

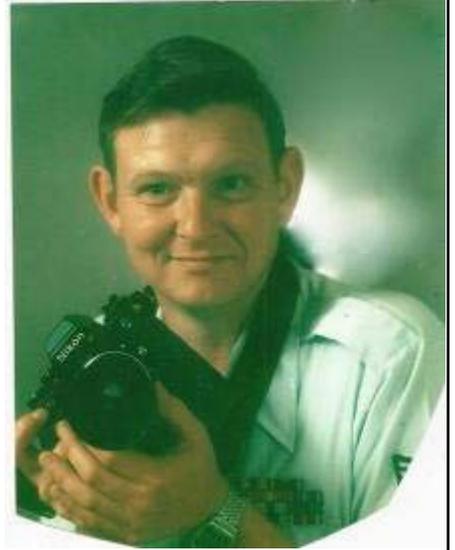
# Member Spotlight

## Member "Veteran" Spotlight - Charlie Diggs

All of this started well before I went into the Air Force. My first bike was something that we towed into the storage lot back home in Louisville Kentucky. It needed a lot of help, and yes it did run and I ran it to death. That was the beginning of a very long process.

I entered the United States Air Force in December 1971. Prior to basic, everyone takes a battery of test to see what job you qualify for and can do for the betterment of the military. During basic, everyone gets a chance to select their "job". Everything pointed to load master, after further review of the job description, that sounded great for my life style. Back to the job at hand, getting trained. Finally, the big day came, graduation and being shipped out to your next duty location/tech school. A few days passed in Texas and off I went to Denver Colorado. Remember, load master school. After several weeks of dorm guard duty and shinning my shoes, I was called in to the orderly room. The great and mighty Air Force sent me to the wrong base. I should have been sent to Sheppard AFB for "load master" school. After several more dorm duty days, they finally gave me an option. I could select another "job" or get out with an honorable discharge. I elected to, you guessed it, pick another "job". My choices for Lowery, was supply, PEML (which I didn't qualify) or photography. Doing cellulose acetate in high school, I would give this a shot for Uncle Sam. Some 16 weeks later, a total of 9 months at Lowery, we graduated with our first set of "Orders". Everyone knows that during tech school you fill out your "Dream Sheet" for your choice of a new base. Mine was nothing west of the Mississippi River. Uncle Sam didn't see it that way, I was sent across the pond to Korea. Didn't realize that Korea was my home base and the unit I was assigned to did nothing but TDY's. My first assignment was a hill in Thailand with a small helicopter outfit. Several weeks with them, documenting everything, then on to the Philippines. Again, documentation and long hours and tons of film. That tour ended and on to Andrews AFB, Maryland. On my R&R before Andrews I purchased a 750 Suzuki. Great ride at the time. Andrews was another "on the road unit". TDY 300 days

a year. Loved every minute of the action. This time we went with a sound crew and 16 mm crew. While assigned to Andrews, I was tasked to the Presidential Unit, 89th MAW. That got me access to 26 and 27000 with a camera. Good trading material when the



Thunderbirds came to town. This assignment gave me the chance to shoot with the top names in the business at that time. On several jobs, more of my photos were used than theirs. Yes, my head did swell. I was awarded the SEI (special experience identifier) and with all my training and school, Uncle Sam made me a Photojournalist. No more pay but a lot more jobs. Assigned to the D. C. area gave me the chance to shoot/photograph everyone from the President to the lowest ranking Airman. This assignment really sparked my love for photography and telling the story. Got married the first time in MD. The 750 had to go according to the wife. We had to buy a car, a Vega. After 9 years and a short assignment to Bethesda Naval, I got orders to Rhein Mein Germany. Another traveling unit, this time not so many days on the road but still a lot of film. Year into the assignment, the wife decided to leave me and the 2 girls. Three years later, off to another assignment, hopefully east of the Mississippi. Uncle Sam said no, Texas. Bergstrom AFB. Checking into the unit, I told the Chief that I was ready to hit the road. He said, "we don't to that in TAC". One way I was glad, but I still missed the road. This was great duty, they put me in charge of the Base Photo Lab. We did everything, shoot, process both color and B&W, print color and B&W and copy plus studio work. That was a great 7 year tour. Met Julie and we got married. Kids grew up and left home and a new(1995) wing took the kids place. The rest is history.