

January 21, 2018

U.S Senate Committee on Armed Services  
Russell Senate Building Room 228  
Washington, DC 20510-6050

The Honorable Senator Richard Blumenthal

Dear Senator Blumenthal,

First, please accept my gratitude for your public service to our country as a United States Senator representing Colorado.

I am writing you and the other members of the U.S Senate Committee on Armed Services to correct a grave injustice that has affected the families of 93 U.S. Army Rangers and the 11 flight crew members aboard Flying Tiger Line Flight 739/14 N6921C bound for Saigon, Vietnam which disappeared between Guam and the Philippines on March 16, 1962. **My father, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Melvin Lewis Hatt, from Lansing, Michigan was on that flight.**

Because of the Department of Defense statement of casualty as “non-battle” status for these American heroes, they have been DENIED their rightful place on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, DC since its establishment. ***Senator Blumenthal, this cannot stand.***

**Senator Blumenthal, two of these soldiers on that flight are from your represented state of Colorado: Henry Francis “Hank” Biernacki and Charles W. Pardonnet.**

*OUR MISSION IS*

*To bring tangible, visible honor and recognition to the 93 U.S. Army Rangers and flight crew who gave their last full measure of devotion in service to their country March 16, 1962 aboard Flying Tiger flight 739/14 enroute to Saigon, Vietnam. To bring their survivors and loved ones a place to remember, receive long-overdue peace and comfort, as well as visible evidence that their loved one's life, service and sacrifice mattered.*

Senator Blumenthal, the best way I can relate this to you is by telling you my personal story. I would kindly ask that you read it, bearing in mind that my mission is to see that the names of every servicemember on that flight are placed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. as well as the flight crew, all of whom served honorably as well.

The last letter my father, U.S. Army Staff Sgt Melvin Lewis Hatt from Sierra Vista, AZ wrote to my grandmother in Lansing, contains these words “I am due in Port 15 Feb (Travis AFB CA) so you can see I will be gone when this arrives.” The letter, dated February 11, 1962 goes on to say, “I will probably fly as am due in Saigon, Vietnam, 25 Feb so am on a hurry up special assignment, for sure.” That same day, this picture was taken of my father Melvin, mother Patricia, me, and my younger sister, Sherri-Ann. I was five years old, Sherri was two. To this

day, I have distinct memories of the servicemen at our door in Arizona, telling our mother that her husband was missing in action.

A postcard to our grandmother dated March 15, 1962 from Wake Island Guam described the hot weather and that they should arrive in Saigon the next morning, having crossed the international dateline. There are images on-line of postcards sent to family by other victims from Guam. One of the few things my dad told Sherri and I about this incident was that the passengers and crew departed the plane in Guam, where it was left unattended on the tarmac, leading to suspicions of sabotage as a reason for the plane's disappearance.

Flying Tiger flight 739/14 was a Lockheed L-1049 Constellation prop liner. The flight departed Travis AFB March 15, 1962 refueled uneventfully in Honolulu, and landed in Guam for refueling, with the destination being Clark AFB Philippines and Saigon, Vietnam. The plane lost radio contact 1 ½ hours after leaving Guam. Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) records indicate its disappearance as the Western Pacific Ocean, Philippine Sea. The crew of the SS T.L. Lentzen supertanker sighted a midair explosion at 12:30 a.m. local time. The subsequent search covering 144,000 square miles found nothing. [www.planecrashinfo.com](http://www.planecrashinfo.com)

The largest sea-and-air search that had ever been conducted at that time, was initiated 5 hours after the plane's fuel exhaustion time failed to turn up even a trace of the airline or its passengers. "Due to the lack of substantiating evidence," The Civil Aeronautics Board concluded in its accident report back then, "the board is unable to state with any degree of certainty the exact fate of N6921C." Bangor Daily News, 2004, [www.bangornews.com](http://www.bangornews.com)

As of 2017, fifty-five years later without an official declaration by the Defense Department of killed in action, missing in action, or prisoners of war, the names of the 93 U.S. Army Rangers do not appear on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. In addition to my father, two other servicemen, Stanley McEntee (Detroit) and James Taylor (Olive Branch) were from Michigan. The lack of inclusion on the National Wall has had a snowball effect with Vietnam memorials in the State of Michigan, and Ingham County. My father's name is not listed on these memorials, either.

The justification by the Defense Department for non-inclusion is that "the circumstances of death did not meet the criteria for inclusion on the VVM. They (sic) did not die in DIRECT support of a combat mission. We have received many requests over the years, similar to this one, to add the names of the victims of the Flying Tiger incident to the VVM." Personal e-mail. U.S. Army 2001.

The 93 U.S. Army Rangers aboard Flight 739/14 were trained in chemical, biological and radioactive warfare as well as jungle combat and communications. There has been speculation over the years that these servicemen were part of a hand-picked team from all over the United States sent to Vietnam in the very early days of the war. The fact that the plane never reached its destination should not negate the original mission.

In an article of Stars and Stripes, and I quote "Though we may never know why the aircraft went down, it would still bring great solace to surviving family members for their loved ones to be

recognized for the mission they never got to complete,” said national VFW spokesman Joe Davis. [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com) [burke.matt@stripes.com](mailto:burke.matt@stripes.com) July 24, 2013.

As I have read and re-read this article, I found the quote from a surviving son, Tommy Joe Myers, son of Army Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Raymond “Bill” Myers to be perhaps the most disturbing. Myers states that after years of being turned away and threatened when pressing for answers and recognition, he has lost all hope. **Why would a surviving son, asking for answers and the inclusion of his fathers’ name on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial be threatened 50+ years after the crash that took the lives of his father and 92 other U.S. Army Rangers?**

Letters since the time of the VVM wall opened in 1982 have been written to the U.S. Army, the Defense Department, and legislators, petitions on [www.change.org](http://www.change.org) have been signed. All to no avail meeting denials and brick walls at every turn.

My adopted father, my father’s brother Normand Hatt, tried for years to get this accomplished. The loss of his only brother devastated him. “He shared a little bit about that particular time and the fear and upset” said Sherri Owen, my sister. “He just felt his world had been blown to pieces.” Lansing State Journal. May 29, 2017. K. Lavey [www.lsj.com](http://www.lsj.com). This was not to be accomplished in his lifetime. He died in 2014.

Normand Hatt and his wife Laurene adopted Sherri and I after this incident in 1962 as our mother Patricia suffered what was at time called a “nervous breakdown”. She would never recover. Adding us to a family of four children, they provided us with a good life, and I am forever grateful.

While doing some of my research, I did come across a bright spot in the midst of this quagmire. In an article published November 13, 2017 by the Bellefontaine Examiner <https://examiner.org> Sgt. John A. Karibo of Logan County, Ohio was officially recognized as Logan County’s first casualty of the Vietnam War. John Roybal, an Air Force veteran, spoke of his experience being part of the search party that looked for the missing plane. At the Veteran’s Day ceremony, he presented flags to Sgt. Karibo’s surviving family members.

I find at times I feel the same frustration as other surviving family members, where to turn next, how to cut through the red-tape and redactions of bureaucracy. This journey has been in fits and starts, and where it will end I have no idea. What I do know is that the 93 U.S. Army Rangers that perished that day in 1962 were American heroes, giving their last full measure of sacrifice in service to their country. They do not deserve to be a forgotten memory of the Vietnam War, and **I am asking for your support and any assistance you have to offer to see that they are honored and recognized on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.**

The snowball effect that I mention earlier has likely applied to every surviving family. Because of the denial of their place on the VVM in Washington, they are denied a place of honor in their home state, county, and city.

The efforts to accomplish this has been going on since the establishment of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in 1982. The logic for the denial of placement on the VMW is insulting to the bravery and memory of these brave souls “they did not die in DIRECT support of a combat

mission” Please let me repeat an earlier statement of fact: The 93 U.S. Army Rangers aboard Flight 739/14 were trained in chemical, biological and radioactive warfare as well as jungle combat and communications. There has been speculation over the years that these servicemen were part of a hand-picked team from all over the United States sent to Vietnam in the very early days of the war. If not going to Saigon, Vietnam as part of the DIRECT support of a combat mission, what was their assignment? Yet another unanswered question. Some families have related it took years and a FOIA to even get a true passenger list!

When I requested a change of casualty status for my father, I was instructed by e-mail that it would have to go through the Army Board for Correction of Military Records. I was told further that over the years numerous families have made the request that their loved one’s name be added to the Vietnam Memorial Wall. DENIED.

Senator Blumenthal, there is precedent set to exception to this continuing litany of denial, secrecy, and stone-walling. President Reagan in 1983 ordered that 68 soldiers be added. Those soldiers were on an R&R in Hong Kong when their plane crashed. Sen. Charles Schumer, New York, is among those lobbying for another exception: to include 74 sailors from the destroyer U.S.S. Frank Evans. The ship sank after it was struck by an Australian aircraft carrier during a training exercise in 1969, outside the designated combat zone. [www.lsj.com](http://www.lsj.com) K. Lavey May 29, 2017.

Quoting the Lansing State Journal Opinion Page May 28, 2017, “It’s been more than 50 years since the Vietnam conflict and 35 years since the memorial was unveiled. What’s the harm in bringing some peace to 93 families who want their loved ones to be forever remembered for making the ultimate sacrifice to the United States?”

Senator Blumenthal, I would ask you and the other members of the Senate Committee for Armed Services the same question. What is the harm? Why have there been YEARS of trying to accomplish this by surviving family members only to be met with denial, lack of information, redacted information, and threats? Did these families receive as much as a Gold Star? The memorial services held for these **93 U.S. Army Rangers** were held with no remains, as none were ever found. Families lives were shattered and forever changed that fateful day, and over 50 years later, is this how they are rendered Thank you from a grateful nation?

I have enclosed copies of documents specifically relating to my father, Staff Sgt. Melvin Lewis Hatt. Also enclosed are copies of the letter being sent to your colleagues on the committee, a passenger list of soldiers and flight crew, and as much information as I have. If you have your staff Google Flight 739/14 1962 Flying Tiger, you may be surprised at the number of entries.

As of this letter, I have been asked to provide the information about this mission to Bob Higley, Commander, The American Legion Department of Michigan, 6<sup>th</sup> District Association, John Meka, Post Commander, Haslett Post 269 (Michigan), and MG James A. Pocock, AUS (Ret) after a presentation I gave December 14, 2017 at the Haslett MI Post. They are in support of this mission.

Senator Blumenthal, I would like to request a meeting with you and the other members of the Senate Committee for Armed Services in Washington, D.C. **as soon as possible.**

I thank you for your thoughtful consideration in this mission. Our families have tried for years to accomplish this mission, and it is now my turn.

Sincerely yours,

Donna (Hatt) Ellis  
1797 Lyndhurst Way  
Haslett, Michigan 48840  
517-339-2051  
517-974-2880  
[Donnalyn.ellis@gmail.com](mailto:Donnalyn.ellis@gmail.com)

Cc: Members of U.S. Senate Committee for Armed Services (27 members):  
Individual letters & documentation as in this packet

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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## **Journey to the Vietnam National Memorial Wall Washington, D.C.**

*Presented to American Legion Post #269, Haslett, Michigan on December 14, 2017*

Good evening. Thank you so much for having me here to tell the story about how the crash of Flight 739/14 in 1962 dramatically changed my family's life. This "walk to the Wall" however it should turn out, is dedicated to my sister, Sherri-Ann Owen, and our dad, Normand Hatt, whose only brother gave his life in service to our country.

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I would like to acknowledge the support of Alexis Begale, Kathleen Lavey, and David Jones. Their interest in the importance of this walk to the Wall has inspired me and re-energized my efforts. The immediate reply of an e-mail sent to Matt Burke at Stars and Stripes this week offering his assistance means everything.

Thank you for letting me tell my story this evening.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Letter to Senate Committee for Armed Services Member

Presentation American Legion #269 Haslett Michigan 12/14/2017

Information received by e-mail under FOIA 2018 January

Photos & Documentation for Staff Sargent Melvin Lewis Hatt

Passenger List – Service members and Flight Crew Flight 739/14 1962

Civil Aeronautics Board Aircraft Accident Report – April 10, 1963

E-mail from Donna (Hatt) Ellis to TAPC Officer United States Army requesting IDPF and Change of Casualty Status for Melvin Lewis Hatt – 2001 and response

Newspaper Article – Lansing State Journal Interview Donna (Hatt) Ellis

Newspaper Editorial – Lansing State Journal

Newspaper Article – Stars and Stripes

Newspaper – Bangor News

Reprints transcribed from National newspapers re: Flying Tiger Flight 739/14 1962

Selected Internet articles (see references)

**INFORMATION RELEASABLE UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT****NAME:**

HATT MELVIN LEWIS

**BRANCH OF SERVICE AND SERIAL/SERVICE NUMBER(S):**

USA RA 16 251 068

**DATES OF SERVICE:**

9 JUNE 1947 TO 30 APRIL 1962

**DUTY STATUS:**

Died in Service

**RANK/GRADE:**

SFC

**SALARY:**

N/A

**SOURCE OF COMMISSION:**

N/A

**PROMOTION SEQUENCE NUMBER:**

N/A

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS:**

SEE ATTACH

**MILITARY EDUCATION:**

N/A

**DECORATIONS AND AWARDS:**

AMERICAN THEATER CAMPAIGN MEDAL; ASIATIC PACIFIC CAMPAIGN MEDAL; WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL; HONORABLE SERVICE LAPEL PIN (RUPTURED DUCK); GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL WITH 4 LOOPS; MARKSMAN RIFLE &amp; CARBINE BAR;

**TRANSCRIPT OF COURT-MARTIAL TRIAL:**

NOT IN FILE

**PHOTOGRAPH:**

N/A

**PLACE OF ENTRY:**

LANSING MI

**PLACE OF SEPARATION:**

US ELM MAAG VIET-NAM (9787) SAIGON

**FOR DECEASED VETERAN ONLY****PLACE OF BIRTH**

DELHI TOWNSHIP MI

**DATE OF DEATH**

30 APRIL 1962

**LOCATION OF DEATH**

BETWEEN GUAM AND PHILIPPINE ISLAND

**PLACE OF BURIAL**

N/A

NOTE: N/A denotes information is not available in the veteran's records

**SECTION 4-ARTICLES OF WAR-READ AS REQUIRED**

SECTION 4 - ARTICLES OF WAR - READ AS REQUIRED						
DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE
11 AUG '40	23 JUN '40	00 JUL '40				
27 JAN '40	26 DEC '40					

SECTION 5 - ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH

**SECTION 5-ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH ATTACHED**

[illegible]

SECTION 6-ORIGINAL ASSIGNMENT AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY ASSIGNED  
DURING THIS PERIOD OF SERVICE

[illegible]

## SECTION 7—COMBAT RECORD

[illegible]

### SECTION 3—WOUNDS RECEIVED THROUGH ENEMY ACTION

SECTION 5 - WOUNDS RECEIVED THROUGH ENEMY ACTION			
BRIEF DESCRIPTION	DATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	DATE

**SECTION 9-REMARKS-ADMINISTRATIVE**



New recruits at the United States naval training station, Great Lakes, Ill., are eight Lansing and East Lansing men. They are now receiving instruction in seamanship, military drill and naval procedure. The local men are: Lloyd E. Tyler, 17, 506 Irving avenue; Leo B. Chastin, Jr., 17, 514 East Grand River avenue; Richard L. Reyes, 17, 622 North Hayford avenue; Francis L. McKinney, 17, 519 North Foster avenue; Lloyd F. Minnard, 17, 502 North Cedar street; Leonard M. Blok, 23, 1712 1/2 Fudge avenue; Donald H. Dunkel, 17, 322 Cleveland street, and Melvin L. Hatt, 18, R. 5.

Melvin L. Hatt, USN, before  
career Army

GREAT LAKES, ILLINOIS

11-9-43

(Date)

HATT MELVIN LEWIS AS

Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

Rank or Rating

(Print or Write Legibly)

has arrived at the U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois for duty.

HIS ADDRESS WILL BE: COMPANY 1712

U. S. NAVAL TRAINING STATION, GREAT LAKES, ILLINOIS

When writing to him please address mail with his FULL NAME, RANK or RATING, and UNIT as above. There may be other men on the Station with the same name and initials. Do not use nickname.

NTSGL-C-57-9-23-43-200M

POSTAL OFFICER



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wedding picture Melvin L +  
Patricia D Hatt - 2/14/48

11 Feb. 1962  
Box 1293 Sierra Vista  
Ariz:

Dear Mom + all:

Just a few  
lines to give you the latest  
and up to date report.

We moved into town  
→ last Tuesday on final word  
I am due in Port 15 Feb  
so as you can see I will be  
gone with the arrival.

Patty is pretty nervous  
but I feel I hope she  
will be ok and am sure  
she can if I try hard.

We have a small 2 bedrm  
house right in town.

---

Last letter home before Melvin L. Hatt  
left AZ for Vietnam



II

→ I will probably fly home due  
in Siagon - Viet Nam, 25 Feb  
so on a hurry up special  
assignment, for sure.

We cleaned yard & got house  
shaped up in fair shape  
in my spare minutes.

The weather has been in middle  
70° for last 2 weeks or so days  
and 40° at night.

There isn't much more to say  
so write when you can.  
My Address

SFC MELVIN L HATT RA 16251068

USA EIL MAAG

APO 143

SAN FRANCISCO

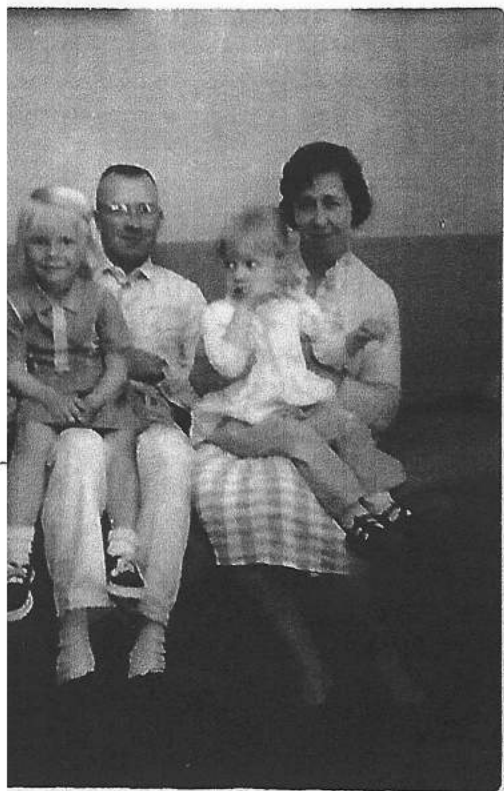
CALIF.

Letty & Lane  
M. H. H.  
Patty

etc.

---

Melvin  
Patricia  
Donna - left  
Sherri - right



Feb. 11, 1962

POSTCARD



15 May 61  
1400Z  
Hi mom  
Left east Tokyo  
at 2200 and via the  
at new home in Am. So  
for a good flight. Real  
hit here as well before  
hears on. Should be in the  
know have crossed the plate  
line.

Mrs. AS  
Boy 364A  
R3  
Mason  
Mich.

Begin  
Son  
ml. A West in Color Card

Postcard from Guam - plane  
disappeared that day.  
Father wrote 61 by mistake

# Flare Sighted At Sea Spurs Plane Search

## Lansing Native On Lost Plane

A Lansing native who is no stranger to sea disasters was on the chartered airliner that disappeared in the Pacific with 187 persons aboard.

He is Sgt. 1-C Melvin L. Hatt, 36, a career serviceman.

Hatt was attending Lansing Technical high school and living on a Lansing rural route when he entered the navy in November, 1943.

After receiving boot training at Great Lakes naval station, he served on 16 ships in the Pacific area from January, 1944 to April, 1946. The picture of Sgt. Hatt, shown here, is an old one, taken when he was in the navy.



He escaped injury during this tour when a minesweeper, the U. S. S. Marathon, was blown up under him off the coast of Japan.

Hatt was discharged from the navy in 1946 but after three months of civilian life he enlisted in the army.

Numerous assignments took him all over the country in subsequent years and for the past two years he had been stationed in Ft. Huachuca, Ariz.

Hatt's wife, Patricia, a southern girl whom he married in 1948, and the couple's two daughters, Donna, 5, and Sherry, 2, live in Sierra Vista, Ariz.

His father, J. W. Hatt, Jr., died some years ago but his mother and younger brother, Normand, live on a college farm in Mason.

Normand, an Oldsmobile employee, reported that Melvin's last visit to the Lansing area was five years ago.

Melvin's brother-in-law, Darvie Pulver of Lansing, is employed in the circulation department of The State Journal.

# Kin of Mason Area Residents Lost on Airliner off Guam

Out at 623 N. College road a family waits and hopes, but as each day goes by that hope fades a little.

to his relatives here was 5 years ago. His father, L. W. Hatt Jr., has been dead for several years.

The home is that of Mr. and Mrs. Normand Hatt and Hatt's mother, Mrs. Alma Hatt. Mrs. Hatt's son and Hatt's brother, Sgt. 1/C Melvin Hatt, 36, for 19 years a career soldier, was among 107 servicemen aboard the chartered airliner that disappeared in the Pacific off Guam last week.

"I doubt if any bodies will ever be found," Normand Hatt told the Ingham County News Sunday during an interview. "They may find pieces from the ship, but I am afraid none of the victims will ever be found."

"We received a telegram Saturday from the army notifying us of the disappearance of the ship and informing us that nothing was known of the survivors, if there are any. We are still hoping, however."

Mrs. Alma Hatt was visiting her sister, Mrs. Augret Slee, 122 N. Alger street, in Lansing. Her son said she was at her sister's home when the disaster was first reported.

Hatt said he is making arrangements for some member of the family to go to Sierra Vista, Arizona, where Sgt. Hatt's wife Patricia and their 2 children, Donna, 5, and Sherry, 2, reside.

"I think we will bring them back here to live," Hatt said.

For the past 2 years Sgt. Hatt has been stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

He and his wife were married in 1948. Mrs. Hatt's home was in the south.

Sgt. Hatt for many years was a Lansing resident. He lived in the vicinity of S. Cedar street and Jolly road. He was a student at Lansing Technical high school when he enlisted in the navy in 1943. He went through boot training at Great Lakes Naval Training station and from January 1944 to April 1946 he served on 16 ships in the Pacific area.

No stranger to sea disasters, he was aboard a minesweeper, the U. S. S. Marathon, when it was blown up under him off the coast of Japan.

Hatt was discharged from the navy in 1946 and entered civilian life. After 3 months, however, he tired of this and enlisted in the army.

He has served at numerous places throughout the country since enlistment. His last visit

# Sgt. Hatt Memorial Is Planned

A memorial service for Sgt. 1-C Melvin L. Hatt, 36, victim of a plane disaster last March 16, will be conducted at 2 p. m. Sunday at First Presbyterian church. Holt. Rev. Vernon T. Smith, pastor, will be in charge.



Sgt. Hatt, a native of Lansing, was one of 107 men aboard a Hatt chartered airliner when it disappeared between Guam and Vietnam. He was en route to duty in Vietnam from Ft. Huachuca, Ariz. No trace of the plane has ever been found.

A career serviceman, Sgt. Hatt had been a member of the armed forces for 18 years. He was attending Lansing Technical high school, when he entered the navy in November 1943. Discharged in 1946, he enlisted in the army three months later.

Sgt. Hatt was the son of Mrs. Alma I. Hatt, 4407 S. Cedar st., and the late Lewis W. Hatt. His wife, Patricia, and a daughter, Sherri, 2, live in Sierra Vista, Ariz. Another daughter, Donna, 5, is presently residing with Sgt. Hatt's brother, Normand E. Hatt, 623 N. College rd., Mason.

The picture of Sgt. Hatt shown here, was taken while he was serving in the navy.



*The United States of America  
honors the memory of*

MELVIN L. HATT

*This certificate is awarded by a grateful  
nation in recognition of devoted and  
selfless consecration to the service  
of our country in the Armed Forces  
of the United States.*

*John F. Kennedy*  
*President of the United States*

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY.

*David J. Mc Inroy*

DAVID J. MC INROY  
CWO, W-2, USA  
Assistant Adjutant General  
Fq, USAEPG, Fort Huachuca, Arizona

"SEAL"

*Statement of Casualty - Melvin L. Hall*



From: MenuDriven <MenuDriven@aol.com>  
Date: Thu, 19 Mar 1998 22:57:36 EST  
To: ellisd@pilot.msu.edu  
Subject: Re: Melvin (Print)  
X-Mailer: AOL 3.0 for Windows 95 sub 51

Headquarters  
Department of the Army  
Office of the Adjutant General  
Washington DC

Statement of Casualty. (keep in mind this is very faded and blurry in places)  
Date Prepared April 20, 1962.

Service Identification (Name, Service Number, Class or Rate; (???) Branch or Organization:  
Hatt, Melvin Lewis, RA I6 251 86D; (the three smudges); (two smudges); US ELN  
MA40 Viet-nam (9787) Saigon, Viet-Nam

Casualty Status: Non-Battle -- Died 16 March 1962. Passenger aboard a chartered Flying Tiger Airlines aircraft which disappeared on a flight between Guam and Phillipine Islands. Intensive air-sea rescues search conducted revealed no evidence of any survivors or wreckage of plane.

Date and Place of Birth, Race, Religious Preference: 13 November, 1923, Lansing, Michigan, Caucasian, Protestant

Date & Place of Last Entry or Active Duty in Current Status and Home of Record  
At Time: 6 November 1950, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, (blurry there, I'm guessing); Lansing, Ingham County, Michigan

Social Security Number, Pay Grade, Length of Service for Pay, Basic Pay, Incentive Pay: 358-12-4782, S-6, Over 16 years, 4500.00

Certified True Copy  
by David J. Mc Inroy,  
CWO, W-2, USA, Assistant Adjutant General,  
Hq, USAEPG, Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

Seal"

Secretary of the Army  
Major General USA  
Adjutant General

By Order of the  
J.C. Lambert,  
The

**STATES OF RESIDENCE AND NUMBER OF PASSENGERS &/OR CREW ABOARD  
FLYING TIGER FLIGHT 739/14 N6239C.**

<u>State</u>	<u>Number of Passengers</u>
Michigan	3
Arizona	3
Oklahoma	1
Nebraska	1
Arkansas	2
North Carolina	2
Georgia	8
Texas	5
South Carolina	1
Missouri	4
New Hampshire	1
New York	8
Colorado	2
Indiana	2
Hawaii	2
Virginia	5
Maine	2
New Mexico	1
Illinois	3
California	8
Pennsylvania	3
Tennessee	2
Washington	7
Ohio	3
Wisconsin	2
Austria	home state Virginia
Holland	
Guam	

## **United States Military Personnel and Flight Crew -- Flight 739/14/1962**

### **United States Military Personnel Listed Alphabetically**

SFC James Armes, Virginia	Pvt. Homer Adams, Ukon, West Virginia
SP4 Robert Baggett, Burlington, North Carolina	Pvt Billy Atkins, Black Mountain, North Carolina
Sgt Donald Aaron Barnes, Granite City, Illinois	Sgt Robert Bako, Elbridge, New York
SP5 Richard Bayse, Prince George, Virginia	Pfc Thomas Baxley, Thomasville, Georgia
	MSgt Henry Francis "Hank" Biernacki, Colorado Springs, Colorado
SFC George Bliss, Ft Jay, New York	Pvt James Dale Bowen, Indianapolis, Indiana
Pvt Joseph Broome, Danville, Virginia	SFC John Joseph Burns, San Luis Obispo, California
	Pvt Larry Dean Canon, Chino, California
Sgt John H. Callahan, Hazelton, Pennsylvania	SP5 Edward Donald P. Cox, Amarillo, Texas
MSgt William F. Caseldine, Dover, Tennessee	MSgt Harold Lamonde Curry, Mangum, Oklahoma
Sgt Lucius D. Croft, Augusta, Georgia	
	Sgt Ernest T. Dixon, Jesup, Georgia
SP5 Douglas Patrick Dickey, Alexandria, Louisiana	SP4 Lawrence A. Fox, Canestoga, New York
Pvt James Allen Edwards, Hanceville, Alabama	Sgt Clarence Gananca Jr., Renasalner, New York
MSgt Howard Gallipeau Jr., Alerwood Manor, Washington	
Sgt John L. Geiser, Granite, Maryland	MSgt Robert R. Glassman, San Jose, California
Sgt Walter Glynn, Tacoma, Washington	SP5 Roy Edward Greenleaf, Bloomfield, New Mexico
	Pfc Sidney Lee Grissom, Newburgh, Missouri
Pfc Charles W. Griffith, Cincinnati, Ohio	SFC Melvin Lewis Hatt, Lansing, Michigan
SP4 Douglas A. Haaf, Syracuse, New York	Pvt Robert N. Henderson, San Francisco, California
Pvt Donald W. Henderson, Mount Auburn, Illinois	
	SP5 Timothy F. Hopkins, Spokane, Washington
SFC Lindsay K. Hester, Fort Monroe, Virginia	Pfc Samuel L. Hunter, Claflin, Kansas
Sgt Clinton M. Hoy, Sierra Vista, Arizona	Pvt John Charles "Corky" Jennings, Newell, West Virginia
MSgt William Reeves Jarvis, Glendale, Kentucky	Pvt John H. H. Jones, Columbus, Georgia
Sgt James Woodrow Johnston, Clarksville, Tennessee	Sgt John Kanisky, Haren, Holland
Sgt John J. Jones, Ogden, Utah	SP5 Guy Wicks Kinnison, Kaneohe, Hawaii
Sgt John Altman Karibo, Bellefontaine, Ohio	Sgt Jack E. Lattie, Grovetown, Georgia
SP4 Charles Edward Kisse, Stockton, California	Sgt Warren M. Lehmkuhl, Columbus, Georgia
SP6 Adam Sablan Leddy, Guam	Pvt Stanley W. McEntee, Detroit, Michigan
SP4 Franklin D. McClure, Dallas, Georgia	Sgt Billy W. Mick, Sierra Vista, Arizona
Sgt Steven Medwid, Alexandria, Virginia	SFC Raymond E. Myers, Warren, Arizona
Sgt Tom B. Morrison, Plattsmouth, Nebraska	

Sgt Nicholas Nichols Jr., Seaside, California  
Pvt Jack C. Packard, Lodi, Wisconsin

Sgt Frank E. Pelkey, Farmington, Maine  
SFC James A. Powell, Fort Worth, Texas  
SFC Hubert Lloyd Rice, Waynesville, Missouri  
WO Edison L. Roberts, Tacoma, Washington  
SP6 Leslie J. Roderick Jr., Houston, Missouri  
SFC Edmond Saenz, Lakeview Terrace, California  
SSgt Leslie M. Saade/Salada, Erie, Pennsylvania  
Pvt Andrew Alexander Sheard, III., Radner, Pennsylvania  
SP4 George M. Slocum, Westfield, New York  
Sgt James C. Sorenson, Spanaway, Washington  
SP4 James Henry Taylor, Olive Branch, Michigan  
MSgt John A. Thomas, Ridgeway, Ohio  
MSgt Jack E. Trantum, Augusta, Georgia  
SFC Wallace L. Walcott, Tacoma, Washington  
SP4 Leonard J. Wedge, Millnocket, Maine  
SFC Albert Francis Williams, Jr., Tacoma, Washington

SP4 Roger L. Oliver, Victory, Wisconsin  
SP4 Charles W. Pardonnet, Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Pvt Lawrence R. Perkins, Chicago, Illinois  
SFC Walter A. Reinhardt, Hammond, Indiana  
MSgt Delbert Leonard Riggins, Boise, Idaho  
SP5 Eddie Fred Robinson, Benton, Arkansas  
SP4 Samuel Rogers Jr., Pine Bluff, Arkansas  
SP4 George E. Sager, Bergton, Virginia  
SP4 Donald Sargent, Ossipee, New Hampshire  
Sgt Efsio Simola, Jr., San Antonio, Texas

SP5 Elmer L. "Buddy" Smith, Louisiana, Missouri  
SP4 Fred W. Talbot, Salamanca, New York  
MSgt Peter Thamy, Vallejo, California  
SP4 Clarence Earl Thompson, Big Spring, Texas  
SSgt James Edward Twitty, Brooklyn, New York  
SFC Ross C. Walker, Pickens, South Carolina  
SFC John Wendell, San Antonio, Texas  
SP5 James Wong, Lahaina, Hawaii

## **United States Military Personnel Listed BY REGION**

### **ALABAMA**

Pvt James Allen Edwards, Hanceville, Alabama,

### **ARKANSAS**

SP4 Samuel Rogers Jr., Pine Bluff, Arkansas

SP5 Eddie Fred Robinson, Benton, Arkansas,

### **CALIFORNIA**

Pvt Larry Dean Canon, Chino, California,

Pvt Robert N. Henderson, San Francisco, California,

Sgt Nicholas Nichols Jr., Seaside, California,

MSgt Peter Thamy, Vallejo, California,

SFC John Joseph Burns, San Luis Obispo, California,

MSgt Robert R. Glassman, San Jose, California,

SP4 Charles Edward Kisse, Stockton, California,

SFC Edmond Saenz, Lakeview Terrace, California,

### **COLORADO**

SP4 Charles W. Pardonnet, Colorado Springs, Colorado,

MSgt Henry Francis , "Hank" Biernacki, Colorado Springs, Colorado,

### **IDAHO**

MSgt Delbert Leonard Riggins, Boise, Idaho

### **INDIANA**

Pvt James Dale Bowen, Indianapolis, Indiana

SFC Walter A. Reinhardt, Hammond, Indiana

### **LOUISIANA**

SP5 Douglas Patrick Dickey, Alexandria, Louisiana

### **MARYLAND**

Sgt John L. Geiser, Granite, Maryland,

### **MISSOURI**

Pfc Sidney Lee Grissom, Newburgh, Missouri,

SP6 Leslie J. Roderick Jr., Houston, Missouri,

SFC Hubert Lloyd Rice, Waynesville, Missouri,

SP5 Elmer L. , "Buddy" Smith, Louisiana, Missouri

### **ARIZONA**

Sgt Clinton M. Hoy, Sierra Vista, Arizona,

Sgt Billy W. Mick, Sierra Vista, Arizona,

SFC Raymond E. Myers, Warren, Arizona

### **GEORGIA**

Sgt Lucius D. Croft, Augusta, Georgia,

Pvt John H. H. Jones, Columbus, Georgia,

Sgt Warren M. Lehmkuhl, Columbus, Georgia,

MSgt Jack E. Trantum, Augusta, Georgia,

Pfc Thomas Baxley, Thomasville, Georgia,

Sgt Ernest T. Dixon, Jesup, Georgia,

Sgt Jack E. Lattie, Grovetown, Georgia,

SP4 Franklin D. McClure, Dallas, Georgia,

### **HAWAII**

SP5 James Wong, Lahaina, Hawaii,

SP5 Guy Wicks Kinnison, Kaneohe, Hawaii,

### **HOLLAND**

Sgt John Kanisky, Haren, Holland

### **ILLINOIS**

Pvt Donald W. Henderson, Mount Auburn, Illinois,

Sgt Donald Aaron Barnes, Granite City, Illinois,

Pvt Lawrence R. Perkins, Chicago, Illinois,

### **KENTUCKY**

MSgt William Reeves Jarvis, Glendale, Kentucky,

### **MAINE**

Sgt Frank E. Pelkey, Farmington, Maine,

SP4 Leonard J. Wedge, Millnocket, Maine,

### **MICHIGAN**

Pvt Stanley W. McEntee, Detroit, Michigan,

SFC Melvin Lewis Hatt, Lansing, Michigan,

SP4 James Henry Taylor, Olive Branch, Michigan,

**NEBRASKA**

Sgt Tom B. Morrison, Plattsmouth, Nebraska,

**NEW YORK**

Sgt Robert Bako, Elbridge, New York,

SP4 Lawrence A. Fox, Canestoga, New York,  
SP4 Douglas A. Haaf, Syracuse, New York,  
SP4 Fred W. Talbot, Salamanca, New York,  
SFC George Bliss, Ft Jay, New York,  
Sgt Clarence Gananca Jr., Renasalner, New York,  
SP4 George M. Slocum, Westfield, New York,  
SSgt James Edward Twitty, Brooklyn, New York,

**OKLAHOMA**

MSgt Harold Lamonde Curry, Mangum,  
Oklahoma,

**PENNSYLVANIA**

SSgt Leslie M. Saade/Salada, Erie, Pennsylvania,  
Sgt John H. Callahan, Hazelton, Pennsylvania,  
Pvt Andrew Alexander Sheard, III., Radner,  
Pennsylvania

**TEXAS**

SP5 Edward Donald P. Cox, Amarillo, Texas,  
SP4 Clarence Earl Thompson, Big Spring, Texas,  
Sgt Efisio Simola, Jr., San Antonio, Texas  
SFC James A. Powell, Fort Worth, Texas,  
SFC John Wendell, San Antonio, Texas,

**VIRGINIA**

Pvt Joseph Broome, Danville, Virginia,

Sgt Steven Medwid, Alexandria, Virginia,  
SFC James Armes, Virginia,,  
SP5 Richard Bayse, Prince George, Virginia,

SFC Lindsay K. Hester, Fort Monroe, Virginia,  
SP4 George E. Sager, Bergton, Virginia,

**WEST VIRGINIA****NEW HAMPSHIRE**

SP4 Donald Sargent, Ossipee, New Hampshire,

**NEW MEXICO**

SP5 Roy Edward Greenleaf, Bloomfield, New  
Mexico,

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Pvt Billy Atkins, Black Mountain, North Carolina,  
SP4 Robert Baggett, Burlington, North Carolina,

**OHIO**

Pfc Charles W. Griffith, Cincinnati, Ohio,  
MSgt John A. Thomas, Ridgeway, Ohio,  
Sgt John Altman Karibo, Bellefontaine, Ohio,

**TENNESSEE**

Sgt James Woodrow Johnston, Clarksville,  
Tennessee,  
MSgt William F. Caseldine, Dover, Tennessee,

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

SFC Ross C. Walker, Pickens, South Carolina,

**UTAH**

Sgt John J. Jones, Ogden, Utah,

**WASHINGTON**

MSgt Howard Gallipeau Jr., Alerwood Manor,  
Washington,  
SP5 Timothy F. Hopkins, Spokane, Washington,  
Sgt James C. Sorenson, Spanaway, Washington,  
SFC Albert Francis Williams, Jr., Tacoma,  
Washington  
Sgt Walter Glynn, Tacoma, Washington,  
WO Edison L. Roberts, Tacoma, Washington,  
SFC Wallace L. Walcott, Tacoma, Washington,

Pvt. Homer Adams, Ukon, West Virginia,  
Pvt John Charles , "Corky" Jennings, Newell, West  
Virginia,

**WISCONSIN**

SP4 Roger L. Oliver, Victory, Wisconsin,  
Pvt Jack C. Packard, Lodi, Wisconsin,

**GUAM**

SP6 Adam Sablan Leddy, Guam,,

## **Flight Crew**

**Grady Reese Burt Jr., Navigator, Baldwin Park, California**

**Robbie J. Gazzaway, 2nd Officer, Fillmore, California**

**William T. Kennedy, Navigator, Braintree, California**

**Clayton E. McClellan, Flight Engineer, San Mateo, California**

**Hildegarde Muller, Stewardess, California**

**George Mitchell Nau, Flight Engineer, Pacoima, California**

**Christel Diana Reiter, Stewardess, San Mateo, California**

**Gregory P. Thomas, Captain, Red Bank, New Jersey**

**Barbara Jean Wamsley, Senior Flight Attendant, Santa Barbara, California**

**Patricia Wassum, Stewardess, California**

**Robert J. Wish, 1st Officer, Hidden Hills, California**



File No. 1-0002

CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD  
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT

Adopted: April 8, 1963

Released: April 10, 1963

THE FLYING TIGER LINE INC., LOCKHEED SUPER CONSTELLATION 1049H  
N 6921C, BETWEEN GUAM AND THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS,  
MARCH 15, 1962

SYNOPSIS

On March 15, 1962, sometime after its last position report at 1422 G.m.t. (22 minutes past midnight, local time), a Flying Tiger Line Inc., Lockheed 1049H, N 6921C, operated as Military Air Transport Service Flight 739/14, disappeared west of the position 13°14' North Latitude and 140°00' East Longitude en route from Agana Naval Air Station, Guam, to Clark Air Force Base, Philippine Islands.

A widespread and intensive search was initiated after the aircraft failed to arrive at Clark Air Force Base at 1916 G.m.t., its estimated time of arrival. The flight was officially declared missing at 2227 G.m.t. which was the estimated fuel exhaustion time for the aircraft. All occupants, 96 military passengers and a crew of 11, are missing and presumed dead.

Crew members of a surface vessel witnessed what appeared to have been a midair explosion at 1530 G.m.t., near the position and at the time estimated by the pilot of N 6921C for his next scheduled position report.

No wreckage or debris which could be definitely associated with the aircraft has been found.

The Board is unable to determine the probable cause of this accident from the evidence now available.

### Investigation

Flying Tiger Line (FTL) Flight 7815/13, operating as Military Air Transport Service (MATS) Charter Flight 739/14, was a Lockheed Super Constellation, model 1049H, U. S. Registry N 6921C. The flight originated at Travis Air Force Base, Fairfield-Suisun, California, with refueling stops scheduled at Honolulu, Wake Island, Guam, Philippine Islands, and was to terminate at Saigon, Viet-Nam.

It departed Travis Air Force Base at 0545 <sup>1/</sup>, on March 14, 1962, with 96 military passengers and a multiple-crew <sup>2/</sup> of 11 under the command of Captain Gregory P. Thomas. The remaining crew members were: First Officer Robert J. Wish, Second Officer Robbie J. Gayzaway, Flight Engineer George M. Nau, Flight Engineer Clayton E. McClellan, Navigator William T. Kennedy, Navigator Grady R. Burt, Jr., Stewardesses Shirley Bolo, Diane Hernandez, Joyce Osland, and Joan Lambrose. The four stewardesses were replaced at Wake Island by Stewardesses Patricia Wassum, Hildegard Muller, Barbara Wamsley, and Christel Reiter.

The loading and departure <sup>3/</sup> of the aircraft at Travis Air Force Base were conducted normally and in accordance with MATS and FTL operating procedures.

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- 1/ All times herein are Greenwich Mean based on the 24-hour clock.  
2/ The flight crew consisted of three pilots, two flight engineers, two navigators, and four stewardesses.  
3/ The actual departure and arrival times at the en route stops are as follows:

<u>Arrived</u>	<u>Station</u>	<u>Departed</u>
14/0308	Travis AFB	14/0545
14/1744	Honolulu	14/2040
15/0354	Wake Island	15/0515
15/1114	Guam	15/1257

There was no maintenance required or performed on the aircraft. No cargo was boarded other than passenger baggage which consisted of personal articles, clothing, etc. Ninety-three of the 96 passengers were members of the U. S. Army, mainly highly trained electronics and communications specialists; the other three were members of the Armed Forces of Viet-Nam.

The military personnel had been briefed at their home stations and again before boarding the aircraft, regarding regulations concerning materials which are prohibited from being carried on board a MATS charter aircraft, i.e., lighter fluid, flashbulbs, loaded weapons, etc. As far as can be determined, all of these regulations had been complied with. A subsequent security check of all passengers, including the foreign nationals, was completed by the U. S. Army Security Service. This disclosed no suspect areas.

The aircraft arrived in Honolulu at 1744 after a routine flight of about 12 hours. Minor maintenance was required on the ignition systems of engines No. 1 (cylinder No. 18) and No. 3 (cylinder No. 6) which consisted of replacing several coils, leads, and plugs. At the request of the flight engineer, a check was made of the air conditioning system. The ducting was disconnected and the expansion turbine was checked for freedom of rotation. No discrepancy of this system was noted and there were no reports at the two subsequent stops that would have indicated any further difficulty.

The departure of the aircraft from Honolulu was delayed for 30 minutes because of complaints by the stewardesses concerning inadequate crew rest facilities aboard N 6921C. Board investigators interviewed the four

stewardesses who had attended the flight from San Francisco to Wake Island. It was learned that the aircraft contained one single bunk and one double bunk forward of the passenger compartment. Under normal conditions there are two pilots on duty in the cockpit and one off duty, with a single bunk available for his use. The double bunk is for the use of the off-duty navigator and the off-duty engineer. Additionally, there should have been two passenger seats reserved for the use of the stewardesses during the flight. However, on this flight there was only one seat provided, and when the aircraft arrived in Honolulu the senior stewardess protested. After a conference with the captain, FTL, and MATS officials, a mattress was placed on the deck under the lower bunk for the use of the stewardesses. Access to this mattress was through a small opening of approximately 18 by 24 inches.

The aircraft departed Honolulu at 2040 and arrived at Wake Island at 0354 (March 15). Minor maintenance was again required to correct discrepancies noted in the ignition systems of cylinders No. 2, No. 15, and No. 18 on the No. 1 engine and cylinder No. 4 on the No. 3 engine. This also consisted of replacing several coils, leads, and spark plugs. The aircraft was then serviced and departed for Guam at 0515.

It arrived in Guam at 1114 after a routine flight of approximately six hours. During the ground time of 1 hour and 33 minutes, the aircraft was serviced to a total of 25,552 pounds of 115/145 octane gasoline, symmetrically distributed in the four main and two auxiliary fuel tanks. Takeoff gross weight was calculated to be 132,554 pounds, which was well below the maximum allowable gross weight of 141,845 pounds, and was within the prescribed center of gravity limits of the aircraft. There were no mechanical discrepancies reported and no maintenance was required.

Preparations for the next leg of the flight were completed by the crew in a routine manner. This included filing an Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flight plan to Clark Air Force Base, Philippine Islands, via a rhumb-line course to Jomalig, Green Airway 9 to Antipolo, Amber Airway 1 to San Fernando, direct to Clark Air Force Base, at a cruising altitude of 10,000 feet and a true airspeed of 235 knots. The estimated time en route for this flight was 6 hours and 19 minutes, and the aircraft carried a total of 9 hours and 30 minutes fuel.

The en route weather forecast prepared for the flight by the U. S. Naval Air Station, Agana, Guam, indicated generally scattered to broken cumulus clouds with bases 1,800 to 2,500 feet with tops 7,000 to 10,000 feet; broken to overcast cirrus clouds, bases at 27,000 to 30,000 feet, and visibility 15 miles. The only anticipated exception to the above conditions was over that portion of the route from 135°00' to 129°00' East Longitudes, where conditions were expected to be broken to overcast cumulus, bases 1,000 feet, tops 8,000 to 13,000 feet; broken to overcast altocumulus, bases near 14,000 feet, tops near 18,000 feet; thin broken cirrus, bases 30,000 feet, and visibility 5 to 8 miles in moderate rain showers. The freezing level was forecasted to slope from near 16,000 feet at Guam to approximately 14,000 feet at Manila. Available inflight weather reports from aircraft transiting the proposed flight route did not indicate any turbulence. The forecast prepared for the flight did not anticipate any significant turbulence at the planned cruising altitude.

The flight was issued an IFR clearance in accordance with its flight plan and departed Guam at 1257. Shortly after takeoff, radar contact with the aircraft was established by Guam Air Route Traffic Control Center. At

1304, N 6921C contacted Guam International Flight Service Station (IFSS) on 126.7 mcs., and requested that a departure message be relayed to the FTL offices in Burbank, California, Pan American Airways (PAA) Manila, and PAA Hong Kong. At approximately 1325, the flight again contacted Guam IFSS and requested a change in cruising altitude from 10,000 feet to 18,000 feet. The pilot did not give any reason for this request. He was advised to contact Guam Center on 118.5 mcs. Upon contacting Guam Center the flight was authorized to climb to and maintain 18,000 feet. At 1328, N 6921C advised Guam Center of climbing through 11,000 feet and estimated position 140°00' East Longitude at 1421. At this time Guam Center advised the flight that it was 100 miles west of Guam and that radar services were being terminated. At 1333 the flight reported to Guam IFSS on 126.7 mcs., advised them of its position 100 miles out at an altitude of 18,000 feet and repeated the 140°00' East Longitude estimate. This report was acknowledged by Guam IFSS, and the flight was then assigned the primary en route frequency of 8862.5 kcs. and a secondary frequency of 2966 kcs.

At 1422 the flight contacted Guam IFSS on 8862.5 kcs. and reported being at position 13°40' North and 140°00' East at 1416, cruising at 18,000 feet on top, and estimated position 14°00' North, 135°00' East at 1530. It further estimated Clark Air Force Base at 1916 and stated that it had 8 hours and 12 minutes of fuel remaining. This was the last radio transmission received from N 6921C. No indication of any difficulty was given in this or any of the previous messages.

At 1533, Guam IFSS was experiencing communication difficulties caused by heavy radio static while copying the 140°00' East Longitude position of U. S. Overseas Flight 400 which was en route from Guam to Okinawa. At 1539, after completing this radio contact, the operator attempted to contact N 6921C to obtain its 1530 position report. Despite numerous attempts, radio contact could not be established. At 1600, Guam Center declared the flight to be in uncertainty phase (INCERFA) status. At 1633 the flight was placed in alert phase (ALERFA) status, and at 1943 it was changed to distress phase (DETRESFA) status. Continuous attempts by all stations and aircraft in the area to contact the flight were unsuccessful.

Search and rescue operations were instituted at 1943 by the Joint Rescue Coordination Center, Agana Naval Air Station, Guam, in conjunction with Clark Joint Air Rescue Center, Clark Air Force Base, Philippine Islands. At 2227, the aircraft's fuel exhaustion time, Flight 739/14 was officially declared lost.

At 2105, on March 15, 1962, a message was received by Mackay Radio in Manila from the S/S T. L. Lenzen, a super tanker owned by Standard Oil of California, under Liberian registration, and manned by an Italian crew. The message stated that at 1530 (1-1/2 hours past midnight, local time) she had sighted a midair explosion from her position at 13°44' North and 134°49' East, and had searched the area for approximately 5-1/2 hours. Unable to contact U. S. Navy radio stations at Manila or Guam prior to this time, she then assumed the explosion must have been the result of military or naval exercises and resumed the original course.

It was established, upon interrogation of five of the crew members, that shipboard lookouts had observed a midair explosion at the approximate position and time when N 6921C was expected to reach 14°00' North and 135°00' East. It was recalled that a vapor trail, or some phenomenon resembling a vapor trail, was first observed overhead and slightly to the north of the tanker and moving in an east to west direction. The Lenzen was cruising on a heading of 077° at this time. As this vapor trail passed behind a cloud, there occurred an explosion which was described by the witnesses as intensely luminous, with a white nucleus surrounded by a reddish-orange periphery with radial lines of identically colored light. The explosion occurred in two pulses lasting between two and three seconds and from it two flaming objects of unequal brightness and size apparently fell, at disparate speeds, into the sea. During the last 10 seconds of the fall of the slower of the two objects, a small bright target was observed on the ship's radar bearing 270°, range 17 miles.

The captain of the Lenzen stated that he arrived on deck in time to observe the fall of the slower object for approximately 10 seconds before it disappeared from view. He estimated its position in reference to a star and ordered the ship's course reversed and, after aligning the heading of the vessel with the star, found his heading to be 270° - the same as the bearing of the target previously seen on the radar. The captain reported that the weather at this time was: "moonlight, clear atmosphere, 1/4 covered sky by small cumulus evenly distributed." The ship proceeded to the position of the radar target



and searched the area until 2105 at which time the original course was resumed. No signals or unusual sightings were reported.

The subsequent search, one of the most extensive ever conducted in the history of aviation, covered 144,000 square miles and utilized 1,300 people, 48 aircraft, and 8 surface vessels. A total of 377 air sorties were flown which involved over 3,417 flying hours. Despite the thoroughness of the search, nothing was found which could conceivably be linked to the missing aircraft or its occupants.

The aircraft's emergency equipment included: five 25-man liferafts, 120 lifevests, 1 emergency transmitter (Gibson Girl), and 1 flare gun with 25 cartridges. Four of the liferafts were stored in the wing compartments; the other was carried in the main cabin.

The historical, maintenance and inspection records of the aircraft were examined. It was found that N 6921C was properly certificated and in an airworthy condition; that all inspections had been performed within the approved time limitations; and all Airworthiness Directives had been complied with.

Records did indicate that on the previous flight from Honolulu to Travis Air Force Base on March 12, 1962, the aircraft had returned to Honolulu with the No. 4 engine propeller feathered. This was due to a significant power loss, a drop of 19.21 BMEP on that engine, which occurred after 3 hours and 27 minutes of flight. The coils, plugs, leads, and Y lead were replaced on the No. 17 cylinder of the No. 4 engine in Honolulu, and the flight then continued on to Travis Air Force Base without incident. The flight crew who

had flown N 6921C on this flight, when interviewed by Board investigators, stated that there were no indications of impending failure in any of the aircraft systems, structures, or engines and that the aircraft appeared to be airworthy in all respects at that time.

On March 13, 1962, prior to the departure of Flight 739/14, a terminal check was conducted on N 6921C at the FTL maintenance base, San Francisco International Airport. The records indicated that the aircraft departed San Francisco for Travis Air Force Base in an airworthy condition.

Flight line and ramp areas of the en route airports used by N 6921C at Honolulu, Wake Island, and Guam were examined by Board investigators. It was found that access to these areas and to non-military aircraft parked therein was possible, without challenge, to anyone desiring entry. It was reported that the aircraft was left unattended in a dimly lighted area for a period of time while at Guam.

#### Analysis

A review of all records pertaining to the aircraft and crew as well as a complete evaluation of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the aircraft produced the following significant findings: N 6921C was airworthy; the crew was qualified and currently certificated; the flight was operated in accordance with company procedures except that there was a lack of adequate crew rest facilities on the aircraft; minor maintenance was performed on the aircraft at Honolulu and at Wake Island, and no maintenance was required at Guam; there were no emergency messages received from N 6921C; a midair explosion, witnessed by crew members of the tanker S/S T. L. Lenzen, occurred at an approximate time and location which

coincided with the estimated position of the aircraft; weather was not a factor in the disappearance; and no wreckage or debris was found that could be associated with the aircraft.

Because no portion of the structure of N 6921C has been recovered, it is impossible to determine whether a mechanical/structural failure, or sabotage, occurred in flight. If such a failure did occur it can be reasonably assumed that it happened suddenly and without warning to the crew. The last message received from Flight 739/14, a regularly scheduled position report, indicated that it was cruising normally at an altitude of 18,000 feet; the message gave no indication of any existing or impending difficulty. It appears to be more than coincidence that the explosion witnessed by crew members of the Lenzen occurred near the position and at the time estimated by the aircraft's crew for their next position report. It is, therefore, the opinion of the Board that this witnessed phenomenon was most likely N 6921C in the process of demolition.

A summation of all relevant factors tends to indicate that the aircraft was destroyed in flight. However, due to the lack of any substantiating evidence the Board is unable to state with any degree of certainty the exact fate of N 6921C.

Probable Cause

The Board is unable to determine the probable cause of this accident from the evidence now available.

BY THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD:

/s/ ALAN S. BOYD  
Chairman

/s/ ROBERT T. MURPHY  
Vice Chairman

/s/ CHAN GURNEY  
Member

/s/ G. JOSEPH MINETTI  
Member

/s/ WHITNEY GILLILLAND  
Member

## S U P P L E M E N T A L   D A T A

### Investigation

The Civil Aeronautics Board was notified of the unreported aircraft at approximately 2200 G.m.t., March 15, 1962. An investigation was immediately initiated in accordance with the provisions of Title VII of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958.

### Air Carrier

The Flying Tiger Line Inc., is a scheduled air carrier incorporated in the State of Delaware with its principal business offices at Burbank, California. It holds a currently effective certificate of public convenience and necessity issued by the Civil Aeronautics Board, and an air carrier operating certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Agency. These certificates authorize the company to transport cargo by air over numerous routes within the Continental limits of the United States. The subject flight was conducted under an exemption granted by the Civil Aeronautics Board which authorizes the carrier to engage in interstate, overseas, and foreign air transportation of persons and cargo pursuant to contracts with any department of the military establishment.

### The Aircraft

N 6921C, a Lockheed 1049H, Super Constellation, serial No. 4817 was owned and operated by The Flying Tiger Line Inc., and was currently certificated by the Federal Aviation Agency. It was manufactured on May 19, 1957, and had a total of 17,224 flying hours. The aircraft was equipped with four Wright 988TC18-EA 3 engines, and four Hamilton Standard 43H60-363 propellers.

The No. 1 engine had a total of 10,474 hours, with 1,531 hours since overhaul. The No. 2 engine had a total of 8,384 hours, with 1,074 hours since overhaul. The No. 3 engine had a total of 9,928 hours, with 706 hours since overhaul. The No. 4 engine had a total of 9,758 hours, with 102 hours since overhaul.

As far as can be determined at this time, the aircraft, engines, and propellers had been maintained as prescribed and were within their time limitations.

The date of the last major airframe overhaul was October 5, 1959, and the last major check was performed on February 17, 1962.

#### Flight Personnel

Captain Gregory P. Thomas, age 48, was employed by The Flying Tiger Line Inc., on July 7, 1950. He held a valid airline transport pilot certificate with ratings for DC-3, DC-4, DC-6, DC-7, 1049H, and C-46 aircraft. Captain Thomas had a total of 19,500 flying hours, of which 3,562 were in Lockheed 1049H aircraft and had approximately 254 hours of flight time in the last 90 days. His last proficiency check in the 1049H was dated December 19, 1961. Captain Thomas held a first-class medical certificate, with no limitations, dated January 4, 1962.

First Officer Robert J. Wish, age 48, was employed by The Flying Tiger Line Inc., on January 25, 1951. He held a valid airline transport pilot certificate with ratings for C-46, DC-4, and 1049H aircraft. First Officer Wish had a total of 17,500 flying hours, of which 3,374 were in Lockheed 1049H aircraft. He held a first-class medical certificate, with no limitations, dated December 21, 1961. His last proficiency check in the 1049H was dated November 30, 1961.

Second Officer Robbie J. Gayzaway, age 39, was employed by The Flying Tiger Line Inc., on January 7, 1953. He held a valid airline transport pilot certificate with a 1049H rating. Second Officer Gayzaway had a total of 5,500 flying hours, of which 900 were in 1049H aircraft. He had flown approximately 139 hours in the last 90 days. His first-class medical certificate, with no limitations, was dated June 12, 1961.

George M. Nau, Flight Engineer, age 38, was employed by The Flying Tiger Line Inc., on December 15, 1956. He had approximately 1,235 flight engineer hours in 1049H aircraft and satisfactorily passed his last proficiency check on January 25, 1962. He held a valid FAA flight engineer's certificate, No. 1370717. His second-class medical certificate, with no limitations, was dated April 27, 1961.

Clayton E. McClellan, Flight Engineer, age 33, was employed by The Flying Tiger Line Inc., on April 4, 1960. He had approximately 1,090 flight engineer hours in 1049H aircraft and satisfactorily passed his last proficiency check on August 4, 1961. He held a valid FAA flight engineer's certificate, No. 1393016. His second-class medical certificate, with no limitations, was dated October 5, 1961.

William T. Kennedy, Navigator, age 45, was employed by The Flying Tiger Line Inc., on February 13, 1962. He held valid navigator and radio telephone licenses. His last proficiency check as a navigator was on February 18, 1962. Mr. Kennedy passed a second-class medical examination on August 21, 1961.

Grady R. Burt, Jr., Navigator, age 35, was employed by The Flying Tiger Line Inc., on February 14, 1962. He held valid navigator and radio telephone

licenses. His last proficiency check as a navigator was on February 17, 1962, and he passed a second-class medical examination, with no limitations, on June 23, 1961. Cabin attendants assigned to the crew consisted of Stewardesses Patricia Wassum, Hildegard Muller, Barbara Jean Wamsley, and Christel Diana Reiter. All boarded the flight at Wake Island after relieving the stewardesses who attended the flight from San Francisco. An examination of company records indicated they all had completed training courses in L-1049H emergency equipment and ditching procedures.



## **ACCIDENT DETAILS**

**Date:** March 15, 1962

**Time:** c 00:30

**Location:** Western Pacific Ocean, Philippine Sea

**Operator:** Flying Tiger Line

**Flight #:** 739/14

**Route:** Travis AFB - Honolulu - Agana, Guam - Clark AFB -Saigon

**AC Type:** Lockheed 1049H Super Constellation

**Registration:** N6921C

**cn / ln:** 4817

**Aboard:** 107 (passengers:96 crew:11)

**Fatalities:** 107 (passengers:96 crew:11)

**Ground:** 0

**Summary:** Lost at sea while en route from Guam to the Philippines. The crew of the SS T.L. Lenzen supertanker sighted a midair explosion at 00:30 local time, from their position at 13 degrees 44' N, 134 degrees 49' E. The subsequent search of over 144,000 square miles found nothing. Cause undetermined.

## **Sources**

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From: "TAPCER, TAGD, PERSCOM" <tapcer@hoffman.army.mil>  
To: "ellisd@pilot.msu.edu" <ellisd@pilot.msu.edu>  
Subject: FW: IDPF request: Melvin L. Hatt DOD 16 March 1962  
Date: Wed, 14 Nov 2001 12:18:43 -0500  
X-Mailer: Internet Mail Service (5.5.2653.19)

Ma'am

In order to change the casualty status, the family would have to petition the Army Board for Correction of Military Records. We have received many requests, similar to this one, over the years, to add the names of the victims of the Flying Tigers aircraft incident to the VVM. The circumstances of these deaths did not meet the criteria for inclusion on the VVM: they did not die in DIRECT support of a combat mission. If Ms. Ellis wishes to pursue this matter, please ask that she direct her request for the IDPF to PERSCOM FOIA Office. @

2461 Eisenhower Ave  
Alexandria, VA 22331

<http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/> <<http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/>>

-----Original Message-----

From: Donna Ellis [mailto:[ellisd@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:ellisd@pilot.msu.edu)]  
Sent: Friday, November 09, 2001 01:04 PM  
To: tapcer@hoffman.army.mil  
Subject: IDPF request: Melvin L. Hatt DOD 16 March 1962

Dear TAPC Officer:

I am writing to request an IDPF for my father, Melvin L. Hatt. United States Army, DOD 16 March 1962.

I am also enclosing the information that I have in hopes that it may expedite the process. The information is from a Statement of Casualty dated 20 April 1962.

I am asking your help or the next point of contact for a couple different issues which I will explain further.

Additionally, I am including the text of a letter written to the Michigan Vietnam Memorial Commission. The MI Vietnam Memorial is to be dedicated Sunday November 11, 2001. While it is too late to have his name on the wall at the actual dedication, the Commission meets again in mid -December to decide on additions, changes and deletions of names.

1) the issue is that my father is listed as Non-Battle status, which appears to deny my family the right of having his name listed on the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C. We were not able to get his name listed on the memorial in Ingham County, Michigan for the same reason. It now appears that I may face the same trial with the new memorial site in Lansing, MI for the state of Michigan.

QUESTION: After you have reviewed the information that I can provide and possibly reviewed your records, I would like to request a change of status from Non-Battle to KIA as he was enroute to Saigon, Vietnam on active duty status when he was killed.

Information follows: (this is from a very faded, blurry document, so hopefully none of the pertinent information is missing)

Statement of Casualty

Dated prepared April 20, 1962.

Headquarters

Department of the Army

Office of the Adjutant General

Melvin Lewis Hatt, Service Number RA I6 251 86D, US ELN MA40 Vietnam (9787) Saigon, Vietnam

Casualty Status: Non-Battle - Died 16 March 1962. Passenger aboard a chartered Flying Tiger Airline aircraft which disappeared on a flight between Guam and Philippine Islands. Intensive air-sea rescue search conducted revealed no evidence of any survivors or wreckage of the plane.

Date and Place of Birth, Race, Religion: 13 November 1923, Lansing, Michigan, Caucasian, Protestant

Date and Place of Last entry or Active Duty in Current Status and Home or Record at time: 6 November 1950, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, Lansing, Ingham County, Michigan.

Social Security Number, Pay Grade Length of Service for Pay, Basic Pay, Incentive Pay:

358-12-4782, S-6, over 16 years, \$4500

This was a certified true copy by David J. McInroy, CWO, W-2, USA, Assistant Adjutant General, Hq, USAEPG, Fort Huachuca Arizona

What follows is the text of a letter I wrote to the Michigan Vietnam Memorial Commission and best expresses my feelings about the situation and will further explain why I would like my father's status changed. Following that is more of this message to your office if you will kindly continue reading after my name and address.

September 7, 2001

The Michigan Vietnam Memorial Fund  
611 W. Ottawa  
Lansing MI 48913

To Michigan Vietnam Memorial Committee:

I am writing this letter after reading the article in the Sunday August 12 edition of the Lansing State Journal. The purpose of this letter is to request the inclusion of my father's name on the Michigan Vietnam Memorial in Lansing.

My father's name was Melvin Lewis Hatt. He was en route to Saigon, Vietnam in 1962 aboard a Flying Tiger Airline. There were 162 military personnel, staff and crew also aboard. The airplane disappeared on the flight between

Guam and the Philippines. Intensive air-sea rescue operations were launched and revealed no evidence of survivors or wreckage of the airplane. This information comes from an email copy of the Statement of Casualty dated 20 April 1962. (Copy enclosed) Casualty status is listed as 16 March 1962.

Because my father's casualty status is listed as Non-Battle, requests to have his name listed on the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D. C. have been denied. He was en route to Vietnam on active duty status at the time of his death, along with 162 others who left family members and loved ones behind.

Enclosed are copies of the last correspondence we have from my father written to his mother. There has been speculation as to the disappearance of the plane after re-fueling in Guam (such as a detonating device), with many unanswered questions.

My father dedicated his life to the service of his country, first serving in the Navy and then in the Army until his untimely death. Enclosed are newspaper clippings about his service.

I believe for his name not to be included on a Vietnam Memorial is a sad commentary to dedicated military service. I have often wondered about the families of the other service people onboard that plane. Have their loved ones also been excluded from memorials in Washington and their home states? We were also denied his name on the memorial in Mason, MI (the county seat of Ingham his place of birth and his home) when not living on a U.S. base or on foreign soil serving his country for the same reason Non-battle status.

I would appreciate your review of this situation. I have provided as much information as I have. I am sure that with your resources the review panel will be able to gather the military records that may be required.

I understand that the Michigan Memorial is scheduled for completion in November 2001. To that end, I would like to see my father, Melvin Lewis Hatt, have his name included on that memorial, and at long last receive the recognition and honor due him. Whether by a bullet or shot down by enemy fire, the fact of the matter remains. My father and 161 others were killed as a result of the Vietnam "Conflict". The lives of 162 families were forever changed. Please let the state of Michigan be a leader in the acknowledgment of those lost to the "cause" of the Vietnam Conflict in service to their country.

I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Respectfully yours,  
Donna Ellis (Hatt)  
1797 Lyndhurst Way  
Haslett MI 48840  
517-339-2051 (home)  
517-353-1956 (office)

While I realize I may be pushing a boulder uphill with this request, I am

looking for a starting point. If I have erred in the point of contact, please forgive me and point me in the right direction. I would really like to see my father's name on the Wall in Washington, D.C. but barring that, at the very least the one in our home state of Michigan.

I can be reached by phone at the numbers listed above or by email at [ellisd@msu.edu](mailto:ellisd@msu.edu). My home address is shown above as well.

Any information as well as the IDPF you can help me with would be appreciated. Of course, I am asking that this process be expedited.

Thank you for your service to our great country and God Bless America.

Donna Ellis (Hatt)

Donna L. Ellis  
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences  
384 Plant and Soil Sciences Bldg  
East Lansing MI 48824-1325  
Phone (517) 353-1956  
Fax (517) 353-3955

## YOUR OPINIONS

### Columnist Cal Thomas offers absurd arguments, LSJ

Columnist Cal Thomas (LSJ, Dec. 28) put the responsibility for the Vietnam War squarely on President John F. Kennedy "50 years" ago.

That would place the action in 1962, the year before the president was assassinated. He states that JFK "ordered advisers to South Vietnam to help battle the communist North." Not so!

Well before 1962, President John Hannah of the Michigan State College, was involved with South Vietnam by providing faculty members as "advisers" to assist in its development.

It was Lyndon Johnson, who became president immediately after the assassination, who ordered troops to South Vietnam and authorized the bombing of Hanoi.

Thomas said in the column that we "left" Vietnam.

We were defeated, leaving by helicopter from the roof of the embassy. His column for Jan. 4 was just as absurd.

He places all responsibility for the "fiscal cliff" on the Democrats, all the way back to the Ronald Reagan years.

These are regular Friday Cal Thomas absurdities.

Please bring back Tim Skubick on Fridays for sensible discussion of local issues.

George L. Griffiths  
Holt

### Vietnam casualty list should include more names

Regarding George L. Griffith's (LSJ, Jan. 14) opinion about U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

President Kennedy did in fact order military "advisors to South Vietnam ..."

Another fact is that 93 U.S. Army Special Forces Rangers, three Vietnamese soldiers and 11 crew members aboard Flying Tiger Line Flight 739/14 bound for Saigon on March 16, 1962 never made it.

My father, Melvin L. Hatt of Lansing, stationed in Arizona, was on that flight.

The plane disappeared 1.5 hours after leaving Guam. A massive search was launched, no survivors were ever

found. Spc. Hatt left behind a wife and two small daughters.

The last letter we received was that he was bound for Saigon. Our mother never recovered from the loss of her husband.

My sister and I were adopted by my father's brother in Michigan.

My father was a Vietnam War casualty, although the Army steadfastly refused to change his casualty status, so that he, along with 92 others, can be honored on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C., Michigan and local monuments.

Donna (Hatt) Ellis  
Haslett

## YOUR OPINIONS

1/22/13

*Happy Memorial Day*

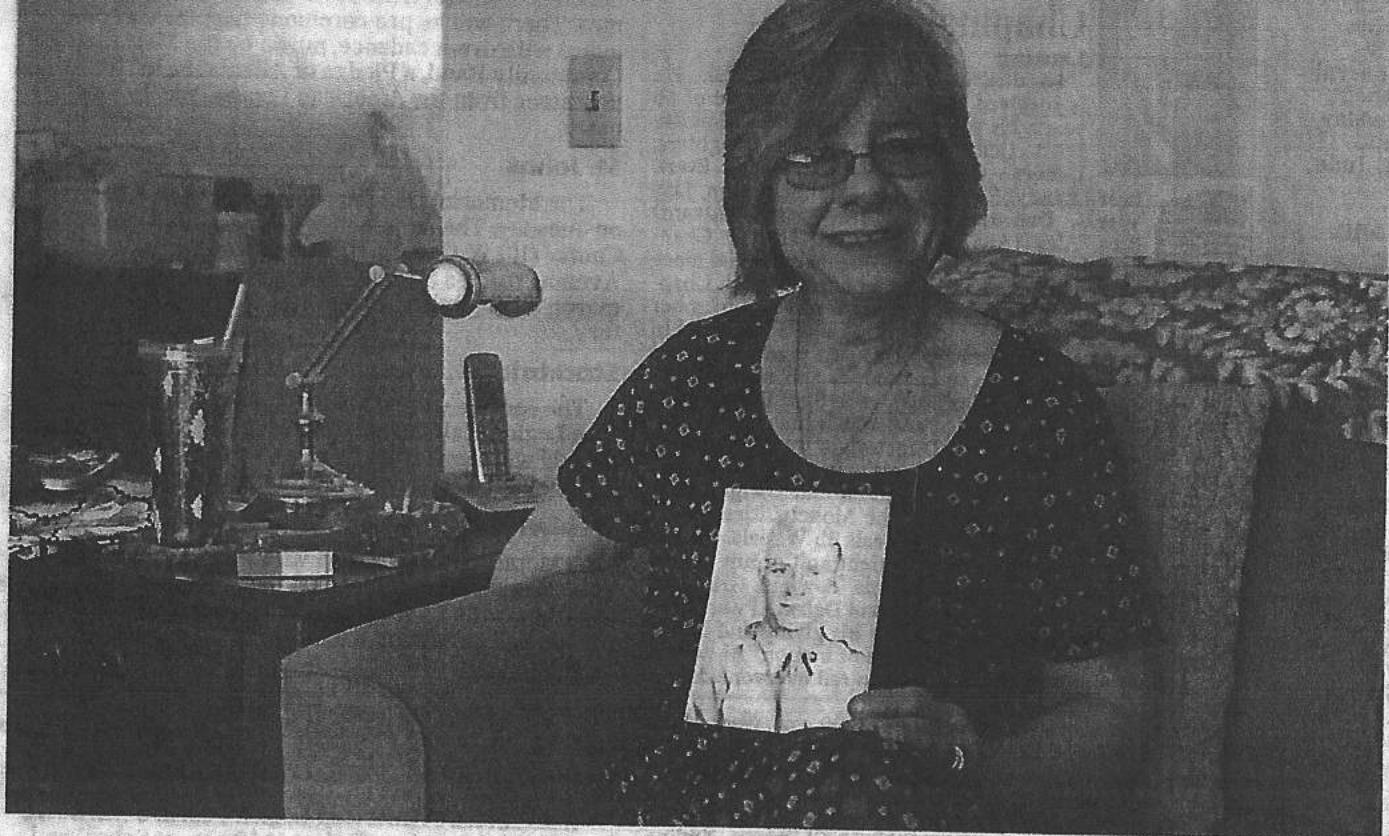
# Lansing State Journal

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BRIAN M. WELLS/LANSING STATE JOURNAL  
Donna Ellis sits with a photo of her father, Melvin Lewis Hatt, in her home in Haslett May 12. Her father was killed when the plane he was flying on went down on its way to Vietnam. Ellis, along with other relatives, are fighting to have his name added to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.



# WORTHY OF THE NAME

## A daughter's quest to get her father's name inscribed at the Vietnam Memorial

KATHLEEN LAVEY LANSING STATE JOURNAL

The handwritten letter dated Feb. 12, 1962, is written in large, slanted script on pale-blue paper. ¶ In it, U.S. Army Sgt. Melvin Lewis Hatt is updating his mother in Michigan on the next chapter of his military career: ¶ *"I will probably fly as I am due in Saigon-Vietnam 25 Feb. so am on a hurry-up special assignment, for sure,"* he wrote. ¶ Hatt, an Army Ranger with training in jungle warfare and communications, and 92 other Rangers finally left on March 16, on their way to train soldiers in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. ¶ They would never arrive. ¶ Their plane - a Lockheed L-1049 Super Constellation chartered by the U.S. military from the Flying Tiger Line - disappeared without a trace over the western Pacific on March 16, en route from a refueling stop in Guam.

The most plausible working theory: an in-flight explosion.

The most interesting piece of speculation: Sabotage brought the plane down.

The most frustrating result for the crash victims' loved ones: The men are not considered casualties of war, despite the fact that they were on a military mission to Vietnam.

That means Hatt's name and the names of the other Army Rangers on the plane do not appear on the polished black granite roster at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C.

But Hatt's daughter, Donna Ellis of Haslett, and other rela-

**"It snowballs downhill. If he's not on the memorial in Washington D.C., he's not on a memorial in Michigan. He's not on a memorial in Ingham County. They should be."**

DONNA ELLIS

tives of those killed on that flight would like to change that.

"It snowballs downhill. If he's not on the memorial in Washington D.C., he's not on a memorial in Michigan. He's not on a memorial in Ingham County," Ellis said. "They should be."

### **'He liked the military'**

Melvin Lewis Hatt was born to Lewis and Alma Hatt on Dec. 13, 1925, in Lansing. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy during World War II and served on 16 different ships during the war. He was on the crew of the U.S.S. Mara-

See QUEST, Page 4A

# Quest

Continued from Page 1A

than transport ship when it was struck by a one-man Japanese suicide submarine in Okinawa's Buckner Bay on July 22, 1945.

His brother, Normand, five years younger, also would serve in the U.S. Navy.

After the war ended, Hatt mustered out of the Navy, but found himself adrift in the civilian world.

"He liked the military," Ellis said. "Civilian life did not suit him."

So he signed up for the U.S. Army. Hatt's military career took him all over the world. He met his wife, Patricia, in Maine. She was a southern belle from Georgia, working for the USO. Donna was born in Paris; her sister, Sherri, in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, where the family was living at the time of Melvin's assignment to Vietnam.

Sherri Owen and her husband, Herb, live in Eaton Rapids. She supports her sister's quest to get their father's name listed on the wall, but she was just a toddler when he died and has no personal recollection of him.

"I don't really remember anything but what I was told," she said. "There are a couple of pictures."

Flight 739 went down between Guam and the Philippines. Controllers lost radio contact, and at least one ship in the vicinity reported seeing a bright flash that could have been an explosion. A 12-day air-and-sea search yielded no bodies or debris.

Ellis recalls the day that an Army chaplain and officer came to the door of their home in Sierra Vista, Arizona, to give her mother the news that Sgt. Hatt had died.

"I distinctly remember the servicemen coming to the door," she said.

Her mother's reaction: a breakdown. Patricia Hatt immediately called Normand and his wife, Laurene, for help. Donna came to live with them immediately. Sherri followed 22 months later, bringing the total number of kids in Normand and Laurene's family to six. Patricia died in 2006.

The girls sometimes asked Normand about his brother but learned not to push the issue too hard.

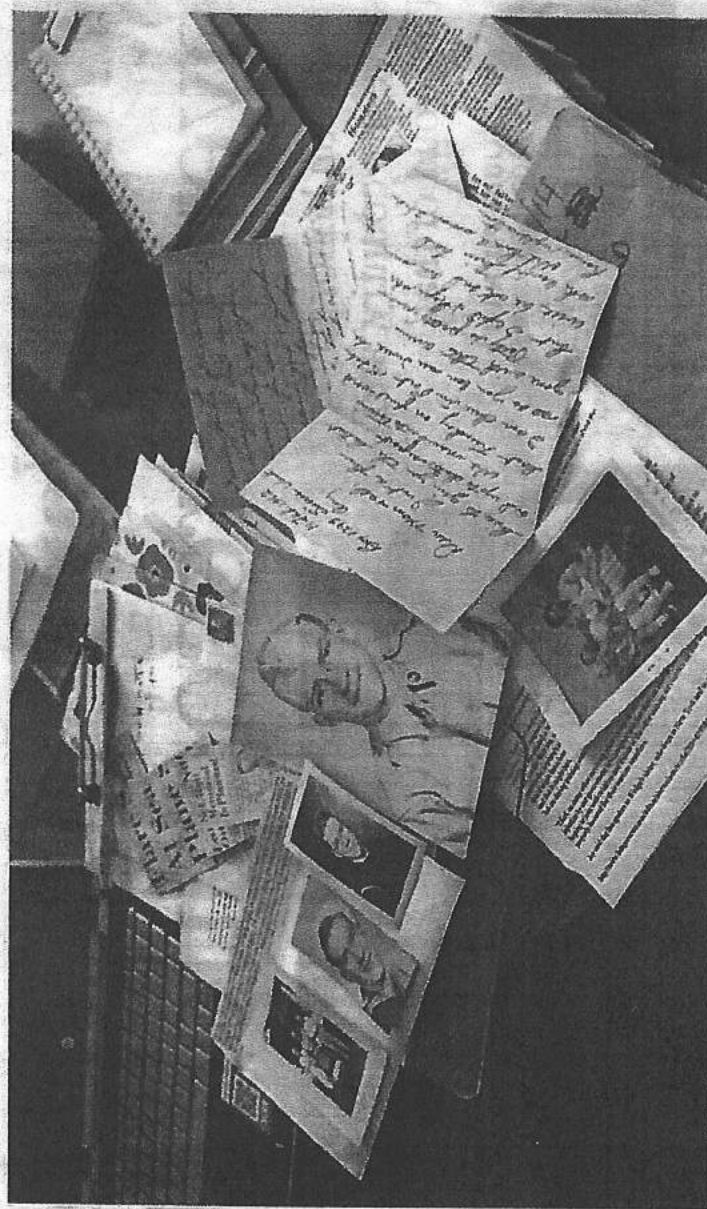
"What memories he had were wonderful, but he did start getting a little emotional," Owen said.

He was crushed by losing his only sibling.

"He shared a little bit about that particular time and the fear and the upset," she said. "He just felt like his world was blown to pieces."

Normand, who died in 2014, did to try to learn more about his brother's death, Owen said, and may have made his own attempts to have Melvin listed as a Vietnam casualty.

"He was always busy with a lot of things, and that



BRIAN M. WELLS/LANSING STATE JOURNAL  
The last letter from Melvin Lewis Hatt, dated 11 Feb. 1962, sits among photos and newspaper clippings in Donna Ellis' home in Haslett May 12. The plane carrying Melvin Lewis Hatt, an Army ranger, went down while flying from Guam to Vietnam.

was one of them," she said. "If he had made attempts and hadn't been able to make anything happen, then maybe there was a reason at that time."

## An exception

More than 58,300 names are listed on the Vietnam Memorial wall, a graceful V of black granite on a 2-acre site near the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

Opened in 1982, it now gets 3 million visitors a year. According to Department of Defense guidelines, those eligible to be listed on the monument include soldiers who served Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and designated coastal areas between 1959 and 1975 and died with 120 days of wounds, injuries or illnesses incurred in the combat zone.

Those who died later of PTSD-related illnesses or diseases related to Agent Orange or chemical exposure are excluded.

Hundreds of names have been added to the 58,000 on wall when it was unveiled. Technically, those who died in the crash of Flight 739 don't count because it took place far from the combat zone.

At least one exception has been made: the names of 68 soldiers were added in by order of President Ronald Reagan in 1983. The Marines were on an R&R trip to Hong Kong when their plane crashed.

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-New York, is among those lobbying for another exception: to include 74 sailors from the destroyer U.S.S. Frank Evans. The ship sank after it was struck by an Australian aircraft carrier during a 1969 training exercise in the South China Sea, outside the designated combat zone.

Ellis has contacted the Army regarding the issue and also has appealed to Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Michigan.

She isn't sure where she will turn next. She may enlist a high-profile Vietnam veteran and a former prisoner of war.

"I'm thinking about copying everything I had and FedEx-ing the whole kit and caboodle to John McCain," she said.

McCain's staff did not respond to an inquiry on the issue.

Melvin Hatt does have a memorial stone at Arlington National Cemetery, although there were no remains to bury beneath it. Ellis appreciates that, but will continue her quest.

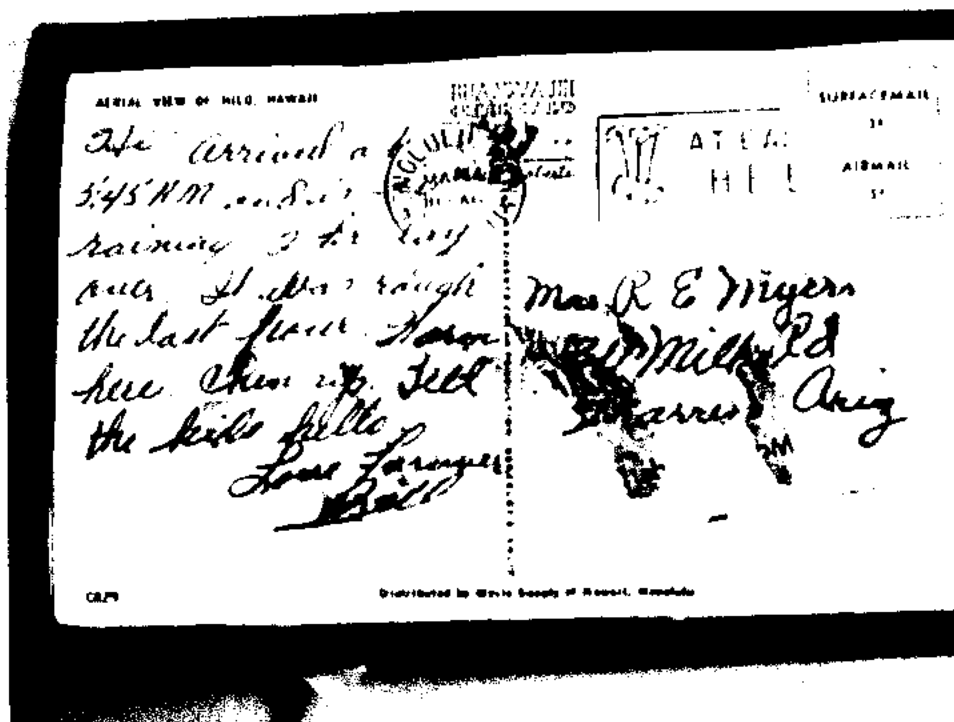
"They deserve to be honored," she said. "They deserve to be recognized."

Contact Kathleen Lavey at (517) 377-1251 or klavey@lsj.com.



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## Listing on Vietnam Wall sought for troops killed in 1962 plane crash



[http://polopoly.fsf/1.232000.1374729244/image/image.jpg\\_gen/derivatives/landscape\\_400/image.jpg](http://polopoly.fsf/1.232000.1374729244/image/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/landscape_400/image.jpg)

"Tell the kids hello Love forever" Army Sgt. Raymond "Bill" Myers sent this postcard to his family in Hawaii on stopover while on Flying Tiger Line Flight 739. The plane disappeared mysteriously on March 16, 1962 somewhere between Guam and the Philippines on its way to Vietnam before hostilities had officially broken out. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOMMY JOE MYERS

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By [MATTHEW M. BURKE](#) ([reporters/2.1728?author=Matthew\\_M\\_Burke](#)) | STARS AND STRIPES

Published: July 24, 2013

Before departing for Vietnam 51 years ago, Army Sgt. 1st Class Raymond "Bill" Myers left behind his ID, dog tags and a gold ring he had never taken off before. He told his brother-in-law that he had a bad feeling about the mission and didn't think he would be coming home. He asked him to watch over his wife and children after he was gone.

Myers then boarded a military-chartered Flying Tiger Airline Lockheed Super Constellation aircraft at Travis Air Force Base in California. After several stops, the plane disappeared over the Pacific and the 93 American soldiers, three South Vietnamese military men and 14 crewmembers onboard were never heard from again. They were declared dead less than two months later.

Myers' son, Tommy Joe — like the families of the other lost Americans — has no answers about his father's fate. Adding to that pain is how his father and the others have been forgotten. Their names are not on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and no government agencies — Army, Air Force, Defense Department, National Archives, State Department, CIA — admit to possessing records related to the soldiers and their mission. None could provide Stars and Stripes with a list of the deceased, although they are mentioned in a Civil Aeronautics Board crash report from 1962.

A petition has been launched to get the names added to the wall. Proponents face an uphill battle and need to prove that the plane was headed to Vietnam for a combat mission — which has been impossible without documentation — or through the special intervention of elected officials.

ADVERTISING

"They were flying into harm's way," said Frank Allen, the Massachusetts man who started the change.org petition in October. Allen is related to one of the men, Sgt. Howard Gallipeau Jr., by marriage. "Had they survived and landed, they might have died under different circumstances. The military treats it like a car accident. They should be honored for what they did."

Allen's petition calls for 1,000 signatures, although they are hoping for many more. The petition will be sent to Defense Department officials after it closes in October.

Tommy Joe Myers said after years of being turned away and threatened when pressing for answers and recognition, he has lost all hope.

"It's hurtful that they won't put these guys' names on the wall," he said. "People need to know what these guys sacrificed. Just give them the same courtesy and respect other guys have gotten."

#### **A few good men**

In early 1962, the U.S. was slowly ramping up involvement in Vietnam, according to editions of Pacific Stars and Stripes from the time. Known military operations were limited mostly to advising the South Vietnamese, and ferrying troops into battle and limited engagements with communist forces when fired upon.

The men on Flight 739 appear to have been hand-picked for the mission; they came from bases across the country, according to Vietnam veteran and retired Marine Bruce Swander, who has spent the last 10 years researching the flight in an effort to get their names added to the wall. He said his research indicates they were advisers trained in communications and not Special Forces.

Pacific Stars and Stripes reported after the plane disappeared that the men were trained jungle troops.

Myers was an all-American boy, according to his son. He grew up in Carterville, Ill., with Steve McQueen good looks and piercing blue eyes. He played minor league baseball in the St. Louis Cardinals organization and commanded attention when he entered the room. But his real passion was military service.

Myers was listed as a supply sergeant in the heavily redacted file his son received upon filing a Freedom of Information Act request several years ago, but he could also speak a multitude of languages. He was a veteran of World War II and had been wounded during two combat tours in Korea.

Myers received his orders to head to Vietnam on March 13, 1962, according to a copy of the orders obtained by Stars and Stripes. The next morning he would be on the ill-fated Military Air Transport Service chartered Flying Tiger Line Flight 739.

As was the case with Myers, Spc. 4 Roger Oliver's family put a headstone in the ground in his hometown after the plane disappeared. Oliver, from Victory, Wis., was "very studious," and he joined the Army and was trained in communications, according to his sister, Gloria Oliver Warmuth.

He also told his father that he wouldn't be coming home from the mission and asked him to take care of his pregnant wife and baby after he was gone. His daughter was born later that year.

"He said, 'I won't be back from this,'" Oliver's daughter, Kristina Hoge, told Stars and Stripes. "My grandfather told him, 'You'll be fine.' I think it haunted my grandfather."

Hoge said over the years she was told by her father's friends that he was involved in "black ops." A condolence letter from his commanding officer at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., states that he worked in the Film Library Division there. Her mother thought he was going to Vietnam to make a training film.

Army photos of Sgt. Howard Gallipeau Jr. from Korea show the communications specialist relaying fire instructions over a field radio from "no man's land" during fighting. He would be wounded in action, have surgery and re-enlist. He was tough but warmhearted, his son, Howard Gallipeau III, told Stars and Stripes.

Eerily, the sergeant too told his wife he would not be coming back alive.

"Before he left, he said, 'I don't think I'm going to be coming home from this one,'" his son said. "My mom tried to talk him out of going but he said, 'I have to serve my country.'"

The three families contacted by Stars and Stripes said they didn't know each other and hadn't shared their stories among themselves.

#### Flight 739

Flight 739 left Travis Air Force Base on March 14, 1962, with a destination of Saigon, according to a copy of the 1962 Civil Aeronautics Board crash report obtained by Stars and Stripes. No cargo other than passengers, crewmembers and their belongings was reported. U.S. Army Security Service checked all passengers including the unknown foreign nationals.

The flight successfully stopped for refueling in Honolulu, where minor maintenance was performed on the engine ignition systems before they departed for Wake Island, the report said. They arrived at Wake, where maintenance was once again performed before heading to Guam. They arrived at Guam with no reported problems.

#### GALLERY



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Army Sgt. 1st Class Raymond "Bill" Myers, seen here with his wife Irene, disappeared, along with 92 other U.S. troops, when the plane they were riding in went down in the Pacific Ocean March 16, 1962 somewhere between Guam and the Philippines.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOMMY JOE MYERS

"There were no mechanical discrepancies reported and no maintenance was required," the report said.

After a short layover, they were off again to Clark Air Base, Philippine Islands. They contacted control several times during their flight, and no disturbances or issues were reported.

They were last heard from just after midnight March 16, 1962, 270 miles west of Guam.

Shortly after, the flight stopped answering radio transmissions, the report said. They were never heard from again.

Search-and-rescue operations were launched from Guam and the Philippines within hours, the report said. A Liberian-flagged Standard Oil of California super tanker and its Italian crew reported seeing a midair explosion in the area where Flight 739 should have been.

"It was recalled that a vapor trail, or some phenomenon resembling a vapor trail, was first observed overhead and slightly to the north of the tanker and moving in an east to west direction," the report said.

"As this vapor trail passed behind a cloud, there occurred an explosion, which described by witnesses as intensely luminous, with a white nucleus surrounded by a reddish-orange periphery with radial lines of identically colored light. The explosion occurred in two pulses lasting between two and three seconds and from it two flaming objects of unequal brightness and size apparently fell, at disparate speeds, into the sea."

A bright target was observed on the ship's radar during the last 10 seconds of the fall of the slower of the two objects, the report said. The ship changed its course and searched the area for 5½ hours with no results.

Over the next eight days, an armada of more than 50 planes and 7th Fleet assets searched 75,000 square miles of sea around the clock between Guam and the Philippines. Two Stars and Stripes reporters covered the search.

"I remember flying around in the aircraft for hours and hours and hours," former Stripes reporter Paul Rogers recalled recently. Rogers said no theories emerged at the time as to what happened to the plane. "We were really just looking for it."

"Though we may never know why the aircraft went down, it would still bring great solace to surviving family members for their loved ones to be recognized for the mission they never got to complete," said national VFW spokesman Joe Davis. "There are far worse things than dying for one's country, and being forgotten tops that list."

So time continues to pass; wives and siblings of the 93 passengers grow old or die. Their children have no place among fellow veterans to honor the fathers they barely knew.

"Getting their names on the wall in Washington, D.C., would be an awesome thing," Howard Gallipeau III said. He believes his father deserves a spot. "He went to war and didn't come home. He died for his country. That makes him a hero."

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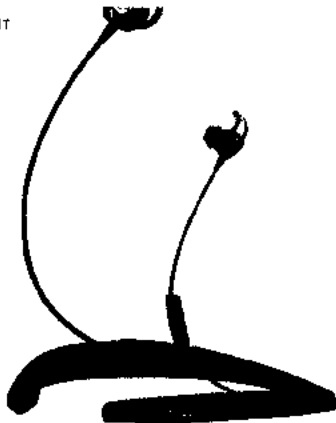
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In the years since, Asensio has written letters to representatives to try and get the men's names added to the wall.

"I get goose bumps thinking about how close I was to getting on that plane," Asensio said. "My main concern is to get those guys' names on the wall."

### The wall

The guidelines for inclusion on the Vietnam Memorial are mandated by Congress.

Since 1982, changes have been made to the eligibility requirements but the general rules state that the someone can be added if they died — regardless of cause or circumstance — within the designated combat zone boundaries, if combat-related wounds, accident or illness incurred in country led to their death elsewhere, or if they were "going to or returning from" a combat mission.

Army officials told Stars and Stripes that the men on Flight 739 did not meet the criteria for serving in the "Vietnam area of responsibility."

Swander said he had hoped to prove that the men fell under the third option. However, with no documentation available, it has been impossible.

"The problem from day one has been to document that these men were on a 'mission' — as opposed to replacements or manpower escalation," he said. "Unfortunately, all records showing what they were trained in, why they were picked and what they were going to do there have been redacted from their files."

Swander said the men do not fit cleanly within the rules, which are open to interpretations depending on who looks at each case.

Over the years, there have been two exceptions, but both took special intervention.

Names have been added for a heart attack at a desk in Thailand, or a stateside suicide after being freed from a communist prison, Swander said.

But the example that most strongly supports including those on Flight 739 is the addition of names of servicemembers who died after a Marine Corps KC-130F crashed into the sea upon take-off from Hong Kong on Aug. 24, 1965.

The plane was returning to Vietnam from a rest-and-recuperation period so the troops on board could finish their tours, Swander said. The 54 Marines who lost their lives were added to the wall in 1983, and the five sailors who died were added a year later thanks to approval by President Ronald Reagan.

"Although the aircraft was en route to Vietnam, it was outside of the designated war zone," Swander said.

### Family anguish

Answers as to what happened to the men of Flight 739 and their mission remains elusive.

The only document received after requests from Stars and Stripes from any government agency was a report that detailed sorties that searched for Flight 739.

Despite the coordinates of the explosion being known, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command officials never searched for wreckage because the incident was never assigned to them as a killed-in-action case, a spokesman said. A spokeswoman from the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office said they are responsible for wartime losses only.

Neither the Air Force casualty office nor the Army's Human Resources Command, which tracks casualties, had any information.

"It's like they were meant to disappear," Gloria Oliver Warmuth said. "They have been forgotten."

Everyone briefed on the details of the case seems to be in agreement, that more needs to be done for the 93 that were lost.

"It really burns me up when things like this happen with the loss of an aircraft and its crew/passengers and the incident is quickly forgotten," Travis Air Force Base historian Mark Wilderman wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes after finding nothing in an exhaustive search of their records. Failure to recognize their efforts dishonors the folks who lost their lives in the line of duty, he said.

It didn't take long for conspiracy theories to swirl. On the front page of the March 18 Japan edition of Stars and Stripes, the owner of the ~~planes alleged that sabotage or hijacking were possibilities. Another Flying Tiger plane carrying secret military cargo destined for the area~~ planes crashed in the Aleutians the same day as Flight 739, killing one member of the crew. However, that crash was later attributed to pilot error.

The search for Flight 739 was called off March 23. Not a single piece of the aircraft, the bodies or any emergency life rafts were ever found.

George Gewehr, historian for Flying Tiger Line Pilots Association, said many in his organization have long believed it was friendly fire that brought down the plane. Hoge said her mother believed the plane was hijacked. Swander believes it was mechanical failure.

**'Thank God I didn't get on that plane'**

Asensio said the two men didn't really fit in with the others — Ranger communications specialists trained in jungle warfare. He said the group appeared to be of a higher grade than he and Byrnes.

Byrnes recalls going up to the bus that would bring the men to the doomed plane to say goodbye to a softball buddy he met at a command in Georgia. He doesn't remember his name.

The pair would take a commercial flight later in the day. They arrived safely in Vietnam for their 13-month tour at a communications compound near Saigon, where they were told of the crash. Their families had believed they were dead for several days.

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW ~

### The 1962 CAB report on the Flying Tiger accident

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Last updated: Tuesday, March 23, 2004

## Plane's fate unknown 42 years on

When the military transport plane vanished over the western Pacific Ocean on March 16, 1962, three Maine natives were among the first casualties of the Vietnam War.

Sgt. Frank Pelkey of Farmington, Spec. 4 Donald Sargent of Cornish, and Spec. 4 Leonard Wedge of Millinocket were among the 107 passengers - 93 U.S. Army Special Forces Rangers, three Vietnamese soldiers and 11 crew members - aboard the Flying Tiger Line Super Constellation, N6921C, that lost radio contact and disappeared not long after taking off from Guam, en route to Saigon.

The largest sea-and-air search that had ever been conducted at the time failed to turn up even a trace of the airplane or its passengers.

"Due to the lack of any substantiating evidence," the Civil Aeronautics Board concluded in its accident report back then, "the Board is unable to state with any degree of certainty the exact fate of N6921C."

More than 40 years later, the Defense Department still has never officially declared the lost servicemen as killed in action, missing in action, or as prisoners of war. Consequently, without a clear determination of their fate, their names do not appear on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall in Washington, D.C., beside all of the others who are honored for having sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

For Mary Joy, the omission is an injustice that she hopes to correct.

"So far, everything remains just one big blank," said Joy, the wife of Rep. Henry Joy of the Aroostook County town of Crystal, who grew up in Millinocket and was Leonard Wedge's childhood friend. "I want to get some answers so that these men will be properly recognized one day. It's as if they've been completely forgotten."

According to newspaper accounts, the Flying Tiger civilian aircraft, chartered as a military transport, took off from Travis AFB, near San Francisco, and landed in Guam. After refueling, the plane left Guam, bound for the Philippines and then on to Vietnam, where some 4,000 U.S. servicemen were stationed in those murky early days of the conflict. Just 1.5 hours after leaving Guam, however, its radio signal was suddenly lost and the airplane

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disappeared from the sky. The crew of a Liberian oil tanker in the area reported seeing a "vapor trail go behind a cloud," followed by a flash of light in the sky.

The subsequent 12-day search, which covered 144,000 square miles with 48 military aircraft and eight ships, turned up nothing. In a March 17 Washington Post story about the missing plane, officials of the Flying Tiger Line raised the possibilities of sabotage or kidnapping, although they had no evidence of either. Another of their airplanes had inexplicably crashed and burned in the Aleutian Islands after taking off from Guam about the same time as the missing aircraft, a coincidence that only added to their suspicions of foul play.

The investigation ended with no conclusive answers, however, and the cause of the airplane's disappearance was officially and forever listed as "undetermined."

Back in Millinocket, Wedge left a wife and 2-week-old son. His mother, Geraldine, received a letter from the Army announcing that her son was missing, but nothing more. Like the airplane he flew on, 23-year-old Leonard Wedge's fate has remained a mystery to this day.

Joy, who had been in touch occasionally with Wedge's mother until her death about a year ago, became intrigued with Wedge's disappearance and military status when the touring version of the Vietnam Veterans wall stopped in the town of Sherman Station a few years ago. At the ceremony, she discovered that Wedge and the two other Maine men on the 1962 flight were not listed on the wall. Curious, she began collecting old news articles about the 42-year-old incident and whatever sketchy documented information she could find.

She eventually learned that Wedge and the others were considered by the Army to be "special liaisons," and therefore never were granted the status of actual Vietnam War combatants. The Army, for reasons Joy has yet to determine, wrote off the incident long ago without ever declaring the soldiers involved to have been officially killed in action.

"And without that declaration, their names can't go on the wall with the others who fought there," she said. "They have no official status with the government whatsoever, which is terribly wrong. There's never been any closure."

As Joy found out on the Internet, the family of at least one of the other missing servicemen feels a similar sense of injustice. The daughter of George Michael Nau, a flight engineer from Wisconsin who was aboard the lost airplane, has created a Web site to honor her father's memory and to fight to get his name listed on the veterans wall. On the Web site, she relates some of the speculative theories she has read about over the years that attempt to explain the airplane's mysterious disappearance: That it might have been shot down by a Russian ICBM missile; that it might have been hijacked to China, where the passengers and crew were interrogated, tortured and killed; and that it might have been accidentally shot down by a Navy pilot whose missile arming switch was mistakenly left on during training exercises.

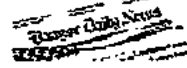
"I feel, as many other surviving relatives and all who are familiar with this story agree, that there has been a grave injustice by our government who assigned and sent them on their mission," wrote Nau's daughter. She said she is hoping to join with relatives and friends of the other missing servicemen on that flight who have never been properly honored for their wartime sacrifices.

Joy said she has spoken to Wedge's sister, who lives in New York and is also eager to clear up some of the

lingering questions surrounding her older brother's death and puzzling military status. And a disabled Vietnam veteran from Augusta, John Hibbard, has pledged to help Joy in whatever way he can to finally provide the sense of closure that Wedge's mother never knew.

"I am a very patriotic person," Joy said. "I lost a brother in Korea, so I know what many families have to go through during a war. But Leonard's family never had a service for him, and he's never had the headstone he deserves or gotten his name on the wall. These three Maine men took the same oath as every other serviceman who died in Vietnam, and they should be recognized, too. It's only fair."

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### Search Continuing For Plane Missing With 107 Aboard

and Pacific Ocean and The Flightpath 11:06 am

Transcribed from *The Free-Lance Star*, Fredericksburg, VA, March 16, 1962, p. 1,3:

#### Search Continuing For Plane Missing With 107 Aboard

Many Military Men Carried By Airliner

By CARL ZIMMERMAN

MANILA (AP) — U.S. military planes and ships pressed a hunt between Guam and the Philippines tonight for a chartered airliner which vanished at sea with 107 persons, chiefly American Army men, on a flight to war-torn South Viet Nam.

A full 24 hours passed since the four-engine Super Constellation, owned by the California-based Flying Tiger Line, radioed its last message. This was a routine report to Guam from a position 270 miles west of that U.S. base in the western Pacific, as it headed for Clark Air Force Base, north of Manila.

Search craft crisscrossed 75,000 square miles of the Pacific fruitlessly by daylight and were continuing through the night. Weather was excellent and the sea normal.

#### 93 ARMY PERSONNEL

The Super Constellation carried a crew of 11 Americans, 93 U.S. Army personnel and three South Vietnamese, Travis Air Force Base in California said. Four women were among the crew.

Military sources in Saigon assumed the troops were due to bolster the American forces backing South Viet Nam's government in its war against the Viet Cong guerrillas.

Fifteen aircraft based at Guam launched the hunt for the Flying Tiger plane. Spread over a 100-mile front, they flew 750 miles westward to a point about midway between Guam and the Philippines and then retraced their course eastward.

#### 9 HOURS OF FUEL

The plane took off from Guam at 8:57 p.m. Thursday night carrying fuel for about nine hours flying for the 1,600-mile, eight-hour hop to Clark Air Force Base, north of Manila. It was last heard from 80 minutes later when the pilot sent a routine radio message to Guam from about 270 miles west of the American Island base.

The Clark Field Rescue Coordinating Center declared the airliner missing this morning. A U.S. Navy spokesman said it was believed the plane went down closer to Guam than to the Philippines.



The identical four-engine 1049A Super Constellations both left Travis Air Force Base, Calif., at 9:45 Pacific Standard Time Wednesday. Both were bound for Saigon on flights for the Defense Department. Both mysteriously hit trouble a few hours later, though they'd taken different routes.

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### U.S. Plane Lost with 107

Transcribed from the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Milwaukee, WI, March 16, 1962, p 1:

#### U.S. Plane Lost with 107

##### Pacific Search Launched

MANILA, Philippines, March 16 (Friday) (AP) A charter airliner from California with 96 military passengers and crew of 11 aboard Friday was reported missing and presumably down in the Pacific.

The Super Constellation of Flying Tiger Airlines was lost on the Guam-to-Philippines leg of its transPacific flight from Northern California. The U.S. Air Force base at Clark Field was its Philippines destination. From there it was headed for South Vietnam.

A U.S. Navy spokesman said the plane was believed to have gone down in an area nearer Guam than The Philippines. No storms were reported in the area and conditions — cloudless skies and calm seas — were ideal for searching planes and ships. Squadrons from Guam and Okinawa joined in the hunt.

Troops are ferried regularly to The Philippines via Guam, where the transport planes make refueling stops.

Air Force officials in California said only the Pentagon could release the names of the military personnel aboard the plane. Pentagon procedure calls for notification of next of kin before names of casualties are made public. Flying Tiger headquarters in California immediately identified the plane's 11 crew members, all civilians from California.

The transport was last heard from an hour and 20 minutes after leaving Guam and the pilot at that time reported on course and on time.

The plane left Travis Air Force Base in northern California Tuesday.

The report of the plane's plight came in a month already marked by two of the worst disasters in aviation history. An American Airlines Boeing 707 jet crashed March 1 at New York's International Airport, killing all 95 aboard.

Three days later a chartered British airliner carrying 111 persons crashed near Douala in the West African republic of Cameroon and all were killed.

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Transcribed from *Evening Independent*, St. Petersburg, FL, March 16, 1962, p. 1:

## Plane, 107 Sought

### 93 Army Men to Viet Nam.

MANILA (AP) — U.S. military planes and ships pressed a hunt between Guam and the Philippines tonight for a chartered airliner which vanished at sea with 107 persons, chiefly American army men, on a flight to war-torn South Viet Nam.

A full 24 hours had passed since the four-engine Super Constellation, owned by the California-based Flying Tiger Line, radioed its last message. This was a routine report to Guam from a position 270 miles west of that U.S. base in the Western Pacific, as it headed for Clark Air Force base, north of Manila.

Search craft crisscrossed 75,000 square miles of the Pacific fruitlessly by daylight and were continuing through the night. Weather was excellent and the sea normal.

IN BURBANK, Calif., striking coincidences and unexpected circumstances in the ill-fated flights of two big planes taking American military help to south Viet Nam led the owner of the planes today to raise these possibilities:

1. Sabotage of one or both planes.
2. Possible kidnapping of the craft missing with 107 persons aboard.

But the Flying Tiger Line stressed it has no evidence of either possibility and they are strictly in the realm of wild guesses.

One plane, carrying secret military cargo, crashed and burned while landing in the Aleutians, killing one man. The other is missing out of Guam.

The identical four-engine 1049A Super Constellations both left Travis Air Force Base, Calif., at 9:45 Pacific Standard Time Wednesday. Both were bound for Saigon on flights for the Defense Department. Both mysteriously hit trouble a few hours later, though they'd taken different routes.

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## U.S. Plane Lost with 107

and Pacific Ocean — The flight was reported missing at 9:45 p.m.

Transcribed from the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Milwaukee, WI, March 16, 1962, p. 1:

## U.S. Plane Lost with 107

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A U.S. Navy spokesman said the plane was believed to have gone down in an area nearer





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## Sabotage Seen As Possibility in Lost Plane

and Pacific Ocean

The Flightpath 10:03 am

Transcribed from *Ocala Star-Banner*, Ocala, FL, March 19, 1962, p. 13:

### **Sabotage Seen as Possibility in Lost Plane**

MANILA (AP) — A report of a mysterious flash of light in the sky increased suspicion today that the American chartered military five nights ago blew up and was possibly sabotaged.

U.S. officials said a "bright light strong enough to light" a ship's decks was sighted by a Liberian tanker in the western Pacific along the scheduled route of the missing Flying Tiger Super Constellation bound for South Viet Nam with 107 persons aboard.

A spokesman at rescue headquarters in Guam said, "With the search in its fourth day, more credence is given to the possibility that the tanker may have seen the missing aircraft explode in flight."

An official of the Flying Tiger line, which operated the plane, said if investigation reveals the plane blew up, it would strengthen previous suspicions of sabotage.

Frank B. Lynoff, executive vice president in charge of operations, said experts consider it impossible for a violent explosion to occur about its Super Constellations under normal conditions.

The tanker T. L. Linzen said it sighted the bright light in the sky early Friday morning — about 90 minutes after the plane made its last report.

The Super Constellation was last heard from about 10:30 p.m. Thursday, 270 miles west of Guam, and gave no hint of anything amiss.

3 Leave a Response

✕

## 2 State Soldiers On Lost Airliner

and Pacific Ocean

The Flightpath 10:03 am

Transcribed from *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Milwaukee, WI, March 17, 1962, p. 4:

### **2 State Soldiers On Lost Airliner**

Two Wisconsin soldiers were among the 107 persons aboard the Flying Tiger Super Constellation airliner which vanished Thursday in the Pacific Ocean, the Defense Department said Friday.

They were identified as Sp. 4C Roger L. Oliver, husband of Mrs. Ramona K. Oliver of Victory (Vernon County), and Pvt. Jack C. Packard, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wesley L. Packard of Lodi (Columbia County).

A spokesman for Mrs. Oliver said her husband was 21 years old and had been in the Army about a year and a half. He was a native of Victory, where his parents still live.



er Airlines Flig X +

wordpress.com/tag/flying-tiger-airlines-flight-729

## 2 State Soldiers On Lost Airliner

Transcribed from *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Milwaukee, WI, March 17, 1962, p. 4:

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Two Wisconsin soldiers were among the 107 persons aboard the Flying Tiger Super-Constellation airliner which vanished Thursday in the Pacific Ocean, the Defense Department said Friday.

They were identified as Sp. 4C Roger L. Oliver, husband of Mrs. Ramona K. Oliver of Victory (Vernon County), and Pvt. Jack C. Packard, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wesley L. Packard of Lodi (Columbia County).

A spokesman for Mrs. Oliver said her husband was 21 years old and had been in the Army about a year and a half. He was a native of Victory, where his parents still live.

Mrs. Packard said her son was 18 and had been in the Army since last July. He was a graduate of Lodi High School and has three brothers and a sister.

The plane was en route to Saigon, South Vietnam, where the 93 GIs aboard were scheduled to relieve other American soldiers who have been helping train Vietnamese troops in the fight against Viet Cong guerrillas. The plane disappeared between Guam and the Philippines.

Others aboard were 11 American plane crew members and 3 South Vietnamese.

Ships and planes of the U.S. armed forces crisscrossed 15,000 square miles of ocean looking for a clue to the airliner's fate.

Loss of all aboard would make it the third worst single-plane disaster in aviation history.

Army Secretary Stahr said in Washington a "maximum effort" was being made to locate the plane.

"We have not given up hope that it will be found and that those aboard are safe," Stahr said.

Striking coincidences and unexplained circumstances in the flights of that airliner and another plane taking American military help to South Vietnam led the owner of the planes Friday to raise these possibilities:

- Sabotage of one or both planes.
- Possible kidnaping of the craft missing with 107 persons aboard, mostly trained American jungle troops.

But the Flying Tiger Line stressed in Burbank, Calif., it has no evidence of either possibility and they are strictly in the realm of wild guesses.

Coincidence was not ruled out.

The other plane, carrying secret military cargo, crashed and burned while landing in the Aleutians, killing one man.

- J Z Responses -



er Airlines flight ✕ +

wordpress.com/tag/flying-tiger-airlines-flight-739

### Ship Reports Bright Flash

and Pacific Ocean

The Flying Tiger

Transcribed from *Eugene Register-Guard*, Eugene, OR, March 19, 1962, p. 4:

#### Ship Reports Bright Flash

Manila (AP) — A report of a mysterious flash of light in the sky increased suspicion Monday that the American chartered military transport plane [sic] which vanished five night [sic] ago blew up and was possibly sabotaged.

U.S. officials said a "bright light strong enough to light" a ship's decks was sighted by a Liberian tanker in the western Pacific along the scheduled route of the missing Flying Tiger Super Constellation bound for South Viet Nam with 107 persons aboard.

A spokesman at rescue headquarters in Guam said, "With the search in its fourth day, more credence is given to the possibility that the tanker may have seen the missing aircraft explode in flight."

An official of the Flying Tiger line, which operated the plane, said if investigation reveals the plane blew up, it would strengthen previous suspicions of sabotage.

#### Sighted by Tanker

Frank B. Lynoff, executive vice president in charge of operations, said experts consider it impossible for a violent explosion to occur about its Super Constellations under normal conditions.

The tanker T. L. Linzen said it sighted the bright lights in the sky early Friday morning — about 90 minutes after the plane made its last report.

The Super Constellation was last heard from about 10:30 p.m. Thursday, 270 miles west of Guam, and gave no hint of anything amiss.

The missing four-engined plane, whose passengers included 93 U.S. Rangers en route to South Viet Nam to help in the fight against Communist Viet Cong guerillas [sic], was en route from Guam to the Philippines.

#### Mattress Picked Up

A search ship was reported Monday to have picked up an air mattress in the general area of the Pacific where the airliner last radioed its position.

Reports from Guam said the minesweeper Gallant found the mattress while patrolling the ocean as part of the vast air-sea hunt for the constellation, missing since Thursday.

The Joint Rescue Co-ordination Center at Guam said the mattress was 42 miles southeast of a position where the Liberian freighter reported sighting falling red lights.

2) Leave a Response



### Sabotage Seen As Possibility in Lost Plane

and Pacific Ocean

The Flying Tiger

Transcribed from *Ocala Star-Banner*, Ocala, FL, March 19, 1962, p. 13:



er Airlines Flig X +

wordpress.com/tag/flying-tiger-airlines-flight-739

## Flash Reported, Plane Sabotage Possible

Transcribed from *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, Spokane, WA, March 19, 1962, p. 4:

### Flash Reported

### Plane Sabotage Possible

MANILA (AP) — A report of a mysterious flash of light in the sky increased suspicion today that the American chartered military transport plane which vanished five nights ago blew up and was possibly sabotaged.

U.S. officials said a "bright light strong enough to light" a ship's decks was sighted by a Liberian [sic] tanker in the western Pacific along the scheduled route of the missing Flying Tiger Super Constellation bound for South Viet Nam with 107 persons aboard.

A spokesman at rescue headquarters in Guam said, "with the search in its fourth day, more credence is given to the possibility that the tanker may have seen the missing aircraft explode in flight."

An official of the Flying Tiger Line, which operated the plane, said if investigation reveals the plane blew up it would strengthen previous suspicions of sabotage.

Frank B. Lynoff, executive vice president in charge of operations, said experts consider it impossible for a violent explosion to occur about its Super-Constellations under normal circumstances.

"So far as blowing completely apart," he said, "there's nothing that powerful aboard; the fuel tanks just don't go off like that."

Lynoff said he was sure "something violent must have happened," however, because of the failure of the plane to radio it was having trouble.

The tanker T. L. Linzen said it sighted the bright light in the sky early Friday morning — about 90 minutes after the plane made its last report.

The Super-Constellation was last heard from about 10:30 p.m. Thursday, 270 miles west of Guam, and gave no hint of anything amiss.

The tanker reported sighting the light about 550 miles west of Guam and said "this was followed by two falling red lights described as one dropping fast and one dropping slow."

A widespread air-sea search has failed to turn up a single clue.

Five partially submerged objects floating along the route the airliner was scheduled to follow turned out to be a 120-foot long tree trunk.

### Chances Doubtful

Maj. Gen. Theodore R. Milton, commander of the 13th Air Force, said although the chances for finding survivors "are certainly not bright, our crews will continue to make every effort as long as there is any hope at all."

For the first time, no planes were dispatched from the Philippines to search through the night. A spokesman said the purpose was to conserve units for another maximum effort tomorrow.

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Soldiers On Lost ✕ +

wordpress.com/2009/11/15/2-state-soldiers-on-lost-airliner/#comments

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Nov 15, 2009 11:15 am  
1 Comment



2009/11/15

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#### 2 Responses to 2 State Soldiers On Lost Airliner

1. WINDIE WOODHEAD says:  
April 29, 2011 at 01:10 pm

2011/4/29  
1:10 PM  
0 0 0 0

The Mother & Father of Jack Packard was never given a Purple Heart that Jack should have been awarded. Is a soldiers life not worth the presentation of an award that honors his military service to his country? Jack has three brothers and a sister that are still alive and they have only one question. WHY?

Reply

2. Kat Stephens says:  
June 20, 2012 at 06:00 am

My Father, Edmond Saenz, died on this plane crash, ten days before my second birthday. I still ask, "Why?"

Reply

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Continuing For I X +

wordpress.com/2009/11/15/search-continuing-for-plane-missing-with-107-aboard/#comments

## 4 Responses to *Search Continuing For Plane Missing With 107 Aboard*

1. Diadem Fantony says:  
October 1, 2010 at 12:03 pm  
What is the update of this missing aircraft. Is it still missing as of press time?  
Reply

2. kurt burmeister says:  
March 16, 2012 at 6:45 pm  
Does any know where I can get the names of the troops on this plane.  
I think I was to be on this plane but got sick and had my orders changed.  
I was trained at Fort Gordon Georgia as a Field Radio Repairman.  
Reply

3. Tamra Croft Adami says:  
August 26, 2012 at 1:33 am  
Kurt,  
Just look up Flying Tigers Line Flight 739. My father was on that flight  
Reply

kurt burmeister says:  
August 27, 2012 at 5:11 pm  
Tamra,  
Thank you for the information.  
Reply

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#### 4 Responses to *Sea Search Abandoned*

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49 persons killed in midair collision  
Noted Men Lose Lives in Crash  
49 persons killed in midair collision  
Noted Men Lose Lives in Crash

1. Joanne Glassman says:  
March 20, 2020 at 8:06 pm

My Uncle was Master Sergeant Delbert L. Riggins in the Army, and one of the 93 men who went down on this day. There was never any proof that the plane ever went down -- it just was never seen again. They say we won't know for 100 years what really happened. The Army won't give us the facts. If any of you know anything about this will you please email me at [scotlandscorner@gmail.com](mailto:scotlandscorner@gmail.com).

Thank you for taking time to read this.  
Joanne

Reply

2. Joanne Glassman says:  
July 21, 2020 at 9:06 am

My father, Master Sergeant Robert Glassman was also on that flight. When I reviewed his military records it did NOT show his reenlistment in the Army. No obits from any city he had lived in at the time or prior could be found NO closure...

Isn't there a statute of limitations on military info...???

Reply

3. Sheila Glassman says:  
June 10, 2020 at 6:04 am

My Aunt lost her husband, James E. Lathe on this flight...no closure no answers. They will not allow these men to be listed on the Vietnam Wall Memorial because they didn't die in Vietnam or country we were in at the time. 93 US soldiers lost by our government. There was another Puebloan on that flight and his family was at least able to get his name called during the Vietnam Wall memorial week in DC.

Reply

4. Bob Brown says:  
September 20, 2019 at 10:04 pm

My Uncle Bill Myers was on this flight too. his son Tommy is a very outspoken trying to get his father and others the respect they deserve. I personally never met my Uncle Bill, but last year I met my cousin Tommy, he deserves to know what happened to his father, his hero...our Hero...along with the other heroes lost on that flight! My cousin has been threatened by the US Government saying it was in his best interest to stop looking, his family was threatened. From what we understood these men, were hand picked by President John F. Kennedy.

Reply

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THE FLIGHTPATH

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#### Sea Search Abandoned

and Pacific Ocean The FlightPath 10:04:00

Transcribed from Eugene Register-Guard, Eugene, OR, March 23, 1962, p. 2:

#### Sea Search Abandoned

CLARK AFB, Philippines (UP) — The United States Friday called off a massive but futile search for a Flying Tiger Line transport plane that disappeared eight days ago with 107 persons aboard.

Maj. Gen. Theodore R. Milton, commander of the 13th Air Force at Clark Air Base, said the search had ended with no trace found of the airliner or its passengers and crew.

Aboard the plane were 93 Army Rangers, 3 Vietnamese soldiers, and 11 crewmen. The four-engine Super Constellation disappeared March 15 on a six-hour flight from Guam to Manila. The flight was headed for South Viet Nam.

The search was one of the largest air and sea hunts in the history of the Pacific. It covered more than 200,000 square miles of open sea.

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Logo created by JEFF GLASSER with permission from SAVE A CONNIE (AHM)

This site is dedicated to ALL 107

# **GEORGE MICHAEL NAU & THE OTHER 106**

whose fates are still unknown.

Newspaper headlines on MARCH 16, 1962 read:

"107 LOST AT SEA"

## **56 YEARS AGO**

## **Aboard N 6 9 2 1 C**

## **THIS WALL is for them!**

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## FLIGHT BLOG

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### Unsolved Aviation Mysteries: Missing Flight 739



## Aviation Mysteries: Flying Tiger Line Flight 739

The Lockheed L-1049 Super Constellation propliner is a rather large plane with a wingspan of over 126 ft. and a length of over 116 ft. It can carry up to 95 passengers with a crew of five.

***So, how did a plane like this simply vanish into thin air?***

That's a mystery that, to this day, hasn't been solved. On March 16, 1962, the weather was as clear as the skies. The Lockheed L-1049

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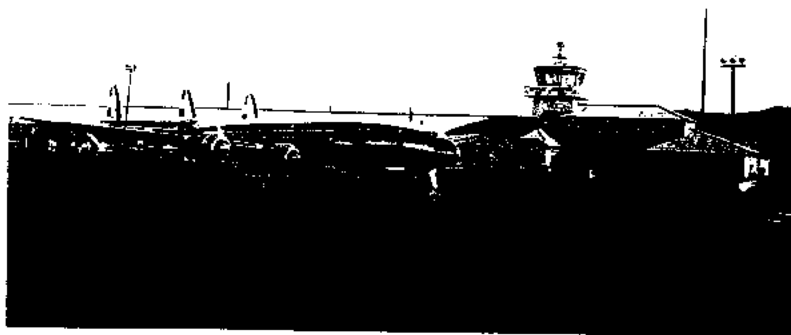
### Recent Comments

Super Constellation was transporting 93 US soldiers and 3 South Vietnamese from California to Vietnam. There were 11 crew members. No one from that flight was ever seen again.

## The Flight

The plane itself was only 5 years old, with just over 17,000 hours of flight time logged. This time, it was serving as Military Air Transport Service.

There were four planned stops on the way to their final destination Honolulu, Wake Island Airfield, Guam, and the Clark Air Base in the Philippines. These stops were planned for refueling purposes, and the plane only experienced minor delays when it made each stop, including minor maintenance, but no issues were detected. After refueling in the Philippines, the plane was equipped with enough fuel to last 9 hours. The final stretch to Vietnam was only scheduled to take just over 6 hours.



A Lockheed Constellation L-1049 similar to lost Flight 739. By Greg and Cindy - originally posted to Flickr as KLM L-1049C Constellation at Santa Maria (Azores). CC BY 2.0.  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6554707>

Eight minutes after the plane departed the Clark Air Base, the pilot radioed in his location and made no indication that anything was wrong aboard the plane. Future attempts to contact Flight 739 were met by radio silence and they were never heard from again.

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> January 2018

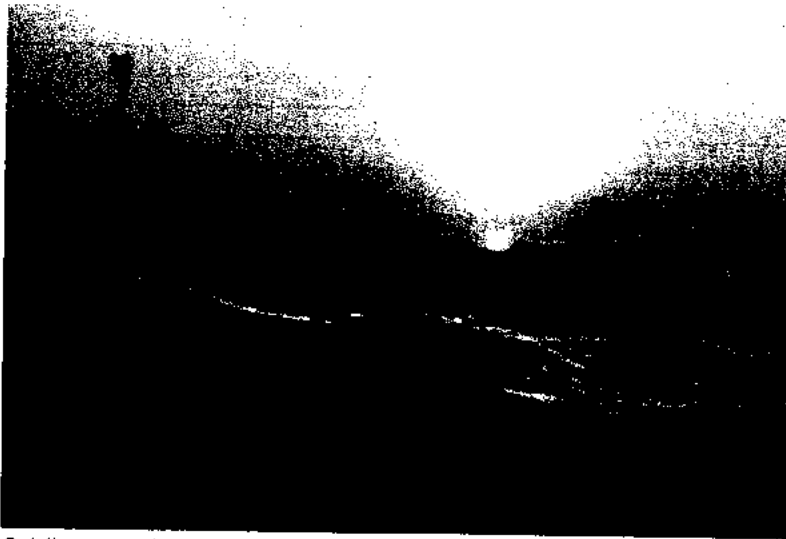
## The Investigation

The aircraft was declared missing that day, and an eight-day search for the missing flight ensued. Aircraft and ships from the Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marines were sent on the search. A total of 48 aircraft and 8 sea vessels were involved.

In just the first two days, 75,000 square miles of the ocean were searched. By the end of the search, over 200,000 square miles were scoured for any wreckage, but nothing was found. The search was called off and all 107 aboard were assumed dead.

***This stands as the worst aviation tragedy involving a Lockheed Constellation aircraft.***

## Conspiracy?



Oddly enough, another Flying Tiger Line flight—also an L-1049 Super Constellation—was involved in an accident a few days before Flight 739 went missing. The two flights had different final destinations, but they both took off from the Travis Air Force Base in California.

While Flight 739 disappeared, the other plane crashed into the Aleutian Islands and caught fire. It was carrying secret military cargo.

That's just one aspect of the conspiracy. Another contributing factor is that a tanker had reported seeing a possible midair explosion

- > December 2017
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- > March 2016

about an hour and a half after the last radio contact with Flight 739. An investigation of that area found no remains of the aircraft.

The tanker's report of the location of the explosion and the estimated location of the plane at that time coincided. However, nothing can be proven as no debris was ever found.

Combined with the airline tragedy a few days earlier, both the media and the public began to suspect sabotage. The official ruling,

*"A summation of all relevant factors tends to indicate that the aircraft was destroyed in flight. However, due to the lack of any substantiating evidence the Board is unable to state with any degree of certainty the exact fate of N 6921C."*

While the airline stated that there is no evidence to support either theory, people can't help but wonder about what could have possibly happened to Flight 739.

---

Did you know that a recent discovery points to the possibility that D.B. Cooper may have been employed by Boeing? Learn about the mystery behind Cooper's hijacking and disappearance in our first Aviation Mysteries post: [D.B. Cooper](#).

---

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By Kayleigh DeMace | January 25th, 2017 | Aviation History | Comments Off

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## Accident description

Last updated: 19 January 2018

Status: Final  
Date: Friday 16 March 1962  
Time: ca 01:30



Type: Lockheed L-1049H Super Constellation  
Operator: Flying Tiger Line  
Registration: N6921C  
C/n / msn: 4817  
First flight: 1957  
Total airframe hrs: 17224  
Crew: Fatalities: 11 / Occupants: 11  
Passengers: Fatalities: 96 / Occupants: 96  
Total: Fatalities: 107 / Occupants: 107  
Airplane damage: Missing  
Airplane fate: Presumed damaged beyond repair  
Location: between Guam and Angeles City ( Pacific Ocean)  
Phase: En route (ENR)  
Nature: Int'l Non Scheduled Passenger  
Departure airport: Guam-Agana NAS (NGM), Guam  
Destination airport: Angeles City-Clark Air Base (CRK:RPMK), Philippines  
Flightnumber: 739

## Narrative:

Flying Tiger Line Flight 7815/13, operating as Military Air Transport Service (MATS) Charter flight 739/14, originated at Travis AFB with refueling stops at Honolulu, Wake Island, Guam, Clark AFB and was to terminate at Saigon. The flight arrived at Guam at 11:14 GMT with the only irregularities on the way being minor maintenance on the ignition systems of engines no. 1 and 3 at Honolulu, a 30 min delay at Honolulu because of stewardess complaints of inadequate rest facilities aboard, and minor maintenance at Wake Island (discrepancies in the no. 1 and 3 engine ignition systems). The flight departed Guam at 12:57 GMT for an IFR flight to Clark AFB, Philippine Islands with an ETA of 19:16 GMT. The flight climbed to a cruising altitude of 18000 feet and reported being at position 13 40'N and 140 00'E at 14:22. The crew expected to reach position 14 00'N 135 00'E at 15:30. At 15:33 Guam IFSS was experiencing communication difficulties caused by heavy radio static and at 15:39 the operator attempted to contact N6921C to obtain its position report. No radio contact could be established.

Search and rescue operations were instituted at 19:43. It appeared that at 15:30 GMT (01:30 local time) the crew of the SS TL Lenzen supertanker had sighted a midair explosion from their position at 13 44'N and 134 49'E.

The subsequent search covered 144000 sq miles using 48 aircraft and 8 surface vessels, but nothing was found.

## Probable Cause:

PROBABLE CAUSE: "The Board is unable to determine the probable cause of this accident from the evidence now available."

## Sources:

- » CAB Aircraft Accident Report File No. 1-0002
- » ICAO Accident Digest No.14 Volume I, Circular 71-AN/63 (24-27)

## Photos

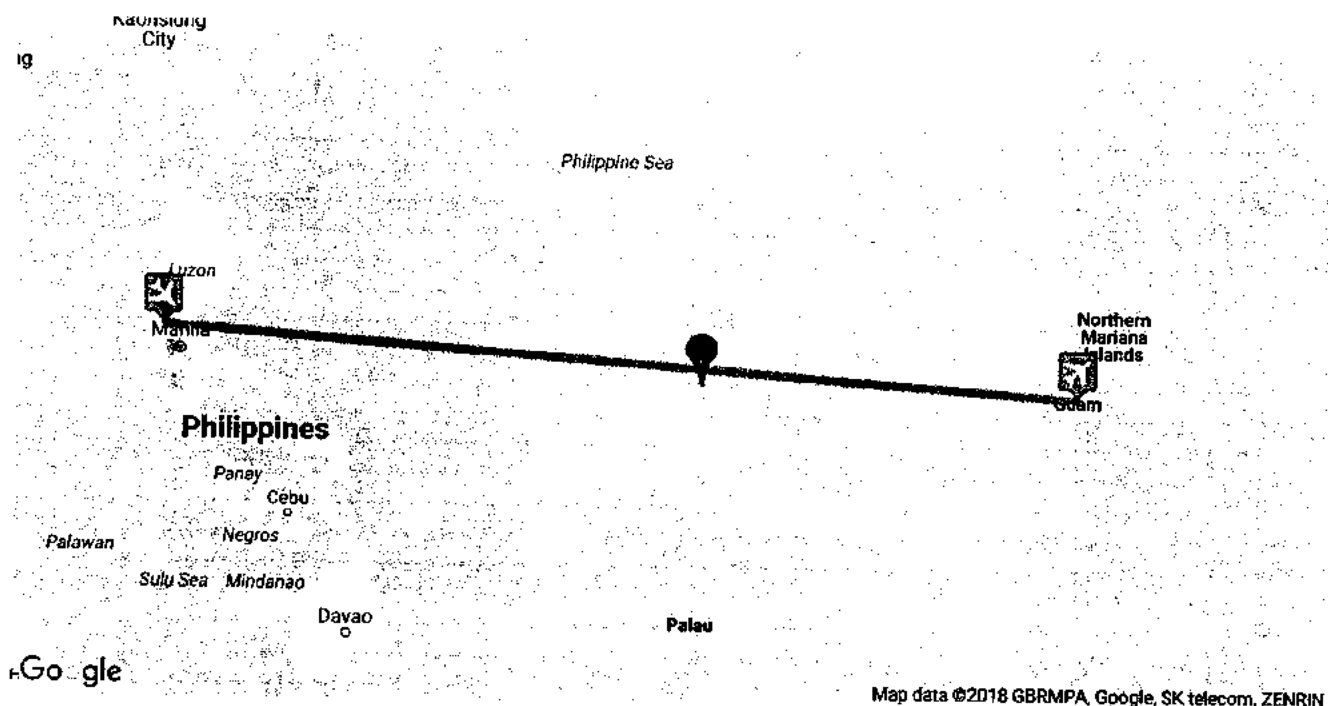
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## Map

This map shows the airport of departure and the intended destination of the flight. The line between the airports does not display the exact flight path.

Distance from Guam-Agana NAS to Angeles City-Clark Air Base as the crow flies is 2602 km (1626 miles).

Accident location: Approximate; accuracy within a few kilometers.



languages: 日本語 繁體中文 簡體中文 英語

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## Lockheed L-1049



- 564 built
- 49<sup>th</sup> loss
- 28<sup>th</sup> fatal accident
- The worst accident

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## Pacific Ocean

- The worst accident (at the time)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> worst accident (currently)

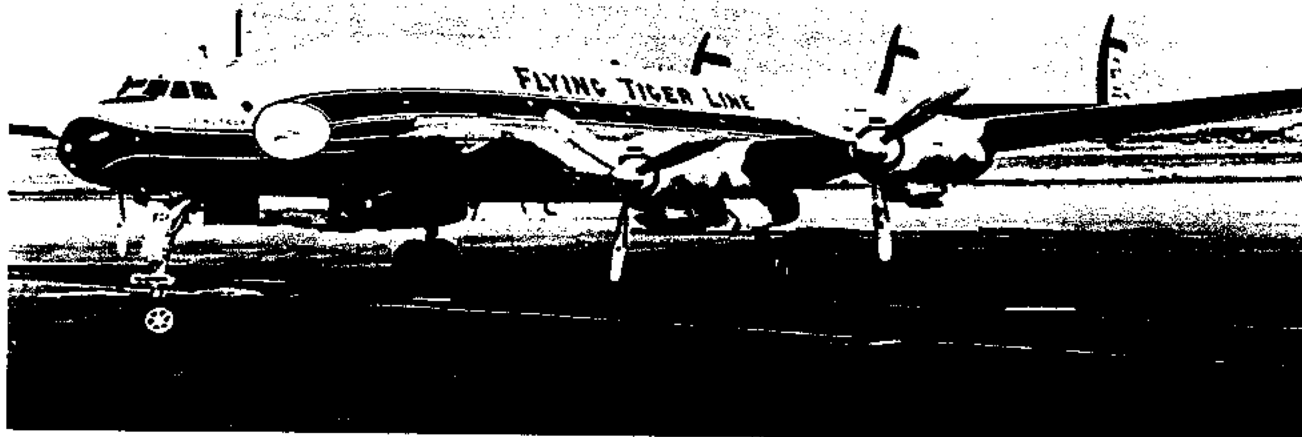
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# VANISHED PLANE NOT WITHOUT PRECEDENT

By **Jerome Greer Chandler** March 15, 2014



Fifty-four years before Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 went missing another airliner vanished over the ocean. It just evaporated. To this day, just what happened to it is unknown, but speculation is rife – speculation fueled by the eyewitness report of those aboard a tanker who witnessed the craft's destruction.

March 15, 1962 a Flying Tiger Line L1049H Super Constellation, bound from Agana Naval Air Station in Guam to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines simply ceased to exist. N 6921C, Flying Tiger Flight 739/14, disappeared at 13°13' North Latitude, 140°00' East Longitude – over an all but bottomless patch of the Pacific, an abyss called the Mariana Trench. This deepest of all depressions in the Earth's crust is an astonishing 6.78 miles deep – this compared to the relatively shallow 300-feet or so along MH370's original projected flight path.

In all probability it's the virtually bottomless depths of the Pacific that entomb the remains of "21 Charlie," the call sign of the Flying Tiger Connie.

21 Charlie, operating as a charter flight for the Military Air Transport Service, was ferrying American Army personnel from Travis Air Force Base, California to Saigon, to a country we once

called South Vietnam. There were 107 people on board that airplane. One of them was my stepfather. He was the co-pilot.

Bob Gazzaway was a pugnacious, plucky sort of guy who'd survived all that life could dish out – and that included being a Naval aviator during World War 11. In command of the Connie (the nickname of the Super Constellation), was Captain Gregory P. Thomas, one of Flying Tigers' most experienced pilots.

21 Charlie's path across the Pacific was placid. An Aircraft Accident Report obtained by this reporter from the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board (the predecessor of the National Transportation Safety Board) says the weather that night was good – broken cumulus clouds, no turbulence, and moonlit visibility of 15 miles – the kind of night airmen relish.

At 22 minutes after midnight, 21 Charlie radioed its position. It was the last the outside world would hear from the crew. About an hour later the crew of the S/S T L Lenzen, a Standard Oil tanker, spotted an explosion in the sky. According to the CAB report, the crew spotted "a vapor trail, or some phenomenon resembling a vapor trail overhead...As this vapor trail passed behind a cloud, there occurred an explosion which was described by the witnesses as intensely luminous, with a white nucleus surrounded by a reddish-orange periphery with radial lines of identically colored lights."

What happened? The CAB couldn't determine a probable cause.

In the absence of hard physical evidence, rumors ran rampant, just as they have with Malaysia Flight 370. At the time people speculated about engine problems, sabotage, even the accidental shoot down of the Connie by an American missile, an inadvertent act that scuttlebutt said was covered up by an embarrassed Pentagon at the beginning of what would mutate into the most unpopular war in American history.

Lending at least anecdotal credence to the shootdown and sabotage theories is a statement by Captain Duilio Bona. The late award-winning investigative reporter David Morrissey and I obtained a copy of his declaration after filing a Freedom of Information request with the United States government. In his declaration, Captain Bona said some fascinating things. Among the more intriguing: the witnesses aboard the Lenzen were "convinced [that the craft they saw explode was "a U.S. Airplane...on [military] exercise flights."

One of Bona's crewmembers, a lookout named Scarfi said, "he saw a jet vapor track," according to the captain. 21 Charlie was a piston-engine airliner. Shortly after the vapor trail, Bona said Scarfi recalled, "a bright light illuminated, as a lightning, the bridge [of the ship]."

Lenzen's radio operator said there were no distress signals from the aircraft, a statement that led the CAB to conclude in its Accident Report "It can be reasonably assumed" that whatever befell 21 Charlie "happened suddenly and without warning."

Captain Bona said the radio operator of Lenzen tried "repeatedly" to contact Naval radio stations in Guam, Manila, Okinawa, and Iwo Jima – all to no avail. And that led to Bona's conclusion "that what we saw was a troubled secret operation."

Troubled by what, or by whom, Bona never said. A missile? Sabotage perhaps? Remember, this was the Cold War, and Vietnam was just beginning to heat up. In its report, the CAB said when 21 Charlie was parked at Honolulu, Wake Island, and Guam just about anyone could access the aircraft "without challenge...the aircraft was left unattended in a dimly lighted area for a period of time while at Guam."

In a letter on the disaster the Federal Bureau of Investigation concluded the Bureau "did not anticipate [launching an investigation] unless substantial evidence of willful destruction is developed."

Then there's a more mundane theory: engine problems. Three days before it disappeared, 21 Charlie had to return to Honolulu when number four engine developed "a significant power loss."

Shootdown, sabotage or something else? The odds are we'll never know. 21 Charlie carried no flight data recorder, no cockpit voice recorder. The United States government says evidence of "willful destruction" was never recovered – this despite one of the most massive sea searches in history, a quest covering 144,000 square miles of ocean that employed 1,300 people, 48 aircraft, and 8 surface vessels. "Despite the thoroughness of the search," concluded the Civil Aeronautics Board, "nothing was found which could conceivably be linked to the missing aircraft or its occupants."

And so it is, 54 years after the fact, that the fate of the Flying Tiger Connie and 107 souls on board remains a mystery – a mystery the answers to which are shrouded by seven miles of water.

Now, we have a new mystery on our hands. Odds are it will be solved far before the passing of a half-century.

## Flying Tigers Line Flight 739: 50 Year Anniversary

### History, Memorial, Military, Tribute

Flying Tigers Line Flight 739, a Lockheed L-1049H, was chartered by the United States military. Originating at Travis Air Force Base, California, the Military Transport was scheduled for fueling stops at Honolulu, Wake Island, Guam, Clark AFB and was to terminate in Saigon.



The flight (<http://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=19620315-1>) arrived at Guam at 11:14 GMT with the only irregularities on the way being minor maintenance on the ignition systems of engines #1 and #3 at Honolulu, a 30 minute delay at Honolulu because of stewardess complaints of inadequate rest facilities aboard, and minor maintenance at Wake Island (discrepancies in the #'s 1 and 3 engine ignition systems). The flight departed Guam at 12:57 GMT for an IFR flight to Clark AFB, Philippine Islands with an ETA of 19:16 GMT.

This plane, a Lockheed Super Constellation, had a flight crew of 11, and 96 U.S. soldiers, including 3 South Vietnam enlisted men.

According (<http://www.geocities.com/nau6/Briefing.html>) to the Civil Aeronautics Board's (CAB) Accident Report, "The plane disappeared 1 1/2 hours after takeoff from Guam enroute to Saigon." And "the largest air/sea search" of that time "was initiated 5 hours after the plane's fuel exhaustion time." "The S/S T.L. Lenzen, a supertanker owned by Standard Oil, was in the vicinity and witnessed a vapor trail go behind a cloud," and then, (what they thought was according to the depositions of the crew) "a covert operation due to the low flying plane." The Accident Report continues, that the crew of the S/S T.L. Lenzen had also witnessed "a mid-air explosion at the approximate time & location of N6921C." The Accident Report concludes, "Due to the lack of any substantiating evidence the Board is unable to state with any degree of certainty the exact fate of N6921C."

The Department of Defense has "excluded this flight," from it's own criteria, which would enable these 107 names being included on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial (The WALL) in Washington, D.C.



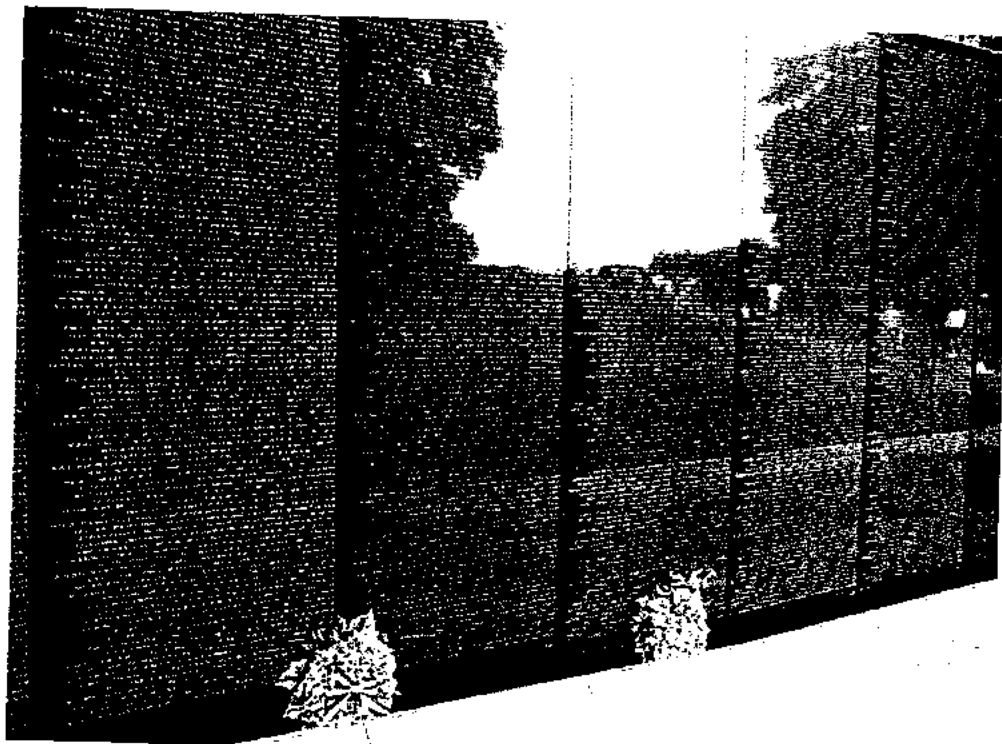
([http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3122/3120121534\\_b5be52cd1d\\_o.jpg](http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3122/3120121534_b5be52cd1d_o.jpg))

Adams Homer D. Private Ukon Wv; Armes James R. Sargent 1/C L.C. Mondsee Austria; Atkins Billy J. Private Black Mountain Nc; Baggett Robert H. Spec. 4/C Burlington Nc; Baks Or Bako Robert J. Sargent Elbridge Ny; Barnes Donald A. Master Sargent Granite City Il; Baxley Thomas W. Private 1/C Thomasville Ga; Bayse Richard S. Special 5/C Prince George Va; Biernacke Henry F. Master Sargent Colorado Springs Co; Bliss George W. Sargent 1/C L.c. Fort Jay Ny; Bowen James D. Private Indianapolis In; Breema Joseph F. Private Danville Va; Burns John J. Sargent 1/C San Luis Obispo Ca; Callahan John H. Sargent Hazelton Pa; Canon Larry D. Private Chino Ca; Caseldine William F. Master Sargent Dover Tn; Cox Edward Donald P. Spec. 5/C Amarillo Tx; Croft Lucius D. Sargent Augusta Ga; Curry Harold L. Master Sargent Mangum Ok; Dickey Douglas P. Spec. 5/C Alexandria La; Dixon Ernest T. Sargent Jesup Ga; Edwards James A., Private Hanceville Al; Fox Lawrence A. Spec. 4/C Canestoga Ny; Gallipeau Howard R. Jr. Master Sargent Alderwood Manor Wa; Gananca Clarence F. Jr. Sargent Renasalner Ny;

Geiser John L. Sargent 1/C Granite Md; Glassman Robert R. M/ Sargent 1/C San Jose Ca; Glynn Walter Sargent Tacoma Wa; Greenleaf Roy E. Spec. 5/C Bloomfield Nm; **Griffith Charles W. Private 1/C Cincinnati Oh**; Grissom Sidney Lee Sargent 1/C Newburgh Mo; Haaf Douglas A. Spec. 4/C N. Syracuse Ny; Hatt Melvin L. Sargent 1/C Ft. Huachuca City Az; Henderson Donald W. Private Mt. Auburn Il; Henderson Robert N. Private Sfo Ca; Hester Lindsay K. Sargent 1/C Ft. Monroe Va; Hopkins Timothy F. Special 5/C Spokane Wa; Hoy Clinton M. Sargent Sierra Vista Az; Hunter Samuel L. Private 1/C Claflin Ks; Jarvis William R. Master Sargent Glendale Ky; Jennings John Charles Private Newell Wv; Johnston James W. Sargent Clarksville Tn; Jones John H.h. Private Columbus Ga; Jones John J. Sargent Ogden Ut, Kanisky John Sargent Haren Holland; **Karibo John Altman Sargent Bellefontaine Oh**; Kinnison Guy W. Spec. 5/C Kaneohe, Oahu Hi; Kisse Charles E. Spec. 4/C Stockton Ca; Lattie Jack E. Sargent Grovetown Ga; Leddy Adams S. Spec. 6/C Guam; Lehmkuhl Warren M. Sargent Columbus Ga; McClure Franklin D. M/ Spec. 4/C Dallas Ga; Mcentee Stanley W. Private Detroit Mi; Medwid Steven Sargent Alexandria Va; Mick Billy W. Sargent Sierra Vista Az; Morrison Tom B. Sargent Plattsmouth Ne; Myers Raymond E. Sargent 1/C Warren Az; Nichols Nicholas Jr. Sargent Seaside Ca; Oliver Roger L. Spec. 4/C Victory Wi; Packard Jack C. Private Lodi Wi; Pardonnet Charles W. Spec. 4/C Colorado Springs Co; Pelkey Frank E. Sargent Farmington Me; Perkins Lawrence R. Private Chicago Il; Powell James A. Sargent 1/C Ft. Worth Tx; Reinhardt Walter A. Sargent 1/C Hammond In; Rice Hubert L. Sargent 1/C Waynesville Mo; Riggins Delbert L. Master Sargent Boise Id; Roberts Edison L. Warrant Officer Tacoma Wa; Robinson Eddie F. Spec. 5/C Benton Ak; Roderick Leslie R. Jr. Spec. 6/C Houston Mo; Rogers Samuel Jr. Spec. 4/C Pine Bluff Ak; Saade/Salada Leslie M. Staff Sargent Erie Pa; Saenz Edmond Sargent 1/C Lakeview Terrace Ca; Sager George E. Spec. 4/C Bergton Va; Sargent Donald A. M/ Spec. 4/C Ossipee Nh; Sheard Andrew A. Iii Private Radner Pa; Simola Efisio Jr. Sargent San Antonio Tx; Slocum George M. Spec. Westfield Ny; Smith Elmer L. Spec. 5/C Louisiana Mo; Sorenson James C. Sargent Spanaway Wa; Talbot Fred W. Spec. 4/C Salamanca Ny; Taylor James H. Spec. 4/C Olive Branch Mi; Thamy Peter Master Sargent Vallejo Ca; **Thomas John A. Master Sargent Ridgeway Oh**; Thompson Clarence E. Spec. 4/C Big Spring Tx; Trantum Jack E. Master Sargent Augusta Ga; Twitty James E. Staff Sargent Brooklyn Ny; Walcott Wallace L. Spec. 1/C Tacoma Wa; \*Walker Ross C. Sargent 1/C Pickens Sc; Wedge Leonard J. Spec. 4/C Millnocket Me; Wendell John C. Sargent 1/C San Antonio Tx; Williams Albert F. Sargent 1/C Tacoma Wa; Wong James Spec. 5/C Lahaina, Maui Hi

Above are the names of the troops that were on the plane, with the soldiers from Ohio in boldface. These men have been denied their rightful place of honor on the wall.





This website (<http://www.geocities.com/nau6/contents.html>) was set up by the daughter of George Michael Nau, a US Navy and Civilian Flight Engineer, who was one of the 107 that disappeared.

There are two men whose names are not in the list above.

Two soldiers who weren't able to make that flight.

One of those soldiers was Lorainite Dan Asensio.

Due to problems with their passports, he and another soldier were held up and were unable to accompany their fellow soldiers when they departed Travis Air Force Base.

All aboard this plane are not officially listed as Killed In Action, Missing In Action or Prisoners Of War by the Department of Defense.

SHERROD BROWN  
(PH)

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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 31, 2008

Mr. Dan Asensio  
2615 Vassar Ave  
Lorain, Ohio 44053

Dear Mr. Asensio:

Thank you for promoting the inclusion of those on board the Flying Tigers Flight 739 on  
Vietnam Memorial.

I appreciate your concern for the heroes who have bravely served our country.

The Department of Defense determines who can be included on the Vietnam Memorial.  
However, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund provides additional information on the  
parameters for inclusion, as well as contact information. Here is a link and contact telej  
number for the organization.

Website:

<http://www.vvmf.org/index.cfm?SectionID=4>

Telephone:

(202) 393-0090

I hope this information helpful. Thank you again for contacting me.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

SFB:hw

[http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3090/3120121032\\_028f095e6e\\_b.jpg](http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3090/3120121032_028f095e6e_b.jpg)

I won't claim to know why the government is denying these men their rightful place on the Memorial  
Wall in Washington, D.C., but I do want to point out two facts: The plane disappeared on March 16,  
1962. According to another website (<http://www.42explore2.com/vietnam.htm>), the first U.S. troops  
entered Vietnam in March 1965.

Three years difference, between when the Lockheed was supposed to land, and the 'official' entrance of  
U.S. troops into this conflict.

What was the proposed mission of these men? Had they actually completed their journey, could there  
have been a difference in the outcome of the war?

We'll never know, but I do think that the government should rethink their position on recognizing these  
soldiers.

On this Memorial Day, 2008, please take a moment to say a prayer of 'Thanks' for all the soldiers who  
have fought for our Country.

Say a prayer for all of our soldiers deployed throughout the world, to keep them out of harm's way, so  
that we can continue to enjoy the freedoms that we have.

And if you're lucky enough to come face-to-face with one of our Country's finest, take a second and  
thank them personally, for their dedication and effort.

We ALL truly appreciate it.

*(A huge 'Thank You' to Mr. Asensio for the information above, and for his commitment to our country. )*

March 15, 2012 Update: The above post was copied in its entirety and posted on another blog. While there has been a lot of discussion there, I'd like to reprint some of the info that has been shared:

*...the 'rules' governing Additions to the VN Memorial Wall. While somewhat complex, they are broken down into three (3) general scenarios:*

*1. Anyone who dies – regardless of cause – on foreign soil within South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia. This also includes boundaries that stretch a few miles out into the South China Sea that are designated war-zone. Note the word 'few'.*

*2. Deaths that occur outside of the war-zone area, but are attributable to events that occurred there. These are usually individuals evacuated out due to wounds, illnesses, accidents, etc – and subsequently died shortly thereafter.*

*3. Individuals that died while "going to, or returning from" a specific war-related MISSION. This change was made primarily for Pilots/Crew who crashed after a NVN bombing raid in Thailand...which is outside of the war-zone boundaries established.*

*Based on various documents, no argument can be made that this crash occurred within the few miles of SVN...no flotsam was ever found.*

*However, a theoretical argument could be made that these soldiers were 'going to' SVN on a specific war-related mission (as opposed to being new replacements). The CAB report does reference that they were Communications Specialists – a group being sent there for a critical purpose of the war.*

*The problem is that of all of the Personnel Files obtained (about 35 so far) – ALL have been excised of any training received prior to this crash. Without those records, I cannot determine in what communications genre they were trained in, what Army or MACV Unit they were to be assigned to once there, or the specific reason/mission they were to perform.*

Also, this:

*The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund receives numerous requests each year from individuals who desire to have particular names placed on the Memorial. While the Memorial Fund finances the name additions to The Wall, we do not determine whose names are to be inscribed. It is the Department of Defense that makes these difficult and often very technical decisions. Our organization does not have the authority to overrule those who adjudicate these matters.*

*Neither victims of Agent Orange nor PTSD-induced suicides fit the parameters for inclusion on The Wall. (Click here for a brief summary of the criteria and sources for names inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial). We are often asked to add a name that DOD has not approved. Much emotion has surrounded the question of names not included on the list. Many families whose sons were taken from them in service during the Vietnam era but in other areas, as well as those whose loved ones died consequent to their return from the war (casualties of Agent Orange or PTSD-induced suicide), have expressed great disappointment that their loved ones' name was not on the Memorial. Such cases have our deepest sympathy and respect, yet as they do not fit the parameters as described above, these names cannot be added to the Memorial.*

*However, The Memorial Fund honors those who have died as a result of the Vietnam War, but do not meet the requirements for inclusion on The Wall with its In Memory program. There is a plaque by the wall to honor these individuals as well as a ceremony to remember them. Honor Roll books listing all of the names honored by the plaque are available to those who participate in the program. Call us at 202-393-0090 to learn about the In Memory*

program.

*For further explanation of the parameters for inclusion and to submit a request, please contact the relevant service branch below:*

**ARMY AIR FORCE**

*Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center 1600 Spearhead Division Avenue, Dept. 450 ATTN: PDC-P Fort  
Knox, Kentucky 40121 VOX: 502-613-8225 Headquarters Air Force Personnel Center*

*Missing Persons Branch  
550 C. Street West, Suite 14  
Randolph AFB, Texas 78150-4716  
Fax: 210-565-3805*

**MARINE NAVY**

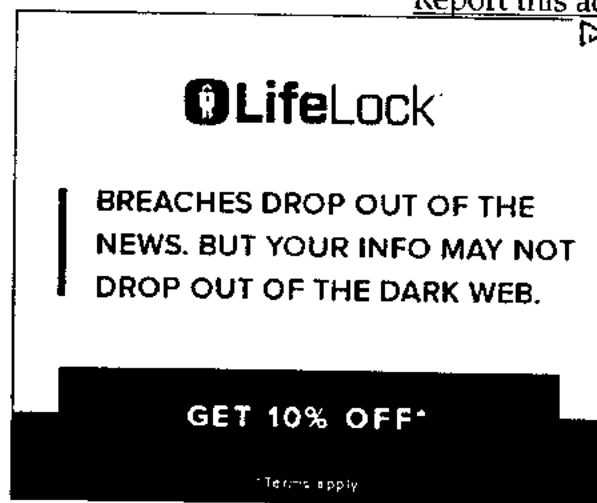
*Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps  
Manpower and Reserve Affairs, MRC  
3280 Russell Road  
Quantico, VA 22134-5103  
Fax: 703-784-9823 or 703-784-4134 Navy Personnel Command  
Casualty Assistance Branch (PERS-621P)  
5720 Integrity Drive  
Millington, TN 38055-6210  
Fax: 901-874-6654*

*Hope this has been helpful, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (<http://vvmf.org/137.cfm>)*

Lastly, this piece of news: Did you know, March 16, 1962 fell on a Friday. March 16, 2012 also falls on a Friday. 1:30 AM Friday the 16th will mark 50 years since a merchant ship witnessed a bright flash in the sky where the missing aircraft was on course between Guam and Clark AF Base in the Philippines.

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March 15, 2012 Mark J Teleha

## *Related*

**A Memorial Day Tribute and Mystery** In "Lorain"

**Scam - September 11 Attack Fund** In "Email"

**The Terminal** In "Lorain"

60 thoughts on "Flying Tigers Line Flight 739: 50 Year Anniversary"

1.

**Catherine Nau** says:

September 21, 2012 at 11:12 pm

Mark,

I found your article on the website (<http://www.locophotogblog.com/>) today. It makes me happy that someone else is paying a tribute to the "107 Missing At Sea" "Aboard N6921C," I noticed that the site had used some of my original photos and my own quotes in order for you to make your story known. I appreciate that you honored my father's name, George Michael Nau, but failed to mention the other 10 Civilian Crew Members' names; nor, did you give me recognition where it is due.

If you can find the book, "A Bright Shining Lie" by Neil Sheehan, you can find the other service member's name who was unable to board N6921C – John Paul Vann.

Sincerely,

Catherine Nau

[Reply](#)

**Mark** says:

September 22, 2012 at 5:31 am

Thanks for the update and I apologize but I thought the link back to your site was adequate recognition. I tried to find the quotes you referenced but was unable to.

[Reply](#)

1.

**Catherine Nau** says:

June 7, 2017 at 7:14 pm

There was no link the time. Only you and myself would know what my quotes were.

[Reply](#)

2.

**Frank Allen** says:

October 13, 2012 at 11:29 am

Hello Mark,

My name is Frank Allen. My Wife's Uncle, Howard Roy Gallipeau Jr., was among those lost on Flight 739. I have started a petition to get the Department of Defense to include these men on The Wall in DC. Would you be willing to sign my petition & and perhaps get your readers to do the same? It only takes a minute. The petition can be found on the website Change.org. If you type in Vietnam Wall the first petition will be the one you are looking for. Just will in a little information and you will be done. Thanks for the help. Let's get these men the honor they deserve.

Sincerely,

Frank Alle

[Reply](#)

1.

**Pat Mintz** says:

January 9, 2013 at 10:43 pm

My father, Robert Glassman , Master Sgt 1st class was also on board...please contact me [Patmintz@comcast.net](mailto:Patmintz@comcast.net)

[Reply](#)

3.

**Matthew Burke** says:

November 9, 2012 at 12:49 am

Frank, Mark,

My name is Matt Burke. I am a reporter with Stars and Stripes, currently stationed in Japan. I am really interested in this. I would like to do a story for our paper. Can you all please reach out to me by email to get things started? [burke.matt@stripes.com](mailto:burke.matt@stripes.com) . Thanks so much! I look forward to hearing from you!

Matt

[Reply](#)

**Mark** says:

November 14, 2012 at 10:05 pm

Frank,

I signed it and for anyone else that would like to sign the petition, here's the link directly to it:

<http://www.change.org/petitions/the-department-of-defense-put-the-names-of-the-men-of-flying-tiger-flight-739-on-the-vietnam-wall>

[Reply](#)

4.

**James72** says:

January 4, 2013 at 10:58 am

Mark: I was stationed on Guam Naval Air Station in 1962. The night of 14 March I was going to the Air Terminal but was stopped by the Control Tower with a red light, Flight 739 was just coming in for a landing. I had to wait for a green light and when I got to the Air Terminal, Flight 739 was just coming to a stop. I went into the terminal just ahead of the plane's passengers, had a bite to eat and noticed there were a lot of Army personnel, some military had Vietnam shoulder patches.. When I left to go back to the Control Tower, I saw the Flying Tiger plane next to my truck. The following morning, we heard the news, that a plane was overdue at Clark Field. Two days later I was on a C-124 searching for survivors. After 8 days, no sign was found of any wreckage.

[Reply](#)

5.

**James32** says:

January 4, 2013 at 1:15 pm

MARK: Forgot to mention about the night Aug at terminal with passengers from flight 739- One of the Army passengers was a good friend of my uncle. They were both in Army at the same time. Didn't know until I was discharged from the Navy in 1963.

[Reply](#)

**Mark** says:

January 4, 2013 at 5:59 pm

Thanks for your comments and your service, James. I can't help but wonder, had these men arrived in Vietnam, would there have been a war? Would history have been written differently?

[Reply](#)

6.

**Pat Mintz says:**

January 9, 2013 at 10:54 pm

I was just 12 years old when this happened...still trying to fill in the gaps. My parents were divorced and all of these years later I would still like to find where a service was held, or a funeral site.....have tried to find clues before , come up with nothing. Also, interestingly enough when I did get his service records from the clearing house in St Louis it doesn't even show he had REenlisted in the Army ..... Personally, I will always feel that I need some kind of closure.

[Reply](#)

1.

**Tommy Joe Myers says:**

February 1, 2013 at 10:31 am

Hello, my name is Tom Myers. My father was S.F.C. Raymond E. (Bill) Myers. He was also on that flight. I have been trying for yrs. To get some answers. I, was 8yrs. Old when it happened. You can reach me at, [tmymers9084@aol.com](mailto:tmymers9084@aol.com) maybe we can help each other?

[Reply](#)

7.

**Gwen Warner says:**

March 8, 2013 at 11:13 am

Roy E. Greenleaf Spec 5/C, Bloomfield, New Mexico is my uncle. He was on the Flying Tiger Line 739. It would be a tribute to those who died on this flight if they were honored for their service.

[Reply](#)

1.

**Mark Strickland says:**

May 27, 2013 at 1:46 pm

Hi Gwen,

It's your Cousin Mark in California. It looks like you got the E-mail on this that I sent earlier this year about Uncle Roy's memorial on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. I'm glad to see your post on here. Your E-mail bounced back so I wasn't sure if you ever received it?

We need more signatures! I don't know why the number needed keeps increasing? Very strange? Anyway... please pass this along to the rest of our family so everyone can sign it. I never knew uncle Roy, but I am remembering his service on this Memorial Day.

I hope you're well! Let's catch up soon!

Love Always, ~ Mark

[Reply](#)

8.

**Kimberly Steinman-Elmqvist says:**

April 4, 2013 at 3:40 am

Gwen, My father Sgt. John A. Karibo was on Flight 739 on March 16, 1962. Not a day goes by that I don't think of him and the others that were on board. I would like to see their names added to the Vietnam Memorial Wall, after all this time they should be honored and remembered for their sacrifice. I have started a push to get additional signatures on Frank Allen's petition to add the names to the



Vietnam Wall. Maybe we can generate a little buzz since it's the "50th Anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War." 52 years is long enough not knowing what happened... There will forever be a hole in my heart! Kimberly Steinman-Elmquist Roseville, CA Sacramento Blue Star Mom

[Reply](#)

9.

**Tom Burt** says:

June 24, 2013 at 10:27 pm

I don't know why there isn't more publicity about the fact that this flight was shot down by a U.S. fighter jet. My father was on this flight as a crewmember and in researching this we confirmed that this is true. It seems in those days if an American military pilot came across a commercial flight he would track and simulate attacking an enemy aircraft. This time the pilot got carried away and actually fired. It was covered up by the us military. Tom Burt, son of Grady Burt, navigator.

[Reply](#)

10.

**Sheila Connor** says:

July 20, 2013 at 12:21 am

My aunt's husband James Lattie was also on flight 793. She too is among the rest of the families waiting to see a proper recognition of her husband James. I would like to be able to help her and the rest of the families. It is long over due for the recognition of these heros

[Reply](#)

11.

**Sheila Connor** says:

July 20, 2013 at 12:27 am

Sorry I did find his name..Jack Lattie. I also signed the petition as well as share it with my family.

[Reply](#)

**Mark** says:

July 20, 2013 at 9:32 am

Sheila,

If you count down 23 lines from the top line of the list of victims, you'll find Jack Lattie's name. So sorry for your family's loss.

[Reply](#)

**Mark** says:

July 28, 2013 at 10:44 pm

Matt Burke of Stars and Stripes magazine did a piece on this incident, published on July 24th.

Thought I'd share: <http://www.stripes.com/news/listing-on-vietnam-wall-sought-for-troops-killed-in-1962-plane-crash-1.231996>

[Reply](#)

12.

**LCDR RONALD W. KILMER USN RET** says:

July 31, 2013 at 6:40 pm

I spent 25 years of my life on active duty in the U. S. Navy and 1 year in Vietnam. I was involved in many black ops and am well aware of how black ops are handled and recorded. If you are caught or killed in the black op it will be treated as if the operation never existed. Since the personnel records of

the 35 men whose records have been obtained have been heavily redacted to eliminate any reference to training or assignment to the mission Flight 739 was intended to support, it is no surprise that the U. S. Government and the Department of Defense will never acknowledge even the existence or the men or the mission officially. Since the mission was established in 1962 and there is no acknowledgement by the U. S. Government of any official involvement in the Vietnam War until 1965, it can only be expected that the Government and the Department of Defense will never acknowledge even the existence of Flying Tiger Airlines Flight 739's involvement in transporting the hand-picked cadre of men with communications experience and jungle training to Saigon for a military mission planned within South Vietnam in 1962. Hence they will never put the names of those men on the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

[Reply](#)

1.

**Caroline D.Cox** says:

August 14, 2013 at 12:15 am

Thanks for confirming my suspucions of what happened. My dad, Edward Donald Cox (E5, or SP5) from Amarillo, TX was on this plane. My dad's military file had only 3 (three) pieces of paper when I requested a copy around 1997. Although I do have hus last paper (orders) just before he left, but it does not give specific details. I am going to write a book someday and want all the children of these missing Army troops to add into it.

[Reply](#)

13.

**Sherry Allen** says:

August 18, 2013 at 9:00 pm

My uncle Howard Roy Gallipeau Jr. was on that ill-fated plane. The loss of his life has been a deep wound for my family. My mom lost her beloved brother and my grandparents never recovered from their grief. My aunt was a young widow with three little boys who had to live with the pain of fatherlessness. All of the devastation of this horrible event is magnified by the U.S. government's refusal to honor these lost men. Why are the lives of flight 739 servicemen worth less than all the other brave soldiers who were lost in service to their country? It is a wrong that needs to be corrected. It has been over fifty years yet the pain remains. The children and grandchildren of these men deserve to see their lost one honored. The addition of the flight members' names to the Vietnam Wall would help the healing to finally begin.

[Reply](#)

14.

**karan** says:

November 13, 2013 at 6:01 am

Larry Canon was my uncle. My family has been so deeply affected by the loss of Larry....our family stands in grief with all of the families! The soldiers that were on that flight were our countries serviceman they were not on vacation they were working for our country! How dare they not give recognition and even acknowledgement for their service!!!! Not only did that plane vanish but so did 107 people.....children without parents....husbands without wives.....families without their loved ones.....no answers after 50 plus years.....no bodies.....no oil slicks no debris.....NO ANSWERS????? I would hope that recognition would be at the very least givin to them for serving their country!!! Praying for all of our families!!! VANISHED BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN.....

[Reply](#)

1.

**Catherine Nau** says:  
**June 7, 2017 at 5:08 pm**

Karan,

What beautiful words to hear! Well written and explained. I'm so proud of what you wrote. This traumatic event has effected so many lives, who sometimes don't know the right words to explain their devastation. If we are to continue fighting, then we need voices like yours!

[Reply](#)

15.

**Rod Bourne** says:

**December 23, 2013 at 7:28 am**

The loss of Flying Tiger Flight 739 is forever etched in my Memory.. I was stationed at Anderson AFB, Guam and flew as a scanner/radio operator on one long endurance search and rescue flight from Anderson on the base C-54.

[Reply](#)

16.

**Sherri Owen** says:

**February 24, 2014 at 11:30 pm**

Thank you for this. I arrived here too late to sign the petition. My father, Melvin Hatt, is on the list. I agree with what LCDR RONALD W. KILMER USN RET has said, I've heard the same from others.

[Reply](#)

17.

**Leon Edwards** says:

**March 13, 2014 at 11:11 pm**

My Brother James A Edwards was on this flight.

[Reply](#)

18.

**Jana Shelton** says:

**March 14, 2014 at 11:42 am**

James A Edwards was known to our family as Buddy Edwards I can remember family sayin his dad uncle Jay made the statement the not knowing was the hardest. This happening to our family gives me understanding when tragedy hits other families like the Flight MH370 Malaysian Airlines jetliner, my prayers goes out to the families that something can be found to give each one of them closer. May GOD be with each one of you. Jana Shelton

[Reply](#)

19.

**Darleen Barnes** says:

**March 14, 2014 at 11:18 pm**

My father was on this flight and not a day goes by that I do not think about his fate and fellow passengers, and the impact it has had on so many lives. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you who have followed flight 739, as well as the relatives of the passengers of Malaysian flight 370 – there are many of us who know and understand the depth of their grief.

[Reply](#)

20. Pingback: [10 Airplanes That Disappeared Without a Trace | Care2 Healthy Living](#)

21.

**Julie Glynn McInnish** says:

April 3, 2014 at 12:26 pm

My father Walter Glynn was on Flight 739, my sisters and i have always wanted his name to be on the wall. I was only 3 years old when he passed away I really don't remember him all I have are pictures to do that. I think this website is great and I thank you for all the hard work you put into it. I have always wondered my whole life "would'nt it be great if all the families could get together?" Again Thank you for the website.

[Reply](#)

12.

**John Weyer** says:

August 9, 2014 at 2:20 pm

Hello. Our family friend Crystal Rider was a stewardess on flight 739.

Is there a list of the crew for the flight?

I went in to the Army in 1963 and went to VN in early 1965.

Thank you.

John

[Reply](#)

1.

**Bob Geyer** says:

August 10, 2014 at 2:40 pm

Hi John. Got your email and started going through sites and came upon your question. It was Reiter not Rider. I asked Marion how she spelled her first name because I didn't think your spelling was correct and I was told, with some degree of certainty that it was Christel. Bob

[Reply](#)

2.

**Troy D. Jackson** says:

November 24, 2015 at 12:59 am

Gregory Thomas 7/50 3/62 ?/?/16 3/62 1049H Accident West of Guam

George M. Nau 3/62 3/62 1049H Accident West of Guam

Robert J. Wish

1/51 3/62 1049H Accident West of Guam

Clayton E. McClellan 3/62 3/62 ?/?/30 3/62 1049H Accident w/Thomas

William Kennedy 3/15/1962 1049 accident near Guam

James M. Johnstone 3/62 3/62 1049H Accident Adak

These are Most of the Crew listed on the FTL site: Two Stewardess are missing perhaps one is the one you are asking about.

Bob J. Gazzaway 1/53 3/62 ?/?/25 3/62 1049H Accident w/Thomas

Grady Burt 3/15/1962 1049 accident near Guam

Barbara Wamsley FTL flight between Guam & Clark AFB

[Reply](#)

1.

**Catherine Nau** says:

June 7, 2017 at 5:19 pm

James Johnston was on N6921C. He disappeared with all 107 on 3-16-1962. Not in Alaska.  
Catherine Nau

23.

**Butch Chavez** says:

September 28, 2014 at 4:55 pm

What is the update on the effort to get their names on the wall.

[Reply](#)

**Mark** says:

September 28, 2014 at 11:28 pm

As far as I've seen and heard, the government is not budging on its stance that the wall is for those who died during combat.

I wish I could tell you differently.

[Reply](#)

1.

**Catherine Nau** says:

June 7, 2017 at 5:39 pm

I, personally, have stood in front of the California Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Commission to include ALL 107 names on the WALL – YEARS AGO. I was redirected to the DoD, as they are the ones who set the criteria for inclusion on the WALL. This has been an uphill battle for 36 years (when I first read the front page article in the L.A. Times, "107 Missing At Sea"). One member of the Commission told me that I could argue that they were on a "Support Mission." Also, per the L.A. Times, their mission was to train the South Vietnamese to defend themselves against the Communist North Vietnam. According to my letters of correspondence, our flight WAS inside the Combat Zone! You can reference this by searching the "Broadhead" case who argued that his son's plane was outside the Combat Zone, so the DoD "extended the Combat Zone" to include his son's name on the WALL.

24.

**Mac** says:

June 8, 2015 at 7:59 pm

On the Wikipedia website for this incident, there is a note under the 'Conspiracy Theory' header that 2 such planes disappeared this day. I can't find anything to substantiate this. Does anyone know if the other flight carrying "secret military personnel" ever existed?

[Reply](#)

1.

**Caroline Cox** says:

November 8, 2015 at 1:45 am

It was the other Flying Tigers Plane carrying the cargo....that crashed. They said pilot error, but who believes that.

Caroline Cox

[Reply](#)

2.

**Troy D. Jackson** says:

November 24, 2015 at 1:11 am

We were told at Clark AB that they and all their equipment was on a C-133 and that was the plane that disappeared and we were looking for.

If and I mean if there were any FTL over the Pacific, I don't believe they were on it, because the home page under air plane crashes of FTL they only show one FTL flight on 3/15/16/1962. I believe they were all on the ADAK, CRASH and deliberately killed as a false flag to boost the War ongoing in Vietnam and never was on a plane of Flying Tiger over the Pacific. I don't even believe there was a C-133 flight.

[Reply](#)

1.

**Troy Jackson** says:

December 3, 2015 at 6:09 am

I have been thinking back all these years about that time. Here are some facts I remember.

As I mentioned above, we were told it was a C-133 that was famous for dropping out of the sky and disappearing without a trace over the sea.

If there were 240 Military Special Rangers and all their loaded gear they would have had to be on a C-133 because there is no way they could have been on a L-1049.

They were on a "secret" mission and would not have been on a Commercial Airlines with civilians. I remember that John Kennedy was sending 7,500 Special forces to train the SVA to fight their own war in Nam. The L-1049 set on the flight line in dim lighting at Agana, Guam. A C-133 would have been at Anderson AFB, Guam and would have been loaded with all their gear and soldiers watched with armed Military Guards for a "Secret" mission. The Stars and Stripes always under reported the actual count of the dead, anywhere from 10% to 30%. I believe, thinking about this, that they were transferred to a C-133 and that plane did crash over the Pacific and the search started when the L-1049 disappeared as a cover. I also believe there were none on flight as 739 if there was such a flight. Two FTL flights and only one is mentioned on the FTL page. The flight 739 and not the Adak, AK flight.

I believe the 93 met up with the other 147 at Anderson to complete the 240 alleged that we were told (maybe prematurely about) and that is the plane that went down. I do not believe a Secret Mission would have been carried out on a FTL Commercial Flight with non-secure intelligence. I believe the Standard Oil Ship that had witnesses that could see 500 miles away, was part of the false flag cover-up along with the Flying Tiger Line Personnel. Because right after that, the Media (including the Stars and Stripes) suspected sabotage and even claimed a Russian Missile had brought the plane down. There were several C-133's that were being moth balled and replaced by the C-141 and that one of those planes is the one that the 240 personnel were on board. I spent 72 straight hours searching for them. Their were F-104's over their last reported location from Clark, Guam and Okinawa and none of them saw anything, nor did we.

2.

**Catherine Nau** says:

June 7, 2017 at 6:47 pm

Troy,

You certainly raised valuable questions about this "secret military mission." One person that I spoke to said that "It's a COVER-UP. You'll NEVER know what happened – not in your generation or your children's. Maybe 100 years from now." I contemplated what the government would want with "Highly trained Army Rangers," and what was in the news back then. Gorbachev from Russia was bragging about how his new Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile could strick a target thousands of miles away (like maybe shooting down our plane because it was in the path of their Sputnik). I tried to enter this on your next comments, but this site didn't have a "Reply" for it.

3.

**Catherine Nau** says:

June 7, 2017 at 5:49 pm

Try researching the L.A. Times in your local university Microfilm Library of March & April, 1962. There was a second plane that DID carry "a secret military cargo," in support of N6921C's passengers.

25. Pingback: LOOK: TOP 10 Planes That Mysteriously Vanished Without A Trace | TDS Journal [Reply](#)

16.

**Troy Jackson** says:

December 3, 2015 at 6:08 am

I have been thinking back all these years about that time. Here are some facts I remember.

As I mentioned above, we were told it was a C-133 that was famous for dropping out of the sky and disappearing without a trace over the sea.

If there were 240 Military Special Rangers and all their loaded gear they would have had to be on a C-133 because there is no way they could have been on a L-1049.

They were on a "secret" mission and would not have been on a Commercial Airlines with civilians. I remember that John Kennedy was sending 7,500 Special forces to train the SVA to fight their own war in Nam. The L-1049 set on the flight line in dim lighting at Agana, Guam. A C-133 would have been at Anderson AFB, Guam and would have been loaded with all their gear and soldiers watched with armed Military Guards for a "Secret" mission. The Stars and Stripes always under reported the actual count of the dead, anywhere from 10% to 30%. I believe, thinking about this, that they were transferred to a C-133 and that plane did crash over the Pacific and the search started when the L-1049 disappeared as a cover. I also believe there were none on flight as 739 if there was such a flight. Two FTL flights and only one is mentioned on the FTL page. The flight 739 and not the Adak, AK flight. I believe the 93 met up with the other 147 at Anderson to complete the 240 alleged that we were told (maybe prematurely about) and that is the plane that went down. I do not believe a Secret Mission would have been carried out on a FTL Commercial Flight with non-secure intelligence. I believe the Standard Oil Ship that had witnesses that could see 500 miles away, was part of the false flag cover-up along with the Flying Tiger Line Personnel. Because right after that, the Media (including the Stars and Stripes) suspected sabotage and even claimed a Russian Missile had brought the plane down. There were several C-133's that were being moth balled and replaced by the C-141 and that one of those planes is the one that the 240 personnel were on board. I spent 72 straight hours searching for them. Their were F-104's over their last reported location from Clark, Guam and Okinawa and none of them saw anything, nor did we.

[Reply](#)

1.

**Catherine Nau** says:

June 7, 2017 at 7:05 pm

Troy,

Please see my post prior to this post on the same date. I've also wondered about Highly trained Army Rangers which is Communications. What was the purpose? A VERY FAR FETCHED purpose, would be to communicate with Aliens in China. Since I was also told that the plane was "skyjacked to China, that they were given new identities..." I put the two together and that's what I came up with. On these new Ancient Alien shows on the History channel, they went into detail about a cover-up of an Alien landing site that China wanted to keep secret. Weird? MAYBE NOT!!

[Reply](#)

2.

**Catherine Nau** says:

June 7, 2017 at 7:35 pm

One of the men included in the search, told me that a surfboard was found that had washed up onshore, and that one of the passengers had brought along his surfboard. He also said that insulation and tubing from an L-1049 Constellation was also found but was not in the (CAB) Accident Report.

[Reply](#)

27.

**Troy D. Jackson** says:

February 7, 2016 at 4:03 pm

If everyone would search and read about the SEATO talks going on at Clark AFB and the Pentagon in the Philippines with Russian and Chinese whose envoy arrived in a Russian TU-104 at Clark Air Force Base on March 13, 1962 and the French, New Zealand, British and U.S. Pentagon Officials who arrived in a "United States of America" 707 for a meeting that was about those "SEATO" talks going on in the State Department over LAOS AND VIETNAM. The Russians and Chinese wanted evidence and PROOF that their Nuclear alert system could and would detect, any "seismic detection" of any, launched U.S. AND THEIR ALLIES "LAUNCHED MISSILES" AGAINST THEM FROM THEIR NUCLEAR SUBMARINES, IF LAUNCHED BY THEM, IN ORDER FOR THEM TO STAY OUT OF THE VIETNAM and LAOS WAR. These talks went on during early March 9 through March 23, 1962. Kennedy, Dulles, McNamara agreed. On March 16th we were told a HUGE C-133 CARGOMASTER WITH 240 RANGERS ON BOARD WITH ALL THEIR EQUIPMENT AND GEAR WENT DOWN AFTER LEAVING GUAM. We searched for 7 days and the search was called off on the eighth day. "coincidence" I don't think so. The Flight 739 and the C-133 story stinks to high heaven. Don't believe it, research and read for yourselves. They were the test for those "Seismic" test that the Russians and Chinese wanted to stay out of the Vietnam War already in progress with their Chemical defoliant Agent Orange lies being discussed at the same time. And the Pentagon let it happen and lied about it just as they LIED ABOUT THE GULF OF TONKIN ATTACK TO GET PUBLIC SUPPORT TO START THEIR WAR THAT WAS ALREADY GOING ON. I WAS HANDLING BODIES OUT OF VIETNAM AND THE STARS AND STRIPES WAS COVERING UP THE ACTUAL LOSSES BY THE PR LIARS FROM THE PENTAGON.

[Reply](#)

28.

**Bob Young** says:

April 6, 2016 at 11:26 pm



There is a question if all the troops on board were Rangers or Special Forces. All I know is I was told there were 14 guys from my training company on that plane, I would have gone with them but I was excepted into MI and my orders changed and instead went to Africa. I had 30 days leave en route and got hurt in a horse wreck working cattle at home in Arizona and was about five days late getting to Ft. Dix learned about the plane being missing from another guy who had been the same training company. He said the plane had disappeared the day before. I never heard anymore about the plane until about seven years ago I began wondering about it and ffound flight 739. Today I found this website.

[Reply](#)

29.

**Catherine Nau** says:

June 7, 2017 at 7:53 pm

This "accident" has caused so much pain for the surviving relatives. So much hardship, grief, Major Chronic Depression, mental breakdowns, broken families, financial hardship as well as living with the NOT KNOWING." My heart and love goes out to all the survivors who are going through the pain of their loss. Let's continue to NEVER GIVE UP! NEVER! Continue to tell this story FOREVER! One day we will see the Bright Shining Light and Truth that always prevails....

[Reply](#)

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