

# **A Tribute to Captain David Burch**

**by Diane Mercier  
with the Red Cross in Vietnam in 1968**

Each Memorial Day I take special time to remember and think about David. He was a wonderful person and a good friend.

I was in Vietnam for a year and a half with the Red Cross and it was while I worked with the 9th Division in the southern part of Vietnam that I met David. Everyone there always asked "Where are you from?" David and I had a "North Carolina connection" and it started our conversation and friendship. I was raised in the DC area, but each summer my family vacationed on the Outer Banks. it was a special place for me. My parents moved to Manteo while I was in Vietnam and it was to a home in Manteo that I returned from Vietnam.

David and I played bridge together regularly. He was a very good bridge player. He spoke of his family frequently and always with love and pride. While in Bearcat, I became ill with "diffuse fungal ear infections" and was sent to a hospital 50 miles away in Long Binh for treatment. I was not allowed to travel by helicopter for a number of days after treatment, but was released to return to Bearcat with no safe way to get there. It was David who showed up in a huge truck, a deuce and a half, to take me back to Bearcat over 50 miles of unsecured road. It was so high off the ground that David had to push me up into the cab. All business, David got me safely back to Bearcat and I never found out how he got a hold of that truck to pick me up. :-)

Captain David Burch was the leader of the 191st attack helicopter squadron, the "Bounty Hunters" with the saying "For a Few Dollars More". All in his squadron wore a red neckerchief and a red patch hanging from their pocket when they were on the base. He was very well respected by the men he led and by everyone who knew and worked with him.

I am sending two pictures of David. They were taken in Bearcat, which was the base for the 9th Division until the late summer of '68. The top picture is of David and his co-pilot, whose name I cannot remember. He was another bridge player who we played with frequently. I was on leave when David got killed and it was his co-pilot who told me that he was gone when I returned. The bottom picture is David with the leader of the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP), Captain (David) Dale Dickey. Dale made it home from that war and is living somewhere in the South, I believe.

David gave me one of his red patches and a red scarf . When I did not hear back from you, I thought I would perhaps leave them at The Wall when I next visit DC, but I really would like them to go to his family. Please send me an address to send them to if his family would like to have them.

I know it seems like a long time ago, but in war so much is just plain burned into you because it is so intense. I will never forget David Burch. I send you and all best wishes, Diane

**Original Date/ Time:** 2 March 2012

**NOTE:**

I discovered the lost e-mail in 2012 and contacted Diane (who was probably then in her mid-60's), in early 2013 presented an envelop containing the red patches and red scarf to David's younger brother, Jimmy Burch, at Burch Farms outside of Faison. This being an emotional occasion, Jimmy waited until later to open the envelop in private.... Ron Oates