

### Vietnam soldier wrote daughter a goodbye poem



EVANSVILLE, Ind. (Tribune News Service) — Before William Busby left for war, he wrote his baby girl a poem. He did his best to pour onto that page a lifetime of fatherly love. It was the only message he would give her.

Lt. William Busby was shot to death in Vietnam on Jan. 31, 1968.

He was 28. His daughter, Michelle, was nine months. For Michelle, now 49, William Busby's death left her with a grief that would unfold slowly all her life. As a child, she knew little of her father. Her mother remarried a Navy man when Michelle was three and his career kept the family moving around the country. "I was very confused," Michelle (Busby) Johnston said Wednesday. "I knew he died, but we never really talked about him."

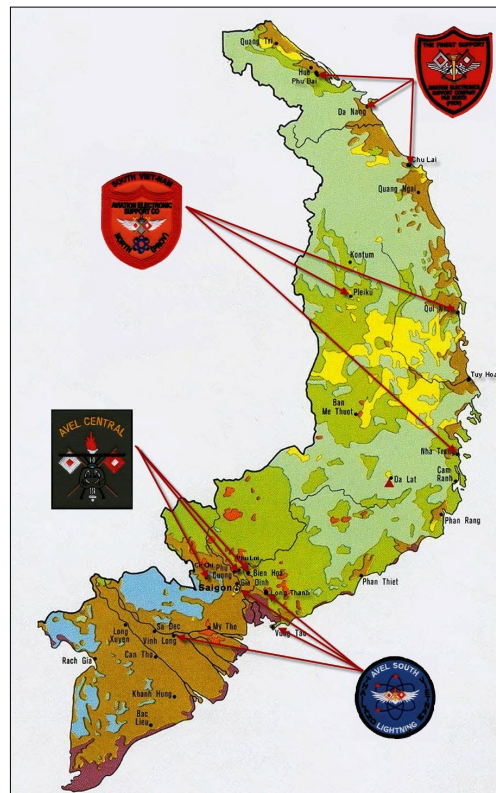
Eventually, in 1981 when Michelle was 14, her mother let her go to Henderson to meet her father's family for the first time. After years of wondering, Michelle felt like she had finally come home to meet her father.

William enlisted in the Army right out of high school. He intended to make the military his career, and within a couple years was sent to Bamberg, Germany. It was there he met Patricia, a 15-year-old from Louisville whose father was also stationed in Bamberg. "It was like a love story made in Germany," Michelle said. The couple married two years later. They hoped to start a family right away, but after years of trying they weren't able to conceive.

After a great deal of prayer and discussion, they went to the Catholic Charities in May 1967 hoping to adopt a baby. Less than a month later, Patricia got a call that they had a baby girl. "We went up there and fell in love with her and we went home with her the next day. We had to stop on the way for supplies!" They named their daughter Dawn Michelle Busby. William called her Mickey.

There aren't many pictures of them together as a family. Three months later, William was in Vietnam. He volunteered to go. William believed in his cause. He believed he was fighting for freedom. He believed he was making the world a safer place for family — for his daughter.

William's unit was attacked on Jan. 31, 1968 as they tried to set up an airstrike.



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According to letters Michelle received from men who served with William, one of the other soldiers in the group was seriously injured in the initial ambush. As the other men ran for their lives, William made a dash for the wounded man, threw him over his shoulders and tried to get away. He didn't make it.

William Busby is buried at the Bethany Memorial Cemetery in Louisville, KY. Nearly 50 years after his death, Michelle treasures what little remains of him: His pictures, his medals, and his last goodbye.

"You're too young yet, my little one;  
To know what freedom means.  
But your Daddy knows, and that's why he goes;  
To fight across the seas.  
It won't be long, my little one;  
So dry your tiny tears.  
Before you know, time will go;  
And your Daddy will be here.  
Till then be brave, my little one;  
And pray for him each night.  
Stand tall and proud that you are his;  
Your Daddy's only delight."

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### **Vietnam MIAs Accounted for and Returned to their Hometowns**

It's been 40 years since the end of the Vietnam War, but there are still over 1,500 men who served there whose bodies remain unaccounted for.

The Department of Defense has confirmed that remains of three servicemen missing since the Vietnam War have finally been recovered and are being brought home to the United States to be buried with full military honors.

The three men; Army Maj. Dale W. Richardson, Staff Sgt. Bunyan D. Price Jr, and Sgt. Rodney L. Griffin were all members of the same group, the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. They were flying aboard a Huey Helicopter that was making its way to the Fire Support Base in Katum, South Vietnam. As a result of unexpected bad weather, the helicopter was forced to deviate from its course and make an unplanned detour into Cambodian airspace.

As soon as they entered the enemy's airspace they were targeted by heavy and sustained ground fire. The pilot had no choice but to make an emergency landing in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia. No one was injured in the descent or landing, but 4 of the 5 crew were captured, and Richardson, Price, and Griffin were immediately killed in a showdown with Cambodian forces.

Their bodies were never recovered from the site. For 16 years, the United States and Kingdom of Cambodia co-operated on a task-force that examined the site in search of the remains of the missing servicemen, but to no avail.

In 2009 the task-force began to interview locals of the Memot District of Cambodia, who purportedly had information of the whereabouts of the remains. Upon the suggestion of the locals, the team began exploring a possible burial location, but were ultimately unable to locate the remains of the servicemen, the Goldrushcam.com reports.

Several years later, in February of 2012, a new task-force decided to re-question two of the local witnesses. The locals proposed an alternate burial site close to the area which had already been thoroughly explored. This time the search was successful, and the team happened upon a grave containing several human remains and military gear.

To identify the remains, scientists working for the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) utilized forensic identification tools to analyze the mitochondrial DNA from the remains and match it to that of members of the servicemen's families.

Finally, after decades of searching, the remains of the three men and the crew of the helicopter were brought back to their hometowns in the United States, to be given proper burials with full military honors.

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## U.S. veteran finds lost love in Vietnam — and she has a surprise for him

Alone in a hotel room in a small Vietnamese town, Jim Reischl waited restlessly. Recounting the story later, the Vietnam veteran said he had traveled 8,500 miles, with an arthritic knee, for this long-sought reunion. “I am getting a bit excited,” he said. “Geez, I haven’t seen her in 45 years!”

Then came a knock on the door. On the other side stood the woman he’d left behind when he shipped out of Saigon in July 1970. The young bar hostess who’d told him she was pregnant. He hadn’t believed her, but he’d also never stopped thinking about her. Now she was about to walk back into his life.

Reischl, 68, came to Vietnam as a 21-year-old Air Force sergeant and was stationed at Tan Son Nhut Air Base outside Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City. After his year-long tour, he went back to Minnesota, became a government cartographer, married twice, had a son and suffered Agent Orange-related health problems. But he never forgot his “first lady.”

Around 2005, after his second marriage ended, Reischl set out to search for the woman he remembered only as “Linh Hoa” — not her actual name. He began by scouring the Internet, eventually contacting Father Founded, a group that helps link soldiers and their Amerasian children through DNA testing and other means. An estimated 100,000 children were born to U.S. servicemen and Vietnamese women during the Vietnam War, most of whom eventually immigrated to the United States. Many were adopted by American families.

Since 2012, with the help of Father Founded volunteers, Reischl has traveled to Vietnam five times, speaking to journalists and placing ads in local newspapers. The most recent read: “I am in search of you. It has been many years. I am not looking for a relationship. I want you to know that. I just would like to talk with the wonderful lady I knew in 1969 and 1970.”

Last spring, in a trip chronicled by The Washington Post as part of a project about Amerasian children left in Vietnam, Reischl went back to visit the \$5-a-month apartment where the couple had spent lazy days making love, watching a black-and-white TV and listening to Beatles and Blind Faith records. He still remembers the day she told him she was pregnant. “She wanted me to stay with her and live in Vietnam. At the time I said, ‘I’m not going to live here, stay here.’ It was totally foreign to me,” Reischl said. “I was young and stupid, I guess.”

Reischl showed neighbors a photo of the young woman he had snapped from a taxi the last day he saw her. She was standing on the balcony watching him ride away. Nobody remembered her, but Reischl said he vowed, “I will never officially stop looking.”

In September, a 64-year-old woman sitting by her bedridden husband in the village of My Luong in Vietnam’s Mekong Delta picked up her iPad and clicked on a news site. She idly opened a locally written article about kids abandoned during the war. Scrolling down, she was shocked to see a photo of her younger self, in the arms of a khaki-clad soldier — Reischl.

“The moment I saw it, I knew,” the woman, Nguyen Thi Hanh, recalled. “Suddenly the memories of the first love reemerged.” Also flooding back were thoughts of their daughter. For there had been a child after all. After Reischl shipped out, a devastated Hanh left Saigon to take refuge in the countryside. On Dec. 18, 1970, she gave to birth to a baby girl with large eyes and pale skin whom she called Nguyen Thanh Nguyen Thuy. Her given name meant “First Tear,” Hanh said, “because I was alone and didn’t have any family with me at the time.”

Hanh, then just 19, let a friend take the child to an orphanage, thinking she would still be able to visit her. But the friend disappeared, and when Hanh went to the orphanage, the nuns told her they had no record of her case. Hanh joined the South Vietnamese Army and, after the fall of Saigon in April 1975, spent two years in a Communist reeducation camp. There, she met her husband, now 74 and incapacitated from a stroke. The couple has two grown children.

Over the years, she said, she never stopped looking for her child — and never forgave Reischl for deserting her. “I was still angry with him,” she said.



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## US Air Medal presented to Australian Vietnam Aircrews



Six members of the first rotation of Royal Australian Navy aircraft to serve in Vietnam have been honored with the United States Air Medal.

In a special ceremony held at HMAS Albatross, at the new home of 816 and 725 Squadrons, the aviators were presented with their medals by the Commander Fleet Air Arm, Commodore Chris Smallhorn, who paid credit to their service, which ranged from October 1967 to October 1968.

Flying Iroquois helicopters or Hueys as they were known, the crews were from the 723 Squadron, joining the 135th Aviation Company (Experimental Military Unit) and the United States Army Military Assistance Command Vietnam. Presented with medals were (with their ranks at the time) Lieutenant Commander Neil Ralph, Lieutenants Gordon Edgecombe, David Cronin and William (Stafford) Lowe and Sub Lieutenants Jeff Dalglish and Vic Battese.

The United States Air medal for distinguishing themselves by meritorious achievement while participating in sustained aerial flights in support of combat ground forces in the Republic of Vietnam.

The medal citation reads: "During the period of duty they actively participated in aerial missions over hostile territory in support of operations against Communist aggression. During all these flights, they displayed the highest order of air discipline and acted in accordance with the best traditions of the service. By their determination to accomplish their mission, in spite of the hazards inherent in repeated aerial flights over hostile territory, and by their outstanding degree of professionalism and devotion to duty, they have brought credit upon themselves, the 135th Aviation Company (Experimental Military Unit) and the United States Army Military Assistance Command Vietnam."

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I will be emailing the hotel link in a day or two so you can reserve your room.

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## NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

**Westbrook, J. Michael (SP/5)**

602 Yorktown Dr.

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

34th General Support Group, III Corps: April

1970- May 1972

[seavets@hotmail.com](mailto:seavets@hotmail.com)

MOS: 76T20

**Jerry Hicks has a new email:**

[hicksjerry70@gmail.com](mailto:hicksjerry70@gmail.com)

**Griffin, Dennis (SP/5)**

21 Pineview Ln.

Coram, NY 11727

516-382-0281

Avel Far North, 2 months Chu Lai, 10 months Da

Nang: Feb. 17, 1968 – Feb. 14, 1969

[dennyg@optonline.net](mailto:dennyg@optonline.net)

MOS: .26D20 Radar Maint/Communications Tech

Questions / Comments: I see my picture and those

of some of my fellow comrades in the Avel Far

North photo gallery.

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### TAPS

None Reported

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### PHOTOS

None submitted

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# AVEL VIETNAM



March 2016 Newsletter

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