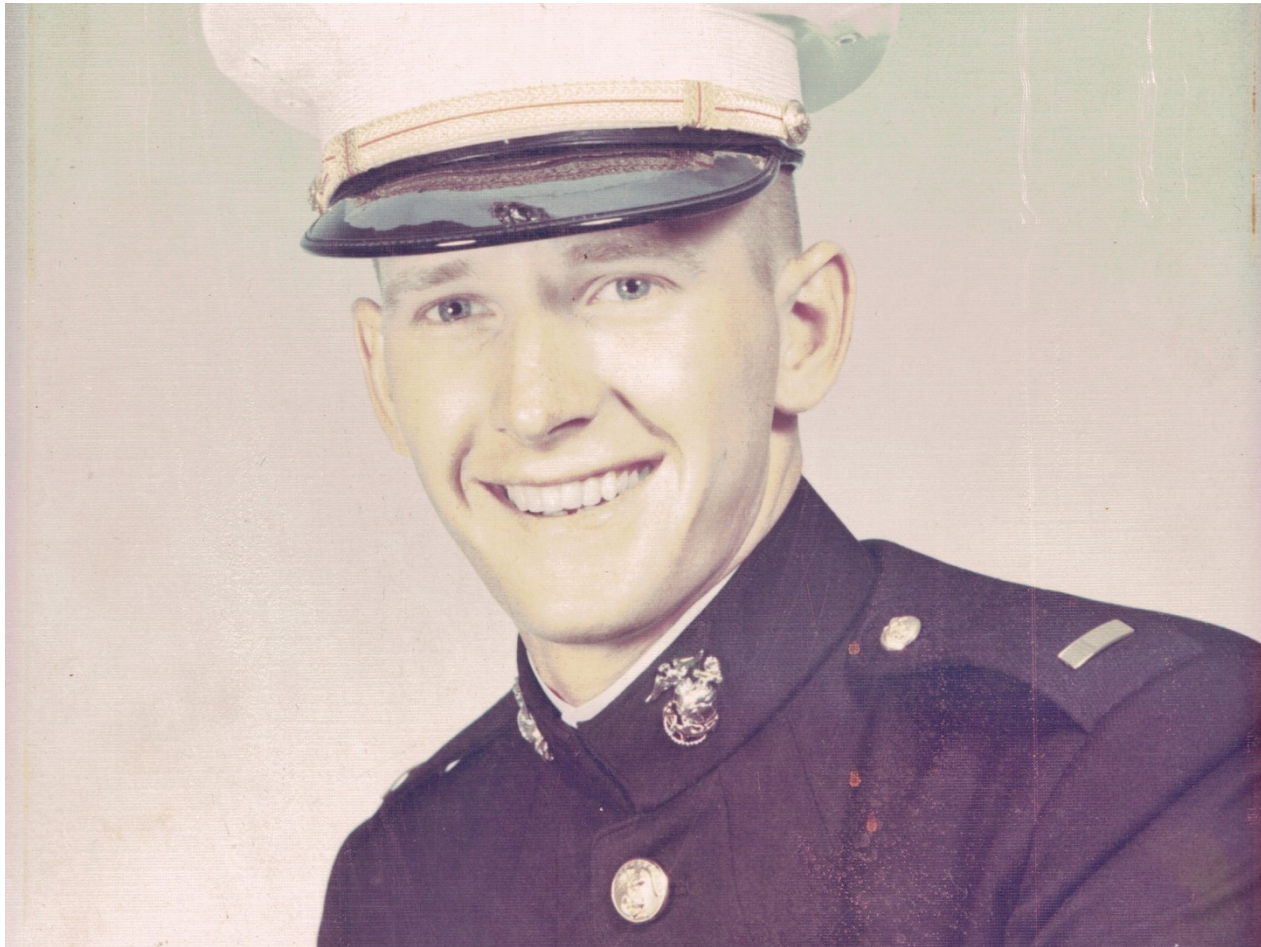


The Life and Times of “Orville” Plassmeyer

Also known as
Bernard H. Plassmeyer

Produced, directed, and executed by
Norb Plassmeyer



Bernard H. Plassmeyer
United States Marine Corps

The Old Home Place on the Maries River south of Westphalia, Missouri



Grandparents



1901
Martin Plassmeyer — Annie K. Heislen

Ben Melies in his store
in Koeltztown, Missouri

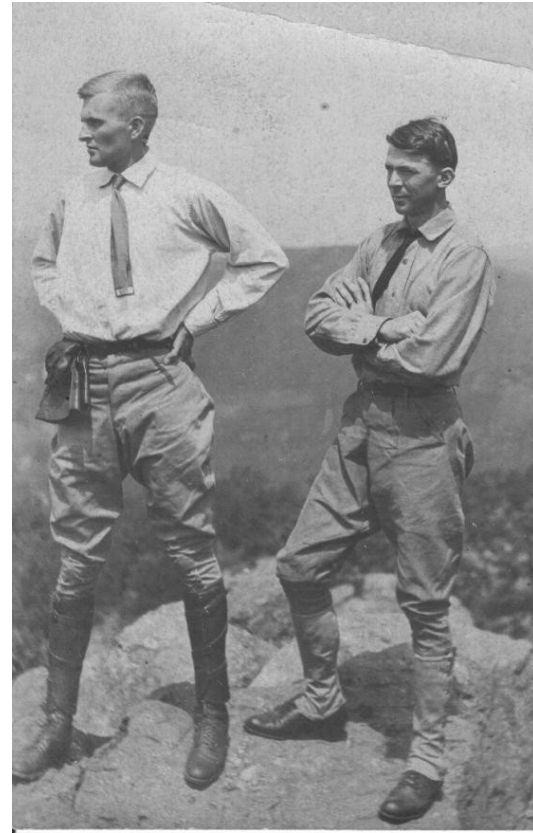


Father and Son

Rufic and Civil War veteran great grandfather Joseph Plassmeyer,



Friend (l) and 2nd Lt. Joseph Plassmeyer Jr. (r) on leave in Missouri after West Point graduation.



Parents Paul and Monica Plassmeyer

25th Wedding Anniversary



Colorado Mountain Vacation



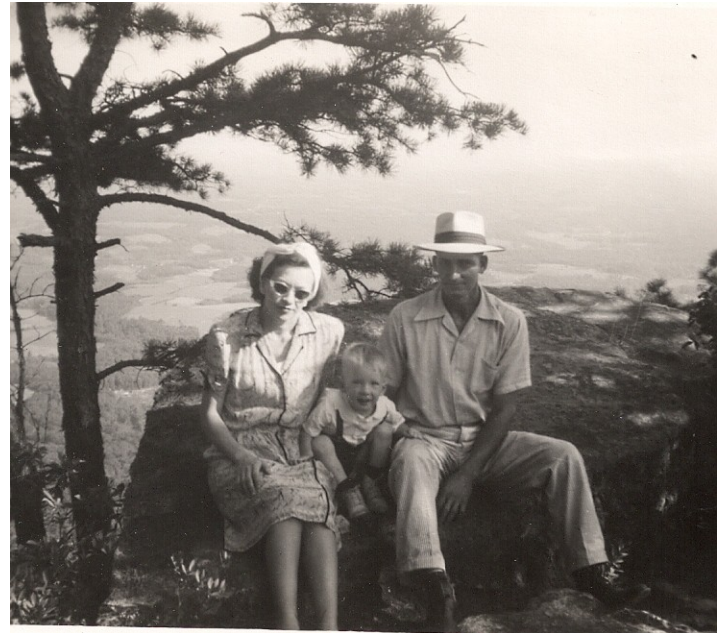
Growing up

Bernie with cousin Ed Brandt

**Ed is Budweiser distributor in
Bozeman, Montana**



**With Monica and Paul on trip to
North Carolina**





Swimmin' in the Maries

Tom, Joe, Annette Westerman----Bernie, Paul Plassmeyer

More Growing Up

Bernie with Harvey Willibrand



**In the weeds with Lloyd's fat
steer**



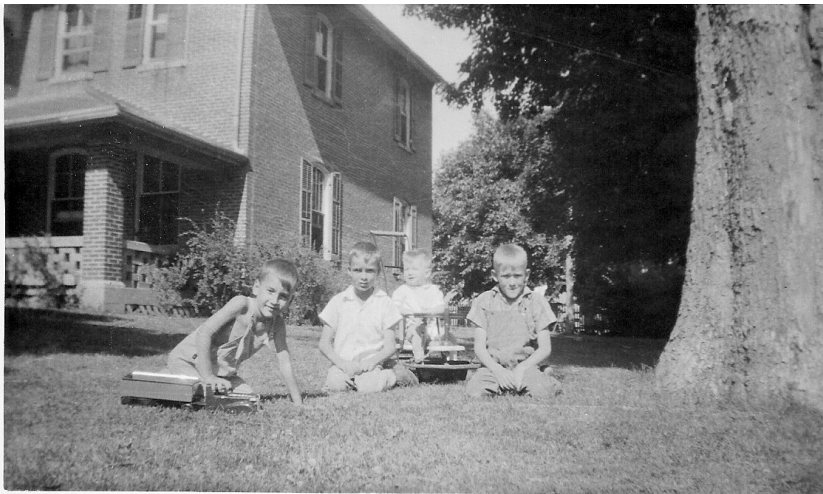
Chicken Thief

Bernie not in this picture. Lloyd and Cousin Bob are holding fox with chicken in its mouth. Norb looks on. Dad (Paul) shot the fox in the act of stealing. A picture too good to leave out.



Still More

**Playin' in the yard-Bernie in stroller.
Fritz, Jim W., Norb on right**



**Bernie under soldier's elbow
Soldier is Col Martin Plassmeyer USA(Ret.)**



And More....

Snowballer....



Snowman

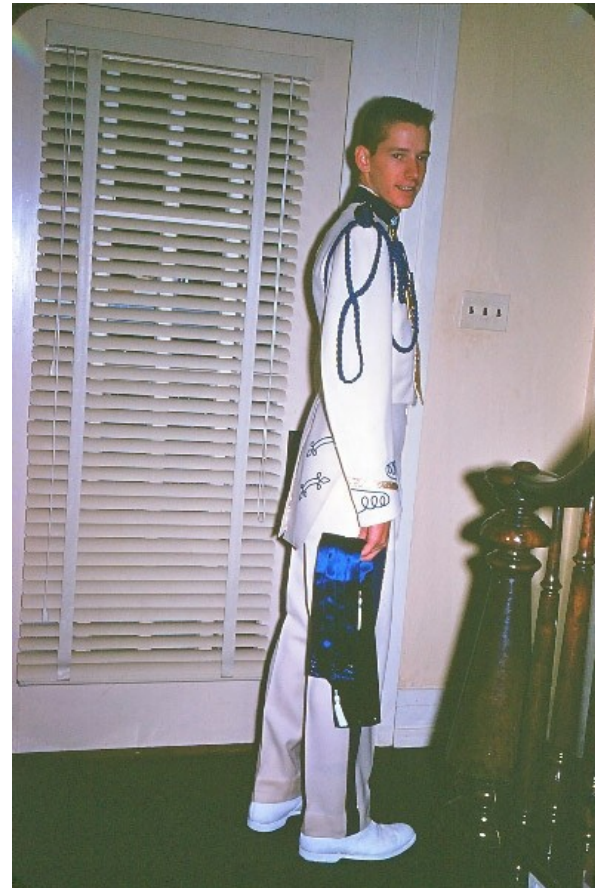


Moving along...

Bernie and friend



Leader of the Band



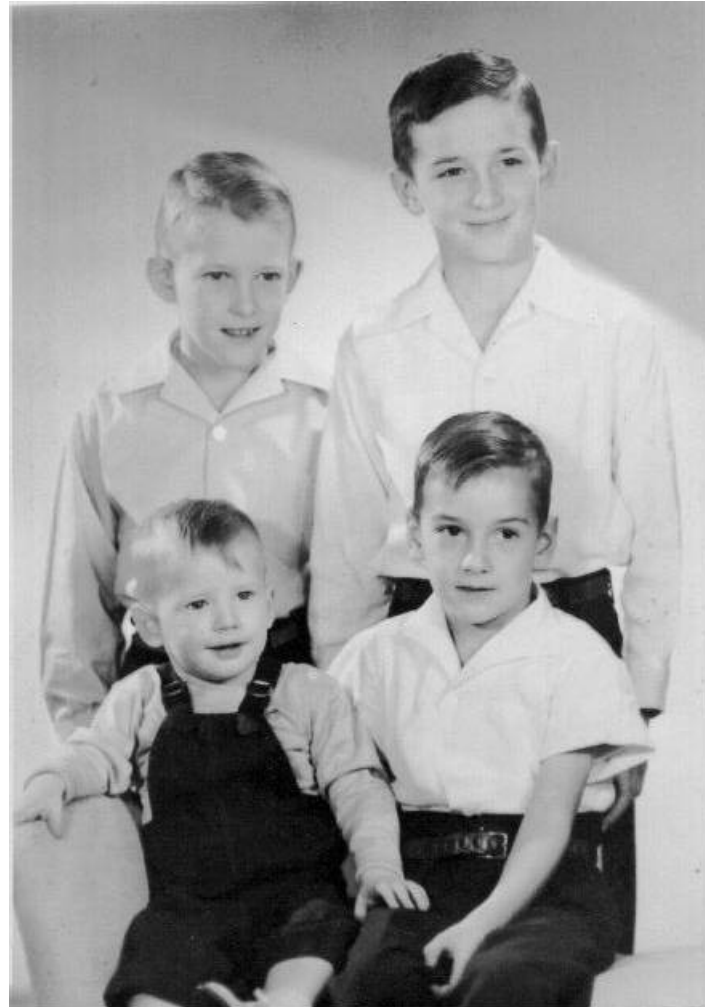


Calf and Bernie

Four Boys

Norb, Lloyd

Bernie, Fritz





Checking the balanced farming books.

Fritz, Norb, Bernie, Paul, Monica

Movin' Along

**Bernie, Lloyd, Fritz, Norb
Heading Out**



Bernie, John, Terry. Evelyn-1965



Posin' for Pics

Fritz, Lloyd, Bernie, Norb, Paul



Lloyd, Eileen, Norb, Bernie--Easter



Handsome Ones

Bernie, Uncle Joe-Lloyd & Chris Wedding



Lloyd, Bernie, Fritz





Fred and Bernie greet ladies attending Lloyd and Chris wedding at Westphalia

Parks College Days

A LPHA PI SIGMA, social fraternity at Parks since 1943, has as its primary purpose the development of sound character and fellowship among its brothers. Sigma also strives for the betterment of Parks College as a whole. The fraternity is active in all sports and numerous social functions and activities throughout the year. Through the cooperation of its membership, the fraternity has increased its enrollment noticeably since its foundation.

ALPHA PI SIGMA

ALPHA PI SIGMA—First row: Corresponding Secretary R. Hermans, Vice-President M. Upton, President D. Mazzacavallo, Recording Secretary J. Batistini, W. Wattenbach.
Second row: F. Floyd, D. Pettyjohn, B. Plassmeyer, T. Miller, J. Nestor, R. Vogler, R. Carter.



Yearbook



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS PARKS CHAPTER

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS—First row: Fr. Walsh, S.J., C. Genest, R. Cramsey, Grand Knight J. Flynn, J. Tedesco, R. Pigott.
Second row: D. McEneaney, J. Manzo, J. Rauscher, R. Raffaul, R. Mathis, D. Mazzacavallo.
Third row: P. Reeves, W. Wattenbach, W. Keldermans, B. Plassmeyer, F. Harla.

SAINTE LOUIS UNIVERSITY AND PARKS COLLEGE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS serves as a link in the worldwide chain of councils in which over a million and a half Catholic men are enrolled. The main purpose is to provide programs for participating in Catholic Action in a chosen field. It also makes available an inexpensive life-insurance plan.

Parks College BS AE Graduates

Norb 1959. Bernie, Fr. Herbert Melies (Uncle Herb), Monica (Mom), Paul (Dad), Norb (graduate)



Bernie 1966. Uncle Herb, Mom, Bernie, Tommy Ripper, Norb, Dad



Officer Candidate School Graduation



TBS 6-67 Graduation

Bernie, Barry Jones, Bill Schultz

Mrs. Sargent (Mom) and Andy



Pilot Training

Don Jones, Bernie



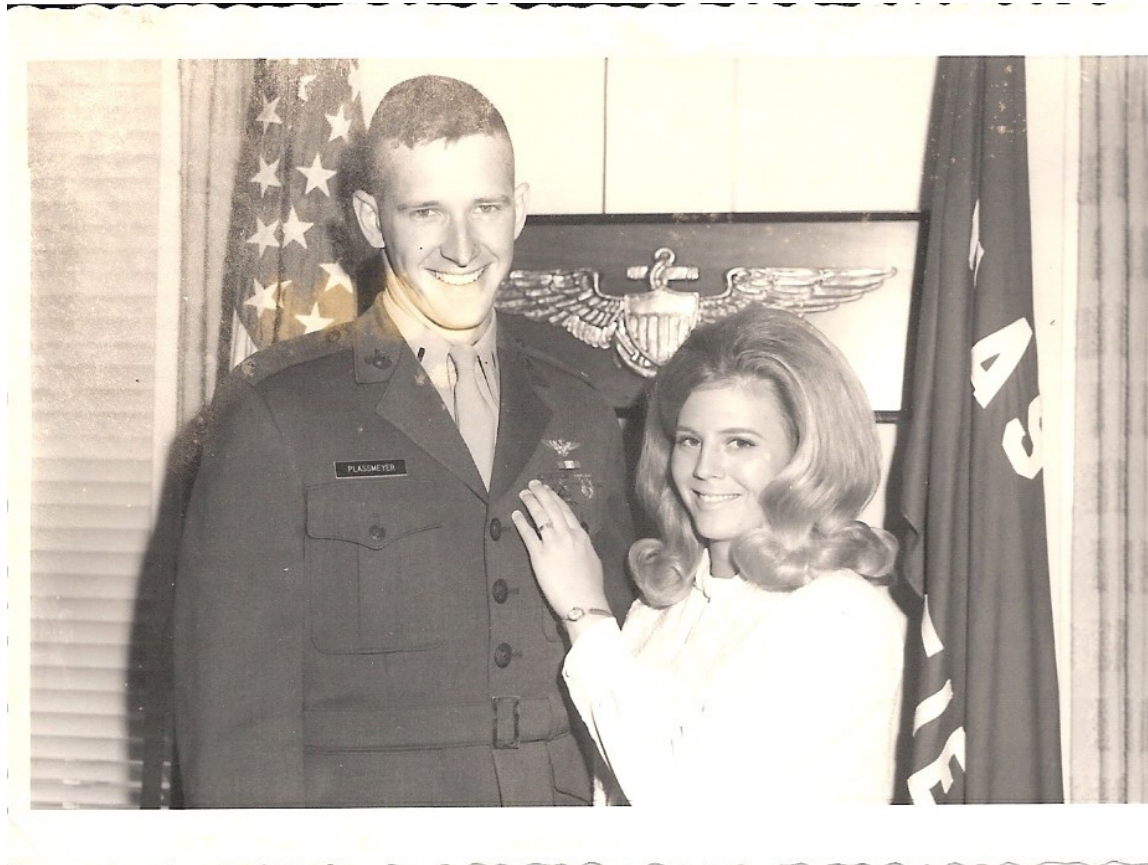
Don Jones, Bernie, Al James



Bernie-Carol Wedding

Paul and Monica Plassmeyer, Bernie and Carol, Helen and Dr. Bill Knaus





Wings of a Marine Aviator

Bernie with Carol at Wings Ceremony

Winner of the Orville Wright Achievement Award

Vietnam

Fortified Quarters

With the kids of Vietnam



Ready to go



In Flight



Ubon, Thailand

Bernie at temple....



...with Thai kids.



R & R at Ubon

Greg Sloan, Bernie, Mike
Ashworth

From a Doug Hileman email:

“We had a program going where two of us would fly a mission, then rather than returning to base, we'd head west to an Air Force base at Ubon Thailand. Two of our pilots who did the same thing a few days prior met us, hopped in the planes, and flew back to DaNang. We got a couple days vacation.

We'd hang out at the base, or often get a hotel room in town. There was a jewelry store many of the married guys went to, and bought some really nice stones for their wives. There was also a clothing store, the Maharajah, that would make anything you'd like.

The guy who owned it had a couple little scooters, and he's let us ride them around. I don't remember if Bernie and I did that on this trip, but I did on others.”



Letter to Uncle Joe (Joseph Plassmeyer, Lt. Col. USA Ret.)

26 June 1970

Dear Uncle Joe,

My answer to your letter of 11 April is long overdue. The pace of the "war" over here provides for a lot of letter-writing time but not too much news.

There is a great deal of talk concerning the withdrawal of Marine ground forces. The most current rumor has 15 October as the date that the 1st Marine Division is to be out of country. That date also appeared in some newspapers. I just returned from an interesting two day visit with the 5th Marine Regiment. They haven't received any word on withdrawal either.

We had a very good look at the other half of the Marine Air-Ground Team. They gave us the VIP treatment all the way. At least ninety percent of their casualties are from booby-traps. It is really a problem. The day before we arrived they had one KIA and 12 WIA when one daisy-chain of booby traps was set off. You can imagine how devastating this sort of thing is to the morale of their troops. A firefight is like a holiday.

The main thing they use of our support for is to destroy their booby traps. Usually an area will be heavily concentrated with these things and we can be very effective with our napalm and bombs. I have blown up hundreds of meters of booby-trapped tree lines. I'm sure we are not making any friends in the Vietnam Conservation Commission if such an organization exists.

The flying we do is still very interesting. I've got 100 missions now which is probably half what I'll have when I leave. Usually after seven or eight months they give us other non-flying type jobs in the Wing. Naturally everyone would prefer to stay with the squadron the whole time but that very seldom happens.

Dad said he told you of Cecot and my ~~own~~ plans to come back to the farm after my tour is over. The more I think about that the better it sounds. Cecot is extremely excited about the possibility and we're both anxious to return there for good.

Love
Bernie

11 October 2002

Mayor Christopher Dickneite
City of Westphalia
P.O. Box 236
Westphalia, Missouri 65085

Dear Mayor Dickneite:

I traveled to Washington, D.C. recently, and as I always do when time permits, stopped by the Viet Nam Memorial – the 'Wall'. If you've visited the memorial you are aware that there are concessions nearby that sell military, and in particular, Vietnam War memorabilia.

As I struck up a conversation with the aging veteran tending one of these concessions, I began to scan through the engraved bracelets with the names of those U.S. servicemen who remain among the missing in action from that conflict. I came across a bracelet bearing the name of Bernard H. Plassmeyer, Lt. USMC, and that is why I am writing to you.

I was struck by several coincidences and wanted to write to the Plassmeyer family to express my gratitude for Bernard's service to our country. I hesitate to do so because the last thing I want to do is evoke painful memories. In this regard, I am asking for your guidance. The coincidences I mention are several and personal as well. We lived only a few miles apart as youngsters and were similarly only a few miles apart when Bernard went missing.

I was born and raised in St Louis, but moved to Jefferson City in 1954 at the age of 14. I spent 22 years in the U.S. Army and am now living in Florida. I have a sister living in Loose Creek, not far from Westphalia.

The most striking coincidence is that I was in Viet Nam at the same place and time as Bernard. I know that he was a U.S.M.C. pilot of an A4E Skyhawk and went missing on September 11 1970, quite likely during a mission in response to our desperate situation. I can recall the period vividly.

I was assigned to the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division. July through September of 1970 was a most difficult time for us. Our major fire support bases were at the eastern edge and southern approach to the A Shau Valley, near the Laotian border. It was a heavily fortified and well-defended stronghold and sanctuary of the North Vietnamese Army. The previous year the 101st Airborne sent troopers into the A Shau Valley for operation Apache Snow. A major battle would soon ensue at a place marked on the map as Hill 937, Dong Ap Bia, that would later be known to the world as Hamburger Hill.

In July 1970 the NVA opposed us in tremendous strength around Hill 1000 and Firebase Ripcord. The 101st Airborne Division suffered casualties but, with the help of U.S.M.C air support, was able to inflict even heavier casualties on NVA forces opposing our positions. These same Marine flyers provided air cover when the 101st Airborne Division found it prudent to evacuate Firebase Ripcord. U.S. Air Force B52's obliterated the firebase after our withdrawal.

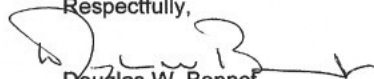
In August 1970, I moved a small reconnaissance team, previously located at Firebase Ripcord, to Firebase O'Reilly. There were four American Enlisted Men and one Australian Army Officer at this firebase manned by elements of the 1st Infantry Division, Army of South Viet Nam. We were under siege from the first week in September 1970, until the firebase was closed in early October because of the inability to re-supply during the heavy Monsoon rains beginning in October.

The siege of Firebase O'Reilly was as fierce and relentless as that of Firebase Ripcord, with continuous rocket and mortar attack followed by Sappers and massed Infantry attacks by the North Vietnamese Army. Two of my three team members were severely wounded during that siege, as were many of the South Vietnamese Army defenders. However, the firebase was not abandoned as a result of NVA combat actions, but because of the onset of seasonal monsoon weather. Tactical air support provided by U.S.M.C pilots flying from their base in Da Nang made the difference.

The tactical skills of these dedicated Marine pilots were critical to our survival as well as the successful fulfillment of our mission. These combat actions are now but a footnote in the history of this troublesome era. But those of us who were there on the ground, will never forget the selfless and heroic actions of these Marine flyers who supported U.S. and allied Army forces. We relied on their help and they gave it skillfully, without question, without hesitation.

I didn't know Lt. Bernard Plassmeyer but I wish I had. There is a kinship among those who have experienced hardship and sacrifice together. The strongest of these bonds are among men who have experienced horrific combat against a most determined foe. I am grateful for his service to our country and profoundly saddened by his sacrifice. I feel Bernard's loss as deeply as many others that owe him a debt of gratitude we can never repay. This is what I would like to convey, with deepest respect, to those of his family that may still reside in Westphalia. I leave it to your discretion to pass this message to them or to destroy it if you believe it may cause even a moment's anguish.

Respectfully,



Douglas W. Bonnof
1SG, US Army (Ret)
Lauderhill, Florida

HIGH FLIGHT

John Gillespie Magee, Jr.

*Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of
earth*

*And danced the skies on laughter-
silvered wings;*

*Sunward I've climbed, and joined the
tumbling mirth*

*Of sun-split clouds—and done a
hundred things*

*You have not dreamed of—wheeled and
soared and swung*

*High in the sunlit silence, Hov'ring
there,*

*I've chased the shouting wind along,
and flung*

*My eager craft through footless halls
of air.*

*Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights
with easy grace*

*Where never lark, or ever eagle flew.
And, while with silent, lifting mind
I've trod*

*The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face
of God.*

Memorial Service Program

April 24, 1976

Bernard H. Plassmeyer was born 5 May 1945. The fourth son of Monica and Paul Plassmeyer of Westphalia, Mo.

He attended St. Joseph Grade School, Fatima High School, and graduated from Parks College of Aeronautical Technology of St. Louis University in 1966.

He entered the Marine Corps 21 March 1967. He completed Officers' Candidate School and received his commission as a Marine officer 2 June 1967. After graduating from The Basic School, Quantico, Va., on 1 November 1967, he began jet flight training.

Bernard received the wings of a Naval Aviator on 21 March 1969. He was selected to receive The Orville Wright Achievement Award for outstanding performance as a Marine Corps aviator 29 August 1969.

He joined Marine Attack Squadron 311 in Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam, in February of 1970. He had completed approximately 100 missions with VMA-311 at Chu Lai and Da Nang when his A4 crashed during a support mission near the Laotian border, 11 September 1970. He was then placed in a missing in action status; and, since no information indicating his survival has been found, he was listed as dead 7 April 1976.

In addition to achievement awards received during training, Bernard has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Bronze Numeral 7, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Bronze Stars, and the Purple Heart.

He and his wife Carol were married 15 June 1968 and had one son, Bernard W., born 27 September 1970.

Norb, Carol, Bernie

Busch Stadium, September 30, 2012



TBS 6-67 Monument at Quantico

Front



Back



That's All ... for now

Thank you for your attention. Also, thanks to Marsha Sargent, Doug Hileman, Mike Ashworth, my Mom, and others known and unknown for generously supplying pictures, inspiration, and other content. Error notices, corrections, suggestions, comments, rave reviews, or other stuff can be submitted to nbplass@yahoo.com. Do not expect an immediate reply.