



Return to Vietnam

Mick Guttau and Heidi *Guttau*-Fox spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club on November 16 about their 17 day trip to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Those included on the trip included Mick and Judy Guttau, Josh and Shelly Guttau and their four children, Heidi and Rick Fox and their three children, Harold Bearden, Bill Stillwagen, and Dave Macedonia (veterans who served with Mick), and Ann Beckenhauer, spouse of another veteran.

The group left on June 29 for their 17 day trip. They found that they set several firsts for returning veterans. Judy is the only original wife of veterans who went there, although most of those who served in Vietnam were not married at the time. Mick was the only veteran who wanted to go to Laos (which is where he served). Mick was the only veteran whose family and extended family went along.

Heidi said that Mick lives by a motto he learned in the military, "Troops always come first." He treats his family and his employees that way too.

Mick's combat unit in Laos had 9 Cobra helicopters, 11 Hueys, and 9 Loach (light observation helicopters). Mick logged 981 combat hours, mostly in Cobras, but about 10% in Hueys.

The Cobra had two guns in the front. The left one was a 40 millimeter grenade launcher that would fire 250 rounds per minute. The right one was a Gatling gun that would rotate between six guns to prevent overheating and fire 4000 rounds per minute. The Cobra could also hold 52 rockets. One of the rockets used carried flechetts (nails). It would carry 2000 nails and the Cobra would fire two at a time. The rocket would explode shortly after being fired and leave a puff of smoke. The nails would kill everything within the area the size of a football field.

The Cobra had a 1400 horsepower engine. It carried 250 gallons of fuel and traveled at 135 knots. It would redline at 190 knots, which is just below the speed of sound. Breaking the sound barrier would make a helicopter uncontrollable.

Mick said that there are about 3000 Americans still missing in Vietnam. There is an active team still searching for them. There are about 300,000 missing Vietnamese and no one is looking for them.

In 1986 Vietnam started a new Communism. Under this form of Communism, people have freedom of religion, capitalism, and few regulations. There is still a lot of corruption.

Mick and Josh Guttau will continue the story of their trip in two weeks, on November 30 at 8:00 a.m. at the Treynor Community Center.