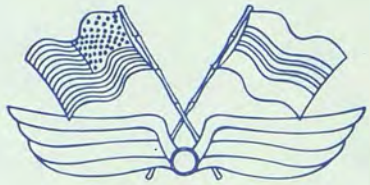
VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

The VHPA Newsletter

P.O. Box 35699 Phoenix, Arizona 85069 May 1986

NO SWEAT, JAKE! Those VHPA guys can fly the "box it came in." ***photo by Larry Clark***



FROM THE EDITOR:

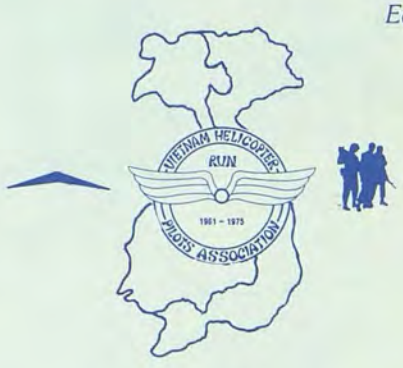
Never did care too much for editorials; they frequently are upsetting, just some "turkey" laying on their personal opinion about some issue or appealing for involvement of some kind. So, wouldn't you know it; here we are carrying on in the same way. Oh well, "When in Rome ..."

It has been stated many times, the VHPA is only a social organization! NO WAYOUT CAUSES, NO HATE MARCHES, and NO "burn 'em at the stake" CRUSADES. Just a bunch of helicopter pilots, rapidly overtaking middle age, trying to enjoy each other's friendship and show the world where we were and what we did there. Judging from the mail we receive, it seems we're being "awful darn" successful at it. In the process, we are also dealing with the agonies of our experience and sharing that part of our life with our loved ones. In many cases, an experience that happened before that special woman became our wife and our children began their turn at living. The mail has also pointed out that our association has been of value to others, our non-pilot comrades, helping them deal with and share "their Vietnam" in the same manner. All in all, a pretty worthy reason for existence.

On another subject, except for *Incoming Mail* (which has been a real joy), your Newsletter has not generated the member participation we had anticipated. A participation that is essential if this publication is to continue, expand, and improve. YOUR PHOTOS, ARTICLES, and HELP SOLICITING REVENUE ADS are desperately needed. Surely someone of you can get something started towards motivating this independent gaggle of heli-ca-peter drivers to contribute. Do you think this needs to be discussed at the annual business meeting?

Mention of the annual business meeting reminds us of another urgent request. Your Committee Chairmen need agenda ideas. Jot down what you would like addressed at the meeting and send it to the appropriate Chairman. Next stop ... "Watergate City"!

Roger Gould
Editor



"We Shall Not Forget You!"

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The VHPA NEWSLETTER is published quarterly by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, P.O. Box 35699, Phoenix, AZ 85069.

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

HELICOPTER 'TACKS

Well, here it is! I'm coming across with a lifetime membership. Although I have not had the opportunity to participate in any of the activities yet, the fact that your membership list helped me to find my two best buddies from 'Nam last year makes the $300 worth it. Plus, you guys (and gals) do seem to have your act together.

Unfortunately, I will not be attending the D.C. reunion due to family plans that weekend, but the two aforementioned friends are supposed to get together with me for the Statue of Liberty's rededication ceremonies on July the Fourth. Anaheim in 1987 sounds real good though.

If it's possible, could you put a small note in one of your next newsletters concerning my pursuit of helicopter pins (tacks) for my extensive collection. I am willing to correspond for trading purposes with other collectors. Keep up the good work.

George Jones
[redacted]

Super! Just what the VHPA is for, George, finding old buddies. Now if you can improve your collection, the Life Membership will really have paid off. Ed.

"JAYHAWKS, READ & WRITE?"

I wanted to be one of the first to send in the correct answer to the "What is it?" quiz. As a former member of the unit in question I know for a fact that there were at least 6 or 8 of us that could read and write (all slick pilots of course) so I am sure you will receive at least a couple more correct answers. The unit in question is of course the 9th Avn Bn of the 9th Inf Div, better known as the "Jayhawks". They were stationed in Bearcat in '67 to '68 and then moved to Dong Tam. The Jayhawks originated in the states at Fort Riley, Kansas, which is, as everybody knows, the "Jayhawk" state.

The gunships of the 9th Div, that did such a super job covering us in tight spots, were called the "Stingrays". Where and how they came by that name is a mystery to all of us.

I am looking forward to the next "What is it?" quiz. Hope it is as easy as this one.

Terry Ritchey
c/o Dana Corp.
[redacted]

You're right, Terry, we did receive a "couple" more correct answers. No idea how those "sea creatures" got mixed up with the "birds". Maybe someone out there could give us a clue. Ed.

"TORNADO RED" WANTS YOU!

I just received my first VHPA Newsletter. Good job. We are spreading the word around the hangar at the 135th Avn Bn, Kansas Army National Guard.

Due to a reorganization, I will have 25 additional warrant officer slots come October 1, 1986, in our battalion. Please run the following in your *Looking For* .. column: Needed - 25 UH1H Warrant Officer pilots by 1 October 1986, for a new Aviation Battalion in the Kansas Army National Guard. Contact CHARLIE RAYL, Battalion Commander.

Charlie Rayl
(Tornado Red)
[redacted]

Thought your request would get more attention here, Charlie. If "Uncle Sugar" wouldn't stop our retirement pay, we'd be tempted. Ed.

ANOTHER JAYHAWK

Your correct answer to the "What is it?" is "Jayhawks" from A Co, 9th Avn Bn, 9th Inf Div, that was stationed at Bearcat and later moved to Dong Tam. I flew for the Jayhawks for 9 months - our basic operational mission was to support the 9th Inf Div, flying the Delta. Appreciate the Newsletter.

Douglas Miller
[redacted]

Ever thought about switching from the "Tar Heel" National Guard to the "Jayhawk" Guard, Doug? Bet "Tornado Red" is looking for you! Wouldn't happen to know why the 9th Avn guns were called the "Stingrays", would you? Ed.

"RUNNING THE BULLS"

Reading the newsletter really brings back memories; some pleasant, some bad. Keep up the good work.

Is there any chance that you could change the date of the Reunion in the future? Unfortunately the reunion is always the same time as the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, Spain, July 6-14. I have been going for the past five years and it is something that I just have to do. I would love to come to a reunion, but Pamplona is Pamplona!

Tom Nollner
13th AFSC CAD
APO NY 09035

Now this leaves no doubt about the sanity of helicopter pilots. Don't slip in the bull ..., Tom. And 5 years yet!! Ed.

MADE THE TEAM!

When I sent my Life Membership in I indicated that I was going to try to make the US Precision Helicopter Team. Well, the good news is that I made the team along with my co-pilot, who is the inspiration of our team, Ken Wright. We finished seventh in the national trials held at Fort Rucker in mid February. Eight teams were selected out of 28 competitors based on total points. Of these eight teams, only five will compete in the international competition to be held at Castle Ashby, England 22-28 June '86.

The US team is made up of seven active Army crews and one from the Texas National Guard. No civilians qualified for the team. Only two civilian teams competed in the national trials primarily due to cost. We are representing the United States and the Helicopter Club of America, not the Army and as such it would be nice in the future to have a civilian crew on the team. The point of all this rambling is that as our organization grows maybe it would be possible to sponsor or cosponsor a crew in one of the future competitions which are held every four years. I know there are some very capable folks in our organization that could compete if they had the sponsorship. I also believe it would be good for the organization in the long run to become a sponsor. Just an idea for the future.

I guess I sould quit trying to spend VHPA money and get this in the mail.

Continued on next page

One final note, the team will be flying at a couple of airshows between now and our June departure. Mobile, Alabama is the only confirmed show right now and we're scheduled to demonstrate the events on 5 April 86 with morning and afternoon flights. Hope to see some VHPA members there.

John Loftice
(Darkhorse 37)
[redacted]

From what we hear, John, there wasn't much doubt about your making the team, understand you're a pretty fine "stick". Maybe the idea of the VHPA sponsoring a team could be tossed around at the Annual Business Meeting. Sorry our publication schedule is such that we were unable to announce your first airshow in time. Ed.

"PATCH HISTORY"

With regard to your "What is it?" on the back cover of the Newsletter, it looks like a Jayhawk, the mascot and callsign of A Co., 9th Avn Bn, out of Dong Tam (in the Delta, southwest of Saigon). I joined the 3rd Bde of the 9th Inf Div after the 1st and 2nd Brigades went home in mid '69, but there were some "old guys" left at Tan An. One of them, Mike Jorda, gave me an example of the Jayhawk patch that matches the nose art shown.

Incidently, I am trying to document the history of Army aviation in Vietnam as represented by the pocket patches worn in-country. Perhaps some members have examples that they would like to donate or sell for the cause. If so, I would appreciate hearing from them. Thanks.

Tom Murphy
(Merkin 10)
[redacted]

Sounds like you picked yourself a "hell-of-a" job, Tom. If you ever get through it, the VHPA would be interested in your "patch history." That would be a neat addition to our archives. Ed.

FROM ENGLAND, NEED "PHOENIX"

I was not a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, but I was a crewchief, and the reason for this letter is that I hope you can help me.

I served with C Co, 158th Avn Bn, 101st Airborne Div, '70 to '71. Our base was Camp Evans. What I would like to know is if any of your members were in the unit? If so do they have a photo of the unit patch "Phoenix". Also, does anyone have the A Co patch "Ghostriders".

I lost both of the above patches in a fire and I want to have them remade if I can get a photo. I wrote the 101st, but they don't have either.

John Devins
[redacted]

See the previous letter, John. Maybe Tom can help you out. Also, we'd be interested in hearing how you ended up in "Jolly Ole England." Ed.

"FROM HIM & HIS SON"

My name is David Schumacher. I was a doorgunner in Vietnam on two tours. A couple of years ago I lost everything in a house fire. Since then I have been trying to get patches of the units I flew with. I want to have them for myself and my twelve year old son. I am hoping that in some way your organization can help me find some patches. I will gladly pay for them.

I flew for three units in my two tours. They were: B Co, 123rd Avn Bn, "The Warlords"; the 174th Avn Co, "The Dolphins"; and the 282nd AHC, "The Blackcats".

Can your pilots association help me locate patches for my units? It is most important to me. I will pay any price for them. And if I can't get the patches I would settle for good pictures of the patches. I will anxiously await a reply.

David Schumacher
[redacted]

Sure hope some VHPA member reading this can help, Dave. Maybe Tom Murphy; see his letter in this column. We know how important it is to share the 'Nam experience with your offspring. Ed.

I am writing you for two reasons. To begin with, I am interested in your organization. While I am not eligible for membership, we have students getting recurrency training which might be. For this reason, I would appreciate it if you could send me information regarding your association (possibly a sample of your newsletter, etc.)

My second reason for contacting your organization is that we are an instruction facility which would be interested in providing recurrency training for any of your members who are not currently flying but would like to get back into it.

I have enclosed information regarding our facility and the costs of training. If you have further questions, feel free to give me a call at (503) 648-2831. Also, I look forward to receiving your information. Thanks.

Scott D. Pickell
[redacted]

Glad to print your letter, Scott. Don't have room for the other information, but it looks like you have a good program. Like your logo, better than a title! P.S. We'd be happy to run an ad for you. See our low rates on page 14. Ed.

GOT HOSKINSON'S ZIPPO!

I am trying to find a pilot and I hope you will able to include my request in the next newsletter. All I know is his last name, HOSKINSON, and that he served in the "Casper" platoon of the 173rd Airborne Bde, probably in 1968 or 1969. I have his engraved Zippo lighter and I'm sure he would like to have it back. I don't even know how I ended up with it because I served my tour in the Delta (Vinh Long and Soc Trang) and don't remember anyone by this name. But I've been toting the damn thing around with me for all this time and finally, thru the VHPA, there is a chance to get it back to him. Hope you can help.

Congrats on a really fine newsletter, one of the best association newsletters I've seen, very informative and helpful. I know it's hard work; I do one myself for a much smaller organization. Well done!! Keep it in the green, see ya in D.C.

Bob Miller
[redacted]

That's the trouble with "Delta Fever", one can pick up all sorts of things and never remember a thing. Bob, you and

Continued on next page

Boyd Wynne ought to trade notes, he's trying to return this shoe brush and ... Seriously, thanks for the "pat on the back" and when you locate Hoskinson how about letting us know how it went. Ed.

THRILLS!

Tidbit ... I had the rare pleasure of flying some brass into the Pentagon over the summer. To say it is a thrill to get clearances/vectors/etc. to land at the Pentagon is an understatement ... but the biggest thrill comes on takeoff when the route banks almost at tree top level smack dab over the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. I looked down between the pedals of my Huey to see the guys looking up beside the Wall. Not so long ago it was me down there by the Wall, mouth drooling when I saw a Huey bank overhead. It is some rush to be at the Wall and hear/see a Huey blast over ... The ULTIMATE RUSH, comes with collective/cyclic in hand.

(Philip) Cary Shelton

Know how it feels, Cary. We spent six years flying the D.C. area, out of Davison AAF. The Washington low level routes are even more stimulating at night. Ed.

KENTUCKY "BLACKHAWKS"

In Feb's Member News, you mentioned the fact that Phillip Cary Shelton is in the 29th Avn Co, Virginia National Guard. The ONLY Guard unit with UH60 Blackhawks. NOPE! You guessed wrong. The Kentucky Guard here in Frankfort, Ky has had Blackhawks since DEC '82. C Co, 42 Avn Bn, soon to become the 718th Combat Avn Co, has been operating UH60 Blackhawks since Oct '85.

Your story on Cary could read the same for Jim Fulcher, also a member of VHPA, he originally flew me off Hill 875 in Dakto in Nov '67 when I was a grunt with the 173rd Airborne Bde. Eighteen years later he's my student here in the Ky Guard, getting his instrument rating. (I also served a tour as a UH1 driver with the 134th AHC, Pheu Hiep, 1970). See you all in D.C.!

Cary Mendelsohn

[redacted]

How about that folks, Blackhawks hatching all over the place, and another Cary flying them! Thanks for setting the record straight, Cary. Ed.

CLASSMATES! COME ON DOWN!

I'm grateful for someone finally pulling together such an organization as the VHPA. I don't know if the enclosed information will be of assistance or not, but thought I would send it along. Enclosed is a copy of the orders for my initial RW Army Aviator designation, including those of my classmates whom I would be very much interested in locating in the near future.

If I may be of service in the future, by all means please let me know.

Jim Hamilton
Class 95-9W

You're right on target, Jim. It's precisely the kind of info the VHPA needs. Ed.

MULESKINNER & THE MOUNTAIN

Enclosed is a copy of my Graduation Exercises with class roster in case you do not have one from this class yet. I am really pleased that something positive is finally happening for Vietnam Vet Helicopter Pilots. Keep up the good work!

Also enclosed is a poem, *An Ode to Muleskinner - Christmas 1968*, written by a Maj. Dutcher, C.O. of Nui Ba Den (a mountain top radio relay station near Tay Ninh) that I found while looking for the class roster.

My hootch mate, Mike Ryan, tried to deliver a Christmas tree to Nui Ba Den Mountain that Christmas after receiving this poem, but was unable to pull a palm tree out of the ground at a fire base called Mole City. He figured a palm tree had shallow roots and would make a startling living Christmas tree on top of the 3,000 foot barren "Black Virgin Mountain", as the Vietnamese called it, but even with the power of a Chinook the tree would not budge. A second attempt was scheduled for the next day with the assistance of a little C-4, but Charlie attacked Mole City that night and the tree was destroyed.

Flying to "the mountain", which we did nearly every day since we were their primary means of resupply, never lacked excitement. If not having to dodge the clouds or radio antennas, it was hovering with a sling load while indicating 30 knots with gusts to 50 or remembering to carry a lighter load because of the high density altitude.

One morning while enroute to routinely resupply the mountain, I noticed several miles out that they were "socked in" so I switched to their frequency on "Fox Mike" to confirm a weather delay in their resupply sorties. What I learned was that they had been overrun during the night and were desperate to get 22 wounded evacuated. The medivac Hueys had been unsuccessful in landing because of the clouds and the C.O. was practically begging us to try. We made two attempts with the C.O. saying, "We can hear you, but we do not have you in sight, keep on coming; you sound like you are on track." As convincing as the C.O. tried to be, it definitely was not the same as Precision Approach Radar at Ft. Rucker. After the second try and feeling relieved we did not find "the rocks in those clouds" someone came up with the idea of hovering up the side of the mountain. The Chinook had plenty of power plus, after all the many past sorties to the mountain, I knew the terrain like the back of my hand. The only problem was where was Charlie? We rationalized that if our troops could not see us, neither could Charlie, so to the base of the cloud layer we went to hover IFR up the side of the mountain hopefully lined up on the resupply pad and not their bank of antennas. After what seemed like hours with the pilot calling out vertical speed and altitude and the left door gunner calling out obstacles, the welcomed sight of the PSP of the landing pad appeared. Fortunately we could take all of the 22 wounded at once because I certainly did not want to do that again. But what about the departure? My memory recalled the antennas straight ahead and the bunkers with RPG fences on either side so a vertical or 180 degree departure were the only two alternatives other than hovering back down the side like we had come up.

I had one instructor at Ft. Wolters who taught me how to do backward takeoffs and Captain Runk at Ft. Rucker taught me 0/0 takeoffs under the hood, but somehow they just did not fit together. A vertical takeoff was certainly possible but how high did the clouds go and how would we avoid the mountains on the way down? The only logical procedure was a hovering 180 degree turn and then a 0/0 standard takeoff on the back course of a normal approach until we were sure to be clear of the mountain, then a standard descent out of the clouds just like a VOR approach. Sounds simple but how do you hover IFR in a tight LZ? No one thought to teach me that! But wait, I have made this turn hundreds of times in good weather, so with a little care and concentration on the instruments and

Continued on next page

the other four pairs of eyes to help stay over the pad it should work. There was no way I was going to stay on top of that mountain until the weather cleared.

The plan worked, marking my first and last 0/0 takeoff and landing in actual weather. After dropping off the wounded at Tay Ninh Hospital, we went back for the KIAs but decided it was not worth the risk. Another Chinook picked them up after the weather cleared. My thanks to Capt. Adam Runk for the fine instrument training he gave me.

Also thanks to you for finding me. I look forward to meeting you in Washington, D.C. in July.

Gary B. Roush

[redacted]

All you Instrument IP's take note. Happy to have found you, Gary. Like the name of the town you live in. We're sorry, there just wasn't space for the poem. Ed.

WHERE'S THE PICTURES?

I think the VHPA is a great organization. So keep up the spirit. I would like to inquire about the Annual that was to be published with pictures of the last Reunion. I have already paid $10.00 and I haven't received any info yet.

Tom Schultz

You got that right, Tom, although Great is an understatement. By now you should have received the Annual, we got ours several weeks ago. Sorry for the delay; we were given the standard excuses. Ed.

HAPPY VHPA TEAM!

Enclosed you will find our registration for the Reunion in D.C. this July. This is the first convention of the VHPA we will attend. My husband and I are both excited about attending.

We would both like to say how much we enjoy reading the newsletter. I read it and enjoy it as much as my husband does. You have all done a great job. We are always looking for names of fellow pilots that went through school or were in Vietnam with my husband. We look forward to meeting all of you at the convention.

Barbara Shields

Thanks for the nice words, Barbara. Sure does the "ole SAS box" good to know the gals are as enthusiastic about our association as the "ugly halves". Ed.

AVIATION AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER

Last August you kindly included an ad from me in your Newsletter asking for help with a book I am writing on Vietnam Air War.

The book is still underway, but in the meantime a shortened version is being published in *Aeroplane Monthly* magazine and I enclose copies of the first three for your interest.

Unfortunately, my request for help resulted in only two replies, both of whom were very helpful and their stories and photographs will appear later in the series and in the book. I would still like to contact more pilots and wonder if you could perhaps run the ad again and mention that the show is actually on the road and that I am not about to waste anybody's time.

Last but not least, could you tell me if any reunions are planned during 1986. Perhaps I can come over with tape recorder if there are.

Many thanks for your help.

Phil Chinnery

[redacted]

Alright! You do good work, Phil. What you have so far is about as comprehensive as we've seen. When the book is completed we're sure many VHPA members will want a copy. By the way, we wouldn't refuse any Vietnam Era helicopter photos for our cover, if you were so inclined. Ed.

WINTER REUNION

Thank you ever so much for having a winter reunion. Having it tied in with the Helicopter Convention was an excellent thought. It gave many of us the best opportunity to be there and see old buddies and friends. I saw fellows I'd not seen since 1968. The meeting was one of the high points of 1985 for me. Thanks again. I'll try hard not to miss the next winter meeting, too.

Michael Bucove
(Spook)

[redacted]

Now calm down, Mike. You really must have enjoyed yourself, considering the HAI Convention was during the first month of 1986. Sure glad things worked out, 'cause we don't need any unhappy "Spooks" around. Ed.

"FLYING TRIBUTE"

First of all, I would like to commend you and your staff on the excellent job you've done with the newsletter. I've been involved with similar projects and know how much work is involved. Just know that we're all behind you and appreciate your efforts.

I'd like to share what I feel was a very timely and unique experience for myself and other members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard (D Co., 47th Avn Bn (Atk Hel), Madison, Wisconsin) at the EAA Annual Airshow at Oshkosh, Wisconsin last summer. The EAA had the foresight to pay tribute to the veterans of the Vietnam conflict and invited us to fly a mock combat assault at the airshow. We eagerly accepted! Our portion of the show was led by a B52 "Arc Light" (complete with some all too real pyrotechnics!!!). The B52 was closely followed by a flight of F4's. Then a heavy gun team of AH1's prepped the LZ for the flight of eight UH1's. The CA was complete with "grunts" who later joined up to stand at attention and salute to the tune of "Taps". This was emotionally accompanied by the first ever "Missing Man" formation to be flown by AH1G Cobra gunships.

The airshow announcer's comment to us as we departed the area was "it's amazing, there's close to 400,000 people here, and you can hear a pin drop down there." It was a very emotional experience for myself and most of the other guys. We attempted to crew the aircraft with vets from 'Nam, where it was possible. Fortunately, the whole sequence was captured on video tape and with the cooperation of the EAA, I am endeavoring to obtain a copy of the event to bring along and share with the rest of the crew at the reunion in July. Never will there be a better audience! The British flew their Concord in for the big event, but I think that everybody would agree that the tribute was by far the highlight of the airshow. It's too bad it was so long in coming. I am also attempting to get a copy of the video for the VHPA archives as a permanent testimonial to ourselves that, although a long period of time has expired since our last sortie, people did notice and all that we did (or attempted to do) wasn't for naught! See you in D.C., and keep up the great work.

Randy Zahn
(Cavalier 24)

[redacted]

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WOW! Some natural high, wish we had been there. Only thing probably missing was live AA and the smell. Great report, Randy; want a job? Also, the "staff" thanks you for the comment. Ed.

"DIFFERENT BREED OF CAT"

As a new member, I was pleased to receive my first copy of the VHPA newsletter. The letters from other members are fascinating. I find that I identify very strongly with so many of the experiences and points of view expressed by the letters, commentary and editorials.

I am grateful to you people for the effort put into organizing the VHPA. It is indeed a strong brotherhood that we share, and the VHPA is going to be very valuable in bringing that brotherhood together. Many times over the years I have been reminded of the sign that hung over the gate to the WOC preflight barracks area at Fort Wolter, stating, "Through these gates walk a Different Breed of Cat." We were made to feel proud of ourselves, our cause, and our abilities, a pride that was justified, but unfortunately, unrecognized and unappreciated. This has been the source of much pain, anger, and bitterness for so many. Organizations such as the VHPA will do much toward healing some of these old wounds.

Having worked in civilian helicopter aviation as a pilot since 1973, I have noted that many Vietnam veteran pilots are wanderers from place to place and job to job; always moving, always seeking. Many have had trouble making lasting commitments of any kind, but especially job and family commitments. I wonder if many are not subconsciously seeking to match the intensity of the Vietnam experience. It would be interesting to hear some VHPA member feedback on this.

I am sending along a picture you might enjoy as a sequel to "Deadly Shadow", on the last cover of the newsletter. As you can tell, we hunt coyotes here in Wyoming, on government contract, with a Hiller UH-12E, what we used to call an OH23G, way back then! Again, thanks!

Jerry Ewen
(Dustoff 43 & 57)
[redacted]

Roger that! You said a mouthful, Jerry; hope we can get some feedback on your subject. "Way back when" was also OH23D for us, instead of coyotes, it was "cows along the Brazos." Ed.

Deadly Shadow II ***photo by J. Ewen***

STILL FIGHTING THE WAR!

In an effort to help a friend who is still fighting the Vietnam war, I am writing in hope of information.

For some time I have been searching for members of the 175th AHC, "Outlaws", based near Vinh Long. Also, those in MACV, IV Corps or for any one who was at the battle on Easter Sunday, Vinh Long, March 26, 1967. Also those who with the 146th Avn Co, 1971.

Any suggestions or assistance in efforts to reunite and support Vietnam Veterans will be most gratefully appreciated.

Linda Riutta
[redacted]

You heard it, "Outlaws", Linda needs some help and that's what we do best. Linda, maybe Richard Dyer or James Bloxsom will respond to your request; both were "Outlaws" in 'Nam. Ed.

"MILLION DOLLAR EXPERIENCE"

Words can't describe the excitement I felt when first hearing that an association actually exists that is composed only of helicopter pilots who served in Vietnam. Despite belonging to the DAV, VFW, and VVA, I had never really felt like a "true" member. VHPA is like a dream come true. In a way, it was like I finally came home.

Imagine the excitement I felt at noticing my name in the "Member News" section of the February newsletter. I actually cried. There is a special feeling of honor and pride that comes from being "recognized by your own." Still, I would like to correct any misperceptions that article may have caused.

Concerning the "Guts of the Century Award" comment, I was indeed flattered. But, when I think of this recognition, I also think MANY times I wet my faded fatigues as bullets came through my door or just about anywhere else. I can remember one time when a hole suddenly appeared on the "window" in front of me (a little to the left of my head, thank God) and I EVACUATED -- spontaneously and immediately. When I received my orders for 'Nam I was 19. Less than four months later, after having been shot down three times, I was/felt 110.

Yes, 1967 was quite a year, a million dollar experience I would not pay a nickel to relive. But, I would do it all

Continued on next page

again (even the three years in the hospital) to relive the comradery and friendships I felt in flight school (66-21) and in Vietnam '67. The VHPA serves to reconnect us in a positive way to what for many of us was the most exciting period of our lives, and I am PROUD to be a member. It feels good (great) to finally "belong". If any members of Class 66-21 would like to write to me, I would really appreciate it. I heard of several of our classmates who were killed and would like to compare notes.

By the time this letter is printed, my wife and I will have moved to San Diego, California, where I will be attending the University of San Diego School of Law.

James Meade, Jr., Ph.D.

[redacted]

No question about it, Jim, you are a "true" VHPA member, and we're PROUD to have you with us. Also agree, "in Spads", with the feeling 'Nam was a "million dollar experience" one would not pay a nickel to relive. Ed.

15 YEARS!

You have a real great idea that you seem to have put into action. Several of the guys I was with for 5 years have wanted to get as many together as possible. Your organization could be a good focal point for us. It has been 15 years for my bunch and it appears to be time to get together again. Thanks for taking the time to organize the VHPA for all of us.

Dave Schmitz

[redacted]

You're right, Dave. It has been 15 years or longer for most of us, seems like only yesterday. Just shows you how profound the experience was. By the way, it's not just our organization, it's YOUR!! organization. Ed.

VHPA HELPED

I am writing to let you know that we have located Paul Matix and others. I believe your pilots association may be connected in our locating Paul and others. My contacts have been with a couple of the pilots who were with the "Muskets". I guess they have been putting together names for a year or so, and last year 13 guys from the Muskets got together in September. They plan on doing it again this year and my husband is planning on attending.

I do understand your not letting your Membership Directory out. I understand that your members want their privacy and I do respect that. Again, I do thank you. I really do feel that your Association has helped.

Christine Bacon

[redacted]

You're welcome, Christine. Why not get all those "Muskets" to join the VHPA, then they could see each other, plus the rest of us, at the annual reunion. We also appreciate your understanding concerning our Membership Directory. Ed.

READY FOR THE REUNION

Please find enclosed my reunion registration and check, and my 1986 dues check. My wife and I are looking forward to the reunion. I appreciate the job being done by the leadership of the association and trust that I shall begin to contribute my share to insure the continued success of the organization.

Richard McClain

[redacted]

We appreciate your early registration, Richard. See, you're contributing already. Ed.

Letters from Pleiku

As we promised, following are two more poems from Mike O'Donnell's "Letters from Pleiku". They were written six and four days, respectively, before his death over Cambodia. *Ed.*

I have tasted the air
in the early morning, before the sun
and before the day ...
I have it run all
down my face
and stain my clothes
and I have learned to wash myself
with the part of the day
that remains ...
I am drying in the sun at Dak To.
I am each day
becoming less interested
in the way the morning tastes
and I am drying in the sun at Dak To ...
I am dying in the sun at Dak To.
18 March 1970

I don't spend much time
inside of mirrors anymore,
waiting for some change
I have a rough and sandy reflection.
I guess I might even
be learning to wear my scars
and carry them like medals ...
they make a map to remind me
of some places I've been ...
I should not remember,
only the easy rolling ...
there are times though,
I still wish
I could sandpaper
myself smooth ...
20 March 1970

From the Executive Director

If any of you received a blue flyer in the mail from the VHPA asking "Did you fly helicopters in Vietnam?", it is because we mailed out 9781 East Coast and 8265 West Coast flyers to all FAA licensed helicopter pilots with at least a commercial ticket. We did not take the time to go through the mail labels and remove active VHPA members. We hope you did not respond to the flyer, as this tends to foul up the system, but passed the application along to an eligible friend.

The *1986 Member Directory* will be mailed at the end of May or the first part of June. This year's printing will not include the addresses for the inactive members. If you desire an address for one of these inactive folks, send a self addressed stamped envelope to the VHPA and we will supply what we have in the computer. Bear in mind this address may be no longer correct.

Please register early for the Washington Reunion. We expect some walk in registrations, but if we plan for 300 or 400, and 600 plus show up it's not hard to see the major problem that could develop. So let us know you are coming and we will make sure you have a place to sit at dinner and be able to hear General Westmoreland.

Larry Clark
Executive Director

S.O.S.

Just a quick call for help to all our lovely ladies that will be attending the reunion in Washington, D.C.:

WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH REGISTRATION AND MEETING & GREETING!!

We only need an hour or two of your time during the reunion to assist the VHPA reunion committee in processing all the attendees. If you have not already sent your pre-registration in, just note on that form that you are able to help; and if you have already sent your registration in, please take a minute to drop a line to:

Kathy Uster
[redacted]

Your help does make all the difference in the smooth operation of our registration efforts. Thanks!

Upcoming Events

July 2-6, 1986
LAWYER-PILOTS BAR ASSOCIATION SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING. Williamsburg, Virginia. Details: David E. Prewitt (215) 557-9998.

July 3-6, 1986
VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION 3rd ANNUAL REUNION. Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C. Info: Jay Elliott (817) 735-8810.

August 1-8, 1986
EAA INTERNATIONAL FLY-IN CONVENTION AND SPORT AVIATION EXHIBITION. Wittman Airfield, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Info: (414) 426-4800.

September 19-21, 1986
145th COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION REUNION. Kokomo, Indiana. Contact: James L. Bodkin (219) 483-5149.

October 1, 1986
281st ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY REUNION. Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. Details: Duane Brudvig (612) 425-0759.

Spring of 1987
HMM-262, PMAG-39, 1st MAW REUNION. Info: James D. Collins III, 224 Sheridan Lane, Birmingham, AL 35216.

President's Roll Call

I'm sure that many of you have heard by now that my employer is posting me back in South East Asia; Singapore, to be specific. My responsibilities will take me all over South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand and you can appreciate how excited I am to return to the land of the big PX. I don't have a home yet but please note my office address:

Bill Ringer
McDONNELL DOUGLAS
HELICOPTER COMPANY
[redacted]

I need to know the names of any Vietnam helicopter pilots in that area because I intend to start a local chapter in Singapore. Also, I would just like to continue hearing from so many members.

I guess my only regret about this new assignment is that I'll miss one of the most important reunions our organization will ever experience - Washington D.C. and the Vietnam War Memorial. I have been there twice but I really wanted to experience it with all of you. Oh well, I plan to schedule my future "home leave" around our convention and Mike McDonald is ready to take over this job. I'm very proud of the growth our organization is experiencing and the positive comments you make in your letters to me. Obviously, I want to thank so many for all of their contributions in helping us get going. I won't make a long list, you know who you are and please accept my heartfelt gratitude.

If I could be at the reunion this summer I would be expected to give a short speech at the banquet dinner. I would have spoken a little on our past, how we started, have moved on to almost 2,000 members and where I see our future. Mike will take care of those chores for me, but before I leave office I do want you to know one thing. Words can never express what an honor it is for this pilot to have served as your President. I'm sure all of you can imagine how honored I am so let's just let it go with -- THANKS!

Bill Ringer
Bikini Blue
170 AHC, Pleiku

(L to R): Tom Hauptman, Patty Hauptman, Mike Bucove, Wendy McDonald and Mike McDonald at HAI Winter Mini Reunion.
photo by Jack Breedlove.

New Life Members

GEORGE M. JONES of Wyckoff, New Jersey. George could be confused for a famous country singer, but instead is a real live Corporate Helicopter Pilot.

THOMAS L. HAUPTMAN resides in sunny Hawaii. Tom is the owner of Sunair Copters, Inc. How this sounds like our "kinda" job!

WARREN R. ROGERS is a pilot from Wood Cross, Utah. Smell that clean air, folks!

DAVIN McLAUGHLIN hangs his hat in Greely, Ontario, Canada, when he's not roaming the world as a freelance Helicopter driver. He works a lot for Viking Helicopters out of Africa.

VINCENT E. ROBINSON calls Tennyson, Indiana home base. He's a "life saver"; one fine EMS Helicopter Pilot.

JAMES L. BLOXSOM calls home Newton, Alabama. Jim is a civilian IP at "Mother Rucker".

JOHN V. BREEDLOVE from Ridgecrest, California, is a Photographer for the Naval Weapons Center at China Lake; you may have noticed some of his work elsewhere in this newsletter.

Member News

MICHAEL J. NOVOSEL, Congressional Medal of Honor winner in Vietnam has become a VHPA member. In addition to serving two tours in 'Nam as a "Dustoff" pilot, Michael was a B-29 Aircraft Commander in the Pacific, during World War II. He first attended military flight school in 1942.

MIKE DAVIS, Guitar Picker and Singer of Songs of Helicopter Pilots of Vietnam, is selling tapes of songs recorded in 'Nam. The proceeds will be used to finance research for a book about gunship drivers. Contact Mike at: [redacted]

DAVE GRIEGER, who owns "D & G" and is one of the Executive Council Members-at-Large and a Life Member, has been nominated to be the "Veteran Small Business of the Year" thru the Vietnam Veteran Leadership Program of Georgia.

ROGER W. DUPREY, 1986 "Army Aviator of the Year", joined the VHPA during this year's AAAA Convention in Atlanta. Roger is a "Snake" IP at Fort Campbell.

LYLE "SKIP" MONSON has been elected the first President of the newly formed Arizona Chapter of the AAAA. Skip is the Government Flight Representative and Aviation Safety Officer for the Army Office, McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Company, Mesa, Arizona.

THOMAS LINDALL MITCHELL, a First Officer for Eastern Airlines, hopes to soon get the honor of flying a UH1 with his son Lindall as pilot. Lindall was just 10 days old when daddy Tom departed for Vietnam in 1967. He is presently a mechanic in his dad's National Guard Huey outfit, but is scheduled to attend the WO Aviator Course in June.

Looking For ...

JAMES BEASEY (Wife: Sue)
JOHNNY HOUSTON
ALTON PENEY
ALEX QUIETT (Wife: Suzy)
all of Class 66-11 are sought by Keith Lane, [redacted]

E. MICHAEL FISHER
is being looked for by William Poluliah, Abu Dhabi Helicopters, [redacted]

MEVIN KOON
BOBBIE ROSS
are sought by James M. Eesley, [redacted]

JACKIE HOLLWELL
is wanted by Jerome A. Hofmans, [redacted]

PAUL HOVEN
Class 68-3 is sought by Michael A. Holt, [redacted]

That's Right, Folks! A Full Page!

See page 23 of the May issue of *Flying* magazine. *Flying*, the VHPA salutes you!

KEN FRITZ presenting PATRICIA LUEBKE, *Flying* magazine's Marketing Director, with a VHPA Award Plaque, as a token of appreciation for the outstanding support given to our association. The award was presented at the HAI Convention, Anaheim, January 1986. *Flying* has provided the VHPA with free ads in their world famous publication.

In Memory

JOHN C. HENDERSON, a FAA test pilot was killed 7 March 1986 while conducting flight tests of a modified Piper PA-32-300. He was flying aft center of gravity spin tests in an aircraft modified with a speed enhancement and STOL Kit. John apparently lost control of the aircraft, which was equipped with a quick-release escape hatch. He managed to exit the aircraft, but officials believe he was too low to allow parachute deployment and he was killed on impact. John had been employed by the FAA since October of 1982. He was retired from the U.S. Army as a LTC after extensive flight test experience in both fixed and rotary wing aircraft. John served three tours in Vietnam.

VHPA Financial Statement for 1985

Balance Fwd from 1984:	$ 4699.20
Income:	40653.61
Expenses:	(40118.18)
Balance Fwd to 1986:	$ 5234.63

INCOME mainly from member dues, annual reunion registrations, and corporate donations.

EXPENSES relate to annual reunion costs; the cost of publishing the newsletter; membership certificates; recruitment flyers; and membership directories; promotional items such as tie tacks and award plaques; postage; plus administrative supplies.

INTERNATIONAL BIRD DOG 305/L-19/0-1 ASSOCIATION

The INTERNATIONAL BIRD DOG ASSOCIATION has been formed to preserve and promote the heritage of the 305/L-19/0-1 aircraft, and to reunite as many veteran pilots who have flown it as possible. Write the IBDA for details c/o Phil Phillips, 3939-C8 San Pedro NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110.

HOT DAMN! Let's bottle the aroma, Jake ... sell it to those VHPA guys to go with their slide shows. ***photo by Paul Uster***

Reunion 1986

A Report by Jay Elliott, Reunion Committee Chairman

The third annual reunion is nearly here ... can you believe it?

The responsibility you placed upon me last year in Houston seemed large. However, with the cooperation of many, the job has been completed. We will be in the very prestigious Washington Hilton Hotel & Towers in Washington, D.C. from July 3rd through 6th. The only organized meetings will happen on Saturday beginning with our business meeting at 8:30 AM for both the members and a separate meeting for wives. There will also be a luncheon at noon for everyone who purchases a ticket. We will have our banquet at 7:00 PM with General William Westmoreland as speaker.

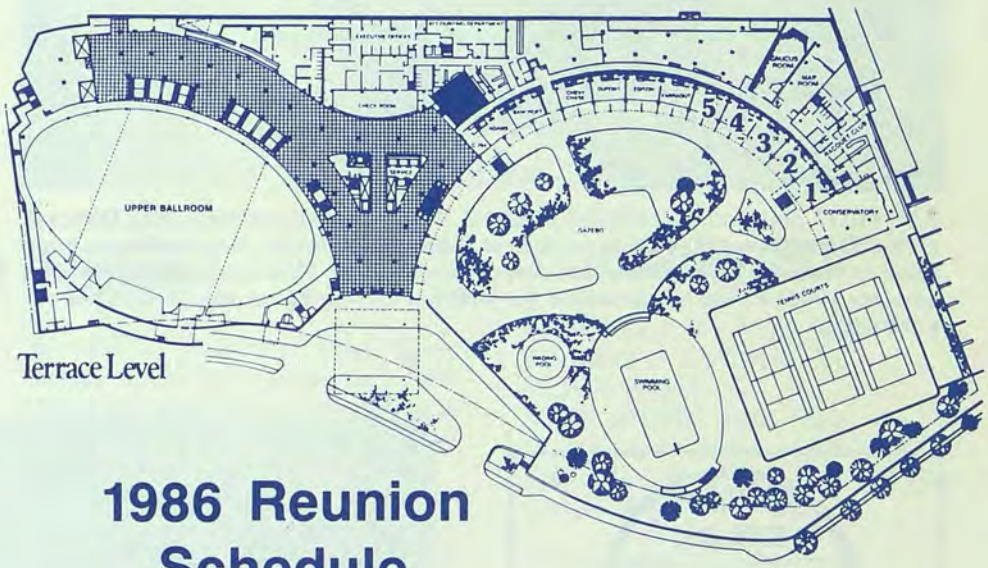
The whole idea behind our reunions is to allow you and your "war buddies" a chance to reunite. You will no doubt meet new friends and have good times, but we do not expect to organize that. There will be a secure place to display your memorabilia. There will be beer and wine *for sale* in that room to allow you to relax. However, all other drinking is provided within the hotel's designated areas. You will find an extra large swimming pool on the terrace. There is also food and beverage along side it. We will be holding our registration near the tennis courts and pool. Please come to enjoy and be happy. Let yourself be free, but remember that the VHPA will be judged by each one's behavior ... make it a good judgement, please.

The registration price this year includes a zippered bag with our theme logo silk-screened upon it. However, vendors will be present to sell you other items of attire. Please bring your official VHPA hat and previous t-shirts. Please wear your organization's emblems with pride .. you have earned them. Especially wear them at the Vietnam Memorial; it will mean a lot to many there.

Please write to the House of Representatives member from your area. He or she can obtain special "VIP" passes for you to tour the FBI, White House, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and the Capitol. You will not be standing in long lines if you have a VIP pass! Please consider the ages of your children you are bringing with you. Under the age of about 10 will be bored with everything except the pool. The museums and other historical exhibits will be very interesting to those in grades 6-12. The long walking and/or standing will be hard on all who have not become used to it. Also, please contact the hotel *directly* about any sitters for your children. Washington is not the place to allow them to go off by themselves at night. However, VHPA will not sponsor any sitter services.

On the subject of reservations, please contact the hotel right away for your reservations. Use the form in this newsletter to reserve your place with VHPA. Contact American Airlines at the 800 number listed in this edition for the "lowest fare" available. Remember, there is a charge for parking cars in the hotel garage. Driving and parking in D.C. is a tough job ... use the taxi, bus or subway.

The Terrace Level has small meeting rooms which open out onto the patio. We have reserved several for our use. The *Conservatory* is where we will display our memorabilia. The *Kalorama* (1) is the registration office. The *Jackson* (2) is the vendor's room. The *Independence* (3) is a meeting room for all committees. The *Hamilton* (4) is the Executive Council's meeting room. The *Grant* (5) will be where you can find a member of the Reunion Committee. Please come to a member of the Reunion Committee if you experience any difficulty. We have contacts in the hotel and within the community to help in many ways.



Terrace Level

1986 Reunion Schedule

JULY 3, THURSDAY
1200-2400:
Registration
HELLO'S
Displays
Cash Bar

JULY 4, FRIDAY
1000-Dark:
Registration
All day:
Activities at the Mall
Dark-2200:
Fireworks on the Mall

JULY 5, SATURDAY
0830-1200:
Annual Business Meeting
(Election of Officers)
1230-1330:
Luncheon
1200-1800:
Displays
1900-0100:
BANQUET
Guest Speaker:
GENERAL WESTMORELAND
Topic: "Remarks by a Former Boss - A Chopper Jockey Himself"

JULY 6, SUNDAY
0900-1200:
GOODBYEs
Checkout

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

Third Annual Reunion
3-6 July, 1986
Washington, D.C.

REUNION REGISTRATION

Name: _____ Member No.: _____

Wife/Guest Name: _____ No. of Children: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Registration Fees

Adults: $15.00 **Children: Free**

Registration Fee includes: An Information Packet and a Zippered Roll Bag with Theme Logo.

Business Meeting Lunch and Banquet Costs

LUNCH	BANQUET
Adults: $15.00	Adults: $30.00
Child: $10.00	(Semiformal Dress)

Number of Adult Registrations: ☐ Amount: $ _____ . ____

Number of Adult Lunches: ☐ _____ . ____

Number of Child Lunches: ☐ _____ . ____

Number Attending Banquet: ☐ _____ . ____

Total: $ _____ . ____

Make Checks payable to VHPA

NOMINATIONS

Vice President: _____

Member at Large: _____

MAIL WITH CHECK TO:

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

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

Third Annual Reunion
3-6 July, 1986
Washington, D.C.

HOTEL REGISTRATION

Name: _____ No. of Persons in Party: ____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: ( ) _____ Arrival after 6:00 PM?: _____

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Special requirements: _____
(CHILD CARE, HANDICAP SERVICES, ETC.)

Room Rates

☐ One or Two Persons:	$ 65.00	Rates are Per Night
☐ Additional Person:	$ 20.00	Add $1 per room/per
☐ One Bedroom Suites:	$230.00	night & 10% for taxes

THESE ARE SPECIAL RATES

Credit Card or Check Deposit required for arrival after 18:00.

FOR CREDIT CARD USERS:

Card Type: ☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ AMEX ☐ DINERS

Other: _____

NUMBER: _____

Expires: ____ / ____ Signature: _____

PLEASE USE THIS FORM ONLY
DO NOT SEND TO VHPA. MAIL TO:

Washington Hilton Hotel
1919 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 483-3000

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 35699 — Phoenix, Arizona 85069

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
OR
CHANGE OF ADDRESS

OFFICE USE

MN _____

DP _____

APPLICATION: ☐
ADDRESS CHANGE: ☐

ANNUAL DUES: $20.
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: $300.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: ( ) _____ WORK PHONE: ( ) _____

OCCUPATION: _____

FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS: _____ SERVICE BRANCH: _____

COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS: _____ SSN: _____

Information about EACH Vietnam Tour:

DATE From	DATE To	UNIT	LOCATION	CALL SIGN

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

NOTE: This form may be used for DIRECTORY CORRECTIONS

NEW!!
VHPA Golf Shirt

S, M, L, XL
$14.00 each

(4-colors!)

T-SHIRT (M, L, XL)
7.50

("Call Signs")

SWEATSHIRT (L, XL)
12.00

VHPA Hat w/ 'Eggs'	8.99
Patch	3.50
Window Sticker	1.50
Car License Plate	5.00
Stickers (60 ea.)	3.50

D & G
P.O. Box 12105
Columbus, GA 31907

	Size	Unit Price	Amount

Subtotal _____
Ga. Residents 4% Sales Tax _____
TOTAL / Ck. or M.O. _____

National Car Rental

The Official Car Rental Company for the

VHPA 1986 Washington Reunion

Call: **800-328-7949**
Recap #: 6407000

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association 3rd Reunion
Washington, D.C., July 3-6, 1986 STAR #S81002

One call to American brings your meeting to order.

That's all it takes. Just call one number and American's Meeting Services Desk will be at your disposal to help you make all your meeting or convention travel arrangements.

Our staff of more than 100 Meeting Specialists will confirm flight reservations, tell you how to qualify for our special Meeting Saver Fares℠ and help you take advantage of many other special services. Like arranging car rentals and pre-reserved seats. We can even send your ticket direct to you or through your Travel Agent.

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1986 Advertising Rates

Guaranteed Publication if placed before deadline:
Full Page: $400
Partial Page: $50 per 1/8 page increment.
Minimum Size: Eighth Page

Space Available Basis:
Twenty-five percent of the Guaranteed Rate

Member Advertising VHPA Items Only:
Free of charge on space available, otherwise at guaranteed rate.

Special Advertising Requests:
Rates, layout, and schedule: contact VHPA Newsletter Editor.

Ad Deadline:
Receipt of photo-ready copy on or before 15th of January, April, July and October for publication in respective Quarter's Newsletter.

NOTICE

Please place all orders for merchandise directly with the vendor. For example: T-shirts and hats are provided by D & G, not VHPA Headquarters. You place an extra workload on the Executive Director if checks for Dues include amounts for these types of items.

BOOKS ON VIETNAM

MORE THAN 200 CURRENT TITLES
★ ★
OTHER PRODUCTS
★ ★
WRITE NOW FOR FREE CATALOG

VIETNAM BOOKSTORE
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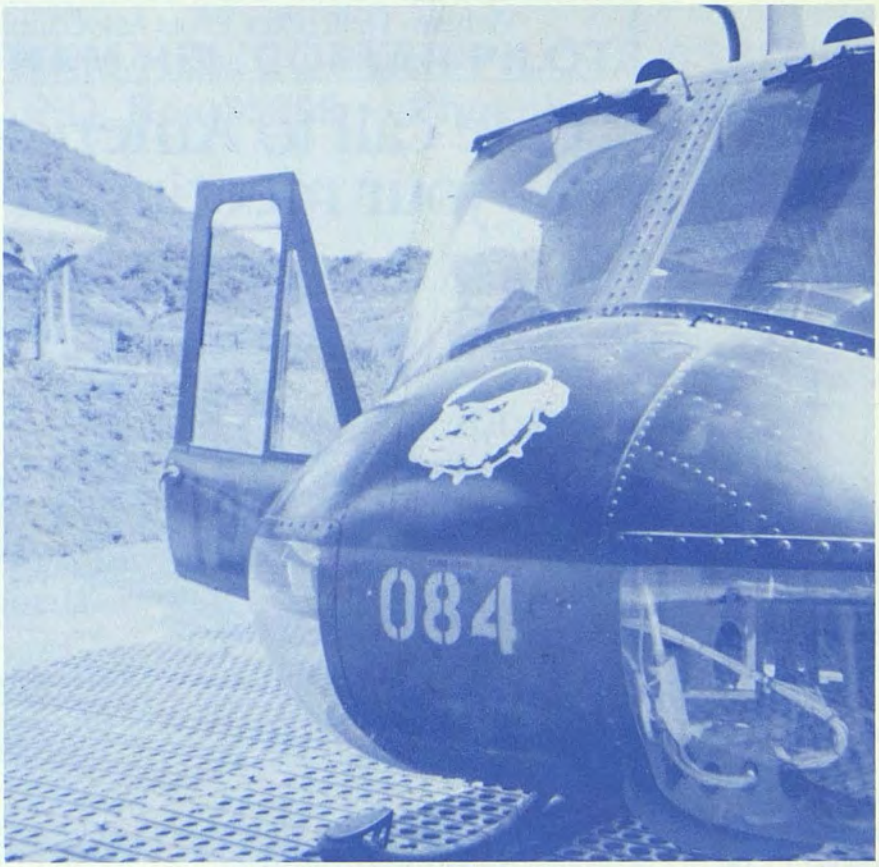

WHAT IS IT?? Name the unit and location. *photo by J.T. Barnicle*

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 35699 Phoenix, Arizona 85069

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