

Sylvie Clayton-Jasna, Brodie Murillo

Period 1st

Steven Lund

Air Force

29 Years In Service

2018

### Steven Lund

The United States Military is known for its dedicated and courageous soldiers. In December, 1956, these soldiers were sent to Vietnam on a mission to keep communism from spreading throughout the country. In 1965, one of these courageous soldiers was Steven Lund. A newly graduated high school student, inspired to help his country by his Father, who served in WWII, and his Grandfather, and who served in WWI. Unknowing of his future, he's set forth on the most selfless and valiant act of his life of helicoptering through the jungles of Vietnam.

Ever since the age of 12, Lund, born in Minnesota and raised in Washington, has been obsessed with aviation. He had been influenced by his mechanic and a WWII Veteran father, and decided to join aviation school to follow his passion. Taught how to fly by Charles McAllister, a dear mentor of his, Lund was determined to earn his pilot's license. In January, 1964, the excited 17 year old young man earned his private pilot's license and flew his first solo flight in March of 1965. While he was flying over the

beautiful valley of Yakima, Washington, he had no idea that he would soon be flying a helicopter over the harsh jungles of Vietnam.

When Lund earned his pilot's license, his first thought was not to join the military. He wanted to pursue an occupation of airline transportation, but, he did not have the flight hours or necessary ratings in order to work in that industry. Humorously, he said he was never really good at tests, especially in school. Sooner or later, he took the Military Aviation tests, passed, and considers that it worked out perfectly because he, "wanted to join anyways." In 1965, he volunteered in the Army and enlisted for training as a warrant officer but went to Officer Candidate School before going to Flight School.

Lund briefly describes his experience of piloting through Vietnam in his helicopter as, "Flying with a death sentence." He also stated that being in the United States Army was a, "very independent job but you were also very dependent and close to your crew." He described it as having a temporary family with the people he served with and that everyone lived so close together that it was a very tight community. You all had to be dedicated to trust and take care of each other, one hundred percent of the time. To which Lund showed his dedication to his fellow soldiers on April 23, 1969, by saving a man from a flaming helicopter. When a Navy helicopter crashed on a road near one of the buildings on his camp, a man was trying to put out the fire. The man did not know that the helicopter's ordnance was about to explode, but Lund did and immediately rushed to save him. With complete disregard for his own safety, he heroically pulled the man out of danger and saved his life by shielding the ordnance when it did explode. Lund would earn the Army's Soldier's Medal for valor for his outstanding, selfless action.

Lund had a passion for aviation in his youth, his 29 years of service in the military, and even after his service. Thankfully he married his wife, Sylvia, who is completely supportive of this passion of his. To follow his passion, Lund was a manager and director for many aviation companies. Like: Hughes Helicopters, McDonnell Douglas Helicopters, Sperry Defense Systems, Honeywell Defense Systems, and Wright Airlift. His work to help his country did not stop there. From 1995 to 2009, Lund flew Counter Drug surveillance and other law enforcement operations for the California Department of Justice. He claimed it was the best job he ever had, even though it didn't pay him much, he greatly values those experiences from those 14 years.

Recently, Lund built his own aircraft all on his own and takes great pride from it. He also takes part in Historical Reenactments, Fly Ins, and Air Shows. Several years ago, something happened to him that once happened before, and it was not just *deja vu*. At one of the air shows he attended, a plane had crashed and he had no hesitation to run into it and save anyone he could. Just like in Vietnam when he saved that man from the burning helicopter. This time, his wife was running right next to him, ready for action and ready to help, just like Lund. Someone who is willing to sacrifice themselves, in a dangerous situation, with and for you, is absolutely true love. Something he stated sincerely was, "I found the right wife". Even now, after more than 35 years of marriage, he still calls her right after he lands his plane and tells her he has "put the bird to bed" so she knows he's safe.

Steven Lund was and always will be a heroic figure in the United States Military's history. He will always be known for his selfless actions and his passion for aviation and

helping others. Lund didn't know what his future had in store for him when he earned his pilot's license, but, he's glad his journey brought him to all the places it did. Whether it was serving in Vietnam, finding an occupation in law enforcement, or marrying his loving, and strong wife Sylvia, his life has been an exciting adventure, in the air, and on the ground.