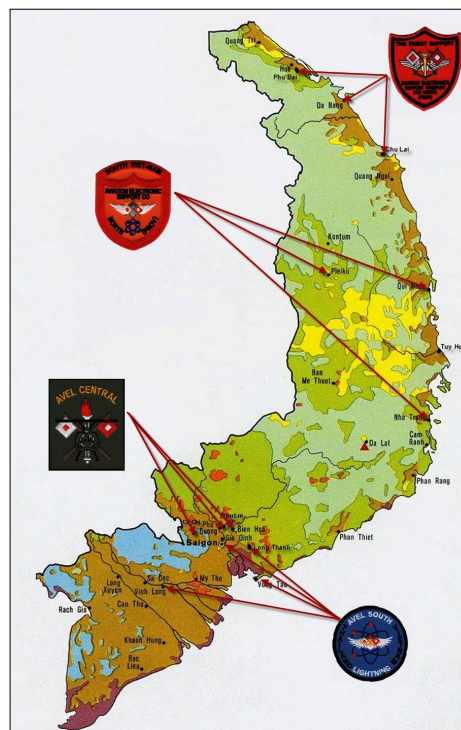


Bob Hope Christmas

By Pete Poirier



Eight times Bob Hope took his Christmas Show to Vietnam. I got to see one when I was in Chu Lai. It was everything you might expect if you grew up with it on TV like I did. Hope visited troops for the holiday starting in World War II and never stopped.

When he was a kid growing up in Cleveland, as I did, he would dance and entertain on street corners for change. Later he would perfect his burlesque character and become a stage, screen and television star. His patter and one liners were classic old school comedian. His timing was exquisite. And he could get a string of laughs out of any crowd anywhere. His props were a golf club and a hat but his special gift to soldiers and sailors had to be the young, good looking singers, dancers and starlets that always were part of his overseas crew.

In Chu Lai, I remember hundreds and hundreds of guys in olive drab crowding a large stage constructed near the Americal Division Headquarters. There was a band, there were singers and go-go dancers all under the direction of Bob Hope.

I was just one of many who hooted and hollered each time that Bob would remark on the features of one or more of the women on stage. Those women were the real reason we had all gathered that afternoon, but Bob Hope was the organizer, the guy who made it all happen, and the one who kept the entire event a riot of fun and entertainment.



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He may have been the USO's main attraction and their longest running star. His dedication to boosting troop morale was and remains unmatched. Year after year he would skip lucrative gigs to bring a first class show overseas to entertain patriots who were destined to miss Christmas with their own family and friends. For many in my generation he was a big part of the highlight reel of our Vietnam experience. If my focus, then was on the likes of Ann-Margret or Raquel Welch or Joey Heatherton (who still fire my imagination) today what I recognize most is Bob Hope the funny guy who proved that the highest and best use of his talents was making military men and women forget for a moment the stress of war and remember what it is like to laugh and have a good time. And, as he said many times, to remember what they were fighting for.

Bob Hope lived to be 100 years old, and he spent fully half a century entertaining the troops overseas. He became the only civilian to be named officially as an honorary veteran. Today, when I think about Vietnam the first memory, I have is the unique smell, then the characteristic sound of a Huey overhead, then the thud of rockets and mortars peppered with small arms fire, then hours of bench work on avionics equipment, then hours of nothing. Eventually, I come around to all the efforts to maintain some degree of morale in the midst of what seemed like endless immorality. I think of all the people who did not have to be there but were. They all were there to make others feel more human, and chief among them had to be Leslie Townes Hope.

Thank you, Bob.

Memories of Vietnam

April 6th, 2021

In 1965 - I moved from Washington, DC to San Francisco with plans of enjoying that beautiful city for a couple of weeks before flying to Texas for Stewardess Training with American Airlines. I arrived in SF on a Friday and friends invited me to my first 49er game on Sunday and later that afternoon at a party I heard about the two charter airlines based in Oakland, which is just across the bridge from San Francisco. The next day a friend drove me to Oakland for an interview and I was hired as number 30, for a class of 30, and started the six week training program the next Monday. After six weeks of training and exams my first flight was to Boston with a turn-around back home the next day.



Franky is on the right

My second flight was a Pacific trip with the first leg to Honolulu on to Wake Island, for a one night layover. The next day we relieved a crew and flew a plane load of Marines on to Saigon. I was 23 years old but still have vivid memories of looking at the faces of the 180 military passengers and thinking to myself, 'Dear Lord they look so young.' Many were truly very young, probably 18 to 20 years old. I recall the sad look on so many faces. After we arrived in Saigon and the troops deplaned, the crew was allowed to walk, under military escort, to the terminal while the plane was refueled. Within a short time, we were back on the plane welcoming troops going home after a year of duty. Many of the guys were weary looking and very quiet so we decided to make bunny ears out of napkins and a bunny tail for the back of our skirts. We were not very 'Playboy Bunny' looking, but we were successful at getting those sad troops smiling. I've always been thankful to all the men I flew over and back for their service to our great country.

When we arrived at Travis AFB many of the troops wanted to hug us goodbye and in those days that was acceptable.

Franky Waters

Son Tay Raid

SHALIMAR, Fla. (Tribune News Service) — Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Leroy Manor, whose distinguished military career included commanding the 1970 training of a task force to liberate American prisoners of war far inside enemy lines in Vietnam, died at the age of 100. According to the Son Tay Raid Association, a nonprofit organization that commemorates the raid on the prison camp near Hanoi, Manor died peacefully in his home in Shalimar.

Funeral arrangements are pending, according to the association's Facebook page. Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the current plan is for a private, family-only ceremony.

Manor's 36-year military career included 72 combat missions over Europe in World War II, including flying over Normandy during the D-Day invasion. Manor also flew 275 combat missions during the Vietnam War.

Manor died just four days after his 100th birthday. That birthday was a personal milestone that Manor had wanted to reach, according to neighbor Carolyn Ketchel, chairwoman of the Okaloosa County Commission.

"He wanted to live to be 100, and he did," said Ketchel. "He was so special to me"

Retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, who served with Manor, remembered him Friday as a special kind of officer. His unassuming conduct meant that "you would have to do a double-take" to recognize his rank, Secord said.

Manor was "just an ordinary guy. ... He certainly wasn't a boastful, way-out kind of guy," Secord continued.

"He was a really good officer," he added. "He was right down the middle."

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Gordon Fornell, who got to know Manor while they served on the board of the Air Force Armament Museum at Eglin Air Force Base, remembered Manor on Friday as "a real stalwart in the special operations world" and "a true aviator" who had "a really amazing aviation career in the Air Force."

Training for the raid on the Son Tay prison camp, dubbed Operation Ivory Coast and described as one of the most daring missions ever conducted by U.S. military forces, was held at Eglin Air Force Base, where 170 rehearsals were conducted before the raid. At the time, Manor was commander of the Air Force's Special Operations Force, then at Eglin, and personnel from nearby Hurlburt Field participated in the raid.

Manor and the operation's vice commander, Army Special Forces Col. Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, were given unimpeded authority in selecting personnel, aircraft and equipment for the mission from across all military forces. Ultimately, according to a U.S. Army history of the raid, it "included a U.S. Navy air diversion of fifty-nine aircraft, a USAF force of nineteen fixed-wing and six rotary-wing aircraft, and a fifty-six man Army SF (Special Forces) ground force."

Shortly after arriving at the Son Tay prison camp early Nov. 21, 1970, it became apparent that there were no prisoners there. After encountering small-arms fire and eliminating opposition, Simons ordered his forces to withdraw. It was later learned, in what was termed a failure of intelligence-gathering efforts, that prisoners had been moved from Son Tay a few months earlier.



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Nonetheless, as word of the raid spread among American POWs, it boosted their morale. Also according to the Army history, the raid resulted in the closing of some prison camps and the consolidation of POWs, "resulting in better care."

And for the long term, according to the Army history, the raid "demonstrated that well-trained and rehearsed U.S. joint special operations forces could conduct missions even in heavily defended areas."

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

None Submitted

TAPS

Alex Kopolovich

Avel Central 1969

He died on 10 Nov 2017. He was 70 years old.

Thomas Hrynyshyn

Avel Central 1969

He died on 3 Nov 2012. He was 64 years old.

Robert Kelly

Avel South

He died on 10 October 2020. He was 70 years old.

PHOTOS

Ron Clark submitted photos of the 263rd Maintenance Co. (*Avel Far North*)

April/May 1970, February 1971

They are on the website, Avel Far North/263rd, Red Beach

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL/PHONE

None Submitted

Send your change of address and email to jmccabe51@gmail.com

Operation Triumphus crowdsources personal stories of the Vietnam War. Share yours now

More than 2.7 million veterans served in the Vietnam War. Today, only about 770,000 are still alive, according to the [American War Library](#).

To Steve Downey, that's 770,000 stories to be told.

"Once they're gone, if they don't tell their stories, their stories go with them," said Downey, a former Army specialist and project manager for Operation Triumphus, a [web platform](#) built to compile the legacies of Vietnam veterans. "That's why this project's just so important, because those stories, their history, their legacy deserves to be preserved."

Operation Triumphus, named for the triumphant return many Vietnam veterans never received and funded by the Berry Law Firm in Lincoln, Nebraska, records veterans' stories just as they tell them.

Keeping in mind the age of veterans from the Vietnam era, Downey has designed the submission process to be as intuitive as possible. To submit a story, veterans simply need to go to Operation Triumphus' [website](#), create an account, and begin typing their experiences or uploading a video.

Operation Triumphus even provides guidelines for shooting good video and asking the right questions in interviews.

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The platform's mission is to preserve the experiences of servicemembers in the Vietnam War for future generations, but stories aren't limited to battle accounts. [Vietnam veterans](#) can also submit their military experiences from basic training or time in garrison.

Once submitted, stories will be compiled by similarities like location, events, and keywords to encourage users to read multiple articles.

The website plans to go live with a soft launch on Apr. 15. If successful, the full launch will follow in May. Downey's personal goal for the site is to collect 5,000 unique pieces of user generated content by the end of the year. User generated content includes stories, videos and photographs from veterans.

ALL AVEL REUNION 2021

**Virginia Beach, Virginia
October 14 - 17, 2021**

DoubleTree by Hilton
1900 Pavilion Dr.
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
757-422-8900

Room Rate is \$107.00/night plus tax

This special room rate will be honored 3 days prior and 3 days post event
Details on registration to follow

Early Bird, Tuesday October 12th, 2021

Early Bird arrivals can explore Virginia Beach and the area on their own.
There is a lot to see and do.

Wednesday October 13th, 2021

Early Bird arrivals can explore Virginia Beach and the area on their own.
There is a lot to see and do.

Thursday October 14th, 2021

The Hospitality Room will be open and well stocked with adult beverages and snacks!
There will be several possible carpool events. Watch for details.

Friday October 15th, 2021

The Hospitality Room will be open and well stocked with adult beverages and snacks!
There will be a group bus to Colonial Williamsburg. *(Paid by Avel)*

Saturday October 16th, 2021

John Veers Martini Golf Outing
Ladies Luncheon *(Paid by Avel)*
Group Banquet. Cash bar during dinner. *(Dinner paid by Avel)*
The Hospitality Room will be open after dinner until 23:00

Sunday October 17th, 2021

Final goodbyes and head home until next year

Preparations for the Reunion will continue but due to the uncertainty surrounding the Corona Virus. As of right now we have **15 vets** and **12 guests** registered. If you want to attend please go to the website and register www.avelvietnam.com.

The Reunion cost is still \$80.00 per person. Checks can be sent now. If we have to cancel the Reunion you will receive a full refund.

Your check should be made payable to AVEL REUNION.

Mail them to: Jack McCabe, 2120 Augusta National Dr., Denver, NC 28037



"The 'I want out' poster with Uncle Sam was published anonymously by the Committee to Unsell the War, in a multi-media-donated campaign of 1971 protesting against US military involvement in Indo-China.

'Uncle Sam' was in reality Samuel Wilson, a provisions merchant from Troy, New York, who supplied the US army during the War of 1812 against the British. Through a series of connections he came to be identified with the plain, honest, self-reliant and patriotic American. In 1961 he was formally acknowledged by the US Senate as the progenitor of America's national symbol of Uncle Sam. As the personification of the USA he was invoked in a US recruiting poster designed by James Montgomery Flagg for the First World War in 1917; that image became iconic.

This reinterpretation works through the ironic reversal of the original gestures. The original image, with an authoritative pointing gesture, summoning the viewer to enlist, is now inverted as Uncle Sam is turned into a wounded soldier, pleading to be released." -Nick Nicholas, PhD in Linguistics from Melbourne University, lectured historical linguistics

I can't say I ever saw this before.



AVEL VIETNAM



March/April 2021 Newsletter