



# The VHHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

January/February 1998 Vol. 16, No. 1



Ed Anderson photo

Spec. 5 Ed Anderson, a tech inspector with the 135th Assault Helicopter Company, took this photo of an aircraft commander and peter pilot after their Huey was damaged during takeoff at Black Horse in early 1968.

|||||

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PHIL MARSHALL SACK 56



## From the President

Happy New Year!

A big thanks to those of you who sent cards to the VHPA. I was going to respond individually, but there were too many cards.

I know that all the members fully intend to keep their New Year resolutions. Well, so much for that, let's return to the real world.

"Lead, follow, or get out of the way." We've all heard that one, most recently from Lee Iacocca.

In any given year, most of you enjoy reading our newsletter, perusing the directory and, for those who can make it, having a great time meeting old friends at the reunion.

Over the years there have been several hundred members who have volunteered their time to help the association in a variety of ways, from joining the Executive Council and standing committees to helping at a reunion.

Needless to say, as a volunteer organization, it would be difficult to operate without these efforts. The demands placed on these members can be quite extensive and, as a result, some have had to withdraw their services due to pressing business or personal demands.

Fortunately, during my tenure on the EC, all those who felt it necessary to withdraw have graciously completed their "tour" and not left us in a lurch.

It becomes more difficult, though, to attract the talent necessary to run this complex organization when volunteers believe they may be the target of some who have personal agendas or "crusades."

I refer all to the VHPA Constitution, Article II, Objectives. We are apolitical.

Every one of us has our personal view on how the world should be run, but none of these views is the VHPA party line.

Over the past four years I have been on the EC, I have been contacted by several members and non-members to espouse their individual cause, crusade or vendetta. My response then and now is that none of these are VHPA issues.

There can never be a VHPA version of political correctness. We are all free-thinkers who join together in comradeship and brotherhood.

### **Volunteers needed**

Enough of the preaching. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS. With the reorganization of the management company,

the superb work of Pappy Jones and the great help from members like Art Ashton out in Portland, OR, we are finding more new and renewing members.

By the way, Art would like some feedback on a possible mini-reunion for the folks out West sometime in the winter. Give Art a call at [REDACTED].

As I mentioned in my previous column, our Reunion 2000 will be in Washington, DC. We need some volunteers to run that show.

Give Tom or me a call. Our Reunion 2001 should be on the West Coast.

Let's hear from some of the chapters and others about possible sites and a commitment to host the event. Sounds like a good project for Art and his crew.

Contact Charlie Rayl or Kenny Bunn with your recommendations, but please check the sites out before you have the committee investigate them.

### **Calling on VHPA business**

I get several calls a week on VHPA business or supposed business.

Since I have a career and one I truly enjoy, I find it necessary to manage my time in the most effective and profitable manner. Consequently, here are some calling guidelines that will help you get a better response to your problem.

Guidelines for contacting the Prez:

1. Have you contacted VHPA HQ? The vast majority of the administrative problems can be resolved there since the reorganization.
2. Don't call me if you've been drinking (only my close friends can do that).
3. Get to the point. My time is valuable, as is yours. Don't waste it.
4. I will only deal with legitimate issues, not personal agendas.

I have a contract out for Charlie Rayl, Greg Ross and Mike Quigley. I will get you!

### **Reminders/checks**

Some reminders and quality control checks:

1. PLEASE renew your VHPA membership now by sending in your dues. This saves us some money if we don't have to bug you.
2. Have you received your 1997 Directory? If not, contact VHPA HQ if you were dues current as of Aug. 15, 1997.

Have a good New Year and I look forward to seeing ALL of you in Fort Worth.

— Mike Hurley, President

## 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] Extension/PIN 8936, or [REDACTED].

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## VHPA chapters

Ohio River LZ Chapter	Jack W. Shrode Jr., President [REDACTED]
Great Lakes Chapter	John Becker, President [REDACTED]
North Carolina Chapter	Vic Rose, President [REDACTED]
New England Chapter	Bob Whitford, Past President [REDACTED]
Fort Wolters Chapter	Charles Holley, President [REDACTED]
Mardi Gras Chapter	Don Hunt, President Lee Overstreet, Vice President New Orleans, LA
Florida LZ Chapter	Judd Chapin, Executive Director [REDACTED]
California Chapter North	Rich Buzen, President [REDACTED] <a href="http://www.hooked.net/~pandata/ccn.com.html">www.hooked.net/~pandata/ccn.com.html</a>

## Ohio River chapter plans Indianapolis reunion

The Ohio River LZ VHPA Chapter will hold a mini-reunion Feb. 27-March 1 at the Quality Inn South, 520 E. Thompson Road, Indianapolis, IN.

The Quality Inn South is located on the 165-degree radial, about 100 yards off the intersection of U.S. 31 and Interstate 465 loop, on the south side of Indianapolis.

If you arrive by plane, the hotel has an airport shuttle.

VHPAers planning to attend should contact the hotel and make their reservations now by calling (317) 787-8341 or (800) 228-5151. Be sure to tell the reservation clerk you are with the Ohio River LZ Chapter to get the discounted room rate.

Arrivals should be planned after noon on Friday, Feb. 27. The hospitality suite will be open at 3 p.m. Friday and will stay open until everyone is too tired to continue.

On Saturday, Feb. 28, there will be a business meeting in the morning. That afternoon, touring the INARNG Flight Facility, visiting the Indianapolis Children's Museum and a visit to a major shopping center is planned.

In the evening, there will be an Officers' Call, dinner and oldies to listen or dance to.

On Sunday morning, we will gather for an informal brunch and depart when individual schedules require. Your family is welcome to attend all activities.

Contacts are:

- Mick Molish at [REDACTED]
- Larry Wigger at [REDACTED] (home) or [REDACTED]

— Mick Molish



# Former Ranger seeks gunship, slick pilots

I served in the 4th Infantry Division at Pleiku and An Khe during 1969 and 1970. I was a team leader with K Company, 75th Rangers. I am very interested in locating anyone who flew any Ranger insertions or extractions.

I have almost no information other than some names. The gunships were "Gambler" and I cannot remember the slicks' call signs. I do remember two nicknames "Spider-man" and "Animal" were frequently the slicks we rode in and out on.

I am sure that I would not be here to write this letter without the pilots, and I am just as certain that the same could be said for many if not most of my Ranger buddies. I was informed of your group by Jim Morgan, a flight for life pilot who came to my school.



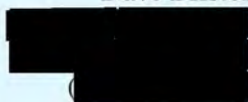
Last summer at our Ranger Reunion at Fort Lewis, Washington I was part of a reunion between a pilot name Barnes and Marvin Duron. All of us were glad to say thanks to him, but I was inspired to seek out others who flew for us.

Please let me know if you can help put some of us "old grunts" in touch with these

guys.

If not, then please extend my thanks to all of your membership who risked their lives to keep us alive. We do appreciate and respect you.

Dave Bristol



# Army redesignates some aviation units

Just a quick note to inform you and the VHPA of a few redesignations:

DA, Hqs, USAREUR/7th Army Permanent Orders, 15 August 1997

• **Order 227-1:** A Company, 5th Battalion, 159th Aviation has been redesignated as Company F, 159th Aviation, effective 16 October 1997.

The company has been and continues to be assigned to V Corps and is located in Giebelstadt, Germany.

• **Order 227-2:** C Company, 6th Battalion, 159th Aviation has been redesignated as Company D, 158th Aviation, effective 16 October 1997.

The company has been and continues to be assigned to V Corps and is located in Giebelstadt, Germany.

• **Order 227-3:** C Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Avia-

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## VHPA Products

### MAIL FORM TO:

VHPA  
5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
(800) 505-VHPA  
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### FAX CREDIT CARD ORDERS: (916) 966-8743

New VHPA bumper stickers	\$1/each	_____
Back VHPA Newsletters (Limited availability)	\$10/year (\$5 P&H each set)	_____
1994 VHPA Directory	\$10/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1995 VHPA Directory	\$10/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1997 VHPA Directory	\$10/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
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VHPA History Book, Vol. 1 Turner Publishing limited edition. Only a few left.	\$39/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____

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tion has been redesignated as Company C, 158th Aviation, effective 16 October 1997.

The company has been and continues to be assigned to V Corps and is located in Giebelstadt, Germany.

I am leaving my assignment shortly with 12th Aviation Brigade and returning to the US. Just received my Newsletter for September/October 1997 and story by Mike Maloy, "Chinook lands poorly upside down." It being about A Company, 159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion, I thought someone out there might be interested in knowing of the new designation. Same for the other two companies.

I am a life member, L07805 and love everything I read in the VHPA publications. Thank you for a job well done.

Cary J. Bacon

Centaur 55

D/3/4 Cav, 25th Inf 70-71

Major, U.S. Army Retired

Resource Management Officer

## Former platoon sergeant would like to correspond

I recently saw the July/August 1997 VHPA Newsletter. I work at Robins Air Force Base, GA, as a civilian employee of the Air Force.

I work with Ron Nobles, a member of your organization, and he and I have discussed our experiences to a limited degree. I was talking to him one day and he showed me a copy of the July/August Newsletter and I read the story written by Mr. Jones.

I was a member of F Troop, 4th Cav's Scout Platoon from March-October 1972. As a matter of fact, I was the scout platoon sergeant for most of that time.

*I was wounded in October while flying with CWO*

*Nathaniel Clark.*

*I'm sure Mr. Jones remembers him.*

I was wounded in October while flying with CWO Nathaniel Clark.

I'm sure Mr. Jones remembers him.

I would love to correspond with former members of F/4th who served when I did. It seems the older I get, the more important it is to me. I doubt if Mr. Jones remembers me, but I remember him.

I am sending this e-mail to the address in the front of the newsletter because I saw Mr. Jones' name as an assistant editor. Please forward this e-mail to Mr. Jones.

Joseph M. Beck

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The e-mail message was forwarded to Hayden "Pappy" Jones, VHPA membership chairman.

## Cobra used successfully for battery's beer run

During a slight lull in the action, I received one of the strangest missions ever.

I'm sure it was because I was a non-drinker that I was sent to Tay Ninh to pick up the beer allotment for the battery.

By this time, we had only Cobras and it was unknown how much beer a Cobra could carry. The consensus was anything I could bring back was better than nothing at all, so off I went to get some beer.

Several of the people at the supply depot laughed when I landed and told them I had come to pick up some beer for my unit. The old sergeant in charge stood there with his arms crossed, looking very wise.

I asked the sergeant how much beer our unit was authorized, filling him in on the size of an ARA battery.

Disregarding everything I had just said, the sergeant said: "You can have all the beer you can put on that 'bird' of yours." Then he chuckled to himself and several of the guys with him started laughing.

I would have the last laugh, though.

I did not go down there unprepared. Before I left Quan Loi, I pulled all the rockets from all four pods. At the time, I was thinking it was just to save weight.



I also pulled the ammo trays out of the ammo bay under the pilot and copilot stations.

I even made sure the front battery compartment was empty, as well as the area up behind the back seat. We did not even carry the first aid kit which usually took up space back there.

The supply depot had several pallets of beer that had just come in and was working on moving them into the warehouse.

My copilot and I started loading off of one of the pallets still outside. We loaded the front battery compartment, the ammo bay, and up behind the rear seat. This was only about 12 cases.

Then I had a thought: Would beer cans fit in the rocket tubes? Sure they would.

We started considering another possible problem — could the cans fall out of the rocket tubes? Wind resistance and the slight elevation of the pods would help keep the cans in the tube and, even if we went into a dive, the aircraft would be falling as fast as the cans, so they would not come out.

With all the physics considered, we began putting seven cans of beer in each of the 76 rocket tubes.

It was as if the tubes were made just for carrying beer. That was 532 cans just in the rocket pods, or something over 22 cases.

There was still beer to be had, so we went back and repacked the area behind the rear seat and got a couple of more cases in there.

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Last, with the copilot strapped into his seat, we placed a case between his legs and had him hold a couple of cases in his lap.

If I remember correctly, this was a total of 42 cases of beer, a whole pallet.

As we pulled pitch, the old sergeant was still scratching his head and wondering how we put all that beer on a Cobra.



My main concern for the flight back was altitude. I wanted to be high enough not to draw fire. An unarmed Cobra full of beer would be a juicy target for some NVA gunner. I hoped they did not know we were unarmed or what we had on board.

Our arrival back at Quan Loi was a glorious welcome, the kind normally reserved for heroes returning from a major battle. That was the funniest part.

By the way, the beer was nicely chilled from the high-altitude return trip.

N.G. (Glenn) Brown  
Blue Max 69-Q1, C/2/20 ARA  
1st Cavalry Division, 1968-69  
Midland, TX

## Warrants not invited to CO's party — once

It was the best of times . . . that spring of 1969 at Bien Hoa. The 190th AHC had received a new company commander.

He was nothing if not "strack." He was a VMI graduate and only changed his uniform twice daily!

As things were apt to happen, a hale and farewell was scheduled the first week he was in command. He let it be known that only commissioned officers were to be invited to this event! All the warrants were to have their own party elsewhere!

Late, very late, that night a cry went out from the plush rooms of the commander and he was seen staggering in the area. All officers were summoned to the mess hall and were threatened with general courts-martial when and if the party or parties were found who placed the "cs" in the good major's air conditioning unit earlier!

The long and short of it was that never again did the 190th have a party and not invite the warrants!

The deed was investigated and no one confessed . . . nor was anyone accused. To this day, there are only a few who know for sure who did it . . . and they are not telling!

WOPA was real that night and served with valor above and beyond the call of duty. RLOs could have been equals if they tried . . . many did, some did not . . . and are still not today!

If you understand the way VHPA was supposed to work when it started, you would see that a few can help promote the organization with friendship and without private agen-

das . . . look around and run for office if you think things are not the way you want them in VHPA. It is your organization . . . help run it!

Jay Elliott

## Senior Army instructor to help find ROK pilots

I just received my September/October newsletter.

During the winter of 68/69 we trained several Korean helicopter pilots to fly the UH-1Ds at A-306 in Chun Chon, Korea. This was part of a KMAG program to upgrade OH-23 pilots into the Huey and later to fly in RVN.

At present, I am the senior Army instructor teaching JROTC in Taegu Korea and would be glad to assist with finding ROK pilots who flew in Vietnam.

After the Christmas holidays, I will contact the ROK aviation officer at the 17th Aviation Brigade in Seoul and see what they come up with. I will also get you a more detailed account of our unit, the 6th Aviation Platoon, and our training of both ROK ground and aviation troops.

I also served with B/158th 101st and we supported CCN from the end of Lamson 719 until December 1971. There are almost too many out-of-country stories to tell and I don't know what has been cleared for release.

Ernest B. Flagg  
Taegu, South Korea

## Writer suggests Newman may be the pilot sought

In an article "How Dave earned the nickname Mud Puppy" November/December 1997, Mike asks the question does anyone know CW4 Newman?

Since there cannot be more than a couple of Newmans who fit the description, I will give you mine.

As assignment officer (Warrant Officer Branch) between 1967 and 1970, I came across a Newman (Bobbie?) who upon graduation from flight school had gone directly to Vietnam, although he had at the time approximately four years with Special Forces in country.

He had gone directly to Vietnam from flight school because he either volunteered or failed to disclose his tours at the time.

His first tour as a warrant officer pilot lasted three years straight!

To the best of my recollection, he volunteered to return to Vietnam with training en route (I believe helicopter) with over seven years in country.

He spoke Chinese, had lots of kids, divorced. Was an adviser to the movie "Green Beret" with John Wayne.

I would guess that he ended up with around 10 years in

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country, although some of it was before official "War Time."

Bob Hamilton



## APC driver seeking dustoff team pilots

A former pilot Mark Hayes told me of this site and said it would be a good place to write in hopes of finding the "Dust Off" team that picked me up in January 1968.

My story: I drove lead APC for Company A, 4/23 Mech of the 25th Infantry Division out of Cu Chi from October 1967 to Jan. 8, 1968.

On Jan. 8, I hit a land mine which literally blew off my left leg and arm, breaking everything on the right side, fracturing my skull, and numerous other injuries.

A tank in front of me also hit a mine shortly after I did, so we had two of us very badly wounded and one guy inside my track wounded.

Three choppers were sent out just a few clicks outside Cu Chi at 7 a.m. to pick us up and bring us to the 12th Evac Hospital.

The area was not secured and the crews radioed they were coming in anyway, as our CO told the crew if they didn't come in immediately, I would die. I was bleeding profusely and they pronounced me dead on impact as they couldn't get a pulse.

I owe my life to many folks, a big, huge TEAM! The "dustoff" folks, by coming into a unsecured area, really spared my life without question!

My life has been full, married 28 years, two great kids. I hit a golf ball off the tee almost 200 yards, walk without the use of a cane, too!

Just wanted you folks to hear a success story of yours. Some of us wounded did survive and lead productive lives, and I think it's high time we give thanks to those we can find, especially now as the holidays approach and it turns 30 years since I was wounded.

If anyone knows the members of the crew that may have picked me up that morning, please contact me.

Thank you for all you did and continue on doing!  
A very grateful combat wounded veteran.

Jon D. Hovde

## Vietnam Center open for a number of years

Nice try "Pappy" Jones. Fact is, the Vietnam Center has been open for some years now. I have supported it financially. I have attended and presented at their annual meetings on issues meaningful to some Vietnam veterans, such as keeping the VET CENTERS open.

## Young warrant officers worth five other pilots

I am not a member of the FWCVHPA, I did not go there, I was at Fort Wolters from March 1957 until August 1973.

I knew a lot of you and you were and still are "ABOVE THE BEST" and don't ever let anyone take that away from you.

I work today for an ex-Air Force officer. He commanded an Air Force Special Operation group in Nam. He was blessed to have some of you assigned to him.

He tells me almost daily that you could do in five minutes what it took some AF pilots days to just talk about. He said he would trade five AF pilots for one young Army WO pilot who was trained at Fort Wolters by Southern Airways IPs.

Keep up the good work guys. I enjoy your page and will see you in July 1998. Think good thoughts.

Bill McSpadden

I gave copies of all the VHPA historical publications to the archivist over two years ago.

The Center is not a social event. It is serious business. VHPA has not demonstrated any interest in any other than social agenda. Hence, when the last one of us dies, our contributions will be forgotten before our drinking suits get moths and rot off the hangers. Sad in a way . . . but hey! the beer's cold, the newsletter's cool, and it's a great directory.

Oh, and you, Chaplain Plummer, should learn something about PTSD before you pontificate about it. Don't judge. How can you recognize "manufactured grief?" Are you clairvoyant?

To all who say the war had no emotional effect on them, I say one of the following statements applies: 1. You're lying. 2. You didn't get close enough to the war. Or, 3. You're crazier than I am.

Dave Price  
MSSW, LGSW

1964, '65, '67, Guns and Scouts

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Pappy Jones' response: "If he is referring to the Tech Library, I wish I'd known about his efforts. It would've saved me about \$90."**

## Member e-mail addresses should be in Directory

Please add my comments in favor of including e-mail addresses with our directory information. It provides an excellent means for communication.

I am not always home to answer my phone, but I can access my e-mail any time of day and receive information from friends or business associates.

If privacy is an issue, members do not have to provide

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their e-mail addresses for the directory. For matters of confidentiality, there is always the standard of sending it through the mail.

Also, I noted in the November/December 1997 newsletter issue, the mention of Jim Spires.

If Jim is the same Spires I served as an instructor pilot with at Hunter AAF, GA (1970-72) and is or was a sheriff's pilot in the Atlanta area, please feel free to pass my e-mail address on to him.

Steve Vermillion

## Letters support e-mail addresses in Directory

### E-mail helps stay in touch

Please include my e-mail address in the directory. I think it's great. I find that I am much more inclined to write e-mail.

I just returned a letter from an Army buddy who wrote me in March of last year after he found my name in the directory. YES I AM SLOW AT CORRESPONDENCE . . . If he had included an mail address, I would have been much quicker.



Again I vote for e-mail see my e-mail signature below.

Walter J. Ellis

P.S.: The strange e-mail address is my call sign from being a pilot in Vietnam.

### E-mail address incorrect

You published in the November/December 1997 VHPA Newsletter, my comments regarding publishing member e-mail addresses.

One problem. You printed my e-mail address incorrectly. My correct e-mail address is:

Would you please correct.

Gary L. Calhoun  
Dustoff 16

### E-mail address more important

As a Life member and user of our directory for all of its intended purposes, I can tell you that including e-mail address is really more important than mail address!

I just recently sent out 20 letters to the membership looking for info on a stick buddy and the ONLY response I've received have been by e-mail.

Privacy is not the issue, but good and easy communication is. Please include e-mail addresses!

Max J. Mizejewski

Minuteman 17A  
176th AHC

### E-mail helps pilot keep up

For myself, the whole idea of the newsletter and annual book are for keeping up with you all.

Count me in on putting my e-mail address with "additional info." Happy Holidays and may the new year be good for you.

Michael Bucove

### Add e-mail address to Directory

Please add my e-mail address to the '98 directory.

If possible . . . please cap the "G" in Gold and the "E" in Eagle . . . Makes it easier to read.

Donald Joyce

## Taps

### Peter Abplanalp

I am sorry to report the death of Peter Abplanalp, my former WOC classmate and good friend.

Peter was killed when his EMS helicopter struck high-tension lines in Littleton, CO, on Dec. 14.

We graduated in class 69-31, then were stationed together at Fort Hood, TX, before receiving orders for Vietnam. There, Pete served in the 129 AHC (1970-71).

Peter graduated from Adams State College in Alamosa, CO, as a civil engineer and joined the Wyoming Army National Guard. Peter achieved the rank of CW4 and was decorated in Vietnam and the Gulf War.

Peter stayed in the Wyoming/Colorado area, while I

went north to Alaska for many years, but we were always just a phone call (and later e-mail) away.

About 18 months ago he called to tell me he was taking sort of a sabbatical from engineering to fly for Columbia Air Life.

My memories of Pete include our time in the service together, backpacking, sleeping under the wing of an airplane in the California desert and a thousand other adventures. He will be missed.

In addition to his mother, brother and sisters, Pete leaves behind his beloved wife Colleen and his stepson.

Peter E. Hadley

11th Aviation Battalion, 1970-71

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Obituaries that appear in the "Taps" column should be submitted in writing by VHPA members. Please include flight school class number and unit served with in Vietnam.



# Member accounts crucial to history

MIKE LAW  
VHPA DIRECTORY EDITOR

As announced in the past two Newsletters, the Directory Committee is researching helicopter activities that happened outside of Vietnam for the History section in the 1998 Directory.

We hope the following example will illustrate to members just how important it is to obtain their input so this history can be recorded.

In many cases, it is not that the eyewitnesses can help get this history recorded accurately; rather, without them, it could not be recorded at all!

Please consider the following:

The HMM-165, Buffalo City, Command Chronology (the Marine Corps term for unit history) for the period June 1-30, 1967, has three parts:

Part I contains the names of their important officers and reports average strength and Part III reports personnel changes, casualties, and awards by name.

Part II contains one paragraph that summarizing their maintenance and aircraft availability for the month plus a summary of the major named operations that they support.

However, from a historical point of view, the greatest value is in the narrative description for each day. A "light day" has about five sentences, while some days have over half a page of detail.

In Part II we read "Two aircraft were lost due to operations against" enemy forces; but no where in all 11 pages is there is description of how these aircraft were lost.

In Part II for June 3, there is a nice narrative about Maj. Loughheed extracting an eight-man Marine recon team and there is nothing recorded for 4 June.

In the Casualties section of Part II, we read: "During this reporting period Capt. S.P. Hanson; First Lt. J.G. Gardner, Sgt. T.R. Bodden, and

*The aircraft received extensive automatic small-arms fire upon takeoff from the landing zone, took numerous hits and crashed 350 meters from the LZ, located about 15 miles inside Laos west of the A Shau Valley.*

Lance Cpl. F.E. Cius Jr. were declared missing in action when their aircraft crashed while working with SOG on June 3. On June 3, Gunnery Sgt. P.L. O'Donnell was wounded."

The VHPA's HELICOPTER database contains the following After Action Report:

On June 3, 1967, Capt. Steven P. Hanson, pilot; First Lt. John G. Gardner, co-pilot; Sgt. Timothy R. Bodden, crew chief/doorunner; Lance Cpl. Frank E. Cius, doorunner; Sgt. 1st Class Billy R. Laney; Sgt. 1st Class Ronald J. Dexter; Sgt. 1st Class Charles F. Wilklow; and an unknown number of ARVN personnel, all passengers, were aboard a CH-46A helicopter (serial #150955) on an extraction mission in Laos.

The aircraft received extensive automatic small-arms fire upon takeoff from the landing zone, took numerous hits and crashed 350 meters from the LZ, located about 15 miles inside Laos west of the A Shau Valley.

The helicopter did not burn on impact, and continued to receive fire.

Three ARVN troops were able to return to the LZ, where the troops remaining at the LZ were extracted the following day.

The troops waiting at the LZ could not search because of the hostile threat in the area.

Air searches located the survivors of the crash, but they could not be evacuated.

The only American found to be in a position to be safely evacuated was

Sgt. 1st Class Wilklow. He gave the following account of what happened to the crew and passengers aboard the CH-46:

Sgt. 1st Class Dexter appeared uninjured and left the wreckage with a large number of ARVN troops. Capt. Hanson was wounded and outside the helicopter, but said he had to return to get his carbine.

The Marine Corps believes he died of the wounds he received when the aircraft was overrun, although Hanson's wife later identified her husband in a widely distributed North Vietnamese propaganda photograph of a pilot being captured.

When last seen, all the other Americans were still in the wreckage, and enemy troops were tossing grenades toward the aircraft with no attempt to capture the personnel inside.

Wilklow left the crash site, and noted that gunfire suddenly stopped. He continued to evade the enemy and was picked up three days later.

When Mr. Ky, the Nung commander, was being evacuated by the last helicopter out, he noted several men (undoubtedly Dexter and the ARVN) in a large bomb crater firing red star clusters from a flare gun.

Frank Cius was taken prisoner and released from Hanoi in 1973. He was one of the dozen or so captured by the NVA, taken immediately to Hanoi and claimed to be the "Laos" prisoners.

In reality, none of the dozen had been held in Laos.

Ronald Dexter, according to Frank Cius, was captured, and died in captivity on July 29, 1967.

John Gardner, according to the USMC, died on the ground after the crash of the aircraft due to intense enemy fire.

Billy Laney was last seen lying wounded on the floor of the aircraft between a crewmember with a broken back and the doorunner with a head wound.

See CIUS', Page 10



# Cius' capture unknown until release

Continued from Page 9

The U.S. did not know Cius was captured until he was released, evidently believing he never exited the aircraft.

From SOG by John L. Plaster (Simon & Schuster publishers) we have the following:

The ARVN force mentioned in the After Action report was a U.S. Special Forces-led Nung Hatchet Force company on a SOG PRAIRIE FIRE operation.

Immediately after a nine-aircraft B-52 Arc Light, a combined helicopter force of nine VNAF CH-34s and five USMC CH-46s inserted the Hatchet Force.

Soon after the landing, it was surrounded by a large, well-organized NVA force. The next morning, June 3, a large helicopter force left Khe Sanh to start the extraction.

An A-1 was shot down during

close air attacks. According to the SOG account, two USMC gunships also were shot down (but the VHPA currently has no record of any UH-1Es taking damage on this day).

Also according to the SOG account, the first helicopter, a VNAF CH-34, to attempt to land in the PZ was shot down, crashed and burst into flames.

Next, a USMC CH-46 was able to get in and lift out some of the Hatchet Force company while taking some hits. Then an USAF F-4 was shot down and plowed into a hillside.

Capt. Hanson's CH-46A was the second helicopter to land in the PZ. After it was shot down and crashed, only two Americans from this ship would survive.

Special Forces Sgt. 1st Class Wilklow was wounded during the shoot-down. The NVA, seeing he was virtually unable to move, used him as "rescue bait" for four days.

That night, he managed to crawl and drag himself nearly two miles and found a rescue panel in one of his pockets the NVA had not searched.

He put out the panel and passed out. When he awoke, he was looking at SOG Staff Sgt. Lester Pace who came down on a McGuire Rig to get him.

Eventually, 58 American SOG soldiers would be MIAs in Laos and only Sgt. 1st Class Wilklow was rescued.

The lesson to be learned — as good as the helicopter unit histories are (or aren't), we can learn a great deal of information about helicopter-related history for After Action reports and from the histories of the ground unit the helicopters supported.

If you were involved in any FOB missions, contact Mike Law, [REDACTED]

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# Peter pilot admires Huey instructor

He didn't know he was my hero, but I admired him very much. He was the UH-1 IP in our unit, the Air Cav Troop of the 11th Armored Cav Regiment.

I regarded him with awe and more than a little trepidation. As a newby, I knew I would have to pass his check ride in order to even qualify as a peter pilot in my own platoon.

In the few days between my arrival at Phu Loi in November 1971 and my scheduled check ride, I watched him closely and what I saw took away a lot of my anxiety.

He was obviously well-liked in the troop and was considered by most as the best pilot on our side of the airfield. I also noticed how easy-going he was and how much he seemed to care about others. I later found out he was a Christian (I wasn't).

Even though I was still nervous any time I was around him, I began to feel a little less fear about the upcoming check ride. My observations proved to be well-grounded.

When we finally sat down together for a brief oral exam, he asked me questions any slick driver should know. He didn't try to trick me or confuse me. He was fair, kind and considerate.

When we finally launched for the flight test, I actually began to relax.

I passed.

I won't mention his name out of risk of embarrassing him, but he's a member of VHPA. In fact, I saw him for

the first time since 1971 while attending the reunion in Orlando last summer. He didn't remember me, but I'll never forget him.

At one time or another in our lives, we all find people like him; people we look up to; people we admire; people we want to be like. We also fill that role for others. This IP had no idea of the admiration I held for him. Nor could he know that I would remember him almost 26 years later.

Would his behavior have been any different if he had known? I doubt it. He lived his life in such a way that he never had to affect a different persona, regardless of whom he was with or what the circumstances were. He was then — and still is — a man to want to be like.

We never know who's watching us. Seldom do we know when we're somebody else's role model.

It's important, then, to live our lives as though someone is watching us all the time. It may be a son or daughter, or a grandchild. It may be someone with whom we work. You may be someone's hero. Are you prepared for that?

Even though I am now firmly entrenched in middle age, I still need a hero, someone I want to be like.

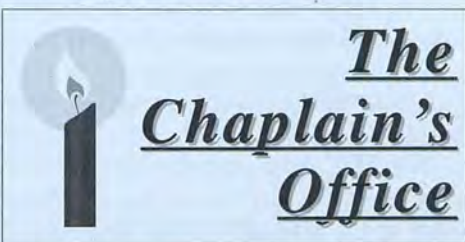
About seven years ago, I decided my role model would be Jesus. He is the only hero that fits the bill for all of us. His actions, his behavior and his response to criticism are all wonderful examples for us to follow.

Now, whenever I am faced with a decision, I ask myself, "What would Jesus do? How would Jesus handle this situation?" The answer is not always easy to accept, but it's always very clear.

Who is your role model. Is he reliable? Is he consistent? Is he worthy? Jesus is. Try him.

Grace and Peace.

— John Plummer, Chaplain



## VHPA briefs

### 'Registrations' to be awarded

Two free "registrations" will be awarded at the Fort Worth reunion headquarters hotel for the two VHPA members who recruit the most new members during the year.

The contest period is July 7, 1997-July 4, 1998 — the night of the banquet at this year's reunion, said Hayden "Pappy" Jones, VHPA membership chairman.

Since the winner and runnerup in the contest will be reimbursed for their accommodations at The Worthington Hotel, members can work up to banquet time signing up new members.

To enter the contest, simply bring the names of the members you have signed up and proof they have paid their dues to Jones or an Executive Council member during the reunion.

### Museum to feature 'Flight'

The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History will be featuring "Flight" and will include exhibits such as a Bell 47D, a Learjet cockpit simulator and a Stearman biplane.

The museum is looking for volunteer "exhibit explainers," preferably, folks with aviation experience.

If you are interested in doing a little volunteer public service work, contact Tracy Holmes at [REDACTED]

Pat Richardson  
Tomahawk 29

### Heavy lifters plan mini-reunion

The CH-54/Tarhe/Skycrane pilots will hold a mini-reunion during the VHPA Reunion in Fort Worth in early July.

George Gagnon, Benny Crocker and Max Torrence already have signed up.

CONTACT: Jim Messinger [REDACTED]



# Family Contacts shares a first success story

The purpose of the VHFCN Family Contacts Committee (FCC) is to facilitate contacts between helicopter crews and relatives of KIAs.

Therefore, it's ironic one of our first success stories didn't work out that way, but came out even better!

Gary Young, a Navy corpsman, was killed when the Marine CH-46 on which he was serving as flight medic was shot down on Feb. 2, 1969.

He had already served five months as a corpsman in a Marine Corps hospital near Da Nang, and had flown on many medevac missions, but was killed the first day he was assigned to Marine Air Base Squadron 16.

Stephanie was born shortly after her dad was killed and then she was adopted.

During her college years, Stephanie took a trip to Washington and visited The Wall, without knowing why, she broke down and cried uncontrollably.

Early last year, she began tracing her roots, but found only a newspaper article about her dad's death and his accompanying high school photograph.

The FCC sent out email announcements to VHFCN and Heli-vets members, but nobody remembered her dad,

probably because he was only in the unit for one day.

The FCC also posted a memorial page, with Gary's picture, on The Virtual Wall ([www.iinc.com/VirtualWall](http://www.iinc.com/VirtualWall)).

A vet who lives near DC went to the Nixon Archives and found a copy of the letter President Nixon wrote to Gary's parents.

The FCC realized we were looking at the name and address of Stephanie's grandparents and found two people with the same name in Portland.

We gave Stephanie the phone numbers and she was soon talking with her uncle, who, just a few weeks before, had vowed to find his brother's child.

The following weekend Stephanie met her grandparents and other relatives at a reception her uncle held for her.

Most relatives were amazed at Steph's resemblance to her dad.

The FCC also placed a picture of Gary and a letter at

The Wall on Veterans

Day. Jack Taber saw the photo and called Dusty, whom he knew was a nurse in the Da Nang area

at the time. Dusty looked at Gary's photo on The Virtual Wall, recognized him, and called Stephanie on the phone.

Stephanie reported "she remembered him clearly and was able to tell me a lot" and that Gary frequently talked of returning to Portland and raising his family.

The Family Contacts webpage ([www.iinc.com/Virtual-Wall/contacts](http://www.iinc.com/Virtual-Wall/contacts)) soon will list the names of the KIA's whose family members are searching for their buddies.

The chairman is Gary Thewlis

Jim Schueckler



## VHCMA plans reunion in Dallas/Fort Worth

The Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association will hold its reunion June 24-28 at the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott.

Room rates are \$70 per night, plus tax. To make reservations, call the hotel at (214) 929-8800.

Unit reunions will start Friday, June 26.

Airport transportation and shuttle service will be provided to the reunion and then to the VHPA hotel.

So far, units committed to attending are:

The 16th Cav, 135th AHC, 155th AHC, 161st AHC, 173d AHC, 187th AHC, 1/9th Cav, 227th AHB and 229th AHB.

CONTACT: Charlie Rains

## Family in the cockpit?

The VHPA Newsletter is looking for relatives who flew helicopters in Vietnam.

If you had a natural brother, a father, a son or any other close relative who flew helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, please tell your story in the Newsletter.

Send stories and photos, if available, to the editor of The VHPA Newsletter,

Or e-mail it to: [swickard@vhpa.org](mailto:swickard@vhpa.org)



# The Primer written by real combat pilots

The Primer of The Helicopter War is not a novel, not a work of fiction, and not a dry documentary with trite expressions and dismissive phrases and statements.

It is written by combat helicopter pilots striving to tell the story of the tool, the weapons system, that evolved perhaps more than any other during that war: The helicopter.

Most of the photographs are previously unpublished, provided to Mike Sloniker by other combat pilots who consider him to be somewhat a keeper of our history.

The first photograph shows a CH-21, with a doorgunner firing a rifle. The last photograph shows the bell of a UH-1H, about to slip beneath the waves after being pushed over the side of an aircraft carrier after the fall of Saigon.

In between are the photographs and the stories of how the war was fought during the very different periods, from the first ventures into "vertical envelopment" to the deployment of specialized anti-tank helicopters.

As a primer, this book does not try to give an in-depth

*The Primer takes us through the evolution of our aircraft and tactics*

analysis of the war itself, although some portions are more analytical than other books that do.

The Primer takes us through the evolution of our aircraft and tactics, and presents short stories and interviews with the men who flew the missions.

None of the battles are covered in detail, but virtually every significant battle is at least mentioned, and some periods are particularly poignant, because of the dearth of information previously available about them.

Two interviews of actions toward the end of U.S. involvement are particularly revealing.

One details a rescue of U.S. advisers and the other is a debrief of a Cobra aircraft commander who lost his entire tailboom to an SA-7 hit at 4,800 feet.

Aviation artist and former crew chief Joe Kline's impressive rendition of that missile it is reproduced in black and white, but his three paintings reproduced in color on the tasteful dustcover make the book as attractive as it is illuminating.

— Ron Timberlake

## California Chapter North meets for bass tourney

Twenty-six members of the California Chapter North gathered in Rio Vista, CA, in October for the 50th Anniversary Striped Bass Derby — and we had a ball.

The Huey looked tired, the pilots looked old, but enthusiastic, and the crowd loved it. We got a trophy for first place in category.

Member Mike Nord's truck school provided a really fancy lowboy truck and driver, everyone filled their coolers and we all piled in and on the rig for the three-quarter-mile parade down Main Street to where the locals welcomed us into their "O Clubs."

The chamber of commerce gave us a parking spot right in front of Jessen's Saloon across the street from Hap's Bait & Tackle where the entries were judged.

A good job of organization was done for us by VHPA member Gary Allen. Gary was also voted to be the King of the Bass Derby.

— Ken Fritz



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## Air America helicopters active early in war

PROFESSOR WILLIAM LEARY AND  
VHPA MEMBER JOHN KONEK

The VHPA has often published accounts from the histories of the first few American military helicopter units to serve in Vietnam — the Army CH-21C-equipped transportation companies that arrived on Dec. 11, 1961, and the Marine Corps UH-34D-equipped SHU-FLY squadron that arrived April 15, 1962.

It would, however, be a mistake to assume these U.S. military helicopters were the first to operate in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era.

Clearly, the French had a few H-19s during their time and we know the South Vietnamese Air Force formed an H-19-equipped squadron about June 1957 and based it at Saigon.

Recently, the efforts of several VHPA members doing research into

*The requirement had  
"come out of the blue"  
as Air America, as well as  
the other air proprietaries  
of the CIA,  
had no rotary-wing pilots.*

the beginnings of Air America's helicopter activities took a huge leap forward when Professor William Leary of The University of Georgia's History Department shared some impressive material.

When combined with other work done into early USMC activities in Thailand, the VHPA now has a much better picture of these early helicopter activities.

Due to the fighting that had broken

out in the summer of 1959 in Laos, CIA officials, supporting the loyalist factions, wanted more and different air transport resources than had been used for the past 10 years. They wanted rotary-wing and STOL capabilities.

In August, CIA headquarters ordered its air proprietary — in 1959 Air America was organized to take over the assets and contracts of the former CAT (Civil Air Transport) — to send two pilots to Japan for helicopter training via a "very curious message" sent to Robert E. Rousselot, vice president for air operations and Hugh L. Grundy, president, who were located in Taipei, Taiwan.

The requirement had "come out of the blue" as Air America, as well as the other air proprietaries of the CIA, had no rotary-wing pilots. Grundy and Rousselot assumed the requirement was for a "special mission" that

**See TWO, Page 15**



Jerry Temple, Worwac 66/15-17, C/D, 227th AHB, First Calvary '66-67 (Rattlesnake 39) is the owner of **JERRY TEMPLE AVIATION**, an aircraft brokerage firm specializing in the marketing and sales of quality Cessna twins.

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## Two pilots sent to Kawasaki plant

**Continued from Page 14**

called for the use of a helicopter for a "one-time deal."

Air America transport pilots Gordon V. Smith and Dale Williamson were picked for the job and immediately were sent to the Kawasaki Helicopter manufacturer in Kobe, Japan, for 10 days of flight training on the Bell 47G-2.

A third pilot, Arthur D. Wilson, would follow in early September.

While not difficult to comprehend the functions of the controls, coordination of the collective, throttle, cyclic and pedals proved a formidable challenger for the three veteran transport pilots.

"It was strange to watch the air-speed go down to zero," Williamson recalled.

There also was the potentially dan-

*Air America purchased a Bell 47 and brought the helicopter to its maintenance base in Taiwan. This facility would grow into the largest aircraft maintenance facility in Southeast Asia.*

gerous tendency to revert to fixed-wing experience in an emergency.

Air America officials obviously viewed the helicopter as just another aircraft and expected pilots to be checked out in it in a few weeks. They had a lot to learn about rotor-wing aircraft.

I can just hear the Kawasaki facility

instructors now — "Aw, you numba 10 pilot. Aw, but you numba one kamikaze" as Williamson, Smith and Wilson were surely doing some "white knuckle flying."

Air America purchased a Bell 47 and brought the helicopter to its maintenance base in Taiwan. This facility would grow into the largest aircraft maintenance facility in Southeast Asia.

In October, Rousselot approached Williamson, who by now had accumulated 60 hours and had the most time in the Bell, and asked if he would train a fourth pilot, Herbert Liu.

Rousselot stressed the urgency of the program, so Williamson reluctantly agreed to pass on his meager knowledge of the aircraft.

**See TRAINING, Page 16**

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# Training code named Grass Hopper

Continued from Page 15

In early November, Air America's four newly trained helicopter pilots were sent to Johnson Air Force Base, Japan, to check out in the Air Force's H-19Bs.

This training came under the code name Grass Hopper and lasted 15-20 hours before the pilots departed for Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

Air America (read the CIA) had arranged to acquire four H-19s from the Air Force. Williamson, now in charge of the group, was there to pick up the aircraft.

After inspecting the aircraft, Williamson found the Air Force maintenance people had given him four "hangar queens." After he loudly objected, the Air Force came around and managed to find the group four H-19As in decent flying condition.

Further enhancing their training in the newly acquired H-19As, the four pilots flew off the Philippine Military Academy parade grounds at Baguio in the mountains north of Clark.

Baguio was selected to give the pilots experience in the higher elevations that would best resemble the Laos mission requirements.

The training, however, lacked realism as the aircraft were always lightly loaded.

As is the case in most covert operations, despite the urgency of the program, the helicopters did not arrive in Laos until March 1960, when the four

*After inspecting the aircraft, Williamson found the Air Force maintenance people had given him four "hangar queens."*

H-19As were flown from Clark to Seno aboard Air Force C-124 Globemasters.

After assembly under the direction of mechanic Abe Rivero, Williamson ferried the first helicopter to Vientiane.

It was now April, the hottest month of the year. Carrying a full load of fuel and 300 pounds of spares parts, Williamson could not get the helicopter to rise above 800 AGL. Only after burning off fuel did the reluctant aircraft ascend to 3,000 AGL prior to arriving in Vientiane.

To Williamson, designated chief pilot for the operation, it was beginning to look like a challenging assignment. Within a short time, Air America's helicopter operations got under way.

Three helicopters were available for missions, while the fourth was relegated for use as spare parts. Smith left the program shortly after the group arrived in Laos, leaving Liu

with mainly ferry flights due to his lack of experience.

The main burden of customer missions fell on Williamson and Wilson.

Due to the limitations of the H-19s, the missions were conducted at lower elevations, carrying CIA case officers to meetings in outlying areas and tossing leaflets out during elections. These were the "up-front" missions, but the whole idea of the helicopters was support of the White Star (U.S. Army Special Forces in Laos) mobile training teams for "safe-hands" pickups.

Williamson experienced Air America's first helicopter accident in early June due to lack of proper training and because he resorted to his fixed-wing training during the emergency.

Working out of Savannakhet, he had a full fuel load and was preparing to launch on a leaflet drop when his mission was suddenly changed to a medevac. A Lao soldier at a small outpost 40 miles northeast of Savannakhet had cut his leg with a machete and gangrene had set in.

Williamson boarded a medic and a Lao captain, then proceeded to the outpost. After collecting the injured man and his family (who would look after the man while he was hospitalized), Williamson circled the field to gain altitude.

He had just reached 1,000 AGL when the engine quit. As he neared the ground, his fixed-wing habits

See CRASHED, Page 17

## AAAA Convention April 1-4

The VHPA is seeking volunteers to help man its annual exhibit at the AAAA (Army Aviation Association of America) convention April 1-4 in Charlotte, NC.

This is an opportunity to see all the latest equipment that vendors have to offer to Army Aviation. We also signed up more than 40 new members and renewals.

Help out the VHPA and get a chance to see all the latest in Army Aviation. This is a great time; they party almost as much as we do. Don't miss out.

Contact Bob Smith at [REDACTED] or online at [REDACTED] for more information.

## Advertising rates

Display advertising rates for the VHPA Newsletter are:

- Full page, \$500.
- One-half page, \$250.
- One-quarter page, \$125.
- Business card size, \$45.

Classified advertising is \$1 per line or \$7 per inch, whichever is highest.

Advertising revenue is used to help produce the Newsletter and limit the publication's dependence on membership dues.



# Crashed chopper couldn't be flown

Continued from Page 16

took over and he pulled back on the cyclic, slamming the tail of the helicopter into the ground.

No injuries occurred due to the crash, but the helicopter could not be flown out.

Williamson walked a mile back to the outpost and sent a message for assistance. Because it was late in the

*On one of his passes, Sutphin dropped a can of grapefruit juice with a chewed up cigar taped to the side.*

day, he and his passengers spent the night there. You can imagine how his apprehension grew as word reached him the Pathet Lao had put a price on his head.

Finally, after a long night, an engine was heard overhead

as Ronald J. Sutphin flew his Helio Courier on a pass over the downed chopper and its eager passengers.

On one of his passes, Sutphin dropped Williamson a can of grapefruit juice with a chewed up cigar taped to the side. A note said: "For breakfast."

It wasn't long before Wilson arrived in one of the other H-19s and picked up a number of very grateful passengers.

Williamson already had advised Rousselot the mission in Laos could only be accomplished with better equipment and properly trained pilots when his chopper went down. CIA officials finally came to the same conclusions.

Rousselot, on orders from Washington, hired four experienced U.S. Marine Corps helicopter pilots, who obtained their discharges in Okinawa and joined Air America.

The first three ex-Marines showed up in Laos a few days after Williamson's accident, enabling the former transport pilots to give up their rotary-wing careers. Williamson

and his companions did so with great relief.

Sadly, Herbert Liu's fixed-wing career ended when he died in an Air America C-47 on Dec. 27, 1963.

Soon, Air America's helicopter operations showed signs of improvement.

Thomas A. Moher, Charles Bade and Michael Weinberg, formerly of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron HMM-261, were joined in July 1960 by Clarence J. Abadie of HMM-362.

They would fly two of the H-19s at a time, while the other helicopters were in maintenance. One handled assignments out of Vientiane, while the other staged out of the southern towns of Pakse, Savannakhet and Pakasane.

Most of the transport pilots were housed in the Sensabay Hotel in Savannakhet and would hang out after a day of routine flights in the club atop the hotel known as the "Club Boi Pin Yang."

Restricted to low level flights, the H-19s performed as well as could be expected given their limited lifting capabilities, in the hands of the experienced helicopter pilots.

Moher described a typical assignment — he had been sent to Pakse, a sleepy southern town on the Mekong

River, to work with a White Star team.

*The White Stars were training a "Tiger Battalion" of local troops . . .*

"They were about the wildest bunch of characters that I had ever seen in my life."

Decked out in khaki shorts and shirts and blue baseball

caps, the Special Forces soldiers certainly didn't look like the Marines he was used to seeing when on active duty.

Most of their work involved monitoring activity in the country side, gathering intelligence on Communist

movements and flying medical teams to local villages for sick call, which also provided the opportunity to gather more information.

The White Stars were training a "Tiger Battalion" of local troops, which looked pretty good to Moher.

Moher kept busy, often putting in 12-14 hours

*Moher received a salary of \$1,200 a month, regardless of the number of hours flown.*

days in the field before returning to his accommodations at the White Star team house.

He enjoyed the work, especially the camaraderie with the Special Forces personnel and the pay was

good, especially when compared to the salary of a junior Marine Corps officer. Moher received a flat salary of \$1,200 a month, regardless of the number of hours flown.

In March 1961, Air America received 16 UH-34Ds as a fleet upgrade from the USMC. The UH-34Ds were flown from Bangkok to Udorn, where Air America established a major rotary wing operating base.

Udorn is 350 miles northeast of Bangkok, but only 35 miles south of Vientiane.

Now, there is a big difference between supporting four H-19As and 16 UH-34Ds! The CIA, however, had friends in high places and arranged for the USMC to help Air America get its Udorn helicopter base established.

While the official USMC published histories are a little quiet about its relationship with Air America in 1961, in a chapter on the Laotian Crisis, 1962, we read:

"A 300-man Marine aviation support unit, MABS-16, had actually been positioned at Udorn for over six months during 1961 where they pro-

See MARINE, Page 18



## Pilots to descend on Mineral Wells in July

EDWARD T. LUTTENBERGER

In July, hundreds of former helicopter pilots will descend on Mineral Wells — not by helicopter, but by bus.

There are three very important and related reasons bringing them to this quiet north-central Texas town.

Vietnam was widely known as “the helicopter war.” And from 1957 to 1973, Fort Wolters, in Mineral Wells, trained more than 90 percent of the helicopter pilots who served in that war.

During the period between 1965 and 1973, Mineral Wells could have been called the helicopter capital of the United States.

Because of the connection with Fort Wolters and Mineral Wells, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) is bringing its 1998 national reunion to Fort Worth from July 1-5.

In conjunction with the reunion are the other two events scheduled for Mineral Wells. As part of the reunion activities, the local Fort Wolters Chapter will be dedicating the Vietnam National Museum in Mineral Wells.

In addition, the Moving Wall Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be on display at the museum site from June 28-July 5. This slightly larger than one-half size is the traveling, anodized aluminum copy of the wall in Washington, DC.

The Fort Wolters/Vietnam National Museum is a project that grew out of the formation of the Fort Wolters Chapter

of the VHPA.

The museum will portray the story of Vietnam through the eyes of the helicopter crews and preserve the history of Fort Wolters, since the two are so closely intertwined.

Because Vietnam was such a significant period in American history, the Fort Wolters Chapter felt the time was right to create a world-class venue to study the war and its relationship to our culture.

Mineral Wells was the natural choice for its location because of the long association with Fort Wolters.

The Moving Wall was conceived and constructed by John Devitt, Gerry Haver and Norris Shears.

These three individuals also provided the initial funding by pooling their personal funds, which totaled \$2,500.

The idea behind the Moving Wall originally was to provide a replica for West Coast residents who might not be able to see the original in Washington, DC.

Because of interest expressed by several other veterans, Devitt decided the Wall should be portable. Since its completion in October 1984, the Wall has been redone twice in different materials.

Because of the amount of handling, and the varied weather conditions experienced, the Wall is now constructed of anodized aluminum to provide the necessary durability and appearance.

The Wall will be on display 24 hours a day at the Fort Wolters/Vietnam National Museum site.

## Marine Corps supplied UH-34Ds

**Continued from Page 18**

vided maintenance support for helicopters which were assisting Gen. Phoumi's forces in Laos.”

This was not the only time Air America would receive UH-34Ds from the Marine Corps or directly from Sikorsky. By 1965, it had lost 12 to shoot-downs or accidents, yet the July 1970 aircraft inventory

shows 24 UH-34s on hand.

For several years Moher flew for Air America, which officially closed its doors on June 30, 1976. In 1978, Moher died when his helicopter hit a transmission line in Hawaii.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: The VHPA needs more friends like Professor Leary and more tireless researchers**

**like John. The Directory Committee plans for the History Section of the 1998 Directory include an expanded treatment of Air America's helicopter history. Anyone desiring to contribute to history is encouraged to contact John Konek or Mike Law, Directory editor, at**

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# Time drawing near for '98 reunion

Time is ripe to make reservations for the 1998 VHPA Reunion at Fort Worth.

First, make certain you have reserved a room at The Worthington Hotel, the reunion headquarters in downtown Fort Worth. To reserve a room, call The Worthington at (800) 433-5677.

Then, be sure to complete the reunion registration form that appears in this newsletter, and fax or mail it to VHPA Headquarters. The fax number and mailing address are at the top of the form.

*The hotel spans three city blocks in downtown Fort Worth*

This year's reunion will run July 1-5, although some VHPA members will arrive early and stay late.

As of January, the room reservation count at The Worthington is:

July 1 — 178; July 2 — 258; July 3 — 268; July 4 — 266; July 5 — 90; and July 6 — 20

The Fort Worth reunion — highlighted by a trip to the former U.S. Army Primary Helicopter School at Fort Wolters — promises to be one of the best reunions ever.

Besides reunion activities, VHPA members will enjoy Fort Worth and The Worthington itself.

The Worthington is an independent hotel rated as one of the finest in Texas, with "Four Stars" from the Mobil Travel Guide and "Four Diamonds" from the American Automobile Association.

The hotel, a 12-story contemporary concrete structure, spans three city blocks in downtown Fort Worth and offers 504 renovated guest rooms, including 44 luxury suites.

The Worthington recently completed a renewal project valued in excess of \$20 mil-



**The Worthington Hotel has undergone a multimillion dollar renovation, creating a lobby and guest rooms that reflect a regional elegance.**

lion renovating the lobby and each of the guest rooms and suites from floor to ceiling.

The hotel has 55,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, including 2 grand ballrooms, 16 separate meeting rooms and an exhibition hall, as well as a three-level underground parking garage.

The Worthington offers a wide variety of unique tastes and restaurants to guests and the public:

- *Reflections*, a world-class, distinctive dining restaurant is acclaimed as among the best in Texas.

- *The Star of Texas Grill*, offers traditional Texas dishes created with an innovative flair.

- *The Bridge*, a European cafe-style "Marketplace,"

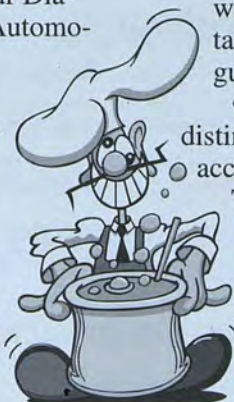
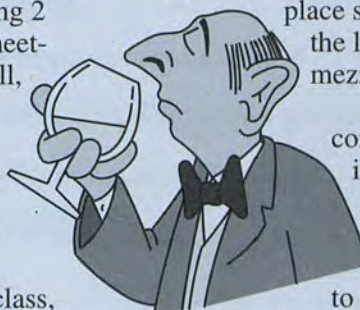
offers pastas, sandwiches, salads and specialty items, as well as Fort Worth's most lavish Sunday brunch.

- *The Lobby Bar* is a gathering place suspended above the lobby on the mezzanine level.

Other guest conveniences include 24-hour room service; a full-time concierge staff to assist guests

with entertainment, travel and sightseeing arrangements.

The Club Level offers business and leisure travelers personalized concierge service, a Club Lounge with daily food and beverage offerings and an array of exclusive services and amenities.



**See HOTEL, Page 20**



# Hotel offers aerobics, pool, tennis

## Continued from Page 19

Club Level guests receive personalized, express check-in/out services, custom business services, and complimentary morning newspaper.

A fully equipped Athletic Club offers scheduled aerobics classes, state-of-the-art workout equipment, indoor swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool, massage and rooftop tennis courts.

## About Fort Worth

Fort Worth, while preserving its history — Stockyards National Historic District — as a major stop on the great cattle drives of the late 1800s, is a surprisingly cultured city.

Its museums rank among the best in the nation.

Among them are the Amon Carter Museum (an extensive collection of Western and American art), the Kimball Art Museum (considered the best "small" museum in the country) and the Mod-

ern Art Museum of Fort Worth (featuring works by Pablo Picasso, Mark Rothko, David Hockney and Jackson Pollock).

Science enthusiasts will enjoy the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History that houses the Noble Planetarium and an Omnimax theater.

The museums are all located within 10 minutes of downtown and within walking distance of each other . . . one stop parking.

Downtown Fort Worth is a vibrant city with Sundance Square at the center of its activity.

Known as Hell's Half Acre in the glory days of the Old West, Sundance Square is a 14-block collection of restored and renovated Victorian buildings.

You can find casual to elegant dining, a variety in shopping pleasure and can hear big-name musical acts at the Caravan of Dreams, Fort Worth's premier nightclub. Sundance Square has it all.

The Stockyards National Historic District offers exceptional western entertainment, as well as western wear.

There is the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show to Billy Bob's Texas (half honky-tonk, half adult theme park) that boasts the largest kicker bar and dance hall in the world . . . just pick your ice-cold longneck when you are tired of shopping. Great adventure for the entire family.

For the younger members of the family and the young-at-heart, just 20 minutes to the east of Fort Worth is Arlington, Texas. You can enjoy Six Flags, Hurricane Harbor and Texas Ranger baseball in a single location.

Fifteen minutes to the west, you will find one of the finest zoos in the country and, within 30 minutes of The Worthington, there are numerous golf courses to get rid of your frustrations.

Simply, you will have a tremendous time in Fort Worth and at the reunion.

Volunteers from the Fort Worth Visitors and Convention Bureau will be on hand to offer suggestions and assistance.

The Fort Wolters Chapter looks forward to being your host!



## Honor & Pride

6100 Tradewinds Court • Virginia Beach, VA 23464 • Fax: (757) 424-7799

We are now taking orders for MA1 Flight Jackets and Baseball Jackets for delivery at the 1998 Annual Reunion

BLACK jackets with 10½ by 10½ -inch embroidered VHPA LOGO on back

Left chest included in cost (2) lines sample: *Jim Jones*  
*Texas Chapter* (or call sign)

MA1 \$75.00 each. 2XL \$85.00 each. BASEBALL JACKETS \$65.00 each. 2XL \$75.00 each.

If not able to attend reunion this year, we will ship. Add \$7.00 for S&H

CUTOFF DATE FOR ORDERS IS MAY 20, IN OUR OFFICE

Please place any other special orders now!

ALL SPECIAL ORDERS MUST BE PAID FOR WHEN YOU PLACE THEM

See you in Fort Worth!



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

15th Annual Reunion Fort Worth, TX July 1-5, 1998

## REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Mail to: VHPA, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7621

FAX signed credit card registration to: (916) 966-8743

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

### REGISTRATION FEES

	No. of people	Price	Total
Registration before 6/1/98*		@ \$ 25.00	
Registration after 6/1/98*		@ \$ 35.00	
Total from sidebar	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX	
Early Bird Reception (July 1)		No host	
Bell Helicopter Tour (July 2)		@ \$ 5.00	
Fort Wolters Chapter Welcome Reception, Entertainment/Dance (July 2)		No host	
Fort Wolters Extravaganza Tour and Barbecue Lunch (July 3)		@ \$ 20.00	
Western Night Dinner/Dance Featuring Don Edwards (July 3)		@ \$ 25.00	
Ladies Social (July 4)		@ \$ 20.00	
Banquet & Dance (July 4)			
Special program planned		@ \$ 35.00	
Dues (if included)	1 year	@ \$ 30.00	
You can make 3 payments over 6-month Installment period if you wish	Life installment No. 1	@ \$150.00	
Complete Life Membership		@ \$450.00	
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		

INDICATE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE		
<b>Golf Tournament:</b> (July 2 - 7 a.m.) <b>Cost: \$60. Limit: 72 players.</b>		
<b>5k Run:</b> (July 2 - 7 a.m.)		
<b>T-shirts:</b>		
Qty.	Size	Price
	S	@ \$15.00
	M	@ \$15.00
	L	@ \$15.00
	XL	@ \$15.00
	XXL	@ \$15.00
	XXXL	@ \$15.00
	<b>Sidebar total</b>	

Entree choice	July 3	July 4
Beef		
Chicken		
Pasta/Vegetable		

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

- ☐ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion '98"
- ☐ Please charge my MasterCard or VISA card (circle one)

Credit card No.:	Expiration date:
Signature:	

### REUNION NAME TAG INFORMATION

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

**Refund policy:** No refunds will be granted before reunion. All refund requests must be submitted to VHPA Headquarters no later than Aug. 7, 1998, and must include all tickets received, plus proof of payment. Refunds will not be granted for fixed-price events that lose money unless the entire reunion has a positive cash balance. VHPA headquarters will process and pay all refund requests within 10 days of completing the reunion account balancing.



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# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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| <input type="checkbox"/> New application      | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual/renewal dues: \$30 (Newsletters included) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Address change       | <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership: \$450*                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Directory correction | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter subscription only: \$30               |

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- ☐ Please charge my MasterCard/Visa credit card
- ☐ Enclosed is a check/money order payable to VHPA

Credit card No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

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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 \$150 payments.*