

Vietnam Zippos – Geschichte im Taschenformat (8)

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1 Herkunft

Dieses Zippo wurde im Internet anlässlich einer Auktion angeboten. Lange Zeit war ich unschlüssig, ob ich ebenfalls mitbieten sollte. Ich entschloss mich, zuerst einige Nachforschungen über den ehemaligen Besitzer anzustellen. Jedenfalls faszinierte mich dieser Feuerzeug von Beginn an. Es sah fast zu gut aus !

2 Vietnam Zippo „Cu Chi 1967“

Auf der Vorderseite ist das sehr detaillierte Bild eines Helikopters UH-1 „HUEY“ mit den Worten „**MAJOR CHARLES KELLY, 12TH EVAC, CU-CHI 1967**“ eingraviert.



Abb. 1: Zippo „CU CHI 1967“ (Vorder- und Rückseite)

Auf der Rückseite findet sich der gleich Helikopter mit dem Rufnamen („call sign“ für Piloten) „**DUST OFF**“.



Abb. 2: UH-1 „HUEY“ in Vietnam

„**12TH EVAC**“ war ein Spital, in welchem verwundete Soldaten versorgt wurden, nachdem sie mehrheitlich durch Helikopter des Typs UH-1 „HUEY“ aus dem Kampfgebiet ausgeflogen worden sind. 1967 befand es sich tatsächlich in Cu Chi, wie die Akten, welche u. a. im Internet verfügbar sind, zeigen.

Der Bodenstempel des Zippos besagt, dass es im Jahre 1967 in Bradford, PA. hergestellt wurde:



Abb. 3: Schematische Darstellung des Bodens (Herstellung 1967)

3 Ehemaliger Besitzer

Major Charles L Kelly hatte eine Frau und drei Kinder, als er sich freiwillig nach Vietnam meldete. Er kommandierte das „57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance)“, welches bereits 1962 in Vietnam ankam. Es war dessen Aufgabe, verwundete Soldaten in Spitäler zu fliegen. „DUSTOFF“ wurde zum „Call Sign“ vom Major Kelly. Dies geschah wohl nicht zuletzt aufgrund der Tatsache, dass landende Helikopter sehr viel Staub aufwirbelten. „**Major Charles L. Kelly was DUSTOFF and DUSTOFF was „Combat Kelly“**“ war ein bekanntes und weit verbreitetes Synonym in Vietnam. Bereits am 1. Juli 1964 wurde der inzwischen 39-Jährige bei einem Einsatz tödlich verwundet. Durch seinen unermüdlichen Einsatz rettete Major Kelly vielen Soldaten das Leben. Gilt er doch heute als erstes Opfer der Verwundetenevakuati-



Abb. 4: Gradabzeichen „Major“



Abb. 5: Abzeichen des „Medical Corps“ (Offiziere)

Nachdem er tot war, wurde „DUSTOFF“ sehr schnell von allen Helikoptern verwendet, welche Verwundete transportierten. Man sprach auch von „DUSTOFF MISSIONS“, wenn es verwundete Soldaten zu evakuieren galt. Insofern schrieb der Tod dieses Piloten Geschichte.



Abb. 6: Abzeichen „Senior Aviator Badge“



Abb. 7: Abzeichen „Combat Medical Badge 1st Award“

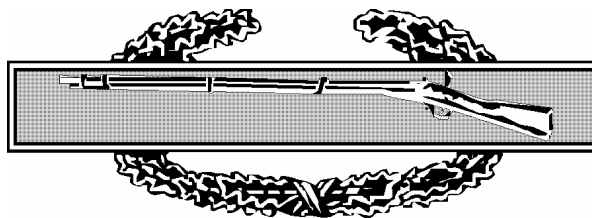


Abb. 8: Abzeichen des „57th MED DET (HEL AMB)“

Abb. 9: Abzeichen „Combat Infantry Badge 1st Award“

Nur die Helikopter der „1st Cavalry Division“ verwendeten die Bezeichnung „MEDEVAC“ anstelle von „DUSTOFF“.



Abb. 10: Gemälde von Major Charles L Kelly

4 Sehr gute Fälschung oder bedeutendes historisches Feuerzeug ?

Was auf den ersten Blick wie ein sehr bedeutendes Stück der jüngeren Geschichte aussieht, ist nach Auswertung der bekannten Informationen eine sehr gute Fälschung.

Erstes Indiz dafür ist die Tatsache, dass Major Charles L Kelly am 1. Juli 1964 über Vietnam abgeschossen wurde und auf der Stelle starb:

MAJ Charles L. Kelly 1 Jul 64 57 th Medical Detachment (HA)

--- General / Personal ---

Home of Record (official): WARM SPRINGS

State (official): GA

Date of Birth: Friday, April 10, 1925

Sex: Male

Race: Caucasian

Marital Status: Married

--- Military ---

Branch: Army

Rank: MAJ

Serial Number: 070399

Component: Regular

Pay grade: O4

MOS (Military Occupational Specialty code): 1983

--- Action ---

Start of Tour: Unknown/Not reported

Date of Casualty: Wednesday, July 1, 1964

Age at time of loss: 39

Casualty type: (A1) Hostile, died

Reason: Air loss - Crashed on land (Pilot - Helicopter)

Country: South VietNam

Province: Unknown/Not Reported

The Wall: Panel 01E - Row 057

Abb. 11: Auszug aus dem Register „Casualties of the Vietnam War“

Demzufolge konnte er 1967 nicht in Cu Chi sein ! Sie können natürlich anfügen, dass es auch noch einen anderen Major Kelly gegeben haben könnte. Es gab tatsächlich noch einen Major Charles L. Kelly (U.S. Air Force), einen Lieutenant Commander Charles Thomas Kelly (U.S. Navy) und einen LTC Charles R. Kelly während des Vietnam Konfliktes, welche aber aufgrund ihrer Funktion (MOS, Military Occupation Specialty) nichts Helikoptern der U.S. Army und Verwundeten zu tun hatten ! Zudem spricht auch die Rückseite des Zippos mit der Inschrift „DUST OFF“ dagegen.

All diese Umstände lassen den Schluss nahe, dass es sich um eine sehr gut gemachte Fälschung handelt. Aber letzte Sicherheit könnte man nur erlangen, wenn man mit den Kindern oder Dienstkameraden über diesen Teil des Nachlasses von Major Charles L. Kelly sprechen könnte.

Jedenfalls bin ich froh, nicht mitgeboten zu haben, obwohl es zweifellos ein sehr interessantes Feuerzeug ist.

Falls Sie Fragen zu Vietnam Zippos haben oder weitere Informationen wünschen, stehe ich Ihnen gerne jederzeit zur Verfügung:



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Quellen:

Avi Bear, Alexander Neumark: "Zippo Feuerzeuge", Heel Verlag GmbH, Königswinter 1999.

Jim Fiorella: "The Viet Nam Zippo 1933 - 1975", Schiffer Publishing Ltd., Atglen 1998.

Diverse Informationen/ Homepages im World Wide Web:

SPEECH BY CHARLES KELLY, JR.

The keynote speakers for the 1997 DUSTOFF Association Reunion were the children of Charles Kelly. Their comments are presented here for those of you unable to attend the 18th Annual DUSTOFF Reunion.

Good evening, I'm Charles Kelly, Jr. and these are my sisters, Barbara and Carol. We are the children of Major Charles Kelly. This is our first DUSTOFF reunion and we are very happy to be here. Since 1 July 1964, the Army, Army Aviation Association, and especially the DUSTOFF Association has been very good to our family. We have met a few of you here in the last couple of days, but I feel like we know all of you. I feel like we are here with family.

My father was a catalyst and an innovator in the development of Army air medical evacuation. He devoted several years of training toward this mission, and he completely devoted the last six months of his life in this endeavor. Ultimately he gave up his life for this mission. He knew the risks of this mission.

I talked with Bob Mack last night. He flew with my father daily and was the one who went to my father's room to collect his personal belongings when he was killed. He said he walked into the room and on a desk, in plain view, not hidden away in a drawer, but laid out very neatly was a packet of information on what to do if he was killed. Bob said it was like he knew he would be killed. My father was 39 and had three children and a wife at home when he volunteered to go to Vietnam. I am convinced that he took those risks because he understood the importance of what he was doing and what it might mean to thousands of people.

Over the last two months, I have read literally hundreds of pages of letters and diaries from Korea and Vietnam that my father wrote. I think I have a pretty good idea of what he would say if he were here today. He would say, "Don't call me a hero, just a soldier who did my duty to the best of my ability to honor my country and family." He would give the credit to his men and those that came before him and those that came after him and carried on the tradition that he began. Well, the fact is, he could not have done this alone. He was the first medical evacuation casualty ever. He set many of the standards and was a proponent of night flying, and he fought the generals for the right to fly anytime and anywhere.

At one point, General Stillwell wanted to have portable red crosses and just put them in general service aircraft where they were needed. My father was vehemently opposed to this and eventually won this battle. If he had not, there would probably be no DUSTOFF today. But all of this would have been for nothing if others had not carried on after he was killed. I want to thank you for continuing and building upon the DUSTOFF tradition.

I consider the people in this room to be true American heroes. I can think of no nobler cause than to risk one's life to save someone else. And that's what DUSTOFF pilots do for a living, day and night, anytime, anywhere. To you active duty pilots and medics (I know you know this or you would not be here, but I am going to say it any-

way), when you are in the air and there is someone hurt or sick on the ground, whether they are soldier or civilian, you are it, you become life itself to them, the only thing that stands between life and death. You should be proud. Your families should be proud of you, and I can assure you of this, the Kelly family is very, very proud of you.

My family would like to take this opportunity to give something back to the DUSTOFF Association. My sister has put countless hours into this project, and we are very proud of what she has done. If you would unveil the portrait please (sisters Barbara and Carol unveil the portrait of Major Kelly). This is our father, Major Charles L. Kelly. One more thing, our family especially wants to thank General Patrick Brady. He carried on the tradition of my father and kept his memory alive. He has been a very good friend to our family over the past several year. It's been 33 years since Charles Kelly gave an order to Patrick Brady. So, General Brady... Front and Center! We have something special for you. (General Brady approaches, we shake hands, and my sister says a few words and unveils the portrait of him. Brady has tears in his eyes and cannot speak.)

History of Dustoff

The Association derives its name, DUSTOFF, from the radio call sign given to the first aeromedical helicopter evacuation unit in Vietnam, the 57th Medical Detachment (Hel Amb), which arrived in-country in 1962. The 57th initially communicated internally on any vacant frequency it could find. In Saigon, the Navy Support Activity, which controlled all call words used in call signs in South Vietnam, allowed the 57th to adopt the callsign "DUSTOFF." This callsign epitomized the 57th's medical evacuation missions. Since the countryside was then dry and dusty, helicopter pick-ups in the fields often blew dust, dirt, blankets, and shelter halves all over the men on the ground. Throughout Vietnam all evacuation helicopters assumed the call sign "DUSTOFF" followed by a numerical designation (the exception being the air ambulances of the 1st Cavalry Division which used the call sign Medevac) and no one ever attempted to change this during the remainder of the conflict. Though other call signs regularly changed, both ground and aviation units refused to refer to these evacuation helicopters by any other callsign. By adopting "DUSTOFF", in those early stages of the Vietnam war, the legend was born. The call sign "DUSTOFF," now synonymous with life-saving aeromedical evacuation, has taken on added meaning with the application of the Association's motto: Dedicated Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces.

The DUSTOFF Association is an organization for all officers and enlisted Army Medical Department personnel, aviation crewmembers, and others who are, or ever were engaged in or actively supported in any capacity, Army aeromedical evacuation programs in war or peace. It was founded by SSG Thomas L. "Egor" Johnson, a former member of the 57th Medical Detachment (Hel Amb), the "original" DUSTOFF unit. Upon his return from Vietnam in the mid-sixties, SSG Johnson dreamed of seeing the officers and enlisted crewmembers who had flown DUSTOFF and Medevac missions throughout Vietnam gather together. They would be able to renew friendships, keep abreast of new developments in the field of aeromedical evacuation, and again experience that special bond of fellowship and camaraderie which develops between those who have shared fears, hardships, and mutual dependency during battle.

He began to develop and give thought to the idea of a reunion/convention in February 1980. He selected Atlanta, Georgia, as the convention site and reserved rooms and banquet space at the Marriott Hotel. He invited General (Retired) William C. Westmoreland, an avid DUSTOFF supporter, to be the honored guest and featured speaker. Armed only with the convention site and the commitment of a famed combat commander, he began to phone and write former DUSTOFF and Medevac crewmembers proposing the idea of a reunion and encouraging their support and participation.

SSG Johnson's dream became a reality and a thrill for each of those 200 plus DUSTOFF crewmembers and their spouses and friends, who chose to attend the first reunion. For them it was a special kind of joy experienced only by former comrades who gather to share and to relive the camaraderie they experienced during combat.

The DUSTOFF Association was born on that memorable weekend in February 1980, thanks to the dedicated efforts of SSG Johnson, and it now proudly boasts of a rapidly growing membership numbering near a thousand and includes two Vietnam DUSTOFF Medal of Honor winners: MG (Retired) Pat H. Brady and CW (Retired) Mike Novosel. Members represent a broad cross-section of military and civilian personnel consisting of active, retired, and former officer and enlisted aviation crewmembers, physicians, and nurses, many involved in the Army's aeromedical evacuation program since its inception. Several charter members were forerunners and developers of this vital humanitarian service, which has now become synonymous with its wartime callsign, "DUSTOFF."

Annual conventions, since that first one in Atlanta, Georgia, have been held in San Antonio, Texas, home of the Army Medical Department and its Museum. The Association is fortunate in having had honored guests and principle speakers such dignitaries as MG (Retired) Pat H. Brady, Mr. Sergei Sikorsky (son of Igor Sikorsky-father of the helicopter), Lieutenant General (Retired) Quinn H. Becker, Astronaut Sherwood C. Spring, and Carter Harmon.
