

AVEL VIETNAM

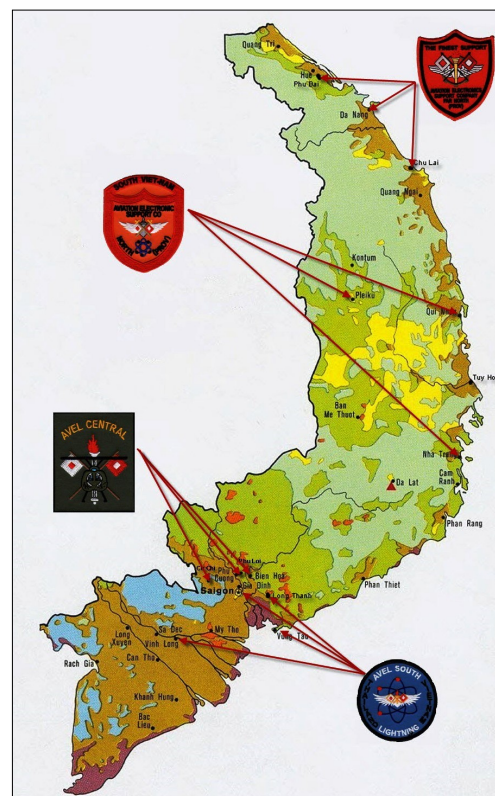
Newsletter - May 2016

MEMORIAL DAY Never forget the meaning of the day!



Enjoy your Memorial Day. Visit friends, attend parades, eat hot dogs, drink beer but never forget the 405,399 that died in World War II, 36,574 that died during the Korean War, 58,209 that died in Vietnam, 4,501 that died in Iraq and the 2,381 that have died in Afghanistan.

Find a moment to drink a toast to our fallen brothers.



AVEL REUNION, CHICAGO 2016



This years Reunion will be held at the Marriott Chicago O'Hare. It is situated in Chicago, very close to O'Hare airport. They have shuttle running regularly from the airport to the hotel. Fly into O'Hare, Midway is a long ways away.

The hotel is conveniently close to the "L" Blue Line and the METRA train. Both are an easy way to get to downtown Chicago.

Please go to the website: avelvietnam.com and register early. We have a lot of planning to do and we need a count of those attending as soon as possible. The Reunion cost is \$70.00/person.

Don't forget to join us on Facebook. Search for the group: AVEL Vietnam.



Marriott Chicago O'Hare
8535 W. Higgins
Chicago, IL 60631
29 September to 2 October 2016

Our room rate is \$139.00 per night. We have blocked out rooms at our discounted rate for 3 days prior to the event and 3 days after. Parking is free for those staying at the hotel.

To reserve your room call the hotel at **773-693-4444** and ask for **Group Housing**. Tell them you are with the Avel Vietnam Veterans Reunion. If you run into any problems call **Amy** at **773-714-4209**.

Activity planning will begin shortly so please register early!

Camp Holloway

Jerry Parks and Orbin Hall sent me photos of the Camp Holloway (Pleiku) Memorial near Mineral Wells, TX (Ft. Wolthers). The Memorial has the names of the 332 men who died there. Here are a few of the photos.



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.

Vietnam vet pays tribute to lost friends

The dead return in bundles
Unresisting to the rain.

Those are the first two lines of an entitled poem written by retired Air Force Maj. Bruce Gearhart Jr. four years after witnessing combat and losing close friends in the Vietnam War. Now living in Prattville with his wife, Gearhart wrote those lines to reflect a period of his life that he finds difficult to tell, and one he wants others to get right.

Here's the entire poem:

The dead return in bundles
Unresisting to the rain.
Their metal cans are stacked
In pyramids on the loading ramp.
At night the air crews shuttle south
Confluencing this sacred flotsam of life
Into Saigon, Tan Son Nhut,
While the news
returns their spirit to families, wives,
Flashed transcending hysterics
In electrical speed of flight
Through the world's eternally stable starlight



"I still choke up when I read this," Gearhart said. "All you bring home after war is the idea of that person."

Gearhart, 86, served in the Air Force 1st Mobile Combat Communications group, and while he was on the front lines, he was not a soldier. The loss of two friends and colleagues, Staff Sgt. David Fuschacht and Juan Maldonado is a daily reminder of the war they all fought.

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

Novotney, Robert (SP/5)

199 Pine Creek Drive

Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-2750

Avel North, 3rd Platoon, Pleiku: October 3, 1969

to January 30, 1971

rnovotney@comcast.net

AGENT ORANGE

Lehman, Kenneth (SP/5)

1402 Hartzell Rd.

New Haven, IN 46774

260-433-4317

263rd Maintenance Co. (LEM), Chu Lai: Sept.

1970 – Sept. 1971

kdlbsl777@gmail.com

MOS: 35K20

Comments: Found your site by accident, was amazed to find pictures of myself at Chu Lai

TAPS

Pierre Baron

263rd Maintenance Co. (LEM)

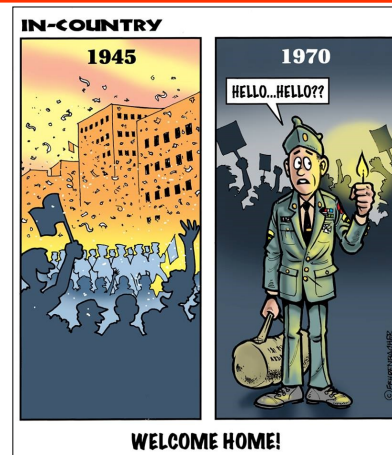
Died on 12 February 2015.

He was 67 years old.



PHOTOS

Photos of Avel North, Pleiku were submitted by Robert Novotney and were posted



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