DWAYNE L. BELL



Dwayne L. Bell enlisted in the U.S. Navy March 2 1964. Following basic training in San Diego and Advanced training at Naval Air Station in Millington Tenn, he was assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 3 (HS-3 Tridents) based out of NAS Norfolk, Va. During this time, in addition to maintaining the submarine hunter/killer Sikorsky SH-3D helicopters, he also earned his Anti-Submarine Warfare Air Crew Wings, as a sonar operator. HS-3 was carrier based, initially on CVS 11 Intrepid. HS-3 was also fortunate to pick-up astronauts in the Gemini program, following "splash-down" upon return to earth.

Early in1967, Dwayne volunteered for duty in Vietnam, with a new Helicopter Attack Squadron that was commissioned in Vung-Tau Vietnam, the Navy Seawolves of H.A.L-3. (Helicopter Attack-Light) This was a "first" in Naval Aviation History, for the Navy to fly attack helicopters. The U.S. Army supplied the navy with UH-1B Gunships in order for Navy Crews to fly close air support for the River Patrol Boats ("the brown water navy") and the Navy Seals, that were operating in the rivers and canals of the Mekong Delta. There Dwayne maintained the UH-1B attack helicopter that he crewed, and flew as crew-chief and door gunner. During one year in country, Dwayne flew 461 combat missions. He received one Distinguished Flying Cross, forty-one Air Medals, One Navy Commendation Medal, as well as medals for Presidential Unit Citations, and Navy Unit Citations. Dwayne returned to Treasure Island Naval Base in the San Fransico Bay, and was separated from Active Duty on his 23rd Birthday, Aug 3rd, 1968. He was separated from the Navy; **but the Navy training and experience , launched a career in Aviation for Dwayne that continued until Aug 2007**

Dwayne went to Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa. There he completed certification for the FAA Aircraft & Powerplant Maintenance and also started his flight training. While in Tulsa, Dwayne met the love of his life and married Cindy L (Addington) Bell. A position with Bell Helicopter in Fort Worth as a Field Engineer was the beginning of a thirty-seven-year career, traveling together, including two and a half years resident in Kermanshah, Iran. Cindy home schooled their daughter Amy while in Iran. The revolution towards the end of 1978 forced relocation back to the USA on Dec, 28, 1978. This was B.E; "Before Ethan." (Betty Meyers' Mr. Ethan. Bell) After a short contract at the Naval Air Test Center in Patuxent River Maryland, Dwayne joined a program for a new model Bell was working on, the Bell 222. Betty Meyers' Mr. Ethan Bell got his first passport when he was six months old and when deliveries of the Bell 222 started, the family moved to southern Germany in Aug 1980. Initially, Dwayne was the front-line support for the Bell 222s delivered into Europe, Middle East and Africa. Eventually Dwayne became the Manager of Customer Support for that area, leading a team of eight men.

As Amy and Ethan completed High School, they each came back to Texas and graduated from UNT. Eventually, Dwayne and Cindy repatriated at the end of 2004 and then Dwayne retired from Bell Helicopter Aug 2007. Today Dwayne and Cindy are involved with cattle and timber production in Northeast Texas, on 530 acres total. That is circa 320 for hay and cattle, with circa 210 in planted pines. Almost 20 years, and the best years of their lives!

Today Dwayne is an elder at Oak Ridge Baptist, a small church in Marietta, TX. There he does expository teaching for Adult Sunday School and occasionally "stands-in-the gap" when the pastor is out of town on mission trips and other ministry business.

Blessed more than we could ever deserve!