

April 1, 2023

Congratulations on the  
Institution of the  
Young McCool VFW Post  
12220

My daughter Melody Young  
and I are very honored.

I would like to present  
this album with some  
of the mementos of  
Gerald's Life

Thank you  
Yadi and Melody  
Young

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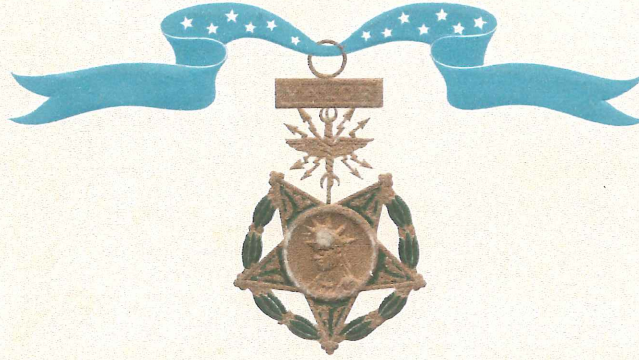
**Institution of Young-McCool VFW Post 12220  
Anacortes, WA**



. You are cordially invited to attend the institution of VFW  
Post 12220.

**When:** April 1st, 2023 1200 Noon

**Where:** Elks Lodge 1204  
1009 7th Street  
Anacortes, WA 98221



The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1896, has awarded in the name of The Congress, the Medal of Honor to

**CAPTAIN GERALD O. YOUNG, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:

Captain Young distinguished himself on 9 November 1967 while serving as a Helicopter Rescue Crew Commander in Southeast Asia. Captain Young was flying escort for another Helicopter attempting the night rescue of an Army ground reconnaissance team in imminent danger of death or capture. Previous attempts had resulted in the loss of two helicopters to hostile ground fire. The endangered team was positioned on the side of a steep slope which required unusual airmanship on the part of Captain Young to effect pickup. Heavy automatic weapons fire from the surrounding enemy severely damaged one rescue helicopter, but it was able to extract three of the team. The commander of this aircraft recommended to Captain Young that further rescue attempts be abandoned because it was not possible to suppress the concentrated fire from enemy automatic weapons. With full knowledge of the danger involved, and the fact that supporting helicopter gunships were low on fuel and ordnance, Captain Young hovered under intense fire until the remaining survivors were aboard. As he maneuvered the aircraft for take-off, the enemy appeared at point-blank range and raked the aircraft with automatic weapons fire. The aircraft crashed, inverted, and burst into flames. Captain Young escaped through a window of the burning aircraft. Disregarding serious burns, Captain Young aided one of the wounded men and then attempted to lead the hostile forces away from his position. Later, despite intense pain from his burns, he declined to accept rescue because he had observed hostile forces setting up automatic weapons positions to entrap any rescue aircraft. For more than 17 hours he evaded the enemy until rescue aircraft could be brought into the area. Through his extraordinary heroism, aggressiveness, and concern for his fellowman, Captain Young reflected the highest credit upon himself, the United States Air Force, and the armed forces of his country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely of the President of the United States at the time of the award, written in a cursive style.





# President Opens Memorial for Heroes

## 4 Medals of Honor Presented

WASHINGTON (ANF) — President Lyndon B. Johnson presented the Medal of Honor to four U.S. servicemen at the dedication ceremony for the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon, May 14.

The Hall of Heroes, honoring recipients of the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award for heroism, is located in the "A" ring on the second floor of the Pentagon.

The President awarded the following four individuals the Medal of Honor for heroism in Vietnam:

Sp5 Charles C. Hagemeister, U.S. Army, of Lincoln, Neb.

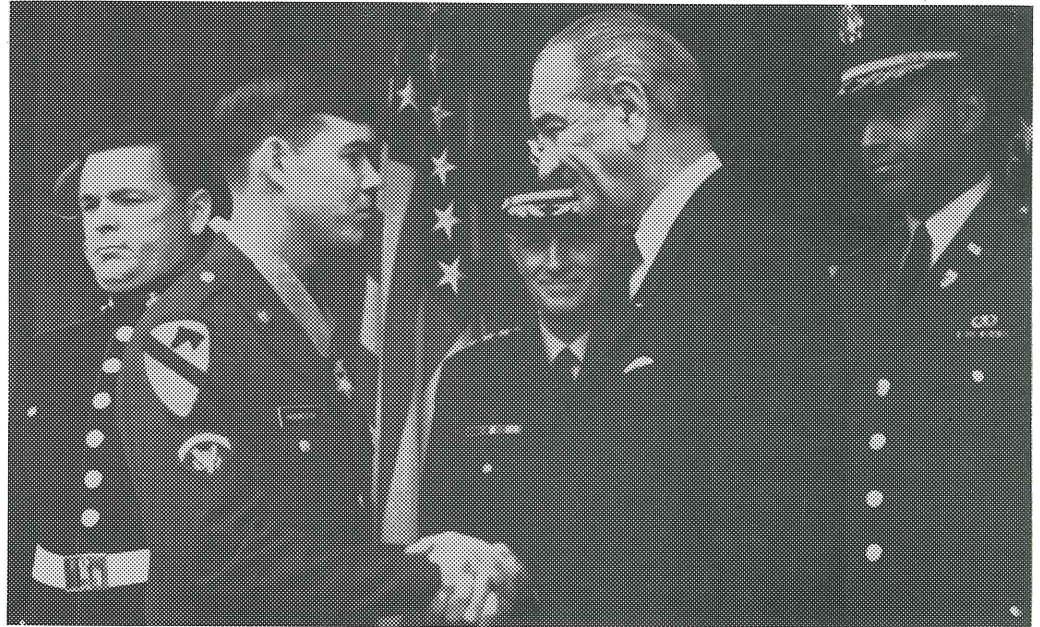
Sgt. Richard A. Pittman, U.S. Marine Corps, of Stockton, Calif.

BM1 James E. Williams, U.S. Navy, of Darlington, S.C.

Capt. Gerald O. Young, U.S. Air Force, of Anacortes, Wash.

Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford presided over the dedication as President Johnson cut the ribbon opening the hall to the public.

Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force; members of Congress; members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; ranking officials of the Department of Defense; immediate families of the four Medal of Honor awardees, and Medal of Honor recipients residing in the Washington metropolitan area also attended the ceremony.



President Johnson congratulates U.S. Army Sp5 Charles C. Hagemeister after awarding him the Medal of Honor. Marine Sgt. Richard A. Pittman (left) waits to receive the medal. Watching are Army Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson (background) and Lt. Col. Hugh Robinson (right), Army assistant to the President's Armed Forces aide.

U.S. ARMY COMMAND INFORMATION UNIT



Extra Edition  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20315

MAY 20, 1968

## **'Hall of Heroes' at Pentagon**

The Pentagon's new Hall of Heroes already has 3,238 names listed on its rolls. The names are those of the American servicemen who have received the Medal of Honor.

To honor these men from all the services, the Defense Department created the Hall of Heroes. The idea for the hall was first proposed by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Harvey M. Ladd through the DOD employee suggestion program. At the time, Colonel Ladd was chief of the Policy Branch, Plans and Policy Division, Office of the Chief of Information.

Ronald Kettle of the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps Exhibit Center designed the hall, based on Colonel Ladd's suggestion. Construction began last September. (ANF)

Pg 2 of 4

### Medal of Honor Award Ceremony of Gerald O Young

At The Pentagon Courtyard

Presented by Lyndon B Johnson

This was the only ceremony that took place at the Pentagon; the Medal of Honor is presented normally at the White House. A special stand was erected in the courtyard inside the pentagon. At this occasion there was also the inauguration of the Hall of Heroes Where all Medal of honor recipients were honored. This was also the first and only time that four members of the branches of the Military Service were honored at the same time. This part of the Pentagon was destroyed during the attack to the Pentagon during 9/11. A new Hall of Heroes was constructed and also has a special place for those who died during this attack.

Curious fact:

This ceremony was used in the film Forrest Gump. By way of technology they were able to superimpose he head of Tom Hanks on one of the members being honored that day



Left to right: Capt. Gerald o Young USAF, US Navy Boatswain Mate first class James E Williams, President Lindon B Johnson, Marine S Lance Corporal Sg. Richard Pittman, SP5 Charles Hagemeister.



# Anacortes tips hat to medal winner



**HERO ARRIVES IN ANACORTES**—Captain Gerald Young, recipient of this nation's highest combat decoration, the Medal of Honor, arrived in Anacortes Wednesday afternoon accompanied by his wife and Anacortes Mayor Jesse Ford. Today, designated as "Gerald Young Day", a parade has been scheduled with a fly-by of jet aircraft from NAS Whidbey and McChord AFB in honor of Young. General John A. Rouse, Commander of the 25th Air Division; speaker of the House Don Eldridge, and Mayor Ford, will address assembled dignitaries and parade participants. A reception at the Elks Home will follow. (Staff photos by Nina Brady)



**COMMUNITY WELCOMES**—Officials and residents of the City of Anacortes turned out to greet Captain and Mrs. Young when they arrived in Anacortes Wednesday afternoon. The couple is shown above with Dr. E. A. Strom, chairman of the two-day program honoring Young. Scheduled to return to Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Tex., Monday, Young received the Medal of Honor Nov. 9, 1967, while serving as a helicopter rescue commander.

U.S. POSTAGE  
ANACORTES, WN.  
PERMIT NO. 6



**PARADE PARTICIPANTS**—Members of the 724th U.S. Air Force Band strike a marching pose on the McChord Air Force Base flightline next to an F-106 Delta Dart. The musical Darts are one of 11 military units scheduled to parade through downtown Anacortes today (Thursday) as part of welcoming ceremonies

honoring the Guemes Island Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Captain Gerald Young. The Thursday parade will begin at 17th and Commercial at 1:30 p.m. The complete route and a listing of other participants are included in the parade story printed elsewhere on this page.

## Anacortes man honored among state's heroes

OLYMPIA (AP) — Washington's 15 Congressional Medal of Honor winners, including Anacortes resident Gerald O. Young, were honored at the state capitol in a ceremony attended by top state officials.

Eight of the state's recipients of the nation's highest military honor were present at Tuesday's noon-hour ceremony. Seven others were unable to attend, including three now living out of state.

Eight veterans received the medals for heroic acts in World War II while seven were recognized for service in Vietnam.

"We as citizens can thank God that you individuals were standing in the right place at the right time and defending the right country," Secretary of State Ralph Munro told the elite group gathered in the capitol rotunda.

The Association of Washington Generals, a non-military society which recognizes citizens who have contributed to the state in some way, organized the event in cooperation with Munro's office. The group added the medal winners to the list of 3,000 other citizens named as honorary Washington Generals in the past 20 years for service to the state.

Young is an Air Force veteran who served 8 1/2 years as an enlisted man and 21 years as a commissioned officer, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel.

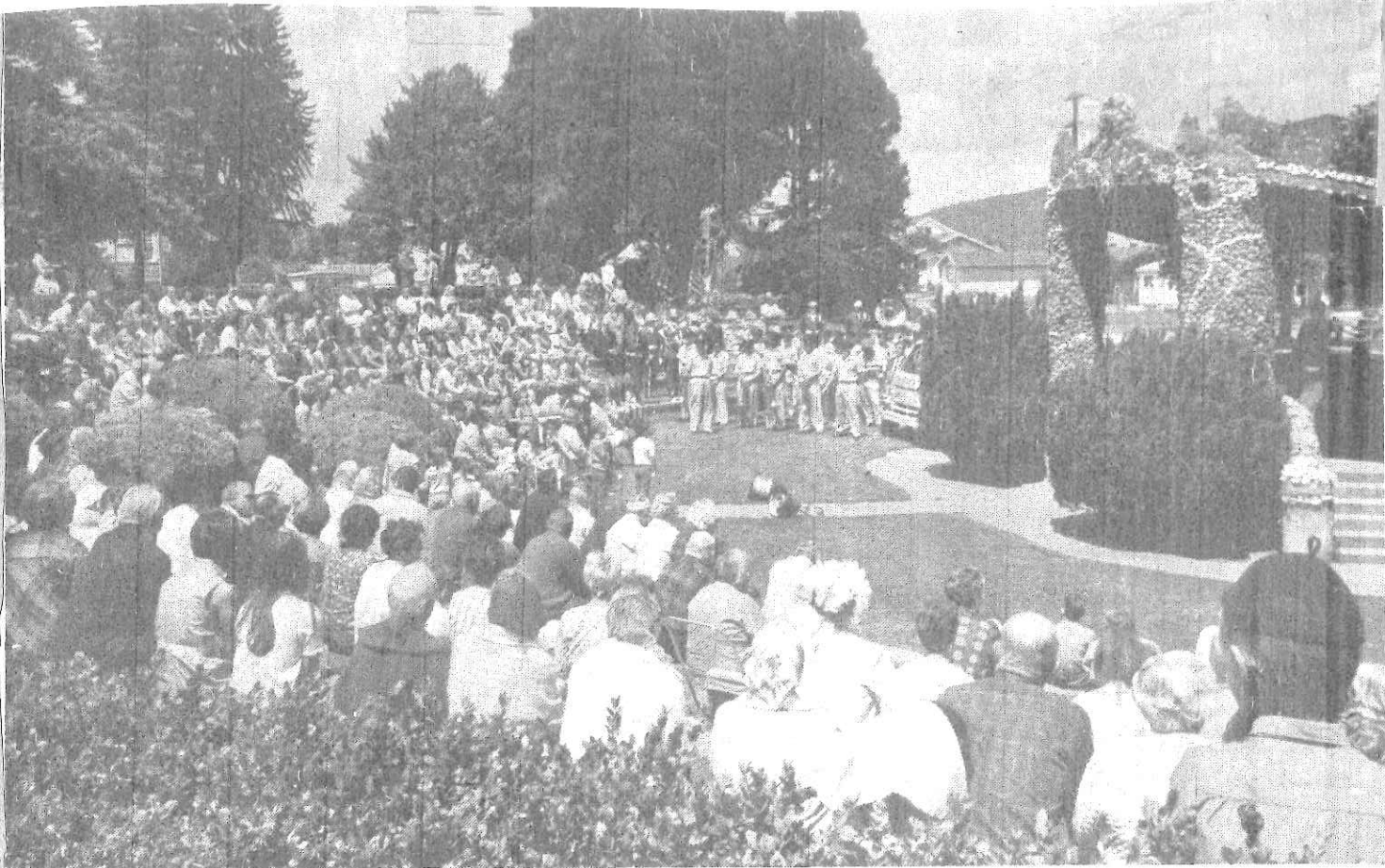
He was honored for his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty," while serving in Vietnam in 1967.

The medal winners accepted the compliments but said their heroism was only a fulfillment of their duties as soldiers.

"We didn't consider ourselves heroes," said Col. Joe Jackson, a retired Air Force veteran who served in Vietnam and now lives in Kent. "We were military men who at one point in time faced a challenge."

One of the medal winners didn't have to go far to attend the ceremony; retired Col. Leo Thorsness, an Air Force Vietnam veteran, is now serving in the Legislature as a Republican senator from Seattle.

The other Washington medal winners honored Tuesday were Robert E. Bush of Olympia, a Navy veteran of World War II; Jesse Drowley of Spokane, an Army veteran of World War II; Thomas Kinsman of Winlock, an Army veteran of Vietnam; Donald Ross of Bremerton, a Navy veteran of World War II; Jose Calugas of Tacoma, an Army veteran of World War II; John Hawk of Bremerton, an Army veteran of World War II; Delbert Jennings of Tacoma, an Army veteran of Vietnam; Richard McCool Jr. of Bainbridge Island, a Navy veteran of World War II; Wilburn Ross of Dupont, an Army veteran of World War II.



**IN HONOR OF CAPTAIN YOUNG**—Following a parade of military and community groups in Anacortes, participants and guests assembled at Causland Park Thursday afternoon to honor Captain Gerald Young, Vietnam Medal of Honor recipient. Captain and Mrs. Young returned to the Anacortes community Wednesday and their home on Guemes Island, amidst a red

carpet reception. General John A. Rouse, Commander of the 25th Air Division was guest speaker with Representative Don Eldridge, Speaker of the House and Anacortes Mayor Jesse Ford sharing honors bestowed upon Captain Young.

(Staff photos by Nina Brady)

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Orren Young

Air Attaché

Embassy of the United States of America

Tel. 329978

Bogotá

(then Specialist Four) Charles C. Hagemeister was serving as a medical aidman, for Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry in Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam, when his platoon suddenly came under heavy attack from three sides by an enemy force occupying well concealed, fortified positions and supported by machine guns and mortars.



Sp5 Hagemeister

Seeing two of his comrades seriously wounded in the initial action, Specialist Hagemeister unhesitatingly and with total disregard for his own safety, raced through the deadly hail of enemy fire to provide medical aid.

As he attempted to evacuate the seriously wounded soldiers, Specialist Hagemeister was fired upon at close range by an enemy sniper. Specialist Hagemeister seized a rifle from a fallen comrade, killed the sniper, three other enemy soldiers who were attempting to encircle his position and si-

**'For Conspicuous Gallantry'**

# Citations Tell Stories of Courage

lenced an enemy machine gun.

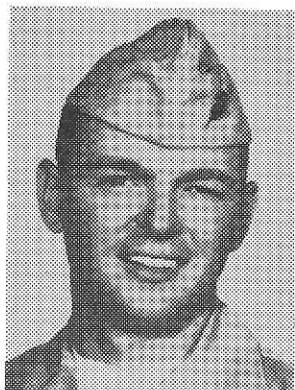
Unable to remove the wounded to a less exposed location and aware of the enemy's efforts to isolate his unit, he dashed through the fusillade of fire to secure help from a nearby platoon. Returning with help, he placed the men in positions to cover his advance as he moved to evacuate the wounded forward of his location. These efforts successfully completed, he then moved to the other flank and evacuated additional wounded men despite the fact that his every move drew fire from the enemy.

**U.S. Marine Corps**

On July 24, 1966, as Company I, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, moved down a narrow jungle trail, the leading company elements suddenly came under heavy fire. Sgt. (then Lance Corporal) Richard A. Pittman exchanged his rifle for a machine gun and several belts of ammunition, left the relative safety of his platoon, and unhesitatingly rushed forward to aid his comrades.

As Sergeant Pittman

forged ahead to aid members of the leading platoon, he again came under heavy fire from two automatic weapons, which he promptly destroyed. Learning that there were additional wounded Marines 50 yards further along the trail, he braved enemy mortar and small-arms fire to continue forward. He was suddenly confronted with a bold front-



Sgt. Pittman

al attack by 30 to 40 enemy.

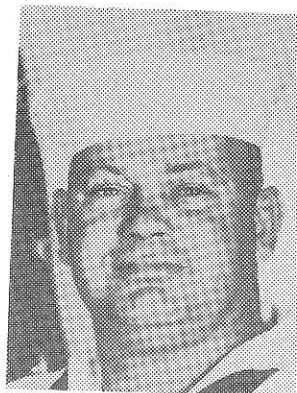
Totally disregarding his own safety, he calmly established a position in the middle of the trail and raked the advancing enemy with devastating machinegun fire.

He continued his lethal fire until the enemy force

had withdrawn. Sergeant Pittman's daring initiative, bold fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty inflicted many enemy casualties, disrupted the enemy attack and saved the lives of many of his wounded comrades.

James E. Williams, boat captain and patrol officer aboard River Patrol Boat 105, was on a patrol in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. Suddenly his two-boat patrol was fired upon by two enemy sampans. Petty Officer Williams immediately ordered the fire returned, killing the crew of one enemy boat and causing the other sampan to take refuge in a nearby river inlet.

Pursuing the fleeing sampan, the U.S. patrol encountered heavy small arms fire along the river bank. The patrol then confronted an enemy force of two enemy junks and eight sampans augmented by heavy auto-



BM1 Williams

matic weapons fire ashore. In the savage battle that ensued, Petty Officer Williams, with utter disregard for his own safety, directed counter-fire and inspired the actions of his patrol.

While deploying his patrol to await the arrival of armed helicopters, he discovered an even larger concentration of enemy boats. Not waiting for the helicopters, he led the patrol through intense enemy fire and damaged or destroyed 50 enemy sampans and seven junks. As the helicopters arrived Petty Officer

Williams directed the attack on the remaining enemy force.

Capt. Gerald O. Young distinguished himself on the night of Nov. 9, 1967, as a helicopter rescue crew commander in Southeast Asia. Captain Young was flying escort for another helicopter which was attempting to rescue an Army ground reconnaissance team. Heavy automatic weapons fire from the enemy severely damaged the first helicopter in Captain Young's rescue team, but the helicopter was still able to extract three men.

Captain Young hovered under intense fire until the remaining survivors were



Capt. Young

aboard. Then the enemy appeared at point-blank range and raked the aircraft with automatic weapons fire. The aircraft crashed and burst into flames. Captain Young escaped through a window of the burning aircraft.

Disregarding serious burns, Captain Young aided one of the wounded men and then attempted to head the hostile forces away from his position. For more than 17 hours he evaded the enemy until rescue aircraft could be brought into the area.



12, Yucaipa, Calif. 92399.

**Lt. Col. Gerald O. Young (USAF Ret.),** 60, died June 6 at home on Guemes Island, Wash.

He was awarded the Medal of Honor in May 1968, making him the first helicopter pilot to earn this medal.

He began his military career in the U.S. Naval Reserve and went on active duty during the Korean War. In 1956, he entered the Air Force Aviation Cadet Program and was commissioned in 1958.

His first operational assignment was flying helicopters in support of the atomic bomb tests in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean. After several assignments in the Strategic Air Command, he was transferred to the 37th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron in Vietnam. He was credited with 60 combat missions and 128 combat hours.

He later served at the Air Force Academy, Colo.; Fairchild AFB, Wash.; and the 24th Helicopter Squadron at Howard AFB, Panama. He assisted the Panamanian air force in establishing its rescue programs. He flew with the VIP Transport First Helicopter Squadron at Andrews AFB, Md., and was air attache in the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia. In connection with this duty, he was awarded the Antonio Ricaute Medal for outstanding service to the Colombian air force.

Other decorations received include the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Air Medals, the Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Purple Heart.

He retired in 1980 after 30 years of service.

Survivors include his wife, Yadira; one daughter, Melody, at home; his mother, Rose Young of Mount Vernon, Wash.; one brother and sister-in-law, Donald and Judy of Grandville, Ohio; and several nieces and nephews.

A service was held June 13 at Guemes Island Community Church, where he was a past president. Interment was July 13 in Arlington (Va.) National Cemetery.

**news**



(photo by Chester Simpson)

### Colleagues in honor

Medal of Honor recipients pay last respects to Air Force Lt. Col. Gerald O. Young, a Medal of Honor recipient who was buried Friday at Arlington National Cemetery.



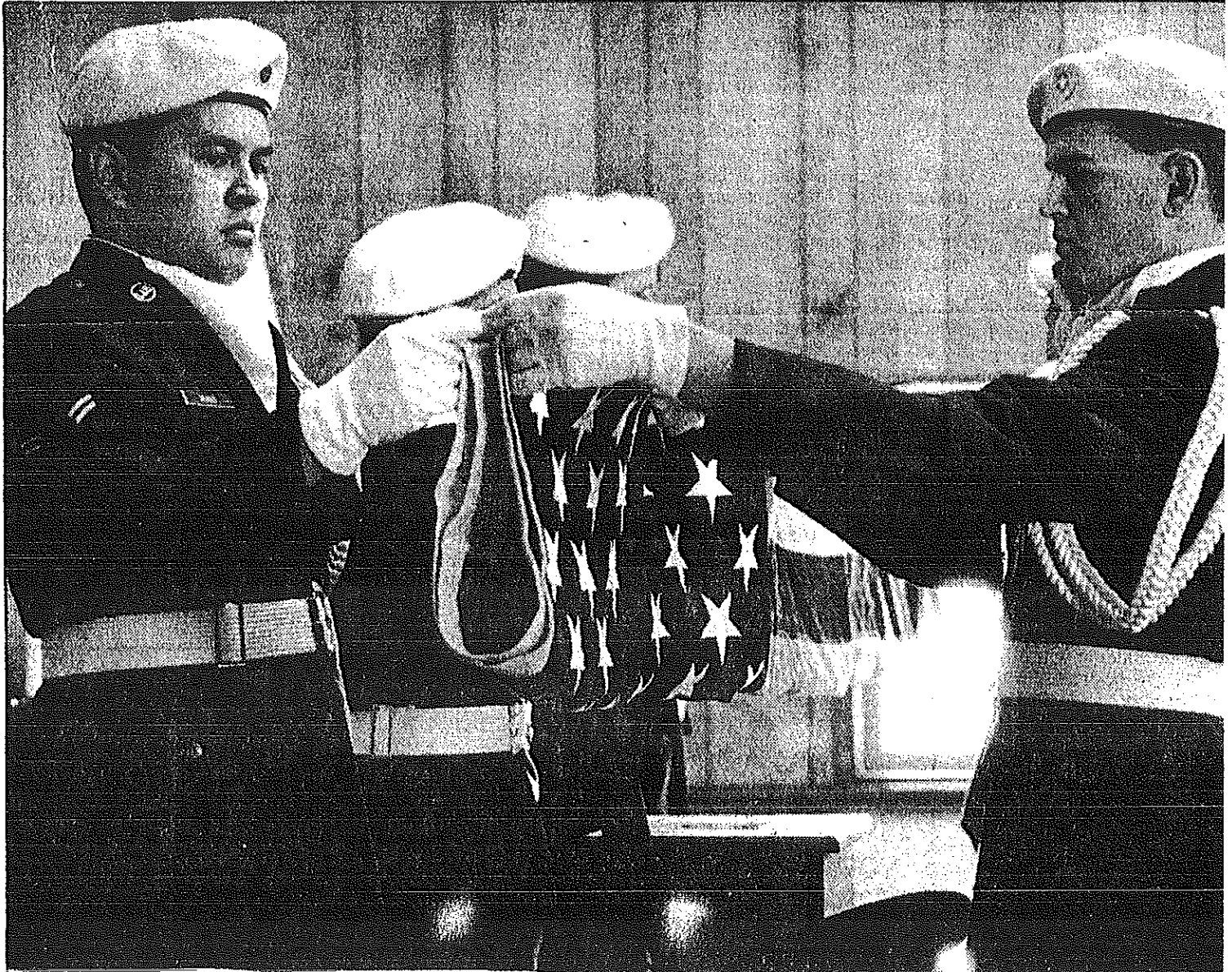
# Anacortes A

Anacortes, Wash. 98221

Volume 101, Number 20

WEDNESDAY, June 20, 1990

## Farewell to a hero



STEPHEN SCH

In the ritual and moving flag-folding ceremony reserved for the nation's fallen heroes, two members of the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard prepare to deliver the American flag to Yadira Young, widow of Congressional Medal of Honor winner Lt. Col. Gerry O. Young at his memorial service Wednesday, June 13. A flyover of

two helicopters at the tiny Guemes Island Community C1 began the service, which included a 21-gun salute, a lone and several colleagues and friends of the late helicopter pilot Col. Young was awarded the nation's highest military honor President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968.

# Completion of Veterans Community Park Plaza celebrated

By VINCE RICHARDSON  
@gokagait

SEDRO-WOOLLEY — A crowd gathered Thursday at the Northern State Recreation Area to celebrate the official opening of the Veterans Community Park Plaza.

An open house and ribbon cutting ceremony fittingly took place the day before Veterans Day.

"Today is a big day for everyone who has been involved," said Skagit County Parks and Recreation Director Brian Adams. "There are just too many people to thank for their hard work and their sweat equity."

"This is what our veterans deserve and it's absolutely amazing."

The ceremony boasted a color guard from the Burlington-Edison High School NJROTC as well as a flyover courtesy of the Heritage Flight Museum.

Among those recognized were veterans, dignitaries



VINCE RICHARDSON / SKAGIT, VALLEY HERALD

The Veterans Community Park Plaza at the Northern State Recreation Area in Sedro-Woolley.

and various community members. They were all there to herald the completion of a project that began in 2016 to honor those who served or are currently serving, and those who died in service of their country.

Jon Schmidt and Doyle Guffie played major roles in getting the Veterans Community Park Plaza built. The pair built the cornerstone project — the Vern Sims Vet-

eran Pavilion — in 2016.

Schmidt, a Vietnam veteran, described Thursday as, "one of the best days of my life." It was also one he shared with his family, including his grandchildren.

"Doyle and myself, we couldn't have asked for anything better," Schmidt said. "This was our vision to start with and it has absolutely exceeded our expectations. It really is first class and what

veterans deserve.

"At 76 years old, you've been through the good and the bad, but by golly, this is what makes it all worth it."

One of those in attendance was Yadi Young of Anacortes, whose late husband Gerald served in the Vietnam War and received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1968.

Gerald Young's citation reads in part, "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a helicopter rescue crew commander."

"... Through his extraordinary heroism, aggressiveness, and concern for his fellow man, Capt. Young reflected the highest credit upon himself, the U.S. Air Force, and the Armed Forces of his country."

Young's Park, located on Guemes Island, is named in his honor. Yadi Young still lives on Guemes Island.

More VETERANS | A8

## Veterans/*from A1*

She said attending the ceremony meant a lot.

"It touches my heart that people in this country don't forget their veterans," Young said. "This place, it's just so amazing. It's just so valued by so many."

"My husband always said he was just the holder of the medal and that it truly belonged to a lot of others."

Adams highlighted Young's attendance.

"To have a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient represented is a big thing," said Adams. "There are not many of them across the U.S. To have his widow here is such a special contribution and is pretty incredible."

It's people like Young that the plaza was built to honor.

"This has certainly taken some time, with all the grant monies and all the support from the commissioners, and from the start it was very much a grassroots effort within a community that knew this was important," Adams said.

Interpretive panels to the plaza's north and south tell the stories and harrowing accounts of those who served in the Vietnam War.

Those panels will be rotated out as veterans from other conflicts tell their stories.

"Reading those, every veteran has a different experience and a different story," Young said. "It just means a lot to read about theirs."

To the sides of the panels are places for nameplates that can be bought by those who wish to honor specific veterans.

A recently completed mile-long ADA-accessible trail along earthen berms that boasts a viewpoint and benches begins and ends at the parking lot.

Adams said from the start those involved were adamant that not only was it to be a veterans park, but something for the community.

"From the very beginning, the veterans wanted this to be something more," he said. "Now this is more. People can enjoy the plaza, the picnic shelter and trail."

To purchase a nameplate to honor of a veteran, go to the Parks and Recreation Department's webpage.

— Reporter Vince Richardson:  
360-416-2181, [vrichardson@skagit-publishing.com](mailto:vrichardson@skagit-publishing.com). Twitter: @gokagait, Facebook.com/VinceRichardson/



## AMERICAN HERO

*Sugarmill Woods residents share story of Medal of Honor*

**PATTI HARMS**  
For the Chronicle

**T**here are currently 71 living recipients of the Medal of Honor out of the 3,508 who were so lauded. It is the United States military's highest decoration.

Citrus County residents Lew and Jackie Tippett were friends with Medal of Honor recipient Gerald Orren Young, meeting him in the late 1970s. Lew Tippett and Young were both assigned to the U.S. Defense Attache Office in Bogota, Columbia. Young was a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force and Tippett was a sergeant first class in the Army.

Both men were veterans of the Vietnam War. It was Young's heroic actions in Vietnam that earned him that esteemed honor.

"Gerry was such a humble man," said Tippett. "We didn't even know about his Medal of Honor until several years later."

When Young was a captain he piloted the HH-3E Jolly Green Giant Helicopters in Da Nang, rescuing downed pilots and crew members from the Vietnam jungle. His 60th mission would result in his earning the Medal of Honor.

He and his crew volunteered to help rescue the team from two helicopters that had been shot down. An earlier chopper was able to rescue three victims, but had to leave due to heavy enemy fire causing it extensive damage.

Despite the danger, Young still elected to go in and try to rescue the two remaining crew members. Touching down in the flare-lit darkness, both injured team members were loaded onto the helicopter under heavy attack, with enemy troops closing in.

As they were taking off, the HH-3E received a direct hit in one of its engines, flipping it over. Bursting into flames, it went crashing down the hillside.

Badly burned, he was able to escape through the cockpit window, roll down the slope and give aid to one of his injured crew members who also escaped the crash.

As the enemy was approaching the crash site, he acted as a decoy to lead them away in case there were any other survivors. After stumbling for six miles, several hours later he was able to call for help; and lead the rescuers to his crew member that he had hidden in the bushes, away from the enemy.

Young spent six months in the hospital recovering from his burns. In May of 1968 he was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Lyndon Johnson, for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."

He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1980. He died on June 6, 1990, of a brain tumor at the age of 60, and was buried in Section 7-A of Arlington National Cemetery, near the Tomb of the Unknowns.

Lew and Jackie remained in touch with Young's wife, Yadi, who settled in Seattle with their daughter, Melody.



Special to the Chronicle

Medal of Honor winner Gerald Orren Young.



Lew and Jackie Tippett visit the Gerald O. Young Helicopter Operations Facility.

Yadi told them in October that the helicopter squadron at Joint Base Andrews was being dedicated to Young. They were not able to get there for the ceremony, but went there two weeks later.

"Because of our relationship with Young, we were given a private tour of the facility, which is located next to the hanger housing Air Force One, by Lt. Matt Reiser," said Lew Tippett.

The Gerald O. Young Helicopter Operations Facility is an impressive building. It is also a memorial to Lieutenant Colonel Young, containing his Medal of Honor, flight suit, medals, photos and much more memorabilia.

On Oct. 26, Yadi invited them to the Medal of Honor book signing event, which was held this year in Tampa. Held annually, this was the first book signing event that Yadi had attended.

"She and her daughter met with us for a wonderful lunch before going to the book signing event. There were three 45 minute sessions. The schedule was strictly adhered to by the FBI, acting as security for the event," Tippett said.

Forty of the living Medal of Honor recipients were in attendance, including two still alive from World War II.

There wasn't time to meet all of them, but Lew Tippett as able to meet several of these heroes and get their autographs.

"I think the most impressive was Hershel Woodrow 'Woody' Williams," said Tippett.

Williams was a corporal in the Marine Corps. He was a flame thrower in a demolition unit.

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### HERO

Continued from Page A13

He received his Medal of Honor for heroism above and beyond the call of duty during the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II. He retired as a Warrant Officer 4 in 1969.

Among the many honors bestowed upon him, he had a USNS ship named after him, the Hershel "Woody" Williams, a Mobile Landing Platform. He was at the keel laying ceremony in the San Diego shipyard in August 2016.

Lew and Jackie Tippett have been married for 54 years and have a son and daughter. They have lived in many places around the country and the world such as Israel, the Congo (now known as Zaire), the Ivory Coast and Columbia during his 21-year career in the Army, and 17 years working for the Army after that. Serving in the military is in his blood.

"My father, sister and son are all also veterans," said Tippett.

Natives of Maryland, they are now happily settled in Sugarmill Woods. Jackie is adamant about never moving back to Maryland.

"Just for visits," Tippett said.

friends and family members.

For more information or assistance, contact mom4sba@tampabay.rr.com.

See NOTES/Page A15

See HERO/Page A16

Andrew AFB

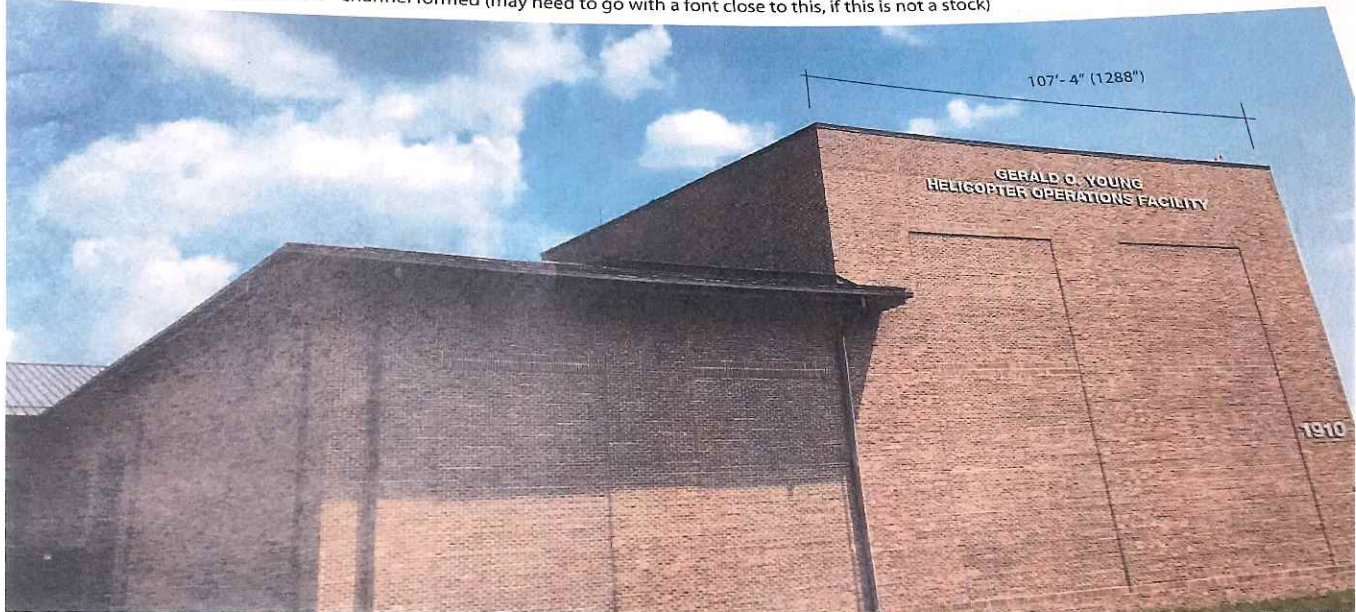
Wash. D.C

18"      +-245"

# GERALD O. YOUNG HELICOPTER OPERATIONS FACIL

Helvetica Neue LT Std 85 Heavy Finish: Metallic Silver  
2 Lines x 468" wide Thickness 3/4" channel formed (may need to go with a font close to this, if this is not a stock)

+ - 468"







At age 5, with his dog in Colorado  
Service photo when he enlisted  
in the Navy, circa 1950



A picture taken by Capt Young of his compound on Da Nang AB,  
Vietnam, 1967.



Standing in front of the Jolly Green Giant outside his Operations building  
at Da Nang AB, Vietnam, 1967.  
An encouraging sign to Fighter Pilots that the 37th AARS  
is on duty, Da Nang AB, Vietnam, 1967.



Photograph of the South Vietnam countryside, taken by Capt Young  
from his helicopter, 1967.



Hill 891, the site of one of the most decorated incidents of the  
Vietnam War. Congressional Medal of Honor, Air Force Cross x 4,  
Distinguished Service Cross x 2, Silver Star x 3, Bronze Star, and  
Purple Heart x 5 were awarded for actions conducted during the rescue.

Always with a smile, even while recovering from his injuries on  
the USS Sanctuary off the coast of Vietnam, Nov 1967.

## Early Years

Gerald Orren Young was born May 19, 1930 in Chicago, Illinois to Ruth and Orren Young. His father was diagnosed with tuberculosis when Gerald was a child. On the recommendation of his doctor to move to a dryer climate, Orren moved his family to Colorado, where Gerald and his younger brother, Don, spent the majority of their childhood. Gerald's self-proclaimed was not the best student nor the best-behaved child. Knowing high school was not for him, he decided to drop out of school and, with the blessing of his parents, joined the Navy on May 5, 1947.

## Pilot Log



## Military Life

The Navy accepted Young on the condition he complete his high school Graduation Equivalence On September 19, 1950. Young transferred from the US Navy Reserve to active service on March 3, 1948, while Electronics Mate and served in the Korean War. He separated from the Navy on February 29, 1952 and used II flight training. Upon reflection, Young acknowledged the Navy straightened him up and allowed for his success, husband, father, and citizen. It was the Navy that ingrained the ethos in him that it's never too late to better you.

Young earned his Commercial Pilot's License at Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington on January 12, 1956. Air Force's Aviator Cadet Program. He was accepted into the program and entered the Air Force on July 3, 1956 at Lubbock, Texas. He completed his last training flight on January 10, 1956, as indicated by FINNIS. After earning his pilot wings, he was sent to helicopter training in Reno, Nevada, where he trained on the H-19. Young's first operational assignment was flying over atomic test sites in the Pacific where he noted the wald loved the milk. Young suspected this was due to the water distilling from the detonations. Following this the nuclear missile mission at several bases in Strategic Air Command until he was selected for HH-3E training.

His first HH-3E assignment was with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Da Nang. The search and rescue mission suited Young well as it embodied the "work together" mentality to account the synchronized efforts of a plethora of professionals to ensure downed aircrew and wounded soldiers got battlefield. He was proud to be a HH-3E Jolly Green Giant and part of the search and rescue mission. During this assignment, he sustained life-threatening injuries on Hill 891. Young survived his injuries because team that found him and the incredible skills of the medical staff on the USS Sanctuary.

After recovering from his injuries, Young took several assignments in Air Training Command (ATC), teach Air Force pilots. Following ATC and in preparation for his next assignment, training Panamanian helicopter crew trained at Fort Ord, California in April 1972. It was during his time in California that his first wife, Nancy, unexpectedly. He ultimately completed his training and was assigned to the 24th Special Operations Squadron mission was to help the Panamanian Air Force establish a rescue program. He said about his time in Panama, America, I like flying in Central America, and I certainly enjoy being involved with a squadron that utilizes its action response, search and rescue missions, and numerous other tasks to assist our Latin American n

While assigned in Panama, he met Yadir "Yadi" Gonzalez-Agileti, whose cheerful, positive attitude made on him. They were married in Costa Rica on January 30, 1974. Not long after the wedding, Young and his Air Force Base.

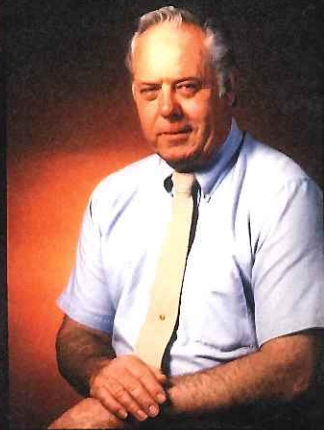


Presenting Capt Young with the Medal of Honor on 14 May 1968.



Official Photograph after receiving the Medal of Honor, 1968.

Gerald, Yadi, and Melody Young at Yadi's Birthday Party, 1989.



Gerald O. Young in 1985

## Awards and Decorations



Command Pilot



Medal of Honor

Distinguished Flying Cross

Purple Heart

Air Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters

Air Force Commendation Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster

Air Force Presidential Unit Citation

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters

## Medal of Honor



For 17 hours, Capt. Gerald Young led the North Vietnamese through the jungle and away from the crash site.

# Flak Trap

By John T. Correll



*Capt. Gerald Young was assigned to a rescue squadron at Da Nang AB, South Vietnam, in August 1967. Three months later, his helicopter was caught in a flak trap.*

**O**n the afternoon of Nov. 8, 1967, a 12-man team of American and South Vietnamese soldiers returning from a secret road-watch and reconnaissance mission on the Ho Chi Minh Trail was ambushed and mauled by a North Vietnamese Army battalion.

The team was assigned to Military Assistance Command Vietnam's "Studies and Observation Group." The name was intentionally vague. MACV/SOG was an unconventional warfare task force that had been conducting cross-border operations in the Laotian Panhandle—where the United States did not admit it had any military forces—since October 1965.

Some contemporary reports give the location of the ambush as Vietnam's Quang Tri Province, but the actual site was a mountainside, surrounded by dense jungle, a few miles inside Laos. It was not far from the US Marine Corps base at Khe Sanh, which lay to the northeast on the other side of the border.

At first, the soldiers thought they had run into a reinforced company, but it turned out to be the main body of an enemy battalion.

The team leader, a US Army Special Forces sergeant, called for help—just as the North Vietnamese expected him to do. They were setting up what was known as a "flak trap."

In the Vietnam War, the United States made an unprecedented effort to rescue those shot down or in trouble in hostile territory. The North Vietnamese knew it, too, and took advantage of it. They often held back from finishing off the survivors of a crash or an attack, preferring to use the Americans as bait. Helicopters and other aircraft would be coming soon and the aircraft would make fat targets as they moved in for the rescue.

The first effort to pick up the SOG team was by a South Vietnamese Air Force H-34, escorted by a US Army UH-1B "Huey" gunship. The North Vietnamese held their fire as the two helicopters approached.

The Huey went in first and hosed down the surrounding area with rockets and guns. The enemy guns were silent until the H-34 pulled into position above the hillside and a sudden fusillade blew him out of the sky. The Huey attacked again, and again the ground fire stopped. The



Huey pilot decided to try the rescue himself, and his helicopter was promptly shot down as well.

The NVA battalion could have made short work of the beleaguered patrol, but chose instead to wait for more aircraft to be drawn into the flak trap, which was still baited.

The second rescue force got there around midnight. There were two Air Force HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters from Da Nang, an Air Force C-130 flare ship, and three Army helicopter gunships.

Flares from the C-130 lit up the whole area and the Hueys pounded the enemy positions with their rockets and guns. The first HH-3E, call sign Jolly Green 29, maneuvered into position on the slope and picked up two American soldiers and three South Vietnamese. However, enemy fire from a nearby ridge took its toll and Jolly Green 29 pulled away leaking fuel and hydraulic fluid and headed for an emergency landing at Khe Sanh, the closest airstrip.

The pilot of Jolly Green 29 advised the second helicopter, Jolly Green 26, to pull out. The ground fire on the



Photo courtesy of Yadira Young

*The HH-3E Jolly Green Giant was the most famous of rescue helicopters during the Vietnam War. Its nickname came in part from its green and brown paint scheme.*

mountainside was intense, and the enemy guns were too numerous for the Hueys to suppress. The Rescue Center agreed and told Jolly Green 26 to return to Da Nang although there were more survivors left on the ground.

The pilot of Jolly Green 26, Capt. Gerald O. Young, didn't like that order. He talked it over with his crew and they all wanted to stay. Expressing the sentiments of them all, the copilot, Capt. Ralph W. Brower, said



*An Air Force art collection painting by Harvey Kidder portrays Young and the helicopter rescue that he led in Vietnam.*



*Capt. Ralph Brower (shown here as a lieutenant) was the copilot on Young's helicopter. When Young asked the crew if they should continue the rescue attempt, Brower spoke for them all: "We're airborne and hot to trot."*

that "we're airborne and hot to trot." Young appealed the order to return and the Rescue Center authorized them to see what they could do.

Young, 37, had a lot of flying experience behind him. He had dropped out of high school and joined the Navy in 1947. In the Navy, he obtained a General Educational Development diploma and got a private pilot's license. After a break in service, he again joined the Navy. In 1956, he moved over to the Air Force, where he earned his commission through the Aviation Cadets, went to flight training, and became a helicopter pilot. In August 1967, he was assigned to the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Da Nang Air Base in South Vietnam. On Nov. 9, Young was on his 60th combat mission.

Jolly Green 26 went in fast, with the gunships strafing the jungle on both sides. It was a tricky hover. Young rested the right main wheel on the slope while holding the other two wheels in the air and avoiding rotor contact with the ground. Brower directed the gunship fire. The pararescue jumper, Sgt. Larry W. Maysey, hopped to the ground and lifted two American sergeants, both of them wounded, up to the flight engineer, SSgt. Eugene L. Clay, who pulled them aboard.

As Young applied power to lift off, enemy troops appeared at point-blank range and raked Jolly Green 26 with au-

tomatic weapons fire. A rifle-launched grenade struck the right engine, which caught fire and exploded. The big

helicopter flipped over on its back, burst into flames, and crashed down the hillside into a ravine.

### 17 Hours

Young was suspended by his seat belt, hanging upside down, and his clothing was afire. He managed to kick out the right window, get out of his straps, and reach the ground. He rolled farther down the embankment and beat out the fire in his clothes. The burns already covered a fourth of his body.

He found another survivor, one of the Army sergeants, who had also been thrown clear. He was unconscious. Young put out the fire in the sergeant's clothing with his bare hands. He tried to reach others in the wreckage, but was driven back by the heat.

About 3:30 a.m., two A-1Es, Sandy 07 and 08, arrived from a base in Thailand to direct the continuing rescue effort. At this point, at least seven Americans and South Vietnamese were still alive on the hillside.

According to Maj. Jimmy Kilbourne, the pilot of Sandy 07, the rescue team could not talk with Young on the radio

## Air Rescue in Vietnam

One of the great success stories of the Vietnam War was combat search and rescue. Chances were good that a pilot shot down or troops in trouble behind enemy lines would be picked up and brought out.

Air Rescue Service—later Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service—was credited with saving 2,511 aircrew members and 1,372 others during the war. Of the aircrew rescues, 739 were in Laos, 176 were in North Vietnam, and 1,596 were in South Vietnam. That record was all the more impressive because the Air Force entered the Vietnam War with extremely limited rescue capability.

Initially, rescue detachments used the HH-43F Huskie, a utility helicopter, universally known as "Pedro," designed for fire and crash work around air bases. It was slow, unarmed, and had a short operating range. Nevertheless, Pedro accounted for more saves than any other rescue helicopter in the war.

The HH-3E, most famous of the rescue helicopters and called the "Jolly Green Giant" because of its green and brown camouflage, arrived in 1965. The Jolly Green was built for missions deep in North Vietnam. It had a range of 736 miles, could be refueled in flight, and could carry up to 15 wounded in litters. It had two 7.62 mm machine guns to aid in its own defense.

The ultimate rescue helicopter in Vietnam was the HH-53C Super Jolly, almost twice the size of the HH-3, faster, better armed, and with longer range and able to carry more people. It entered service in 1967. The other services also flew some rescue missions, as did the CIA's proprietary airline, Air America.

The conspicuous heroes of ARRS were the pararescue jumpers, or PJs, airmen trained not only in rescue but also in survival skills, hand-to-hand combat, and as medics. They went down on jungle penetrators attached to long cables to bring out the wounded. PJs won more decorations for bravery than any other airmen in the war.



*Sgt. Larry Maysey, a pararescue jumper, lifted two wounded US soldiers onto Young's helicopter. He died when enemy fire hit the Jolly Green, causing it to flip over and burst into flames.*

because there were "three 'beepers' broadcasting on the emergency radio frequency, making voice contact with the survivors impossible. ... The beepers blocked the voice transmissions." The scene below was illuminated, Kilbourne said, by the three helicopters, which formed a "fiery triangle" within 100 yards of each other.

Sandy 07, who was directing the rescue team, decided to wait until first light and bring in more Sandys, fighters, and gunships before the next attempt. "The plan," Kilbourne said, "was to go in early, locate the survivors, and draw enemy fire by flying low and slow over the area." Sandy 07 would then put fire from gunships and fighters on the enemy positions and "escort the Jolly Green Giants in for the pickup while all four A-1Es formed a firing 'daisy chain' around them."

At daybreak, Young came out of hiding long enough to fire a pen gun flare. He wanted to warn the Sandys that they were circling a flak trap. Sandy 07, making a low, slow pass, saw Young. The Sandys made about 40 passes, "trolling" for ground fire, but drew none.

At 7 a.m., Sandys 05 and 06 relieved Sandys 07 and 08, who were low on fuel. Sandy 05 spotted five survivors near the wreckage of one of the helicopters. Two hours had passed with no sign of the enemy, so the Sandys led Army and VNAF helicopters in for

the pickup. They were not fired upon. Apparently, the enemy had pulled back for the night and had not yet returned. Sandy 05 was on the verge of sending in a Jolly Green to pick up Young and the sergeant when the North Vietnamese troops reappeared.

Young saw the enemy force approaching from the south. He hid the wounded man and decided he would lead the North Vietnamese away from the crash site if he could. Injured and suffering from second and third degree

burns, he drifted into shock from time to time. He used his survival maps to cover the worst of his burns.

"When enemy troops approached the crash scene, he led them away from the wounded sergeant hidden in the underbrush," an Air Force historical summary said. "He took off through the brush, enemy troops following him. Young knew that the only way rescue helicopters would be able to reach the scene and recover any remaining survivors was if they could see and have time to operate without encountering enemy fire. Young was determined to give them that time by luring his pursuers farther and farther from the wreckage. In his condition, that meant almost certain capture or death. After stumbling for six miles, he eluded the North Vietnamese troops in pursuit."

Young came to an open field, dragged himself out, signaled the helicopters circling overhead, and was picked up. He had been on the ground for 17 hours.

#### Medal of Honor

Back at the crash site, US and VNAF aircraft pounded the enemy with rockets, cannon, and machine gun fire. The NVA gunners got a piece of Sandy 07—who had since returned and resumed control—and kept on shooting.

Eventually, a 100-man ground party landed, remained overnight, rescued another survivor, picked up bodies, and destroyed ordnance on the Army

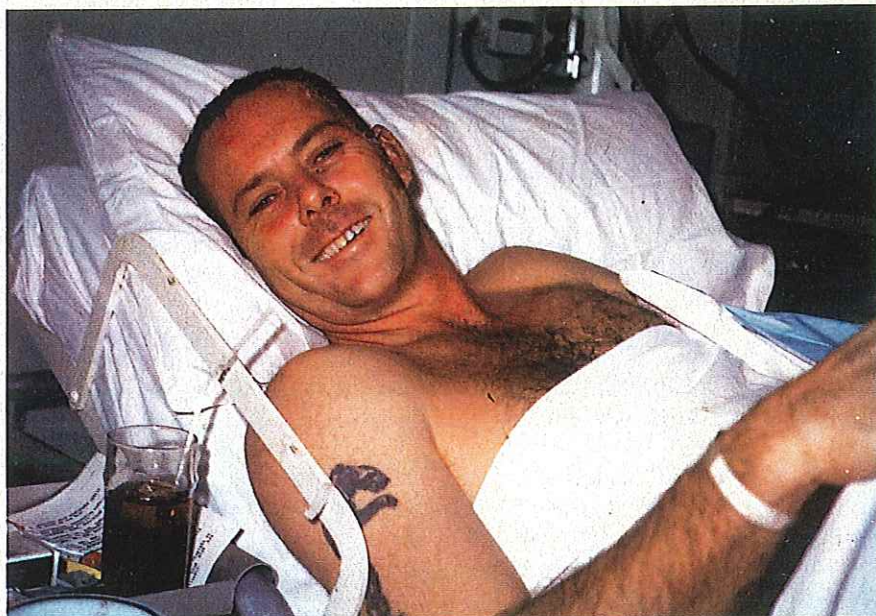
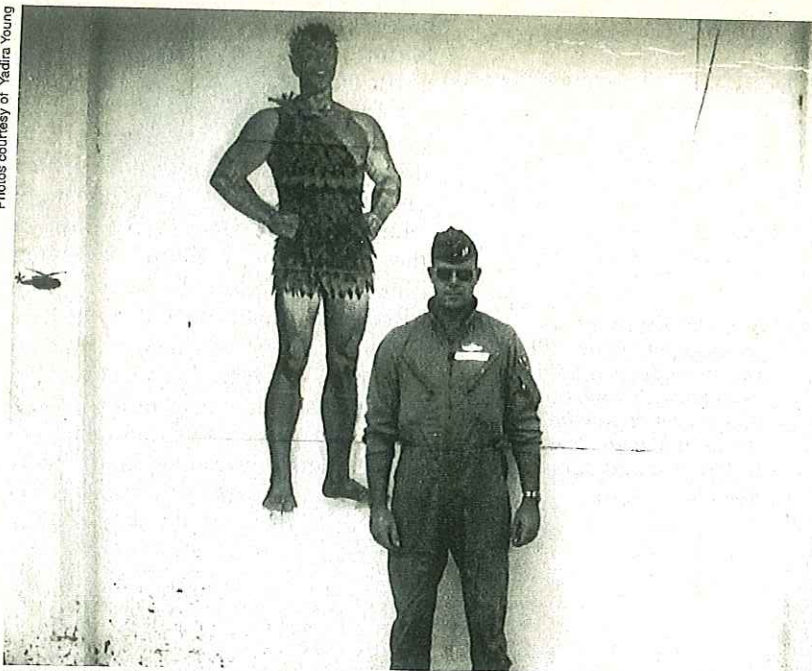


Photo courtesy of Yedira Young

*Young suffered second and third degree burns in the helicopter fire. He covered them with survival maps and led the enemy away from the crash site, so others could be safely rescued. Here, he recovers on USS Sanctuary after his own rescue.*



Young stands in front of his barracks next to an advertising icon that helped give a nickname to the HH-3 helicopter. On the back of this photo, he wrote, "Two Jolly Greens."

gunship. The eight helicopters working the extraction had to avoid the flak trap, but they took no more losses.

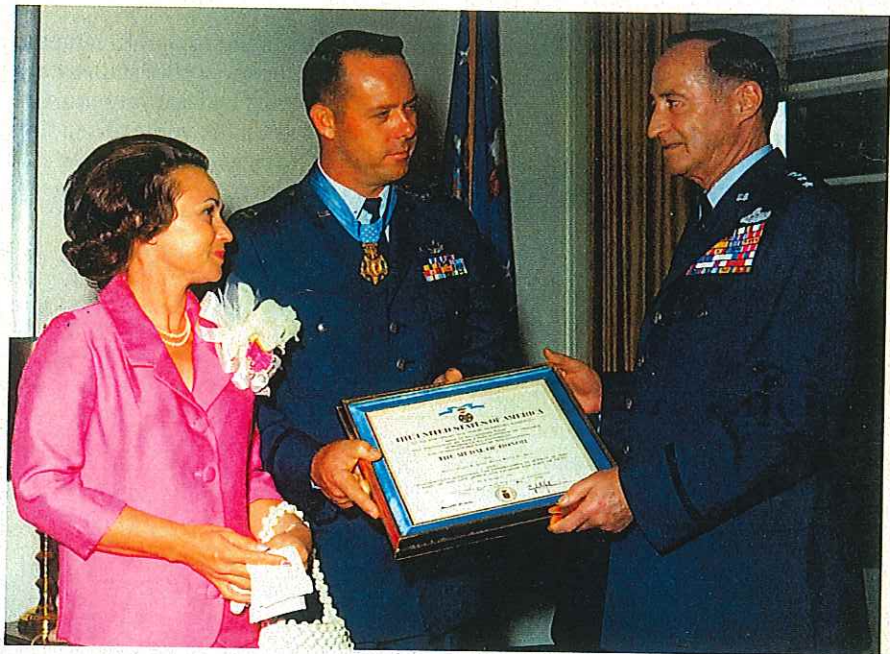
Accounts vary of how many people got off the hillside. According to an article written in 1969 for *Airman*, the official magazine of the Air Force, by Sandy 07 pilot Kilbourne, "seven survivors and the remains of six men were recovered." The bodies of Brower, Maysey, and Clay were not recovered.

Young was treated for his wounds at Da Nang and flown back to the United States for further treatment and skin grafts. He spent six months in hospitals recovering from burns before he returned to active duty.

The Medal of Honor was presented to Young by President Lyndon B. Johnson at the Pentagon, May 14, 1968, in ceremonies dedicating the Pentagon's new Hall of Heroes. The other members of the Jolly Green 26 crew, Capt. Ralph W. Brower, SSgt. Eugene L. Clay, and Sgt. Larry W. Maysey, were awarded the Air Force Cross posthumously. The four Sandy pilots received the Silver Star.

### Propensity for "Rescuing"

Gerald Young served another 13 years in the Air Force after returning from Vietnam. He had several assignments in flight training programs at the Air Force Academy and in Air Training Command. He helped set up a forerunner to the Military As-



USAF photo

After receiving the Medal of Honor from President Johnson, Young and his first wife, Nancy Lee, show the award to Gen. John McConnell, Air Force Chief of Staff.

sistance to Safety and Traffic (MAST) program in which military helicopters support the civilian highway patrol in emergencies. He also assisted the Panamanian Air Force in establishing a rescue program.

During a tour with the VIP transport squadron at Andrews AFB, Md., he

finished his B.A. degree at the University of Maryland with a major in Latin Studies and a minor in Spanish. That prepared him for his last assignment, as air attaché to Colombia. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1980.

Young and his family went to the Pacific Northwest and a 30-acre farm on Guemes Island in Puget Sound, a five-minute ferry ride from Anacortes, Wash.

"I think that 'rescuing' was in his blood," said his wife, Yadira Young. "Here on our farm ... he always wanted to employ people who needed second chances. As he worked alongside of his helpers fixing fences or feeding the cattle, he told them that it was never too late to change."

He was a frequent speaker for schools, ROTC units, and public events and took an active role in the community. The city of Anacortes named Young's Park, a popular recreation area on the north end of the island, for him.

Young was diagnosed in 1989 with a brain tumor and died in 1990, just after his 60th birthday. A memorial service on Guemes Island featured a flyover by HH-3 helicopters. He was subsequently buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. ■

John T. Correll was editor in chief of Air Force Magazine for 18 years and is now a contributing editor. His most recent article, "In the Wake of the QDR," appeared in the September issue.



“That Others May Live,” Captain Young  
and his three crewmembers braved  
the flak trap from which

# ONLY ONE RETURNED

Nobody on Capt. Gerald O. Young’s Jolly Green crew liked the decision very much. “Hell,” as his copilot Capt. Ralph Brower expressed it, “we’re airborne and hot to trot!”

SSgt. Eugene L. Clay, flight engineer, and Sgt. Larry W. Maysey, pararescueman, were in complete agreement. They were part of a largescale rescue effort organized in Saigon to rescue a US-Vietnamese reconnaissance team and several survivors from two downed helicopters southeast of Khe Sanh.

The force included several specially equipped aircraft—a US Air Force C-130 flareship, three US Army gunship helicopters and two Air Force “Jolly Green Giant” rescue helicopters. Captain Young and his crew were in one of the HH-3Es.

The decision that Captain Young and his crew found so disagreeable was the word from the Rescue Center that his Jolly Green was to return to Da Nang Air Base. So when Young learned—in a sort of unofficial survey—that everybody on his crew felt the same way he did about the decision, he appealed. Rescue Center was finally convinced Young’s chopper should be allowed to accompany the rescue force as backup.

It was a fateful decision. Who could have known that for this particular Jolly Green and its four-man crew the mission would end in tragedy—and the award of the Medal of Honor?

by Maj. JIMMY W. KILBOURNE  
Hq USAF

The events leading to that flight began on the afternoon of November 8, 1967. The main body of a crack North Vietnamese Army Battalion ambushed a small US-Vietnamese reconnaissance team in the dense jungles southeast of Khe Sanh, South Vietnam. Responding immediately to a call from a US Army sergeant—the team leader—a Vietnamese Air Force helicopter and a US Army gunship helicopter moved in. The sergeant directed them toward his position while briefing them on the situation.

Meanwhile the enemy held their fire. It was an old trick. Using the surviving team members for bait, they had set a “flak trap” for the helicopters.

As the Army helicopter approached the team’s hiding place the enemy opened fire immediately. Evading the hail of bullets the determined helicopter crew pounded the enemy gunners with rockets and machine gun fire. Soon the hostile fire ceased, the enemy positions apparently destroyed. The VNAF pilot eased his defenseless helicopter into position alongside a steep slope near the besieged team.

Suddenly, the hillside again erupted into a wall of ground fire. Out of control, the VNAF helicopter flipped upside down and crashed in flames. The flak trap tactic had worked again. Fortunately, the team had not had time to board the VNAF helicopter.

Again the Army helicopter attacked the new enemy positions with rockets and machine gun fire. And again the enemy guns fell silent.

Now the Army helicopter pilot decided to attempt a pickup. He made one final pass over the survivors. “All’s quiet,” he thought, slowly turning back toward them. He was wrong. Once more the enemy gunners opened up, blasting him out of the sky!

#### **Patient and Deadly**

Thus far, the enemy had decimated the US-Vietnamese reconnaissance team and downed two helicopters. Still, though, they did not move in to kill the survivors. Patient and calculating, they rightly assumed the US would attempt another pickup that night or the following morning.

Their strategy paid off. The rescue force arrived in the area around midnight. A low, broken cloud layer and fog forced them to operate within range of the enemy gunners and the battalion-sized enemy force immediately opened fire on the gunship helicopters. They were obviously confident and buoyant after downing two helicopters and routing the Army team.

Alert, the helicopter pilots evaded the ground fire, pounding the enemy gunners with rockets and machine

gun fire. The C-130 flareship kept the entire scene bright with flares. Meanwhile, the two Jolly Green Giants held clear of the area. Eventually, the enemy fire dwindled and ceased.

As the first Jolly Green streaked in for the pickup try, the gunship helicopters strafed along a wide area on both sides of his flight path. Despite the realization that he would be a perfect target silhouetted against the hillside by flares, the rescue crew commander nevertheless carefully maneuvered his helicopter into position alongside the steep slope.

Just then, the enemy raked the helicopter with automatic weapons from point-blank range! However, three survivors scrambled aboard while the team leader and his assistant engaged the enemy gunners, discovering with dismay that a small group of enemy soldiers had flanked the defensive fire and were shooting from atop the ridge. The pilot had to withdraw, leaving two wounded Americans behind.

The helicopter was badly riddled with armor-piercing shells. It spewed jet fuel, oil, and hydraulic fluid as it struggled to gain precious altitude under cover of darkness. Captain Young’s copilot directed the damaged helicopter to proceed to Khe Sanh. It landed there eventually but not before its pilot recommended that further rescue effort be suspended. Ground fire was too intense and the gunship helicopters, not only unable to knock out the enemy gunners, were low on fuel. In a few moments they would be forced to depart the area.

Captain Young and his crew would have been completely justified in withdrawing to escort the damaged helicopter into Khe Sanh. But as before, the crew would have no part of retreat. Two wounded Americans—as well as other survivors—needed help, and there was still a chance the helicopter could dart in, pull them aboard and dart out under cover of the gunship helicopters. After all, they knew the enemy gunners’ position.

Captain Young had a plan. The copilot, Captain Brower, would direct the gunship helicopters against the enemy gunners. Sergeant Clay was to remain on board and help pull the wounded through the door while Sergeant Maysey got out of the rescue helicopter and lifted them up to him. It was a bold plan and everyone agreed to it.

The Army helicopters led a renewed attack against the enemy, while Captain Young carefully worked his Jolly Green into position. He eased the right main gear down onto the steep slope and immediately felt his ship shudder under a hail of enemy bullets. Calmly Captain Brower called out the firing positions and directed the armed helicopters in on both sides of the Jolly Green.



Captain Young

The closest enemy gunners ceased firing. As Captain Young held the chopper in a delicate hover, the next few seconds seemed like an eternity. In the face of renewed ground fire, Sergeant Maysey and one remaining survivor had difficulty climbing in but Sergeant Clay, busy returning the enemy fire, finally signaled that everyone was aboard.

Only then did Captain Young apply power to the straining jet engines and attempt to take off. No deal! A large group of enemy soldiers suddenly appeared. They raked the crippled bird with small arms fire and rifle-launched grenades. One grenade found its mark. The right engine began to trail sparks and flames. Then it exploded! Inverted, the helicopter rolled and skidded down into a steep ravine where it burst into flames.

#### **Besieged and Injured**

Captain Young hung upside down suspended by his seat belt. His clothes aflame, disoriented, burned on the left leg, arm and face, he fought desperately to kick out the right window and release his seat belt. Finally he fell clear of the burning helicopter. He then rolled 100 yards down a steep embankment where he beat out the flames. Burns covered over one-fourth of his body.

The injured pilot saw that one of the men from the chopper had been thrown clear. The man was unconscious, his foot in flames. Young immediately crawled to his side and put out the fire with his bare hands. He tried to make his way back up the hill to the burning helicopter where he hoped to help the others. Excruciating pain, intense heat and ground fire drove him back. He could do no more than drag the unconscious man into the bushes and treat him for shock.

While Captain Young hid from the enemy in that bloody ravine, two "Sandy" pilots were awakened by the duty officer at an alert base in Thailand. Three helicopters have been downed by enemy ground fire south southeast of Khe Sanh, the duty officer told them. He directed them to scramble immediately and lead a rescue effort for possible survivors from the three helicopters.

The Sandy pilots (Sandy 7 and 8 flying A-1E *Sky-raid*ers), arrived in the area at 0330. Sandy 7 assumed control of the rescue effort and ordered everyone to hold well clear of the area while he and his wingman searched for survivors.

They soon heard three "beepers" broadcasting on the emergency radio frequency, making voice contact with the survivors impossible. Nevertheless, they had little trouble in locating and identifying the three helicopters which formed a fiery triangle—all within 100 yards.

Sandy 7 called the C-130 flareship and briefed them on his plans for a "first lite" effort the following morning. The plan was to go in early, locate the survivors and draw enemy fire by flying low and slow over the area. Then Sandy 7 would direct Air Force jets fighters and Army gunship helicopters against their positions. Hopefully, with the survivors located and the enemy gunners silenced, he could escort the Jolly Green Giants in for the pickup while all four A-1Es formed a firing "daisy chain" around them. This tactic had worked throughout North Vietnam in the past. Sandy 7 was confident it would work here.

Captain Young came out of hiding at daybreak. He attempted to warn the Sandy pilots that enemy gunners might be using him as bait. Descending to treetop level Sandy 7 flew over at about 125 mph. He saw Captain Young signal with his pen gun flare and was elated at seeing him alive.

Sandy 7 sensed a trap. Consequently, he made 40 passes over the entire area at 50-100 feet. He was "trolling" for ground fire. He found none. Perhaps the enemy had moved out of the area anticipating heavy bombardment. On the other hand, they could be hidden near the wreckage. They enjoyed every advantage.

In the meantime, Sandy 7 was unable to establish radio contact with Captain Young. The beepers blocked the voice transmissions.

At approximately 7 a.m., two more A-1Es (Sandy 5 and 6) arrived in the area. Sandy 7 and 8, now low on fuel departed the area after briefing Sandy 5, who now took control of the effort.

For the next two hours, Sandy 5 and 6 combed the area searching for enemy opposition. They located five survivors huddled near the wreckage of one of the helicopters, but failed to draw ground fire or visually locate any enemy gunners. Several US Army and VNAF helicopters now entered the area. Sandy 5 led them to the survivors and provided cover while they picked them up. No one was fired on. The enemy had, in fact, withdrawn prior to daybreak. Running low on fuel, the helicopters departed.

Sandy 5 then returned to the site of the Jolly Green crash and spotted Captain Young and the unconscious survivor. He was unable to take a nearby Jolly Green in for a pickup try, however, because he saw the enemy returning to the area from the south. He was certain that they would set up another flak trap.

Sandy 7 and 8 returned at this time, were briefed on the situation and Sandy 7 once again assumed control.

Quickly he came under fire from the advancing hos-



tiles. He made a firing pass at a large group of troops in an open field. They stood firm and returned his fire, jolting the A-1E with a barrage of armor-piercing shells. Sandy 8 counterattacked, destroying several enemy positions with rockets and cannon fire. The gunners again fell silent. This time they did not fool the Sandy pilots. Sandy 7 laid down a smoke screen that blanketed the enemy approach to the survivors.

Within moments the US Army and VNAF helicopters returned. Sandy 7 told them where the gunners were and how long the smoke screen would last. He then led them in over a known safe route from the north. They had hardly moved into position when the enemy flanked the smoke screen and opened fire from the south once again. Sandy 7 and 8 were ready. They both attacked the enemy positions with rockets, cannons and machine guns firing full blast. The enemy, although suffering heavy losses, raked the lead A-1E again and again with ground fire. Sandy 7 finally limped off to a safe area while Sandy 8 laid down another smoke screen. This provided the rescue helicopters a few more precious moments. But Captain Young was near the enemy gunners. He hid the wounded man and disappeared into the thick undergrowth.

### **Lead Them Away!**

Young realized, of course, that the enemy had ambushed the reconnaissance team only to use the survivors as bait for their flak trap. This bait had permitted their gunners to shoot down the VNAF helicopter and Army gunship helicopter as well as his own Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopter, and to heavily damage one of the Sandys. Young decided that he would not let the rescue force fall prey to the flak trap again. Deliberately he attempted to lead the enemy away from the crash site.

He realized that this decision would probably cost him his own life.

From time to time, sensing that he was going into shock, Captain Young hid and tried to treat his wounds. But he had only one bandage, so he used survival maps to cover his more serious burns.

The enemy pursued him relentlessly throughout the day. He spotted several troops in black pajamas searching for him in the dense underbrush. As they approached, he crawled toward an open plain to the north-

east. Soon he found himself going in circles in the tall elephant grass. He was certain the enemy was trying to force him to call in the rescue aircraft. But despite the severity of his wounds and drifting into shock, he managed to keep ahead of them, refusing to call the rescue aircraft circling overhead. He was determined not to expose them to another trap.

Finally, after nearly six miles of stumbling, crawling, and hiding, he escaped and spotted a friendly helicopter over a safe area. Only then did he drag himself into an open field and signal the helicopter. He was picked up and flown to Da Nang Air Base for treatment.

In the meantime, the Sandy pilots were unaware of his plight. A ground party was airlifted into the area by helicopter to look for Young and to recover the bodies of the crew members still trapped in the choppers, as well as that of the man Young had hidden in the brush. The 100-man ground party remained overnight. They located another survivor, recovered the bodies of the crew members and destroyed the ordnance aboard the wrecked US Army gunship helicopter.

The next morning, Sandy 5 and 6 returned at first light only to discover that low clouds completely hid the countryside. Also, the dogged enemy had set up still another flak trap, this time for the eight helicopters that would attempt to retrieve the ground party. Sandy 5 and 6 were successful in avoiding the enemy gunners and the ground party withdrew without further incident.

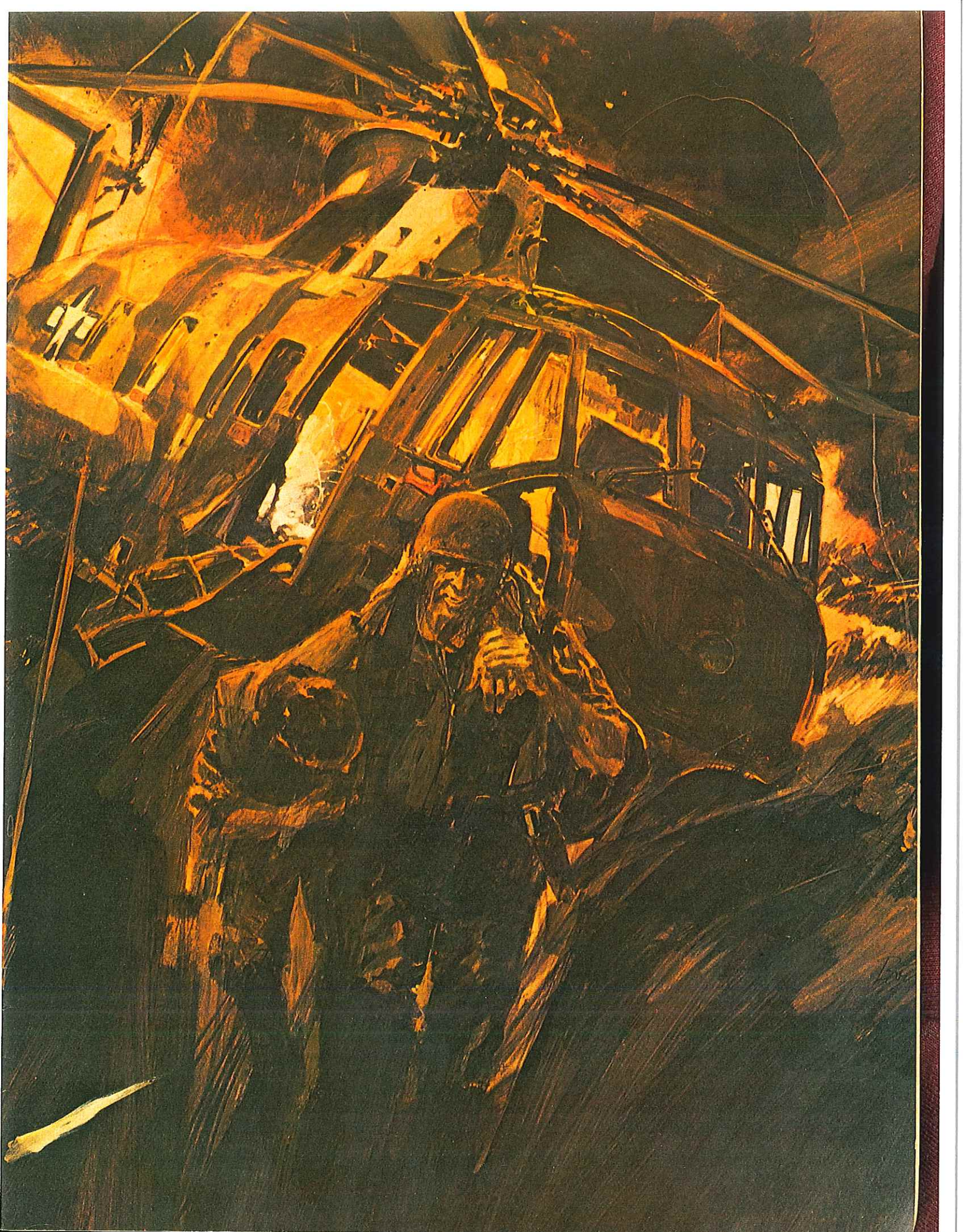
This effort was one of the largest and most hazardous on record. A ground team had been mauled, three helicopters shot down and two A-1Es and a Jolly Green rescue helicopter heavily damaged. However, seven survivors and the remains of six men were recovered.

The rescue people who participated, and particularly those who gave their lives "that others may live," added a brilliant chapter to the incredible rescue record written in blood and tears in Southeast Asia.

Captain Young, whose final rescue was almost anticlimactic, was awarded the Medal of Honor. His three crew members each received the Air Force Cross (posthumously) and the four Sandy pilots were each awarded the Silver Star.

*(Editor's Note: The author prepared this account from his own first-hand observation. He was Sandy 7.)* ✪





# America's FIGHTING HEROES

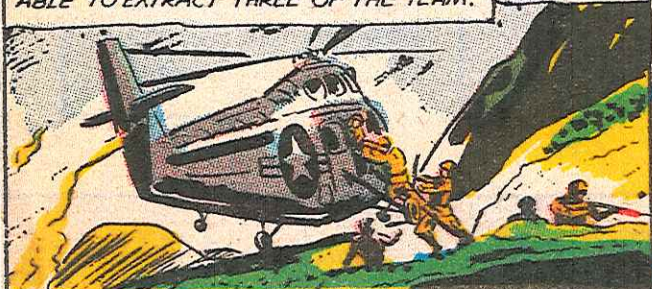
The Story of Captain Gerald O. Young, USAF

CAPT. YOUNG DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ON 9 NOVEMBER 1967 WHILE SERVING AS A HELICOPTER RESCUE CREW COMMANDER IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA. CAPT. YOUNG WAS FLYING ESCORT FOR ANOTHER HELICOPTER ATTEMPTING THE NIGHT RESCUE OF AN ARMY GROUND RECONNAISSANCE TEAM IN IMMINENT DANGER OF DEATH OR CAPTURE.

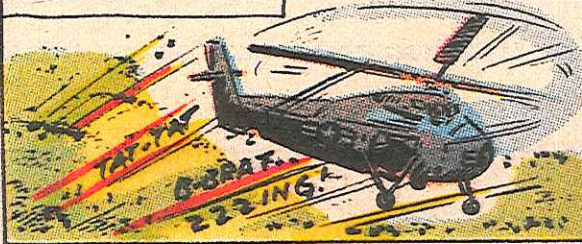
PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS HAD RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF TWO HELICOPTERS TO GROUND FIRE. THE ENDANGERED TEAM WAS ON THE SIDE OF A STEEP SLOPE WHICH REQUIRED UNUSUAL AIRMANSHIP.



HEAVY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE FROM THE SURROUNDING ENEMY DAMAGED ONE HELICOPTER, BUT IT WAS ABLE TO EXTRACT THREE OF THE TEAM.



THE AIRCRAFT'S COMMANDER RECOMMENDED TO CAPT. YOUNG THAT FURTHER RESCUE ATTEMPTS BE ABANDONED BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO SUPPRESS THE CONCENTRATED FIRE FROM ENEMY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS.



WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE DANGER INVOLVED, AND THAT SUPPORTING HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS WERE LOW ON FUEL AND ORDINANCE, HE HOVERED UNDER INTENSE FIRE UNTIL THE REMAINING SURVIVORS WERE ABOARD.



THE ENEMY AT POINT-BLANK RANGE RAKED THE AIRCRAFT WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. THE AIRCRAFT CRASHED, BURST INTO FLAMES. CAPT. YOUNG ESCAPED THROUGH A WINDOW. DISREGARDING SERIOUS BURNS, HE AIDED ONE OF THE WOUNDED MEN.



LATER, DESPITE INTENSE PAIN FROM HIS BURNS, HE DECLINED RESCUE BECAUSE HE HAD OBSERVED HOSTILE FORCES SETTING UP AUTOMATIC WEAPONS POSITIONS TO ENTRAP ANY RESCUE AIRCRAFT. FOR MORE THAN 17 HOURS, HE EVADED THE ENEMY UNTIL RESCUE AIRCRAFT COULD BE BROUGHT SAFELY INTO THE AREA. FOR CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY AND INTREPIDITY IN ACTION AT THE RISK OF HIS LIFE ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY, CAPT. GERALD O. YOUNG WAS AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR.



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ONE OF THE HELICOPTERS RECOVERED FROM A PREVIOUS MISSION IN VIETNAM GERALD'S HELICOPTER WAS NUMBER 26 AND WAS NEVER RECOVERED.

# Skagit Valley Herald

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## HONORING VETERANS



VINCE RICHARDSON / SKAGIT VALLEY HERALD

Skagit County Parks and Recreation Director Brian Adams addresses those attending the ribbon cutting for the Veterans Community Park Plaza.