VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

# The VHPA Newsletter

P.O. Box 9592 Wichita, KS 67277 Volume 4, No. 3 September 1987

**Mike McDonald, VHPA Flag with the 4th streamer, one for each reunion site, one to be added each annual reunion.** ***Photo by Ron Wright***

## FROM THE EDITOR:

Just Perfect! The Queen Mary reunion couldn't have been better. First there was the Queen herself and the memories of my father, then a gathering of some of the world's greatest helicopter pilots, including my own private reunion with a very special friend, Rick Cline. Over 25 years ago, Rick showed me what helicopter flying was really all about and then twice accompanied me to Vietnam, just to make sure I didn't screw up and get myself severly dead. Rick is one of the very few I've met who "puts on helicopters like their clothes." And finally the "frosting on the cake," a Life Membership for all the fun I've had working on this Newsletter. Thanks guys, this honor and your response to the Newsletter made the trip worth it.

Roger Gould
Editor

**Nancy Osterhout, the sweetest "Top Kick" any outfit could ask for.**
***Photo by Ron Wright***


### VHPA Newsletter

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

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

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

The VHPA Newsletter is published five times a year, March, June, September, October, December, by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, P.O. Box 9592, Wichita, KS 67277. Second class postage pending paid at Wichita, KS.

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

Material published in the VHPA NEWSLETTER is contributed by members and other interested persons. Letters to the editor are welcome. As space permits, we will publish as many as possible. Letters are subject to editing for brevity and accuracy. The VHPA does not guarantee or endorse any product, organization or person mentioned in this publication. Mail to: Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 9592, Wichita, KS 67277.
POSTMASTER: Send Change of address Form #3579 to:

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


## VHPA OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN 1987-88

PRESIDENT
C. Dave Owens

FOUNDER
Larry Clark

VICE PRESIDENT
Jay Elliott

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Mike Law

MEMBERS AT LARGE
Dave Grieger
Greg Ross
Paul Uster

MEMBERSHIP
Ron Wright
Joe Schreiber

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Mike McDonald

REUNION
1988 — Jay Elliott

HISTORICAL
Dan Hutchinson

RECORDS / DATA BASE
Mike Law

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Roger Gould

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES, ASSISTANT EDITOR
Nancy Osterhout

# INCOMING MAIL

## "COLORADO KOOL AID"

After some telephonic harassment from Greg Ross, I am finally rising to the bait. The "marvelous old dogeared photo with the "Coors" can rocket pod (March issue of VHPA Newsletter) is one I gave to Greg years ago. The exact details of the story of the pod(s) have been lost through time but, here goes: The photo was taken at Bao Loc west of Phan Thiet during my first tour when I was with A CO 227 AVN BN/1st Cav or B TRP 7/17 CAV (latter part of the tour). Did I mention that some of the detail was lost? The aircraft belonged either to the 92nd AHC or the 192nd AHC. The pods were part of a set painted by one of their crewchiefs. He painted two sets, one was a set of "Coors" cans and the other was a set of "Budweiser" cans. The story I was told was that the last of the pods were lost when the aircraft developed some problems inflight and the pod(s) were jettisoned. The story goes on that the unit was about to conduct a mini combat assault to retrieve the pods but for some reason did not. I think they were damaged beyond repair. Maybe there are some VHPA members out there who can shed more light on the story.

Keep up the good work. Every issue of the Newsletter brings back another name, another place, or a detail not thought about or remembered for many years. Best of all I recently got to talk to two friends that I have not seen for almost 18 years. Enjoy the reunion. The Duck and I wish you all the best.

Daniel R. Nichols
(Chickenman 14)
(Blueghost Red)
[redacted]

## "HEY, THIS BUD'S FOR YOU"

I enjoyed receiving the March issue of the Newsletter and believe I can answer your question about the 'C' Model with the "Coors Beer Can" rocket pod. The Sidekicks of the 92nd AHC at Dong Ba Thin had two 'C' models that had painted rocket pods. One had a pair of "Coors" cans and the other a pair of "Budweiser" cans. I wasn't familiar with who painted those tubes, but they were a real work of art, right down to the smallest detail.

In 1969 one of the "Coors" cans developed a crack and had to be retired. So, that ship flew with only one can for several months until it too developed a crack and had to be retired.

The 'C' Model with the "Bud" cans crashed in late '69 after having one of its tail rotor pitch change links shot off. The crew escaped just fine, but the ship and the "Bud" cans were a loss.

Being a slick driver during 1969, I often felt a little more at ease on a hot assault when I could look out my window and see one of the SIDEKICKS firing those "Bud" cans. We were the ones, long ago, who coined the phrase, "Hey, this Bud's for you".

Jim Bankston
(Stallion 23)
Rte. 1, Box 606
Hudson, WI 54016

*Hot dog! We like it, we like it a lot. Thanks guys! Ed.*

## SCREECH

I was very pleased to read Bob Potvin's and Greg Conaway's letters in the March Newsletter. Boy those guys bring back some good memories! I remember the day Bob got his new Loch (OH-6A) and brought it by to show Joe. He was so damn proud of that Hughes and was glad to be rid of the H-13. Joe Potvin was one very good Warrant Officer and an excellent Aircraft Commander. The training and knowledge he passed on to all he flew with probably saved the lives of dozens of later Chickenmen.

Greg Conaway came into the unit in the Summer of '68 and was a good FNG pilot. I will never forget the time he told me about his twin brother who went through flight school with him. After several drinks of Screech, (50% beer and 50% Mateuse wine) Greg started talking about how much he missed his brother. Several drinks later the story got better. It seems that the Army had come up with a regulation against twins being in the country at the same time, so Steve volunteered to call W.O. Personnel in D.C. to see what could be arranged. Steve arranged Germany and Greg was ordered to RVN. I thought it was a little fishy but Greg was happy with the arrangement.

This is an idea for the '88 Ft. Wolters Reunion. I visited Ft. Wolters on Labor Day, 1985, ninteen years to the day from my WOC arrival. Things are pretty gloomy around here and I was really saddened to see that there was not one sign, plaque or statue which mentioned anything about the Mineral Wells Industrial Park ever being an Army Base or helicopter school.

I did find a statue left by our members which seemed out of place. How about moving the statue to DFW Airport and buy a plaque which briefly explains Ft. Wolters and the thousands of young men who enjoyed their stay in Texas. A good place at DFW might be in the connecting hallway between the American Airlines gate areas.

P.S. Ray Wood (Black Widow 20 and Commanchero 14) was killed in a helicopter accident a couple of months ago in connection with his job. Ray was Chief Pilot of the University of South Alabama Medical Center, Mobile, Alabama. For those who were honored by having known Ray over the years, we will all miss him very much.

James L. Caufman
[redacted]

*Tried some Screech, would you like to nominate it as the official VHPA drink, Jim? Ed.*

## WHO WAS THAT MAN?

While browsing through a book at the local bookstore, I came across an incredible helicopter fact.

According to "American Warplanes" by Bill Gunston, copyright 1986, in discussing the Hughes OH-6 Cayuse, he states "An indication of their operations is provided by the fact that one Loach pilot was shot down 14 times." WHO WAS THAT MAN??? I never had the good fortune to fly one of those wonderful machines, always wanted to but didn't get the chance. Maybe this 14 timer can tell us a little about the OH-6. Is he a VHPA member? Is he even still alive???

Phil Marshall
(Dustoff 711)
[redacted]

*MDHC Marketing would love you, Phil. Ed.*

*Continued on next page*

## "FOREVER IMBEDDED IN MY MIND..."

Enclosed are two pictures I thought you might be able to use. The one picture showing me bending over my co-pilot, WO Lawrence Farmer, was taken by a combat photographer from the Fourth Infantry Division. He was on the Med-Evac ship that arrived first at the crash site.

This crash was caused by a complete tail rotor failure when the tail rotor drive shaft sheared in half. After trying all standardized emergency procedures, an autorotation was initiated at about 200 feet above the ground. The ship immediately began spinning around the mast in a nose low attitude to the right leaving us unable to determine our altitude or attitude. The last words I heard over the radio were those of my wingman, WO Loren Engstrom, who yelled "Pull Pitch". Somehow the aircraft righted itself when pitch was pulled. The tail boom was severed and fuel was leaking but no fire. I remained conscious and was able to remove all my crew and render first aid. I suffered back and neck injuries but was flying again 10 days later.

The rest of my crew was all Med-evaced back to the States. This crash happened on Oct. 30, 1968. This was the 6th time I had gone down. Two weeks later on Nov. 13th, WO Loren Engstrom, was killed in action when his ship suffered a complete tail rotor failure. The tail rotor drive shaft was sheared in half by a 50 caliber round as he pulled up from a rocket run. The words "pull pitch" are forever imbedded in my mind — they saved myself and my three crew members.

I want to thank you for printing my request in trying to locate Lawrence Farmer and Bill McGrath. I found Bill and sent him a membership application. Still no word on Farmer however. I would really like to locate him.

Randolph Brooke
(Buccaneer 5)
[redacted]

*What a powerful picture, thanks, Randy. Ed.*

**Randolph Brooke attending to his injured co-pilot Lawrence Farmer.**
***Photo furnished by Randy Brooke***

## DUSTOFF REUNION

Need a little help, I got it in my head to have a reunion of Warrants who I flew with in Dustoff in '67. I went to the Dustoff convention in February and it was overwhelmed by RLO's, most of whom are on active duty and never made 'Nam. A few old timers were there, Mike Novosel, Freddie Long, Ed Mote, etal, but few WO's and these guys really bore the brunt of the combat flying. I'm looking for guys who flew with the 498th Med Co. (AA) in '67/'68.

Of course any other Dustoff pilots of that era would be welcome. I have no firm plans, just an idea and a desire. I'd like to keep it to Warrants, but I'm not fussy.

Bill Grauling
[redacted]

*Had a cute remark to make, Bill, but am afraid the WOPA would increase my dues, plus we sure do need those RLO's in this outfit, so. .. Ed.*

## ONE OF THE FIRST 100

I'm proud to be one of the 1st 100 or so members of the VHPA. It's a great organization. I wish I was able to attend the Reunions, but the job I have as contract helicopter pilot for Mountain Air Helicopters of Albany, Oregon, is mainly a four month contract during the summer. I need to fly when I can.

I'm currently flying on a Slash Burning Project. The helicopter is also a Fire Helicopter and will be used again this summer to fight forest fires.

While on active duty with the Army at Fort Lewis, Washington and Fort Rucker, Alabama, I have talked with other senior Warrant Officers and passed out VHPA applications to about 20 qualified pilots. I also left my membership directory with the guys at I Corps Flight Det at Fort Lewis. I would like to get a new directory and maybe a catalog, if there is one, of available VHPA items, T-shirts, coffee cups, etc.

I hope to be able to become a Life Member soon.

Glenn Hogan
P.O. Box 94
Junction City, Oregon 97448

*Member number 49 to be exact, Glenn. See the D & G ad elsewhere in this issue for VHPA items and be sure to call Nancy at our Wichita HQ. Ed.*

# To Rick Schwab:

Thanks, the photos of Fort Wolters were great, will use them in coming issues.

Ed.

*Continued on next page*

## HELICOPTER MUSEUM

As a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Crew-Members Association, I am happy to submit these photos of aircraft in RVN. I have many more and am getting the more interesting ones copied.

If the name Decker is familiar, my oldest brother, Douglas S. Decker, is a retired Wobbly with two tours on UH-1S and is a member of VHPA.

As of July 1987, aviation minded people in the Tucson area are conducting feasibility studies of founding a Helicopter Museum.

Yes, I know about Ft. Rucker and the New England Air Museum in Connecticut, which has an excellent collection of Sikorsky types. I am also aware of the new Hiller Museum and welcome its opening. How many out there are aware of the "Hubschrauber" Museum located in Buckenburg, Republic of West Germany? This has been the first and only dedicated helicopter museum in the world!!! In Europe!?! Come on guys, quit wishing and procrastinating and start thinking of ways of starting a UNITED STATES HELICOPTER MUSEUM.

It is my personal belief that there exists no finer and better qualified group of flying individuals than the pilots and crews of our organizations; many members who now have positions and interests in the helicopter industry to assist such an idea.

At this point a museum is just that, an idea, a dream. There are many, many details to work out and no one is locked into any hard and fast decisions. How about an annual Helicopter Air Show? How about corporate participation? For without everyone working together to further better understanding of helicopters, *we all suffer!!*

Witness the public opposition to heliport development. Through lack of public education and understanding as to the unique and beneficial capabilities of VTOL aircraft, the public has adopted a negative stance almost across the board.

Perhaps this proposed museum can thus serve as *another* spring-board of information.

Yes, I am aware of the efforts of the H.A.I. and A.H.S. (I am a member). Helicopter types need *all* the coordination and assistance from like minded organizations they can get. A museum, then, would also strive to *promote* prohelicopter causes. Is this not written into the by-laws of VHPA, VHCMA and Dustoff Associations?

The VHPA and VHCMA both are unique in having members who rode helicopters into combat, raining death and destruction onto a very determined enemy in war. This heritage of men and machines screams to be preserved.

Dave Decker
VHCMA
P.O. Box 40367
Tucson, Arizona 85717

*Thanks for the photos, Dave. As you can see on the back cover, one has already been put to use. Ed.*

## COBRA PATCH

Enclosed please find my application for membership to your organization. After having read several of your newsletters from a current member, Tom Schultz, I am convinced that VHPA is an organization whose time has come and I need to be a part of it! As you will notice from my application, I served two tours across the great blue lake far from the "land of the all night generator". As I have time I will send you some photographs for your collection.

I, like many others, have stayed in the business and I now command the Alabama Army National Guard Aviation Support Facility in Mobile, Alabama and serve as the S-3 of the 31st Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter).

What is interesting about our current organization is that the pilot Corp is made up of helicopter pilots not only from the Army, but from the Navy and Marines as well. You might call us a miniature chapter of the VHPA (Not a bad idea for the future!).

I have one request which you might include in your next newsletter (space permitting). As a member of the Cobra's, 114th AHC, Vinh Long in 1970, I remember especially the platoon patch. Over the years and moves mine was lost. If any of your members was a member of that unit after converting to the AH-1G I would like to obtain one of these patches to keep or reproduce. Also, the Cobras at that time were an official member of the Southeast Asia chapter, American Fighter Pilots Association, the only Army unit in this organization. If anyone has any of the old decals we wore on our helmets, I would like to obtain one of these also.

Gary DeKay
P.O. Box 5637
Mobile, AL 36605

*See the "Looking for Patches" letter from Jim Maxwell, Gary. Ed.*

## LOOKING FOR PATCHES

A good friend of mine, Rick "Black Bart" Bartlett, told me about the VHPA, so I'm enclosing my application and check. I'm in the process of building a collection of AHC patches or photos of patches for reproduction on shirts. I need as many different types as possible. I would particularly appreciate a patch from the Seawolf guns who I worked with out of Nha Be.

Jim "Big Dog" Maxwell
(Top Tiger 11)
[redacted]

*Jim, we'll bet Tom Murphy (Merlin 10) 3292 Rowena Drive, Los Alamitos, CA 90720 can help, he has one dandy collection of patches. Ed.*

## HERE COMES THE STAGECOACH

Thanks to the VHPA I have contacted a good friend who served with me in the 155th AHC in 1969-70. Also my roommate in flight school called me last week to tell me about the VHPA and I explained that I was already a member. We were in Class 69-17. I would like to hear from any members of 69-17 or anyone who served in the 155th at any time.

Maybe either one or both of these groups could get together in '88 in Ft. Worth.

John Houston
(Stagecoach 14)
Rt. 4, Box 161
Troutville, VA 24175

*No problem, John, the VHPA is full of folks who were Stagecoach drivers, one of the finest being George Harrison, "of course we are prejudiced." Ed.*

*Continued on next page*

## VHPA FOR LIFE

I just found out about your organization through an old friend and Dustoff pilot, Al Walsh (Dustoff 18).

Enclosed in my application and membership fee.

I read two of your old issues and am really looking forward to receiving them. It has been a long time since I read the names of TAN AN, ME TUO, XUAN LOC, NUI DAT, VUNG TAU, DONG TAM, LAI KAI, Etc. I flew Dustoff from March of 1970 through March of '71 out of Long Bihn, 45th Med Co. Gun support was usually furnished by the Cowboys, and I am not only an honorary Cowboy, but home, safe, sound, and the father of three because of their terrific support (and many, many others!).

Thomas W. St. Hilaire
(Dustoff 12)
P.O. Box 64333
St. Paul, Minnesota 55164

*Tom failed to mention his application was for a life membership, what a way to start. Ed.*

## TAC OFFICER!

It's late and I should be resting up for the start of another week, but, thanks to the kindness of Mike Law, I have just finished the June Newsletter and I can't go another minute without doing what I've been wanting badly to do for several months, namely, renew my membership. The bills will just have to wait!

I would also like to say, Roger, that I was deeply moved by your editorial, as I'm sure many of us were. It's a powerful piece. Thanks for sharing it with us. I'm sure all in attendance will understand as you experience your personal reunion.

I have been wondering something for some time: in all the letters I have seen in the Newsletter over the past few months I have not read about anyone admitting to having been a TAC OFFICER! (Even today the very mention of the term causes me to brace the nearest vertical surface!) Surely there are some among us. Ever since Wolters I have been somewhat morbidly curious about how the Army could transform what at one time must have been a pretty likeable guy into that steely-eyed, fire-breathing demon that we all came to know and love so well. Never before or since have I encountered anyone so finely tuned to ferret out the smallest dust bunny, the slightest wrinkle, or the lint on the *underside* of the sink!

How did they get that way? What was their training like? What motivated them to do what they did? What was their life like?

Don't get me wrong, former TACs. I'm not saying what you had to do was not necessary. I'm sure many of us are alive today because of your "guidance". I just want to know what it was like. Would any of you be willing to come out of hiding to enlighten me and many others who might be just as curious?

Jerry Gray
(Lucky Star 10)
[redacted]

*We appreciate your kind words, Jerry, things from the heart come easy. Ed.*

## TWILIGHT ZONE

Please set out a glass for me when you toast your gathering! I'll be in Utah, rotors turning, in a modern "LOACH" (500C).

Sure wish I could be with you, having walked out of the "Twilight Zone" recently. You're just the kind of company I enjoy keeping!

Oh, one last thing. I know you guys party hard, but please don't sink the "Queen" or try to hover the "Flying Boat" while you're having a good time. We're rather fond of these attractions here in Southern California!

Best regards,
Dorcey A. Wingo
(Blackjack 491)
and
(Gambler Guns)

*Right on! Dorcey, sure glad things are working out, hope you can make the Wolters reunion. Ed.*

## SO, ENOUGH ALREADY!

I give. Enclosed is my check for a lifetime membership. I joined and paid annual dues over a year ago and failed to renew my membership when it came due a month or so ago. I received notice from you of the pending expiration, but neglected to send in my check. You, of course, being the diligent businessman you are, stopped sending me the Newsletter.

That's when the trouble began. I found that I could no longer sleep at night. I began pacing the floor wondering who the new members were and whether I had missed a letter from an old "stick buddy" that I'd been trying to locate.

So, enough already, stop, cease and desist, I give. Here's the money. Keep the Newsletters coming. I can't stand the pressure anymore.

Sincerely yours
Robert F. Potvin
(Stingray White 25)
[redacted]

*Sleep well, Robert, never again will a Newsletter you miss. Ed.*

## WORKING HARD

I am enclosing some material which may provide a base of information on which we can build. This info can be used by members of VHPA and also for people doing research about army aviation units in Vietnam.

If you could publish the listing of units and call signs of the units or of the slick and gun platoons, I'm sure you will create much interest. Also, many VHPA members would be able to fill in the missing call signs, add units not listed, or make corrections!

William E. McGee
[redacted]

*Nice work, Bill. Must have taken a while to do your list. No room in the Newsletter, but we can sure use the info to update the call sign listing in the membership directory. Ed.*

**Puck, puck, puck CHICKENMAN to the rescue!**
***Photo by Wayne Trucke***

*Continued on next page*

## A BUNCH OF SNAKE CHARMERS

I only heard about the VHPA a few months ago, and like many of the guys I talked with at the Reunion in Long Beach, I had reservations concerning associating myself with a Vietnam Veterans Organization. By and large I think it is because of the unpleasantness most of us have experienced as a result of our participation in the war and the uncertainty of what to expect at such a gathering. I do not believe anyone could have gone through the war and emerged without some strong opinions and I did not want to listen to three days of everybody's opinions.

SURPRISE! I have not had so much fun in years. It seems that everyone I talked to was there to have a good time with the kindred souls who flew the "Fling Wings". The selection process for pilots brought together a group of people with similar capacities, intelligence, and personality traits. Almost to a man, we had and still have the kind of friendships that have not altered by time and circumstances. We can start up where we left off.

In the early morning hours of July 4, a group of rowdy drunks (male and female) called our old classmate, friend, and flying buddy, Mike Jackson, in San Francisco. I shamed him for not coming to our party. He then flew in to join the VHPA and attend the party and banquet. He spent the entire evening trying to move in on my date! Nothing has changed, he struck out this time too. Love him like a brother.

I want to start a California Chapter of the VHPA and would like to hear from anyone else who wants one. I am sure that if we all joined together in a common effort, we can achieve a new low in etiquette and decorum here on the West Coast.

I would love to hear from anyone in the enclosed photograph.

Ross Ivey
(Charlie Horse 39)
[redacted]

*Afraid you're right, Ross. A great number of folks probably have not joined us because of the same reservations you had initially. Somehow we all need to convince them otherwise. Ed.*

**C Troop, 3/17 Cav, Sept. '68 at Dian. If you see yourself here, Ross Ivey needs to hear from you.**
***Photo by Ross Ivey***

# In Memory

**Terry Jamison,** Erwin, TN, Class 67-7, 67-68, 7/1 CAV, 71-72 1 AVN BDE, Died: 7-10-87.

**Timothy A. Tagudin,** Elkhorn, WI, Class 69-25, 69 72 ABN, 70-71 173 AHC, Killed in a helicopter crash in 1986.

**Joseph P. Bonesio,** Houston, TX, Class 70-1, 70 361 AWC, 71 235 AWC, Died July 5, 1986 of a heart attack.

**Gary Wayne Warren,** killed February 2, 1987 while piloting an L206 Long Ranger in the Gulf of Mexico.

**Barry Day,** killed in October 1986 flying a Bell 222 in North Carolina.

**Rodney L. Hibberts,** Nashville, TN, Class 70-17, 70 B/25 25 INF, 70-71 INFANT DET 11 CAB, Died: Dec. 3, 1986.

**Robert E. F. Bartels,** 101 ABN, Killed in plane crash.

**Ray Wood,** Mobile, AL, died April 15, 1987, in crash of a Bell 222A.

## WITH GREAT SADNESS!

I sit down and write this letter with great sadness to the VHPA to inform you and your members of the death of my husband, Ray Wood. On April 15, 1987 Ray and his director of Maintenance, John Palmer, were ferrying a Bell 222A from Mobile, Alabama to Fort Worth, Texas. They crashed near Canton, Texas, killing both of them instantly.

I also want to attempt to express what the VHPA meant to Ray. He always read everything that the VHPA published from cover to cover, made notes, and managed to keep up with people. This was the only organization he felt was worthy of joining. The common denominator that brings these men together, also sets them apart.

Attached is a copy of my first writing, two days after Ray's death, that I dedicate in his memory.

I would also like to continue to receive the VHPA Newsletter. Thanks to Angela Lee of Houston, Texas, I realized a non-member can subscribe.

Annette Wood
P.O. Box 161602
Mobile, AL 36616

*It's also with great sadness that the VHPA receives your tragic news, Annette. We salute your beauty and courage for remembering us in your time of grief. You are proof that what's really special about Vietnam Helicopter Pilots are the women they love. Ed.*

### "PILOTS and WIVES"

To all the wives out there of helicopter pilots who daily live with the thought that one day someone may walk up to you and say, "I'm sorry, but there's been an accident."

We, as wives, have been engrained with this thought just as our husbands have accepted and lived with it as part of their lives. When their 'number is up', know that he died doing what he wanted and loved to do. What greater honor could a man have. He introduced me to a different world, a world of helicopters and the pilots that fly them. To him, I say "thank you", to God I say "Thank you for the years we had."

In loving memory of my husband, RAY WOOD.

Annette Wood
April 17, 1987

# President's Roll Call

On Veterans Day in Houston this year a "Stand Down and March" was held to honor all vets and to welcome home those who served in Vietnam. Jesse Miller, Howard Horton and I hosted a VHPA hospitality room. We found some new members and we even found some old friends. Hundreds of "grunts" and some Donut Dollys stopped by to say thanks to the helicopter pilots who saved their lives, brought them food and ammo, and/or extracted them from a HOTLZ. Jesse, Howard and I were honored to shake their hands for you and not only hear the words "thanks" but to see it in their eyes and hearts. I wish you could have been there.

Reunion "87" on the Queen Mary was a roaring success. A good time was had by one and all. I would like to thank the reunion committee, AAM and the Executive Council for all of the hard work that made this a successful reunion. A special thanks to the families of these dedicated people for their patience and understanding.

A "mid-year gathering" will be held during the Helicopter Association International (HAI) Convention in Anaheim, CA. The "Gathering" will be held from 1800 to 2200 hours on Sunday 7, February 1988 in the Anaheim Convention Hilton. Those interested in attending please write VHPA in Wichita for further details.

Our Reunion Committee has everything in hand for the 5th Reunion which will be held in Ft. Worth, TX in 1988. So in closing all I have to say is:

**"LOOK OUT FORT WOLTERS, HERE WE COME!!"**

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

*From Craig Mossman*

**"Listen up, Gary, those 'Arizona Clique' dudes are getting a bit rowdy and it's going to be a long cold night unless you get them under control."**
***Photo by Ron Wright***

# Looking For...

**GEORGE CARPENTER**
Please contact Neal Hagen, P.O. Box 591, Long Beach, MS 39560

**STEVE DARLING**
Formerly with 57th AHC, 1970-72, you're wanted by Kevin [redacted]

**JOHN LEE**
Class 66-19B report to Harold (Red) LeSage, [redacted]

**PHILLIP F. HICKEY**
C/158 101 ABN, 1969? Jack Glennon, [redacted] is looking for you.

**TOM HICKS**
last known working for Kodak in Mass. 70-71 3/9 INF, C/7/1 CAV, please write: Mike LaBarbera, 98-1691 C Kaahumanu St., Aiea, HI 96701, 801/455-3669.

**ROBERT D. JOHNSTON, JR.**
Class of 67-25, David M. Harmon, [redacted] is looking for you.

**MEMBERS OF 281 AHC or 5th SPEC. FORCES ON PROJECT DELTA,** please contact Al [redacted]

**118 AHC PILOTS, 68-69 BANDIT GUNSHIPS,** please contact Wayne T. Bates, Bandit 37 at Auto Network Services, [redacted]

# Reunion Reflections

Just a short note to thank one and all for your help in putting on the 4th Reunion. A special thanks to the staff of the Queen. They went out of their way to make sure we had a good time. A special thanks also, to our own people, Mike, John, Nancy, Gary, Lynn, Jan and all others who made registration work despite the computer breakdown. Thanks to all who allowed me to recruit them on a moments notice to help with a "now" task. Pat Paulsen's "Secret Service" bodyguards were outstanding.

My wishes go out to you who attended, that you had a wonderful time. My sympathies to you who could not join us — WE HAD FUN!

Paul Uster
4th Reunion Chairman

## "What is it?"

**answers for march & june...**

**March '87:**
UH1 C from the 176th AHC, flown by CPT Roger Mothersbaugh (Musket 36), summer of '69, completed a forced landing with minor damage after losing the entire tail rotor, gearbox and all, one tail rotor blade impaled the pylon after separation.

**June '87:**
The University of Dalat.

# New Life Members

**JOHN K. DAVIS**
[redacted]
66-21
67 D/229 1CAV
69-70 B/25 25 INF
Retired

**ROSS ELIASON**
[redacted]
71-3
71 C/2/17 CAV
Police Officer

**KENNETH FRITZ**
[redacted]
68-31
69 176 AHC AMERICAL
Sales & Service Mgr.

**JAMES W. FULCHER**
[redacted]
66-23 67-1
67-68 4 AVN
Ins. Agent

**JAY FULLER**
[redacted]
67-18
67-68 101 ABN
Pilot

**ROGER GOULD**
[redacted]
62-1W
66 B/228 1 CAV
67 213 ASH
69-70 17 GRP
Flight Test-MDHC
VHPA Editor

**JAMES GOLDTHORPE**
[redacted] 96271
70-45
71 ARTY GRP
71-72 A/377 FA 101 ABN
Pilot U.S. Army

**SCOTT McDOUGALL**
Raytheon Mid-East Systems
P.O. Box 1348
21431 Saudi Arabia
71-07
71 242 ASCH
71-72 25 CAC
Pilot

**STEVE MICHAUD**
[redacted]
67-11
68-69 D/1/1 CAB
Dir. Nat. Sales - WSCA-TV

**WALTER E. PINKERTON, JR.**
[redacted]
68 (USMC)
70-71 HMC-367
Attorney

**ROBERT F. POTVIN**
[redacted]
67-15
67-68 1 BDE 1 CAV
VP Prudential-Bache Securities

**DANIEL C. ROSS**
Box 205
Deer River, MN 56636
35-60 (USMC)
63-64 HMM-361
Pilot-Game Warden

**THOMAS ST. HILAIRE**
22[redacted]
69
70-71 45 MED
Sales/Mgt. Insurance

**LONNIE G. SCHMIDT**
[redacted]
67-68 AHC
Bus. Mgr.

**Become A Life Member. Call VHPA (316) 946-4047**

**GEORGE D. SHIELDS**
Box 154
Tolovana Park, OR 97145
57-10
67-68 A/4 4 INF
68 B/4 4 INF
Real Estate Sales

**DARRELL J. STIGLER**
[redacted]
Pittsburg, PA 15213
69-23
69-70 191 AHC
Pilot

**RAY POLLOK**
[redacted]
66-11
67 A/4 4 INF
67 D/1/10 CAV 4 INF
67-68 120 AVN
Pilot

**LEE T. STRICKLAND**
[redacted]
67-15
67-68 611 TRANS CO
Assoc. Professor

**HENRY J. TEXEIRA**
[redacted]
69-13
69-70 68 AHC
IBM Engineer

**JOHN A. WILLIAMS**
[redacted]
69-21
69-70 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV
Pilot

**THE BLUE GHOST flies again, Greg Ross at the controls.**
***Photo by Ron Wright***

# From the Executive Director

It is with some degree of fear and trembling that I write this column after reading it for years from Larry Clark. I know I am only one in the long line of folks that deeply, deeply appreciate Larry and his long and faithful service as Executive Director. We all, however, must respect his wish to "just be a member and enjoy the association" after years of pioneering work to establish VHPA. Anyway, I am honored to be able to try to fill Larry's shoes and pledge what strength I have to the max for VHPA.

I would like to share with all of you some "sage thoughts" I received from Larry Clark and last year's Past President Bill Ringer, during an Executive Council meeting on the Queen Mary. During a break Bill started "reviewing the bidding" since the original gathering in Phoenix in '84 (now known as the 1st VHPA Reunion). He related parts of conversations where guys said "well, this is neat but there won't be any more meetings... VHPA will never fly". Bill went on to say how glad he was that that "gloom and doom" attitude did not prevail. Bill pointed out that with our solid tradition of successful reunions, a fantastic newsletter, a valuable membership directory, about 70 "hard core lifers" (he means VHPA Life Members), and a total membership nearing 3,000 — that VHPA has not only shown that it will exist but also proven that it is a GREAT ASSOCIATION. Larry picked up on Bill's theme and started talking about the "band of Houstonites" who put together the '85 Reunion that "pulled on everyone's memory strings". Who can forget the cold cut lunch with all that Texas NG gear and the AFNV music, or our biggest helicopter display to date, or the first successful business and banquet meetings, or the first reunion book. Larry went on to remember, with a certain pride but none the less sadness, THE WALL ceremony during the '86 Reunion in DC, the great talk General Westmoreland gave and the fun time everyone had listening to Les Morris? Well, all too quickly the business meeting began again but I had had a lot of fun watching those two "pioneers" play "remember when".

I think the '87 Long Beach Reunion "did us proud". I know it was our most successful reunion!! I was struck with the idea over and over again — that the people attending this reunion were really comfortable and really having fun! The major "gathering" (also billed as dances, receptions or luncheons) were well attended and I was impressed with how many people sat and talked and talked and talked (and drank and drank and even danced a little)!! They either had fun for hours and hours or put on a very convincing show. I know I had fun at this reunion. For the first time I met a guy from my old platoon that had flown with me for many months and another guy from the unit I went over with... that was special!! And laugh... Greg Ross and the Blue Ghost history presentation was absolutely priceless!! And Dan Ross and his band of merry men (I guess their formal title is Marine Pilot) are too funny for words!! Pat Paulson was a kick; everyone had a good long laugh during the banquet! The Memorabilia Room was, without a doubt, the best ever. Naturally, Southern California with the Spruce Goose and the Queen Mary were added treats. I was also proud that our Editor, Roger Gould, finally got his just desserts... a complimentary Life Membership.

So the message is clear and undeniable — VHPA IS GREAT — thank you very much!! VHPA's future is bright — I've seen the plans for Wolters in '88 and I can't wait!!!

Mike Law
Executive Director

**Helicopter Cake presented to the VHPA by the Hotel Queen Mary.**
***Photo by Ron Wright***

# Annual Business Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Mike McDonald at 0900 with about 120 members present. All the VHPA officers were assembled on the stand with Mike including Past President Bill Ringer, who came all the way from Singapore for this reunion. The following business items were covered in the meeting:

With a degree of sadness Mike announced that Larry Clark desired to step down as Executive Director to become a "normal member" and everyone gave Larry a round of applause for his excellent work over the years. Mike Law, whose term of office as Member at Large ends this year, was introduced as the new Executive Director.

Mike gave the membership an update on the changes that have happened during the last 12 months to the administrative side of VHPA. Most of these changes centered around the decision previously announced in newsletters to retain a professional association management service for the administrative functions. John Frank, President of AAM and a member of VHPA, and Nancy Osterhout, the primary AAM employee to handle VHPA business, were introduced to the membership. Naturally this meant moving VHPA headquarters from Phoenix to Wichita where AAM is located. Mike outlined again that the reasons for this change were to provide quality service to members of a 3000+ sized organization that the old, all volunteers simply could not provide and to reduce operating costs thus guaranteeing the membership better service for a lower percentage of their annual dues. The cost savings in the newsletter and postage areas alone have been impressive. Mike announced that AAM was providing the Executive Council with a monthly financial operating report and that a copy of the latest report was posted in the rear of the room for anyone to review. Mike also announced that with the transition to AAM it was necessary to change the dues cycle to a monthly basis rather than what was decided at the Washington reunion. Finally Mike announced that the Executive Council, in working with AAM had decided to publish the

*Continued on next page*

Continued from previous page

membership directory each year after the reunion so the next one could be mailed in the late September time frame. This directory will be magazine sized with color photos on the cover, larger type and generally be a major improvement over our previous directories.

Dave Owens, the VHPA Vice President, outlined the need for four VHPA Constitution changes that had been approved by the Executive Council. These covered Corporate Life Memberships, returning VHPA dues to a calendar basis, naming standing committees, and formalizing the Constitution change process. After some discussion the membership approved these changes.

Dave Owens also presented the Executive Council opinion that VHPA should have a formal mid-year gathering (a mini reunion) in concert with HAI. This gathering would be Feb. 7-9, 1988 in Anaheim. The membership approved this action.

A lengthy but interesting discussion was held concerning locations for the 1989 and 1990 summer reunions. Florida was actively considered but rejected because of new tax laws. The membership finally voted on Chicago in 1989 with Greg Rose as the coordinator and the Fort Rucker area in 1990. A small but elite group from Indiana offered ideas for 1991 that everyone seemed to like but no firm action was taken concerning 1991.

Next, the operating committees gave reports to the membership. Gary Roush from the Records Committee covered the significant gains made this year to improve the KIA and died after the war lists. Dan Hutchison from the Historical Committee covered the results of his survey.

The membership was reminded of the importance of pre-registration for reunions to prevent disappointment either in room location or for meals at the reunion. For example, next year the number of buses chartered for the trip to Wolters will be fixed 30 days prior to the reunion by contract with VHPA. To help reduce the high percentage of last minute registration, VHPA might be moving to an additional late registration fee structure.

Mike Law led a brief discussion about the importance of unit history presentations as part of the reunions and received encouraging ideas from the membership.

Greg Ross, a Member at Large, led the officer election phase. The membership was handed printed ballots and each candidate was given 3 minutes to address the membership. We took a break while Larry Clark and Bill Ringer counted the ballots. The new Vice President is Jay Elliot and the new Member at Large is Paul Uster.

We spent another twenty minutes discussing walk-on items but nothing of significance transpired during this part of the meeting. Mike McDonald adjourned the meeting about 11:30.

Mike Law,
Executive Director.

**"No joke Ma, that's him, Larry Clark, the founder of the VHPA. Notice the perfect technique used in holding on to his drink, the sign of a master at work. Also notice the superior concentration and beady little eyes, your ideal helicopter pilot."**
***Photo by Ron Wright***

## Blue Star Lighter

A lighter has been found, belonging to Blue Star 76, 48 AHC 65-71.

Contact: Bill Meacham, 860 S. Greengrove, Orange, CA 92666

**VHPA "4th Reunion" T-Shirt**
**T-Shirts 8.50 each**
S-M-L-XL add 1.00 for XXL

Tan w/4color

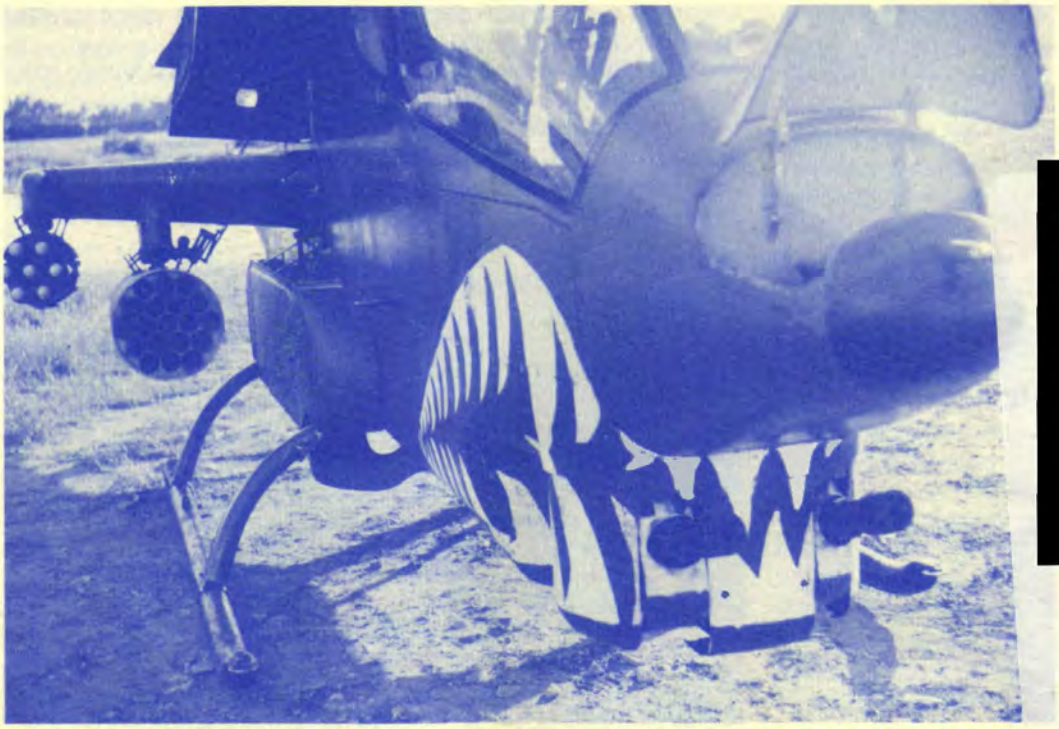
VISA
MasterCard

For Ordering Info:
D&G
P.O. Box 1205 / Columbus, GA 31907
404-563-7646

## HELP! HELP!

As part of our "Back to Wolters" reunion theme we would like to have several short flight class history presentations at our social events. Each presentation should be in the 3-5 minute range and should include an integrated slide show. Everyone enjoyed the History of the Blue Ghosts during the Long Beach Reunion and we would like to continue doing history presentations at each reunion.

So if you and/or some of your classmates have something you'd like to share please contact Mike Law, Executive Director, 392 S. Robb Way, Lakewood, CO 80226.



[redacted]

**WHAT IS IT? Name unit and location. Also, what weapon is mounted on left wir inboard position? Hint: Note the side-pod above the skid cross tubes, a like pod is al mounted on the other side.** *Photo by Double D. Phot*

## VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION
## P. O. Box 9592 — Wichita, Kansas 67277 — (316) 946-4047

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

APPLICATION: ☐
ADDRESS CHANGE: ☐

**ANNUAL DUES: $20**
**LIFE MEMBERSHIP: $300**
**SUBSCRIPTION ONLY: $12***
(*included in annual dues)

**OFFICE USE**

MN _____
DP _____

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.***