



Historic Fairfax City, Inc.
"Fare Fac - Say Do"

Executive Officers

John A.C. Keith	President
Jenée L. Lindner	Vice-Pres.
Albert L. Leightley	Treasurer
Linda M. Baringhaus	Secretary

Jean Carpenter	Director
Hildie Carney	Director
Patricia A. Fabio	Director
Linda C. Goldstein	Director
D. Lee Hubbard	Director
Hon. Wm. Page Johnson, II	Director
Benny Leonard	Director
Maria Macfarlane	Director
Wayne A. Morris	Director
John P. Murphy	Director
Mary S. Petersen	Director
Hon. Penny A. Rood	Director
Mark A. Towery	Director
Edward C. Trexler, Jr.	Director
Matthew T. West	Director
Vacant	Director

The Fare Facs Gazette

The Newsletter of Historic Fairfax City, Inc.

Volume 16, Issue 4

Fall 2019

Ya Krong Bo'lah River Rescue (Ol' Walt Part 2)

by William Page Johnson, II



The following is the second installment chronicling the life of City of Fairfax resident, Lt. Colonel Walter Joseph Potock, Jr. Walt was a highly decorated United States Air Force officer who served in Vietnam from '67 to '68.

As a Forward Air Controller (FAC) in Vietnam, Walt Potock flew over 200 combat missions. He amassed an impressive record. He often defied prescribed safety protocols, flying at night, or in bad weather, in support of American and Vietnamese ground forces who needed assistance.

24 August 1967

"They had an Army Huey with nine people on going down in a river over here..."¹

In August 1967 the annual southwestern monsoon was in full force over the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The lakes and rivers of Kontum and Pleiku Provinces were swollen by the abundant rainfall.

The afternoon of 24 August 1967 was clear, however. Major Walter J. Potock, Jr., 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron, was flying Visual Reconnaissance (VR) in his assigned sector west of Kontum, something he did nearly every day. As he approached the Krong Bo'lah, also known as the Tonlé San, or Se San River, 11 miles west southwest of the Kontum Airfield, he heard a radio report which originated from a Popular Forces (PF)² patrol. The



Yali Falls, Ya Krong Bo'lah River, Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam, August 1967, as seen from Walt Potock's O-1E Bird Dog.

Photo credit: Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

FAIRFAX FAST FACT:

Jemantown was once a thriving village of "mechanics," located on the western boundary of what is now the City of Fairfax. The settlement contained a half dozen houses and a blacksmith shop. That is until the advent of the Civil War.

On July 17, 1861, the eve of the First Battle of Manassas, Union troops advanced toward Manassas from Vienna along Jemantown Road and from Alexandria along the Little River Turnpike. They on converged on Jemantown. The Harrison House and several others were 'burned to the ground.'

Charleston Mercury, July 24, 1861, p. 1.
Madison Daily Patriot, July 29, 1861, p. 2.
West Jersey Press, July 31, 1861, p. 2.
Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, August 10, 1861, p. 1.
Charleston Courier, August 31, 1861, p. 1.
Charleston Courier, September 20, 1861, p. 1.

DUES ALERT

If you have not paid your annual Historic Fairfax City, Inc. dues they are now due. Please remit based on the schedule below. Annual dues payments should be made out and sent to: **Historic Fairfax City, Inc.**, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Your annual dues help HFCI to continue to meet its basic goal of preserving the unique history of the City of Fairfax. Tax deductible donations over and above dues payments are encouraged.

At the Fairfax Museum and Historic Blenheim...

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center

The Fairfax Story - Hamill Gallery. Permanent Fairfax history exhibition.

Gano Gallery

"Fairfax County's Original Set of Weights and Measures," through December 31, 2019 - See one of the oldest and most complete set of colonial weights and measures in the country on loan from the Alexandria Washington Masonic Lodge No. 22.

"Teetotalers and Moonshiners: Prohibition in Virginia, Distilled" • October 28 - December 8, 2019

A traveling exhibition from the Library of Virginia, "Teetotalers and Moonshiners" addresses the important and long-lasting effects of Prohibition on the Commonwealth and America.

"New Virginians, 1619-2019 and Beyond" - December 16-January 25, 2020

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center "Second Sunday" Programs

Programs are held at **2 p.m.** on the second Sunday of each month. Unless otherwise noted, programs are held at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street. Free (unless noted). Check back to find out about additional programs planned throughout the year. Information: **703-385-8414**.

newsmagazine television program and its legacy for LGBTQ civil rights in Northern Virginia.

Sunday, November 10 - 2 p.m.

"Goodbye Booze": The Music of Prohibition

Dr. Gregg D. Kimball, Director of Public Services and Outreach at the Library of Virginia, will trace the musical legacy of prohibition through spoken narrative, period images, and live and recorded music. Feel free to sing along!

Sunday, December 8 - 2p.m.

"Prohibition in Washington, D.C.: How Dry We Weren't"

Author and tour guide Garrett Peck will explore how prohibition impacted our capital city. Book sale and signing will follow the talk.



Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim

PERMANENT EXHIBITION

"Blenheim's Civil War Soldier Signatures: A Diary on Walls". Explores the local Fairfax Court House history and the experiences of soldiers who wrote on the walls of the Willcoxon home (Historic Blenheim.) The replica attic is a life-sized replica of the house attic that shows the clearest graffiti in the house.

Historic Blenheim Civil War Interpretive Center Program Series Programs are free and held at 2 p.m. on Saturdays (unless otherwise noted) at the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway. Information: 703-591-0560.

Saturday, November 2, 9:30a.m.-3:30 p.m. \$15; optional lunch \$10

"Beneath the Paint: Civil War Graffiti

Symposium" --Speakers and topics include: Kim O'Connell, the history of Civil War Graffiti; Conservator Chris Mills, the technical side of graffiti conservation; and Conservator Kirsten Travers Moffitt, graffiti investigation and conservation at Historic Blenheim. Sponsored by the Northern Virginia Civil War Graffiti Trail.

Reservations required: https://apm.activecommunities.com/fairfaxcityrecdept/Acitivity_Search/13003

Sunday December 8, 2019, 12pm-4pm

"Christmas in Camp and Making Do at Home"

Travel back in time to learn how Civil War soldiers and the folks back home celebrated Christmas. Meet the soldiers in camp; drill with soldiers; join in with a cease-fire exchange of gifts; house tours; make Handmade Victorian ornaments; write letter to soldiers; sew a "housewife"; pack a food crate for soldiers.



Exhibition at Ratcliffe-Allison-Pozer House

Location: 10386 Main Street, Fairfax, VA 22030
Open Saturdays from 11am-2pm May-October for free tours; or call 703.385.8414 for tour appointment.

"Dr. Kate Waller Barrett: Mother to Many" - Exhibition examines the life of this prominent social reformer of the Progressive Era, who saved the early 19th-century Ratcliffe-Allison-Pozer House from demolition in 1923.

Volunteers and Docents are sought for the city's historic buildings: Ratcliffe-Allison-Pozer House, Historic Blenheim and the Civil War Interpretive Center and Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. Additionally, volunteers may be interested in assisting with walking tours and special events. For information email Susan.Gray@fairfaxva.gov, or call **703-385-8415**.

Select historic buildings are open during city special events, including the Chocolate Lovers Festival, Civil War Weekend, Independence Day Celebration, Fall Festival and Festival of Lights and Carols. To arrange group tours of city-owned historic buildings email Susan.Gray@fairfaxva.gov or call **703-385-8414**.

The city has published a free self-guided walking tour brochure that provides a brief history of the city and noteworthy buildings in the Old Town Fairfax Historic District. This brochure is available from the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, or call **703-385-8414**.

Select historic buildings are open during city special events, including the Chocolate Lovers Festival, Civil War Weekend, Independence Day Celebration, Fall Festival and Festival of Lights and Carols. To arrange group tours of city-owned historic buildings email or call **703-385-8414**.

The Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. It includes a variety of building and monument types and styles, including:

Fairfax Courthouse (1800)
 Ratcliffe-Allison House (1812)
 Joshua Gunnell House (c.1830)
 William Gunnell House (c.1835)
 Ford House (c.1835)
 Fairfax Elementary School (1873)*
 Old Fairfax Jail (1885)
 Old Town Hall (1900)
 Marr Monument (1904)

*Fairfax Elementary School was converted into the Fairfax Museum & Visitor Center in 1992.

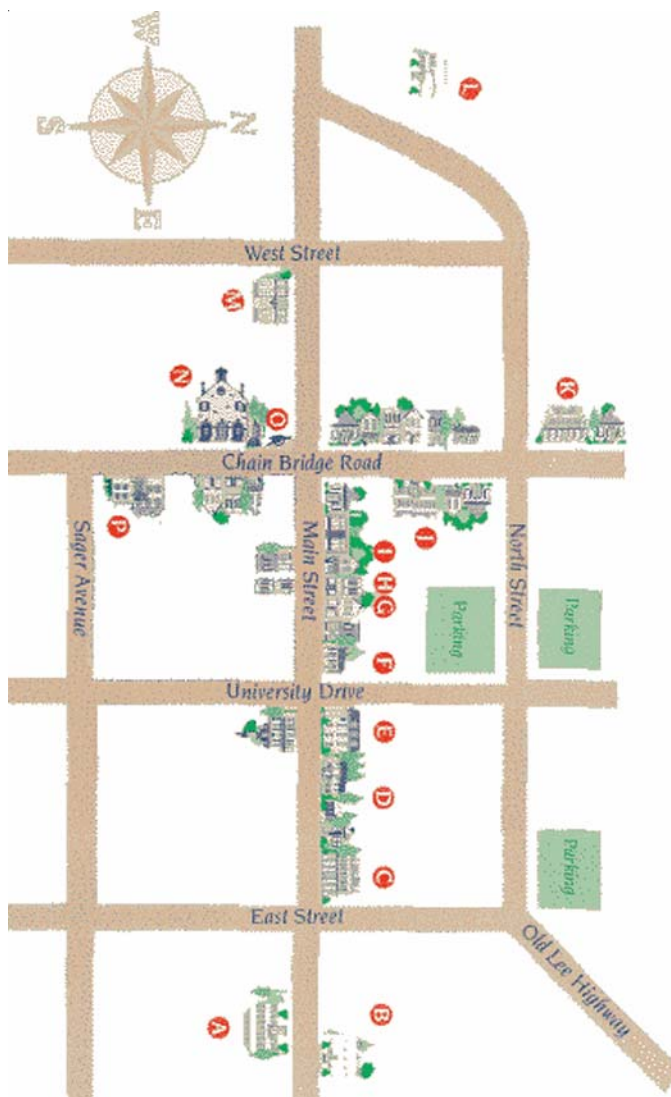
Visit us on the web:
HFCI Website!

<http://www.historicfairfax.org>

Old Town Fairfax

National Register Historic District

- A - Elementary School
- B - Farr Homeplace
- C - Draper House
- D - Ratcliffe-Allison-Pozer House
- E - Old Town Hall
- F - Herald and Print Shop
- G - Ralston's Store
- H - Nickell's Hardware Store
- I - Hay and Grain Store
- J - Ford Building
- K - Moore House
- L - Dr. Gunnell's House
- M - Old Fairfax Jail
- N - Fairfax Court House
- O - Marr Monument
- P - Joshua Gunnell's House





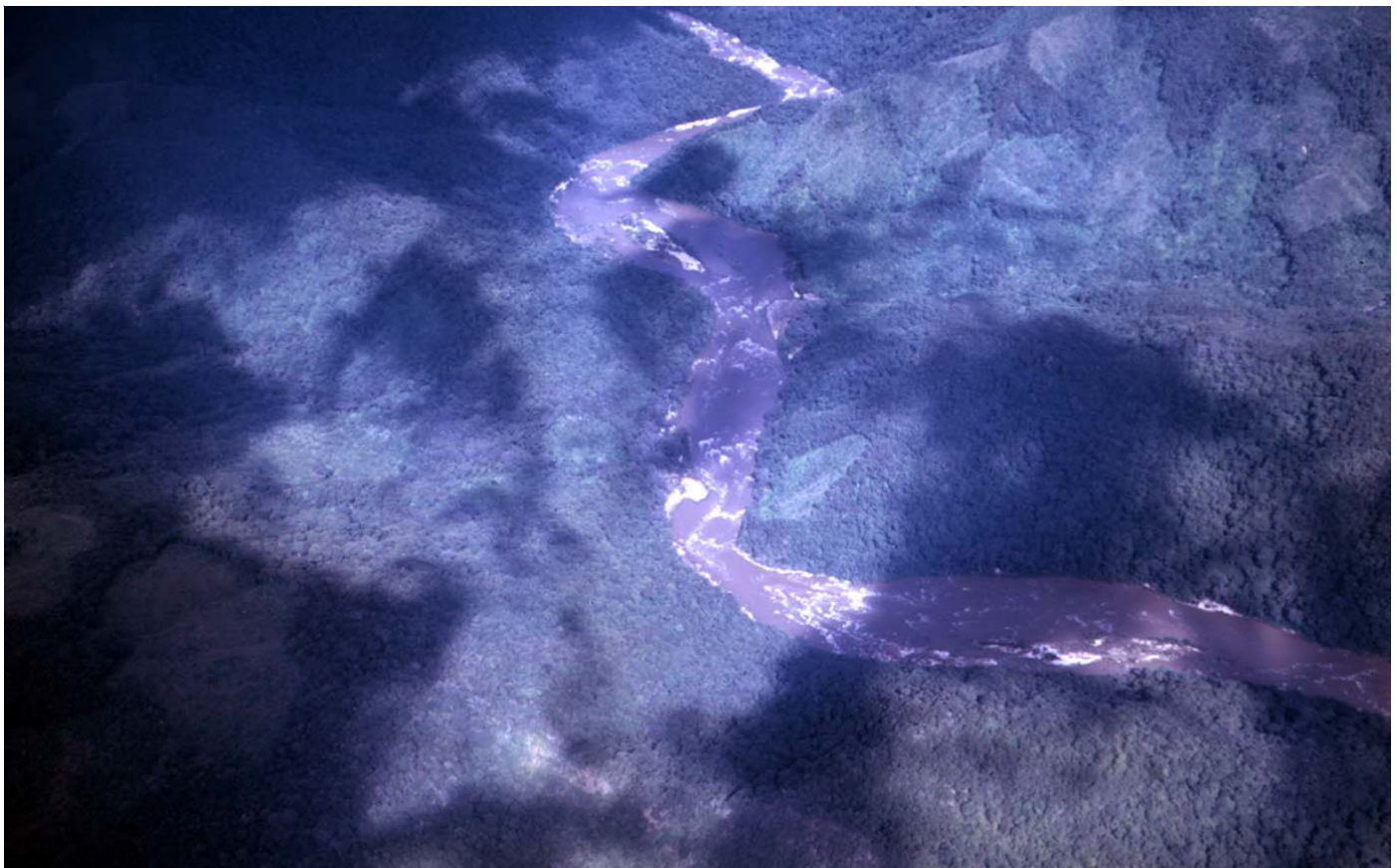
Lt. Col. Walter J. Potock, Jr. c. 1967.

Photo credit: Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

report stated that a helicopter had crashed near the river.³

*"... one of the little Vietnamese outposts out here on top of a little hill called in and said that that had seen a chopper go down in the river, or along the river. I was up to the north, so I came on down...."*⁴

The Krong Poko (river) flows south from the Central Highlands of Vietnam before merging with the Dak Bla River to form the Krong Bo'lah, not far from the town of Trung Nghai west of Kontum. These waters eventually flow across the Vietnamese border into Cambodia and merge with the Mekong River, which flows down into the Mekong River Delta and out into the South China Sea. The lower reaches of the river are characterized by wide, lake-like conditions with sandy banks and wetlands. The upper stretches of the river run through the mountainous Central Highlands and include a mixture of rocky channels, rapids and falls interspersed with wide sections of river.



Ya Krong Bo'lah River, Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam, August 1967.

Photo credit: Collection of Robert E. White



USAF O-1 *Bird Dog* shown here in a target acquisition/tactical air support role over Republic of Vietnam. Note the "observer." The observer was typically another FAC pilot.
Photo credit: National Museum of the USAF.

"...My buddy Peerless Piper, another headhunter... the Army [FAC]...same type of thing that we do, except they can't direct airstrikes ... gave me a call and I went down there and Piper says, 'Hell there's nothing around here,' and he started off. I found an oil slick coming up from alongside the bank underneath the trees. The river in that area is real fast and it's wide too and very deep. So I got to looking around there and in about five minutes time and was down skinning around on the top of the trees and it looked like somebody with a piece of paper, a newspaper or something, waving at me down there, waving in the wind or something. So I go on down and have



UH-1 (Huey) *Slick*, or Troop Carrier, Republic of Vietnam.
Photo credit: Unknown

*another look and there's a damn guy standing along the edge of river in the trees and he's waving a shirt at me..."*⁵

As Walt flew over, he identified a large oil slick on the surface of the swiftly flowing river. Though nothing was visible, he noted the oil slick was welling up from one spot. Walt had located the site of the helicopter crash. He maneuvered his small aircraft down to within several hundred feet to investigate further. He identified several injured Caucasian's on rocks in the river and along the riverbank. He immediately radioed the Direct Air Support Center at Nha Trang and requested rescue helicopters and close air support for the extraction of the survivors. He marked the site with smoke rockets and began to search the river for additional survivors. He quickly sighted two more people who had been swept downstream. He marked their location with smoke rockets, as well, and slowly circled above and waited.

*"...I marked him and while I was calling for the rescue choppers from Pleiku, I went on down the river maybe a click and found two more guys. One guy was on a big rock and the other guy was in the stream on the bank. I marked them..."*⁶

Within minutes a Kaman HH-43F, *Huskie*, air rescue helicopter was scrambled from Pleiku Air Base 23 miles away to the southeast. The *Huskie*, call sign



Interior view of UH-1 *Slick*, or Troop Carrier, Republic of Vietnam.
Photo credit: Unknown



An A1E Skyraider and an HH-43 Huskie, Pleiku Air Base, Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam.

Photo credit: United States Air Force

Pedro 56, was escorted by two Douglas A-1E Skyraider fighter aircraft also from Pleiku. The Skyraiders, call sign *Sandy*, of the 1st Air Commando Squadron–Fighter, were scrambled to provide close air support for the rescue operation. *Pedro 56*, was from Detachment 9, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Pleiku Air Base. The crew of *Pedro 56* was composed of Captain (CPT) Keith Hallstrom Ricks, pilot, age 29, of Rexburg, ID; CPT Robert Lee Osborne, co-pilot, age 26, of Warren, OH;⁷ Staff Sergeant (SSG) Arthur Lee Wood,⁸ flight engineer, age 31, of Bossier City, LA; and Airman First Class (A1C) John A. Smith,⁹ pararescueman (PJ), age 23, of Hialeah, FL. A second Huskie, call sign, *Pedro 74*, also from Det. 9, 38th ARRS, which had been on a training mission, rendezvoused with *Pedro 56* within five minutes. Onboard *Pedro 74* were Det. 9 commander, Major (MAJ) Richard A. Smith,¹⁰ pilot, age 32, of Fort Worth, TX; CPT Francis B. “Bud”

Gilligan, age 26, co-pilot, of Watertown, NY; A1C Jose Gene “Geno” Abara, flight engineer, age 22, of Long Branch, NJ; A2C David Barrozo Ortiz, parasrescueman (PJ), age 21, of Pico Rivera, CA; and A2C Robert Edward White, jet mechanic, age 20, of Canoga Park, CA.

Walt communicated with MAJ Smith by radio while enroute and briefed him on the situation and the location of the known survivors. In his subsequent Mission Narrative, MAJ Smith credited Walt (aka *Elliot 10*, his call sign) for his role in the rescue:

“...A FAC O-1E, Elliot 10, was at the site and reported that three survivors were in need of assistance. JSARC [Joint Search and Rescue Center – Ton Son Nhut AB] was notified while Pedro 56 prepared to scramble...Pedro 56 launched at 0830Z [1530Z] when it was

*ascertained that two A1E fighters were being scrambled for "escort". Pedro 74 was on a training mission and joined Pedro 56 at 0835Z [1535Z]... While enroute, Elliot 10 reported that the helicopter had crashed in a very swift river. Throughout the operation Elliot 10 did an excellent job of coordinating the operation. Three survivors were in sight several hundred yards down the river on the shore and on islands."*¹¹

Earlier that morning at 9:00 A.M. a UH-1H (Serial #66-16526) of the 119th Assault Helicopter Company, call sign, *Gator 526*, had taken off from Hensel Field, Camp Enari with nine people onboard.^{12, 13} The UH-1H troop carrier, or *slick*,¹⁴ was on a routine daily G-2¹⁵ liaison mission to obtain and relay new intelligence information with Special Forces camp commanders. The helicopter made multiple stops that day at the SF Camps at Pleiku (Co. B); Plei Do Lim; Plei Djreng, Plei Me; Dak To, Polei Kleng, and Plei Mrong.

At the time, the 4th Infantry Division (ID), with the assistance of the 25th ID, and 1st Cavalry (Airmobile), were conducting an operation codenamed *Francis Marion*, in an ongoing effort to halt enemy incursion activity over the nearby Cambodian border.

Onboard *Gator 526* were four crewmen and five passengers. The crewmen were Warrant Officer 1 (WO1) Brayton Witherell, II, pilot in command (PIC), age 29, of Carmel, CA; WO1 Richard William Morrison, co-pilot, age 21, of Sioux Falls, SD; Specialist 4 (SP4) Richard Michael Allard, crew chief, who turned 21 that day, of Chesaning, MI; and SP4 Ronald Lee "Ron" Holtzman, door gunner, age 21, of White Post, VA. The passengers were First Lieutenant (1LT) Richard John Schell, age 23, of Minneiska, MN and Sergeant Major (SGM) John Richard Alt, age 45, of Knox, PA. Both Schell and Alt were in Headquarter and Headquarters Company (HHC), 4th ID, G-2 Section; 1LT Kenneth Bradford "Brad" Goff, 3/8 Inf., 4th ID, age 23, of Warwick, RI; 1LT Sterling A. "Skip" Wall, Det. B-24, U.S. Special Forces, age 24, of Brookline, MA; and Miss Cynthia Farrish Collbran,¹⁶



Aerial view of Yali Falls, Krong Bo'lah River (left). Oblique view of Yali Falls, Krong Bo'lah River (right). Notation by Walt Potock on the reverse "Found people from chopper crash. Section of river is behind strut and near top of picture. Aug. '67." The Yali Dam, completed at the falls in 1996, created a 25 mile long reservoir flooding this entire section of the Krong Bo'lah River. Photo credit: Collection of Robert E. White (left). Collection of Walter J. Potock (right).

a civilian Red Cross field worker, age 23, of Belvedere (San Francisco), CA.

At around 3:00 P.M. the UH-1H helicopter took off from Polei Kleng Special Forces Camp¹⁷ enroute to Plei Mrong SF Camp about 16 miles to the southeast. Plei Mrong was to be their final stop before returning to Camp Enari. At the controls of the *Huey*, in the right front seat, was WO1 Witherell. To his left sat co-pilot, WO1 Morrison. In the rear of the helicopter, seated on the left side, facing the door, behind the bench seat, was SP4 Allard. Seated on the right side, facing the door, behind the bench seat, was SP4 Holtzman. On the bench seat, facing forward were (r-l) SGM Alt, 1LT Goff, 1LT Schell, Cindy Collbran, and 1LT Wall.

During the flight, the pilot, Witherell, requested that the co-pilot, Morrison, take over control of the helicopter and fly at low-level along the Dak Bla River.

Witherell stated that he wanted to familiarize himself “*with low level navigation in this area.*” Morrison complied with this request. As the helicopter proceeded down the river, SP4 Allard identified four armed individuals in black pajamas on the east bank of the river. Allard believed the individuals to be Viet Cong insurgents. However, friendly Popular Front (PF) militia also wore black pajamas. Morrison elected to turn back and investigate. He executed several 180 degrees turns, searching the east river bank for the suspected insurgents. The search yielded nothing. On the third turn, Morrison had to climb above a small east-west ridge running across the river. The turn and cyclic climb over the ridgetop caused the airspeed of the helicopter to diminish markedly. Morrison attempted to regain airspeed by entering a dive but the helicopter was caught in a sudden downdraft and failed to recover before striking the water,



Gator 526 Co-pilot, Warrant Officer 1 Richard W. Morrison, being hoisted aboard *Pedro 74* from the Krong Bo'lah River, 24 August 1967. Photo credit: Collection of Robert E. White.



Major Walter Potock, Vietnam, w/ *Miss Manookie*, his O-1E *Bird Dog*, c. 1967. Photo credit: Collection of Walter J. Potock.

nose low, at about 70 miles per hour. The helicopter sank almost immediately. There was no distress call.

It is likely that the individuals in black pajamas that SP4 Allard spotted along the river were local PF militiamen. The U.S. Army later reported that a PF patrol witnessed the crash and radioed a report to the HQ of the 24th Special Tactical Zone at Kontum. At least two FACs, one from the USAF, 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron and a second L-19 from the U.S. Army's 219th Aviation Company were notified and dispatched to the area to investigate the report.¹⁸ According to established rules of engagement, the USAF FAC, if available, had authority to direct the rescue operation and any airstrikes as necessary.

At the time of the crash, the crew and all passengers were believed to be wearing their seatbelts. However, Cindy had been seen occasionally out of her seat during the flight, presumably to get a better view. The flight crew were all wearing standard equipment, flight helmets with radio headsets, armored chest protectors, and flak jackets. One of the passengers, 1LT Schell, was also wearing a flight helmet with headset.

The sudden impact with the water shattered the helicopter cockpit and windshield. WO1 Witherell was propelled through the windshield. Weighed down by his flight gear he immediately sank to the bottom of the river. He quickly pulled off his chest protector, discarded his

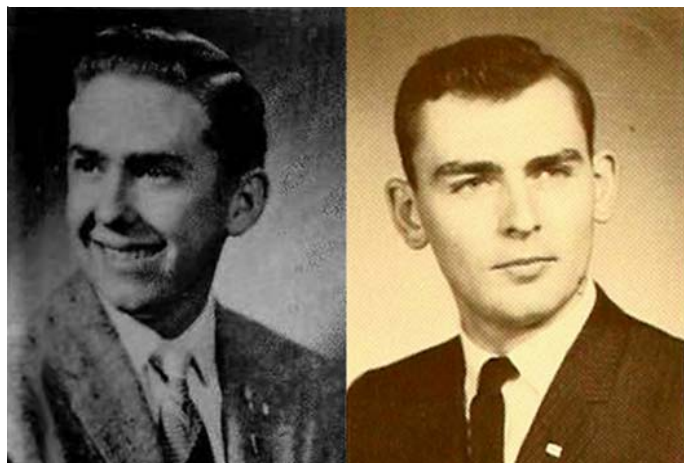
helmet and kicked himself to the surface. WO1 Morrison also sank to the bottom of the river still strapped inside the helicopter. Morrison's vest and armored plate got hung on something in the cockpit. As he was taking off his vest to get out of the helicopter, a large piece of wreckage fell on top of him. He pushed this off and was able to make it to the surface. Witherell, whose back was injured in the crash, grabbed onto the tail boom which had been sheared off from the force of the impact. It was drifting downstream and rapidly sinking.

After the crash, SGM Alt released his seat belt and exited the right side of the helicopter and swam to the surface. He managed to grab a packed waterproof clothing bag which surfaced near him. He used the bag as a makeshift flotation device. He heard, but could not see, SP4 Holtzman, the door gunner, call out for help and state that he couldn't swim. Holtzman had also exited the helicopter on the right side. Alt attempted to swim to shore without success due to the swift current. He drifted downstream until he was able to grab onto a small tree on a rock outcropping in the middle of the river.

After the crash, Cindy also exited the helicopter, likely on the left side, and swam to the surface. She



Members of the 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron, Kontum, RVN, Summer 1967. (l-r) Jim Pierce, Rex Miller, Ed Legg, Dee Henderson, Col. Jubert "Mac" McCrea, Mike Johnson and Walt Potock. Photo credit: Collection of Walter J. Potock.



Captain Keith H. Ricks
Pilot, *Pedro 56*

Captain Robert L. Osborne
Co-pilot, *Pedro 56*

knew she was badly injured as she couldn't move one of her legs. She also had a head wound, which was bleeding, multiple lacerations, and a fractured wrist. She recalled that the water was warm and felt strangely comfortable. After surfacing, she saw a man directly in front of her. Blood was gushing from the top of his head. This was likely 1LT Skip Wall who was seated to Cindy's left and next to the door of the chopper. Cindy swam up to him and pulled him to her in an effort to help. As she did this, the man put his hands on her waist and they both went under. When Cindy resurfaced he was gone. As luck would have it at that moment a piece of wreckage floated by. It had some sort of honeycomb structure and was large enough for Cindy to climb up onto.

After the tail boom sank beneath him, Witherell called out for assistance and attracted the attention of Alt who was able to reach out and grab Witherell as he floated by. The two men removed their boots and hung them around their necks in preparation for an attempt to swim to shore. At that moment, about 25 feet away, Cindy Collbran floated past, but she was too far out of reach for either man to assist her. As she drifted past, she saw the two men but did not call out for help. Witherell called to her and told her to make for the shore and that they would come find her. Although seemingly conscious, Cindy was non-responsive and was likely going into shock.

Cindy, on top of her makeshift float was travelling faster than the others. She quickly drifted downstream through several rapids and out of sight.

Alt and Witherell attempted to swim to shore with the aid of the now waterlogged and sinking waterproof bag. The bag couldn't support the weight of both men. The two men were swept over a rock and fell a few feet down into a shallow pool. In the eddy of the pool the current wasn't as strong as in the main channel of the river. Witherell drifted a bit further downstream and made it to a large rock. He called out to Alt that he was OK, and not to worry about him and that he was going to lay down. Alt was able to make it to the east shore with the aid of the waterproof bag. He emptied the contents of the bag and began to gather material to build a signal fire. After a half hour he heard an aircraft approaching. Alt lit his fire and waved a white towel retrieved from the bag. He was spotted by FAC pilot Walt Potock.

When the rescue helicopters arrived on the scene Walt directed them to the location of the three survivors several hundred yards downstream from the suspected crash site (coordinates 48PZA083831). Two of the survivors were fairly close together, one on a small rock island and the other about 30 feet away on the shoreline. CPT Ricks maneuvered *Pedro 56* to the co-pilot, WO1 Witherell, who was lying on a rock in the middle of the river. SSG Art Wood, *Pedro 56* flight engineer, lowered the jungle penetrator hoist down to him, but Witherell



Airman 1st Class Jose G. Abara Airman 2nd Class David B. Ortiz
Flight Engineer, *Pedro 74* Pararescueman (PJ), *Pedro 74*
Lewis-Porter High School 1963 El Rancho High School 1964



Rescue of Red Cross Worker, Cindy F. Collbran from the Krong Bo'lah River, 24 August 1967.

Photo credit. Collection of Robert E. White.

was unable to get into it due to his injured back. CPT Ricks moved his aircraft lower until hovering just beside Witherell. Together, *Pedro 56* PJ, A1C John Smith and SSG Wood, hauled the injured man into the helicopter. CPT Ricks then maneuvered over to SGM John Alt on the shoreline. Alt, via the helicopters loudspeaker, was given instructions on how to use the penetrator. He was hoisted into the helicopter without incident.

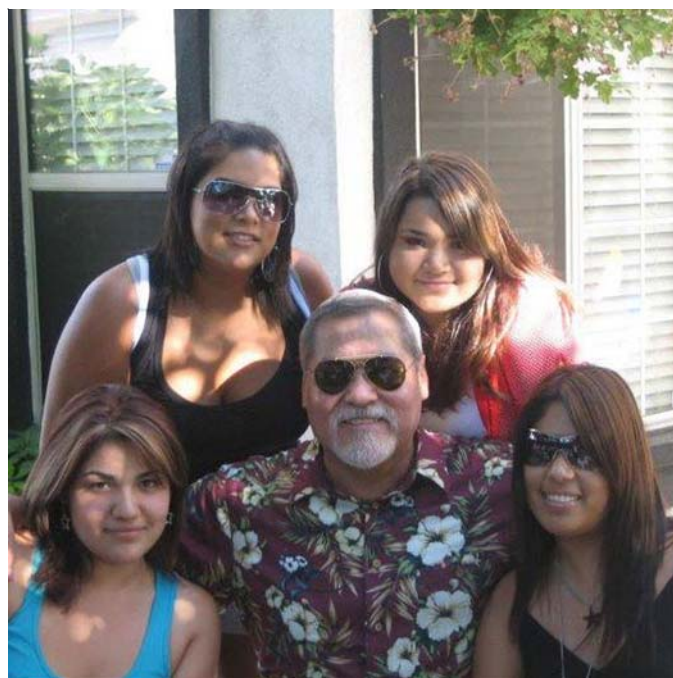
"... I kept looking around and the Pedro's came up, that's the rescue choppers, and I run them in there to where the guys were. The one Pedro, who had picked up the two guys who had drifted on down the stream, I asked, you know, questioned the people they picked up if there had been anyone else that

*they had seen get out of the [chopper]. They said that they had seen this Donut Dollie get out and try to swim across to the east bank, which is probably a good hundred meters..."*¹⁹

Once onboard *Pedro 56*, SGM Alt asked SSG Wood, the flight engineer, if they found the rest of the people onboard to which, Wood replied, *"What rest? How many were there?"* Alt then told Wood that there had been nine people onboard the helicopter, then added, *"Did you find the girl?"*²⁰ SSG Wood simply stared at Alt as if he were crazy. This information, however, was immediately relayed to Major Potock, in the control aircraft, and subsequently all the aircraft involved in the search and rescue mission as well.

*"... So I go on down and have another look and there's a damn guy standing along the edge of river in the trees and he's waving a shirt at me..."*²¹

Simultaneously, *Pedro 74* flew to the location of the third survivor, on the west shore. This turned out to be the co-pilot, WO1 Morrison. After freeing himself and reaching the surface, Morrison saw that he was not



David B. Ortiz, *Pedro 74* Pararescueman (PJ) and family.

Photo credit: Collection of David B. Ortiz

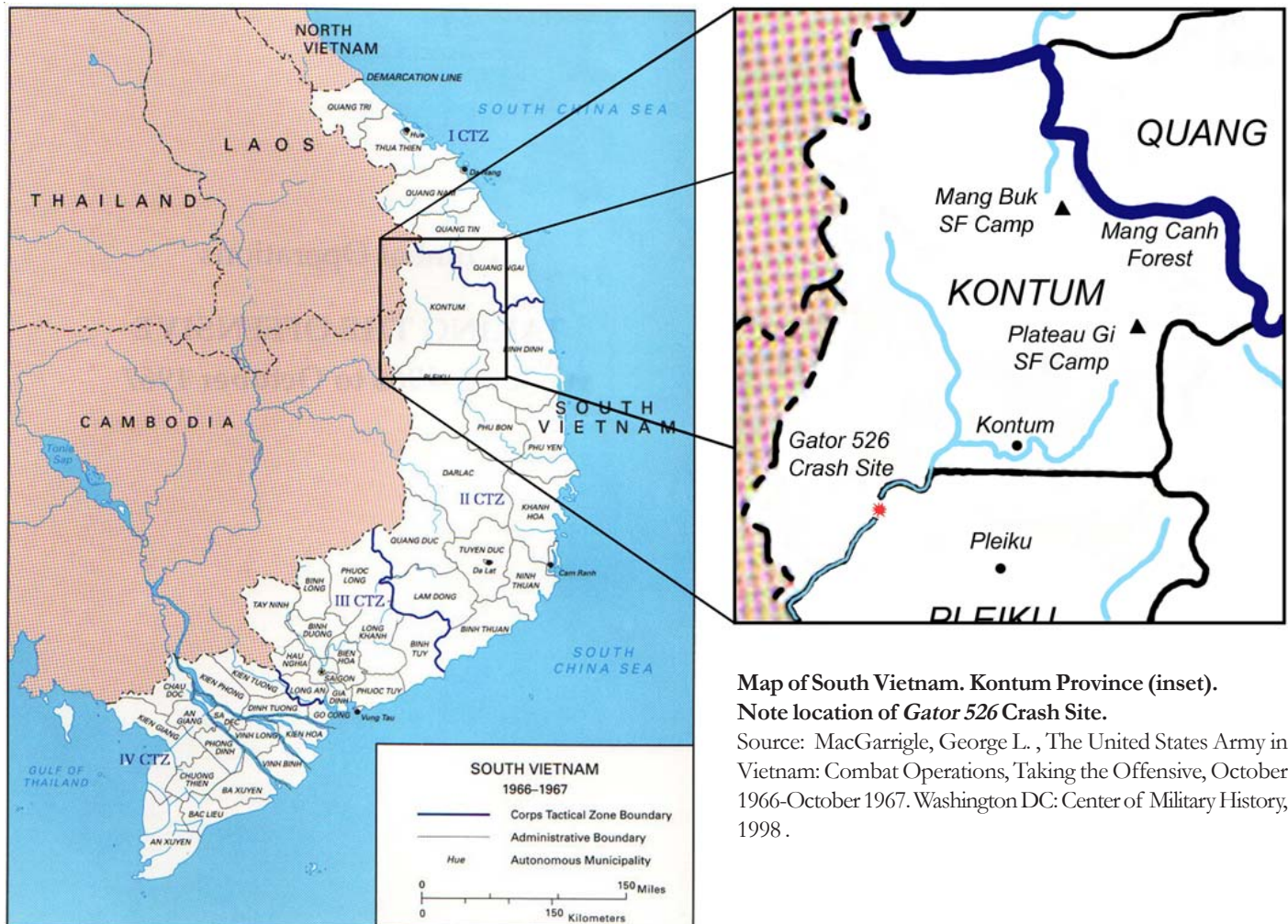
more than five feet from SP4 Holtzman. Morrison also identified Cindy Collbran 15 to 20 feet further upstream and floating on a piece of wreckage. Holtzman told Morrison he couldn't swim. Morrison reached out and grabbed Holtzman by the arm and attempted to pull the man toward the shore. Holtzman, who was still wearing his flight jacket, armored chest protector and flak jacket, was heavily weighed down and about to go under. He likely began to panic, and in desperation, grabbed Morrison pulling him underneath the water several times. After resurfacing the final time, Morrison was able to free himself of Holtzman and determined to get a better, lifesaving hold, on the drowning man. Unfortunately, by then Holtzman had drifted out of reach.

Morrison managed to reach the west riverbank and grab onto some branches overhanging the river. He held on, exhausted, not moving for several minutes.

After about ten or fifteen minutes he heard the sound of approaching fixed wing aircraft. Morrison climbed higher in the bushes. Standing on the bushes he stripped off his t-shirt and waived it at the approaching FACs, one of whom was Walt Potock.

As *Pedro 74* hovered above Morrison, A1C Jose Abara lowered the jungle penetrator down. Morrison grabbed hold of it and was quickly hoisted up and into the helicopter.

The rock was just inches above the water and only just big enough for her to lay down on. Because of her dislocated hip Cindy could not straighten her legs. As she lay there, bent kneed, she assessed her situation. She was utterly alone except for the roar of the river. A sense of dread began to fill her. Twilight was approaching. Would she have to spend the night on that rock? Would the raging water rise higher and force her back into the current? Was



Map of South Vietnam. Kontum Province (inset). Note location of *Gator 526* Crash Site.

Source: MacGarrigle, George L., *The United States Army in Vietnam: Combat Operations, Taking the Offensive*, October 1966-October 1967. Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1998.

the enemy lurking behind the thick jungle screen on the shoreline?

“... So then the chopper went on down the river and about I guess a mile or so down the river they found, they did find this woman, she was up on a rock, I probably would have found her I just hadn’t gone down that far. The current had swept her on down there. She managed to get up on a big ‘ol flat rock...”²²

Once onboard *Pedro 74*, the co-pilot, Richard Morrison, indicated he was in pilot in command of the aircraft when it crashed. He was asked how many people were on the helicopter. He responded nine. *Pedro 74* immediately began to search farther downstream for additional survivors. Within seconds MAJ Smith and CPT Bud Gilligan spotted Cindy, apparently injured and lying on a small rock near the shoreline about a mile downstream from the crash site.

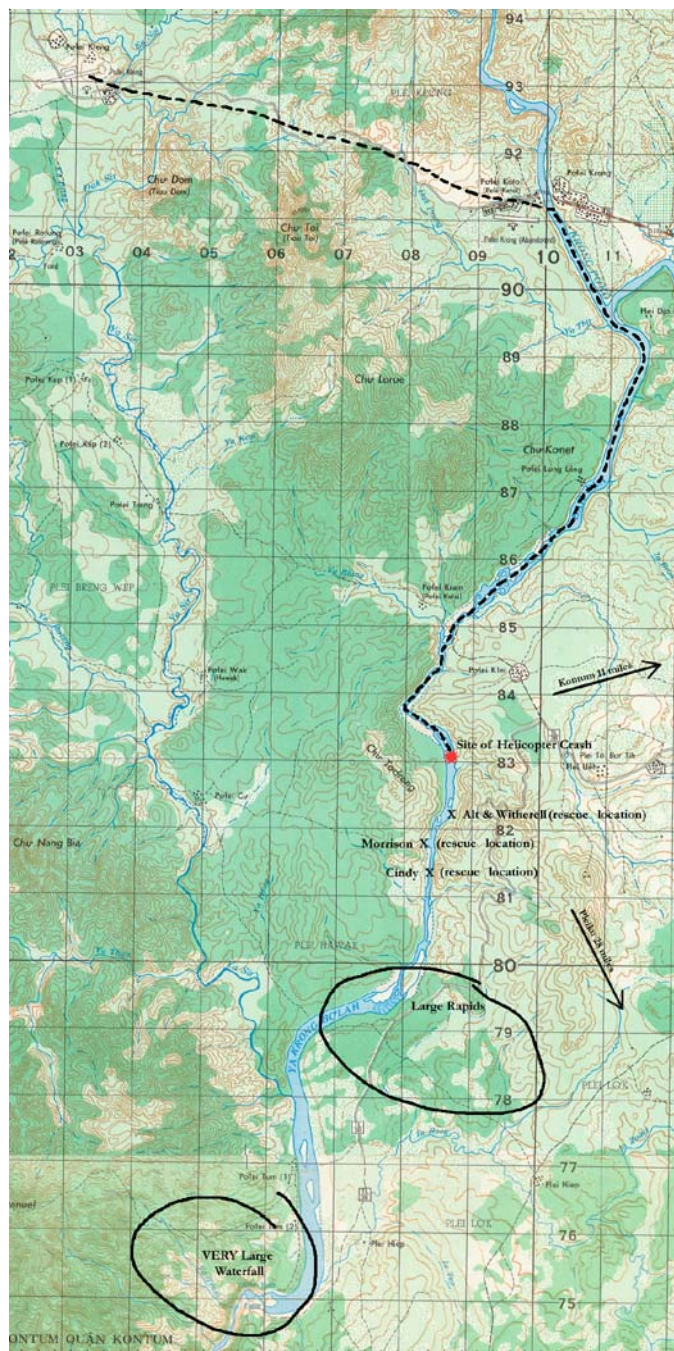
Pedro 14 Flight engineer, Jose Abara lowered PJ David Ortiz down to her position along with the semi-rigid, or wrap-around litter. The rock was so small that Ortiz had to straddle Cindy in order to be able to stand. It was obvious to Ortiz that Cindy was severely injured and in shock. Working quickly, Ortiz placed her gently into the litter. Then grabbed the hook that was lowered to attach it to the litter. This momentarily stunned him and knocked him off balance. In his excitement, Ortiz had forgotten to allow the hook to touch the ground thus allowing the static electric charge built up by the rotor blades to discharge. Ortiz completed the connection and Abara hoisted Cindy up and into the helicopter. Abara then re-lowered the hook back down and retrieved Ortiz. Once safely aboard the helicopter Ortiz began to assess Cindy's condition and administer first-aid. In spite of the summer heat and humidity, Cindy was chilled and shaking. Ortiz wrapped her in a large blanket to counter the effects of shock.

23,24

As all of this was going on Crewman A2C Robert E. White assisted in scanning the shoreline for additional

survivors and documented the event by taking several color photographs of the rescue.

By now *Pedro 74* was running low on fuel and it was getting dark. Once Cindy was safely onboard and her condition assessed, MAJ Smith elected to exit the area. He immediately flew to the closest place to refuel,



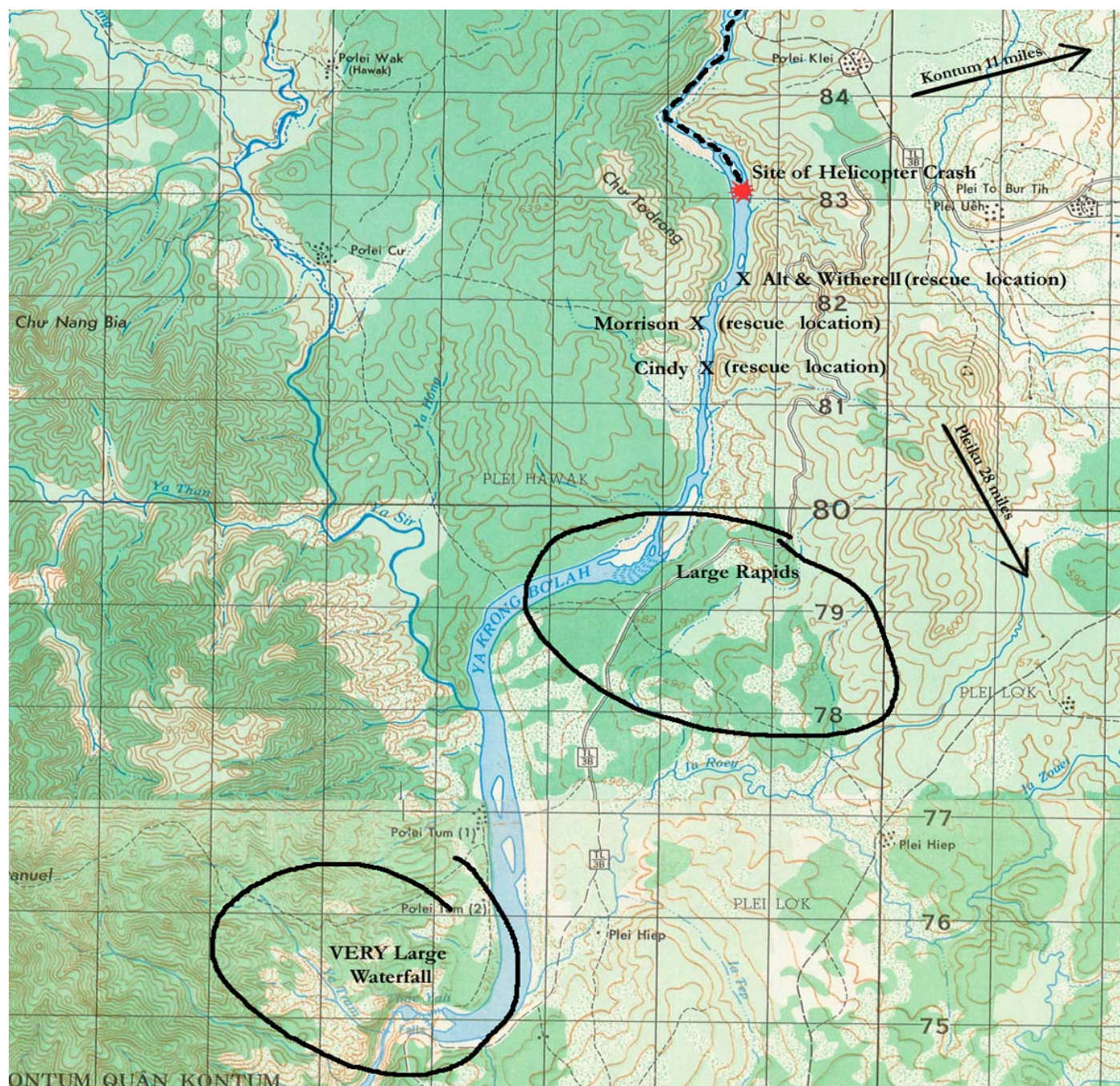
Final flight path and crash site of *Gator* 526, 24 August 1967.

Adapted from Polei Breng, (topographic), Sheet 6537-1 1:50,000 U.S. Army Map Service, 1970. Vietnam Archive Map Collection, Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University, <https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=6537-1>, Accessed 23 June 2018.

the Special Forces Forward Operating Base #2 (FOB-2) on Route 14, south of Kontum. As *Pedro 74* departed the scene, crewman A2C Robert E. White looked down and scanned the river below. He was horrified to see a large waterfall with a drop of nearly 100 feet not far from the small rock on which Cindy

had been. He thought, had she not made it to that rock she likely would not have survived the plunge over the falls. The waterfall seen by White was *Yali Falls*, the largest waterfall on the Krong Bo'lah River.

In the meantime, *Pedro 56* had sufficient fuel and continued to search the river for five miles in either



Final flight path and crash site of *Gator 526*, 24 August 1967.

Adapted from Polei Breng, (topographic), Sheet 6537-1, 1:50,000 U.S. Army Map Service, 1970. Vietnam Archive Map Collection, Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University, <https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=6537-1>, Accessed 23 June 2018.

direction for additional survivors. After about 50 minutes the weather and darkness were beginning to close in. CPT Ricks exited the area and also flew to FOB-2 to join up with *Pedro 74*.

At FOB-2 the injured survivors, with Cindy Collbran the most severely injured, received additional medical aid by U.S. Army medics at the base dispensary. After the weather improved a bit, both helicopters then flew the survivors to the 18th Surgical Hospital at Pleiku.

The rescue of the passengers and crew of *Gator 526* was not the only mission for *Pedro 56* that day. Earlier in the day, *Pedro 56* responded to the crash of an Air Viet Nam C-46 that had crashed on takeoff at the end of the runway at Pleiku AB. One person was rescued. From 1951 to 1975, Air Vietnam was the commercial air carrier for South Vietnam. CPT Bob Osborne, recorded the following in his Flight Log Book for 24 August 1967:

“24/8/7 – Training 1 hr. 05 min. [as Pilot]”

24/8/67 – LBR [Local Base Rescue] Save 30 min [as Co-pilot]



Cindy (Collbran) McGuinness in 2016.
Photo credit: Collection of Cindy McGuinness

24/8/67 – ACR [Aircrew Recovery] 2 Saves 3 hrs 25 min [as Co-pilot]”²⁵

Extensive air searches were conducted on 24, 25 & 26 August 1967 along with ground searches by Special Forces from FOB-2. U.S. Navy divers also attempted to locate the helicopter and the remains of the missing passengers and crew. All search efforts were futile.

SP4 Holtzman, who was witnessed in a state of drowning by WO1 Morrison, was immediately listed as KIA, BDR (killed-in-action body-not-recovered) by the U.S. Army. The remaining four onboard, Allard, Goff, Schell, and Wall were listed as MIA (missing-in-action) as no one saw them alive or dead after the helicopter went down. A written statement from Cindy regarding her likely encounter with 1LT Wall was never taken.

The day after the crash, the U.S. Army established an observation post at *Yali Falls* five miles downstream from the crash site to look for wreckage and remains.²⁶ Additionally, the villagers at Polei Tum 1 and Polei Tum 2 on the west bank of the Krong Bo’lah just above the falls were advised of the crash and asked to be alert for wreckage and remains.²⁷ On 2 Sept 1967 1LT Wall’s body was recovered just below the falls.

In early January 1968 the 4th Engineer Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, launched *Operation Retriever* (OPLAN 41-67):

“...OPLAN 41-67 [Operation Plan 41-67] (RETRIEVER) initiated a search and recovery operation along the YA KRONG BOLAH River to locate a downed UH1 helicopter. The operation was conducted in four phases, which included: air reconnaissance, ground reconnaissance and search by indigenous personnel, dragging operations by the 4th Engineer Battalion and final recovery of the helicopter.”

...In KONTUM Province, in response to appeals for information leading to the recovery of an American soldier believed drowned, an entire village responded to the call. The body was found. Another incident of cooperation was in the response received in the recruiting of local MONTAGNARDS to search for a helicopter that went down in the YA KRONG BOLAH, (SE SAN) River in late August. Search attempts were unsuccessful at that time due to the swiftness of the river at the height of the monsoon season. Representatives from two villages participated in the search and the helicopter was found on the second day of the operation....

...Company E was given the mission in early January to recover bodies and equipment from a helicopter which had crashed in the YA KRONG BOLAH River southwest of KONTUM on 26 [24] August. The mission was completed on 14 January with the recovery of the radio equipment from the helicopter. The bodies of the missing crew members and passengers were not found."²⁸

At least three additional searches were conducted in 1969, 1970 and as late as 1993. The remains of the four missing passengers and crewmen have never been found.

The U.S. Army carried the remaining three men as MIA until 1977 when their status was chnged from



Cindy F. Collbran, (first row, far left) with other Red Cross Volunteers, Camp Enari, Pleiku Province, Republic of Vietnam, 1967.
Photo credit: Collection of Cindy C. McGuiness.

MIA to KIA BDR. It is likely that all three men were either killed by the force of the initial impact or were knocked unconscious and subsequently drowned in the Krong Bo'Lah River.

In 1993, the Vietnamese began construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Krong Bo'lah at Yali Falls. The controversial 226 foot high *Yali Dam* was completed in 1996. The 25 mile long reservoir created behind the dam subsequently displaced thousands of Montagnard tribesmen, who for centuries had fished the river. The dam also engulfed the helicopter crash site.

Cindy's Story

The American Red Cross began providing assistance to American servicemen in Vietnam in 1962. By 1967, the Red Cross was operating three program groups staffed by 363 Red Cross volunteers.

In *Service to Military Hospitals* (SMH), 76 all-female volunteers worked in hospitals directly with the patients, doing a combination of social work and recreation therapy.

In *Supplemental Recreational Activities Overseas* (SRAO) 107 all-female workers operated base recreational centers where soldiers could shoot pool, play cards and games. SRAO workers served Kool-Aid and played audience participation games with soldiers. Their job was to essentially provide a brief respite and a touch of home in the combat zone. SRAO workers also provided similar services to soldiers stationed at remote forward operating bases. Dubbed *Clubmobile*, SRAO workers travelled to these locations by helicopter just like the soldiers they went to assist.

In *Service to Military Installations* (SMI) 180 female and male social workers provided servicemen at major bases with counseling and guidance on personal



Crew of *Pedro 74* (l-r) Jet Mechanic, Airman 2nd Class Robert E. White, Pararescueman, Airman 2nd Class David B. Ortiz, Crew Chief, Airman 1st Class Jose G. Abara, Pilot, Major Richard A. Smith, Co-pilot, Captain Francis E. "Bud" Gilligan. August 1967.
Photo credit: Collection of Robert E. White.

and family problems. SMI workers facilitated financial assistance; compassionate emergency leaves; and passed along telegrams from the families back home regarding births, deaths, and emergencies.

Red Cross workers were primarily women. In order to serve, they had to be 21 years of age, single, and in the case of SMI and SRAO workers, college graduates. The number of Red Cross field workers at individual locations varied from 4 to 10 women.

The most common name the soldiers used when referring to female Red Cross workers was *Donut Dollie*, a term first used during World War II. During World War II, Red Cross workers also supported U.S. troops and were famous for serving coffee and doughnuts to soldiers in rear areas. In addition to *Donut Dollie*, soldiers in Vietnam also affectionately referred to them as *DD's*, *Delta D's*, *Chopper Chicks*, and *Kool-Aid Kids*.

Cynthia Farish Collbran²⁹ was born in San Francisco, CA in 1943 to Arthur Harry Collbran and Jeanne Wyatt Krick. She was a graduate of the Sarah Dix Hamlin School³⁰ and attended Colorado Women's College. By 1966, she was back in California. Independent and adventurous, she wanted to participate in the seminal event of her generation – Vietnam.

After completing six months of Red Cross training at Glasgow AFB in Glasgow, Montana, Cindy left for Vietnam in March 1967.³¹ As she had not yet completed college, she was assigned to the Service to Military Installations (SMI) group. After arriving in Vietnam, she was sent to Camp Enari, the Headquarters of the 4th Infantry Division. Camp Enari, (aka Dragon Mountain), was located in Pleiku Province, 6 miles south of Pleiku, RVN.

Cindy enjoyed interacting and assisting the young soldiers at Camp Enari, but she was curious about the war and wanted to see more of the beautiful country of Vietnam.

On the morning of 24 August 1967 SP4 Ron Holtzman, a young soldier from White Post, Clarke County, Virginia, was eating breakfast in the mess hall at Camp Enari. Cindy came into the mess hall. After getting her breakfast, she recognized Ron's familiar face and sat down with him. Ron was just 21. He was a door gunner with the 119th Assault Helicopter Company. The two young people chatted about the fact that Ron had less than a month left in his tour.³² He also shared with Cindy that he was anxious to get home to his pretty 19-year-old wife, Helen (Helen May George). The couple had been married in May 1966 just before Ron left for Vietnam.

During the course of their conversation, Cindy, asked Ron what he was going to do that day. Ron, a crewman on a UH-1H combat helicopter, indicated that his crew would be flying a routine mission out to some



(l-r) Page Johnson and Francis "Bud" Gilligan, co-pilot of *Pedro* 74. Spring 2019.

Photo credit: Page Johnson

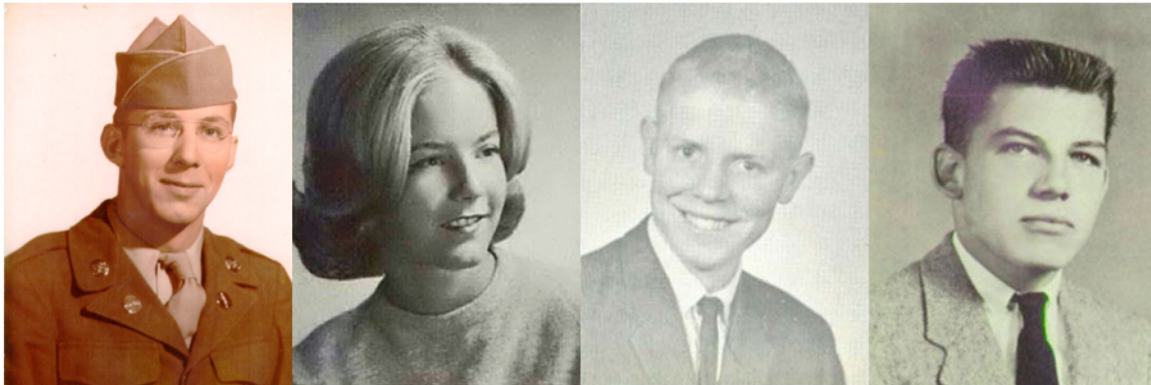
forward operating bases near the Cambodian border. Cindy knew that the enemy was in this area and, despite assurances to the contrary, this sounded dangerous and somewhat exciting. When Ron asked her if she wanted to tag along, Cindy jumped at the opportunity. She reasoned that Red Cross recreational field workers routinely flew out to these forward areas, so it should be OK for her to go along, as well. After breakfast, she told her boss, the Assistant Field Director at Camp Enari, that she would not be at work that day. When he pressed as to why, Cindy confessed. The Assistant Field Director reminded her that this wasn't her job and she

shouldn't go. However, a headstrong, youthful, Cindy told him she was going.

24 August 1967 was a beautiful day in the Central Highlands, perfect for flying. The sun was shining and there were intermittent clouds at a ceiling of more than 2000 feet. Flying high above the countryside, it wasn't hard to forget that there was war was going on below.

Cindy was both amazed and shocked at what she witnessed that day. At one Special Forces camp she was escorted down into a command bunker several stories underground. Inside the bunker there was a lot

Rescued



SGM John Richard Alt Cynthia Farrish Collbran, ARC WO1 Richard William Morrison WO1 Brayton Witherell, II
 Knox, PA Belvedere, CA Sioux Falls, SD Carmel, CA
 1922 - 1999 1943 - 1946 - 1937 - 1996
 Photo source: J.R. Alt Family Photo source: *Skyline* '63 Photo source: Wash. HS, '64 Photo source: Carmel HS '56

Casualties



SP4 Richard Michael Allard 1LT Kenneth Braford Goff SP4 Ronald Lee Holtzman 1LT Richard John Schell 1LT Sterling Aiden Wall
 Chesaning, MI Warwick, RI White Post, VA Minneiska, MN Brookline, MA
 1946 - 1967 1943 - 1967 1946 - 1967 1944 - 1967 1942 - 1967
 Photo source: *The Indian* Photo source: FindAGrave Photo source: FindAGrave Photo source: FindAGrave Photo source: FindAGrave
 Chesaning Union HS, '65

of electronic communications equipment as well as living quarters for the Special Forces A-team members of the camp. Indigenous Sedang Montagnard tribesmen also lived within the perimeter of the camp under the protection of the Special Forces and the camp militia of Montagnard CIDG soldiers. A Special Forces soldier warned her that anyone encountered outside the camp perimeter was likely the enemy. He also pointed out to her the small bamboo *tiger cages* used to confine captured VC and NVA prisoners. The cages were purposely placed out in the open to provide a buffer and some measure of insurance in the event of enemy attack.

After the crash and subsequent rescue, Cindy was visited in the hospital by a man in a military uniform who questioned her about what had happened. She was unable to provide him full details of the crash. She was also visited by a friend, USAF officer Scott A. Schafer, of Orange County, VA. Schafer was a 1965 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. The two had dated while Cindy was attending Colorado Woman's College.

Cindy was evacuated back to the United States on a large military transport plane by way of Clark AB in the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii and ultimately Travis AFB outside San Francisco, CA. The experience was unpleasant. The aircraft had three rows of stretchers, stacked on top of one another and down both sides of the fuselage. The aircraft was full of wounded men. Cindy, too, was strapped down in a stretcher and could not move for the duration of the flight. It was loud, claustrophobic and stiflingly hot. When she landed at Travis she was reunited with her parents. From there she was then flown *by helicopter* to Letterman Hospital in San Francisco where she spent about a month recovering.

"Anxious to Return to her duties as American Red Cross field assistant is Cindy Collbran of Belvedere. Cindy was injured in a helicopter crash in Vietnam. She had been overseas for six months,

*and was travelling back to her base after the day's routine, distributing supplies, when the accident occurred. As a result of a mechanical difficulty, not enemy fire, she says. While recuperating Cindy is staying with her parents Mr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Collbran in Belvedere."*³³



Airman 2nd Class Robert E. White
Jet Mechanic, Crewman, Pedro 74
Canoga Park High School 1965

The following year, in late 1968, she married Lt. Brian M. McGuiness, a U.S. Navy Transport pilot, at Treasure Island, San Francisco, CA. The couple moved to Washington State and had one son before separating in 1989.

Cindy was evacuated out of Vietnam so quickly that she did not know the names of the men who affected her rescue or even how to get in touch with them until recently. In spite of the obvious trauma, Cindy can find humor in her experience. Her son is fond of saying, *'Both my parents served in Vietnam, but only my Mom was in combat!'*³⁴

While women did serve in Vietnam they were not supposed to be placed in obvious combat situations.

Shortly, after the incident the U.S. Army acknowledged that:

"U.S. female civilian personnel are not authorized to fly as passengers in operational aircraft. A full investigation of the crash, the cause of the



Staff Sgt. Arthur Lee Wood
Flight Engineer, Pedro 56
1936-1998



Walt and Charlie Potock. Labor Day 2016.

Photo credit: Janet Fields Jaworski

crash, and the reason for the presence of U.S. female civilian personnel on board an operational aircraft is being conducted by the 119th Aviation Company, 2nd Combat Aviation Battalion, Camp Holloway Army Airfield, Pleiku City, Pleiku Province, RVN."³⁵

Although she was a Red Cross worker, Cindy was not authorized to be on that helicopter. Additionally, as *Gator 526* was on a combat related mission, the aircraft commander should probably not have permitted her to be onboard. However, Red Cross Recreational and Hospital workers did routinely fly onboard helicopters in Vietnam.

The rescue of a female Red Cross worker from a helicopter crash was newsworthy in 1967. The story was widely reported in newspapers in the United States. Bud Gilligan, the copilot of *Pedro 74* was quoted:

"Both our helicopters hovered over the river. We covered four miles both ways, from where the co-pilot had been picked up. We found the young Red Cross girl on a rock in the river. She had been swept

down the stream almost a mile from the crash scene."³⁶

Cindy was never formally interviewed, or asked to give an official statement by the U.S. Army regarding the crash. In fact, she never received any communication at all from the U.S. Army after being evacuated out of Vietnam.

Perhaps more importantly, Cindy never knew the identities of those who affected her rescue. Likewise, her rescuers never knew her fate.

American Red Cross workers who served in Vietnam are eligible to receive the American Civilian Service Commendation Award. Likewise, Red Cross workers who were wounded or injured during the Vietnam War are eligible to retroactively receive the Purple Heart Award.

During the summer of 2018, fifty-one years after leaving Vietnam, Cindy was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The truth is, while she left Vietnam, Vietnam hasn't left her.

Epilogue

Several days after the crash a formal Board of Inquiry was convened by the U.S. Army. The aircraft commander, co-pilot WO1 Richard Morrison was officially cleared of fault. Morrison completed his tour with the 119th and returned home. In 1968, he was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer. He returned to Vietnam for a second tour in 1970, serving as an Air Liaison Officer (ALO) with Headquarter and Headquarters Company (HHC), 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

During his service in Vietnam, Morrison was the recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star with "V" device for valor and Oakleaf Cluster, and more than 20 Air Medals. After serving in Vietnam Rich Morrison remained in the U.S. Army retiring after 25 years of service.

In February 1968, Capt. Francis B. "Bud" Gilligan, was piloting *Pedro 56* on a night mission to

evacuate several badly wounded U.S. Army personnel. AC1 Jose Abara was also onboard as the Flight Engineer. As they approached the landing zone (LZ) *Pedro 56* came under intense enemy ground fire from a large caliber machine gun. The aircraft was hit and caught fire immediately. Gilligan managed to crash land the crippled helicopter, which exploded shortly after impact. Three of the four crewman managed to escape. Jose Abara was killed.

Following his tour in Vietnam, Bud Gilligan remained in the USAF until his retirement.

Of those that did not survive the crash of *Gator 526*, their families were naturally devastated. One of the more compelling POW/MIA stories from Vietnam actually arises from this incident. Mrs. Phyllis Dorothy (Hasterlik) Allard, of Chicago, the mother of SP4 Richard Allard, travelled to Phnom Penh, Cambodia in late January 1972 to search for her son. In testimony she states that she and Japanese Journalist, Hideaki Sakamoto, of the *Kyodo News Service*, Tokyo, met with Cambodian and Viet Cong officials who blindfolded them and took them to an underground bunker in Cambodia where her son was being held. Once inside the bunker her son was brought in to see her for several minutes. In the same bunker she says she saw approximately 25 other Americans being held captive. Her testimony was later refuted and discredited by Sakamoto. Likely, the fervent and delusional wish of an intensely grieving mother.

Still, Mrs. Allard never gave up hope of finding her son. As late as 1998, she wrote to the President of the United States seeking his assistance. Phyllis D. Allard, now 98 years old, is still waiting on news of her missing son.

*"... I don't look for the personal recognition.... We got the people out...that's the main thing."*³⁷

Walt Potock never asked for or received any formal recognition for his role in identifying and assisting in the rescue of the survivors of the crash of *Gator*

526. Likewise the aircrews of *Pedro 56* and *Pedro 74*. Although it has now been over fifty years, this oversight can, and should, be rectified.

Of those that were rescued, all eventually returned to the United States. They fell in love, got married, had children, or additional children. They all lived full and eventful lives. All these people, their unborn children and grandchildren, ultimately, owe their lives to the brave crewmen of *Pedro 56* and *Pedro 74* and one USAF Forward Air Controller who was just doing his job and just happened to locate that oil slick in the river over fifty years ago. That pilot was my friend Walt Potock.



Virginia License Plate issued to Walt Potock c. 2003.

Endnotes

¹ Potock, Walter, J., Jr., Personal Recording of Walter J. Potock to Judith M. Potock from Vietnam. Audio Recording on Magnetic Tape. Summer 1967. Personal Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

² During the Vietnam War, the South Vietnamese Regional Popular Forces were Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) militia. Recruited locally, they fell into two broad groups - Regional Forces and the more local-level Popular Forces (RFPF). The RFPF's, called *Ruff-Puffs* by American forces.

³ Report of CPT Robert Romero, MI, S-2 Advisor, Air Operations, Kontum Sector, Kontum, RVN, 28 August 1967. Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, South Vietnam, pre-1975: AGENT REPORT: CONCERNING THE CRASH OF U.S. HELICOPTER IN THE Krong PO KO RIVER. Contributor: United States Army. <<https://cdn.loc.gov/service/frd/pwmia/146/44088.pdf>> by WPJ on May 31, 2019

⁴ Potock, Walter, J., Jr., Personal Recording of Walter J. Potock to Judith M. Potock from Vietnam. Audio Recording on Magnetic Tape. Summer 1967. Personal Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

⁵ Potock, Walter, J., Jr., Personal Recording of Walter J. Potock to Judith M. Potock from Vietnam. Audio Recording on Magnetic Tape. Summer 1967. Personal Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

⁶ Potock, Walter, J., Jr., Personal Recording of Walter J. Potock to Judith M. Potock from Vietnam. Audio Recording on Magnetic Tape. Summer 1967. Personal Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

⁷ Robert Lee Osborne, b, 17 Nov 1940, Warren, OH; d. 25 Dec 2005, Spokane, WA.

⁸ Arthur Lee Wood b. Bowling Green, OH 1936. Enl. USAF in 1954. Retired as MSG 1976. Died 1998. Interred Hill Crest Memorial Park, Bossier City, LA. M/1 Catherine G. Wood; M/2 Margarette D. Wood; dau. Susanna L. Wood (Joe Markoch), Rockledge, FL; Deborah L. Pierce

(Leonard) of Bossier City, LA; son Arthur C. Wood (Pamela) Bremerton, WA.

⁹ John A. Smith b. 1944.

¹⁰ Richard A. Smith began flying the HH-43 in 1960. By 1967 he likely had more hours at the controls of a Huskie than anyone else. See Kaman RotorTips, issue Jan-Feb 69, page 23.

¹¹ South Vietnam, pre-: MISSION NARRATIVE - RESCUE ATTEMPT. 1967. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/powmia/pw061556/>. Mission Narrative of Major Richard A. Smith, Det. 9, 38th ARRS, 26 August 1967. <<https://cdn.loc.gov/service/frd/pwmia/213/64016.pdf>> As accessed by WPJ June 13, 2019

¹² According to Ron Carey in his book, *The War Above the Trees, Operation Wayne Grey*, © 2004, Trafford Publishing, Victoria, B.C., Canada, the 119th Assault Helicopter Company was one of the first units to arrive in Vietnam. "Between mid-to-late 1966 the unit would trade their old UH-1B model helicopters in for the newer UH-1H and UH-1C ships. Because of this, they would be the only unit that had aircraft with consecutive tails numbers. The first group of ships had tail numbers 66-16371 to 66-16376. The second group of ships had the tail numbers 66-16516 to **66-16526**. The last group would contain numbers 66-16532 to 66-16536."

¹³ Camp Enari was a camp of the 4th Infantry Division and located along Highway near the base of Dragon Mountain 7.5 miles south of Pleiku, RVN.

¹⁴ "Huey" was a nickname given as a result of the early "HU-1" designation of the aircraft. The AC was later re-designated to UH-1 in 1962. "Slick" was the nickname given to Huey's used for troop carrying. To save weight, this variant of the UH-1 was not fitted with any external weapons. The only armament were two M60D machine guns fixed on door mounts and manned by the Crew Chief on the left and a Door Gunner on the right.

¹⁵ G-2 refers to the military intelligence staff of a unit in the United States Army. G-2 missions were intelligence collection and distribution missions conducted by military intelligence staff. Intelligence information was relayed, in person, face-to-face to base commanders in order maintain to the highest possible level of security.

¹⁶ Cindy Farish Collbran was born September 28, 1943, San Francisco, CA. She is the dau. Arthur Henry Collbran and Jeanne Wyatt Krick. She married Lt. Brian M. McGuiness, USN, December 2, 1968, Treasure Island, San Francisco, CA. They have one son. They divorced June 19, 1989, Skagit, WA. Cindy McGuiness lives in Washington State.

¹⁷ Polei Kleng Special Forces Camp aka Camp Le Vanh, FB Bass, LZ Bass, or Polei Kleng Camp.

¹⁸ South Vietnam, pre-: AGENT REPORT: CONCERNING THE CRASH OF U.S. HELICOPTER IN THE Krong Po Ko River. 1967. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/powmia/pw061559/>> by WPJ May 31, 2019.

¹⁹ Potock, Walter, J., Jr., Personal Recording of Walter J. Potock to Judith M. Potock from Vietnam. Audio Recording on Magnetic Tape. Summer 1967. Personal Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

²⁰ South Vietnam, pre-: AGENT REPORT: CONCERNING THE CRASH OF U.S. HELICOPTER IN THE Krong Po Ko River. 1967. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<https://cdn.loc.gov/service/frd/pwmia/146/44090.pdf>> by WPJ May 31, 2019.

²¹ Potock, Walter, J., Jr., Personal Recording of Walter J. Potock to Judith M. Potock from Vietnam. Audio Recording on Magnetic Tape. Summer 1967. Personal Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

²² Potock, Walter, J., Jr., Personal Recording of Walter J. Potock to Judith M. Potock from Vietnam. Audio Recording on Magnetic Tape. Summer 1967. Personal Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

²³ LaPointe, Robert L., PJ's in Vietnam, © 2001, Northern PJ Press, Anchorage, AK <http://www.rotorheadsrus.us/documents/1935_1967.html> by WPJ October 25, 2018.

²⁴ South Vietnam, pre-: WITNESS STATEMENTS FROM INCIDENT. 1967. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/powmia/pw061562/>> by WPJ June 13, 2019.

²⁵ Excerpt of the Flight Logbook of CPT Robert Osbourne, July 1967. In possession of William Osbourne, his son.

²⁶ South Vietnam, pre-: Summary of Information Inspection of Site 0096. 1967. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/powmia/pw142561/>> by WPJ April 10, 2019.

²⁷ South Vietnam, pre-: FIELD SEARCH RECORD. 1970. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/powmia/pw061577/>> by WPJ April 10, 2019.

²⁸ Operational Report of 4th Infantry Division, Quarter Ending 31 January 1968. 7 March 1968 Report of general activities of Co. E, 4th Engineer Battalion, 4th Infantry Division. <<http://redwarriors.us/AfterActionReports/AD390612.pdf>> by WPJ on June 11, 2019

²⁹ Colorado Women's College Yearbook, *Skyline*, 1963, v. 54, Denver, CO.

³⁰ *Daily Independent Journal*, December 12, 1968, p. 18, c. 5.

³¹ *Daily Independent Journal*, March 10, 1967, p. 15, c. 5.

³² Every soldier who served in Vietnam counted down the days until his DEROS – *Date of Expected Return From Overseas*.

³³ *Daily Independent Journal*, November 4, 1967, p. 4, c. 5.

³⁴ Personal communication of Cindy Collbran McGuiness, November 10, 2018.

³⁵ Report of CPT Robert Romero, MI, S-2 Advisor, Air Operations, Kontum Sector, Kontum, RVN, 28 August 1967. Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, South Vietnam, pre-1975: AGENT REPORT: CONCERNING THE CRASH OF U.S. HELICOPTER IN THE Krong Po Ko River. Contributor: United States Army. <https://cdn.loc.gov/service/frd/pwmia/146/44088.pdf> As accessed by WPJ on May 31, 2019

³⁶ *Idaho State Journal*, August 27, 1967, p. 2.

³⁷ Personal communication of Richard W. Morrison, October 24, 2019.

³⁸ Potock, Walter, J., Jr., Personal Recording of Walter J. Potock to Judith M. Potock from Vietnam. Audio Recording on Magnetic Tape. Summer 1967. Personal Collection of Walter J. Potock, Jr.

In the Next Issue...

Defense of Luc Luong Dac Biet (LLDB)

at Plei Mrong

26 August 1967

and

Mang Buk, Hill 1121

26 September 1967

(Part 3 of 3)...

The story of LTC Walter J. Potock, Jr., a highly decorated United States Air Force officer who served in Vietnam, continues.

In August and September 1967, Walt participated in the Defense of a Luc Luong Dac Biet, (LLDB), or Vietnamese Special Forces Company surrounded at Plei Mrong, Pleiku Province, RVN. He also flew a dramatic air strike mission in support of embattled Special Forces and north of Mang Buk, Kontum Province, RVN, also known as *Hill 1121*.

For both missions Walt was further decorated.

Fairfax C.H. News

50 Years Ago

Fairfax County Tower To Get First Tenants

By JOHN JENNRICH
Star Staff Writer

Two years after ground was broken, the 15-level Fairfax County Administration Building is about to become home for 900 employees.

The concrete and brown-tinted glass structure is the highest building in the county, standing 192 feet tall.

Moving day will be about Sept. 11. Officials expect the process to take 17 or 18 days, and they plan to fill one floor at a time. They have 35 men lined up to work 4 p.m. to midnight, Monday through Friday, to move office equipment. Heavy equipment will be moved on weekends.

Finishing Touches

This week, workmen are putting finishing touches on the inside of the building, especially on quarters for those agencies now housed in rented office space. Primarily, those are the purchasing and supply division and the welfare department. The move is expected to save \$6,800 a month in rent.

The structure—known unofficially as the County Tower—stands with a new low-level health building on 6.5 acres of land. The tower has 166,322 square feet of floor space and the total cost is approximately \$4.6 million.

The new building is 200 yards behind the county courthouse in Fairfax City. Almost 90 percent of the county employees will move into the new building, leaving the courthouse for of-

fices connect with the administration of justice.

Renovation of the courthouse will provide larger chambers for circuit court judges and more courtroom space.

Parking lots around the tower will provide 1,050 spaces. Inside, levels A and B—underground on some sides—will contain a 60-seat cafeteria, communications facilities for the police and fire departments, a press room, and the board of supervisors meeting room.

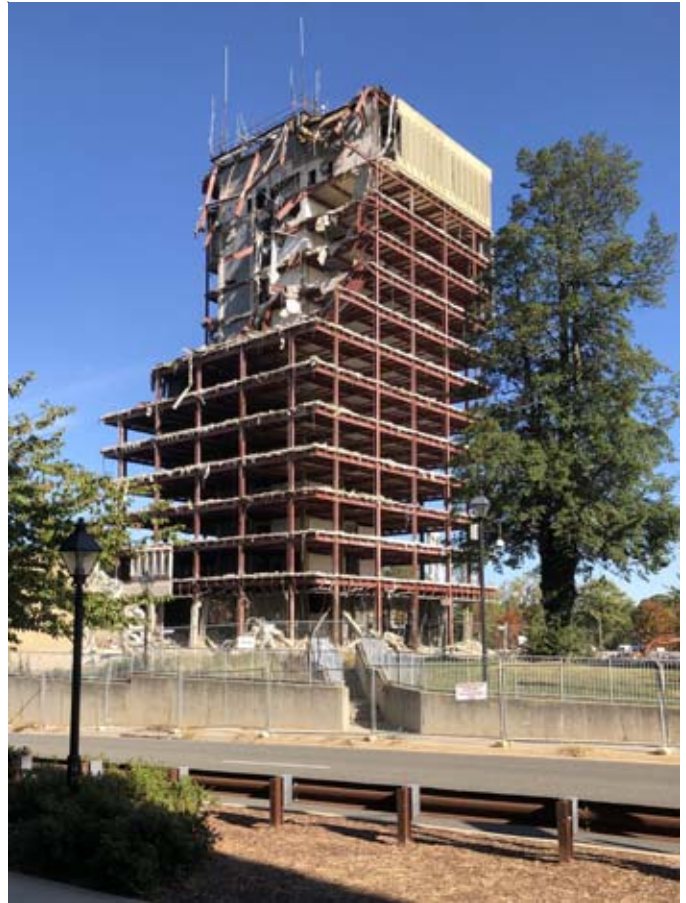
The first floor will have a reception desk and lobby. Four elevators serve the building, which will contain staff offices on floors 2 through 10, plus telephone and air conditioning equipment.

Executive Level

Fully carpeted floor 11 is the executive level, with office space for County Executive Carlton C. Massey; department heads; Frederick Babson, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and the public affairs office.

With the move, the county government will convert its switchboard telephone system to a Centrex system, with an individual number for each office. The new central county number will be 691-2000, and 691- will be the prefix for all other offices.

The general contractor for the tower is Blake Construction Co. Glass work was done by Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co.



Almost 50 years to the day it opened the Massey Building, aka County Tower, opened it is being demolished.

Photo credit: Page Johnson

TWO ARE NAMED TO VOTING BOARD

Thomas R. Chapman, former clerk of Fairfax County courts, last night was appointed to one of two vacancies on the three-member Fairfax City Electoral Board.

Also appointed was Mrs. Everett R. (Anita) Boyer. The two appointees replace Mrs. Evelyn M. Kielsgard and Col. James R. Alderton, who recently resigned.

Evening Star, October 22, 1969, p. C-5.

Evening Star, September 1, 1969, p. B-4.

FAIRFAX CITY — By Owner, \$36,500.
Roomy split level, 3 to 4 bedrm., 2 bath, beaut. corner lot, quiet res. area, conv. to everything. Assume 5 1/4 pct. loan, will consider VA. Call 273-2480.

Fairfax News of 50 Years Ago

Man Is Arrested Near Draft Office

Fairfax City Police arrested a 21-year-old Falls Church man yesterday on a charge of trespassing outside the city's draft board office.

Andrew J. Johnson, 21, of the 1000 block of Madison Lane, was arrested when he refused to leave a corridor outside Selective Service offices in the city's Post Office building.

Evening Star, December 24, 1969, p. A-2.

100 Years Ago

FAIRFAX, Va., September 13.—Plans for the annual fair are completed. The fair will take place on the 1st, 2d and 3d of October. The first day will be devoted to a celebration in honor of the Fairfax county soldiers in the war with Germany. The feature of the second day will be the exhibit of saddle horses, and the third day the school children of the county will parade on the fairgrounds. The premium list is off the press, and besides the regular prizes offered by the fair association there are numerous special premiums offered by persons interested in the work.

A band will be in attendance every day, and on the date of the welcome home celebration addresses will be made to the soldiers by Representative R. Walton Moore and F. L. Ballanger, chairman of the board of supervisors. The ranking officer of the local soldiers will respond to these addresses. Besides a short drill there will be no other formal functions, and the day will be given over to entertaining the soldiers.

The county board of health held its annual meeting at Fairfax courthouse recently and adopted a resolution endorsing the state law which requires public school children to be vaccinated before entering school. The law requires that every child must be successfully vaccinated before entering the public schools. It is stated that if the parents do not see that this is done by their family physician, the physicians of the county board of health will visit the school and do the vaccinating.

The Fairfax school will open Monday. The building and grounds have been put in first class condition, and all is ready for the year's work. Four experienced teachers have been procured—Miss Harwood, Miss Thompson, Miss Compher and Miss Pierce.

Evening Star, September 14, 1919, p. 20.

With the appointment of S. R. Donohoe, of Fairfax County, as Federal prohibition director for Virginia, there is added another to the already long list of cogent reasons why continued maintenance of the State Department of Prohibition is unnecessary and a drain on the public funds which are so sorely needed in divers other directions. Mr. Donohoe, with the co-operation of city and county authorities, will be able to enforce the dry laws just as effectively, and perhaps even more so, than they are being enforced now. Many members of the General Assembly are committed to the abolishment of the State department, and there is every reason to believe that at least a majority of them when the session convenes will vote to discontinue an expensive office which is neither useful nor ornamental.

Richmond Times Dispatch, November 22, 1919, p. 6.

Fairfax News of 100 Years Ago

Interest in the American Legion is spreading in the nearby counties, three posts having recently been established in Fairfax County, at Fairfax, Herndon and Falls Church, and one in Alexandria County.

Washington Herald, October 2, 1919, p. 3.

6-ROOM NEW BUNGALOW, ON CAR LINE, at station, Fairfax Court House; \$1,000 cash, balance easy terms. Address Box 242-S, Star office. 24*

Evening Star, November 19, 1919, p. 31.

150 Years Ago

It is stated that the little girl lately outraged in Fairfax county, near Alexandria by a white man, died on Saturday afternoon. Henry Church, charged with the crime, will be sent to Fairfax county for trial. There is great excitement about the affair, and many threats of lynching. The jail is strongly guarded.

Daily Critic, October 26, 1869, p. 3.

SPLENDID POTATOES.—The neighboring county of Fairfax is already noted for the magnificent fruit it produces, and will soon be equally distinguished for its splendid vegetables. Some of the largest and finest Irish potatoes ever brought to this city were raised this year by Mr. Amos Fox, of Fairfax Court House.

Alexandria Gazette October 28, 1869, p. 3.

SENTENCED.—Rufus Hughes, colored, who was tried at Fairfax Court House, on Monday last, on the charge of attempting to commit an outrage upon a young girl named Elizabeth McCawley, was sentenced by the Court to twenty years imprisonment in the penitentiary.

Evening Star, November 5, 1869, p. 4.

CAPT. JACK BARGES, of Fairfax county, attended a sale at the horse bazar in Washington yesterday, and had knocked down to him, at the first and only bid of \$50, a splendid looking stallion, apparently worth \$250. The captain sent the horse to a livery stable, but when he went there himself to get him he was told that no human being dared to approach him to lead him out; that his heels flew like lightning at all who came near him; that he had nearly mashed one man to death against the side of the stall who had gone there to feed him, and that he bit at people as savagely as a mad dog. One ostler, bolder than the rest, attempted to mount him from the top of the stall and ride him out, but the vicious animal laid down with him and nearly killed him. The captain was compelled to come away without him, and the stable keeper to retain an unpleasant boarder.

National Republican, November 13, 1869, p. 4.

GIPSEYS.—The band of gipseys who were encamped near here a short time ago, recently passed through Fairfax Court House, and are traveling up the Centreville turnpike. It is said that the thief who stole the watches from Mr. Wilcoxon, on Monday last, belonged to this band.

DEATH OF A BAPTIST PREACHER.—The Rev. Lovell Marders, a well known preacher belonging to the Baptist Church, died at his home in Prince William county on the night of Monday last.

Evening Star, November 23, 1869, p. 4.

Ed. Note: Lovell Marders was also an early minister of Jerusalem Baptist Church located on Chain Bridge Road south of Fairfax.

200 Years Ago

A House and Lot for Sale.

I offer for sale a two story brick house and lot, situated on St. Asaph street, Alexandria, at present in the tenure and occupancy of Mr. Ambrose Vasse. It is a good and convenient house, and will be sold on reasonable terms. The premises will be shown, and terms made known, on application to col. *Francis Peyton*, Alexandria, or to the subscriber, near Fairfax Court-House.

RICHARD RATCLIFFE.

September 27

mthf

Alexandria Gazette October 7, 1819, p. 4.

"Preserving the Past. Protecting the Future."

Return Address - Historic Fairfax City, Inc.
John A.C. Keith, President
10209 Main Street
Fairfax, VA 22030



The Newsletter of Historic Fairfax City, Inc.

The Fare Facs Gazette © 2019
Editor: William Page Johnson, II