

Sven A. Akesson



Rank:	Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret)
Branch of Service:	U.S. Army
Unit:	Troop D, 1st Sq, 10 Cav, 4th Inf. Div
Active Duty Dates:	1969-1971
Reserve Duty:	Oct 1979-Jul 2007
Armed Conflicts:	Vietnam
Speaking Subject:	Reflections of an Army Helicopter Pilot in Vietnam

Sven was born in Sweden and moved to West Los Angeles when he was 5. He believes the Boy Scouts taught him to always do the right thing. By trade, he first became an aircraft mechanic and later a private pilot.

He then joined the Army in 1969 and became a Warrant Officer flying helicopters. With basic training and pilot school under his belt, he was deployed to Pleiku Vietnam to fly troops supplies and was assigned to an Air Cavalry unit tasked with protecting highways and fire bases from enemy attacks. He flew missions with nine helicopters; three observation, two gunships and four Hueys carrying 28 Troops and one scout dog. His most rewarding missions were flying wounded soldiers to the hospital and later being informed they survived.

In 1970 when his unit was based in the An Khe area, his unit was bombarded with grenades and machine guns by the enemy while he was taking a shower. He later learned that 17 helicopters including his were destroyed and is grateful he wasn't in it. Some fond memories along with his fellow soldiers is giving their lunches and candy to the Montagnard villager children. He spent 16 months in Vietnam and then retired from active duty in 1971. Shortly after, Sven joined the California Army National Guard and proudly served for another 20 years flying missions during floods, riots, drug interdiction and border control.

His most challenging missions were fighting fires and dropping water from a 325 gallon bucket hanging under the helicopter. Sven retired as an airline pilot in 2007 and is currently a proud member of the Orange County Freedom Committee and shares his military story and experiences throughout the community. He feels it is very rewarding and it's just one of the many ways he gives back to the community especially to our youth.

He has been married to Cookie for 47 years and they are proud parents to two sons and live locally in Mission Viejo. For this and all you have done, we thank you for your past and continuing service.



The Freedom Committee of Orange County brings "Living History" into the classrooms by sharing stories from all generations. The veterans are available to speak to school children at the request of educators. For more information please visit the website at fc-oc.org.