



**VIETNAM
HELICOPTER
PILOTS
ASSOCIATION**

The VHAPA Newsletter

P.O. Box 9592

Wichita, KS 67277

Volume 4, No. 5

December 1987



THE EARLY DAYS... CH21C, UH1A, 01A over Tay Ninh-May 1964.

Photo by Skip Budny

**TRADER JON, OWNER OF THE
HISTORICAL "TRADER JON'S
BAR" IN PENSACOLA, FL
RECEIVES VHPA BANNER!!**

Local VHPA members, along with VHPA President Dave Owens, presented Trader Jon (on 26 September 1987) with a banner signed by attendees at the recent reunion on the Queen Mary. Trader was deeply moved and gracious (he also put the move on several of the wives).

Bill Pullum



Left to right: Bill Pullum, USM LTC, Gary Mock, Trader Jon, Don Spivey, Dave Owens, Richard Ezell and Jim Cronley. Photo by Bill Pullum

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VHPA Newsletter

Published by
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association
Wichita Mid-Continent Airport
2120 Airport Road/P.O. Box 9592
Wichita, KS 67277/Phone 316/946-4047
Roger Gould, Editor

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Newsletter is distributed to members of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

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

The VHPA Newsletter is published five times a year, March, June, September, October, December, by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, P.O.

Box 9592, Wichita, KS 67277. Second class postage pending paid at Wichita, KS.

The VHPA is a non-profit war veterans organization filed under Section 501(c) (19) of the Internal Revenue Service.

Material published in the VHPA NEWSLETTER is contributed by members and other interested persons. Letters to the editor are welcome. As space permits, we will publish as many as possible. Letters are subject to editing for brevity and accuracy. The VHPA does not guarantee or endorse any product, organization or person mentioned in this publication. Mail to: Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 9592, Wichita, KS 67277.

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to:

VHPA Newsletter
P.O. Box 9592
Wichita, KS 67277





INCOMING MAIL

UNIQUE BUNCH

Just finished reading the VHPA Newsletter that I received in today's mail and it reminded me that I had not yet written to pass along some info that might be of interest, and to make a couple of suggestions relative to the forth coming (1988) annual reunion.

First let me say that the VHPA is the finest organization for Vietnam vets that I have thus far come across. It has the service, support, and spirit not found in any other organization for RVN vets. It goes without saying that we chopper jocks are a unique bunch, and unlike any other soldier, form a bond that is difficult, if not impossible, to break. The VHPA helps to carry on that tradition by providing a meaningful organization where we can continue to nurture those bonds with those who shared the Vietnam experience. My hat's off to Larry Clark for funding the organization and providing the leadership to make it succeed. Keep up the great work!

There is an interesting adjunct to the above. I recently located a long lost friend and associate, Jon Myhre, through the VHPA. Jon and I had served together at Vinh Long in the 66-67 time frame with the 175th AHC. Jon had been critically wounded on Easter Sunday, 1967 and was Med evac'd home. I never knew — but always wondered — of his whereabouts and what he was doing. Circumstantially, a letter was published in the VHPA Newsletter that launched a concerted and successful effort to locate Jon. It never would have happened without the VHPA, and for that I am truly grateful!

Now, about the reunion. Since I live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, I am very pleased to hear that the VHPA is holding its '88 reunion in this area. I may have missed it somewhere along the line (old age and/or too many hours flying with a 1:1 vertical!), but is the reunion going to be in Fort Worth or Mineral Wells? If it is in Mineral Wells, there may be a housing (like in hotels) problem. The magnificent old hotel downtown is closed and there are not many other places to stay. Fort Worth is, of course, another story. Beaucoup

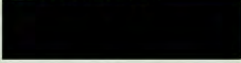
everything!

I know there are many members who would like to see Fort Wolters again. However, sad though it may be, Fort Wolters is not even recognizable as the Fort Wolters that we all knew.

The next time I'm over that way, I'll take some pictures and send along for your edification.

I am one of those who stuck with "it" and remained in the active reserves (Texas Army National Guard). I served as an aviator in various capacities for many years and have now been promoted out of a flying slot. However, I'm still in the Guard and would like to suggest that the Texas Army Guard may be able to support the reunion by providing static displays of some of the Army's latest and greatest equipment (such as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the Improved TOW Vehicle (ITV), FISTV, M60A3 tanks, CH-47, OH-58, and the venerable UH-1 aircraft, etc.) if there is any interest in that sort of thing.

Robert (Bob) Lakey
(Maverick 31)



No sweat, Bob. The 1988 Reunion will be in Fort Worth, with a tour of Wolters. Thanks for the photo offer, but Rick Schwab has sent us a "ton" of the "New Wolters" photos, on the other hand your static display idea is super. We'll bet Dave Owens contacts you about it. Ed.



Wayne's Memories, with the 117th AHC.

Photo by Wayne Wollins

Continued on next page

"AGELESS WARRIOR"

Having just recently become a member, I thoroughly enjoyed my first Newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 3. I have a request if possible. Would you send me a copy of the past issues since the first one?

Since just deploying aboard the "Ageless Warrior" to the "MED", reading past copies of VHPA Newsletters would be most entertaining.

E. Everett
CV-43 USS CORAL SEA
V-2 Div. Box 29
FPO N.Y. 09550-2720

You got 'em, Back Issues are available for \$15 a SET, requests to VHPA BACK ISSUES, P.O. BOX 9592, Wichita, KS 67277. Ed.



"FANNY" MEMORIES

Memories of friends, and friends lost, the UH1H, insertions, and some very hot extractions of LRRP teams. I can still recall 100 knot approaches, left pedal sideway decelerations, fast touchdowns and low level high speed climb outs; all this going on while the PLAYBOY'S were either preping the LZ or getting on azimuth from a smoke thrown by the team on the ground in contact, so us slick drivers could go in for the extraction. Memories of steaming jungles, nights lit up by flares, the sounds of M60's, 2.75's, Miniguns and the good times when we all made it back to home base and AT LEAST one or two COLD BEERS!!

Wayne Wollins



PROUD OF WHAT WE DID

I am proud to join the VHPA; however, I must admit that at first I was hesitant. That was because it initially appeared to me that the Association's primary goal was to present to the rest of the world that we were all a bunch of drunken brawlers.

Don't get me wrong, I like a party as much as the next person, but I am proud of what we all did in Vietnam, as I know we all are; and I therefore did not want to associate myself with an organization that perpetuated Hollywood's image of us. We, flyers and ground pounders alike, are not a bunch of half-crazed Rambos, or scum of the earth losers as portrayed in "Platoon". The vast majority of us were then, and we are now, stable, patriotic Americans.

What changed my mind was what I see written between the lines of "The VHPA Newsletter". What I see is a membership that believes in America and themselves like I do, they just like to party every once in a while — and being helicopter pilots, they like to do it in grand style.

So go ahead and hold your apolitical claims, while you may not be militantly political, the VHPA is certainly more than just a fraternal, or even a support, organization. Indirectly, because of the numbers, there will be a political impact.

The VHPA focuses our thought, strengthens our resolve, and last but not least, it helps us adjust our attitude the way we have since flight school — with a party. Keep up the good work!

I hope my views haven't caused you to rip up my application, because I would be proud to join.

Michael D. (Don) Rominger
(Dustoff 30)

Welcome to the club, Don. ANY Pilot who flew a helicopter in Southeast Asia can become a member of the VHPA with application and payment of the appropriate dues. Ed.

"JUST CALL ME NO SIGN"

I have been (im)patiently awaiting the arrival of the 1987 Membership Directory. So far it's as scarce as sleep was during Tet. The VPHA is one of my very few links to a past I used to try very hard to forget. I eagerly await the arrival of the Newsletters, but look forward

even more so to the Membership Directory. I would greatly appreciate anything you could do to expedite its delivery.

By the way, I'm also jealous of all the guys who are known by their call signs. The units I served with assigned call signs to the aircraft, and we flew different aircraft everyday. When I returned to the States, I served as an IP in the CH-47 Transition Course where I was assigned the only call sign I can remember having... Whiskey One-One.

Finally a simple, but heart-felt thank you to the founders of the VHPA. Thank you for filling a rather large void in my life.

Bruce Fischer, Ph.D.
(Whiskey 11)

Know how you feel, Bruce, we too had no personal call sign, only what went with the aircraft. The Membership Directory was published in October, so if you haven't received yours yet, some "lower than whale dung pony express rider" has it, call Nancy for a replacement. Ed.

THE ONLY TIRE COVER

Thought you might like to see the tire cover on my Jeep. Local shop (T-shirt type) copied it for me from our patch. Get a lot of inquiries on it on the street.

Dick Gerard

Hot idea, Dick, now if we only had a Jeep. Bet your "seat cover" is just as sharp. Ed.



Dick Gerard's Jeep Tire Cover.
Photo by Dick Gerard

UNWRITTEN BOND... AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

Earlier this year I returned to my office and found a telephone message which simply stated that "Blue Ghost 22" had called and a phone number was listed. I hadn't heard from "22" since 1968 and was immediately awash with memories of those days so long ago in a far away place we called "Nam". A phone call was quickly placed to Greg Ross and we ran up a nice phone bill playing "remember when" and "There I was, at twenty thousand feet and the flak was so thick you could walk on it...". (Did you ever notice how the stories get better each time they are told?)

I am one of the surviving crazy scout pilots of those days and Greg Ross was often the guy flying cover for me in his UH-1C. The esprit in our unit and the total dedication we had to one another's welfare was so strong that I don't think I have the talent to clearly express what it meant to me. Guys like Greg were the guardian angels for those of us hovering around the little OH-6 "Loach" looking for trouble and more often than not, finding more than we wanted. What made the job of "scout" tolerable was the unwritten bond that existed between us and the gunship pilots flying cover. We knew without a doubt that, when we went down, the guys overhead were coming in to get us regardless of the situation. We knew if they didn't get us out, their failure would mean they were also shot down and we were going to have the pleasure of their company on the ground. They would either get us out or join us! It was that simple and I never doubted it... and they proved it time and time again. To the Greg Ross' of those days, I owe my life on scores of occasions.

I guess one of the things that still troubles me after all these years is the feeling of such immense debt to guys like Greg and yet knowing there will never be a way to repay that debt. They should know that they are in my thoughts often with fondness and eternal gratitude. And for those that didn't come home, my heart has never stopped aching. You gave everything and so very few of us seem to remember or care. I assure you, you are not forgotten!



Continued on next page

INCOMING MAIL, continued

Anyway, I am looking forward to helping Greg locate the lost "Blue Ghosts" and see as many as possible at the next reunion.

Don Williamson
(Blue Ghost 13)

TOOTH POWER!!

I have been studying the picture of the "Snake" on the back of the September Newsletter, trying to find an identifying mark.

F/4th Cav had teeth on our Snakes in '72, most were outlined with black and had red in the "mouth". We were kind-a superstitious about flying missions without them having been painted. It seems that any time a new bird came in and flew without the teeth it would inevitably take a hit. If you were in the AO with an older bird that had teeth and he didn't get hit, you knew it was the teeth. We also painted Centaur's on the dog house but you can't see that in the picture.

Of all our birds we had only one with the XM-35 system but I can't, for the life of me, remember if it had twin minis. Neither can I remember the tail number, but then I could never use it for check rides and B.G. wanted to fly it all the time.

All in all, it was a fine weapon to have strapped to your back-side when things got hot, unless you were prone to nose bleed.

Hayden (Pappy) Jones

Read on, Pappy, this is a toothy issue.
Ed.

THE LEGEND GOES ON...

Since joining the VHPA and renewing some valued old friendships I thought I'd share an old letter that was sent to me by Doug Womack, RATTLER 2, who was a classmate and good friend.

In going through the 1986 Membership Directory I found nearly twenty names of members who flew with the SHARKS and DOLPHINS of the 174th AHC. I know the letter would be of interest to them and hopefully of interest to anyone who ever saw the "Charlie Models" behind those shark mouths

"workin' out" in I Corp 1966 to 1971.

Fred Thompson
(Shark 7)

You must be a mind reader, Fred, considering the reference to TEETH expressed in the preceeding letters, your info couldn't have been more timely.
Ed.

Phoenix, Arizona
June 28, 1966

Major Dick Overhamm, USA
174th Aviation Company
(Airmobile)(Light)
14th Aviation Battalion
APO US Forces 96238

Dear Major Overhamm:

Having just returned from the Air Force Academy and our 1966 Annual Convention of the American Fighter Aces Association (where I was just about all the Flying Tigers) — I consider it the appropriate time to acknowledge your letter of June 14th — requesting permission to adapt the shark-mouth used on our P-40s back in World War II — to the "faces" of your organization's 540 Huey 'copters...

So — you have my immediate permission. As the Commander of the 23rd Fighter Group as well as General Claire Chennault's Fighter Commander for the CATF — I pass it on to you because I know that if he were still alive he would give it to your organization. He and his

**Your Letters,
Comments And
Suggestions
Are Always
Welcome.**

Tigers gave me that permission long ago — and they would want any group of American fighting men to aid in its continuance of use — for the purpose of winning against the enemies of the United States....

Therefore, authority is hereby granted and I assure you I will write members of the First American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers) and tell them what I have done in their name. I assure you that such men as Tex Hill, Ed Rector, Bob Layher, Bob Neal, Chuck Sawyer, Gil Bright and Jim Howard — of the original group — as well as General Bruce Holloway, Dallas Clinger and all the others of my later 23rd Fighter Group — will back me. In the mean time — please pass on to your fine men that all of us who ever flew into combat behind the shark-mouth — wish you — the 1966 version of the Tigers — every success...

Good hunting and GOOD LUCK!

/s/Robert L. Scott, Jr.
/t/ROBERT L. SCOTT, JR.
B/Gen., USAF (ret.)
Former Fighter Commander
China Air Task Force



"045" The 1st EASY RIDER, North bound, south of Quang Ngai. 174th AHC SHARKS.
Photo by Fred Thompson

Continued on next page

LOVE THOSE TEETH!!

It is an AH-1G with (seven-round) pods outboard with 171b VT rockets loaded. Inboard on the right wing is a rocket pod which apparently has nineteen 10 pound warhead rockets loaded.

The left wing most likely has a G.E. 20mm cannon mounted inboard as the ammo rack on the right inboard fuselage with crossover feed is for 20mm linked ammo which joins the ammo rack mounted above the cross tubes on the left fuselage. I suspect another seven-round rocket pod is mounted outboard on the left side.

The turret (love those teeth!) has twin miniguns which have a 4,000 round per minute capability each.

This Cobra was possibly based in Tay Ninh during early 1970, however, the company units name escapes me at this time.

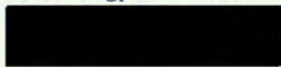
I was fortunate enough to be associated with the D/229th Smiling Tigers based at nearby Dau Tieng and occasionally saw similar attired "snakes" in the area.

This armament configuration was referred to as a scout configuration in the 229th.

Another common configuration was the "heavy hog" which consisted of four 19 round rocket pods combined with a turret loaded with 40mm and 7.62. The "heavy hog" configuration made for an overgross condition, which, if departing from a tight area, gave new meaning to the term "P-T".

The 20mm's were really great for going after the .51 cal's. Unfortunately for many, the .51 preceded the 20mm in deployment! Hello to all my old buddies out there! I miss you!

Wes "Pigpen" Clark



Wes, see the following, "a picture is worth a 1000 words" answer to the Sept. "What is it?". Ed.

"CHARLIE, YOUR PARKING METER HAS EXPIRED!!"

I just finished reading the Sept. Newsletter and, without a doubt, they just keep getting better. I especially liked the comments on the Sidekick's Beer Can Pods (BCP's) — "Hey, this Bud's for you." As an ex-Cobra pilot, I can REALLLY relate to that.



Sept. '87 "What is it?" Answer. C Troop, 16th Cav, DARKHORSE AH1G with a 20mm "Vulcan" on the inboard left wing. Mekong Delta, 1970.

Photo by Double D Photos

Speaking of Cobras, the "What is it?" picture is obviously a 70's vintage Cobra due to the 20 MM cannon it's carrying on the left inboard wing station. We got our first one about June 1970; they came with a clear canopy rather than the blue tinted one on earlier Cobras and air conditioning which some earlier Cobras had. As for whose it is and where — that's going to be tough. A lot of units painted the teeth on the turret and ammo bay. Some folks called them tiger teeth, while others called them shark teeth — either way, the message was the same — "Charlie, your parking meter has just expired!!!" The unit we were attached to at Vinh Long, 7/1st Cav (Black Hawk), had three troops that painted the teeth on their Cobras, A Troop (Apache), B Troop (Dutchmaster — don't ask me why) and C Troop (Comanche). There was also a unit in Soc Trang who painted their Cobras with teeth, C/16th Cav, I think.

For those interested, the 3/5th Armored Cavalry has started annual reunions. The first was held in June of this year and was announced in the last VHPA Newsletter. Memberships and questions should be directed to: Ron Quezada, President, P.O. Box 629, Ponce De Leon, FL 32455. This is for the entire squadron, including the "Blues" (airborne assault troops, normally attached to the air troop) and the armored units. From the history supplied by Ron and from the tales of the "ole guys" I've pieced together the

following brief history of "Lighthorse" D Troop 3/5th Air Cavalry. You might want to use it to update your call sign listing.

"Lighthorse" D Troop 3/5th started with the rest of the Squadron attached to the 9th Div. at Bear Cat and was still there during Tet '68. Lighthorse was then moved to Don Tam with the 3rd Brigade, 9th Div until mid '69. Lighthorse next moved to Vinh Long attached to the 7/1st Air Cav Squadron around August/September 1969. I joined D/3/5th in November '69 and left in November '70. I later heard from some of the guys coming back that D/3/5's colors had been retired in early '71 and sent stateside, but the assets stayed in Vinh Long and were renamed C Troop 3/17th Air Cav. Lighthorse Troop had three companies, the scouts flying Loches (OH-6's) were "Warwagon", the slicks were "Long Knife" and the guns in Cobra's were "Crusader".

The last thing I'd like to mention is another GREAT ad for MDHC Marketing. While we were out on a daily scouting mission between Tra Vinh and Soc Trang — a really bad area of the Delta — the Warwagons found a VC camp along the coast and started snooping around. Suddenly the whole world opened up on them, we immediately went inbound with mini's and rockets flying while the scouts had their mini's blazing away. The lead scout,

Continued on next page

always a favorite target for Charlie, was accelerating through 50-60 knots about 15 feet off the ground when he got hit. All I heard from him was the typical, cool scout, mundane "ah shit!?" and I watched as he hit skids level. The skids came off the first bounce, the mini came off the second bounce, on the third bounce the OH-6 flipped end over end at least three times and went through, and I mean THROUGH, several trees in its path. There was wood, rotor blades, and pieces of tail boom flying everywhere. The Loch finally came to rest on its side about 50 yards from where it first hit. The trail scout was beside him when he stopped, the lead pilot HOPPED out, helped his door gunner out and both of them hopped into the trail scout which took off with all that extra weight, no problem. The pilot had a few scratches and was back flying in a few days, while the door gunner had a few scratches and some injury to his left hand because it got outside the canopy bubble during all the bouncing and tumbling. Now that's what I call ***SURVIVABILITY***.

Bob Odenheimer
(Crusader 38)

September 29, 1987

Maybe MDHC's ad folks will call you, Bob, after we send a copy of this Newsletter to company marketing. Ed.



Jim "Big Dog" Maxwell ready to go, with NO DOORS! Editor's Note: For all the "raised eyebrows" to Tom Hestund's letter about No Doors back in March 85, here's your proof.

**Help The VHPA.
Get A Friend
To Join Today**

THE PLAYBOYS OF OLE



Shown above are members of Playboy Platoon, which flies HueyCobras in Vietnam. From left (top row) are Warrant Officers Mike Dodson, John Ulsh, Hal Dawson, Richard Wydun and Roger Cameron and (front row) Warrant Officer Larry Welch, Captain Ken Rubin and Warrant Officer Bob Bey. Cameron was killed on a mission during the Vietnam Era (1961-75).

Sent in by Ken Rubin (from Bell Helicopter News, 1968)

23 CLASSMATES... 20 YEARS LATER

Well, WOC 67-1 did it again! Enclosed please find two pictures of twenty-one of the twenty-three 67-1 classmates that attended the VHPA gathering on the Queen Mary. It's hard to believe that it was twenty years ago this year that we graduated from flight school. And, I'm proud to say that I'm still in touch with approximately 95 classmates out of 320 that graduated in 67. Not bad for twenty years of water under the bridge!

Right after one of our picture taking sessions, a couple of VHPA members approached me and asked in amazement how on earth we managed to get twenty-three members of one class together at one time. They expressed deep disappointment that, after looking and looking, not one other classmate of theirs appeared to be in attendance. After explaining to them how I had managed to keep our class in touch with one another, they suggested I share my ideas with the rest of the membership. So, at the risk of boring everyone, here goes.

I am fortunate enough to live within thirty miles of a flight school classmate and roommate of mine, Dennis Reed. We managed to refind each other in the early 70's and now get together three or four times a year. One night in the mid 70's both of us were half in the bag, reminiscing about flight school and wondering what ever happened to so and so, and thinking, wouldn't it be great if we could all get together again. We didn't know if there would be any interest in having a reunion and more importantly, after all the years since flight school, we didn't know how we would go about finding our classmates. But, we decided to find out.

When we were at Wolters a flight class yearbook was put together. In the back pages of that yearbook were not only the names of all our classmates but, also their home addresses. Knowing that it had been ten years or so since these addresses were current, I took a chance and sent to each address a letter stating that it was time to have a class reunion and if there was any interest, please contact me. The response was phenomenal!!! From that mailing I received more than 130 updated addresses and all said "Go For It!!!" Many of the guys that responded had had the letters forwarded to them by their parents who still lived at the residence listed in the yearbook. I also received

Continued on next page

INCOMING MAIL, continued

several notices from parents and wives of classmates that didn't make it through Vietnam, or had died since Vietnam.

The first reunion, held here in Kalamazoo, unfortunately, fell at the time of the gasoline crunch and of the sixty plus that said they would be able to attend, only thirty-five made it. But those that did had one hell of a good time!

It was decided at that first reunion to get together again in three years, which would fall on the fifteenth anniversary of our graduation and then have a reunion every five years thereafter.

The second reunion was held in Kansas City, Missouri, and the same number of classmates attended. But there were only nine in attendance that had made the first reunion. Approximately twenty-five guys attended that, again, I had not seen since flight school or Vietnam. I can't begin to tell you how good it made me feel to have been able, over the course of a little over three years, to bring together sixty plus guys who otherwise would never have known what other classmates had been doing since graduation.

It was not an inexpensive task, in either time or money. And since I became the unofficial "class locator", thirty-five or so guys have moved and left no forwarding address. Chances are they are lost forever.

Between our fifteenth reunion and the twentieth, which had originally been scheduled for Houston this summer, the VHPA was formed. I polled my classmates as to whether or not they wanted to have a reunion in Houston or have it in conjunction with the VHPA gathering in Long Beach, and 100% of those responding chose Long Beach.

Because the VHPA is well organized and is dedicated to doing for everyone who flew rotary wing in Vietnam what I did just for my class, I've strongly encouraged all of my classmates to join, so they don't find themselves "lost" at some point in the future. And also because of the VHPA, WOC 67-1 will no longer be having a reunion every five years, but will now be able to have one *every year!!* It is hard for me to understand why anyone who is qualified to become a member of this organization would not want to do so, but at last count only sixty or so of my classmates are currently members. That is a very sad "that's no shit" story.

There it is guys. I would encourage all of you who may have a list of fellow

classmates stashed somewhere to do what I did. Even if you only get a ten percent return on the mailing, it will be well worth it. That I can guarantee. If you don't know what other VHPA members are members of your flight class, or unit(s) for that matter, contact Mike Law. Mike has been responsible for putting together the VHPA data bank and can supply you with a list of other members that have indicated that they were graduates of your class. Contact them! They may be the one that has that list of class graduates squirreled away somewhere and may be just the person you need to talk to to get the ball rolling.

Good luck, and I am personally looking forward to the day that another class



has more guys present at a VHPA gathering than WOC 67-1.

See you all in Fort Worth.

Greg Ross
(Blue Ghost)



Quit being so nice, Greg, we know you plan on 67-1 having the most guys present in Fort Worth. Ed.



Back-L to R, Ross Ivey, Jim Horan, Bill Owen, Paul Hart, Keith Alderman, Larry Brown, Bill Rowe, and Bob Smith.

Front-L to R, Greg Ross, Gary Kimbrell, Allan Jackson, Tom Pearcy, Gary Raver, Jim Rock and Tom Wiley.

Photo by Greg Ross



L to R, Bill Marcrander, Conley Musick, Ralph Harvey, John Hazelwood, Mike Jackson, and Terry Rippey (Jim Fulcher and Jim Reeder not pictured).

Photo by Greg Ross

Continued on next page

"HERE CANDIDATE, HERE BOY!!"

Reading Jerry Gray's letter (TAC Officer!) in the September issue caused me to undergo a long period of introspection. When I got back to Wolters in October 1969, I tried IP school, but my heart just wasn't in it. Maybe I had too many copilots (our illustrious immediate past president among them) try to kill me taxiing out of revetments, and feared student pilots too much. Anyhow, I found my thoughts turning to School Brigade and all those fresh young butts in need of a lawn mower. So off I went to 6th WOC, back to my roots, and served as a TAC, the training officer, the senior TAC, the XO, and ended up Commanding it. (Imagine me sitting in LTC Williams' office! God bless America!) They sent us to a one-week MOI course, but mostly we operated on memories of our TACs.

But this still doesn't answer Jerry's question, how could the Army have transformed me into a "steely-eyed, fire-breathing demon?" How could I have put horse-shoe taps on my mirror-shined Cochran boots and then slide down the mirror-shined hallways? How could I have named my miniature schnauzer "Candidate," slap a set of Brasso-green WOC brass on his collar, then allow him to use the day room as a latrine? How could I have gone through a case of Sucrets with each pre-flight class? How could I have sliced the stripes off a former Green Beret's greens, and live to tell the tale? Actually, the Army couldn't have transformed a relatively nice guy like me into that kind of beast. Only one thing could — CANDIDATES!

Bryan (London) England
(Blue Ghost 39)

We respectfully decline comment concerning any and all TAC letters out of fear of a recurrence of nightmares filled with "give me 20" and "that will be 50 Demerits" and on and on... Ed.

"YOU WANT TO BE A TAC???"

I have been home for 31 minutes tonight. It took me 30 minutes to read the Sept. 87 Newsletter I received today, cover to cover, and one minute to walk to the typewriter.

Regarding the requirements for becoming a TAC Officer, I can only

speak for myself because there was no hard and fast rule that I know of. In fact, I firmly believe quite a few were made TAC's because they didn't know what else to do with them! I received a million dollar wound after 5 months in country and wound up back at Wolters as a Wobbly 1 in the land of CW2's. I requested to become an IP because I was a damn good pilot (yes, I'm modest but I'm truthful, too!) and felt the Army could best use my abilities in that respect. What? Am I crazy? The Army put my best talents to work? Surely I jest! "Hey, Mister, we don't care how good you are, you don't have enough hours!"

So there I was, in front of a "review board" to try to decide what to do with me. I thought that I would be bored as a classroom instructor and besides, I had a damn good TAC when I was a candidate. In fact, probably just about the best, CW2 James P. Fazekas. (Where are you, sir?) So there I am in front of all these RLO's and maybe one or two Warrants and I said "I'd like to be a TAC!" I'll never forget the looks on their faces and the female Major looked at me and said, "You WANT to be a TAC?" I'll never forget it.

Soon afterwards, I got my first flight and I suppose the only training I got was when I was in flight school as a candidate; I simply tried to do what Fazekas did right and not do what the others did wrong. I made a lot of mistakes, but I think I did a lot of things right, too. Looking back, I think I have a lot more pride having been a TAC than working half days as an IP or a classroom instructor. A lot of times I was the last one they saw at night and the first soul they saw in the morning. My philosophy was that when they graduated from Wolters, it would only be if I was willing to fly with them, and I can honestly say that I did not pass one candidate that I wouldn't fly with. I may not have jumped at the chance to fly with a couple of 'em, but I wouldn't refuse 'em. And that's exactly what I told every one of them their first day in my flight!

So Jerry Gray, Lucky Star 10, there's one answer for you. Hope you had a good TAC like I did.

Phil Marshall
(DMZ Dustoff 711)



SPIT AND SHINE TAC

Asking someone to "admit" to being a TAC seems to imply some kind of guilt. But I'll proudly recall my experiences as one of the toughest TACs on the hill.

What type of WO would even become a TAC? I graduated from Wolters (68-01, 1st WOC) hoping I would never see a TAC again in my life.

My tour of duty in 'Nam was with the 196th Inf Bde Aviation Unit (Charger 3) out of Chu Lai and LZ Baldy. A small team with only 7 pilots, we had 3 Loaches and 1 Huey for C&C. Approximately one third of my tour was a TDY assignment to the 1st Marine Division out of Da Nang, flying scout missions around the rocket belt of the city. Maybe some great stories later about WOs Hambrick, Reid and Schelecki.

Nine months into my tour, and while playing "Dustoff" during some heavy ground fighting around Tam Ky, and for the fifth time I got a helicopter shot up real good, I took three rounds in my right leg, one through the knee. It didn't seem that bad at the time but after four months in the hospital, I found myself back at Ft. Wolters again and still not back on flight status.

After working some flaky Finance Officer position for a couple of weeks, I requested an "interview" for a TAC opening. There must not have been too many applicants because after a two-minute talk, they decided I was a good (bad) enough a___hole to go back to the "Big Red One", 1st WOC.

We had no special training at that time. The first time a new group of recruits arrived it just all came back to you. What didn't come back you quickly picked up from the seasoned TACs already there. Remember Swinford? or Gomer?

As a TAC, and as with all TACs, I just wanted to make sure, as best I could, that all my graduates had what it takes to be in combat. You flight instructors did not let mediocre pilots through. But you had a strict set of objective guidelines and tests for the student to pass.

TACs had some objective guidelines, such as "spit and shine", attention to detail, etc., but those were really just part of a deeper subjective process of recognizing motivation, enthusiasm, cooperation, mental capability under duress, etc. When we had our doubts, then the candidate was eliminated (the official term).

Continued on next page

1st WOC always had a reputation, but I eventually developed a reputation and was usually assigned all re-cycles. When I left Wolters, I had the school record, with some help from the flight line, for the class with the most eliminations, graduating only 9 out of an initial 32 candidates. I was not every popular at Brigade Headquarters where only numbers, not quality, counted.

We all lost buddies in 'Nam. But I know that every one of my graduates were officers that you were all proud to be in country with. I have never heard of what happened to any of them. But even if some did not return, I am positive that, like my friends killed in action (Danny Ortega, Robert "Bobby" Jansen, Jerry Johnson, Joe Cotton), or those critically wounded (Al Henderson), they were some of the best damn Officers, let alone pilots, that the Army ever produced.

Robert "Russ" Jones
[REDACTED]

HOW COME YOU NEVER WRITE?!

Jerry Gray sparked a memory of a time near and dear to my heart, the time I spent as a TAC Officer. I must digress a bit and set the stage as to why I volunteered to be a TAC in 1979, since my class was never afforded the luxury of a real live Warrant Officer TAC.

When Class 65-11 arrived at Ft. Wolters in January of 1965, we were greeted by the senior class in residence that had four weeks to go before rotating to Ft. Rucker. We had TAC NCO's and a Company Commander, but the senior class in residence had a license to kill, and they had learned well three months earlier upon their arrival.

Somehow about 40 of us made it to senior class at Wolters, and needless to say, payback on Bloody Sunday for the new class kept the tradition going. However, we had not lost sight of the fact that the very class that had greeted us would be putting on their black tabs as seniors, just prior to our arrival, and assuming command of the Candidate Staff at Rucker. The Candidate company did have a Commander (RLO) and associated administrative personnel, but the senior candidates ran the show for four weeks, then assumed "Super Senior" status (U.S. insignia, not WOC on collar) and were Gods to us lowly juniors.

Class 65-11 finally took over the

Candidate Staff in August and I was assigned to command the first Fixed Wing class to go through the system in a good while. It was then that I realized that these guys were looking to me for guidance and hung on my every word. Would I handle personal problems or discipline problems correctly? Would I be fair? Would I be a good role model?

I must say we did quite well during my time as their leader, they made me proud of them and their spirit and I only hope they felt the same towards me. After Vietnam and Rucker (TAC X), my time was up in 1968. Civilian job, night school, National Guard and recalled to active duty in 1978, Ft. Rucker. I was grounded for a few months in 1979 with hand surgery, and while talking with my old friend Lee Komich at Warrant Division, he suggested I volunteer to be a TAC Officer.

WHY NOT?! A chance to repay a program that was good to me, plus I remembered how good I felt after seeing that Fixed Wing class pull together and do so well. I spent one year as a TAC in Primary Phase and 18 months as the Senior TAC of the Junior/Senior Company. I have had two jobs in my lifetime that have totally consumed me and left me with a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment — being a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and a TAC Officer at Rucker. Yeah, there were the dust bunnies, wrinkles, lint and lost weekends due to demerits, but if attention to detail saved one life, it was worth being the nit picking bad guy. My philosophy, be a professional Warrant Officer first and the best damned helicopter pilot second. I'd do it again!

Oh, yes, to all my former candidates, as the DI in the Miller Lite commercial says, "HOW COME YOU NEVER WRITE!"

Joe Sullivan, Jr.
(Fang & Clipper '65-66)
[REDACTED]

February 5-7, 1988
VHPA Tri-State (OH, IN, KY) Mini-Reunion, Cincinnati, OH
Contact: Phil Marshall, 4465 Cedar Cove, Troy, OH 45373-9611, phone 513/339-3167 or 513/335-7112.

February 7, 1988
The "Gathering" VHPA Mini-Reunion in conjunction with HAI Convention.
Anaheim Hilton, Anaheim, CA. Contact: VHPA Headquarters, P.O. Box 9592, Wichita, Kansas 67277,

This is a story
of pilots and glory
and it's not quite as bad as it seems.
It takes place on the coast
with the Blue Ghost
in a war that lives only in dreams.

At Chu Lai, up in "I" Corp it was
in that beautiful South Vietnam
with waterfalls and snow white sand
and sparkling blue sea.
At war in this land
that we don't understand
where not one of us wanted to be.

With slicks and guns and lohs for fun
our days were spent hunting VC.
But by night that all changed
We were the game
Ole Chuck was hunting you and me.

We kept score with body count
we even called them "kills",
but, we never thought that the
friends we lost
were shown on Charlie's
scoreboard in the hills.

Now a chopper pilot is a
different breed
He has everything under control.
He'll fly straight through hell
in that Huey from Bell
with his hand firmly grasping the stick.
For the thought never comes
that he may be the one
on Ole Charlie's scoreboard
in the hills.

Author: Mike McDonald

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Upcoming Events

316/946-4047.

February 17-21, 1988
Lawyer-Pilots Bar Assn. Meeting
Hotel Del Coronado, San Diego, CA
Contact: David E. Prewitt (215) 557-9998.

February 18-21, 1988
**The Dustoff Association
9th Annual Reunion.**
Holiday Inn NW, Loop 410/Interstate 10, San Antonio, Texas. Details: Joe Madrano (512) 659-4237.

From The Executive Director

I hope by now each and every member has spent some time reviewing the 1987 VHPA Directory. I do hope everyone is pleased with it. The Executive Council believes that the Directory is one of the most important items a member receives for their annual dues. To that end a significant financial and resource commitment was made this year to upgrade the Directory. I don't mean to belittle the effort that went into producing the 1986 Directory (I was part of that effort also... many, many "fun filled hours"), but the 1987 effort was impressive!! This Directory is one more concrete example of the benefit VHPA reaped when we selected AAM to provide administrative services for the organization. So if you enjoy this Directory and happen to be writing or calling VHPA headquarters, say thanks to John Frank and Nancy Osterhout and the rest of their staff. They put in lots of "fun filled hours" this year for your Directory.

I am certain many of you that also have the 1986 or earlier Directories can note with great pride the greatly expanded KIA/MIA/Deceased section in the 1987 Directory. This section is the work of a fantastic human being and VHPA member named Gary Roush. During the 1986 Washington Reunion, Gary came up and bugged me a couple of times saying he had a computer and wanted to help. We talked for a while and he promised he wouldn't let me or VHPA down, so we gave him sole responsibility for the KIA data base. For those of you that don't know Gary, he is one of the most humble and most dedicated people you will ever meet. He has attacked the research effort as a true "labor of love" and the results are impressive. So if you enjoyed that section, drop Gary a note and tell him so. "Thanks" is just about all we have at VHPA for guys like Gary who spent many "fun filled hours" slaving over a hot PC in their basement.

In all fairness, however, I must tell you that the credit for the Huey refueling picture on the front cover goes to a man who is half most our ages, a man who didn't even fly in Vietnam, a man who just subscribes to the VHPA Newsletter because he likes helicopters, and a man who (Praise the Lord!!) happened to think that we might like the picture so he sent a copy to headquarters completely unsolicited. He really saved my bacon because I was getting desperate. This young man's picture preempted... a profile shot of Larry Clark and Ron Wright at the First Reunion's Survivor's Pool Party. Anyway, many thanks to Larry Ford for offering the picture. However, I am putting the entire membership on notice right here and now! YOU WILL SEE THAT PICTURE OF LARRY AND RON ON THE 1988 DIRECTORY COVER IF WE DON'T FIND A SUITABLE REPLACEMENT. So, PLEASE, for the good of VHPA, find us a good Vietnam helicopter picture for the next cover!!!

Finally, I'd like to ask for your input concerning the 1988 Directory. What improvements would you like to see? What don't you like about this Directory? Please send me your comments.

Mike Law
Executive Director



"Last One In Boys" (Officers Club, Lai Kae)

Photo by Wayne Trucke

Looking For...

**AL DREEVES,
CLAUDE WOOLARD**

you're wanted by Joe Walker, FAA
Flight Standards, [REDACTED]

CHRISTOPHER WARNOCK

please contact Fred Thompson, [REDACTED]

**TOM TERZICH,
GEORGE COX**

get hold of Ken Rankin, [REDACTED]

ROY LAIRD

being sought by Philip R. House, [REDACTED]

**McMAHON,
SELLS,
MERCHANT,
196th INF "CHARGERS"**

looked for by Dr. Richard L. Elgin, [REDACTED]

JOHN CAMPUS

contact Bill Phillips, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (sent in
by Bill McGee)

FRANK A. WYNNE

please contact Howard M. Klein, [REDACTED]

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New Life Members

PHILLIP GARY SLAUGHTER

71-5
71 176 AHC 72 1 AVN
Construction Management

STEPHEN GREEN

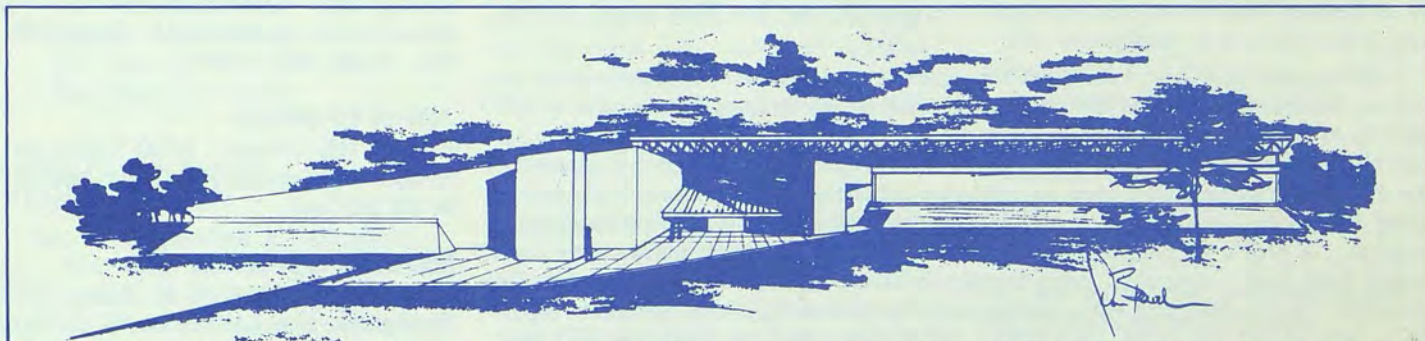
66-19 66-21
67-68 173 ABN
Pilot

LARRY J. TALLEY

66-7
66-67 128 AHC
69-70 138 RR
Pilot



Past President Mike McDonald (center) presents Roger Gould (left) a Life Membership while New Life Member Gary Slaughter (No. 65 right) looks on.



Plans have been developed to build a new Army Aviation Museum at an estimated cost of \$5 million. To date \$2.15 million has been raised in private funds with an additional \$350,000 required in order to receive Federal matching funds of \$2.5 million. **YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!!** Please call THE ARMY AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION, INC. at (205) 598-2508 or send your tax deductible contribution payable to the "Army Aviation Museum Foundation", P.O. Box 610, Fort Rucker, Alabama 36362. Note: Individuals contributing \$100 or more will receive a Certificate of Membership in the Foundation, a set of twelve signed prints of "The Evolution of Army Aviation", and will have their name engraved on a wall in the new museum.

VHPA "4th Reunion" T-Shirt

T-Shirts 8.50 each

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| 52. Golf Shirt (Wh.-tan-lt. blue) M, L, XL - 14.00 | 57. 57a. VHPA Cap w/patch w/eggs (White, Navy, Black, Royal) - 9.00 |
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Sweatshirts-L, XL - 13.50 | 58. Car License Plate - 5.00 |
| 54. VHPA "Logo" T-Shirts-M, L, XL - 8.50
Sweats-L, XL - 13.50 | 59. 59a. VHPA Patch - 3.00 |
| 55. 3rd Reunion ("D.C.") T-Shirts only M, L, XL - 8.50 6.00 | 60. Tie Tack - 3.00 |
| 56. 2nd Reunion ("Houston") T-Shirts only M, L, XL - 8.50 6.00 | 61. Stickers (60) - 3.50 |
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President's Roll Call

The "Gathering" (a winter mini-reunion) will take place 7 Feb. 1988 at the Anaheim Hilton, Anaheim, CA, from 1800 to 2200 hrs. The "Gathering" is being held in conjunction with the Helicopter Association International (HAI) Convention. Discount tickets are available to all members interested in attending the HAI Convention. Please call or write VHPA for your discount registration forms. You may attend the "Gathering" without attending the HAI Convention, but I recommend that you don't. Those of you that have been out of aviation for a while will be amazed at the changes.

I have been out and about recruiting new members. Sept. 27 I was in Pensacola, FL. I presented a VHPA banner (signed at Reunion 87) to Trader Jon. Trader owns the world's most famous (Naval) aviation bar. I would like to thank Bill Pullum and Gary Mock for getting the pilots, friends and the press together at Trader Jon's for a fun filled evening. Sept. 30 I attended the National Business Aircraft Association (NBAA) Convention in New Orleans. I met with several aircraft manufacturers with regards to Corporate Life Memberships and donations to the VHPA Scholarship Fund. The presentations were well received and donations should be forthcoming. I found 10 new members at NBAA. Oct. 10 I traveled to Harlingen, TX, for the Confederate Air Force Air Show. Numerous applications and info sheets were passed out. CW4 Bill Tucker (a sandwich 1st Cav man) put on a flight demo with the Apache Attack Helicopter. What a show; the P-51 and the AH-64 back to back.

Your organization is doing well. We have money in the bank, Reunion '88 well in hand, and a steady growth of membership. If each person reading this letter would recruit 2 new members between now and Reunion '88, we could have over 10,000 members (about 50% of all pilots eligible for membership).

Keep the blue side up.

C. David Owens
(Darkhorse 26)
(Guardian 31)



"MEDIVAC" Prescott, Arizona

To purchase a limited edition miniature of "Medivac" contact: Philip C. Wilson. 602/445-2540.

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"A Little Speed Tape and Schedule It For the Morning".

Photo by Skip Budny

REUNION '88 — You Can Go Home Again



"Sure it's still standing, son, it was a designated Nuclear Fallout Shelter".
Photo by Rick Schwab



"Damn it Jake, I told you he wasn't ready to solo, look what that Candidate has done to the runways." Stage Field #5, Fort Wolters, Texas.
Photo by Rick Schwab

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	Price	Total
Back VHPA Newsletters (Complete set only)	\$15.00/Set	_____
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1987 Reunion Mugs	\$2.75/each	_____
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Send check/money order or charge to MasterCard/VISA

Account No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

MAIL FORM TO:
VHPA
P.O. Box 9592
Wichita, KS 67277

On July 1, 1988, we will all have the chance to return to Fort Worth and Fort Wolters. The saying "you can never go home again", is not true in this case.

We will arrive at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Friday, July 1. A welcome home party will be held at 7:00 p.m. The attire will be informal. On Saturday, July 2, we will depart the hotel at 8:30 a.m., by bus, for Fort Wolters. You will need to have your bus ticket purchased prior to June 1, 1988 as we will be paying for buses in advance. The Arizona VHPA Chapter has agreed to be bus captains on the ten or so buses and will see to it that all goes well. We will arrive at the air conditioned Student Activities Building around 9:30 a.m. for a memorabilia slide show by Col. Willie Capser. Also available will be an historic display of photos and newspapers from the earliest dates at Wolters. From 10:30 to 1:30 there will be buses leaving for Dempsey, Downing and other areas of Mineral Wells. A Texas Barbecue lunch with free draft beer will be served at 2:00 p.m. compliments of the City of Mineral Wells and the Chamber of Commerce. This meal will be served in the National Guard Mess Hall. After lunch, we will attempt to lift the "WOC ROCK" onto a truck for transport to Fort Rucker. The last thing we do in Mineral Wells will be to visit the Holiday Inn where so many of us were "christened" after soloing. If anyone cannot swim, they had better be careful! Upon arrival back in Fort Worth, we will change and gather around the pool area for an informal swim and drink party beginning at 8:00 p.m. On Sunday, July 3, we will have brunch at 10:30 a.m. and hold our business meeting afterwards. There will be an interesting speaker for the brunch, don't miss it. In the afternoon, a radio-controlled model club will put on a demonstration of model helicopters. The banquet will be held at 6:00 starting with cocktails. Your attire should be the best party outfit you wore in the 1960s. A "soc-hop" atmosphere will prevail with judges for best costume, best male dancer, and best female dancer. You will be in serious trouble if you don't look like you did in the '60s! The banquet will be conducted prior to the "soc-hop" but that will not require different clothes. Come home again with gusto... we will be ready!

David Owens
President

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Fifth Annual Reunion

1-4 July, 1988

Fort Worth, Texas

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VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

Fifth Annual Reunion

1-4 July, 1988

Fort Worth, Texas

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Name: _____ Member No. _____

Wife/Guest Name: _____ No. of Children _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

REGISTRATION FEES

\$15.00 (After 6/1/88 \$25.00)

Business Meeting Brunch
\$15.00

Banquet
\$30.00

Bus Trip to Wolters \$10.00 (Dress Informal-'60s)

Number of Registrations: ☐ x 15 = \$ _____

Number of Brunches: ☐ x 15 = _____

Number of Bus Tickets: ☐ x 10 = _____
(Purchase Prior to 6/1/88)

Number attending Banquet: ☐ x 30 = \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Make Checks Payable to VHPA

NAME TAG INFO

(Name desired on your reunion nametag)

(Flight School, Class No., Years)

Combat Units and Years)

(Hometown)

MAIL WITH CHECK TO:
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What is it? Provide details and history.
Photo by Rick Schwab

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APPLICATION: ☐ ANNUAL DUES: \$20
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Information about EACH Vietnam Tour:

DATE		UNIT	LOCATION	CALL SIGN
From	To			

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

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