

**8th Air Force Historical Society, Oregon Chapter**

**Veterans Salute**

**CDR. Max Dixon, USN, Ret. and CW5 Barry L. Brown, US Army, Ret.**

**With Interviewer, Tom Davis**

**November 4, 2023**



CDR. Max Dixon and CW5 Barry Brown with interviewer, Tom Davis [top]

CDR. Dixon and CW5 Brown receive Quilts of Valor

[Photos courtesy of Joan E. Hamilton]

## **Veterans Salute Transcript**

Edited by Joan E. Hamilton

[Checked, corrected, and approved by \*CDR. Dixon and \*\*CW5 Brown]

Our November luncheon presentation was a Veterans Salute with Tom Davis' interviews of CDR. Max Dixon, USN, Ret. and CW5 Barry Brown, US Army, Ret.

CDR. Max Dixon, USN, Ret., was a pilot who flew A-7A Corsair IIs with the VFA-97 Warhawks during the Vietnam War. He flew off the U.S.S. Constellation [CV-64] from "Yankee Station". During non-combat duty, he piloted the A-4 Skyhawk among other aircraft. His service included duty with the Research Development Test and Evaluation Unit, N.A.S. China Lake, and N.A.S. Patuxent River.

CW5 Barry Brown, US Army Ret., enlisted in 1969 at age 18. After flight school and Medevac training, and spent 10 months in Vietnam (1970-1971). He flew Medevac in the southern portion of Vietnam in III Corps as a Bell UH-1H Iroquois "Huey" helicopter pilot with the 15<sup>th</sup> Medevac Battalion. He began his service in the Oregon Air National Guard in 1987 where he flew the UH-1 "Huey" and Sikorsky UH-60 \*\*L Blackhawks with the Oregon Air National Guard during which he did Tours in Bosnia

(2000), Stateside during Operation Enduring Freedom (2003-2004), and in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (2008-2009). Pilot, Instructor Pilot, and Instrument Examination were his MOS. He also flew Bell OH-58 Kiowas with the Counter Drug Unit and Blackhawks in high Cascade Mountain rescues.

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

[I went to] Vietnam in 1970, July right after the official Cambodia. I say “official” because we went back in there to pick up that were LRRPs.

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

I think the first time I was in Nam--I made two trips over there. The first in ship's company on the [U.S.S.] Independence. We sailed around from—I'm ninety years old and sometimes things don't come as fast as they used to. We were on the East Coast and we came around, all the way to Vietnam. That would've been about 1974 and I was back, again, later. I'm sorry, that was back in [19]64 and back, again, later.

**Tom Davis:**

What was your impression?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Of Vietnam? [Affirmative] I didn't like it. Hey, I was lucky enough to get to fly the ship's COD, carrier on board delivery, airplane along with my regular duties. So, I went into Da Nang a couple [or] three times and Saigon and Tan Son Nhut, a couple. It made me itchy all the time. I was much happier back on the ship.

**Tom Davis:**

How about you, Barry? What was your impression of Vietnam?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I think I was a little more up close and personal because I flew helicopters over there rather than jets. There were some very pretty areas. It was warm, muggy. The rice fields, they would burn them, so it was smoky at times. The weather, the monsoons, created some havoc when you're flying. Overall, it's a pretty country. But, you could see where the bombs were dropped. You could see all the craters that they left. So, there was some parts of it that weren't so pretty.

**Tom Davis:**

Where were you stationed?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I was stationed north of Saigon in III Corps. I was at Phước Vĩnh was our normal base. I spent most of my time out on all the other forward bases. So, I was at \*\*Quần Lợi, Sông Bé, Tây Ninh, L-Z, Mace, and Biên Hòa was actually a big city \*\*and was an Air Force Base. But, it was actually a small outpost for us.

**Tom Davis:**

What units were you assigned to?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I was assigned to the 15<sup>th</sup> Med Battalion, Medevac Platoon, 1<sup>st</sup> Air Cav (Cavalry). My call sign was "Medevac 23". I was a pilot over there. My job \*\*was to fly an air ambulance to take the medic to the patient [and] get the patient to the hospital and that's what we did.

**Tom Davis:**

Why don't you give that (microphone) to Max? What outfits were you assigned to?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

The first time around, I was ship's company on the Independence. The second time, I was Ops Officer of VA-97 which was a new squadron we formed just before we went over.

**Tom Davis:**

Okay, good. Barry, what was the rank when you were over there, your rank?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I was a Warrant Officer, \*\*basically WØ1. That was a special rank that they had. Vietnam, it was used just because of helicopter pilots because they needed a lot of pilots and they didn't want them doing anything else.

**Tom Davis:**

What were your living conditions like?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Depending on the base I was at, better than the ground pounders. Sometimes, we had hooches, Quonset huts that we built. Sometimes, they were huge sandbagged that you could hear and you could see the little rat eyes running around inside of it. But, we also had "solar" showers, so we were able to get a shower now and then.

**Tom Davis:**

I may be embarrassed to make you cry [to Barry], but what were your living conditions like in the Navy [to Max]?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Probably better than that. Well, we had a stateroom, another pilot and myself—two of us in a stateroom. We had a flight suit mess up forward where any time the ship's operating, we could go up there in flight suits and eat, but otherwise we were \*required to be in the uniform of the day to eat dinner, for instance. We didn't do too much of that. Ship was pretty comfortable. The air conditioning worked most of the time and, you know, I'm sure we were, on average, better off than the guys on the ground.

**Tom Davis:**

What was your daily routine, for example?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Get up and go down to the ready room. Every squadron had a ready room. And [I'd] see what I had to do that day. That was fine. You usually flew once or twice a day and the ship operated twelve hours on and twelve hours off. Sometimes, we were the day carrier and sometimes we were the night carrier. And I'd fly. And I was Ops Officer, so I had to sign some stuff and do some paperwork occasionally and so on. Mostly, I flew and then I rested and I flew some more.

**Tom Davis:**

Okay. Barry, your duties?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

So, we had a rotation with standby: first up, second up, standby, and then you're off. And so, out of seven days in a week, you would be on duty four straight days.

First up would get the mission and they'd go out. Second up would take the next mission. Standby--depending on where you were--then you would take the third mission. A lot of times, we had all four aircraft flying each day. The normal day would start out and you'd go out and preflight the aircraft and \*\*I'd start it and run it up, and put it in the hot position, which meant all you had to do was go out there and hit the battery, fuel, and \*\*starter to crank it to go. We had two pilots, a crew chief, and a medic. The lead pilot would stay behind along with the medic and they would find out what the patient's status was, where it was going, get the call signs for the artillery, get the call signs for the gunship to support you, and the call signs for the unit that was on the ground. Once you did that, then you were on duty until you got a call and then, it just kind of kept going like that. Some days were busy. Some days weren't.

**Tom Davis:**

You didn't, say you'd fly combat duties, did you ever get exposed to being shot at when you were out there flying?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**



Well, our job was to go pick up the people on the ground. They were in direct contact with the enemy. So, we were picking up people who were wounded. A lot of times, we'd go into hot LZs. That's why we had Cobra [Bell AH-1G Cobra] gunships. Sometimes, we had Bird Dogs [Cessna O-1E Bird Dog]. Sometimes, we had a FAC. We actually had an F-4 buzz to keep the heads down. But, a lot of times we'd go in [and] we'd get shot at, get shot up, shot down.

**Tom Davis:**

How about you, Max?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Yes. If we had a strike. If I was part of a strike, we had the pleasure of—they kept their fuses on their anti-aircraft guns for a certain altitude that they knew we were going to fly through and we rolled in from 20[000]—45-degree dive—20,000.

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Oh, not 20 feet. [Laughter]

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

No. And started to pull up at 5[000], released the bombs [and] you started to pull out. And they knew we were going to go through, like I said, 10,000 feet. So, you'd have a whole lot of all at the same altitude ground flashes and you went through that. If you got through that, then you were doing pretty well. And we did a lot of \*dueling that you're not supposed to do with anti-aircraft guns, but we did because they irritated us and we irritated them. They shot at us and we dropped bombs on them pretty commonly.

**Tom Davis:**

Did you ever have a SAM (surface-to-air missile) chase you?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Once. I shouldn't say that. That's not quite true. I had a SAM fired at me and, as far as I can tell, I started doing the normal maneuver because I saw it come up and it was going pretty much straight up at that point. You do a barrel roll around it to keep it from tracking you or it's supposed to, anyway, help. But, this one didn't track anything. It just went straight up and boom well up above me. But, that's the only SAM I saw. We commonly carried Shrikes [AGM-45 Shrike] which were anti-radiation missiles. It got to the point that, if you did the maneuver that you would've done to fire a Shrike, it'd go off in the air, of course, because it—unlike the HARM [AGM-88 HARM] later on—the Shrike, at that time, if the radar was off, it didn't know where to go. So, we'd just do the maneuver and they'd turn it off without firing anything, usually. I did fire one. It caused my engine to stop over North Vietnam upside down. Other than that, it was fine.

**Tom Davis:**

I would say that's a close call.

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Well, it wasn't that close. I fired the Shrike and you were in at a nose high attitude and it went across in front of me and the \*A-7A was sensitive. It always was. And the engine quit, and, of course, I was concentrating on rolling that—inverted and getting the nose down, so I didn't stall because flying the airplane's the first thing you've got to do and rolled out again. By the time I did that, the engine was coming back up. We had

continuous ignition. That had re-lit it and it was coming back up and I flew off. Scared me to death, but that was about it.

**Tom Davis:**

Did you ever get hit by ground fire?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

No, I never picked up a hole in the airplane.

**Tom Davis:**

Pass this [microphone] to Barry. Did you ever have any close calls, Barry?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Yes

**Tom Davis:**

Every day?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Not every day. I mean, there were times when you did see the combat, but most times they were in direct contact when we went to get them. So, our aircraft would get shot up. I got shot down. Got rescued. But, it's one of those things where it's normal. I hate to say that, but it was normal.

**Tom Davis:**

Did you ever get injured?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

No

**Tom Davis:**

You didn't? Never did?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

No, no. I didn't lose a crew.

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

We wore our chicken plates which were not a flak jacket but a chicken plate which was a kind of a \*\*Nomex/ceramic blend of whatever materials and that would deflect a .30 cal [caliber] on down. So, one of my crew chiefs was firing and the gunner was also firing and they both got hit right in the chicken plate. Just knocked the wind out of them. Couldn't hear them because we were up \*\*"hot mike". So, you could hear the chatter back and forth because, when you would go into a hoist mission, they're getting you down into the trees and so they're telling you move left a foot and move right a foot,

move forward, move back. And when the chatter stops, you wonder what's happening down there.

**Tom Davis:**

Let me ask you, what was the morale in your outfit? Your morale? Pretty good?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Yes, it was pretty good. I was nineteen. I was bulletproof.

**Tom Davis:**

How about in your outfit? Morale pretty good?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Morale was pretty good.

**Tom Davis:**

Pass it to Max [microphone]. Being in the Navy's got to be good, right, the morale?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

The squadron morale was good. We looked after each other. We were flying with the same guys day in, day out. Morale was good. Whether the skipper was any good or not, we didn't care. It was quite good.

**Tom Davis:**

Barry, since you were there, how were the Vietnamese people regarded, the Vietnamese soldiers or people?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Just like American soldiers, there were good soldiers and there were bad soldiers. There are people who did their work and there were people who didn't do their work. Our contact with them—because we supported a lot of the Army Republic of Vietnam soldiers. We would have Medevac 101 classes where we'd go out and talk to them. Show them what we could do and how they could get hooked into the Jungle Penetrator or into the Rigid litter if we had to come hoist them out. We would work with them because we knew we would go be supporting them. We didn't have many issues at all. Actually, had some VNAF which is the Vietnamese air force cover us a couple of times.

**Tom Davis:**

Did you serve more than one term, tour of duty?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Yes, \*\*besides Vietnam. I was also in Bosnia and Iraq.

**Tom Davis:**

Okay. What about you Max? Did you serve more than one tour of duty?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

In Vietnam, I served two: one in ship's company and one in the Air Wing later on.

**Tom Davis:**

Do you guys recall what was going on the day your service in Vietnam ended? Do you remember leaving?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Oh yes.

**Tom Davis:**

How did that feel?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

The last day on the line when the ship's supposed to go home after that, we had bad weather. Finally, they canceled the first launch. My roommate, who was junior to me, couldn't fly the first launch and he really wanted to get in there and fight. He wanted to take my flight and \*fly the second launch.

I said, "No, I don't—I'd love to have somebody take my flight, but I don't want to go home and tell your wife that you took my flight and you got killed. So, no, I'll fly it."

And then when it was cancelled that cancelled the whole mess with the launch, so we were done and there was a lot of happiness and people using their emergency radios to make noise and a lot of cheering. We were ready to go home. You just don't want to get shot down on the last day of it.

**Tom Davis:**

What about you, Barry? Do you remember your last day and how'd it feel?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Actually, I'd come in out of the field and my commander says, "You have ten months in country. You can either go with us up to do the Laos invasion or you can go home."

I chose to go home, but I was one week shy of the ten months. So, I ended up going to Biên Hòa, the Air Force Base, and so I was able to get clean clothes, get a nice shower, and get ready to go home. By the time I got home, it was a surprise to my folks. That's what I remember the most.

**Tom Davis:**

What year was that?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

1971, it was May of '71. I got over there in July of [19]70.

**Tom Davis:**

How were you received when you got home? People in general and your family and friends?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

That was fine. It was the just airport at San Francisco wasn't too friendly. But, family was overjoyed. Surprised the heck out of my mom when I walked into the bank. She didn't know I was coming home.



**Tom Davis:**

Max, how about you? What was it like coming home?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Oh, I was extremely happy like everybody else, Like I said, nobody wants to get shot down on the last day of a deployment. I rode the ship back. Some of the people who were going to be coming back again, in that squadron, got to fly home. But, the people who were leaving the squadron, when we got home—which, I was one--rode the ship back. So, we had plenty of warning. People getting \*circumcision. One of the surgeons did a—if I can think of it—I can't, anyway, some personal surgery on a lot of people who wanted to get it done before they—. It takes about thirty days to go around, maybe at least three weeks depending on how much \*speed is authorized. Anyway, we were all very happy to get home. Airplanes flew off and I flew off when we got in to Stateside. The other guys flew off into Lemoore [NAS Lemoore in California] and we were very happy.

**Tom Davis:**

When you got home, was it the end of your service or did you continue on?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

No, that wasn't the end of my service. That was [19]69 and I retired in [19]78, so I had some more to do, but I had no more combat, as it turned out.

**Tom Davis:**

Okay, that was good. How about you [to Barry]?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

When I got back from Vietnam, I served up at Fort Lewis and flew MAST which was Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic. And then in [19]72, the war was winding down \*\*and they had Reductions in Force [RIF] and I got caught up in the second Reduction in Force. So, I went to college. I got a degree and joined the Oregon Army National Guard and I flew Hueys in the Oregon Army National Guard. We were a \*\*lift company. Then we worked with the 15<sup>th</sup> MI out of Fort Lewis doing night vision goggle \*\*S.P.I.E.S. [Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction System] which [was] lowering/throwing them down cables. We did helocasting with the air drops and rappelling. Then, we became a Medevac unit which, that's what I did in Vietnam. So, I became their instructor pilot for them to teach them how to do hoists. We flew Hueys for three or four years as Medevac and then we got Blackhawks courtesy of Senator Hatfield's retirement. We got nine sequential Blackhawks right off the showroom floor which meant we were getting deployed. We first went to JRTC which is Joint Readiness Training Center. Went to Turkey in support of a Marine operation. I went to Bosnia in 2000. The company I was in ended up in Afghanistan in 2003. I was promoted out of the company to a battalion. We were supposed to go to Iraq in [20]04. An active-duty unit back at Fort Bragg, N.C. because none of them had seen any combat—so they ended up going to Iraq and we covered \*\*their mission for them. So, I had ten grueling months of golf in North Carolina. That was tough. And then, I also went to Iraq in [20]08 to [20]09 as the Aviation Safety Officer for a task force. I retired in 2010, but I also flew Counter Drug Missions from 2000 to 2010 when I wasn't deployed.

**Tom Davis:**

Did you make any close friendships when you were in Vietnam?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Yes, just like here, you know, you guys have a reunion. You have business meetings. We have a reunion every year. This year it's going to be in Shreveport. Last year, it was in Austin. So, we're able to go around the country. They've had them in Portland here. There's a guy that has signed books back there [in the room]. His name is Corky Walsh. He and John Lunger put together one in Portland. We try to go every year to do that and I've had lasting friendships. But, just like here, they're slowly passing away.

**Tom Davis:**

How about you, Max? Make any good friendships while you were serving overseas? Have reunions and so on?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Yes. We were all close friends as far as the squadrons were concerned. After I retired, I ran into my wingman from Nam. He was now a Navy doctor. He was a hell of a good pilot. He's a better pilot than I was, but he quit piloting and the Navy put him through med school. He was a smart, smart guy. But, yes, but mostly not—they're off in all directions.

**Tom Davis:**

No reunions then?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Not to my knowledge.

**Tom Davis:**

Any regrets of your service?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I can't say I have any regrets because I got to do what I love to do which is fly. It's kind of a passion. And there was a guy that was in the Oregon Guard. His name was Tim Baker. He and I were the Night Vision Goggle Instructor Pilots. We both had a pact that, when it became work and it became no fun, that we'd retire. I retired in 2010 because I had to. I was sixty. So, no regrets.

**Tom Davis:**

Thank you. Max?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

No, not really. I'm sure I made a lot of bad choices or poor choices at one point or another, but I was glad that I was in the Navy at this point and I liked what I was doing a lot. I stayed in until [19]78 which put me at twenty-three years. At that point, when I left China Lake, I would've had to stop flying because I was forty-five and that's when I retired and I really enjoyed flying. But, I'm not that big on boats, but I really enjoyed flying.

**Tom Davis:**

I've got to ask you, what made you go into the Navy?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Well, two things really. One, my dad was in the Navy in WWII. The other was they had a good arrangement. They had what they called a regular NROTC and if you went to the schools that they approved, the Navy would pay for your—.

**Tom Davis:**

Your education?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Pretty much, yes, and give you \$50 a month on top of that. It was a good deal. It cost my folks very little for me to go to college and I think that was the only deal like that that was available at that time. I probably would've applied for the Navy anyway. I went to Oklahoma University, which was in my home state.

**Tom Davis:**

When you're in ROTC, you have an obligation to stay in for so many years?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Well, yes, in that one, yes. I think it was two years. If you'd go to flight training, then they add another year. I didn't have any intention of joining the airlines or anything. I enjoyed what I was doing. I didn't have any intention of being \*an airline pilot. Some people did. They'd go through flight training and you're pretty well trained, Navy or Air Force or whatever. When you get out of flight school, you're pretty well trained and the airlines were very eager at that time to grab people, but I wasn't interested.

**Tom Davis:**

How old were you when you got in ROTC? Probably about twenty?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

How old?

**Tom Davis:**

How old were you? Probably about twenty years old?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

I think eighteen I think is when I started college. At the end of high school, I went straight into college. I was about twenty-two when I graduated. [I was] thirty-five when I went to Vietnam the second time. [I was] forty-five when I retired.

**Tom Davis:**

Okay, Barry how did you get in the Army? Did you volunteer or did they come get you?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

No, it's a long story. The short story of it is a friend of mine and I had been talking about doing it for a while and so we went down to join the Army without our parents' knowledge. Signed on the dotted line. They sent both of us up to have a physical. He was 4-F because he had a collapsed lung and they took me. And so, that's how I ended up. I signed up to go to flight school. I'd never flown. Never knew what it was like. I went to Fort Polk, Louisiana for two months and then to flight school. All told, it was one year to the day I graduated with my wings and I went to AMEDD course at Fort Sam Houston--basically, it's like flight EMT work—to get my Medevac certification.

**Tom Davis:**

Okay, we pretty much have covered it. Is there anything either one of you would like to add that comes to mind you think you might be interested in adding?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

I've got an anecdote from the deployment of the A-7. I came back to the ship one night after the usual—and a dashpot on the hook had drained. It keeps the hook down

after it hits the deck. This hydraulic dashpot keeps it down, so it will catch a wire. Apparently, the dashpot had drained and the hook was coming up. So, I made twelve approaches that night and \*didn't get aboard. \*I went up and \*inflight refueled, tanked, and then came down again. Told the LSO that I was doing the best I could. If I was going to get aboard, you're going to have to do something.

So, he said, "Okay. When I yell at you, go for it."

I knew how to do that. I was doing that all my life—all my flying life, anyway. So, I did and caught the first wire before it had a chance to bounce. There's a little diagram they put up for everybody showing their landings and whether it was okay or fair, or go around or whatever. My little slot had twelve landings.

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

After the first bolter, I got serious about it. The first one was kind of okay. It was probably would've been rated a fair pass, but all of the rest were okay because I was really trying to get that thing on the deck, yet I needed help and they gave it.

**Tom Davis:**

You brought in that model airplane. Why don't you talk about the airplane. Describe what it is and what it could do.

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Yes. I brought this because I thought maybe quite a few of you might not have seen an A-7 or recognize what it is [LTV A-7 Corsair II]. This is the company model that they give to people. I went back there when I was at the Naval Air Test Center, Pax River [Patuxent River, MD.]. I went back to Dallas to the company and they gave me one of these. This bomb load is a little bit optimistic. We usually carried ten Mark-82s



[Mk 82] and a couple of Sidewinders and a couple of Shrikes. The [Mk] 82 is a 500-pound bomb and the Sidewinders were \*air-to-air-missiles. I did get to shoot down a drone which was unusual for an attack pilot, but I did get it with a Sidewinder. In fighters usually used up all of their drones, but this time they didn't and I got a chance to shoot at it. One of the virtues of the airplane was it had 10,000 pounds of internal fuel, so you could fly all day on internal fuel. So, we never carried external fuel tanks. Later on, I guess, they did. But, we weren't cleared to drop bombs with fuel tanks on the airplane which was just fine with us.

Are there any questions regarding the airplane that I can answer?

**Bob Dean:**

Did you fly any other airplanes besides this one?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Yes, a lot of them. I flew A-6s [Grumman A-6 Intruder], A-4s [Douglas A-4 Skyhawk], F-8 [Vought F-8 Crusader].

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

I flew a fighter one time. When I'd go to shore duty, I went back to Pax River Test Center or China Lake which is another test center [Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake]. I flew whatever was there, but mostly A-4s and A-7s.

**Tom Davis:**

What was your favorite, if you had one?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Well, this one [A-7] brought me out and back 100 times in combat. I have a good deal of affection for it. The A-4 was a nice airplane to fly. It was fun.

**Tom Davis:**

Did you ever have to eject out of one of those?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

No, I didn't. I did \*crash on a cat shot in an AD [\*Douglas AD-5] years ago before this, but I never ejected and I'm very happy about that. We had good seats. They were rocket seats. So, we could possibly eject without too much injury. Earlier on, the ones with the cartridges in them would most of time you'd get compression fracture. But at that point with the A-7 and the later A-4s, we had rocket seats. If I'd had to eject, I would've been a lot better off, but I didn't.

**Tom Davis:**

Okay, thanks Max. Barry, what about you? Is there something you'd like to add, say, that we didn't cover?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I never had to eject, either. We have that in common. Is there anything you guys out there would like to ask?

**Tom Davis:**

Yes, open for questions. Anybody? Everything?

**Pat Keating:**

There was an episode in a Jack Reacher novel where the Medevac pilot, helicopter pilot, came up with an idea when the LZ was too close in the jungle. He came down and trimmed the trees as he came down, with the tips of his rotor blades. Is that nonsense?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

No. When you're on a hoist mission a lot of times, you try to get as low as you possibly can because you only have 250 feet of cable. So, sometimes, it's further down to the ground than that, so you have to work yourself down and back and forth like this and you can look up and you can't see the sky because the canopy's come back around over the top of you because of the rotor wash. It just picks up and it's circular. One your way back out, you kind of prune your way out. And there's also times when you have to inadvertently prune in order to get down just a little bit further. And there are those that, you know, if you make a mistake, you hit a tree limb on your way in or out.

**Audience member:**

How many casualties could you evacuate on a UH-1, H model, I guess?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I flew the H \*\*Model in Vietnam. It all depended on whether they were ambulatory or littered. So, we had a litter rack we could put three on. We could put one on the floor. We could carry four or five ambulatory. It all depended on what you had. That's where math came in, so you could figure out how much weight you needed to be when you got there. Ambulatory, we could just put them in. But, we only had one medic, so he could only work on so many people. So, if they had a lot of ambulatory, we'd send in two aircraft or three aircraft.

**Dwight Gruber:**

Did you do that in advance? You knew in advance what you were going to pick up?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Yes, but it changes. If they're in contact, maybe a bit more. If they're in contact with two or three people, then we would send two ships. And once we got closer if they had more, we'd call for more cover.

**Tom Davis:**

Anybody else?

**Bob Dean:**

What aircraft do we have at the air museum in McMinnville [Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum] that you were involved [with]?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

I haven't counted lately. I remember back before the financial problems that I had flown a dozen of them. It's less now. A-4, A-7, T-28, T-6, \*FJ-3 we've got in there, and that's all that comes to mind now, but there were more before they got rid of some of the airplanes or they were taken.

**Tom Davis:**

What about yourself?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I've flown \*\*five helicopters. There's a little Hughes \*TH-55 that was our trainer. I flew the 13 in the Bell [Bell H-13 Sioux] at flight school. I flew the Kiowa [\*\*Bell-OH58] and I also flew the Huey. I actually flew the Huey that's at the \*Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum. That was part of the Oregon [National] Guard. It's a relic, I'm a relic.

**Tom Davis:**

Are helicopters the only thing you've ever flown?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

Yes, as much as I tried to apply for fixed wing in the Army, unfortunately, I was too good at what I did as an instructor and senior instructor. So, they didn't want to lose that capacity.

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

I didn't mention the F-8 [Vought F-8 Crusader]. I forgot that. I \*sniveled my way into an F-8 flight. I wanted to go supersonic and I did. That was an enjoyable flight. What was the nickname of the F-8? Does somebody remember?

**Audience members:**

Crusader

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Crusader. that's right. That was a [microphone issue]. I broke it. I did that with airplanes once in a while.

**Tom Davis:**

Oh, there you go. Is it working? Do you hear that?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Anyway, as I just said, I really enjoyed it, the one hop I had in the F-8. I got up to, I think, it was about Mach 1.2. We did go supersonic in the A-7 momentarily on a maintenance flight where I pointed the nose straight down, full throttle. But, we'd climb up to 40,000 [feet], roll into a \*90-degree dive, full throttle and we would get supersonic for a while. Then, as you got closer to the ground, supersonic—sonic speed was increasing faster than you were, so you/it dropped out. So, I did get [supersonic]. That was a maintenance flight we had that we were supposed to do. Yes, I have gone/been supersonic a few times.

**Tom Davis:**

Anybody else? Any other questions? Joe?

Joe Burger:

The gentleman who was in Iraq, were you involved with, at the time the battleships were shelling the Republican Guard?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

No, I was not. I was there in [20]08 and [20]09.

**Joe Burger:**

I manufactured one of the remote aircraft, the Pioneer, and one of the things we had were pictures. I'll try to bring pictures. It showed the airplane with the little [inaudible] drone, looking down on the Republican Guard with probably 100 people with a white hanky on the end of their rifles because they knew the minute that airplane found them that they'd get an F-15 or a sixteen-inch shell right in the middle of their little [inaudible]. The pictures we got were just fabulous. I mean, you wouldn't think a little airplane would be that effective, but it did scare the hell out of them apparently.

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I will tell you, there's a couple of things. One is I had the opportunity to fly with a drone. When they first came out in Bosnia, they were working and they wanted an aircraft to fly along with it. We were pretty skeptical because the pilot for it was back somewhere in North Dakota and we were in Bosnia. They were going to fly it and we were going to fly formation with them, so we told them we would be trail. That way, we would know what it was doing. That was one of the early drones. We saw a lot of drones when I was in Iraq.

**Tom Davis:**

Anybody else? Any questions? What's that?

**Audience member:**

Just in flying the A-7, you mentioned the A-9 Sidewinder that you had?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

Yes

**Audience member:**

What kind of training did you receive in your unit in air-to-air combat for that being an attack unit—primary mission air-to-ground—did you have any training in the air-to-air employment role to use that weapon?

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

We didn't get any fighter training. We just had to—well, if you got the tone in your \*headset, that was a sidewinder and you're within range, you'd just shoot because it's going to fly up his tailpipe. But, no, didn't have any training. Normally, an attack pilot wouldn't have got to shoot at a drone, but the fighters on the [U.S.S.] Constellation didn't use up their drones.

So, somebody said, "Well, let's give it to one of the guys in the two attack A-7 squadrons."

The Ops Officer of the other A-7 Squadron and I flipped \*a coin and I won. And then, I don't think my Skipper wanted to do that, so I did it. It was fun. I really enjoyed it. I think the \*Skipper in the other squadron gave his Ops Officer a hard time about flipping and giving away that sidewinder.



**Tom Davis:**

Anybody else?

**Audience member:**

Just one last question, do any of you still fly as much as you can your original aircraft or try to?

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

No, I didn't have a civilian license because I was doing it for free in the military. One of the things with the aircraft that I flew were \*\*turbine engines and you're talking \$4[000] to \$7,000 an hour.

**Audience member:**

Never mind. [Laughter]

**CW5 Barry Brown:**

I had the opportunity to fly after I retired, but it was a deployment. So, it was either going to be deployed for the state department [and] it was going to be deployed on \*fire contracts and my family'd suffered enough of me being gone.

**Audience member:**

I understand that.

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

My theory was that what I'd like to do, I couldn't afford and what I could afford to do, I wouldn't like. So, I just stopped. When I left the Navy, I quit flying. I changed over to motorcycles for a while. [Inaudible]

**Joe Burger:**

The pilot of the fighter, were you in the era when we found out that the Russians had a helmet capability that they could look at a target flying the other way under them and guide their missiles to it? We couldn't do that [inaudible] from the Russians that they had developed that made the missiles much more effective.

**CDR. Max Dixon:**

No, I don't think so. Yes, well, if you—slightly aside—the A-7 was famous for leaking hydraulic fluid. They had one and two-rag leaks. If you got up to three-rag leaks, they had to do something about it. Otherwise, it just leaked. The rumor going around was the Russians had developed an air-to-air missile that homed on hydraulic fluid. [Inaudible] Fortunately, we knew that wasn't true.

**Tom Davis:**

Anybody else? That's it? I want to thank you both. Let's give these guys [a hand]. You are both honorary members for a year. You're going to get the newsletter [Flightlines]

and anything else that comes up, [Inaudible] I want to thank everybody for being here. Our meeting is closed. Our next meeting will be in February and it will be Alice Miller. We're going to have her back, Alice Miller, in February. I think it's February 10<sup>th</sup>, but you'll get a notice in the mail. Thank you, everybody for being here. I appreciate it.

## References

"Vietnam War Pilot in Iraq—Oregon's Barry Brown" CWO Barry Brown of the Oregon National Guard was interviewed by Salem-News.com's Tim King in Balad, Iraq in September, 2008. This report was sponsored by the Eola Hills Winery.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofTUV\\_xyG6w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofTUV_xyG6w)