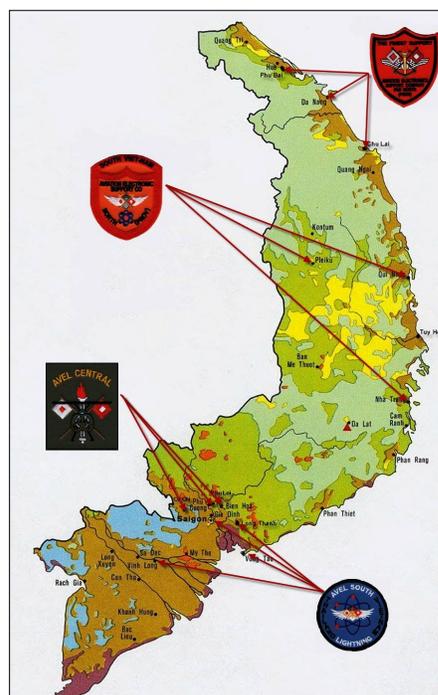


Missouri Farmer Turns Corn Field into Vietnam Memorial



It's generally true: grand gestures of kindness beget grand gestures of kindness. When Jim Eddleman, Vietnam veteran and native of Perryville, Missouri, donated his three-generation, 47-acre family farm to found Missouri's National Veterans Memorial in 2017, he kept only one acre for his and his wife Charlene's house. To him, his donation is a way to keep a promise he made to himself in 1968 while fighting in the Vietnam War.

"While I was over there, I made a promise to myself that if I ever made it back to the United States, I had to do something to show my respect and honor for my comrades, and I never had forgot that promise," Eddleman says. "But when I got back, I was not financially able to do much of anything. Through the years, I made some good investments, and then later on, I was able to come up with a considerable contribution."

It is, indeed, a considerable contribution. The response to this gift from the community of Perryville and beyond has been tremendous, bringing together individuals and businesses from the surrounding area for a common cause.

A vision that has been and will remain privately funded.

"When I started out with this, I said ... 'There's nothing going to be done cheap,'" Eddleman says. "I said our veterans don't deserve nothing but the best. And I said what we're going to build is going to be the best. So far, that's the way it's been, and that's the way it will continue to be."



Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

Nancy Guth, director of Missouri's National Veterans Memorial, estimates 7,500 people have donated to the memorial. She has solicited and received donations primarily through direct mail pieces, which she began sending out within a 250-mile radius of Perryville. Since, she has expanded that radius and placed ads in newspapers. Word-of-mouth has also helped popularize the destination.

"I have two classmates' names on there," Eddleman says. "It's such a quiet and peaceful place."

Vietnam veteran and 'air hostess' reunite 52 years after memorable photo



EULESS, Texas — For a retired flight attendant in Euless, it was just a photograph five decades old that stirred up both good and bad memories. Now, it's an old photo that also tells the story of one very remarkable coincidence.

BJ Elliott Prior was an "air hostess" back in the day for Continental Airlines.

"My very first trip was very emotional for me," she said, when she realized many of these soldiers she was helping escort to southeast Asia were men who might never come home.

"And it was very scary at times," she said.

"The guys would absolutely applaud, scream you know," she said of the return trips she did get to take with surviving soldiers at the end of their tours.

"All those soldiers that we left behind that never made it back home," she said of the more than 58,000 Americans killed in Vietnam. "That's what hurts us. You know. That's what war is about."

Her stories from that war, are in a book she wrote. It's called "**Behind My Wings.**" She tells the stories of the flight attendants, the soldiers, and the bonds made through difficult times. And in her collection of photos for that book, one stood out. "We've always seen this soldier. None of us ever knew (who he was). It was a soldier," Prior said.



In the photo an Airman E-3 is seated in one of the Continental planes, a flower in his hair, a lei around his neck, and a stewardess named Gloria Dorman is sitting on his lap. The flight attendants tried their best to cheer up the soldiers who were headed to Vietnam. But in this particular picture, Prior says no one could remember the man's name.

"When I called her I said, 'Gloria you are not going to believe this,'" Prior laughed.

Because when she showed the photo to her neighbor in Euless, a guy just two doors down, he definitely recognized the soldier. "Paul said, that's me. And we're all going, what? No. What?" Prior said.

"We were as scared as hell going over, excuse my English, because of the unknown," said Paul Rabe, the neighbor who identified himself as the man in that photo. "I do recall a young lady, sitting in my lap," he said. "I think I was 18 years old, I'm not sure what to do," he laughed. "I'm frozen as far as this young lady, beautiful young lady, sitting on my lap." "But it was remarkable, my trip to Vietnam may not be as bad as I thought!" Rabe said.

Continued on Page 3

"Incredible. Just incredible," Prior said, while also realizing her neighbor and her friend, Gloria Dorman, should probably see each other again.

So last month, Dorman flew in from her home in Humble near Houston.

"And I was like there's no way, that can't be possible," Dorman said of the coincidence.

They met on a Thursday afternoon. The Vietnam airman from 52 years ago, also with his wife accompanying him, arrived with a bouquet of roses.

"Hi, Mr. Paul. How are you doing," she said as they embraced. "So good to meet you after 52 years."

They would be the guests of honor the next day at a gathering of veterans at a Roll Call event in Fort Worth. Prior shared the photo and the story of their unexpected reunion with veterans happy to share in one good Vietnam War memory too.

But back at the house in Euless, there was one more thing to do.

"Wait we have to maybe turn the chair. Because see I was facing the aisle," Dorman said as they moved furniture in Prior's living room, so they could attempt to re-stage the 52-year-old photograph.

And flowers and all, that's exactly what they did their best to do.

Veterans will tell you that in the horrors that war can bring, they will do their best to cling to at least one good memory. That's the power a single picture can hold.

Especially, Rabe says, if you're holding an air hostess named Gloria at the same time.

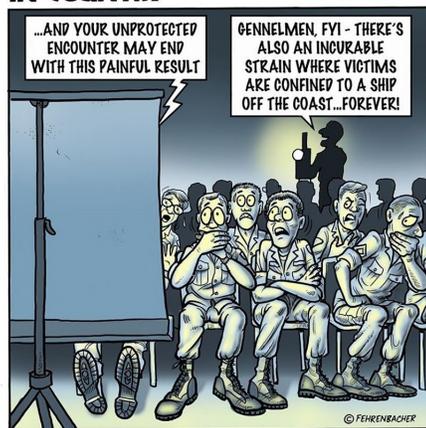


Landstar's Last Three Vietnam Vets

Jerry Mahanay, Paul Rondeau and Don Van de Laar were the last Vietnam veterans working at Landstar, Jacksonville Florida. Paul retired prior to this newsletter. Jerry (Avel Central) will be retiring in June.

Enjoy retirement guys!

IN-COUNTRY



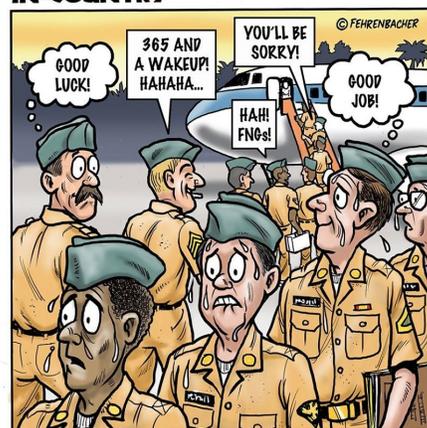
SEX EDUCATION...VIETNAM STYLE

IN-COUNTRY VET



YOU STILL CHECK THE PERIMETER AT NIGHT?

IN-COUNTRY



EXCHANGING "GREETINGS" AT THE PLANE!

AVEL Troops Going Home!

Who can forget the experience of going home? A lot has been written about the lousy reception many received so lets move on to happier times.

Do you have any photos of that time waiting for your flight out? Photos of your family and friends welcoming you home? Photos of those days shortly after coming home from Nam or being discharged?

SEND THEM TO ME FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER!
jmccabe51@gmail.com



Mike Blatt (Avel Central) just off the plane home



Manny Alen (Avel North) waiting to board the plane for home.



Eric Haase (Avel Central) back home.



Mike Piotrasch (Avel Central) back in the World.

EMAIL ME YOUR PICTURES!
jmccabe51@gmail.com

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

Zickel, Mark

Avel Central, Bien Hoa: Oct. 1969-Oct. 1970

mzickel@comcast.net

MOS: 35L20

No other information supplied

Neil, George R. (Randy) (SP/5)

203 W. Queens Dr.

Williamsburg, VA 23185

757-876-1775

614th Maintenance Co., 604th Transportation, Tuy

Hoa, Pleiku: 1971-1972

lasrman@gmail.com

MOS: 35L20

TAPS

Joel "Joe" Hooker

Avel South

Joe died on 22 February 2019. He was 71 years old.

PHOTOS

None Submitted

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL/PHONE

Stan Braden (Avel South) has a new address: 2128 SW 35th Street, Ankeny, IA 50023

All AVEL Reunion 2020

As of right now the Reunion is scheduled to go on as planned!

Virginia Beach, Virginia

October 15 - 18, 2020

EVENTS

Ladies Lunch

Bus to Colonial Williamsburg

John Veers Martini Golf Outing

Saturday Banquet

Other activities are possible. Planning will continue.

Preparations for the Reunion will continue but due to the uncertainty surrounding the Corona Virus and stock market fluctuations we may have to have to cancel. Time will tell. As of right now we have 61 early registrations. If you want to attend please go to the website and pre-register www.avelvietnam.com. There is no financial obligation. We just need a count. Actual registration will begin at the end of May when we know more.

Details on hotel and costs will be in the next newsletter.

AVEL VIETNAM

February/March 2020 Newsletter