

## HC-7 PRESENTS USMC COMBAT AIRCREW WINGS AND HONORS FIRST COMMANDING OFFICER “LLOYD PARTHEMER” AT THE 2008 REUNION IN LAS VEGAS



**HC-7s First Commanding Officer, CDR Lloyd Parthemer** was honored by all hands at the HC-7 2008 reunion in Las Vegas. Five of HC-7s eight Commanding Officer attended; Lloyd Parthemer 1 of 8, Don Gregory 3 of 8, Dave McCracken 6 of 8, William Lamberth 7 of 8 & Walt Lester 8 of 8. Most of the alumni have known Lloyd since he was a crusty old Commander at Imperial Beach and all hands agree forty plus years later that Lloyd remains a crusty old Commander.

Lloyd Parthemer made it possible to qualify Navy Helicopter CSAR aircrewmembers from the Viet Nam era to retroactively receive the USMC Combat Aircrew Wings. This was no easy feat. Even though it took much work and a couple of years he never gave up. The recognition he has provided to our aircrewmembers is a valuable contribution to them personally and to the history of the Navy Helos in Viet Nam.

Lloyd is a **Charter member Trustee and Life member of the Naval Helicopter Association (NHA)** and a strong driving force in the creation of the Naval Helicopter Historical Society (NHHS) with a goal to; Gather Preserve and Display the Legacy of Naval Helicopter Aviation not only for HC-7, but all naval helo squadrons.

Lloyd is recognized for his many achievements in the US Navy. His early career, while a 3<sup>rd</sup> class aviation ordnanceman (AOM3/c) in WWII, included searching for the lost squadron in the infamous Bermuda Triangle. He has flown a large variety of fixed and rotary wing aircraft, which explains his favorite quote, “Been There, Done That”.

The Reunion Combat Aircrew Wings awardees presented Lloyd with Honorary Viet Nam era USMC Combat Aircrew Wings. He had received his initial set in 1945. Lloyd also was presented an eagle statue that reflects Lloyd’s Power, Energy and Presence, with inscription that simply says, To Lloyd Parthemer from All Hands, HC-7 Reunion 2008.

Lloyd, this recognition and honor is bestowed upon you because over the many years you have always been available to support your men and women and worthy causes. We have learned to love and respect you, and that is why we call you the “Skipper” not the “Old Man.”

---

## HC-7 2008 Reunion - USMC Combat Aircrew Wings Presentations



It was 6 September 1972 when third crewman **AE-3 Gary Tremel** launched from the USS Gridley, with pilot LCDR Frank Koch, co-pilot LTJG Gene Gilbert, 1<sup>st</sup> crewman ADJ-2 Taco Melendez and 3<sup>rd</sup> crewman ADJ-3 Tim McCarthy, in an HC-7 Det-110 HH-3A helicopter. This was HC-7 Rescue Number 118. Combat conditions were daytime over water, under enemy AAA Shore Fire, with RESCAP bombing support, 2 – 3 miles off the beach. The potential POW was LTJG Will Pear from VA-212. CDR Dave McCracken 6<sup>th</sup> Commanding Officer of HC-7 presented the US Marine Corps Combat Aircrew Wings to Gary Tremel. Note: There is a recent article regarding the rescue of LTJG Will Pear in the Naval Aviation Museum Magazine.



**ADJ-2 Jeff English** was 2<sup>nd</sup> aircrewman in an HC-7, H-3A helicopter. It was 15 April 1968 HC-7 Rescue #30, a combat daytime rescue over water under enemy fire. Pilot & Co-pilot were LTJG Nicholson & ENS Jeff Wiant First Crewman was AX-3 Peters. Two rescued potential prisoners of war were Pilot, Officer Farnsworth and co-pilot Officer Sarnecky from Fighter Squadron 114 (VF-114). CDR Lloyd Parthemer HC-7 CO 1 of 8 presented the US Marine Corps Combat Aircrew Wings to Jeff English



**ADJ-3 George Vines**, 1<sup>st</sup> crewman, launched in the HC-3 UH-46 helicopter on 5 July 1968 to rescue CAPT David Jennings, a US Air Force F-100 pilot from Columbia, SC. Pilot & Co-pilot were Howie Varner & LTJG Mike Rist, 2<sup>nd</sup> crewman was AD-1 Doug Lopes. This mission, under enemy fire on the beach was the first and only HC-3 rescue in Viet Nam. George swam on this one to assist the downed pilot, ignoring his "fear of sea snakes" in the spirit of Indiana Jones. An Air Force Jolly Green helo picked up the co-pilot. George also served in HC-1 and was an aircrewman on the H-34, H-1, H-2 and H-46 helicopters. CDR Len Woltersdorf HC-7 XO 8 of 8 presented the US Marine Corps Combat Aircrew Wings to George Vines.

.....



**AMS-2 Lorren Hammon** served in HC-1 and HC-7 during 1968-69 and 1972-75 on DLG 10 USS King and DLG 11 Mahan and six other detachments. In 1968 while on a HC-1 CSAR Detachment in the Tonkin Gulf he was 1<sup>st</sup> Crewman during a rescue of an A-1 Spad pilot. During the rescue Lorren fired his guns to fend off local fishing junks in the area. Lorren has participated in numerous CSAR missions as aircrewman on UH-2A/B, HH-3A, SH-3A helicopters. CDR Dave McCracken, USN (Ret) 6<sup>th</sup> Commanding Officer of HC-7 presented the US Marine Corps Combat Aircrew Wings to Lorren Hammon.



**ADJ-2 Don West** was 2<sup>nd</sup> aircrewman in an HC-7, UH-2A/B helicopter. It was 19 June 1968, HC-7 Rescue #37, launched from the USS Preble, a combat nighttime rescue over water under intense enemy fire twenty two miles inland. Pilot & Co-pilot were LT Clyde Lassen and LT Leroy Cook. First Crewman was AE-2 Bruce Dallas. Yes! This was the World Famous HC-7 Medal of Honor Mission, LT Lassen was awarded the Medal of Honor, the Co-Pilot received the Navy Cross and Silver Stars to Don West and Bruce Dallas. Two potential prisoners

of war were Pilot LCDR John Holtzclaw and LCDR Zeke Burns who have been guests at previous HC-7 reunions. Sadly, LCDR Burns has recently passed away. CDR Lloyd Parthemer HC-7 CO 1 of 8 presented the US Marine Corps Combat Aircrew Wings to Don West, who came all the way from his home in the Philippines to join the HC-7 reunion.

---



**AN Frenchy Plamondon** launched with pilot LCDR Frank Koch, co-pilot LT Budd and AEAN Gary Tremel in HC-7 Det-110 Big Mother 66 an HH-3A It was HC-7's rescue number 106 on 18 June 1972 in combat conditions during day time. The potential Prisoner of War was Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) LT Ron Laib from Fighter Squadron VF-213 deployed in the USS Kitty Hawk CVA-63. Frenchy was not able to be at the HC-7 reunion because of health reasons. John Birch is seen with CDR Dave McCracken accepting the award for Frenchy. Note: Frenchy Plamondon

was featured on the cover of Naval Aviation News, posing in flight gear with the barrel of a GAU-2A/B gattling gun.

---



**Lewis "Robby" Robertson** served in HC-1 Det-3 from October 1966 to June 1967. The HC-1 UH-2 helicopter launched from the USS Gridley at South SAR Station in an attempt to rescue LT Richard "Moon" Mullins. Pilot was LT Joe Brecka, co-pilot was HC-1 CO CDR John McMinn, 1<sup>st</sup> Crewman was William J Duggan (KIA) and 2<sup>nd</sup> crewman was Lewis "Robby" Robertson. It was cloudy, at dusk, under intense enemy ground fire 5 miles inland. Richard "Moon" Mullins was taken prisoner and was held captive for six years until his release in 1973.

**William J. Duggan** was killed by the ground fire. His sister **Florence "Duggan" Bayne** was in attendance to accept her brother's USMC Combat Aircrew Wings and is seen in the picture with awardee **Lewis "Robby" Robertson**. The presentation was made by CDR Dave McCracken HC-7 CO 6 of 8.



**AMS-3 Patrick Clark** served in HC-1, HC-3 (plank owner) and HC-7 as aircrewman in UH-2A/B/C and SH-3A/B helicopters. On 25 Feb 1970 HC-7 H-2 call sign CLEM 1 launched on a daytime CSAR mission from the DLG USS Fox in the Tonkin Gulf. A VF-161 F-4 Phantom was returning from North Vietnam when MIGs got on his tail, he went to full afterburner and feet wet & the MIGs retreated. The F-4 flamed out trying to inflight refuel. Pilot LTJG Young was rescued. Patrick fired warning shots and denied enemy use of raft & survival gear by sinking it. Pilot was LT

Joe Skrzypek, Co-pilot LTJG Joe Behunin, 1st crew AE-2 Combat Conlin 2nd crew AMS-3 Patrick Clark. Joe Skrzypek recalled details of that rescue mission and presented the USMC wings to Patrick Clark.



Combat Aircrew Wings awardees with HC-7 COs - William Lamberth CO 7 of 8, Dave McCracken CO 6 of 8, Don Gregory CO 3 of 8, Jeff English, Lorren Hammon, Gary Tremmel, "Robby" Robertson, Florence "Duggan" Bayne, Patrick Clark, George Vines, John Birch, Lloyd Parthemer CO 1 of 8, Walt Lester CO 8 of 8.



-----