

I, Robert Duane Fuller, SSN 281-26-4063 enlisted in the U.S. Army, at the age of 14 ½, at the Dayton, Ohio Recruiting Station, on 21 July 1948. My Serial Number: (SN:) was RA15-412-676. I was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey for eight (8) weeks of basic training after which I was granted two (2) weeks of leave. I then proceeded to Fort Lawton, Washington and was subsequently shipped by sea from Seattle, Washington to Camp Zama, Yokohama, Japan. I was assigned to B Troop, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment at Camp Drake, Japan where I was trained and qualified as a Light Automatic Weapons Infantry Man, armed with the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR).

Sometime in the first half of 1949 the personnel in the unit to which I was assigned were sent to Camp Schimmelpfennig near Sendai, Japan and assigned to Company D, 13th Combat Engineer Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. I was trained and qualified as a Demolitionist. In June of 1950, I was then only 16 ½, while my unit was being trained in Amphibious Warfare at Yokosuka Naval Base, the North Korean Army and Air Force invaded South Korea.

The unit to which I was assigned was attached to the 1st Cavalry Division and sent to Korea, landing at Pohang, South Korea on 18 July 1950. We performed combat engineer duties during the retreat to the Pusan Perimeter, and were redesignated as C Company, 14th Combat Engineer Battalion, 8th U.S. Army. During this time period I was witness to the sights and smells of many battlefield scenes of death and destruction, and of the results of North Korean atrocities to members of the U.S. and South Korean Armed Forces.

After the 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division suffered heavy casualties along the Naktong River Line my Battalion was sent into the front line and acted as Infantry for 45 days, replacing a Battalion of the 21st Infantry Regiment. I was once again armed with the BAR. We also placed mines, obstacles, and booby traps, and I was witness to many, nightmare producing, scenes of the dead and dying.

After MacArthur's end run around the North Koreans on the West Coast of South Korea, my unit was once again assigned Combat Engineer duties in support of the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division and the R.O.K. 1st Infantry Division in the initial breakout from the Pusan Defense Perimeter and the drive North to link up with U.S. and R.O.K. forces at Kimpo and Seoul. While repairing a damaged crossing at the Naktong River, hostile forces demolished a dam upstream from our work site and the resulting flood washed me and many dead and decomposing bodies downstream. I managed to grab a life line that had previously been strung across the river. During my struggle to the bank, I was physically struck several times by decomposing corpses, U.S, ROK, and PRK. I vividly recall the gore and stench that covered my entire body.

During this northward drive we also bridged the Imjin, Yaedong and Taedong rivers. In late September 1950 I was unloading bridging materials from a Brockway Bridge Truck, in preparation for bridging a river, when there was a loud noise and I was thrown from the top of the truck. The next thing I recall is being in a stretcher on a Willy's Jeep Ambulance which took me to a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) where I was diagnosed with torn ligaments in (I believe) my right wrist. There were several, unreported, minor cuts and abrasions on my back which went untreated.

From the MASH Unit I was transferred to a hospital ship off the West coast of Korea where I convalesced for several weeks before being released to return to my unit which then was near Kuniri, North Korea. I was allowed to make my way, alone, back to my unit. During that trip I became lost, between the lines, behind a foot path in a rice paddy, for about three days and nights with only residual water from the paddy to drink. I think this was the precipitate cause for my contraction of Hepatitis A at a later date.

With the intervention of the Chinese Communist Field Forces my unit was once again pressed into service as Infantry with Task Force Allen for the purpose of providing rear guard action to cover the "withdrawal" of other Allied Forces from the area. We then conducted delaying actions, destroying bridges, dams and other assets to slow the advance of the Chinese Forces during our "strategic withdrawal". During this period we destroyed many facilities in the North Korean capital Pyongyang (train tracks, locomotives, communications centers).

Sometime during this period, I am not certain of the timing; I was diagnosed with Hepatitis A and evacuated to a military hospital in Kyoto, Japan. I remained there for approximately three months for treatment, recuperation, and rehabilitation prior to being returned to my unit. I believe my unit was in the vicinity of Seoul. During my remaining time in Korea my Company was once again required to act as Infantry at the "Lincoln Line" during the Chinese Communist Field Forces Summer Offensive in 1951.

I returned to the Continental United States (CONUS) in October of 1951 after serving 2 years 11 months and 6 days overseas. My remaining active duty time was spent at Fort Belvoir, Virginia where I was assigned to the Airborne Department of the Engineer School as an Air Transportation platform instructor. On 20 July 1953, at the age of 19 ½ years, and after 5 years of continuous active duty in the Regular Army of the United States, I received an Honorable Discharge. (See the attached DD form 214)

On 10 January 1955 I enlisted as a Corporal, SN: NG15-412-676, in the Ohio Army National Guard, assigned to Company L, 147th Infantry Regiment, 37th Infantry (Buckeye) Division. I quickly rose to the rank of Sergeant First Class (E-6) and in September of 1956 was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry (SN: O2-287591), assigned as Platoon Commander of a Platoon in which I had previously served as a Squad Leader.

I was ordered to Active Duty for Training (ACDUTRA) at the Basic Infantry Officer Course, the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia from January through June of 1957. During this period I applied for training as an Army Aviator.

In October 1957 I was ordered, as a 2nd Lieutenant of Infantry, to ACDUTRA at the U.S. Army Primary Flight School, Officer Fixed Wing Aviator Course (OFWAC), Camp Gary (San Marcos), Texas. While taking my Class 1 aviation medical examination, prior to assignment to Class 58-6, it was discovered that I had somehow sustained a fracture of the 5th Metacarpal of my left hand and I was held over for the next available class (58-7) which was to start in late November. My first solo flight took place in early December 1957. I was designated a U.S. Army Aviator in June of 1958 at Fort Rucker, Alabama and was ordered to attend the U.S. Army (Fixed Wing) Instrument Course which graduated in August 1958. I then returned to my assigned National Guard unit and was attached, for training, to the Aviation Detachment of the 37th Infantry Division.

On 1 October 1961 was ordered, as a 1st Lieutenant of Infantry, to ACDUTRA at the U.S. Army Primary (Helicopter) School at Fort Wolters, Texas to attend the Officers Rotary Wing Qualification Course (ORWQC) which I completed satisfactorily on 15 December 1961.

On 27 January 1962, I was ordered, to ACDUTRA at the U.S. Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia to attend the Associate Infantry Officer Career Course, as 1st Lieutenant of Infantry,. I graduated and was awarded the Military Occupational Specialty Code (MOS) Prefix 5 (Nuclear Weapons Employment Officer) on 14 June 1962. During this period I also applied for Extended Active Duty (EAD).

Orders to EAD for a period of 2 years, effective 21 June 1962 were received and I was assigned, as 1st Lieutenant of Infantry, to the Combat Aviation Company, 82nd Aviation Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, 18th Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In late 1962 I attended the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning, Georgia and returned to Fort Bragg. In the early part of 1963 I applied and was accepted for an indefinite period of EAD. On 12 April 1963, I voluntarily transferred to the 73rd Aviation Company (Airplane Surveillance Light) which was being formed at Fort Rucker, Alabama for subsequent shipment to South Vietnam (Southeast Asia).

Assigned to the Advance Party of the 73rd Avn. Co. (ASL), I traveled in civilian clothing, with an Official Passport (red), aboard a chartered civilian airliner to Saigon, South Vietnam, arriving in May of 1963. When the remainder of the Company arrived we were relocated to the airfield at Vung Tau until the unit's aircraft had been assembled and received. Another officer (1st Lieutenant Fred Stevenson) and I were assigned to find, photograph, and catalog all of the useable airfields south of the Demilitarized Zone. This mission was accomplished over the next four weeks using plasticized survival maps for navigation purposes.

During the period 10 June through 31 October 1963 while based at the Hue Citadel airstrip, I was promoted to Captain of Infantry, and flew 262 hours of combat time in a single engine, 2 seat, high wing, Cessna O-1D (Birddog), performing unarmed reconnaissance, in the 1st Corps area of South Vietnam. It was during this period that I gained a reputation for being a bullet magnet. My aircraft was frequently hit by light small arms and automatic weapons fire. During this timeframe the Section, which I led, managed to acquire a significant supply of cluster bombs.

We began to carry these on the wing bomb shackles (4 clusters per aircraft, 6 bomblets per cluster). They were utilized for retaliatory strikes against those Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) personnel who had the temerity to fire on our aircraft. These strikes were normally carried out along the border with Laos and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This capability enjoyed a small degree of success and was immensely satisfying to the Aircraft Commanders.

On 4 November 1962 I was transferred to the 117th Aviation Company, 52nd Aviation Battalion and transitioned into the UH-1B (Huey) Helicopter. After successfully completing the necessary training and gunnery qualification on, 10 December 1963, I was transferred to the Gun Platoon of Headquarters Company, 52nd Aviation Battalion and stationed at the airfield in Danang for the purpose of providing armed escort for the Marine Helicopter unit and other missions as assigned.

I retained my reputation as a bullet magnet because of frequent hits from hostile small arms and automatic weapons fire. On one occasion, while departing the Ashau Valley, my aircraft received small arms fire which struck the aircraft causing smoke, the smell of an electrical fire, and the loss of the engine tachometer and temperature monitoring instruments. I immediately executed an emergency landing in a stream bed, set up a quick perimeter of defense, with my wing man (CW2 Dean Pomeroy) providing cover, the fire was extinguished with the engine still running. After determining the fire was out, and not likely to restart I elected to load my crewmembers into Dean's aircraft and flew my aircraft to the nearest secure airstrip which happened to be the Hue Citadel Airstrip.

On another occasion while supporting a combined U.S. Special Forces/RVN patrol in the rugged hills West of Danang my wing man (Dean) and I lost radio contact with the troops on the ground. In an attempt to re-establish communication I elected to land across a ridgeline which sloped downward to the left of my approach path. After ground contact and while putting the left skid down the aircraft began to slide sideward down the hill and it rapidly lost rotor and engine RPM. After making a pedal turn to the left so that I was aligned in the direction of the drift, and while well below the RPM green arc (engine and rotor) I lifted the aircraft off the ground. Seeing trees ahead I executed a slight right turn

in an attempt to fly between 2 trees. The attempt was futile and my advancing rotor blade struck and severed a 7 inch diameter mahogany tree approximately 5 feet inboard from the tip.

My aircraft began to vibrate so violently that the instruments were a blur. I immediately transmitted a Mayday call and announced my intent to land at the closest suitable clearing. After landing, a perimeter of defense was established utilizing the aircraft weapons and our personal sidearms. My wingman (Dean) climbed to altitude and succeeded in transmitting a Mayday call to our home base. He then provided air-cover until he was relieved by one of our other aircraft.

Inspection of my aircraft disclosed that the red blade had a span-wise through and through crack just aft of the stainless steel spar from the outboard tip to a point approximately five feet inboard. There was another through and through chord-wise crack from the trailing edge just outboard of the trim tab to within 4 inches of the span-wise crack. The aircraft vibrations had been so violent the vertical fin mounted FM radio antennae had flexed into and been severed by the tail rotor.

About 6 hours after the landing and just before nightfall the Marine Helicopter unit we normally supported brought in an RVN Ranger unit to secure the site over night. My crew and I were then flown back to Danang.

The next morning our platoon maintenance officer (CW4 Al Cargen), a brace of our platoon maintenance enlisted personnel, and I returned to the site with a replacement rotor blade, spare parts, and special tools for a quick rotor blade change. We performed a hasty blade change, to include balancing and tracking and then Al and I flew the aircraft to Danang where more extensive inspections were conducted and all necessary repairs accomplished to return it to service.

After this episode I was forced to go on R&R to Hong Kong and upon return was transferred to our headquarters at Camp Holloway, near Pleiku. I continued to fly missions in the Huey, Birdog, and the U-6A (Dehaviland Beaver). Shortly before I was returned to CONUS I learned that my friend and former wingman (CW2 Dean Pomeroy) had crashed as the result of enemy action, fractured his spine and was paralyzed from the neck down. I was able to visit him in the hospital before he was returned to CONUS. He later contracted pneumonia while at Letterman Army Hospital in California and died while undergoing an emergency tracheotomy. I continually suffer feelings of guilt for not having been there to cover for him as he had often covered for me. He was and is a rare exception to my preference to not allow myself to become close friends with anyone because of the pain suffered when they are lost.

On 3 May 1964 I returned to CONUS was given a 30 day leave and assigned to Company D, then Company A, and then Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 11th Air Assault Division, Fort Benning, Georgia.

During the Revolution in the Dominican Republic I became day Aircraft Carrier Qualified and flew as Aircraft Commander in armed UH-1B aircraft from 6 May through 3 June 1965. On 1 August 1965 through 4 January 1967 I was reassigned to the Operations Office, Godman Army Airfield (FTK), Fort Knox, Kentucky.

On 4 January 1967, still a Captain, I was reassigned to the 214th Aviation Company, Fort Campbell, Kentucky pending deployment to Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division. On 27 February 1967 I was sent (pipeline) to Vietnam and assigned as Aviation Safety Officer, to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 25th Aviation Battalion, 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi, South Vietnam. I flew missions in the UH-1H, UH-1C, and the OH-23G until 2 September 1967 when I was given an emergency leave due to family problems and on 1 November 1967 was granted a compassionate transfer to the United States Army Aviation School, Fort Rucker, Alabama as a Fixed Wing Flight Instructor where I served until 6 January 1969.

I attended the CH-47 (Chinook) Qualification Course from 9 January through 31 January 1969, still a Captain, and was then sent to Company C, 228th Assault Support Helicopter (ASH) Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Division at Phouc Vinh, South Vietnam from 14 April thru 26 August 1969. I was then assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 159th Aviation Battalion (ASH), 101st Air Assault Division at Hue Phu Bai, South Vietnam as Aviation Safety Officer from 27 August 1969 through 16 March 1970 at which time I returned to CONUS.

After a 30 day leave I reported to the Commander, Stewart Army Airfield, Fort Stewart, Georgia as Airfield Operations Officer on or about 12 June 1970 until 11 July 1971 when I was released from active military duty as a Captain of Infantry. I had been promoted to the rank of Major in the USAR effective September 1970.

For the awards earned during this period of active service see the attached DD Form 214.

In September 1972 I was assigned as Aviation Safety Officer, to Headquarters, 83rd Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) located at Fort Hayes in Columbus Ohio and subsequently placed on Flight Status as a Major on 29 November 1971. I served in this capacity until I accepted an appointment as a Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) on 13 March 1978. I was subsequently assigned to 2nd Service FSE, 11th Special Forces Group (Airborne) effective 1 June 1980 and attached to the 83rd ARCOM, Aviation Support Facility # 33 for flight training effective 6 July 1980.

On 14 September 1983 I transferred to Detachment 1, 136th Transportation Company, Texas Army National Guard and placed on National Guard Flight Status flying the CH-47 (Chinook). On 15 September 1986 I was transferred to the Company B, 149th Aviation Battalion (Attack Helicopter) and trained in the AH-1S (Cobra).

My unit was redesignated as B Company, 1st Battalion (Attack Helicopter), 149th Aviation Regiment, and in January 1990, I was ordered to ACDUTRA for the AH-64A (Apache) qualification course at Fort Rucker, Alabama. I was granted a medical waiver for high frequency hearing loss and permitted to participate in the Fort Rucker contact lens program, using personally provided, AccuView Bifocal Contact Lenses. I completed training 10 February 1990 and returned to the TXANG. I remained in this capacity until 31 December 1993 when, at the age of 60 years, with a total of 44 ½ years of service in the Armed Forces of the United States, I was released from the National Guard, reassigned to USAR Control Group and retired with the rank of Major on 1 January 1994. My total military flight time at retirement was 7,442 hours of which 1146 hours were flown in combat.

In May 2001 I was inducted into the State of Ohio's Military Hall of Fame and awarded Ohio's Medal of Valor.

From 30 June 1997 through 31 December 2006 I was employed by the Federal Aviation Administration as an Aviation Safety Inspector (Operations). The cumulative affects of Diabetes Mellitus (Agent Orange), Hypertension, oxygen dependency, erectile dysfunction, and tingling of all extremities due to Hypoxia caused by severe COPD, tinnitus in both ears due to a severe high frequency hearing loss, and PTSD induced sleep disorder which results in restless leg syndrome, an inability to sleep more than a couple of hours at a time, and mild to severe arthritis pain in all joints has resulted in denial of any Class of Aviation Medical Certificate which was a requirement for continuing my employment. This made it necessary for me to retire as of 31 December 2006. These complications make me essentially unemployable.

Total flight time in all aircraft is currently 11,000+ hours

Total flight time in airplanes is currently 6,550+ hours

Total flight time in helicopters is currently 4,500+ hours

Total flight time as Certified Flight Instructor in all categories of aircraft is currently 4,050+ hours

I hereby certify that the information I have given in this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Robert D. Fuller
Major, USAR (Retired)