

Conversation

with

Lam Cain

at

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Recorded and Transcribed

by

Lyn Corley

TAPE 1 SIDE A

LYN-Today is October 28, 2017 and I have the honor of having Pam Cain who has driven from Ocala [Sarasota] all the way to Jacksonville at my home to interview about her experiences in the military. Her father's experiences, her husband's and being a Navy daughter, a Navy wife, and the daughter of a missing in action pilot.

Thank you for this opportunity and we look forward to understanding from a different point of view, not a pilot's view, as many we have talked to, but as a daughter and a wife view of Navy careers.

So, I'm going ask Pam to re-introduce herself and tell us when and where she was born and about her childhood and then leading into her father's life and tragic loss.

PAM-It is an honor to be here. I pretty much drive anywhere to talk about my dad and my life as a military brat and military wife. I have to correct you though on a couple of things or I'll get in big trouble. I'm an Air Force daughter. My dad was Air Force but Navy wife. For all of my, I might as well say my age because you can figure it out later, but for all of my sixty-four, almost sixty-five years except one I have been an Air Force brat, either a daughter or wife. I'm very proud of that. I, even though the military was tragic in some ways for me it was also very enlightening and gave me many friends and people that I treasure to this day.

LYN-I'm hearing that so many times about the life-long friends.

PAM-If I get emotional it's because it's still with me every day. I live in the Sarasota area so I drove a little bit farther.

LYN-You came from Sarasota, excuse me. Oh, my goodness, you have come a long way. Thank you.

PAM-I do love this area so it's enjoyable.

LYN-The interesting thing with this project, if it wins the award that we going to apply for, it would be awarded in Sarasota in May. You did make a long trip. Thank you, Pam.,

PAM-I was born in New Jersey which was kind of just a coincidence really because as my parents, New Jersey natives, I was born while my dad was stationed at McGuire Air Force Base. At that point he had already gone through flight training. He had enlisted initially and was at the very tail end of World War II. He gave up his senior year of high school in order to do that then came back and went to Newark College of Engineering, graduated, went on to flight school.

LYN-You mentioned he gave up his senior year of high school. I believe that became common. Was he already mind-set flying? Was he patriotic? Did he ever talk about why he made that decision?

PAM-It was pretty much flying. He was, he had a passion. I'm not sure how that evolved to be honest with you. I don't recall him talking about it or it doesn't stick in my memory. He was an Eagle Scout. He was very active but I think between the flying and the sense of patriotism I'm not sure which.

LYN-We probably can't even understand today what World War II was like and the patriotism in our nation.

PAM-I can talk for hours.

LYN-Go ahead and tell us about, he went back to school and he was going to be a pilot.

PAM-By the time I'm born he is a pilot and he has definitely made it a career. I think from day one it was a career for him. He felt an obligation to this country, they trained him so whatever his government felt was right and just he was prepared to fight that battle.



Pilot Oscar Mauterer

He was very, very dedicated to his country, to the military. Somehow found a way to put his family right up there. I'll never be one to say which was 1-2-3 but they are all pretty close. He was a hands-on guy. I can remember, I was the first of two children and I have very early memories of him always being around. My brother was born two years after I was and shortly thereafter we went to Japan as a family.



Pam Mauterer Cain
with her father
Air Force Pilot Oscar Mauterer

LYN-So you were how old then?

PAM-I was about three or four.

LYN-So, it wasn't like you knew it was going to be exciting or not. You were just with your parents.

PAM-I had no idea but we had a blast and I do have some memories from over there. We were not in Toyoko, we were up north. It was very snowy I can remember a couple of pictures of my dad on his motorcycle that he had. Of course, no helmet, no safety precautions. We were going around in the snow and ice so even though he traveled a lot, he flew a lot, or shifts on guard and things like that on flight duty, he was always there. He was never an absentee dad in my memory.

Once we came back from Japan we went to Ohio and he did go to school in Ohio. That's when I really became aware of how much of a golfer he was. If I remember any arguments between him and my mother it was over the fact that he had bought another pair of golf shoes. (Laugh) He'd be out there rain or shine.

I have these really positive memories and I grew up loving aviation, loving flying which I do to this day. Never had the desire to be a pilot myself. No, but I'll go anywhere with a good pilot.

LYN-So, your first flying experience.



Pam Mauterer
in Air Force jet following in her father's
enthusiasm for flying

PAM-My dad, even though he was a fighter pilot, he also belonged to flying clubs so most military, not most but some back in the day that had flight lines on base also had an aero club or flying club so he was always a member. The one I can remember the most was once we got to Maryland in the early '60's he would take us flying a lot.

LYN-What did you fly in?

PAM-Little Cessnas. He would tour around and come back the same day, that type of thing. So, as he, as the Vietnam War progresses we're living in the Washington, D.C. area and he went to about three different sets of orders there, because of the close proximity of different bases. We stayed in the same house.

As that started ramping up he volunteered to go. Again, he felt that he had been trained, it was what he was trained to do, and if they were sending pilots and flyers he should be there. He owed that to his country. He had to fight to preserve that freedom.

LYN-How old were you?

PAM-I was about ten or eleven at that time.

LYN-What did you understand about...

PAM-My parents were very matter-of-fact, very calm, and very, pretty much blunt. They just said, "Dad is going to have to go, this is something that he needs to do. Our country is involved in what could be a war, it's not pretty, it's not something that he wants to do but he needs to go."

I never resented that he went, never even to this day. So, I really credit my parents for kind of instilling that sense of duty and that obligation in me.

LYN-When he left did you think there was time-line of when he would be back?

PAM-It was a year so we had expected him in a year. He wrote letters. He was great about writing not only my mother but he would send me my own letters and my brother letters. We did sense his frustration once he got there and things that were happening, decisions that were being made and how they were being made. He became very close with some of the South Vietnamese troops. He was teaching some of them to be pilots. He had very high things to say about the country and the people there. As I got a little bit older, now I'm twelve you know, he, as I mentioned earlier was going to go to Hawaii mid-way through his tour and my mother talked about it and decided that he would come home instead.

I am so thankful for that because that was in November so we were able to spend Thanksgiving with him. We went back up to New Jersey with my mother's family and then he left from Baltimore and was shot down the following February.

LYN-So, he had been about six months of that one year when he came home for Thanksgiving. Did you see a different person or you just saw dad?

PAM-I just saw Dad. I get goose bumps just thinking about that. It was Dad and I remember treasuring the time and thinking how lucky I was because there were people in my school who had relatives either overseas or away and I just was feeling pretty great that Daddy came home whereas, it's too bad they couldn't have gone to Hawaii together, but from a selfish standpoint it was great for me. (Laugh)



1965
Colonel Oscar
Mauterer
With
son Randy
and daughter Pam

So, in February I remember walking home from junior high. I can remember the day like it was today and I was walking down the street and I saw my grandparent's car sitting out in front of the house. We were supposed to go up to New Jersey that week-end to see them and I thought, "Why is the car there?" That car is there.

I opened the front door and my mom was there and she was at the top of the steps and she had sun glasses on but she was crying and I had never seen her cry. With everything that she had had to deal with, with Dad and the military life and at that point I knew that something happened.

I was just praying that it wasn't Dad. Then as the story unfolded, I will say the Air Force was very, very good to us. They had an officer there and a chaplain and especially the chaplain. They came back all the time. We had a very close relationship with the person who had come the first time until he basically left the service then his successor the same thing. His successor was so close to us that he wound up marrying my husband and me, baptized both our children. He was truly, you know, a member of our family. As part of his ministry.

We were going to the church at Bolling, it was at Bolling Air Force Base in D.C. so that's where they were anyway. So, it all kind of worked. I feel we had that benefit in that we were close to a base when Dad went overseas. My mother, she wasn't going to go back to New Jersey and live with family. She was staying, she wanted our life to continue, to be kind of in that routine what we were used to, and did not want to up-end anything. She was pretty independent herself.

LYN-Tell me, where was he actually serving? Was he stationed at a base on the ground in Vietnam?

PAM-He went to Bein Hoa. That's where the squadron was. They typically went on temporary duty to different places so he was at Danang for a while.

LYN-What kind of plane was he flying.

PAM-The A-1A Skyraider. He was a fighter pilot and usually you think fighter pilots are jets but because he volunteered, the billet that he was given was actually this prop, slow, older plane and apparently, he was known to take his missions very seriously, I'll say that. He would come back with holes in his plane. He, he earned the Silver Star about two months after he went over there. He was in some kind of air battle and they said he took quite a beating.



Oscar Mauterer during his
volunteer
tour during Vietnam War

LYN-How aware were you of what was going on?

PAM-I was not too aware of that.

LYN-But your mom knew.

PAM-My mother knew. She always down-played you know any heroism if you will or the medals. I really learned more about that later on and I was kind of floored, and he was very grounded and very, he down-played anything like that. If he even knew, you know for me to be talking about him like this he would be angry. He did not consider himself a hero or doing anything special. This was his job.

LYN-I hear that from the Navy pilots. They are doing hero stuff.

PAM-I think so.

LYN-So you came home, there is an Air Force chaplain and the, what do they call him?

PAM-I can't remember the term. He was kind of the casualty officer.

LYN-What did you understand at that time?

PAM-That's a really good question. Again, they were, they told us he was shot down in Laos. They told us we were not to tell anyone else that he was shot down in Laos. That if we talked about it, it could endanger their efforts to get him home. I say that a little tongue-and-cheek because I think years later we realized that wasn't quite what we should have done. But we did it.

We were told that he was missing, that he had bailed out of the plane which you could do in that airplane. It wasn't an ejection seat but he had radioed that he was on fire. He had taken a hit on their last pass, and that he was going to jump. His flight lead did circle and was able to circle and saw the chute and watched it go to the ground. So, for years we were kind of under the assumption that he could have been taken prisoner. He could have been killed depending on the hostile surroundings because again it was Laos and we weren't supposed to be in Laos but we were flying over Laos. It was really kind of that murky unknown.

LYN-What were we doing in Laos do you think?

PAM-I have no idea. Well, I think we were doing some special operations. I think we were trying to do some things on the trail.

LYN-The pipeline coming in from China is what we are talking about now. There is no war declared, well, there is no war declared in all of this but there is no official combat supposed to be happening in Laos but they all knew that there were other nations sending supplies through that nation into Vietnam.



PAM-I think Dad was one of the early shoot-downs, he was '65-'66. I think they were kind of fishing around you know. His squadron did a lot of special ops kinds of things so we don't know a lot.

LYN-So, what changed that day in your life?

PAM-What changed that day, knowing that my dad might not come home and knowing that the country was at such odds with where he went down, I really felt isolated. I felt like people really didn't understand us. I was afraid. We started getting really awful phone calls from people who would either say, "Your dad deserved to die, he is a baby killer" to "I have information". You know they would want money and that type of thing for information.

Our government, our casualty office was good about helping out with those things but we didn't have voice mails in those days so you didn't know if shouldn't answer the phone because it might be some kook or it might be the Air Force.

LYN-No caller ID.

PAM-No, we had none of that. My mother pretty much dug her nails in and she, she did not want any kind of public presence at all. She tried to have us lead as normal a life as we could. We were raised outside of Washington, D.C. so every night on the news you could see what was happening. The protests and just the ugliness and...

LYN-Of the protests, did you see any actually or only on the news?

PAM-Well, I saw them. You could drive through downtown and not that we would drive down that street but you could see where they had been, you know, fires and signs around the White House and things like that. So, it was a very, very ugly time.

LYN-Certainly more personal to you than many people who were serving in the military.

PAM-I feel like I grew up over-night, I've said that before. I, you know a lot of people my people age kind of went through that rebellious, you know teen-age stage. I didn't get to do that. (Laugh) I was the older child.

My dad had made it clear, not just before he went to Vietnam, but growing up we had high expectations, my brother and me. Whether it was grades in school or doing our best, whatever it was, it was clear in our household that you are a Mauterer and you need to not only represent your family but you need to be the best and be the best that you can be all the time.

So, when this happened I just felt like, even though my mother was being a strong person she was, I had to be there for her and I had to compensate or do whatever she couldn't handle or I just had to be that kind of liaison or just help around the house or do whatever I could do. So, that's what I did.

LYN-You were a good daughter. (Laugh) So was there ever any thought of moving and relocating? You all just wanted to stay put.

PAM-That's a good question too. We decided we would stay put. Again, it's the '60's and you didn't have the social media and the things that you have now but we thought if there was anybody, if we needed to be somewhere for Dad, that was the best place to be. If he was going to come home we wanted him to come home to where home was. So, my mother never contemplated anywhere else.

LYN-Were you on base?

PAM-No, we were living in a community. I was in junior high so I wound up, you know most military children moved so often, I didn't because there dad went to three different bases before

Vietnam and we stayed in the same house and then we stayed in the same house until after I graduated from high school.

LYN-As time passed, hopes fade. Is that right?

PAM-I don't know if hopes fade. I felt that, you know we were doing, the government always said, "We'll tell you when we hear something." My mother, I think, was more of the person who felt that he went down in Laos, a hostile area and he was shot and killed and he's probably not alive. But, where is he and what did happen to him? She would go into the Casualty Office, they would call her periodically to come and go through photos. So, they would have photos either of POW's or surveillance pictures. Of course, would come home and say that nothing had been found.

LYN-Was there any word of anyone who went down in Laos? I don't even know how many people would have even gone down in Laos.

PAM-Not to my knowledge but again, see we were isolated. At that point I wasn't talking about it. I had not, the National League of Families had formed in 1970. We were not a part of that early formation. Again, my mother felt that she had to listen to the government and not say and not talk to anybody and just be ready you know for anything for Dad. But, she did not join that organization.

LYN-Did you know about the National League?

PAM-I don't think I was that early in the early '70's but I think she was but she was afraid even with the bracelets back then. She was afraid that if we had his bracelet done and being worn by people that might be actually be more harmful to him.

LYN-So his name was not on a bracelet?

PAM-Well, it was on bracelets. She later tried to collect all the ones that had been made which is hysterical. Then, it is funny, I've only found out since social media in the last several years, she turned around, she did collect a lot of them. But, she gave them to friends of mine and a lot of people that I went to high school with had the bracelets. They tell me now that they go, "Pam, do you know your mother gave us a bracelet and it's one of the original ones." I went, "No."

LYN-We'll put on tape what the bracelets were about.

PAM-Oh, yeah. Well, an organization, I think it was out in California early on, had decided to make some bracelets and they made a few and it was just one of those things that just snow-balled. Pretty soon the whole country was wearing bracelets of those who were missing or held prisoner and now it's a mammoth industry almost because with the other concepts are using the bracelets as well. I know I wore a bracelet for years and years, my mother, my children.

LYN-What's on your bracelet?

PAM-My bracelet says Colonel Oscar Mauterer, United States Air Force, 15 February 1966, Laos.

Pam Cain
still wears the MIA bracelet
bearing the name of her father
Colonel Oscar Mauterer



LYN-Mine was Jeremiah Denton. Jeremiah did come home and served our country in Congress. We were in Virginia Beach during that time that he was from right down the road. It really, Jeremiah Denton will always be so dear to me because I made that commitment, I made the commitment to pray for him. So, these bracelets became a big part of our lives.

PAM-It did and I've heard that from other people too because people now kind of get in touch with me and a lot of people want to return the bracelets. We ask that, we'd like to have the bracelets out there. We want to know that those people praying and caring for and supporting bringing our missing loved ones home. Once the person comes home then yes, if you would like to send the bracelet I'd love to have it.

There are a couple of people who wanted me to have it now and they have sent it. But, I like knowing that there are people out there who see his name and maybe have seen his face or you know are still thinking about him and praying for him.

LYN-So how old would your father be now?

PAM-Ninety-one.

LYN-We talked off-tape about if he had survived and he would be a very old man and chances he would have died a natural life by now. So, at what point did you realize?

PAM-You know, some things happened in my dad's case and I'm kind of jumping around a little bit but over the years we did get different reports of different scenarios with him. Once, I will say President Ragan really did kind of put the MIA mission on the forefront and investigations and work and money were put to the mission much more than it had been in earlier years. When some of those scenarios surfaced my dad was on the "Last Known Alive" list because somebody should know what happened to him. Somebody over there should know what happened to him.

Some of the scenarios ranged from he was held in a cave with many people. There was a small group that they were trying to move to Hanoi and one of the prisoners wouldn't march so they shot him and buried him and that could have been my dad, which actually kind of sounded like him, to be honest with you. (Laugh) He would refuse, you know.

So, there were all these different reports. In 2010 we received a photo and a little bit of the details are that finally the government started looking at, OK, who was in the area? Let's find first-hand witnesses. So, they started looking up battalions and troops and finding out "Were they Vietnamese troops in Laos or were the Laotian troops?" Well, in my dad's case they were Vietnamese troops. They found the battalion. They found witnesses. They found witnesses who they spoke to and one of the witnesses says, "I have a photo of somebody that we were told to go out and pick up after his plane crashed and he was in a parachute."

The government didn't think it was my dad. They were actually kind of zeroing in on another case. I've always been very active since the early '80's with my dad's case and I make it a point to know the people that are working on the case and the different agencies in government. I think by knowing that, one Sunday morning I was at home and I got a text from someone who said, "Do you have any other pictures of your dad? The one that we have is kind of his picture of record.?"

So, I'm never without my thumb drive where I don't have things at hand and I sent them to them and within a few days I got a call saying, "We have a hundred percent match."

LYN-It was a hundred percent.

PAM-And they did the whole, whatever they do on NCIS and all the photos and scientific stuff and dental records.

LYN-Did you see that photo?

PAM-Yes. I got the photo in 2010 and it was my dad.

LYN-Would it have been close to the time he went down?

PAM-No. He went down in '66.

LYN-When the picture was taken?

PAM-Right. What the interpretation of the photo was is that he deceased, he was still in his flight suit, and you can see his torso but they are government and from what the witnesses have said, is that shortly after he landed they went out to bring him in as a POW and he was dead when they got there. You can see in the photo where there is a little something just right over his eye. Whether it's a wound, a gunshot I don't know.

To me, was he dead? I don't know. His eyes were closed but he could be unconscious. I don't know. But the photo is very, very gripping and at that point then the witnesses, the ones that were ID's as being Dad's, his category, if you will, changed because now he was no longer "Last Known Alive". They had a determination of fate that he actually was deceased. So, now it's the question of "where was he buried? Can that be excavated?"

LYN-So, this witness that took the photo knew exactly where that place was?

PAM-Well, there was the other thing. There was actually more than one witness. They talked to the photographer. They talked to the witness who had been given the photo. I have a lot more, I will say that. I'm quick to say I have a lot more information than some of the other family members of missing loved ones do. So, I do treasure that.

With that photo, I think they have three or four witnesses at that time from the same battalion. So, the photographer, the person who still had the photograph that the photographer had given him, and the witness that said, "I can show you where he's buried." I'm very clear about what he said.

LYN-Was your mother living in 2010?

PAM-Yes. I was with her, they showed me the photo and then I took it to her and it was electronic so, but I took it. But, this whole, that whole set of circumstances was mind-blowing to say the least, for her. It definitely was for me. It took from that point to an actual excavation, it took about another four years because we began what the government has to go through and the whole process and having his name on a particular excavation board and having it be his term. Then in Laos we have a lot of policies and procedures to follow and it's not an open access and there's money so it takes a lot of time.

To make a long story short, they came up with nothing. So, the case stands now, it's still active thankfully. I was afraid they would put it into "No Further Pursuit" but they are keeping it active because they, there are some other leads they can follow. They want to go back and talk to villagers. He was buried along a creek area and so there could have been movement and so they want to do some soil testing and kind of look at shifts over time. That maybe something that may have moved.

LYN-I'm hearing very frequently, so it seems to be common that villagers did bury American military people.

PAM-Absolutely. The other thing at this point, my question is "What happened to all his personal effects?" We were told that these same witnesses said they did remove pretty much

everything they could. He was a tall man so they didn't take his boots because they said they were too big for anybody in that culture. But they sent everything, as the Vietnamese were known to do, for recording and for storage. So, I asked the government just actually last year, I said, "Hey, you know, not that that would make it better but what happened there, maybe it would give us something to know what happened to that." I would certainly like to have anything back that might still be. They are looking at that as well to see where that went.

LYN-Let's go back. Your mom stayed put for how long? You all grew up with a missing in action father.

PAM-We grew up. I decided that I had had enough of D.C. when I graduated from high school so I came down to Florida State so that's how I got back into Florida. So, that was a good move for me. My brother wound up going to Miami of Ohio. My mother stayed in the same house and finally I think it was when I was still at school she decided to move across the river to Alexandria. She was ready to get out of the house and move. She did it and then after about three to five years there she moved out to Seattle.

She moved out to Seattle because she had been seeing someone that was actually well known to my dad. We had been stationed with him and his family in Japan and in Ohio and he was now a widower and so they sought out each other and they wound up getting married. She said she wouldn't go to Seattle if she wasn't married because that was the '70's. No, that was '80's.

I was, "No, Mom, you're not ready to get married." But she did and he was very understanding because he knew my dad, he knew the circumstances. He knew what her true love was but they at least were able to have several years I think of traveling and being happy and doing things together.

LYN-Your mom never pursued a career?

PAM-She had, right before my dad came back into the picture and said, "All right, you're getting married and going off with me for training." She was in med school up in Vermont and then wound up doing a lot of different things in Washington, D.C. area, mostly it was teaching and dealing with kids that had criminal records and in trouble. She took that route but she did a lot of good with bringing up teen-agers, working with teen-agers with all kind of problems. Then became a volunteer out in Seattle for about twenty years, in the hospital in the medical setting.

LYN-So you are at Florida State. What kind of degree?

PAM-Social work. (Laugh)

LYN-Your mom led you on that path.

PAM-So, I graduated, went up to D.C., was very lucky to get a job in social work and was engaged to be married. As I say, "Pretty much, almost day one after I was married, you know, my husband decides, 'I really like flying. The Navy can teach me to fly.'" I was just kind of

laughing this off. I just started my career. I had just been a military brat, you know, this was the first time I'd never had an ID card. The next thing I knew we were driving to Pensacola. (Laugh)

From that point on I loved working, I loved being out with people. I just made it a career as I'm sure you know how wives have to just do what they do where ever they land. That's what I did. I had all kind of different experiences.

LYN-So the difference in the other pilots' lives, they were not married when they went to Pensacola, you're married and you go through the Pensacola thing. From day one they are tough on these guys. So, your husband is really into he's going do it.

PAM-Oh yeah. He and I were one of the older ones. Most of the babies down there were not married and they're engaged. We're like, "Oh, my gosh." We were all of maybe twenty-four or twenty-five but we were the old married couple. There were only a couple of others, married couples there. Yeah, to see him you know, skinned and oh, my gosh but he really did respond. He loved it.

LYN-What was his goal? What did he want to do?

PAM-He definitely wanted it as a career. He did not go in with the idea that it would be four to six years and come back out. He wanted to fly and his eyes were not good enough to fly so he was a rear-intercept officer. He did get jets so he was thrilled.

Put him on a jet, put him on a carrier, do touch-and-go's he's fine. He just loved it. He did get all his civilian ratings as well and taught flying. Hasn't done that recently. There are just too many other things. Did really enjoy that general aviation aspect of flying.

LYN-So he finished his basic and where did you all go?

PAM-To Virginia Beach.

LYN-You were at Oceana.

PAM-Yep, we were at Oceana and we're at the RAG.

LYN-Do you remember VS what?

PAM-It was VS-171. This was the late '70's so 171 and then he went to VF-103 which was the F-4 squadron. They were deployed on the Saratoga out of Mayport. That's my connection with Jacksonville.

I started driving down 95 whenever he had to go out on the Sara and he was on the Sara cruise in 1980 and so I remember crying all the way down 95.

LYN-Nothing brings emotions to me faster than "Anchors Aweigh". To the Navy wife that meant good-bye. You'll see me when you see the whites of my eyes.

That was a Med cruise? Did he enjoy that?

PAM-You know, I think he did. You know back then, we had tapes. Then we were on, what was that radio where you had to “Over”?

LYN-That was really embarrassing because the whole world could be listening.

PAM-Exactly. But he really, he just loved to fly. He loved the camaraderie and he wouldn't care if he smelled like jet fuel when he was the junior officer and he just, that was OK.

LYN-So, you're pursuing your career. What were you doing?

PAM-By that time, going back and forth, I was, I went into adult education. I was working downtown Norfolk teaching adult ed. and many of them were Navy veterans. But I kind of felt, I loved that, being instructional and I started back to school.

LYN-Tell me the year we're talking about.

PAM-We are in 1980.

LYN-We had been there. I worked at the Virginia Beach Board of Realtors. My husband was at Norfolk but your husband is at Oceana. I worked out toward Oceana and you worked downtown so we're going the opposite way.

PAM-We just loved Virginia Beach and I loved the people that I was with. I started back to school. I took a couple masters of social work classes at Norfolk State and there were just too many things going on. When he came home in '81 I got pregnant right away and that changed things. (Laugh) I couldn't deal with son and big dog and husband going back and forth and I think as a Navy wife that was toughest when they would do the work-ups. I just wanted to say “Go and come home when you can stay home and be here at night and be part of the family.” So, that in and out stuff was hard.

On his second cruise, this time he went off on the Forrestal, the Sara had gone into the yards so they did their second cruise on the Forrestal.

LYN-Which by that time was at Mayport also. My husband was on the Forrestal but it was in Norfolk.

PAM-No, we were out at Mayport so that's why I made a lot of rides down 95 [Interstate 95] But, it was different for him having a son at home, having a baby at home. On that cruise he decided that “I can't do this anymore.” So, he came back and really lucked out. He was accepted to the TAR program. It was the training of the reserves. That did allow him more time on land and a little different type of career and he retired as a captain which I'm fine which I'm fine with. I think obviously it affected some of what he might have been able to do. He was with the reserve squadron out at Miramar, 302 before it went to the Marines.

LYN-It did become Marine?

PAM-Yes, it's all red and yellow. We were out there in the "Top Gun" days right when that movie first came out.

LYN-Did you ever live on base? When you were at Oceana were you on base?

PAM-No, the only time we lived on base was in Pensacola. We were in one of the old captain's housing, nobody wanted it. There were these great big old brick houses with big ole kitchens. I said, "I'll take one of those." It didn't have central air but you know it was great. That was, I think, the only time we lived on base. Then the only other time I did was as a child at McGuire the first couple of years. We've got pictures of me running around.

LYN-So, I don't think you made a better Navy wife than I did. (Laugh) I have pled my case to everybody, all these brave Navy wives. You were not so into having a child and him going out on ships back and forth.

PAM-No, when we got married we were not at all sure we were going to have children. It was when he was coming home from that first cruise he called and tried to talk me into having a child on the way home. I went, "Well, all right, if it happens it happens." Well, it happened immediately. Then I have two children and they're the nearest, dearest thing ever.

LYN-Where were they born.

PAM-I had one born in Portsmouth because we were in Virginia Beach and then my husband did have a joint tour, Air Force, he came down to Tyndall in Panama City.

LYN-Tyndall, I grew up with a beach house at Mexico Beach. Do you know where that was?

PAM-I know exactly where Mexico Beach is.

LYN-The red-nick Riviera. To get to Panama City you had to go through Tyndall. I think that would be kind of good place to be.

PAM-It was, it was great.

LYN-It is isolated from major cities.

PAM-Yeah, but again I was Air Force and I was at home with Air Force. It was close to Tallahassee. But that was great and my dad trained at Eglin at Hurlbert Field. [an Air Force base also located in Florida's Panhandle on the Gulf of Mexico] So that was, that gave me...

LYN-That's near Crestview so it's just further west from Tyndall but still on the coast.

PAM-That gave me time, I would go over there and kind of drive around. There's a memorial there with his name, at Hurlburt Field and his name is on that monument. It made me feel that I was at places where my dad had been, you know those little connections.

We loved Tyndall and by then I was working with seniors, so back more in the social work field but working in a senior center and again to this day have friends that I met then.

One side, if I may, when I was growing up people used to say to me, when I was in Tallahassee, "Oh, you grew up in the military you don't know how to establish friends, you don't know how to keep friends because you have to keep moving all the time." I didn't keep moving but I felt it was just the opposite because friends that we did have you really treasure those relationships. You worked harder at it.

LYN-You had more in common because you had the same careers. For you, during war time, obviously you knew how important it was to defend this nation. Thank you for serving as an Air Force brat. So, let's talk about the National League. How did you get involved?

PAM-I was in San Diego, married, two kids and a husband at Miramar and it was, I started questioning why we weren't hearing. Everywhere I went, I mean my dad was always with me and in everything I talked about. Oddly enough, my husband, in Virginia Beach, my husband's CO was a returned POW from Vietnam.

LYN-Who was that.

PAM-Ted Treble, he now lives in North Carolina. Ted is near and dear and of course when he heard that my dad was still missing we had kind of that connection. My husband used to fly in the back seat with Ted on cruise. There was just some, some gap and I said, "Mom, things aren't right." So, I said, "I'm going to go to a meeting of the National League of POW/MIA Families." Actually, I think it was before we left, I went to D.C. and I was flabbergasted.

LYN-Their headquarters is there.

PAM-And our annual meetings are, they used to be in downtown D.C. now they have them in Crystal City. I was floored first of all by meeting other family members and other daughters and sons who had grown up like I had. They, we all react to our circumstances differently but we totally get what we've been through and right away there's that bond of sharing something that a lot of people in the country have never shared, thank God.

So, what that did for me was just immeasurable. My brother, I tried to get him involved and he deals with it a different way. He never did want to be a part of it but I feel it helped me. It helped me understand a lot more and it sure as heck gave me a chance to network and find out that a lot of the things that we had been told or led to believe might not have been quite truthful.

I said, "Mom, you're got to come to these meetings." So, she did, she started attending and that was a real turning point in our lives because things that she was hearing, and it's not just from

people but the government and officials, made her realize that perhaps she should have done things differently.

LYN-So there were regrets?

PAM- I've never felt that she acted in any other way than how she should have done. With the information that she had, even things my dad had told her before he left and before he was shot down, she made the best judgements and the best decisions she could. I never regret, I never blame her for anything.



Evelyn Mauterer with daughter Pam Cain

Yes, I wish we had been maybe a little more active early on but then again, I don't think our government was really doing a lot during the Carter years. But she was really devastated to realize how I think she had been led to believe certain things and know it was her government, the very government that her husband basically died for and volunteered to go and fight for. Those were some tough times.

She came through it. She totally supported me. I had told her, "Mom before you die I want to bring Dad back." I was not able to do that. I hope they are together. She just means a lot to me. I am so glad that she did embrace the League. The League I think was key, like you say, you have the flag down here. That's the League's flag and it was done by a wife.



LYN-Mary Hoff who felt there was no emblem of these who were still missing, came up with a POW/MIA flag and it is flown at our capital. I do remember the process of getting it flown here in our city and it came out of our city. I was sitting at City Council and I was like “What is that they’re talking about.?” Now it is everywhere and it is a symbol of those who did not come home.

Your dad’s official status at this time is...

PAM-Well, everybody’s official status is KIA-their body not recovered. His was changed during the Carter administration when they went through and had hearings for each of the MIA’s. They kept one MIA designated as MIA and that was Colonel Shelton and that was a symbol that there were those still missing. It was an administrative type of change done for financial reasons more

than anything so that insurance could be paid and benefits and money stopped and that type of thing.

LYN-So, at that point salary ended, the benefits, the death benefit was paid out. What did that do financially for your family.

PAM-My mother had made some very smart decisions and so with the insurance that my dad had and with the money that been coming in to her she was a pretty smart cookie. We did not, we did very well. Like I even made her pay out-of-state tuition for Florida State. (Laugh) I got some assistance with that but God love her she never complained about doing it.

One thing that didn't change is that my dad was still missing. We did go through, a lot of families didn't, but we did go through the service at Arlington.

LYN-When was that?

PAM-That was shortly after, probably four to six months. It was like when I was home from school. You know it had to be done when we could all get there. We had the service. We did get the marker at Arlington.

Headstone
for Colonel Oscar
Mauterer
at Arlington
National Cemetery



LYN-Talk to us about the service.

PAM-It, I was angry. They had it at the little chapel at Ft. Myer which I had lived in D.C. for years and years and I've been in that chapel a lot and to be in there having service for my dad and knowing that not one thing had changed. There I was having a service for him, not very many people there. Even some of the close friends that my mother had did not come.

LYN-Why was that?

PAM-I don't know to this day I don't. It was kind of one of those things. I can remember we had a small reception afterwards. The headstone was added later on but we didn't have anything. I really tried very hard, I was married and I said, "OK, if this is closing that chapter I need to close this chapter, OK, this is it." I tried and I just couldn't. It finally just came back to me that, I have to find him, we have to get him home. Then when I got with the League and there were all these other families, I said, "Now it's not just my family, it's all these other families."

LYN-They are estimating how many there are?

PAM-There are fifteen hundred and two from Vietnam.

LYN-From Vietnam.

PAM-And I'm never going to walk away. Even if my dad, if his remains are found, if he is accounted for, I can never walk away from this issue.

LYN-The day that his remains are found, what will happen?

PAM-Well, I'll cry a lot but that will be tears of happiness.

LYN-How will it all be handled?

PAM-A lot of people have said that they will be at a celebration for his life and there will definitely be that. I think I would have to do the marker again. They would pull it where it is and put it someplace else in Arlington.

LYN-So the remains come home. They fly them home and then they are put in a casket just like a whole body with a uniform. Then there is the whole escort process which you would want to do I assume. So, he would fly into California?

PAM-Probably, maybe Hawaii. During the excavation everybody was so sure that they were going to find something. When I say everybody, I'm talking the government. I was ready to go.

I would have gone all the way over there if they had repatriated anything I was going all the way over there because I was going to be with him and bring him home.

LYN-We're talking all the way over to Laos, not just to California. We're talking the whole thing.

PAM-So I hope that if and when that happens that I could at least go to Hawaii. Normally they do bring them to Hawaii. I would want to be with him as much as possible.

LYN-You will fly to D.C.

PAM-D.C. and we would, I think I can speak for my family and say that we would want him at Arlington. My mother wanted him at Arlington. She wanted to be with him at Arlington.

LYN-Is she at Arlington?

PAM-No, I have her ashes and we're waiting for my dad so that they can be put together. She didn't want to be there if he wasn't there. So, I keep her.

LYN-Tell me about your activity with the National League.

PAM-We kind of got off track. The National League of POW/MIA Families has obviously been very instrumental to me and my family. I'm on the board now and I've been on a family delegation that was under the umbrella of the National League of Families. That flag that we talked about has really become a symbol of not just Vietnam but all conflicts.

To me, part of our mission now is not only for our loved ones that have been lost and the people that have come back but also a real signal for today's military. I never want anybody to go through what we went through. I don't want anybody, God forbid, to go through a war like that again. I think we really need to make sure that our armed forces know that if something happens to them they won't be left behind, that we will do everything we possibly can to bring them home. I think that flag is really a symbol of that. That's how I feel in my heart and I will work to that and the League has given me that...

TAPE 1 SIDE B

PAM-The League has given me a chance to do some things I probably would never have been able to do as little Pam Cain, social worker you know. For that I am really grateful. Some of the other organizations that I belong to and are proponents of the League, I really feel has given me the chance to thank others who did go to Vietnam and who came home and who were spit on and who never got their thanks. In as much as I want to have that flag and really mean to today's military what they mean to us it also now gives me a chance to see others who were there and veterans who are in wheel chairs and veterans who never got that thanks.

I was in Clearwater-St. Pete the other night for an Honor Flight that came back from D.C with a group that I belong to and we had sponsored a World War II former POW who I knew and he is

getting very, very frail but he is just a sweetheart and his son got to take him to D.C. so he was on that Honor Flight coming back.

Again, would I have known those people? I don't know. Would I ever have had that exposure to them? I don't know. The League, some people say the League is dying. The League was formed with the idea of closing as soon as everybody came home. So, if you ask any member of the League or any family member who has been part of the League if they ever thought we would be in existence all these years the answer is, "No. Hell, no." But we are and we can't stop.

There are other family groups and there are always different perspectives and different ways that of looking at how we bring people home but I feel that the League with its history, they have made relationships with government officials overseas, with political officials, our ambassadors, and that type of thing. We have some avenues and some communications and ways of working it so that we can help the government. We're not at odds with the government. I think you need an organization like the League because even in Sarasota where I live, some people go, "Oh, they're still looking for missing over there?" So, you need to make sure you've got somebody pushing.

LYN-I'm hearing a number because we made the presentation to City Council and different numbers were thrown out but I'm hearing that in all wars the number of 88,000. Is that correct?

PAM-Correct.

LYN-We don't know what happened to those people who served in our military.

PAM-Some of them, well a lot of them we know what happened. I would tell you that I'm realistic enough to believe that probably that over half of them we will never get home. They are either over an ocean, way out, but in many cases you know what happened. You know where they were and where they succumbed. But we haven't been able to find them.

There are other cases like the Vietnam cases where you don't know what happened to them, where they are, and anything like that. But, I think that number, and I think the government, and this is the League position but it is also my position, I think we're going to have to lower that number to the more reasonable, rational number that we can really feel we can get.

LYN-So the most number that we don't know what happened to them would be what conflict or what war?

PAM-That we don't know what happened to them? Well, Vietnam and some people from the Korean Conflict, World War I, World War II, they get upset with the League, with the government for putting more of an emphasis on Vietnam. But with Vietnam you had some circumstances there that you didn't have in the other conflicts. One, after Vietnam we were not allowed to just go in and recover as many people as we knew were over there. We couldn't just go and canvass the countryside.

In other wars you could. In World War II you know it was, we could go in and bring them home. In Vietnam you have soil and all these other physical characteristics that are really going to make us run out of time to get answers and witnesses are dying. Whereas, if you look at World War II and beyond to be honest your witnesses are pretty much gone. So, you're going after evidence which is important but you know our position is we don't ever want to say that ours is more important or to take away from any other finding. But when it comes to funding and whose is going go, please just get in and out of Vietnam when you can. These countries don't just let us come in even now, even with Favored Nation and you know open trade we still, we have to sit down at the table and especially in Laos, and say, "OK, we'll let thirty people come in for forty days. We'll let you do it three times." You just don't have that easy access.

LYN-I didn't realize that. I was surprised there was access but when there was I didn't realize it was so limited.

PAM-It is very regimented and very set-up.

LYN-So, you are on the board of National League and what does that entail in your life?

PAM-I'm on the Board of Directors and I'm also one of the coordinators for the State of Florida. So, as far as at the national level we have an annual meeting. We have quarterly board meetings. I'm involved from the stand point of seeing communication and looking at up-dates and helping to make decisions on what our resolutions are, our policies are and who do we push, who do we nudge. How do we get things done? What do we want from our government? Who do we need to educate? I'm shocked at how much education there is still, you'd think after all this time. That's a constant battle is educating. Part of what I do is the honoring and the remembering part but I really want to make sure that people realize we need to have that on-going commitment. The commitment these days means money and the money is from Congress so even though this is a humanitarian effort, it is linked with government and there is just no way around it.

LYN- Who are your big advocates in Congress?

PAM-We have a few. Unfortunately, several people are gone but Claire McCaskill who was instrumental in having the agency, now it's called DPAA responsible for accountability. Back when that was, it needed to be reorganized. She was big with that. I don't consider John McCain a big advocate, we won't go down that road. Other congressmen, that's tough because Sam Houston is but he's getting very, very elderly.

LYN-Now who is Sam Houston?

PAM-Sam Houston was military, Texas.

LYN-We have a Sam Houston here. [chairman of board of Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc.]

PAM-I know. My husband actually had a Houston, Captain Houston who was the CO at one point.

LYN-Sam Houston was the CO at Cecil. He sat right where you are sitting. I knew his wife before I met him. You never made it to Cecil Field?

PAM-I did only on my way to Mayport and a couple of other times we stayed there in temporary lodging at Cecil. So, I've been in that chapel. That's one reason I have to come back up because I had heard it was being used for storage and I just remember thinking as I read this, because this was a couple of years ago, "That's horrible. How could they use that chapel for storage?"

LYN-There were, well, there are no pews, there is no organ, it was gutted and office partitions were put up and it was piled high. I saw it. I was pretty shocked. It is emptied out now and the process has begun and you will be here for the rededication. Next week she will be back in town.

PAM-It's the rededication.

LYN-Of the chapel and the chapel, we believe was built in the '70's or '60's. [1963] It is through the efforts of the Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. that it is being restored at their own expense. The land and the building are owned by the City of Jacksonville. It was deeded from the Navy when Cecil closed and there is a five-year lease now on twenty-seven plus or minus acres. That chapel sits on it.

So, there is a young man who obviously you've met, Mike Cassata, who had a vision. The vision was after he saw the sixteen memorials out beside the chapel with the memorial plaques for sixteen people lost from Cecil, and there are many more lost from Cecil, in disrepair and he started cleaning up and it led from thing to another and now our goal is that at Cecil Field on that property we would in some way memorialize all missing in action and another important thing, educate about what these efforts were and what their lives were. So, what a big task they have ahead.

PAM-But they have made so much progress in I think a relatively short time.

LYN-So, we are hoping that they very brilliantly are able to do that for our nation that needs to remember and have a place to remember.

PAM-Speicher is near and dear. I never met the family but followed that very, very closely. I know he is from this area.

LYN-He is from Jacksonville actually, and Scott Speicher was the first man lost during Desert Storm and we have on tape the wing leader's personal account of that. We have Mike Cassata's father who was right beside the plane right before it took off, so his remembrance of that. We have those who were with Scott and knew that Scott was not supposed to fly that night. He was not on the flight schedule and said, "I need to be flying."

Scott became the local legend of those lost. There were other people lost that night but there is something that has drawn the hearts of those here and the name has been "Scott Speicher". Quite a remarkable young man, I understand but what a tragedy for his loss.

So, Pam, how did you get to Sarasota, Florida?

PAM-Well, that's a good question too. I mentioned my mother was in Seattle. I had been working in Washington for way too many years. My husband got transferred back to the D.C. area. He had actually been doing some stuff out of Norfolk at the end of his Navy career when he was full-time but active-duty reserve. He then retired.

We stayed there, the kids were being raised in Northern Virginia and a couple of things happened. One, he and I kind of went our separate ways a little bit, very amenable and I think I told you we talked for about thirty minutes today and he is actually down in Pensacola, revisiting his early days. My mother was in Seattle. I lived there for a while to be with her and kind of help out and then came back and when I came back to D.C. it was one of those things, "If I start working here again I'm never going to get out of this city." I love visiting and even though I have two grandchildren there, I just did not want to live there any longer. There were just too many things.

So, I had a chance to, I kind of wanted to come back to Florida, being a Seminole alumnus that I am and I had a friend of a friend near-by that had a house that just kind of fell in and I was able to find a really good job in Sarasota. So, I've been there for about four years but I'm finding that I'm not dealing with the humidity (Laugh) living on the Gulf Coast for that long. I'm actually trying to get to Jacksonville.

LYN-Well, we would love to have you in Jacksonville.

PAM-I would love to be here. I need a job. I keep saying, "I have to go up there and spend a couple of days." It is my hope to spend a couple of days and really do some job hunting. I do know a lot of people in the Jacksonville area. I have this crazy notion that I have to be in Florida but I need to be a little closer to my grandkids so maybe I can jump in the car and drive up 95. I've told you I've done it.

LYN-All our guys and all we have done as we go to meet the ships.

PAM-But, I can do that. That extra four or five hours down into Sarasota just makes it tough and it makes it tougher for them to come visit me. I just, I think you get a little more of the seasons here. It's just all those intangibles. So, I'm looking to come to Jacksonville.

LYN- Jacksonville seems to be the place to move to now.

PAM-Oh, really?

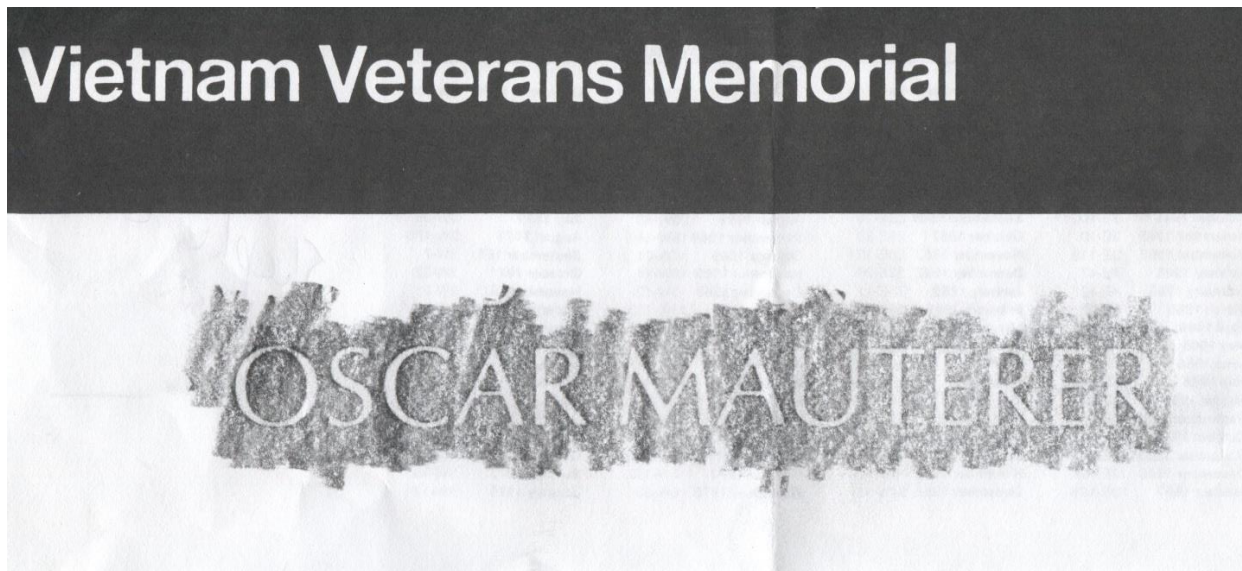
LYN-You didn't know that? It is the 2nd most popular place to move now is Jacksonville. The economy, economically it's very feasible because housing has been so low here so yes, but I'm saying, "No, most people go away" but we would love to have you. There is something out there for you we hope for you to be Jacksonville resident. But if we take the statue of Andrew Jackson down we may even change our name. [movement to remove statues from public places in the

city] Whatever town we are going to be, if we can close Cecil we can change our name. [the city's name is in honor of Andrew Jackson whose statue sits prominently in the city]

We look forward to seeing what is going to happen with your career and what is going to happen with this memorial.

We were just talking about what's going to happen the week of Veteran's Day in Washington. Pam, tell us about that.

PAM-The organization who built the Vietnam Memorial, the Wall, as it's known. Periodically they do a reading of every name on the wall and this year is one I think it is the 35th anniversary, don't quote me on that, I would have to look it up, of the opening of the wall. There on Veteran's Day they will have receptions and programs but they start on Tuesday so that they can read all of the names during the days and most of the evenings and be done on Veteran's Day. So, my dad's name will be read Tuesday evening and I'm gonna fly up on Monday so that I can be there and read his name as well as twenty-nine others around his loss date.



Rubbed Impression of Pam's father's name on the Vietnam Memorial Wall
Washington, D.C.

We were kind of chatting about what it means when you say those names out loud. I've had the honor at the National League of POW/MIA Families annually in reading the names of those from the Vietnam War who have been accounted for from the previous meeting, throughout that year. When I did it one of the names I read was the sister who was in the picture that I gave you from going to Laos and I not only is it difficult to say those names but when you know the family or just you know what saying that name is meaning and what you're saying and what you're doing. As we were saying, it is very emotional.



Pam Cain with Recovery Team in Laos with the sister of another unreturned military hero

LYN-It brings you to attention of what this is really all about.

PAM-Very much so. So, I'm looking forward of being able to read my dad's name and just have a special time.

LYN-Thank you for your service. Thank you for the amazing trip up to be part of this and we will do our best to make sure it's a really good project and you are a good voice to have. Thank you, Pam.



MIA Daughter's Story
by
Pam Mauterer Cain

I am not the only person who remembers a date like it was yesterday. Many of us recall where we were or what we were doing when shocking news events break: JFK being shot, September 11, 2001, the Challenger explosion are some that are vivid in our hearts and memories. For my family and me, another date is etched in our lives forever: February 15, 1966, the day my dad, Col Oscar Mauterer, USAF, was shot down over Laos during the Vietnam War and listed as Missing In Action (MIA). it was a time of political and social unrest in our country, and little did we know it would be the beginning of a 49+ year journey of growth and maturity, anger and frustration, sadness and longing. The journey continues. This is a story of dedication to bringing Dad home and fighting for the fullest possible accounting of our unreturned Vietnam veterans. It is a story of finding hope and being surrounded by many: motorcyclists (ok, bikers), veterans, men and women of all ages, who care, inspire and are pushing for the same answers we family members are. For along the way, I, the older of two children, became involved with the National League of POW/MIA Families, The Ride Home, Run for the Wall (RFT\N) and Rolling Thunder. My life has been blessed by those who never knew Dad but who have taken on the POW/MIA issue and have enveloped me in their passion to bring him and others home. Though this story is about Dad and how our lives changed, it is a story that includes the organizations above, veterans' organizations and numerous individuals whose support and efforts are simply extraordinary! Many never received their own "Welcome Home"! I salute them as I share my story. Much has been said about those who face holidays and other special times with an empty chair at the table. if you have experienced the loss of a child, someone abducted, those killed in battle or in accidents or from disease, you know about that empty chair. I have to admit that for me, at least, it does not get any easier as the years pass. For years we bought greeting cards for Dad, celebrated his birthday with his favorite lemon merengue pie and candles, commemorated his shoot-down date, even had a memorial service for him when MIAs were reclassified as "KIA-body not recovered" by the Carter administration. He has a marker in Arlington National Cemetery. His name is on the Vietnam Memorial. The sense of loss and not knowing is

pervasive. And it does not end. I was fortunate to know Dad, experience childhood outings with him, learn from him and try to live up to his expectations. Even when away from home, he was a parent who held us accountable, who wanted us to accept responsibility and take leadership roles. He was a cigar-smoking, rangy golfer whose passion for flying and his country led him to a career in the Air Force. He volunteered to go to Vietnam because, as he said, he was trained to serve and had taken an oath to protect the U.S. - and our freedom. His sense of humor, determination, intellect, and integrity were always noted by those he met and knew. He made friends easily, was a great teacher (including to South Vietnamese student pilots), had a soft heart for animals, and had a zest for life and living that was reflected in everything he did. Born and raised in NJ, Dad loved watching and playing sports, from football to swimming to bowling. He and Mom enjoyed entertaining, playing bridge, hunting (or at least shooting!) and they prioritized time with their children. When he was shot down, at the end of a mission from Thailand into Laos, his A-1E Skyraider was on fire, he radioed that he was bailing out and his flight lead watched his parachute deploy and then descend to the ground. Search and rescue efforts were terminated after three days due to heavy ground fire and no sign of Dad. He never entered the prison system. He remained missing. At home just outside Washington, DC, my mother, brother and I suddenly found ourselves isolated and "different" from others. We waited. We cried. We were told not to discuss what happened or where it happened. We received reports that correlated to his case but never could be verified. We received hostile phone calls - some from callers who condemned Dad for being a killer and getting what he deserved. It was a tough time to be a teen and realize how many hated not only the war but those who fought in it. My mother was nothing short of a heroine! She was a rock, while enduring the heartbreak of losing a husband and not knowing what happened to him. Mom literally hunkered down and raised her son and daughter, sheltering us from the destructive and hateful situation around us. She also followed what Dad had told her to do should something happen to him: listen to what the government told her and have faith. Years later, when her confidence in our government's efforts to find Dad dissolved, Mom joined me at National League of POW/MIA Families annual meetings. There, our sense of isolation was replaced with support from other family members who understood. We compared data and networked. We learned to be active in our case, to demand the fullest possible accounting, to push for answers and to plead for our nation to honor its commitment to bring home those who fought for their country. The years of complacency were over! It was time to demand results. It was also a time to anguish again, because so much time had passed and along with it, lost opportunities to find our missing, Dad included. Dad was considered a "last known alive" case for years since he was known to have made it to the ground. His case has been investigated by Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), and first-hand witnesses ultimately produced a photo of him in 2010. These same witnesses lead a team to an alleged burial site and that site was excavated in 2011. While results were not positive, the U.S. government assures me that they will not stop trying to resolve his case. They will return. They will continue the search. And I will continue pressing them to do so! I will also urge our government to fund Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), the new agency charged with accounting for our POWs and MIAs, work closely with the League of POW/MIA Families and go wherever I can make a difference. For the past several years, I have spoken on the issue, traveled domestically and to S.E. Asia and met some incredible people. I also found I enjoyed riding on the back of a Harley! Traveling to Americus, GA, years ago, I was shocked to learn that one of the events during The Ride Home was a service to honor MIAs. A large poster of Dad's photo was hanging in front, along with others, whose families I knew. People cared! We

weren't alone! As family members, our numbers are small. But a growing number of organizations who focus on our nation's obligation to bring our men and women home would have an impact. We could be heard. The POW/MIA issue could reach a level of prominence again. With the public gig families demanding funding, accountability, and answers, perhaps we could bring more home, resolve more cases. Since then, The Ride Home has given even more attention to MIAs in its programs. As an MIA daughter, my life has been enriched by relationships made in GA and during Run for the Wall in May of each year. Riding across the country from TX to DC (RFTW travels from CA to DC but I have not yet been able to go" all the way") gives me the privilege of joining other patriots and concerned citizens, to say thank you to veterans and to share events that I treasure with people who I consider family. All sustain me as does the attention focused on POWs and MIAs during Rolling Thunders Freedom Ride in DC which I look forward to riding in each year, including 2015. My life was forever changed on February 15, 1966. Though I have a wonderful career, became a wife, mother and grandmother of a family that has grown, seen other losses and had much happiness and prosperity along the way, Dad is always at the forefront. My promise is to do all I can to bring him home I can't do it alone and hope you may find something in this story that causes you to react — and take positive steps: write Congress, fly the League of Families' POW/MIA flag, tell others that we still have veterans waiting to come home, support organizations like the League of POW/MIA Families so we can continue the work needed. And finally, remember and honor those who are still missing. Each has a story. Each has a family. Each should be returned to his home. Dedicated with love to my mother, Evie, who passed away in March, 2015.