



# In The Beginning

“Doc” David Wilson served in Recon Platoon 1965.

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I started my military career 22 Aug 1963 at Ft Gordon, Georgia, where I had both Basic, and AIT training. After AIT I requested jump school and qualified and was sent to Ft Benning in January of 1964 for jump school. After completing Jump School, I was assigned to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg NC. After just a few weeks I was sent to Ft. Sam Houston TX for Medical School. After completing Med-School I returned to Bragg and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Air Borne. In the Spring of 1965 the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne was deployed to the Dominican Republic. My CO had me typing up a bunch of Article 15s. If I made three mistakes I had to start over. Even though I was a fast typist I was disappointed in my new role as company clerk.



I was a 19-year-old E-4 but I was pretty good friends with the 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant. Top was 35 years old and recognized the growing friction between myself and the CO. Top asked me if I would like to fly back to Ft Bragg to check on some supplies, and I jumped at the chance. I was working in the office at Ft Bragg when this guy came around with clip board looking for volunteers for a new kind of unit. I submitted a request and with my Medic MOS, I soon received orders to report to Ft. Benning, GA and was assigned to Delta Company of the newly formed 1<sup>st</sup> Calvary Division Air Mobile.

When I arrived for training at Fort Benning I was assigned to barracks with a few newbies, doing basic M16 training. There were typically 4 medics in each company. For some reason at the time there were only 3 medics in Delta Company, so I joined them. Recon. platoon was made up of mostly Airborne or Special Forces guys from the 82<sup>nd</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup>, that were older and more experienced. I requested and was assigned to be with them.

I had bonded with training Sgt Marshall from our first meeting, and since most of us in Recon Platoon were experienced, we were given many privileges during our training. We did have one evade and escape exercise that was mandatory. The unit was divided into small groups and each group was given a compass. The entire unit was loaded on 2 or 3 deuce-and-a-half's and headed to the back of the post. We began to hear explosions, and the trucks stopped to let us off. We were given the coordinates of our destination and

were told that anyone captured would be placed in a barbed wire POW camp and “tortured”. My group managed to navigate to the designated area without being captured.

Just before deployment at Ft. Benning we were told to dye our T-shirts and skivvies OD. We all got together and headed into Columbus, GA to the laundromat and loaded all our whites in the machines with a box of die. I often wonder if folks coming later had any problem with green clothes.

We set sail from Savannah Georgia in September 1965, to begin our voyage. During the trip over on the USNS Geiger, the E4 medics took turns working in the ship’s hospital. The hospital was placed midship to reduce the effect the waves had on the ship. The hospital was also air conditioned.

In the evenings the troops were restricted to “C” hold, with no AC and only canvas bunks. For a while I was able to sneak upstairs and sleep on the hospital cots, but I eventually got caught. My punishment was being sent to work in Officer’s Mess. During the passage through the Panama Canal, it got pretty rank in the Scullery since the ship was not allowed to dump garbage in the canal. We had to hold the garbage in large cans there in the mess for 2 or 3 days, But the food was great, eating left-overs from the officers. They ate much better than the NCO’s and Enlisted. In my next life, I will definitely be an officer!

The ship sailed 31 days from Savannah to Qui Nhon, On 20 September 1965 our unit was offloaded using rope ladders onto LSTs. Timing was important as you stepped from the ladder to the LST in the waves. The LSTs then took us to the beach at Qui Nhon. Once organized we were flown by Chinook to An Khe – later known as Camp Ratliff. When we arrived at An Khe the advance party told us not to worry if we heard a lot of shooting in the night, it was only the VC trying to storm the radio relay station on Hong Kong Mountain. Sure enough, that night we were treated to a spectacular show of green and red tracers flying through the air.

At the end of October, the unit was inserted into a special forces camp in Plei Me. When we landed the area looked like a logging company had clear-cut the area. As far as 200 yards out, it was total devastation. There were bodies still in the wire and the stench was so bad that half the troops threw up. Snipers were still taking pot shots at us. A1 Sky Raiders were circulating in the area to try and eliminate these snipers. 20mm shells rained down when the Sky Raiders fired, trying to suppress the sniper fire.

Delta Company 2/8 went searching for the NVA Regiment that was escaping into the Ia Drang Valley. On 4 Nov 1965, Recon Platoon found a temporary holding area for the wounded and sick NVA. We also found plenty of NVA. The fire fight began around 10:00 AM and continued until Dark. Sometime during the day parts of both Alpha and Bravo came to support Delta Company.

My Squad leader Sgt Robert Wilson was hit in upper right thigh by a spent tracer round, Sgt Wilson had lost lot of blood and was down. I knew I could put a tourniquet on him but did not know how long it would be before he would be evacuated so I used a pressure pack instead. I told the Medic on the chopper to watch this Tall Texan with a light completion and to take good care of him, which he must have done because Sgt Wilson was flown out, recovered and went on to be the Command Sgt Major for the entire 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. Patterson, an RTO, received a round in his leg and was knocked down. I went to Patterson and patched him up. He screamed “please don’t move me”! when we tried to place him on a litter. He was in terrific pain. I remember that they were able to call in at least 3 choppers to lift out the worst of the wounded. After Action battle reports indicate that one chopper was shot down. Platoon Sgt Marshal, a fabulous Guy, told me, “Doc, you have done enough today. Get out of here.” Sgt Marshall ended up somewhere in Oklahoma.

At dusk the secured area took several rounds of Incoming and Sky Raiders were called in to drop bombs on the enemy munitions' positions. About that same time, I became the last person wounded in that battle, but it was so late the birds could not see to come in. I was placed on a litter and carried back to LZ Cavalier that night. I woke up in the hospital right next to Patterson who said, "We got the million-dollar wound."

I spent a while on LZ Cavalier and then was sent to a MASH unit that was all tents. A bunch of us were laying on cots, and my leg was in a cast from my toes to my groin. I had noticed that my toes were going black, and I kept telling the medics to look at the leg, but to no avail. One day, in comes General Westmoreland and asks, "is there anything we in the hospital can do for you?" I tugged on the General's sleeve and whispered, "if these Doctors don't vent my cast, I'm going to lose my leg." And in a very short time the medics arrived venting the cast.



I was flown to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines for a couple of days and then on to California. I finally ended up back at Ft Gordon, where I was the first wounded Vietnam returnee to arrive at fort's general hospital. The hospital wards were WWII barracks with radiators for heat and no AC. I spent 16 months in FT. Gordon Hospital, the same one that had been on base when I attended Basic in 1963. I had just turned 20 when I was shot. 6 months later a photo was taken of both my dad and the Commanding General of Ft. Gordon holding me up while presenting my Purple Heart.

The Doctors at Ft. Gordon were anxious to see and treat a high-speed wound, something new to them. In his initial diagnosis, the doctor wanted to amputate my leg, but I kept putting them off as long as I could. Because I was the first Vietnam Vet, and for a while, the only wound patient at the hospital, the Doctors worked (experimented) and were successful in saving my left leg from amputation. My official diagnosis is Osteomyelitis of the upper Tibia. My leg healed initially but it had a large hole, and I never wore shorts.

After returning home from the hospital from 67-69, I drove a Cattle truck for a year and half and often drove through DFW on my way to Amarillo or Wichita Falls. In 1974 I went to work for the Post Office and enrolled part time at the University of Florida. I was the first city mail Carrier in Williston, Florida for 4 years and found no fun in the job. The rural carriers were allowed to wear anything they wanted to be comfortable. I was required to wear uniforms with wing tipped shoes, not good for an outdoor country boy. While attending UF, other students would distance themselves from myself and other Vets. In 1977 I completed a Degree in Elementary Education and History from the University,

I once had an opportunity to meet war correspondent and author Joe Galloway at a reunion in Greenville, SC. Joe and I were the only two wearing Stetsons at that reunion. I also had a chance to meet Hal Moore and I determined that he was a cocky Son-of-A-Gun. In Sept of 2004, I met Joe Galloway again at the University of Stetson in Deland, Florida. I had

(Story Continues on Page 7)

# 2024 Reunion

**Come One Come All**  
**Join us for the 2024 Annual Reunion in Jacksonville Florida**



The 2024 ASA Reunion will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton- Jacksonville Riverfront 1201 Riverplace Blvd Jacksonville Florida.

The special ASA room rates may be applied for any night from MAY 29 - June 1, 2024. Standard Room \$135.07 Tax included, River Front Room \$157.77 Tax Included, Riverfront Jr Suite \$180.47 Tax Included. Room rate includes 2 Breakfast meals per night. Check in is 4:00 PM and Checkout is 11:00.

This hotel does not provide transportation to and from the airport. Several ride share options are available as well as Taxi Service.

For hotel reservations, please call 1-800-222-8733 and reference the Group Code "ASA" All attendees will need to make their own reservations directly with the hotel.

Parking is available at the discounted rate of \$8.60 per day.

## Golf

May 29th Wednesday 10:00  
Tee time Hidden Hills Golf Club \$81.50. Register by April 25th includes green fees, cart, range balls and taxes. Club rentals are available, call 904-641-8121 to reserve.

May 30th Thursday 10:00  
South Hampton Golf Club \$81.50. Register by April 25th includes green fees, cart, range balls and taxes. Club rentals are available, call 904-287-7529 to reserve.



Thank you John Bourdelais!

**ANGRY SKIPPER ASSOCIATION, INC. 2024 REUNION ACTIVITIES REGISTRATION FORM**

DoubleTree by Hilton- Jacksonville Riverfront – MAY 29-June1, 2024

**For hotel reservations, please call 1-800-222-8733 and reference the Group Code "ASA"**

All attendees will need to make their hotel reservations. Hotel rooms are not included in package price below

Your Registration Packet will be available upon arrival at the hotel; distributed at the registration desk

Listed below are registration and meal costs for the reunion. Send the total amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$35 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at <https://www.events.afr-reg.com/e/AngrySkipper24> (3.5% will be added to credit card charges). All forms and payments must be received by May 1, 2024. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.  
322 Madison Mews  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
ATTN: Angry Skipper Association

OFFICE USE ONLY
Check # _____ Date Received _____

\*\*\*\*\* **Saturday June 1st Group Photo 4:30** \*\*\*\*\*

**REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS 5/1/2024**

Per Person	# of People	Total
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**Saturday, June 1st: BANQUET 5:30**

**Reunion Banquet** (All entrees served with side salad, seasonal vegetables, rolls and chefs choice of dessert)

Pork Tenderloin	\$58	#	\$
Chicken Marsala	\$58	#	\$
Vegetarian	\$58	#	\$

**MERCHANDISE (All orders must be in by April 15, 2024)**

**SHIRTS - Black** (Please indicate the number of shirts next to the appropriate size)

_____ Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ XLarge	\$35	#	\$
_____ XXLarge _____ XXXLarge	\$35	#	\$

**ASA CAPS - Black**

\$24	#	\$
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**Golf - Wednesday - Hidden Hills Golf Club - 10:00 AM**

\$82		
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**Golf - Thursday - South Hampton Golf Club - 10:00 AM**

\$82		
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**Mailing** If you will NOT be attending the reunion and would like any purchased merchandise mailed to you, please add the \$15 shipping fee to your total

\$15		\$
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**REGISTRATION FEE**

**Mandatory Per Person Registration Fee (Anyone attending reunion)**

If you are only purchasing merchandise, you will not need to pay the registration fee

\$15	#	\$
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**DONATION**

Please enter the amount you would like to donate/contribute to reunion funds

		\$
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**TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE TO ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, Inc.**

		\$
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FIRST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_

PLATOON \_\_\_\_\_ In Country MMY-MMYY \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE/GUEST NAMES (IF ATTENDING) \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME NUMBER ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE NUMBER ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

(Sleeping room requirements must be arranged by attendee directly with hotel)

EMERGENCY CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_ EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

Please do not send in this form if you have already registered at <https://www.events.afr-reg.com/e/AngrySkipper24>

Registrations received after the cut-off date will still be accepted on a space available basis, we will contact you immediately with any restrictions. CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays). Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Cancellations prior to May 1, 2024 will receive a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$15 per person). After May 1, please contact the association directly for refunds.

**Angry Skipper Association, Inc.**  
**Profit & Loss**  
 January through December 2023

**Angry Skipper Association, Inc.**  
**Balance Sheet**  
 As of December 31, 2023

	Jan - Dec 23
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>	
<b>Income</b>	
Banquet	4,133.00
Donations	2,988.00
Misc Income	1,000.00
Registration Fee	1,620.00
Shirts, Hats & Patches	4,307.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>14,028.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
Banquet - Saturday	4,301.00
Entertainment - Reunion	475.00
Insurance	327.00
Photographer	120.00
Postage and Delivery	751.67
Printing and Reproduction	625.00
Professional Services - Reunion	1,485.00
Shirts, Hats & Patches-reunion	4,395.01
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>12,363.74</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>1,664.26</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>1,664.26</b>

	Dec 31, 23
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Checking/Savings	
Checking - Wells Fargo Bank	5,148.92
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	<b>5,148.92</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>5,148.92</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>5,148.92</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Equity</b>	
Opening Bal Equity	3,316.97
Retained Earnings	167.69
Net Income	1,664.26
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>5,148.92</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>5,148.92</b>

## Members Identified as Deceased

03/08/2019	<b>69-70</b>	Rifle/Range	Edquist	Stephen Edquist
11/21/2020	<b>71-72</b>	White/Skull	Washburn	Daniel Washburn
01/22/2023	<b>71-72</b>	Stone Mountain	Blagg	Col (ret) Thomas E. Blagg
06/13/2023	<b>67-68</b>	Recon/Weapons	Armstrong	Thomas L Armstrong
07/11/2023	<b>66-67</b>	Wild/Cat	Lang	James Lang
07/23/2023	<b>70-71</b>	White/Skull	Wagner	Jim Wagner
09/01/2023	<b>66-67</b>	Wild/Cat	Hoffman	Terry Hoffman
12/03/2023	<b>70</b>	White/Skull	Berry	David W. Berry
12/18//2023	<b>69-70</b>	Cat (Medic)	Davis	Mitch Davis
12/25/2023	<b>68-69</b>	Skipper 6	Colavita	LTC (ret) Henry Colavita
12/31/2023	<b>70</b>	Wild/Cat	Spence	David Spence

### Minutes of Business Meeting May 20, 2023

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Phoenix-Mesa/Chandler - Mesa, AZ

Ed Regan gave the Treasurer's report and informed members that he renewed the annual insurance for ASA; (2) Eugene Curtis (Skull, 70-71) stated \$1,500 hospitality suite funds are avail for next year; (3) Members voted for John Dullahan (FO, 71-72) as President, Jim Garvin (Range, 70-71) as VP; Ed Regan (Range, 68-69) remains Treasurer and Robin Woo (Skull, 71-72) remains Secretary; (4) Members voted for Doug Hilts (Range, 70-71) as Chairman of the Board; the remaining serving members of the Board shall continue serving. They are Stan Dillon (Range, 70-71), Chuck Hustedt (Skull, 69), Bob Burke (Skull, 70-71), Ed Regan, Robin Woo and Thomas Vollmar (Skull, 70-71). Rich O'Brien (Wild Cat, 67) was removed from the Board due to his passing. Rich O'Brien served as Chairman and a Board member for decades and we will miss him; (5) Members voted for black cap and shirt for next year. Members voted for reunion location and year embroidered on the right sleeve of the shirt; (6) Members voted to cancel D.C. in 2024 and replace with Jacksonville, FL, hosted by Bob Burke (Skull, 70-71) and Ft Hood, TX in 2025, hosted by Jim Garvin (Range, 70-71); (7) John Dullahan called adjournment to the business meeting.

(Continued from Page 3)

read in the paper that Hal Moore was to be there to deliver a guest lecture on “War and Peace and Leadership”. He was also signing books. I also had the opportunity to meet Captain Max Cleland, then Sec of VA from Georgia. Captain Cleland was a triple Amputee in a wheelchair but a man with a great attitude. I was also able to meet Sgt Robert Wilson, my Recon Squad Leader in Vietnam, at a 1<sup>st</sup> Cav Reunion when he was part of an honor guard. This was the same guy I had patched up back on 4 Nov 1965.

In 2007 Chuck Kline talked me into going to a Reunion in Washington DC. He told me I had to see the Wall and suggested I go late at night. Chuck and Ken Perkins took me to the wall and stayed back on the lawn as I moved toward the panel of the Wall where my buddies’ names were located. I think they knew what an emotional moment it would be and let me experience it to the fullest.

I began my teaching career in 1977 when I took over for a Kindergarten teacher the last 2 months before school was out for the summer. My degree at the University of Florida was in American History and I taught primarily high school American History after that. I have taught every grade in public school. I taught high school and middle school for the better part of my 30 years and bought four years for my military service for my retirement in 2007.

While teaching in Branson, Florida I met my wife “April May” who happened to be born in March. April had a daughter from a previous marriage. April and I were married in March of 1982 and had a son in March 1983. I am still so grateful for April’s understanding about what living with a PTSD husband is like. My son from a previous marriage at age 50, started a second career as a Registered Nurse. April’s little Girl is now the principal of a private School. Our youngest son is now an Administrator with the VA Hospital.

I retired with 90% medical disability. It was only in late 2023 that I was finally awarded 100% with the VA. I am still dealing with infection in the wound on his leg and might yet have to have it amputated.

On 14 Nov 1965 Col Hinal Moor and the 7<sup>th</sup> Cav fought the battle of LZ Xray made famous in a book and Movie. Just 10 days prior, 4 Nov 1965, marked the beginning of the Delta Company Honor Roll. Richard Coffey, Wright Hamill, and Eddie Hill died that day. Terry Rippy would die 22 April 1966 of his wounds. These four soldiers were my friends.

“We Were Soldiers ..... Once and Young”.

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Brothers:

This is your newsletter. Please give us some feedback on what you would like to see in future newsletters from the Angry Skipper Association. I personally believe that the history of the unit is important and that we should make some effort to preserve that information for future generations. I encourage each of you to submit a memory of your time in the unit. I would also enjoy hearing how each of you has served your country and your community since your return home. What would you be willing to share so that the Angry Skippers will never be forgotten? Do you have photos you would be willing to share of you and your buddies?

Please send Stories and Pictures to [james.garvin47@yahoo.com](mailto:james.garvin47@yahoo.com)

or text to 817-688-0731

or

Snail Mail to

Jim Garvin

121 S Bluebonnet Cir

Justin TX 76247

**ANGRY SKIPPER ASSOCIATION, INC ®**  
**P.O. BOX 501**  
**Stockton, NJ 08559**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



*"Remember the bad times once,  
Remember the good times forever"*

We are on the web:  
**[www.angriskyperassociation.org](http://www.angriskyperassociation.org)**

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**1<sup>st</sup> CLASS**  
**U. S. POSTAGE PAID**  
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## **Upcoming Reunions:**

8th Cav Assoc, 1-5MAY24. Fort Benning, contacts;  
Smiley Harris 678 340 6512, Larry Hempfling 414 229 7701, Top Gun Dotson 270 978 1075.

Angry Skipper Association - 29MAY24 - 1JUNE24, Jacksonville, FL (See Registration Form)

1st Cav Div, 19-23JUNE24, Crowne Plaza, Louisville, KY 866-888-0620

Kentucky Campout 16-20 Oct 2024 Contacts  
Smiley Harris 678 340 6512, Larry Hempfling 414 229 7701, Top Gun Dotson 270 978 1075.

Summer/Fall 2024, Wreath laying - Tangier, VA for Warren "Snake" Eskridge, Contact: Ed Regan 609-947-9845.

I laid a wreath there on a Veterans Day sometime in the past with Rocky and Mouse. We stayed at a place called Brigadune Inn. Tangier Island is DRY, so if you do attend and desire to imbibe, be sure to BYOB, unlike Rocky and Mouse, who all along the way were talking about stopping for some booze to bring along and deciding that they would purchase it once we arrived on the island. Upon de-embarking off the ferry, they asked where the local package store was and when they were told that Tangier Island is DRY, they exclaimed something that sounded like WTF!

Thank you Ed Regan