

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Ron Botz

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember Oral History project

Interview # VRV-A-L-2012-010

Ronald (Ron) Botz, a UH-1 Huey pilot with the 4th Infantry Division during the Vietnam War, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Mar 22, 2012 Location: Ron Botz residence in Springfield, Illinois

Date: Apr 13, 2012 Location: Ron Botz residence in Springfield, Illinois

Date: May 4, 2012 Location: Ron Botz residence in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center

Edited by: Susan Seiber

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:11 + 2:28 + 1:41 / 2.17 + 2.47 + 1.68 = 6.32 hrs

Session 1: Early life through Army Aviator flight training & arrival in Vietnam

Session 2: Combat as an aviator in Vietnam in 1968-1969

Session 3: Life after Vietnam, and a career in the Illinois Army National Guard

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on July 26, 2012.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Ronald (Ron) Botz, *Veterans Remember*, VRV-A-L-2012-010

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Ronald I. Botz was born on June 21st, 1945 in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, the son of a P-40 fighter pilot fighting with the Flying Tigers in Kunming, China at the time. Ron grew up in various military posts, while his father served in the military, and attended high school in White Haven, Tennessee, graduating in 1963. Throughout this time he had an abiding desire to fly for the Air Force. He spent a few months at Memphis State University before leaving school and finding work in a steel mill. He attempted to join the navy as a pilot, but was unable to due to his lack of a college degree.

Botz received a draft notice in 1966, and attended Basic Training at Ft. Polk, Louisiana. Being an army aviator was the only way he could get flight training; he attended Primary flight training at Ft. Wolters, Texas, then advanced flight training at Ft. Rucker, Alabama, by this time as a warrant officer. Following graduation from flight school in February, 1968, he arrived at Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam one month later. He was assigned to B Company, 4th Aviation Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, which operated in the II Corps (Central Highlands) region of South Vietnam. Botz arrived at the tail end of the Tet Offensive, and during the next year saw extensive combat, flying a variety of mission types, including combat assaults, medivacs, insertions for long range reconnaissance patrols, VIP missions, and others. He discussed combat at Ban Me Thuot, an attack on the Special Forces camp at Duc Lop, and the life of an army aviator in great detail. He also gave his reflections on the anti-war movement in the United States, and his views on the politicization of the war effort.

Following his tour of duty in South Vietnam, Botz returned to the states in March, 1969. After finishing his active duty tour, he moved to Pennsylvania and found work with the Woodstream Corporation, both as a salesman and a corporate pilot. He soon moved to Indiana with the company, but by 1973 decided to work full-time for the Illinois Army National Guard. For the next thirty years he worked in the Illinois National Guard in a variety of aviation related missions. In 1998 he became Chief of Staff for the Illinois Army National Guard, and in 2003 he was promoted to Brigadier General and took command of the 44th Chemical Brigade, an Illinois Army National Guard unit headquartered in Chicago. General Botz retired in June, 2005.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Warren G. Botz & Flying Tigers in World War II; Army Aviation in the Vietnam War; 4th Aviation Battalion, 4th Infantry Division in the Vietnam War; UH-1 Iroquois (Huey) helicopter; psychology of the army aviation warrant officer; views on Vietnam era antiwar movement; Ft. Rucker, Alabama; impact of 9-11 on the Illinois National Guard; Illinois Army National Guard in 1970s through 2000s; 44th Chemical Brigade; Adjutants General in the Illinois National Guard; Woodstream Corporation

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