



# The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

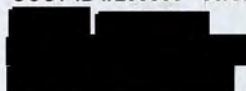
September/October 2001 Vol. 19, No. 5



At least one VHPA member — William Ruth of Mt. Airy, MD — has been confirmed as killed in the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon. This photo was taken by a relative of Bob Karvonen, a crew chief with the 118th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. Karvonen resides in Enterprise, AL.

\*\*\*\*\*3-DIGIT 453

CUST ID #L00806 - 99/99





## From the President

For all of those who question the ultimate value of our military and the sacrifices they make to ensure our overall freedom, the tragic events of Sept. 11 serve as a indelible reminder of how quickly world events can change, and the need for our country to remain strong, viable and committed.

We are very blessed we have our current leadership and the strength/dedication of our overall armed forces.

### Commitment

We have heard repeatedly over the past few days that America will always remember the above date and the thought process of our citizens has directionally changed forever.

Perhaps, but I do believe the commitment and dedication made by you all some 30 years ago will be looked at very differently by many of our citizens in the future vs. perhaps what may have existed previously.

Many of our association members also participated in Desert Storm and more than a few are currently involved in whatever will happen in the weeks and months ahead.

For those so involved, we salute you . . . and ask that you keep us in your hearts and minds during the difficult times ahead, as will we.



Dave Rittman

### Our lost and missing

We have all had our ups and downs over the years. These times suddenly are much more difficult, but as Winston Churchill said during the dark days of the London bombing, "This is our finest hour."

Perhaps for us, that's now true too.

I am saddened that as this column was written in the days immediate following the tragedies in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, it appears we may have lost some of our fellow pilots of the Vietnam era, mostly in the Pentagon fire.

VHPA member William Ruth of Mt. Airy, MD, has

been confirmed as dead. Five other names reported as missing as of Sept. 23 appear to have flown rotorcraft in our era, but have not been identified in this newsletter, as information available to us is tentative and not confirmed.

Our next edition will contain an updated list of active and possible members who we have lost.

The names were developed by matching the official lists of missing and confirmed dead in New York and Washington to our member files and known information of those who flew during our era.

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of Gary Roush, Mike Sloniker, Ken Fritz and others who have been working diligently on this over the past several days on this most difficult task.

### We will not be deterred

During our service to our country during the Vietnam era, we experienced first hand the trauma, uncertainties, and difficulties that are most likely to resurface again as our pilots return to defend our country.

While our economy, transit systems and way of life will be impacted in the near-term, our country remains strong, as will the camaraderie of our association.

Our reunion next July will run as planned . . . and, if anything, it will mean even more to us as we welcome back both old friends and salute members we hope will have returned from active duty by then.

Without a doubt, our patriotism will reflect stronger than ever, as will the reunion itself.

We all have been through difficult times in our personal lives, and for many of our members, remembering the bond that kept us together then . . . and now remains paramount.

Mark your calendar: 6 p.m. July 3, 2002, to a Sunday a.m. departure on July 7, 2002, in Las Vegas. Buy your tickets now and, besides getting low fares, help send a message that our way of life cannot and will not be altered by a very few who wish us a different way of life.

### To our fellow pilots and friends in harm's way

Our entire membership — 11,000 strong — wish you the best in the weeks and months ahead. You are all in our hearts and minds. Rotors in the green, my friends, and God bless.

— Dave Rittman

## Classified ads

**POSITION WANTED:** Experienced helicopter pilot looking for a position in the areas of EMS, natural resources or public service. Experience: Regular Army, Indiana National Guard. Class 68-27. Call Bill Resor at [REDACTED]

**CALORAD:** All natural wellness product. Would you like to lose inches/weight while you sleep? Build lean muscle mass? No diet or exercise necessary. Too good to be true? An 86% long-term success rate speaks for itself. Available retail or wholesale in an excellent business opportunity. Call VHPA member Paul Uster (L200) at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and follow the cues. Or visit [www.eyicom.com](http://www.eyicom.com) Use code word: paul

THE VHPA NEWSLETTER (ISSN 0896-3037)(USPS 001-497) is published six times yearly — February, April, June, August, October and December. Annual dues are \$36 or Life membership for \$450. Yearly subscription for nonmembers is \$36. Published by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698. Periodicals Publications postage paid at Citrus Heights, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE VHPA NEWSLETTER, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698.



# VHPA OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND STAFF 2001-2002

PRESIDENT	David Rittman
VICE PRESIDENT	Joe Bilitzke
PAST PRESIDENT	Charles Holley
MEMBERS AT LARGE	
Senior Member	Mike Hurley
Midterm Member	Dan Ferguson
Junior Member	Mike Sheuerman
SECRETARY/TREASURER	Thomas Payne
FOUNDER	Larry Clark

## COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

National Reunion	Joe Bilitzke
Membership	Dana Young
Records/database	Gary Roush
Site selection	Kenny Bunn
Public relations/publications	Ken Fritz
Directory	Mike Law, Editor
Newsletter	Jack Swickard, Editor
Assistant editors	Ken Fritz, Thomas Payne
Contributing writer	Mike Law
Vendor Coordinator	Ken Fritz
Historical	Mike Sloniker
Technology steering	Charles Holley
Strategic planning	Robert Smith

## VHPA SUPPORT

Legal adviser	James Gunderson
Investment adviser	Bob Potvin
VHPA Headquarters	(800) 505-VHPA
Fax	(916) 966-8743

## ELECTRONIC MAIL

VHPA Headquarters	HQ@vhpa.org
President	president@vhpa.org
Historical chairman	sloniker@vhpa.org
Newsletter editor	swickard@vhpa.org
Directory editor	law@vhpa.org
Records/Database chairman	roush@vhpa.org
Membership chairman	membership@vhpa.org
Secretary/treasurer	TomPayne@vhpa.org
Webmaster	webmaster@vhpa.org
Reunion webmaster	webmaster@vhpareunion.org
VHPA website	www.vhpa.org
VHPA reunion website	www.vhpareunion.org

## Newsletter privacy statement

This newsletter contains member privacy information the VHPA considers proprietary and confidential.

This information, including but not limited to the VHPA Chapter list, shall not be used for commercial solicitation purposes or for any correspondence related thereto without prior written authorization from the VHPA president.

Correspondence relating to commercial purposes or solicitations shall only be sent to those officers, committee chairmen, and staff listed above.

# VHPA chapters

Arizona Chapter  
chapete@juno.com

Albert Rodriguez, President  
7929 Via de Belleza

California Chapter North

Mike Nord, President

VHPA of Florida

Gary Bortolus, President

Fort Wolters Chapter

Gerald Brazell, President

Georgia Chapter

Woody McFarlin Jr., President

Las Vegas Chapter

Lad Vaughan, President

Mid America Chapter

Gary Wineteer, President

Mid-South Chapter

Charlie Bell, President

National Capital Chapter

Peter Kacerguis, President

North Carolina Chapter

Joe Armstrong, President

Ohio River L.Z. Chapter

Andy Archer, President

Rocky Mountain Chapter

Brian Foote, President

Southern California Chapter

Carl Cortez, President

Washington State Chapter

Jack Salm Jr., President



# VHPA Products

You may order a past calendar with incredible color photos through VHPA Headquarters or online at <http://www.vhpa.org> The 2001 Calendar may only be ordered by calling Turner Publishing at (800) 788-3350.

Product	Each	P&H	No.	Total
Bumper sticker	\$1	Free		\$
Window decal	\$1	Free		\$
Newsletters — back issues	\$2	Free		\$
1999 Directory — 1972 Easter Offensive	\$15	\$5 ea		\$
1998 Directory — Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, N. Vietnam	\$15	\$5 ea		\$
<b>1997 Directory — IV Corps</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>\$5 ea</b>		<b>\$</b>
1995 Directory — Tandem-rotor helicopters	\$10	\$5 ea		\$
1994 Directory — Lam Son 719 and tactical map	\$10	\$5 ea		\$
2000 Calendar	\$8	\$5 ea		\$
1999 Calendar	\$5	\$5 ea		\$
1998 Calendar	\$5	\$5 ea		\$
<b>1996 Calendar</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>\$5 ea</b>		<b>\$</b>
<b>1995 Calendar</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>\$5 ea</b>		<b>\$</b>
Historical Reference Directory — Vol. I. (Highlights 1961-65)	\$10	\$5 ea		\$
Historical Reference Directory — Vol. II. (Highlights 1966-67)	\$15	\$5 ea		\$
Vietnam Helicopter History CD-ROM (\$15 for VHPA members)	\$25	\$5 ea		\$
<b>Grand total</b>				<b>\$</b>

## To place your order

Complete this form, then mail or fax it to:

VHPA  
5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698  
Fax: (916) 966-8743

Pay by credit card:

Call (800) 505-VHPA

Visit our website at:

[www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org)

*(Include credit card information or enclose check or money order)*

Name:		VHPA membership number:	
Address:			
City:	State:	Zip:	
Credit card (check one):	<input type="checkbox"/> VISA	<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	
Card number:	Expiration date:		
Signature:			



## Letters

# Reunion stimulates memories of Vietnam

We like to talk about the "fog of war" and how it creates confusion during combat.

Unfortunately, as the years go by, the "fog of memory" is also a reality and we reminisce about those who shared the trials of the Vietnam War and the experiences we tolerated upon our return. The reunion stimulated such memories.

One of those that come to mind is Randy West, who at that time was the maintenance officer for A company, 4th Aviation Battalion (1967-68), commanded by Maj. George Shields.

Upon my return to the "real world," Randy stopped by Springfield, MO, where I was visiting enroute to my new duty station and he was traveling to Columbus, GA.

Naturally, it was a delightful reunion and he credited my crew for saving his maintenance aircraft, which was dispatched to recover a "Black Jack" helicopter that was downed during an insertion.

It was not until he related the experience that I learned a sniper, perched in a tree, was beside the approach path to the recovery aircraft with Randy behind the controls (my gunner dispensed with the sniper). Naturally, I was surprised, but my children decided their father was something of a hero.

Anyway, both George Shields and I are anxious to find Randy and B Company Maintenance Officer Blaine Jensen.

So, if anyone out there knows how we can find Randy or Blaine, please give me a call at [REDACTED]

George P. Brown  
Black Jack 5  
[REDACTED]

# Manufacturer working on helicopter models

Corgi Classics, a manufacturer of fine scale, metal models of vehicles and aircraft, is doing a series of models which they market in good hobby shops and toy stores, titled "Unsung Heroes."

Corgi paints the models to represent the specific vehicle or craft of an individual serviceman who served in Vietnam.

They base the detailing of the model on pictures obtained from the individual and they include in the pack-

aging of the model a booklet telling his personal military history along with pictures of him in action.

They came out with some trucks and tanks of the 7th Marine Division in Vietnam this past Christmas season and it was a great success.

I've provided them my pictures and story as a Marine AH-1G pilot and that is due out later this year. They are currently seeking information for a "Dustoff" project and need assistance in lining up a good set of photos and a good "unsung hero" who can be the pilot, crew chief or medic — any member of the crew.

They have pledged a substantial donation to the Roy P. Benavidez Memorial Sculpture project as compensation for my story and assistance.

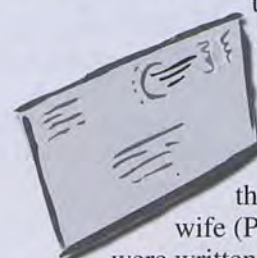
I've asked that this donation be in memory of Maj. Stephen Pless, USMC, Medal of Honor. Pless was, I believe, the only Marine helicopter pilot to receive the Medal of Honor for action in the Vietnam War.

Mark A. Byrd  
"Scarface 47"

HML 367 (September 1969-September 1970)

# Having lunch with authors an enlightening experience

I attended the author's luncheon at the Denver reunion. Mike Law was the host and the invited authors were Bob Mason, a former U.S. Army warrant officer, "Chicken Hawk;" Bruce Lake, a U.S. Marine Corps H-46 pilot, "1,500 Feet Over Vietnam;" Dave Eastman, author of a



unit history book; Ralph Young publisher of 2 of 10 volumes about the history of aviation units in Vietnam.

Bob Mason said he based his book on the letters he wrote home each day. Before he wrote the book, he threw out the box of letters, but his wife (Patience) saved them — saying they were written to her.

Years later, when he decided to explore the possibility of writing a book, he read the letters and organized them chronologically. He had more than 750 pages he had written home!

He made up an outline with 12 chapters, one for each month of his tour in Vietnam. He listed all the incidents and actions, and had over 225 — he knew he had enough material for a book.

When he wrote the first chapter, he found he was using stilted language, so he had to try to rewrite it to sound more like himself. He passed the rewrites around to friends and listened to the suggestions.

When he had 200 pages written, he contacted a literary agent in New York City who took the partial manuscript to several editors. It took him 2.5 years to write "Chicken

See LETTERS, Page 6



# Letters

Continued from Page 5

Hawk.”

It was good he started to find a publisher before the book was done.

He closed by telling us to always write as ourselves. If you get blocked on a missing word, just type “TK,” then call up the search to find those missing words and plug them in later. The same goes with adjectives: Just list all of them that apply and tag them with “TK” so you can go back later and pick the best word.

Bruce Lake did not want to remember the Vietnam War, did not want people to know he was a Vietnam veteran and had never told his family about his experiences.

About 10 years after the end of the war, he was approached and asked for information about MIAs, so he reviewed the letters he had written to his wife. After organizing the letters, he decided to write a book; it was just going to be for his family so they could understand his experiences in Vietnam. He still was not looking to publish commercially.

A local minister helped review his manuscript and convinced him to let it be published. He agreed and sent an e-mail copy of the text to an editor the minister had arranged for.

After a few weeks, he got a request to review and rewrite the first three chapters, which he did in a marathon two days.

He didn’t understand that the publisher expected it would take six or seven months for the review.

He did get another opportunity to review the book when it was about half finished. Bruce was working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and had planned to have a private printing made because, as a public servant, he could not promote the book commercially.

He had 1,000 books published in the first printing and 500 in the final printing at a cost of \$15,000, and the book is out of print and no longer available.

He has recovered about \$13,000 from the book, but his goal was not to earn a profit. He wrote the book to help him share his memories with his family. He talked about Private Press and self-publishing.

Dave Eastman, a former Army aviator, served a tour in Vietnam and returned to the United States just three months before the Tet Offensive.

He was part of a huge rescue that became a full battle.



**He had 1,000 books published in the first printing and 500 in the final printing at a cost of \$15,000, and the book is out of print and no longer available.**

He based his book on his unit’s history.

The first chapter starts with how his orders and plane ticket for Vietnam were mailed to the wrong Dave Eastman in the same hometown in New Hampshire. The other Dave Eastman was puzzled, since he was not in the military and had not even been to basic training.

Then the chapter goes on to tell about arriving in Vietnam, working through the replacement company and getting his duty assignment.

Dave is a naturalist, has a radio spot and is starting some work with the VA Center and helping out soldiers with post traumatic stress disorder. He is continuing to work with unit members to create a history of his aviation unit.

Ralph Young served as a soldier in Vietnam, but was not a pilot.

His father was in the U.S. Army Air Corps serving in World War II and inspired his interest in aviation.

For the past 30 years, Young has been collecting and researching data about Vietnam. He has collected corps maps the Library of Congress could find no use for; they were used as packing material for some of the shipments from Vietnam.

He has spent years viewing and researching data on military aviation in Vietnam.

Five years ago, he started publishing and has released 2 of the 10 volumes he is working on. He is organizing the work under unit histories, and has tried to chronicle the unit call signs patches and insignias, and their missions.

He had hoped someone else would have published this work and he could just read their book. Finally, he decided, along with his wife of 25 years, he should start publishing the work or it would never get done.

He sees the helicopter at war as an amazing weapon and, photographed against the spectacular landscape of Vietnam, it just highlights the wonder of what the helicopter pilots experienced.

After each author gave a 15-minute presentation, Mike Law asked for questions and discussion from the audience.

Mike said the work he has done in chronicling the statistics for the VHPA was a lot of work and very rewarding, but he does not consider it on the same creative level as these authors. He wanted to thank the VHPA members who have given him the data for the VHPA directories and to Mike Sloniker and Bob Davis for carrying the work on.

John Deland asked about trying to get works published; he wanted to know if anyone else had a good relationship with the Vietnamese people. He was a two-tour medevac pilot and flew a third tour in Mohawks.

**Mike said the work he has done in chronicling the statistics for the VHPA was a lot of work and very rewarding, but he does not consider it on the same creative level as these authors.**

See LETTERS, Page 7



# Letters

## Continued from Page 6

He wants to write about the Vietnamese.

There were hundreds of civic action programs in Vietnam, according to Young, but there was little reporting of the support efforts by individual units.

Jim Chote Parker told about modern on-line publishing and told about the book he wrote: A fictional account of Che Guevara, with a plot line of him surviving and exporting his revolutionary ideals to the Middle East.

There were closing remarks about publishing costs and strategies.

The luncheon had all 280 seats filled and about 40 more overflow seats were set up.

I was a bit slowing in getting through the food line and most of the tables were filled. I decided I would find a seat up front. There was a single seat, facing forward at the table beside the speaker's podium. I took it. It turned out all the speakers were there and I got to meet with all of them!

They were interested in the Vietnam Center and Archives, and the progress of the VHPA museum in Mineral Wells.



William J. Fitzgerald

## Pro Stock Truck team could promote VHPA

In December or so of last year, I sent an e-mail note to the VHPA making the offer of using our NHRA Pro Stock Truck team as an advertising medium for the VHPA.

Basically, the offer was that I would provide membership information at our 14-race locations throughout the United States.

We could provide information handouts, membership applications and I could have my current membership directory on site.

If the VHPA had a small banner we could hang on our trailer or our canopy over our work area, it may receive some notice by veterans walking through the pit area. We could also provide space on the truck for a VHPA decal logo. Right now we do it for the DFC Society.

We are always looking for sponsors and in return you might be able to give us some coverage in one issue per year or so.

Right now we are not planning on running the last race of the year in Pomona which is on Veterans Day weekend.

The team is self-funded by the owner to the tune of \$350K per year. We expect coins to be a tad bit slim in November.

We are committed for the 2002 season. If this is something the VHPA might like to try, please give me a call or a return on the e-mail.

There may not be any interest. Thought I would try before we get into the ramp for 2002.

Steve Vermillion  
Tsunami Enterprises

## Heritage Foundation has successful season

The St. Louis Air Show was the culmination of a long and successful season for the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation.

We flew our aircraft more than 4,000 miles and performed 11 air shows to an estimated audience of 2 million.

All of our shows were completed with the full package of aircraft, without incident or accident.

Making this happen was no easy task and, though there are great rewards in the satisfaction of accomplishing our mission, the efforts to make the shows happen is just plain hard work.

In preparation for St. Louis, we accomplished more than 30 different inspections on our aircraft and resolved a myriad of deficiencies that had cropped up, from a bleed air leak on the Cobra to a hydraulic leak on Huey 354.

In the middle of this, Bob Peterson, Ron Warner, Tuck Middlebrook, Jim Brennan, Ed Bearden, Deny Toasperm, Adam Strange, George Meeker, Ron Disney, Jeff Clark, Darryl King, Skip Lam, John Egerett, Mike Breunig and many more made it happen.

From the operations side, Skip Davis, Cathy Johnson, Peyton Dehart and Jim Castill formed the teams and made the coordination necessary to pull the operation together.

For all of us who are excited by the presentation, the pyro Jody Fann puts together adds the reality that wows the crowds.

Our arrival in St. Louis went smoothly. Despite a minor chip light on 354, we arrived on time and were taxied to a holding ramp, while other aircraft were stacked into their static position for the show.

Though we enjoy the opportunity to show our aircraft off on static display, we are typically on the outskirts of the static area to allow us easy access for runup prior to our presentation.

**Our arrival in St. Louis went smoothly. Despite a minor chip light on 354, we arrived on time and were taxied to a holding ramp, while other aircraft were stacked into their static position for the show.**

See LETTERS, Page 8



## Letters

### Continued from Page 7

ranging in age from twin boys almost 21 to my youngest brother Steve, who would turn 9 just a month after Chuck's death.

Chuck and my mother were very close; the depth of their relationship would not hit me until many years later when I sat down to read his letters. Most were signed 'Your Loving Son, Chuck.'

Although surrounded by her other children, none of us were equipped to help her deal with her grief.

Mom convinced herself that Chuck was angry with her when he died — there have been various reasons that she conceived, and nothing that anyone could tell her would relieve that ache in her heart.

Our answer was to not talk about Chuck, because it only made her cry. Although never forgotten, Chuck was never discussed, so I never really knew much about him.

When he left for Vietnam, I was 11, and Chuck was much closer to my older brothers. We were just not at the ages where brothers and sisters do much together socially.

Every year on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, on Chuck's birthday and on the anniversary of his death, my sister Barbara and I wear our Purple Heart survivor's pins.

We work together, and this year, a new co-worker asked us about them. After telling him Chuck's story, he suggested that we get a case for Chuck's flag and medals. I began to look for one on the Internet, then began searching for information about Vietnam.

For many years, I wondered what Chuck had done with the 101st Airborne — all I knew was that he as a crew chief. I had looked for books to read about Vietnam, but I didn't know what would give me information about what my brother did, what his role was specifically.

As I searched, I found the website:

[www.thevirtualwall.org](http://www.thevirtualwall.org)

What I found there touched me more than I could have imagined: A gentleman who had served with Chuck by the name of Frank Tresenrider had posted an open letter to his family. There was an e-mail address, so I immediately responded.

Believe it or not, Frank had grown up just miles from where I live. Though not living in the area at the time I first contacted him, he and his wife were preparing to relocate within the next month.

We met at my home on April 3 and a friendship was made that I hope will last a lifetime. Frank has since met my entire family.

He loaned me William Meacham's book "Lest We Forget," which I found fascinating.

I started to look for more information about the 101st Airborne and found the VHFCN and the VHPA. With the



## Captain seeking information about cavalry unit in Vietnam

I am looking for some information on the 7/1 Cavalry unit.

We are putting together some pictures and background info on different units for our conference rooms.

I need the history during Vietnam, description of their mission and location of unit during the Vietnam War. Just a basic overview and the weapons systems used for their missions.

I appreciate and help you could give me.

Capt. Jonathan Bentley  
Fort Rucker, AL

help of Gary Thewlis and Julie Kink, I began to search for others who might have known Chuck — the response has been overwhelming!

So many people have either called or written, all with wonderful and loving words about Chuck. I finally knew the names of the other men who perished with Chuck — this was the first Memorial Day that I could remember them by name.

I have been in contact with Jean Erickson, the sister of copilot Daniel O'Neil, which has been wonderful.

I received a 60-minute audio tape with a small snippet of Chuck speaking. After 32 years, I could hear his voice again!

One gentleman was kind enough to send my mother flowers for Mother's Day, along with a very poignant letter.

All of these people taking time for strangers — I was and still am blown away.

What has been the most gratifying thing for me has been the change I have seen in my mother.

Frank has been able to put to rest her fears that Chuck was angry at her — being able to speak to someone who was there with him up until the last moment has been a blessing beyond belief.

She now knows that Chuck was and always will remain her Loving Son. That is a gift that I could never buy her. With heartfelt respect and gratitude;

Victoria Girard Chandler  
Sister of Spec. 5 Charles Pierre Girard  
B Company, 101st Airborne Division Kingsmen  
(KIA 3/9/1969)

## Many stories emerge from Denver reunion

Imagine four women who just met, "sisters" by virtue of the fact that they each lost a brother to the Vietnam War, sharing thoughts they never before shared because nobody else ever knew quite how it felt to lose a sibling in such a

See LETTERS, Page 9



# Letters

Continued from Page 8

way . . .

Imagine a young man who was an infant the last time he saw his dad, when he left for Vietnam 31 years ago, sitting in a room full of men sharing stories about the place where his father last flew . . .

Imagine a young lady who hears on her office radio that there's a convention of Vietnam helicopter pilots in town . . . who decides to see if she can find out something about the uncle she never knew . . . and ends up reading the actual report of his crash and talking with somebody who knew him in flight school . . .

Imagine a Gold Star Mother standing in the spotlight of a huge banquet room, surrounded for the first time by hundreds of men who did exactly what her son did in Vietnam, and thought of him as a brother . . .

Imagine a Gold Star Mother and Father spending the day with a man who was with their son in his last days . . . and another brother of a helicopter pilot being at a reunion of his brother's comrades for the first time.

These are only a few of the stories that came out of the VHPA reunion in Denver July 2-7.

In my wildest dreams, all the while I was growing up, I couldn't imagine such things happening. Even since finding the Vietnam Helicopter Flight Crew Network, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association in 1996, I still find it hard to believe the kinds of connections that are made between helicopter veterans and us "KIA families" — a term I use for lack of a better explanation for who we are and why we do what we do.

The VHPA reunion is many things to many people. To me it's an opportunity to see the people who helped me

## F-4 pilot would like to meet UH-1 crew that rescued him

A friend of mine, (USAF F-4 driver), would like to reconnect with the UH-1 crew that picked him up on May 12, 1970.

His F-4 was shot down west of Plei Djerang in Cambodia. He bailed out and spent a short time on the ground before the UH-1 crew picked him up.

He remembers a UH-1, a Cobra, and CH-47 in the area.

The UH-1 crew flew him to a dispensary at Plei Djerang. Later that day he was taken to Pleiku. (There are different spellings of Plei Djerang, it was west of Pleiku, close to the Cambodian border.)

Perhaps you could put an inquiry in the newsletter?

Thanks for doing such a great job, the newsletter gets better every issue.

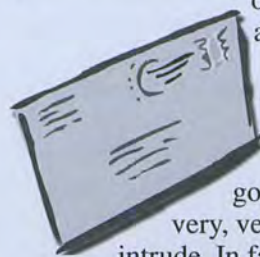
Steve Sullivan

learn more about my brother when no one else could, who stand as examples of who he might be today, had he come back. . . and who come as close as possible, without taking his place, to "being there for me" in the way that only big brothers can.

But I remember going to my first VHPA reunion in 1997, with a very different set of emotions. I was concerned that being a "KIA sister" meant I would carry a dark cloud wherever I went. I wanted so much to meet men who did what my brother did, but they were going there to remember the good times, not the bad.

I, on the other hand, was going essentially because of a death. (Talk about feeling like you're crashing the party.) I didn't want them to feel obligated in any way to talk to me, console me, shelter me, lower their voice for me, weep for me, smile for me, search out information for me, help me

or do anything else special to acknowledge my presence.



As it turns out, they have done all of the above, many times over, over the past five years!

To family members of our fallen, going to a big reunion like this is a very, very special thing. We don't want to intrude. In fact, some of us (myself included) are so concerned about intruding we let years go by without even trying, seriously, to find veterans whose lives might be upset by the mention of that distant time and place. Once we find out there are organizations dedicated to keeping the history alive, and recognizing the pride with which helicopter veterans served, it's like walking into a clearing in the middle of a forest one has wandered for 30 years.

What it all comes down to, I think, is this: Each of those young men who lost their lives in Vietnam is still remembered and missed deeply. Whether they were there for a day, or a year, or longer, they experienced a camaraderie that only one group of people, brought together once a year to celebrate a unique bond, can recapture. Thank you for allowing us family members to share that bond for a moment. It means more than you know.

The warm welcome that was given each of the family members that attended some part of the VHPA reunion in Denver is absolutely thrilling to me. I can't adequately describe how great it feels to be in the same room when a family member meets fellow unit members of their loved one. I want to thank everyone who hugged a family member and helped them learn about what their loved one — and you — did in Vietnam.

Thanks to the Denver committee for making everything run smoothly and making us all feel so welcome.

And thanks to everyone who stopped at the Family Contacts Committee table, which was located near Gary Roush's database and KIA/MIA/DAT Rolodexes, and Mike Sloniker's history table. We gathered a lot of information on existing cases, for which we have some connection already established with a family member or friend of the

See LETTERS, Page 10



# Letters

## Continued from Page 9

were for Army and 50 or so for the Marines, which early on were designated FMS-1 and later CH-37C.

I have enclosed a copy of a photograph of a CH-37 with two Jeeps and two trailers.

Now, for the Vietnam era, CH-37. I believe the first one's — three or four — came down from the 39th Trans Company in Korea in 1962. I flew them in the 339th Trans Company at Nha Trang in 1964 and 1965, at which time we had four CH-37B's.

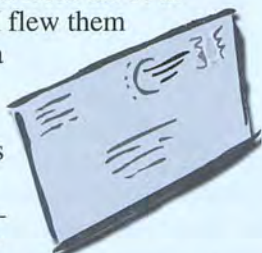
Saigon had three and Vung Tau's 611 Trans Company had three.

For approximately three years — 1962, 1963 and 1964 — the CH-37 was the only aircraft in country that could sling out a downed UH-1 until the spring of 1965 when the CH-47's and CH-54's arrived with the First Cav.

To my knowledge, only one CH-37 was shot down. Lt. Ronnie Woodmansee and three crew members were killed and one E4 who survived reported a recoilless rifle round in the cockpit. This occurred on Dec. 12, 1963, as per the 1999 membership Directory, Page 200.

I believe the CH-37's were retired in Vietnam in 1966. I had the pleasure of flying them again in Korea in 1967 and 1968. CW4 Roger Eichelberger (retired) tells me he flew the last one out of Korea to Japan in 1969.

I passed the boneyard at Tucson in 1996. It looked as if



the CH-37's were next in line for the chopping machine.

If you would like to see a great old warrior in very nice and shiny olive drab paint, you must go to Fort Rucker.

It did its job to the best of its ability with two R-2800's humming. It was all we had in 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965.

Gerald "Budda" Meador

## Scholarship recipient says thanks to VHPA members

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association for the scholarship that has been awarded to me through the Army Aviation Association of America.

I am deeply grateful to receive this honor, especially in light of my father's long military career and experience as a Vietnam helicopter pilot. I am especially honored to be recognized as the first scholarship winner for the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, and appreciative of the efforts taken to make this scholarship a reality.

This scholarship will allow me to continue my studies at Bryn Mawr College, where I am majoring in Russian, with an emphasis on literature.

Thank you for the confidence you have placed in me to continue to achieve academic excellence.

Amanda E. Hrubik

From Robert Mason, author of the best-selling Vietnam War memoir, *Chickenhawk*

## Flight Line: The Army Helicopter Pilots of Vietnam

Host and Narrator  
Harrison Ford

Firsthand accounts  
from the  
Helicopter War

© 2000 Flight Line Partners, LLC  
A Division of Television

If you missed the opportunity to pick up your personal copy of "Flight Line: The Army Helicopter Pilots of Vietnam," you can still order directly from:

The National Vietnam War Museum  
P.O. Box 146  
Mineral Wells, TX 76068-0146

Order today for only \$29.95 (includes postage and handling) and enjoy the documentary seen on PBS and at the 2001 VHPA reunion in Denver.

Make checks or money orders payable to:

The National Vietnam War Museum

Credit Card Orders  
(American Express, MasterCard, Visa)

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# Taps

## Greg Fullam

Aviation has lost a great pilot; I have lost a good friend. Greg Fullam, 54, of Fresno, CA, was killed in a single-pilot aircraft accident on Dec. 12.

As a pilot for the California Department of Justice, he was enroute from his base in Fresno to Fox Field (Lancaster, CA), flying a Cessna 182P surveillance aircraft.

He was to provide aviation services to a Los Angeles narcotics investigation. While descending to enter the traffic pattern, the aircraft pitched nose down and crashed into the desert floor. No cause has been determined, but it is believed he had a medical incapacitation during the maneuver.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, in 1946, Fullam graduated from Fort Rucker with class 69-36. Assigned to the 15th TC/1st Cavalry Division, he flew in South Vietnam from 1970-71. He continued his military career, serving in National Guard and Army Reserve units.

In 1990, as a member of 343rd Medical Detachment, he was deployed to Saudi Arabia to fly as a UH-1 medevac pilot in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Upon his return, he changed units and began flying CH-47's with the California National Guard.

His ratings included CFII, multi-engine IP and helicopter CFII. His love for flying found him not only flying part time for the Army and full time for the state of California, but also as an aircraft owner in his spare time. Greg retired as a CW4.

He is survived by his wife, Tyra, and his favorite dogs, Murphy and Sage. His three brothers, Richard, John and Peter also survive him.

As my close friend, he served as best man in my wedding. During our Desert Storm tour, he also made pretty decent coffee in our shared tent. We miss him.

Joe Bilitzke  
Wolf Pack 34

## James Alfred Hensley

James Alfred Hensley, 61, of Mill Creek, WA, died May 10 after a 2.5-year battle with pancreatic cancer.

He was born in Portland, OR, on May 31, 1939. Hensley enlisted in the Army in 1956.

In flight school, he was in classes 67-7 and 67-9.

He served two tours of duty in Vietnam, with the 79th TC Company and the 14th TC Battalion in 1968-69 and 1971-72.

During his Vietnam tours, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and eight Air Medals.

Hensley retired from the Army in 1976 as a captain.

He then served briefly as an Alaska state trooper, then became an agent with the Defense Investigative Service. Hensley retired from the DIS in 1999 and worked briefly

as a banker for Washington Mutual.

His military career continued with the Washington State Guard, in which he served for many years, rising to battalion commander. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 2001 and was awarded the Legion of Merit for his service.

Hensley is survived by his wife, Erika; children, Robert and Diana; sister, Linda; and grandchildren, Kevin and Amanda.

## Godfrey Ludlow

Godfrey Ludlow, 65, of Boise, ID, died July 6 at a local hospital of natural causes.

Ludlow was born Aug. 14, 1935, in Manhattan, N.Y., to Godfrey R. and Blanca C. Ludlow. He graduated from Trinity High School in New York City.

Immediately after graduation, he enlisted in the Army. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot and unit commander.

He retired in 1973 as a lieutenant colonel, after 20 years of honorable service.

Some of the awards Ludlow received include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal with V device. Upon his retirement from the military, he was appointed administrator of Mountain States Tumor Institute. Upon leaving MSTI, he had a successful career as a bond broker.

In 1985, he met Melissa. They were married on Dec. 6, 1986.

Ludlow is survived by his wife, Melissa Ann-Ludlow of Boise; his children, Debbie Kranz of Mt. Laurel, NJ, Gwendolyn Bonnichen of Texas, Wendy Ludlow of Seattle, WA, Ana Phelps of Boise, Christopher Rossi of Boise, and Emily Rossi of Boise. He was preceded in death by his parents.

## William J. Maddox Jr.

William J. Maddox Jr., 79, a retired Army major general who served three combat tours in Vietnam, died of sepsis Jan. 5 in a Bedford, TX, hospital.

Maddox was a resident of Southlake, TX. He was born in Newburgh, NY, and raised in Washington, DC.

In 1977, he retired as commander of the Army Aviation Center and School at Fort Rucker.

Maddox served three tours of duty in Vietnam, commanding a battalion, a brigade and an aviation group. He also served in the Korean War and World War II.

In all, he amassed more than 10,600 hours of flight time, including 4,000 combat flying hours in Korea, Vietnam and Korea.

His decorations included the Distinguished Service Medal, four Silver Stars, eight Distinguished Flying Crosses, 127 Air Medals, and five Legions of Merit.

After retiring from the Army, Maddox served as an advisor to King Hussein of Jordan and managing director



See TAPS, Page 12



# Taps

## Continued from Page 11

of Arabian Helicopters and Bell Helicopter in Asia.

He is survived by a daughter, Charlotte Maddox of McLean, VA, and William J. Maddox of Bedford.

## Dominic "Deano" Martin

Dominic "Deano" Martin died suddenly and unexpectedly on Aug. 4, doing what he enjoyed — working his land.

Deano was born Aug. 14, 1940, to Mr. and Mrs. John Martin Sr. of Imogene, IA, and lived there most of his life.

He served in Vietnam from June 1970 to June 1971 as a Cobra pilot with the B/4 Aviation, 4th Infantry Division "Gambler Guns" and the 361st ACE "Pink Panthers."

Deano was retired in his hometown of Imogene at the time of his death.

He was loved and respected by many. He will be remembered as a hard worker, good listener, great story teller, wonderful grandpa, beloved son, a wise father and as "Flanagan."

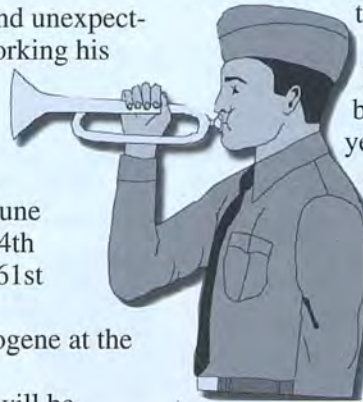
He is survived by his mother, Frances; his son and daughter, Tim and Jennifer; and his grandsons, Jacob and Joshua.

His son Tim sent a copy of a note Deano had written

sometime after his return from Vietnam: "Good scary, adrenaline-pumping good times — to wake up every morning with a purpose — to ride the edge of the envelope — save and protect friends — camaraderie, all for one and one for all, regardless of the consequences — and at the end of each day, thank God for having made it through that day. A time compressed, more scares, thrills, highs, joys, sadness, happiness, camaraderie, togetherness, in one year, than most people endure in 10 lifetimes. It makes every other job mundane, dull. Hard to explain to people who weren't there."

Deano attended the VHPA Reunion in Denver and had a great time. His Panther brothers, some who hadn't seen him in 30 years, will remember Deano's joy at being there, sitting among friends and comrades, telling tales of daring do and smiling. It's a great way to be remembered.

Mike Sheuerman  
Panther 15  
361st ACE/AWC  
Pink Panthers



## Roger Ratzlaff

Roger Ratzlaff died Sept. 20 after being in a medically induced coma for 15 days.

He was a member of the Rocky Mountain Chapter.

Ratzlaff served in 1970-71 with the 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company and the 213th Assault Support Helicopter Company.

## VHPA briefs

### Unit making reunion plans

Former members of the 8th Transportation Company (Light Helicopter), redesignated the 117th Assault Helicopter Company, who are interested in holding a unit reunion, have been asked to contact Marvin A. Farmer Jr. at ( )

Marvin A. Farmer Jr.  
( )

### VHPA Newsletter deadlines

The following are deadlines for submitting items to *The VHPA Newsletter*:

- November/December 2001 — Oct. 1, 2001
- January/February 2002 — Dec. 1, 2001
- March/April 2002 — Feb. 1, 2002
- May/June 2002 — April 1, 2002
- July/August 2002 — June 1, 2002
- September/October 2002 — August 1, 2002

Written items should be sent by e-mail to: [swickard@vhpa.org](mailto:swickard@vhpa.org)

## Honor & Pride

6100 Trade Winds Court  
Virginia Beach, VA 23464  
(757) 424-9374

### There have been numerous requests for reunion T-shirts from Denver

We can do another run if at least 36 T-shirts are ordered

Anyone who would like to order one, please e-mail me at:

**[VHPADenvertees@aol.com](mailto:VHPADenvertees@aol.com)**

*Send no money until notified by mail*

**Please let us know the size and number wanted**  
**Sizes run up to 4XL. Price is \$15. Add \$2 each for sizes 2XL to 4XL**

Also, we have full VHPA back patches, as seen at the Denver reunion, for \$25 each

Unit pins and patches and crests, VHPA ball caps, shirts, patches, and

MA-1 jackets with the VHPA logo on back, as well as lightweight jackets



# Annual VHPA membership dues increase

Not since Jan 1, 1992, have VHPA membership dues increased.

Prior to that time — and apparently from the very beginning — the dues were \$20 per year. But, effective Jan 1, 1992, the Executive Council raised the dues to \$30 per year and they remained at that rate for almost 10 years.

The bad news: Due to increased costs of administration, postage, Directory printing, and credit card costs, among other things, the Executive Council voted in early 2001 to raise the membership dues.

However, it was decided the announcement would be made first at the Annual Business meeting during the Denver reunion. That was done at that time. However, only some 350 members attended the meeting.

Now, effective your next renewal, or Jan. 1, 2002, whichever comes first, the new membership dues will be \$36 per year or \$90 for three years, paid in advance.

The reason for charging \$90 for three years in advance is those funds, theoretically, could be invested to yield additional revenues approxi-

mately equaling the increased \$6 per year. This may or may not have been a good decision, looking back, because of reduced interest rates.

So, when you send in your renewal membership dues to Headquarters, please remember the increase and prevent Headquarters from calling or writing to ask for the correct amount.

Let us hope we can prevent raising our membership dues only once over the next 10 years. We will do everything possible to see that is the case.

**Tom Payne**

**VHPA Secretary/Treasurer**

## VHPA business directory

**ATTENTION PILOTS:**

**ARE YOU READY TO RETIRE?  
NO!**

**THEN START BUILDING FOR IT  
TODAY!**

*[www.excelir.com/nolen](http://www.excelir.com/nolen)*

**OR  
CALL PETE NOLEN@800-398-8921**

kubotan pepper spray mace handcuffs personal alarm  
window alarm door alarm personal alarm door jammer  
wired and wireless hidden cameras nanny camera  
100,000-500,000 volt stun guns & batons door stop alarm  
beer, soda, video, wall socket, book stone diversion safes

**[www.self-defense-mall.com](http://www.self-defense-mall.com)**

spyglasses electronic dog repeller telephone voice changer  
knives child watch monitor throwing stars telescopic  
steel batons crossbows wrist rocket counterfeit detector  
pen telephone 10-hr recorder gunlock blowguns pepper  
pager wildfire 15 percent Pepper Spray mace canine  
repellent home protection infrared motion alarm magnetic  
door/window alarm window glass alarm big jammer door  
brace electronic barking dog tasers folding knives pen  
knives butterfly knives kubotan pepper spray mace hand-  
cuffs personal alarm door jammer door stop alarm

**Do you have  
a DFC?**

Call or write us for information  
**THE DISTINGUISHED  
FLYING CROSS SOCIETY**  
6920 Miramar Road, Suite 207-D  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92121

Tel. (858) 693-1950

Fax (858) 693-1882

Visit our Website: [www.dfcsociety.org](http://www.dfcsociety.org)



*A Rare Medium, Well Done*

**R&Y PROMOTIONS - LEE WAYNE**

Affiliated with Lee Wayne Corporation

1734 THOMASVILLE ROAD • TALLAHASSEE, FL 32303

800-359-7062 850-222-7755

FAX 850-222-2266 [www.rypromos.com](http://www.rypromos.com)

**Richard (Rick) Yood, CAS**

(Gladiator 21)

Caps, Shirts, Pens, Pencils, Ring Binders, Coffee Mugs, Gifts, Golf  
Items, Clocks, Flags, Banners, Decals, License Plates,  
Coins/Medallions, Plaques, Knives, Trophies, Key Tags,  
Glassware, Ribbons, Badges, Food, Electronics and many other  
items from the over 15,000 types of products available.



# Membership Directory out soon

MIKE LAW

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY EDITOR

The 2001 Membership Directory is scheduled to be in members' hands during the third and fourth weeks of October for those in the U.S. postal system.

The style of the 2001 edition follows that used in 2000, with the following features: 392 internal pages (2000 had 368); 14,490 living pilots (1,202 Life, 9,599 Regular, 3,689 Potential, 320 Deceased Members); 123 Died During Training; 1,429 Died After Tour; 2,200 pilot KIAs; and 2,703 crew KIAs; 3 Honorary Members; and 7 pages of individual Chapter members.

The 2001 Membership Directory is dedicated to — meaning the cover photos and the history section feature — helicopter units in III Corps, especially north and west of Saigon. If your unit was in III Corps, we hope

you will review the unit location roster printed in the Directory and submit updates to the Directory Committee.

For several years, the Directory has been “dedicated” to several different periods of time, locations or types of helicopters. For example, the 2000 issue featured Northern I Corps; 1999 — the Easter Offensive; 1998 — Southeast Asian helicopter units outside of Vietnam; 1995 — tandem rotor helicopters; 1994 — Lam Son 719; 1993 — Dustoff Units; 1991 — Shufly and the pioneer units.

The 2002 issue will be dedicated to helicopter maintenance — specifically all Southeast Asian helicopter maintenance units and any helicopter maintenance personnel.

Clearly, we hope to have some detailed input from all the test pilots in all the Transportation Corps detachments, all the E companies of divisional maintenance battalions,

and all the aircraft direct support (ADS) and aircraft maintenance general support (AMGS) companies, to name just a few.

This will be the day in the sun for all the aircraft recovery and rebuild guys. We need to have the history of the 34th General Support Group and a great photo of the USNS Corpus Christie Bay.

We welcome input from the Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy maintenance folk — indeed, anyone involved in helicopter maintenance in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam era.

The 1998 issue included Air America, but mostly its operations and training teams. Many of these units worked all night long so the rest of us could fly the next day.

Please consider sending the lengthy detailed histories and extensive photo collections to Mike

See **HISTORIAN**, Page 15

## VIETNAM VIDEOS

Ever thought of going back to Nam? Sure you have. What's it like? These two videos will help you make up your mind:

### “Healing on the Hill”

An award-winning documentary about members of  
B Troop, 2/17 Air Cav, 101st Airborne Division  
([www.deltaforce.net/air\\_cav/healing.html](http://www.deltaforce.net/air_cav/healing.html))

and:

### “A Vietnam Journey . . .”

(<http://www.vietnamvideos.com>)

A travel video about veterans returning to Vietnam with their families and friends.

Looking for 3/17 and 2/17 Cav Sqdn pilots and crews for a reunion at Di An and Camp Eagle . . . visit [www.deltaforce.net/aircav/index.html](http://www.deltaforce.net/aircav/index.html)



# Historian needs detailed accounts

**Continued from Page 14**  
Sloniker, the VHPA historian.

Please consider sending smaller individual experiences and Directory candidate photos to me.

The following is an example of "Directory candidate" material:

*The VHPA Helicopter database has an accident and loss with injuries record for B/7/17th Cav UH-1C No. 66-0730 at Camp Enari dated 6 February 1968.*

*The crew of CW3 B.C. Walton and Spec. 4 Gerald Getzfried had minor injuries. The decoded details of the record state that this was a combat mission and the accident summary states:*

*"Pilot attempted to land aircraft in revetment. Wind caught aircraft caus-*

*ing the tail rotor to hit the revetment. The aircraft spun to the right and hit the ground."*

*Bill Walton writes: "I was in charge of B Troop's Circle Red X Ranch (the maintenance platoon). This was before the 569th TC Detachment joined us. This happened on my 37th birthday.*

*"The aircraft was shot up at Kon-tum during Tet 1968. It was repaired by the 40th TC Detachment, including a new tail rotor. They were short test pilots and asked me to test flight it. Since we needed all the aircraft we could muster, I agreed.*

*"The other guy in the 730 was Spec. 4 Gerald Getzfried, CE of No. 66-15066. Spec. 6 Harold Randall was 730's crew chief, but he asked if he could do something else while I*

*test flew the aircraft. Getzfried's aircraft was down for parts and he wanted to get some fresh air and asked if he could come along.*

*"After a short test flight, I parked it in one of those high, narrow revetments, but the aircraft was crooked and I decided to straighten it out because the next time she would be fully loaded. I lifted off, lost control and hit the revetment, causing the tail rotor and gearbox to separate.*

*"We spun three times and crashed. There were no serious injuries resulting directly from the crash. I was bruised from my knees to my crotch from the cyclic stick trying to beat me to death, but was flying again two days later.*

*"Spec. 4 Behrend was in the revetment next to the crashed aircraft. He*  
**See CAUSE, Page 16**

## Book airline reservations for Reunion 2002 in Las Vegas

### We know of one investment that always does well.

We believe one of the most profitable investments is an investment in relationships. At times like these, when the market can be volatile, that investment really pays off.

- Now is the time you need someone who understands your goals and risk tolerance.
- Someone who can help you adjust your portfolio in a changing investment environment.
- Someone who takes the time to ask the right questions, so together you can come up with the right answers.

If you want to talk to a Financial Advisor that truly understands the importance of a long-term relationship, call us at UBS PaineWebber.

**Robert F. Potvin**

Account Vice President, UBS PaineWebber  
"Stingray White 25"



**UBS|PaineWebber**

202 East State Street, Suite 300, Traverse City, MI 29684  
(800) 235-9031

[www.ubspainewebber.com](http://www.ubspainewebber.com)

UBS PaineWebber is a service mark of UBS AG. ©2001 UBS PaineWebber Inc. All Rights Reserved. Member SIPC

## VHPA LOGO ITEMS

(DAVE GRIEGER, L-66)

**THEY'RE BACK!! THESE ITEMS ARE STOCK ITEMS AGAIN**

**VHPA JACKETS (L,XL) — \$69.95 (XXL,XXXL) — \$74.95) BLK**

CALL SIGN, NAME, UNIT, LOCATION, DATE, ETC. — FREE (3 LINES)

**ALSO AVAILABLE: WINGS (ALL SERVICES), CIB, CMB, ABN, PATHFINDER, MORE — \$12.00 EACH**

<b>VHPA BIG BACK PATCH (10")</b>	<b>\$29.95</b>
<b>VHPA EMBL'D HAT (WHT)</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>
<b>VHPA HAT WITH PATCH</b>	<b>\$11.95 (BK, N, WH)</b>
<b>VHPA HAT W/"EGGS" &amp; PATCH</b>	<b>\$14.95 (BK, N, WH)</b>
<b>VHPA EMBL'D GOLF SHIRT (WHT)</b>	<b>\$25.00 (L,XL) WHITE</b>
	<b>\$30.00 (XXL, XXXL)</b>
<b>VHPA T-SHIRT (WHT W/POCKET)</b>	<b>\$17.95 (L, XL)</b>
	<b>\$19.95 (XXL, XXXL)</b>
<b>VHPA PATCH</b>	<b>\$ 4.50</b>
<b>VHPA PIN (HUNDREDS AVAILABLE)</b>	<b>\$ 3.95 (WOPA, RLO, ETC.)</b>
<b>VHPA WINDOW STICKER</b>	<b>\$ 2.00 ('W')</b>
<b>VHPA BUMPER STICKER</b>	<b>\$ 3.00 ('B')</b>

**BESIDES VHPA STUFF: BELT BUCKLES, FLAGS, DoD/NOVELTY PINS, PATCHES, POW/MIA, DoD MEDALS AND AWARDS, SHADOW BOXES, FIXED/ROTARY PINS, MAPS, LICENSE PLATES/FRAMES, BUMPER/WINDOW STICKERS, BULLET KEYCHAINS, AND CUSTOM PINS/PATCHES OF YOUR UNIT!**

**36-PAGE COLOR CATALOG — \$ 2.00**  
**SHIPPING & HANDLING — \$ 4.95 (MC/VISA)**

**D&G ENTERPRISES**

**P.O. Box 180**

**SALEM, AL 36874-0180**

Mon.-Sat. (7 a.m.-noon EST)  
(334) 749-9222/Fax: (334) 749-1818  
Website: [www.DandGEnterprises.com](http://www.DandGEnterprises.com)  
Screen name: [DLG555@aol.com](mailto:DLG555@aol.com)



# Scholarship applicants score big

THOMAS PAYNE

VHPA SECRETARY/TREASURER

Even though it was a "short fuse," the number of applicants for the first VHPA Heritage Scholarship didn't seem to suffer.

In all, the Army Aviation Association of America reported 36 of the 197 applicants marked their fathers were members of the VHPA and applied for our scholarship.

However, not only did VHPA applicants win our scholarship, they won a lot more of the AAAA scholarships.

Final total of all scholarships awarded was \$194,500 won by 110 recipients.

While it is not exactly known how many total winners were due to the announcement by the VHPA of the scholarship competition, a check of the 110 winners showed 22 had checked the VHPA box as VHPA members.

Applicants are not identified by name, only by number.



Sara A. Rainwater

As a courtesy, and certainly not required, the AAAA executive director Bill Harris offered the VHPA an opportunity to have a member representative on the scholarship selection committee. Volunteering for that duty was Mike Brokovich, who lives in the Washington, DC, area.

Mike gave up his weekend to participate in the selection and take part in the task of evaluating each of the applications.

"I can tell you that the VHPA candidates did very well. There were some very intelligent high achievers in the group and our future looks bright, indeed," he said.

The VHPA owes Mike a thank you and a cool, tall one for representing us in the project. Look him up at the next reunion and buy him one.

A number of other VHPA-related applicants heeded the call earlier this year. Those applicants read about the



VHPA member John A. Hrubik, a retired CW5 living in Sierra Vista, AZ, and daughter Amanda E. Hrubik, winner of the \$1,000 VHPA Heritage Scholarship.

VHPA scholarship and others available in the newsletter and on the VHPA website.

An undetermined number were recipients of other AAAA scholarships, in addition to Amanda Hrubik, reported on elsewhere in this newsletter.

**Sara A. Rainwater, daughter of VHPA life member Ross Rainwater of Nashville, TN, was the winner of a \$1,000 Upperclassman Scholarship for one year.**

She will be continuing her studies at Middle Tennessee State University.

If your child heeded the call to apply and was a recipient of one of the other AAAA Scholarships, contact me at

See APPLICATIONS, Page 17

## Cause of accident blamed on two factors

Continued from Page 15

ran over and helped us get out. He suffered some sort of a knee injury in this sprint and was medevaced to CONUS.

"The second guy to the aircraft was Spec. 6 Randall and the first thing he said was, 'Mr. Walton, I am glad that you are not dead!' I replied, 'I'll drink to that!'"

"I policed up the parts and sent them to ARADMAC in Texas for analysis. That investigation determined that two bearings in the tail rotor control system had been improperly installed and had welded themselves together, causing me to lose control.

"The accident investigation board decided it was pilot error.

"The good news was we got lower and wider revetments. One of the rotor blades is visible in the pictures on B Troop's website under Circle Red X Ranch and the other landed 400 feet from the wreck.

"I have half of its stabilizer bar buried in cement in my backyard and call it 'Walton's Vietnam Monument.'"



# VHPA Scholarship now a reality

The first award of the VHPA Heritage Scholarship of \$1,000 was recently announced by the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA).

The recipient is Amanda E. Hrubik, daughter of VHPA member John A. Hrubik, a retired CW5 living in Sierra Vista, AZ.

Ms. Hrubik will be continuing her studies at Bryn Mawr College in Philadelphia this fall.

For several years, funds donated

sporadically to the VHPA by members grew very, very slowly. The amount was insufficient to yield enough earnings for a worthwhile scholarship.

Then, last year, the VHPA Executive Council decided joining the AAAA Scholarship Foundation would be the best approach to ensure VHPA funds would be invested, managed and safeguarded for the future.

AAAA, in turn, granted an equal matching grant through its Heritage

Program, which effectively doubled the amount in the VHPA account. The VHPA Heritage Scholarship Ms. Hrubik received was the first fruit of that decision.

Congratulations to Ms. Hrubik for applying for and receiving the first Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Scholarship.

May she be the first of many more VHPA Scholars.

**Thomas Payne**  
VHPA Secretary/Treasurer

## Applications available for next year's scholarships

Continued from Page 16

*TomPayne@vhpa.org*

Applications for the 2002 VHPA Heritage Scholarship of \$1,000 for one year, plus many other AAAA scholarships, may be obtained by calling the AAAA at (203) 226-8184 or checking the association's website at *aaaa@quad-a.org*

Don't delay requesting the application. Deadline for returning the application is June 1, 2002.

Finally, if you would like to make a donation to the VHPA Scholarship Fund, send your checks designated "VHPA Scholarship" to Headquarters. The gift is tax deductible and a wonderful way to memorialize a friend who died in Vietnam.

## Lam Son 719 was baptism by fire

**DR. JIM WILLIAMS**  
AVIATION BRANCH HISTORIAN

Thirty years ago, the U.S. Army was nearing the end of an invasion of Laos, called Operation Dewey Canyon II by the U.S. forces and Lam Son 719 by the U.S. allies — soldiers and Marines of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

Lam Son 719, as most people refer to it, was a major milestone in developing Army aviation.

The operation began with a buildup in January and lasted formally into early April, although the bulk of the operation ended by March 20.

During Lam Son 719, some 650 Army helicopters transported (ARVN) troops into Laos, gave them covering fire, and evacuated casualties.

Several things remain with us today from that operation.

One is veterans and their memories — often, of great

**What particularly distinguished Lam Son 719 from prior experiences for Army aviators was the wholesale, very personal and repeated encounter with very dense, highly integrated air defenses.**

bravery and commitment to the mission and fellow soldiers that would be extraordinary in some times but, because of the demands of the moment, was routine.

Another is an almost-completely reshaped doctrine, training, and aviation systems.

Last but certainly not least, is the tradition of adherence to the Army values, coupled with the central focus of support to the soldier on the ground, that give meaning to the Branch motto, "Above the Best."

As with many of the major events in Army aviation history, many of those who participated are still among us. Almost all still living carry memories and lessons drawn from often-bitter experience.

In many cases, veterans of Lam Son 719 are still actively using their experience to prepare aviation soldiers for the future they may have to face in combat one day.

What particularly distinguished Lam Son 719 from prior experiences for Army aviators was the wholesale, very personal and repeated encounter with very dense, highly integrated air defenses. Not since the U.S. Air Force split off as a separate service in 1947 had Army aviators had that kind of experience.

The experience was doubly impressive to many of those who went through it, because they had been flying relatively routine missions within Vietnam under radically

**See PLANNING, Page 18**



# Planning information very restricted

Continued from Page 17

different conditions of enemy, terrain, climate, and availability of logistical support.

To try to preserve the element of surprise, planning information was tightly restricted.

At the company level, usually only the commander and the operations officer even knew where they were going before the operation began, let alone what the overall mission and other factors were.

Among those briefed in the planning phase, the reaction to the intelligence estimates of enemy troop strength drew a measure of disbelief.

Among those was Col. Richard M. Johnson, who only recently retired as the directorate of evaluation and standardization after serving as commandant of the Total Warrant Officer Career Center.

At the beginning of Lam Son 719, then-23-year-old Capt. Richard M. Johnson, operations officer of the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company "Robin Hoods," simply could not take seriously an estimate of 36,000 North Vietnamese Army air defenders alone.

Only after crossing the Laotian border and encountering flak that looked like what he had seen in old World War II movies of bombers flying over Europe did Johnson say to himself, "So this is what war is really like."

For Johnson and all others, the reality of war impressed itself ever more strongly through the remaining days of the operation. It remains vivid to many yet today.

The difficulty and brutality of the early days made almost everyone look forward to the extraction of the Republic of Vietnam troops to end the operation. They had no idea the extractions would be even worse than the insertions.

From the very first day, conditions called for intense commitment and sometimes extreme measures, including deliberate self-sacrifice.

Stories of heroism are abundant.

There were difficult moments when some aviators, confronting the grimmest realities of their profession, balked at returning to Laos for a second day.

A very few simply refused, had their wings taken away from them, and were quickly sent away.

A very few, while not refusing to fly their missions, flinched and became combat-ineffective.

All the rest carried on, doing the job as required, because they realized that, if they failed to take their turn, everyone else in the unit would have to make that many

more trips to do the job. Loyalty to each other and the mission kept people going back.

The brotherhood of soldiers in combat made many risk and sometimes suffer serious injury and death to help one another.

On Feb. 18, 1971, First Lt. Gary Green, A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, saved the lives of two helicopter crewmen when their gunship was shot down on an armed reconnaissance mission over Laos.

Green landed his AH-1 Cobra in the midst of heavy ground fire, ran to the downed helicopter, and pulled out the two wounded soldiers.

After placing them on his Cobra's rocket pods, Green opened fire at North Vietnamese Army soldiers who had advanced to within 15 meters of his helicopter.

For his actions, Green received the Distinguished Service Cross.

Others were less lucky.

One was CWO Harold Smith, a UH-1 pilot in the A Company, 158th Aviation Battalion, GhostRiders.

On March 19, taking direction from a command and control aircraft above, Smith jockeyed his aircraft over a hover hole, trying to rescue the crew of a Huey gunship that had been shot down earlier.

Instead of the downed crew, the hover hole contained a .51-caliber NVA anti-aircraft gun.

A round came up through Smith's seat and spine, and out his shoulder. Someone yelled, "Someone help Mr. Smith," and the copilot recovered the badly damage aircraft enough to get about a mile away before crashing.

True to form, other Army aircrews came in to rescue Smith and his crew.

Today, Harold Smith looks back with pride on serving his country and his fellow soldiers, even as he spends his days in a wheelchair.

Some paid the ultimate price. On March 18, "Music One Six" was leading an attack helicopter section from D Company, 101st Aviation Battalion, helping extract the 88 survivors of the 420-man 4/1 Battalion of the 1st Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

The survivors — 61 of them wounded and nearly all out of ammunition — were surrounded in a bomb crater near the Xe Pon River.

Enemy loudspeakers called for the survivors to surrender.

To prevent the enemy from overrunning the 4/1's final positions, the Air Force ran 68 airstrikes.

The AH-1 Cobras repeatedly refueled, rearmed, returned, and expended their ammunition on the enemy.

See THE HELICOPTER, Page 19

**From the very first day, conditions called for intense commitment and sometimes extreme measures, including deliberate self-sacrifice. Stories of heroism are abundant**

**On final approach, intense fire set the Cobra ablaze and knocked out its hydraulics.**



# The helicopter crashed, exploded

Continued from Page 18

The last smoke grenade to mark the friendly position was long gone. Dust and debris completely obscured the site from the air when the rescue lift ships, led by Capt. Rich Johnson, arrived.

"Music One Six" knew exactly where the survivors were. With all ammunition gone and certain all enemy guns would concentrate on his gunship, "Music One Six" called Johnson to follow him onto the friendlies.

On final approach, intense fire set the Cobra ablaze and knocked out its hydraulics.

"Music One Six" calmly gave a final vector to the surviving ARVNs and said, "I'm going to try to make it to the river."

As his gunship turned toward the river and went down, he called, "Give my love to my wife and family."

The helicopter crashed and exploded. Everyone knew they had witnessed an act of unparalleled courage and devotion to duty — but nobody even knew the name of "Music One Six." There was no time for reflection.

Johnson dropped into the debris. Twenty-four survivors scrambled into or clung onto his UH-1.

He landed back in Vietnam with 21 — three kicked off in flight to keep the aircraft from crashing. On July 18, 1990, "Music One Six" — Capt. Keith Brandt (age 31 at death) and his copilot, First Lt. Alan Boffman (age 24 at death) — landed at Travis Air Force Base enroute home to Arlington Cemetery.

Lam Son 719 reshaped Army aviation, its doctrine,

**Out of these adjustments came a new generation of aircraft, designed to operate in these harsher conditions and with greater survivability — the AH-64 Apache and the UH-60 Blackhawk.**

training and materiel.

Even before the operation formally ended, people were analyzing the lessons.

On one hand, the ability to insert, support, and extract the Republic of Vietnam forces under the extremely difficult conditions confirmed the concept of air assault/airmobility.

As a number of pioneers of Army aviation had said after World War II, the helicopter meant there would never again be "a bridge too far" — referring to the disastrous experience of the 82nd Airborne Division, parachuted behind German lines in 1944 only to be trapped and almost crushed when the relieving ground forces failed to break through.

The experience of "mid-intensity conflict" — resembling what might occur on the battlefields of Central Europe if the Soviet bloc attacked the West — caused almost immediate realization aviation had to change. To be visible to the enemy was to die.

A whole new set of tactics arose that emphasized low-level flying to use the terrain for cover and concealment. If low-level flight hugging the terrain was good, low level at night was even better.

Out of these adjustments came a new generation of aircraft, designed to operate in these harsher conditions and with greater survivability — the AH-64 Apache and the UH-60 Blackhawk.

To meet the special needs of airmen at night, a separate system of night vision goggles was developed. Training changed to emphasize the necessary skills.

The first real test of these changes came in Operation Just Cause, Panama, in 1989. The results led Army Chief of Staff Carl E. Vuono to proclaim, "We own the night."

During the 20th anniversary of Lam Son 719, Army aviation showed that again with much more media recognition during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Today's Army aviation soldiers carry on the tradition of those who flew and fought in Lam Son 719.

## Planning starts for 13th CAB reunion

Planning is in the early stages for a reunion of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion and its assigned units at Fort Rucker.

The most likely date is the last Thursday-Saturday in April 2002.

At one time or another, almost every Army aviation unit at Soc Trang, Can Tho and Vinh Long was part of the 13th CAB. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following units:

The 114th, 121st, 162nd, 175th, 191st and 336th Assault Helicopter Companies; 147th and 271st Assault Support Helicopter Companies; 235th Aerial Weapons Company; 73rd, 134th, 199th, 221st, 244th Aviation

Companies (Caribou, Birdog and Mohawk units); Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion (which later became the 336th AHC); Company A, 502nd Aviation Battalion (which later became the 175th AHC); C Troop, 16th Cavalry,

If you or your unit reunion committee are interested in attending and would like to be informed of planning committee progress, please contact Stan Gause at (561) 852-1675 evenings or weekends, or e-mail me at [SGause101@aol.com](mailto:SGause101@aol.com)

We also need volunteers to coordinate individual unit activities. We are especially looking for those who live in the Rucker area.



**GILBERT ACCOUNTANCY CORPORATION**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**

**Board of Directors  
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association  
Sacramento, California**

We have audited the accompanying statements of cash receipts and disbursements of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (Association) for the years ended December 31, 2000 and 1999. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Association's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

As described in Note 1, the accompanying financial statements were prepared on the cash basis of accounting, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the cash receipts and disbursements of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association for the years ended December 31, 2000 and 1999, on the basis of accounting described in Note 1.

*Gilbert Accountancy Corporation*

**GILBERT ACCOUNTANCY CORPORATION  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS**

**April 27, 2001**



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

## STATEMENTS OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS – CASH BASIS YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2000 AND 1999

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>
<b>CASH RECEIPTS:</b>		
Reunion	\$ 349,968	\$ 236,908
Membership dues	242,790	213,090
Interest	28,488	15,286
Raffle (Net of raffle disbursements of \$25,108 in 2000)	11,532	
Newsletter advertising	8,308	9,748
Publications	5,506	6,901
Scholarship contributions	52	1,462
Miscellaneous	1,578	2,287
Total cash receipts	<u>648,222</u>	<u>485,682</u>
<b>CASH DISBURSEMENTS:</b>		
Reunion	433,475	230,201
Management fee	122,961	115,862
Directory	38,708	40,669
Administrative	14,493	19,569
Newsletter postage	11,681	7,812
Promotion	7,910	8,420
Publications	4,876	5,389
Legal and professional fees	3,900	3,300
Miscellaneous	17,360	13,960
Total cash disbursements	<u>655,364</u>	<u>445,182</u>
<b>NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND INVESTMENTS</b>	(7,142)	40,500
<b>CASH AND INVESTMENTS, JANUARY 1</b>	<u>540,418</u>	<u>499,918</u>
<b>CASH AND INVESTMENTS, DECEMBER 31</b>	<u>\$ 533,276</u>	<u>\$ 540,418</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS DECEMBER 31, 2000 AND 1999

### 1. ORGANIZATION AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (Association) is a nonprofit corporation organized to promote the bonds of brotherhood, esprit de corps, and traditions of rotary wing aircrews that flew in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era.

**Basis of accounting** – The Association uses the cash basis of accounting and presents its activities in a statement of cash receipts and disbursements. The Association does not present transactions that would be included in its financial statements if presented on the accrual basis of accounting, as contemplated by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

**Income taxes** – The Association is exempt from income taxes under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(19).

**Use of estimates** – The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

### 2. CASH AND INVESTMENTS

The Association considers all investments with a maturity at purchase of three months or less to be cash equivalents. Cash, cash equivalents, and investments consisted of the following balances at December 31, 2000 and 1999:

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>
Savings account	\$ 179,507	\$ 65,271
Money market accounts	166,226	276,442
Checking accounts	37,323	104,717
Petty cash	220	220
Short-term certificate of deposit		93,768
Subtotal, cash and equivalents	<u>383,276</u>	<u>540,418</u>
Investments with maturities from 8 to 11 months	<u>150,000</u>	
Total	<u>\$ 533,276</u>	<u>\$ 540,418</u>

Of these balances, \$8,326 and \$8,219 were designated for scholarships at December 31, 2000 and 1999, respectively.

The Association maintains its cash in bank deposit accounts which, at times, may exceed federally insured limits. The Association has not experienced any losses in such accounts. Management believes the Association is not exposed to any significant credit risk related to cash.



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS DECEMBER 31, 2000 AND 1999

### 3. SERVICE AGREEMENT

Marcia Fritz & Company, Certified Public Accountants, (Management Company) provides management services for the Association and prints newsletters for its current and life members. The Association pays the Management Company a fee, which is calculated monthly based upon the number of Association members, plus expenses. The Association's contract with the Management Company expires September 30, 2001. The Association paid the Management Company \$122,961 for 2000 and \$115,862 for 1999.

### 4. FUNCTIONAL ALLOCATION OF CASH DISBURSEMENTS

The Association allocates cash disbursements to member services and management and general based on estimates of time incurred by its management company. The Association's cash disbursements are summarized on a functional basis as follows:

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>
Member services	\$ 555,625	\$ 339,356
Management and general	<u>99,739</u>	<u>105,826</u>
Total	<u>\$ 655,364</u>	<u>\$ 445,182</u>

### 5. RELATED PARTIES

In the routine course of business, the Association sometimes purchases goods and services from companies of the Association's members, officers, or members of the Board of Directors. Significant related party balances and transactions are as follows:

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>
Total broker account balance	\$ 316,226	
Management services	122,961	\$ 115,862
Insurance services	2,250	1,100
Investment fees	1,096	



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200 • Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698

(800) 505-VHPA (voice) • (916) 966-8743 (fax) • HQ@vhpa.org (e-mail) • www.vhpa.org (website)

## Membership application/change of address

☐ New application

☐ Address change

☐ Directory correction

Membership dues:

☐ Annual: \$36

☐ Three years: \$90

☐ Life: \$450\*

Newsletter subscription only: ☐ Annual: \$36

☐ Three years: \$90

Add \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as my contribution to: ☐ Membership Fund ☐ Scholarship Fund

NAME

DATE OF BIRTH:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

HOME PHONE: ( )

WORK PHONE: ( )

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

OCCUPATION:

☐ Please charge my MasterCard/Visa credit card.

☐ Enclosed is a check/money order payable to VHPA.

☐ Add \$15 for current Membership Directory,  
plus \$5 for postage and handling

Credit card No.:

Expiration date:

SIGNATURE:

FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS:

SERVICE BRANCH:

COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS:

SOCIAL SECURITY NO.:

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?

*\*NOTE: Life memberships may be purchased with three bi-monthly payments of \$150 each.*