



POMFLANT Remembered

The POMFLANT Alumni, organized 9 years ago, the get togethers are the only time most of us see each other during the year and the newsletter provides us information about our members. I feel strongly that the alumni should continue, however, it seems that we are losing the focus we once had. I have taken over the newsletter and as of this date no one has elected to volunteer to do be our social director functions. I personally would have done this also, if I still lived in the Charleston area. Unfortunately, it would be hard to do this from Florida.

News from our Members:

Paul Fitzgerald - Rachel and I are currently in Kissimmee, FL. Mostly we enjoy going to the four Disney theme parks, Sea World and Busch Gardens (72 miles). We can do chores in the morning, sleep in or just read until around noon. By that time all the early birds have entered the parks and we just scoot in. Went twice last week and so far twice this week. Animal Kingdom is the best park.

I send out e-mail to some of the former POMFLANT personnel and also spend time on the web reading various newspapers. I also do volunteer work for Osceola County, sometimes for the sheriff and the courthouse administration. Meet lots of interesting people. Otherwise we just enjoy our retirement. Our children all now live in Florida. Mike is in Merritt Island, Bruce is in Avon Park and Cyndi is in Panama City Beach

Mike Fitzgerald - In May, we began searching for a home to buy and within 2 or 3 weeks settled on one. With the upcoming purchase, we decided that this would be a good time to get married. Sally threw together a wedding in 1 week. We were married on May 29th, the day after Memorial Day. We're in our new house on north Merritt Island on one acre of land. We love it! Below, I've included a web link to a site where I've posted pictures from the wedding and the new house, for those of you that are interested. The folders are titled "Our New House", and "Our Wedding". All are welcome to view the folders of some of our other vacations and weekend trips, including one of our trip out to watch a Trident II launch.

<http://community.webshots.com/user/skibum957>

Henry (Nicky) and Brenda Nix - We are doing just fine. Nicky is still working at Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, GA and Brenda is still working at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island. We are looking forward to retirement in a little over three years. But who is counting! We are going back to Charleston, SC as fast as we can. We have the most precious little two-year old grandson, named Hunter waiting for us to return. We go to Charleston every weekend just so we can see him.

Brenda is going to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA in March on business. Nicky and their daughter Wendy are going along and they are going to turn it into a vacation. We are looking forward to a wonderful time.

Earl and Elaine Pringle - We are in Homestead, Florida. Both of us are still working for the Federal Government. I work for the Air Force and Elaine works for USDA. We found the POMFLANT Remembered website on the Internet and we think it is very good. It brought back a lot of memories.

Buddy and Connie Gaillard - We are still enjoying retirement. We play a lot of golf on the course in our community and enjoy the other amenities, like a heated pool & spa, exercise room, billiards etc. If anyone wants to retire to a wonderful community, they should look at Spruce Creek Preserve in Ocala, Florida. You can find some bargains here for under \$90,000. Still racing dirt bikes but have slowed down some.

Peggy VanDeLeest - I worked at MAPB2 as a missile mechanic. I stopped working in early 1983 to raise our daughter. My husband was in the Navy and retired in September of 1998 after 23 years active duty. We currently live in Spokane, Washington. Our daughter, Amanda, graduated from high school this year and is now attending Gonzaga University in Spokane. She will be majoring in political science and is active in the debate program. She was a debater for the last 3 years in high school and won numerous local, state and national awards. We have twin sons, Matthew and Ryan, who will be entering 10th grade this year. Both have been active in Boy Scouts for the past 8 years. Matthew was just awarded his Eagle award. His project was the construction of two benches for our church's social hall and mediation garden. Ryan just completed his Eagle project, the construction of a Japanese style footbridge for the mediation garden. I will be returning to college this fall to obtain a degree as a Hearing Instrument Specialist. It is a 2-year pilot program for Washington and will be a guideline for other states. I am excited with the change in my life and the prospects the future holds. Last year, my husband, Dean, and I finally purchased one of our dream vehicles - a motorcycle, a Yamaha custom cruiser classic. We have thoroughly enjoyed it and have explored many miles of the state.

Dean adds, some comments on the movie "Blackhawk Down", a first hand account from a participant. To make it easier to read, I cleaned up the formatting breaks that email sometimes causes, but there are no changes to Izzo's account. Enjoy.

=====Original Message=====

We caught the MAKING of that movie on TV and it was even BETTER than the movie itself. Interesting time and an embarrassment to the USA, but the guys who fought it were outstanding.

MILINET: A Soldier's Eye-View of "Blackhawk Down."

Contributed By: LTC Greg Wilcox, US Army (Retired)

The author of the below E-mail, Gerry Izzo, is currently a Captain at Comair. He flew one of the UH-60s on the mission that is depicted in the movie "Blackhawk Down."

During the last few days many pilots have come up to me and asked me if I had seen the movie "Blackhawk Down." I don't mind talking about the movie, and I welcome the opportunity to talk about the heroism and valor of my friends. I just wanted to post some comments here about the movie and my impressions. Also I wanted to try to answer some frequently asked questions.

First of all, I and many of my friends that also flew on the mission thought that the movie was excellent! It is technically accurate and it is dramatically correct. In other words, the equipment, lingo and dialogue are all right on. By dramatically correct, I mean that it very effectively captured the emotions and tension that we all felt during the mission. It did this without being a cartoon, (like TOP GUN) or being over the top, (like FIREBIRDS). It's true that the screenwriters had to consolidate two or three people into one, but this was necessary because otherwise there would have been too many principle characters to keep

track of. Also in the actual mission we had nearly 20 aircraft in the air that day. In the movie they had 4 Blackhawks and 4 "Little Birds". The unit could not afford to commit the actual number to the filming of the movie. However, through the magic of the cinema, they were able to give the impression of the real number. Our force mixture was as follows:

Super 61 - Lead Blackhawk
Star 41-44 Little Bird Assault
Super 62 - Trail Blackhawk

These aircraft made up the assault force. Their mission was to go into the buildings and capture the individuals who were the target of the day. Super 61 was shotdown, killing both pilots. (They were CW4 Cliff Wolcott and CW3 Donovan Briley. The three of us shared a room at the airfield.)

Star 41 landed at the crash site and the pilot CW4 Keith Jones ran over and dragged two survivors to his aircraft and took off for the hospital. Keith re-enacted his actions in the movie. Super 62 was the Blackhawk that put in the two Delta snipers, Sergeant First Class Randy Shughart and Master Sergeant Gary Gordon. They were inserted at crash site #2. Shortly after Gary and Randy were put in Super 62 was struck in the fuselage by an antitank rocket. The whole right side of the aircraft was opened up and the sniper manning the right door gun had his leg blown off. The aircraft was able to make it out of the battle area to the port area where they made a controlled crash landing. (This is not depicted in the movie.)

Next was the Ranger Blocking Force. This consisted of 4 Blackhawks:

Super 64 (CW3 Mike Durant, CW4 Ray Frank)
Super 65 (Me, Cpt Richard Williams)
Super 66 (CW3 Stan Wood, CW4 Gary Fuller)
Super 67 (CW3 Jeff Niklaus, CW2 Sam Shamp)

The mission of the blocking force was to be inserted at the four corners of the objective building and to prevent any Somali reinforcements from getting through. In the movie there is a brief overhead shot of the assault. My aircraft is depicted in the lower left hand corner of the screen. This is the only part of the film where I come close to being mentioned. As the assault is completed, you hear the Blackhawks calling out of the objective area. When you hear, "...Super 65 is out, going to holding..." that's my big movie moment. There is also a quick shot of an RPG being shot at a hovering Blackhawk. I did have one maybe two fired at me, but I did not see them or the gunner. I only heard the explosions. We were not able to return fire, although some of the other aircraft did.

Make no mistake. I am fully aware of my role in this mission. My job was the same as the landing boat drivers in "Saving Private Ryan." Get the troops in the right place in one piece. I am very proud of the fact that my crew and I were able to do that. After having done this in Grenada, Panama and Somalia, I can identify with the bombardiers of World War Two. You have to ignore all of the chaos that is going on around and completely concentrate on the tasks at hand. That is holding the aircraft as steady as possible so the Rangers can slide down the ropes as quickly and safely as possible.

Okay, Okay, enough about me. Super 64 was shot down also with an RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade). They tried to make it back to the airfield, but their tail rotor gave way about a mile out of the objective area. They went down in the worst part of bad guy territory. The dialogue for the movie appears to have been taken from the mission tapes as it is exactly as I remember it. (This was the hardest part of the movie for me to watch). The actions on the ground are as described by Mike Durant, as he was the only one from the crew to survive the crash and the gun battle. It was here the Gary and Randy won their Posthumous Medals of Honor.

Super 66 was called in at about 2000 hours to resupply the Rangers at the objective area. Some of the Rangers were completely out of ammunition and were fighting hand to hand with the Somali militiamen. (Also not depicted in the movie). Stan and Gary brought their aircraft in so that they were hovering over the top of the Olympic Hotel with the cargo doors hanging out over the front door. In this way they were able to drop the ammo, water and medical supplies to the men inside. Stan's left gunner fired 1600 rounds of minigun ammo in 30 seconds. He probably killed between 8 to 12 Somali militiamen. As Stan pulled out of the objective area, he headed to the airfield because his right gunner had been wounded, as had the two Rangers in the back who were throwing out the supplies. Once he landed, he discovered that he'd been hit by about 40-50 rounds and his transmission leaking oil like a sieve. Super 66 was done for the night.

The final group of aircraft was the 4 MH6 gunships, and the command and control Blackhawk and the Search and Rescue 'Hawk'. They were:

Barber 51-54 MH6's
Super 63 C&C
Super 68 SAR

In the movie, the gunships are shown making only one attack. In fact, they were constantly engaged all night long. Each aircraft reloaded six times. It is estimated that they fired between 70 and 80,000 rounds of minigun ammo and fired a total 90 to 100 aerial rockets. They were the only things that kept the Somalis from overrunning the objective area. All eight gunship pilots were awarded the Silver Star. Every one of them deserved it!

Next is Super 68. The actions of this crew were very accurately portrayed. The only difference was that they were actually hit in the rotor blades by an RPG. This blew a semicircle out of the main rotor spar, but the blade held together long enough for them to finish putting in the medics and Rangers at the first crash site. It was then that they headed to the airfield. What they did not know was that their main transmission and engine oil cooler had been destroyed by the blast. As they headed to the airfield all 7 gallons of oil from the main rotor gearbox, and all 7 quarts from each engine was pouring out. They got the aircraft on the ground just as all oil pressures went to zero. They then shutdown, ran to the spare aircraft and took off to rejoin the battle. They were in the air just in time to affect the MEDEVAC of Super 62, which had landed at the seaport. The pilots of this aircraft were CW3 Dan Jollota, and MAJ Herb Rodriguez. Both men were later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Major Rodriguez is retired from the Army now and he teaches middle school with my wife in Clarksville, Tennessee.

Finally there is the Command and Control Blackhawk, Super 63. In the back of this aircraft was my battalion commander, LTC Matthews, and the overall ground commander, LTC Harrell. In the movie, there is a scene where the men on the ground were begging for MEDEVAC. By this point in the battle we had 5 Blackhawks out of action, either shot down or shot up so much they couldn't fly anymore. Of the two-assault force and four blocking force 'hawks', only Super 67 and myself were left. I fully expected LTC Harrell to send us in to try to get those men out. I jacked a round into the chamber of my pistol and my M16. I knew that the only way to do was to hover with one wheel balanced on the roof of the building. Then the Rangers would be able to throw the wounded in. I knew that we were going to take a lot of fire and I was trying to mentally prepare myself to do this while the aircraft was getting hit. My friends had all gone in and taken their licks and now I figured it was our turn. (Peer pressure is such a powerful tool if used properly.) Quite frankly, I really thought that we were at best going to get shot down; at worst I figured we were going to be killed.

The way I saw it we had already lost 5 aircraft, what was 2 more? I had accepted this because at least when this was all over General Garrison would be able to tell the families that we had tried everything to

get their sons, fathers or husbands out. We were even willing to send in our last two helicopters. Fortunately for me LTC Harrell realized that the time for helicopters had passed. The decision was made to get the tanks and armored personnel carriers to punch through to the objective area. Once again, the dialogue in the movie is verbatim. What you don't hear is me breathing a sigh of relief! I remembered thinking that maybe I was going to see the sunrise after all.

I guess I got a little carried away. I really didn't mean to write this much. People ask me if this movie has given me 'flashbacks'. I don't think you can call them flashbacks if that day has never been out of my mind. I hope that when you do see the movie it will fill you with pride and awe for the Rangers that fought their hearts out that day. Believe me, they are made of the same stuff as those kids at Normandy Beach. When 1LT Tom DiTomaso, the Ranger platoon leader on my aircraft, told me that we did a fantastic job, I couldn't imagine ever receiving higher praise than that. I love my wife and children, but the greatest thing I've ever done is to be a Nightstalker Pilot with Task Force Ranger on 3-4 Oct 1993.

Thank you for reading this. I look forward to answering any and all questions anyone may have about the movie or the actual battle. I just thought that this might fill in some of the blanks. Thank you again.

Capt. Gerry Izzo (Super65) "NSDQ" Nightstalkers Don't Quit

Don Coffman - I am working as a volunteer Activities Director at the Seniors Center in Goose Creek (behind the Goose Creek library). Don also teaches basic computers ceramics, and plays cards with friends. Everyone is invited to join. It's free to sign up as a member. There is socializing, fellowship and travel. Lunches are provided everyday for only a \$1.00. They currently have over 500 members.

Jim and Rosalie Lawrence - We attended the annual reunion of the USS Whitehurst (DE-634) in Knoxville in June, and also had a couple of other short trips to Gulfport, Mississippi and Jacksonville Florida.

In August, we attended the 24th reunion for the USS Nicholas (DD-449) in Bremerton, Washington and tours of downtown Seattle. A Salmon Bake put on by the Indians, and we participated in tours of the Naval Sub Base at Bangor, Washington, and the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (where we saw several of the older Aircraft Carriers being cut down for scrap, including the USS Ranger, USS Midway, and the USS Independence. We also saw the fast attack submarine USS L. Mendel Rivers (which used to be home ported here in Charleston, South Carolina), and two of the Trident submarines (USS Alaska and the USS Ohio).

In November, we drove up to Renfro Valley, Kentucky, to see the Loretta Lynn show, and after Christmas we are taking the AMTRAK up to Hudson New York, to visit with Rosalie's sister and family.

We are expecting to be grandparents for the first time in November. Also, as our daughter Kimberly and her husband Mike, are expecting their first child. It's already determined to be a girl, and the name they have picked out is Morgan Grace. Our son, Jimmy is in his fourth year of teaching third grade at Boulder Bluff Elementary School, and really enjoys it. Kimberly is an Area Sales Manager at the new Belks Store at Citadel Mall.

Jim is kept busy with "honey do" projects around our home in Goose Creek, and Rosalie has kept busy with several projects and organizations. It's great for both of us to be totally retired, and we enjoy it. Jim went into the hospital on 21 September for a total right knee replacement.

Tina (She did not include her last name) - Just want to thank Mary Adams for the newsletter (a job well done). Sorry to see you go but I am sure you need a rest. Hope who ever takes over will remember may not always keep in touch but we still look forward to the POMFLANT newsletter.

I had a total hip replacement in May. I am doing well, and back at volunteering. Once at Trident Hospital on Wednesday and again on Thursday at the Menrivi Family Service Center. I guess I love what I do. I have been with the hospital thirteen years. Did you know my son Tom Durham is the sculpture that did Mr. Philip Simons, who is famous for the Iron Work in Charleston? There will be another unveiling of Christ and child the end of September, watch the Charleston Post and Courier. These will be on display in the Simmons Garden on East Bay Street.

I see Barbara Jackson now and then. Also, Fred Coker, we still share our coupons. A few others, when I run into them at Wal-Mart or out eating.

I stay busy with my crafts. I have made a bunch of red, white, blue and black ribbons and have started my Halloween pumpkins and black cats. Made beach hats out of plastic bags from Wal-Mart, Food Lion etc. Whatever color each store has, they are fun to make. Cute, never know they were from a plastic bags. Thanks again for all the good work on getting the newsletter out. Hope to see you in Wal-Mart or some place one of these days. Take care and good luck what ever you do.



John Campbell - Made the headlines, when interviewed by the Charleston Post and Courier on 28 November 2001. There had been a random shooting in his neighborhood. John is a retired Missile Inspector.

Our Sad News:

Since our last newsletter, I have received information that the following co-workers and friend have died:

Jim Freeman - died on 2 November from congestive heart failure due to pneumonia brought on by a mistreatment of Waggener's disease by Walter Reed Hospital. Jim was 57. Jim was buried Arlington National Cemetery on 13 December. His wife Teri and her two daughters Rene and Nicole are holding up well.

John English - Worked at POMFLANT for Lockheed has died. John was a very outgoing guy who enjoyed dancing the Grand Strand style "shag" and enjoyed it competitively. John became a dancing celebrity due to his hard work at perfecting his abilities; entered and won his share of shag dance contests, and was known locally for his efforts in competing and teaching the dance. John was a handsome and very personable man that was admired by many, and became a major LMSC contributor to the development and growth of the Charleston area Polaris Missile Facility, Atlantic. John will be truly missed by all who knew him.

Hugh Brock King - Hugh was a retired Missile Inspector. He lived with his wife, JoAnn Stevens King in Mount Pleasant. Hugh was 69 and died Monday, 03 September 2001.

Walter "Bud" Fulda – Retired as a Missile Mechanic and a TSGT from the USAF, Walter C. Fulda, 65, of Ladson, husband of Ellen Margaret O'Connell Fulda, died Saturday, 24 February 2002, at his residence. Mr. Fulda was born on November 24, 1936, in Hazelton, Pennsylvania, a son of Dorothy Wallace Kroef of Summerville and the late Walter John Fulda. Mr. Fulda was a career Enlisted Man in the United States Air Force, serving as senior loadmaster with 3500 flying hours. He was a graduate of the Community College of the Air Force and was chief of security at Porsche. He was a member of VFW Post 3433 where he served as past post commander. He also served as past state grand commander

MOC. He was a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. Surviving are, wife, Ellen Margaret O'Connell Fulda of Ladson; mother and step-father, Dorothy and Henry Kroef of Summerville; daughter, Sharon Bernstein of North Charleston; son, Major Walter John Fulda, USAF, of Montgomery, Alabama; brothers, David Fulda and Bruce Fulda, both of New Jersey; sister, Marion Fitzsimmons of Del Ray Beach, Florida; three grandchildren. He was pre-deceased by a sister, Diane Miller.

Please keep us informed of any news about our POMFLANT family.

Please keep Ron Thomas **pomflantremembered@email.com** and John Maney **jmaney@attglobal.net** up to date, with your current e-mail addresses.

Please keep Ron and Nancy Thomas informed of your current snail mail address and telephone number changes.

Please send us information for the next Newsletter. Without your input we have little to write about

Hope to see you all at the next Get Together! Someone in the Charleston area please put something together for your fellow Alumni members.

Take Care,
Ron and Nancy Thomas

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