



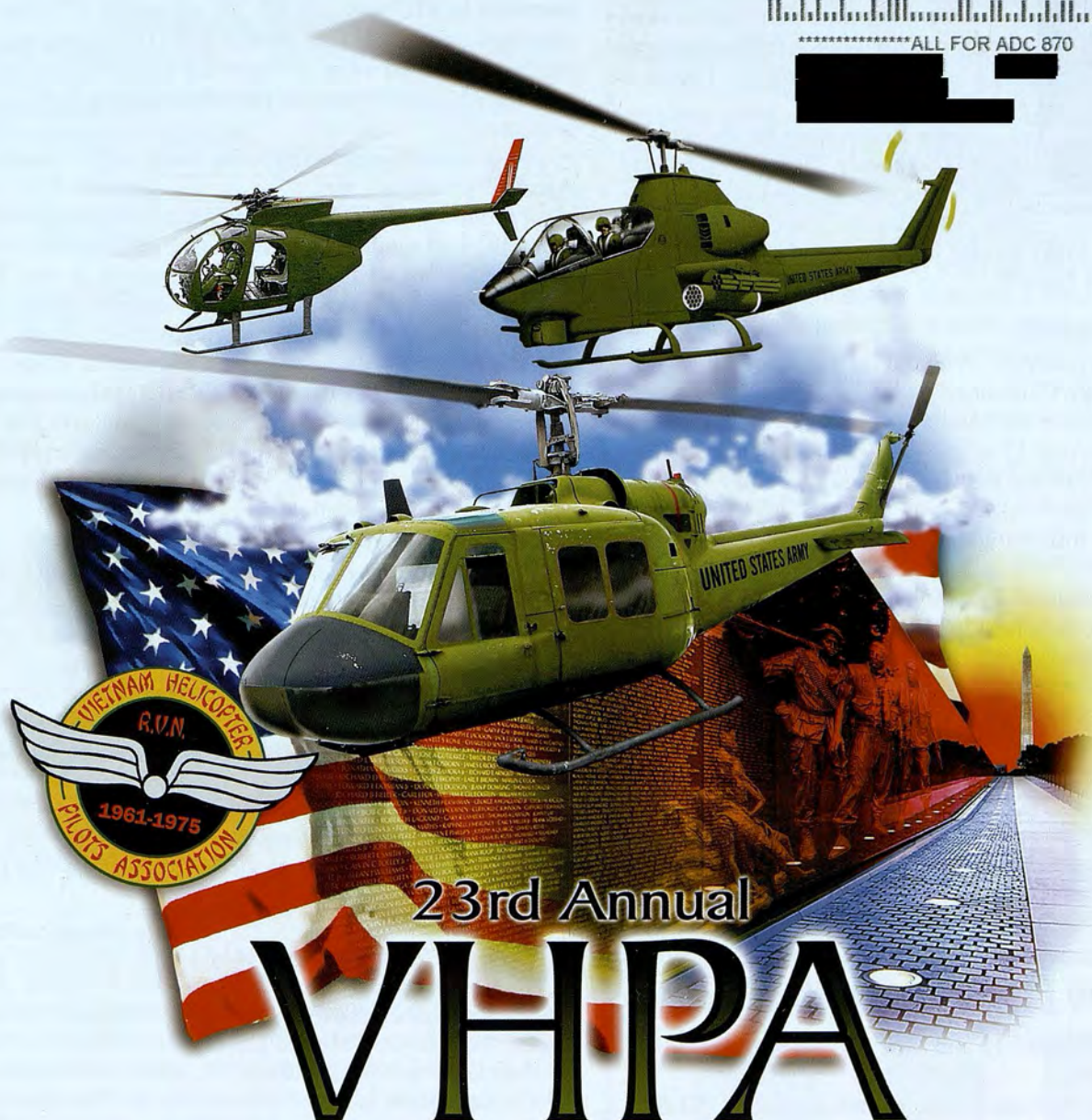
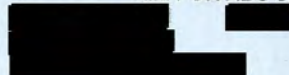
# THE VHPA AVIATOR

## Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

May/June 2006 Vol. 24, No. 3



ALL FOR ADC 870



# 23rd Annual

# VHFA

## REUNION

July 1-5, 2006 - WASHINGTON, DC



## From the President

It's hard to believe my year as VHPA president is almost over. As we used to say in the Nam, "54 days and a wakeup."

It's been an interesting year, some successes and some failures. There was so much I had hoped to get done. The things that were accomplished should be credited to the



Mike Sheuerman

entire Executive Council and the committee chairmen and their committee members.

The things that didn't get accomplished are my fault. I'm the president and I take the responsibility. The buck stops with me.

Gary Roush gave me the nickname "Old Ready, FIRE — Aim!" If I offended anyone, it was not my intention. Anything and everything I have done or tried to do was for the betterment of VHPA as an association as I saw it.

### Positives lead off

First, the positives. With the help of Gary Roush of the Technology Committee, we started a *New Guy Morning Report*. It lists the names of all the new members who join between Aug. 15 of one year and Aug. 15 of the next, the "cutoff" date for the *Membership Directory*.

Now we don't have to wait until the new *Directory* comes out to find out who became members during the past year.

With the help of Tom Payne and "Fearless" Forrest Snyder on the Scholarship Committee, our funds, on deposit with AAAA which administers our scholarship, will more than double this year. There is a better than good chance VHPA will award three or more \$1,000 scholarships annually starting in 2007.

By the time you read this article, you should be able to pay annual dues on line. The software, currently in use at VHPA HQ, has been greatly improved. Again, Mike Law and Charlie Holley of the Technology Committee deserve the credit on all the IT improvements.

*The Aviator* has been excellent. Jack Swickard has

turned out to be an outstanding editor of a magazine.

VHPA finances are really doing well. Use of the reunion funds to buy short-term CDs instead of leaving them in the bank earning little or no interest has added additional funds to the Association. Bob Smith and Bob Potvin of the Investment Committee deserve the applause here.

And Wally Magathan kept us on the straight and narrow so nobody sued us.

### Negatives 'my fault'

Now the negatives. Membership was one of my three main goals. I really dropped the ball there. Through the first nine months of my presidency, the growth of active members in VHPA is only 62. We signed up 179 new members during this time period, but 119 existing members either passed away or chose not to renew their membership. My fault. I was the president and the fault lies with me.

Reduction in reunion expense could not be found. Again, my fault.

I promised you that after five years of talking about preparing and sending out a Request For Proposal for a new contract on VHPA outside management, it would be done before my term ended. It won't happen. Again, my fault. Hopefully, my successor will have better luck.

The reunion is on track to be a spectacular event. Current projections are between 2,700 and 3,000 attendees. Congratulations to Joe, Dave, Dana and all those who assisted them in make it the outstanding event it will be.

Those of you attending, make sure you stop them and say thanks for a job well done.

And don't forget the Reunion Brat, Linda Irvine. She is our outside reunion coordinator and makes a pit bull look tame when she is out to get something done for VHPA.

### Brat's contract should be renewed

Joe has recommended to the EC that we renew her contract and I heartily concur. She puts forth an outstanding effort of our behalf.

If you are not registered and are considering attending the reunion, come on. We will have the room for you.

Two quick comments on the VHPA Scholarship Program.

*Continued on Page 3*

## VHPA statistics

- Between April 12 and June 2, the VHPA added 19 new members.

- During April-early June, members donated \$1,635 toward the VHPA Scholarship Fund.

**E-mail items to The Aviator at:**  
***editor@vhpa.org***

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## From the President

*Continued from Page 2*

We had a member call in and complain he was a member of both VHPA and AAAA, and felt his child was being disadvantaged because he or she could not receive a scholarship from both.

Since AAAA administers our scholarship program, the recipient of the VHPA scholarship — soon to be recipients — is not eligible to receive an AAAA scholarship. He wanted us to administer our own scholarship program so his child would have a chance at both.

### Scholarship program working fine

Sorry, we are staying where we are. Last year, 27 children and grandchildren of VHPA members applied for our scholarship. One of them received the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Heritage Scholarship.

Thirteen others received AAAA scholarships, including one of the two \$2,000 scholarships awarded every year. As my daddy the sergeant major is known to say: "It's working just fine, Son, don't mess with it."

And the scholarship fund itself. In the last issue I wrote a letter informing you of a \$10,000 donation to the VHPA Scholarship Fund by one of our members. All he asked was the members of VHPA match his contribution. That shouldn't be very hard.

As of today, VHPA enjoys 7,617 active members. If 100 guys contribute \$100 each, we have matched his donation. It's my sincere wish, request, and plea and last

*Continued on Page 4*



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## Letters

# Vietnam helicopter pilot on Iraq tour

The year was 1970 and I was flying escort for a three-ship insertion into a small LZ in Cambodia. My Cobra was circling at 1,500 feet above the dense jungle and covering the three UH-1s flying in trail formation.

The first insertion went off without a hitch and the men were securing the perimeter when the second flight of three was on short final.

I knew the pilots in most of the ships because we had flown together on many insertions, hot and cold, but this was Cambodia and we'd only been in this area for less than a week.

As the second flight was dropping its troops off, I saw the first ship explode; before it hit the ground, the second ship was hit by another B-40 rocket in the cockpit.

### Bad guys run from perimeter

As we dived into the hot LZ, I spotted two bad guys running from the perimeter into the tree line. We saw just enough of the bad guys to fire two pairs of 2.75-inch rockets over the downed helicopters into the tree line. We got them!

Simultaneously, the third ship took off and made it out of harm's way. We stayed on site until our fuel was low. By this time, there was a full company of aircraft coming to the rescue and we left station to rendezvous with the third ship. We landed at a large firebase called LZ Brown in Cambodia and we had lunch together, talked of the day's action and the loss of our friends. The day was forever imprinted in our memories.

Now, fast forward to 1982. I was leading an organization of combat veterans in a Boston Veterans Day parade. More than 300 of us RVN veterans had formed to march

that day, a first for all of us.

Walking toward me (I'm in my RVN flight suit) is an Army aviator in his flight suit with a 1st Cav patch on. We immediately hit it off and started to exchange stories and name places we'd flown.

His company was the same one I was flying cover for in Cambodia that fateful day in May 1970. You guessed it; CW2 Geoffrey Boehm was the pilot who flew the third ship in that three-ship lift. We had last seen and talked with each other on LZ Brown in Cambodia. What a small world indeed.

### Pilots saw each other regularly

We would see each other often during the 1980s and early 90s. We both attended functions with a newly formed chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association New England Chapter.

In 1995, Bev and I moved from Massachusetts to California and our life gave way to new adventures and new friends.

Last summer, the VHPA held its annual reunion in San Francisco. Bev and I decided to take a week's vacation in San Francisco and include the reunion. While standing in the pickup-your-application line, we spotted some old friends and were asking about some of our mutual acquaintances when a voice yelled out: "Hey, Cobra10!" It was my old buddy, Geoff. He had come to the reunion with his bride. What a fun time this would be.

Geoff got us all together and said he had something to tell us. He told us how he had stayed in the Army Reserve all these years and was looking forward to his retirement at age 60 as a CW4, as he was one of the youngsters among us at age 57.

### Geoff's unit called up

Then he said: "Guess what? My unit has been called up and I'll be going to Iraq in November 2005."

So here we are, Geoff is in Kuwait, flying H-60 Black Hawks. He e-mails me often and sends pictures of the AO. I recently sent him a care package of baked goodies, pistachios and more SD memory for his camera. He'd love to receive cards or letters while in harm's way.

*Continued on Page 5*

## From the President

*Continued from Page 3*

presidential order that 1,000 or 2,000 or even 3,000 of you contribute \$100 each and the rest donate whatever you can.

By the year 2056 most, if not all, of us will be a memory. Our time on this Earth will be over. Only our legacy will remain. And it is one hell of a great legacy. Scholarships, given in our name, will continue that legacy of service to our nation by benefiting the youth of our nation.

Long after we are gone, this program will continue to serve our nation just as we did 30-plus years ago in Southeast Asia.

Enough begging. I want to thank the members of the Executive Council, the committee chairmen and their committees, the legal advisor, the members of VHPA and Colleen and Laura at VHPA HQ for their support over the last year.

Please remember to do the three things I ask of each of you:

- Contribute to the VHPA Scholarship Fund
- Write a letter or article for *The Aviator*
- Sign up a new guy

— Mike Sheuerman, President



## Letters

**Continued from Page 4**

His address is: Geoffrey M. Boehm — CW4, 3/126 AVN BN, Company A, APO AE 09330.

All you RVN veterans, remember what they called new guys? FNGs. They call him TOG. (Token Old Guy!) Some things change . . . and some things never change. War never changes.

Please write to my friend.

Michael O'Neil  
President  
DFC Society

## Flight school class reunion a success

I just returned from Fort Worth, Texas, where I attended the First Annual Class Reunion of Flight School Class 66-11.

This was to celebrate our attending the rotary wing course, 40 years ago. Needless to say, a very fine time was had by all. A special thanks to the VHPA. I don't think I could have found enough of the class to do this, without the Directory that was published by your group.

This event will be repeated in early May 2007 in San Antonio, Texas.

All members of the class have been contacted, except for 15. If anyone knows where the following people are, please contact me. Their last known location was:

James E. Clark, Illinois; Neil E Elliott, Texas; Bill S. Fry, Missouri; Wally D. Givins, Texas; John L. Houston, Tennessee; Charles H. Lumpkins; Tom McGuillicuddy; Charles S. Meadows, Texas; Larry Miller, Oklahoma; James E. Moore, Texas; Mike O'Shea; Henry B. Rice, Washington; Sam Rollason, Louisiana; Tim Rudy, Missouri; and Dale R. Sails, Fla.

Ed Duke

## Letter describes rest of the mission

Just as 1st Lt. Richard Parrish read with great interest the remembrance of John R. Weiner, I, too, started reading with great interest the remembrance of Lt. Parrish entitled "Aviator recalls Jolly Green mission described in issue" in the November/December 2005 issue of *The Aviator*.

F Troop, 4th Cav was one of my old units in Vietnam and I had never read anything in the newsletters concerning her.

Right off, I recognized the AO Richard was describing, as I had flown with the 2/17 Cav in I Corps in the latter part of 1971, before it stood down, and then with F Troop 4th Cav in the early part of 1972.

As I'm reading the article, I'm reminiscing in my mind about Quang Tri, The Citadel, Hue, Jolly Greens and Sandys, and the Soviet tanks I had read about from friends in the unit. Then I sadly read about the SA-7 taking down the UH-1 climbing out of the PZ.

I started my tour with HHT, 2/17 Cav out of Camp Eagle in 1971, until it stood down in the latter part of January 1972. Aviators with less than 6 months in country were reassigned to other units.

I was sent to Long Binh to join up with F Troop, 4th Cav, which was re-designated as such, when D Troop, 3/4 Cav went back to Hawaii. We kept the "Centaur's" call sign and began the task of carrying on their tradition.

### NVA start pushing south

Soon, the NVA started their big push south, which the ARVNs couldn't stop, so, we packed up almost overnight and flew all our assets up to I Corps, stopping at Phu Bai.

I was high speed that day, being a WO1 and leading the pack up to I Corps with Maj. Spencer Butler, the troop commander. He picked me because I was one of the very few in the unit who was familiar with the AO in I Corps, having flown there with the 101st. This was early April 1972, I think.

I got to fly a few missions in the old AO, but an early ETS date forced me to leave on the 24th of April.

Around the third week of May 1972, as a civilian and back in the States, I received a letter from one of my buddies in the unit, Chuck Rose (Rosie). It was short and rather to the point, telling me Jesse and Petrilla had been shot down by a heat-seeking missile. He happened to be flying behind them and witnessed the whole thing. Gut-wrenching and sickening is how he put it, but did not elaborate any further.

Now, I know the rest of the story, many thanks to Lt. Parrish.

### Story continues

Well, my story hasn't ended. I joined the WVARNG in 1978, moved to Virginia in 1981 and transferred to the VAARNG.

My present unit (HHC, 2-224 Aviation Battalion, Richmond, Va.) was mobilized on Oct. 18, 2005, and we presently are flying Black Hawks in northwestern Iraq!

My how times have changed: We now have SA-16's and SA-18's. Counter-measures, such as ALQ-144, APR-139, CMWS, GPS, radios with HAVE QUICK, SINGCARS, frequency hopping, KY-58s, and ANVIS-6 gen 6 with HUD. Helmets with CEP's, Air Warrior ALSE system, with body armor and cooling vests, just to name a

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## Letters

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few.

I've been in Iraq since Feb. 1 and I am not alone. There are four of us Vietnam vets still flying in the unit and we have one Vietnam vet attached to us from the Maryland National Guard.

Besides me, there are CW5 William "Wild Bill" Outlaw, who flew with the 187th Assault Helicopter Company from June 1967- May 1968; CW4 Billy "Mouse" Milliken, who flew with the 240th Assault Helicopter Company from July 1970- June 1971; CW4 Hugh "Gomez" Adams, who flew with the 121st Aviation (Assault Helicopter) Company and HHC, 13th Aviation Battalion from July 1968- June 1969; and the attachee, CW5 Ray "R.J." Johnson, who also flew with the 240th Assault Helicopter Company from May 1970-April 1971.

We would much rather be joining you guys in D.C. for the reunion in July, but duty has called again, so we are now enduring "Iraqi Freedom"!

Well, brothers in arms, if anyone wants to know how things are going, or to just say heh, give us a shout, we'd love to hear from you.

CW4 David "Davy" Crockett  
HHC, 2/224 Aviation Battalion  
Battalion Standardization Pilot

Our email addresses are:

## College scholarship named after pilot

George Bartol was a lifetime member of VHPA. He was an Army helicopter (scout) pilot and served two tours in Vietnam (1965-66 and 1968-69). He flew commercially for PHI for 33 years before being diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. He died on Oct. 16, 2004, at the age of 59.

George was service connected at 100 percent by the VA. His brain cancer was linked to his exposures in Vietnam. George Bartol was honored at the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C., in April 2005 because of the sacrifice he made for our country, his life.

The George Bartol Memorial College Scholarship was created in 2004 to assist children who have lost a parent to brain cancer or children who have a parent battling brain cancer with college assistance. Children of Vietnam Veterans are strongly encouraged to apply.

The scholarship application is available through the Brain Tumor Society's website at [www.tbts.org/assets/files/BartolScholarship2006.pdf](http://www.tbts.org/assets/files/BartolScholarship2006.pdf)

On Aug. 26, the George Bartol Memorial Scholarship will be hosting a golf scramble at Orange Lake Country Club & Resort in Orlando, Fla. All golfers and volunteers are welcome.

For details about the George Bartol Memorial Scholarship Fund or the golf scramble, contact Heather Bartol at [REDACTED].

Heather Bartol

## Family friend seeks pilot's class photo

Is it possible to find a flight class picture of Michael Lorrell Arrants? He was killed when his helicopter was shot down in Tay Ninh Province on Jan. 31, 1970. His unit was B/25 AVN, 25th Infantry.

He was the best friend of my brother-in-law in high school. His son was named after Michael.

Arrants' flight class was 60-40/69-44. We have no pictures of him in the military. If you could help us it would be greatly appreciated. Thanks

Wilma Sikes  
[REDACTED]

## Writer nominates LZ as highest in Vietnam

I hope you are not being bombarded about this already, but the cover photo of the March/April issue of *The VHPA Aviator* contains the caption: "... LZ Pineapple, at 4,300 feet above sea level, reputed to be the highest LZ in South Vietnam."

I wish to nominate LZ Airborne on the East rim of the A Shau Valley, I Corps as the highest LZ.

On Joe Kline's wonderful map of 101st aviation units with unit patches, LZ Airborne is listed at 1774 meters or 5,820 feet. On an Operation Navigation Chart 1:1,000,000, this mountain is listed 5,820 feet at YD3809.

I flew Chinooks for A/159 "Pachyderm" and I remember LZ Airborne. I had a fender bender incident up there and I know other Chinooks broke a few parts trying to deliver loads. At that elevation, the density altitude needed to be accounted for, along with the tricky winds.

External loads for LZ Airborne were picked up at logistic pads in the Camp Eagle area, which was in the 50-foot elevation range, and within 27 NM you were trying to place, say a 105 mm howitzer in a gun pit with a density altitude of more than 13,000 feet.

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# Letters

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Further down the east rim of the A Shau Valley was LZ Eagle's Nest at 4,879 feet. For over a week the winds were so strong up there that you could only drop off loads. No hovering around in the LZ to pin point a load placement and no repositioning to pick up back hauls.

In short order this LZ had all the slings and external cargo nets in the whole division.

Some intrepid Hook pilot went up there and got a huge load of slings and nets and, thus, life for cargo pilots went on. Hats off to whoever he was.

Further down was LZ Berchtesgaden and, finally at the bottom, was LZ Rendezvous which I think had several names as it was at the bottom of the mountain near the main road into the valley and, thus, easy to occupy and then abandon.

"Airborne is Highest"

Andrew Belmont

## Two other firebases higher

Nice photo of LZ Pineapple on the cover. The caption accompanying the photo "reputed" it to be the highest LZ in Vietnam at 4,300 feet MSL. There were two firebases (and pads) on the east rim of the A Shau Valley much higher than LZ Pineapple. Eagle's Nest was at 4,878 feet MSL and Airborne was a whopping 5,820 feet MSL. Can anyone top that for the highest LZ?

Mike Pate "Kingsman 15"  
B/101AVN/101st ABN

## LZ Airborne higher

On the cover of the March/April cover of *The VHPA Aviator* LZ Pineapple was listed as the highest LZ in Vietnam at 4,300 feet. Might I offer two higher in I Corps: LZ Eagle's Nest at 1,487 meters or 4,878 feet and LZ Airborne at 1,774 meters or 5,820 feet, both overlooking the A Shau Valley West of Hue-Phu Bai.

Edward C. Ragan II  
"Kingsman 24" 1968-69

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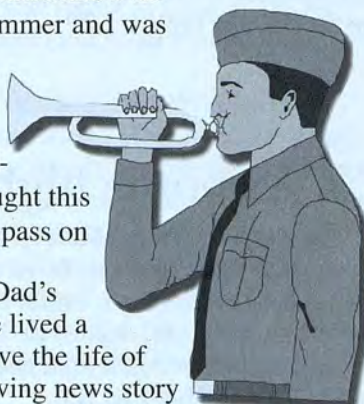
# Taps

## Curt Gaskins

I regret to inform you that we recently lost our father, Curt Gaskins, in an accident. I know he attended a reunion last summer and was excited he was able to reconnect with many of you. I'm not sure how to get in touch with any individual members, so I thought this was at least an attempt to pass on the news.

We are proud of our Dad's service to our country. He lived a hero and died trying to save the life of his grandchild. The following news story was in the local paper. I wanted to share it with you.

— Kari Christiansen



Curt Gaskins loved his family so much, he gave his life trying to protect them. Family members are remembering the Naperville stockbroker as a hero.

The 61-year-old father of three died April 13 trying to rescue one of his grandchildren from a Pacific Ocean rip tide.

"It's very shocking. It's horrible," said his daughter, Kari Christiansen of Westchester. "At the same time, he died a hero going to save those kids, and I know he'd do it again even if he knew what would happen."

A grandfather of six, Gaskins and his wife, Peggy, were vacationing in California and visiting their daughter, Gimi Herren, son-in-law Paul and four grandchildren. Timed to coincide with spring break, the family rented an oceanfront house in Morro Bay, Calif.

Spending the day enjoying sunny weather at Atas-

cadero State Beach, one of the grandchildren, 15-year-old Taylor, got caught in a rip current after she was pulled off her bodyboard.

Curt Gaskins rushed into the water to help, Christiansen said. As he swam under Taylor to try to free her from the tide, he became caught in the current. His grandson, 13-year-old Ryan, joined the rescue effort and managed to free his sister from the wave, Christiansen said.

Emergency crews found Curt Gaskins about 100 yards offshore. He was taken to Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center in San Luis Obispo and pronounced dead.

## James Charles "Goldie" Goldthorpe

James Charles "Goldie" Goldthorpe, 63, of Silver Spring, Md., died on Oct. 6, 2005, in a helicopter accident in the Gulf of Mexico off the Louisiana shoreline.

He worked for Industrial Helicopters in Scott, La., as a helicopter pilot flying oil workers to and from offshore oil rigs.

In the military, Goldie was a CW4 and was the oldest, active

duty aviator in the Army until he retired March 31, 2005. His service spans a 30-year period.

As an Army helicopter pilot, he amassed more than 7,200 hours of flight time, some of which was in a combat tour of duty in the Vietnam.



**James Charles 'Goldie' Goldthorpe**  
Chairman of 2000 VHPA Reunion

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# Taps

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His other assignments have included a tour of duty in Germany as an instructor pilot and pilot in command for the 22nd Aviation Detachment, a tour in Korea as an instructor pilot and operations officer for the 45th Transportation Company, and various stateside assignments.

Although previously retired, Goldthorpe volunteered to return to active duty to assist his country during the Iraq conflict.

He was assigned to the Fort Polk Joint Readiness Center in Louisiana, where he trained many soldiers and their units for their vital missions.

Throughout his career, he earned more than 20 medals, including the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, and 15 Air Medals.

Goldie was chairman of the 2000 VHPA Reunion in Washington, D.C., and he was instrumental in founding the Washington, D.C., chapter.

He was a founding member of the Combat Helicopter Pilots Association.

His parents, Jack and Emma Goldthorpe, and his daughter, Casey Carroll Goldthorpe, preceded him in death.

Survivors include his wife of 32 years, Ann Goldthorpe, and son, James Christopher Goldthorpe of Silver Spring; brother, Jack Goldthorpe and wife Katherine of California.

There will be a memorial service on July 2 at the VHPA Reunion in Washington.



## John "Jack" V. Ohnstad

Retired Lt. Col. John "Jack" V. Ohnstad died April 20 of pulmonary hypertension at his retirement home in Estelline, S.D.

He graduated from OCS in March 1953 and then from Flight School in March 1956.

Ohnstad was an Army engineer officer and aviator, and served with distinction in Korea and two tours in Vietnam.

He was a pilot with the 114th Assault Helicopter Company in 1963 and 1964 and a former commanding officer of the 68th Assault Helicopter "Top Tigers" while stationed at Bien Hoa from November 1967 through March 1968.

He was recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal, Air Medals and the Purple Heart Medal.

Ohnstad retired in May 1971 after 20 years of service. In retirement, he farmed, owned and operated a supper club for 10 years, and was head maintenance supervisor at the Estelline Care Center for some 10 years.

He was a graduate of the University of Nebraska Omaha. Ohnstad was a lifetime member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans.

He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; four children, John Jr., Pam Bodart, Melanie Henkelman and Daniel; and 19 grandchildren.

## Howard Wiggs

Howard Wiggs, 65, of Berlin Center, Ohio, died May 29 in a helicopter crash.

He was a member of flight school class 69-3.

# Membership Directory available on CD

As announced in the March/April issue of *The Aviator*, the *VHPA Membership Directory* will be available on CD this year for the first time.

The CD will contain all of the information available in the printed Directory, with several additions. The main additions are e-mail addresses and phone numbers. This will make it much easier for you to find a long-lost buddy and re-establish contact after all of these years.

An extra bonus this year will be copies of most of the VHPA *Aviators* and *Newsletters* going back to 1993. As always, the Directory Committee is concerned about preventing unwanted mailing lists so the database on the CD is encrypted and the search program, while easy to retrieve one address at a time, cannot be used to generate bulk mailing lists.

A big advantage of the CD over the printed directory is that you will be able to search by first name. Also, the search program uses a sophisticated soundex search technique so you do not need to know how to spell the per-

son's last name exactly.

To help make this CD as accurate as possible, please be sure HQ has your current e-mail address and phone number. Send them to [HQ@vhpa.org](mailto:HQ@vhpa.org) or use the form at [www.vhpa.org/info/vhpaform.html](http://www.vhpa.org/info/vhpaform.html)

If you do not want your e-mail address and/or phone numbers on the CD directory, please notify HQ.

In preparation for this year's directory, HQ needs to know your preference. The default will be the printed directory, so if you do not want to change to the CD directory, you do not have to do anything. However, if you would prefer the CD, please contact HQ by e-mail or by phone (800) 505-VHPA (8472).

If you want both the printed directory and the CD, contact HQ and let them know. There will be an additional charge of \$20 for both. The CD is for IBM-compatible PCs only.

**Gary Roush**  
Chairman, Directory Committee



# Growth

## *We all can help increase, retain VHPA members*

**DANA YOUNG**  
**MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN**

During the past three years the active membership of the VHPA has fluctuated between 7,090 and 7,617.

During the same period, almost 1,000 new membership numbers have been issued.

That same period has seen increased attendance at our annual reunions and a significant initiative that resulted in the identification and, in most cases, a more current location of what we believe to be the total population of those eligible to join our organization.

Based on membership percentages of other special interest organizations, we, the VHPA do better than most. We can do better.

There are two "objectives" relating to membership that you, as a VHPA member, can help accomplish.

- Increase membership
- Retain current members

### **Increase membership**

Almost one-third of those eligible to join, have.

It is reasonable to conclude the majority of those eligible to join have, at least once, received some type of mailing from the VHPA.

All potential members identified during our member search were mailed information about the VHPA

Members, and potential members, residing in the areas of the last three reunions and Washington, D.C., were sent information about the VHPA reunion.

The VHPA has maintained a presence at the AAAA and HAI annual conventions with limited results. There are some spontaneous renewals and, on occasion, a new membership, but most of those attending seem to be in an age group that would be the sons and daughters of members rather than potential members.

The VHPA holds its annual reunions in sites throughout the United States. The idea is to make the reunions accessible to those who may not be inclined to travel a long distance to participate. The past few reunions have validated that premise and Washington, D.C., is no exception.

We still need help. History has shown that, other than reunions, individual contact is the best way to encourage potential members to join. The Executive Council, Headquarters and the Membership Committee have made calls to potential members with some success.

With more than 29,000 potential members to contact, it can be a time-intensive effort. The best way to make personal contact is to have a member contact a potential member he knows.

The data in the *Membership Directory* is as accurate as we can make it. As mentioned above, we have done a significant search effort to make sure the member location information is current.

We have asked before, and we ask again: Take a look at the *Directory*, find a person you knew, call or write and encourage him to participate. If he can't attend a reunion, he can join VHPA and have the opportunity to share via *The Aviator* and the annual *Directory*.

You, as a member, understand the value of membership and you, as a member, can share that with someone who has not yet had that experience.

### **Retain current members**

The VHPA has changed over the past years. Those who were members 15 years ago would not recognize the organization today. The membership determines our future. Your input to the EC gives them direction.

We need your input to understand what we, as an organization, need to do that will encourage you, the member, to stay a member. When your membership renewal shows up in the mail, we need to know what needs to be done to make it easy for you to renew. Should you not renew, we need to know why and what we can do to change your decision.

The VHPA is as strong as its members. The more members, the stronger it gets.

During the reunion in Washington, we will be encouraging those who attend to assist us in contacting members who have not renewed and members who have never joined.

If you attend a mini-reunion, we will be there with a list of those who were in your unit and have not joined. We will ask you to pick a name, or two, and give them a call.

On the back of the ticket to the Business Meeting you will find the name, and contact information, of a member who did not renew his membership. If you will take the time to contact that one former member, you may be able to get him to renew. If not, find out why he did not renew and let us know.

The back of the Banquet ticket will have the name and contact information for a potential member who has never joined. Call, or write that person and encourage him to join. Make the personal contact.

I don't think anyone believes that "once a member, always a member," but I do think that if you are never a member, you don't know what you are missing.

Our goal is to have every potential member be a member; experience the VHPA.



# Scholarships

## *Funds increasing dramatically to match donation*

Contributions to match the \$10,000 donated earlier to the VHPA Scholarship Fund have begun to arrive at VHPA HQ.

This tells me two things: One, you guys are reading my articles, and two, you also see the value of our scholarship program.

The funds raised during the next two months will greatly enhance this program. If you haven't contributed yet or don't know where to send your donation, here's what you need to do:

Write a check to VHPA SCHOLARSHIP FUND and mail it to VHPA HQ, 2230 Birdcage, Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698 or call HQ at (800) 505-8472 and tell Laura or Colleen you want to make a donation to the VHPA Scholarship Fund and give them your credit card number. Be sure to mention this is for the Scholarship Matching Fund Drive. It is tax deductible.

This is about preserving our legacy of service to our nation, the legacy of the Vietnam helicopter pilot. Some 30-plus years ago we did it as rotary wing aviators in Vietnam and Southeast Asia and our efforts were second

to none.

In his book *A Bright And Shining Lie*, Neil Sheehan wrote: "The aviation units were the sole combat element of the U.S. Army that did not come apart under the stress of the war in Vietnam. Nearly 6,000 helicopter pilots and crewmembers perished, but the Army airmen never cracked. Whether it was the oneness of man and acrobatic flying machine, whether it was equally shared risk of officer pilot and enlisted crewmember, whatever the reason, the men of the helicopters kept their discipline and their spirit. As the French parachutists became the paladins of the earlier war, so the U.S. aviators became the dark knights of this one."

I would correct his statement to include rotary wing aviators and crews of all the services, not just the Army.

This time we are doing it through the continuing commitment to the youth of our nation by providing them scholarships long after we are gone. Please join many of your fellow Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association members and me by contributing to this worthwhile project.

— Mike Sheuerman, President

## Sheuerman, Roush initiate recruiting technique

Last year Mike Sheuerman and Gary Roush tried something that worked.

Armed with a current *Membership Directory*, a highly visible table and some arm-twisting, they encouraged members to sponsor a membership for someone who had never joined.

Were they successful? They were able to recruit 64 new members.

This year we are going to do it again and the goal is to surpass what was done in San Francisco.

When you register, look for the "New Guy" table, find a friend in the *Directory* who is not a member and, since you can't buy him a drink, buy him a membership.

Everyone who is eligible to be a member needs to be a member at least once.

— Dana Young, membership chairman

## Battle of An Loc dispels common belief

Most Americans believe U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War ended in 1970 with, or soon after, the incursion into Cambodia.

Those of us who served in-country after 1970 know Americans were fighting and dying well into 1972 and early 1973.

James Willbanks has done U.S. advisors and aviators a great service by telling of their heroics during one small part of what took place in the spring of 1972. *The Battle of An Loc*, Indiana University Press, details the 90-day siege of An Loc.

The NVA Eastertide — or Easter Offensive — rolled through Vietnam from the DMZ to the Delta. Hard hit were the cities of Loc Ninh and An Loc in Military

Region III.

Having been an advisor on the ground at An Loc, Willbanks is in a unique position to tell this story. Willbanks' style is one that tells a story without a lot of hyperbole, but clearly gives credit where credit is due.

Special attention is paid to the crews of the 229th Aviation Battalion, specifically, the guns of Blue Max, F/79th ARA, F/9th Cav and D/229th. These pilots carried on a tradition of valor established early in the war at the Ia Drang Valley.

If you thought the war ended in 1970, pick up this book and see what really took place after the Nixon withdrawal was well under way.

— Mike Wheeler



## POLICY

### MANAGEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT CONTRACT

It is the policy of the VHPA to maintain and monitor an administrative support contract ("HQ Contract") with an individual or organization that the Executive Council deems qualified to meet the stated requirements of the VHPA. The contractor will be selected by the EC following a competitive bid process.

The terms of the HQ Contract will commence between 1 September and December 31 of the year initiated and terminate 30 September of the third year. The agreement can be extended by the EC to 30 September of the third year following the calendar year in which the extension is agreed, if in the judgment of the EC and at the EC's option and sole discretion, the contractor has satisfactorily met the goals and objectives of the HQ Contract and remains otherwise qualified and capable of performing.

Notice of the EC's intent to solicit bids for the HQ Contract will be posted in at least one issue of the VHPA Aviator prior to the actual publication of the Request for Proposals.

After the EC has awarded the HQ Contract, or extended the term of the current HQ Contract, it shall advise the membership by notice published in the next issue of The Aviator. The contract award, or extension, will be an agenda item at the next annual business meeting.

Any proposed modifications to the current or proposed HQ Contract will be reviewed by the VHPA legal advisor or qualified legal counsel prior to submission to the VHPA EC for consideration and approval.

The HQ Contract will include measurable requirements, where practical, for the following:

Membership and Membership Support  
Financial processing and accountability  
Magazine and Directory support  
Reunion Support

Each year, after the annual business meeting, an EC member will be appointed by the President as the primary point of contact for the HQ contractor, and will advise the EC regarding the contractor's performance.

The EC Representative will visit the HQ offices once per quarter if practical.

This Policy was approved by the Executive Council at a meeting held on  
\_21 May\_, \_2006\_ as recorded in the minutes thereof.

## Email addresses

VHPA needs your current email address on file at HQ.

This will give the VHPA the ability to contact members quicker and reduce costs in labor and postage expenses, and assist in getting dues collected faster.

Please send an email with your current email address to HQ at [hq@vhpa.org](mailto:hq@vhpa.org) or use the forms on at [www.vhpa.info](http://www.vhpa.info) or [www.vhpa.org/info/vhpaform.html](http://www.vhpa.org/info/vhpaform.html)

Send it even if you believe the email address on file to

be current. Be sure to include your name and member number. HQ will verify receipt with a reply email.

Recently we have found almost 50 percent of the email addresses on file are bad.

In the future, HQ will notify members with current email addresses of such things as dues renewal dates, requests for personal data by another member and any other information that needs disseminating immediately.

Thanks in advance for taking the time to do this.

**Mike Sheuerman**  
President



# VHPA REUNION SOP AND HOTEL POLICY

This shall constitute the Policy of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association with regard to entering into contracts with hotels hosting Annual Reunions, and with regard to assuring such contracts do not conflict or frustrate Reunion Standard Operating Procedure.

The VHPA may enter into multi-year contracts with hotel organizations having facilities in locales selected by the National Reunion Committee and approved by the Executive Council for consecutive future Annual Reunions. The VHPA shall not enter into a contract or agreement with any such organization that obligates the VHPA to utilize that organization's facilities for more than the next three succeeding Annual Reunions. Upon completion of an Annual Reunion, the VHPA may agree to an extension of any existing hotel reunion contract for one or more years, provided that the remaining number of future Annual Reunions under the extended contract does not exceed three.

After each Annual Reunion, and before considering any new hotel reunion contracts or contract extensions, the National Reunion Committee shall prepare and provide to the Executive Council the NRC's after-action report for that completed reunion. Such report shall review the financial results of the reunion, update the Executive Council on any changes the NRC has made to the Reunion Standard Operating Procedure following the reunion, and provide the NRC's recommendations for the Executive Council's consideration for future action. The Executive Council may also direct the NRC to make any changes to the Reunion SOP the Executive Council deems necessary and appropriate.

Before agreeing to the terms of a new hotel reunion contract, the Executive Council shall review the NRC's updated Reunion SOP to ensure that the proposed hotel contract includes the necessary terms and language that may be necessary to conform the contract to the requirements and intent of the Reunion SOP, and to assure that the proposed hotel contract does not conflict with or frustrate the purpose of the Reunion SOP. In the event of any such conflict between the hotel contract and the Reunion SOP, the Executive Council after due consideration may approve the contract as proposed, in which event the NRC must amend the Reunion SOP to conform to the existing hotel contract.

This Policy was approved by the Executive Council at a meeting held on \_\_\_\_  
21 May\_\_\_\_, 2006\_\_\_\_ as recorded in the minutes thereof.

## Vet Center Booth open at reunion

Many of you who attended the San Francisco Reunion and went down to the Vendor Area visited with the counselors from the Concord Vet Center out of Concord, Calif.

San Francisco was the first year we brought the Vet Center in, and it was nothing short of a huge success. The counselors were busy from the time they opened until closing, and we cleaned them out of brochures and pamphlets.

Information on everything from tinnitus treatment, Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, recognizing back and neck injuries that were a direct result of what we flew and what we did every day, Agent Orange information and treatment, and a host of additional benefits available to all of us, earned by all of us.

I am happy to report we will expand the Vet Center Booth this year.

In the Vendor room this year, counselors from both

coasts will man the Vet Center Booth. There will be information about facilities and programs available in your part of the world, with phone numbers, contact people and other pertinent information applicable to your specific situation.

In addition, there will be private meeting areas for one-on-one discussions, where you will be able to talk about personal issues in privacy.

I can tell you from personal experience there are many programs available I am willing to bet most of you are not aware of. I would be happy to talk with any of you and discuss my personal experience and what it has meant to my family and me.

In addition, many of our "problems," physical and mental, are covered by a myriad of services you have all earned and are provided, in many cases, free to veterans. I encourage all of you to stop by and say hello to the counselors at the Vet Center Booth.

— Rich Buzen, vendor coordinator





# Reunion 2006

## *Numbers may top previous record, room for more*

JOE BILITZKE, DANA YOUNG AND DAVE RITTMAN  
2006 REUNION COMMITTEE

It may be our largest get-together ever!

Our previous largest reunion ever was in 2000, when we last visited Washington, D.C. More than 2,490 pilots and their guests attended that year.

It looks like we are on the path to break our all-time record. As this article is being written, more than 2,451 people have registered.

The chance you will meet a pilot friend from many years ago — someone who you have not seen in years — may never be better.

We still have room for more members and guests to attend.

Still thinking about coming this July, but couldn't make reservations early this year for whatever reason? OK, here is the bottom line — if you can get to D.C., we can make it happen for you on most events. There is still time, if you act quickly.

### **How to get there**

As this article was being written, there are still a few rooms available at the headquarters hotel, the Marriott Wardman, after a small group released its block to us. When those are gone, there are rooms across the garden at the Omni, which is honoring the same \$115 nightly rate as the Marriott.

Up-to-the-minute details on the hotel status can be found on our reunion website: [www.vhpareunion.org](http://www.vhpareunion.org)

Discounted airfares still are available into D.C. from many parts of the country. Remember, there are three airports near Washington. We strongly recommend Reagan National (DCA) due to its close location, but if it works better for you, there is Dulles out in Northern Virginia (IAD), and Baltimore (BWI).

### **Status of our host hotels**

When you arrive, whether you are at the Marriott Wardman or Omni, you are in great facilities right in the

heart of Embassy Row in Northwest Washington. The Metro station is just outside the door, so getting around D.C. is easy. It's a perfect location for a great reunion!

The key: Get on the Internet at [www.vhpareunion.org](http://www.vhpareunion.org) and register now. Our Internet registration system for events will shut down on June 23 at noon Central Time.

If you are reading this article after that date and still want to come, get in the car or on the plane and make it

happen. We'll get you registered for most events when you arrive at the hotel.

Our dedicated room block at the hotels will expire a bit sooner — on June 10 — but you can call the hotels directly. Call the Marriott first to see if it has any cancellations; if not, then the Omni.



Dave Rittman photo

**The watering hole at the Marriott Wardman features an outdoor patio. Plans are to expand the bar area into the hallway with extra tables and chairs for meet-and-greet activities.**

### **Fourth of July evening activities**

Right at the deadline for our last Aviator magazine, we inserted an article letting you know that due to construction at Bolling Air Force Base, we have relocated our Fourth of July evening activities in downtown Washington — right where it is all happening.

This also sets up a unique opportunity to participate in the parade that morning, and then spend the afternoon in the downtown Mall area, in the heart of the Smithsonian museum complex, the U.S. Capitol, the White House, and the Washington Monument, all within easy walking distance of each other.

The Smithsonian museums are all open until 9 p.m. on the Fourth of July.

While VHPA buses will leave the Marriott starting at 5 p.m., if you chose to remain downtown after the parade, you could spend the afternoon on the Mall, then walk the four blocks north on Sixth Street from the Smithsonian National Gallery of Art (adjacent to the Air and Space Museum), turn right onto F Street to the National Building Museum.

The Museum includes a fully restored Grand Hall, where many presidential inaugurations have been held since the 1800s. It's a spectacular setting.

*Continued on Page 15*



# Reunion 2006

## *Numbers may top previous record, room for more*

**Continued from Page 14**

Our reception starts there at 6 p.m., and all you need is your event ticket for access. Below is a simple map to show you how close everything really is. This map also will be printed on the reverse side of the event ticket.

One change we had to make due to an alcoholic beverage law in Washington, as well as Museum policy, both of which preclude us from selling beverages (or food) for cash. When our event originally was planned for Bolling Air Force Base, each participant would have purchased his own food and beverages for cash.

As we can't do that legally on the Mall, we have arranged for a caterer to provide a prepaid buffet-style cookout at the Museum, with all the beverages you can drink for five hours. Even for the VHPA, that's a first — a five-hour, completely open, prepaid bar — all for \$25 above the originally priced event. The cost is \$15 for children and young adults under age 18.

If you have not done so, call or e-mail VHPA

Headquarters at (800) 505-VHPA or [hq@vhpa.org](mailto:hq@vhpa.org) and authorize a charge to your credit card of the extra amount. Payment can be made when you register at the hotel, but it's easier for all if this is taken care of in advance.

No security clearance is needed for this event any longer, as we are not on a military base.

While you would have spent about the same or more per person in cash at Bolling Air Force Base, we realize this is a change in the program, and thus a full refund of the event may be obtained by calling or e-mailing Headquarters until noon Central time on June 23.

As we have significantly enhanced the event, we hope you don't cancel. Since the announcement was made about 30 days ago, only one member has canceled. However, that cancellation has been offset by dozens of members who were not signed up previously, but now have done so.

The bottom line is it's going to be a great evening, and very near to a sellout.

In addition to the reception, cookout, and the open bar

all evening, we have a great show for you that originally was going to be at Bolling, including a patriotic performance after the fireworks while we wait for the crowds to thin so we can get the buses back into the Mall area.

Earlier in the evening, the WOC Chorus will perform.

The fireworks can best be viewed in the Mall area (see map). They physically are shot off near the Washington Monument and we are told there is a limited view at the Museum. It's best to walk back to the Mall, and then when they are over, head back to the Museum for entertainment, beverages, dancing, and the show.

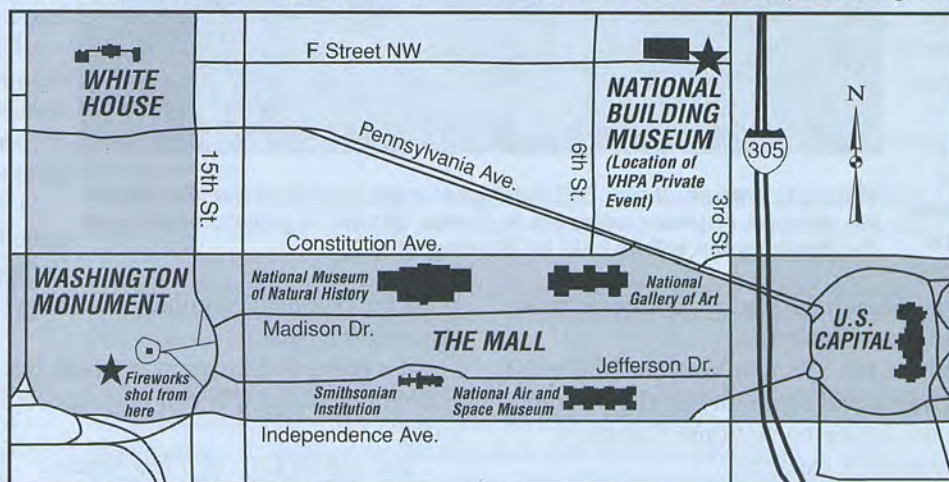
Currently, tickets are available, but capacity is limited to 2,000 people. So far, 1,626 tickets have been sold.

Order now. If you already have registered, call Headquarters

at (800) 505-VHPA and add this event to your registration.

### **Fourth of July Parade**

The buses depart at 9:30 a.m. for the parade starting area. The parade is open to members and spouses/guests. You don't have to



march, of course.

More than 1,200 of us will be in the parade. If you have not signed up, call Headquarters and add this event to your registration. In the parade will be four Vietnam-era helicopters towed to DC from North Carolina by VHPA members.

### **Private Evening at the Smithsonian**

This is another great event and has capacity limited to 1,999 attendees. As of today, 1,834 members and guests have enrolled. We have tickets left, but you can do the math. Register now!

If you have registered for the reunion, but did not sign up for the Private Evening at the Smithsonian, call Headquarters.

Located in North Virginia adjacent to the International Airport, the Smithsonian has hundreds of full-size aircraft, space artifacts, and more. Helicopters, the space shuttle Enterprise, the Concorde, an SR-71 are on display in the museum.

*Continued on Page 16*



# Reunion 2006

*Numbers may top previous record, room for more*

## **Continued from Page 15**

This event includes a buffet dinner designed to let you take a plate and walk through the museum, then come back for more if you want.

Similar to the Fourth of July evening, a full prepaid open bar with beer and wine is included all evening.

## **Other great activities**

In earlier editions of *The Aviator*, you may have read about some of the other great events planned at this year's reunion.

The U.S. Marine Corps Tattoo on Friday, June 30; the welcome reception on Saturday, July 1; and our special brunch on Sunday, complete with Dick Steiner, a world-class illusionist.

There also is a trip to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for a special remembrance and ceremony on the morning of July 3. However, the Arlington National Cemetery wreath-laying ceremony is at capacity.

Our banquet is on the evening of Monday, July 3, which is not on the last night of the reunion this year. We have a great party band to dance to after the formalities.

Vendors abound this year and, of course, we have dozens of mini-reunions for your individual units throughout the reunion. Times and dates are on the VHPA website, and are available upon arrival at the hotel.

The historic presentation and war stories forums have been expanded in recent weeks.

Details are contained in another article in this magazine, as well

as on the one-page summary of events printed along with this article.

It's going to be a great reunion, but if you don't come, you will be missed. If you have not registered yet, do it today.

See you in D.C. in a few weeks.



Dave Rittman photo

**The early version of the Bell helicopter is on display at the Smithsonian aviation museum adjacent to Dulles airport. A private evening at the Smithsonian will be held on Sunday, July 2.**

## Reunion features forum, war story contest

If you check the one-page reunion schedule, you'll noticed there are some new events scheduled.

One is called the Historic Presentation Forum (HPF) and the other is the "This Ain't No Sh\_t War Story Contest."

The war story contest leads off on July 1. VHPA members who will wow you with their 10-15 minute tales of heroism, nostalgia, foolishness, with maybe a little frivolity thrown in. This is meant to be a light-hearted time for members to step up and spin their best war stories on us — all will be winners, we suspect, as long as they mutter those famous words that validate all war stories as legit: "This Ain't no Sh\_t!"

The HPF is actually several separate professional presentations about Vietnam War topics. Three HPFs are scheduled on Sunday:

- The Schantags will talk about some people who

make false claims about Vietnam service.

- Jack Heslin will speak about the Battle of Kontum.
- The POW/MIA Accounting Command will fill us in on recent recovery efforts and more.

On Monday, July 3, Cheryl Fries will give a talk titled, "In the Shadow of the Blade."

All of these events will be in the Cotillion Ballroom.

This is the first year we organized these events. We announced them and sought speakers in *The Aviator* and on the VHPA/Reunion website some time back. On the reunion webpage we also had a survey of interest in these events.

If you have questions, call Dr. Jim Fulbrook at [REDACTED] for HPF information, or Doug Womack at [REDACTED] for information on the War Story Contest.

— Jim Fulbrook



## **2006 VHPA Reunion in Washington, D.C. ...**

### ***Schedule of activities at a glance \****

#### **Friday, June 30th**

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Vendor set up – lower level; Washington Room B North
10:00 AM – 7:00 PM	Registration – main floor registration desk (just to right of hotel check in area)
1:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Vendors open for business - lower level; Washington Room B North (escalator right at registration desk)
4:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Early Bird informal get together – lower level atrium just down escalator from Harry's Bar
6:45 PM to 11:00 PM	Buses depart for Marine Military Tattoo, an evening of excitement, pageantry, music, and skills

#### **Saturday, July 1**

10:00 AM – 8:00 PM	Registration – main floor registration desk (just right of hotel check in area)
10:00 AM – 6:00 PM	Vendor area – lower level; Washington Room B North (escalator right at registration desk)
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Mini Reunions
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM	War Story Contest – Cotillion Ballroom
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	First-time reunion attendee special orientation welcome reception - Maryland Room (near main Ballroom)
7:30 PM – 11:00 PM	Welcome reception, buffet dinner, and party for all members and their guests – Grand Ballroom (Full Buffet Dinner served at 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM)

#### **Sunday, July 2**

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM	Registration – main floor registration desk (just right of hotel check in area)
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Annual Business Meeting (dues current members only) – Marriott Ballroom 1 thru 4
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Brunch and entertainment for spouses and guests – Cotillion Ballroom
12:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Vendor area – lower level; Washington Room B North (escalator right at registration desk)
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Mini reunions
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM	Historical Presentation Forum I – Mary and Charles Schantag – P.O.W. Network – Cotillion Ballroom
2:30 PM – 4:00 PM	Historical Presentation Forum II – Jack Heslin – The Battle of Kontum – Cotillion Ballroom
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Historical Presentation Forum III – Reply from JPAC – Joint POW/MIA Acctg Command Update – Cotillion
6:00 PM – midnight	Private Evening at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum at Dulles Airport (Bus tour of monuments in downtown DC available 1st come first serve departing Museum at 11:00 PM to about midnight)

#### **Monday, July 3**

6:00 AM – 3:00 PM **	Golf Tournament at the south course at Andrews Air Force Base; includes lunch and mementos
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Mini-reunions (8:00 AM – noon and 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM)
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM	Registration – main floor registration desk (just right of hotel check in area)
9:00 AM – 5:30 PM	Vendor area – lower level; Washington Room B North (escalator right at registration desk)
7:30 AM – 2:00 PM	Tour of Arlington National Cemetery & Wreath Laying at Vietnam Wall (sold out activity – see newsletter)
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Wreath Laying at Vietnam Wall (available activity) – does not include trip to Arlington Cemetery
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Historical Presentation Forum IV – Cheryl Fries - In The Shadow of the Blade: LZ to LZ – Cotillion Ballroom
5:45 PM – 12:00 PM	Doors open - Banquet, entertainment, & dance (Coat and tie event. Some members wear military dress uniform. Ladies wear cocktail dresses) – Grand Ballroom; ceremonies start at 6:30 PM

#### **Tuesday, July 4**

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Mini-reunions (8:00 AM – noon and 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM)
9:30 AM – 2:30 PM	Participation in Washington DC Parade down Constitution Avenue
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Registration – main floor registration desk (just right of hotel check in area)
9:00 AM – 4:30 PM	Vendor Area lower level; Washington Room B North (escalator right at registration desk)
5:00 PM – midnight	4 <sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks Display; cook out & beverages; performance by WOC Chorus, static display of Vietnam era helicopters, entertainment & patriotic show at National Building Museum near the downtown Mall/Smithsonian. Buses leave hotel at 5 PM; Reception at Museum starts at 6 PM for those already downtown

#### **Wednesday, July 5**

AM Departure	Check out for majority of reunion attendees – returning home
--------------	--

\* All events run rain or shine – no refunds due to adverse weather. See reunion article for details

\*\* Golf Tournament requires specific background information be provided during VHPA advance registration process on each attendee so that military security clearance can be issued prior to arrival in Washington, D.C. Active or retired military with ID cards have already met this security requirement. Clearances no longer required for 4th of July fireworks event. See reunion article for details.



# Reunion 2006

## WOC Chorus to perform at museum on July 4

The Warrant Officer Candidate Chorus will perform at the July 4 event at the National Building Museum during the Washington, D.C., reunion.

The chorus was formed by a group of warrant officer candidates in 1966 at Fort Wolters, and performed at colleges, universities and military events in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Late that year, the Army commissioned a song for the chorus to record. The song — “Winged Soldiers” — found its way onto wax in December. The chorus continued to perform until Fort Wolters was closed.



### Chorus reconstituted

In 1999, some of the former members reconstituted the chorus to perform at VHPA reunions.

Past members of the chorus who would like to perform at the reunion should contact me at [roulierga@hoa.centcom.mil](mailto:roulierga@hoa.centcom.mil) or at [mike@roulier.us](mailto:mike@roulier.us)

When you arrive in D.C., make sure you check the bulletin boards outside the registration and vendor areas

where the rehearsal schedule will be posted.

You also can check registration for my room number and call for the schedule or just find me in whatever hotel bar is serving cheap beer.

If you don't rehearse, you won't perform.

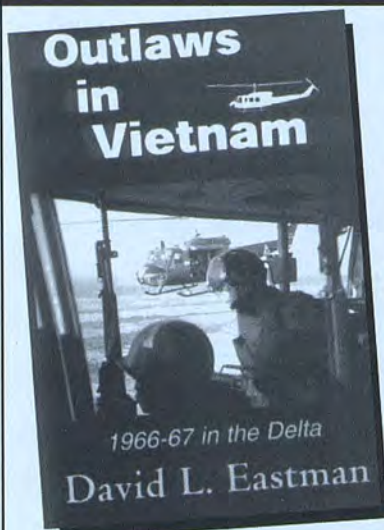
### Former members welcome

All former WOC Chorus members are welcome, even if you are no longer the “golden-throated” stud you were when you were young and your ear can now only be accurately described as “tin.”

Also, for any former members, I would be interested in an account of your time with the chorus. In particular, I would like to know where you performed.

If you would e-mail me a narrative of your experiences, I will compile them into a future article for *The VHPA Aviator*.

CW4 Mike Roulier  
Deputy Safety Director  
CJTF-HOA  
Djibouti, Africa



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July 1-5



# Reunion 2006

## *Details about July 4 Parade through Washington*

Before the reunion, check your boots, flight suits (zoom bags), utility fatigues, jungle fatigues or NOMEX flight suits for fit, rips, insignia, etc. Bring them with you to Washington.

### **July 3 — Evening**

Load four cases of (backup or emergency) water on each of the two Hueys that will be at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel on display.

### **July 4 — 7 a.m.**

Helicopters with towing over-the-road tractors leave hotel to link up with the local military vehicle collectors that will pull the helicopters in the parade. The locale for linking up will be along Independence Avenue, heading westbound toward the Washington Monument, hopefully between Fourth and Seventh streets, but NOT BEYOND Seventh.

Keep in mind the parade organizing committee suggests arriving this early when the traffic will be minimal for truck/trailer maneuvering. Independence Avenue is a two-way street and will NOT be shut down before, during, or after the parade. So heads up!

After switching from over-the-road tractors to the military vehicles, one of the North Carolina Chapter's members will remain with each helicopter and ride in the parade in its respective military vehicle. The other members will proceed to the end of the parade point at Constitution and 17th Avenue) and park along Virginia Avenue between 18th and 23rd streets.

### **9 a.m.**

Military tow vehicles and trailered helicopters enter the only vehicle security checkpoint at Seventh and Independence, where the National Park Service and military with dogs will check out the personnel and vehicles.

I do not recommend carrying even a pocketknife or anything that might be considered a "weapon." You may lose it!

No vehicle or person will be allowed on the Mall or through the checkpoint until 9 a.m.

After clearing security, the vehicles and trailered helicopters will make their way to their element's staging area.

Upon arrival at the staging area, please space the helicopters as described below in "Order of March" about 50-75 feet apart to allow for those in uniform to march between them.

The first helicopter should be about 100 feet behind our lead element, which will carry the VHPA banner.

### **9:30 a.m.**

Buses will depart the Marriott Wardman en route to the parade starting point. Bottled water will be available that morning for each participant upon departure or at the parade starting point.

### **10:30 a.m.**

Arriving at the Seventh and Independence or the Fourth and Independence personnel security checkpoints, all participants will leave the buses and pass through the checkpoints.

These checkpoints will have metal screeners similar to those at airports, so please leave metal objects such as knives and coins at the hotel.

After clearing security, make your way to our element's staging area, find your general location for the march, and relax. The buses will proceed to the pickup point where the parade ends and park along Virginia Street, as well.

### **Order of March**

The parade starts at 11:45 and we probably will start as a group about 1:30 p.m.

In 2000, we observed the following format so that historically those in uniform and the helicopters appeared in the parade in the same order as in Vietnam.

- The 40-foot wide VHPA banner led the way.

Response from the spectators was amazing.

- Next came those who are still on active duty or reserve status and were authorized to wear Class A or B uniform.

- Next came those who still had and could fit into our gray or day-glow orange, cotton flight suits. If you still have your hat designating your flight class, please wear it. Otherwise, wear an appropriate baseball or jungle hat.

- Next came those who deployed to Vietnam in the old, herringbone utility fatigues with white nametags and yellow-and-black U.S. ARMY tags, followed by the D Model Huey.

- Next came those in jungle fatigues, followed by a C Model Huey gunship.

- Then those in one-piece NOMEX flight suits, followed by a Little Bird or Loach.

- Then those in two-piece NOMEX followed by the Cobra.

All others wishing to participate without uniforms, together with their wives, girlfriends, children and grandchildren, will march at the end of the column and wear a VHPA polo shirt, a baseball hat (preferably VHPA), khaki shorts and tennis or training shoes.

— Gil Ferrey



# Pleiku 6

## *Bangkok wedding delays return to Vietnam unit*

MIKE SHEUERMAN

Lash and John were experienced visitors to Bangkok. This was not their first rodeo.

Both had served at least 18 months or more in the 361st Assault Helicopter Company and considered Thailand their home away from home. That said, they were selected as tour guides for the rest of us "first timers."

After floating in the pool for several hours and drinking a couple more quarts of Singha beer, we all went to our rooms to get ready for the evening's adventures.

The air conditioner in the room was phenomenal. It kept the room cool to almost cold. And the shower was hot, with plenty of water. If you were stationed at Holloway, that was a real treat. I may be wrong, but I remember staying in the shower for over 30 minutes.

I made sure to take two and, sometimes, three showers every day we were in Bangkok. And the bed was full size and comfortable.

### *Part 2 of series*

We piled into two cabs and off we went to dinner. There were table clothes, background music, and great-looking waitresses. The food was excellent and there was plenty of it. I had Kobe steak for the first time. And there was more Singha beer. We thought we had died and gone to heaven.

After dinner, our leaders took us out on the town, where we made new friends.

### **After breakfast, we went for ride**

We met for breakfast the next morning. Lash and Dang had to take care of some last-minute paperwork before their wedding on March 8.

The rest of us were going to see Bangkok on rented motorcycles; not little mini-bikes, but big 450 Hondas.

Now comes the fun part. I had never ridden on a motorcycle in my life, much less driven one. But was I worried? No Sir, I was an experienced combat helicopter pilot flying a half-million dollar gunship with great aplomb and this motorcycle would be a piece of cake. Or

*Continued on Page 21*

## VHPA briefs

### **MOC coming to Washington**

By popular demand, the VHPA-CCN (California Chapter North) Mobile Officers Club (MOC) semi-trailer will go to its fourth VHPA reunion, carrying inside the memorabilia we all enjoy and, of course, the many boxes of gear and records used by VHPA Headquarters for the reunion.

Donations to support this not-for-profit mobile museum again will be accepted with the enthusiasm this group is known for, so bring a friend, see the MOC and have a refreshing beverage while you visit.

VHPA-CCN also will have souvenirs of your visit to the club: Coozies to keep those beverages cold, golf jackets, shirts, mugs, etc.

And, as always, VHPA-CCN membership applications and dues renewal forms will be there so you can join and keep up with all the group's activities.

The pilots in this active chapter have had a busy year since the San Francisco VHPA Reunion, winning trophies for their participation in local Veterans Day parades, golf, etc.

The MOC won't make it to the local Citrus Heights Red, White & Blue Parade in June because it will be on the road to D.C.

Rich Buzen will tow the Charlie Model in this parade on June 24 as the guys do a warm-up for the reunion and that parade of parades in Washington.

Go to our website at [www.vhpacn.org](http://www.vhpacn.org) for photos. You might be in one of them!

— Kenneth Fritz

### **Final call issued for book**

The third edition of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Commemorative Book is about to go to final edit.

This high-quality, "coffee-table" book is a history of the helicopter in Vietnam and the histories of the pilots who flew them.

At the reunion, you will have a last chance to submit your biography or update the one you submitted for the previous editions.

Rekindle memories of the camaraderie and spirit of one of the most memorable times in your life with this book.

See us in the Vendor Area and look over previous editions, pick up your information submittal form to update or enter your bio, order a book.

To date, we have 300 new biographies and more than 350 copies of this third edition sold.

The final edit will take place during the last two weeks of July so the book can be printed and delivered by the first week of December.

— Kenneth Fritz



# Pleiku 6

## *Bangkok wedding delays return to Vietnam unit*

**Continued from Page 20**

so I thought.

The bikes cost us \$35 each for the day, including gasoline. Mike K., an experienced biker, so he said, gave me a quick course in how to drive the thing. Didn't seem that difficult.

I hopped on, started it up, revved the engine and released the clutch. Wrong! I released the brake and went flying forward into another bike, ripping a big gash in the leather seat and putting a big dent in the gas tank. The owners went nuts. They must have thought I spoke Thai.

### **Accident cost \$400**

After everything calmed down, I had to write a \$400 check to cover the damage.

Not learning from my mistake, I took off on the Honda to explore the city with my buddies. Fortunately, nothing else happened — on the bike.

Let me digress a moment. When the decision to go to Bangkok was made I asked Lash and John how much money I would need. They suggested \$200-\$300 should cover it. I went to American Express, gave them \$300, received 25 checks and left. I also took a \$100 in cash. I had written a check for \$200 to cover my hotel room and other miscellaneous expenses upon arrival. Having written my second check I was now overdrawn in the AMEX account and there were five days to go on the R&R or so I thought.

We returned to the hotel around four after turning in the bikes. Lash and Dang informed us there was a problem; some red tape BS and it would now be the March 12 before they could get married. We were scheduled to return to Vietnam on the 12th.

We were extremely disappointed. After all, that was the only reason we had come to Bangkok, to see Lash get married. He was our good friend and fellow combat aviator.

Lynn suggested we call back to Holloway and see what could be worked out. John called, got Barfield on the phone, explained the development and requested a two-day extension on our R&R. To our amazement, it was granted.

### **Group told to call unit each day**

We would fly back to Vietnam on March 13 and return to Camp Holloway on the 14th. The CO asked that we call every other day just to make sure things were still quiet and we weren't needed. Without hesitation, we agreed. Things were looking up.

John said, "Since Lash and Dang can't get married until the 12th, let's go to Pattaeu Beach for a few days."

Great idea. It's agreed, we go tomorrow morning. After all, we trust our tour guides.

We decided to have dinner at the hotel restaurant and then go out on the town. During dinner, we received a strange phone call from Mike Pascoe, "the Gofer." He is in his room and believes he has been poisoned. He wanted John to come there fast.

John grabbed me to go along. We rushed up to his room, concerned something else has gone wrong. We found him on his bed, stoned out of his mind.

It turned out Mike, a smoker, needed some cigarettes and a local "cowboy" had offered to sell him a pack of Salem Lights. Mike thought they were regular cigarettes, bought them, went to his room to shower, lit one up and had his first and, I'm sure only, experience with cigarettes laced with opium.

He laid there on the bed, telling us he was seeing all sorts of strange things flying around the ceiling, the room was spinning, he felt like he was floating, he was sick — no, he was dying.

He grabbed John and made him swear we would tell his folks he died in combat and not in a hotel in Thailand after smoking opium. It was hard to keep from laughing. We left him and returned to the restaurant.

### **Gofer was fine the next morning**

After we told the others and they finished laughing, they all rushed up to say goodbye to our poor, dying friend. The Gofer stayed in that night, slept like a baby and was fine the next morning for our trip to the beach.

We went to the beach in a tour bus, just us. The bus was loaded with food, Singha and other things to drink. It took several hours to get there.

We were to stay in a huge bungalow on an island off the coast. To get there, we had to take a private party boat, again loaded with everything we needed such as scuba gear and fishing equipment. We also had a ski boat with us.

I had fished before and thought it boring. But Scuba and water skiing were new for me.

My best friend, Mike Kieren, hopped in the water at the dock, put on the skis and started skiing across the Gulf of Siam toward the island. I was in the ski boat, along with Lynn Carlson and the driver.

Mike was really pretty good and, even though the water looked choppy, he never fell. He skied 15-20 minutes and then Lynn took over. After awhile, it was my turn. It looked simple enough. After all, I'm an experienced combat helicopter pilot flying a half million-dollar gunship in Southeast Asia. How hard could it be?

**Continued on Page 22**



# Pleiku 6

## *Bangkok wedding delays return to Vietnam unit*

**Continued from Page 21**

They dragged my sorry butt all over the Gulf of Siam. That body of water was six inches lower after they finally let me back in the boat. I had drunk that much salt water. To this day I can taste salt whenever I see a ski boat.

The five days at the beach were unbelievable. All you could eat and drink, fresh seafood, great steaks, Singha, beautiful accommodations, plenty to do — and all for \$150 each. It was really an unbelievable trip.

On March 11, we headed back to Bangkok, the Opera Hotel and good/bad news, depending on how you look at it.

### **Paperwork causes further delay**

There was a problem with the paperwork for the wedding. Either that or someone wanted more money. Anyway, the wedding was postponed again. Now it would be on March 15 or 16 at the earliest. Damn bureaucracy.

The next day, John called the unit, got the CO on the phone, explained the situation and sought the advice of our leader. Again, to our surprise, our request to stay in Bangkok was granted. We would leave Thailand on March 17 at the latest and get back to the unit on the 18th. At least that was the current plan.

We spent the days relaxing, swimming, partying, touring the city, making new friends, shopping, eating, etc. By this time I was least \$1,500 overdrawn in the AMEX account. But as they say: "If you still have checks, you ain't broke." I still had checks.

On March 15, we received more good/bad news. It would be the 22nd before Lash and Dang finally could be wed. But this was a definite date. We were assured of it. This time, I made the call. Again permission was given but our good relationship with our unit commander was being tested.

We were told, no matter what, we would be on a plane on the 23rd and headed back to Vietnam. Be back in Halloway on the 24th, no excuses. Don't even ask for another extension on peril of losing our AC orders.

Disappointed we would not be allowed to ask for any more extensions, we reluctantly decided to make the most of this extra time.

Again, we spent our time wisely waiting for the March 22. We had a ball.

The 22nd rolled around and Lash and Dang did get

married. We weren't allowed to attend the ceremony for some reason, but there was an unbelievable wedding reception that night in the backyard of Bill Vittoon's house. I have the party on a CD.

Bill was Lik's boss, the owner of the cab service we were using and a close friend of Lash and Dang. We partied until early morning.

The Thai food was authentic, really good and the spiciest thing I had ever tasted. It was so hot it would light your mouth on fire. Only Singha would cool it, so naturally, I had to drink a lot of Singha.

When it was time to go back to the hotel, Lik was drunker than Cooter Brown. I was called on to drive us back to the hotel. Being an experienced combat helicopter pilot used to flying a half million-dollar gunship, it was no problem. Just follow the cab in front of us. I never have driven that fast, run so many lights or taken so many chances in my life. I must have made it without any problems though, all the folks in the cab are still here to tell the tale.

We met for breakfast the next morning, settled our bills. I was now almost \$3,000 overdrawn in the AMEX account, but still had two or three checks left, so I wasn't broke. We said good-bye to our newfound friends, especially Lash.

### **Lash and Dang attend reunion**

I would not see or talk to Lash again for more than 12 years or Dang for 25 years when she and Lash attended their first VHPA Reunion in Orlando in 1997.

The seven of us Panthers posed for a picture outside the lobby of the Opera Hotel. Some of us were wearing party suits made for us while we were in Bangkok.

We each have a copy signed by all the rest of the guys in the photo. Mine hangs on the wall in my office at home as a reminder of great friends and great times. We look so young, confident and bulletproof. I guess we were or thought we were.

Our seven-day R&R over, six of us headed for the airport and back to Vietnam. Lash would head stateside several days later.

The six of us returning to our unit had been gone 17 days on a seven-day R&R. Soon we would be known as "The Infamous Pleiku 6"

**TO BE CONTINUED**

**Proposed bylaw amendments posted  
on [www.vhpa.info](http://www.vhpa.info) in the 'In the News Section'**



# Jack Salm:

## *Four-letter word has new meaning since flight*

Northern Alabama is not western Colorado or Wyoming or Montana.

Oh, there are some pretty fair-sized hills north of Birmingham, but nothing in the mountain category.

I was on a flight in an L-19 (OV-1) "Birdog" from Fort Campbell, Ky., to Birmingham, Ala., for a radio retrofit. The weather was crappy. When I had left Campbell, it was not good, but it had really deteriorated since.

I was in a fix. Should I turn around and go back to Campbell or press ahead to BHM. I was much closer to BHM than Campbell.

Here is where the problem compounded itself. I was at about 800-1,000 feet. A good-sized hill or even a building could pop up and my day would be over.

I called BHM tower for a heading to the field.

"Where are you?" the tower asked.

Good question! I hadn't a clue. I knew I was north of the field, but where? I had to pee really badly. I'm in an L-19 and there is no way to go potty. Here is where flying is not your primary concern, peeing is.

Then I saw it off to my left — a water tower with "WARRIOR" on it in big, black letters. I called BHM tower and reported I was over Warrior, Ala. They gave me a heading, but told me the field was below minimums. I think their minimums were 500 feet and a half-mile.

I turned to the heading they gave me and now I really, REALLY had to go. I was actually in pain.

I looked into the back seat for some kind of receptacle. Nothing. The only thing back there was the spare "stick" — the flight control for the back seat pilot or copilot. I grabbed it and found it was hollow. Oh, good, I could pee in it and then throw the contents out the window. I accomplished this, not an easy task, I might add, and opened the window.

As I attempted to empty the "stick," the entire contents blew back into the cockpit. I was literally "pissed." However, I was now able to place all of my attention on flying the aircraft and getting to BHM.

The field was still below minimums and CLOSED. The tower asked if I wanted to declare an emergency? No, NO and NO way. The distance between the clouds and the hills was getting smaller and smaller.

Miraculously, a hole in the clouds materialized and I could see the field straight ahead. I had been flying for some time, looking straight down or to the sides, since I couldn't see straight ahead.

BHM gave me permission to land even though the airport was technically closed. Since there was no other traffic, I could land whatever direction from which I could see the runway.

After I got on the ground, I noticed I was wringing

wet and it was not the contents of the "stick," but sweat.

Since this incident, I have always taken note of the word "pissed." The British say "Piss off" when you are requested to leave. We use it when we are annoyed or when we want to dismiss an event: "Piss on it." When one gets sloppy drunk, he is said to be "pissed."

I think I can truly say, "I got pissed."

\*\*\*\*\*

## *The memory . . . sometimes there, sometimes not!*

We all can recall embarrassing moments that have occurred during our lifetime.

How many of us have been introduced to someone only to forget his or her name before the end of the conversation?

Some people remember names or faces or both better than others. I have always had a name retention problem.

My wife is just the opposite. She can remember names and faces forever.

However, I can recall one instance when she really dropped the ball.

We were stationed at Fort Rucker. I was an instructor in the helicopter branch at Hanchey.

She and I had both enjoyed sponsoring many of the foreign students. We sponsored two from Iran, two from Australia, two from Israel and many Vietnamese Air Force cadets.

We were at a party at the "O" Club in their honor. We were sponsoring a young Australian captain and his wife, Richard and Ruth Knight. We had met a young Thai student previously.

My wife went to introduce him to the Australian couple.

She rolled his name off her lips, no easy task since "Thanom Kangwangshirothada" has 24 letters in it, and drew a complete blank when she came to Richard and Ruth Knight.

Needless to say she was mortified. To this day she has never forgotten it.

Reminds me of the Southwest Airlines commercial: "Want to leave town?"

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Jack Salm, the author of these articles, is midterm member at large on the VHPA Executive Council.



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