

In Memory of Harley James Morgan

I don't remember when I first met him or when he joined Bounty Hunters Gun platoon for the 191 AHC. He may have been my friend's door gunner on the "Elusive Butterfly". Harley and I were friends. I haven't had many friends like Harley. Even though we lost contact and had not seen each other in years he was still my friend. I have thought about him from time to time. We were part of a team. We played for keeps, not many know what we did. Some may think it was for nothing, we lost others and we miss them as does their families. So today I want to give those that knew him a little glimpse into what one-day was like.

It was one of those times I was thinking about Harley. I had just bought a used 2003 Anniversary Edition Harley Davidson Duce. The previous owner had done a little custom work on the bike and he had put a sticker on the oil tank. The sticker was a copy of the famous 101st Division patch. My friend Harley had been in the 101st before transferring to the 1st Aviation Brigade. I did a search for him online thinking I would visit him if I could find out where he was. What I found was an Obituary online. Harley James Morgan, 64 of Starks, LA passed away on March 9, 2013 in his residence with his loving family at his side following a brief illness.

Like Harley I don't talk about the time I spent in the Republic of Viet Nam very much. Past memories tucked away in a box in the attic. Occasionally something will stir an old memory. I usually just remember a small part of the event but sometimes the memory will be crystal clear. This story is from my memory and there maybe some errors but it the best I could do.

When you are reading this about Harley it is not meant to be an all-inclusive history of what he did. Harley told me a story about a firefight he was in when he was with the 101st in Viet Nam. I know that Harley received two Purple Hearts; the firefight included a Human Wave Attack at night when he was in the field. There are other stories, but I only know bits and pieces.

In Memory of My Brothers

This story also contains names of the crewmembers, Aircraft Commander WO William Campbell, Copilot WO Ronald Michael Cederlund, Crew Chief SP-5 August Kraemer, Door Gunner Harley James Morgan. There were 4 of us on the Wing Gunship that day. Towards the end of my time in Viet Nam

I found myself the crew chief for two UH-1C Helicopter Gunships. My friend William Whitaker from Billings Montana nickname "Teach"

another crew chief had finished his tour and left. It seemed that no one wanted to transfer to the gun team at that time. There were a few incidents of trouble and a little more action than normal. This may have been a concern to some outside the team. It was all in a days work for us. We almost always put up a team of 4 ships everyday. We didn't get much down time. Up before sunrise, and not back to the barracks until after sunset and sometimes stand by at night.

Harley was from the 101st and he had transferred to become a door gunner. I think he was my door gunner when we had the incident where my ship took an armored piercing round behind me. The round hit the turbine engine oil pump missing me by about 6 inches. We had to make a forced landing at a base camp. My AC at the time WO Campbell tried to convince me that the helicopter was safe to fly after running it with no engine oil pressure for about 20 or 30 min. I wasn't convinced and could picture it freezing up on the hour flight home. William (Bill) Campbell served with the 191st at Bearcat as a pilot. I last saw him in September of 2004 at a reunion in Tulsa, Oklahoma, he was claimed by cancer December 14, 2004. His wife told me that one of the reasons he came was to see me. They could make a movie about his service, I can't write about him, as I would not do him justice. Silver Star, DFC, and Special Forces. WO Campbell took the ship after our maintenance team had replaced the engine oil pump and hovered around for about 5 min. and came back to us and said see it's fine. The rest of the crew satisfied, were ready to go, so I went along with it and the ship did fine. I think it was this incident that also got us nominated for valor. The firefight that we were in only had 1 of the 4 gunships in it. The other 3 ships were grounded at the time. The ground troops need support and we volunteered, seems we were always volunteering when others were in need. No one would say do you want to volunteer they would just say they need us and we would go, so we wound up doing gun runs with a Cobra Gunship. Which meant we covered him and he didn't cover us. Being a wingman usually left our bottom hanging out there after a gun run anyway, but that day was serious return fire. This was in August of 1968. The copilot WO Ronald Michael Cederlund, Bronze Star, DFC (KIA September 3, 1968) took a hit in the moveable sight he was holding. I think we took about 3 hits to the ship that day.

I last saw Harley when we returned to US after our tour of Viet Nam. We flew home together we went to Travis AFB after a brief stop over in Tokyo, Japan. When we landed at Travis I remember seeing protesters welcoming us home. At least they were far enough away that they couldn't spit on us. They loaded us on a bus and took us to be processed. While at Travis we had to wait so we went outside and found a paved street, curb, sidewalk and a children's play area with

swings, merry go round, and a teeter-totter. I have always remembered this it was a marker in my life. Symbolic of innocence lost, back to home and the way things are different. Brad Owens, Hayward, CA another Crew Chief from Bounty Hunters picked us up and a few of us spent a day celebrating our return to the U.S. Harley and I flew out of SF Airport and went to Houston. I spent a few days at his home before going on to New Orleans. I was in Viet Nam for about a year and we had a leave after returning. I don't know how long Harley had been in Viet Nam. Harley came to visit me in New Orleans for a couple of days to show me his new Harley Davidson Motorcycle. We then reported to our next duty stations. That was the last time I saw him.

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