

Veterans

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C-130 aircraft, Lieutenant Commander Melvin finally located the liferaft. Although the liferaft was being violently tossed by 15-foot seas and 45-knot winds, Lieutenant Commander Melvin maneuvered the helicopter into position for the eight arduous hoists. With the survivors safely aboard, Lieutenant Commander Melvin piloted the helicopter at 50 feet above the ocean surface and returned to landfall at Virginia Beach to find the airports below instrument approach minimums and visibility down to 1/16 of a mile. Already fatigued by the demanding flight, he cautiously maneuvered his way to a safe landing at Norfolk International Airport with less than 30 minutes of fuel remaining. Lieutenant Commander Melvin's innovative actions, expert aeronautical skill and valor throughout this rescue mission resulted in the successful rescue of eight men. His courage, sound judgment and unwavering devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

Petty Officer Richard Hugger ...

Petty Officer Richard Hugger served in the U.S. Navy from 1970 to 1974 as a signalman onboard the USS Inchon, LPH-12 (amphibious helicopter carrier). The ship carried approximately 300 to 600 marines.

The ship rescued downed



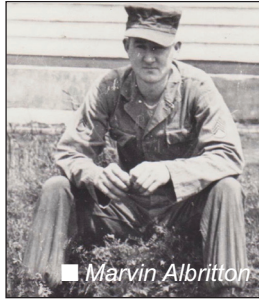
■ Bob Melvin Sr.

pilots and B-52 bomber crews at the end of 1972.

Richard served in Vietnam from 1972 to 1973 and was part of Operation End Sweep in 1973 that swept for mines in Haiphong Harbor. The task force had to pull out of the Gulf of Tonkin to avoid a typhoon. The anemometer blew off the mast at 135 mph. Most of the sailors and marines on the ship were seasick during the storm.

Sergeant First Class Marvin J. Albritton ...

Served nine years in the Army, and one of those years was during the Korean conflict. After service he became a FWC officer and was accidentally killed by a faulty bowline on an airboat in 1966.



■ Marvin Albritton

Lt. Col. John S. Flickinger 1921 - 1956 ...

Lt. Col. John S. Flickinger, UMSMC, otherwise known as "Flick," enlisted in the Marine Corps in January of 1941 and served in combat in WWII in the Pacific Theater in 1943 -1944 as a fighter- and dive-bomber pilot. He was Division Leader of Marine Scout Bomber Squadron 236 and Flight Group Leader of Squadron 244. He flew 30 raids against enemy forces in the Northern Solomons and New Britain areas and against enemy shipping and fortifications at Bougainville, Rabaul and New Ireland.

At Bougainville, his squadron operated from an airstrip only 400 yards from enemy lines. He was wounded in the head in Guadalcanal by an enemy sniper while preparing to take off from Henderson Field. Fortunately, the bullet entered his cheek and made a clean exit behind his ear.

He returned to active duty after a brief hospitalization in Australia and participated in the Guam Campaign. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with Gold Stars in lieu of 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Air Medals, with Presidential Citations and the Purple Heart.

In an interview for his hometown newspaper, the "Lewiston Morning Tribune," after he was wounded, he said, "This has been the most exciting tour of duty that any squadron has had since the first days of Guadalcanal. A few weeks ago the enemy began a series of attacks on our position, and we were shelled continuously for 20 days. I would lead a strike out and they would shell us when we took off and again when we landed. At night we could not sleep because of the constant barrage. Many hours were spent in foxholes. The entire squadron behaved like veterans, and it fills me with pride that they are 'my boys.' I would like to have them all in Idaho for a week of hunting and fishing."

Flick was 23 years old at the time, but considered a combat

veteran.

He also served in the Korean War in 1953 with the First Marine Aircraft Wing and was awarded the Bronze Star with a Combat "V," the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with 4 Stars for major engagements, and the Korean Service Medal.

In 1956, he was Commanding Officer of Marine Fighter Squadron 115 at El Toro Marine Corps Air Station in California, where he was killed when his F4D-1 Skyray flamed out during a routine landing approach.

Ironically, he was returning from a conference in Los Angeles with Douglas Aircraft, the plane's manufacturer, concerning similar problems encountered during fleet introduction testing of the new supersonic craft.

Lt. Flickinger was the father of Boca Grande resident Lynne Seibert.

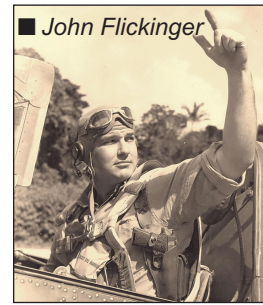
Lt. Philip "Dusty" Hopkins ...

Dusty Hopkins enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1969 and went into pilot training in Texas. He is pictured here doing parachute landing drills.

Lt. Hopkins left the Air Force after Vietnam.

His daughter, Tricia, was born while he was in the Air Force and stationed at Kincheloe Air Force Base in the upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Dusty is a resident of Boca Grande and owns the Boca Beacon newspaper.



■ John Flickinger



■ Dusty Hopkins

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