the 1965 invasion of Santo Domingo, I never was with a US unit.

Here is a summary of my assignments while in the Army in Vietnam, you will see that I was having way too much fun to be interested in returning to the US:

16 August, 1965 -- 25 May 1966 Asst Advisor, 22nd Ranger Bn, ARVN

(Among a number of other battles, I was in the battle of Plei Me SF Camp which led to the 1st Cavalry Battle of I'Drang Valley and Chu Pong Mountain. Since I was very familiar

with the terrain, I was loaned to the 1st Cav Airborne Command Post for the duration of that battle.)

25 May, 1966 — 26 June, 1967 Asst Opns Advisor, Tuyen Duc Sector (in Dalat), RF/PF Forces

(During the 2nd half of this period, I was loaned to the Australian Training Team at the Vietnamese National Police Training Center, in Dalat, to train the CIA's first Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU)

26 June 1967— 15 Oct 1968 Opns Staff Officer, Joint Operations Center, VN JCS

(Here I traveled throughout Vietnam with the Special Assistant to the Chairman, VN JCS to gather first hand reports on all major battles in the country, usually arriving early morning when the fighting broke off)

15 Oct 1968— 15 Sept 1970 Special Asst to the Director of the Phoenix Program, initially William Colby of the CIA (Basically I was liaison to the Director of the Phoenix Program, Vietnamese Special Police at the VN National Police Hq. We established District Intelligence Centers throughout the country which he, his senior staff, and I visited numerous times to review files on all

suspected Communist Party members and initiate operations when warranted. Since Administrative Judges could sentence Communist Party members to indefinite detention in the Con Son Island Prison, I also traveled there with them a number of times to review interrogation material and meet with prisoners)

15 Sept, 1970 I was promoted to Major and left the Active Army simultaneously!

(I left the Army having participated in 11 of the 13 Campaigns of the Vietnam War. I had 32 military decorations including 3 Bronze Stars for Valor, 3 VN Cross of Gallantry,

2 National Police Medals for Valor, and 5 Air

Medals (over 50 air assaults and over 400 hours flying as Observer in Air Force Forward Air Control planes). Also the Vietnamese Ranger Badge and Special Forces Parachute Wings .

I was transferred to the Army Reserves and hired as a GS-13 Naval Intelligence Officer (all pre-arranged by Colbly and Gen Abrams) and continued in my same job in the Phoenix Program (until the US portion was disbanded)

1971/1972 — April 1974 I transferred to the Special Office of the Ambassador for Field Operations (I was head of an Analytical Team responsible the Hamlet Evaluation System and transitioned it to the VN Prime Minister's Office. We provided Saigon-based analytical support to the Kissinger Peace Talks in Paris until they completed.)

In April 1974, I returned to the US (unemployed) to attend Georgetown University, Graduate School of Foreign Service.

Robert Black
Commanding Officer of Company B, First Battalion, First Marines, First Marine Division. Silver Star. See Valor page.

Bill Brinkley
I was in the Tonkin Gulf several times in 1966. One night, we took out an AA emplacement manned by about 125 VC. We also called in a number of air strikes on suspected VC boats.

Walt Breede
For what it's worth, I spent about 100 years in Vietnam from June 1965 till June 1966. I was in and out of Qui Nohn in the summer of '65

and then ashore at Chu Lai from August 65 till June '66. I'll never forget the bravery and heroism of my fellow Marines and sailors.

Peter Browne

I was the OOD on USS Rowan for the last night Navy surface combat action. See

http://www.dd782.org/A_DICEY_NIGHT_UP_NORTH/a_dicey_night_up_north.htm for an account of this raid on Haiphong Harbor.

Ken Buell

VA-35 - the 'Black Panthers of attack squadron 35 with their A6 Intruders. On the USS America (CVA-66). KIA

John Burns

I served on USS Braine [was off Mekong when Kennedy & Diem assassinated]

Served with Naval Advisory Group out of Danang 65-66----based NE of Hue on Perfume River outlet to S China sea.

Dave Byrnes

As for me I was never in country but was close to the shore line on USS Arnold J. Isbell (DD-869) in 1964. Then again at Yankee Station and Tonkin Gulf on USS Salmon (SS 572) in late 1967 and again in 1970.

Dick Buelow

I served in Viet Nam on two cruises in VA-94 flying the A-4. The first cruise was onboard the U.S.S Hancock and the second was onboard the U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard.

Ron Calhoun

Patrol Officer of River Patrol Boats 71 and 76, in the Upper Dong Tranh River, Rung Sat Special Zone, Republic of Vietnam. Silver Star. See Valor page.

Chuck Calvano

I did, indeed, serve in VN for 1 year as the advisor to the VNN officer who commanded and oversaw the engineering and repair work at the 16 naval bases the USN had turned over to the VNN. The job entailed a lot of travel all over South Vietnam, done on helos, boats and trucks.

George Candelori

United States Air Force. Silver Star. See Valor page.

Pete Carrothers

I was flying back seat in the Vigilante in 1965-68 and had a West Pac deployment on the USS Enterprise. After surviving a mid air in October of 1966 flew 68 combat missions over NVN...had a lot of time with Kelly Patterson who was a BN in the Intruder squadron on board. Lots of "interesting" flights including the one over Haiphong when our F4 escort kept yelling we were on fire and eject...it turned out to be a compressor stall with a hard AB relight just as some 85mm was exploding near by. On a fun note, we set a new speed record from Yankee Station to Cubi (a little over 650 miles as I recall) in less than 28 minutes...gave us time to grab a beer while they washed the plane. We only had two rules...No smoking within 24 hrs of a flight, and No Drinking within 50 feet.

Bill Carmichael

I did put a year in 'Nam - 1970. After CI/SERE and Language training, I reported to the so-called "Fleet Command" as advisor on LSIL's mostly around Can Tho and Binh Tuy, initially as a rotating R&R relief. After about 2 months, I was transferred to the Senior Naval Advisor's staff to work on turnover planning for IUWG, SEAL, and "Blue Water Assets" (a couple of DE's and a Coast Guard Cutter) to the RVN Navy. Working the SNAdv's shop did have one plus - I went to nearly every place in country where we had Naval assets. In this job I also briefed visiting Flags and other VIP's on turnover progress (the ACTOV program).

In September of 1970, I was assigned to NSF Cam Ranh Bay as the base operations officer, where I finished my year. Other than my time on the LSIL's, I was fortunate not to have to deal much with rat turd

infested rice, canned bacon, and other "delicacies" found on many Vietnamese vessels. I'm sure my year in-country was much easier than most of our classmates experienced, but not one I particularly would like to repeat.

The Naval Support Facility at Cam Ranh was essentially the Market Time base, fleshed out with a CB detachment (functioning as the Public Works Dept), a ship repair facility (where Canon, Snuffy Robinson's PG, was put back together after the Sea Float ambush), housing for a large number of VN families, a SEAL detachment, a couple small groups that nobody talked much about, and, of course, an Officers Club. The Market Time operation was still there, headed by a USN Cdr. and the base CO was also a USN Cdr. Surprisingly, they got along well. We were all at the south end of the peninsula, about 3-4 miles from the CommSta. I arrived in country in January 16, 1970, still slightly hung over from the night I spent with you and Rick Scott before you took me to Travis. Left country January 2, 1971. I did not get to Binh Ba; we were discouraged from acting like tourists by the folks on the island.

Jim Carter
Swift Boat skipper

Bill Cole
I was an advisor with the VN Marines in 1966 and 1967. Also you could add my old roommate, Larry Graham, who was a Navy Seal and was wounded in the Rung Sat Special Zone in 1967.

Mike Colston
I DID NOT SEE OUR CLASSMATE WHO MIGHT BE NUMBER ONE ON THE LIST
TIMEWISE. WARD BOND SERVED IN THE GUN OBSERVER POSITION IN USS MADDOX, ARGUABLY AT THE BEGINNING.
HE NEVER TOLD ME WHAT HE SAW, IT PROBABLY GOT LOST IN THE PAPERWORK.
ON A PERSONAL NOTE, DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT HOW OUR ALL AMERICAN

USED TO BEAT ME AT TENNIS?
LAST YEAR EL AND I MOVED BACK FRO NC, AT THE URGING
OF OUR CHILDREN.
BEING A NATIVE NO CAROLINIIAN IT HAS BEEN HARD, BUT I
SEE MY 9
GRANDCHILDREN MUCH MORE OFTEN.

Denny Conley

As for me I served on multiple ships from '64-'69 in Vietnam as a result of also being on afloat destroyer division/squadron staffs which embarked different ships as they arrived/departed the theater. I went ashore on several occasions to work with USMC to schedule missions/operations but was not ever assigned in-country....I salute those who were as what we did afloat was a cake-walk by comparison.

Jerry Harken and I were in Class 14 at Destroyer School. Jerry, Jim Lasswell and Don Hidy served together aboard *USS Frank Knox* (DD-742) in Vietnam. Jim relieved John Pfeiffer as Weps, joining me and Jerry as DHs. I would imagine that close to 100%, if not all of our class, that went surface either served in Vietnam on ships or ashore, some both.

Mike Corgan

Nov '66 - April '67. Weapons Officer USS Warrington (DD843). 'Sea Dragon' ops off North Vietnam, gunfire support, I and II and IV Corps areas, 'Market Time' support in IV Corps. 1971 (all) - US Naval Advisory Group, Advisor to Vietnamese Naval Academy, Nha Trang.

Lanny Cox

I participated in air operations over North Vietnam in 1965 and 1966 while flying ECM Support missions off Yankee Station carriers in the EA-1F aircraft with Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron THIRTEEN (VAW-13). In 1975, I participated in the evacuation of Saigon providing armed escort for evacuation helicopters flying the A-7E Corsair II aircraft from the USS Coral Sea (CV-43) while assigned to Attack Squadron NINETY FOUR (VA-94).

I ditched an EA-1F ECM Skyraider in the Tonkin Gulf in the Fall of 1966 after a complete electrical failure at night over N. Vietnam. Without electrical power, my radios and Nav aids didn't work and I was unable to find a carrier to land on. All four of the crew got out safely and an Air Force HU-16 Albatross seaplane picked us up. I ended my pilot career in June 1977 in a night carrier landing in an A-7E Corsair II aboard USS Coral Sea and I never flew again. During my career as a Naval Aviator, I flew about 3,600 hours and had over 1,000 hours in the A-1 Skyraider, the A-4 Skyhawk, and the A-7E Corsair II with about 600 carrier landings (about 250 at night) and 135 Combat Missions.

Mike Cronin
Silver Star. See Valor page.

I served in VA-23. Dan Moran and I joined the squadron about the same time in May 1965. Dan was shot down just a few days after I was. He was injured in the cockpit and managed to eject over water, but had bled to death before he could be picked up. Stan Smiley was also in VA-23 after Dan and I were gone and was KIA in Laos. Ron Machens also served later in VA-23 and made it home. As you all know Denver and I did time in Hanoi. Carl Doughtie was in VA-25, the Spad squadron in our Air Wing 2. He was shot down and KIA on a mission I was on as well. Our classmate Jim Lynne was also in VA-25 and survived the war only to lose his life flying in New Guinea missionary work.

Jim DeFrancia
Max Ricketts and I were actually the first two members of the Class to serve in Vietnam, arriving in-country in March 1964 and departing in July 1965. We were attached to Naval Support Activity Saigon.

I served as Supply Officer to a SeaBee Battalion charged with facility maintenance, and also motor pool ops. In addition served as Stevedore Officer in the port.

Max was Asst Commissary and Navy Exchange Officer.

We also both served collateral assignments as Evacuation Wardens.

After Vietnam Max went to Barber's Point NAS in Hawaii as Asst Supply Officer, and I went to San Diego as Aide to RADM Lee Kimball, commander at NSC.

We both got to pick our duty stations, pretty much, as we were coming out of the "war zone."

From Max Ricketts:Very minor corrections to JDeF below: We arrived in very late April 1964, me a week prior to Jim and my assignment was assistant Commissary Store Officer though I had responsibilities with the Navy Exchange as well. Our collateral duty as Sector Wardens might be a hilarious chapter in itself.. Our experience might be better described as the "Vietnam Adventure" than the "Vietnam War." There were only about 14,000 Americans in country when we arrived and there were more Army generals in Saigon than Navy ensigns. We had vehicles and drivers and some of the generals didn't.

Some of our experience, including memorable Lt(jg) wetting down party at the rooftop of the Caravel Hotel with all the Army generals and every Navy officer in attendance, were written up in my July-August 1990 Shipmate article "The Brinks Bombing" - the 1964 Christmas eve bombing of the Brinks BOQ.

Our brilliant and dynamic Dec 1941 Naval Academy graduate commanding officer, "Mayor of Saigon" Captain Archie Kuntze (22-medal war hero of WWII and Korea) wound up being court martialed after our departure as a result of minor indiscretions emanating from his romantic relationship with the exotic Jannie Sun. He was out mentor and inspiration. JDeF was the one who first dated, then introduced the very stunning Jannie to our C.O.

Max is correct about the date of arrival. I dated that from March but had stopped in Manila and Taipei en route to arrival in Saigon. And we were known as the only two Ensign's in the Far East that were bold enough to invite generals to our parties - and they would come!

In addition to cars and drivers we also had a cook and a maid in our home across from the French Embassy, and entertained with regularity.

Haven't lived so well since!

Felix De Golian

My first assignment was to the USS Picking (DD 685). We were in the same division with Maddox and Turner Joy and were in the Tonkin Gulf the evening they were attacked. Later in that and a follow up cruise we had off and on duty in the Gulf, some with shore bombardment duties.

Next I was assigned as Aide and Flag Lt to ComTraPac, Radm David Lambert, '34, out of San Diego. The Admiral and I would travel twice a year to all the commands in country Vietnam in the ongoing attempt to keep training in line with what the front line forces needed.

An interesting aspect of those visits was that we traveled by helo at a minimum of 4,000 feet with guardships flying below us. The Navy

definitely didn't want a flag officer killed or captured. The very interesting aspect of these trips was that they started in Pearl where the admiral met with CincPac and other flags to discuss the current situation. Admiral Lambert let me sit in on all those meetings. On the return trip he'd debrief the same Flag officers.

We traveled throughout Vietnam each trip. It was fascinating. I faced no where the front line horrors of war that many of our classmates did but I had an opportunity to see planning and implementation of both military and political objectives and a front line reaction to strategies. I can't say the Admirals were particularly fond of their political guidance but I did see how they reacted to it. And I came home from each trip with a lot of first hand comments from guys facing various in country challenges.

One memory sticks with me. We were on the way in via a carrier (I don't remember which) from which we would be flown in country the next day. That evening aboard ship Doc Palenscar, a company mate, invited me to sit in on his pre op flight briefing prior to a night attack. Doc did not return from that mission. I'm sad every time I think about the evident pride this quiet, reserved guy had in his Navy role. We're lucky to have guys like this among our friends and classmates.

Ted DelGaizo

Like many of our submarine classmates, at the end of the nuclear-training pipe line we found too many trainees and too few nuclear submarines. Consequently, in June 1965, I received orders to USS Pomfret (SS-391). Commissioned in 1944, Pomfret had completed six war-patrols in 1944 and 1945, and had been converted to a Guppy-II submarine in the early-1950s. Because the Gulf of Tonkin was generally too shallow to justify nuclear submarine operations, diesel boats like Pomfret served in the Gulf. As such, we deployed to the Gulf of Tonkin on two separate occasions in 1966, primarily on plane-guard duty.

During the two tours in the Gulf, we patrolled submerged for weeks on end without ever seeing a single downed pilot (although other submarines were fortunate enough to rescue pilots). We

surfaced every night to charge batteries and to prepare for another submerged day in the shallow water. Battery charging at night was a challenge because we had no radar (which had been removed for electronic equipment to detect emergency radio signals) and other USN warships in the Gulf were running-around at darkened-ship in the War zone. As a surfaced OOD, it was pretty nerve wracking to see the shadows of close-aboard, darkened warships and no way to track them on radar. Personally, it was a lot more comfortable as a submerged OOD than on the surface in the dark with no radar. In 2007 during the McCain campaign for POTUS, I had lunch with Orson Swindel, a Marine Corps fighter pilot who had been shot down in Vietnam and spent six years as a POW in the Hanoi Hilton with John McCain. As I told my plane-guard story to Orson and his wife, she asked why he hadn't crashed into the Gulf rather than into the jungle where he was subsequently captured. His response was "Believe me; I was trying to reach the Gulf." I guess that's what it was all about.

Jim DeLong

I was weapons officer on USS Buck (DD761) during a Vietnam tour in 1966. The Buck was a FRAMED Gearing class (? as I recall with somewhat faded memory) destroyer with six 5"/38 guns. During our 6 month tour (homeport to homeport in San Diego) we spent many days on the gunline, providing gunfire support to American and Vietnamese troops and shore bombardment to disrupt Vietcong operations. We operated mostly offshore of I Corps, the northern most province of South Vietnam. I Corps was a free fire zone, where virtually everything was a legitimate target, and we , with the aid of mostly Army spotters in light planes, fired at almost everything---- water buffalo, structures, boats, vehicles, people. We provided artillery support from near offshore in a couple of significant onshore firefights involving American marines. Even with A-4s dropping napalm, helicopters firing rockets, and a company of Marines, it was our gunfire that drove off the Vietcong and caused them the most casualties in the most intense of these firefights.

Body count was a big deal then, and the official tallies of body count were based on observed counts (by our spotters) multiplied by four,

on the basis that for every visible body, four were not visible. I thought then, and do now, that this was a much over-hyped way to measure our effectiveness, and it doesn't make me particularly proud that our ship's body count was 500.

In addition to our gunfire support duty, we spent roughly half our time at sea as planeguard for the aircraft carriers operating there. I remember operating with the Oriskany, especially, and maybe another carrier that I don't recall.

During our tour we were sent to make a port visit---a show the flag visit---to Zamboanga on the southern tip of the Philippine island of Mindanao. I had been in some poor places in the Sudan, Somaliland, Pakistan, but no where more poor than Zamboanga. There were women who came out to the ship in crude outrigger canoes who held their babies up to us and offered to sell them to us for a quarter, no doubt to try to give them a better shot at life than was their lot in Zamboanga.

This is just a quick sketch of a short but intense part of my Navy experience. As we were returning home from this tour I received orders to the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, which caused me to have to make a decision whether to accept the orders and effectively commit to a career in the Navy, or whether to resign from the service at the end of my original commitment. After much consideration of the pros and cons, I decided I would resign and become a civilian.

Miller Detrick

I served in Viet Nam on two cruises in VA-15 flying the A-4. Both cruises were onboard the U.S.S Intrepid.

John Detweiler

From Pete Soverel--John Detweiler and I served together in, River Assault Squadron Nine, as part of the Mobile Riverine Force -- joint Army (2nd Brigade, US Ninth Infantry Division) - Navy (TF 117) strike group in the Mekong Delta October 1967-October 1968. John was

operations officer. I a bit vague on his gongs, but at a minimum, he received combat action ribbon, Presidential and Navy Unit citations and, as recall, he was wounded in action twice.

Form John: I saw the list of people who served in Vietnam and Pete Soverel's info on me. I thought I should add/correct a few things. I was with RAS 9 from December 1967 to November 1968. I was only wounded once -- that was enough -- and received one purple heart. The rest of the time I was zigging when I should have been zigging. Or more likely, I owe my life to the gunners mate on the 50 cal next to my battle station. He operated that gun as if it was a drill press destroying most everything that could harm us from the port side of the boat. I did receive a Navy Commendation with 'V'.

Peter Deutermann

I deployed to Vietnam for the first time in the fall of 1964, arriving in the Gulf aboard USS Morton (DD-948) a few weeks after the Maddox & Turner Joy dustup. We joined up with USS R.S. Edwards (DD-950) for a so-called nighttime DeSoto Patrol off the coasts of North Vietnam, which precipitated the second Tonkin Gulf incident, after which a two-carrier alpha strike was launched. We continued to work the Gulf until Spring of 1965.

Next time back was in 1966-1967 for a one year tour in-country as skipper of PCF-39, based down south in the IV Corps area near Vung Tau. We worked the Long Tao (Saigon) River, and then operated offshore hunting for North Vietnamese supply vessels along the several Mekong Delta outlets.

Returned again in late 1967 as Ops Boss in USS Hull (DD-945) for gunline operations extending into 1978, firing over 25,000 rounds of five inch and going through two sets of new gun barrel liners.

Came back to the Gulf in the fall of 1970 through 1971 as Ops Boss in USS Jouett (DLG, later CG -29), for Red Crown station ops and also the North SAR station.

After that I went back east to LantFleet and didn't return to the PacFleet until 1985 for a Destroyer Squadron command.

Ollie Donelan

I flew search and rescue helicopters off multiple carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin. Highlight of my career was my first flight picking up Neil Holben '61 (13th company) about a half mile off the coast of North Vietnam. Classmates Vern Von Sydow, Jerry Smith, and Bob Wildman were in the same squadron, HS-6.

Chuck Donovan

Chuck served as Assistant Navigator aboard the USS Shangri La in the Tonkin Gulf in 1970.

Bill Earner

PBRs in Riverine Force

Carl Doughtie

Attack Squadron TWENTY-FIVE (VA-25), aboard U.S.S. MIDWAY (CVA-41). KIA. Distinguished Flying Cross. See Valor page.

James Duke

I deployed with COMPHIBRON 5 on board U.S.S. Okinawa LPH-3, on line six months in 1967. Did not get in country.

Bill Earner

I served in River Section 534 (PBR) in the Kien Hoa province area of the Mekong Delta near Ben Tre from August of 1967 through August of 1968. Our unit is somewhat memorialized in a book written by one of our Patrol Officers, Wynn Goldsmith, and titled " Papa Bravo Romeo" 2001.

Len Eaton

I served with the Marine Corps in Vietnam and was awarded a Bronze Star with a Combat V for my service. I also received a Presidential Unit Citation and a Navy Unit Commendation.

Jim Eckland

From Oct 67 to Oct 68 [incl. Tet Offensive Jan 68], I served in Vietnam with US Army Corps of Engineers [497th Post Const. Company], 35th Engineer Group.

Dave Emerson

I served on three FRAM 1 DDs homeported in Yokosuka. We spent a great amount of time off the coast of Viet Nam, both south and north. Many times were spent with the carrier groups, but also numerous NGFS missions and Sea Dragon missions in the north. My first NGFS mission was in July 1965 aboard USS ORLECK (DD-886). I also did a tour with MACV from Sep 71 through Aug 72.

Patric Enright

I served initially, after the Gulf of Tonkin "attacks" , deploying with the 9th MEB out of Okinawa. I was a rifle platoon commander in Alpha Company 1st Bn 3rd Marines. I was on the USS Tulare (AKA112), and my platoon was the "ship's platoon". We spent August and September 1964 in Danang harbor before returning to Okinawa. My next "visit" was on the ground from February to August 1970 with the 1st Bn, 1st Marines on Hill 10 (about 60 km west of Danang), then from August 1970 to February 1971 I was assigned as the Aide de Camp to the CG 1st MarDiv MGEN Charles F. Widdecke. I saw much more combat with the General than I did with the infantry battalion--go figure!

Charles Fishburn

I served in Vietnam on board the USS AMERICA the later part of 1968 and whole deployment in 1970.

Jim Fisher

I landed at ChuLai with the Marine Expeditionary force as platoon commander of 2nd Platoon Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment in the summer of 1965. I was in country 11 months I think, when I got orders back to Quantico for Communications Officer School. I hope this helps your historical effort!

George Fister

An odd thing happened when George died. I was exchanging e-mails and images of the text for his cemetery marker with the Arlington representative assigned to me. Each time a proof of the marker was sent to me it included - Vietnam - and I would return the proof with Vietnam crossed out. Finally, after several exchanges I contacted some shipmates and was told to leave it. In my mind, being in

Vietnam meant being "In Country." As a submariner, certainly that would not apply to George's service. I will leave it to you to decide if he is eligible for your traditions page.

I know that Fred Meyett served two tours in Vietnam and would truly qualify to be acknowledged.

Bill Fitzgerald KIA.

Senior advisor to Vietnamese Navy Coastal Group SIXTEEN. Navy Cross. See Valor page

Roland Fontaine

He served two tours of duty in the Vietnam War as a helicopter squadron pilot. Among the numerous commendations he received were the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, 11 Air Medals, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation.

Jim Fontana

I served at sea aboard DD -826 providing NGFS in the South and shotgun support to several bird farms in the Gulf. I also had an in-country tour on the COMNAVFORV Staff in Saigon.

Dave Frost

Three cruises; two on Coral Sea and one on Ranger. VF-151 and VF-154.

Joel Gardner

May 1965 Company B 3rd Recon Bn Chu lai, Hue/Phu Bai RVN until June 1966. July 1967 CIA Phoenix Program Nha Trang RVN until August 1968

Ed Gill

SEAL. Silver Star (no details)

Sonny Glassner

I served in the Dennis J. Buckley(DD-808) and enjoyed many days shooting up the Vietnamese coast as well as the Mekong area in

1965(the early days). R&R around Vung Tao.

George Grider

I was aboard the USS Dale (DLG 19) during its time off the coast of Vietnam, this during February-April 1965. I served as Personnel and Legal officer. We assisted with the landing of the Marines in DaNang. Plane guarding the carrier (can't recall which one). No rescues.

All Griggs

I was stationed at Chu Lai in 1966-1967 and flew with VMFA 542 and VMFA 323.

Phil Gubbins

I was in, over and around Vietnam in VA-95 and VA-195.

Bill Gunn

My time in the Tonkin Gulf was on the USS Okinawa (LPH-3) –at the time, one of the new helicopter gunship carriers-from Dec 1965 to June 1967. We steamed off the coast pretty near DaNang most of the time. I was ship's company and I had the typical duties of a line officer.

Mike Harman

I served in Vietnam from January of 1965 to June of 1967. I was on the USS Washtenaw County LST 1166 and the staff of Comlst div 92. We were home ported out of Yokuska, Japan but spent most of our time moving equipment and troops into and out of Vietnam. We brought much of what was used to build the Chu Lai airfield into Chu Lai. We celebrated the birth of my oldest son in Chu Lai.

Jon Harris

The USS Independence with Air Wing 7, including my new squadron, VA-72 (A-4E's) arrived at Yankee Station on July 1st, 1965, just in time for Independence Day. On my 63rd combat mission (ironically enough) on September 20, 1965, I joined six other pilots and crewmen having being shot down over the North. Two air force pilots (including the one captured by the Chinese and held in their prison

until February 12, 1973) and the entire four man crew of a rescue helicopter looking for the other pilot, were captured and held as POWs for seven and a half years.

The Alpha Strike I was on that day was the first major strike into Hanoi, meant to destroy a bridge running to the north as the major supply route from China. My plane was hit during the engagement, and I was forced to eject about halfway to the coast. Having been told that there was a rescue helo aboard a cruiser off the coast, I found an extraction position halfway up a mountain hiding in elephant grass, where I could see a village below, but would be able to be picked up if the helo came my way. After a couple of hours of praying and hoping, it did come my way, circled around behind the mountain (to dump my weight of fuel), was shot at by the bad guys causing the RESCAP A-1 pilot to strafe that area and quiet them down, and came to a hover while it let down the horse collar. As it began to ratchet me up, the helo had to turn out over the valley to gain airspeed, and I was dangling 500 feet or more from terra firma. Finally in the helo, we began taking taking antiaircraft fire as we approached the coast south of Haiphong. One blast was close enough to unbalance the rotor blades, and the pilot had to continually press (what he later told me was) the "self-balancing" button...so it was a rough ride to the cruiser...which was at flank speed the entire two hours of the rescue heading directly toward the coast so that the helo would have enough fuel to make it back.

It was later reported in the book, Alpha Strike Vietnam, by Jeffrey L. Levinson, that this was the first recovery of a pilot shot down over North Vietnam. Knowing how many friends, squadron-mates, shipmates, and classmates endured such interminable and horrendous experiences as POWs, there has always been a lingering sense of survivor's guilt mixed with the exultation of the moment and the recognition over the years that somehow those others on that day punched my ticket and let me get home. I have never forgotten.

Fittingly enough, the Independence departed Yankee Station for our homeward trek on Veteran's Day, November 11, 1965.

Wilson Harris

I was CIC Officer on USS Massey (DD-778) out of Newport, RI. The entire destroyer squadron left Newport in late January 1966 for our Westpac tour. got there about March and stayed four months, providing a bit of gunfire support and mostly plane guarding for the carriers at Yankee Station...We continued west after Nam, crossed the equator down around Indonesia and stopped in India on our way. I was transferred off the ship a few days after arrival back in Newport for Destroyer School.

From Wikipedia:.....

Massey was ordered to the Pacific for the second time, in January 1966. Departing [Newport, Rhode Island](#), on 19 January, she transited the [Panama Canal](#) and headed into the Pacific. On 28 February she arrived at [Kaosiung, Taiwan](#), commencing operations in the South China Sea the following week. The destroyer cruised off the coast of Vietnam, providing gunfire support for ground forces and rescue service for carriers, as well as performing picket duty assignments, until departing [Tonkin Gulf](#) on 3 July 1966 for Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. From the Philippines, she steamed for home via the Suez Canal. She arrived at Newport, Rhode Island, on 17 August 1966, having circumnavigated the world. On 28 September she entered the Naval Shipyard at Boston for repairs.

Ray Heins

I spent a year in-country in the Naval Advisory Group, part of USMACV. Tom Miller was there, also, as was Charlie Minter and others. I have attached a couple of pix, but have lots more. And stories!



Charles Helsper

I was Deputy Commander, Naval Research and Development Unit – Vietnam Nov 1070 - Oct 1971. We operated from an office in Saigon, next to the river in a compound with other service-specific R&D organizations. The nature of applying quick-turnaround fixes from the Navy’s R&D Labs to in-country problems took us all over SVN. In addition to the in-country R&D tour, I also served on four shipboard deployments in the area – destroyers and an LPD. Taking DD-716 up-stream in the Saigon River for H&I fire could count both ways – a rather unusual trip with such a large target. Having ASROC exposed was my major concern. Many projects, many stories etc.

Tom Heslop

My first tour after Supply School was as Supply Officer of the USS HIGBEE (DD 806). Begin homeported in Yokosuka, Japan it seemed the only break HIGBEE got from gunfire support off Vietnam was escorting the CVA's !!

I expect my hearing loss was from all those rounds fired from mount 51 where I was the safety check sight observer !

Dick Jones

Served “in country” with USMC VMFA-314, Black Knights, from Sept 66 until Nov 67. Based primarily at Chu Lai. Flew 253 missions, mainly from that Chu Lai 12,000 ft runway. Such memories from so very long ago. Have we learned anything at all? Be well. Blessings.

Sempre Fidelis,

Frank Hilton
VP 19 (Market Time)
USS Oriskany CVA34

Bill Himchak

I served on the USS Hancock (CVA19) from Dec '71 to Jan '74 as Communications Department Head in ship's company. I was also a C-1 (COD) pilot on flying duty about every third day for two cycles carrying people, mail and aircraft parts to and from DaNang, and a nominal monthly trip to Ubon Thailand carrying our supply officers to buy souvenirs for Hancock's and accompanying DDs' ships stores. One of my best memories was trying to get a landing on all 8 of the carriers on the line in a single day, but only got 6. Worst memory was the day Vance Schufeldt was lost at sea.

Dan Hitzelberger

Marines. Commanding Officer of Company G, Second Battalion, Ninth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Rein.), FMF. Silver Star. See Valor page.

William Hoefling

Bill Hoefling served four tours aboard Aircraft Carriers in the Vietnam War. Two aboard USS Kearsarge (CVS-33) with VS-21 and two aboard USS Hancock (CVA-19) as part of ship's company.

JJ Hogan

JJ served several tours in the Vietnam conflict. Among his many awards were the Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star (in lieu of a second award) and the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Star.

Frank Holmes

I served in Vietnam as MPA aboard the USS America (CVA-66) from Jan 1969 through Dec 1969 (not sure anymore of the exact dates but Capt Hayward (later CNO) held me aboard to be MPA just as I was about to be detached as Boiler Officer to go to Supship, Newport

News. I made the entire cruise (around the world) and left America in Jan 1970 and went to my new billet at Newport News where I served for over three years where my last assignment was as project officer for DLGN's California and South Carolina.

I was a LT as America's MPA and had about 660 BTs and MMs working for me. Serving in America was the start of a nearly 23 years as a carrier engineer, finishing as Carrier Program Manager at Navsea. I loved the various jobs I had as a carrier engineer. I went to America after MIT, diving school and the ship engineering course at Newport, Rhode Island.

Dave Honhart

In 1968 I served as the Chief Engineer on the USS Coontz DLG 9. During that period of time the Coontz was deployed to Vietnam, where we were assigned duties in the northern Tankin Gulf to provide gunfire support and rescue missions for pilots whose aircraft were disabled but were able to make it to the Gulf where we were stationed to rescue them.

Larry Hopkins

After graduation I attended 10 weeks of Damage Control Officer training at Treasure Island (Firefighting, nuclear, chemical and biological defense, and ship stability) and then reported to the USS Lyman K Swenson DD729 homeported out of Yokosuka Japan. For the next 9 months spent a lot of time on carrier safety patrol in the South China Sea and when the USNS Card was sunk in Saigon harbor we went there as a show of force and I and my shipfitters helped in the analysis and recovery effort. We also did some fire support missions in the south.

I was transferred to the USS Providence CLG6 and, after shipyard rehab in Bremerton WA, we went back across the pond to become 7th Fleet Flagship. Again homeported in Yokosuka, we spent a lot of time down south. The ship received the Navy Unit Commendation award for our support at Hue during the 2nd Tet Offensive. We also got tagged by NVA shore batteries at the DMZ and lost our missile fire control radar antenna. Although I was serving as the Main Propulsion Assistant on the ship. I also stood OOD Underway

watches (being a line officer) and had the conn during many unrupts and fire control missions.

The Providence would also pull into DaNang harbor frequently and spend the night firing interdiction rounds into Elephant Valley. Although my stateroom was only about 60 feet from the 8 inch #2 powder room I could usually sleep through the night. I resigned my commission after 5-1/2 years active to go back to grad school in mathematics. I have 4 oak leaf clusters on my RVN Campaign Medal.

Ed Hutcheson
COMNAVFORVStaff in Saigon

Albert Isger
I didn't have the the in country experiences that many of our classmates had but I did have the opportunity to see most of North Vietnam. From June-December 1967, on board the USS Intrepid, I was in VA-15 (Valions) along with Miller Detrick and Dave Thornhill flying A4C's

Steve Jacoby
On graduation day, I took my commission in the Army and ultimately served as a fire base commander in Vietnam. I have attached some excerpts from my autobiography which covers not only information about my Vietnam adventures but also experiences as a battery commander in Germany.

Dennis Jones
Compared to the many others, mine was a small part and I did nothing heroic. I was there at them beginning as I was on my way to my first ship when the Gulf of Tonkin incident happened, and left my last ship as it was on the way to start the evacuation of Saigon. For most of the middle of the war, I was at NPS or LBNSY; far away from the shooting.

Spencer Johnson

Operations officer aboard USS Perry (DD844) in 1969. Deployed from Mayport, Florida to Vietnam as part of the Ticonderoga carrier group. Escort and SAR ops on Yankee Station with gunfire support operations close inshore in II Corps area (Phan Thiet) supporting an 82nd airborne regiment and Australian forces. Sent ashore on several occasions, one of which was to explain to very nervous Army colonel why supporting naval gunfire was not "incoming", even though it sounded like "incoming". Liberty in Subic, Maintenance in Kaoshung and R&R in Hong Kong. My first WestPac cruise.

Dick Jones

I served in country during 1966-1967 as a pilot with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, the "Black Knights," flying the F-4, Phantom based at the new west field just opened at Chu Lai, RVN. Flew 253 combat missions, whatever was on the flight schedule! Spent the entire tour assigned as a pilot to 314 which was very unusual. No staff job or FAC duty during the tour. Feel blessed to have gotten out of there. The Animals made a hit of "We Gotta Get Out Of This Place." It became our theme song. We made it! Sempre Fidelis!

Fred Kaiser

U. S. Navy June 1963 to October 1968 USS Topeka
Junior Officer Nuclear Missile Division. Responsible for 30 men.

UDT 12 LTJG. - Platoon Commander. Responsible for platoon of frogmen. included one tour to Vietnam

SEAL TEAM ONE Lieutenant - SEAL Platoon Commander & Detachment Officer Included one tour to Vietnam

John Kallestad

After graduation I served on USS Porterfield (DD682) in the weapons department, eventually departing as "Gun Boss". I volunteered for Vietnam service in the new, but esoteric, Swift Boat program. Training was located at the amphib base-Coronado, I was stationed in the delta. Jim Thorell '63 a Navy track team friend, also served there.

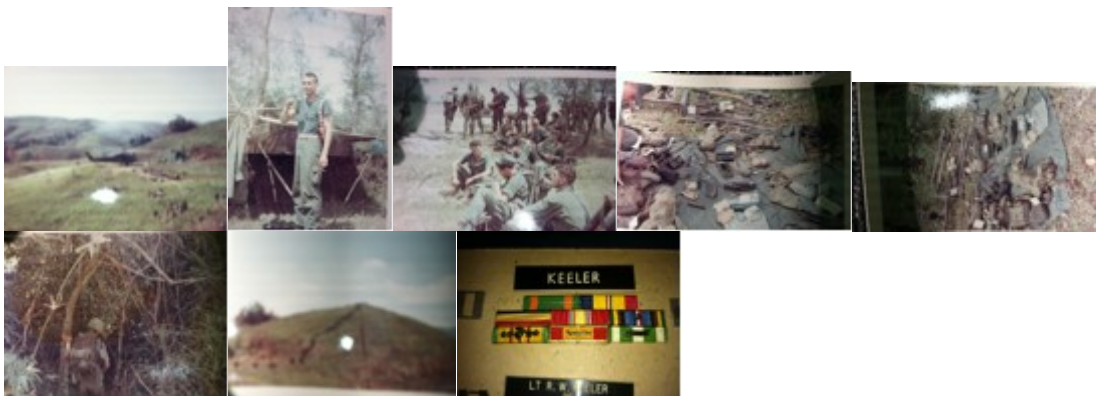
Robert Keeler

I had two very different Vietnam tours both of which were extended.

The first was NGLO First Marine Division. My assignment was Division Assistant Naval Gunfire Officer, on the Generals Staff. So I got help write the Op Plans for combat operations. Then I got to brief the Regiment staff, then the Battalion Staff, go join my Liaison team, join the Company and helo team and fly to target LZ. I usually helo'ed out to the gunfire support ships to brief them on the ground ops they were supporting. That is a lot of time on helo hoists.

I went on combat operations with various Marine units (Combat Action Ribbon), plus various ARVN Army and Marine Units (Cross of Gallantry) and Local Force and Popular Force units, and Republic of Korea Marines and even a US Army operation.

I went on Special Landing Force Operations Deckhouse I and II. Deckhouse II turned into Operation Hastings 3rd Battalion 5th Marines near the DMZ. The Battalion stopped /destroyed / inflicted heavy casualties on a NVA Regiment. (Presidential Citation)



The CO of my next Destroyer Benjamin Stoddard (DDG-22) told me I would get Passed over for LCDR because I had been messing around with the Marines instead of Destroyer school, DD Dept. Head tour and PG school.

My second long term Vietnam tour was Ops aboard USS Ponchatoula (AO-148) Floating Gas station up and down the coast of

Vietnam for almost 3 years (Deep Draft Qual for Four Strippers...Submariner followed by Airedale.) Navy Achievement Medal and a few more stars on Vietnam Service Medal, I think my tours covered 13 campaigns but I stopped counting after Marine globe&anchor and four stars.

Richard Kell

I also served in Vietnam at Naval Support Activity (NAS) Danang. I served there from May 1967 to June 1968. I was ordered in to NAS as Civic Action Officer to relieve a CDR that was media-vac to HI due to intestinal illness. The Admiral decided he didn't want a junior Lt. as Civic Action so I was to be transferred to the Coastal Defense Force but that got canceled at the last moment by someone else from Saigon being assigned. After several weeks I was assigned as Harbor Master for all the Naval Support craft in Danang. About 3 months later I was reassigned to the Assistant Officer in Charge at Small Craft Repair Facility (SCRF). SCRF had responsibility to maintain all small craft supporting I Corps operations. SCRF had about 600 Vietnamese and 85 USN personnel assigned. That was the start of my ED career in the Navy.

Bob Keen

I was one who did on Sculpin SSN-590 and with some brief detached duty as a ship-shore communicator with a special operations group.

Denver Key

POW. Silver Star. See Valor page.

Ron Kilmer

I AM A CLASSMATE, RON KILMER, AND I SERVED IN VIETNAM DURING 1969 AND 1970. I WAS IN AN OUT OF DANANG, SAIGON, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER AREAS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. WHILE I NEVER EVER GOT TO NORTH VIETNAM I DID OVERFLY HANOI IN 1970. I ALSO HAD SOME R&R IN UBON THAILAND.

Michael Krause

USS MAHAN (DLG-11), USS OZBOURN (DD-846) on Sea Dragon in the Tonkin Gulf off North Viet Nam. See extensive write up including a nuke incident on the Traditions page.

Ray Kutch

I served in VR-21 from 64-67 and had many flights as an NFO into and out of Vietnam. Being in a transport squadron, saw many classmates and alumni on those trans-Pacific flights.

Sonny Langley

3rd battalion 9th marines combat engineer platoon leader landed April 1965 with first marine combat troops into Vietnam at Danang. Also served as combat cargo officer aboard the Union taking the reinforced battalion to Vietnam. We steamed the South China Sea for over 50 days waiting for the go ahead to land. Not pleasant. A night landing!

Jim Lasswell

Advisor to VNN Sea Force. Served in USS HOEL (DDG-13), USS FRANK KNOX (DDR-742 and USS SAFEGUARD (ARS-25) in direct support of the Vietnam activities

Glenn Laury

From March of '68 until June of '68, I was the ASW officer in VS 25 while in the Gulf of Tonkin on the USS Yorktown CVS -10.

Larry Linn

I was Flight Deck Officer on the USS Constellation (CVA-64) in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1971-1972. As an S-2 qualified pilot, I managed to ride the COD, C-1A, into and across Viet Nam a few times during the cruise. Our squadrons were among those that mined Hai Phong Harbor, and one crew (Cunningham and Driscoll) were the first aces of the war.

Bob Little

I was on a the DD-755 for 4 trips to be in the South China Yacht Club. While there we spent some time up the Saigon River shooting H & I fire and getting sprayed with Agent Orange.

Steve Longo

I served in RVN for 13 months during '67 and '68, mostly flying Bird dogs and as the ALO with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines.

Joe LoPresti

USS Carpenter, DD-825

Duty off Vietnam

Operations in the Gulf of Tonkin

Support of American and Allied troops in South Vietnam

WESTPAC Cruise 1967

Jim Lynne

From Lanny Cox: Jimmy Lynne was a member of the VA-25 flight of four A-1 Skyraiders that shot down a North Vietnamese MiG-15 jet fighter in 1965. The "kill" was actually credited to LTs Clint Johnston and Charley Hartman. The flight leader was LCDR Ed Greathouse and LTJG Jimmy Lynne was his wingman.

Chuck Maclin

Served in USS Orleck (DD886) and USS Eversole (DD789) 1964 to 1968.

Don MacLaughlin

A-4 Skyhawk with VA-76 in the carrier ENTERPRISE. KIA.

Bob Maier

I reported to VA-144 as Ev Alvarez's relief. Ev was the first pilot shot down after the Gulf of Tonkin Incident and a long time POW. I ended up logging a couple hundred missions in A4Cs launching from Ticonderoga and Kitty Hawk. Along with far to many others, we lost squadron mate and classmate Jerry Pinneker.

Chuck Marik

A-6A from the U.S.S. Constellation. KIA

John McCabe

My ship was USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14), where I served as Fire Control Officer, in charge of the four remaining 5inch guns, which by then provided little more than ballast. My primary function was serving as Officer of the Deck, which, given my two prior years on a DDG, gave me (at least in the eyes of the C.O.) an advantage over the other OCS-bred J.O.s.

Dick McKenna

- November '66 – March '67 Chief Engineer Myles C Fox (DD-829), plane guarding and gunfire support.
- January '68 – January '69 Commanding Officer USS Madera County (LST-905), primarily Mekong Delta ops with one cargo load to ICORPS. We were designated to “smoke test” the Saigon River during the Tet offensive to restore convoy ops. Austen Lett was one of the other Squadron COs.
- July -November '72 Material Officer, CruDesFlot 11. Our Staff was in charge of Surface Ops offshore and we were Linebacker participants on a Haiphong Raid. Hank Dalton was our Flag Sec.
- April – May '75 XO USS Kirk (FF1087). We participated in the Cambodian Evac, the Saigon Evac, and the escort of the VN Navy remnants to Subic Bay with 30,000 refugees. Technically, we were the last Navy ship out of Vietnam waters, Leaving Con Son Island on 2 May. We were featured in “The Last Days In Vietnam” an Academy Award Nominee in 2015.

Jamie McClure

Served on Jouett off the coast for about 5-6 months...spent one day in Danang bumming paper plates etc as we weren't making enough water on board BTW...that one day resulted in my cancer being related to agent orange... would be interesting to know how many of us who served ended up with cancer

Jack McDonald

I was first there in 1965 on board USS Walker (DD-517) and then in 1968-69 on Swift Boats with Coastal Division 15, IICorp, Qui Nhon.

Ken McGuire

In July, 1966, I reported to Danang, South Vietnam and became O-in-C of PCF 15. Most of the year was spent in Operation Market Time, inspecting numerous junks and handling heavy Winter Monsoon seas. I received a Bronze Star with Combat "V" for actions of PCF-15 while operating with the USMC's Operation Canyon on April 9, 1967. We had been assigned as a blocking unit on the Cua Viet River for a USMC unit advancing from the south. I spotted a man carrying a machine gun some distance away running south from the river. We followed and entered a small tidal creek with multiple bends and wooded banks, going slowly due to the shallow water depth and to keep engine noise low. As we rounded a sharp bend, we came within yards of a VC unit arranged along a small ridge whose leader was using hand signals to position the man we had followed and designate his targets - a Marine squad unaware of their presence and relaxing in a clearing at the end of the creek. The VC leader and I immediately saw each other. An intense, short range fire fight ensued. The VC unit was destroyed with no friendly casualties. The Marines recovered eight weapons.

Denis Meredith

I also served in Vietnam waters aboard USS Tom Green County (LST-1159), USS Chase County (LST-532), and USS Dale (DLG-19).

Alan Merkel

I served in country from March 1968 to March 1969.

Jim Metcalfe

I served on AMERICA, CVA66 in 1970. Even spent about 24 hours in Danang during a rocket attack. Glad to get out to the ship!

Fred Meyett

Fred Meyett, served on the USS Vogelgesang DD862 off the coast of Viet Nam for 7 months from June to December 1966 and then went back in country as an advisor to a NAG Group for a full year from December 1968 to January 1969

Tom Miller
Advisor to VNN Sea Force

Charlie Minter
I did serve with the Naval Advisory Group as an advisor on a Vietnamese PGM. I made patrols to three of the four coastal zones during my 68-69 tour. Others included Bob Harper and Ron Wills. Rick Trani was our SEAL but we rarely saw him.

Dave Moore



Advisor to Coastal Group 26 (Junks). Yabuta Junks were a Japanese design but built in Saigon. There were several variants. Of the two shown here, we had six that were like the junk on the

left. The lower style "deck house" required you to crawl around on your hands and knees. The sun shade built over the helmsman position allowed enough shade for four people to stand up in the shade. These junks seem to show permanent machine gun positions for 50 or 30 cal. We had a portable weapons stand with pipe welded to a flat plate and sand bags to hold things down. We could also put 60 mm mortar on sand bags on the foc'sle. In actual practice we did none of the above. The most common use was for the 5 man crew to check the ID cards of fisherman. At Coast Group 26, the most useful function was carrying troops on the forward part of the boat. There were 22 Junk Bases with different geography, different threats, and different missions depending on the Commanding Officer of the Base.

Yabutas were 36' x 10' x 2' with a 3 cylinder engine. Speed 10-12 kts.

The pictures on the internet often show an old, demasted junk with a much wider beam. We had one of the of these "ghe lun" (junk big) in such bad shape it was only used to fetch water from the Swift Boat pier.

Dan Moran
A-4 on USS Coral Sea. KIA

Joe Morra
Served in Vietnam in the Marines- short tour due to getting wounded and medically evacuated followed by a full tour 3 years later.

Wayne Mosher
I was on a DD 795 chasing Carriers when it started, then AF59 & later on ASW3 staff; total of 6 cruises.

Frank Mutch
I served in Vietnam on a surface ship. during the years 65 and 66.

Tony Nargi

Pilot of a jet aircraft while attached to Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN (VF-111), Detachment ELEVEN, embarked in U.S.S. INTREPID (CVS-11). Silver Star. See Valor page.

Wayne Nelson

From 1965-67 in WASHOE COUNTY (LST-1165) homeported in Yokosuka - continuous round trips from Okinawa to Viet Nam carrying both troops and heavy equipment. A sea story - On the first amphibious landing in Viet Nam, carrying construction personnel and heavy quipmnet to build an air strip at Danang, we are at general quarters not knowing if there was going to be any resistance on the beach. As we are beaching, we are greeted by a group of young Viet Namanese women holding up a banner saying "welcome to Viet Nam." What a war.

From 1967-68 in OKLAHOMA CITY (CLG-5) also homeported in Yokosuka, the Oakie Mau provided gunfire support to troops ashore.

Charlie Newkirk

I was with NAVSUPPAC Danang from 1965-66 spending most of my time in Danang and Chu Lai.

Bob Nobbs

OIC MSTS Office in ChuLai June 1966- June 1967

Jim Oakes

USS Midway (CVA-41) ships company 1963-65 ; Yankee Station duty; Navigator USS Monticello (LSD-35); 1965-1966 ; Put Marines and their equipment ashore up and down the Vietnam coast. Several Vietnam service medals(don't remember them all).

Mike Obsitnik

I was first there in early 1965 on board a Minesweep. Second tour was in-country mid 1965 to mid 1966. Initially with HSA Saigon then as advisor with a Vietnamese Junk Division based in Rach Gia.

Randy Orlowski

1965 August to December - TDY with the US Army Combat Engineers from Schofield Barracks, HI to Dong Ba Thin to extend and place pierced steel planks over a dirt airfield adjacent to a Special Forces camp.

April 1966, back again for a full year with the engineering battalion of the 25th Infantry Division when the division moved into a base camp at Cu Chi. Nasty area. Read "The Tunnels of Cu Chi" written by a few tunnel rats. We lost 5 engineers due to mines and ambushes during the move-in. Later in the year I was assigned as the company commander of a float bridge company and moved the unit up the coast to Tuy Hoa to keep roads open as well as for infantry and artillery unit support. Bronze Star awarded.

Bob Otis

I was in the war zone in:

USS Henry B Wilson DDG-7, early '64 and again in '65.

USS Iwo Jima LPH-2, '68-'69

USS Buchanan DDG-14 '72

Don Palen

Advisor to VNN Sea Force

Doc Palenscar

A-4 on USS Kitty Hawk. KIA

John Pearson

I am John W. Pearson, USNA '63, 7th Company. As a LTJG I served as a Tactical Coordinator (TACCO) in a seaplane squadron, VP-48, flying P-5M (P-5B) Martin Marlins. Our flight crew flew 25 combat flights in the Vietnam theater in 1965-66, taking off and landing in Cam Rahn Bay while operating with a seaplane tender. Our mission was surveillance of the coastline of South Vietnam from Cam Rahn Bay all the way around to the Cambodian border. The flights were 10 hours long. All of our squadron's aircraft qualified for combat pay every month we were there.

Phillip Parotti

In the spring of 1964, I was Asst. ASW on the USS PREBLE (DLG-15) when we spent May/June on Yankee Station and up in the Tonkin Gulf acting as escort for the KITTY HAWK which Capt. Bringle was then commanding. As I remember it PREBLE was relieved on station by the MADDOX and the TURNER JOY, the Tonkin Gulf "incident" occurring about a month after we departed. I went back in 1966 as Gunnery Assistant and ASROC officer on USS BRONSTEIN (DE-1037); on that deployment, we did everything from escort and screening tasks to extended radar picket duty south of Hainan.

I think that pretty well covers it; in the fall of '66, I was transferred to the JOSEPH K. TAUSSIG (DE-1030) in Newport, RI and spent the rest of my tour as Weapons and acting XO.

James Patterson

Naval flight officer serving with Attack Squadron THIRTY-FIVE, embarked in USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65). Distinguished Flying Cross. See Valor page.

Bill Pawlyk

[taken from Bill's essay "Nuke Navy", posted at USNA63.org, Pride and Tradition]: When the time came for service selection, I had a full menu before me. The smaller destroyers, the workhorses of the fleet, seemed to be more fun, exciting, and more like the tight-knit submarine crews. The thought of overseas duty seemed exotically attractive; after all, I joined the Navy, in part, to see the world. As I scanned the bewildering options, my eyes fixed upon a destroyer with an intriguing situation. She had been homeported in Japan and just finished a major shipyard modernization. Now homeported in Long Beach, California, her schedule took her for a deployment within the next year to the Far East, (WestPac, as it was called in the Navy). My eyes lit up as I realized this was the best of all worlds as far as I was concerned. I'd be on a reasonably up-to-date destroyer; I'd taste California and the Far East, perfectly new and exciting experiences for me. I quickly chose the *USS Eversole* (DD-789) as my duty station. I wrote to my new ship and got a reply informing me that I'd be assigned to the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) division. My new

ship's primary mission was ASW, so my assignment further motivated me.

I loved my destroyer duty. Operating out of Long Beach, I cruised to San Diego, Seattle, Juneau, Hawaii, and the Far East. Vietnam was just heating up and we played bumper cars with Soviet intelligence ship that was bothering our carriers off the coast of Vietnam.

Entering the Sea of Japan, we also stirred up some Soviet destroyers and a jet off the Siberian coast. Our return to the states was delayed a few weeks by the Gulf of Tonkin incident [Aug 1964], but we were up in Japanese waters when that happened. My ship won the "E" for excellence as the best destroyer, and we won the "A" for ASW excellence.

Jerry Pinneker

A-4 on USS Kitty Hawk. KIA

Peter Quinton

I served on the U.S.S. Black (DD-666) (I was 1ST, Lt., ASW officer and Gunnery officer) doing Market Time Patrol; gunfire support; Yankee station and Dixie station (2 deployments). U.S.S. Repose (AH-16) as her navigator and providing battle casualty support to U.S.M.C. (primarily) along with Army, and Coast Guard. Operated along coast from Chu Lai to the DMZ (one year deployed). U.S.S. Collett (DD-739) (Chief Engineer) doing Market Time Patrol, Gunfire Support, Yankee Station and riding shotgun for all missile Cruisers.

Bob Polich

I was ship's company (Carrier Control Approach/Asst Air Ops Officer and flew the ship's COD) on the Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) for cruises in Nam in 1968 and 1969.

Grayson Redford

I was with VP-47, deployed to Okinawa, Philippines and Thailand in 1966 and 1967. Most of our flights were coastal patrols off Viet Nam and over the Straits of Formosa. We did fly a few passive listening missions over the mountains between North and South Viet Nam. Only once was I "in country": we landed at Cam Rahn Bay for

a couple of hours during the 1967 deployment. I don't remember why we did so, but I do remember the taxiways and parking apron had not been paved, but were earth, covered with interlocking metal planking.

David Reif

I was a member of 21st company and served in country from July '69 to July '70. I was the Senior Adviser the Vietnamese Navy's River Assault Group 30. I was awarded the Bronze Star with combat V, and the Vietnamese Staff Service Honor Medal First Class. My Unit had 40 combat missions on the rivers from Saigon to Tay Nin province.

Keith Reynolds

Served on a different ship for each of my 3 Vietnam tours. First, USS Jenkins (DD447) a FRAM 1 out of Pearl Harbor. As part of an ASW WestPac deployment tracking 3 Russian diesel subs we were suddenly ordered to Tonkin Gulf right after North Vietnam attack on our ships. We mostly plane guarded. Second, as XO of USS Chesterfield County (LST 551) we ran ammunition and supplies into Vietnam including Danang and Chu Lai. Last, as XO of USS Energy (MSO 436) where we were part of Market Time patrol off the coast of Vietnam. As boarding officer I probably boarded close to a hundred junks, etc. without incident.

Max Ricketts

Max Ricketts and Jim DeFrancia were actually the first two members of the Class to serve in Vietnam, arriving in-country in March 1964 and departing in July 1965. We were attached to Naval Support Activity Saigon.

Jim served as Supply Officer to a SeaBee Battalion charged with facility maintenance, and also motor pool ops. In addition served as Stevedore Officer in the port.

Max was Asst Commissary and Navy Exchange Officer.

We also both served collateral assignments as Evacuation Wardens.

After Vietnam Max went to Barber's Point NAS in Hawaii as Asst Supply Officer, and I went to San Diego as Aide to RADM Lee Kimball, commander at NSC.

We both got to pick our duty stations, pretty much, as we were coming out of the "war zone."

From Max Ricketts:Very minor corrections to JDeF: We arrived in very late April 1964, me a week prior to Jim and my assignment was assistant Commissary Store Officer though I had responsibilities with the Navy Exchange as well. Our collateral duty as Sector Wardens might be a hilarious chapter in itself.. Our experience might be better described as the "Vietnam Adventure" than the "Vietnam War." There were only about 14,000 Americans in country when we arrived and there were more Army generals in Saigon than Navy ensigns. We had vehicles and drivers and some of the generals didn't.

Some of our experience, including memorable Lt(jg) wetting down party at the rooftop of the Caravel Hotel with all the Army generals and every Navy officer in attendance, were written up in my July-August 1990 Shipmate article "The Brinks Bombing" - the 1964 Christmas eve bombing of the Brinks BOQ.

Our brilliant and dynamic Dec 1941 Naval Academy graduate commanding officer, "Mayor of Saigon" Captain Archie Kuntze (22-medal war hero of WWII and Korea) wound up being court martialed after our departure as a result of minor indiscretions emanating from his romantic relationship with the exotic Jannie Sun. He was out mentor and inspiration. JDeF was the one who first dated, then introduced the very stunning Jannie to our C.O.

Max is correct about the date of arrival. I dated that from March but had stopped in Manila and Taipei en route to arrival in Saigon. And we were known as the only two Ensign's in the Far East that were bold enough to invite generals to our parties - and they would come!
In addition to cars and drivers we also had a cook and a maid in our home across from the French Embassy, and entertained with regularity.
Haven't lived so well since!

David Robinson
Commanding Officer of the patrol gunboat USS CANON (PG-90)
Navy Cross. See Valor page.

Ray Ross
Very late in the war we had the inglorious task of flying unarmed S-2 Trackers, mostly midnight to 0600, either gunfire spotting for DDs offshore NVN, or tracking the Soviet subs shadowing the CVAs.

Both missions involved hiding in cumulus clouds whenever MIGs came looking for easy prey - thank God for F-4s patrolling high over us.

John Ryan

I flew the F-4B Phantom off the Ranger for two cruises during 1967-69. Many of my missions were over the North.

Mike Rubel

I was on the USS CIMMARON AO-22 that refueled ships up and down the coast including the SAR DD's up the gulf of Tonkin.

Jerry Saber

April and July 1966 – USS EVANS (DE1023)
March 1968 – September 1968 – COMNAVFORV
Sept 1968 – March 1969 – COMRIVPATFLOTV

Ken Sanger

Deployed to SE Asia three times from 1967 to 1973 aboard carriers Ticonderoga, Oriskany, and Midway, flying A-4 (VA 192) and A-7 (VA 56) aircraft. Flew 410 combat missions, one resulting in a night on the jungle floor and helo ride from Laos to Thailand, courtesy of the U.S. Air Force. Two DFCs.

Hugh Schall

I served in Vietnam on the USS Tortuga (LSD 26) in 1969. We supported amphibious operations from the 17th parallel to Vung Tau area. During operation "Daring Rebel" the ship was awarded the Navy Unit Citation, while serving as the operation control ship for Amphibious Ready Group ALFA. Having spent 5 years on both diesel and nuclear submarines (I qualified in submarines, while on the Robert E Lee (SSBN 601), going to the USS Tortuga, an WWII amphibious ship was quite an experience, that really put to use all of the engineering knowledge that I had accrued and was very rewarding.

Ron Schowalter

Served as Plane Commander in VP-5 during 1967 deployment to Philippines, flying Yankee Station and Market Station missions off North and South Vietnam.

Vance Schufeldt

Attack Squadron ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-THREE, embarked in USS ORISKANY (CVA 34). Silver Star. See Valor page.

Will Settle

I served in country Vietnam from August 1966 through July 1967, assigned as mine countermeasures officer on the staff of COMNAVFORV and the Naval Advisory Group

Bud Small

I did two tours on the destroyer USS Nicholas.

Stan Smiley

USS Oriskany (CVA-34) in A4F. KIA

Gary Smith

Gary Smith served on the Herbert J. Thomas and Brinkley Bass as Chief Engineer and, later, as Operations Officer. While on duty, the destroyer shore bombed around the north coast of Vietnam and the South China Sea, and picked up pilots whose planes went down in the sea. Gary Smith was also on the Turner Joy, but that destroyer never made it to Vietnam during my dad's tenure (he was on TAD – temporary attached duty on it while his ship was in Vallejo). He served from 1963-1969 in active duty and from 1969-1972 in the Reserves. He left the Navy Reserves as a Lieutenant Commander.

Pete Soverel

I served in-country October 1967-September 1968) as Chief Staff Officer, River Assault Squadron Nine part of the Mobile Riverine Force – a joint Army (2nd Brigade, Ninth Infantry Division) – Navy (TF 117) strike force operating in the Mekong Delta. John Detweiler (classmate) was our operations officer during the same period. Other boat schoolers: RAS Nine Commanders: Lou Hamel (USNA '56); Scott McCauley (USNA'55), Bob Hansen (USNA '60), John Collins (USNA '65).

I don't know what idiot came up with the idea behind this formation, but I do recall that our speed over the ground heading upstream against an outgoing tide was about 1.5-2.0 knots i.e. about as fast as a person could walk ruling out surprise. The only time we found the

enemy was when they decided to be “found”, usually with unpleasant consequences. It was not unusual to be hit by enemy RPG anti-tank rockets that did not detonate because they had not traveled the requisite 7 meters to arm. I remember wondering how a surface warfare officer had wound-up wearing Marine greens, packing an CAR-15 and shooting at folks 20-30 feet away instead of Beep-Beep-Boom at 15,000 yards!

Awards: Silver Star, Bronze Star w “V”, Navy Commendation Medal w “V”, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, various Vietnamese Gallantry crosses. Miraculously, unlike almost all the officers and enlisted I served with, I was neither WIA nor KIA for which I was and remain grateful. Lt. Dave Wyrick USN (NROTC Ohio State '60) was KIA.



Jim Stewart

I was in VP-5 and flew many missions in the support of our efforts in that theater.

Bill Stewart

From Mike Moore: We attended HS together as well as roomed together in the 15th Co. until I left prior to 1/c year.

After a short stint as an Engineering Officer on an LST out of San Diego, and having every request for transfer denied, a request was finally approved and Bill became a Naval Gunfire spotter with the Anglico Team in Pleiku (**USMC Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Companies (ANGLICO)** are Airborne **fire support** and liaison units of the **United States Marine Corps.**). He was proud of his gold Marine Corps- Navy Parachutist Badge. (I recall that Bill had spent one summer leave at Ft Benning at the Academy but did not get an Army Parachutist Badge due an inability to leave the aircraft.) He later

made many jumps. Bill once told me he lost several Marines on his Anglico team and I came to understand he saw a good deal of combat.

He rarely if ever spoke of it. I was once in his apartment in Imperial Beach and saw a crossbow and a shotgun mounted on his wall with a bamboo machine gun sight. When he quizzed me, I was glad I knew what each item was. I took the bamboo sight down and began chipping off some mud, which I commented on. He corrected me saying it was blood. I asked Bill where he got it, he said he took it away from a man from a guy who didn't need it any more. He once told me in a letter, written in the 60's that he had flown over Hanoi the night before (I seem to recall this was a "ride along" for him.) and noticed their lights were all on and he found it hard to believe that they were losing, if so, why would they keep their lights on at night? He became very close and an admirer of Harold "Hal" Moore, the 7th Cav and the 1st Cav of Ia Drang fame. Bill helped resupply radios to Hal Moore's beleaguered troops in the Ia Drang. He understated his contribution. Bill rode in the back seat of the Observation aircraft and tossed radios out as they rode at low level over the elephant grass. I think they repeated that several times.

Sandy Stoddard

I spent a year in-country in 1968 as Senior Advisor at Coastal Group 11. I also had shipboard duty off of Viet Nam in 1964 and 1965.

Glen Takabayashi

Marine pilot then a forward air controller 1967

Tony Taylor

You will probably also hear from **Roger Keithly** (both of us started out with the Class of '63, but turned back Youngster Year to later graduate with the Class of '64), but we both served in Vietnam. Roger flew with VA-94 flying over NVN, and I, **Tony Taylor**, spent a year in Danang and Chu Lai as OinC of a Swift Boat. As I searched through your extensive list, I did not see **Harlan Ullman '63** who was also an OinC of a Swift Boat during the time I was in Vietnam.

Grant Telfer

USS Weiss off Vietnam and then SEAL Zulu Platoon.

Skip Templin
S2F on USS Hornet. KIA

Raymond Theep

I didn't make much of a splash in Vietnam, but I should be added to the list. USS Henrico (APA 45) [later LPA] 1965- 1967. Carried troops from Okinawa to the first Danang landing. Then up and down the coast back to Okinawa. Deployments were a little longer, burned out the propulsion plant and the Henrico went on the scrap heap. USS Cabildo (LSD 16) [1967-1969]. Did the same thing as the Hank except that we had a well deck and carried a lot less troops. I left the ship and it was sent off to be decommissioned shortly thereafter.

Roger Tetrault

I served two combat tours on the USS Turner Joy (DD-951). For the first tour in 1966-1967 I was the CIC officer. During the second tour in 1968 I was the Operations Department head, Senior watch Officer, and GQ Officer of the Deck. During both deployments, the CO of the ship was Commander Ed Briggs, who went on to be promoted to Vice Admiral. I overlapped Ed Briggs on the ship, both earlier and later, and had two bookend commanding officer on the Turner Joy. Both of those Commanding Officers attained the rank of Rear Admiral. Turner Joy had long guns and was used primarily as a gun fire support ship. During the two combat tours, we fired in all four South Vietnam Corps, the DMZ and often in the Tonkin Gulf. During one deployment, in the Tonkin Gulf, the ship took a direct counter fire hit that exploded in the Supply Officers office. There was also substantial damage, and some flooding, from VT fragmentation hits. Fortunately, only one sailor was wounded. The Turner Joy is now a museum ship located at Bremerton Washington

Olen Thompson

I spent most of 1967 on a deployment to Vietnam, as the Weapons Officer aboard the USS Allen M. Sumner (DD-692). At that time

Sumner was the oldest destroyer on active, continuous duty. However, she had 3 twin 5 inch mounts, which made her very useful.

Most of our tour in Vietnam was spent off the North Vietnamese coast. We were part of Operation Sea Dragon. Over the months on Sea Dragon we sank 58 North Vietnamese supply craft and damaged 47 more. We also destroyed truck convoys, supply depots, and staging areas. Other assignments included screening for the USS Long Beach (CGN-9) off Haiphong Harbor, shore bombardment supporting an amphibious assault near the DMZ, providing close (within 50 yards, the troops told us later) gunfire support to troops being overrun in I Corp, pulling pilots out of the water off North Vietnam, and plane guarding for various carriers.

A 2003 article in American Legion Magazine on Operation Sea Dragon, called the Sumner a "Shell Magnet" because we drew more fire than any other ship on Sea Dragon. We often picked up shrapnel off the deck but miraculously, we never took a direct hit. 29 other ships were hit, two of them twice. I was blessed to serve on a fine ship, with a great crew, and we all made it back.

Tom Thompson

I made two cruises on the USS O'Bannon DD-450 from Nov 63 thru Dec 65. Then left for NFO training and got my wings in 66. From 67 to 69 I was assigned to VAW-13 and we sent two pilots and two NFOs to the Coral Sea to supplement a VAH-2 detachment flying the KA3B. My second cruise VAW 13 had been re designated VAQ-130 and we had another mixed detachment. VAQ 130 in the EKA3B and VAH 2 in straight tankers.

While I was on the O'Bannon Tom Aulenbach and Al Smelly were also assigned during the second cruise. Their original ship (the Radford I think) was in dry dock and They were reassigned to the O'Bannon.

Jack Thorn

Upon graduation from the Naval Post Graduate School (NPGS) in March 1972, I received orders to an unaccompanied tour as Communications Officer for CTF 77/COMCARDIV 5. This was a result of my newly acquired subspecialty in telecommunications. CTF 77 was the tactical commander in charge of the naval air war in Vietnam, which during my tour, consisted of the simultaneous operation of three or more carrier battle groups. During my tour, our flagships included the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63), USS Enterprise (CVN-65), and USS Constellation (CVA-64). I was in the unique position of being the only surface warfare officer on an air staff. Needless to say, I learned a lot about naval air operations and the broader aspects of command and control, and got the chance to apply some of what I learned at NPGS. The low point in this time occurred in July 1972, when I learned that my first ship, USS Warrington (DD-843), ran over a mine while providing gunfire support. She was towed to Subic Bay where I got the chance to see the ship before it was decommissioned in September of that year. Overall, it was a challenging learning experience, but difficult being away from my family.

Dave Thornhill

Two cruises (1966 & 1967) flying A-4's in VA-15 from USS INTREPID. Classmates also on board INTREPID for one or both cruises. Miller Detrick and Tony Isger also in VA-15. Phil Gubbins flying A-4's in VA-95. Bill Oatway flying EA-1's in VAW-33. Tony Nargi flying F-8's in VF-111 Det. Dave Maples flying A-1's in VA-145. Dick Sidford, ship's company ENG Dept. Jim Shaw & Jim Slaughter flying E-1 "Willy Fudds" with VAW-121. Vern Von Sydow flying the "Big Mother" rescue helo with HS-6 Det.

Denver Key flying A-4's in VA-34. Denver was shotdown on a Hanoi mission on INTREPID's last day of strikes from Yankee Station in 1967. He survived 6+ years as a POW.

I was shotdown 01 AUG 67 on a Hon Gai mission. I made it to the water before having to eject. Two A-1's from USS ORISKANY sank the boats that were after me and Andy Curtin and his helo crew from USS FOX rescued me.

LT Fred Hoerner was my Company Officer (22nd) 2/c year. He was the Air Wing 10 LSO. I flew several missions as his wingman.

Jim Thornton

I was Nav and Comm ofc on USS T E Chandler (DD-717). Did two tours: 6 mos 1965 and then home ported in Yokuska for a year 66-67. Here are two events that I thought were very interesting....at the time.

All of our duty was in the Gulf of Tonkin doing what DDs do.

One summer day abt 2 miles off the VN coast, North I recall. we started getting rounds fm the beach. We started our maneuvers and started shooting back (I could even see their muzzle flashes). The Capt was very cool and pointed out after it stopped that if the enemy is in our range, we are in theirs. Funny that we stopped shooting at abt 8-9000 yrds (5 inch max distance without much accuracy) and so did the enemy. A good lesson learned.

Abt 2 weeks later we're in the same area and very aware of our history. Of course, we thought that our air guys probably got rid of them. But here they came again....first round can be heard and very close. But here's the funny part of the story. Earlier that day we took onboard a artillery officer (by hilo) for a little R and R and he had a couple of Australian nurses. They were clean as they could be under the circumstances. But just before they were to depart a fire mission came in. They were happy because they got to see up close how we do it. Remember, the guys on the beach got to pull a lanyard. So we're all on the bridge to observe. Well, the guys in the fire control room do the firing. A dual 5 inch directly in front of the bridge makes a very loud noise. They jumped every time the guns fire and never did get used to it.

Well later that day we sent them off the ship but they apologized for their earlier jokes. You see, when they came aboard we took them to the wardroom for 'refreshments'....clean white linen etc. And of course our kakies were clean and almost right from the laundry.

Craig Thrasher

Confusing story. Temp duty Guns on USS Duncan (DDR-874). Plane guarding way off Nam.

But things started to darken up when I was trapped below decks when Hartley (DE-1029), my second command, was cut in half off of Cape Hatteras, VA. Then a reward of new construction (Ramsey (DEG-2)). Then to Duncan while waiting for Ramsey delay.

Lee Tillotson

You can add me to the list of Vietnam vets (363 combat missions flying F-4)

George Tracy

Two surface-warfare Vietnam tours (63-65) on the USS McKean, supporting flight operations, ASW screening, search and rescue and gunfire support missions, and my two amphibious operations tours on the USS Polk County (66-68) as XO, providing logistics support Saigon to Quang Tri province (Danang, Chu Lai and Cua Viet). Some would call the latter "brown water" or "beached".

Rick Trani

SEAL. Silver Star. See Valor page.

Bob Van Nice

1. Senior Advisor, VNN River Assault Group 30 (Bronze Star, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star) [all after period as Assistant Watch Officer, COMNAVFORV OPSCENTER]
2. OPS OFF, USS Hull (DD-945) on Yankee Station and selected I Corps NGFS ops.

Dave Vetter

I served sea duty on USS Goldsborough (DDG-20) with gunfire support. Also spent one year on Riverine Assault Force TF 117 in country.

Vern Von Sydow

Had two tours flying Combat Search and Rescue helos in the

Vietnam theater. We'd rescue downed aircrew if they were able to bail out and escape/evade until we could get to them. Our squadron (HS-6) rescued 31 aircrew on our first cruise and 19 on our second. Also had a tour as Air Operations officer on USS Duluth (LPD-6) where we would participate in amphibious operations up and down the South Vietnam coast.

Peter Vreeland

I had two tours aboard the Ticonderoga (CVA 14) in the Gulf followed by one on the Benjamin Stoddert (DDG 22).

Tren Ward

Service Jan 1965 CVA Ticonderoga, VF53, flying F8E, Crusader- 6
Air Medals

Also service aboard USS Mulany 66-68, USS Impervious MSO 449
68-69

Roy Warren

I was in VS-21 and did two tours in the Tonkin Gulf, conducting SSSC missions, between '67 and '69. Had over 80 flights in those two deployments.

Later, I was in VRC-50 and supported the ships in the Gulf with mail and parts delivery. Luckily or unluckily, dependent upon your point of view, I flew into Saigon the day it was evacuated, loaded my aircraft with evacuees, and then landed on the USS Hancock in a C-2. While I was there, my wife, Vicki, was in Cubi Point, helping take care of all the evacuees, that came in on C-5's.

Joel Warshaw

Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 242. Silver Star. See Valor page.

Mike Whitmore

I flew with VP-50 during three deployments. We spent a lot of time at Can Rahn Bay flying market-time patrols.

Wink Wilkinson
1966-67 Swift OinC

Ron Wills

I was on a Vietnamese patrol boat Feb 68 to Jan 69. I served with Tom Miller, Ray Heins, Bob Harper, Charlie Minter and other 63ers doing what I was doing for a year. We were mostly Tin Can sailors.

I also deployed to Vietnam from Newport on USS Warrington (DD843) as Chief Eng Oct 66 through May 67. So counting training for this deployment and also CI/SERE/Weapons, Vietnamese language 6 weeks in Coronado, that is what I did for 3 years 66, 67, 68. It was an interesting time for me and I met a lot of cool VN people who were patriots. I was very sad in April 1975, very sad.

Steve, at the urging of Dave Moore, I have attached some pictures from Vietnam. 1 is my boat PGM 614, 2 is in Ha Tien near Phu Quoc island after we ran the boat aground in low tide with a mean low water of 13 feet and a tide of +/- 12 feet. We sat there for 4 or 5 hours with the VC up on the hill above us but nothing happened. The kids were funny when we got into port. 3 is a doggy in Duong Dong east side of Phu Quoc island taking a s--t. 4 is my brother and I together. Don was a plebe with us in co 23 when I was in 3 (later 12). He got a medical survey for cancer after plebe year. Later our first class year, what a very few people know is that at the 1962 Army game with me on crutches, I asked the Dr not to put me on the sick list so my twin brother(at U of Delaware in 1962) could march in with the brigade so I could go and sit with girl friend. So Don did this and no one except roommate Bill Witcraft and a few others knew it was not me, but Don





Albert Wilson

My service in the Vietnam zone was only a 6 month deployment with the Tridents of Patrol Squadron 26 in Nov '67 to May '68. But it was a very active time, during which I collected two Air Medals for over 500 flight hours of combat support missions.

But I was also inspired by your suggestions to write down some of our personal experiences. Actually, I had already done that with a memoir about those 6 months, so I'm attaching it for you here to use as you see fit.

This was written back in 1996 when my son, Gordon ('91), was on his first tour as a pilot with that very same squadron, VP 26 in NAS Brunswick, ME. They had a plaque in the hangar spaces with the names of the 24 airmen of the two crews that were KIA during that deployment. Whenever I visited, his squadron mates wanted to know more about what happened and what we did there. Eventually the squadron PIO asked me if I could write up something for their files and perhaps use sometime in a newsletter. That got me started. And once I got underway, the memories vividly reemerged, and I'm glad I put them to paper.

Hopefully, my son will get around to putting his experiences to paper as well. He's got a lot more to tell over his highly decorated 21 year career that also includes an Air Medal while flying P3 Orions. In his case it came with bronze star for a specific action taken while providing low level tactical support of special forces clearing the route to Baghdad International Airport during Desert Storm in 2003.---

Bill Wilson

From Chuck Spadafora: Willis C "Bill" Wilson served in the marines in Viet Nam and was awarded a Navy Cross. (See Valor page) He was my and Dick Jones's roommate at USNA.

Tony Womble

I was off shore on a destroyer providing gunfire support in 1967. Back again as an advisor to the Vietnamese Navy patrolling the various rivers in 1968 - 1969 (along with various USNA '63 members including a collection of 14th company members). I was the advisor to LSIL 329 (Landing Ship Infantry Large <large meaning about 65'>). Though relatively small we had a 3" gun, a 40 mm cannon, two 20 mm mg, and two 30 cal mg. We made lots of noise. Our mission was to patrol the rivers looking for VC and to escort merchant ships to Cambodia. Picked up a couple of Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart during that period.

After a tour at USNA I returned to the coastline as XO on an ammunition ship in 1975 and was off the coast during the Vietnamese evacuation.

In 1972 I was Ops aboard USS Farragut (DLG-6), homeported in Newport, RI during a trip around South America during Operation UNITAS. About a week after returning home my wife, Virginia, delivered our son Jeff. Coincidentally in 1975, a couple of weeks after returning from Vietnam, aboard USS Mount Hood (AE-29) to our home in Concord, CA, my wife gave birth to our daughter, Melanie. Somewhat surprisingly with two kids born about as far apart in distance as possible, I missed most of the last 6 months of Virginia's pregnancy each time.

John Worcester

A4C Skyhawk on the USS Bon Homme Richard. KIA

Frank Wroblewski

1965 I was assigned to USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA-62) as the Admin. Officer for the Engineering Department. We deployed from the Atlantic Fleet to Vietnam early in the year and I left the ship on 1 October when I was commissioned in the US Army and separated from the US Navy.

1967 From early in '67 to either late '67 or early '68 I was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division at CuChi in III Corps. For the first half of my tour I worked in the S-3 Shop of the First Brigade HQ. For the second half of my tour I commanded Company B, First Battalion, 27th Infantry (which was subordinate to the 2nd Brigade HQ).

1969 From early in '69 to either late '69 or very early '70, I was assigned to the 1st Brigade of the 5th Mechanized Division in Quang Tri Province in I Corps. This was a separate Brigade but it was OPCON to the Third Marine Division. For the first half of my tour I commanded Company B, 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry. For the second half of my tour I was the Plans Officer for the S-3 Shop at Brigade HQ.