



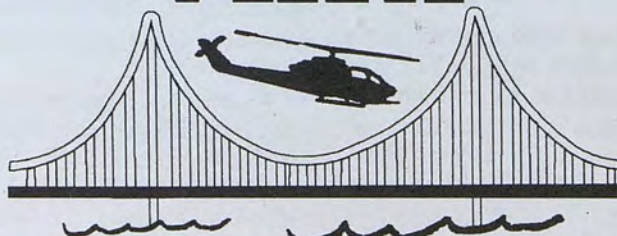
The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

June/July 1996 Vol. 14, No. 3



VHPA



Big Bash By The Bay
SANTA CLARA
JULY 3-6, 1996

This year's reunion message promises a "Big Bash By The Bay" when VHPA members gather in Santa Clara, CA, at the southern end of San Francisco Bay on July 3-6. These logos will appear on the official reunion T-shirt, which can be ordered in advance, using the form on Page 17.

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From the President

Reunion time is near and my family and I are enthusiastic about all the VHPA'ers with whom we expect to rekindle friendships. We are anxious to make new friends, too.

All the things to do at the upcoming reunion sort of pale in comparison to the anticipation of sharing laughs and smiles and stories with our extended VHPA "family."

The VHPA membership is increasing. The greater number of friends each year makes it more difficult to spend as much time with old friends as I'd like, yet I always have time and I always really enjoy making new friends at every reunion.

We are all getting older and our friendships mean more as the days and weeks pass. This is the time of year when

I think about all the regular faces and I begin to rack up a phone bill calling guys to make sure we won't miss each other at the reunion.

Please come and enjoy the smiles on every person's face with me at this reunion and at reunions to come.

I am very lucky and very proud to have served this year as President of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. This job (and it is a job, believe me) has afforded me the opportunity to talk to far more of you than I could have ever dreamed possible.

Any successes the VHPA has enjoyed this year should be attributed to the guys who work so hard on the Committees, the Executive Council and to all of you who have provided your input (pro and con) to help guide this association.

Thanks to all of you. Thanks for the chance to serve as President of the VHPA.

— Ken Fritz, President

Seeking

I am looking for information on three aircraft we are refurbishing that served in Vietnam.

A Huey, tail No. 66-15057, was with the 135th AHC, from November 1970 to February 1971, and was with the 116th AHC from June 1969 to December 1969.

Also looking for information on an OH-6A, tail No. 69-16019, but have no information on who it was with or who it was assigned to.

Another OH-6A, tail No. 67-16415, have no information on it either.

If you have any information, pictures, etc., on any of these aircraft, please contact Al Geribino at:

Can you help to put me in touch with anyone who might be able to find a pilot who I flew with in VN? Or can you tell me how to go about trying to locate them by phone, mail, or computer. Thanks.

Larry Talley

I am trying to locate anyone who served with the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion in 1964 or later, and particularly anyone who knew Sgt. Hollis Kimmons.

Hollis Kimmons completed three tours of duty from 1963 to 1968. He passed away three years ago.

I can be reached at [redacted] (collect calls are fine), by fax at [redacted]

Marc Herman

The sister of WO1 David R. Kink, C/1/9 First CAV, WORWAC 69-11 KIA 8/3/69 is hoping to hear from guys her brother knew in flight school or Vietnam.

Please write, call collect, or e-mail to Julie Kink,

Phone: [redacted]

Inactivation ceremonies planned for regiment

Company C, 7th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment at Scott AFB will hold formal inactivation ceremonies in August 1996.

Anyone interested in attending these ceremonies is encouraged to contact Capt. Kirk Armstrong for details and to be placed on the invitation list.

Attendance is expected to be extensive because the inactivation represents the end for all the Reserve Aviation units that have served the St. Louis area for so many years. These include the 219th Aviation Company, 281st Aviation Company, 7th/158th Aviation Battalion, and the 148 Aviation Group.

Many former members of these units now serve with Company C/7th/159th and many more past members are expected to be present to witness this final Army Reserve Aviation event.

Contact: Captain Armstrong, Company C/7th/159th Aviation Regiment, Room 128, [redacted] Phone [redacted]

John Dowdy
Central Region analyst manager
Harris Computer Systems Corp.

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Dogs get charge from flying in helicopters

DREW BOUDRIEAU

Dogs were used quite a bit in Nam as guard dogs or as part of a tracking team.

The ones we dealt with were used for tracking. The teams consisted of a dog and a handler.

The dogs were trained to be loyal to their handler and it was very difficult for anyone else to get close to the dog.

Many times when a handler was wounded or killed, the dog would have to be killed because it would not let anyone near the wounded or dead handler.

The dogs underwent training in the World separate from the handlers, then the teams would be formed for more training.

It is a well known fact that dogs love to stick their head out of the window of a moving car.

It did not take them long to discover a helicopter in flight is a whole lot better.

We almost always flew with the cargo doors open, and they would like to fly with their front paws on the edge of the doorway and their head sticking out in the slipstream.

One day we had a mission to pick up two dog teams at Americal and take them out to field locations.

When we got to the pad, we were told to shut down for a few minutes to wait for something.

It was obvious the handlers were both new guys and were not aware of the dogs' love of helicopters.

As soon as we landed, the dogs started to get excited about the possibility of a helicopter ride. It also was obvious the handlers were misinterpreting their excitement.

My co-pilot and I got out of the aircraft and started toward the dogs.

As we got closer, the dogs started jumping around and barking. The handlers were becoming more nervous and told us to stay away, that no one could get near the dogs, especially as excited as they were.

We, of course, knew why the dogs were excited, so we kept on coming. The handlers told us that we were going to get attacked by the dogs if we got much closer, so please stay away.

Just then, we got to the dogs, and they started whining and licking our hands.

The look on the handlers' faces was priceless.

It took quite awhile to explain the dogs associated us with the fun of a helicopter ride and that's why they acted like they did.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Drew Boudrieau flew as "Minuteman 14" in 1968-69.

Memorial Day 1994 — 26 years later

I was motivated by the emotional nature of television coverage from the Vietnam Wall. These specials often recall strong memories of my past life as an Army helicopter pilot.

I was employed by a major airline and had the afternoon free before reporting for my trip that evening. In the past, I had procrastinated, but I decided that today would be the day I try to locate some special people from the past.

Twenty-six years earlier, they had received the shocking news of the loss of their only son in a helicopter training accident. Their son, Mal Littman, was my student.

In the summer of 1968, I was a helicopter instructor pilot in the Department of Tactics at Fort Stewart, GA. Having completed my Vietnam tour as a medevac

(Dustoff) pilot in March, I had reported to the Hunter/Stewart area in early May. I was looking forward to flying the UH-1 again in peacetime as a smooth transition from combat to the "real" world.

I was delighted to learn that my flight school classmate, Gordon Shirley, was going to be my flying partner in instructor school. We renewed our acquaintance and became good friends during the next few weeks. We finished the course and were assigned to sister platoons.

A couple months later (June 30, 1968) my platoon was scheduled to fly the dual night formation sortie. Each instructor had four students, so guest instructor pilots from our sister platoon would fly with the two students not flying with us. I was pleased that my other students, N.H. "Mal" Littman and G.T. Faircloth, would be paired up with my friend and former classmate, Gordon Shirley.

After completing the sortie, a few hours later, I was shocked to learn that Gordon and my two students had crashed and all were lost. They had been observed, from others in the formation, diving from position straight into the ground.

The accident investigation revealed that hydraulic fluid contamination had caused a valve to stick open, giving them a hard-over cyclic from which they couldn't recover.

The next day Maj. Jones, my platoon commander, asked me if I would be willing to be the military escort officer for Mal Littman. I learned that would entail escorting his remains home to Chicago to attend the funeral and burial services as the representative of the United States Army.

I felt honored to have this awesome responsibility, but was more than a little nervous about the exposure this duty would demand. Would the family be (understandably) bitter toward me and the U.S. Army which I represented?

I met a warm, understanding, passionate and loving fam-

Twenty-six years earlier, they had received the shocking news of the loss of their only son in a helicopter training accident.

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VHPA Product Order Form

MAIL FORM TO:

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FAX NUMBER FOR

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New VHPA bumper stickers \$1/each _____

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1992 VHPA Directory \$10/each _____
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1994 VHPA Directory \$10/each _____
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1995 VHPA Directory \$10/each _____
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Vol. 1 Historical Reference \$15/each _____
Directory (\$5 P&H each)

Vol. 2 Historical Reference \$20/each _____
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1995 VHPA Calendar \$7/each _____
(\$3 P&H each)

1996 VHPA Calendar \$10/each _____
(\$3 P&H each)

1995-96 VHPA Calendar set \$15/set _____
(\$5 P&H set)

GRAND TOTAL

TO ORDER

Send check/money order or charge to your VISA, MasterCard or Discover card.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Credit card No.: _____

Expiration date: _____

Signature: _____

Continued from Page 4

ily in Chicago and I grieved with them over the loss of their son.

As I drove into that neighborhood 26 years later, I was again apprehensive about my reception, opening of old wounds, their health and even if they were still both alive and able to communicate.

About one in four homes, I noticed, had flags out for Memorial Day observance and I was sure that if one or

both of them were still healthy, they also would, and they did.

I knocked on the screen door and shortly was greeted by Mal Littman Sr., now about 82 years old.

I stammered a little and confirmed what I already knew by asking him if he was the father of Mal Littman who was killed in a helicopter accident 26 years ago.

I believe he just nodded his head in disbelief as I told him who I was. The tears welled in both our eyes as he called for his wife.

I stammered a little and confirmed what I already knew by asking him if he was the father of Mal Littman who was killed in a helicopter accident 26 years ago. I believe he just nodded his head in disbelief as I told him who I was. The tears welled in both our eyes as he called for his wife.

Neva came out to meet me. She was having trouble getting around, suffering from arthritis, but otherwise appeared to be in good health for her age. She was obviously moved, but initially speechless.

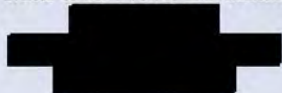
I found them to be the same warm, loving, patriotic Americans that I had met 26 years earlier. They are still grieving.

The thought occurred to me in 1968 how this scene, multiplied times the total number of fatalities from the Vietnam War, represented an unbelievable amount of heartache and sacrifice. It occurred to me again.

Mal and Neva Littman would like to hear from friends of Mal's. If you have information about the families of G.T. Faircloth or Gordon Shirley, they would like to be in touch with them.

Just a note to tell them you remember would be appreciated.

Mal and Neva Littman



Ted Riendeau
283rd Medical Detachment



Writer trying to locate chopper's pilots, crew

I am trying to locate the pilots/crew of an aircraft UH-1D that was C&C for Gen. Freund of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade in an engagement (XT 815063) on Aug. 7, 1967, north of Hoc Mon Village, III Corps.

The general was wounded and his aide was killed while trying to rescue crews from our 187th AHC "Blackhawk" ships down in the LZ that day.

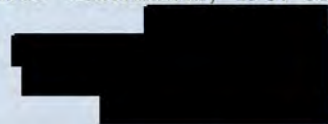
Also on station were LFTs from 162 AHC, 116 AHC and 120th AHC, four UH-1D "slicks" from the 191st AHC, one 68th AHC "slick," and the 269th Aviation Battalion's "Smokey."

I've done research at the National Archives and have been in contact with "Redcatcher" grunts involved.

Any additional information from the above units would be greatly appreciated, as I would like to write an article on the events that transpired that day.

Bob Gibeault

199th Light Infantry Brigade, 1966-67
187th AHC "Blackhawks," 1967-68



Huey will be dedicated at special airport ceremony

Please consider this a formal invitation to attend a special ceremony at the Sonoma County Airport on June 15, 1100 hours until noon.

The Pacific Coast Air Museum, based at Sonoma County Airport, has recently received a Huey, No. 66-16779, which was being retired by the 126th Medevac ANG in Sacramento.

This Huey will be dedicated in a formal ceremony on the above date and time to the 56 servicemen who died in Vietnam from Sonoma County.

The Air Force Band of the West, Brass Quintet, the American Legion Rifle Honor Squad, two Vietnam Veteran chapter colors guards and a bagpiper from the ANG will all be there, and a combat Huey pilot from Vietnam, Frank Gallagher, will be the featured speaker.

A 30-year veteran of the Air Force Chaplain Corps will be the sky pilot and formally dedicate the aircraft.

It has been requested that the 126th Medevac do a fly-over at noon. That is still in the works and no response has

This Huey will be dedicated in a formal ceremony on the above date and time to the 56 servicemen who died in Vietnam from Sonoma County.

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been received from the request as of this date.

It any of your members would like to attend and be acknowledged by their attendance, please advise Gary Greenough, project coordinator, Huey Memorial Project, Pacific Coast Air museum.

Gary Greenough
[REDACTED]

Where are missionaries who lived near company?

SEEKING: Anyone who was last in the Danang area around 1969 or 1970.

Was with the 142nd Trans Company, Red Beach. Knew Jim "Sneaky" White then. He used to come down to our ramp to get his shot-up 58s fixed.

Am trying to find out what happened to the missionaries who lived across the bay from us. Barry and Tillie, who lived with Dr. Halvorson and his wife. We built a house for them when they arrived in 1970.

If anyone was there after 1970 and knows of them, would appreciate a little intel to what happened to them, like if they stayed on or not or left when the great fall came.

We supported several units up in I Corps then such as 1/5th Mech out of Dong Ha, a medevac unit in Phu Bai, a couple of units at Camp Eagle and parts of the Americal down in Chu Lai.

Most memorable mission — going on a hot aircraft recovery south of Danang down around the Hoi An River with Capt. Pete Fee and, as I recall, we couldn't go in high because of naval arty and so we could only go low and fast, which took us over a village full of black clothes "kung fu" fighters with AKs.

We caught about 30 holes, including fuel tanks on the way out.

Some up through the floor, one hit one of the guys in the rear, but thanks to chicken plate seat pad it only jammed his head into the roof of the huey. Anyone with info on the above can e-mail it to:

CW4 Ken Bryant
[REDACTED]

'Gladiators' close call recalled 22 years later

I was flying as copilot on the lead ship of a Special Forces FOB mission while serving with the 57th Assault Helicopter Company.

At the time, Jan. 5, 1970, the 57th AHC, "Gladiators," was based in Kontum, northern II Corps and the company's primary mission was to support the 5th Special Forces' CCC Recon Company.

The CCC recon Company, also known as FOB II, had a then-classified mission to monitor the activities and gather intelligence along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos and northern Cambodia.

The AC I was flying with that day, Carter Higginbotham, was flying as "White Lead" and we had just inserted

Former Navy helicopter pilot sought by relative

I ask your assistance in locating a former U.S. Navy helicopter pilot who served with a relative of mine in HA(L)-3 in Vietnam in 1967.

Please check your files to determine if Algirdas V. Bacanskas was or is a member of your organization. If so, I would appreciate being advised of his current address.

Thank you for your assistance.

F.C. Johnson
[REDACTED]

the eight-man recon team, "Spin Down," in the northeastern corner of Cambodia.

The insertion went well, the team was on the ground undetected and moving.

During our return flight to the Dak To forward staging area along with our escort, the 361st Escort Company's "Pink Panthers," the covey working us was notified of a "Prairie Fire" in progress.

A "Prairie Fire" was the FOB code word for a tactical emergency.

"Wolfgirl," RT Vermont, had stepped in it and was engaged in heavy contact and had sustained casualties.

The team was making its way to a bomb crater located at the base of a boxed canyon west of the Ben Het Special Forces border camp.

The terrain was such that the 361st Cobra's could not effectively provide cover for the "Gladiator" slicks due to the abruptness of the canyon in regards to the intended extraction point.

Therefore, the 57th's "Cougar" gun platoon was called in to provide quick cover with its UH-1C models which were capable of making the necessary close-in support. A1-E "Skyraiders" also were on station and used throughout the day.

Our first attempt was aborted while we were on short final to the LZ due to intense small arms fire and an unexpected RPG impacting directly under our tailboom.

We pulled off and returned to Dak To for fuel.

Several more attempts were made and aborted to pull the team during the afternoon.

The enemy had the luxury of firing down effectively on the team and choppers from a horseshoe ridge line located above the bomb crater.

During our return flight to the Dak To forward staging area along with our escort, the 361st Escort Company's "Pink Panthers," the covey working us was notified of a "Prairie Fire" in progress.

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A CCC recon company "Bright Light" rescue platoon was due to link up with "Wolfgirl" from the east and, during the ensuing hours, we finally were able to successfully set up once more for an extraction attempt as evening approached.

We flew to the head of the canyon and hovered up to the bomb crater.

I looked through the chin bubble and saw a North Vietnamese soldier lying on his back, staring up at me; his eyes wide open.

I screamed to the "Bright Light" team on the FM radio, which was now linked up with "Wolfgirl" in the LZ, about this guy. I told them he had his hand on his rifle and looked like he was ready to shoot. They informed

me the guy had been there all day and he was dead as a post.

The rotor wash was simply moving him around, which gave the appearance of him scrambling to get his gun up.

We were able to pull both the recon team and the "Bright Light" team without further losses. RT Vermont had sustained one or two KIAs and all that remained were wounded.

We flew them to Ben Het to the waiting "dustoff" choppers.

Other than a few more gray hairs for Higg and myself and the other "Gladiators" involved, we were none the worse for wear and this was just another day on FOB.

Like Paul Harvey, the rest of the story follows:

Twenty-two years later, I was perusing a Military Book Club listing and noticed a picture of a book with the MACVSOG insignia on the cover.

I ordered the book, "Reflections Of A Warrior," by Franklin Miller, out of curiosity only. I had not seen the FOB insignia, which consists of a white fanged skull wearing a Green Beret with a multicolored bomb blast in the background, in years.

To my surprise, when I finally received the book, I instantly recognized Miller's picture on the jacket, along with Col. Apt, commanding officer of the CCC Recon Company during our tenure with the "Gladiators."

To my further astonishment, I was shocked to read Franklin Miller, a.k.a. "Wolfgirl," was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions on that fateful day back on January 1970.

I had no contact with any "Gladiators" since leaving the service in 1971.

I had almost simultaneously noticed Carter Higginbotham's name in the VHPA directory when I received Miller's book.

Former 'Blackhawk' tries to find members of unit

My name is Thomas E. Moore. My reason for writing is I saw your name in the preface of a book called "4/4 A LRP's Narrative" and saw that you were connected with the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

I served in Vietnam with the 187th Assault Helicopter Company "Blackhawks," which was later changed to the "Crusaders."

Over the years, I have lost all contact with those I served with and was hoping you may be able to help me get in touch with some of my old unit. I would truly like to speak with any of them again, but I have no idea where to start.

If you can assist me in any way I would greatly appreciate it.

Thomas E. Moore

P.S.: I served in the 187th at Tay Ninh is 1967 and 1968.

I immediately ordered "Higg" a copy and mailed it, along with a letter, to his home in New Hampshire.

Carter and I had a chance to relive the "Wolfgirl" fiasco and reacquaint ourselves, along with almost 100 more "Gladiators," at our first reunion this past March in Orlando.

Several CCC Recon Company team leaders were present, along with a Montagnard tribesman who fought up until this past year in the jungles of Cambodia and Vietnam.

Vaughn R. Ross
Gladiator 16 and 3

Student writes a note about Vietnam statistics

Just got the following note from a high school student. He is referring to the statistics page on our homepage.

<http://www.vhfcn.org>

This illustrates the value and importance of accurately publishing our history. Another 30 or so young people get exposed to accurate facts about the Vietnam War. (Hope his spelling was better in his report)

Gary Roush

Thank you for running such an excellent web page I thought it was very useful for my Vietnam video report for 11th grade history.

Thank you
Damon Petta

Guardian Angel now wears general's stars

We've all had dreams; some good, some bad, it's not unique to any one person. However, I had always been able to say, "I never had any of 'those dreams.'" I had my stuff together and even though I suffered pain from the crash, that was it.

Until the year 1993, when I got hammered by a couple of things that set off "the dreams."

They got worse and worse until I thought I was losing my marbles. I went to counseling at the VA and most of you know what that's like.

I had the standard bunker mentality, loaded gun within easy reach and since I was retired due to ill health, I spent most of my time alone in my room.

My dreams settled into a pattern; I would dream of every flight from planning to shutdown, and the dream would turn to nightmares (I actually kneed my wife in the rump and she flew out of bed).

As the dreams progressed to the point where they were unbearable, I would dream about a nurse who saved my life.

Problem was, that was in 1987 at Fort Drum, NY. The nurse was, I am quite sure, Maj. Cunningham of the 351st HSPGRP 94th ARCOM USAR.

She had red hair and green eyes and freckles. She had jumped on the gurney and straddled me and kept me from going off the deep end, for I had no blood pressure.

In the dream as I stared up at her, she would slowly change to a lovely, angelic face with blonde hair and blue eyes, dressed not in cammies, but in nurse's white with a bright white light behind her.

I didn't know who she was, but in spite of my sad shape then and for six years after, her soft, soothing voice, so caring and sweet and urging me on, I would fall asleep, the demons chased away once more.

On Veterans Day 1993, my wife Pat (OW) and I went to the ceremonies for the Women's Vietnam Memorial.

The morning of the ceremony, we arrived at 10 a.m. and found that handicapped seating would not be until 12:30. I

made such a fuss and to-do that a Secret Service agent (or a man with a terrible-fitting Miracle Ear) came and escorted Pat and me to a bench beyond the ropes, where we sat until the dogs had cleared the VIP area.

This same gentleman took Pat and me by the arms and escorted us into the VIP area and said, "These two are here by my orders and they stay."

As you can imagine, the place was like a beehive.

During this time, someone made an announcement: "If you were wounded or injured in RVN, then your nurse is here."

Well, I watched a few emotional reunions and even got

some nurses and their patients together. I thought, "Gee, that's really nice."

As I went to sit down and get my portable oxygen tank straight, I looked up, and I saw "That face." She was a brigadier general and when our eyes met, I said: "I know you," and she said: "I know you, too."

I walked over to where she was, and waited for my chance.

When chance came, I said, "Excuse me, General, but I have a question."

She stood up and said, "Don't tell me, I'll tell you. Walter Reed Army Hospital 1967! How are you Arthur?"

I said, "Pretty good, Dot, and you?"

I said, "May I hug a general?" and she said, "You'd better, I'm starting to cry."

I couldn't say anything because I already was. As we held on, I felt the demons and all bad things just melt away, for you see, I had found my Guardian Angel.

We have kept in touch and I have gone through

several operations and I usually tell Dot beforehand and update her on my progress. Only once did I not tell her until after the successful outcome of surgery for lung cancer.

I have an official general photo on my wall that says, "To Arthur Stevenson, a former favorite patient and current good friend. Dorothy Pocklington Brig. Gen. USAR (RET)."

And, as a postscript, I say: "Angel First Class, missing a few feathers for me."

Arthur D. Stevenson



Brig. Gen. Dorothy Pocklington, now retired, meets VHPA member Arthur D. Stevenson during dedication of the Women's Vietnam Memorial in 1993. Pocklington saved Stevenson's life in 1967.

Mission: Keep Sam Donaldson busy

TOM PAYNE
VHPA MEMBER

While serving my second tour in RVN, I took part in the so-called "Vietnamization Program" in a number of ways and, in particular, Lam Son 719, a very large offensive that took place in I Corps of South Vietnam from January to March 1971.

I was serving as executive officer of A Company, 125th Air Traffic Control Battalion. Stationed at Hue/Phu Bai, A Company was responsible for providing all non-divisional air traffic control for the entire region called I Corps.

Our mission included control towers, ADF navigational and terminal beacons, GCAs and approach controls, flight following and other types of aviation support.

At Hue/Phu Bai, our headquarters, we provided air traffic control advisers to the Phu Bai tower, an ADF beacon and a radar approach control (RAPCON) and GCA.

Our headquarters was on the airfield and located in a red building between the parking tarmac and the east-west runway. The GCA and RAPCON also were located next to the runway.

My story begins one morning in late January 1971. Our CO, Maj. Malchow, received an urgent phone call from the commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division, located several miles east of the airfield.

The general told us that "under no circumstances were we to help any media personnel or reporters to get helicopter rides to the interior of I Corps and, especially, to the area where Lam Son 719 was taking place."

As I remember, the real reason was that the 25,000 or so Vietnamese were getting the **** kicked out of them by the NVA. Maj. Malchow called us all into his office and told us of the orders and for us to pass it on to the NCOs.

Well, it was 30 minutes later when the control tower called on the intercom to say a very angry reporter and his cameraman were headed across the ramp to the "Red Shack" and they were wanting a ride to the interior, where Lam Son 719 was under way.

In just a couple of minutes, the door burst open and guess who? Sam Donaldson of ABC Television fame and his Korean cameraman.

In just a couple of minutes, the door burst open and guess who? Sam Donaldson of ABC Television fame and his Korean cameraman.

While he was ranting and raving loudly in the front office about not being allowed to get on a helicopter, Maj. Malchow took me aside and told me to do anything I could think of to keep this guy occupied and away from a helicopter. I had no idea what I was going to do or what I could do to divert Donaldson and his cameraman, but I had to try.

Well, I introduced myself to Donaldson and asked him if they would have a seat and I would see what I could do to help. I told him there surely would be a bird soon, but that sometimes it took awhile.

I made up something about helicopters coming in this time of day being mostly "ash and trash" birds going south to Da Nang or north to Quang Tri, and that most of the birds to the interior were usually very early or very late — it was now about 10:30 or 11 a.m.

I offered them coffee, Cokes, doughnuts and even got into talking about things stateside. I dragged out

... I asked Donaldson if he was hungry. I told him I knew a great officer's mess where we could get a great steak.

all the pictures and war trophies I could find and even got Donaldson to take down the phone number of my wife, and everyone's wife in the office so he might give them a call when he got back to the "world."

Donaldson described in detail how he had gotten into the media and where he was from, etc., etc. I even got him to tell the story about how he had come to have a Korean cameraman.

It seemed like time passed so slowly, especially when he watched every helicopter that landed or took off from the ramp. I even acted like I was talking to the tower on the intercom, asking to be notified immediately when a bird going east landed.

As noon approached, I asked Donaldson if he was hungry. I told him I knew a great officer's mess where we could get a great steak. He agreed to go eat, but his cameraman declined, saying something about looking for something around the airfield and watching the camera and equipment.

Our first sergeant said he would take care of the cameraman.

Maj. Malchow's Jeep was out front, so off we went. (The first sergeant later told me he thought by splitting them up, we could confound their plans and divert them for a longer time.)

I drove all around the airfield and through the Vietnamese town, killing time, and finally ended up at the Radio Research Compound where there was a great officer's mess and club.

I also knew there sometimes was even one of those "great" all-girl Philippine bands at the club for noon and, sure enough, this day there was. After a few drinks, a few songs and finally a great lunch of steak, baked potato, etc. lunch was over and the time was 2 p.m.!

Incidentally, a great help in my delaying tactics was the fact almost everyone in the officer's mess and club recognized Donaldson and wanted to shake his hand and visit a little.

We left the Radio Research Compound and I tried to retrace my earlier route so Donaldson would not suspect I had taken him the long route the first time.

See ALMOST, Page 10

Pig Pool a highlight of WOC parties

PHIL MARSHALL

One thing RLOs missed out on was some of the fun and frivolity for warrant officer candidates (WOC) in flight school at Fort Wolters.

Yep, as warrant officer candidates rather than officer students, we missed out on the \$25-a-day per diem, the off-post living and the Corvettes, but we made up for it with the Pig Pool.

There were three major rites of passage for the typical WOC at Fort Wolters: Graduation from preflight after four weeks, "solo status" at about seven or eight weeks, and the last four weeks of the 20-week program was known as "senior status."

Each of these prestigious events was marked by a party at the Student Activities Building (SAB) and, since we were all gentlemen (almost), it was always more fun if ladies were present. But the goat-ropers and ranchers of Mineral Wells were too wise to the ways of the WOCs and would have nothing to do with their daughters attending such functions.

So, a call went out to Texas Women's University at Denton, home school of at least two Miss Texas candidates for Miss America.

Notices would be placed on the bulletin boards of dormitories at the campus announcing such things as "2nd WOC Solo Party" or "6th WOC Preflight Party" on such and such a date and the time the OD green bus would pick them up.

At the appointed time, they would be delivered to the SAB and the smiling warrant officer candidates would be waiting to help them off the bus and request to be the ladies' escorts for the evening.

The ladies were almost always in demand and many came back often for several parties; they all seemed to have a nice time.

But how did ALL of these ladies get asked to be escorted, even the "less attractive" ones? Meet CW2 James P. Fazekas, TAC officer.

I assume somewhere along the line, Fazekas participated in a Pig Pool himself as a student of some sort, so all he

was doing was passing on the knowledge to us, his candidates.

The deal was each of us put \$1 in a pool, and the candidate who escorted the worst "pig" got the pot, usually over \$40, a princely sum for a WOC.

There were a few rules, however:

First and foremost, absolutely no word could leak out to the ladies as to what we were doing or none of them would ever return to a 2nd WOC party again!

Second, you had to spend most, if not all, of the evening with your date.

And third, you had to introduce your date to Mr. and Mrs. Fazekas. (I've never had the guts to ask her if she ever knew what was going on!)

By the way, married candidates were ineligible! That was it; money was dispersed the next day.

As far as I know, none of the ladies ever caught on to the pool, and when I returned from Vietnam and was assigned as a TAC officer, I continued the tradition.

We had great parties, the ladies seemed to have plenty of offers and one candidate at each party was a little richer for it. In fact, I know of a few marriages that took place from these parties!

Years later, while at the Fort Worth reunion, I met wives of two VHPA members who were sisters and graduates of Denton. They both had attended the parties and we all discussed the fun times at the SAB.

Reluctantly, I told them about the pig pools and hoped they would understand we were only trying to make sure all the ladies had a nice time and did not feel left out.

We all had a good laugh when I finished the story, but I noticed the ladies were laughing harder than the rest of us. I was relieved they were being such good sports about it.

But my relief turned to disbelief when they informed me the ladies had a Pig Pool, too!

All these years, I thought we were so cool about it and once again I was reminded women really DO make all the rules!

While there is no doubt in my mind these two ladies' dates did NOT win the pool, I wonder which of us WOCs DID "win" for our side!

Almost everyone recognized Donaldson

Continued from Page 9

Just before 3 p.m., we arrived back at the "Red Shack." The Korean cameraman was there and told Donaldson there had been very few helicopters to come in since lunch.

Reluctantly, they both sat down and we began to talk some more.

Around 3:45 p.m. Donaldson stood up and said he could not wait any longer and they were going to look around and see if they could find a vehicle or some other transportation to the 101st Airborne Division area, where there might be more heli-

copters going to the interior.

I said that might be a good idea and I was sorry we couldn't find them a bird, but that was the way it was sometimes.

Donaldson and his cameraman picked up their bags and camera, and out the door they went.

We all ran to the window and watched, laughing, as they waddled across the ramp to the highway that passed just off the Hue/Phu Bai Airfield.

I remembered how proud we felt to have accomplished our mission —

keep the media off a helicopter going to Lam Son 719.

Over the years I have seen a number of TV programs on which Donaldson has appeared and in which viewer call-in opportunities were offered.

I have spent countless hours trying to call these programs and talk to Donaldson.

I wanted to ask him if he remembered the incident back in January 1971 at Hue/Phu Bai.

But most of all, I have wanted to say: "Gotcha, Sam Donaldson."

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VHPA3 6/96

Marine Corps Cobras in Vietnam

WALTER E. PINKERTON JR.
VHPA MEMBER

I am looking forward to the month of July this year.

The VHPA was kind enough to put a picture of a "real" helicopter in its 1996 Calendar for that month and I love it!

The text under the picture said the first Marine AH-1G Cobras arrived in Vietnam during April 1969. Initially, they were assigned to the VMO squadrons, which at that time had the only Marine Corps helicopter gunships, the UH-1Es.

On Dec. 16, 1969, HML-367 was officially commissioned as the Corps' first true helicopter gunship squadron. The squadron's name was "Scarface" and our two-letter aircraft identifiers were "VT."

All Cobras were consolidated into that squadron, which initially was stationed at Phu Bai. In 1970, it relocated to Marble Mountain.

I joined HML-367 in October 1970, shortly after I completed Cobra training at Hunter Army Airfield in September 1970.

On my arrival at Marble, I was assigned to the "enviable" collateral duty as embarkation officer. I refer to this as "enviable" because generally such a billet is a "no brainer."

However, in July 1971, the Marines were relocating back to the world and I was fortunate to assist in the embarkation from Danang harbor.

In fact, not only did I oversee the embarkation of my squadron and its property, but additionally the 5th Marines showed up on embarkation day and I assisted them with their 105s and 155s. It was a real treat!

Like almost everyone in the VHPA, the memories of my tour in Vietnam are still important to me. I'd like to share three of them:

First, and I've been meaning to update the information in the VHPA Directory for several years now. I was involved in the incident in which 1st Lt. John Lassitter died on Dec. 4, 1970.

I was in the front seat and John in the back. Our section (flight of two for the Army readers) was assigned to morning medevac and was returning

As we punched up Marble tower, we were asked to check out a bunch of suspicious boats, low in the water, which were moving north off the coast.

to Marble from an earlier medevac extract.

As we punched up Marble tower, we were asked to check out a bunch of suspicious boats, low in the water, which were moving north off the coast.

I'm sorry I don't know more details about the boats, other than they were low in the water and numbered about 20-25.

I remember we flew 180s around them at about 1,000 feet AGL for about 10 minutes, awaiting clearance to commence hot runs.

Finally, approval to fire was given and John and I were starting a gun run when the engine torque went to zero, presumably from hostile fire.

In the Cobra, you couldn't hear the hostile fire except when the ground FM was keyed.

We were in an approximate 35-degree dive and about 170 knots when we impacted the South China Sea.

Upon impact, the water imploded the canopy and the Cobra went belly up and commenced sinking. I was struggling to get out of my harness and lap belt, but my bullet bouncer (I

Upon impact, the water imploded the canopy and the Cobra went belly up and commenced sinking.

think the Army called it a chicken plate) had positioned itself over the release toggle of the lap belt.

We were sinking fast and I remember looking up through the canopy at the sunlight as it streaked through the water like ribbons of light.

At about 80 feet, based upon my later scuba diving experience, my bullet bouncer became buoyant. I was able to release the harness and get free to the surface.

But I was hardly out of danger. Since then I've told my friends my rescue was something out of a Three Stooges cartoon!

First, a CH-53 came to the area and despite the crew's good intentions, the rotor wash for that huge machine nearly drowned me. I still had on my boots and clothes, but no water survival vest.

It was during this time I observed John bobbing in the ocean about 35 yards from me.

Next came a UH-1E and the crew threw out a life vest which helped me float. I pointed the flight crew in the direction of John.

Needless to say, even the Huey's downwash was enough to produce typhoon conditions at the surface of the water.

Later, a CH-46 landed near me, lowered the side door and the crewman pulled me on board.

I was transported to a medical unit near Danang and I fully expected to see John there. Not so, a few days later his body washed ashore near Chu Lai.

The second thought I'd like to share concerns the AH-1J Sea Cobra. HML-367 flew AH-1Gs exclusively except for a three-month period when a four-aircraft AH-1J detachment joined us.

This detachment of 9 officers and 23 enlisted arrived on Feb. 16, 1971. The four AH-1Js arrived a few days later and started flying combat missions in early March.

The AH-1J's chin turret mounted the XM-197 three-barrel, 20 mm gun which fired up to 750 rounds per minute. It had a rotor brake for ship-board operations, standard Navy avionics, and twin engines.

Naturally, the Marine Corps was
See AH-1Js, Page 13

AH-1Js arrived several days later

Continued from Page 12

very interested in testing it under combat conditions. They were flown in Lam Son 719, on escort missions, and on Black Hammer missions (a searchlight equipped UH-1E covered by two gunships carrying "nails" with four-foot V.T. fuses).

I am certain the official Marine Corps report presented the Sea Cobra as vastly superior to the AH-1G, but I loved to fly the AH-1G. I thought the 7.62 mm miniguns and 40 mm grenades in the chin turret gave us a lot of flexibility, firepower and was really a great support helicopter.

In closing, I'd like to present a little verse I wrote after leaving the Marine Corps and reflecting on a particular night medevac mission, which we often supported.

It goes with the melody for "Night Riders In the Sky" and I call it "Ghost Riders In My Eyes."

It was a hot, dark and clammy night, some resting in their beds

*Tonight it's night medevac so some kid won't lie dead
The radio it crackled loud, I jumped up fast half stunned*

The call emergency medevac and I prayed we'd see the sun.

We launched quickly from our pads, the messages coming fast

The POS pushed up by shackled code, we plotted as we speed

*We got our briefing on the go, at fifteen hundred feet
And Hercules lighting up the skies, preventing their retreat.*

The Cobras they were following began to make their runs

Rockets launching with red glare to muffle Charlie's guns

And then they made a let down pass, when a quiet voice it said

Change in classification boys, "Permanent Routine" now instead.

*Our heartbeats then quieted as we returned to our beds
Back listening to the tunes, like the Grateful Dead*

Blood, Sweat and Tears screams aloud, another message blurred

This time asking a question, war what good is it for?

Yippee Ey Ya, Yippee Ey Oh, Ghost Riders In My Eyes

EDITOR'S NOTE: Walter E. Pinkerton Jr., "Scarface 27," is now an attorney who specializes in international asset protection and advanced estate planning.

Newspaper tells war stories

LES HINES

Recently I was reading the 1966 *Des Moines Register* in the library. I am trying to understand what the good people in my town were reading and thinking about while we were fighting the war.

I trust the VHPA members will enjoy these as much as I did!

From the Nov. 28, 1966, issue:

Copter Flier

Franklin D. Beggs, 26, of Somerville, Ala., who got divorced so he could join the Army — and then remarried his wife — is now happily flying a resupply helicopter as a war-rant officer in Vietnam.

"I have no regrets," the former truck driver said at Phan Rang. "I feel like this is what I'm supposed to be doing."

Beggs was turned down last year when he tried to enlist in the Army because he had one too many dependents — his wife Linda Joyce, and a son, Mark, 3. Mrs. Beggs also was expecting a second child.

Mrs. Beggs got a divorce on the grounds of cruelty. He joined the Army the next day. He remarried Linda while on leave. He has been in Vietnam since Oct. 8.

From the Dec. 4, 1966, issue:

405 Chaplains in Vietnam

Step Too Far

A doorgunner on a helicopter used for medevacs and assault landings was a pacifist who felt that "it is better that I get killed than that I kill a fellow human."

He was trying to shoot close to the Viet Cong to make them keep their heads down" without killing them. This, of course, was not only beyond the skill of the greatest marksman but also a perpetual menace to the other crewmembers who knew nothing of the kindly feelings their gunner had toward all humanity.

A discerning chaplain was able to get the gunner moved to a non-combat job. The Army is by no means hostile to conscientious objectors. On the contrary, it is glad, if they present themselves for what they are.

Classified advertising

BLACKHAWK PILOTS: I am a VHPA member and an attorney who represents pilots in products liability claims arising from aircraft accidents. I need an expert consultant/witness who is knowledgeable about (1) the reported tendency of Blackhawk helicopters to roll excessively as a result of an aerodynamic slip anomaly in a shallow right turning approach to hover, (2) lateral CG problems associated with asymmetrical fuel flow from the external tanks, or (3) any history of hydraulic failures or hard overs. If you have any information concerning any of the above or know where I may obtain same, please contact Jeremiah A. Denton III (Gun Runner 1) at [redacted] fax number [redacted]

FOR SALE: Comprehensive helicopter model collection. More than 800 models collected by the late Warren Bahlke, VHPA member, WORWAC 68-25. Collected more than 20 years, his mom offers these for sale as a collection. A complete list is \$2.50 from Mrs. Bahlke, [redacted]. Or call [redacted].

VHPA Reunion '96 drawing near

ROSS MCCOY
REUNION CO-CHAIRMAN

The final countdown is on for Reunion '96 in Santa Clara, CA, July 3-6.

In the Santa Clara area at the southern end of San Francisco Bay, you can enjoy some of the finest foods and wines in the world.

Two great hotels have been reserved for the reunion at a special VHPA room rate of \$70 for up to four people per room. This rate is good June 29-July 8.

The Santa Clara Marriott and the Santa Clara Westin are lavish, full-service hotels.

They provide free shuttles to and from San Jose International Airport. Plenty of free parking — some of it covered — is available at the two hotels, if you drive.

The primary reunion hotel is the Santa Clara Marriott.

The direct phone number is (408) 988-1500 and the toll free number is (800) 228-9290.

The Westin Santa Clara, the overflow hotel, is five minutes by free shuttle down the street from the Marriott.

The Westin's direct phone is (408) 986-0700.

When making reservations, be sure to tell the hotels you are with VHPA so the proper rate will be charged. The hotels have free swimming pools, exercise facilities and plenty of friendly service.

Special VHPA drink prices will be in effect at both hotels.

There will be bars close to the shuttle bus stops at the Marriott and the Westin.

VHPA members and guests will enjoy these drink prices: \$1.50 for 12-ounce domestic beers, \$2 for imported, wine will be \$1.75, mixed drinks will be \$2.50 for well drinks, \$3 for call brands and \$4.50 for premiums.

One of the highlights of the reunion will be the Taste of California wine-tasting on Friday evening, July 5.

The admission price includes the tasting, cheeses and a commemorative VHPA wine glass.

The annual banquet will be Saturday night, July 6.

The menu includes three entrees: Filet of beef with halibut, or vegetarian, or chicken breast with halibut.

The banquet will be staged by VHPA member Joe Bilitzke, whose firm specializes in convention and meeting production.

The annual business meeting will be on Saturday morning, and while we are there, the ladies will have the opportunity to go shopping and lunching in San Francisco on a special bus tour.

During the reunion, five mini-reunion rooms will be available, complete with VCRs, monitors, 35mm projectors and screens.

Also, don't forget to reserve your T-shirt on your registration form.

This will ensure that you get the right size. These shirts have a pocket with color logos on the front and the back.

Reunion briefs

VHPA T-shirt logo change

By popular request, the Cobra will be in a dive rather than pulling out of a dive between the Golden Gate Bridge towers. Be sure to pre-order to ensure you get your size.

Can't make it to the reunion? Pre-pay and we'll send you a shirt right after the reunion.

Golf Tournament change

Because of the originally scheduled golf course's decision to overhaul most of the greens, we have had to change the game to Friday morning at a different course.

Please get your registrations in early so we can arrange transportation. The new course is within 10-15 minutes of the hotel, but it's too far to walk, march or hobble . . .

Memorial 2½ hours away

Sacramento, the capital of California and the site of the state's award-winning Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, is only a 2½-hour drive from Santa Clara.

If you plan to drive near or through Sacramento on your way to the reunion, please call or fax VHPA Headquarters for directions or ask for directions while in Santa Clara if you plan to visit after the reunion.

Lam Son 719 reunion planned

There will be a mini-reunion for all participants and interested people for Lam Son 719, the Laos incursion in 1971.

The mini-reunion is scheduled at the VHPA Reunion from noon-2 p.m. July 4 in the Portland Room at the Santa Clara Marriott.

Anyone who participated is requested to bring along photos/slides, negatives, films, tape recordings, of the battle AO, memorabilia, news clippings, orders, accounts.

For more information, contact Jim Fulbrook [REDACTED] Mike Sloniker and Doug Womack also will coordinate and officiate at the mini-reunion.

Rotors will be at reunion

Remember the Fort Wolters Holiday Inn rotor blades? Well, come to Santa Clara and walk through them again!

One of our very dedicated members is going to make some out of Huey blades and they'll be there for "THE FINEST HELICOPTER PILOTS IN THE WORLD" to pass through!

We also will have a Cobra, an LOH and a Mike Model on display. Plans are to move them over into the banquet hall, too, so you can enjoy them on the last evening as well.

Jim Cunningham, our S-3 Air for the reunion, is working on an appearance by a -13 and -23, and word is they may be available for rides.

Reunion fund-raiser features truck

Op Area: Santa Clara

LZ: Marriott

Mission: Pick up keys to a new 1996 Dodge Ram, 2500 (three-quarter-ton) Club Cab, Laramie SLT pickup truck with A/C, power windows, doors and locks, airbag, cruise control, six-way power seat, trailer tow group, sliding rear window, tilt wheel, chrome wheels, premium AM/FM stereo with CD player, custom wood grain dash, compass and tach. The only thing missing is an altimeter!

Retail value, approximately \$31,000.00. Pickup Courtesy of Stevens Creek Dodge, San Jose, CA [REDACTED].

Details: Sponsored by the VHPA, a nonprofit organization. Help yourself and the VHPA. Net proceeds go into the VHPA general fund.

Tickets are a donation of \$100. Only 500 tickets to be sold.

First come, first serve. No limit to how many you can buy, but only one name per ticket.

Yes, your spouses, girlfriends, and children over 18 of VHPA members also may purchase tickets.

The grand prize winner, second place and 13th place winners will be announced at the banquet, July 6.

Call: 1 (800) 505-8472 (VHPA) or fax (916) 648-1072 with Visa, MasterCard or Discover card.

You need not be present to win, but you are responsible for picking up and transporting the vehicle. If you win and you choose the cash, a check will be sent to you.

FOB Santa Clara, California. Taxes, fees and title not included. Void where prohibited by law.

Prizes:

• **First ticket:** Grand Prize or \$21,000 cash.

• **Second ticket:** \$500.

• **Third-12th tickets drawn:** \$100 each.

• **Thirteenth ticket:** Life membership if eligible and \$50 gift certificate or \$450 cash and \$50 gift certificate.

• **Fourteenth-50th ticket drawn:** \$100 each.

How do you get a ticket?

Call: 1 (800) 505-8472 (VHPA) or fax (916) 648-1072 with Visa, MasterCard or Discover card or mail requests with cash, check or money order to:

VHPA

949 University Ave, Suite 210

Sacramento, CA 95825

Remember, no money, no ticket and first come, first served. Don't wait, DO IT NOW! Good luck!

Rooms still available for mini-reunions

ED ALMAZOL

We're off to a slow start, but I hope by this time you have seen the previous newsletter and gotten the word out.

Hey fellas, we've got a lot of time slots and empty rooms waiting for you and your buddies to get together and reminisce at this year's VHPA Reunion in Santa Clara. So talk it up and call to reserve a room soon.

Here's the list of scheduled mini-reunions so far:

• The **171st AHC** will be gathering for the 25th anniversary of Lam Son 719. Contact Jim Fulbrook at [REDACTED]

You also can e-mail Mike at [REDACTED] to let him know that you'll be there.

• The **176th AHC** also is meeting in Santa Clara. Call Ken Fritz at [REDACTED] or e-mail him at [REDACTED]

• **DMZDUSTOFF** is planning to get together also. Call Phil Marshall at [REDACTED] (home) or [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to join the gathering.

• **Alpha 229th AHB** is calling all members of the company, as well as members of Bravo, Charlie and Delta companies to join them for a maximum mini-reunion in Santa Clara. Call Tom Johnson at [REDACTED] or e-mail him at [REDACTED]. It's been a couple of years since the last get-together, so tell everyone to head out West.

• The **7/17th AHC** is calling the troopers for a gathering. Call Charlie Rayl at [REDACTED] (home) or [REDACTED] (work) to let him know your intentions.

• **Bravo 227th AHB** also is meeting in Santa Clara. Let Mel Canon know you're coming by e-mail at [REDACTED]

• The **128th AHC** is gathering also. Contact Jay Riseden at [REDACTED] for more information.

• The Blue Stars and Jokers of the **48th AHB** are planning a mini-reunion in Santa Clara. Call Carlos Cortez at [REDACTED] (home) or [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for more information.

• The **189th AHB** Ghostriders and Avengers are calling all members to meet in Santa Clara. Contact Stephen Schmidt at [REDACTED] (home) or [REDACTED] (work) for the specifics.

• The **119th AHC/81st TC** are planning a mini-reunion. Call Bob Heisterman at [REDACTED] or fax at [REDACTED] for more information.

Don't forget to bring your photos, slides, movies or videos to share with all your old friends. We'll have all the equipment necessary in the rooms to show all your stuff.

To schedule a mini-reunion for your group, contact Ed Almazol by e-mail at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]. For you old-fashioned types, you can reach him by landline at [REDACTED]. So call him now while there are still rooms available.

See you all at the VHPA '96 Reunion in Santa Clara.

Reunion

Reunion events

The following events are planned at this year's VHPA Reunion in Santa Clara, CA.

Reunion headquarters is the Santa Clara Marriott Hotel. The overflow hotel is the Westin Santa Clara.

For reservations at the Marriott, call (408) 988-1500 or (800) 228-9290. To make reservations at the Westin, call (408) 986-0700.

Santa Clara is located at the southern end of San Francisco Bay.

Wednesday, July 3

Registration	8 a.m.-6 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Vendor Area	8 a.m.-6 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Information Desk	8 a.m.-6 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Mini-Reunions	12-4 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Early Bird Party	8-10:30 p.m.	Marriott Pool Area

Thursday, July 4

Registration	8 a.m.-6 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Vendor Area	8 a.m.-6 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Golf Tee Off	10 a.m.	Golf Center
Mini-Reunions	10 a.m.-4 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
BBQ/live music	5:30-9 p.m.	Parking Roof
Fireworks	9-9:30 p.m.	Parking Roof
Dance	9:30 p.m.-12:30	Parking Roof

Friday, July 5

Registration	8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Vendor Area	8 a.m.-6 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Information Desk	8 a.m.-6 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Bus Trips:		

• Don't tell me,

• Day tour,

• Lights, camera 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Marriott VHPA Hqs

Mini-Reunions 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Marriott VHPA Hqs

Wine-tasting 5:30-7 p.m. Marriott VHPA Hqs

Pub Crawl! Open evening. Do your own thing.

See the information area for suggestions, VHPA discounts, etc.

Saturday, July 6

Registration	8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Vendor Area	8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Business Meeting	8:30-11:30 a.m.	Marriott Ballroom
Static Display	1200-1600	Marriott VHPA Hqs
Bus Trip:		

• Shop 'til . . . 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Marriott VHPA Hqs

Mini-Reunions 12-4 p.m. Marriott VHPA Hqs

No-host bar 6-7 p.m. Marriott VHPA Hqs

Banquet & Dance 7 p.m.-12 a.m. Convention Center

Sunday, July 7

Depart Santa Clara for home.

No VHPA events planned. See you next year!

EXCLUSIVE VHPA TRAVEL DISCOUNTS

Why pay more for travel to San Jose? Call VHPA's official travel agency for significant savings on airline tickets and car rental.

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To use **RAPID FAX RESERVATIONS**,

complete form and **fax to (407) 575-3744**. Our experienced travel planners will fax back a detailed itinerary & rate information, utilizing our special VHPA discounts.

Name: _____ Day Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Address: _____ City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Number In Party: _____ Names: _____/_____/_____

Departure Date: _____ Departure Time: _____ Return Date: _____ Return Departure Time: _____

Preferred Airline (Circle): United America West Other: _____

Seat Preference: _____ Frequent Flyer# _____ Special Meal?: _____

Car Rental Size (Circle): Economy Compact Midsize Fullsize Luxury Van

Form Of Payment (Circle One) Check Credit Card Money Order

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date: _____ Name Of Cardholder: _____

My signature authorizes Carlson Wagonlit Travel to charge the above credit card for travel purchases.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Circle your choice for method of delivery of tickets or documents:

U.S. Mail (No Charge) Airborne (\$7.00) Your FedEx # _____

UNITED AIRLINES

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VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

13th Annual Reunion Santa Clara, CA July 3-6, 1996

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Mail to: VHPA, 949 University Ave., Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95825

FAX signed credit card registrations to: (916) 648-1072

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

REGISTRATION FEES

	No. of people	Price	Total
Registration before 6/1/96*		@ \$ 25.00	
Registration after 6/1/96*		@ \$ 35.00	
Total from sidebar			
Barbecue (July 4)		@ \$ 17.00	
Wine tasting (July 5)		@ \$ 7.00	
Banquet (July 6)		@ \$ 35.00	
Bus trips:			
Don't tell me (July 5)		@ \$ 20.00	
Bay Tour (July 5)		@ \$ 40.00	
Lights, Camera (July 5)		@ \$ 40.00	
Shop 'til . . . (July 6)		@ \$ 40.00	
Dues (if included)	1 year	@ \$ 30.00	
You can make 3 payments over 6-month Installment period if you wish	Life installment No. 1	@ \$150.00	
Complete Life Membership		@ \$450.00	
	GRAND TOTAL		

Indicate if you want to participate in these

Golf Tournament: (July 5, 8 a.m. Includes prizes.) Cost: \$50. Limit: 72 players.	
5k Run: (July 6. Prior to Business mtg.) No charge. No limit.	
Early Bird Party: (July 3.) No host. Number attending?	
T-shirts: (Order now!) List total at left.	
Qty. Size Price	
	S @ \$12
	M @ \$12
	L @ \$12
	XL @ \$12
	XXL @ \$15
	XXXL @ \$15
	Sidebar total

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

- ☐ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion '96"
- ☐ Please charge my: MasterCard VISA Discover (circle one)

**Questions? Call
(800) 505-VHPA**

Credit card No.:	Expiration date:
Signature:	

REUNION NAME TAG INFORMATION

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

Refund policy: No refunds will be granted prior to the reunion. All refund requests must be submitted to VHPA headquarters no later than Aug. 8, 1996, and must include all tickets received, plus proof of payment. Refunds will not be granted for fixed-price events that lose money unless the entire reunion has a positive cash balance. VHPA headquarters will process and pay all refund requests within 10 days of completing the reunion account balancing.

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E-mail: mail@galaxytours.com



Veterans Tour Operator Continues Support of American G.I.s

Wayne, PA - The "veteran of veterans tours" has announced their continued support of the American G.I. through the development of personalized tours for Vietnam. Galaxy Tours is world-reknown for its four decades of experience, helping veterans of World Wars I & II and Korea return to their former service and battle areas.

Working closely with the Vietnam Veterans Travel Service, Galaxy has developed individualized itineraries for many U.S. divisions, including the 101AB, 3MD and 4ID. At the same time, arrangements have been made for just four people traveling together to receive special group rates and personalized itineraries.

Galaxy's Vietnam programs are fully escorted, including hotel accommodations, air and land transportation and a local driver & guide while in Vietnam.

Galaxy's clientele return to former service areas for a myriad of reasons. Some return to honor fallen comrades...others to put old war wounds to rest. Some wish to see again the rain forests, mountains & lush plains...others want to see for themselves how their military service played a role in Vietnam's rebirth into a contemporary and prosperous nation. And some go to simply remember a most significant time in their lives.

For more information, call Galaxy Tours toll-free at 1-800-523-7287.

You too can find your old Chinook

MIKE LAW

One of the great blessing of being the Directory Committee chairman low these many years is receiving the Newsletters from other associations.

In last year's Membership Directory and in Vol. 2 of the Historical Reference Directory, we published some of the fine work done by The Boxcar, 178th ASHC Association.

Their last two 1995 Newsletters carried a neat story from their secretary, Dean C. Nelson, who was a flight engineer with the Boxcars in Vietnam and now lives at [REDACTED]

With his permission, this information is presented for the VHPA readers.

The bottom line is Dean was able to visit his old Vietnam Era CH-47 No. 66-19088 at Hunter Army Airfield and described how this happened.

At the third Boxcar Reunion in 1993, a Boeing tech rep named Dan Hatcher made available copies of the "Customer Service Analysis — U.S.

Army CH-47 Cross Reference." This 17-page roster lists every CH-47A, B or C-model built from 1959 through 1985 with its current disposition or date of attrition, and with the CH-47D serial number for all the rebuilt airframes.

Dean's "Baby," Boxcar 088, survived Vietnam and, in 1981, was rebuilt and re-serial numbered as CH-47D No. 81-23386.

The roster showed the CH-47 was at Fort Campbell.

After letters to the two CH-47 units at Campbell, Dean learned his "Baby" recently had been modified into Special Operations (black helicopter) form and was assigned to Company B, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) at Hunter AAF.

His letter to that unit was rewarded with an invitation to visit, which he did on Aug. 15, 1995.

Dean's words are so special: "Both the Chinook and its original flight engineer are showing some wear and tear after 28 years . . . but it was like seeing an old best friend once again."

When I spoke with him on the phone to obtain his permission to put this in the VHPA Newsletter, he was even more emotional.

While most of the major components are not Vietnam-era, there were old skin patches and Dean remembers vividly how they got there!

Dean closed by saying that as the current D-Model Chinooks max out their airframe time, they are being rebuilt by Boeing into MH-47Es which are expected to remain in Army service through the year 2023. Amazing!!

For any VHPAers interested in this 17-page CH-47 roster, copies are available from the History, Database or Directory committees.

I actually toyed with printing it in the 1995 Directory, but didn't think I could sell the extra couple hundred dollars to the Executive Council.

Anyone interested in the Boxcar Association or whatever, can contact Dean at [REDACTED]. The group's next Reunion is July 25-29, 1996 at the Holiday Hotel in Reno, NV.

Bro Vau Watch Co.

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Arlington, TX 76006
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The VHPA watch

Bro Vau Watch Co. is offering special watches to members of the VHPA.

Each watch, which sells for \$36, has the VHPA logo imprinted on the face. Each carries a LIFETIME warranty, except for battery, strap and strap pins.

To order a watch, complete this form and then mail or fax it to Bro Vau Watch Co., along with a credit card number, a check or money order.

Ship to:

Name:

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Address:

City:

State:

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Quantity:	Type	Unit	Total
	Man's	\$36.00	
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	Sales tax		\$2.78
	S&H (\$3.50 each)		
	TOTAL		

(Check, money order, VISA, M/C)

They're a lot more than just pretty pictures . . .

The VHPA is running a special on 1995 and 1996 calendars ordered as a package deal.

For \$15 — plus \$5 P&H — you can buy a 1995 and a 1996 VHPA calendar.

This is an \$3 savings.

Better yet, you will be getting the best photos ever taken of helicopters in action in Vietnam — while supporting the VHPA, **YOUR** association.

Call VHPA headquarters at (800) 505-VHPA and order your calendar package today.

Alcohol flow kept pace with action

DREW BOUDRIEAU

To my knowledge, no one in our unit used hard drugs.

That doesn't mean they weren't being used, but it is not likely.

Nothing was ever formally discussed among the pilots. I think we all just felt that there were too many possible side effects and, when we were flying, we needed all of our faculties.

However, the alcohol flowed quite freely. We drank to forget what we had been through that day, and so we wouldn't have to think about what we were going to have to do tomorrow.

We had ration cards for the PX that enabled us to buy beer and liquor. We were supposed to be limited to four cases of beer and two bottles of liquor a month.

The cards were seldom punched, so we could get unlimited amounts. We had a refrigerator in each hooch, so could keep a good supply cold. There was an officer's club across the creek at battalion, but we mostly went there for a special party or a floor show.

When I first arrived in-country, we did not have more than a couple of beers or drinks most nights. Every few nights, we would have a real blast, but not on a regular basis.

In early 1969 things really started to heat up and every day in the field was long, hard and dangerous.

That's when we started serious drinking almost every night. The crew on flare standby wouldn't drink, but the rest of us would.

On night, after we finally went to sleep, we were awakened by gunfire right outside our back door. Talk about instant sober!!

We then heard a familiar voice, that of Ben Trevino, also known as "Gentle Ben." He shouted something else, then there was more firing.

Curiosity got the better of us, so we went outside. There was Ben, with his Thompson in his hands, looking up at the moon and cursing.

In early 1969 things really started to heat up and every day in the field was long, hard and dangerous.

It turns out it was a full moon and it was shining in the window beside his bed. He couldn't go to sleep with all the light, so he was trying to shoot out the moon.

Another thing we liked to do was play "Rat." We would all sit in chairs in a circle facing inwards.

Everyone would have his weapon of choice. The more popular ones were a machete or a rice knife (similar in length to a machete, but slightly curved and with a sharp hook on the back of the blade at the tip.)

When someone would finish a beer, he would throw the can onto the floor and yell: "Rat!"

The object then would be for everyone to attack the pretend rodent until it was no longer recognizable. To this day, I consider it a miracle no one ever received so much as a scratch. Probably this was due to our superb pilot-type reflexes.

On the night before Doc Tree was finally leaving, he was going around having a final drink with everyone. When he came into our hooch, we were in the middle of a spirited game of Rat.

He went running into my room

When someone would finish a beer, he would throw the can onto the floor and yell: "Rat!"

without saying anything. After a few minutes went by and he didn't come out, I went in to see what he was doing.

He was sitting back on my bed with my helmet on, with his bush hat on top of the helmet. He also was wearing my chicken plate and had my holstered .45 pistol in his hand.

When we would go near him, he would wave the pistol and growl. Finally, he told us he was going home and didn't want to get chopped up by accident because we thought he was a tree.

We finally convinced him we would put away the weapons, and he came out and celebrated with us.

I — most of us — would wake up the next morning with a horrendous hangover. It was all I could do to get dressed and have my usual breakfast of a can of Coke.

The trip to the flight line took forever and it was always a toss-up whether it was easier to wear my chicken plate or drag it behind me.

I would lie on the cargo deck while the pilot and crew chief did the pre-flight inspection.

As takeoff time approached, the crew chief would help me into my seat and gently slide the armored panel forward.

When all was ready, I would tell the pilot to start the engine and please do it as quietly as possible.

Many things, mostly unpleasant, would be going through the pilot's mind as he contemplated flying in a hot war zone with an aircraft commander who looked like I did.

It must have been adrenaline, because as soon as the engine started and I could hear the familiar whine, I would shake my head and all vestiges of the hangover would be gone.

I could then fly my typical 10- to 14-hour day with no ill effects at all.

After the missions were over, we would eat supper and start all over again.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Drew Boudrieau flew as "Minuteman 14" in 1968-69.

On-line group planning ComCenter

MEL CANON

Well, it's almost time for that annual C/A into the past. I'm really looking forward to dropping in to LZ Santa Clara.

The on-line group has some interesting things to bring to the party this year. For those of you who made KC last year, you'll remember we had a place set up where you could get on the computer and send messages to folks on the net.

This year, we'll have the same setup but it, hopefully, will be a little more elaborate.

Concentric Network is going to be providing us on-line time this year and we'll have about four or five computers set up so that you can jump on and send messages to anyone you find on our roster who's not at the reunion.

I'll have the roster posted at the ComCenter (that's what we'll call our little setup this year), so you can see just who is on-line out there.

There will be lots of folks who won't be able to make the reunion for one reason or another, but they will be tuned into the net and anxious to talk to some old friends.

If you are not a member of the on-line net and want to participate in our reunion activities this year, you can . . . without being a member of the on-line group. We have a couple of big changes in our on-line operation. I'll get into that shortly.

What we plan for the reunion is to have something of a message center set up with a bulletin board for messages that can be picked up by whoever they are addressed to.

I'll have a printer set up at the ComCenter to print out the messages and other tidbits that come our way. Maybe some of these old geezers will send us some digital pics of themselves.

So, if you can't make the party . . . send your mug . . . digitally, that is.

OK . . . the other thing is . . . we're gonna have a little mini for the on-line members . . . those who are current . . . and those who aren't. Actually, anyone who wants to join in this on-line mini will be more than welcome.

Since I don't have exact schedules, you will have to check in with our homepage and get the last-minute news of the reunion. Well, that brings me to the changes I mentioned earlier.

I believe I mentioned something in the last newsletter about the VHFCN Homepage on the World Wide Web.

There have been some changes you cyberspace fans will be happy to hear about.

First, we have a new webmaster for our www site, LARRY RUSSELL (REDACTED). Larry took over the site from Gary Roush and has been doing a great job as our webmaster.

One of our new features is a real-time chat room called "The Bunker." Our OIC for the room is PAUL "PAPA" PELLAND (REDACTED).

Paul opens the room a couple of times a day . . . at lunch and again at 2100 Eastern. The active times for the chat room will be posted on the net.

The Bunker is a hot spot on the bottom of our homepage. Just scroll down to where it says, "The Bunker," and click on that spot.

Just as a reminder, the address for the VHFCN Homepage is: <http://www.vhfcn.org/>

If you are on-line and have access to the World Wide Web, stop in and visit the homepage. When you're there, drop me a line to say, "Hello." Just click on my highlighted name and it will set you up an e-mail form to send me a note.

The homepage also features membership forms for VHPA and VHFCN. VHFCN is gratis, but you need to be able to get on-line with your computer in order to participate in the net.

We can help you with just about any aspect of getting on-line, or even getting a computer for that matter.

We can tell you who is an Internet service provider for your area and how to contact them.

We can assist you in just about any area of computer operations and you don't have to be a computer guru . . .

or even a devout fan . . . to get into our on-line gaggle. Many of the guys we have onboard have little computer experience . . . some had none, when they joined up with the flight. You think I'm gonna say . . . "now they're experts" . . . but I'm not.

We've set up the net so there are alternating net administrators, the guys who take your request to join up . . . or drop out . . . and do something with it. We have five or six guys who take the controls for a month or so at a time so that no one gets burned out.

The current network administrator will be listed on the homepage and you can just drop him a line from the homepage or fill out the membership form and send it on it's way . . . it'll know where to go.

The net is gaining popularity all the time and we now have more than 170 active members on-line with us.

We even suckered old "Minuteman 17," Ken Fritz, into joining us. Ken is a digest member and gets the net mail in a digest format. That is, it comes to him as one message and has all the previous day's messages inside.

There is a table of contents and he can scan that to see what, if any, of the messages he wants to read. The messages are numbered and carry a title relative to the subject of the message. The table of contents refers to the message number, the subject, and the author.

You can then scroll down the body of the digest, reading each message, or scroll down to a specific number message you want to read . . . then you can delete all or part of the digest and make room for the next day's traffic.

The message count is averaging around 45-55 messages per day. Yeah . . . rotorheads love to talk . . . didn't they always?

We are getting close to having an FTP site set up along with our e-mail network and the homepage. An FTP (file transfer protocol) site is a place where files are stored for downloading.

Guess you might think of it as a library of sorts, where you can find information and download it into your own computer.

What we'll have on our FTP site

See FTP, Page 23

On the InterCom

FTP site is being readied

Continued from Page 22

are: Stories our members have written, pictures of members, pictures from Vietnam, pictures of aircraft . . . flyable and non-flyable, and member profiles, just to name a few of items to be found there.

All these will be downloadable to your computer when it is set up.

As a point of information, Ken Fritz tells me the next VHPA directory will feature the e-mail addresses of those who wish to have them published. So, if you have an e-mail address and wish to have it published in the next directory, you need to let VHPA Headquarters know this.

And, how do you let VHPA Headquarters know, you asked?

Well, another surprise . . . VHPA is now on-line with its own e-mail address . . . and here it is:

Put that in your on-line address books and the next time you want to say something to those at the top . . . let 'er fly. They like to hear all your complaints . . . but prefer to hear your kudos. They say they will not hit the delete key till AFTER they've read your message.

The introduction of VHPA's on-

line capability is much to the credit of our new management company and our own Ross McCoy. Thanks a bunch, Ross, et al.

We have really seen an explosion in the on-line activity of our membership and have more than 400 VHPA members listed on our on-line roster.

That reminds me, if you checked in with me some time ago and have changed your e-mail address, please send me an update. I would like to make roster corrections and purge the inactive ones before the reunion.

I intend to have updated rosters with on-line addresses at the reunion. If you are not listed with me, send me your on-line address so it can get included on the roster before the reunion. I'll have the roster available at the reunion so people can find you and send you a note via e-mail . . . right from the ComCenter.

OK . . . that about wraps it for another couple of months. Catch us next issue for some interesting post-reunion tidbits.

Next issue I'll try to have some more chatter from the net. See ya next issue when we listen in . . . "On The InterCom."

Seeking VHPA office?

The names of VHPA members who wish to run for the VHPA offices of vice president and junior member at large of the Executive Council must be submitted to the Nominating Committee chairman (NCC) prior to the 1996 reunion.

Nominees must be interviewed by the NCC before the NCC submits the nomination to the Executive Council for inclusion on the ballot.

Nominations will be accepted by the NCC at the reunion prior to 6 p.m. Friday, July 5, 1996.

Nominations may be mailed or faxed to:

**Robert J. Smith, Chairman
Nominating Committee**

Looking for a:

- Long-lost stick buddy?

- A classmate from flight school?

Look the easy way. Use VHPA's "Find-A-Friend"

Simply send a No. 10, self-addressed, stamped envelope — and the name of the person you're seeking to:

Phil Marshall

VHPA briefs

New VHPA chapter to form

A group of VHPA members from New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania will hold its first meeting the weekend of Aug. 17-18 near or at the Scranton, PA, Air Show.

Please contact Dutch Magill

Or Jim Schueckler,

Chapter meeting to be held

A preliminary meeting will be held during the 1996 Reunion in Santa Clara for the purpose of establishing a Northern California VHPA chapter.

All interested VHPA members should contact Ken Fritz at [redacted]. Look on the bulletin board at the reunion for more information.

VHPA History Book available

The VHPA History Book, published by Turner Publishing is available from VHPA at (800) 505-VHPA with your Visa, MasterCard or Discover card for \$52.50 plus shipping. A few are left, so call now and order yours soon.

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

949 University Ave., Suite 210 Sacramento, CA 95825 (800) 505-VHPA

Membership application/change of address

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual dues: \$30 (Newsletters included) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Address change | <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership: \$450* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Directory correction | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter subscription only: \$32 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information only | <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher's Edition of Directory: \$14 |

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Date of tour			Unit	Location	Call sign
	From:	To:			
1st					
2nd					
3rd					
4th					

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

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association?

**NOTE: Life memberships may be purchased with three \$150 payments.*