



Rotary



NOTES OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF ROYAL HUA HIN (RCRHH): Tuesday 11th August 2020
Book ends Rick Rees.

Time: 12:00 to 14:00 hrs.

Location: Imagine Room.

Attendance: 32

Members: 21

Guests: 11

PP Mark Butters	RC Bangkok South UK
Captain Saifon Chingsum	Hua Hin Police Thailand
David Range	USA
Bo Eluf Nielson	USA
Dr Thomas Hirsh	Germany
Bob Richards	USA
Thomas Mohr	Germany
Punyisa Chalausophon	Thailand
Jasiya Kuywongtal	Thailand
Arnold Ruijs	Netherlands
Jan Saenen	Netherlands
Khun Lek	Thailand

President (P) Brian Anderson opened the meeting with the Thai National Anthem and called upon Sergeant at Arms (SAA) Rick Rees to introduce the guests as listed above.

P Brian then spoke about the following club events that had recently occurred.

31 st July	Celebration of Life Dr Birger
1 st August	Global Grant management seminar
1 st August	Swiss National Day
4 th August	Fellowship Evening Monsoon Valley wine bar
11 th August	Bookends Rick Rees.

P Brian Anderson then informed the meeting of future events for the RC Royal Hua Hin

18 th August	Board Meeting
22 nd August	District Awards night Songkhla
28 th August	Weekly Meeting on CR at Nongkhon School
1 st September	Fellowship Evening Lo Stivale
8 th September	Weekly meeting Basis Fire Safety.

P Brian then introduced today's guest speaker Sargent at Arms Rick Rees, P Brian went on to say that today's talk was about Rick's experiences as a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War and that during the war Rick was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for the citation below.



CONFLICT/SPACE FLIGHT/EVENT: Vietnam

MODEL: UH-1H

CITATION: 1.) The President of the United States takes great pleasure in presenting the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross to Captain Richard Rees, 187th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) Armor, United States Army, Republic of Vietnam, for action dated 8 January 1970 for heroism while participating in aerial flight evidenced by voluntary actions above and beyond the call of duty: Captain Richard Rees distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions while flying a combat mission in support of friendly infantry which had made contact with a large enemy force. Many casualties were sustained and the friendly elements were constantly exposed to sniper, rocket grenade and machine gun fire from the enemy. Day long battles made night resupply missions necessary and Captain Rees made two such resupply trips to the mountain. Captain Rees was forced to hover his ship while crew members dropped the resupply. During both missions his ship became the target of intense enemy ground fire. With complete disregard for his own safety, he sacrificed his own security for the welfare of the ground troops. Captain Rees efforts kept the infantrymen supplied with vital food and ammunition and were an immeasurable aid to the success of the mission.

Rick thanked everyone and stated he did not feel a hero, but was just a soldier doing his job.

Rick went on to say that he would like to thank his wife June for helping make the presentation which was about 1 year in Tay Ninh which was in an area known as the "Iron Triangle"



After leaving flight school Rick explained that he had 30 days leave then was flown to Vietnam via Hawaii and then Clark air force base in the Philippines.

On arrival in Vietnam he was based at a camp known as "Ye Holy Land"

Tây Ninh Combat Base was established approximately 5 km west of the city of Tây Ninh and 12 km from the Vietnam-Cambodia border.

Tây Ninh served as the base for the 196th Light Infantry Brigade from April 1966 until August 1967. Although during

this period the base was home to many other Brigades and Battalion's including the 187th Assault Helicopter Company that Rick served in.

Rick went onto say his helicopter was named the boss by his first officer. (See picture left) and that during operations pilots could only drop their personnel within 8 seconds to avoid attracting enemy fire.



The base was handed over to the ARVN in September 1970 and was used by the ARVN 25th Division.

Rick went onto say that the 187th had a remarkably low death rate considering our AO and the multiple daily missions we were involved in. Perhaps good tactics helped, perhaps just blind luck. Even as I say that, every life is precious and we lost 44 comrades and brother airmen of the 187th during

our time there. We honor and mourn them every year at our reunions.

Two and a Half Million men and women served in the uniformed services and of these, only about 10% served in actual combat. Fifty-Eight Thousand perished and over 300,000 wounded, of these, slightly over 4,900 or approximately 10% of all casualties were helicopter crewmen.

Some of these totals are way on the low side and if one were to look a little deeper into the figures, they are close to twice that amount especially among the civilian population. There is a phrase used in some of the figures that I wasn't familiar with, notably the word Democide, that being killings sanctioned or carried out on behalf of a government. I'm not so sure how that differs from genocide, I'll leave that to you good folks to figure out.



The pictures above show Rick with his father who had a business in Vietnam and the far right shows Rick meeting one of the most decorated Vietcong soldiers when he returned to Vietnam. He stated that it was strange that here there were pictured together but 50 years ago they were enemies.

Following the talk Ricks wife June handed out battalion mementos he had purchased.

P Brian thanked Rick for a very informative presentation.

P Brian then called upon CP Alan Cooper to present the new members certificates to the following new members, Anthony Schatz, Paul Burke and transferee Michael Rutzen.



There being no other business lunch was called.