



# THE VHPA AVIATOR

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

November/December 2007 Vol. 25, No. 6



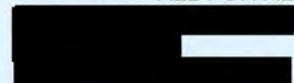
Kevin Whitehead photo

A restored Bandit Huey gunship with 118th Assault Helicopter Company markings and a medevac Huey fly in formation in preparation for Rolling Thunder's Run to the Wall in May. The Hueys are owned and operated by Wings and Rotors Air Museum in Murrieta, Calif. Flying in the Bandit Huey are pilot Pat Rodgers, copilot Dave Barron, crew chief Steve Roberts and doorgunner Frank Tresenrider. Flying in the medevac Huey are pilot Larry Clark, VHPA founder; copilot Mike McCartney; crew chief Shayne Meder, marketing director of Wings and Rotors Air Museum; and doorgunner Ray Reinders. The photo was taken by Kevin Whitehead of [Jetwashimages.com](http://Jetwashimages.com)

## In this issue:

- 2008 Reunion events
- Reunion schedule
- Results of membership survey
- Chapter activities

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



# EC working on '08 Reunion

Greetings. Now that we are in the holiday's season, let me first say I hope all of you had a great Thanksgiving and a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Your Executive Council has been working on bringing you the best reunion ever in wonderful San Antonio. We hope to have the registration system up and running in mid-January.

I hope you all think about coming and seeing old

friends and the next best friend you will meet. Because of the various activities that are available in the downtown area, you will not see all the tour and events we offered last year when we were on the

outskirts of Phoenix and were confined to the area.

Those die-hard golfers didn't mind though, I think we were the exclusive users of the two golf courses on the property.

Some of you may have heard we lost money, a lot of money, at the 2007 Reunion. Yes, we did. We had to pay the Marriott Hotel \$84,141 for rooms we didn't occupy because attendance was so poor.

When the VHPA entered into the contract with Marriott there was a room count guarantee. We had a chance to lower the number, but had a final number we would be held responsible for and that is what caused the large hotel bill.

When registration opened up we had a response that teased us to believe we might make 1,400 or 1,500 total attendees. Then, as time went on, we had more than \$41,000 in cancellations.

Since 2002 the VHPA has had more than 2,100 people attend the reunions and though we, the EC, knew we would have a drop-off, we didn't expect that the membership would not come in the way it happened. We only had about 1,132 total people.

We also lost \$14,563 in activities revenue. We already had committed to certain events that we had to guarantee and because of the very low attendance we could not recoup. Events like the Welcome Reception, the pool party, Lee Greenwood Concert all came up short. That

hurt, but the other side of the coin is, because of excellent stewardship in the past, your association can handle the loss and still provide you with all the services you have come to expect and the association is financially strong and vibrant.

The survey, which I discuss below, shows you don't want to go to Phoenix and I think you can be assured that it will not be on the schedule again. Sorry, Larry.

Our membership continues to grow and Mike Law, as membership chairman, and his gang are working to keep us growing. He has some good ideas he is working on to keep it climbing.

An independent polling company completed the How Are We Doing survey for the VHPA. To those of you who participated, the Executive Council thanks you. We plan to publish the executive summary on the website in the future so it will be available to all.

I would like to quote one sentence in the report: "The VHPA has an extremely high positive rating with its membership, with 95 percent indicating a very or somewhat positive opinion of the organization."

This tells us the association is doing what it's supposed to do.

You will read other articles in this copy of *The Aviator* about the 2008 Reunion and I hope you decide to come to San Antonio in July.

Vince Vance and his troupe, who were at the Dallas Reunion four years ago, will put on a great show for us on the Thursday night of the San Antonio Reunion. We will all be on our own on Friday night to enjoy the beautiful Riverwalk and a fireworks display from the top of the Tower of the Americas near the hotel.

Of course, we will have golf Thursday morning at beautiful Canyon Springs.

We will have a change in the way we open our final banquet. After the missing man ceremony, we will acknowledge all who have left us since Vietnam with a toast and a moment of silence for them.

— Mike Whitten, President

## VHPA statistics

- Between Sept. 1 and Nov. 27, the VHPA added 47 new members.
- During this same period, members donated \$1,215 toward the VHPA Scholarship Fund.

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

THE VHPA AVIATOR (ISSN 1930-5737) (USPS 001-497) is published six times yearly — February, April, June, August, October and December. Annual dues are \$36 or Life membership for \$540. Yearly subscription for nonmembers is \$36. Published by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 105, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698. Periodicals Publications postage paid at Citrus Heights, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE VHPA AVIATOR, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 105, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698.

## VHPA OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND STAFF 2007-08

PRESIDENT	Mike Whitten
VICE PRESIDENT	John "Jack" Salm
PAST PRESIDENT	Angelo Spelios
MEMBERS AT LARGE	
Senior Member	Gary Roush
Midterm Member	Woody McFarlin
Junior Member	Mike Law
SECRETARY/TREASURER	Rich Buzen
FOUNDER	Larry Clark

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

National Reunion Committee	Dana Young
Membership	Mike Law
Records/database	Gary Roush
Public relations/publications	Ken Fritz
Directory	Gary Roush, Editor
The VHPA Aviator	Jack Swickard, Editor
Chapter Liaison	John "Jack" Salm
Vendor Coordinator	Rich Buzen
Historical	Mike Sloniker
Technology steering	Charles Holley
Strategic planning	Robert Smith

### VHPA SUPPORT

Legal advisor	Wally Magathan
Investment advisor	Bob Potvin
VHPA Headquarters	(800) 505-VHPA

### ELECTRONIC MAIL

VHPA Headquarters	HQ@vhpa.org
President	president@vhpa.org
Historical chairman	sloniker@vhpa.org
Aviator editor	editor@vhpa.org
Directory editor	roush@vhpa.org
Records/Database chairman	roush@vhpa.org
Membership chairman	membership@vhpa.org
Secretary/treasurer	[REDACTED]
Reunion chairman	NationalReunion@vhpa.org
Chapter liaison	[REDACTED]
Webmaster	webmaster@vhpa.org
Reunion webmaster	webmaster@vhpareunion.org
VHPA website	www.vhpa.org
VHPA reunion website	www.vhpareunion.org
VHPA EC Forum	www.vhpa.info

## Aviator privacy statement

The VHPA Aviator contains member privacy information the VHPA considers proprietary and confidential.

This information, including but not limited to the VHPA Chapter list, shall not be used for commercial solicitation purposes or for any correspondence related thereto without prior written authorization from the VHPA president.

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

## Operations coordinator collecting nicknames

This is John Brennan, active member of the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association and the 114th Aviation Company Association.

I'm collecting nicknames ("Flying Coffin," "Iron Butterfly") that in-country Army helicopter crews painted on their aircraft during their Vietnam tours, 1961-73.

A future book by an aviation publisher is in the making. I have cataloged over 1,200 names to date. I expect that number to exceed 2,000 when complete.

I would very much like to include as many personalized copter names as possible.

Photos of "names" are fine, but are not necessary to be included in the database section of the book. "Names" alone will do.

The second part of this book project is the photo collection of helicopter "nose art" that includes "names," artwork, graffiti, everything and anything that was painted officially and unofficially on in-country Army copters, 1961-73.

Send "nickname" info and/or scanned "nose art" pictures to [REDACTED]

## LETTERS

John Brennan  
Flight Operations Coordinator  
114th Assault Helicopter Company  
Vinh Long Army Airfield  
Mekong Delta, 1970-71

\*\*\*\*\*

The long arm of a TAC...

When you attend the reunion in San Antonio next year, and if you happen to be in the bar at the right time, you and everyone else present will receive a beer, compliments of a couple of Red Hats.

This last May, Carl Kimmich, 1st WOC class of 71-1, hosted a group of red hats for a Yankee baseball game. After the night game, and on the way back to Carl's home with a SUV full of sleepy, old, helicopter pilots, Carl experienced a blowout.

He managed to safely pull off the freeway, but from here on things went downhill, all under the watchful eye of one of the old red hats. Not just any red hat mind you, but Carl's own TAC officer while at 1st WOC, "Mister" Jones (Robert "Russ" Jones).

It seems Carl, now a senior captain with Delta, did not seem to readily know where his jack was or how to use it, and he had no safety equipment, no flashlight, no tarp, no gloves, and well, you get the picture.

In Phoenix, Carl was presented with a Red Hat roadside Emergency Kit, which had been provided by "Mister" Jones. Accompanying the Kit were many demerits for lack of preparedness, safety, attention to detail, and so on.

It was suggested that Carl might be able to work off

the demerits next year in San Antonio by buying a round of beer for any and all former helicopter pilots who happen to be at the bar.

Everyone promptly agreed until Ross Eliason, who Russ Jones has always suspected of being one of the candidates who carried his motorcycle up to his third floor office, immediately pointed out it was, after all, Russ Jones who graduated Carl Kimmich and, therefore, holds some responsibility in the matter.

Tom Andrews and Walt Henderson, 1st WOC, 68-1, and classmates of Russ Jones, immediately abandoned their loyalties and promptly seconded the motion. So we look forward to seeing you at the bar in San Antonio.

Pat Ewing

\*\*\*\*\*

I am looking for help from the members living in Illinois who have received the DFC medal. The State of Illinois has automotive military veterans plates available for those awarded the Bronze Star and the Silver Star among others, but they passed over the DFC.

If enough people request the issuance of the plate, they will make the plate available. When I first asked about this I was told it would take 75 requests. I only need 74 more requests and we're there.

This would be for the WWII, Korea, Gulf pilots, too. Here is the starting point for contacting the Secretary of State:

[www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/vehicles/license\\_plate\\_guide/specialty\\_plates/military/home.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/vehicles/license_plate_guide/specialty_plates/military/home.html)

David Grubb

Redskin 32  
D/158 AVN BN, 101ABN

\*\*\*\*\*

My name is Glen McEntire, I was one of Dave Timm's roommates from September 1967 until April 1968.

I was originally assigned to the 129th Assault Helicopter Company on May 7, 1967.

The 192nd Assault Helicopter Company was assigned to the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion when it came into country. The 10th CAB then took some of the experienced aircraft commanders from other companies and shipped them to the 192nd; the battalion then took the same number of pilots from the 192nd and sent them back to the other companies. That way the 192nd started off with seasoned aircraft commanders, and that is how I wound up as one of Dave's roommates.

On one occasion, Dave and I were taking off from Phu Hiep. I had already tuned the ADF to the Armed Forces Vietnam Radio Station. The Beatles were singing "Yellow Submarine." Dave and I keyed our mikes and joined in for a verse or two.

When we released the mike buttons, the company commander came on the radio and chastised whoever had been

singing on the UHF radio.

I do not know which one of us had our radio switched to UHF transmit instead of intercom, but I do know that the old man did not sound very happy.

We moved to Phan Thiet in October 1967 and were in direct support of the 3/506/ 101st Airborne Brigade.

Right after Tet 1968, my platoon leader came to me and asked if I would fly with Dave and prepare him for his A/C check ride.

Dave was then assigned to fly with me for most of a month, at which time I tried to teach him everything I knew about flying Hueys in Vietnam. I had learned to fly the old, underpowered D model Hueys with the 129th, and usually they had to be coaxed onto the air, but the pilots developed a lot of good flying skills.

The 192nd, on the other hand, had brand new H models with the T-53-L13A engines.

Dave was a good pilot and passed his A/C check ride on his first attempt, and was I proud of him.

On April 5, I was completing my end of the month reports as the motor pool officer when one of the enlisted men came in and told me an aircraft had crashed. I went to operations and learned it had been Dave's aircraft and there were injuries.

I then went and watched the medevac aircraft land and unload some of the injured. When they carried the stretcher by me, I noticed that the nametag on his flight suit read "Timm."

I blamed myself for Dave's death. I thought that I should have said or done enough to ensure Dave's survival.

The other pilots and crews I flew with finally got tired of pouring my drunk carcass into the aircraft. The XO called me into his office and there Maj. Brown made me realize Dave's death was not my fault and I had taught everything I possibly could have to Dave.

I completed that tour and came home on May 1, 1968. I was assigned to Fort Wolters, where I flew as a flight instructor for 2 1/2 years, then returned to Vietnam and flew with the 173rd Airborne Brigade from Nov. 1, 1970-September 1971, when the "Herd" stood down and came home.

I finished my second tour with the 92nd

## LETTERS

### *Is Hall of Fame a generals' club?*

Sometimes I think that the older I get the more cynical I become. I just recently read *The VHPA Aviator* article titled "Hall of Fame," where the author discusses the Vietnam helicopter pilots inducted during the 50th anniversary.

Of the 10 inductees, 2 were warrant officers, while the rest were either generals or colonels.

Considering that more warrant officers served in Vietnam (probably closer to 8 out of 10 were warrant officers), I find it disappointing that more are not honored or is AAAA just a club for generals, making the Hall of Fame Award meaningless?

Respectfully,  
Bob Baird  
Retired commissioned officer

Assault Helicopter Company at Dong Ba Thin, RVN.

There is an interesting footnote to this story.

I am now in law enforcement and have been for almost 30 years. For the past 22 years, I have been the director of firearms training for the Oklahoma Police Academy. I am known as a hard ass, one who will not compromise the training.

Because of my experience with Dave, I know the price of failure, in law enforcement firearms training, is too high.

In Oklahoma today there are officers alive — and children who have been born to those officers — who would not be alive if it were not for David W. Timm.

Glen McEntire

\*\*\*\*\*

It was early September 1970 and I had been in the 195th Assault Helicopter Company only about a week.

I was to take my in-country check ride and I had just been briefed by the unit instructor pilot who then told me to proceed to the aircraft and start the preflight inspection. He would be out shortly.

As I approached the aircraft, the crew chief and doorgunner had just finished opening up all of the covers and cowling for my inspection.

In flight school there was no CE or DG to stand by and you didn't even think about opening anything. Sure, you could look through some hole in a cowling and see what looked like an engine, but that was about it.

Well, I proceeded to look and pull on everything I had previously been not allowed to do. I finally got to the right side of the engine and noted a valve at the bottom of the engine oil tank was closed. In a flash of genius, I suddenly opened the valve and turned to the CE and said, "How come that valve is closed?"

The CE replied, "Well (dah), Sir, because I don't want oil to drain all over the ground."

I looked down and noticed a puddle of oil forming in front of my feet and I decided it probably would be smart to close the engine oil tank DRAIN valve.

A minute later the CE returned and handed me a quart can of 23699 oil and told me, "If you don't mind, Sir."

That night I was wondering what all the laughter from the enlisted hooch was all about.

Thomas H. Nadeau  
CW4, U.S. Army (Ret.)

\*\*\*\*\*

I recently had the opportunity to attend a reunion of the

Misty Fast FACS. These guys flew F-100s as forward air controllers over North Vietnam from 1967-70.

Many were shot down, some killed and some captured. The most famous being Col. Bud Day, a Medal of Honor recipient who spent five years as a POW.

One of the Misty pilots I met, Charlie Summers, flew F-100s in South Vietnam in support of the Army prior to joining the Misty organization.

He was flying close air support for the Army when he was shot down on Nov. 13, 1965, near Can Tho. The first aircraft to come to his rescue a UH-1 was also shot down and the second Huey to arrive rescued both the first crew and Charlie.

He's not sure, as he kept passing out, but he may have been flown to an Army base where he was transferred to a medevac helicopter and taken to a hospital.

He would like to find the crews that saved him so he can personally thank them. He has a picture of him being taken from the helicopter that took him to the hospital and says one of the crewmembers is clearly visible in the picture.

Charlie would like to request the support of the VHPA and VHCMA to help him find these crews.

Charlie can be reached by e-mail at

## LETTERS

Tom Rountree

D Troop 1/10th Cav, 4th Infantry Division  
and 4th Aviation Battalion, 1966-67  
Headquarters, 268th Aviation Battalion, 1969-70

\*\*\*\*\*

Panthers had a mission where we would go and land at Pleiku Air Base at the end of the day and if Camp Holloway was attacked during the night, we could launch to support the base.

We would land and then walk across a field to a little place to get something to eat. Not sure who was walking with us that night, if it was Capt. Hodges or Woody, but unbeknown to us, someone, possibly Engineers had dug a huge trench across the field. We had walked across this field a dozen times.

We were walking across the field and, all of a sudden, I heard, "Ohooo," and the person next to me disappeared. He fell into the hole and I was laughing so hard I could hardly get him out.

Woody and I were aircraft commanders and Hodges was in my front seat. From Pleiku Air Base one night we got launched to cover a medevac into North Dak To to pick up a wounded soldier. It was a pitch-black night; no horizon, just flying in a black hole.

Woody was air mission lead. When we got on site, Woody told me to hold high and he would cover the medevac in.

I was circling at about 3,000 feet and wondering just where was that 5,000-foot mountain when Capt. Hodges lit a match to light his cigarette. He went to screaming,

"Incoming! Incoming!"

It was the reflection from his match on the canopy that scared him and me to.

I never did smoke, have never smoked. It was just something to do, I guess, in Nam.

I was only 19 and was the youngest pilot in the unit. Full of spit vinegar and overzealous, pissed off everyone and I am sure was a very cocky, young warrant.

Hell, 19 year olds today only want to play Nintendo and chase poon tang. Well, I chased my share of poon tang in Nam. Was not married while in Nam, only had a tax-free salary, cigarette ration, which I used to procure the local ladies. They just seemed to love Salem cigarettes.

Dana Johndro was training me to be A/C. I was in his front set and flying the aircraft when we started to pull into POL at Dak To.

Dana cut the SAS off and said, "I have just been hit, the SAS is out and you have to land the aircraft."

I was laughing so hard, funny how everything was funny to me back then. I bounced it around several times, went into several different refuel points and then rapidly exited as the aircraft turned sideways, all the while still

## LETTERS

laughing.

Dana is yelling, I cut the SAS off on Mackey, I think that is his name, he was the maintenance officer and he landed just fine.

Told him to go get Mackey if he wanted it landed. I was able to get us close enough to get some fuel.

Mackey — I believe this was his name — was the maintenance officer. He took an A/C out on a test flight one day and rolled the throttle off to enter autorotation.

Someone forgot to set the flight idle detent and he rolled the throttle all the way off and crashed landed in a rice patty.

Everyone was telling him what a great job he did landing the aircraft and I was telling him what a crappy maintenance officer he was for not checking the flight idle detent

## Crewman seeking scout pilot

My name is Russ Underwood. I served with C Troop, 9/1 in 1966-67.

I am trying to find my OH-13 scout pilot, John Lee. He was from California, I believe.

My phone number is [REDACTED].

Russ Underwood  
[REDACTED]

## Are you retiring or changing jobs?

If so, you may be facing some important financial questions. That's why now is a good time to turn to a Financial Advisor for some answers.

### Get answers about:

- Retirement income sources
- Retirement plan distribution options
- Rollover IRAs
- IRA distribution options
- Social Security
- Financial planning and investing

### For information, call:

**Robert Potvin**, Account Vice President

"Stingray White 25"

231-995-7000 517-332-2878 800-235-9031

[robert.potvin@ubs.com](mailto:robert.potvin@ubs.com)

202 East State Street, Suite 300, Traverse City, MI 49685  
[www.ubs.com/fa/robertpotvin](http://www.ubs.com/fa/robertpotvin)

*UBS Financial Services Inc. does not provide tax or legal advice. Please consult your tax advisor or legal professional regarding your specific situation.*

**UBS Financial Services Inc.**

©2005 UBS Financial Services Inc. All Rights Reserved. Member SIPC.

UBS



## Good Vibrations

New from Joe Kline. Full color, extremely detailed. 20" X 28" limited edition print of a UH-1H Huey Slick. \$80 standard (as shown), or \$125 customized with unit markings and nose art. Can also be converted to a D model.



### Joe Kline Aviation Art

6420 Hastings Place

Gilroy, CA 95020

408-842-6979

[klinejd569@aol.com](mailto:klinejd569@aol.com)

[www.joekline.com](http://www.joekline.com)



## Attend Reunion 2008 in San Antonio

on startup. Guess that's why I pissed everyone off.

Dana Johndro and I were in the officers club one night having a heated discussion about something. Not any relevance now of what it was about.

I was taking heat from Dana and after about 12 of those 25-cent rum and Cokes, I grabbed Dana around the waist, carried him out the club, and he and I dove into the famous Camp Holloway swimming pool. Now, as everyone knows, that pool at Holloway was not for swimming. It was our drinking water.

Some colonel came by just as Dana and I went for our midnight swim and told us to get our ass out of the pool. I remember saluting with only about 4 inches of my head sticking out of the water and told him, "Aye, aye, Sir."

I really felt bad for Dana afterwards as his wallet got wet and the picture of his wife was in his wallet. Guess that's why I pissed everyone off.

To all the guys I pissed off, to the second platoon leader I had that neither him nor I could agree on anything and constantly was at each other's throat, I apologize. I was young, cocky, had no discipline.

Like Lt. Sheuerman, I had one hell of a good time and now have had friends and buddies I would never have known if not for the Panthers.

I salute and admire each and everyone one of you.

Thanks, Dana, for teaching me what I needed to know to survive. I truly feel your coaching and guidance, kept me alive in Nam. I owe you, buddy.

David Smith  
Panther 25, July 1971-June 1972

\*\*\*\*\*

We all do our small little part to honor our fallen comrades. My little contribution is to do the formal flag posting ceremony at my church on Sept. 11th and Veterans Day.

I sing as part of the church choir and on those two

## 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?



John Conway  
4411 North 67th Street  
K.C., KS. 66104  
Eve. 816-561-3265 • Toll Free Weekdays 888-870-5408  
[jpconway@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jpconway@sbcglobal.net)



days, wear my uniform (in this case dress blues) and cavalry hat with pride. I've attached a photo of our choir with me in uniform in the background.

Even on the "left coast" this small gesture is appreciated by all of the church members and gets the most wonderful reaction from the young children.

Michael H. Campbell  
Lt. Col. U.S. Army (Retired)

\*\*\*\*\*

Maybe an idea for *The Aviator*: Ask members to send in photos of their personalized license plates that depict something related to Vietnam, VHPA, unit, call sign, etc.

You can publish a few small photos in each issue.

I know of a few other aviation magazines that did this and they got quite a large response. I recall seeing many personal plates in the parking lot at each VHPA reunion.



Attached is a photo my Arizona plate. I tried to get

Richard Yood, MAS  
Gladiator 21

  
**vernon**  
SALES PROMOTION

Ph: 850-222-7755/800-359-7062 • Fax: 850-222-2266  
Tallahassee, Florida • [rick@thepromodeli.com](mailto:rick@thepromodeli.com)  
[www.vernoncompany.com](http://www.vernoncompany.com) (use code PROMODELI)

Your Unit insignia or Company Logo on anything. We have: Caps, Shirts, Pens, Pencils, Ring Binders, Coffee Mugs, Gifts, Golf Items, Clocks, Flags, Banners, Decals, License Plates, Coins/Medallions, Plaques, Knives, Trophies, Key Tags, Glassware, Ribbons, Badges, Food, Electronics, and many other items from the more than 15,000 types of products available.

"HUEY," "UH-1B," "128 AHC," "GUNS 37" and several more, but they were already taken.

Larry Clark

\*\*\*\*\*

Most of the helicopter pilots who eventually were in Vietnam, were students at Fort Wolters Texas.

Fort Wolters had many flights for pre-solo primary. Ten of the flights at Downing were in the TH-55A. Of the 10 flights, 2 consisted of military flight instructors. The remaining 8 were civilian contractors.

Major Dick Hale was the flight commander of C5 Flight for about 18 months and was, and still is, proud to say he had the best group of instructors in existence and he also had the best flight. This was confirmed by the Standardization Division at Fort Wolters and the fact new instructors arriving were known to ask to be assigned to C5.

Eighty new WOCs arrived every 10 weeks for the pre-solo primary training. At the onset, usually your first words to the three students in your stick were, "this is a helicopter and I am going to show you how to put the shoulder harness on."

From then on it was a lot of work for the instructors and certainly for the students. The end result was positive after they accumulated 80 hours, made 80 full-stop autorotations and soloed. As you all know, the small helicopters were tricky to fly. Your feet, your hands and your entire body were working like hell to get the damned thing into the air.

Hovering was the first part of the curriculum and often there were funny and strange incidents, one of which was the greatest of all.

CW2 Castro who was one of the instructors at the time told Major Hale he did something that might cause a problem.

During the hovering, the natural tendency initially was for a student to drift. Staying over a spot was a lot of work. One of the common problems of a "drifter" was to lean in

## LETTERS

the opposite direction of the drift. If you were drifting to the right, you leaned to the left.

As described, CW2 Castro had a student who was a real problem. He drifted to the right and leaned to the left, to the extreme. Castro told Hale that he was nearly in Castro's lap. Castro decided to take action to stop this problem. When the student got close enough, Castro leaned over and kissed him on the cheek.

After Hale got done rolling on the floor over this method of correction, he decided to use it at the beginning of each new class by telling the students about drifting and that one of the instructors, who would not be named, might give them a little kiss. It seemed to help.

The attached picture was taken at Fort Wolters in 1968. It is hard to remember all of the names of the instructors that became a member of C5.

Some of the names: CW2 Richard Luna, CW2 Robert Dawson, CW2 Jerry Wilson, 1st Lt. James Thomason, Capt. James Barnes, CW2 Luis Carreras, CW2 Anthony Kernagis, CW2 Robert McClintock, Capt. James Pollard, CW2 William Hougland, CW2 Jarvis Colburn, CW2 Larry Martin, CW2 Wayne Branch and CW2 Castro. I am the one seated in front of the group.

A number of the warrant officers were offered direct commissions later and stayed on active duty until retirement.

The importance of the assignment at Fort Wolters was that it proved to be very rewarding. The training was the best. Most of the VHPA helicopter pilots that made it through the Vietnam War would agree.

Major Dick Hale, USA Retired

\*\*\*\*\*

Earlier this year a dear — this can also be written "desperate" — friend asked me to get back into Cub Scouts by helping staff a summer day camp.

After at least a 15-year hiatus, I found my Scout shirt in the back of a closet and was sad to see that it still fit me. Darn!

So I attended a planning meeting and signed on to be the Webelos program director for the day camp.

At the meeting someone said, "I believe you flew helicopters in Vietnam. Why don't you contact some of your friends and get us one for the day camp?" Yeah, right!

Then I got to thinking. The Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA was basically formed specifically to support the 2001 VHPA Reunion in Denver. Yes, VHPA National appointed me to be the reunion chairman, but I was more like the band director because, all totaled, there must have been over 40 VHPAers involved, plus half that many family members.

We had two helicopters land at the barbecue picnic organized in Golden, plus some Army helicopters at the picnic organized at Fort Carson. Maybe I was quitting too soon.

At the next chapter meeting I brought up the subject of getting some "good PR" for some helicopter company.





Greg Mann said, "Hey, I am flying for Air Methods on a contract with AirLife. Let's see what we can do?"

Then I went to the local fire department and asked if they would be interested in some "refresher training" in working with a flight for life helicopter. I knew there was no way a normal mortal could land a helicopter even on private property without the fire department guys being there.

The bottom line, after several letters and phone calls and serious begging, the AirLife people approved it so long as there wasn't a real mission for the helicopter at that day and time.

Here is a picture of Greg Mann and me standing in front of the AirLife helicopter on June 27.

If you could see to the left, there would be 6 volunteer firemen working with the 2 AirLife nurses for training.

To the right you would see 250 Cub Scouts and 50 adults all lined up for a 60-second "up-close" visit to the

helicopter. Winners all the way around!

Once again we see that two VHPAers are better than just one.

Mike Law  
Denver, Colo.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fred Smith and I have found there is no organization to honor all those who have the Air Medal. We both feel it is time to create a society to honor those who earned the Air Medal and for the purpose to let all know that those who served and so honored are not forgotten and their legacy will live on.

We have great plans for this society and invite you to join and become a part of history. Also, we need your help! In order to get the word out to everyone possible, as well as air groups who publish a newsletter and/or have a roster of members and will support our effort, we ask you for your help as well as any veterans group where you have a connection.

If you will pass the word along to your friends or those you know who have the Air Medal, it will be greatly appreciated. We are in the process of constructing a website ([www.airmedal.org](http://www.airmedal.org)) and while it is in the beginning stages, you will find it informative and know that we are dead serious about creating this society.

Won't you please help in any way you can. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please get in touch with me or Fred Smith (760) 346-2312 [palmniblic@aol.com](mailto:palmniblic@aol.com)

Your help will be greatly appreciated and you will know you have played a part to help us get the Air Medal Society off and running.

Our sincerest regards,  
Lee Stanley  
75-784 Via Allegre

## LETTERS

# Two new gardens to be added

With the opening of the Meditation Garden on June 2, The National Vietnam War Museum completed the first step in Phase I of its building program.

This was quickly followed by the Rock Creek Trail, a connector that links the museum property with the Lake Mineral Wells State Trailway behind the museum site.

There are now two additional projects in process on the museum grounds. The first is the Contemplation Garden that will contain a reconstruction of the Camp Holloway Memorial Wall.

Camp Holloway, near Pleiku, was the largest Army aviation base in Vietnam and home to the 52nd Aviation Battalion "Flying Dragons" and more than half of its assigned aviation companies.

The original Camp Holloway wall was built at the base in the 1960s. It carried plaques with the names of

soldiers assigned to Camp Holloway who were killed or missing in action.

The second project is one that should attract interest from Vietnam veterans throughout North Texas and throughout the Southwest.

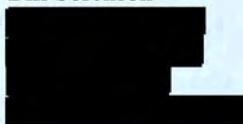
The museum is in the process of constructing the Vietnam Memorial Garden that will feature a replica of "The Moving Wall," a one-half scale version of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The museum's wall will be constructed in a forest of Arizona Cypress trees, fronting on Highway 180, and accessed by a path of decomposed granite.

Between the wall and the highway fence will be five flagpoles flying the service flags of the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard. U.S., Texas, and POW/MIA flags current fly over the Meditation Garden.

# VHPA CHAPTERS

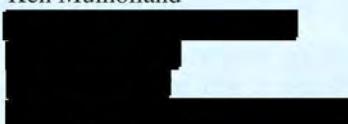
**Arizona Chapter**  
Bill Sorenson



**California Chapter North**  
Ken Fritz



**VHPA of Florida**  
Ken Mulholland

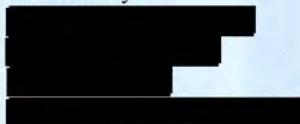


[www.vhpaf.org](http://www.vhpaf.org)

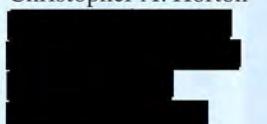
**Fort Wolters Chapter**  
Adam Steczko



**Georgia Chapter**  
Bill Stanley



**Mid South Chapter**  
Christopher A. Horton



**North Carolina Chapter**  
Bill Doran



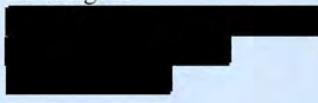
**Ohio River LZ Chapter**  
John Flanagan



**Rocky Mountain Chapter**  
C. Edward Fickes



**Southern California Chapter**  
Ed Holguin



**Washington State Chapter**  
Chris Farwell



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.

## Fort Wolters Chapter

The chapter has been very busy on several fronts.

Our work with the 091 Foundation is gaining support. The foundation wheelchair/mobility device has delivered three units and has raised money for five more.

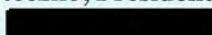
There exists the possibility of 50 more next year.

We challenge each chapter to raise \$100 per member to "Adopt A Veteran." Contact: [REDACTED]

In December, we plan, with the sponsorship of American Airlines, to fly three plane loads of Iraqi veterans' widows and orphans from three locations around the country on the "Snowball Express" to Disneyland.

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

**Adam Steczko, President**



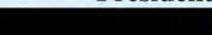
## Washington State Chapter

Chapter members participated in the Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 10 in Auburn, Wash.

Our black windbreaker jackets have arrived and will be worn proudly by our members.

Our next quarterly meeting will be held at Famous Dave's Barbecue on Feb. 16 at 11 a.m. All are invited for an excellent meal.

**Chris Farwell  
President**



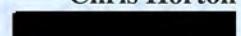
## Mid South Chapter

Our chapter held a cookout on Oct. 23 in Lebanon, Tenn., where we ate in the process of refurbishing a TH-55 helicopter.

We are looking for volunteer maintenance experts. Contact: Chris Horton at [REDACTED]

Also, we participated in the Veterans Day Parade in Nashville on Nov. 12. After the parade, we conducted our quarterly meeting.

**Chris Horton**



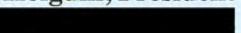
## Southern California Chapter

Our new chapter president is Ed Holguin.

VHPASC's next scheduled activity is a chile cook-off in Hawthorne, Calif., on Dec. 1 with the proceeds benefiting needy families. The quarterly meeting also will be held on that date.

The first quarterly meeting for 2008 will be held at on Saturday, March 15, at the American Legion in Newport Beach. It will have a St. Patrick's Day theme.

**Ed Holguin, President**



## VHPA of Florida

We had our 14th annual reunion in Tampa at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Oct. 18-21.

Highlights were a barbecue; free drink hospitality suite, and a banquet in Saturday night.

We invite all Vietnam vets to attend our reunions in Florida. The registration form is on the web at [www.vhpaf.org](http://www.vhpaf.org)

**Ken Mulholland, President**

### **Ohio River LZ Chapter**

The chapter will hold its annual reunion in Columbus, Ohio, on the weekend of Feb. 22-24 at the Airport Marriott Hotel.

There will be a welcome on Friday evening and a banquet Saturday night. Reunion chairs are John Flanagan (██████████) and Keith Allegre ██████████

### **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES**

**John Flanagan, President**

### **North Carolina Chapter**

NCVHPA participated in the Albermarle (N.C.) Air Show on Sept. 15 and 16, the Pope Air Force Base Air Show on Oct. 6 and 7, and marched in the Veterans Day Parade in Raleigh on Nov. 10.

Our annual POW/MIA Ceremony at the State Capitol will be held on Feb. 2. Our members will read the names

of North Carolina residents still missing in Southeast Asia.

Our annual meeting will be held that evening, with dinner and a speaker.

**Bill Doran, President**

### **Rocky Mountain Chapter**

We took our traveling museum to the Veterans Day celebration at the Weld County Veterans Memorial.

On Dec. 14, chapter members will be at the Denver VA Hospital's hospice for a get-together with the veterans. Our annual Christmas party will be held later that day.

**Ed Fickes, President**

### **Arizona Chapter**

The Arizona Chapter is planning a Christmas get-together in December, time and place to be announced. Anyone in Arizona who would like to attend or desires information, please e-mail me.

**Bill Sorenson, President**

— *Assembled by Jack Salm*

### **A NOVEL**

*Based on Historical Events*

# **GRUNT AIR**



**by John R. Taylor**  
**Outlaw 3**



Mid-1971 saw the ongoing Paris Peace Accords going nowhere fast when it came to the POW issue, especially the ones in Laos and Cambodia. Military commanders were prohibited from rescue attempts, in Laos by The State Department and the Ambassador to Laos for fear of interfering with the Peace Talks and Laos neutrality. The Ambassador reluctantly authorized the formation of a small lightly guarded survey team to go into American aircraft crash sites to conduct evaluations as to what had happened to the pilot and develop improvements in survival training.

The Commanding General of 7 Air Force (CG) saw this as a loophole. Under great secrecy he quickly formed a crash site evaluation team per the directive except he would use the very best Army combat helicopter pilots, ground reconnaissance teams and intelligence support personnel available to locate and recover his downed pilots in Laos. The unit was formed in late July 1971 and secretly operated in the northern part of Laos and the area known as the Plain of Jars (PDJ). The Air Force boys had nicknamed the Army unit "Grunt Air". The first American POW was located by a Grunt Air Recon team, as were two other allied officers, in a camp referred to as The Homestead. This discovery created a great deal of excitement within Grunt Air and the key command staff that knew the true mission of Grunt Air. When the identities of the three were learned, a high priority was placed upon either their recovery or death by bombing. Each of the three had very sensitive information that could not fall into Hanoi or Moscow's possession. The Grunt Air mission had to remain a secret from everyone not directly associated with the mission. If its cover story was ever broken the unit would be disbanded by the Ambassador or higher authority. Dan Roman deployed his five Recon Teams into northern Laos to look for other POWs and to keep track of the three prisoners that were being transferred from camp to camp north to Hanoi via Laos. Plans were being formed to rescue these badly abused prisoners at the first opportunity and before they were sent to the Hanoi Hilton, executed by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) or terminated by massive U.S. B-52 bombing.

Meanwhile back in the states two wives of POWs were trying to get a full accountability out of the North Vietnam government of the American POWs and their condition. They had to fight the U.S. government political stonewall, a philandering Pentagon POW family representative, as well as the North Vietnam Delegation in Paris.

The NVA started their Dry Season Offensive (17 Dec 71) to take over Laos. This found the five Grunt Air Recon Teams strategically positioned to continue to observe the POW movement and as well as report on the deployment of the attacking NVA. They could see, yet do nothing for the POWs as they endured the torture. Through clever manipulation of secret information they tricked the NVA to move the three POWs to a new camp near Sam Neua, nicknamed "The Big Casino". It was considered by the NVA to be in a safe rear area controlled by them. The valuable POWs would be safe there until they could be moved to Hanoi. This is exactly what Grunt Air wanted them to do and think. This key factor made a surprise rescue mission possible. The night of 19 January 1972 the mission was conducted literally within sight of the lights of Hanoi.

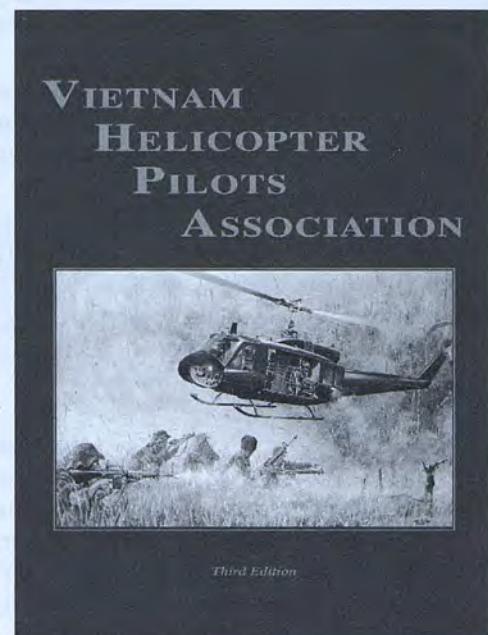
**Available**  
**at**  
**amazon.com**  
**and**  
**Borders**  
**Bookstores**

# REMEMBERING VIETNAM...

## VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION, 3RD EDITION

Released in 2007, this third installment in the VHPA commemorative book series provides a detailed history of the Vietnam Helicopter War from 1961-75, the early history of the VHPA, After Action Reports, hundreds of biographical vignettes of VHPA members, with "then and now" photos, full-color patches, and more, plus a special tribute to pilots who paid the ultimate sacrifice and Medal of Honor recipients. ISBN: 1-59652-210-0.

9x12-inch, with 288 pages. \$49.95 plus shipping\*.



## VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION 2008 CALENDAR

The annual VHPA Calendar is the perfect way to honor the men and mission of helicopter pilots in Vietnam. Each month features a different helicopter, including a description of the craft and its surroundings. Photos include the OH-13, UH-1, AH-1, CH-37, UH-34, CH-47, UH-2, HH-43, CH-54, OH-6, and more. Oversized (BIG) 17x11 -inch format, printed in Full-Color. Includes the names and units of the 2,198 helicopter pilots killed or declared MIA in Southeast Asia from 1961-75, each listed on the date of death or disappearance. ISBN: 978-1-59652-382-1.

17x11-inch in full-color. \$14.95 plus shipping\*.

*\*Shipping for books, add \$6.95 first copy; \$3.00 ea. add'l*

*\*Shipping for calendars, add \$3.95 first copy, \$1.00 ea. add'l*

**Save 20% when you order two or more copies!**  
Enter coupon code SV for internet orders.



### VHPA 3RD EDITION & 2008 CALENDAR • EASY TO ORDER

Online [www.turnerpublishing.com](http://www.turnerpublishing.com) • Call Toll-Free 1-800-788-3350

Or mail in your check or money order to Turner Publishing Company  
P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101

Please ship me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the VHPA 3rd Ed. Commemorative Book, Only \$49.95 ea.!

Shipping/handling: \$6.95 first copy; \$3.00 ea. add'l

Please ship me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the VHPA 2008 Calendar, Only \$14.95 ea.!

Shipping/handling: \$3.95 first copy; \$1.00 ea. add'l

Ky residents add 6% sales tax

Discount for 2 or more, subtract 20%.

TOTAL ORDER \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please ship to:

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

## IN QUALITY BOOKS & CALENDARS!

## Donald Harold Bowers

Donald Harold Bowers died in Salem, Ore., on Aug. 22 after a five-year battle with melanoma cancer.

Bowers celebrated his 60th birthday and 20th wedding anniversary this year.

After graduating from flight school with Class 69-23, he served two tours in Vietnam. During his first tour in 1966-67, he was a member of B/2/327, 101st Airborne Division. His next tour was in 1969-70 as a helicopter pilot with the 198th Light Infantry Brigade.

He was recipient of two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal and five Army Commendation Medals.

Bowers retired from the Army after 22 years of service. He later retired from the California Department of Corrections after 10 years of service.

His wife, Cheryl, and five sons, Brandon Bowers, Bryan Bowers, Steven Zenk, Richard Zenk, and Lawrence Zenk, survive him.

## TAPS

## Gino Ray Del Carlo

Gino Ray Del Carlo, 61, of Reno, Nev., died Oct. 6.

He was born in Virginia City on March 23, 1946, and graduated from Virginia City Schools and the University of Nevada.

He graduated from Army flight school with Class 70-34 and served with the 134th AHC in South Vietnam in 1971. Del Ray received two Bronze Star Medals and two Purple Heart medals.

Del Ray was in Nevada banking for 35 years and had planned to retire from Great Basin Federal Credit Union where he was CEO for the past 13 years.

He is survived by his wife, Sara; a son, Gino Joseph; and a daughter, Elizabeth; a grandson, Leo Lucca; his mother, Lora; and seven brothers.

## John T. "Jack" Glennon

John T. "Jack" Glennon of Virginia Beach, Va., died Oct. 4, 2006 after a struggle with cancer. He was 58.

Glennon was a member of Class 69-5 and served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam with the "Phoenix" of Company C, 158th Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division.

He was a Virginia Beach native and a graduate of Old Dominion University. He worked as a sales manager at Custom Business Graphics.

Glennon was instrumental in getting the Phoenix veterans together for various unit reunions. In the late 1980s, he began his pursuit of tracking down every unit member.

One lead on a person would lead to another person, but sometimes that lead would dry up. First he started with letters and postcards, later the Internet. He was relentless, persistent, and indefatigable in his mission to

locate everyone who had ever worn the unit patch.

Glennon always arranged for the hospitality suite and plenty of "refreshments" during the reunions and "T-shirts" for the reunion. A collection was usually arranged but Glennon never worried about his expenses. He represented the heart of the Phoenix.

His loving wife, Carol, survives him as well as children, Amy G. McConnell and Ryan M. Glennon.

## Terry Langille

Terry Langille, 60, of Marietta, Ga., died Aug. 26 in Belize of a probable heart attack.

After graduating from flight school with Class 66-11,



Langille joined 17 of his WO1 classmates in Fort Lewis, Wash., to form A Company, 4th Aviation, 4th Infantry Division, arriving in Pleiku in January 1967 on a C-141.

A major infusion took place in February 1967 and Langille and several of his classmates moved down the runway to D Troop, 1/10th Cavalry. He volunteered for the gun platoon, flying Charlie models.

In January 1968, he rotated out to flying guns along the border in Germany.

In August 1969, he left the service and found a job flying a traffic helicopter. He was less than happy with the maintenance and became an air traffic controller until the big strike. He then went into computer support for the telephone company, where he worked until his death while on vacation with his wife, Cheryl, visiting his daughter, Emily, with the Peace Corps in Belize.

Langille is survived by his wife, Cheryl Dover Langille of Marietta, Ga.; his daughter, Emily of Belize and Marietta, Ga.; stepdaughter, Deanna Benson.



## Joseph H. Morton Sr.

Joseph H. Morton Sr., 69, of St. Louis, Mo., died Aug. 20.

He served as an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, retiring at the rank of major after a 20-year military career. Morton graduated from flight school in Class 66-10.

He owned his own real estate company in Orlando, Fla., for many years before retiring to St. Louis.

A daughter, Linda Halleman, and a son, Joe Morton, survive Morton.

## William L. "Willie" Ruf

Retired CW4 William L. "Willie" Ruf died Sept. 20 at Southeast Alabama Medical Center in Dothan. He was 84.

Ruf, the son of a sergeant major, enlisted in the Army at age 18. He served in the infantry in World War II. Ruf was captured, but escaped to rejoin the war.

In 1955, he graduated with the first helicopter pilot class at Fort Rucker with Class 55-F and later saw action as a pilot in the Korean War, the Lebanon crisis, and the

## Vietnam War.

In 1959, Ruf became a member of the Army Executive Flight Detachment (Presidential Flight), serving as the helicopter pilot for Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy.

During the Vietnam War, Ruf served with the 93rd Transportation Company in 1961-62 and with the 228th ASHB, 1st Cavalry in 1964-65.

He also served as an instructor pilot at Fort Rucker for five years, accumulating 16,000 flying hours, 1,200 in combat.

After 26 years of service, he retired from the Army in 1967 with the rank of CW4 and became a civilian flight instructor until his final retirement.

He remained active as a Red Cross volunteer at the Fort Rucker hospital, a tour guide at the Fort Rucker Army Aviation Museum, and a popular guest speaker at helicopter flight training graduations and other ceremonies at the post.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 50 years, Grace Madeline Ireland Ruf.

His wife, Kim Ruf of Daleville; a son, William L. "Billy" Ruf III; and a daughter, Teresa Ann Crawford, survive him.

— Brian Foote

## William "Bill" C. Sipes

Retired CWO William "Bill" C. Sipes, 67, formerly of Fort Knox, Ky., died Oct. 27 in the Philippines.

Sipes earned two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Purple Heart Medals, an Army Commendation Medal and 18 Air Medals while serving two missions in Vietnam, first with the 101st Air Cavalry flying Huey medevacs and the second with the 138th Aviation Company flying fixed-wing reconnaissance.

Survivors include his wife, Helen Sipes of the Philippines; a son, Richard Sipes of Washington; and a daughter, Sharon Ahrens of California.

## Paul M. Smith

Paul M. Smith, 60, of West Islip, N.Y., was killed Oct. 7 when an out-of-control taxi hit him while he was on the sidewalk in New York City.

His wife, Donna, was severely injured, but is recovering.

Paul graduated from flight school with Class 70-50 and served with 114th AHC in the Mekong Delta in 1971 and 1972.

After leaving the Army, Paul traveled and eventually returned to finish college with in Philadelphia in 1976.

He went home to Oklahoma for a while and married Donna Smith, who he met in Philadelphia. Their first son Cory, 26, was born in Oklahoma.

Paul then relocated to New York City for a flying job with Island Helicopters, and resided on Long Island. Their second son, Cale, 24, was born there.

## TAPS

For the past 10 years, Paul had been flying for ABC 7 Eyewitness News in NYC. We always said Paul had nine lives because he served two combat tours, one as a tank platoon commander and the other as a helicopter pilot. He also had his share of helicopter incidents including a touchdown autorotation to the East River in NYC after losing an engine with a load of foreign tourists.

His most telling comment was he had it under control, and the biggest surprise was when he fired the floats, they actually inflated.

Paul won an Emmy for covering the crash of another news helicopter in NYC. He was flying the news helicopter on 9-11 at the World Trade Center, where he arrived after the first plane hit, but before the second one did.

Paul and I met in flight school, were stationed together in Vietnam, and then went to college together. Paul was passionate about a number of things, and the big three were his family, aviation safety and an overarching sense of fairness and justice.

Paul was a longtime member and former president of the Eastern Region Helicopter Council and currently served as their Safety Committee chairman. He will receive (posthumously) the Helicopter Association International's Joe Mashman Safety Award at the HAI's annual meeting in Houston on Feb. 25, 2008.

Paul touched many people over his life, and his passing is a great loss to his family, fellow helicopter pilots and many others.

— Rich Golaszewski

## Jack Burton Smith

Jack Burton Smith, 69, a retired Army colonel who became lead administrative judge for the Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals, died of cancer Aug. 7 at his home in Alexandria, Va.

Smith, who was born in Houston, enlisted in the Army in 1957. He served as an enlisted man in Turkey in 1958 and as an officer and helicopter pilot with the 175th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam in 1966-67. He graduated from flight school in Class 66-12.

A highly decorated pilot, he flew 200 combat missions in Vietnam and was wounded in action in 1967. He was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, 24 Air Medals and the Army Commendation Medal for Valor.

He graduated from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La., in 1960 and received a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1971. He then began a career in administrative law.

In 1976, Col. Smith moved to Northern Virginia as



attorney adviser for the Army at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Several years later, he held the same title at the Office of the General Counsel at the Army headquarters for the Development and Readiness Command in Alexandria.

In 1981, he joined the Defense Legal Services Agency as the general counsel for Department of Defense Dependent School System, which oversaw all legal aspects of the country's Dependent School System overseas.

He was appointed lead administrative judge for the DOHA in 1987 and was awarded the Office of the Secretary of Defense Civilian Service Award for outstanding service for the period 1985 to 1993.

Smith retired in 1996, but in 2001 was rehired as senior administrative judge for the DOHA Washington Hearing Office, where he remained until his retirement two years later.

His wife, Elena Stulina, and three children, Ginger Smith of Denver, Bonnie Stephens of Centreville, Va., and Brannon Smith of Wilmington, N.C., survive him.

## William Edward "Bill" Takacs

William Edward "Bill" Takacs, 72, of Shalimar, Fla., died Oct. 16.

He graduated from Indiana University, which he attended on a football scholarship.

He entered active duty in the Air Force in 1958. His military career spanned 30 years, including service at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii; Bergstrom AFB, Texas; Mather AFB, Calif.; Stead AFB, Nev.; Saigon, Vietnam; Sheppard AFB, Texas; and Taichung, Taiwan.

Takacs was brought in after the failed rescue attempt in Tehran as commander of the 20th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, where he was instrumental in building the SOF capability with H-53s. Much of today's readiness can be traced back to the efforts of "Col. T" and his team of officers, NCOs and airmen.

After serving with the 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing, he

## TAPS

retired in 1988 at the rank of colonel.

Throughout his military career, Takacs received numerous awards and commendations, including the Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Air Force Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and the Republic of Vietnam Pilot Wings.

He also served as a special advisor for Northrop-Grumman Aviation.

Takacs is survived by his sons, William E. Takacs Jr., (Libby), Douglas J. Takacs and Thomas C. Takacs; daughters, Sally Jo Takacs-Miller and Karen Chappell.

## Raymond Myers Trott

Raymond Myers Trott, 71, of Westover, Ala., died Oct. 3.



His military career spanned more than 26 years. Joining the Army at 17 years of age, Trott served in Korea, Germany and two tours in Vietnam.

He was a pilot with the 240th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. Trott was recipient of the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palms and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Survivors include his wife, Lily Bragg Trott, and his children, Donna Rae Wiggin, Master Sgt. Raymond M. Trott Jr., Darrell W. Trott, and Elisa Nell French.

## George Mike Zuvela Jr.

George Mike Zuvela Jr., 62, of Tukwila, Wash., died Sept. 29 at Veterans Hospital in Seattle.

He was a member of flight school Class 68-505/68-3, and served in Vietnam as a medevac helicopter pilot with the 237th Medical Detachment in 1968-69.

Upon his return, he repaired cars in his own shop, George's Autobody.

He is survived by his wife, Carol; sons, Mark and Bill; and daughters Clare Burleson and Susan Zuvela.

Group newsletters

Contact: Leslie Hines,

## Crewmen plan mini-reunion

The Vietnam/Aviation Crewmember Charleston Mini-Reunion is set for the weekend of Feb. 8-10 at the Radisson Hotel at the Charleston, S.C., Airport.

Our group will be guests of honor at The Citadel's full dress parade, pass and review Friday afternoon.

A casual buffet dinner will be served Saturday night.

For reservations call: (800) 333-3333

Paul S. Pelland  
Charleston, S.C.

## ADVA interested in documents

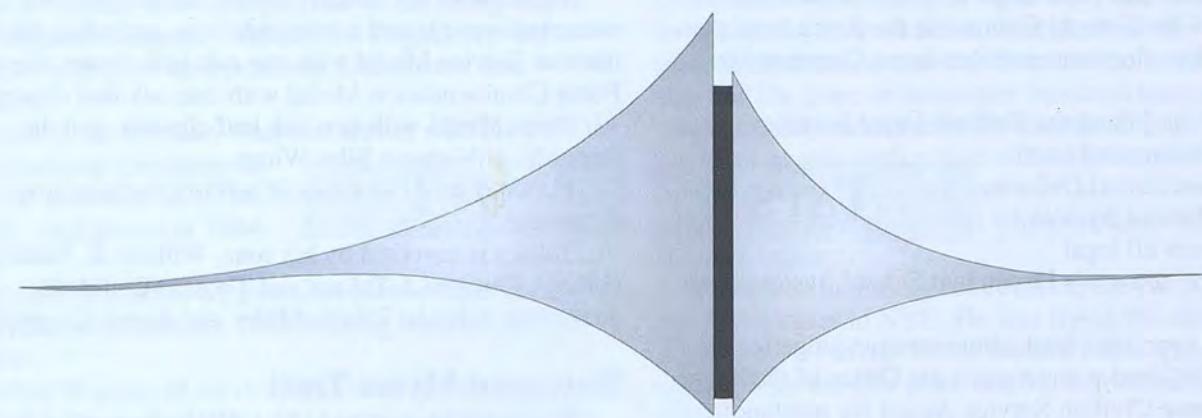
For years American Division Veterans Association (ADVA) teams have obtained copies of Vietnam-era unit histories, after-action reports, S-2/S-3 logs, etc., and input them into word processors and distributed copies to the VHPA.

Currently the ADVA is about halfway through a three-year effort to obtain the division TOC reports.

The ADVA is interested in copies of the following:

- Unit yearbooks — especially from the aviation units
- Special unit newsletters — especially the American Division Safety Newsletter and the 16th Combat Aviation

## VHPA BRIEFS



# VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL STATE PARK

Located 24 miles east of  
Taos on Highway 64  
P.O. Box 608, Angel Fire NM 87710  
[www.angelfirememorial.com](http://www.angelfirememorial.com)

**(575) 377-6900**



[www.nmparks.com](http://www.nmparks.com)  
(888)NMPARKS



Paid for by David Westphall Veterans Foundation

VHPA members James Thorne and Jack Swickard  
serve on the David Westphall Veterans Foundation  
Board of Directors

# Reunion

## *San Antonio headquarters located on River Walk*

DANA YOUNG  
NATIONAL REUNION COMMITTEE

The 25th VHPA Reunion will be held in San Antonio at the Marriott Rivercenter on July 2-5.

Located on San Antonio's famous River Walk, the hotel is bordered by a major shopping center on one side. The location offers attendees a multitude of shops, restaurants and historic sites within walking distance.

While the hotel boasts several quality restaurants, you will have your choice of everything from McDonalds to Hooters.

For a more detailed view of the area, check out: [www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com/](http://www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com/)

Tuesday, July 1, will be the first day registration will be open for the early arrivals and we will have a location for the Early Birds to gather and kick off the first informal event.

There are no special activities planned and for those that would like to see a bit of San Antonio on their own, the Alamo is just a few blocks from the hotel.

On Wednesday the reunion officially starts with tours available in the morning and our First Time Attendee Reception and Welcome Reception that evening. The Welcome Reception will include a dinner buffet but, in response to member feedback, there will be no scheduled entertainment.

Two tours will be offered this year:

### Tour No. 1

#### Highlights of San Antonio/Market Square

Tour time: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Price: \$25 per person

Begin with a guided tour of the city, where you will discover how San Antonio captures the spirit of Texas.

Now the eighth largest city in the United States, San Antonio has retained its sense of history and tradition, while blending in cosmopolitan progress.

Afterwards you will proceed to Market Square, which from early morning until late at night, is alive with activity.

Visitors can browse through the 32 shops at "El Mercado," an area patterned after a Mexican market.

In addition, there are 80 specialty shops in Farmers Market Plaza. Market Square is also the scene of many Hispanic festivals where food and beverage booths spring up alongside the Guadalajara lamps and the strains of mariachi music blend with the excitement of Mexican dances.



### Tour No. 2

#### Sins and Saints

Tour time: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Price: \$55 per person (includes lunch)

Explore centuries of the history and culture when you visit the missions of San Antonio. Your tour begins with a visit to two of San Antonio's five wondrous missions.

Mission San Jose, known at "the Queen of Missions," was founded in 1720 and became the largest and best

known of the Texas missions. Considered a model for future missions, it is noted for beautiful carvings in the church and the famous Rose Window is considered one of the finest pieces of Spanish colonial ornamentation in the country.

The next stop is Mission Concepcion. This handsome church looks essentially as it did 200 years ago.

From 1731, religious festivals were held as friars strove to replace traditional Native American ritual by the demonstration of Christian ideals. Remnants of wall and ceiling paintings in the surviving rooms of the mission's convento have been conserved.

The final stop on this tour will be the Buckhorn Saloon and Museum. Formerly on the grounds of the Lone Star Brewery, the Buckhorn features a massive collection of more than 3,500 specimens of horned game animal trophies from all over the world.

The museum has two stories of exotic collections, from cowboy memorabilia and fish from the Seven Seas to a wax museum of Texas history. And don't forget about the cold beer at an authentic cowboy saloon! You can even take your beer into the museum as you are touring! Private lunch at the Buckhorn Museum included.

These same tours will be available on Thursday to accommodate those who would like to do both.

\*\*\*\*\*

Thursday we move into the first full day of events. The schedule will include the two tours, mini-reunions, War Story Contest and the Historical Presentation Forum.

In addition, there will be four special activities: Golf in morning, a luncheon with B.G. "Jug" Burkett, co-author of Stolen Valor, the first session of the Poker Tournament and, in the evening, by popular demand, Vince Vance and the Valiants.

Those that saw them in Dallas will want to see them again, those who missed the opportunity, sign up before we sell out. The concert will start later in the evening — at 9 p.m. — and does not include dinner.

# Reunion

## *San Antonio headquarters located on River Walk*

Friday, the Independence Day, will start with the chance to march in the Fourth of July Parade in New Braunfels, Texas. Members will be taken by bus to the parade site and then be given the opportunity to do a little local sightseeing.

We will include lunch after the parade. The city is, in its own right, a tourist attraction.

During the day there will be mini-reunions, the Historical Presentation Forum and the second session of the Poker Tournament.

This year, we are leaving one night open. Friday evening is yours.

There are numerous restaurants and activities along the River Walk to see and enjoy. For those that like fireworks, there are some provided by the city and, if you want to put your own group together, the local military bases offer Fourth of July activities.

Saturday, the final day of the reunion, will kick off with the annual business meeting. This is your chance to let the Executive Council bring you up to date on the state of the VHPA and to vote on who will be your next vice president and junior member at large.

While the pilots are in the business meeting, we will have the Spouse and Guest Brunch. This year we are scheduling the return of one of our most successful presenters, a Face Reader.

This is an opportunity for your spouse to learn how to read your body language. While initially used during jury selection, the art of face reading has multiple applications, including the ability to tell when one is "stretching" the truth.

Pilots beware: If your wife attends, your life may never be the same.

In the afternoon, there will be two seminars that were so successful in Phoenix we were asked to do it again: The Veterans' Benefits Seminar and the Women's Seminar.

That evening the reunion, culminates in our Annual Banquet. Seating will be done the same way we did in Phoenix. If you have a seating request, let us know when you register and we will do our best to accommodate.

Once you arrive at the hotel, we will be able to finalize your seat assignment. Remember to bring your tickets. Sunday is departure day.

### Some administrative notes:

There are two Marriott hotels located on the River Walk. The Rivercenter (ours) and the Riverwalk. Should you enter the wrong one, you will be directed across the street to the correct site.

There is shuttle service available from the airport to the hotel. If you are traveling alone, it is the least expensive way to travel to the hotel.

If you are with someone, it is less expensive if you take a taxi. There is no "per person" charge.

Parking at the hotel is expensive, \$21 per night. There is a public garage across the street that charges \$8.

The first three floors of the hotel, the ones we will use for reunion events, are going through a renovation process. That process will be completed by the time we arrive.

We expect to be able to room all attendees in the Marriott Rivercenter. The Marriott Riverwalk is our "overflow" site. Room rates for the reunion are \$115 per night.

We have a limited number of renovated rooms with balconies and a view of the River Walk available at the Marriott Riverwalk for \$135.

Online registration is scheduled to be available the first part of January and is the recommended registration method.

This year T-shirts will be offered with or without a pockets. Make your preference known when you order. If no preference is noted, the default is with a pocket.



SACVB/AI Rendon  
The Tower of the Americas was built in honor of the 1968 World's Fair celebrating San Antonio's 250th anniversary. Visitors can dine in the 750-foot-tall Tower's revolving restaurant

# Words opened a new world

"Your brother was our brother."

Those words, written to me more than 10 years ago by a VHPA member answering my quest for information about my brother David's time in Vietnam, opened up a whole new world for me.

With help from the VHPA, after a silence of a quarter-century, I was finally able to learn about my brother, meet his fellow pilots and crew members, hear about what they did in Vietnam, and discover that David was not forgotten.

There are many other Gold Star family members like me. One of the most powerful ways for them to connect with their past and their lost family member is to spend time with those who walked in his shoes.

If you are thinking of sponsoring a fallen buddy's family to attend the reunion, please let them know about the Family Contacts Committee and the KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast that will take place on July 5.

The all-volunteer Family Contacts Committee (FCC), chaired by VHPA member Gary Thewlis (213th ASHC "Black Cats") has been in existence since 1997.

We help connect friends and family members of our helicopter losses with those who knew them in service, who can share memories.

The FCC will have a table at the reunion to collect information from VHPA members willing to be a resource as well as those members who would like help finding fam-

ily of their deceased stick buddies or flight school classmates.

We also will hold a KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast at the Marriott from 8-9:15 a.m. on July 5.

All Gold Star family members, and veterans who want to be there to support us, are welcome to attend.

While this is not a formal VHPA reunion event, it is made possible by the willingness of the VHPA to assist the FCC in arrangements and publicity.

If you would like to attend, please contact me either prior to the reunion via email at [REDACTED], phone [REDACTED] or as soon as you get to the reunion by stopping at the Family Contacts Committee table to sign up.

In his last letter home, my brother wrote: "You're never alone on a mission."

Now I know what those words mean, and I look forward to sharing that discovery with other family members just like me, who loved and lost someone, by exploring our common bond with our VHPA brothers.

Julie Kink

Sister of WO David Kink

C Troop, 1/9th CAV

KIA 8-3-1969

VHPA Honorary Member No. 3

Member, VHFCN Family Contacts Committee

## "FIRST BOOTS ON THE GROUND"

AN ART PRINT TRIBUTE TO THE MEN WHO FLEW & FOUGHT IN THE VIETNAM WAR



Soldiers of the 7th Cavalry, 1st Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), deploy from UH-1 Hueys of the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion onto Landing Zone X-Ray in the Ia Drang Valley.

SPECIAL PRICES FOR VHPA MEMBERS!

[www.VvalorStudios.com/vhpa](http://www.VvalorStudios.com/vhpa)

or call (570) 435-4523 (9-6 EST)

## Do you have a DFC?

### The Distinguished Flying Cross Society



Call or write us for information

P.O. Box 530250  
San Diego, CA 92153

Tel. (866) 332-6332

Visit our Website:

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

Attend Reunion 2008  
in San Antonio

# REUNION SCHEDULE

## Tuesday, July 1 — Early Arrival

1-5 p.m. Pre Registration  
8 p.m.-Midnight Early Bird Gathering

## Wednesday, July 2 — Arrival Day

9 a.m.-2 p.m. Highlights of San Antonio/Market Square Tour  
9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sins and Saints Tour  
9 a.m.-8 p.m. Registration  
6-7 p.m. First Time Attendee Reception  
7-11 p.m. Welcome Reception (Buffet)

## Thursday, July 3

9 a.m.-2 p.m. Highlights of San Antonio/Market Square Tour  
9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sins and Saints Tour  
9 a.m.-6 p.m. Registration  
7 a.m.-2 p.m. Golf  
8 a.m.-Noon Mini-Reunions  
11:30 a.m.-1p.m. Luncheon w/ Jug Burkett (250 max)  
1-3 p.m. War Story Contest  
1-5 p.m. Mini-Reunions  
1-5 p.m. Poker  
3:15-4:30 pm HPF Special Documentary Presentation  
9 p.m.-Midnight Vince Vance

## Friday, July 4

9 a.m.- 6 p.m. Registration  
8 a.m.-Noon Mini-Reunions  
9:30 a.m.-Noon Fourth of July Parade  
1-5 p.m. Poker  
1-5 p.m. Historical Presentation Forum  
1-5 p.m. Mini-Reunions

## Saturday, July 5

9 a.m.-Noon Registration  
8-9:15 a.m. KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast  
10 a.m.-Noon Annual Business Meeting  
9:30 a.m.-Noon Spouse & Guest Brunch  
1-3 p.m. Veterans Benefit's seminar  
1-3 p.m. Women's Seminar  
1-5 p.m. Mini Reunions  
3:15- 4:30 p.m. HPF Special Documentary Presentation II  
5:45 p.m. Final Banquet (doors open)

## Sunday, July 6

Departure Day

# Reunion

## Varied events fill schedule for San Antonio 2008

### Burkett to speak at lunch

B.G. "Jug" Burkett, co-author of the landmark "Stolen Valor — How the Vietnam Generation Was Robbed of its Heroes and its History," will be the lunch speaker on July 3 during the San Antonio Reunion.

Jug's book exposes the myths of Vietnam that have been so destructive to real Vietnam veterans.

"Stolen Valor" won the coveted William E. Colby Award for outstanding military book. Burkett also served as co-chairman of the Texas Vietnam Memorial with former President George H.W. Bush as honorary chairman.

His work has been the subject of two Reader's Digest stories, as well as award-winning pieces on ABC's 20/20 and other national programs.

He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and the University of Tennessee.

Burkett served in Vietnam with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Vietnamese Honor Medal, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

In December 2003, Burkett was awarded the Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the highest award the Army gives a civilian, by former President Bush at the Bush Presidential Library.

In July 2005, Burkett was inducted into the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame at Fort Benning, Ga. Also in July 2005, Burkett stood with Congressman Salazar of Colorado when the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 was introduced on Capitol Hill. President Bush signed the Stolen Valor Act into law in December 2006.

After lunch, Burkett will be available for a book signing and further discussions.

I have heard him several times and I always learn something new.

If you have never heard Burkett speak before, you will come away highly informed on an important subject. I would invite all of you to register for this luncheon with Burkett.

— Angelo Spelios

### New Braunfels parade

As the September/October issue of *The VHPA Aviator* cited, New Braunfels, Texas, is inviting us all to participate in its patriotic parade on July 4.

New Braunfels, a laid-back, friendly, conservative but progressive city of 50,000, attracts visitors internationally to its Wurstfest, the nation's No. 1 water park, an authentic German restaurant, and many fine dining and recreation opportunities.

Home to many military retirees, New Braunfels has nationally acclaimed JROTC programs at each of its three high schools.

Two American Legion posts will be there to help host our visit. The VFW post is providing free, air-conditioned shelter and plenty of shady spaces on the banks of the beautiful Guadalupe River.

Here a real Texas barbecue lunch will be served at a modest fee, along with usual trimmings, refreshments and plenty of cheap beer.

Here is the program for the main event:

Parade steps off at 9:15 a.m. on West San Antonio Street. VHPA may join in at any point. I suggest falling in at the end, behind a military band yet to be approved. A Huey will do a fly-over.

The parade will end about 10 a.m. at the town circle and bandstand gazebo. The mayor and county judge will welcome us. The Community Band will play patriotic music. Free bottled water will be offered.

Expect to re-board buses at 11 a.m. for a 10-minute ride to the VFW.

Enjoy refreshments and mingling until noon.

Depart for San Antonio as you wish.

The city of New Braunfels will offer special incentives for good participation. As it is, expect a small goody bag. We want you to return for extended stays. The city's slogan is: "In Neu Braunfels is das Leben Schoen." (In New Braunfels, life is beautiful.) And so it is.

The coordinator is Roy Knippa, New Braunfels Coordinator. Phone: [REDACTED]. Other coordinators are Russ Jones, [REDACTED]; Tom Andrews, [REDACTED]; and Cliff Hyatt, [REDACTED].

For additional information, contact:

[www.nbjumpin.com](http://www.nbjumpin.com)

— Roy Knippa

### Poker Tournament

Since the First Poker Tournament was so successful — we raised over \$1,000 for the VHPA Scholarship Fund — a second Annual Tournament will be held at the San Antonio Reunion.

This time around it will be an officially sanctioned VHPA event and you will be able to sign up when you register for the reunion.

There will be several changes in the format. Merchandise certificates will be the prizes rather than cash. This was decided due to the varying gaming laws in different states.

The two games will be on Thursday and Friday. Texas Holdem' rules will be followed.

Come and give it a try. It's for a good cause. All prof-

# Reunion

## *Varied events fill schedule for San Antonio 2008*

its will benefit the VHPA Scholarship Fund. Entry fee will be \$25.

— Jack Salm

### **Veterans Benefit Forum**

At our Phoenix Reunion we had, for the first time, a Veterans Benefit Forum run by one of our own members, Vincent "Pike" Anderson, a national service officer for the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

We had an overflow crowd, and I promised all of you to not only hold it again in San Antonio, but also expand the room and add some additional speakers who represent different areas of benefits and medical care earned by you.

It was clear to me there are medical and monetary benefits you may be eligible for, but because of a lack of any communication or information from the VA, go unclaimed.

Got diabetes, hearing loss, cancer, blood disorders, PTSD and any variety of problems that already may be considered Vietnam combat-related? Are you paying for medical care and drugs that may be covered by the VA because they evaluate the problem as Vietnam-related?

This forum is designed to help you make those determinations and will tell you exactly what you need to do to make these claims, where to make them and what documentation the VA needs to see to meet its requirements for coverage.

The comments we received from the participants of the Phoenix seminar let us know that because of our ages and because some of these diseases and problems take decades to show up, its time to get the information.

I encourage all of you to attend and be prepared to ask the questions that will help you understand what exactly you may qualify for and how to apply. I can tell you from personal experience this information has changed my life. I just wish I had done it sooner.

— Rich Buzen

### **War stories, historic presentations**

At the San Antonio Reunion, we will have the third year of our annual War Story Contest (WSC) and Historic Presentation Forums (HPFs).

Last year, more than a dozen members told war stories in our formal session and a number of other stories were collected from members throughout the Phoenix Reunion.

We recorded a total of 29 war stories and HPF events, which are included on a reunion DVD that can be ordered from the VHPA Reunion web pages.

## **REUNION**

The HPF events at Phoenix included a presentation from Texas Tech about its history archive, a presentation by Mike Law, Mike Sheuerman, and Doug Womack on researching and writing unit histories, and presentation of a documentary on the Vietnam War which included a number of veteran interviews.

At the San Antonio Reunion we will have the WSC again and we need members to sign up now so we can get an idea of how long to schedule this popular event. Yes, we will take some members from the audience, but you should not wait and expect to be added that day.

The San Antonio reunion also will include presentations by Texas Tech on a history topic, Joe Klein will provide a presentation on his career as an artist and painter of Vietnam aviation themes, a lunchtime presentation from B.G. "Jug" Burkett, author of Stolen Valor, and two presentations by Cheryl and Pat Fries, producers of the "In the Shadow of the Blade" documentary, who will be showing some of their latest documentary films on the Vietnam War.

We still may add another presentation or two to go with the WSC. If you think you might want to be a speaker or have an idea for a topic, to include book and media author presentations, let us know right away and we'll see if we can schedule it in.

So, contact us to sign up for the war story contest (or at least plan to attend) or let us know your interest for an HPF. Contact me at [REDACTED]

— Jim Fulbrook

### **Women's Forum**

At the Phoenix Reunion we held, for the first time, a forum for wives and significant others led by a VA counselor from the Concord (Calif.) Vet Center.

Francis "Francie" Latimore has been doing this type of counseling for wives and families of war veterans for many years. Once again she has agreed to lead this forum for us in San Antonio.

Based on the "after action report," the Phoenix Women's Forum was a huge success, and some of the typical comments from participants included: "We need more of this" and "why didn't you do this sooner?"

I got the message and assured all we would have the forum again in San Antonio and expand the topics and the format to attract an even wider audience.

Many of us experienced events in Vietnam that forever changed our lives. But our families also were impacted and some of those changes were impossible to explain or understand, or were not even understood by us when we returned.

Some of us have discovered these changes were not

# Reunion

## *Varied events fill schedule for San Antonio 2008*

always for the better, yet the people we love the most were forced to deal with them without understanding the causes and possibly the help available.

Add to that the "silence" that was so pervasive when we returned and you have a recipe for some of the issues that will be discussed at this forum.

I am hoping all of you who are planning to attend the seminar in July. Let your family member know about the Women's Forum and have them decide if they want to attend.

Remember, this is for all female family members — children, grandchildren and wives.

— Rich Buzen

### REUNION

#### Phoenix Reunion

Long after the Phoenix Reunion ended last July, the Reunion Committee and the Executive Council continued to work on the financials.

This year, for the first time in several years, the reunion in Phoenix had a negative cash flow. The bulk of the negative cash flow was attributed to the liability to the hotel for unused rooms. There appear to be two reasons for the unused rooms.

The first reason was an unusually high number of cancellations prior to the cutoff date.

The persons canceling were entitled, under our nor-

mal refund policy, to a complete refund. However, each cancellation left an unused room in our block of rooms for which the VHPA was liable.

When VHPA released the rooms prior to the reunion, the hotel ran an Internet special (at the VHPA rate). However, the hotel was not able to sell all of our unused rooms. The VHPA paid for these unused rooms at the end of the reunion.

The second reason was that, for the first time, Phoenix did not follow any of the algorithms that were used for planning. Attendance was lower than the worst-case scenario. The Phoenix final numbers showed no relation to trends from the prior three reunions.

There was also a negative cash flow associated with some of the events due to the large number of cancellations.

However, the Phoenix reunion was also one of the most successful reunions in one important way — we had a record number of first-time attendees, 72.

I have always felt the VHPA was about the fellowship, finding fellow pilots over the years, and bringing them together. That has always been my platform when I have stood before the membership and asked them for their vote.

So, to me, the fact that over 70 new guys came to the reunion made Phoenix a great success. This, to me, is what VHPA is all about. I am looking forward to San Antonio in 2008 and hope to see you there!

— Angelo Spelios, Past President

# Polling company surveys members

JACK SALM  
VICE PRESIDENT

After two inconclusive surveys, your Executive Council commissioned a professional polling company to conduct a random study of 305 VHPA members to determine the structure of the reunions after the year 2010.

The questions on the survey ranged in content from how many days should the reunion be, what time of year, proposed cities, etc. (See outline at the conclusion of this article.)

The polling company claims a 95-percent accuracy, with a +/- 6 percent of the "True Values." True Values refers to the results obtained if it were possible to interview every VHPA member.

The results of the survey seem to indicate our members have a positive opinion of the organization (95 percent). They generally come to reunions meet and greet old

friends. Overall they are happy with the way things are organized.

Seventy-four percent of those polled indicated a desire to have the reunions moved to a non-holiday date. That said, 23 percent were happy with the July 4 date, while 42 percent were not. July through October and October-November split that percentage.

Sixty-two percent felt a three-day reunion is appropriate, while 26 percent wanted four days.

As suspected, the cities in the mix were those we already have visited. Those receiving the most votes were Orlando, 19 percent; Washington, D.C., 19 percent; Dallas/Fort Worth, 17 percent; and Las Vegas, 16 percent.

It is now the responsibility of your EC and the National Reunion Committee to determine the location of these reunions. A new, three-year contract has to be negotiated with a hotel chain. Now that we have your desires

*Continued on Page 25*

## Questions used in the 2007 Telephone Survey

In late October the Executive Council contracted with TelOpinion Research to conduct a professional telephone survey using the following questions. The Executive Summary of the results of their interview of 305 VHPAers will be posted on the VHPA website and published in The Aviator. The results of this scientific survey are within +6% of the "True Value" if they had been able to interview every VHPA member.

1. How long have you been a member of the Association?

1	5 years or less	2	5-10 years
3	11 to 20 years	4	More than 20 years
5	Not a Member	98	Not sure

2. What is your opinion of the Association:

1	Very positive	2	Somewhat positive
3	Somewhat negative	4	Very negative
98	Not sure		

3. What do you like most about the VHPA?

1	Newsletters	2	Reunions
3	Directory	5	Keeping in touch
6	Web pages	7	The VHPA itself
8	Scholarships	9	Database
98	Not sure		

4. What, if anything, the VHPA is doing, would you like to see changed?

0	Nothing	1	Reunion Date
2	Lower Reunion Cost	3	Lower Dues
98	Not sure		

5. How often have you attended an Association reunion?

1	Once	2	Two to 5 times
3	More than 5 times	4	Never
98	Not sure		

6. Thinking about the annual reunions you have attended, would you say they:

0	Have not attended	1	Exceeded my expectations
2	Met my expectations	3	Did not meet my expectations
98	Not sure		

7. What is the primary reason you've not yet attended a reunion?

0	Have Attended	1	Cost
2	Dates the Reunion was held	3	Reunion Location
4	Just not interested	5	Work
6	Health reasons	7	Not convenient
98	Not sure		

8. What are your top THREE Reunion location choices for the three Reunion starting in 2011? Please make THREE selections.

0	None	1	Orlando, FL
2	Chicago, IL	3	San Francisco, CA
4	Dallas/Ft Worth, TX	5	Las Vegas, NV
6	Nashville, TN	7	Washington, DC
8	San Diego, CA	9	Houston, TX
10	Atlanta, GA	11	Seattle, WA
12	San Antonio, TX	13	Phoenix, AZ
14	Philadelphia, PA	15	Denver, CO
16	New York City, NY	17	Boston, MA
18	New Orleans, LA	19	Kansas City, MO

9. For the past 24 years, the reunions have been held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Were you to have a choice, when would you prefer the reunions be held starting in 2011?

1	4 <sup>th</sup> of July	2	January thru March
3	April thru June	4	July thru Sept
5	Oct thru Nov	6	Anytime
98	Not sure		

10. Would you prefer the Reunion be held with a holiday or non-holiday weekend?

1	Holiday	2	Non-holiday
98	Not sure		

11. In the past, the VHPA has been able to negotiate favorable room rates over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday. If room rates are higher for a date other than the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, would you still prefer to have another date, or would you then prefer to stick with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?

1	4 <sup>th</sup> of July	2	Other date
98	Not sure		

12. What is the *most* additional you'd be willing to pay per night for a hotel room in any major city for any date with current room rates \$115 - \$125?

1	\$0 per night	2	\$10 per night
3	\$20 per night	4	\$30 per night
5	More than \$30	98	Not sure

13. If the final banquet is on a Saturday, how many days should the reunion last?

1	3 days Start Thursday	2	4 days Start Wed
3	5 days Start Tuesday	4	6 days Start Mon
98	Not sure		

14. From the following list, what is the most important to you about the reunions?

1	Opportunity to see friends	2	Vacation
3	Attractions in city	4	Updates & info on VHPA
98	Not sure		

15. Should the reunion include a location unique special event or activity?

1	Yes	2	No
98	Not sure		

16. What type of special event within the reunion itself, in addition to the Welcome Reception and the Banquet, would you like to see added to the reunion schedule that would make you more likely to attend?

0	None	1	Historical significance
2	Area tours	3	Top Entertainment/Music
3	Golf	98	Not sure

17. If you attend a reunion, would you normally bring family members with you?

1	Yes	2	No
3	Sometimes	98	Not sure

18. In 2001 the VHPA designated the Vietnam Archive affiliated with Texas Tech University as its official repository for Association and member memorabilia. How likely are you to contact or donate to the Archive?

1	Extremely	2	Very
3	Somewhat	4	Not very likely
98	Not sure		

19. Currently the VHPA provides the annual Directory in "hard copy." In the future, how would you prefer the Directory to be provided?

1	"Hard copy" Directory mailed each year
2	CD of Directory mailed each year
3	Directory published on the password secure VHPA Web site
98	Not sure

20. The VHPA has six online membership applications at [WWW.VHPAMEMBER.ORG](http://WWW.VHPAMEMBER.ORG) to join the VHPA, give a gift membership, pay your membership dues, change your membership information, buy a VHPA product, make a donation or provide information about a deceased pilot. How likely are you to use any of the applications over the next year?

1	Very likely	2	Somewhat likely
3	Not likely at all	98	Not sure

21. In which State do you live?

22. What is your VHPA membership

1	Life	2	Regular
3	Not currently a member		

# Survey

in hand we can proceed with the negotiations. As things progress we will keep you posted.

## SURVEY RESEARCH REPORT

1. How long have you been a member of the organization?

- 5 years or less — 21%
- 5-10 years — 27%
- 11-20 years — 27%
- More than 20 — 16%
- Not a current member — 7%
- Not sure — 3%

2. What is your opinion of the association?

- Positive — 93%
- Negative — 3%

3. What do you like most about the association?

- Keeping in touch with friends — 32%
- Directory — 17%
- Magazine — 15%

4. What, if anything the VHPA is doing, would you like to see changed?

- Nothing — 60%
- Reunion date — 12%

5. How often have you attended an association reunion?

- Once — 17%
- 2-5 times — 27%
- More than 5 times — 11%
- Never — 44%

6. Thinking about the reunions you have attended would you say they:

*Continued on Page 26*

# Survey

- Exceeded your expectations — 29%
- Met your expectations — 65%
- Did not meet your expectations — 4%

7. What is the primary reason you've not yet attended a reunion?

- Cost — 11%
- Date reunion held — 29%
- Reunion location — 11%
- Just not interested — 15%
- Work — 11%

8. Top 3 convention locations.

- Orlando — 19%
- Washington, D.C. — 19%
- Dallas-Fort Worth — 17%
- Las Vegas — 16%
- San Diego — 13%
- Chicago — 13%
- Other — 26%

9. For the past 24 years the reunions have been held through the 4th of July time frame. Were you to have a choice when would you prefer the reunions be held starting in 2011?

- Through July 4 — 23%
- January/March — 4%
- April/June — 19%
- July/September — 21%
- October/November — 21 %
- Not sure — 11%

10. Would you prefer the reunion be held in association with a holiday or non-holiday weekend?

- Holiday — 11%
- Non-holiday — 74%
- Not sure — 15%

11. In the past the VHPA has been able to negotiate favorable room rates through the July 4 timeframe. If room rates are higher for a date other than through the July 4 timeframe, would you still prefer to have another date, or would you then prefer to stick with the July 4 timeframe?

- Through the July 4 — 16%
- Other date — 71%
- Not sure — 13%

13. What is the most additional you'd be willing to pay per night for a hotel room in any major city for any date with current room rates \$115-\$125?

- \$0 per night — 21%
- \$10 per night — 20%
- \$20 per night — 19%
- \$30 per night — 13%
- More than \$30 — 12%
- Not sure — 12%

14. If the final banquet is on Saturday how many days should the reunion last?

- 3 days (starts Thursday) — 62%
- 4 Days (starts Wednesday) — 26%
- 5 days (starts Tuesday) — 5%
- 6 days (starts Monday) — 3%
- Not Sure — 5%

15. From the following list, what is the most important to you about the reunion?

- Opportunity to see friends — 83%
- Vacation — 2%
- Attractions in city — 5%
- Updates (information on organization) — 6%
- Not sure — 4%

16. Should the reunion include a location unique special event or activity?

- Yes — 38%
- No — 49%
- Not sure — 13%

17. What type of special event within the reunion itself, in addition to the Welcome Reception and the Banquet would you like to see added to the reunion schedule that would make you more likely to attend?

- None — 48%
- Variety of special events — less than 5%
- Other — 7%
- Not sure — 22%

18. If you attend a reunion would you normally bring family members with you?

- Yes — 70%
- No — 22%
- Sometimes — 4%
- Not sure — 4%

19. In 2001 the VHPA designated the Vietnam Archive affiliated with Texas Tech University as its official repository for association memorabilia. How likely are you to contact or donate to the archive?

- Extremely — 6%
- Very — 17%
- Somewhat likely — 42%
- Not very likely — 33%
- Not sure — 3%

20. Currently the VHPA provides the annual directory in "hard copy." In the future how would you prefer the directory be provided?

- Hard copy mailed each year — 49%
- CD mailed each year — 30%
- Published on website — 16%
- Not sure — 5%

21. The VHPA has six online membership applications at [www.VHPAMembership.org](http://www.VHPAMembership.org) to join the VHPA, give a gift membership, pay your membership dues, change your membership information, buy a VHPA product, make a donation or provide information about a deceased pilot. How likely are you to use any of the applications over the next year?

- Very likely — 27%
- Somewhat likely — 40%
- Not very likely — 31%
- Not sure — 3%

22. Membership

- Life — 15%
- Regular — 85%

23. Dues status

- Current — 58%
- Non-current — 42%

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

5530 Birdcage St., Suite 105 • Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698

(800) 505-VHPA (voice) • (916) 966-8743 (fax) • HQ@vhpa.org (e-mail) • www.vhpa.org (website)

## Membership application/change of address

New application       Address change       Directory correction

Membership dues:       Annual: \$36       Three years: \$99       Life: \$540\*

Aviator subscription only:       Annual: \$36       Three years: \$99

Add \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as my contribution to:  Membership Fund     Scholarship Fund

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my MasterCard/Visa credit card  
 Enclosed is a check/money order payable to VHPA

Add \$20 for printed Membership Directory  
 Add \$20 for Membership Directory on CD

Credit card No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_ SERVICE BRANCH: \_\_\_\_\_

COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS: \_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL SECURITY NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

Information about each Vietnam unit:

Dates in units		Unit	Location	Call sign
	From:	To:		
1st				
2nd				
3rd				
4th				

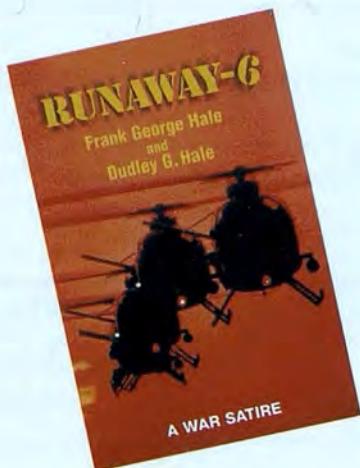
Information about you: Helicopters flown, medals/awards, talents, hobbies, and anything else:

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association? Referred by? Was membership a gift? From whom?

# Register online for Reunion 2008 in San Antonio

Go to: [vhpareunion.org](http://vhpareunion.org)  
to register online after  
Jan. 15

The mail-in/fax registration form will  
be printed in the next issue of  
*The VHPA Aviator*



**INFI<sup>∞</sup>ITY**  
PUBLISHING.COM

is proud to announce:

## Runaway-6

by

Frank George Hale &  
Dudley G. Hale

**Runaway-6** is *Catch-22* meets *M\*A\*S\*H* meets *Dr. Strangelove*, with a devilish Vietnam twist. A mixture of action and black comedy, **Runaway-6** is truly original.

To order online:  
[www.buybooksontheweb.com](http://www.buybooksontheweb.com)  
call toll free: (877) BUY-BOOK  
local call: (610) 941-9999

Author: Frank George Hale &  
Dudley G. Hale  
Keyword: runaway  
ISBN#: 0-7414-3935-2  
Price: 10.95 + 4.50 S&H