



# The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

April 1994 Vol. 12, No. 2



UH-1D slicks are parked on a road leading to province headquarters in Song Be, South Vietnam, in 1967.

Jack Swickard photo



## From the President

Our Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association continues to grow. We are still averaging more than one new member a day and, to me, this is incredible. Not so much because of the sheer numbers, but because potential members are still finding out about us for the first time or are finally deciding to become members for the first time.

We have existed for 11 years; we have advertised and promoted and "cajoled" people and organizations to help us get the word out. We have bugged media people for coverage and tried lots of different venues so that potential members will know about us. Membership drives were sponsored, chapter activities encouraged and booths for membership acquisition were manned at aviation functions. We do it for only one reason, so that new members can continue to find us. It IS working, and lots of pilots

have found the VHPA, but there are still those who don't know about us.

We are getting so large that only a few hotels and cities can handle us. We are so large the volunteer Executive Council makes decisions that can involve amounts measured with six digits; the reunion budget for this year is more than \$100,000. We are big enough that we could easily have 2,000 people at the reunion in Philadelphia.

So, what's my point? Nothing more than to ask: Is this a great organization or what? We have no "cross to bear," no cause to champion. No politics to pursue, no lobbying, no need for federal or state legislation. No bake sales, no pleas for cash, no garage (hangar?) sales to generate funds. We're just a bunch of Vietnam helicopter pilots who stay in touch and get together to share a common experience; plus, have a good time doing it.

Thanks, guys, for ALL the memories; I hope to see you for many years to come.

— Phil Marshall, President

## VHPA chapters

### Arizona Chapter

(Update requested)

### Ohio River LZ Chapter

Paul Cotter, President

### Great Lakes Chapter (Northeastern Illinois)

John Becker, President

Bruce Rodewald, Vice President

### North Carolina Chapter

Gary Kimbrell, President

### New England Chapter

(Update requested)

### Mardi Gras Chapter

Don Hunt, President

Lee Overstreet, Vice President

New Orleans, LA

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Chapters are responsible for providing the name, address, telephone and fax numbers of chapter officers to the VHPA Newsletter, 7 W. Seventh St., Suite 1990, Cincinnati, OH 45202, for this listing.

## VHPA briefs

### 'Spirit of America' available

Coors Brewing Co. has introduced another in the series of commemorative veteran posters.

The poster, "Spirit of America," honors the American Indian veteran and is a reproduction of the original painting by George Skyepek. The original artwork recently was donated to the library at West Point by Pete Coors.

Rex Gooch has a limited number of the posters which he is offering free to VHPA members.

To obtain a poster, contact Rex Gooch at [redacted] Lakewood, CO 80228 or call him at [redacted]

### Historical directory scheduled

The Directory Committee reports Volume No. 1 of the Historical Reference Directory went to the printer at the end of March.

Those who order this edition should receive it in early May. If you have not received your copy by May 16, please contact VHPA Headquarters.

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## VHPA OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND STAFF 1993-94

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## Calendar

### May 20-22

The Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Reunion will be held May 20-22 at the Capital Plaza in Frankfort. Entertainment will be provided by VETTZ and by Britt Small & Festival.

Contacts: Bill and Sandy Robinson at [REDACTED]  
and Joe and Lisa Humphrey at [REDACTED]

### July 13-17

The Lawyer-Pilots Bar Association meeting will be held at the Clarion Inn in Napa Valley, CA.

Contact: David E. Prewitt, [REDACTED] Philadelphia, PA 19103 or call: [REDACTED]

### July 15-17

The Tan Son Nhut Association will have its reunion in Evansville, IN. For addition information, call or write Don Parker, [REDACTED] Princeton, IN 47670, or call him at [REDACTED]

### Sept. 7-11

The Army Otter-Caribou Association will hold its annual reunion in Orlando, FL.

Former Army Otter and Caribou aviation personnel can contact the association at (800) 626-8194 for additional information.

## Council sets agenda deadline

Members desiring to place an issue before the membership at the annual VHPA business meeting for a vote by the membership must submit the item to the Executive Council 45 days prior to the day of the annual meeting.

The Executive Council welcomes input from the membership as to the operation of the VHPA.

The Executive Council is responsible to the membership for the operation of the VHPA.

In order to meet these responsibilities and to facilitate orderly discussion of issues, the Executive Council needs to have annual business meeting agenda items submitted to it in time for it to review during its telephone conference meeting prior to the annual business meeting.

The Executive Council adopted the following procedure during its February telephone conference meeting:

### Seeking VHPA office?

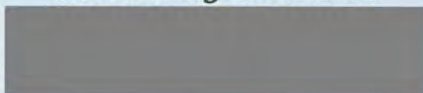
The names of VHPA members who wish to run for the VHPA offices of vice president and junior member at large of the Executive Council must be submitted to the Nominating Committee chairman (NCC) prior to the 1994 reunion.

Nominees must be interviewed by the NCC before the NCC submits the nomination to the Executive Council for inclusion on the ballot.

Nominations will be accepted by the NCC at the reunion prior to 6 p.m. Saturday, July 2, 1994.

Nominations may be mailed or faxed to:

**Charles R. Rayl**  
**Chairman**  
**Nominating Committee**



## Committee wants details about platoons

Do you know any details about the airlift platoons in 1962 and 1963?

We believe there were at least four of them, that they deployed to Vietnam as platoon-sized units, flew only Hueys and were stationed near the CH-21 companies. We think they were separate from the UTT, which also had Hueys in the early days.

What happened to them? Were they incorporated into the aviation companies?

If you can provide details, please contact the Directory Committee via VHPA, 7 W. Seventh St., Suite 1990, Cincinnati, OH 45202 or call Mike Law at [REDACTED]



# Marathon is member's mid-life crisis

I agree with our VHPA president, Phil Marshall, in that this is the only veterans organization I belong to. I have benefited from the Directory by re-establishing contact with several friends from 25 years ago. I've also enjoyed the Newsletter very much.

I had hoped to attend the reunion this year in Philadelphia but I will be in training to run in my first marathon (26.2 miles) for the Leukemia Society of America. (This may be the ultimate in mid-life crisis ideas!)

As part of my participation in the event, I'm raising funds to continue research to find a cure. If you are able to support my effort, please send your contribution to: Leukemia Society of America, Indiana Chapter, 921 E. 86th St., Suite 205, Indianapolis, IN 46240, and indicate my name as a participant. I'll let you know the results of the campaign and if I survive the race!

Don Wood  
Plainfield, IN

# Experience can take years to accumulate

A long time ago, in a place far, far away . . . so begins the story.

I soloed on Aug. 1, 1966, in a TH-55 on a bet between my IP, H.T. Ogle, and another IP. (H.T. won \$5 and I put solo wings on my "brown hat.")

Then, after what seemed like a thousand years, I became a "Wobly One" and an Army A-VI-A-TOR on the same day. A fire had been lit that was inextinguishable, and I was the hottest, best helicopter pilot who ever strapped in a UH-1.

A group of us went to Fort Sam Houston, TX, for AMEDS training



## Federation has one VHPA member

Here is a photo of my car here in Yap, with the VHPA bumper sticker on it. I thought maybe you might want to publish it in an upcoming issue of the Newsletter.

I have the only vehicle on the entire island with this bumper sticker! In fact, I am the only person on the island, and the whole of the Federated States of Micronesia, who is a member of VHPA. The FSM covers an area the size of the United States, but if you take all the actual land and lump it together, it is about 10 percent the size of Rhode Island.

Yap is one of the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia. It is known as the "Land of Stone Money" because in olden times, large stone disks were the medium of exchange.

I got my new copy of the Directory and discovered four other VHPA members in this area in Guam. Geographically, and politically, Guam is not really part of Micronesia. I wrote to all of them but so far have only heard back from one. The three who fly for Continental Airlines haven't answered yet, but the one who is also an engineer wrote me back. It's good to know that there are "stick buddies" in the area.

I made the Fort Worth and New Orleans reunions, but since then have been committed here in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and have been unable to attend further ones. I still enjoy reading about them, though, and eagerly look forward to getting the Newsletters.

Kenneth R. Cochran

via Guam

enroute to Fort Bragg, NC. There we formed the 45th Medical Company-Air Ambulance.

I questioned once or twice "what is Dustoff?" No matter — I could fly anything. After drinking my young (23) "aviator-equipped" mind into oblivion at the 82nd Airborne "O" Club one night, I came back to reality somewhere called Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, looking out onto the ramp at a flight of C-141s refueling. God, am I lucky!

The next week or two were a blur. The heat, monsoon rains, the black-and-white sign, "Welcome to Bien Hoa, RVN." "Why do they have this stupid wire over the windows of the bus? I can't take decent pictures." "There's the heliport, next to the hospital, with Hueys on it . . . I have arrived!"

Move over, get out of the way, let me at one of those mutthas and I'll show you how it's done. I'm good — damned good!

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"Oh, by the way, Mr. Wynne, those are not your aircraft. They're ours. Yours are still on a boat somewhere in the Pacific Ocean."

"Well, ex-cuse meee."

It didn't take long for me to find my position along with the rest of the FNGs. But heck, all I wanted to do was fly . . . and fly I did. Reality has a way of sneaking into your life and mind. I wasn't as good as I thought. Hell, I wasn't good at all. Thank goodness I was lucky and that gave me time to learn what I needed to stay alive.

I learned self-reliance, what the aircraft could and could not do, how much punishment it could take, and I learned instinct and survival flying. There I was . . . a CW2 Dustoff aircraft commander. How could it get any better than that?

Then, all of a sudden, I was back at "Mother" Rucker, assigned to become an instructor. I had arrived . . . again. "Don't worry, I've been to Vietnam. I have almost 1,000 hours of combat flight time." My SIP listened and said, "Lieutenant (that's right, an RLO now!), let's go fly a little. "No problem," I said. WRONG!!

Steep and normal approach sight pictures, 500-foot-per-minute climbs, standard-rate turns, touchdown auto-rotations to a spot the size of a throw rug, thorough and precise pre- and post-flights . . . whoa. All this, thinking and talking about what you're doing while you're doing it!!! No, I wasn't as good as I thought I was, but I sure was learning a lot.

Then followed two wonderful (and sometimes terrifying) years of instructing, and I was finally learning how to fly. "Lady Luck" was still sitting in my lap.

One day I picked up my mail and opened a harmless manila envelope with papers saying, "Captain Wynne is to report to the 90th Replacement Depot, Long Binh, RVN." No please, no thank you or any other options. This I don't need. What happened to those orders to Germany?

Another two-week blur. Then orders to the 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery (ARA). Another question — "what's ARA?" Oh, aerial rocket artillery. Gunships. Cobras!!

I had arrived . . . again. "No problem, guys, I'm an IP, second tour, and all that stuff." I looked around and there's one of my old students. "Oh, you're to give me an orientation flight? Great, I remember the area well." Surprise, surprise. This isn't like anything I've seen before; what's with these screwy controls? No, I'm not as good as I thought I was.

So, it's off to transition school, this time with a different attitude. I wasn't as cocky; I had more of an interest in doing things right with precision and professionalism. I wanted to learn as much as possible, knowing that even the smallest detail remembered can be the difference between life and death. I was beginning to rely on experience. Experience is a strange thing. You gain it mostly by making mistakes and learning from the mistakes of others. I was lucky to have survived my mistakes, and they were turning into experience.

Boy, was I lucky.

Then, back into the field, flying for "Blue Max." Still more to learn — tactics, rules of engagement and a host of things that spell survival. I had great teachers; I was lucky.

Suddenly it was over. In the blink of an eye, those days that never end were gone. Gone were the sounds and smells that invade your very soul — whopping rotor blades, turbine whine, JP-4 and cordite. Gone was the feeling of adrenaline flowing a gallon a minute through your body, things in slow motion but happening in milliseconds. All the dirt, sweat and fear was over, nothing but a memory. For me, it stayed over for almost 18 years.

Two and a half years ago, I had the opportunity to "start all over again," as a weekend backup pilot for WFLA-TV, the NBC affiliate in Tampa, FL, my hometown. I still remember my orientation flight. Imagine the emotion of that moment as I "commanded" the "Eagle 8" AS350 Astar into the air and it all came rushing back — the ground, that is!!! My entire life passed before my wide-open eyes as the check pilot took the controls. No, I wasn't as good as I thought I was . . .

From that humbling beginning,

I began to again listen, watch, learn and tolerate how to fly the "Squirrel." I progressed from unsafe to questionable, from passable to OK to "that was a damn good check ride." The first thing I did after that was to buy my fellow pilots a beer and go get another big watch!!

It has been an absolute ball flying the "Eagle." Where else can an old man have so much fun with his clothes on? Learning ENG flying is a lot like learning to be an IP. Much of it is very precise. My attitude toward flying has changed over the years. Professionalism, safety and courtesy are the mainstays of television flying, as it should be in all flying. No matter what your age or experience, there's always room to learn to be good.

So, when you find an "old guy" who's been there and back a few times, and displays a desire to do it and do it right, give him a shot. Chances are, you'll get your money's worth and a whole lot more.

Right now I feel luckier than I ever have before . . . someday I hope to be good, too . . .

O. Boyd Wynne  
Tampa, FL

## Thank you note to pilots draws a nice response

When I sent the letter to your association, I never expected the kind of response that we got. We just thought a "thank you" from our group to yours was long overdue. We did support each other during the war, but had little personal contact. All we knew was that you guys were doing one hell of a job and someone should say so . . . even if it took 20 some years to do it.

I recently got a very nice letter from one of your members, along with a story that he had written about his special Christmas Donut Dolly mission in 1969. He gave me permission to print the story in our newsletter. I know the guys will enjoy it a great deal, so a big

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# Letters

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Raider thank you goes out to Jim Scheuckler.

Thank you for printing our letter and God bless all of you.

Raymond Blackman  
Delta Raiders of  
Vietnam Association  
Rt. 1, Box 39-A  
Valparaiso, NE 68065

## The following letter was written to Blackman in response to his letter in the December VHPA Newsletter:

Dear Raymond:

I was "DMZ Dustoff 711" out of Camp Evans and Quang Tri from 4 July 1969 to 15 November 1969, when I was wounded on an insecure night mission near Razorback and sent home early. One of the privileges of being President of the VHPA is that I get to proofread our Newsletter before it is published. This morning I read your letter to the helicopter pilots and crews.

You made me misty-eyed today,

reading your comments about what we (both you AND us) went through. What especially hit my "heartstrings" was your comment, "Please do not say that you were just doing your job. All the grunts know that simply isn't so." Most of the pilots I know will only admit to "just doing their job," but, yes, we tried to go the extra mile for you guys because we all knew that if the roles were reversed, you would have done the same thing for us. And many air crews were rescued by grunts, taking risks and doing more than "just THEIR job."

I once talked to a wounded ground-pounder the day after I picked him up, and his comment was that there was no way I would catch him "up there." My reply was that there was no way he would catch me "down there!" It was a matter of what we were trained for, I suppose.

There were times that we would take cold Cokes or beer out to you guys because we knew that we DID have "3 hots and a cot;" we

had all the respect and highest regard for the grunts in the field. There was little we wouldn't do for them, but you also have to realize that there was a little bit of daring and audacity in a 21-year-old pilot with a helicopter in combat! The pilots were there to support the troops, and that's what we did. Your appreciation of our efforts is well received and I am certain that you will get several positive responses from our members.

We all did our jobs well, both grunts and pilots; we were not found to be lacking. Only those of us who depended on each other for our lives can know what it meant to be there. Hopefully, our children and grandchildren will never know for themselves what it is like, only what we tell them it was like. If so, then maybe 58,000 lives will not have been lost in vain after all.

Phil Marshall  
VHPA President

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## NORTHERN I CORPS, 1968-1972

An Eagle's Eye View by Joe Kline © 1993



This full color, highly detailed, collector's quality print includes a topographic map of Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces, showing base camps, firebases, and geographic features. The map is bordered by representative aircraft of each aviation company of the 101st Airborne Division, including aircraft insignia, company patches and callsigns.

Each 24" X 32" print is numbered and signed by the artist, who was a crew chief with B/101 in 1970-71. Each is printed with permanent inks on 100# acid-free paper and is shipped rolled.

The cost for each print is \$26.50, plus \$3.50 shipping and handling.

Limited Edition  
Order While Supplies Last

Please Allow 3 weeks for delivery. California residents add 8.25% sales tax.

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VHPA



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## French TV director seeks vets

I am a French TV journalist and director, and I am working on a documentary about veterans' actions and activities in Vietnam.

I am looking for individual cases of veterans (or veterans' families) wanting to go back to Vietnam for personal reasons for the first time since the end of the war:

- To find a friend (Vietnamese or not), a wife, a child, a grave, a souvenir, a place . . .

- To help that country through a mission, an association.

- To try to get over their trauma and problems in daily life (alcoholism, unemployment, loneliness . . .) connected with the war in Vietnam.

We would like to film two or three veterans on their trip in Vietnam.

Julien Meije

## Sending out Newsletters a great idea

Congratulations, and what a great idea of sending the February issue of the VHPA Newsletter out to the entire membership, current or otherwise. It found me deep down in the crack I fell through a few years ago.

I was disenchanted with the organization because I joined up and never received more than one or two newsletters. I guess my name was being overlooked by the computer or something. Well, looks like there's much more participation these days and the Newsletter was very striking. It got my attention. I just called in my

renewal and ordered a current directory. I am looking forward to getting the new directory and some back issues of the Newsletter.

While I'm at it, I would like to extend an invitation to all those On-Line comrades who are tripping down that superhighway of information via any of the electronic services out there. I would like to see us develop an on-line forum for all VHPA members.

I am currently using America Online and find it a great, inexpensive service. I would encourage anyone who would like to get hooked up via computer to send me an e-mail via their service, whichever they're using. My Internet address is: melcan@aol.com. You don't have to subscribe to AOL to send me e-mail. Whichever service you're using has an Internet mail gateway. All you have to do is address your correspondence as shown above and sent it via your Internet mail gateway.

In some cases, you don't even have to subscribe to an on-line service to send e-mail. Many large cities have Freenets that you can dial into directly, free of charge. If you live near a university, there is probably a phone line that will allow you to dial into the university's computer and hook up through one of the various Freenets that way.

If anyone would like more information about how to do that, feel free to write or call me at home.

I think it would be great to have that networking capability with a great group of guys who share so much in common. There's no limit to its benefits, not to mention the pure camaraderie involved. I look forward to hearing from everyone who would like to crank up those engines and fly off into cyberspace.

Mel Canon, B/227 1967-68

Nipomo, CA 93444

**EDITOR'S NOTE: All VHPA members interested in receiving e-mail from other members can include their e-mail address in letters to the VHPA Newsletter. E-mail addresses will be published along with postal addresses. On-line service subscribers can send e-mail to the Newsletter**

ter editor over Internet at:

(CompuServe subscribers can send e-mail directly to:

## Memorial story in Newsletter appreciated

Just a short note to say I appreciate the work you and your staff are doing with the Newsletter. Your article on the recent dedication of the Women's Vietnam Memorial was especially appreciated.

As a point of consideration, I would propose consideration relative to extending both all the nurses and "Donut Dollies" a standing open invitation to attend all reunions.

William L. (Larry) Little

## Daughter searching for father's friend

For several years now, I have been in search of a gentleman who served with my father in the Vietnam War. My father lost contact with this gentleman sometime after they were discharged and since then has tried to relocate him, but has had no success.

My father's name is Leston James Ross. He served in the Vietnam War (Army) from 1968 to 1970. He was a member of the 189th Aviation. The gentleman we are trying to relocate also served in the Vietnam War from 1968 to 1970. His name is Michael Lavin. He was a specialist 4 crew chief and a member of the 189th Aviation as well.

The last time we had any knowledge of his whereabouts, he was residing somewhere in the State of New Jersey.

Jennifer Adams

Troutdale, VA 24378



# Pilot turned boat captain dies at sea

## Jimmy V. Dobbs

Jimmy V. Dobbs, 56, of Destin, FL, died at sea on Dec. 7, 1993, while serving as captain of a commercial fishing vessel.

He initially served in the Army from 1954-60, serving one year in Japan with the 508th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and three years in Germany with the 82nd Airborne Division.

After a five-year break from military service, Dobbs returned to active duty in 1966 to become a career officer. He attended Infantry Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA, and was commissioned in October 1967.

He graduated from flight school as a helicopter pilot in 1968, and served two tours in South Vietnam, with the 114th Assault Helicopter Company, 3/5th Cavalry, and with the 48th Assault Helicopter Company.

After retiring from the Army in 1980 as a major, Dobbs flew helicopters in the Louisiana and Gulf of Mexico oil fields for Offshore Logistics Inc. through 1985.

Dobbs then was licensed as a commercial fishing boat captain, serving on the vessel "Bronco" for six years. At the time of his death, he was serving aboard the "Partners Pride."

He is survived by his wife, Margaret I. Dobbs of Destin; daughter,

Susan Dobbs of Destin; brothers, Jackie Eugene Dobbs of Tampa and Gregory Charles Dobbs of Vero Beach, FL; and sister, Violet Yearby of Midwest City, OK.

Funeral services were conducted for Dobbs on March 16.

## Paul Erikson

Paul Erikson of Vero Beach, FL, died in January of cancer.

A member of class 66-21, Erikson served with C/229th Avn., 1st Cavalry Division in 1967-68.

He was a retired air traffic controller. Erikson is survived by his wife.

## Clifford R. Hendryx

Clifford R. Hendryx, who graduated in flight school class 57-5, died Feb. 23.

Hendryx, who served with the 57th Assault Helicopter Company in 1962-63, was a resident of Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.

He is survived by his wife.

## Gerald Dean Jones

Gerald Dean Jones, 44, of Greybull, WY, drowned Jan. 21 in an ice-fishing accident near Meeteetse, WY.

Known to his friends as "Dean," Jones is survived by his wife Kerry and a teen-age daughter, Hillary.

He and his wife operated Jones

Construction.

"He was known as a good craftsman and was liked and respected. He had never joined the VHPA, but it is his family's wish to have his name included in the Directory," Jerry Ewen, a friend and member of the VHPA, wrote.

During his tour in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, Jones' aircraft were shot down four times. The last time he was shot down, Jones was injured and left for dead. However, he later was rescued.

Ewen said Jones, a graduate of Class 69-15, served in Vietnam from July 19, 1969, until May 23, 1970.

"If there is anyone who knew him in Vietnam, would you please write down any memories of him and send them to me. I will give them to his daughter so that she will understand more about him and his service, and will be able to pass the information on to her children," Ewen said. "If anyone else would feel moved to drop a card of condolence, I will deliver them to his family."

Ewen's address is:

## Pierre R. Lefebvre

VHPA member Pierre R. Lefebvre died of a heart attack on

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# Gleason sacrifices life to prevent deaths

Richard "Rick" D. Gleason, 46, was killed Jan. 28 when the helicopter he was flying crashed and exploded atop a 13-story office building a block from San Jose City Hall, San Jose, CA.

The crash ignited a five-alarm fire.

Witnesses credited Gleason with averting a more deadly disaster.

Bob Norona, a longtime friend of Gleason's, said: "Eyewitness accounts declared Rick a hero for dumping the bird on the roof instead of autorotating into the crowd below, which would have killed numerous bystanders but

would have saved his life."

The San Jose Mercury News reported the 7:36 a.m. crash onto the roof of the First American Title Guaranty Co. building, on First Street between Taylor and Mission streets, sent black smoke billowing into the air and heavy debris falling to the ground.

No injuries were reported, and the fire in the evacuated building was contained on the roof, authorities said.

The Sikorsky S-58 helicopter belonged to Air One, based at San Jose International Airport.

The helicopter had completed lifting an 1,800-pound piece of

cleaning equipment to the roof of the First American building, when the craft's tail rotor apparently failed, sending the chopper down at a 45-degree angle, authorities said.

The craft exploded on impact, breaking up and bursting into flames.

Gleason, who graduated in class 69-43, served with D/1/10 Cav., 4th Infantry Division in 1970-71.

He was to have been married July 5 to Belinda Del Valle.

Gleason had three daughters and two sons from a previous marriage.



# VHPA member succumbs to heart attack

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March 1, 1993, according to Charles L. Eady.

He is survived by his daughters, Dawn and Heather; a son, Pierre Jr.; and his ex-wife, Kathy.

Kathy and Pierre Jr. live in Killeen, TX.

## Donald Rollins and Ken Shriver

Donald Rollins and Ken Shriver died in an AH-64 helicopter crash

in north Louisiana on Feb. 14, the Army reported.

The two men were flying an Apache helicopter for Rockwell International when it went down near Spearsville, LA.

Rollins, who served with the 498th Medical Company in 1970-71, was from Waskom, TX. He was a member of flight school class 69-29.

Shriver was from Keithville.

The AH-64 was returning to Shreveport, LA, from Fort Belvoir,

VA, when it crashed.

## Burton "Jon" J. Vleck

VHPA member Burton "Jon" J. Vleck of Dalton, AL, died Nov. 14, 1993.

He graduated in class 62-1, and served with A/228th Avn., 1st Cavalry Division in 1967-68; 120th Avn. in 1969; and the 5th Aviation Detachment in 1969-70.

He is survived by his wife, Anice Vleck.

# Museum asks for crewmen names

**GARY ROUSH**  
DATABASE CHAIRMAN

The VHPA has been asked by the Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker to provide it with names of crew members killed in Vietnam.

This information will be used to construct a new memorial room in the museum.

The original basis for the VHPA KIA list came from the museum about 10 years ago.

This list was restricted by the Department of the Army to crew members killed by hostile action only, which covered one-third of crew members.

The museum has just received permission from the Department of the Army to include all crew member casualties and the museum is asking us for help because the VHPA has the most accurate information available.

We need your help. Although the helicopter pilot portion of the list consisting of 2,186 names is in

fairly good shape, we have just started compiling enlisted crew members.

Our starting list includes 1,486 people compiled from accident records from the Army Aviation Safety Center, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion Association memorial list, casualty records from, the National Archives based on MOS, and from the VHPA and VHCMA.

Now is the time to pull out your letters, orders and notes from Vietnam to help us ensure we do not leave out anyone.

Since the museum memorial will include all Army crew members, we are also putting together a database of Army fixed-wing pilots and crew members killed in Vietnam, so include those as well.

Please send all information to Gary Roush, Painted Post, NY 14870, or to VHPA Headquarters, Suite 1990, Cincinnati, OH 45202, attention: Database Committee.

# HCA needs judges to help with nationals

**JACK JORDAN**  
VHPA MEMBER

The Helicopter Club of America (HCA) will be holding the National Helicopter Competitions this May 7-8 at the Silver Bowl in Las Vegas, NV.

The winners of this competition will not only be declared U.S. champions, but will represent the United States in international competition in Russia in August.

The HCA needs rotary-wing pilots to serve as judges for these national competitions. Training for those judges will be conducted May 6.

If you are looking for an excuse to go to Vegas and want to partici-

pate in a very worthwhile endeavor, here's your opportunity. If you are interested in participating, contact the chief judge:

**Jim Hesson, B.G. (Ret.)**

HCA has responsibility for providing judges for all vertical take-off-sanctioned competitions or attempts to set National Aeronautical Association (NAA) or Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) records.

HCA judges are trained and sanctioned at HCA National Helicopter Championships. Selected judges are nominated to the FAI as

international judges.

Once sanctioned, the designation as an FAI judge is permanent as long as the person so designated is able to perform judging duties.

As with all members of the HCA, this judging effort is voluntary and at the individuals own expense. The HCA neither reimburses judges nor assumes any responsibility for expenses at national or international events.

For the forthcoming International Championships in Moscow, Russia, Aug. 26-Sept. 1, the Helicopter Club of Russia is attempting to provide a package for hotel, meals and local transportation at about \$1,000 per person.



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Take a moment now to fill out and mail the coupon for your application packet, or call (904) 226-6363 for undergraduate program information, or 1-800-866-6271 for graduate program information. **All Embry-Riddle independent study degree programs are designed and supported by faculty and staff from our Daytona Beach, Fla., Prescott, Ariz. campuses, and the College of Continuing Education.**



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Daytona Beach, FL 32114-3900

VHPA Newsletter

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Larry Salese photo

The Art Museum and Waterworks are two of Philadelphia's scenic and popular tourist attractions.

## Reunion begins in three months

**RALPH HARVEY**  
REUNION CHAIRMAN

The VHPA Reunion in Philadelphia is only three short months away. If you haven't given thought to attending, now is the time to mark your calendar for June 30-July 4.

- **Hotel reservations:** Almost half the rooms at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel, the reunion headquarters hotel, will be reserved by the time you read this.

This number of reservations is an early indication this reunion could possibly be the highest-attended reunion to date. Make your reservations now by calling (215) 448-2000.

- **Transportation:** If you fly, there will be limo service available

through Limelight Limo Service.

Limelight is located at each terminal. The fee is about \$8-\$9 each way. Check for the roundtrip fee.

- **Trips:** If you would like to go to the casinos in Atlantic City or to The Wall in Washington, D.C., you will have to arrive on Wednesday for an early Thursday departure.

The casino trip leaves at 9 a.m. and returns at 5 p.m. The Wall trip leaves at 8 a.m. and returns at 6 p.m.

If you are interested in taking one of these trips, please mark the appropriate places on the Reunion Registration Form accompanying this article.

- **Thursday:** Arrive early and enjoy the rest of the day with old friends or go out and about in the

city and discover the many areas of history, science and beauty. Your entertainment for the evening will be by a D.J.

- **Friday:** From 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Philadelphia Navy Yard there will be a large aircraft static display provided by the Pennsylvania National Guard. Come and see one of every Army helicopter that flew in Vietnam.

There will be a tour of the Navy Yard, which possibly will include a tour of a ship. Crew chiefs also have been invited.

Evening events will be a cocktail party and live entertainment.

Remember, there is a crew chief party at the Holiday Inn. All VHPA members are invited.

- **Saturday:** The golf tournament starts with a 7:30 a.m.

*Continued on Page 12*



# Follow these directions to hotel

**Here are directions to the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel in Philadelphia:**

• **From the north:**

Follow Interstate 95 to Exit 17, which is the "676 West Central Philadelphia" exit. When you get off at that exit, follow 676 West to the first exit, which is "Broad Street."

When you get off at that exit, it will bring you onto 15th Street.

The first light is Vine Street. Make a right, proceed two blocks to 17th Street and make a left. The hotel is 1.5 blocks, on the left.

• **From the south (Washington, Maryland):**

Follow Interstate 95 north to Exit 17, which is the "676 West Central Philadelphia" exit. When

you get off at that exit, follow 676 West to the first exit, which is "Broad Street." When you get off at that exit, it will bring you onto 15th Street.

The first light is Vine Street. Make a right, proceed two blocks to 17th Street and make a left. The hotel is 1.5 blocks, on the left.

• **From the west (Pennsylvania Turnpike, Harrisburg):**

Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Exit 24, which is the "Valley Forge" exit.

When you get off at the exit, take 76 East to Exit 38, which is the "676 East" Central Philadelphia exit.

When you get off at that exit, stay in the right hand lanes and follow signs for "Broad Street Central Philadelphia" exit. When

you exit, the first light is 15th Street.

Make a right turn onto 15th Street. Go two blocks to Cherry Street.

Make a right, then go one block to 16th Street and make a right. The hotel is 1.5 blocks, on the left.

• **From the east (New York):**

Take the New Jersey Turnpike to Exit 4. When you get off at Exit 4, you will take 73 North to 38 West, then take 38 West to 30 West, which will bring you over the Benjamin Franklin Bridge.

When you come over the bridge, you will be on Vine Street. Stay in the local traffic lanes on Vine Street.

Proceed to 17th Street and make a left turn. The hotel is one block, on the left.

# Golf tournament begins with shotgun start

**Continued from Page 11**

shotgun start. Please mark your registration form so we can schedule adequate transportation.

The 5k run will be held early in the morning in Fairmount Park along Boat House Row.

Guest speaker at the luncheon will be retired Col. Jay Strayer, a Son Tay Raid pilot.

Evening events will include a cocktail party and live entertainment.

• **Sunday:** A non-denominational church service will be held at 8 a.m. I am seeking a volunteer to conduct this service. Please contact me at [redacted]

The ladies function will be an hour of meet-and-greet and an hour or more of old-fashioned Bingo, with cash and prizes. We are looking for volunteers to help the committee run this event. Call me with your name and number if you can help.

The Membership Business Meeting will be held in the morning so you will have free time to tour Philadelphia or visit nearby

museums.

At the Sunday night banquet, cocktails will be served starting at 7, followed by a live band and dancing until late.

• **Monday:** Instead of checking out, why not extend your stay and watch the North Carolina Chapter and its helicopter float for the City of Philadelphia's Fourth of July Parade. Come and walk alongside a UH-1 chopper.

• **General information:** There will be numerous activities for the kids, such as swimming, basketball, volleyball, racquetball and tennis.

Mini-reunions will be scheduled throughout the reunion. Crew chiefs have been invited to attend these mini-reunions. Bob Anderson, assistant reunion chairman, is in charge of scheduling all mini-reunions. Call him at [redacted]

There will be a shuttle bus available from Friday to Sunday for travel between the Wyndham and the overflow hotels, to certain historical areas, Penns Landing and other locations.

During the weekend of July 4,

there will be an air show at North Pennsylvania Airport. All VHPA members and family are invited.

Tours available Saturday and Sunday are:

• Pennsylvania Dutch Country-Lancaster and Amish area, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Cost: \$42.

• Franklin Mills Outlet Mall, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Cost: \$18.

• Longwood Gardens, 1-5 p.m. Cost: \$26.

• Historic Philadelphia with a colonial-dressed guide, 9 a.m.-noon. Cost: \$17.

Arrangements can be made now through Centipede Tours. Call (215) 735-3123. If you want to learn more about the City of Philadelphia and surrounding countryside or to shop till you drop, these tours are of excellent quality and are extremely interesting and worthwhile for the entire family.

So, break out your luggage and dust it off, call for your reservations at the Wyndham and send in your registration form. Then pack your bags and come to Philly for history, beauty and lots of fun.



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

11th Annual Reunion Philadelphia, PA June 30-July 4, 1994

## REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Mail to: VHPA, 7 W. Seventh St., Suite 1990, Cincinnati, OH 45202

FAX signed credit card registrations to: (513) 721-5315

Name:	Member No.:	Expected arrival date:
Wife/Guest name:	No. of children:	Is this your first reunion?
Names of additional guests:	How many reunions have you attended?	
Address:	Check here if notifying VHPA of an address change [ ]	
City:	State:	ZIP: Phone: ( )

### REGISTRATION FEES

	No. of people	Price	Total
Registration before 6/1/94*		@ \$ 25.00	
Registration after 6/1/94*		@ \$ 35.00	
Saturday luncheon (Jay Strayer, Son Tay Raid pilot.)		@ \$ 20.00	
Banquet July 3		@ \$ 35.00	
Trip to "The Wall" (Meals not included.)		@ \$ 30.00	
Atlantic City casinos (Meals not included.)		@ \$ 20.00	
Dues (if included)	1 year	@ \$ 30.00	
You can make 3 payments over 6-month Installment period if you wish	Life installment No. 1	@ \$150.00	
	Complete Life Membership	@ \$450.00	
	GRAND TOTAL		

Indicate if you want to participate in these activities	
<b>Static aircraft display at Navy Yard:</b> (Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. May include ship tours; meals not included.) <b>Cost: No charge</b>	
<b>5k run:</b> <b>Cost: No charge</b>	
<b>Golf tournament:</b> (Saturday until noon. Exact price to be determined, details in next Newsletter.) <b>Cost: \$50</b>	

\* Each adult 18 and older must pay the registration fee.

- ☐ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion '94"
- ☐ Please charge my: MasterCard VISA Discover (circle one)

Credit card No.:	Expiration date:
Signature:	

### REUNION NAME TAG INFORMATION

Name you want on name tag:	Call sign:
Name of wife/guest:	Flight school class: (Number or year for Army; branch and year for other services.)
1st combat unit:	Year(s):
2nd combat unit:	Year(s):
3rd combat unit:	Year(s):
Hometown or current residence:	

**Refund policy:** No refunds will be granted prior to the Reunion. All refund requests must be submitted to VHPA headquarters no later than Aug. 5, 1994, and must include all tickets received, plus proof of payment. Refunds will not be granted for fixed-price events (the Banquet is a fixed-price event) that lose money unless the entire Reunion has a positive cash balance. The VHPA headquarters will process and pay all refund requests within 10 days of completing the Reunion accounting balancing.



# Hotels, phone numbers, rates listed

Here is a list of hotels — with reservation telephone numbers and room rates — catering to VHPA members attending the 11th annual reunion in Philadelphia:

• **Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel**, reunion headquarters. Call: (215) 448-2000. Rate: \$69 per night.

• **Holiday Inn Midtown**, several blocks from the Wyndham. Call: (215) 735-9300. Rate: \$65 per

night.

*NOTE: In the February Newsletter, the telephone number of the Holiday Inn Centre City was given instead of the number for the Holiday Inn Midtown.*

• **Korman Suites Hotel**, six blocks from the Wyndham. Call: (215) 569-7000. Rate: \$69 per night.

• **Doubletree Hotel**, halfway between Wyndham and the his-

toric area. Call: (215) 893-1600. Rate: \$69 per night.

• **Hotel Atop the Bellevue**, luxury hotel near Doubletree. Call: (215) 790-2816 and ask for Meg Evans. Rate: \$90 per night.

• **Embassy Suites**, across street from Wyndham. Call: (215) 561-1776. Rate: \$95 per night for luxury suite occupied by 1-4 people; \$15 per night extra for each additional guest.

## Chapter would like guards for helicopters

The North Carolina Chapter needs help in Philadelphia! I have been informed by the personnel at the hotel that it would be inadvisable to leave the Huey and Loach helicopters unattended at ANY TIME.

As this could be a problem, the North Carolina Chapter is asking for volunteers to pull guard duty for one hour increments; we need 96 volunteers.

The only requirements to be a volunteer are that you have to be able to expound war stories for one hour and describe the various functions of the aircraft. This time with the aircraft could give you the opportunity to rebound with an old friend if you both sign up together.

The North Carolina Chapter hopes the presence of the aircraft will add to the ambiance at Philadelphia. If you can aid in our quest for keeping all the parts of the aircraft in one location, please contact Jerry Seago (weekends, [redacted] work, [redacted] during the week after 5 p.m. EST, [redacted] or drop me a note at [redacted] NC 27278.

We would like to see as many of the membership as possible remain and participate in the Independence Day Parade, July 4, 1994. Would it also be appropriate to ask the crew chiefs to join us in the

parade?

Without getting into a great deal of detail, I would like to offer an explanation as to why the aircraft was not at The Wall on Nov. 11, 1993.

The powers that be in Washington would not allow the aircraft to be brought within one mile of The Wall. We requested help from, and received help to no avail from, the Governor's Office of North Carolina, a Virginia state senator's office, and VHPA members in Washington.

Neither would they allow the aircraft to take part in the parade because the parade permits did not allow for motorized vehicles. The money that was contributed in Phoenix will be used to bring the aircraft to Philadelphia. I hope this will be satisfactory with the VHPA membership.

The North Carolina Chapter is looking forward to seeing you in Philadelphia. So, bring your best war story. What better prop could you have than an old UH-1C to impress, bedazzle, and beguile others while telling your favorite war story! This could be done as you look after the aircraft!

Jerry Seago

Past president, NC Chapter of VHPA  
Chair, Helicopter Procurement Committee  
of NC VHPA

## Seeking

I am an Australian pilot who served with A Troop (Silver Spurs), 3/17 Air Cav, based at Dian in May/June of 1970 and again briefly in October of 1970.

I would like to make contact with pilots and observers who served with the Spurs during that time, particularly Phil Blakeney if he is contactable.

David Earley

I'm looking for a class list that will give current addresses of anyone who was in the same class as my father, Donald R. Saegaert, the class of 63-7WA.

I also have a mug that has the following inscription on it: "Fort Wolters, Texas, 'OH23D', W.O.C. D.R. Saegaert, Class: 63-7WA. Solo: 26 Aug. 63, 'Instructor' J. McCullough."

My father was killed on June 10, 1965, and I have already spoken to a dozen people who were with him in Vietnam and one of them gave me the idea to contact the VHPA to see if you might be able to help in my search to find other people who also knew him.

Susan J. Schumacher



# Video on helicopters, pilots is well done

Some of you may remember the ad that appeared in the October 1993 VHPA Newsletter for the videotape "Of Heroes and Helicopters."

The producer, Dane Hansen Productions, made this hour-long production with the idea that it would be shown on one of the cable television networks in 1994. As yet, it has not been scheduled, but when it is, we hope to include an announcement of the date, time and station in the newsletter.

The program is the most accurate depiction of the way helicopters were used in Vietnam that has ever been produced. It features short interviews with 22 veterans, not only pilots, but a couple of the crew chiefs and doorgunners, as well.

Sandwiched between the inter-

**The program is the most accurate depiction of the way helicopters were used in Vietnam.**

views is motion picture footage of helicopters in Vietnam performing just about every kind of mission we ever flew. The video also includes some recognizable scenes from Fort Wolters and Fort Rucker.

The pilots do most of the talking, but an off-screen announcer does an excellent job explaining the actions and events shown from Vietnam.

Dane Hansen Productions recorded the interviews at the VHPA's annual meeting in Phoenix last July, and worked with VHPA members to ensure the announcer's comments were factual.

You will not find any Hollywood interpretation that ignores or even bends the facts. This is not a "docu-drama," but a realistic portrayal of the helicopter's vital role, as told by pilots and crew members. The producers are to be congratulated for such thoroughness and accuracy.

The videotape is available for \$29.99 from Dane Hansen Productions, 3405 Penrose Place, Boulder, CO 80301. Telephone: (800) 541-8871. The producers are donating 10 percent from sale to the VHPA in memory of the pilots who died in Vietnam



## Book Now and Save to Philadelphia!

### Exclusive VHPA Travel Discounts to the 1994 Reunion

Call the official travel agency of VHPA and receive exclusive airline and car rental discounts for travel to Philadelphia. These are special VHPA rates, available only through Carlson Travel Network/Media Travel USA.

You save money & VHPA wins too! CTN/Media Travel USA will make a cash donation to VHPA for each airline ticket purchase. Make plans now to meet in Philadelphia June 30- July 4, and take advantage of the exclusive discounts provided by these companies:

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**Media Travel USA**

**1-800-283-TRIP**



# Marine pilots in lucky 66 percent

Reading "1500 Feet Over Vietnam" made me realize how much I agree with Bruce's statements about being thankful for having simply survived Vietnam, to say nothing of having body and mind intact.

Bruce and I bunked and flew together over there and we were definitely among the lucky ones. I remember going home and counting about 15 pilots KIA of the 45 or so active pilots in HMM-265. That 33 percent figure always gives me a great sense of sorrow.

I've been a Life Member of the VHPA for almost 10 years now, and the Marine Corps articles in the last few Newsletters have been especially enjoyable, so I thought I'd offer some of my thoughts.

I was one of the last three Marcads (enlisted) to go through the Pensacola flight training and arrived in Vietnam as a brown bar. I was easily the most junior pilot in country, and paid the price — talk about SLJO!

I got there at the height of the 1968 Tet Offensive and got caught up in the frenzy of those changing times. It was both exhilarating and horrifying at the same time.

I became convinced there was no way to survive 13 months of that stuff. But I did, and when I got back to instructing 46s in Tustin, Calif., I was still so junior that I didn't outrank many of the students I was training.

In December 1968, I was transferred from HMM-265 to HMM-161 in Quang Tri in a big pilot shuffle. Even as a brown bar, I had much more Vietnam flight experience since that squadron had come over intact the previous summer.

In February 1969, I volunteered for a very interesting mission that nobody else wanted.

It was to be all IFR, flying up a valley somewhere south of Khe Sahn, then dropping pallets of resupply by parachute to several hundred stranded ARVN grunts. I had always enjoyed instrument flying and had gone out of my way to stay proficient in-country.

The weather was absolute crap and had been for over a week — which, of course, was why the ARVNs were in such bad trouble. They were completely surrounded by the NVA and virtually out of everything.

I was told to fly up the valley under ASRT (Air Surveillance

Radar Team) control and kick the pallets out the back precisely over their base. We were flying in the soup, at a quite low AGL for drop accuracy, and well below the mountains on either side.

I think the ASRT was at Quang Tri, or possibly Phu Bai, and their equipment included both vertical and horizontal GCA-type radar. Their function was for pinpoint control of fixed wing bombing runs, and I've never heard of another case like ours with helicopters.

For the first little while it was a lot of fun. We'd set the transponder and the ASRT vectored us around in the soup until we were headed up the valley. They could tell exactly where we were — even our altitude to within a few feet!

"Uh, Cattlecall 1-0, up 50 feet and come right 3 degrees please . . ." Holy Cow, we were going to drop this stuff right on their plates!

We also had to drop the loading ramp and reduce the airspeed way down, to about 50 knots, as I recall. About this time, the "fun part" had definitely passed.

"Uh, Cattlecall 1-0, you are 1,000 meters out . . . come right 2

*Continued on Page 17*

## Classified advertising

OF HEROES AND HELICOPTERS: This is an action-packed, 60-minute broadcast program on the life and times of the helicopter pilot in Vietnam.

Great footage and many interviews with pilots, including Congressional Medal of Honor winners.

Look for very positive review in this newsletter and in the June issue of VIETNAM magazine. \$29.95 plus \$4 s/h. Call: (800) 546-8871 or send check to DANE HANSEN PRODUCTIONS, 3405 PENROSE, No. 103, BOULDER, CO. 80301.

## DEFENCE HELICOPTER

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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



## 'Fun part' of mission is over at 50 knots

**Continued from Page 16**

degrees . . . 500 meters, down 100 feet . . . 200 meters . . . steady . . . DROP!"

At that point I found I had to kick the nose up even higher to get the pallet down the ramp and was very relieved when it was clear so we could resume a normal (?) flight attitude.

We had two pallets on board, so we'd have to drive around in the soup for awhile before dropping No. 2. The delay was so the grunts could let ASRT know where No. 1 landed and how to make adjustments.

About this time I got to wondering what would happen if the pallet got hung up on the 46 and the chute popped. It didn't take much imagination to visualize little pieces of us and our 46 unevenly distributed over this ARVN base!!

After flying this mission all day, we reloaded twice — so we did 6 drops, our radios started crapping out. After the last drop they were completely gone. No ASRT direction anymore — still up some valley well below the mountains, in the soup, it's getting dark, low on fuel . . . nobody ever

said it was going to be easy!

Fortunately, I'd asked the copilot to follow along on the map as best he could. So we were able to do a little DR. We decided to fly east for a while until we were clear of the mountains and, hopefully, the bad guys. Then I put it in a 500 FPM descent with a moderate spiral to the copilot's side, and slowed down to 50 knots, figuring I was sort of in a landing configuration. I told the whole crew to call out the clock location of the first thing they saw and to add "#@\$t" if we were about to crash into something.

After some substantial puckering, we broke out at about 150 feet directly over highway 1. What a miracle! After 12.5 months, my luck was still holding.

Mostly lost at that point, we managed to find an Army base before running out of fuel, and spent the night doing some serious damage to their O-Club's beer supplies.

The next day we learned that most of the resupply found its mark, and about a week later I was proud to accept a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, with Silver Star, from an ARVN general who claimed we saved several hundred

lives with that screwy but innovative mission.

Fred Pratt, 68 HMM-265  
68-69 HMM-161

**EDITOR'S NOTE: VHPA member Bruce Lake wrote a neat book, "1500 Feet Over Vietnam," which is really an expanded daily journal of his year in Vietnam as a CH-46 pilot with HMM-265. Bruce saw Fred's name in the VHPA Directory and sent him a copy of the book. Thus two good guys reestablished their friendship.**

An HMM-265 Association was established nine years when 42 guys attended their first reunion. Three years ago, more than 100 attended, including crew chiefs and gunners. Their third reunion will be in San Diego on June 16-20, 1994.

Contact Gerald Dooley at [redacted] for more details. Also, Marion Sturkey, is ready to publish "Bonnie-Sue: A Marine Corps Helicopter Squadron in Vietnam," which covers USMC helicopter activities from the summer of 1965 through the summer of '68 and gives special attention to HMM-265. He can be reached at [redacted]

### Order Form

Please send \_\_\_\_\_ copy(ies) of **1500 feet over Vietnam**, by Bruce R. Lake. For each copy ordered, I enclose check or money order for \$14.00 plus \$2.15 postage and handling.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

(used only for problems with order)

Make checks payable to:

Bruce R. Lake

### 1500 feet over Vietnam

An account of Marine pilot Bruce Lake's tour of duty in Vietnam. Includes journal entries, excerpts from letters home, and reflections on his experience. 372 pp., 19 chapters. Almine Library, 1990.

ISBN 0-9623500-2-8 LC 90-14421

## Fritz has information on Pennsylvania vendor taxes

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania sales tax laws may have an impact on vendors.

Although the G-men there have the LZ surrounded, Ken Fritz says Pennsylvania is not a hot LZ; they are friendly.

Ken has a "Packet, VHPA Vendor Mission Briefing, genuine, 1 each" to explain the rules of engagement.

Ken Fritz can be contacted at [redacted] Orangevale, CA 95662. Or call him at [redacted]



# Directory spurs search for memorabilia

I just received the 1993 Membership Directory and really think you guys have done an outstanding job putting it together.

With its emphasis on Dustoff this year, I was inspired to go digging in the attic to see what I might have packed away 24 years ago. I found a quarterly newsletter for Dustoff units in III and IV Corps written at the end of 1968.

It is full of facts and names from that period, and I hope you find it useful reference material.

I served with the 57th Med Det from June 1968 to June 1969.

Although I've scoured the Directory for names, I was disappointed to find no one from my unit during that time.

Anyone who knows about any of the following, please call me:

Capt. Pierre Allemond, Maj. Lillard F. Belcher, Bill Covington, CWO John W. Gennett, CWO Sherman F. Goodman, CWO Marvin E. Hammond, CWO Jerry L. Johnson, Capt. Webster L. Langhorne, CWO James A. Leonard and CWO Richard P. Lyle.

Although I haven't made it to a reunion yet, as I get older and

have more time, I'd like to become more active in the association. Thanks to my patient wife of 28 years, I have been fortunate to have mostly good feelings and memories from my tour, and I would look forward to renewing some of that camaraderie again.

Gary Stahlhuth  
"Dustoff 72"

57th Medical Detachment  
1968-69

**EDITOR'S NOTE: The Directory Committee was delighted to have this newsletter and would love to have others.**

# 'Scarfig' mission leads to downing

On Feb. 13, 1969, two days after returning from R&R in Hawaii with my wife and one-year-old son, I was brought back to reality in a hurry.

The 57th Medical Detachment was just setting up our new home in Lai Khe and I was sent off for a two-day standby at Dau Tieng.

In those days, morale was high in Dustoff units, as exemplified by the tradition we had of "scarfig"

**Close call** missions from other crews. The competition grew as we all tried to beat other Dustoff crews to their patients before they could pick them up.

That day, as we were returning from another mission, such an opportunity presented itself.

We heard the medevac request being called in over FM to our sister detachment, the 159th out of Cu Chi. I immediately radioed in that we were close to the pickup location and would take the mission.

As it turned out, an ARVN unit had run into Charlie and suffered several casualties. There were no English-speaking personnel at the LZ, so we followed protocol and picked up an interpreter to establish radio contact on the ground.

As we picked up the ARVN soldier with his PRC-10 radio and took off for the short hop over to the LZ, all hell broke loose.

At about 300 feet and 80 knots,

**Dustoff pilots, crews spoke their own, special lingo.**

**— See terms on Page 19.**

we began taking fire from an enemy .51-caliber machine gun. The three rounds we took felt like bricks as they hit the aircraft. One entered the door next to my left leg, another went through the rear cabin floor wounding the medic in the buttock, and the third hit farther back causing a fuel fire.

The engine never failed, but the cockpit quickly filled with smoke, and I figured we were going to explode any second. But "The Man Upstairs" was definitely with us that day.

As my pilot, Marvin E. Hammond, got out a "May Day" on guard, I headed for the middle of a wide open rice paddy below us. I think we were all out of the Huey before the skids even touched down.

At a safe distance, we all laid in the mud and watched our helicopter, with the engine still running and the blades still turning, become completely engulfed in flames.

With no idea of what the tactical

situation was on the ground, the sky was soon filled with aircraft which must have heard our "May Day."

We were by ourselves with no communication and, in spite of all our efforts, everyone was too high to even see us on the ground. As we moved further away from the burning Huey, I noticed automatic weapons fire hitting the water around the aircraft. Fortunately all the air activity must have kept Charlie's head down, because the firing soon ceased.

Finally one of us thought about trying a signal mirror from a survival kit to attract attention to our position from the air. It worked!

Soon another Dustoff ship, with a pair of Cobras flying cover, landed right next to us and we all climbed aboard and took off. Ironically our rescuers were the same crew whose mission we had "scarfed" earlier and put us in that predicament. They flew us to an aid station to tend to our wounded crew member where someone noticed blood all over my left leg. They found a piece of the door from the bullet hole buried in my leg, and I hadn't noticed it until then.

The four of us caused quite a celebration when we returned to Lai Khe. They had heard we went down in flames and were all killed.

Gary W. Stahlhuth  
Dustoff 72

57th Medical Detachment



# Terms describe Dustoff pilot's life

The following comes from the 4Q68 issue of "DUSTOFF — III and IV Corps," a quarterly newsletter published by the 45th Medical Company.

The below listed definitions will serve to brief those new personnel in the theatre as well as to orient incoming Vietnam personnel to some of the unusual terms so commonly thrown about by Dustoff and other personnel during their tour in Southeast Asia:

**Zing** — Refined aviation equivalent of the grunt term "Zap." Refers to the unforgettable sound of hostile rounds skipping merrily through your helicopter, crew members, etc. Generally occurs in "secure" LZs.

**Grunt** — Sometimes referred to as "the line," "GI," "rifleman," or "infantry" without whom we would all be seeking other gainful employment.

**Strap-hanger** — One whose hostile fire pay is earned by someone else but who generally can tell the best war stories of them all.

**Secure** — An apparently very

nebulous term used by unscrupulous types who desire for sometimes humane reasons and sometimes sadistic purposes to have wounded personnel evacuated from their particular rice paddy, jungle, etc. without regard to the wishes of unfriendly elements in the vicinity.

**Hoist** — A device invented and installed ostensibly to evacuate wounded personnel from areas with no LZ, but which in reality was a result of the Army suggestion program for which suggestion a man named Ho Chi Minh received a \$25 bond and a certificate of achievement.

**Scarf** — That which has been done to you when you arrive over the pickup point in time to observe another aircraft departing with your patients.

**FNG** — Generally refers to personnel with only a short time in the theater who, if their actions are not closely monitored, may attempt to mark LZs with burning helicopters.

**Short** — An adjective description of personnel who, nearing the

completion of their Vietnam tour, suddenly become loud, boisterous, and extremely supercilious in their attitude toward others, especially FNGs, and who exhibit very strange traits in the execution of field medical evacuation, i.e., any hostile personnel who may have been in the vicinity when the mission was called in will generally die of old age before the "short" individual arrives on the scene.

**Mission-scarfing** — Only recently recognized as an exact science.

**Bunker shuffle** — A new dance we all get to try when the "Bad Guys" play at night with their mortars, rockets, and recoilless rifles.

**Dustout** — A thrill surpassed by none other. Usually experienced while going IFR at 50 feet during a night approach to a narrow trail between two tanks while the unit is in contact.

Gary Stahlhuth  
"Dustoff 72"

57th Medical Detachment  
1968-69

# History Book improved, but delayed

The VHPA History Book has been a real chore to put together.

The writing and rewriting of this book to get it up to the high standards demanded by the VHPA's oversight committee, specifically Ken Fritz, has resulted in a delay of the book's release.

Though the History Book had been scheduled for release prior to this summer's reunion, the section dealing with 1969-75 has had to be completely rewritten.

Fritz expects this will be done by July 1, which makes it impossible to get the book released by July 4.

He is continuing to work very closely with the publisher, Turner Publishing Co., and expects to get the book approved and printed by Christmas 1994.

He further explained he felt there were two choices when he learned part of the book would have to be rewritten:

- Get the book done correctly.

**As a result of the delay in the book's release, Fritz said he plans to allow VHPA members who have not ordered a History Book to place orders and submit information until July 30.**

- Cancel the project and refund all of the orders.

He chose to have it rewritten.

As a result of the delay in the book's release, Fritz said he plans to allow VHPA members who have not ordered a History Book to place orders and submit information until July 30.

Order forms are available by writing to VHPA Headquarters,

7 W. Seventh St., Suite 1990, Cincinnati, OH 45202, or Turner Publishing Co., P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101. Turner Publishing can be contacted by telephone at (502) 443-0121.

A History Book order form last appeared in the centerfold of the October 1993 VHPA Newsletter.

So far, 811 of the books have been ordered, Fritz said.

He invites all purchasers to contact him directly if there are hard feelings or concerns about the delay.

His address is: Ken Fritz, [redacted]  
Orangevale, CA 95662 or CompuServe [redacted]



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

7 W. Seventh St., Suite 1990 Cincinnati, OH 45202 (513) 721-VHPA

## Membership application/change of address

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Information about each Vietnam tour:

Date of tour			Unit	Location	Call sign
	From:	To:			
1st					
2nd					
3rd					
4th					

Information about you: Helicopters flown, medals/awards, talents, hobbies, and anything else:

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association?