

Books I & II, Vietnam Photos

Books I & II, American Heroes: Grunts Pilots & "Docs"

By Michael Dan Kellum,

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LCpl. Harold Bridges, 21 of Longview, Texas was a fire team leader with Mike Co., 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment in 1968. He was involved in his battalion's 4-company assault on Hill 881N to dislodge the NVA from the hill overlooking Khe Sanh Combat Base April 14, 1968. 2/26 would sustain 6 KIAs, 19 WIAs while killing 106 NVA and capturing two. A friendly airstrike would injure Harold and kill or injure most his squad June 2 and end his tour in Vietnam. His photo graces the front cover of *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs"* representing Grunts and his story is in Chapter 5. (Photo courtesy of Harold Bridges)



1stLt. Douglas R. "Doug" Orahod, 23 in 1970 of Wilkinson, Indiana and a

pilot for HMM-364 Purple Fox strikes a nonchalant pose beside his Sea Knight helicopter in Vietnam. He earned a Distinguished Flying Cross in Vietnam and his photo represents Pilots on the front cover of *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* His story is located in Perspective Part I and Chapter 1 of Book I. Orahood took photos of Purple Fox personnel for both Book I and Book II. Note the shoulder holster and pistol as well as upper body armor he is wearing. His flight helmet is in the window above. (Photo courtesy of Doug Orahood)



U.S. Navy HM3 Thurman G. "Doc" Mullins, 21 in 1969 from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was a member of 1st Recon Battalion in Vietnam. He earned a Bronze Star with Combat Device for his actions with 1st Recon. Doc Mullins' photo is on the front of *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs"* representing Navy Corpsmen. He also makes a comment about his service in Vietnam for Perspective Part I of Book I, and there's a short story he tells in Chapter 3 of Book II. He wears the cocky typical bush hat Recon Marines wore in Vietnam and is holding his M-16 rifle in his right hand while his left hand rests on an M-60 machine gun that is linked to a bandoleer of 7.62mm ammo in an ammo can at a prepared perimeter position. Around his chest is his medical equipment and first aid bandages. (Photo courtesy of Thurman Mullins)



1stLt. David A. "Dave" Marshall, Forward Air Controller call sign Ruggles 14A, 25 in 1967 of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, poses with a captured .51 caliber enemy machine gun he earned in combat the hard way while serving with 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment (The Walking Dead). Marshall was loaned out to 1/9 by the O-1 (Birddog) Detachment, H&MS-16 flying out of Dong Ha and Marble Mountain Air Facility, MMAF, to coordinate airstrikes. Being a pilot, he could talk his fellow

pilots' language better to put them on target. Previously, from May to December 1966, he had flown A-4 Skyhawks with VMA-223 Bulldogs out of Chu Lai. He would remain with 1/9 from January to June 1967 then get an extension on his tour to finish in January 1968 with the Birddogs...20 straight months in Vietnam! See his story in Chapter 10, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* (Photo courtesy of Lt.Col. Dave Marshall, USMC, Ret.)



2ndLt. Gilford G. "Gil" Robinson, S-2 Intelligence officer, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, in 1970. He relates intriguing stories as to how 2/1's Intelligence and Counterintelligence worked in Vietnam. One of his many shining moments was the Cam Sa Raid August 4, 1970. See his comments in Chapters 1 and 37 in *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* Also, *Perspectives on the Vietnam War--Part I,*

Chapters 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 in *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* (Photo courtesy of Lt.Col. Gil Robinson, USMC, Ret.)



Team Flakey Snow Delta poses on 1st Reconnaissance Battalion's Camp Reasoner LZ 401 with one of the Cobra gunships sometime in 1970. They are, L-R, PFC Andy Timmons, LCpl. Randy Robinson, LCpl. Robert J. Beagle, HM3 Kenneth D. "Doc" Toline and PFC Larry M. Feldman. Not pictured 1stLt. John R. Hoff, team leader, and Cpl. P.J. Hanley. On one of the team's missions into Laos Lt. Hoff would receive the Navy Cross. (Photo courtesy of Cpl. Larry Feldman) See reference to Flakey Snow Delta in Perspectives on the Vietnam War--Part I and Chapter 9, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."*



1stLt. Robert "Bob" Fawcett, 22 of St. Louis, Missouri, Alpha Co., 1st Recon Battalion platoon commander, right, is shown aboard a Sea Knight with one of his teams either being inserted or extracted out in Indian Territory. (Fawcett served as the platoon commander of 1st Platoon, Echo Co., 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines before moving on to 1st Recon). The Recon team's faces are streaked with green camouflage paint to blend in with the terrain they traverse and in which they hide in the bush. A K-bar knife with 9-inch blade and 5-inch handle is attached to a harness over his left shoulder. Note the dark tape that breaks up the lines of his M-16 rifle butt. (Photo courtesy of Col. Bob Fawcett, USMC, Ret.) Col. Fawcett's comments are in Chapters 19, 24, 37 (Photo), 39, Epilogue (Photo) and Perspectives on the Vietnam War--Part II, *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* Also, Chapter 12 and 16 (Photo), *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."*



HM3 David L. "Doc" Snider, 20 in 1969 poses with his buddy, LCpl. Frank Bosco, 19, of Providence, Rhode Island while holding their weapons in front of the Delta Co., 1st Reconnaissance Battalion sign at Camp Reasoner. Snider makes a comment in the Perspectives on the Vietnam War--Part I, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* LCpl. Bosco lost his life when the Sea Knight his team

was in was shot down by enemy troops June 21, 1969. His story is in Chapter 2, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* (Photo courtesy of David Snider)



Cpl. Larry Feldman, Echo Co. and later the S-3 Operations radioman for 1st

Recon Battalion, 20 of Dover, Delaware in 1970, is camouflaged to blend in with his surroundings in the bush. The 6-foot-4 Marine tells his combat stories/comments in Chapters 10, 14, 18 and 39, *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* Also, Chapters 2, 4, 8, 9, 14, 15 and Perspectives on the Vietnam War--Part I, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* (Photo courtesy of Larry Feldman)



L-R, Alpha Co., 3rd Amphibian Tractor Vehicle Battalion, 1st Marine Division personnel, Cpl. Charles R. "Charlie" Lauer, Cpl. William Kirby "Billy" Gardella and PFC Sidney A. "Sid" Schmidt hoist a cold one next to their amtrac. The enemy would take its toll on the men in two incidences a week apart killing Lauer by gunfire and a mine blast that killed Gardella and severely burned Schmidt. See their combat stories in Chapter 12, *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* (Photo courtesy of Sid Schmidt)



Because we fly, we envy no man on earth.

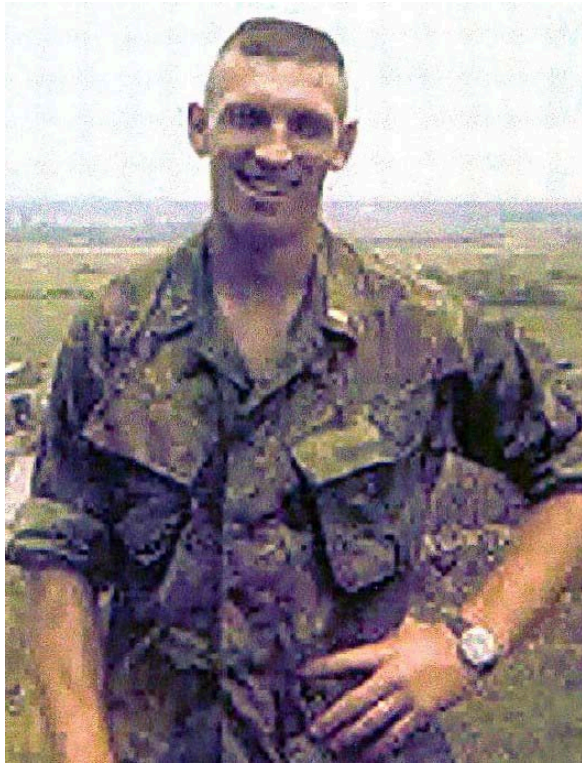
-Author Unknown

1stLt. David W. Causey, 23, of Bergenfield, New Jersey in 1970 was a snake driver (pilot) for HML-367 Scarface flying the sleek Cobra gunships in Vietnam 1969-70. Note the varying armament on the stub wings on either side of the aircraft and the nose. The pilot sits behind his copilot in the cockpit and flies the gunship while the copilot is responsible for the firepower unleashed on the enemy below. Causey also served as an Air Liaison Officer for 1st Recon Battalion. Causey's comments are in Perspectives on the Vietnam War--Part II, *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* Also, in Chapters 14 and 15, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* (Photo courtesy of David Causey)

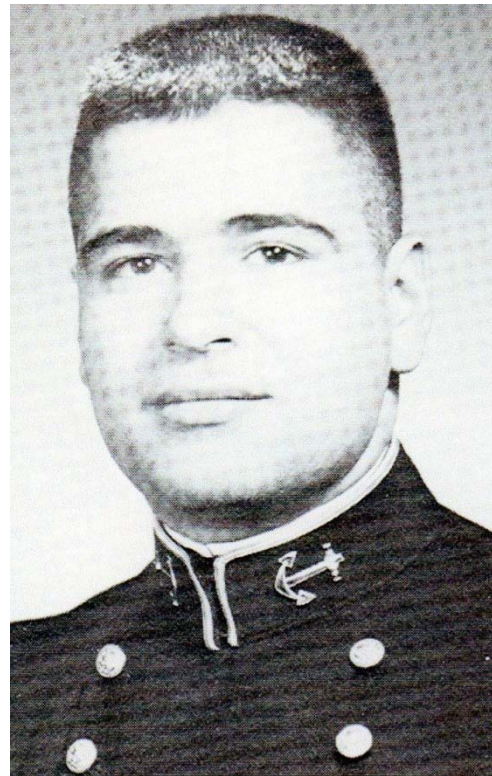
The Basic School: Charlie '69 Officers KIA in Vietnam

"They died as Marines believing in what they were doing. Like true warriors in the Marine tradition...they died with their boots on. Kupka, Lakin, Huth, Harvey and Lassitter were in my 3rd Platoon, while Benson was in 1st Platoon, Nelson was in 4th Platoon and Schanck and Vivilacqua were in 5th Platoon, Charlie Co. 1969 at TBS." 1stLt. Michael Dan Kellum, TBS, C-69 graduate

These nine Marine officers' stories are in Chapter 2, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs"* and their photos are in the order they were KIA in Vietnam.



2ndLt. Tony Kupka, 22, of Falmouth, Massachusetts, Echo Co., 1st Recon Bn. KIA, April 16, 1969, boobytrap. Trinity College graduate, MCOR, (Photo by Frank Porpotage II)



2ndLt. Vivi Vivilacqua, 22, of Maywood, California, Hotel Co., 2/5 KIA, May 13, 1969, RPG. U.S. Naval Academy graduate, (USNA Photo)



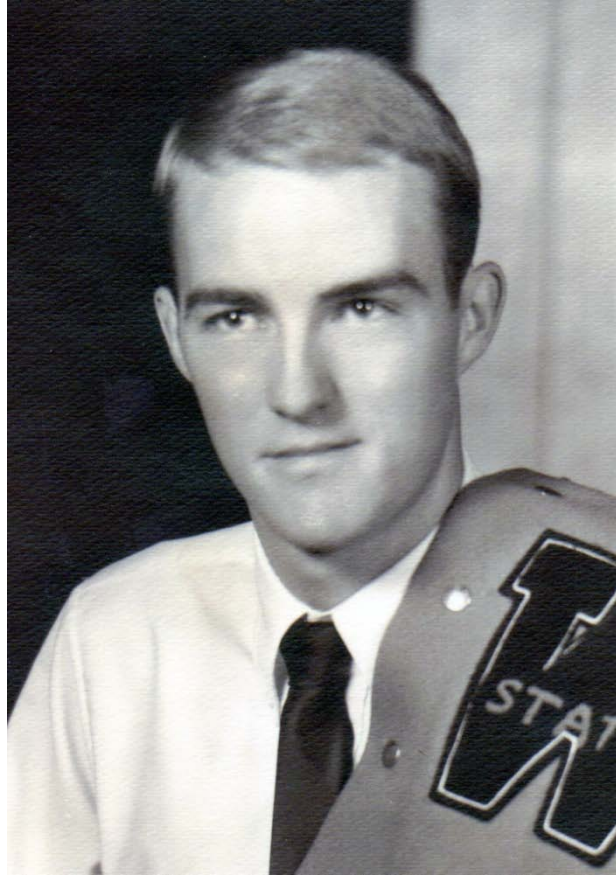
2ndLt. Al Nelson Jr., 20, of Oceanside, California, India Co., 3/5, KIA, May 21, 1969 boobytrap. Formerly from the enlisted ranks, ECP. (Photo courtesy of Col. and Mrs. Al Nelson Sr.)



2ndLt. John Lakin, 22, of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, Echo Co., 1st Recon, KIA, May 24, 1969, mishandled M-26 grenade, 1969. Auburn University graduate. (USMC Photo)



2ndLt. Garry Schanck Jr., 21, of Chepachet, Rhode Island, D Co., 1st Recon, KIA, June 21, 1969, Helicopter shot down. Formerly from the enlisted ranks, ECP. Briefly attended the University of Rhode Island. (Photo courtesy of Mary Schanck-Wasilewski)



2ndLt. Al "A.D." Benson, 23, of Sidney, Iowa, Fox Co., 2/5, KIA, July 6, 1969, boobytrap. Wayne State College graduate, PLC. (Photo courtesy of Lynn Benson)



2ndLt. Nick Huth II, 23, of Corpus Christi, Texas, Golf Co., 2/5, KIA, July 12, 1969, boobytrap. Formerly from enlisted ranks, ECP. Attended Southwestern University, Del Mar College and the University of Texas at Austin, Texas completing his junior year before dropping out to join the Marines. (USMC Photo)



1stLt. Butch Harvey, 23, of Alexandria, Virginia, D Co., 1st Recon KIA, November 18, 1970, helicopter crash. Formerly from the enlisted ranks, ECP. Attended North Carolina Wesleyan College, 1965-67. (USMC Photo)



1stLt. John Lassitter, 24 of Summerdale, Alabama, HML-367 pilot, KIA, December 4, 1970, Cobra crash. William Carey College graduate, PLC. (USMC Photo)



1stLt. Douglas R. "Doug" Orahod, pilot, left, and Cpl. Josef "Joe" Dobosz, crew chief, of HMM-364 Purple Fox, 21, of St. Joseph, Missouri, stand in front of their Sea Knight helicopter that has patched up bullet holes around the cockpit. (Photo courtesy of Doug Orahod) See Chapter 1, *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs"* for their story.



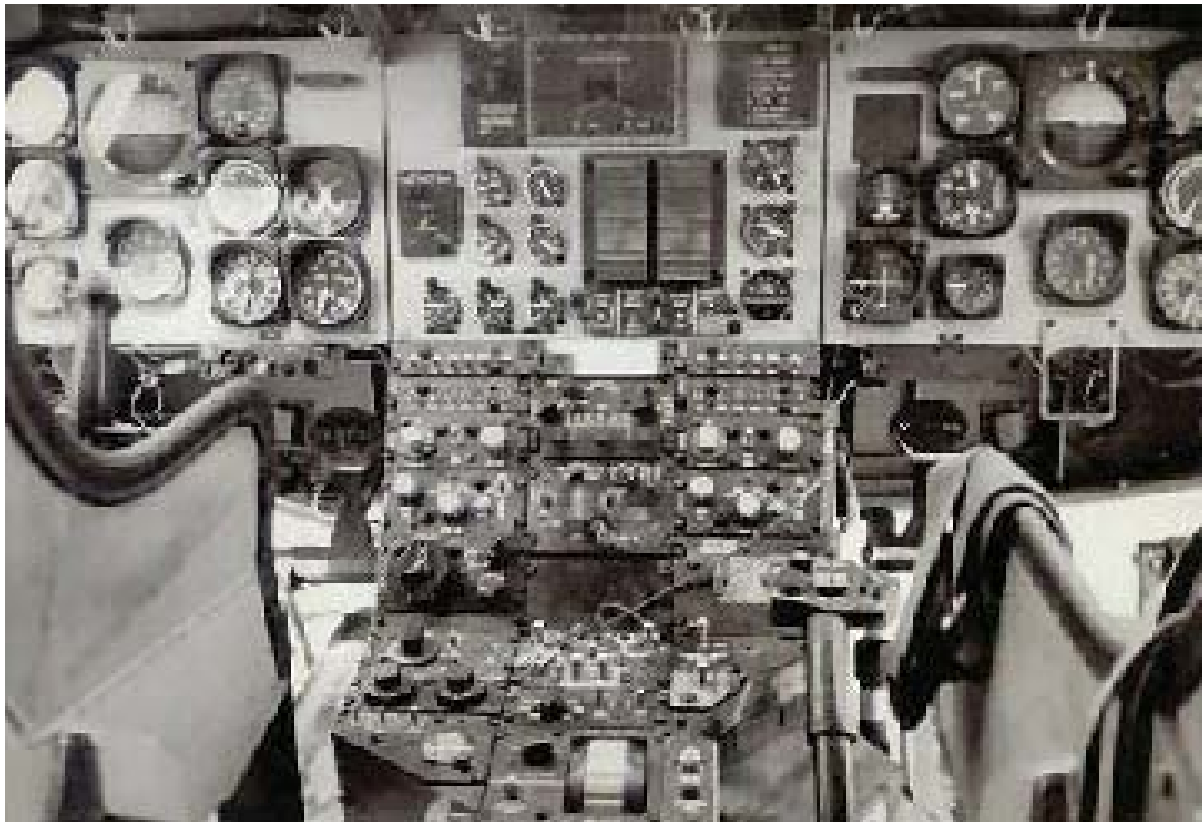
2ndLt. John Paul Bobo, 23, of Niagara Falls, New York, a platoon commander in India Co., 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for action he was involved in on March 30, 1967. After losing his right leg below the knee from an NVA mortar shell explosion, he kept on

fighting. He held his ground while his Marines regrouped and counterattacked to carry the day. (USMC Photo) See his story in Chapter 7, *Book I, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."*



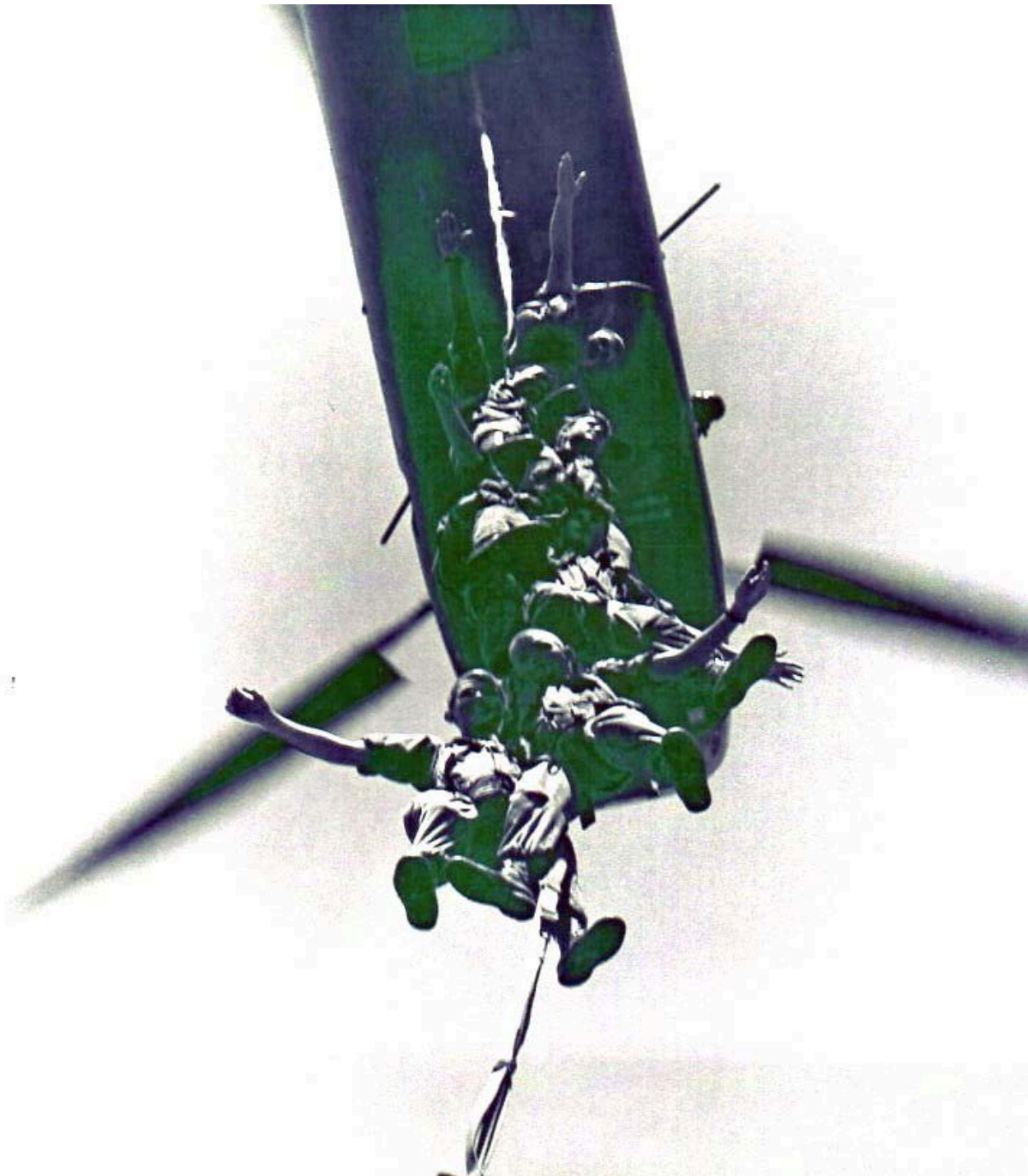
Sgt. Walter Keith Singleton, 22, of Memphis, Tennessee, was in Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. 1stLt. Dave Marshall and Singleton were involved in silencing an NVA machine gun on Good Friday, March 24, 1967. Singleton would be awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously

for this action. A Memphis park was named in Singleton's honor as Gen. Lew Walt was on hand for the opening ceremony on November 7, 1971. (USMC Photo) See his story in Chapter 10, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."*



This is the control panel in the cockpit of a CH-46 Sea Knight. The controls are duplicated for the pilot and copilot. Basically the control 'stick' is between the men's legs and foot pedals are on the floor all of which controls the overall movements of the aircraft. Several flight schools generally starting with Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida have to be mastered before the pilots are given the awesome responsibility of transporting Marines, running life-saving medevacs and insertion and extraction missions for Recon units in Vietnam. We were told in the interviews for the Flight Program at Pendleton that a million dollars went into the development of a pilot. Not sure how they came up with that figure but it would seem it must've taken some mighty intense training to comprehend all those dials and switches as well as someone who could chew gum, walk and rub their head and stomach all at the same time to work the control stick, pedals and keep an eye out on the various dials while being alert to what the heck they were flying into. I tip my old steel helmet to those helicopter pilots whom we typically nicknamed "Blades" in reference to their fore and aft helicopter's rotorblades when they came to us as Air Liaison Officers or Forward Air Controllers.





In the five photos above taken in either March or April, 1970 these 1st Recon Battalion Marines practiced hooking up to the Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction, SPIE, rig. Top left, Gruber, with John Thompson behind him, is wearing a harness attached to a climber's Swedish seat with a snap link on the end of a rope. Bottom right of the 4-photo set attached to the rig standing on the ground are Gruber, Rob Grace and Sgt. Dennis Cantrel. The snap link is snapped onto "D" rings embedded every 8 feet in three or four straps 125-foot long, bounded together and secured at the hellhole of a hovering Sea Knight. Bottom photo, Cpl. Larry Feldman

could only identify Sexton and Cantrel at the bottom of the strap being lifted into the air. They practiced interlinking their legs to prevent being blown around by tornadic wind in the wild 100+ mph ride back to Camp Reasoner off patrol. The straps had a tensile strength to carry 20,000 lbs. Generally only 7-8 Marines/Navy Corpsman rode the SPIE rig. In Book II, I've tried to explain how Recon Marines attached to SPIE rig straps were lifted upwards by a hovering Sea Knight to clear the tall jungle canopy to be extracted. This allowed the Recon teams to be lifted out from tight spots in the jungle, hands free to return fire. They say a photo is worth a thousand words so these photos should better explain how the SPIE rig works. (USMC Photos, courtesy of Col. Bill Drumright and Larry Feldman) See SPIE rig extraction and attachment to flexible aluminum ladders attached to Sea Knights in stories in Chapter 8, 14, 15 and 16, *Book II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."*



1stLt. Earl Masaji "Pineapple" Miyamoto, 23, of Kaneohe, Hawaii in 1970 and I

became good friends while stationed at Camp Pendleton as enlisted men waiting for orders for OCS at Quantico, Virginia. Pineapple was a calming force to me with his unwavering Christian faith. We were both headed for Flight School initially. He made it as a helicopter pilot...I ended up in the grunts. We lost touch as he attended several schools to become a hotshot Sea Knight CH-46 pilot while I marked time at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba before receiving orders for Vietnam. We finally crossed paths after a year and a half following graduation from The Basic School. It was in Vietnam around Cam Ne on August 2, 1970 when the Sea Knight he was being given a check flight on his first day in the air for the Purple Fox answered our call for an emergency medevac. A sergeant walking point had most his foot blown off by what was called a toepopper boobytrap. Pineapple saw me on the deck and, as I ran my casualty onto the helicopter...but I didn't see him. He sent a letter to my parents back in Texas to have them pass a letter on to me to let me know he was now a HMM-364 Purple Fox pilot at nearby Marble Mountain Air Facility. Pineapple had a few tales to relate after Vietnam flying for the Purple Fox which I tried to relate in two chapters at the end of Book I. I think you'll find his background story that includes a famous Japanese samurai swordsman and his father during the outbreak of World War II in Hawaii as interesting as I did. (Photo by Doug Orahod) See Perspectives on the Vietnam War--Part I, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 21, 38 and 39, *Book I: American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."* Also, Chapter 13, 14, 16 and Epilogue, *Book II: American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs."*