



THE VHPA NEWSLETTER

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

March 1990 • Vol. 7 • No. 1



The Gathering - Dallas, 1990.

New member Ronnie Reyes (third from left) is welcomed into the VHPA by (l. to r.) Larry Clark, Founder; Bill Ringer, Past President; and Roger Gould, President. Ronnie is the last surviving Phillipine pilot to have flown in Vietnam.



President's Roll Call

As one of the lucky sixty-six who attended the first reunion in Phoenix, I am constantly amazed at what this Association has become in less than six years. The interest and support shown the VHPA at the recent Helicopter Association International's HELI-EXPO '90 in Dallas is the most recent example. Thanks to VHPA Member Frank Jensen, President of HAI, the VHPA became an affiliate member of HAI and was provided exhibitor space at HELI-EXPO. VHPA's appearance at HELI-EXPO resulted in 63 new members, one life member and 27 renewed members.

A special thanks is due Gary and Lynn Slaughter, Jack and Betty Lou Jordan, Wendy McDonald, Wesley Moore, and Dave Bennett for the long hours spent meeting, greeting, and manning VHPA's very busy booth. Also, Larry Boles and Gary Slaughter put together our annual mini-reunion 'The Gathering' held in conjunction with the HAI convention. Lynn Slaughter, Wendy McDonald and Betty Lou Jordan were the very pretty guardians of the 'The Gathering's' front door, through which over 500 folks passed before the evening ended. VHPA is grateful to SAFT America for their donation towards the cost of 'The Gathering'; this is the third year in a row they have helped defray the cost of our mini-reunion.

Recently, a couple of members have suggested that our former crewchiefs and door gunners be allowed 'Associate Memberships' in the VHPA. The rationale is that this would be an effective way to acknowledge the important part our former crewmembers played in our survival and the mission's success. Furthermore, the Vietnam Helicopter Crewmembers Association allows pilots to join as associate members and apparently some VHCMA members are disgruntled that the VHPA has not reciprocated.

For those of you who have recently joined the VHPA, this subject has been presented to the membership at several past reunions. On each occasion, the majority voted against the proposal. The reasons? First of all, the VHPA was founded as a means of maintaining the bonds created by the collective experience of flight school, Vietnam, and the absolute responsibility only pilots assume. The Association would also help preserve the history of an unique war involving the use of helicopters. Secondly, it was felt the essence of the Association would be lost if the premise of membership it was founded on was changed. In other words, 'a real can of worms' would be opened. For example, there are individuals that flew helicopters in Vietnam before 1961, do we change the rules to allow them membership? And what about those who went to flight school but did not go to Vietnam? If crewchiefs and door gunners are allowed a class of membership, what about he mechanics and other non-flying folks in our units? These guys contributed just as much to our survival and success as anyone else.

I have not met a Vietnam pilot who does not admire and respect his former crewmembers. The VHPA helped the VHCMA form and will continue to support their efforts in any reasonable way. There appears to be interest in a future VHPA/VHCMA co-located reunion, possibly 1993. What do you think about this idea? The important thing is not to let this issue become divisive, the VHPA has enjoyed its success because it is the only steady organization just for the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and has steadfastly maintained a social, no politics, no controversy posture. Many members, including myself, have indicated they would not be interested in the VHPA if the types and prerequisites of membership were to change.

Roger Gould
President

**Help the VHPA.
Get a Friend
to Join Today!**

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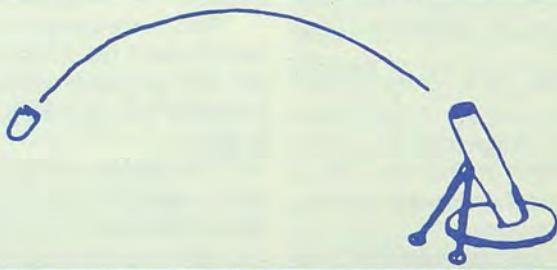
VHPA membership is open to all helicopter pilots who flew in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era (1961-1975). Annual dues are \$20.00 or Life Membership for \$300.00. The price of a yearly subscription for non-members is \$12.00.

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INCOMING MAIL

A SALUTE TO A FRIEND

This letter may be a little different than most of the mail in this Newsletter. That's because I wish to salute someone different.

I attended the Chicago reunion this year. It was the first whole reunion I have attended. I joined the Association last year after spending the last two days at the Ft. Worth reunion. Most of the people I saw last year that I knew, I had not seen for twenty years. I never knew we could all change so much, and yet not change at all.

We are called the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, but some of our closest friends were made during flight school. We were growing, learning, struggling under a lot of pressure. We had one goal, to complete our training, and since misery loves company, we made friends quickly and strongly because we were all under the same stress and pressure. We needed

each other to survive, almost as much as we needed each other later in Vietnam.

I spent most of my time at the Ft. Worth reunion with the people with whom I had been closest in flight school. Time spent learning what had happened in the last twenty years, learning who these people were again, and renewing friendships that were never lost. These were the things which made that first reunion, for me, special.

There was one more thing which made the reunion extraspecial. I did not attend it alone. I was accompanied by a very close friend. A friend who had been with me in Wolters and helped me celebrate my first solo, passing check rides, and graduation; suffered with me when the pressure seemed too much; was with me in Rucker through instrument flying, and followed me through contact and gunnery training and tactics, and remained my closest friend during this period.

What is amazing is that this friend didn't go to Vietnam, has never learned to fly a helicopter, and was never even in the Army. This friend is my wife. She has remained my closest friend through all these years.

The people we spent most of our time with at the reunions were also husbands and wives we both knew in flight school.

There is something rather unusual in this situation. Chicago found Shirley and me reading the list of people attending the reunion. We saw names of pilots we remembered as being married in flight school. Naturally, we wondered if they were still married, or were we the odd couple. To our surprise, everyone who attended that we had known in flight school turned out to still be married, and to the same person. There were six couples gathered around a table after the banquet and all had been married and remained married these twenty odd years. That is a very uncommon percentage, considering the number of pilots I know who have not been as fortunate.

Attending the reunion was good for me, but attending it with my wife who had shared that early experience with me made it something to be cherished.

Don't get me wrong, there are many "new" wives very supportive of VHPA. Just following some old ex or current helicopter pilot to a reunion is, in itself, being very supportive. But I think we owe some special recognition to the original wives who were married while in the Army. I know I do.

So, whether or not the VHPA ever formally recognizes these unique people, I would like to salute them.

Original wives, I don't know if we could have made it without you.

Thank you.
Roy A. Rogers

Sometimes we take for granted the ones that mean the most. Thank you for taking the time to express your feelings; I know that many of us have the same feelings but haven't taken the time to express them publicly. Without the women's support, VHPA would not be what it is today. LADIES - THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!! Ed.

AN UNCLE LOOKS FOR DAVID

I would appreciate whatever assistance you might be able to provide

Together for the first time, Founder, Larry Clark; Past Presidents Bill Ringer, Mike McDonald, David Owens and Jay Elliott; President, Roger Gould. (Missing is Past President, Don Hildebrand)

Continued on next page

in locating helicopter pilots who may have flown or served with my nephew - and who would be willing to contact me in that regard.

My nephew was DAVID R. HANNA - his hometown was Norton Center or Barberton, Ohio. He was married and had a daughter. He was a Huey I pilot. He was killed in action on September 3, 1969. He had 25 missions at the time he was shot down. He was awarded the DFC, bronze star and the Air Medal with 4 oak leaf clusters.

He was with the 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile), Company A, 227th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter).

I would be interested in talking or communicating with those who may have served with David. Hopefully some of the blank spots concerning his war activity could be cleared up by someone with first hand knowledge on the matter.

Please contact:

John A. Wortring

Thanks.
John A. Wortring

Again, we are asked to find a member of our "FAMILY". Help David's family find the answers to those unanswered questions. Ed.

MEMBERS & FRIENDS AT OSHKOSH

I read your ad in either the AOPA or EAA magazines some time ago, but, frankly, I was doubtful of the political action disclaimer. Also, I wasn't sure I wanted to reopen an old can of worms.

While attending Oshkosh '89, I learned that VHPA was having a get together. I figured, what the hell, if it turns into shit, I can always E&E.

A local reporter was in attendance. The enclosed article is kind of sentimental for combat hardened Marines. It really only contains a fraction of the pure delight I felt meeting some old friends.

Beaucoup thanks for providing an organization that promises to be a source of real enjoyment. Please accept my membership application.

Reserve a rubber lady (air mattress) and some "C" rats for me in New Orleans.

From the Monday July 31, 1989 edition of The Oshkosh Northwestern:

Vietnam Veterans Embrace at Emotional EAA Reunion

As a cold wind whipped through the dark and damp tent, Bill Cihak stood and introduced himself.

Across the aisle, Dick Upshaw and Dennis Darnell took notice. It had been more than 20 years since they flew over the jungles of Danang in Vietnam with a young helicopter pilot named Bill Cihak, but Upshaw was certain.

"I know you," Upshaw said to Cihak as he stood.

The statement drew instant recognition from Cihak as well. "I know you, too. How are you doing, buddy?"

The two hurried across the aisle to meet one another. As wide smiles graced their faces, they shook hands and embraced. Although it had been more than 20 years, they hadn't forgotten.

They couldn't forget.

The other 40-some people attending the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's Association get-together, the Experimental Aircraft Association and Fly-In Saturday stood and applauded. They understood.

Cihak, Upshaw and Darnell flew helicopters together in the jungles of Danang after the Tet offensive in 1968. They survived heat, equipment malfunctions and North Vietnamese gunfire together - and they were finally ready to relive those old memories with each other.

"You can't talk about that stuff with anybody else," said Darnell, who flew support missions in a Huey gunship with the U.S. Marine's VMO2 "Scarface" unit from the Marble Mountain Air Facility in Danang.

"It seems like another life-like it never really happened," said Upshaw, who flew an H-46 twin rotor rescue chopper with Cihak in the Marine's HMM 265 "Injure" unit from Marble Mountain.

But it did happen, and the three friends opened up their Pandora's Box of memories together.

"I remember a lot of the really scary stuff - the goofy things," said Darnell.

The laughing stopped for a minute, as Cihak and Upshaw silently agreed. There had been frightening and trying times.

There was the time seven Cambodian mercenaries clung to the rope ladder of Darnell's chopper as he lifted them out of a combat zone. Flying low through the trees in freezing weather, the mercenaries managed to hang on until Darnell reached safety.

There was the time Cihak's chopper was hit with every bullet from a Viet Cong soldier's 20-round clip. One round caught a crewman in the shoulder, spraying the

inside of the chopper with blood.

And there were the times that Upshaw had to hold his chopper steady with just one leg on the ground as soldiers quickly unloaded supplies under a steady barrage of lead.

"Remember how bad you felt, flying out there looking for a landing zone," Cihak asked his friends. The laughter returned, as Upshaw and Darnell giddily remembered the vague instructions they often received from other pilots.

"I came here tonight looking (for acquaintances)," said Upshaw, now a restaurant owner in Tyler, Texas. "I said 'I know that guy'."

Do you know what I noticed?" cihak said of Upshaw. "that damn crooked hat of yours."

When Upshaw, Cihak and Darnell finished their tours of duty in 1968, they went their separate ways. They hadn't seen or heard from each other, yet they said there was and will always be a bond between them.

They had seen comrades who were killed, wounded or went insane. Twenty years ago, they didn't want to talk about it. As time wore on, however, that had changed.

"I didn't think about (Vietnam) and I did" said Cihak, now a dentist in Buffalo, New York. "I didn't think about it for a long time, and now I'm trying to remember."

"It's like lighting up another part of your life," Upshaw said of the reminiscing. "It's like meeting a friend you haven't seen in 20 years."

Another member of the VHPA looked on as the three talked and smiled. He had been there too, and said he knew just what they were talking about. "That's what it's all about."

As the night wore on under the dim, yellow light of the tent, the three friends sat and talked. With every minute came a new memory, a long-forgotten friend. They said they hadn't forgotten their experiences together - and they wouldn't forget this reunion.

Sincerely,
Bill Cihak

P.S. Will they serve beer in New Orleans?

There are many who doubt the political disclaimer. However, others like you, that take a chance, are rewarded with a reunion such as yours at Oshkosh. Spread the word.

P.S. Slaughter says that there is a forecast of a "BEER FRONT" in New Orleans, July 4th. Ed.

Continued on next page

THANKS

I was reading a magazine and saw your ad for helicopter pilots. I was in Hotel 2/7 USMC in Viet Nam in 1965 and 1966. In March of '66 we were in Operation Utah. I had many men in my squad killed there. In the afternoon of March 4, a helicopter landed to take out wounded. There was a lot of mortars coming in and the pilot had to get out or lose the ship. That night more helicopters came back and with no lights landed in the rice paddies. After 3 or 4 lifts I got out and flew to Chu Lai. I would like to thank the pilots who had balls enough to land there. Now I operate a seaplane base in the Adirondack Mountains of New York and welcome any pilots who flew Marines out on Double Eagle or Harvest Moon or Utah to stop by. You are great guys.

Thanks,
Herm Busse

We winged soldiers were there for you when you called and you for us. Your "thank you", with the passing of time, means more.

ARMY FLOATS

Enclosed is my membership for another year along with those for my brother, Mike.

Mike and I both went through Ft. Wolters/Rucker/Hunter, and then on to Vietnam; me in 69-70 and Mike in 71-72. Mike is now Project Manager for the Bank of Hawaii, living in Honolulu and about to open a bank branch in Majuro - capital of the Marshall Islands. I am working for PanAm/Dyncorp on Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, as a Helicopter Pilot and Operations Officer. We have the dubious distinction of having the only float equipped Hueys currently in the Army inventory. The enclosed picture may be interesting since the ship the floats are on is a "Corpus" rebuild

of the 1968 vintage! After 20 years and quite a few thousand hours, the "old girl" still gets us around the islands in style.

Have enjoyed the Newsletter tremendously and can't wait to dig into the next issue. Keep up the good work!

Ted Wix
(Ghost Rider 78/Lucky 14)

Ahhh, a Huey with floats. My wish in '69, while dumping "excess inventory" into the South China Sea, just prior to an IG inspection!! Hueys without floats . . . DON'T!!!!

WHAT IS IT - SEPTEMBER '89

This Huey is rigged very much like the one we used to spray Agent Orange on the Leminh Forest (IV Corp) in either Dec. 1970 or Jan. 1971. I was attached to the 114 AHC (knights of the air) 1st AVN. Bde. at the time in the Delta, while being assigned to its sister co., 335 AHC "Cowboys" at Dong Tam. The 114th was based at Vinh Long.

Tom Nesbitt



Photograph by Ted Wix

The answer is . . . not a spray rig. It is . . . a magnetic anomaly detector (MAD) used to locate arms caches by detecting the large quantities of metal present. Good try, Tom. Agent Orange was probably more effective but imminently more dangerous.

BUNN IS BEAUTIFUL

HEY GUYS!

It's almost that time again! Time to meet your old friends from RVN and your new friends in the VHPA. It's also time to do your part to make this year's reunion the best ever.

"Uh-oh" you say. Another touch for a few more bucks. NOOOO!

"Then you want me to serve on a committee that no one else will touch!" Nooooo . . . Again!

STEP RIGHT UP! DELIGHT YOUR FRIENDS! UPHOLD THE HONOR(?) OF YOUR UNIT! SHOW US THAT YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES! ENTER THE PETER PILOTS BEAUTY CONTEST!

Judging will be by the ladies. Categories to be judged will be Swimsuit, Evening Wear (whatever you wear in the evening) and a question posed to you by a group of the judges.

It's sure to be a lot of fun.

To enter contact Kenny Bunn at [REDACTED] Columbiana, Alabama, 35051, or call [REDACTED] You may also enter at the Reunion.

Sincerely,
Kenny Bunn
Stallion 19

The way some of us have aged, any costume would be an improvement!

Continued on next page

DAMN THE TORNADOES . . . FULL SPEED AHEAD

I wanted to tell you how much I enjoy the VHPA Newsletter - it brings back a lot of memory of the past that I had moved out of my mind. I dug out all my pictures from two tours 1964-65 and 1968-69.

On my first tour I was assigned to the 611th Trans. Co. (3rd echelon Maint.) I was in the recovery section. We had three CH-37B that we used for recovery and one CH 21C we used as our gunship also to haul the recovery Team to rig down aircraft. We also used any of the aircraft that was in for maint. on transfer status.

I had the mission in late 1964 to recover an ARVN L-19 that had been shot down southwest of Saigon. I used a UH-1B slick to recover the L-19. I had two UH-1B gunships with me also, after we rigged and picked up the L-19 and started for home base we met a Tornado. In the picture you can see one of the gunships in lower left bottom of picture also a sharp cloud by the funnel. It was also a funnel cloud so at times there were two funnels on the ground at the same time running side by side.

I don't remember who the pilots were in the gunships but they were trying to get me to release the L-19 and get out of there but we would have had to go back for it so I elected to keep it with me and as you can see we made it. Maybe the gunships crew will recognize the picture and mission.

I have also enclosed a photo of one of our CH-37B we used. Our flight engineer put hearts for each recovery of a downed aircraft and above the hearts he put B.U.M.F. until the General asked what the B.U.M.F. stood



Photograph by Royce D. Raley



Photograph by Royce D. Raley



Photograph by Royce D. Raley

for. The FE said Big Ugly M.F. Needless to say the General had that part removed.

Until next time-

Royce D. Raley, Retired

Thanks for the pictures. Tornadoes look even more awesome from the air, especially with a sling load.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

- Recoiless rifles - aren't.
- Suppressive fire - won't.
- If it's stupid, but works, it ain't stupid.
- Don't look conspicuous - it draws fire.
- Never draw fire - it irritates everyone around you.
- When in doubt, empty the magazine.
- Your weapon was made by the lowest bidder.
- Incoming fire has right-of-way.
- Beer math is 2 beers x 37 men = 49 cases.
- Friendly fire - isn't.
- Murphy was a grunt.
- If your attack is going really well, it's an ambush.
- If you can't remember, the claymore is pointed towards you.
- All five second grenade fuses are three seconds.
- The enemy diversion you are ignoring is the main attack.
- The easy way is always mined.
- If you are short everything except enemy, you are in combat.
- No OPLAN survives first contact intact.
- When you have secured an area, don't forget to tell the enemy.

Continued on next page

CALLING CARD

Keep up the good work, I enjoy the Newsletters.

I am currently working for Croman Corp., Medford Oregon Logging in a S61A (SH-3). I have now spent 12,000 hours in helicopters.

I graduated with class 66-19 in Dec. of 1966. Put one tour in Nam. 10 Jan. '67 to 10 Jan. '68 with the 128th AHC, the Tomahawks and the Gunslingers.

I was Gunslinger 39 for most of my tour.

The 128th was the best damn outfit over there. Enclosed is one of our calling cards, as you can guess we left them behind with the units we served.

Steve Dillman
Gunslinger 39
M3221

As you say, the Tomahawks were a fine outfit but as to being the "best" damn outfit may cause a lively discussion when mentioned to a Blue Ghost, Undertaker, etc. etc. etc.

A GREAT ESCAPE

Stickbuddies:

You know well that all of us pilots will sit around and tell stories of our flights in RVN. I had the pleasure of meeting another pilot in the contract company which had hired a bunch of us guys who were now desk pilots. Last year when the new guy came on board, I told him we had to do that soon. When we started the conversations, I found out quickly how small the world is. Canh Van Vu and I flew the same area only at different years. It had a significant difference to both of us. I flew the OH6A in the Pleiku, Kontum, Dak To areas in 1968-69. He flew the UH1s there from the early '70s until 1975. The differences are more than just the aircraft and the years. While I was there, the division had accomplished cleaning up the area and forcing combat into small "brush fires". In contrast, in April 1975, we all know it became an uncontrollable "forest fire" combat for the RVN.

Canh learned how to fly at Ft. Rucker as a young RVN officer. He was Huey

qualified and moved back to the area where his family lived - Pleiku region. As a youngster, his mother and father moved out of North Viet Nam to be able to enjoy the democracy which they understood. Canh had learned well from them and knew he wanted to hold onto what South Vietnam had.

as a technical computer programmer. He is extremely competent.

In our conversations at the contract agency, I found out that he, his family, and other Vietnamese associates have no photos of their country. They all left quickly without packing such items. I had hundreds processed in 1968-69 making it easy for me to put them together for a showing at lunch. Now he has done the showings using my slides for his friends, and has had some of the air shots made into photos to remember how RVN is - especially near Pleiku and Vung Tau. Canh enjoys the U.S. and is still able to communicate from here to his mom and dad. Both of them wished to stay in the RVN mainly because of their older age.

Now Vu performed an excellent mission based upon his unit's over run and lack of military to support. It made good sense to care for his family by the best means and support

- via helicopter. They were unable to safely and sensibly leave RVN and enter the U.S. Based upon this and the other military tactical support that he did, I would like to propose that he be made a member of VHPA this year (without dues) as his mission award. Thereafter, to be required to pay all annual dues like the rest of us Peter Pilots!

I regret that I cannot be at the 6th reunion to tell this story. I met Canh right after the 5th reunion which was one of the factors to reopen the thoughts and morale which I enjoyed as a pilot. Had it been before last year's reunion I'd have told it to my stickbuddies then.

Respectfully,
Michael E. Stamilio
Red Leg 6 (68-69)

Quite a story. Understand how you feel about Canh, Mike, but if a years dues were given as Mission Awards, there wouldn't be enough money left in the VHPA account to even do a Newsletter. Perhaps someday the VHPA and the treasury will be large enough to recognize outstanding individuals such as Canh. Thanks for the recommendation.



We all know that the hold on democracy and associated enjoyment went away quickly in April 1975. Thus, since his unit and the Pleiku area had been bypassed by the NVA, Canh planned an air mission for him and his family to continue to be in a democratic society. On April 29th, he gathered his family and indicated a flight to the Saigon area to depart the country. He arrived at an air base in Can Tho to refuel and to continue the evacuation flight. On the 30th there was no fuel truck or ground assistance. However, there was a VIP Huey in excellent condition and with fuel. He loaded the family and flew to Phu Can To Island to get into a safer area for all of them. He then next flew to an island called Phu Quoc which was a "wild island" where he had to land since the fuel level was dangerously low. Then on 1 May 1975, they left the island through their signaling and pick up by a fishing boat. The family traveled for almost three days until they docked at Thailand. They were received easily and processed to seek entry into the United States. Vu's mission was successful.

Since he has been here, he has become a U.S. citizen who is well educated

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?

Read any good books lately? When I first joined VHPA I would have answered that question with an emphatic NO. But after Bob Mason's "Chickenhawk" I decided there may be some others worth reading. I have yet to meet up with another helicopter pilot that doesn't think "Chickenhawk" is super! Indeed I have several copies and keep them circulating with friends and people at work - I believe it helps tell the story "correctly". It is strange, my own father was not in favor of the war. But he had seven good reasons - being the father of seven sons. I can remember when he started saying "No more war". I am his oldest, was heading overseas, three more of my brothers were in uniform, the war had already lasted five years with no end in sight; and my father could easily see "that war" taking every one of his sons. Anyway, about four years ago I gave him a copy of "Chickenhawk" and said . . . "please, it will help you understand what I went through because I flew in the same area Bob did just a few years later." Anyway, he read it and not long afterwards we had a family gathering and he announced that he had really enjoyed the book and had a new respect for the guys who fought in the war. My brothers all looked at me with great surprise!

Recently I was on a business trip and ate dinner with a colleague about my age. We got to talking about our first jobs after college and I mentioned the Army. He mentioned that he had been drafted and was a "grunt" in Vietnam. We ended up talking about Vietnam a lot for the next few days and in the end he said he had never done that before; but that he had enjoyed talking about it again. He had hiked around the A Shau Valley. I was reading "Anatomy of a Division" (The 1st Cav in Vietnam) by Shelby Stanton, so I showed him the map in the book. He took it one evening and read most of it by morning. "You know", he said, "I always wondered who opened up those fire bases. It was interesting to read that account".

There is no doubt in my mind that VHPA has given me confidence to read more. Indeed, the conversations I have had with you guys at Reunions and working on the Directory and trying to code the combat units for the VHPA database . . . all that has wet my appetite to learn more. I've spent hours and hours reading and looking through Shelby Stanton's "Vietnam Order of Battle".

Others I've read: "Brennan's War" and "Headhunters" by Matthew Brennan,

"The Tunnels of CuChi" by Tom Mangold and John Penycate, "Bird" by S.L.A. Marshall, "The 13th Valley" by John Del Vecchio, "Sky Soldier" by Lawrence Okendo, "Permission to Kill" by Brian Wizard, "Gunslingers In Action" by Lou Drendel, "The Ten Thousand Day War" by Michael Maclear", "Green Berets at War" and "The Rise and Fall of An American Army" by Sherby L. Stanton, "To Bear Any Burden" by Al Santoli, "Five Years to Freedom" by James N. Rowe, plus the Time-Life Book series "The Vietnam Experience".

Naturally, I am open to suggestions on what I should read next. "Sneaky" White was kind enough to send me a long letter and copied pages from a book on Lam Son 719, but I can't find the book anywhere.

Mike Law
7/17 CAV 68-69

Sounds like you've been busy reading all the right books, Mike. Thanks for sharing the titles of so many books about Vietnam.

SPECIAL FORCES CHOPPERS

Some answers to your question on helicopters and the Special Forces in Vietnam. I served in the 281st Aviation Company based in Nhu Thang from July 1966 to July 1967. The 281st was under operational control of the Special Forces. We had two platoons of slicks and one platoon of gunships. Each Special Force "C" team (Da Nang, Can Tho, Bien Hoa, and Pleiku) had one slick assigned to it. They used it for C&C, mail runs, resupply and just about anything. The other ships supported the Special Force Recon school, B-52 Delta project and the headquarters.

It was an interesting assignment. I got to see the entire country from north to south and east to west. I got to work with the airboats and hover craft in the delta. I put in lots of long range patrols and road runner teams. I met and got to fly Woody Hayes, the Ohio State football coach; also Errol Flynn's son who was a journalist and Martha Ray. We did almost no assault work. Most of our operations were with six or fewer ships.

We also went on hunting trips with the helicopters. We shot deer and water buffalo and took them back to camp for parties.

The Special Force Group was a good bunch to work for. They took real good care of us and treated us like they wanted us to stay. From the commander on down they realized the importance of helicopters

and used them as much as possible.

On one trip back to Nha Trang, I picked up an Air Force pilot who was going my way. I put him in the left seat and except for the take off and touch down he flew it for one hour and forty five minutes. He in turn got my co-pilot and myself a ride in F-100's. Boy what a flight that was. I went on a bomb mission in the northern part of the country, west of Da Nang. One of the highlights of my tour.

I hope this short letter gives you some insight into the Special Forces and their aviation support.

Sincerely,
Richard Lubic

Your letter explains some of the history of helicopters operated under the control of Special Forces in Vietnam. We'll add this to our history. Anyone else out there want to contribute?

LETTER TO A DOOR GUNNER

Regarding my letter, "Note from a Door Gunner" - please read the attached photocopy of a letter I received from Frankie Gilbert the other day. I think it pretty well says it all. The original is going on the wall in my den.

Regards to all,
Ned Flecke

Dear Ned:

I read your letter in the December, VHPA Newsletter. I arrived in country May 1967 at Bear Cat, with the 240th Greyhounds (Mad-Dogs gun platoon). I flew guns with them until being infused into the 17th (Kingsman Lancer guns). We were at Plantation airstrip at Long Binh. I remember the call sign Fire Birds and I would bet we flew many missions in the same areas. I stayed at Long Binh for Tet and our unit went to Camp Eagle Hue Phu - Bi the first part of March to work with the 101st. I left country in May 1968.

I flew C-model gunships, L-9 engine until engine failure. The rest of my ships had L-11's, many running take-offs as you remember. Many missions when coming back to base I would climb to crew seats and let the door-gunner or crew chief fly. I would jump back in on final at base. I only wish I had done this on every mission.

Continued on next page

My crews will always be my heroes they got most of the kills, and truly made the C-model so effective. The 334th had a few Cobra's during Tet, to the best of my knowledge all were shot down during Tet. For the first day or two from what I monitored on the radio and saw only C-model gunships were able to fly in the Saigon, Bien Hoa area.

I know my fellow pilots hold you and the crew members high in our hearts for your skill, your devotion and the most outstanding courage that truly made our missions a success. We pilots remember the long hours you put in after each mission, getting the ship ready for the next.

Ned, let me assure you when I look at my air-medals I see a co-pilot, a crew chief and door-gunner that made it work. Be patient, we all came back changed in one way or another, with time most of us are doing well.

I don't want you or any crew member to ever feel you can't come to New Orleans to talk and see friends. Maybe some day soon we can have that long overdue joint reunion. Although you and I never flew together I feel a special bond between us and you can be sure many other pilots feel the same as I do.

Sincerely,
Frankie L. Gilbert (Lancer 7)

Thanks, Ned, for sharing this tribute you crew members so richly deserve.

MEMORIES - THE TRAVELING WALL

This summer I had an opportunity to act as a volunteer for the Traveling Wall. I spent only 3 days with the Wall, but in that 3 days I encountered every personal drama and emotion associated with the Wall that I had only read about. After seeing macho men humbled before the Traveling Wall, I cannot fathom the awesome power the Wall in D.C. must possess. One of the first persons I met was another volunteer and Gold Star mother. In the course of our conversation I was to discover her son was a WO helicopter pilot. As I looked at her I could easily see my mother sitting there, and on it goes. Anyway, I'm hoping to locate some friends of her son. Later in the day I decided to walk the Wall. I happened to notice a wreath with the name of a guy from my unit. For some reason I decided to place a phone call. On the first attempt I struck paydirt. And on the following day a Gold Star mother walked up, pointed at me, and said she wanted to talk. I can't remember the last

time I was that nervous. Later that evening I also met his wife (she never remarried). I was struck by the pride both these ladies have in their pilot son/husband. I was the first person they ever talked to from our unit. I think I helped answer some of the questions, and some doubts, and fill a void that has been there for 19 years. For behind all that pride I could see a glint of pain in those eyes. I hope I was able to help just a little.

I would urge everyone out there to take the time to pick up the phone or write a few words to the family of someone they knew. I think we owe the guys we served with that much.

Until New Orleans,
Kenneth L. Mayberry ("Phoenix 50")

Looking for: Friends of WO1 Larry Lee Stoner, KIA 3-11-69. Especially classmates James R. Tolley and David G. Swanson. Contact Kenneth L. Mayberry.

The wall is an experience that is felt. Helping ease the pain by sharing your memories with the loved ones of a lost buddy is an expression of the love we feel for those who gave their lives.

DEAR SIRS:

I am a Viet Nam war historian and Viet Namophile and although I am not eligible to be a member of your organization, I am very much interested in it. I would very much like to contact and correspond with a Khong Quan Viet Nam (VNAF) helicopter pilot who is willing to relate personal stories and remembrances, perhaps even one who lives in my area. If you know of any such man, I would sincerely appreciate it if you would ask him if he is willing to write to me. If, however, you feel that this would be inappropriate or if you can't find anyone to do this, please write me and tell me so. Thank you for your trouble.

Tim Johnson

VHPA Product Order Form

	Price	Total
Back VHPA Newsletters..... (Complete set only)	\$15.00/Set	
1989 VHPA Directory..... (VHPA Members only) (While supplies last)	\$12.00/each	
VHPA Decals..... (VHS Tape).....	\$1.00/each \$25.00/each	
	Grand Total	

Send check or money order or charge to: MasterCard VISA

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MAIL FORM TO:

VHPA
7 W. Seventh St./Suite 1940
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

New Orleans 7th Annual VHPA Reunion Information

EARLY REGISTRATION:

All persons registering prior to June 1st will be eligible for a drawing, of which 1st place will be free, upgraded hotel accommodations July 5th, 6th, and 7th. Second place will be two free Natchez paddle boat tickets for the VHPA cruise July 5th.

Ladies Gathering:

All ladies are invited to attend a cajun cooking show Saturday, July 7th. There is no charge for this event and it promises to be very tasteful as all present will receive a sample of food prepared during the show. A cash bar will be available.

Handicap Assistance:

Should you be in need of special assistance during the reunion, please contact me ASAP. The local DAV has volunteered transportation as needed to both ship functions.

Swamp Tour:

Don't miss this exciting tour. Mail your check to me, payable to VHPA, as soon as possible. See December Newsletter for tour details.

Video Room:

This year we will have a special half moon shape raised conference room to view our videos. All will have seating and

complete view of the movies. Times will be posted for each video playing, so no one will miss their favorite.

Memorabilia:

For those attending the Houston reunion, you remember the great memorabilia display. I am hoping for the same this year with everybody's assistance. If you would bring to the reunion a piece of your Vietnam Memorabilia it would be most appreciated. I have asked the Alabama Chapter of VHPA to be in charge of the memorabilia display. Should you have any questions, please call George Baker at [REDACTED] or Jim Cully at [REDACTED]

Unit Reunions:

If your unit or group would like to meet or have a mini reunion, please contact me ASAP. I will reserve one of two meeting rooms we have set aside during the entire reunion for VHPA's use.

Please call or write if I may help in making the New Orleans reunion a most pleasant time for you and yours.

Gary Slaughter
[REDACTED]

VHPA Gift Membership

Please send a gift membership to:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Yes, please include my name so he will know who sent it to him.

No, let him find out when he comes to the next reunion!

Enclosed is \$20.00 for each gift membership included. Of course, I used additional paper when necessary.

MY NAME: _____

MEMBER #: _____

Looking For.....

WO ROBERT "DOC" FUQUA

Doc and I were hootch mates, serving with the 48th AHC in 1968 at Nihn Hoa about 30 miles north of Na Trang. I believe Doc was from the Northwest, Washington or Oregon. Any information please write Dan Nelson, [REDACTED]

Thank you.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR HERNDON

Captain Herndon was a helicopter pilot with co. C, 158 101st. He was based somewhere near Quang Tri. Captain Herndon was KIA on December 21, 1969. Anyone who can remember Captain Herndon should write to Julie Schneider, [REDACTED] It would mean a great deal to hear from someone.

In Memory

John W. Sims, Jr., 67 135 AHC, 67-68 113 AHC, attorney, passed away on November 7, 1989. In a recent letter, Becky Sims stated "Mr. Sims was very proud to be a member of your organization. He displayed his certificate in his office on his 'war wall' and when his illness (hepatitis) required him to close his office, I made him a 'war wall' at home. He was a good man, husband, father, friend and soldier. We shall miss him a lot." John was a recipient of the Purple Heart and Air Medal.

Michael Patrick Madden passed away on December 18, 1989. Mike was a professor of Communication and Theatre Arts at The University of Puget Sound. Mike served as an Aircraft Commander in the Aviation Corps of the U.S. Army, piloting the U.S. Army's first attack helicopter, the Huey Cobra, and flying more than 270 missions. During his 1969-70 tour of duty in Southeast Asia, he was awarded the Bronze Star, twice the Distinguished Flying Cross, 12 times the Air Medal for Valor, and twice the Purple Heart. His ship was shot down during the Cambodian "incursion" on April 28, 1970. Dr. Madden died after a valiant struggle with cancer.

New Life Members

James Ottman

68-1
68-69 C/229 1 CAV
Carpenter

Bruce Fischer

67-15
68 213 ASHC
68 B/159 101 ABN
Clinical Psychologist

Thomas L. Gould

68-40
69-70 335 AHC
Helicopter Pilot

George E. Mayl

68-25
68-69 335 AHC
Communication Tech., AT&T

William Montgomery

66-9
67 176 AHC
68 281 AHC
69-70 273 AVN
DAC, Flt. Simulator

William Burleigh

68-43, 68-523
69-70 B/3/17 CAV
Captain, ASA

Thomas K. Michel

67-15
68 C/7/17 CAV
68-69 C/7/1 CAV
69 C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN
Police Officer

Bruce W. Loughridge

68-23, 68-513
68-69 4 CAB 4 INF
Owner - Asphalt Paving Co.

Charles A. Edwards

56-15
65-66 Div Arty 1 INF
68-69 334 AHC
Commercial Prop. Mgr.

Michael R. Sherrer

70-7
70-71 C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN
Owner of WINGS

Jim R. Kreutz

67-13
67-68 189 AHC
71-72 HHC 1 AVN BDE
Self employed

Bruce V. Britton

69-11
69-70 192 AHC
Real Estate Broker

Bruce A. Terry

66-19, 66-21
67 571 MED DET
68 82 MED DET
Airline Captain

Rod L. Dykhouse

70-3
70-71 61 AHC
Fireman

James L. Caufman

67-7
67-68 A/227 1 CAV
69-70 235 AHC
Airline Pilot, DC-9, A-300

Dennis A. Schoville

68-24
69 B/7/1 CAV
Attorney

Jarvis W. Coburn

67-3, 67-5
67-68 176 AHC
Business Executive

Brian G. Sullivan

65-14
65-66 197 AVN AHC
68-69 B/228 1 CAV
Elec. Contractor

Continued on next page

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Alan F. Jackson

Canada-U2S 6R7
67-1
67-68 B/3/17 CAV
68 120 AHC
Business Owner

Glenn F. Klutz

67-5, 67-7
67-68 175 AHC
IP & Maint. Test Pilot

Matthew A. Wojdak, Jr.

70-13
70-72 145 AVN ASHC
AVN. Maint. Tech. U.S. Army

Jack Dale Jordan

68-2
68-69 361 AWC
72 C/7/17 CAV
72 H/10 CAV
Pres., NE TX Health Services

Robert J. Heisterman

65-7
65-66 119 AVN
68-69 HHB/4/77 ARA
69 D/101 ABN
Home Remodeling & Repair

Michael J. Keating

69-6
69 A/1/1 INF
70-71 334 AWC
Pilot

George E. Newton

70-7
70-71 48 AVN
Helicopter Pilot

James M. Coleman

69-3
69-70 B/227 1 CAV
Attorney, Guard IP

Robert A. Corscadden

70-1
70-71 142 Trans Co.
Chief Pilot

William C. Courtney

67-19
69 129 AHC
69-70 A/2/20 ARA 1 CAV

Lawrence A. Wigger

66-5
67 134 AHC
68 48 AHC
Airline Pilot

Thomas F. Johnson

69-47
70 A/2/17 CAV 101 ABN
Helicopter Pilot

Lawrence Logsdon

66-15
67 48 AHC
67 A/4 AVN 4 INF
69 121 AHC
Fleet Sales Mgr.

FLYING MAGAZINE

The VHPA would once again like to express a sincere "Thank You" to FLYING MAGAZINE for their continued support and promotion.

Thanks especially to:

Dick Koenig, Vice President/Publisher

and

Patricia E. Luebke, Advertising Director

VHPA Public Relations

If you would like to help advertise the New Orleans reunion, please write to Mike McDonald c/o VHPA headquarters. We can provide you with a public service announcement tape ready for television broadcast. Most television stations will broadcast this PSA if we ask. Please provide the station name and address or we will send the tape or tapes to you. It helps if the tape is hand carried to the station. This shows the dedication we have to our Association.

New Orleans

7th Annual VHPA Reunion

Schedule

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Wed. July 4th	2:00 pm-6:00 pm 6:00 pm-1:00 am	Early Bird Hospitality BBQ, fireworks, party	8th Floor Pool Deck (C/B) Pool Deck (C/B & C/BBQ)
Thurs. July 5th	9:00 am-5:00 pm 1:00 pm-2:00 pm 2:00 pm-4:30 pm 7:00 pm-1:00 am	Registration, Memorabilia Vendor FREE Coors hospitality Natchez Paddle Boat Cruise/Lunch Peter Pilots Beauty Contest/Dance	3rd Floor Pontchartrain Ballroom Natchez Boarding Area Behind Jax Brewery on Mississippi River (C/B) 5th Floor-Grand Ballroom (C/B)
Fri. July 6th	9:00 am-5:00 pm	Registration, Memorabilia Vendor	3rd Floor Pontchartrain Ballroom
		*NO EVENTS SCHEDULED THIS DAY! OPEN FOR SIGHT SEEING! SEE REGISTRATION PACKAGE FOR SUGGESTIONS.	
	8:00 pm	Real Helicopter Pilots Roll Call	Bourbon Street
Sat. July 7th	9:00 am-5:00 pm 8:00am-12:00 pm 1:00 pm-3:00 pm 1:00 pm-3:00 pm 1:00 pm-3:00 pm 6:00 pm-7:00 pm 7:00 pm-1:00 am	Registration, Memorabilia Vendor Helicopter Static Display Boiled crawfish/shrimp \$5 FREE Dixie beer served Mens Business Meeting Ladies Gathering & Cajun Cooking Show/Cocktails Children Pool Party Cocktails Banquet, Mardi Gras Parade M/G Costume Ball/Dance	3rd Floor Pontchartrain Ballroom Depart Hotel via Bus to U.S.A. Cabot Aircraft Carrier Museum 5th Floor Grand Ballroom 2nd Floor Rhythms Room (C/B) 8th Floor Pool Deck 5th Floor Grand Ballroom Foyer (C/B) 5th Floor Grand Ballroom (C/B)
Sun. July 8th	Going Home 10:30 am	Check out time is 12:00 noon C/Champagne Jazz Brunch (a non VHPA sponsored event available for those staying over.)	2nd Floor Cafe Promenade

- C/B - Cash Bar
- C/ - Cash Event

NOTE: Memorabilia & Vendor area will be closed during business meeting, Saturday July 7th.

Upcoming Events...

May 25-28, 1990

1st MAW Association

1st Marine Aircraft Wing-Vietnam Service

For all grades, ranks, years!! Attention all pilots, air and ground crews, operations, maintenance, LAAMs, combat engineers, F.L.C. and medical personnel. Sheraton Premier at Tysons Corner, VA. For information write: 1st MAW Association

May 25, 26 and 27, 1990

LuckyStar/Starblazer Reunion

Fisherman's Wharf Marriott

San Francisco, California

Contact: Dany A. Pennington

July 6, 1990

1st Annual Reunion of the 173rd Assault Helicopter Co.

Dear fellow Robinhoods/Cross Bows,

After running into a great number of Robinhoods in Chicago last year a few of us said, "Why not make an effort to reunite all Robinhoods?" So here we are!

At the New Orleans reunion of the VHPA, **July 4-7 1990**, the Robinhoods will reunite as a group for the first time!

We can not only enjoy our unique groups camaraderie with ole war stories of the daring, but also document the complete history of the 173rd in Vietnam. I have my unit book from Vietnam when the Robinhoods were in DaNang and in it is a partial unit history done by a fellow friend in Vietnam and a current VHPA member, **Chester R. Bennett**. With this information and yours we can put together all the pieces to the history puzzle.

We will meet in the Sheraton Hotel July 6, 1990-2pm 'til 4pm, Suite #808, next to the pool deck. As I am reunion chairman for

VHPA this year, I have asked **George "Russ" Shuler**, Robinhood "15", to host and make sure every beer is cold. As an extra precaution: wear boots that day, I'm sure the bull will be deep!! Please try and attend this 1st annual reunion of the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company.

Sincerely,

Phillip Gary Slaughter
Robinhood "13"

August 2-5, 1990

25th Infantry Division Association

41st Annual Reunion

Marriott-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois

For information write: Midwest Chapter
c/o Mr. Bill Malony
25th Inf. Div. Association



United Airlines is pleased to offer the attendees of the VHPA 1990 Reunion a 45 percent discount off unrestricted coach fares or 5 percent discount off lowest applicable fares, including first class.

This special offer, available only to attendees of this meeting, applies to travel on domestic segments of all United Airlines and United Express flights. These fares are available through United's Meeting Plus Desk with all fare rules applying.

United Meeting Plus Specialists are on duty 7 days a week, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. ET to make your reservations. Call today, as seats may be limited. Please refer to account number 415KM to be advised.

United States and Canada **1-800-521-4041**.

As a United Meeting Plus attendee you also qualify for special discount rates on Hertz rental cars. Mileage Plus members receive full credit for all miles flown. Tickets will be mailed by United or you can pick them up at your local travel agency or United Airlines ticket office.

REUNION REGISTRATION VHPA
7th Annual Reunion of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association
New Orleans, Louisiana
July 4th thru 7th, 1990

Name: _____ Member No: _____
 Wife/Guest Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 No. of Children /Guests: _____ Arrival Date: _____
 Is this your first reunion? _____ How many? _____

REGISTRATION FEES

No. of People	Total
Registration before 6/4/90	@ \$15.00 per person = \$ _____
Registration after 6/4/90	@ \$25.00 per person = \$ _____
Natchez Paddle Boat - Adult.....	@ \$20.00 per person = \$ _____
Natrchez Paddle Boat - Child.....	@ \$10.00 per person = \$ _____
Banquet.....	@ \$35.00 per person = \$ _____
	GRAND TOTAL: = \$ _____

Enclosed is my check to VHPA Reunion '90
 Please charge my MasterCharge or VISA

Account No.: _____ Exp. Date: _____
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NAME TAG INFORMATION

NAME: _____
 NAME OF WIFE/FRIEND: _____
 FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS (NO. & YEAR): _____
 COMBAT UNITS & YEARS: _____
 HOMETOWN OR PRESENT RESIDENCE: _____

MAIL TO: VHPA /7 West Seventh St./Suite 1940/Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

SHERATON HOTEL REGISTRATION
7th Annual Reunion of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association
New Orleans, Louisiana
July 4th thru 7th, 1990

Name: _____ No of Persons in Party: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: () _____
 Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

ROOM RATES:

One thru four occupants per room \$70.00 Plus Tax.

Rooms may be available at 12 Noon, check-in guaranteed at 3:00 PM.

These are Special Rates. Reservations Must be Received No Later than June 4th, 1990.

For guaranteed reservations the Sheraton must receive a deposit equal to one nights room charge.

For Credit Card Use:

Card Type: _____ MC _____ VISA _____ AMEX _____ DINERS
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 504/525-2500



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OR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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LIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$300

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COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY NO. _____

Information about EACH Vietnam Tour:

DATE From	To	UNIT	LOCATION	CALL SIGN

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

Note: This form may be used for Directory corrections.