

Major Jerry Sellers, my roommate at Danang, was killed on Christmas Day evening, 1967 along with a second FAC on board, Dick Budka. That became a long story.

BACKGROUND

I knew Jerry and his family from our tanker days at Mather AFB. We went through the FAC pipeline together. We both ended up as FACs and roommates at Danang AB, RVN. Jerry was shot down just below the DMZ in Vietnam while trying to save a Marine patrol from the onslaught of NVA forces from across the DMZ. Below clouds, at low altitude, in the dark, he had tried with his landing lights, to separate the patrol from the enemy for attack aircraft. When I arrived, I ended up flying overhead while another FAC tried to salvage the situation such as it was. A Marine helicopter was in the process of trying to find the patrol. As he talked to them, I could hear his door gunner blasting away and enemy bullets tearing through the skin of the chopper. In the end, they rescued the patrol and the remains of the FACs. It was a "Congressional Medal of Honor" operation if I ever heard one. What a blow that was to our FAC Community at Danang. Somehow yet, as usual, we all had to move on with the war.

Then in 2006 I came home from work in Hawaii and answered a phone call – "are you the Rushforth that was a FAC in Vietnam?" Indeed! It was Jim Brock, Jerry's High School classmate in Altha, Florida. Jerry had received the "**Air Force Cross**" and Jim planned to celebrate Jerry's accomplishments, and life, with special events and presentation of a Sellers Monument at City Hall. Would I come? I wouldn't miss it!

What a grand celebration of several events it was, a wonderful tribute to Jerry from the folks of that small town. I was honored to speak to them about Jerry at the monument dedication and was especially pleased to meet Jerry's family again after all that time. Another aspect of this was that I mentioned to Jim that my wife Audrey had family on her Dad's side in Altha. They actually came to the dedication and introduced themselves. One Aunt offered me a book she had written on Altha's history. I mentioned Aunt Minnie Stone as family on Audrey's side. She could easily have graced a Norman Rockwell, cover of "**Saturday Evening Post**" - original, calico dress and all. We all reminisced. She was a true farmer that I had come to admire from numerous visits when we lived in Alabama. One of my favorite people!

Later, on our way back to the beach house where we were staying, I spoke with Jerry's family about my encounter with Audrey's Dad's family. Jerry's daughter said she thought there were "Stones" in the "Sellers" lineage and that she would check? Indeed, that out to be the case.

So – at that time we realized that when I married Audrey in 1972, I became related to the family of my Vietnam roommate, Jerry Sellers' family. Now, here I am finding that out 34 years later. Try to put the how and why of all that together! Fun, ain't it?