

KIA 8 Feb 1970

**Sgt Charles G Bobo
WO1 Thomas P Doody
Cpl John E Robertson
CW2 Paul C Stewart**

CW2 Paul C Stewart Phoenix 22 “Double Duece”

On January 25, 1971 the prelude to the largest airborne invasion since June 6, 1944 started with Operation Dewey Canyon II. Dewey Canyon II would pave the way for Lam Son 719. The plan was for the ARVN's to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. What the air crews didn't know was that they were flying into a trap. The North Vietnamese had placed approximately fifty anti-aircraft batteries in the area. The first phase required that QL9, the single lane road from Quang Tri to Laos be usable for military traffic. Huey crews assaulting security troops into Khe Sanh were pleasantly surprised to find a "Welcome to Khe Sanh" sign awaiting them. It was from the Phoenix, C Company, 158th Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division. WO John Michaelson and his crew had placed it there the night before. On February 8, 1971 the aerial assault began and the Phoenix lost another crew consisting of CW2 Paul C. Stewart, the aircraft commander, WO1 Thomas P. Doody, pilot, Specialist 4 Charles G. Bobo, crewchief, and PFC John E. Robertson, doorgunner. The MIA synopsis reports: The helicopter was operating about ten miles west of Lao Bao on an insertion mission. Stewart radioed the flight leader that his aircraft had sustained damage to the tail rotor by ground fire, and that he was returning to the PZ, which was about five miles inside Viet Nam. While the aircraft was in route, Stewart radioed that he was inverted and was going in, and nothing further was heard. The flight leader then observed a column of smoke coming from the crash site. The Cobra team accompanying the operation was dispatched immediately, but detected no signs of survivors in the area of the wreckage. Several burned remains were seen around the wreckage. It was determined that the aircraft had crashed, exploded on impact, and burned. The remains were identified as Doody, Bobo, and Robertson. A fourth body was determined to be that of an ARVN on board the aircraft. No trace of Stewart was found. It could not be determined whether he burned in the crash or was thrown clear of the aircraft as it impacted. They were in aircraft 68-16307 and the crash site is XD582368. Stewart had extended his tour to enable him to qualify for an “Early Out” (Army program whereby the soldier would be released from active duty if he extended for 6 months in VN). He received a 30 day leave and returned home for Christmas. Upon returning, he found the program had been cancelled and he would be discharged upon DEROS. He was making up his 30 day leave when he was shot down. He had been known as "Mr. Invincible.

From “History of Company”

Gary Earls beegee@abraxis.com

Date sent: Wed, 17 Apr 2002 15:35:58 -0700
To: phoenix50@neb.rr.com
From: Ted Olson <tolson@porterville.com>
Subject: Re: StewDooBoboRob

If you still need any of this Ken...

Initial campaign launch day for Lam San 719, 8 Feb 1971. Large flight had formed up over Khe Sahn, we crossed the border into Laos at about 5,000 feet best I can recall. Major Loyd (Phoenix 6) was flight lead, I (WO1 Ted Olson, Phoenix 65) was Chalk 2, CW2 Paul Stewart (Phoenix 22) was Chalk 3. Carrying ARVN pax for insertion. Can't remember exact time of day, seems like it was mid-morning.

At around 2-3 minutes (as I recall) west of the border we drew first fire from north of the the flight path, looked like 37mm, probably aimed at lead but started popping out to our (Chalk 2's) direct 3 o'clock, I made the first "taking fire" call. NVA walked fire into the flight path and hit Chalk 3, Stewart called that his ship was hit, others further back reported watching him drop out of the flight.

Next call from 22 was that he was maintaining flight, had managed a descending 180 turn and was heading back to Khe Sanh at low level. Can't say for sure the interval between that call and the next, possibly around a minute or so - that call was a brief shouting scream, he yelled they were going inverted. There was nothing further, that was the last call.

It was approximately two weeks later that the crash site was located and ground troops were able to recover the remains. I drew the mission to pick them up, we sat down in a small clearing along Highway 9. Several body bags were laid out along the edge of the clearing, the last of them were just arriving and emerging from the tree line. As they were loaded on board both of our crew in back became sick, the scene was very powerful.

Incredibly, a reporter was there and was standing on the right skid toe trying to ask questions of my right seat that day, Capt John Bottman. I got a thumbs up at about that time that our load was complete, and pulled pitch abruptly enough to toss the reporter off the skid and onto his rear end. The area was not secure and we wanted to get out of there and get some air flow moving, but there was also some satisfaction in this maneuver as the press were not treating us well back in the States.

We delivered the remains to GR (graves registration) near the southwest end of the Khe Sanh airstrip.

Recollections of Ted Olson
Phoenix 65 (then-WO1, 23 years old)

From: DPhoenix64@aol.com
Date sent: Fri, 12 Apr 2002 14:28:13 EDT
Subject: Re: StewDooBoboRob
To: phoenix50@neb.rr.com

They were chawk 3 on the 1st lift into Laos, 23mm "Golden Hose" started firing on us not to far into Laos, they took hits in the tailboom which severed the drive thereby losing

tailrotor control, they made a descending right turn back under the formation and 22 said something about trying to make Khe Sanh, you have heard the tape of when they went inverted, as to why they went inverted as far as I know it is anybody's educated guess, my guess is the driveshaft continued turning and became unbalanced which caused the drive shaft hangers to break and the drive shaft severed enough of the tailboom to cause it separate from the a/c causing a rapid shift to uncontrollable cg and inversion, as I say my guess not factual

Butch Doan Phoenix 64
DPhoenix64@aol.com

From: "McKeany, Pat" <PMcKeany@cbnorcal.com>
To: "kenmay@neb.rr.com"
Subject: RE: StewDooBoboRob
Date sent: Fri, 12 Apr 2002 10:57:20 -0700

Ken,

Obviously, many years have passed but here is what I remember...

It was our first flight into Laos. The Phoenix were the lead ships. After crossing into Laos we experienced anti aircraft fire at high altitude. I remember red tracers coming up on both sides of us. I think it was 50 cal. I don't specifically remember the altitude, but I remember we were all shocked to get fired upon at that altitude. I think Stewart and Doody were #2 or #3 in the flight. I was approximately #7 or #8 I think. I remember hearing Stewart indicate he had been hit in the tail rotor and was going to return to Khe Sahn. We had been briefed earlier and given direct orders not to leave the flight to help any of our fellow pilots if they were hit. We were told that we could only assist them after the insertion. This was very disturbing to everyone since it was our unwritten duty to help one another. Once hit, I saw Stewart turn sharply to the right and fly below us trying to return to Khe Sahn. A short time later I remember hearing the chilling radio transmission as they lost control.

.You might want to talk to Dean Grau about this flight. If my recollection serves me well he was best friends with Doody and had the grim task of retrieving his body from the wreckage.

Let me know how my recollection compares with what you know please.

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