

Flying a Cargo Aircraft into Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, during the Tet Offensive, 1968

David K. Vaughan

Above the field, I look for passage through

The clouds that screen the land of black-clad foe.

I wish I had another place to go.

I landed at this field not long ago;

The runway slopes up to the hills, I know.

Above the field, I look for passage through.

Those marines need their ammunition, so

I throttle back, bring gear and flaps down, slow.

I wish I had another place to go.

Descending, I turn tightly to allow

Us to avoid the hostile fire below.

Nearing the field, I look for passage through.

If this were a different world, I would follow

A route where flight is simple and life mellow.

I wish I had another place to go.

We land in dust and smoke, drop our cargo,
Depart for Da Nang, my crew and I, to
Return again, sweating our passage through.
I wish I had another place to go.

David K. Vaughan is a retired Air Force officer and university professor. He flew a variety of training and cargo aircraft during his twenty-year Air Force career. His autobiographical account of flying C-130s in Southeast Asia is titled *Runway Visions*. He recently published *Solo Stages*, an account of his pilot training experiences.