



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

March/April 2001 Vol. 19, No. 2

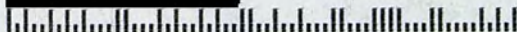
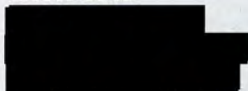


Curt Knapp photo

In the fall of 1968, this Huey from the 101st Airborne Division draws a crowd to look at the tailboom, which was slit open when it struck a hidden stump in an LZ in Central I Corps. The photo was taken at Camp Eagle.

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From the President

We've made a lot of progress on several Executive Council (EC) projects since the last newsletter.

Two of the more important are the implementation and funding of the VHPA/AAAA Scholarship Fund and a new direction for managing the annual national reunion.

The VHPA/AAAA Scholarship Fund stands at \$20,000 and our first merit-based scholarship award of at least \$1,000 will be made this year. Deadline for applications is May 1, so by the time you read this it may be too late for this year.

However, we have tried other methods to notify the membership and hopefully were successful with a large percentage.

Tom Payne has provided an article with full details later in the newsletter and the information is also available at www.vhpa.org/Scholarship.htm

You can make a contribution to the Scholarship Fund using the Membership Form, Reunion Registration Form, or by sending it directly to VHPA Headquarters with a notation that it's for the scholarship fund. All contributions are tax deductible.

Changes made in reunion management

Since the tremendous growth in attendance at our annual reunion began with a 30 percent leap at Fort Worth '98 and has continued at approximately that rate annually, it had become clear by DC 2001 that we could no longer continue to plan and execute reunions the way we were doing.

One example of changes that you already have experienced is the way we are doing hotel registrations. There have been some minor snafus, as one would expect from any large-scale, coordinated process, but the direct feedback from members has been very positive and HQ has taken immediate action to correct any problems that have arisen.

This year, we also have moved some recurring tasks, such as the official reunion T-shirts and provision of the official reunion photographer, to the National Vendor Coordination Committee, thereby reducing some of the

workload of the local committee.

A key problem, however, has been that the local reunion committee is typically dumped-on with a tremendous task for which they have no professional training or experience.

(Reunion 2001 is an exception due to Mike Law's "been there, done that," as is Reunion 2002 because of the excellent job the committee is doing along with close coordination with "been there, done that" Vice President Dave Rittman).

So, we're okay near-term, which gave us time to implement a new direction for the planning and execution of the annual reunion that will be partially in effect for Reunion 2002 and fully in effect for Reunion 2003 (planning for a reunion begins two years in advance of the reunion).

Reunion planning, execution changed

Primarily what we have done is to put the responsibility for planning and execution of the National VHPA Annual Reunion at the national level, conducted by professional meeting planners.

We will continue to have a local reunion committee, but the scope of its responsibilities, frustrations, and "headaches" will be greatly reduced.

To implement this "new management direction," we have appointed Joe Bilitzke as chairman of the National Reunion Committee.

Joe, our current senior member at large and well-known to the organization, is also directly involved with the professional meeting planning process as a "civilian."

To directly assist him with the details of planning and executing the reunion, he will have the contracted services of a professional events coordinator.

Joe has an article later in the newsletter providing greater details of this new management direction. Joe will report directly to the president and indirectly to the EC.

We look forward to Joe's success and to making R2003 a demonstration of how the new reunion planning and execution process can run smoothly.

On the membership front, Bob Wiggins resigned as chairman of the Membership Committee due to health problems. We regret losing Bob, but wish him well in regaining his health.

Dana Young was appointed as the new chairman.

Continued on Page 5

Classified ads

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THE VHPA NEWSLETTER (ISSN 0896-3037)(USPS 001-497) is published six times yearly — February, April, June, August, October and December. Annual dues are \$30 or Life membership for \$450. Yearly subscription for nonmembers is \$30. 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.

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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.

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Historical Reference Directory — Vol. I. (Highlights 1961-65)	\$10	\$5 ea		\$
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Vietnam Helicopter History CD-ROM (\$15 for VHPA members)	\$25	\$5 ea		\$
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Letters

Green inducted into aviation hall of fame

Lt. Green, then a CWO, distinguished himself during more than 1,600 combat missions flown as a Cobra and OH-6 pilot in the Republic of Vietnam.

His complete fearlessness and extreme flying skills made him a living legend in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). His exploits caused him to be regarded as the "heart and soul of his unit."

His squadron commander, Lt. Gen. Teddy Allen, called him "the bold-est of the bold."

Lt. Green's aggressiveness, extraordinary sense of the battlefield and rare understanding of the enemy gave him an unmatched ability to locate enemy forces and determine their capabilities.

Gary repeatedly returned from missions with a prisoner or the backpacks of enemy soldiers that he encountered and killed.

During a mission near the DMZ, flying low, he detected enemy packs laying on the ground. Landing his OH-6 to investigate, he came face to face with two enemy soldiers. His gunner/observer leaped out of the helicopter and killed



one enemy soldier, who was preparing to use his weapon, and captured the second.

Lt. Green then took off with the bewildered prisoner and a nonfunctioning tail rotor to give the NVA soldier his first and wildest helicopter ride.

On another occasion, he located an enemy 122mm artillery battery.

After dispersing the enemy artillerymen with the fire from his helicopter, he maneuvered his aircraft so that his gunner could disable the artillery pieces by inserting thermite grenades down their tubes.

Five times he landed his aircraft in the face of an attacking enemy to rescue downed aircrews. On two of these occasions, the wounded pilots were brought out straddling the rocket pods of his Cobra and firing their side arms.

Once the attacking enemy forces reached within 15 feet of Gary's departing Cobra.

In another instance, Gary's LOH was shot down and he was seriously wounded, yet he was able to remove his wounded and unconscious gunner from the aircraft and drag him down a jungle trail, while engaging in a running firefight with an estimated platoon-sized group of NVA soldiers.

While making his escape, Gary killed eight of the pursuing enemy with grenades and his AR-15.

Exhausted and grievously wounded a second time by a "punji stick" that passed through his foot, he boosted his still unconscious gunner into the rescue helicopter and continued to throw hand grenades and fire his AR-15 to cover their departure.

The .50-caliber wound he received when he was shot

See LETTERS, Page 6

From the President

Continued from Page 2

Dana and the Southern California Chapter did a great job earlier in the year by organizing and manning our HAI booth. He has an article in the next newsletter in which he describes events that have been, and will be, occurring on the membership front.

In the article, he mentions we have now achieved our 11,000th member (who will be recognized at the banquet in Denver) and two membership mailings of 2,500 and 2,900 that have recently been sent out.

The work behind these mailings was performed by the Rocky Mountain Chapter/Reunion 2001 Committee and organized by Mike Law.

I particularly want to thank chapter and committee member John Gaines, who funded a substantial portion of the first mailing from his own pocket. Well done, John, and thanks from all of us!

We all owe a "hats off" to Don and Helen Joyce for jumping in and doing the local organizing of our AAAA booth.

Due to a schedule conflict by our North Carolina Chapter, Don and Helen ended up manning the booth themselves for the entire convention. Now that's dedication!

At the business meeting in Washington, attendees were presented with a proposed change to the constitution/bylaws wherein an explicit statement would be added to support our position as a nonpolitical organization.

Rationale for the proposal was presented and discussed, with voting to occur at the R2001 business meeting. The proposed amendment is reprinted later in the newsletter so that everyone may have another chance to review it prior to the business meeting.

In my last column, I issued a challenge to the Las Vegas Chapter regarding the reunion website for R2002. Although the website won't be activated until around August, I have reviewed the chapter website and now realize the challenge was unnecessary.

If you want to see an example of a well-designed and informative chapter website, visit www.vhpalasvegas.org. Kudos to their webmaster, Mike Smith!

The best to you and yours!

Register now for Reunion 2001 in Denver — and order your official reunion T-shirts!

— Charles Holley

Letters

Continued from Page 5

down eventually resulted in the loss of his right leg below the knee.

Gary Green was shot down five times while flying the AH-1G Cobra and twice flying the OH-6A "Loach."

For these and other conspicuous acts of gallantry, Lt. Green received a total of 81 awards for valor, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross with three oak leaf clusters, the Bronze Star with "V," the Purple Heart with three oak leaf clusters, 60 awards of the Air Medal and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Gold Palm.

Lt. Gary Green was recommended for induction into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame by the Army Aviation Heritage Association. He was a life member of the AAHF.

Regrettably, on April 30, 2000, the autogyro that Gary was flying exploded in flight, killing him instantly.

Retired Maj. Gen. M.J. Brady Sr.
Chairman of the board
Army Aviation Heritage Foundation

February 1968 medevac crew still has not returned

On the evening of Feb. 12, 1968, aircraft commander Lt. Jerry Lee Roe, call sign "Dustoff 90," and his crew: CW2 Alan Gunn, pilot; Spec. 5 Wade L. Groth, crew chief; and their medic, Spec. 5 Harry W. Brown, departed Ban Me Thuot in their UH-1H for an urgent medivac at the Gia Nghai Special Forces Camp.

The crewmembers and helicopter were from the 50th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), normally stationed at Tuy Hoa, and were on standby at Ban Me Thuot in support of Special Forces operations in the area.

At about 8:19 p.m., 20 minutes out of Ban Me Thuot, Dustoff 90's blip disappeared from the U.S.A.F. TAC control radar screen.

There was no "May Day" call or indication there were any problems. That last position would have put them close to the top of a mountain we commonly called "VC Mountain".

The mountain had plenty of Triple A and small arms fire from the enemy, so it was normally avoided like the plague.

Yet the coordinates given for the last contact was about 100 meters from the top of the mountain.

Helicopter crews from the 155th Assault Helicopter Company were dispatched for search and rescue operations.

An Air Force A1E Sandy joined the search and reported seeing "fire and lights" on the mountain.

The following morning, a helicopter crew from the 50th Medical Detachment piloted by the unit's commanding

officer, Maj. Ronald C. Jones and the unit's XO, Capt. Ronnie Porta, arrived and joined the search and rescue effort.

A Special Forces soldier using a "sniffer" device which detects the presence of ammonia in human urine also joined the crew. Flying low and slow over a mountain you normally could not fly close to made the search seem almost surrealistic.

We could have reached out and picked the leaves off the trees. It was unbelievable.

SOP for search and rescue operations: After three days of searching, if the crew or helicopter had not been sighted, the operation was suspended and the crew listed as missing in action.



Per SOP, the search and rescue operation was officially suspended but many pilots from the 50th Medical Detachment would continue to search during missions in the area.

Now things begin to get strange.

It's 1970, and Ronnie Porta is back in Vietnam as a major and in command of his own dustoff unit. He receives a call at Cu Chi from a friend at Ban Me Thuot who was there when Dustoff 90 went down.

His friend tells him the aircraft was found intact, minus rotor blades, of course. His friend believed the crash was survivable. They found an ambu bag, a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, spent M-79, M-16, and .30-caliber carbine ammo casings, and part of a flak jacket.

Memorial Day, 1986: I had a report pulled from the POW/MIA database maintained by the National League of POW/MIA Families. Lt. Roe and Spec. 5 Brown were identified as POWs.

In April of 1969, the CIA was asked to analyze a positive identification by a "Rallier" who had selected their pictures from a book of personnel listed as missing in action.

The CIA had determined it was only a "coincidence" a "Rallier" could positively ID two people from the same helicopter crew; one black, one white, one located in the front of the book under Brown, and the other listed near the back of the book under Roe? (Just a coincidence?)

According to the "Rallier" the location of the POW compound where they were being held at the time was about two miles from Camp Eagle, "home" to the 101st Airborne.

I decided to look up Wade Groth, also. In 1979, about six years after all POW/MIA's not returned in "Operation Homecoming" had been declared dead by Hanoi and Washington, Groth had been seen alive and in good condition in a place called Bong Song about 40 miles south of Hanoi, working on a railroad section.

An IRA gunrunner by the name of Sean O'Toolis spoke to Groth, Brendon Foley, and another POW named MacDonald. O'Toolis was able to obtain a fingerprint of Foley and a note for his brother.

He gave the CIA sketch artist a description so accurate it was easy to tell it was Groth — red hair, freckles and all.

See LETTERS, Page 7

Letters

Continued from Page 6

O'Toolis' word supposedly couldn't be "trusted". He was a gunrunner and worked for the IRA, and, therefore, was disreputable in our government's eyes. Since he freely took this evidence to the CIA, I would think he had some connections there.

October 26, 1992: A search team finds what it believes is the burn spot left by a crashed and burned UH-1H. Members of the team also find the same things I mentioned before: Ambu Bag, gold-rimmed glasses, part of a flak jacket, spent M-79 casings, and all the rest, but they are here to bury this crew, not to find them (my personal view).

So, due to the size and depth of the burn spot, the team reported the aircraft crashed into the mountain with such force it exploded and the entire crew was killed.

Excuse me, but the search team grossly oversimplified its "findings" on this point, 22 years after the aircraft had been found comparatively intact in 1970. No human



Air museum small, but very impressive

I had a project to check on at Vancouver Barracks last week. After we finished our site visit, we stopped off at the Pearson Air Museum, adjacent to Vancouver Barracks along the Columbia River.

This is a small, but first class aviation museum, with a focus on the "golden years" of aviation.

Several years ago, they were given a Cobra, tail No. 22791. Since they are now on the Historical Registry, and are focusing on the golden years, they need to get rid of the Cobra.

The Cobra is not flyable, there is no engine and, of course, no weapons, but the airframe is complete.

Spread the word please, it could be made available to a museum with a more recent theme or an organization such as the VHPA, if we had a place to serve as a storage/museum facility.

For the details, you should contact John Nold, the museum manager at Pearson Air Museum, (360) 694-7026, e-mail, pearson@pacifier.com, in Vancouver, WA.

If you are ever in the Portland area, this museum is worth a visit. It is named after Flight Lieutenant Pearson, who was a contemporary and friend of Eddie Rickenbacher and Jimmy Dolittle.

Mel Latham
Gambler 37
Tacoma, WA

remains were found!

What really happened to Jerry Roe and the crew of Dustoff 90? Are they prisoners of war or are they dead?

I am looking for anyone from the 155th Assault Helicopter Company who may have witnessed the finding of Dustoff 90's helicopter in 1970, or the person who called Maj. Porta with the information.

The standard procedure when I was in Vietnam (1967-68) was, if the aircraft couldn't be recovered, it was to be destroyed in place. In other words, the helicopter would have been blown up or burned by our side.

So, if an otherwise intact "bird" had been blown in place by our forces, the search team, not knowing this, would naturally come to the wrong conclusions, based only on what they saw at the crash site.

You would think also that nearly everyone "in the business" would know the difference between spent rounds that have been fired and those that have simply exploded in a fire.

The implication, of course, is plain: If the cartridge casings were from fired rounds, then Dustoff 90's crew was alive enough to engage in a firefight after they were on the ground.

They were never confirmed KIA (killed in action). Three of them were reported as having been seen alive. Therefore, they are still missing in action! We have one mission still out: Dustoff 90.

If you were in the 155th Assault Helicopter Company or Special Forces CCN, and you have direct knowledge of the finding of Dustoff 90's aircraft in 1970 or if you were a POW held with Jerry Roe, Wade Groth, Harry Brown or Alan Gunn, please contact: artnhoss@bellsouth.net

Don Caldwell

Australian member recalls terrific time at reunion

I have just received my copy of the VHPA 2000 Reunion booklet and have been reminded of the great time I had at the Reunion and in your country.

My company in Vietnam was the 135th AHC and a reunion had been organised in Charlotte in conjunction with the VHCMA last year. My presence there, and later in Washington at the VHPA Reunion, was entirely due to all the help I received from a lot of folks both here and in America. My thanks to them all again.

I had such a marvellous time seeing old friends and meeting new ones and wish I could be with you all again in Denver.

If there is a message I can pass on to those who haven't yet been to a reunion and are tossing up whether it's worth it or whether they will get anything out of the experience, then I say go. You will be amazed at what might be in store for you.

I'm not talking about the organised programme (that will
See LETTERS, Page 8

Letters

Continued from Page 7

be good, too), but about the people and stories you will run into quite by chance.

Take for instance the call I took one day in the hotel, a voice I hadn't heard in 30 years of a bloke I had lost touch with when I had been moving around a lot after getting out of the Royal Australian Navy.

Then there was the bloke at the barbecue. We had our last chat on the side of an airfield down in the Delta in '70.

My thanks to Gerry Ventrella and Rich Thompson for remembering.

Then there was the ex-Army aviator who dropped me off in New York on his way back to Wisconsin. To give Larry Ayres his due, that dogleg was due to generosity of spirit rather than lack of navigational ability. Thanks, Mate.

And everyone will remember the fun we had when the fire alarm went off in the middle of the night, not once but many times!! And the silly grin on Doc's face as he held the door to the foyer open for all the ladies in their bed attire.

So, to all those who helped me and shared with me the reunions last year, to Don and Angelia Agren who not only shared their home but also their hotel room, I say a very big "thank you."

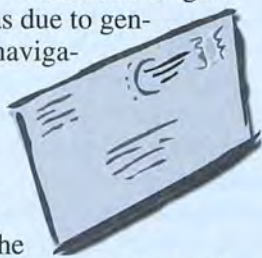
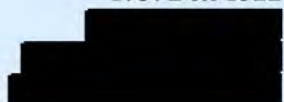
To all of those contemplating their first reunion . . . just go. To all of you in Denver, when you raise a glass to absent friends, think of me because I'll be thinking of you.

Kindest regards to all,

Andy Perry

EMU 13 1969-70

P.O. Box 1322



Newsletter article answers pilot's 30-year question

At the end of 1999, I read a short note in *The VHPA Newsletter*. A former Army pilot was looking for AH-1 pilots who wore red helmets in Vietnam.

This article led me to the answer of a nagging question I had carried for over 30 years.

War is really about saving life rather than about dying. I had saved a life and that was what it was all about.

I never knew whether Gary had made it or not. In fact, I never knew him at all until some time in January of 2000 when he visited me with a case of Scotch in his car to thank me for being there.

He and his wife Rusty and my wife Kate and I sat and finished off the first bottle and recounted the story of so

long ago.

The year 1968 — sometime shortly after the famous Tet offensive. I think it was still going on to some extent because there was a real firefight happening in the Plain of Reeds in IV Corps.

Our AH-1 from Can Tho was assigned to assist a Cav unit from Vin Long that was in support of a ground action. Heavy contact was encountered and a day-long battle resulted.

In the course of this battle, several helicopters were hit and some shot down.

Gary was attempting to rescue one of his comrades when his OH-6 was hit. Gary sustained what for most of us would have been mortal wounds.

His observer was able to lift the OH-6 out of harm's way, but soon found that flying a crippled OH-6 is something even an experienced pilot could not do well. That observer deserves a lot of the credit for this rescue.

Our AH-1 was escorting another crippled helo back to the staging area when we spotted a wisp of smoke in the distance.

Knowing our charge was out of danger, we investigated. Approaching the area, we discovered a smoking OH-6 and one dazed observer on the ground.

There was only one choice and that was to land in the water-soaked paddy and do what we could.

I was flying that day with Lt. Joe Bryant (24W-074). We frictioned down the controls and went to the smoking OH-6.

Gary was still pinned inside by the twisted controls. Joe and I pried him loose and I carried Gary to our AH-1, while Joe attended to the observer.

We strapped them on the ammo bay doors with our web belts and made a hasty exit to the staging area, which had a Special Forces hospital.

Hardly a day went by since that day in 1968 that I didn't wonder if that pilot made it home.

But now I know Gary Holmes is the hero who came home alive and I rest knowing that sometime gunships do save lives and not by shooting.

Greg Smith

Satan 19

With the red flight helmet

Pilot finds way to strengthen his system after exposure

I'm Huey Walsh and I live in Pensacola, FL. For several years, I was a helicopter pilot in the Marine Corps and during 1966-67, flew 46's in Vietnam.

During quite a bit of my tour, I was up around the DMZ in the areas where they were spraying Agent Orange. We were around that stuff a great deal and six of my former squadron mates have died of cancer.

Personally, I have had a problem for several years with swollen lymph nodes and it has really worried me.

See LETTERS, Page 9

Letters

Continued from Page 8

I have gone to the VA and they have given me an Agent Orange physical and say that I'm OK. I go back for check-ups, but no one has been able to tell me what has caused this problem or been able to give me any relief with the swollen nodes.

But I have solved the problem. Recently a friend told me about a product that has done wonders by helping to strengthen a person's immune system. I started on the product about six weeks ago and now the swollen lymph nodes are gone! After having been bothered for all these years! You can imagine how this has improved my feelings!

This is a natural product that tests have shown can strengthen the immune system 250 percent. I have recently learned of people who have greatly improved their health and have even had tremendous success with beating cancer. An MD used it to overcome his prostate cancer! A lady has enjoyed much improvement in her lupus. And an older gent reported total relief from his arthritis. The stories of improvements in one's health goes on and on.

We've all had family members or friends affected with cancer or some other kind of disease. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to help ourselves and our friends avoid some of

Pilot may hold key to flood information

My name is Koert Davidse and for the Dutch broadcasting company NPS I'm doing the research for a documentary about the flood of 1953 which struck the southwest of Holland.

The reason I contact your organization is that I want to try to find a former helicopter commander. This man was in that period stationed in Germany and helped to evacuate refugees. He also flew the prince and queen of Holland to the flooded district. During his flights he made a couple of colour photographs. Two of them I've seen in an archive in Holland. (In this archive I was told that the photographs were taken by an American helicopter pilot, but unfortunately they didn't have a name.)

I'm very interested to know if he made more photographs and maybe he shot colour film.

Is it possible to contact this helicopter commander with the help of your organization, or do you have a suggestion where I can continue my research. My final goal is to find colour photographs or footage film of this flood in 1953.

Koert Davidse
K. Dullemondstraat 17

these diseases? And wouldn't it be great to be able to strengthen our immune systems so that we can really enjoy the golden years?

In this polluted society that we live in, we really need to give our immune system all the help we can so that it can do its job. And we can enjoy good health!

We're not getting any younger, so there's no time to waste. If you're interested or have a family member or friend that needs help with their immune system, e-mail or call me and I will mail you a cassette tape and other information.

Huey Walsh

Promoting attendance draws pilots from units

I read an article in the July/ August 2000 VHPA Newsletter in which a member said he had attended several VHPA reunions in hopes of seeing some of the 50-plus pilots he served with. He said his disappointment is in finding only two or three at each reunion.

I know the feeling. I attended my first VHPA reunion in Atlanta in 1992. Eleven 361st ACE/Aerial Weapons Company pilots were there — five of whom I had served with.

I didn't go again until Santa Clara in 1997. Only nine Pink Panthers were there. I knew three.

I decided to get active. I recruited other unit members. We made phone calls, e-mailed, located buddies through Social Security numbers, wrote letters, threatened, lied, cajoled, whatever it took to involve our unit members. Orlando had 18, Fort Worth had 23, Nashville had 32 and last year DC had 38.

The 361st ACE/Aerial Weapons Company was a Cobra Unit. About 195 pilots flew in the company from April 1968 to August 1972. Five died in combat, 19 have passed away since returning home, and 17 are still missing (haven't been located). That means we have about 155 guys on our unit roster.

As of today (March 31), 83 have registered for Denver or have indicated they intend to be there. Our goal of 50 is out the window and is now 90.

Two quick stories:

I called David "Smitty" Smith. I ask if he's coming. He said "No," he has a wife's family reunion in Arkansas.

I suggest he take the family to Arkansas, then go to Little Rock, catch a flight to Denver, stay a couple of days and then return to the family reunion in Arkansas.

He likes the idea and plans to talk to his wife and check on flights that night.

I get an e-mail at 6:30 p.m. His wife, the understanding

See LETTERS, Page 10

Taps

William Thomas 'Bill' Graves

William Thomas "Bill" Graves, 59, of Tucson died Sept. 1, 2000, after an eight-month fight with cancer.

It was his second war.

A retired U.S. Navy commander, Graves served four tours in the South China Sea as a helicopter pilot flying search-and-rescue missions over North Vietnam. In 1968, Graves was awarded the Air Medal with two stars for 60 successful SAR missions to pick up downed fighter pilots. At the time, he was attached to HS-2, "Big Mothers," aboard the U.S.S. Hornet. His squadron's motto: "You fall, we haul."

Graves was a member of the Gulf of Tonkin Yacht Club.

During his overseas tours, he wrote faithfully to his wife, Sue, who was holding down the fort, caring for their children and praying for his safe return.

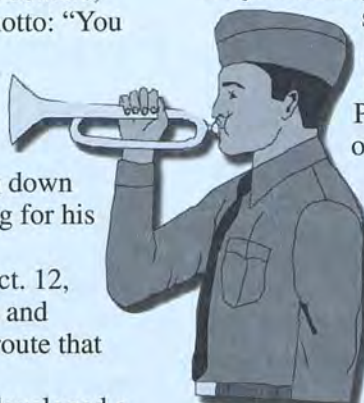
He was born William Thomas Graves, Oct. 12, 1940, in Prattville, AL, to Walter C. Graves and wife Fannie. As a boy, Graves had a paper route that taught him the value of a dollar.

He was proud to be an Eagle Scout and developed a lifelong passion for the outdoors. Graves led his kids to the top of Mount Whitney before they were teens.

He was a 1958 Tucson High School graduate. Although the Navy would send him around the world, Graves considered Tucson his home.

He graduated twice from the University of Arizona, in 1962 with a degree in zoology, and in 1987 with a degree in architecture.

He retired from the Navy in 1982 and returned to Tucson to become an architect. He and wife Sue later moved to Phoenix, then Prescott. By then, they had acquired Holmes, an odd little dog who just showed up one day at their Tucson home on Calle Guaymas. Graves loved that mystery mutt.



In Prescott, Graves grew a ponytail, bought a Harley and made exquisite silver jewelry. He took a summer off to work as a cook aboard a salmon boat in Alaska.

His last great adventure took place on Water Island in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Graves drove a dinghy and floated naked in clear warm water with Sue.

Graves was a man who made friends and kept them.

He loved his children unconditionally. He called his only daughter "Jenny-Poo." In his last months, they were bonsai partners.

A quietly spiritual man, Graves believed in angels.

He died with angels at the ready. Fly Navy.

Graves is survived by Sue, his best friend and wife of 38 years; daughter, Jennifer, wife of T.J. Franks of Tucson, and their daughter, Taylor Brooke; sons Jeffrey Graves and wife Melissa of Tucson and Timothy Graves and wife Cyndee of Prescott; brothers, John Graves and wife June of Greenville, NC, and David Graves and wife Karen of Louisville, KY.

Graves would like to express his gratitude to the great folks at Bethesda National Naval Medical Center, the Arizona Cancer Center and Carondelet Hospice. "Well Done."

A private family service was held at East Lawn Cemetery, followed by sandwiches and beers at Famous Sam's Tavern.

The commander, who just loved it when a plan came together, wouldn't have it any other way.

— Jeff Graves, his son

Terry A. Gunter

Terry A. Gunter of Garland, TX, died suddenly on April 24 in Orlando, FL. He was 59.

Gunter was an original member of the 361st Aviation Company (Escort) "Pink Panthers." He joined the unit in November 1967 during its formation and training in Fort Hood, TX, and served in Vietnam from April to September 1968 as an AH-1G pilot.

See TAPS, Page 11

Letters

Continued from Page 9

Goddess that she is, said "go to the VHPA reunion, see your buddies, have fun, my folks know what you look like."

I e-mail Mike Peck. His daughter is getting married in Idaho on July 7th. He needs to go; he's "the money man."

I suggest he take the family to Idaho, catch a flight to Denver, stay till the morning of the 6th and then fly back.

He e-mailed yesterday to say it's a possibility. After all, his only function until the night of the wedding is to have a "big checking account."

My point is this, if you want to see a guy you served

with, or 2, or 10, you have to make it happen. Make calls, e-mail, write letters, do whatever it takes. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GET THE GUYS YOU WANT TO SEE TO THE REUNION.



Note to Mike and Smitty . I hope it's OK I used these two stories. I was trying to add a little humor to my letter. Looking forward to Denver. Mike, will you be able to make it for a day or two?

Mike Sheuerman
Panther 15
361st ACE/AWC
5/71-4/72

"Stickitt Inn Officer"

Taps

Continued from Page 10

At the time of his death, Gunter worked for the Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas as a telecommunications systems expert. He was in Orlando to receive several awards and honors for his work in the field.

Gunter is survived by his wife Sara; sons Eric and Jason; and his sister Kay. He was buried in his hometown of Versailles, IN, with full military honors.

Bob Stafford

Bob Stafford died Feb. 11 in a Rockville, MD, hospice after a six-month battle with lung and bone cancer.

Stafford was an active member of the Otter-Caribou Association.

During the Vietnam War, he commanded a Birdog company at Phu Loi in 1967-68.

John B. "Brent" Morel

John B. "Brent" Morel died of cancer on April 9 in Houston.

Brent came into Army Aviation from an Army family. His dad was a decorated Army aviator who flew from the tail end of World War II through the early days of Vietnam.

Initially, Brent was extremely competitive, whether trying for the highest grade in the class on checkrides or racing his '66 Corvette on the weekends. Excellence was the only standard for him. He did not suffer fools gladly and became a challenge for some of his less-talented commanders.

After his initial tour in the Army and Vietnam in 1968-69, Brent spent a number of years as a flight instructor for the Louisiana Army National Guard, and then transferred to the Army Reserve in Conroe, TX. When the bugle sounded, he was ready to charge. He retired flying AH-1s.

Brent was blessed with the raw talent, skills, and abilities to absolutely excel as a pilot. As he matured, he transposed himself into one of the very best of flight instructors.

In almost any category, fixed or rotary wing, seaplanes, gliders or acrobatics, military or civilian aircraft, Brent was a master in his element.

As his civilian flying career progressed, Brent passed through the various stages from light aircraft, into Lear-jets, and then to Continental Airlines. Brent was flying domestic routes on the Boeing 737 when he retired. He also was a former International Captain on the DC-10, and a check airman on the B-737.

When I visited with Brent shortly before his death, he did not want anyone to be sad for him, as he had a great life, full of adventure. He even joked about there being plenty of cold beer at the next LZ.



As he reflected on events in his life, it was not his thousands of flight hours or the numerous medals, including the DFC, or other accolades that mattered. It was his family and the good people in his life.

Brent treasured being part of the VHPA. These men are the very best, and he was proud to be one of them. Brent truly had a place in his heart for all veterans.

He could not pass a military cemetery without stopping and paying his respects.

One of his most significant trips was to Normandy for the 50th anniversary of World War II.

He attended many of the VHPA Reunions and looked forward to Denver. When we close ranks there, let us remember Brent.

He was at peace with himself, his friends, his family, and his God. I am proud that he was my friend.

His wife, Mimi; his sons, Chris and Ben; Chris's wife, Andrea; grandson, Shane; and granddaughter, Peyton; two sisters, Donna Biba and Denise Nanette Morel; Mimi's sons, James and Bill Lofton; and James' wife Lisa and grandson Caleb, survive him.

— Terry McDowell

Merlin H. Olson

Merlin H. Olson died April 18.

He was mechanical maintenance officer of B Company, 7th Support Battalion, 199th Light Infantry Brigade in Vietnam in 1968-69.

Olson retired many years before as a major and worked as a helicopter instructor for many years at Fort Rucker before PTSD and pain from a couple of helicopter accidents got to him.

In March, Olson moved to North Carolina to live with one of his daughters as the pain and PTSD had taken over his life.

It sure is a sad story and day.

— Tom Putnam

John Wallace

John Wallace died April 4 after a two-year illness.

Wallace flew with the 335th Assault Helicopter Company and the 48th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. He also flew with the 48th AHC in Germany.

He was a past member of the VHPA.

Jim Watkins

Jim Watkins died of a heart attack last July 28 while on vacation in the Colorado mountains near his home in Colorado Springs.

He is survived by Candy Watkins, his wife of 28 years; his dad, James Watkins, who also saw Vietnam service in the SR-71 Blackbird; his stepmother, Susie Watkins; three brothers, and many friends who proudly flew with him during the 20-year span of his career.

In Vietnam, Watkins served with the 361st Aviation Company in Pleiku.

See TAPS, Page 12

VHPA scholarship fund takes off

TOM PAYNE
SECRETARY/TREASURER

For a number of years, the VHPA Scholarship fund has slowly, ever so slowly, grown.

One of the main reasons for the slow growth was the fact there was no formal program; nor was there sufficient principal to produce enough return to award a scholarship that would be significant . . . kind of a Catch 22.

Plus there were the practical and logistical problems of managing a scholarship fund.

That has now changed!

The VHPA has joined the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) Scholarship Foundation by contributing an initial \$10,000 and has received a matching grant of \$10,000 through the Heritage Matching Fund Program of the AAAA.

With the VHPA/AAAA Scholarship now funded at \$20,000, there is sufficient principal to offer at least a \$1,000 scholarship, and "take-off"!

Here is how your child or grandchild can make application.

If you are a VHPA member in

All forms, together with other supporting data, must be received by the AAAA Scholarship Foundation on or before June 1 for consideration by the AAAA Scholarship Selection Committee's 2001 awards.

The applicant must be attending an accredited college or university or be selected for fall entry as an undergraduate or graduate student.

good standing (dues current) and have a child or grandchild who already is enrolled at — or is a high school senior planning on going to — an accredited junior college, college or university, they can make application directly to the AAAA Scholarship Foundation to be considered for the "VHPA/AAAA Scholarship".

Here are the rules:

The Scholarship will be awarded

on the basis of academic merit and personal achievement.

To apply, request a Scholarship Grant/Loan application from the AAAA Scholarship Foundation Inc., 49 Richmondville Ave., Westport, CT 06880-2000, Telephone: (203) 226-8184, Fax: (203) 222-9863, e-mail: aaaa@quad-a.org and return it to the AAAA Scholarship Foundation Inc. on or before May 1, 2001 (postmark will govern).

All forms, together with other supporting data, must be received by the AAAA Scholarship Foundation on or before June 1 for consideration by the AAAA Scholarship Selection Committee's 2001 awards.

The applicant must be attending an accredited college or university or be selected for fall entry as an undergraduate or graduate student.

The applicant must join the AAAA as a student member (\$15) on or before May 1, 2001. (This is to meet a legal requirement that recipients of AAAA Foundation scholarships be members of the AAAA).

The selection of winners will be made by the AAAA National Scholarship Selection Committee during

See PROGRAM, Page 13

Taps

Continued from Page 11

Everyone who knew Jim back then admired the strength of his principles; always clear in his consciousness; always knowing quite firmly what he stood for; never pretentious; always able to negotiate the veritable minefield of decisions that had to be made as a combat platoon leader in a war which had become more controversial than any in our history.

Jim did these things, like so many other Americans of that era, because it was his turn to serve. This he did, always to the best of his ability; always in a manner that earned him the universal respect of the people who had the pleasure of working with him.

The very minor fact that I am here today is due in no small measure to his advice and counsel along the way, and his repeated bravery under enemy fire.

The quality that Jim possessed that stands out in my

mind, even more than his moral and physical courage, is that he genuinely liked people.

No matter how bad you thought things were, there was a bright side that Jim could always find.

His upbeat mood had much to do with the reality that I can look back on that experience as one of the most positive of my life.

Jim was my best friend. I know others who have referred to Jim in this way. I am sure there are others still, who I will never know, who remember Jim as the best friend a man could have.

Someone so profoundly capable, brave, decent and fun to be around. I will miss Jim. I can now only be grateful that fate allowed me to know him during the time of our Vietnam service.

To Candy, and the rest in his immediate family, I can't even begin to imagine the void in your lives as a result of Jim's passing. I hope you will know that Jim will always be in the thoughts and prayers of those with whom he served in Vietnam.

— John Debay

Program benefits VHPA applicants

Continued from Page 12

mid-July, with each applicant to receive a list of the winners no later than Aug. 15, 2001. (A VHPA representative will be a member of the Selection Committee.)

The beauty of being a part of the AAAA Foundation's Scholarship program for the VHPA is our applicants also are eligible for larger scholarships, up to \$15,000; and, since the scholarships are merit-based, there could be multiple VHPA recipients of

scholarships.

However, the VHPA Scholarship, worth \$1,000 will be awarded to a VHPA applicant if none receives a higher award. So, don't delay, act today.

If you are a VHPA member in good standing and have a child or grandchild who is interested in applying, act today. Contact the AAAA and be sure to indicate VHPA on the application form.

Remember: deadline for this year's

applications is May 1!

Another important note: VHPA will continue to solicit and receive contributions for the Scholarship Fund. Our New Member/Change of Address/Dues Form and our Reunion Registration Form will be revised to provide a place to make contributions.

Please continue to make your contributions directly to VHPA so we can ensure correct accounting of the funds.

VHPA business directory

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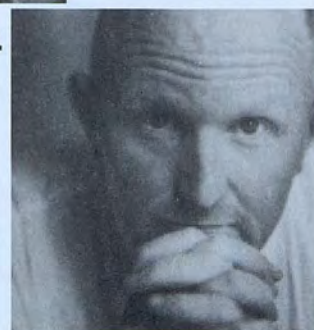
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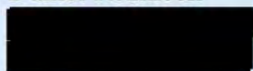
veteransbusinessnetwork.com

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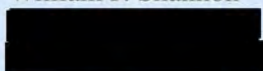
New Members Corner



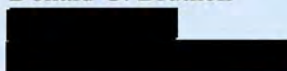
Daniel Reznicek



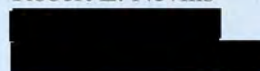
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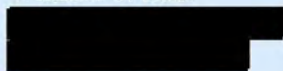
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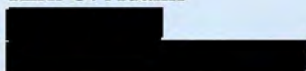
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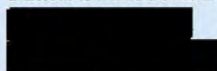
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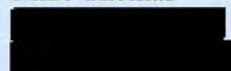
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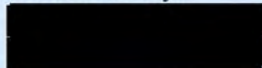
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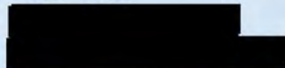
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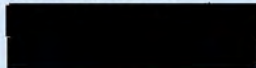
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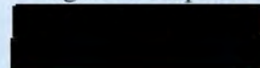
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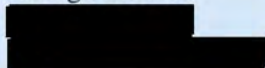
John R. Ghery



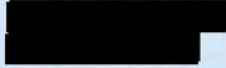
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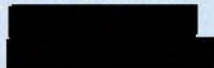
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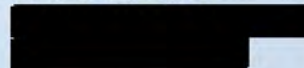
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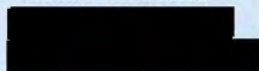
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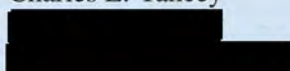
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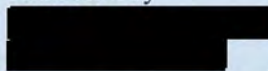
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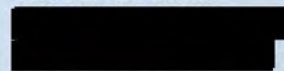
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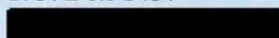
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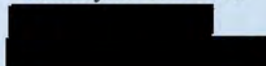
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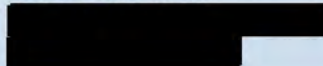
Alan Schramm
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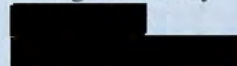
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and Richard Jellerson, a VHPA member and
slick pilot from the 116th AHC, Cu Chi 1969.
This film contains candid and compelling
interviews with pilots and crewmembers.
Combined with Super 8mm filmed by the
crews themselves, this is our story from
induction to flight training to Vietnam
and home again.

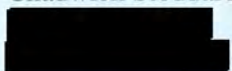
This two-hour program will air June 9th at 8
p.m. Eastern and Pacific times;
6 p.m. Central; 7 p.m. Mountain . . .
on The History Channel.

Greetings:

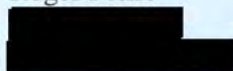
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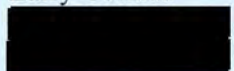
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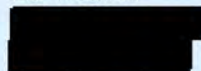
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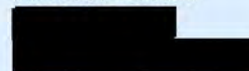
Larry Gutman



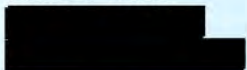
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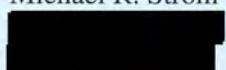
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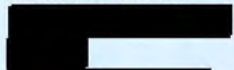
John E. Wood



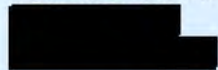
Michael R. Strom



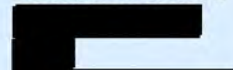
Cullis L. Holub



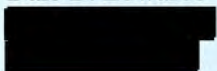
Vincent E. Cantwell



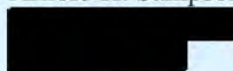
Michael Morrison



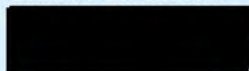
Dale B. Edwards



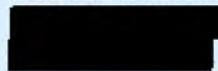
Arnold H. Sampson



Charles K. Sicotte



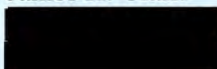
Michael T. Peterson



Peter Locke



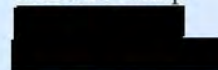
James H. Clark



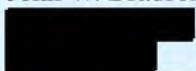
Franklin Lou Hunt



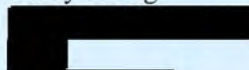
Marc B. Sharp



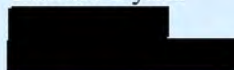
John W. Bradford



Harry Oberg



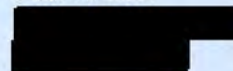
Thomas Dykes



Michael S. Plantz



Paul T. Keil



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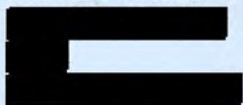
Visit us on the web at:
www.keystonehelicopter.com

Greetings:

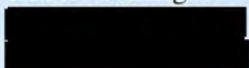
New Members Corner



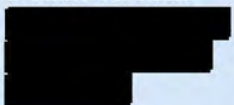
Harold D. Fuller



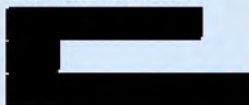
Robert C. Knight



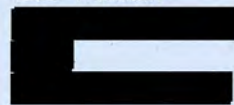
Donald Abrams



Stewart G. Hill



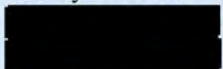
Bob Witham



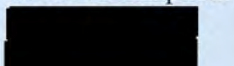
Stephen J. Shaffer



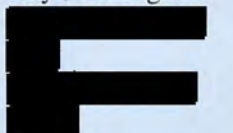
Ronny W. Ross



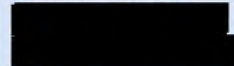
James A. Czaplicki



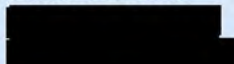
Ray E. Musgrave



John T. Borden



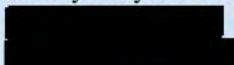
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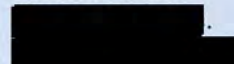
Frank Larsen



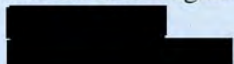
Harley Clayton Goff



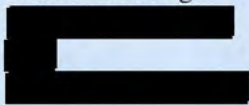
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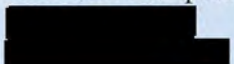
Joe Ed McDougald



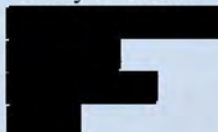
Peter Holmberg



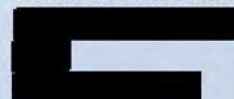
Albert M. Hampton



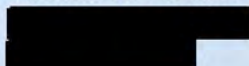
Jimmy L. Simon



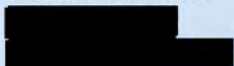
Richard A. Mitchell



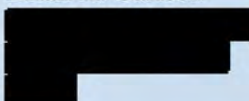
Willaim A. Ralston



Ronald W. Olson



Brian K. Carlson



Chickenhawk by Robert Mason

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If you'd like it autographed, please put to whom: _____

_____ copies @ \$13.95

Bob will be talking about writing at the 2001 VHPA reunion in Denver at the Author's Luncheon along with Bruce Lake and Ralph Young on July 4th.

Shipping and Handling \$3.50 minimum
(total price for 1 book by mail \$16.95)

or 10% of cover prices _____
(PRIORITY MAIL \$6.95 per book)

He'll also be happy to sign books.

Total _____

There will be 2 showings of his production, *Flight Line: The Army Helicopter Pilots of Vietnam* at 5 PM on July 3d and 4th, which Bob will introduce and talk about making afterwards.

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Rooms can handle maxi-reunions

DENVER — During this year's Denver Reunion July 2-7, we have more than a dozen large business rooms and can handle mini-reunions of up to 250 people without a problem.

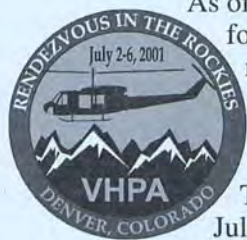
We provide all your audio/visual equipment, such as 27-inch TVs, VCRs and slide projectors.

We can schedule photographers and even small unit banquets.

See mini-reunion reservation form for details and schedule possibilities.

Send mini-reunion registrations to Brian Foote ([REDACTED])

Mini-reunion schedule



As of April 30, the following mini-reunions are scheduled:

- All ARA Units, John Taber, 6-10 p.m., July 5.
- All Chinook/Tandem Rotor Units, Brian Foote, afternoon of July 4.
- All Skycrane Pilots, Max Torrence, afternoon of July 4.
- All Soc Trang Units, Jerry D. Esmay, morning of July 4.
- All Troops of 7/17th Cav, Jose Martinez, morning of July 4.
- A Company, 101st Avn Bn, Milo Overstreet, afternoon of July 4.
- A Troop 2/17th Cav, Bob Karig, afternoon of July 3.
- B Company, 101st Avn Bn and 17th AHC, Kenneth Roach, afternoon of July 3.
- B Troop, 7/1st Cav, Lyle Borders, afternoon of July 4.
- C Company, 101st Avn Bn and 188th AHC, Jack Johnson and Dick Detra, afternoon of July 3.
- C Troop, 1/9th Cav, Walker Jones, afternoon of July 5.
- D Troop, 1/1st Cav, David Adams, afternoon of July 5.
- D Troop, 1/4th Cav, Ellwood Soderlind, morning and afternoon of July 3.

United Airlines is official airline of Reunion 2001

Here is how to take advantage of the special rates offered by United Airlines as the official airline of VHPA Reunion 2001:

- Call (800) 521-4041 to book your reservations.
- The meeting number is 592XE.
- Receive a 5 percent discount off the lowest applicable discount fare or a 10 percent discount off full fare unrestricted coach fares, purchased seven days in advance.
- Receive an extra 5 percent discount for tickets are purchased at least 60 days in advance of your travel date.
- Fly into Denver or Colorado Springs between June 29 and July 10.

- 48th AHC, Carlos Cortez, afternoon of July 4.
- 61st AHC, Jim Beach, afternoon of July 4.
- 116th AHC, Walt Winters, afternoon of July 4.
- 118th AHC, Mike Hurley, afternoon of July 4.
- 119th AHC and 81st Trans Co., Bob Heisterman, afternoon of July 6.
- 123rd Avn Bn, Wesley H. Moore, morning of July 4.
- 134th AHC, Stan Gause, afternoon of July 5.
- 162nd AHC, Stan Gause, afternoon of July 6.
- 174th AHC, Jim McDaniel, afternoon of July 4.
- 176th AHC, Max Mizejewski, afternoon of July 4.
- 187th AHC, John Quesenberry, afternoon of July 6.
- 189th AHC, Steve Schmidt, afternoon of July 6.
- 195th AHC, Al Harinck, afternoon of July 4.
- 281st AHC, Fred Mentzer, afternoon of July 4.

• 361st Escort Company, Mike Sheuerman, Suite.

Flight School Classes

- WORWAC 68-3, 8 a.m.-noon, July 4.

VHPA Chapters

- Southern California, Carlos Cortez, morning of July 4.

Late Breaking Reunion News

- **Adam's Mark Hotel:** About 50 percent of the VHPA room block has been reserved.

There are still handicapped-accessible rooms available for those who need them.

Please remember you must register for the reunion with VHPA HQ in order to get the hotel reservation form. It does you no good to call the hotel directly; you must work with VHPA HQ.

- **Buffalo Run Golf Course (July 3):** We can only accommodate 144 golfers.

The \$90 fee includes everything, plus lunch. Buses will leave the Adam's Mark promptly at 6:15 a.m. for a 7:30 shotgun start.

The course is BEAUTIFUL. Check it out on the www.rockies-golf.com/buffrun website.

We play the course on July 3 and the Colorado Open uses it as one of its qualifying courses on July 17. Only the best for the VHPA!

If you or your company is interested in hole sponsorships, contact Rich Walker (cheif49@aol.com) or 2766 E. Jamison Place, Littleton, CO 80122.

- **Rumble in the Rockies Motorcycle Ride (July 3):** We can only accommodate 250 bikes.

Bring your helmet, gloves, and boots. Be prepared to sign the VHPA Release of Liability form. Additionally, you must have a motorcycle endorsement on your driver's license if your home state requires one.

Please visit the reunion website www.vhpa2001.org for more details

See LOCAL, Page 21

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

18th Annual Reunion • Denver, CO • July 2-7, 2001

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION/HOTEL RESERVATION REQUEST FORM

Mail completed form to:

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

Fax signed credit card authorization to: (916) 966-8743

Member name:	Member No.:	Hotel room? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Flight class:	Chapter:	
1st combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
2nd combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
3rd combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
Address:	Address change?	☐ Yes ☐ No
City:	State:	Zip:
E-mail address:	Telephone: ()	Fax: ()
Wife/guest name:	Hometown:	Hotel room? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Guest name:	Hometown:	Hotel room? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Guest name:	Hometown:	Hotel room? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Guest name:	Hometown:	Hotel room? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Guest name:	Hometown:	Hotel room? ☐ Yes ☐ No

A hotel registration form will be sent to you with your registration receipt. The hotel registration form must be completed and mailed to the Adam's Mark Hotel. Telephone and fax requests will not be honored. If requesting a hotel room for a Unit TOC, specify unit. Total rooms needed? _____

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION INFORMATION

EVENT	No. of people	Price	Total	REUNION T-SHIRTS		
Registration before 4/30/2001*		@ \$35.00		QTY.	SIZE	AMT.
Registration after 4/30/2001*		@ \$45.00			S@\$15.00	
Total from sidebars	XXXXXX	XXXXXX			M@\$15.00	
Golf tournament (July 3)		@ \$90.00			L@\$15.00	
Motorcycle ride (July 3)		@ \$15.00			XL@\$15.00	
Artists Luncheon (July 3)		@ \$23.00			XXL@\$16.50	
Authors Luncheon (July 4)		@ \$23.00			XXXL@\$17.50	
Welcome Reception (July 4)		@ \$ 6.00		SIDEBAR TOTAL:		
Colorado Springs Outing (July 5)		@ \$32.00		QTY.	BANQUET MEAL	
Golden Outing (July 5)		@ \$32.00			Prime rib	
Talk and Enjoy Party (July 5)		@ \$ 5.00			Pork loin	
Ladies Function (July 6)		@ \$27.00			Chicken Oscar	
Closing Banquet/Dance (July 6)		@ \$45.00			Vegetarian	
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	1 year	@ \$30.00		Membership Fund Contribution:		
Life membership (installments)	1 of 3	@ \$150.00		\$ _____		
Life membership		@ \$450.00		*Each person 18 and older must pay registration fee.		
GRAND TOTAL						

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

Credit card No: Expiration date: Signature:

CHECK or MONEY ORDER PAYMENT

In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion 2001" with form.

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

18th Annual Reunion • Denver, CO • July 2-7, 2001

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION/HOTEL RESERVATION REQUEST FORM

Part 2

REFUND INFORMATION

Reunion fees. No refund will be given for any reunion fees (dinner, event, registration fee, or other activity) unless the member cancels the registration by faxing, e-mailing or calling VHPA Headquarters no later than June 25, 2001. Requests by U.S. Mail must arrive at VHPA Headquarters no later than June 25, 2001. There will be a \$10 cancellation fee charged for each refund request, regardless of the number of items (dinners, events, registration fee, hotel reservations, etc.) included in the request. Each refund request will be assigned a refund request confirmation number on the day the request is received by VHPA Headquarters. Reasons for requests received after June 25, 2001, such as hospital admission, medical emergencies, death in the family, etc., will be considered on an individual basis. Please remember that some events (i.e. the banquet) require the VHPA to commit a firm count to the hotel in advance. If the VHPA is unable to resell the canceled ticket, the registrant might not receive a refund for that event.

Hotel fees. Notice of hotel reservation cancellations must be made by June 25 by faxing, e-mailing or calling VHPA Headquarters. Requests by U.S. Mail must arrive at VHPA Headquarters no later than June 25. Each refund request will be assigned a refund request confirmation number on the day the request is received by VHPA Headquarters. VHPA Headquarters will process the cancellation request as quickly as possible. No hotel fee refunds will be made if the hotel does not honor the cancellation due to insufficient time prior to date of arrival.

DENVER MINI-REUNION REGISTRATION

Send min-reunion registration information to Brian Foote [REDACTED]

Unit or flight class designation:

Unit call sign:

Estimated number attending mini-reunion:

Point of contact name:

Telephone: ()

E-mail address:

SCHEDULING INFORMATION

FIRST CHOICE

- ☐ Tuesday, July 3 — a.m.
- ☐ Tuesday, July 3 — p.m.
- ☐ Wednesday, July 4 — a.m.
- ☐ Wednesday, July 4 — p.m.
- ☐ Thursday, July 5 — Evening
- ☐ Friday, July 6 — p.m.

SECOND CHOICE

- ☐ Tuesday, July 3 — a.m.
- ☐ Tuesday, July 3 — p.m.
- ☐ Wednesday, July 4 — a.m.
- ☐ Wednesday, July 4 — p.m.
- ☐ Thursday, July 5 — Evening
- ☐ Friday, July 6 — p.m.

SPECIAL REQUEST INFORMATION

AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT

- ☐ TV/VCR
- ☐ 35mm slide projector
- ☐ 35mm slide carousel
- ☐ Projection screen
- ☐ Photographer

ROOM FURNISHINGS

- ☐ Podium
- ☐ Microphone and sound system
- ☐ Private unit banquet
- ☐ Extra tables
- ☐ Internet access (limited availability)
- ☐ Hang a banner

We have more than a dozen rooms that can be scheduled for mini-reunions. Three are large enough for small banquets and/or gatherings of more than 200 people, hence they have sound system capability. Unit banners can be hung.

Each room will have one 8-foot table per 15 people attending the mini-reunion. This table can be used for displaying photographs, memorabilia, etc. You can have a 27-inch TV with VCRs. Slide projectors come with a portable projection screen.

Local clubs will escort bike flights

Continued from Page 18

and a list of bike rental companies.

Several local motorcycle clubs have volunteered to escort each flight of 25 bikes.

Please remember, we will be traveling in the mountains, so we could encounter rainshowers. I suggest sunscreen, rain gear and a jacket because it can be cool. The elevation in Nederland is 8,236 feet, so expect summer high altitude conditions.

The roads in the canyons are very winding, fun and narrow, so we will be traveling slowly.

On the other roads, the scenery will make you want to proceed slowly as well. Our main objective is to be safe and have a great time.

Contact Fred Lyssy [REDACTED]

• **Ladies Coffee (July 4):** Several ladies asked for a small function early in the reunion as a way to get to meet old friends and as a gathering point to see who all is in town.

Patience Mason will be the guest speaker of a short program. She is the author of *Recovering From The War and Why Is Daddy Like He Is?*

She devotes considerable time and energy to the subject of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Visit her website at www.patiencepress.com

• **Authors Luncheon (July 4):** Four authors of Vietnam helicopter books will have about 15 minutes each to summarize their lessons learned.

Please visit the reunion website www.vhpa2001.org for more details.

The authors are:

1. VHPA member Robert Mason, author of *Chickenhawk*, published by Viking Press.

2. VHPA member Bruce Lake, a former Marine helicopter pilot, author of *1,500 feet over Vietnam*, used the

"self-publishing" route for his book.

3. Ralph B. Young is authoring the *Army Aviation in Vietnam* series. Volume 2 was available at the last

VHPA

Reunion. His research techniques and great attention to detail are impressive.

4. VHPA member Dave Eastman is nearly ready to publish *Outlaws in Vietnam* with the help of many who flew in the 175th AHC, especially in 1966 and 1967.

This luncheon is a must if you have plans or dreams of publishing your own book.

• **Colorado Springs Outing (July 5):** Buses will depart the Adam's Mark from 9-10:30 a.m. for the 90-minute drive to the Turkey Creek Recreation Area on the Fort Carson Military Reservation.

We will have at least one wheelchair-accessible bus on this route. The committee plans to have a Colorado Springs resident VHPA member on each bus and will route the buses through the Air Force Academy and the city of Colorado Springs along the way.

Howard's Bar-B-Que has a sign over the door that reads: "Meat so tender you don't need teeth to eat!" Coors beer on tap. A limited number of horseback rides will be available.

The 7th Infantry has promised a static helicopter and military vehicle

display.

There will be a horse-mounted "Old West" cavalry charge.

We are researching various bus return route options. Everyone will be back at the Adam's Mark by 5 p.m.

Contact Terry Sullivan (tsullivan@coloradosprings-travel.com) or 104 S. Cascade Ave., Unit 104, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

• **Golden Outing (July 5):** Buses will depart the Adam's Mark from 9:15-10:30 a.m. for the 30- to 45-minute drive to the Tony Grampas Memorial Sports Complex in Golden.

We will have at least one wheelchair-accessible bus on this route.

In addition to a complete "Texas Style" barbecue and Coors beer on tap, the park has horseshoes, volleyball, softball equipment.

Circulating shuttle buses will depart about every 30 minutes with dropoff/pickup stops for visits to Coors Brewing Co. (www.coors.com), downtown Golden (www.goldenochamber.org), and Colorado Railroad Museum (www.crrm.org).

Those wearing their reunion lanyard do not have to pay the normal \$6 admission fee. The Railroad Museum is also within walking distance.

You have three options to return to the hotel:

• Option 1 departs at 1:30 p.m., with visit to Buffalo Bill Gravesite (optional museum visit \$3 per person) on top of nearby Lookout Mountain (www.buffalobill.org), and stop at Red Rocks Amphitheater Park (www.red-rocks.com), returning to hotel by 5 p.m.

• Option 2 departs at 1:30 p.m., with visit to nearby Heritage Square shopping village and amusement park, and stop at Red Rocks Amphitheater Park, returning to hotel by 5 p.m.

• Option 3 returns directly to hotel. Buses depart from 1:30-4 p.m.

Capacities for Options 1 and 2 may be limited. Contact Bill Robie [REDACTED] or 300 Lookout

See ROCKIES, Page 22

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Denver, CO
June 30 - July 7 2001

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Basic rate includes government tax, insurance, and optional items. A-H are additional. Additional driver fee and rental tax are extra.

AVIS Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association
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Reserve in minutes your Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number when you call for reservations.
To reserve an Avis car in your meeting or event call 1-800-331-1600

Rockies, Angels play at Coors Field

Continued from Page 21

View Drive, Golden, CO 80401.

• **Colorado Rockies-Anaheim Angels baseball game (July 7 at 6 p.m.):** While not officially part of the reunion, many attendees can enjoy a Saturday evening baseball game in beautiful Coors Field.

The RMCVHPA has \$5 tickets in upper right field so we can all sit together. This includes four wheelchair positions.

The VHPA will be featured in the

pregame ceremonies where Dave Rittman, the 2001-02 VHPA president, will throw out the first pitch. This is not a fund raiser; you can purchase the tickets at cost: \$5.



Tickets can be reserved prior to the Reunion by contacting Ed Fickes at [redacted] or [redacted]

Subject to availability, tickets also can be purchased at the reunion.

Currently, the VHPA's room block for Saturday night in the Adam's Mark is only 200 rooms.

Please make or extend your reservations ASAP if you want to go to the game with us.

It is easy to get from the hotel to Coors Field and LoDo (Lower Downtown) Denver is FUN, FUN, FUN during home games.



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**Larger, more detailed, with actual 10 Carat White Gold Wings

National reunion takes new direction

JOE BILITZKE
CHAIRMAN
NATIONAL REUNION COMMITTEE

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association has experienced tremendous growth over its short history.

We also will experience the inevitable decline.

While still in the growth stage, we have come to rely on a management company for administrative actions and a financial management company for our investments.

The time has come to expand our vision of our one, big, organized annual event, the VHPA reunion. In an earlier time, when we were much smaller, VHPA could rely on the spirit, dedication and tireless work of a group of individuals who lived in the area of a proposed reunion site.

The event has become too big, too complex and too costly to ask our local chapters to shoulder this tremendous responsibility.

The reunion is no longer fun for those tasked with its execution. From the reunion chairman to the president, we are asking individuals to take responsibility for a mission that potentially may be far above their pay grade.

Good intentions, long hours and devotion to duty all are admirable qualities when it comes to putting on a reunion. But the early reunions have now grown into the national VHPA annual reunion and we must grow with that reality.

To that end, your Executive Council has formed a new position within our organization. I have been asked to assume the responsibilities of this new position, chairman, National VHPA Reunion Committee.

This is an unpaid, volunteer position giving the entire membership a single, defined target to express frustrations, questions, and — I hope — glowing reports and kudos for future reunions. Some of my ideas and vision for this new direction follow:

- Location, activity or size of a local chapter should no longer deter-

mine the national VHPA annual reunion sites. The sites should be chosen using the following criteria:

1. The hotel should be affordable, and able to house the entire reunion under one roof.

2. The hotel should be in a location that offers easy access and cost effectiveness by air and maintain the standards of a destination acceptable to the majority of the membership.

3. The hotel should offer room, food, and beverage costs within the parameters acceptable to the VHPA.

- The chairman, VHPA Site Selection Committee (VHPA SSC) will contact all major hotel chains having properties exceeding 1,500 rooms. A Request For Proposal (RFP) is requested with the following:

1. Provide properties located within CONUS that would allow VHPA to contract a minimum room block of 1,200 rooms over the July 4 holiday. The hotel sites will be rotated geographically as best as circumstances allow.

2. VHPA Site Selection Committee would recommend a hotel chain offering properties in three cities that meet the above criteria.

3. With EC approval, the VHPA SSC would negotiate with each national chain having hotels described. A contract would be executed for a long term (e.g., three-year) period with the chosen chain. Subsequently, each year, a reunion would be held in one of the three properties held by the national chain.

4. Guaranteeing a three-year contract would greatly improve our bargaining position. And hotel acquisition would be negotiated at a national level, both by the chains and VHPA also helping to ensure a national VHPA annual reunion.

- The chairman, National VHPA Reunion Committee will establish the position of event coordinator, national VHPA annual reunion. Duties follow:

1. Report to the chairman, National VHPA Reunion Committee.

2. Assume daily duties much like

the VHPA management company.

3. Participate in site selections, hotel negotiations, budgeting, and preliminary duties as directed by the chairman, National VHPA Reunion Committee.

4. During the national VHPA annual reunion, assume responsibility for execution of a successful reunion. This includes coordination with the chairman, National VHPA Reunion Committee, and the hotel staff.

5. Provide sufficient local staff and/or local VHPA volunteers to adequately staff, but not limited to, the following areas of responsibilities:

- a.) Coordination of room block
- b.) Registration
- c.) Banquet
- d.) Transportation
- e.) Vendors
- f.) Mini-reunions
- g.) Ancillary food functions
- h.) Business Meeting
- i.) Ladies' events
- j.) Golf Tournament
- k.) Raffle

- l.) Fulfillment items, e.g., pins, decorations, handouts, gifts, programs, etc.

- The event coordinator, national VHPA annual reunion will be paid a retainer, plus travel expenses required for maintaining the position. Areas not reimbursed include office, administrative staff, reasonable and usual communication, and logistical equipment required of an existing business.

- The event coordinator, national VHPA annual reunion will be an established, event/meeting planner with sufficient experience to assume the role of the position.

- Local chapters and/or individual VHPA members are not being excluded from the reunion process. This will continue to be an event for and by the membership.

The chairman and event coordinator, national VHPA annual reunion may utilize the local chapter and/or local area members, if available, to recommend attractions, events, and sites that might be of interest to the membership.

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 ☐ Annual/renewal dues: \$30 (Newsletters included)
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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.*