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**May 2010 1<sup>st</sup> Edition**

The first edition of the “**NIGHT Hawk**”, the battalion newsletter, was published on 18 January 1963, at Fort Bliss, Texas. The purpose of the newsletter was to keep the personnel informed of events, especially those within the Battalion.

The Battalion continued publishing the NIGHT Hawk newsletter when they deployed to Vietnam. The newsletter was nothing fancy or professional. It was published for the troops by the troops. The publishing principal used was “KISS” keep it simple soldier. The only copy of the NIGHT Hawk newsletter is displayed on the Battalion website courtesy of Richard Carlander.

If you would like to have an article or pictures publish in the NIGHT Hawk e-mail it to [john@6thbattalion56thartillery.com](mailto:john@6thbattalion56thartillery.com)

## **Battalion comrades Meet in the Desert**

Ronald (Ron) Abbink and his lovely wife Gail met me my wife Arline at our home in Palmdale California. Ron and Gail had a church conference in Shafter California, from there they flew to Las Vegas Nevada. On their way to Bakersfield California they stopped by Palmdale California to visit with Arline and myself. Ron gave me about 80 copies of pictures he had taken in Vietnam. Ron was stationed with A battery from 1966 to 1967.



Ronald Abbink and John Mayfield May 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Palmdale, CA.  
Ron on the left with hair and John on the right, well you see the picture.



Ron Abbink and his wife Gail at John and Arline Mayfield home in Palmdale, CA (May 17, 2010) Ron is a former member of A Btry, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) Vietnam.

We had so much to talk about but very little time. Ron is the first member of the Battalion that I have met since leaving Vietnam. It was great to see the happy face of a former 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 56<sup>th</sup> Artillery, Vietnam air defender.

## **Email from Family Members**

I have received numerous e-mails from sons and daughters requesting information on their fathers that was stationed with the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 56<sup>th</sup> Artillery. If you knew their father and have any information that would these dependents of former members of our Battalion feel in the gaps please contact them. Their fathers were proud Air Defenders and their sons and daughters are proud Americans. I think them for their parent sacrifice.

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**Last Name: Poremba**

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Comments: I am trying to find anyone who served in Vietnam with my father, Spc. 5 Richard V. Poremba. He was Battery Clerk for C Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery, and he was in Vietnam from September of 1965 until February of 1966. He really wanted to get in touch with Gary Erickson (sp?) who stood up to his wedding and then lost contact. My dad died in December of 2008. He was only 68.

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**Christopher Murphy**

**firnatine31@embarqmail.com**

John,

Thanks again for everything. I will continue to search and sort through any information I can find to pass on to you.

As I was thinking about this last night I was wondering if you have ever contemplated a Face book page, it seems to be a good way to "spread" information. Just a thought. By the way I know we spoke on the phone and I have had the opportunity to read your Bio. a little bit about me. As you know I live in Florida, I am a Lieutenant for the City of Sanford Fire Department assigned to a truck (ladder) company and an Urban Search and Rescue team leader. I have also been a Paramedic for 20 years. I have a wife and two daughters ages 12 and 15. I was a member of the Florida Army National Guard from 1985 to 1994 assigned to 2nd Bn/ 124 th. Inf. Div. 53rd infantry Brigade as a mortar platoon squad leader. I have often regretted not doing a hitch of active service but the fire department seemed to be my greater calling. I guess I was impacted by father's accident, he was water skiing when he broke his neck and had to be rescued and removed from a river. He spent his last two years as a quadriplegic.

It has been a pleasure speaking with you and exchanging information. If you are ever in Florida give me a call.

Chris

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**Re: Chief Warrant Officer 2, GERALD ROOP 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) Vietnam**

Dear Mr. Mayfield,

Thank you so much for the information. You are very kind to do this and I really appreciate it. This information describes the last part of my father's career. Do you have some ideas on how I could find out more about the early years of his career? Are there websites where I might be able to find this out?

Thank you again,

Barb Llewellyn

G Craig Llewellyn [barb4nsix@sbcglobal.net]

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First Name: Jesse

Last Name: Chandler

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Comments: Hello,

My name is Jesse Chandler. My grandfather is William H Chandler "aka Bill or Peavine". My father recently gave me a box of his medals and some other items from when he was in the military. I found a Zippo lighter that reads "China Sea View Club 6th Battalion 71st Artillery. I was just trying to find out where all he had been and places he had served. He served in WW2, Korean War, and Vietnam. From what I can tell he was an E9 Sergeant Major. He passed away when I was too young to ask questions about the things he had done, and I'm just interested in finding out a little more about him. If you have any info or knew him I'd love to hear about it.

Thank you

Jesse Chandler

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First Name: Brandon

Last Name: Selmer

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Comments: Hello,

I'm trying to put together a uniform for a buddy of mine that was part of D Battery 71st ARTY Army-Aus-Atry. He deployed to Vietnam with the unit and received a purple heart for injuries he sustained there. He is a close family friend. However, I am having a problem finding the correct unit patch for the uniform. I know that now some unit patches are different from Battery patches. Any help would be great. Nice site, love the pics.

Respectfully,

1LT Salmeri  
C CO 502d MI BN, 201st BfSB, COB Basrah Iraq, Platoon Leader

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**Pride runs deep in the Hearts of the Officers and Men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 56<sup>th</sup> Artillery**

Mr. Mayfield,

I am sorry to respond to your email so late. The Army Aviation Assoc forwarded it promptly but I was out of the country when it arrived and only recently opened it.

43 years ago I was Capt Forster, CO of C Battery, 6/56th Arty just west of Ton San Nhut Airport. LTC Jim Hollis was brave enough to give me the opportunity to command one his batteries and the C Battery NCO's and soldiers carried me forward - convincing me that the Army was the life for me. 30 years later I retired as a LTG. In a strange coincidence, one of my generator mechanics (Alfonso Scott) in C Battery became my battalion motor NCO at Fort Lewis 10 years later. Though I went on to command field artillery and aviation units, I kept the 56th Artillery as my regiment and was wearing the crest when I retired in 1995.

As I go thru my mementos I'll see if there is anything that may be of interest to you.

William H. Forster  
LTG, US Army (ret)

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**What NATO partner used the HAWK missile to bring down an aircraft in combat? Okay, times up! The French in 1987.**



Remains of a Libyan Tupolev Bomber TU-22 shot down on Sept 7, 1987 by a French HAWK missile battery. The 3rd battery of the 403rd Regiment d'Artillerie (RA) led by 1st Lt. Aznar over N'djamena, the capital of Chad in Africa.



Class Picture 403 TH RA (Artillery Regiment) 1987. Photo by Gilles Ruben ((Gilles Ruben) 2nd row, 14th from left)

**Quiz:**

- 1. What are the 9 Types of Aircraft shot down by the HAWK missile system in combat?**
- 2. What United States manufactured fighter aircraft was shot down by a HAWK missile in combat?**

**For answers go to <http://6tbattalion56thartillery.com> Tab, THE DEADLY HAWK MISSILE.**