

Dedication

<http://www.dixiestones.net/details.php?listing=55>

This is a photograph of myself taken at the time of my retirement from the Alabama Air National Guard in 1995. My career field (Continuous Photoprocessing Specialist) went away and the laboratory side of 117th Intelligence was discontinued.

This website is dedicated to the memory of my friend Airman First Class Bobby Wayne Jones of Thomasville, North Carolina.

At different times in our nation's history, mighty men of valor have stepped forward to shoulder the burden of warfare at home or on some distant shore. The Studies and Observation Group in Vietnam is one of those groups of individuals that I have come to admire.

Studies and Observation Group personnel and those units that supported them in the air and on land were among the bravest human beings ever to set foot on the face of the earth. Each mission was into the Valley of Death. I also have information on other persons who served in these units but do not have a burial place. Once again, I solicit the help of friends and family who may know of their resting place. Any information would be helpful.

Airman First Class Bobby Wayne Jones and I were stationed together at England Air Force Base in Louisiana in 1963 and 1964. Bobby and I had joined the Air Force to "see the world." Now, it appeared that all that we would ever see would be the swamplands of Louisiana. We learned that we would receive our first choice in assignment at the end of a tour in Vietnam so we both volunteered. At the time we volunteered, I would have been hard pressed to tell you where Vietnam was even located but we were determined to go. The Air Force tasked our unit for two men, one of them was Bobby. The other was not me. On May 11, 1964, the USAF C-135 carrying Bobby and 84 passengers and crew attempted to land in the Philippines at night and during a rain storm. The plane crashed on the approach to the runway. The plane was ripped apart on impact and fire consumed the rear cabin. The only survivors were the cockpit crew of five. In January of 1965 I took Bobby's place and served a year at Bien Hoa Air Base.

After my discharge from the Air Force in 1966, I was unable to find employment in East Tennessee so I signed up for a two year tour in the Navy. I was assigned to a craft in Charleston called MONOB 1. It was a converted yard water barge that was assigned to the U. S. Navy Research & Development Office in Washington, D.C. and Atlantic Underwater Test and Evaluation Center (A.U.T.E.C.) located in the Bahamas. Our home port was Charleston, SC although we spent a good deal of the time in the Bahamas doing acoustical research on Submarines. I served two years on this ship but decided that in my specialty, Engineman, there was a strong possibility that I would spend a lot of my time at sea. In December of 1968, I completed my tour and enrolled at East Tennessee State University.

I was one of eight police officers hired by the City of Johnson City in 1970. I left the department in 1976 to take an appointment as Deputy United States Marshal in Birmingham, Alabama. I retired from the Marshal's Service in 2000.

While I was enjoying a career with the U. S. Marshals, I also became a member of the Alabama Air National Guard in 1979. When I retired in 1995, I was the NCO in charge of the Quality Control Section of the Photoprocessing Laboratory of the 117th Intelligence Squadron. We processed the film from the RF-4C aircraft and other platforms. As a member of the guard, I traveled to Europe a number of times training with NATO forces where we monitored activity in Iraq and Afghanistan and other hot spots around the globe. I was forced into retirement because my career field was being phased out.

I am a member of the UAB National Alumni Society, the Air Force Sergeant's Association, the American Legion, the United States Marshals Association and the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association.

I hold a Certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University and I am a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the National Genealogical Society, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the Alabama Genealogical Society and the Birmingham Genealogical Society as well as several Genealogical Organizations in North Carolina.

I have used several publications and data bases in documenting the service of these men. These include, but are not limited to, "15 Months in SOG" by Thom Nicholson, "SOG" by John L. Plaster, the Social Security Death Data Base, U. S. Army Enlistment Records 1940-1946, the Vietnam Memorial and the National Graves Data Base of the Veterans Administration. It is my desire that the government will better document those who serve our nation in the future.

The information and style of display of the information on these pages is my property and I would ask that you respect it. Please remember that this is a work in progress. I will be constantly editing the entries as new information is received.

