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1st Lieutenant Peggy Finn Reno, a US Army Nurse wore these fatigues while serving in Vietnam

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, J. Gleim, Museum Curator)

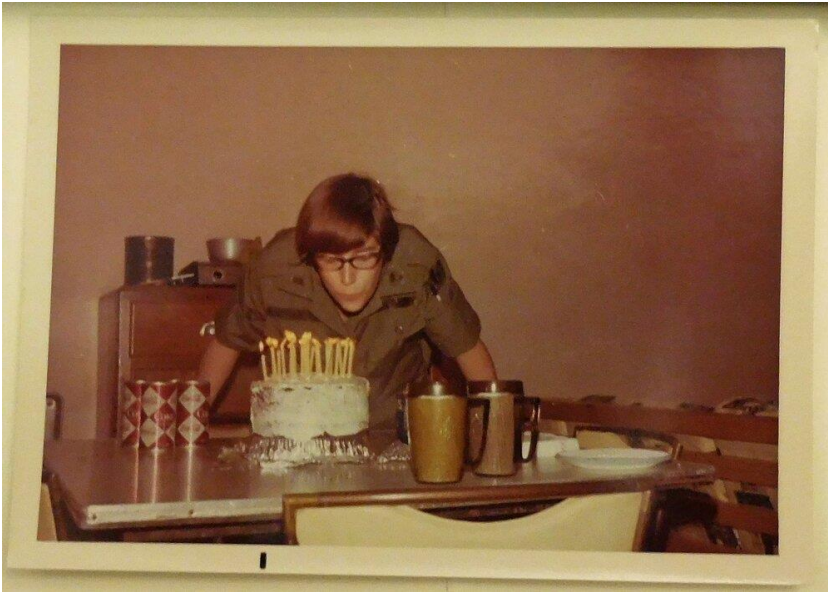


Photo of Peggy Reno, Birthday Party.

Peggy (Finn) Reno (1945-2019) was born and raised in Harrisburg, PA. She earned a degree in nursing from Polyclinic Hospital School of Nursing and in 1967, joined the US Army Nurse Corps. Peggy trained at Brook Army Hospital, Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas and at Kimbrough Army Hospital, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. While in training, she enrolled for duty as an Operating Nurse. Peggy recalled in a 2002 interview, volunteering for Operating Room nursing was “a sure ticket to get into Vietnam.”

Peggy arrived in Vietnam in May 1968, shortly after the Tet Offensive. A coordinated series of North Vietnamese attacks on South Vietnamese cities and outposts, the Tet Offensive intended to encourage uprising among the South Vietnamese people and weaken American resolve to continue fighting. The offensive campaign greatly weakened American popular support for the war and inflicted heavy military and civilian casualties.



Photo of Peggy Reno's fatigues.

Peggy was stationed at the 8th Field Hospital in Nha Trang, a South Vietnamese coastal resort city along the South China Sea. Unlike many field hospitals, which were designed to be mobile, the 8th Field Hospital occupied a location formerly used by French colonial forces. It afforded the doctors and nurses an operating room in a permanent building and staff quarters in buildings Peggy called "villas".

Nha Trang had been one of the first locations attacked by North Vietnamese soldiers in January 1968 and heavy fighting still raged in the mountains near the 8th Field Hospital. Peggy remembers: "We were hit the second day I was there. It was air fire and small arms. Several times a week there was weapon fire near our compound." Casualties came to the hospital via helicopter "covered in mud and dirt, soaked from the rice paddies." Medical personnel treated American soldiers as well as Vietnamese soldiers from both sides of the conflict.



Photo of Peggy's US Army Commendation Medal.

Peggy spent nearly a year at the 8th Field Hospital, often working 24 to 30-hour days. She celebrated her 23rd birthday at the hospital and became engaged to her future husband, Dennis Reno. For her service in Vietnam, Peggy was awarded the US Army Commendation Medal.