



# THE VHPA AVIATOR

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

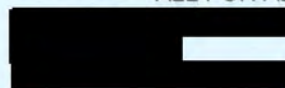
September/October 2007 Vol. 25, No. 5



Bob Whitford photo

Whitford, who later retired from the Army as a CW3, took this photo of a Skycrane lifting a double slingload west of Lai about August 1972. Whitford is seeking more information about the location. He served two tours as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, with the 361st Aviation Company in 1968-69 and with D Troop, 1/1 Cavalry in 1972-73.

\*\*\*\*\*ALL FOR ADC 870





## From the President

Here it is the end of August and my second column. Time is flying fast; I don't know where it has gone.

Your Executive Council is working on several new projects that we hope bring good results to the Association. They are long range and I will be bringing them up throughout the year as they proceed to completion.



**Mike Whitten**

As you know, we have a contract in place with Fritzco as our headquarters company starting Sept. 1. This contract closed some loose ends we have had and strengthens the ties between the Association and our management company.

I will be making bi-monthly visits to make sure we are getting our money's worth. Your vice president, Jack Salm, will accompany me on my next trip to Sacramento to see the Headquarters himself and get a lay of the land.

We have had a significant drop in membership for the past several months and your new membership chairman and junior member at large, Mike Law, has been on top of it and we have had a good jump in membership recently. Thanks to you, Mike, and to the hardworking staff at Headquarters.

Of course, we would like all the guys who piloted the skies of Vietnam in those things we know are not supposed to fly to have an opportunity to join the Association and attend the reunion to see who we are and what we have become.

I am going to list a few of the guys I have known since college, through flight school, my tour, and afterwards who have never joined or have joined and not attended a reunion. I'm asking that you look over the names and, if you know any of them, call and urge them to at least look at the website.

I have been successful to some and not to others. Also, think of friends that you have and give them a call.

No particular order; just a bunch of names. Frank Dallas, Ralph Stenzel, Tom Tarpley, Ben Walton, Tom Bodiford, John Barron, Bill Zanow, Jim O'Toole and Ray Siekman. In Ray's case, he lives in Lincoln Neb., and the records show 30 pilots, of whom only seven are members, the rest are potential members.

There will be several articles in this issue about the last reunion in Phoenix. To those who wrote about the reunion, thanks for writing and thanks for putting up with the heat. It was a great facility and a great time.

Like always, not everything went perfectly, but we had a great time, and hope to see you in San Antonio.

The next *Aviator* will be a big issue to inform you about San Antonio, with a lot to be said about what we will have going on for you.

Oh, in my other hat as a guy who chases that little white pill across the cow pastures, we will be playing at Canyon Springs Golf Club. Thank you, Al Flory, for your help and support. Tom Grant has been helping me and Dana Young and Mike Sheuerman with some inside connections to events and places to visit for food and entertainment.

It is a pleasure to work with your Executive Council and to be your president. Let's all get involved in some way and make the Association the best it can be. Until next time . . .

— Mike Whitten, President

# Attend the San Antonio reunion in 2008

## VHPA statistics

- Between Aug. 1 and Aug. 31, the VHPA added 12 new members.
- During this same period, members donated \$139 toward the VHPA Scholarship Fund.

**E-mail items to The Aviator at:**  
*[editor@vhpa.org](mailto:editor@vhpa.org)*

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Correspondence relating to commercial purposes or solicitations shall only be sent to those officers, committee chairmen, and staff listed above.

## Letters

## Former Army nurse seeks Dustoff crew

My name is Maureen Robinson and I served as an Army nurse in Vietnam. During my second tour, I adopted one of my patients, a young Montagnard boy from the Hre Tribe — Dinh Nit (also known as Mark Robinson).

This is probably like looking for a needle in a haystack, but I have tried many times to locate the Dustoff crew who picked him up in Tra Bong (Quang Ngai Province) on Nov. 8, 1970, and brought him to the 27th Surgical Hospital in Chu Lai.

I just wanted to thank them and let them know what a difference they made in a young Hre boy's life and mine, as well.

Someone suggested that the 236th Medical Detachment might have flown in this area. I have heard from members of the 54th and 68th groups, but no success. After all this time, I know it is difficult to recall one mission, but thought I would try.

Tra Bong was a difficult and dangerous area to fly in/out due to the mountain terrain and the VC controlled the roads. I know we followed a dry riverbed to get there from Chu Lai. LZ Cindy was located there and a SF Camp A 107. That was turned over to ARVN Rangers around August/September 1970.

Around that time, the camp was overrun, with many casualties but was retaken shortly afterwards. There were other camps in Son Ha, Gia Vuc, Ha Thanh — perhaps some of this might sound familiar to one of your members.

A belated welcome home,

Maureen Robinson

36th Evacuation Hospital/24th Evacuation Hospital

August 1966-67

27th Surgical Hospital/91st Evacuation Hospital

April 1970-September 1971

## Army pilot locates Navy rescue pilot

As a U.S. Army first lieutenant, I flew an OH-23G for John Paul Vann, the protagonist of Neil Sheehan's "A Bright Shining Lie," for the last 5 months of my tour, January 1967-December 1967.

Prior to flying for Vann, I had flown guns and scouts for "D" Troop, 3/5th Cav.

In October of 1967, he sent me to Can Tho, deep in the

*Continued on Page 4*



## Letters

Delta, to pick up a Vietnamese Army colonel friendly to the U.S. and fly him to Saigon.

On the way back, right after crossing the Song River and less than a minute after I had tuned to the Dong Tam frequency, the engine of my Raven blew a jug and I made a successful "0" groundspeed autorotation to the center of a rice paddy that was submerged under one foot of water. I ended up sitting, dry as a bone, in the middle of the paddy.

All I had for personal protection were a half dozen HE grenades and a 9 mm Swedish K submachine gun Vann had given me.

### **Autorotation a credit to training**

On the rapid way down, I recall making a 180-degree turn and checking my airspeed for 60 mph, but I remember nothing about the flare and pitch pull, a credit to my flight school, ORWAC 66-16, training, even though I flew TH-55As there.

I had broadcast multiple "May Days" on the way down and in less than 10 minutes, a solo U.S. Navy "Sea Wolf" UH-1B gunship shot an approach to a spot 100 feet to our right hand side to pick us up.

After I pulled my radios, I don't think my boots got wet as I raced across the rice stalks. The Sea Wolf flew us back to Dong Tam, a U.S. Army colonel grabbed my RVN colonel, and I hitched a ride on a Caribou to Bien Hoa.

In 1999, I posted a message on the "Sea Wolf Association" website in an attempt to locate my savior.

On April 20, 2007, I received a letter from Mike Stock, Sea Wolf 62, informing me he was the pilot that picked me up on Oct. 17, 1967. I called him immediately and talked to his wife, Barbara, and learned he was on a trip with an April 22 return.

She informed me, in response to my inquiry, that his favorite adult beverage was chardonnay and suggested I call him on the 22nd. Two days later, I called him and we had, as you can imagine, a great conversation.

He's retired from the Navy, lives in Traverse City, Mich., and is a corporate pilot (King Air).

For the very first time, I learned the details of the "flip" side of this event. He was alone in his Navy UH-1B at Dong Tam (approximately 10 miles east of my location), hovering a short distance to refuel, when he heard my transmission and, knowing I was going down in very nasty territory, "pulled pitch" and took off looking for me; no copilot, door gunner or crew chief and his mini-guns were still wrapped in their protective canvas coverings.

He worried en route they might fly off and hit his tail rotor.

He saw my flare — I had forgotten I had even fired one — and did the pickup.

He said that on his way in, he could see several VC moving toward my location along the paddy dikes.

After dropping us off, he manned his helo, teamed up

with two Army gunships and headed back to the paddy to fend off the VC until an extraction team was dropped in to secure the area and pick up my chopper.

While the extraction crew was doing its work, it was mortared by the VC, fortunately with no casualties on our side.

### **Recalling mission makes skin crawl**

Hearing this for the first time, almost 40 years later, made my skin crawl. No other aircraft had responded to my "May Day," so had Mike not been on frequency at that time, I probably would not be alive to tell this story today. I owe him my life.

Mike's wife, Barbara, had told me on May 20 that he had been awarded the Silver Star Medal for his actions in rescuing me. I wish I had pinned it on his chest!

On May 1, 2007, twelve bottles of Kendall Jackson's finest "Reserve" chardonnay were delivered to the Stock residence with a long-delayed "thank you" note!

Mike is now in Alaska for the summer, flying float-planes (DeHavilland Beavers) and he and his wife plan to visit us next spring during their planned trip to the East Coast. What a party that will be!!

H.H. (Rick) Roll  
Camden-Wyoming, Del.  
[REDACTED]

## VHPA wife loses camera at reunion

I attended the VHPA convention with my husband over the Fourth of July in the beautiful Marriott resort. Unfortunately, I lost my camera while we were attending the Lee Greenwood concert.

I either left it on the table (in front of the stage close to exit doors) or left it in the ladies room at the bottom of the escalator. I reported the loss as soon as I realized what I had done to security, lost and found and to the registration desk of the VHPA. I did not receive any results.

I am hoping that since that time my camera has surfaced and I will be able to get my valuable photographs that were on it.

The camera is a silver Kodak 3.5 Easy Share; it is an older model, but the photographs were of my grandchildren and their great-grandmother and are priceless. Also there are photos of our trip to the Grand Canyon that we will probably never be able to duplicate.

I will gladly send a CD, pay for shipping or whatever it takes to get my camera or at least my pictures back.

My phone number is: [REDACTED]

My address is: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Margo Lurvey  
[REDACTED]

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## Letters

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### Landing on Riverine boat good practice

Capt. Bass, Thunderbird 16, sent us an email about the cover picture on *The VHPA Aviator*, July/August 2007. I would like to add my 2 cents to it.

After giving it great thought and downing several "Buds," I have decided I could not have been on that aircraft that day. Please note it is Red 2. It was before my time by a shade, or just missed out as an FNG in the first part of 1969. Anyway, I missed out in a lesson I could have used later on. Sure looks pretty sitting there doesn't she?

As I remember it, we didn't work with the Navy very often and if we did, it was always single ship or "Ash and Trash."

Anyway, I do remember flying a Navy captain one day and landing on one of those Riverine boats in mid-late 1969 or early 1970.

#### Captain would mingle with sailors

That morning we had flown this Navy captain to several small Navy bases located around the Mekong Delta area, sometimes carrying supplies they needed, but always the captain would get out and mingle with his charges. It was the sign of a good commander. It must have been good for the morale of the sailors under his command.

I would always call the base or outpost when I was a few miles out and let them know I was inbound to their location so someone would come out and throw a colored smoke grenade to let us know how much wind was blowing and from which direction. That way I could make a safe landing. I also would inform them if we had supplies that would need to be unloaded and that we had a "Code 6" on board.

At one small location, we landed and were greeted by a detail of "buck-ass naked" sailors, who proceeded to unload the supplies we had on board for them. I was a bit shocked, but the captain just wandered off to do his thing. I must admit, they did have a very good all-over tan.

#### Lunchtime for most Americans

It was getting on to noon or lunchtime for most Americans, unlike helicopter crew members, who learned to catch a meal whenever and wherever we got the chance, if at all some days.

Now, I only bring this up to show the contrast in food and style in the military.

I can remember, after a long hard day, walking over to the battalions officers club with the idea of treating myself to a good meal for a change, if they were still open.

We usually had the choice of one thing. One less deci-

sion to make in the day.

I remember a "green" salad that was sliced onions with vinegar poured over it for dressing and steaks and pork chops that to chew them was like a piece of rubber and I would say, was very much like cooked cardboard.

Most evenings, I just went back to my room and picked out a C-ration from a stash my roommates and I kept. If I'd gotten a "care" package from home, I might be able to pull a log of salami or cheese and cut away the green and blue stuff and enjoy some of the rest. Or maybe a packet of Lipton's soup in the old popcorn popper. What a life!

But we had it much better than most. Not being a drinking man at that time was probably to my disadvantage. I'm sure, I would have enjoyed those meals at the officers club a lot more if I had "hammered."

Anyway, back to the story.

#### Small boat had 'H' on deck

Lunchtime for the captain. I was given the location where we were to land and we were off on our way. To my dismay, when I sighted where we were to land, all I saw was a very small boat with and even smaller deck with an "H" painted on it.

They were motoring up river to match the speed of the river's flow, so appeared to be staying in one place. Piece of cake, right? Not so. I was expected to land on the tiny boat motoring up this river with no indication of where the wind was blowing from or at what speed. I had to land on its "deck" from the side and park my eight-foot or so skids on the boats 10- or 12-foot wide deck. No problem right?

The real problem with all of this was that the boat and I were working in totally different environments. I in the air and he was in the water. On top of that, the helicopter I was flying was about 50 feet long and was to land on a boat that was 10 or 12 feet wide. Give me a break.

#### Crew talks pilot onto deck

As I came to a hover just short of the deck, my crew chief and doorgunner were hanging out of the aircraft and talking me down onto the deck, as all I could now see was water rushing by as the nose of the aircraft was hanging over the side of the boat. Now that was a weird feeling.

I slowly allowed the weight of our aircraft to settle onto the deck, all the time knowing we were heavy and might sink this boat. Not too worry. We floated like a cork, maybe a little top-heavy, though.

We shut the helicopter down and the main rotor blades came to a stop. Normally, one of the crewmembers would have jumped out, caught and tied down the blades. Not this time. Both blades were hanging about 15 feet or so out over the water.

Now to exit the aircraft. I unstrapped my seat belt and shoulder harness, took off my helmet and gloves, and for sure my chicken plate, and prepared to exit the aircraft as we always did.

But wait a minute, I look down to where I will step and there is nothing but water rushing by. The damn nose of the aircraft was hanging out over the side of the boat.

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My peter pilot and I elected to exit out over our radio console and between our seats, and into the cabin, and then out through the cargo doors onto the landing deck, such as it was.

As we got out of our helicopter, we found ourselves in the Navy's world. The deck of the boat was moving under us, which was strange.

### Captain's launch pulled alongside

A captain's launch, pulled up alongside and we clumsily got aboard.

As we motored away to an LST or something, I looked back to see the small boat with our helicopter parked on top of it. Nose hanging out over one side and the long tail boom out over the other, and wondering, will those sailors dump it overboard before we get back?

We climbed on board the larger boat to a very nice welcome. Of course, we had a Navy captain with us.

The crew chief and doorgunner were taken from us and

we were escorted to the officers' mess, where we were seated at a large table, with cloth place mats and china plates on them. There were cloth napkins and real silver eating utensils. Crystal drinking glasses, the whole works.

The food was great to boot, better than any can of beans and weenies or ham and eggs I ever had the occasion to cut into with a P-38.

We gave all around our thanks and again boarded the captain's launch, and were motored out to the small boat with our Huey parked atop it. I was pleasantly surprised that she sat on the boat's deck and had not slid overboard in our absence.

We got on board, strapped in and fired the old bird up again. And we were off on our afternoon adventure.

More of the same, but late in the afternoon we heard over our radio there had been an incident: A helicopter from another unit had been attempting to make a landing, as we had earlier, and failed.

As we approached the scene, we could see a Huey half hanging off the side of the small boat and beat to pieces. It was "beached" to a mud flat and looked sad.

A medevac helicopter had already taken the injured to

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## Thinking About Retiring or Changing Jobs?

If so, we invite you to take advantage of our free retirement analysis.

Considering that it's likely a person who is 65 years old today will live past age 85, it is important to plan appropriately for retirement. Regardless of your current age, you should ask yourself:

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**Attend Reunion 2008**  
in San Antonio



## Letters

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a hospital.

We landed nearby and, in the end, flew two Navy 03s who had been on board the helicopter to Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base in their muddy, blood-splattered khaki uniforms. They were after all going on their R&Rs to meet up with their wives for a few days.

Dale J. Moore  
Thunderbird 13,  
April 1969-July 1970  
[REDACTED]

## Vietnam helicopter pilot flies missions from Kuwait

"Bikini 24" is again flying in a combat area.

Rather than Southeast Asia, he is now flying in Southwest Asia.

CW5 Jim Lake is commander of the ARCENT (Army Central Command) C-12 Detachment, Kuwait.

Lake, as a WO1, often was mission lead, flying for the Kontum, Vietnam, based 170th Aviation Company, the Bikinis.

His C-12 detachment has three C-12R2 aircraft, eight Army warrant officers and four enlisted persons. They operate all over the Central Command's area, but 70 percent of the missions are in Iraq.

Regular flights include Kabul, Afghanistan, and Djibouti in Africa. His detachment has flown more than 2,300 accident- and incident-free hours in the past six months.

The C-12 is a militarized version of the Beech 200 Super King Air. It carries a crew of two and up to eight passengers at a true airspeed of 285 knots; has a service ceiling of 35,000 feet and a mass gross weight of 14,000



CW5 Jim Lake with C-12R2 in Kuwait

pounds. WO1 Lake flew for the Bikinis from May 1969 until May 1970, and was a regular on the MAC-SOG insertion of recon and combat teams in Laos and Cambodia. Those daily missions involved a flight of at least four UH-1Hs, the

escorting Cobras from the 361st Aerial Escort Company, a Covey aircraft, and close air support A-1Es Sky Raiders.

Lake plans to retire from active duty in June 2009, closing out a career of 42 years of service. His home is Tacoma, Wash.

George Crawford  
[REDACTED]

## Veteran helping friend receive overdue Air Medal

I am trying to help a friend of mine, Ed Lloyd, convince the Army that the Vietnam War award criteria for the Air Medal was less stringent for Army personnel performing assigned or voluntary non-crew member duties in-country.

I was assigned to the S-3 Section of the 222nd Aviation Battalion as an assistant flight operations NCO from February 1967 to March 1969. A large portion of my duties involved the maintenance of individual flight records.

I am sure you are well aware that the accurate posting of these records was as critical as the posting of aircraft flying hour maintenance and historical records.

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### WANTED

Looking for memorabilia from Air Cavalry, Assault Helicopter, NETT, UTT, ICCS, Support, Medical, Transportation and Special units. Patches, Uniforms, Headgear, unit "Business" cards, Propaganda, Printed matter, Plaques, Souvenirs, Party Suits & Novelty items are all of interest. This material is wanted for use in historical exhibits and information for a book. I have numerous references. What can I do for you?



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## Letters

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I transcribed hours and minutes flown by type of mission data from the aircraft's daily mission record. This record contained the names and in-flight capacities of those personnel assigned to that aircraft during that mission day.

This mission record also included the names of personnel performing recognized duties on that aircraft, which were unique to Vietnam and not usually recognized elsewhere in the Army.

For example, doorgunners, command and control personnel, couriers and other normally ground-based personnel, were determined to be key and essential to the mission requirements of that aircraft on that mission day.

### **Units granted authority in Vietnam**

I am sure you also are aware that 1st Aviation Brigade, divisional and separate aviation units were granted the unique authority to recognize such personnel by award of the Air Medal provided they attained the required 100 hours of flight time as their crew member counterparts.

A unique method of multiples for computing the 100 hours was used because of the more hazardous conditions of combat and direct combat support missions. Informal flight records were maintained on these personnel.

This criterion was not arbitrary. It was based on formal exceptions to AR 672-5-1 which were passed down to the operating level by letters, messages and other formal notifications. I know these existed because they were maintained with AR 672-5-1 and were the basis for recommending personnel for award of the Air Medal.

In the 23 years I served in the Army, I cannot remember a more exacting or scrutinized task as that associated with the maintenance of flight records and the providing of formal documentation award of the Air Medal to these personnel.

### **Lloyd's request denied**

To date, Ed Lloyd has submitted three requests for after-the-fact award of the Air Medal to the HQDA Adjutant General Office. Each request had congressional interest. Each was denied based on the criteria contained in DA Pam 600-8-22 (today's criteria) and not against AR 672-5-1 as modified for Vietnam.

Ed's problem is not that he cannot prove his case for after-the-fact award of the Air Medal. We are both members of the 222nd Aviation Battalion "Skymasters" Association. Many of its members have signed statements and others are willing to.

## Being a Vietnam vet pays off for fast pilot

Recently, I left my warehouse to see a customer. I was running late and the fact I was speeding never crossed my mind.

A big semi was lumbering along in front of me so I stepped on the gas, pulled into the passing lane and right into the line of sight of a radar gun speed trap. The motorcycle officer leapt out into the road, signaled the semi to stop, pointed his finger in my direction and waved me to the curb. Crap. Guilty as a hungry dog.

I stopped, took out my wallet, removed my driver's license and proof of insurance and waited for him to stroll over.

"When were you in Vietnam?" were the first words out of his mouth.

"1971-1972, I flew helicopters," I replied.

He had noticed my Cobra license plate cover with the colors of the Vietnam flag on the front of my car as he motioned me over and the VHPA sticker on the back window as he approached.

He had been an enlisted man in the Army and served in the first Gulf War. We talked for about five minutes or so about our military experiences, the current state of the armed services and the war in Iraq.

He handed my things back to me, showed me I was going 49 in a 35, asked me to slow down, shook my hand, thanked me for my service and walked away. It was a really nice welcome home.

Mike Sheuerman  
Panther 15  
361st ACE/AWC

Some (me, for example) voluntarily flew in his place to give him a day off. One, Woody Adler, did too and was killed at Sanford Field in Long Binh when the 54th Utility Airplane Company's Otter he was flying in struck another plane with its wing tip, flipped over, crashed and exploded. All on board were killed in the fire. In the casualty report, Woody was listed as a non-crew member and not as a passenger, as others were.

If we can obtain several statements from pilots that will corroborate the criteria for award of the Air Medal during the Vietnam War, I am sure Ed Lloyd will be able to obtain the recognition he earned nearly 40 years ago.

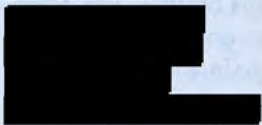
Herbert G. Gotshall

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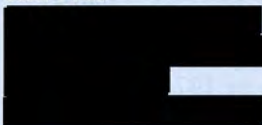


## VHPA Chapters

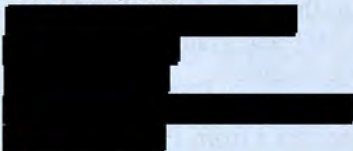
### Arizona Chapter Bill Sorenson



### California Chapter North Ken Fritz



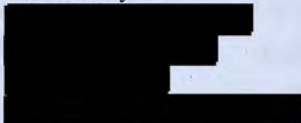
### VHPA of Florida Ken Mulholland



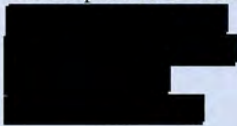
### Fort Wolters Chapter Gerald Brazell



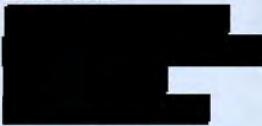
### Georgia Chapter Bill Stanley



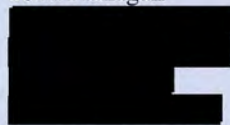
### Mid South Chapter Christopher A. Horton



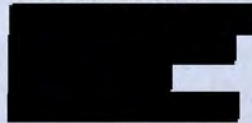
### North Carolina Chapter Bill Doran



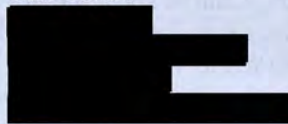
### Ohio River LZ Chapter John Flanagan



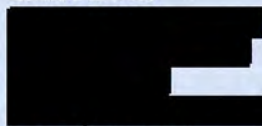
### Rocky Mountain Chapter C. Edward Fickes



### Southern California Chapter Carl Cortez



### Washington State Chapter Chris Farwell



[www.vhpawa.org](http://www.vhpawa.org)

The VHPA and Chapters share information and guidance with one another for the mutual benefit of their members. Chapters are separate and independently managed organizations not under control of the VHPA. Neither the VHPA nor any Chapter is authorized to act as agent or representative of the VHPA or any other Chapter.

## Chapter Activities

### Washington State Chapter

We participated in the Sept. 15 POW/MIA Recognition Day in Vancouver, Wash.

This consisted of the rededication of the UH-1 "Lady Belle" and a great crowd was on hand for the festivities.

On Nov. 10, the chapter will participate in the Armed Forces Day Parade in Auburn, Wash., with a UH-1, if it is repaired in time.

Also, the chapter voted to donate \$500 to the Fort Lewis Fisher House Foundation and \$500 to the American Lake Veterans Hospital.

— Chris Farwell, President

### Ohio River LZ Chapter

We will be holding our annual reunion in Columbus, Ohio, at the Airport Marriott Hotel on the weekend of

Feb. 22-24.

Anyone looking for fellowship, a good time or a favorite war story is invited to attend.

There will be a welcome reception on Friday evening and a banquet on Saturday night.

Questions? Contact Keith Allegar

or John Flanagan

### Rocky Mountain Chapter

The chapter has a 53-foot trailer that has been outfitted as a mobile War Museum. It is air-conditioned and has a 'Tommy Lift' on the rear, so it is wheelchair accessible. It is a nonsmoking, no-alcohol environment.

To date, the chapter has taken the War Museum to more than a dozen venues in Colorado (Fort Carson, Greeley's veteran and civic functions, plus several fly-ins at local airports), New Mexico (Vietnam Veterans National Memorial at Angel Fire), and Kansas (Veterans Memorial dedication at Atwood/Rawlins County Airport).

We currently are negotiating with the VHPA Executive Council to bring the mobile War Museum trailer to the reunion in San Antonio.

— Ed Fickes

Items for Chapter Activities should be sent to Jack Salm  
at



# Taps

## Charles Canedy

Retired Brig. Gen. Charles Canedy died at his home on July 29 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Charlie was born Nov. 11, 1931, in Shelburne Falls, Mass.

He attended Norwich University in Vermont, graduated in 1953 and was commissioned in the Army.

He married Fredrica "Fred" Dole, his high school sweetheart, and immediately they began their Army adventure. Charlie spent the next 28 years in the Army stationed from Fort Hood to Fort Knox to Korea to Washington to Germany to Fort Sam Houston and many places in between.

Over the course of his career, he organized and trained one of the first two divisional air cavalry troops; organized, trained, deployed, and fought with one of the Army's first three separate air cavalry squadrons in Vietnam, and was the first commander of the 6th Air Cavalry Combat Brigade.

In 1962, while in the 1st Armored Division at Fort Hood, he received an order to organize an air cavalry troop and to be prepared to fight it if the division received the order to invade Cuba. He scrounged castoff Air Force and Navy weapons, mounted them on H-13s and UH-1As, trained the troop, and planned its deployment.

Although the invasion did not occur, those who knew Charlie knew his homemade air cavalry troop would have achieved the world's first victory in aerial mounted combat.

In 1967, he was selected to organize, train and deploy the 7th Squadron of the 1st Air Cavalry Regiment that deployed to Vietnam from Fort Knox.

The tactics developed by his squadron laid the foundation for today's air cav and attack units.

In 1973 he took command of the 2nd Brigade (Air Cavalry), 1st Cav Division, later renamed the 6th Air Cavalry Combat Brigade. Promoted to brigadier general, he was assigned as the Army aviation officer and spearheaded the effort to form the Army's Aviation Branch.

In 1981, following assignment as chief of staff of 5th Army, Charlie retired to settle in San Antonio.

He began his second career as an agent with USPA and IRA, went on to lead the Geronimo District, and transitioned with the company to First Command.

After 23 years with First Command, he retired once again, turning his energy to service in the Windcrest United Methodist Church, revalidated his pilot's license and took back to the skies, and worked on his golf game.

His wife, Fred, preceded Charlie in death.

His children, Sue Canedy, Carol Guillory and Charlie D. Canedy, survive him.

## Brian Edward Dunloy

Brian Edward Dunloy, 60, died July 25 at his home in Lakeway, Texas, after a battle with esophageal cancer.

He was born at Fort Totten Army Hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Nov. 12, 1946. He and his brother, Jim, were raised in a military family and lived overseas with their parents on military bases in Europe, Asia and across the United States.

Brian graduated from high school while the family was in Kingsville, Texas. He received a BA from Pennsylvania State University in 1968 and a bachelor of aviation management from Auburn University in 1974.

He attended the Army Command and General Staff College while was on active duty and, after his military service, went to the Sloan School of Management at MIT and graduated in 1976 with a Master of Science in management.

Brian served on active duty with the Army as an Infantry officer and a helicopter pilot from 1968-72 and in the Army Reserve until 1976.

He graduated from Army flight school with Class 69-26, and served with the 117th Assault Helicopter Company (The Warlords) at Long Binh, Vietnam, in 1970-71.

During his tour of duty in Vietnam, he was awarded a Bronze Star Medal, 13 Air Medals, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and various other service and campaign medals. He was a Life Member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

After his military service, Brian joined the Arabian American Oil Co. in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in 1977 and worked there until 1983, when he returned to the United States.

He spent the next five years working in maintenance management and business development, internationally and domestically, before returning to Saudi Arabia and rejoining Saudi Aramco in 1989.

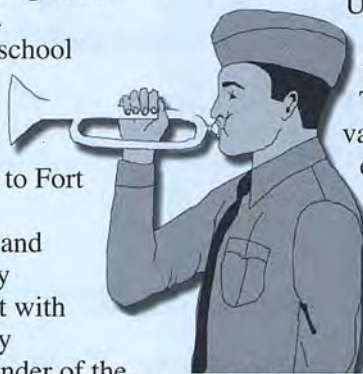
Brian remained with Saudi Aramco until his retirement in October 2004, when he and his wife, Joann, moved to Lakeway.

During his time in Saudi Arabia, Brian was actively involved with the American Businessmen's Association and was part of the Annual Doorknock Campaign that lobbied Congress on behalf of U.S. companies doing business in the Middle East.

Also during his years in Arabia, he received service commendations from U.S. military forces during the Desert Storm Campaign in 1990 and from the U.S. State Department for his role as company warden during the Iraq War in 2003.

Brian had a passion for sailing and enjoyed taking friends and family on his Hobie Cat on Half Moon Bay in

*Continued on Page 11*





# Taps

**Continued from Page 10**

Saudi Arabia and the MacGregor 36, his ocean-racing catamaran on Lake Travis in Austin.

He also enjoyed traveling internationally with his wife, in particular to cities in the Orient, especially Hong Kong and Bangkok, where they loved eating the local foods and buying Oriental antiques and treasures.

He was an accomplished cook, especially with Chinese food.

Brian is survived by his wife, Joann; sons, Andrew Wilson Dunloy and Scott Alexander Dunloy; father, Deane Allison Dunloy; brother Zaran Dunloy.

— John J. Cesar

## Eric "Gus" Jowers,

Retired Lt. Col. Eric "Gus" Jowers, of Ozark, Ala., died March 17 of an illness in Jacksonville, Fla.

Eric was born in Little Rock, Ark., on June 10, 1948. He graduated from Stuttgart High School in 1966 and from Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe in 1970.

He served in the Army as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam after graduating with ORWAC Class 71-34).

Eric also served as an artilleryman and public affairs officer.

He moved to Ozark after retiring from the Army and married the former Sheryl White in 1995.

Eric founded Omni Government Services, LLP, and served as the president until his death. He was active in local politics, was an avid golfer, loved spending time with his family and friends, and was active in his church.

He is survived by his wife, Sheryl Jowers; his mother, Ellouise Way; stepmother, Margaret Ann Jowers; daughters, Keri and Emily; and his son, Jason.

— John Plummer

## Robert M. Reuter

It is my sad duty to report the passing of a "Ruthless Rider" on Aug. 6.

My father-in-law, retired Col. Robert M. Reuter, commanded the 7/17th Cavalry Squadron in Vietnam from

September 1968 through March 1969.

Prior to that assignment, he served in the headquarters of the 17th Combat Aviation Group at Nha Trang.

He also was the former commander to the UTT in Vietnam in 1962 and 1963, which many of you will know was the first armed helicopter company in the U.S. Army.

He also served with ACTIV (Army Concept Team In Vietnam) in 1962. Bob truly was one of the fathers of Army aviation.

In the early 1960's, he and a buddy were majors at Fort Knox. They risked being court-martialed by secretly mounting weapons on the helicopters and conducting unsanctioned weapons tests.

I believe the Armor branch wanted the helicopter to remain something of a taxicab of the service.

After his tour with 7/17th, Bob went to the Pentagon and was involved in the design of a new attack helicopter, the Cheyenne.

As the Vietnam War was drawing down, the Cheyenne was never put into production, but the features incorporated into the design became standard in the current generation of warbirds.

Bob is the only soldier I ever met who had been awarded the Legion of Merit five times.

He had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for the past few years, so his passing was expected. During his illness, his short-term memory was sketchy, but his long-term memory was still good.

We sat around talking about his Korea War service as a mortar platoon leader in 1950-51 with the 7th Division and, of courses, about his service in aviation.

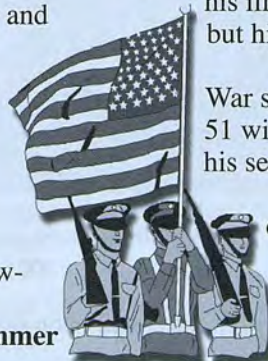
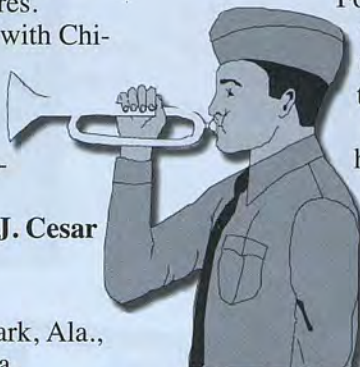
He was so proud to have served with all of you.

His Ruthless Rider's memorabilia was hanging on the wall in his room at the care center until his death earlier this morning.

He retired after 30 years in 1980 as a full colonel. After retirement, he served his church and community in numerous ways.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Lucy, and his two daughters, Becky and Kathy, two sons-in-law, and six grandchildren.

— Duncan & Becky Turner



## Membership Directory now available online

The *VHPA Membership Directory* is now available on a secure, password-protected website at [www.vhpaservices.com](http://www.vhpaservices.com)

To access this site, you have to be dues current. It contains all of the information that is contained in the

2007 Membership CD, plus it will be updated about once per week.

The paper and CD directories (whichever you have selected) should arrive by the end of October.

If you do not receive your directory by the end of October, please contact HQ on (800) 505-8472.

Gary Roush  
Directory editor  
[webmaster@vhpa.org](mailto:webmaster@vhpa.org)



# OUR OWN WORST ENEMY

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS  
ABOUT SECURITY TO PROTECT YOU,  
YOUR FAMILY, AND AMERICA

Randall J. Larsen, Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Ret.),  
Director, Institute for Homeland Security

## CWO Randy Larsen

A Bat 4/77 ARA  
101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division  
Oct 68 – Oct 69

Then



Now



*Our Own Worst Enemy* is the single best thing that has been written on homeland security ... this book asks the right questions and provides concrete recommendations that government officials, corporate executives and every citizen need to understand and apply.

- Admiral Steve Abbot, USN (Ret)  
Deputy Homeland Security Advisor to the President  
2001-2003

Larsen advocates a seldom used tool to fight terrorism—common sense.

- Bob Schieffer, CBS News

Larsen explains how to ask the right questions—from the Oval Office to the front office to your kitchen table.

- Bruce van Voorst  
former Senior Correspondent for National Security,  
*Time* magazine

... Larsen might be seen as profiting from fear of terrorist attacks. Refreshingly, he blows the whistle on fearmongers, while for the most part maintaining an understated tone. Larsen criticizes government officials at all levels—Republicans, Democrats and those without political party labels—for spending billions of dollars without a logical rationale... The author delivers on his promise for a commonsense guide.

- *Publishers Weekly*, July 23, 2007

**Available in bookstores and at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)**



# Reunions

## *Observations about Phoenix, San Antonio events*

**DANA YOUNG**  
**REUNION CHAIRMAN**

After a series of very successful reunions, Phoenix was a "bump in the road."

While the environment was spectacular, the draw was not. For the first time in five years, we had a reduction in attendance. We did not meet our minimums.

It would appear the concern over the Phoenix heat deterred many from joining us. Those who did attend were impressed with the facility, the staff and most of the events.

There were some memorable successes: The two seminars/forums, Veterans Benefits and Women's Seminar, for example, drew far more attendees than expected and we will do our best to include them again at the San Antonio Reunion.

My compliments to Rich Buzen for taking the lead for both of those events. The War Story Contest and the Historical Presentations continue to be member favorites.

We learned, again, that members would rather be able to communicate than compete with entertainment. We also picked up on the desire to have some time that was not programmed. The Phoenix agenda left no time for members to meet with other members. That will not happen again.

San Antonio will benefit from the comments we received in Phoenix. The Welcome Reception will be a place to enjoy the company of others and the Banquet will defer "entertainment" until after the dessert is served.

I gave the results of the informal survey in the last issue of *The Aviator*, so, I will not repeat them. You may have noticed in that last issue we advised you might be the recipient of a phone call from a professional polling company requesting your input on what you would prefer to see in future reunions.

Not all members will be polled but, according to the survey company, we will be able to obtain a 95 percent degree of accuracy based on the sample size. The results of the survey, along with the questions asked, will be published in a future issue and on the VHPA web site. Those results will be our guide for future reunions.

Based on the Phoenix informal survey, there have been some modifications to the San Antonio agenda. These changes should make for a more exciting and

enjoyable event.

First, the Fourth of July at Knibbe Ranch has been scrubbed. While we still believe it would have been a memorable event, it was a 30-minute bus ride from the hotel, once there you could not get back and the Riverwalk, with multiple entertainment opportunities, is just outside your door.

Second, we are adding the opportunity to partici-

pate in a Fourth of July parade in New Braunfels, Texas. The city of 50,000 has invited us to participate and Roy Knippa, the same person who coordinated our participation in the parade in Kansas City, will be providing details in a future issue of *The Aviator*.

I encourage you to consider joining us that morning in New Braunfels.

We will devote more to the San Antonio Reunion in the next issue of *The Aviator*, but for planning purposes:

- July 1 – Early Bird Gathering
- July 2 – Welcome Reception
- July 3 – Vince Vance
- July 4 – Parade in New Braunfels
- July 5 – Banquet

These are in addition to the seminars, mini-reunions and business meeting. Registration should be open, on line, the first week of January.

Start planning now. There is no penalty for early registration.



**VHPA member Clifford George (left) and son, Clifford George Jr., visit the Boeing Aircraft Co. Apache Line during the Phoenix Reunion.**



# Hall of Fame

## *Vietnam helicopter pilots inducted in ceremony*

Ten Vietnam helicopter pilots were inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame, during the 50th anniversary of the Army Aviation Association of America convention in Atlanta, Ga., in May.

Many of these pilots are members of VHPA. The Army Aviation Hall of Fame honors commissioned, warrant, and non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, as well as civilians from government and industry who have contributed in all areas of Army aviation.

Inducted were:

- Retired Col. James C. Adamson



Attending the Hall of Fame ceremony were (from left) Carl Sievers, Tony D'aguillo, Roger Fox, Bob Fladry, Jack Jordan, and Cliff McGee.

- Retired Maj. Gen. Ronald K. Andreson
- Retired Brig. Gen. John C. Bahnsen Jr.
- Retired Col. Norman M. Bissell
- Retired CW5 Robert R. Fladry
- Retired Maj. Gen. Joseph N. Jagers Jr.
- Retired CW5 Stephen T. Knowles II

- Retired Brig. Gen. Robert L. Stewart
- Retired Maj. Gen. James H. Patterson
- Retired Brig. Gen. Rodney D. Wolfe

I was honored to be among those chosen and was in awe of the accomplishments of my fellow inductees. You

*Continued on Page 15*

## VHHPA briefs

### Membership Directory CD

By the time you read this, you should have received your 2007 Membership Directory in paper form or CD form.

If you have not received your Directory, please contact HQ on (800) 505-8472.

The 2007 Directory CD cannot coexist on your computer with the 2006 directory CD, so the old program needs to be removed from your computer. Everything that is on the 2006 CD is repeated on the 2007 CD, so there is no reason to keep the old one.

We suggest you destroy the 2006 CD by shredding or breaking it in half before throwing it away.

There are two ways to remove the 2006 CD from your computer:

- Insert the old CD in the CD drive, then follow the prompts to remove the program.
- Without using the old CD, click on START, SETTINGS, CONTROL PANEL, ADD or REMOVE PROGRAMS, VHPA Member CD, REMOVE.

This new Directory CD is compatible with Vista. The old one is not.

New this year is the Membership Directory online at [www.vhpaservices.com](http://www.vhpaservices.com). It is updated once per week, so it is more up to date than the paper or CD directories. It is a secure, password-protected site only dues-current members can access.

The CD Directory and online Directory contain the complete history section of Lam Son 719 and most of the past newsletters and magazines. They also contain a complete copy of the paper Directory in PDF format. Please check the accuracy of your information online and provide HQ with any additions or corrections.

Enjoy this year's Directory.

Gary Roush  
Directory Editor  
[webmaster@vhpa.org](mailto:webmaster@vhpa.org)

### VHHPA History Book update

Turner Publishing sent out the latest VHPA History Book on Sept. 21.

If you ordered one of these books from Turner Publishing and did not receive it by Oct. 1, please contact Randy Baumgardner at:

- Turner Publishing Co., P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002
- (270) 443-0121, Ext.102
- [rbaumgardner@turnerpublishing.com](mailto:rbaumgardner@turnerpublishing.com)



# Scholarships

## *Three students receive help from VHPA, AAAA*

Roxanne Coonrod is recipient of this year's VHPA Scholarship.

She is the daughter of Michael E. Coonrod, who flew in Vietnam with the 162nd Assault Helicopter Company "Vultures" in the IV Corp area in 1969-70.

He has now retired after commercially flying helicopters out of Ketchikan, Alaska, for a number of years.

After being notified she was the scholarship winner, Roxanne wrote:

"All my life I have been one of those so-called "weird" people who actually enjoy their math class. In fact, math was always among my favorite subjects in school. When it came time to choosing a major to put on all my college applications, the choice was obvious.

"Now, this fall, I am attending the University of California at Davis with a major in applied mathematics. I am still not entirely sure what I want to do with a math major, but I have four years to figure that out.

"I grew up in one of the most rural parts of Northern California on my family's ranch. I attended Yreka High School, where I received several awards for my top grades. Among those awards were a lifetime membership to the California Scholarship Federation, Yreka Rotary Student of the Month, Yreka Rotary Top 100 Student (2002-07), numerous Student of the Month awards for mathematics, and I was the 2006 representative to the American Legion Auxiliary California Girl's State.

In addition to all of that, I graduated with in the top



**Roxanne Coonrod**

10 percent of my class.

My biggest hobby is music. Since the age of seven, I have been deeply involved in music. Currently I play the flute, tenor saxophone, and violin.

I spent four years in the Yreka High School Band, two years in the Yreka High School Jazz Band, two years in the College of the Siskiyou Community Band, and I was part of the orchestra pit for the College of the Siskiyou Spring Musical "Chess."

While I am attending U.C. Davis, I hope to be part of the university's Concert Band.

### **Joshua E.B. McDaniel**

The Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) has awarded Joshua E.B. McDaniel a scholarship for \$1,000.

Joshua was considered and selected for this scholarship for his academic achievement and as a grandson of the late CWO Dewey C. Little Jr.

Joshua graduated from Lampasas (Texas) High School in May 2007 in the top 5 percent of his class. He was a defensive starter on the varsity soccer team and participated in the LHS competitive one-act play.

Joshua is attending Texas Tech University as architecture major.

Dewey C. Little Jr., like his grandson, also was a graduate of Lampasas High School. Little had several overseas tours, including two in Vietnam, flying for the



**Joshua E.B. McDaniel**

*Continued on Page 16*

## Vietnam helicopter pilots inducted into Hall of Fame

*Continued from Page 14*

can go to the AAAA home page at [www.quad-a.org](http://www.quad-a.org) and select the Hall of Fame link and read their citations.

Our ranks in Vietnam were WO1, CW2, lieutenant and captain, a few were majors, and most of us had multiple tours. I was especially thankful for five of my fellow pilots from my second tour in Vietnam with D Troop, 229th, 1st Cavalry, who gave up there time and money to be with me during the ceremony.

All are VHPA members and five of us made it to the 2006 Washington reunion. They are pictured on Page 14,

from left to right:

CW2 Carl Sievers, Capt. Tony D'aguillo, Capt. Roger Fox, CW2 Bob Fladry, CW2 Jack Jordan, CW2 Cliff McGee. (Ranks from 1971-72)

The actual Hall of Fame is located in the Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker, Ala., where the portraits of the inductees and the citations recording their achievements are retained for posterity.

CW5 Bob Fladry (R)  
B Company, 229th AHB, 1st Cav 1969  
D Troop, 229th AHB, 1st Cav 1971-72



# First memorial bricks laid

Since its inception, The National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells, Texas, has offered the sale of engraved memorial bricks as a fundraising project.

To date, almost 400 bricks have been purchased and, with the opening of the Meditation Garden on June 2, the museum finally has a place for these to be displayed.

Individuals and groups have purchased bricks, and they can now see the finished product when they visit the garden.



The largest purchase to date was a group of 54 bricks by members of the 116th Aviation Company, to honor comrades who lost their lives while serving with the unit in Vietnam.

The bricks are made for the museum by Acme Brick in Denton, Texas, and volunteers do all the installation work. The laying of the first bricks was done on Aug. 13, near the start of one of the labyrinth trails.

Areas are set aside in the garden, along the trails so

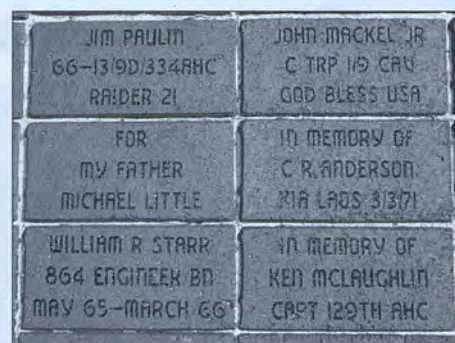
that as additional bricks are purchased, they can be engraved and installed in manageable sized groups.

The original concept was to use these bricks as paving for walks

in the gardens, but the board of directors that that because of their memorial nature, they should be placed in areas along the walkways so they would not be subjected to continual foot traffic.

The memorial brick project will be an ongoing museum activity and, as the areas set aside in the Meditation Garden are filled, bricks will begin to be placed in other gardens as well.

Now that the Meditation Garden is complete, the next



*Continued on Page 16*

## Scholarships

*Continued from Page 14*

57th Transportation Company and 120th Aviation Company.

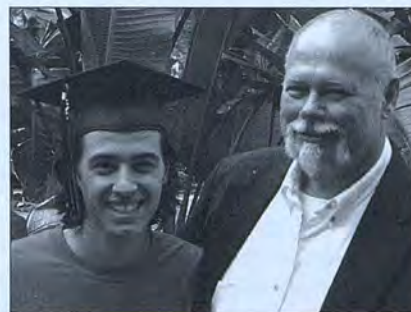
At the time of his death in a mid-air collision at Fort Benning, Little was training to return to Vietnam as part of the 11th Air Assault, which later became the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

### Sean McDaniel

The first VHPA Scholarship in Honor of the 361st ACE/AWC "Pink Panthers" has been awarded to Sean McDaniel, son of Will McDaniel of Atlanta, Ga.

Sean is a junior at the University of Florida, majoring in English with a concentration in film and media studies.

He currently is president of the Florida Undergraduate Film Society and will spend this spring semester studying



**Sean McDaniel and father.**

at Temple University in Tokyo, Japan.

His father was a member of flight school Class 67-11. He deployed and served in Vietnam with the 92nd Assault Helicopter Company in 1967 before transferring to A Company, 4th Combat Aviation Battalion, and ended his tour with C/7/17 in 1968.

Will is a member of VHPA and owns Sand Lyon Studios in Atlanta and has a master of fine arts degree in sculpture.

## Interested in advertising in *The VHPA Aviator*?

The cost for a black-and-white ad is only \$125 for a quarter-page ad, \$250 for a half-page ad, and \$500 for a full-page ad

Contact Mike Sheuerman at [membership@vhpa.org](mailto:membership@vhpa.org) for details



# Mission

## *Plan to restore helicopter brings back memories*

WALT LEDBETTER

This story started a couple of years ago when I got a phone call telling me that an aircraft that I had flown in Vietnam on Jan. 31, 1970, had crashed in Iraq and was being brought back to the United States to be restored as it was on that day in Vietnam.

The crew chief on that flight — Mike Clausen, the only enlisted Marine flight crewmember to receive the Medal of Honor — had just recently passed away.

A few months later I got a call from a man named Ed West. He told me he had been a young lance corporal on that day.

He said he was lying in a minefield with both of his legs blown off, and if we had not landed and picked him up when we did, he would be dead.

After talking for a while, I told him about the aircraft and that it was being restored at the aviation museum in Charlotte, N.C. We determined to meet there.

### **Get-together planned**

At our first meeting, we decided to try and find the others who were involved in the action on that day and try to bring them together when the aircraft was ready to be dedicated.

As best as we can determine, 15 were wounded and 4

killed in Alpha Company, 1st Marine Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, that day.

I have written a summary of that day and a little information on what led to the action.

### **Every day is Monday**

Every day in Vietnam seemed like a Monday, because the weekend good times were over and you had to get up and go off to work.

In my job, there were always people eagerly waiting for me. They waited hidden, heavily armed, and ready to kill. Like every other day of that month, I got up at about 4 in the morning, dressed, tried to hold down my breakfast and act calm in front of the others.

I was the commanding officer of HMM-263, a Marine assault helicopter squadron. It was January 1970. For that month and the next, my squadron had been assigned a mission code named "Kingfisher."

We worked with the 1st Marine Regiment as an airborne roving assault force against NVA forces. The air portion of the force consisted of a lead Huey, my three assault CH-46s, four Cobra gunships, and an OV-10 observation aircraft.

The ground element was Alpha Company, 1st battalion, 1st. Marine Regiment.

*Continued on Page 18*

## Bricks laid at Vietnam War museum



### **Continued from Page 16**

project is the development of the Vietnam Memorial Garden, which will contain a one-half scale replica of the Moving Wall, brought to Mineral Wells in July 1998 by the museum.

In addition, the Vietnam Garden will include flags representing all the branches of service, and places to rest and contemplate along the path fronting the wall.

For those wishing to visit the site, the Meditation Garden is located on the museum property at 12685 Mineral Wells Highway (U.S. Highway 180), at the Parker County, Palo Pinto County line.

For more information regarding the museum or the development projects, contact the museum at P.O. Box 146, Mineral Wells, Texas 76068-0146, or online at [www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org](http://www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org)

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# Mission

## *Plan to restore helicopter brings back memories*

**Continued from Page 17**

Nearly every day we would fly out before dawn to pick up the ground assault force. The Huey would be sent to scout out a designated area to look for anything that was out of place or people who should not be there.

The Huey normally flew at about 1,500 feet to appear to be on a routine administrative flight. My flight would follow 2 or 3 miles behind, carrying a reinforced platoon.

We flew low, on the deck, to limit the enemy's observation.

### **Huey would call with sighting**

When something unusual was spotted, the Huey would call on the radio and tell me what had been sighted. Then we would speed up toward him.

He then would mark the objective area with a smoke grenade and we would land on top of whatever was there.

It was the last day of January, a Sunday, and this was the 24th or 25th Kingfisher mission I had led that month.

All of these flights had come under heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire.

To show the ferocity of these assaults, on an earlier mission, on the way into the zone, I came under heavy fire and the aircraft's hydraulic boost system was damaged.

Upon landing next to a hut, 6 NVA soldiers came, firing AK-47s and throwing grenades. I took 57 hits in the cockpit before the doorgunner took them out with his machine gun.

I isolated the remaining hydraulic fluid into the control system and air taxied back to Marble Mountain to get another aircraft.

My copilot, a lieutenant colonel, from the wing staff told me he was sorry he couldn't go back with me because he had very important work at the wing headquarters he had just remembered.

I had to take a lieutenant walking down the flight line as a surprise copilot to go back and continue the mission.

### **I was flying Clausen's helicopter**

What else could happen? I was flying Pfc. Mike Clausen's aircraft that day. He had come to me a month before and asked if he could name his airplane and paint the name on the side of the helicopter.

I told him OK, as long as he didn't paint a big target on the side of the aircraft.

He named it after his favorite rock band, Blood, Sweat and Tears.

Mike was a great combat Marine, but he could not stay out of trouble on the ground. He was still a private first class after nearly three years in Vietnam.

The gunners, Sgt. Maj. Landy and Cpl. Marinkavic, were experienced combat Marines. The copilot, First Lt. Parker, was ready to become an aircraft commander and, in all modesty, I was the best CH-46 pilot in the world.

My two wingmen were good pilots, and the gunship pilots were eager for a chance at the enemy. It was just another day at the office.

As always, the Huey found something for us to land on and the fight was on.

We inserted the first platoon and went back to pick up a second platoon to act as a blocking force. We inserted a third platoon because of heavy action.

All of the landings were made into heavy fire.

After the insertion of the third platoon, I was called for an emergency medevac. I had my wingman orbit while I picked up a wounded Marine in a hot zone and carried him to the hospital.

Upon my return, I was called for a second emergency medevac. This time, I picked up five Marines in the middle of a fight who apparently had been wounded by a booby trap and automatic weapons fire.

The day got worse as it went on.

### **Part of platoon walks in minefield**

Upon my return from taking the wounded Marines to the hospital, I was informed part of the third platoon, in pursuit of the enemy, had inadvertently walked into a minefield. A number were badly wounded the rest could not move. To move was to die.

To compound the problem, they were under fire. There was really no choice. I had to land and get them out of the minefield.

I told the crew what we were going to do and what might happen. I told them to take off their flak vests and stand on them. In case we landed on a mine that would render some protection from shrapnel coming up through the floor.

I also told them to stay in the helicopter because I didn't want them to get blown up and become part of the problem.

The crew chief, Mike Clausen, directed me into the minefield to a landing close to a number of wounded Marines. He directed me to put the main landing gear in a crater caused by the explosion of a mine.

I was a little concerned because that meant the nose gear right under my feet was going to hit a mine or just dirt. You pay your money and take your chances. I won. There was no explosion. Thank God for dirt.

I lowered the ramp and Clausen went to the back of the aircraft and walked into the minefield to pick up

**Continued on Page 19**



# Mission

## *Plan to restore helicopter brings back memories*

**Continued from Page 18**

wounded. He did it knowing full well he could die at any step.

After we picked up the wounded there, we had to move forward about 10 yards because we had landed over one of the dead.

We played the same game of Russian roulette with the nose gear, and once again out went Clausen to pick up the body.

### **Chopper lands at another group**

The last group of Marines was about 50 yards away, so we air taxied to them and landed. Clausen was all over the minefield.

Altogether, he got out of the airplane 6 times and picked up wounded and dead. On his last trip out, a mine detonated and knocked him down, but he got up and continued to carry a wounded man into the aircraft.

The explosion damaged our rotor system and put a few holes in the fuselage, but the aircraft was still flyable.

When we had gotten all of the Marines loaded in the aircraft, I took them to the medevac hospital. There were 11 wounded, 4 dead and 4 unharmed.

The platoon commander was wounded, but when we got to the medevac hospital, he refused treatment. We took him and the 4 Marines who got out of the minefield unhurt back to the action.

I cannot imagine the courage it took to go back.

The day was not over until the fight was finished. We made three more landings to pick up the platoons we had inserted that morning, and returned what was left of them

to their base.

Then our day at the office was over. Six hours of flying and a number of horrifying moments.

February was better.

I only led 7 or 8 more Kingfisher missions, and then my time as the squadron commander was over. I was transferred to the wing headquarters in Da Nang to be the helicopter operations officer.

In my 6 months with the squadron, I flew more than 400 missions for a total of 515 missions. I was shot down three times and flew home numerous badly damaged aircraft.

That kind of work plays games with your mind. In early December, I had gone on R&R to Hawaii. I went to say goodbye to my wife and children, because I knew I could not survive the next 2 months. You cannot imagine how hard it was to get on that aircraft and go back to Vietnam.

### **Other employees unbelievable**

It was a bad office to work in, but the other employees were unbelievable. That was 36 years ago and I still miss them.

Would I do it again? Certainly. We all fought for each other.

Our symbol was a little gopher with its tail twirling like a rotor, painted on the aircraft, and our motto was: "Gopher Broke." Words to live by.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Crew Chief Mike Clausen was awarded the Medal of Honor for walking through the minefield to rescue the wounded Marines.**

## Information about tours valuable

I get hundreds of e-mails each week from Vietnam veterans, their families and friends. Many of these emails have valuable information in them that we record in databases to preserve our history.

Frequently one of them will have new information that we do not have. While collecting information, we frequently get some wonderful personal histories.

A good example of this is the following email I received from Barry Grimm after asking him to clarify a unit he was in. This illustrates what all of us should do before we forget.

Gary Roush  
Database chairman  
[webmaster@vhpa.org](mailto:webmaster@vhpa.org)

I left the 128th Assault Helicopter Company about the

end of July 1968 and went over to fly for II FFV and flew brass around.

Generals Abrams and Westmorland among the more well known. That set a trend, so back in the States I ended up flying for the White House and Pentagon for three years with DUSSA out of Davidson Army Airfield.

We did not fly the president, but all the others the Presidential Helicopter Unit did not handle. Flying generals and diplomats around and practicing DEFCOM took up 4 days a week and was off the other 3.

Yes, I have even been in the Oval Office.

I was one of the last army pilots qualified in the CH-34 (matter of fact, I qualified in one of President Eisenhower's CH-34s which is now on display at Fort Eustis

**Continued on Page 19**



# Warrant officer took direct

*Continued from Page 19*

Museum). Would you believe it had a computer system?

It was at Davidson that I also became one of the few Army helicopter pilots who are officially "Aircraft Carrier Qualified."

Like many CWOs, I was offered direct promotion to first lieutenant, took it, went to Transportation Officers School in Fort Eustis, and then sent to Nam again to take over the 650th.

## Detachment attached to 101st

The 650th Transportation Detachment was attached to A/377 ART 101 ABN at Camp Eagle (up by Hue).

This unit was like the 605th (Witch Doctor) was with the 128th, but over the years and with the changes for withdrawal, the scope of the units changed a lot.

I had a motor pool, UH-1Hs, OH-6s, 84 men, myself as CO, an XO, first sarge, several platoon officers, E-5s, hangar, repair shop, etc., etc. We would give a list each night to the A/377 on what was available to them for the next day.

So by 1971 up north units like the 650th operated as a company with all equipment, vehicles and aircraft assigned to the 650th instead of supported unit.

Weird setup, but even stranger was I had a motor pool

that also contained my Jeep, but regulations did not permit me to drive it myself. I had to have an enlisted man as the assigned driver.

## Copilot not needed to fly

But I could take off solo with any of my aircraft anytime I wanted. OK, I had to take a crew along, but no copilot needed.

One time I took off on a "parts run" and ended up going round trip from Hue to Saigon and back. Was gone for better part of a week and was never even questioned on it.

Before my tour ended they discovered an error had been made in my paperwork from Fort Eustis and I had to sign a time extension . . . I said "Like Hell," and within three days I was back in U.S.A. and a civilian!

Like many Vietnam Vets, I had a number of jobs and ended up working for Uncle Sam. I worked my way up through the postal system and I retired last year as postmaster of Brookville, Pa.

Funny part is, I was born in that town because Clarion, where I grew up, did not have a hospital so I was only in Brookville the first 3 days of my life.

Barry Grimm

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# Miracle?

## *Clouds part, then close, over Pleiku Air Force Base*

**BERNARDO S. PAEZ**

One afternoon during the end of the monsoon season, six "Blackjack" slicks from A Company, 4th Aviation Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, were assembled at an airstrip west of the Oasis Firebase.

I want to say it was the Duc Co airstrip, but I can't remember. We were to insert a platoon-size force some place in the mountains southwest of Kontum.

We sat to the side of the airstrip for hours waiting for the orders to go. We had six grunts sitting and waiting near and in our aircraft.

We started getting apprehensive because it started getting late and we were losing the light.

### **Slicks wait for gun cover**

We must have been waiting for gunship cover, because we finally got the order to crank up and take off without gunships.

The flight finally reached a large valley as it started getting dark. The flight leader directed us into a single-file formation as we circled round and round above the large valley. Our aircraft was the third in line.

Before we realized it, the clouds had built up all around us and we were trapped in the valley.

I remember someone breaking radio silence to ask the flight leader for a mission abort.

We waited for what seemed a long time before we got the word to abort the mission and that it was up to every man to find his way back to Camp Enari.

By this time it had gotten dark, but luckily there was close to a full moon lighting up the clouds and night sky.

We had climbed as far as we could while circling inside the valley. I remember the flight leader disappearing into the clouds, followed by the second in line about five seconds later.

### **Crew prepares to go on instruments**

We closed the helicopter's doors and prepared to go on instruments.

I took a southeasterly heading and went into the clouds on instruments at a high rate of climb. I was praying we wouldn't run into a mountain or into another helicopter.

We finally broke out of the clouds at about 9,000 feet. It was a beautiful sight, from the sky around the moon, to blue, deep blue, purple, then black. A night sky lit up by the moon with a sea of white clouds below us.

We flew around for a while trying to find where we were. We could see nothing but clouds below us. There were no other aircraft in sight. (Later I learned the rest of

the flight had gone under the cloud cover).

We finally contacted Pleiku Air Force Base and asked if they could pick us up on their radar. Pleiku asked us to squawk our transponder. We did and they placed us 19 miles south. They gave us a heading to Pleiku.

### **ADF begins turning in circles**

We followed the ADF until the needle started turning in circles and we knew we were over the airbase.

We were running low on fuel so we decided to ask for a ground-controlled approach through the clouds.

It was going to be pretty hairy because we were way out of practice and the clouds were almost to the ground.

I was scared and anxious. I knew we had to do something soon before we ran out of fuel.

All of a sudden, the clouds parted in a circle below us. We could see the runway and the lights of Pleiku Air Force Base right below us.

We didn't even ask for permission to land. We hurriedly circled in for a landing through the parted clouds. We were incredibly relieved to finally reach the ground.

We asked the control tower to contact our airfield control and tell them where we were. We parked and tied down the aircraft.

### **Clouds close after landing**

We looked up and the clouds had closed again. I remember being in confused, but grateful wonder. Perhaps I had just witnessed a miracle.

The Air Force sent over a Jeep for the pilots and a 2.5-ton truck for the enlisted men.

I told everybody to meet at the aircraft next morning at 7 a.m.

We were taken to the officers club where we had a couple of beers and an excellent steak dinner. The enlisted men were taken to the enlisted club.

We slept in real beds with thick mattresses in the BOQ. That was a delight in itself, as I was used to sleeping in a narrow cot with a leaky air mattress inside a sleeping bag.

The next morning we took a hot shower, ate a great breakfast, and met the crew and grunts at the aircraft.

### **Enlisted men had great night**

You could see that the enlisted men had a great night also, especially the grunts.

They had gone from spending the night in the jungle to having a great hot meal, with hot showers, and sleeping in nice beds.

We then flew them, and us, back to the division base camp and the war.



# Exercises

## *Constantly on alert can grate on soldier's nerves*

JACK SALM

Any of you who were in combat arms prior to going to flight school have been on field exercises.

After two tours in STRAC units, it had become a way of life. Constantly on alert, never knowing when it was a real or just a dry run can really grate on the nerves.

I was in the 82nd Airborne Division and we would be alerted at 2 or 3 a.m., go down to the marshaling area; sometimes there would be planes, sometimes not.

### **Planes could mean one of two things**

I remember one time we went down to the marshaling area and there were planes. This could mean one of two things: We would take off and jump on one of the drop zones at Fort Bragg — Sicily, Salerno, Normandy or Holland — or we might actually go somewhere.

This turned out to be Operation FLASHBURN, an atomic exercise. We took off and dropped on Sicily.

This was to be a weeklong operation in an atomic environment. Everything had to be dug in: Command posts, mess tents, everyone had to have a covered foxhole.

As a platoon leader, I had constructed a two-man foxhole with overhead cover. It was really cold. In all my years in the Army, Fort Bragg was the coldest I've ever been and this includes Germany and Alaska.

It was about 3 a.m. and cold as a witches tit. I was sacked out in my sleeping bag. I had dug a little shelf in the side of the foxhole for a C-ration can of sand and gasoline for light and heat. It had gone out and, as I tried to pour more gas in the C-ration can, it blew up.

It blew the top off of the foxhole, singed my eyebrows and hair, and made one hell of an explosion. I was covered with dirt and soot, my command post was a shambles, and it was still really COLD!

This whole exercise was a shambles. All we did was sit in holes in the ground for a week, didn't move. It really tested the mobility of the 82nd.

### **SNOWBIRD promised to be cold**

Exercise SNOWBIRD was the exercise to end all exercises.

It was to take place in Alaska and was to test the response of the 101st Airborne Division, which was to move from Fort Campbell to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, in C-119s in full combat gear.

Things started going wrong from the start. Aircraft started dropping en route for maintenance and when the 101st finally got to Elmendorf, the exercise was behind schedule.

A brilliant tactician determined the exercise would

have to be scaled down. It was originally scheduled for three phases — Galena, Naknek and Talkeetna for testing in different environments.

It was determined that the C-119s could not go on all three phases and return to Fort Campbell without major engine overhaul. So, only the phase in Talkeetna would be conducted — an exercise in deep snow.

I jumped with a 60-pound rucksack, bear paw snowshoes, parachute and reserve, and must have weighed 275 pounds.

When I landed, I disappeared in 6-plus feet of snow. By the time I got off the drop zone, I was sweating profusely. Every step I would take I would crash through the snow. The weight of my pack and other equipment made the bear paws minimally effective.

I thought I was going to freeze to death. Shades of FLASHBURN!

I have never liked cold weather, so why was I in Alaska? Not by choice, I can assure you.

Anyway, SNOWBIRD was a big bust. I can't imagine what it cost and what did it determine? These are just two examples of pie-in-the-sky exercises.

★★★★★

The bulk of the Army's helicopter effort in RVN was shouldered by the UH-1 "Huey."

Hook and snake drivers may dispute this, but the UH-1 was the backbone of the inventory.

True, there also were other rotary-wing aircraft during the 14 years we had assets in country, the initial UH-21, H-19, H-34 and the Skycrane.

Air America had a virtual panoply of aircraft, both fixed- and rotary-wing. The Army also had a fixed-wing inventory. It was not as extensive as the rotary-wing, but O-1s, Mohawks, Beavers, and U-8s also flew in Nam.

While in RVN in 1966-67 I was assigned to two units — the 48th Assault Helicopter Company "Bluestars" and the IFFV Flight Detachment.

The first half of my tour was as the Joker commander — 8 UH-1 gunships known as the "Jokers" with a variety of armament, everything we could think of to hang on the aircraft was tried: Rockets, in varying configurations, grenades, door guns, etc.

We supported everyone in the combat operations zone.

In February 1967, after an aircraft accident, I was transferred to the IFFV Flight Detachment in Nha Trang. There, I was the operations officer and scheduled all pilots to missions.

*Continued on Page 23*



# Exercises

## *Constantly on alert can grate on soldier's nerves*

The detachment flew all of the fixed-wing VIP flight support for I Corps. We flew all of the general grade officers in the area — First Cav, 4th Infantry Division, 101st Airborne, ARVN, ROK and the Corps staff.

To say the transition from the UH-1 to the U-8 was a stretch was putting it mildly. From on the deck flying to 5,000-plus feet.

One would think that the U-8 wouldn't draw much fire, but Charlie was smart. He knew there was someone important on board.

Every time I flew into Dak To, they mortared the airfield. Same deal in and out of Dong Ha.

### **Usually it was pleasant flying 'stars'**

Most of the time it was a pleasure and an honor to fly the "stars." The two 3 stars, Lt. Gens. Larson and Rossen, I Corps commanders, always thanked us for flying them.

Generally, the "hangers-on" or "strap hangers" — the rest of the entourage — were more of a problem than the generals.

One general, an aviator, always wanted to fly and the flight detachment pilot was just along for the ride. On one mission I assigned one of our pilots to fly this general. He was not aware of the general's foible.

After the mission when he got back, he said, "He flew the whole time."

Not a surprise.

"When we took off from Nha Trang, he took off with NO FLAPS, scared the hell out of me."

For you fling-wing jocks you DO NOT take off without flaps, especially with a full load. However, this was the exception, most flights went fairly smoothly.

★★★★★

Way back in the 1950s I found myself in Korea on my first overseas tour.

It was 1958, the war was over, but Korea was still in shambles. Kimpo — the main airfield for Seoul — was operational, but that's about all that can be said for it. The terminal was destroyed and it was a very marginal operation.

I was processed in at the replacement depot, was trucked up the MSR to A-3 in Uijongbu, and assigned to the 3rd Light Aviation Section in support of I Corps at Camp Red Cloud.

A-3 had two runways, both very short. Our aircraft were H-13s, L-19s and L-20s. A 15-foot fence, barbed and razor wire, and searchlights surrounded our compound. The "Ville" came right up to the fence.

The locals were masters of thievery. They were called

"slicky boys" and they could steal anything, even if it was nailed down.

Case in point: We had a large generator used to power the camp. One night they backed a truck up to the fence, spliced a line to the main power line, lifted the generator onto the truck and took off with it.

By the time we found out what had happened, they were long gone.

Shortly after I arrived, the 3rd Light Aviation Section had a graduation party for six Turks who had been transitioned into the L-19. Don't ever try to out drink or even keep up with a Turk. They are great drinkers.

They are also great fighters. You definitely want them on your side.

Their compound was just up the road from ours and all they had around the perimeter was a single strand of barbed wire. When I went up to their place for the first time, a Korean was hanging by his ears at their front gate.

That told me why they only needed minimal security — just enough to let people know to keep out — or enter at their peril.

### **Daily mail mission a milk run**

Our missions were to support I Corps, the ROK divisions, 1st Cavalry, 7th Division and Corps Artillery. We had a daily mail run that went from A-3 to A-9 (1st Cav), a ROK division, Corps Artillery (at A-23), 7th Division (at A-7) another ROK division and back. What could probably be considered a milk run.

Some of our missions along the DMZ were really hairy.

Getting in and out of the VIP OP on the Imjin was the worst. It was situated on a ridgeline with 1,000-foot drop-offs on either side, was only wide enough for an H-13 and all the VIPs wanted to go up there to look at the North Koreans looking back at them.

After I had been in country less than a week, I transitioned into the L-20 (Beaver). The first time I tried to land it I felt like I was landing on an aircraft carrier. Not too bad empty, but loaded was another ballgame.

Too many staff officers felt that as long as it could fit into the aircraft, it was good to go. Max gross load was a foreign language. I don't know how many times we had blatant confrontations on things that could or could not be taken.

The Beaver is probably the sturdiest aircraft around. They are still used in great numbers by "bush pilots" in Canada and Alaska. It is a great aircraft, slow as hell, but it will do the job for you as long as you treat it right.

Korea, almost 50 years ago. Seems like another life.

— Jack Salm



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