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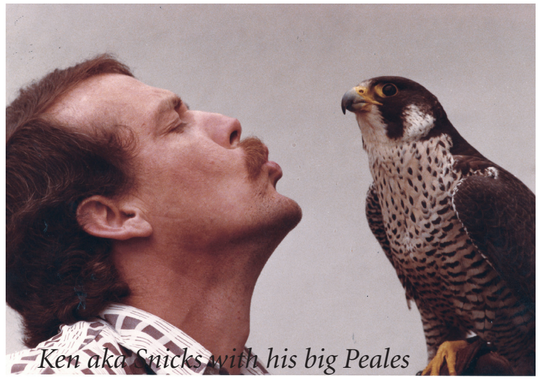


Ken aka Snicks with his big Peales

> **"...Ken was always good for a laugh, told interesting stories and was a loyal friend. We will miss him."**

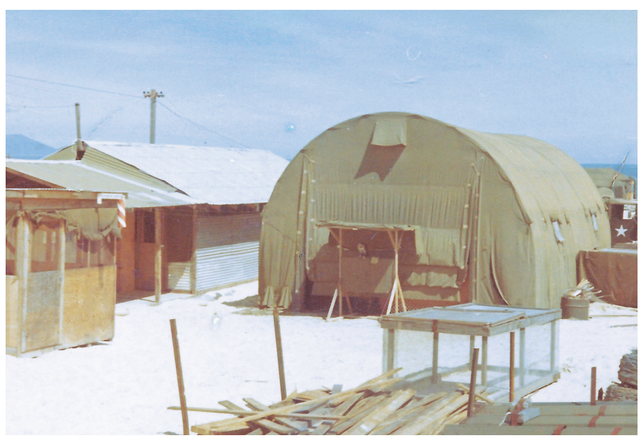
My memories of Ken

by Bryan Culbertson

Ken Higgins was a born falconer like we all are. He flew most of the North American birds of prey starting with a kestrel about '57. Ken had several Merlins, Prairies, Cooper's, Sharpies, Goshawks, and the 3 kinds of Peregrines here that pass thru the states. He took a little break and spent some vacation time over in Viet-Nam in '66-'67 but even there found time to fly a Goshawk from that area. The flying time was restricted a bit as he was point man on many patrols. They liked Ken for his height at 6'9". He could see the smoke from the enemy's rifles as those bullets whistled over his head and pinpoint where they were.

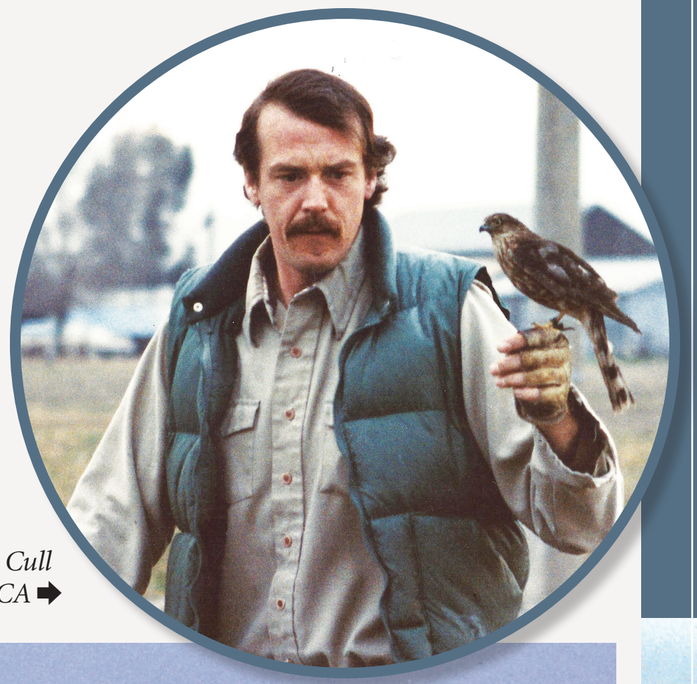
Back in the states in '68 he was flying an American Gos from a Nevada nest around Wildhorse, then went on to Prairies from Pyramid Lake, then to a few peregrines. Ken caught a lot of rabbits and pheasants with the Gos. The Prairies were on pheasants and ducks - so were the peregrines. Ken took a nice female Sharpie that ended up flyin' out the window of the truck at starlings. Some were caught on the lawn of industrial areas - people would see that and we would tell them it's a rescue project, "Gonna turn the bird loose" and most times that really did happen. Ken had a few Merlins that were flown on the yellow field birds - nothing scares those like a Merlin. You guys know they will bury up under your feet just to hide. The one bird that turned out to be THE BEST falcon was a 48 oz. Peales. A few of you got to see this bird fly at the CHC meets and NAFA meets. Ken went to the Alamosa, Colorado meet one year and turned this falcon loose on a herd of mallards a couple hundred feet up with the line of cars and trucks on the road watching. This bird took off after the ducks and she pushed them even higher in the beehive pattern. She got above them at 'bout 800' or so and did the roll and tuck stoop on the black ball in the sky and went thru the pack and everyone could see the mallard fall out the bottom like a drop of oil and spinning in the air to the ground with the Peales 6' behind...you could hear that duck hit the ground. You know there was a gorge that followed that flight.

I have maybe 50+ years of flights that could be told and other good stories of different things that happened in that time-span. Anyway Ken Higgins for those who knew him was always good for a laugh and interesting stories (most of them true) I met him in '59. He was my partner on the other end of a '12 piece of sheetrock for 45 years. We flew a lot of different birds together and he was a loyal friend - give ya the shirt off his back (after he wore it a few years), give ya a bottle of whiskey (but wanted to strain it thru his kidneys first). ***Yeah, this guy will be missed in this circle we call falconers and falconry . . .***



Even during his time serving in the Vietnam War, Ken found a Goshawk to fly!

Thanks for the good times, Ken!



1984 Sharpie from Cull Canyon Danville, CA ➡

Hawking chukar and crows near Modesto

Memories of Ken

by Susie Higgins

Ken was an avid falconer. He was raised in San Leandro, California and flew birds all over the San Francisco and central California areas. He enjoyed flying in Nevada as well. He moved to Idaho in the mid-1990s and flew with his good friend Bryan Culbertson.

A list of his falconry friends reads like a "Who's Who" of central California falconry. Even his military service with the US Army in VietNam did not stop his falconry. While stationed there, he trapped and flew a local goshawk! He was wounded in VietNam by the dreaded punji stick. But he still had time for his goshawk!