



**VIETNAM  
HELICOPTER  
PILOTS  
ASSOCIATION**

# The VHPA Newsletter

P.O. Box 35699

Phoenix, Arizona 85069

August 1985



*The '85 Reunion Banquet*

## Reunion '85 — After Action Report

The first day of the 1985 VHPA reunion was marred by rain. The outdoor picnic had to be moved indoors to one of the hotel meeting rooms. But the rain did not dampen the spirit of 224 adults and 33 children, who ate Bar-B-Q and enjoyed free beer furnished compliments of the HORLOCK BEVERAGE COMPANY. Before we chowed down, we kicked off the party with a P-38 race. Participants had to bid for a can of 'C' rations in order to compete. Can you believe that some members actually paid up to \$6.00 a can for such delicacies as boned chicken and pound cake? Two heat races were held with approximately 20 P-38 operators in each race. The two winners of the heat races were given the small cans of jelly and peanut butter to use for the championship event. The champion was JAMES LAKE from Anchorage, Alaska who won the prized trophy, an old beat-up canteen cup proclaiming him the champion P-38'er at the 1985 VHPA Picnic. The activities at the picnic were televised LIVE on the 5 o'clock news by News Anchor and VHPA Member BOB BEAUDREULT.

The evening of July 4th saw most of the crowd atop the hotel, in the glass mini-dome, watching fireworks displays that were frequently visible in many directions at once. The occasional rain forecasted a change in the weather; the night of the worst "drunk front" in Houston's history.

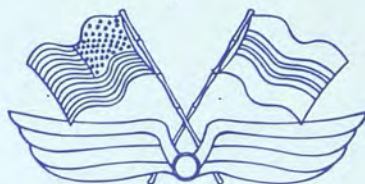
On Friday, those who were able were up early to board three buses for the trip to the nearby JOHNSON SPACE CENTER for a guided tour of Mission Control. On the return trip, the buses were stuck in typical Houston freeway traffic and were forced to make a beer stop at one of the convenience stores. Can you picture three buses pulling up, people running in and cleaning out the coolers of all types of beer and then running out. The clerk must have thought it was a hurricane.

At noon on Friday more free beer was served by the pool. By the time the NASA tour buses returned, the party was in full swing. There were rumors that some pilots were actually up on the hotel roof with their bathing suits down around their knees. Things like this could have NEVER happened, because throughout the reunion police security guards were in attendance at all times. Of course, the police guards were all volunteers from the HOUSTON POLICE HELICOPTER PATROL. Who would have thought of having a bunch of helicopter policemen guard a bunch of helicopter pilots. What wisdom!

Friday night we were entertained with music of the '50s, '60s and '70s played by JOHNNY GOYEN, a local DJ celebrity. Approximately 300 of us attended the evening dance and party that continued late into the night. Before we

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#### FROM THE EDITOR:

WOW!! What a reunion!! While most events never come close to the level anticipated, this was the exception. MIKE McDONALD and the REUNION COMMITTEE can be right proud of a super job. With an act this tough to follow, JAY ELLIOTT has to be the bravest dude around to have volunteered as next year's Reunion Committee Chairman. By the way, let's not forget RON WRIGHT who got the 1985 Reunion ball started and relinquished his chairmanship only after a transfer to the east coast of Florida. RON's strong foundation was the first vital step in ensuing the great outcome we experienced.

As you can guess, the intent of this edition is to report the shindig in Houston, particularly for you unlucky souls who missed it, a task we could title the "AGONY and the ECSTASY." Agony because, with a budget limited newsletter, every reunion event cannot be reported and all of you who participated cannot be acknowledged. Also, some of the recently received INCOMING MAIL will have to await the next issue. Ecstasy in that, for the first time we won't have to scratch for material to give you an interesting product.

An important happening occurred at the reunion; the gals organized a WOMEN'S AUXILIARY of the VHPA. KATHY USTER is the Chairwoman of this illustrious group and, with the help of SUE GOULD, will be writing a newsletter column for the beauty in our midst. "WARNING!!" DO NOT circular file, wrap fish, return to the Editor rolled up for insertion where the sun doesn't shine, or otherwise dispose of this, or future editions prior to your special lady reading same; otherwise there will be trouble in your house — BIG TIME!!

Beginning with the First Quarter of 1986, the Executive Council has decided that our newsletter will begin accepting appropriate advertising for a fee. Besides many obvious reasons, it's hoped that advertising income will eventually pay for the entire publication of an expanded and improved newsletter. This will then free up membership dues for other uses, such as the Annual Reunion, member services, etc. Because printing fees are charged per SHEET (four pages), the cost of an ad guaranteed to be published in the next issue will be at four times the rate charged for an ad that can run on a space available basis. The lower fees will simply return the cost of typesetting and layout. For those of you with the worried look on your brows, you have our promise that the type and amount of advertising accepted will be on a very selective basis, so that the VHPA NEWSLETTER will not become overwhelmed by ads, as is the case with many publications of this type. Also, we welcome your comments concerning our advertising policy and rates; after all, this is your newsletter!

As was the case last year, one of the most emotional issues addressed at the business meetings was the admission of nonpilot crewmen as associate members. The strongest reason for their inclusion into our rolls was the shared experience and the fact they frequently were the reason we survived. No question about it, our mechanics, crewchief, gunners, and others made a great contribution in keeping our pilot tail feathers intact. Regardless of strong feelings of respect, appreciation, and comradeship, the proposal was

defeated. The majority felt the VHPA should remain an organization exclusively for pilots, as our name so states. Approved was a resolution pledging the VHPA's support in assisting crewmember groups in organizing their own associations.

Roger Gould  
Editor



#### VHPA OFFICERS — 1985/86

PRESIDENT:	Bill Ringer [REDACTED]
VICE PRESIDENT:	Mike McDonald [REDACTED]
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	Larry Clark [REDACTED]
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS AT LARGE:	
Term Expires 1988	Dave Grieger [REDACTED]
Term Expires 1987	Mike Law [REDACTED]
Term Expires 1986	C. Dave Owens [REDACTED]

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It is distributed free of charge to all members of the VHPA.

VHPA membership is open to all helicopter pilots who flew in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era (1961 to 1975). Annual dues are \$20.00 or Life Membership for \$300.00.

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. The VHPA does not guarantee or endorse any product, organization or person mentioned in this publication.

The VHPA NEWSLETTER welcomes letters to the editor. As space permits, we will publish as many as possible. Letters are subject to editing for brevity and accuracy. Mail to Newsletter Editor, VHPA, P.O. Box 35699, Phoenix, AZ 85069.





## INCOMING MAIL

### HOUSTON'S FINEST

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the VHPA membership, especially MIKE McDONALD, HOWARD HORTON, MIKE WILSON, and JESSIE MILLER, for allowing myself and the other Police Officers to "serve" with you all during the 2nd annual reunion of the VHPA. It was an awarding and great experience to associate with such outstanding people. Personally, this was the best group of individuals that I have had an occasion to work for or around. It does show the professionalism and comradery of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots. These people can definitely stand tall and deserve a "job well done" for their service to our Country in the Aviation service.

I have been involved in Police Helicopter Aviation since 1976 and owe a lot of my interest and desires in aviation to the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots. My association with present and former members of the 273rd Med. Det. (Hel. Amb.) led to my decision to join the U.S. Army (Reserve) and become a member of the 273rd. I realize that I won't be able to make the contributions that you have made to us and the Country, but I'll try to maintain the high standards each and every one of you have set. By volunteering to work the Reunion, myself and other Police Officers, all assigned to the Police Helicopter Patrol Division, were able to give you something to say thanks for what you have done for us. I hope each and every one had an enjoyable and memorable time and returned home safely. And, if the Reunion is held in Houston again, you would be comfortable in letting us associate with you again.

If the Association ever provides for Honorary memberships into the Association, I hope we could try and meet the high standards set to be included into the Association. It would definitely be an honor to be associated with this group of individuals.

Again, let me say thanks to each and every one for the privilege to serve you in our own way. If I could be of service again, please contact me.

Robert E. Tessier  
Sergeant of Police  
Houston Police Dept.

*Bob, we can't express just how much we appreciate your comments. It is the VHPA who should be thanking you and the other officers for your unselfish donation of time and attention to our safety and welfare. All this on a long holiday weekend when you should have been off with family and friends. Ed.*

### CHOPPER PILOTS - OLD FRIENDS

I just read a notice of the VHPA in the VVA Newsletter from LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

I served in the Army Nurse Corps - Pleiku - 68-69. There are no group of people I admire, respect, love, more than the helicopter pilots of Vietnam. For those who died in my care, a part of me went with them. For those who lived I wonder where they are, what they are doing, and how they are today. So many memories to live with.

I will also share with you some poems I have written. You are a part, a very big part, of these poems.

Approximately 8,000 military nurses served in Vietnam. Eight were killed. Their names are on the "Wall." And a part of us, nurses, is also on that wall. We shared in the life and death of thousands of soldiers - as did you chopper pilots.

Diane Carlson Evans  
Ex. Captain, ANC

*Thanks, Diane. The feelings of admiration and respect are mutual. Answers to how we are, where we are, and what we are doing, are the biggest reasons the VHPA got off the ground. Note: This letter was received a year ago and somehow overlooked, but "better late than never" for a message of this importance. Elsewhere in this issue, you will find an excerpt from one of Diane's poems. We will share more with you in the future. Ed.*

### ENGLISH HISTORY

A fellow historian in Los Angeles has told me that a reunion of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots is to take place in Houston between 4-6 July.

Unfortunately, the earliest that I can visit the States is September, otherwise I would have liked to attend the reunion as an observer. You see, I am currently writing a book about the pilots and

aircrew who served in Vietnam and would dearly like to spend some time at your reunion with a tape recorder. However, would it be possible to bring my project to the attention of the pilots at the reunion and to ask for anyone who has either interesting experiences to relate or maybe photographs that I could borrow for publication, to write to me.

I would answer all letters and return any photographs lent to me, and would appreciate some more details of your planned reunion.

Philip D. Chinnery

England

*Philip, are you sure? Aviation history based on the war stories of this group could redefine the meaning of the subject; i.e. "You may not believe this, but we were low level over the rice paddies when . . . don't worry about it, Jake! That's why God put two horns on the water buffalos." Ed.*

### ANTIQUE NEWSLETTERS

Just a note to give you some idea of the time it takes the Pony Express to deliver the Newsletter. Mine arrived today. That's correct, the March 1985 Newsletter arrived on the 24th of May.

As you can see we in Europe will not have a chance to send in a ballot for the VHPA Newsletter Name contest as they must be submitted no later than 15 April.

It seems certain that we will not receive the registration forms for the upcoming reunion in time to register. With me it is a moot point as I will be unable to attend.

Hope this is not considered a criticism of the newsletter. It is not. It is just that nonprofit organization mail is sent sometime after the post office is certain that the information in the newsletter is completely out of date. My Time magazine is not a news magazine, rather it is a history magazine by the time it arrives.

Peter W. Barber  
APO N.Y.

*Just think about it, Peter. They say there is big money in ancient documents. Ed.*

### LONDON CALLING

I noticed with interest your address in Saber, which a 'Nam vet sends me, and wonder if you or any of your members could help me improve my collection of aviation insignia.

If any of your members have any spare insignia or any information regarding the same, I would sincerely like to hear from them.

*Continued next page . . .*



## INCOMING MAIL, Continued

Another reason for my request is that my eldest son will soon be studying the Vietnam War for his examination in history and I have offered to help his teacher with a display of Free World Forces insignia relating to Vietnam.

I would deeply appreciate any help you could give me.

C.J. Young

England

*OK all you insignia collectors, how about a helping hand for C.J.? By the way C.J., thanks for the measure of pleasure the stamp on your envelope gave us; a handsome drawing of a grasshopper titled, "Bushcricket." We have some in the States big enough to paint numbers on, add armament, and schedule for missions. Ed.*

## A WINTER REUNION?

I signed up at your booth at HAI in January and support the purpose of the organization wholeheartedly. I bought the hat, the t-shirts and all, but the logo is hard to read, and most people ask me if it says "RUN" where it says R.V.N.

I would like to attend the reunion, but the July date is tough for those of us who are active in the commercial helicopter business. May I suggest scheduling a reunion at Disneyland next winter during the HAI convention.

Jim Cheatham  
Salinas, CA

*Hang in there Jim. Your wish may come true; not the reunion, but a mini one. Because of the difficulty some of you have in attending the reunion during the summer, the VHPA is looking into the possibility of an event in conjunction with the 1986 HAI Convention. Ed.*

## WAYNE ISN'T DEAD!

Would like to reply to WAYNE ALEXANDER's request in "Incoming Mail." WAYNE and I were close friends from Basic through flight school. Saw each other once in Cu Chi in 1967. Then I heard he was killed. Sure was shocked to learn differently after all these years. Could you send me his address.

Also, ROGER GOULD is a name I remember well but can't quite pin down. Could you let me know if any of these dates/places coincide: WOC Class 67-13; 68th Assault Hel. Co. Bien Hoa - Sept 67 to Sept 68; Ft. Rucker Basic Instrument Instructor - Hanchee; and HIFC Instructor

Lowe Field - Sept 68 to Dec 69.

Thanks. Keep up the good work. We've needed this a long time.

Gerald Barnes

*How about that!! This is what the VHPA is all about — finding dear friends you thought were long gone. You will find Wayne's address on page 13 of your new directory. In regards to that other turkey you inquired about, we knew you couldn't forget a mean ole "Mother Rucker" MOI/Flight Examiner Course IP. Ed.*

## DUSTOFF FLICK

We are preparing a feature film concerning Dustoff Operations in the Soc Trang area of Vietnam. If you have any members who served in the 82d Medical Detachment, 45th Medical Company, 68th Medical Group, please let me know.

John J. Wright, President  
MRM Pathfinder  
Productions Inc.

*O.K., Vincent Sedola, Ray Salmon, Ed Taylor, Bruce Terry, and the rest of you 82 Med Det guys - now's your chance to tell it the way it was. Give John a call. Ed.*

## HELICOPTER FANATIC - SCOTTISH STYLE

I am neither a helicopter pilot nor a Vietnam veteran. However, I am a helicopter fanatic, and would greatly appreciate some information on your association, and any merchandise you have for sale, especially books. I'm sure you'll agree that helicopters have been given the "back seat" when it comes to books - perhaps you could recommend some titles available in the USA?

I am interested in all aspects of helicopter operations, and especially in the machines themselves. I would very much like to obtain old flight and maintenance manuals for any helicopter type, but especially for the UH-1 Huey, Jet Ranger, OH-13 Sioux and OH-6 Cayuse. Could you advise me of where I might obtain any of these?

Adam C. Watson

Scotland

*This letter was sent to Dave Grieger, who sent it on to us. Thanks, Adam, for taking time to write and Dave for sharing with us.*

## LOOKING FOR MARINES

I am looking for former USMC Helicopter pilots (CH 34's) from HMM-361, 1st MAQ 1966 and 1967, I Corps Area, CAPT. RON GOODWIN, LT. NORM WHITNECK, or LT. WILL.

If you have any of these gentlemen listed and can give them my address I'd really appreciate it. Thank you.

Jan Sallaz

Warren, Ohio 44485

*Well Jan, we have Marine pilot members, but unfortunately as of this writing these fellows have not applied. Sure would like to have them listed in our directory. Ed.*

## THINKS SWEATSHIRT IS NEAT

I am a "student" of Vietnam war history and an avid collector of Vietnam paraphernalia (specifically official and unofficial patches and insignia of the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army helicopter units), as well as a friend of the Viet-vet, and I would like to know more about your organization, if that's possible. I think I should say first that I was made aware of the existence of your organization by Tom Hebert's Vietnam War Newsletter, as well through a xeroxed ad I got from Tuck Boys of Bien Hoa Products.

I suppose you have some kind of newsletter or other periodical. Do you think you could mail me a sample issue? Would it be possible for me to join your organization, or at least subscribe to your newsletter and support it that way, even though I am not an American? If this would be possible, I'd appreciate it very, very much.

As you will have noticed I am enclosing \$17 with this letter, which is for a Sweatshirt I'd like to order. The one I mean is the "Callsigns" sweatshirt, with the Huey from the left, surrounded by the different callsigns, which I think is very neat. Would it be possible to mail the shirt as soon as possible, so that I have it before the end of this month? (The \$5 extra should be sufficient for Air Mail, I've been told.) This is because I would like to wear it at an upcoming meeting here. Thanks for that. If you also have other designs for T-shirts and sweatshirts, I'd be interested in that too. I'll be really looking forward to receiving this shirt, and your reply to this letter, and I thank you for your consideration.

Bauke Jan Douma

The Netherlands

Continued next page . . .



## INCOMING MAIL, *continued*

*Glad you like the sweatshirt design, Bauke. This was also our 1984 reunion t-shirt design. Your 17 green stamps are on the way to ye ole peddler of VHPA duds. Soon everyone across the "big pond" can admire the "Callsigns" design too. A complimentary copy of this newsletter is on the way. Ed.*

## Reunion '85 Report *continued*

go any further we must make one point clear, while we did party a lot all weekend there were plenty of old friendships renewed and war stories told. Numerous members were wearing parts of old uniforms along with their VHPA hats of various class colors. Of course, our great '85 Reunion T-shirt was worn by just about everyone. If you would like an extra one of these super 9 color T-shirts, please contact DAVE GRIEGER.

Saturday morning members attended the annual business meeting while the ladies conducted their own program elsewhere in the hotel. After the business meeting, lunch was served "Army" style. As reunion attendees entered a large meeting room through a GP medium tent, with side flaps rolled up, they saw a full field kitchen, complete with immersion heaters in garbage cans, a field oven, and merrimac cans. All this was beside a

audio tape complete with announcements about the evening movie schedule and an appropriate ad to take your R&R in Hawaii.

Saturday afternoon there was a static display of 7 Vietnam era helicopters at a nearby empty lot. There was a CH-47, UH-1, AH-1, OH-58, OH-6 (Hughes 500), and TH-55 (Hughes 300). The two Hughes were provided by the HOUSTON POLICE HELICOPTER PATROL. The Army birds were flown in by VHPA members of the TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD. At 1530 all 7 of these magnificent machines fired up and in order departed. The sight, sound, and smell of burning JP-4 brought a tear or two to some eyes who had not seen these types since leaving 'Nam. Also, many of the ladies and children had never seen, live and up close, the machinery their men folk had herded around the skies of Vietnam over 15 years ago. To the TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD and HOUSTON POLICE, thanks for the memories.

The party continued by the pool all Saturday afternoon until it was time to get ready for the Hawaiian Luau. As everyone entered the banquet room they were "leied." The wall behind the head table was covered with a giant American flag, just like in the movie *Patton*. Each table was decorated with a fish net, star fish, and other nautical items, all adding to the Hawaiian R&R atmosphere. Naturally, the menu was Hawaiian foods. As is our

retired COL and former commander of Fort Wolters, Texas. Willie became a VHPA Member at the reunion and asked the VHPA to consider having a future reunion in the Fort Worth area, with a one day tour to Mineral Wells to visit the old base, a place of strong memories for most of us. The town of Mineral Wells wants to throw a big party in honor of all helicopter pilots who passed through the town on their way to Southeast Asia. Recognition was also paid to the REUNION COMMITTEE for the outstanding job that they did. A certificate of appreciation the was presented to each member of the committee, while MIKE McDONALD received a laser engraved plaque. MIKE LAW was awarded a Life Membership for his long hours keeping track of all of us. Mike and his computer are responsible for the print-out in the Membership Directory and all those labels that get this newsletter and other items to you. The Life Membership will not come close to repaying him and his wife for all those late night hours and weekends he volunteers to the VHPA effort. A drawing for two airline tickets donated by CONTINENTAL AIRLINES was conducted, with PEGGY RITCHIE of the ASTRO VILLAGE HOTEL the drawer, and the lucky drawee DAVE SHEPPARD. Dubious honor was paid to the "Best" and "Worst" War Story Tellers. BRUCE McINNES overwhelmed the lady judges and walked away with the top title, while KEN BUNN had the distinction of coming up with the worst tale told. Damn!! The first liar doesn't stand a chance with this group.

The final dinner event was an excellent video presentation that was shown on a large screen at one end of the hall. It was the efforts of MIKE McDONALD, who traveled to Fort Rucker and Mineral Wells to videotape portions of the presentation, the work done by BOB BEAUDREAU digging through old file tape and 8mm movies, and the skill of BOB's editor that resulted in this fine tribute to the Vietnam helicopter pilot. The video is narrated by Bob and contains excerpts from the BILLY JOEL *Goodnight Saigon* song. There are scenes of students undergoing flight school Tac inspections and learning to hover OH-23 and TH-55 helicopters. Some scenes of gun-runs in Vietnam are complete with radio and intercom traffic. One of the most moving moments of the show was a scene of GREG ROSS at the "WALL" in Washington telling his story about the grunt he met in a hospital who thanked him for saving his life, by "Med-Evacing" him from the field. It was extremely well presented

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*Lunch . . . Army style.*

"Duce and a half" truck and an M-151 Jeep pulling a trailer holding soft drinks and kegs of beer on ice. At the end of the serving line was a lister bag supported by the familiar three tent poles. Lunch was served on tin plates with plastic spoons. Background music was from an AFRVN

tradition, a place setting with an empty chair, candle, flight helmet, flak jacket, and flight suit was set in memory of all helicopter pilots who could not be there with their comrades.

After dinner, BILL RINGER recognized the presence of WILLIE CASPER, a



## REUNION REPORT, *Continued*

and we thanked Bob and his editor with a standing ovation for one of the best TV documentaries about helicopter pilots ever seen. Copies of the tape will be made available for sale in the near future, contingent upon copyright releases for Billy Joel's music.

Immediately after dinner, the "Survivors Party" started by the pool and lasted until the last survivor gave up at 0530. During most of the night we had police surveillance from above. A LOH made several reconns of the pool, complete with search light, siren, and loud speaker. As the night wore on and the beer kegs got lighter, some of the pilots on the ground saluted the pilot above by dropping their bathing suits to half mast. We leave Houston, hopefully to return again in a few years, (no, we were not thrown out of town!) looking forward to next year's reunion in Washington, D.C. If you didn't make it this year, you missed a great reunion, so make plans now for the future and join in the memories and good times.

Plans are being made for a mid-year, winter meeting, possibly in conjunction with the HAI Convention in Anaheim

January 26-28, 1986, for all you that had to work and could not make the last two summer reunions.



*Drink!! A drink you say!!*

Photo by Jim Ratcliff

## Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting was conducted by BILL RINGER and LARRY CLARK, with active participation from the floor. The first major item of business was a proposal to establish Associate Membership for non-pilot crewmembers. After more than 30 minutes of comments, the majority of members present voted against the proposal. There was strong feeling that the VHPA should remain for pilots only. A side motion was made and carried to offer VHPA assistance to these other crewmembers if they wished to establish their own organizations.

BILL RINGER raised the issue of liability insurance for the officers of the VHPA. After a short discussion, a motion was made and carried to allow the Executive Council to select a suitable insurance company and procure a policy for an appropriate amount of coverage.

A discussion was held about the formation of local chapters of the VHPA. It was pointed out that our constitution allows the members to form local chapters, but it is not specific as to assessment of dues or other administrative procedures. It was also noted, if a group of members from a regional area wanted to get together

occasionally they do not have to form a chapter to do this. A motion was made and carried to let the chapter issue continue as is, until problems arise.

The next item of business was the formation of a Historical Committee to investigate the possibility of obtaining a permanent home for Vietnam Helicopter memorabilia. The committee will look into the options of becoming affiliated with one of the current museums of establishing our own museum. An additional task is to address the question of whether the VHPA should try to obtain a UH-1 and/or other Vietnam era helicopter(s) and maintain them in a flyable condition, similar to the Confederate Air Force's effort concerning WWII aircraft. The committee will report back to BILL RINGER and Executive Council, the results of their findings on both of these subjects. Feel free to contact the Chairman of the Historical Committee with information about this issue.

MARTY THIELEMANN presented to the Executive Director, prior to the business meeting, copies of correspondence on his efforts to obtain permission to visit Vietnam. This was described to the members and a motion was made and carried asking MARTY to continue with his efforts, with a goal of having a group tour of Vietnam. Some members expressed a desire to return, provided they

*Continued next page . . .*



**YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUS 1:**

From left to right: Larry Clark, Dave Owens, Bill Ringer, Dave Grieger, and Mike McDonald. (Minus 1: Mike Law)

Photo by Terrie Clark



## BUSINESS MEETING, *Continued*

were flying a gunship. Details of any negotiated tour to Vietnam, including estimates of cost, will be published in the newsletter.

The last item of business was the election of a new Vice President and one Member-at-Large. There were 12 candidates for each open office. Each candidate had a few minutes to address the meeting prior to the ballots being distributed. DAVE GRIEGER requested he be deleted as a candidate for Vice President, because he didn't feel quite ready for the position at the moment, realizing this year's Vice President is next year's President, and considering the responsibility of that office. ROGER GOULD asked to be removed from contention for both Member-at-Large and Vice President, because with his present workload as Newsletter Editor he couldn't do justice to these positions. All VHPA positions are volunteer non-paying jobs, done in addition to the fulltime employment required to keep nasty Bill Collectors at bay. A short coffee break was taken while the ballots were counted and then the winners were announced. The new Vice President is MIKE McDONALD, this year's Reunion Committee Chairman and a Member-at-Large on last year's Executive Council. The new Member-at-Large is DAVE GRIEGER.

For those of you who don't know him, DAVE GRIEGER has been one of the prime movers of our young organization. He served in Vietnam 1968-69, with the 176th Assault Helicopter Company, Americal Division at Chu Lai. Dave left the service in 1979, with over 13 years service,

after becoming disabled in an 1978 aviation ground accident. In 1982 he started "D&G Products" and has become the VHPA's "ole T-shirt Peddler." Currently his company is the only source of official VHPA Items. We can thank Dave for the VHPA Logo, which was his design, and for numerous other items, that along with the logo, give our group visible identity. Dave has provided this service in spite of considerable financial risks.

Since MIKE McDONALD had one year remaining on his term as Member-at-Large, C. DAVID OWENS, the runner-up to DAVE GRIEGER, was named to fill Mike's vacated position. DAVE OWENS is a pilot for AIR LOGISTICS and also operates his own aviation consulting firm, AVIATION SPECTRUM, INC., located in The Woodlands, just north of Houston. He served with C Troop, 16th CAV. during his 1971-72 Vietnam tour.

At their meeting, the ladies voted on a motion to start a Women's Auxiliary to the VHPA. KATHY USTER will head up this group of lovely ladies and her first efforts will be directed toward preparing a Constitution/By-Laws and beginning a Newsletter column. The women's goal is to assist the men and the VHPA in every way possible. During both reunions the ladies have been most helpful, taking care of many details that made each meeting a success. A prime example this year was the Hawaiian leis and table decorations. Let's not forget, the reunions are not just for the guys; the gals enjoy talking with each other and comparing "war stories" too.



Annual Business Meeting — ugh! What a crew!!

Photo by Terrie Clark

## 1985-86 Committee Chairmen

### Membership

Ron Wright

Joe Schreiber

### Public Relations

Chuck Neubert

### Nominating

Bill Rheams

### Reunion

Jay Elliott

### Historical

Dan Hutchinson

### Records/Data Base

Mike Law

### Newsletter Editor

Roger Gould

### Women's Auxiliary

Kathy Uster

## Get in on the History

The Historical Committee is preparing a report concerning the direction the VHPA should take in preserving the history of Vietnam Era Helicopters and Pilots. They need to hear from you folks with information on museums, archives, displays, collections, documents, or studies pertaining to these subjects. Please contact the Historical Committee Chairman, DAN HUTCHINSON, P.O. Box 7733, Boise, Idaho 83707. Phone: (208) 345-9375.



# The WVHPA Column

by Kathy Uster and Sue Gould

## CALLING ALL WIVES, DAUGHTERS AND WIDOWS OF VHPA MEMBERS

... Are you interested in actively supporting your VHP's in a true labor of love?? If so, we need your help and participation in building our auxiliary. Our purpose is to assist the VHPA's reunion committee with registration and to serve as official hostesses at reunion social functions. An additional goal is to promote membership in the VHPA and to assist in local, city, and state get togethers, in order to keep in touch with VHPA members unable to attend national reunions.

We have been referred to as "the tag-a-longs"; but, any of you who were part of the "tag-a-long" group that helped with the registration this year knows this name is not very appropriate. Especially, considering we worked many hours registering participants in VHPA activities. We need a "catchy nickname" — so, if you have any suggestions, please send them within two weeks of receiving this newsletter. Submitted names will be published in the next newsletter, at which time you will have a chance to vote for your favorite.

At the Houston reunion, the ladies had a get together, while our men were in their business meeting. The get together was opened with the dedication of "Precious Being," followed by a fashion show and color draping demonstration. At the next reunion, in addition to the ladies get together, we would like to have a special time for the auxiliary to meet for a



Beauty in our midst! Wendy McDonald models something blue for the gals — in the background, Tamara Faubion of "Color & Clothes" sponsored the Ladies Fashion Show. Photo by Terrie Clark

personal sharing, away from husbands and nonauxiliary members, to bond new friendships and to renew old ones.

Any eligible ladies wishing to be a part of the WVHPA, please send your name, address, and phone number to KATHRYN M. USTER, WVHPA Committee Chairman, [REDACTED] on 85282. Phone: [REDACTED] We will contact you with the specific area, of our outstanding group, where you will be the most helpful. Also, feel free to contribute to this column, which will be a continuing feature of the WVHPA newsletter. Thank you for your support.

## Member News

JOHN H. VANDEVER is writing a fiction novel about Dust-Off activities during the 1966-67 and was a SIP with the 17th Group during a second trip to Charlieville in 1969-70. After leaving the Army in 1970, he acquired a Masters Degree in Geology from Wright State University. Following a stint with the world's biggest oil company, EXXON, George decided to do his own thing. If you run into the "Old Rock Doc" over in East Texas someday, ask him about Vietnam rocks that shoot back, 12.75mm style.

VHPA's Life Member, GEORGE B. HARRISON, is president of his own oil company. George flew with the 155th AHC out of Ban Me Thout his first tour in 1966-67 and was a SIP with the 17th Group during a second trip to Charlieville in 1969-70. After leaving the Army in 1970, he acquired a Masters Degree in Geology from Wright State University. Following a stint with the world's biggest oil company, EXXON, George decided to do his own thing. If you run into the "Old Rock Doc" over in East Texas someday, ask him about Vietnam rocks that shoot back, 12.75mm style.

## New Life Members

Since your 1985 Directory was published, the following folks have sprung for 300 big ones to become Life Members.

### ROBERT HARGROVE

A Movie/TV Producer from sunny California.

### EDWARD ACUNA, JR.

Owner of Gulf Coast Helicopters, near Houston.

### DAVE GRIEGER

Owner of D&G Products.

Hopefully we will be able to report more about these fine gentlemen in future MEMBER NEWS columns.

## Our Wall

Without exception, reports of visits to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial describe the need to touch the names on the wall; how touching, the conduit to the soul, gives real meaning to the experience. In a most beautiful poem, titled "Thanks, Nurse," Diane Carlson Evans, a Vietnam Veteran Army Nurse shares her encounter with the wall and says what so many have felt but found impossible to relate.

Editor

Excerpt from "THANKS, NURSE"  
by Diane Carlson Evans  
Copyright 1983

*Facing the wall, I encounter  
Something I left behind me so many  
Years ago.  
I am at that moment lifted away  
And reunited with those who suffered  
And died and had left me  
Alone.*

*Left me alone, with the memories of them.  
And left me too numb to cry.  
As I put my hands on the hard granite  
And touched the names of those who  
Died, 1968-'69, I no longer  
Felt alone.*

*Those who had died, came back  
At that moment,  
Allowed me to grieve, embraced me  
And touched a part of my  
Soul I had thought was gone.  
That vague place in my life,  
Vietnam, which could not bring forth  
Emotion or feelings  
Or tears.*

*It was such a relief to cry now, to  
Feel again. It was so strange.  
I felt unbearable sadness, and yet  
Set free -- free of an intangible  
Burden.*

*That beautiful black granite  
Wall, now carries the burden  
For me.  
And for us all.*

*It carries the names and souls,  
The memories, of those who died  
In Vietnam.  
It shelters them with respect  
And dignity.*





## VHPA to Attend 'Firebase Colorado; LZ 85'

Your association will participate in a 3 day Welcome Home Encampment titled, "Firebase Colorado; LZ 85", to be held November 9-11, 1985 at the Fort Collins/Loveland Colorado Airport. Plans are being made to set up a booth and provide a hospitality tent.

The event will feature a Writer's Symposium hosted by the author of *Vietnam Voices*, Professor JOHN CLARK PRATT of Colorado State University; a static display of Vietnam Era Helicopters; and a traveling 1/2-scale model of "The Wall." Numerous celebrities, including GLENN FREY of the Eagles/"Miami Vice", MIKE

FARRELL of "M.A.S.H.", and CHARLIE DANIELS are planning to be there.

The Honorable RICHARD LAMM, Governor of Colorado and The Honorable ED HERSCHLER, Governor of Wyoming, have proclaimed November 4-11, 1985 "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Week" and personally invite ALL Vietnam Veterans to attend.

This will be a great way to spend your "Veteran's Day" weekend. Please contact BILL RINGER for additional details and to schedule your participation in VHPA sponsored activities.

## '85 Reunion Photo Memory Book

Publisher schedules, layout requirements, and the time required to obtain proof approvals will delay distribution of the Reunion Photo Memory Book until mid November. It's not too late to have your favorite reunion photos included. Please send them to RON WRIGHT, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] before September 6, 1985.



*Into the pool with Ron Wright; sure hope the Hotel fed the sharks!*

Photos by Jim Ratcliff



*Hey Jake! Lookee here! Another OLD Helicopter Pilot with a YOUNG SEXY Wife. (Paul & Kathy Uster)*



## Records and Data Base Committee Needs Your Help

We are very interested in establishing a data base of flight school rosters. Please send copies of your flight school orders, graduation ceremony lists, or any other documents identifying class members to PAUL S. ERWAY, 12710 Hollandale, Houston, Texas 77082. We hope to cross reference these lists with information we already have and publish the results in the next membership directory.

## Upcoming Events

September 24-26, 1985

**National Business Aircraft Association 38th Annual Meeting and Convention.** New Orleans Convention Center, New Orleans, LA. Information: NBAA (202) 783-9000.

October 9-12, 1985

**Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association 30th Annual Convention and Industry Exhibit.** The Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C. Call: (301) 695-2052.

November 6-8, 1985

**Vertical Flight Technology Seminar and International Tour.** Jingling Hotel, Nasjing, China. Contact: American Helicopter Society (703) 684-6777.

November 9-11, 1985

**Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans 3 Day Encampment, Rocky Mountain Region, Firebase, Colorado, LZ 85,** Loveland-Fort Collins Airport. Information: Alan Brett (303) 221-5176.

January 26-28, 1986

**Helicopter Association International Annual Convention,** Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Details: (202) 466-2420.

January, 1986

**Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Mid-Winter Meeting.** In conjunction with the HAI convention in Anaheim, CA. Watch the next VHPA Newsletter for details.







Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association  
P.O. Box 35699 — Phoenix, Arizona 85069



Annual Dues \$ 20.00  
Life 300.00

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
and  
CHANGE OF ADDRESS**  
(Circle One)

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ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ SERVICE BRANCH \_\_\_\_\_

Information about EACH Vietnam Tour:

DATE		UNIT	LOCATION	CALL SIGN
From	To			

Total Combat Hours \_\_\_\_\_ Would you like to attend next year's reunion? \_\_\_\_\_

Present occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: (Models of helicopters flown, hobbies, talents of value to VHPA, telephone, medals & awards, etc.)

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY CORRECTION**

CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ VIETNAM TOUR INFO \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

CALL SIGNS \_\_\_\_\_

KIA/MIA/DECEASED LISTING \_\_\_\_\_





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