



# THE VHPA AVIATOR

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

January/February 2008 Vol. 26, No. 1



DAVE RITTMAN PHOTO

Pilots head for parked Hueys to begin their day's missions with the 1st Cavalry Division.  
This photograph was taken at the An Khe Golf Course in 1967.

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# Registration open for reunion

Happy New Year.

I hope everyone had a great holiday and is looking forward to 2008. San Antonio promises to be another great reunion, as only Texans can do.

The end of the year was saddened by a phone call I got on Dec. 27 from my daughter telling me about a fallen brother, Clifford Mike Thomas, Class 66-22/66-24.

Mike and I go back to Fort Rucker in 1980 and our girls were inseparable in school. My family has had close ties since and our deepest sympathy to Barbara and the girls.

This has been an interesting time since we left

Phoenix.

We had a hard pill to swallow with the large loss of revenue, but we also had a good investment period where we made more than 6 percent on our investments. This can only be contributed to the diligence Bob Potvin and Bob Smith put into making sure we grow at a steady pace.

The registration is open and I hope all sign up to meet us in San Antonio. We will have a much different program than in the past to allow you to see the great city of San Antonio at your pace.

We also will have a much quieter welcome reception so, while you are eating and trying to renew old friendships, you will not be blasted out of the room.

Of course, on Thursday night, it will be rocking time with Vince Vance and his show to blow you away. We had him in Dallas in 2004 and all those who attended raved about the show and those who didn't go wished they had.

Friday night find your friends and visit a restaurant of your choice and then find a spot to watch the fireworks that the city puts on.

We have some locals trying to get the restaurants in

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

the downtown area to offer specials to us. We will see how that comes out.

Of course, on the final night we will have the banquet where we will toast all of our fallen brothers. Added this year we will start toasting all who have died after tour.

Also on that Saturday we will have our Annual Business Meeting where we will vote on two positions on the Executive Council, the vice president and the junior member at large.

If any of you want to run for office please contact Woody McFarlin and let him know of your intentions. The cutoff date for applications is in June, so don't wait until the last minute to decide.

I am pleased to announce Dave Rittman has come back on board to help Dana Young on the National Reunion Committee. Thank you for stepping forward once again, Dave.

Mike Law and the Membership Committee are trying some new ideas to increase membership. It will be in several steps, but hopefully we will see more and more members joining and staying.

I am happy to announce we are over 7,800 current members. That is the largest number the VHPA has ever enjoyed.

I am still working on a few of my friends who have never joined, in hopes that they will at least see what we offer. I know I will see two old friends I haven't seen in over 30 years at this reunion and I hope to get three more and their families to come.

Again, I want to wish all of you a joyous and prosperous New Year and hope to see a lot of you in San Antonio.

— Mike Whitten, President

## WANT TO BE ON EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE?

There are two officer positions to be elected to the 2008 VHPA Executive Committee:

Vice President and Junior Member at Large

If you are interested in either position, submit a letter or e-mail of intent to me no later than June 12, 2008. I will send you the complete application packet by return mail or e-mail.

Send your letter to:

Woody McFarlin  
515 Mars Hill Road  
Powder Springs, Ga. 30127  
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Mike Whitten

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# Enemy fire kills pilot in gunship

I was a member of A Battery, 4/77th ARA, 101st Airborne Division from January through December 1969.

I extended for six months and wanted to fly medevacs or slicks. I tell people that I guess someone needed a gun platoon leader and hijacked me.

According to the VHPA's records, WO Tom Rogers died of injuries he received when his UH-1C crashed near Dalat on July 8, 1970.

I was flying with Tom that day as part of a 48th AHC fire team covering an insert of some ARVN troops. This was not my regular aircraft and crew. I was the AC and was flying in the right seat.

CW2 Ed Brophy was my wingman. I don't recall names of the rest of his crew.

We were about 500 feet above the trees when we heard a loud bang and immediately lost directional control. The ship was spinning so hard that I lost my glasses. I don't remember any conversation via the intercom, but I heard Ed Brophy report that we had been hit by enemy fire.

I tried an autorotation, but the last thing I remember is that we were still spinning. When I came to, I remember hearing voices and thinking — "Well, I'm not dead."

I still had my flight helmet on, so I was hearing radio communications. Not long after that the radios went dead.

I could hear the crew moving around, but we were unable to communicate effectively. Someone held my left hand to let me know they were there, but we couldn't understand each other.

The helicopter crashed on a slope. It must have bounced and rolled until it came to rest. I was pinned to the ground by some of the wreckage. I do not recall the names of the gunner or crew chief, but it was their voices I heard and they who held my hand.

### Crew tries to free pilot

One of them, I think it was the gunner, had a broken leg. Working together as best they could, they could not free me. I remember having to yell at them in a loud voice, but they could hardly hear me because my face was pinned to the earth.

I remember smelling the earth and figuring that I must have been thrown from the cockpit in the crash. I later learned that a Dustoff ship extracted the gunner and crew chief. I had to wait until enough ARVNs gathered to lift the wreckage off me. I am pretty certain they rolled what was left of the fuselage down the slope a little further to free me.

I was very groggy. A Dustoff ship lowered a jungle penetrator; they strapped me in and lifted me out. Once on the Dustoff ship, I asked about my crew. They told me they had already been evacuated.

## LETTERS

Various 48th Assault Helicopter Company members have photo scrapbooks that include pictures of the wreckage. All were taken after we were extracted and after the ARVN had rolled it down the hill. You can tell the twisted wreck was a Huey, but just barely.

I was taken to an aid station at either Phan Thiet or Phan Rang. After receiving some treatment, I was taken to the hospital at Cam Ranh. When I woke up after surgery I was in the ICU at Cam Ranh.

Because I had a broken back and was paralyzed from the waist down, I was in a striker frame. That device has a padded board on the top and straps to sandwich the person between two rigid frames so they can roll you over.

I learned that Tom Rogers was in the bed next to me, but I couldn't see him. He died soon after that from his injuries. Our CO, Maj. Terrell, visited and gave us Purple Hearts.

I also had a serious urinary tract infection. I was hooked up to all sorts of IVs for a long time. It was a total of 17 days from the day we crashed until I was back in the States.

I spent seven of those days in Japan. I spent four months in the Fort Lewis hospital because that was near my hometown.

Then they moved me to the Long Beach VA hospital that specialized in spinal injuries. I was there for seven or eight months with about 220 other guys with spinal injuries.

Besides the physical recovery efforts at the VA hospital, I learned a lot about depression and hope.

In January 1971, I was discharged from the military. Since that time, I've lived in the Seattle area. At first I lived with my parents, but now I'm married and have my own house.

#### Author former PVA president

I am the executive director of the Northwest Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

My wheelchair and I have attended 25 or so Paralyzed Veterans of America conventions. I served as national president for two years, in 1988 and 1989.

The San Francisco VHPA Reunion was my first. I really enjoyed it, especially meeting some of the 48th AHC guys at the mini-reunion.

Now, the VHPA's investigation report of this incident mentions that the helicopter was inverted when we crashed, but I cannot comment on that. I first learned about the inverted crash was when some of the Jokers contacted me after the 2004 VHPA Reunion.

John "Jack" Michaels

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I want to tell you, as a pilot who flew in Southeast Asia that I have enjoyed the VHPA History Book very much. It brings to mind many memories, fond and otherwise.

There are some great stories in the issue and many incidents of extreme courage and skill and bravery. I have

many friends who made it back from this war and a few who did not.

You have a very good publication and a group of great people in it.

However, I do have a small bone to pick. On Page 43 of the book, "Charlie wins one," your writer should do some research before calling this battle at Con Thien a Marine defeat.

He should read "Con Thien — Hill of Angels" by Jim Coen to gain insight.

Over the objections of Marine Generals Krulak and Walt, General Westmorland placed Marines at Con Thien with instructions to hold it even though they were not permitted to conduct offensive operations into the DMZ.

They had to sit there and be bombarded every day without being able to attack.

Despite your author's assertion, the Marines, despite terrible losses, never gave up that hill.

The hill was turned over to the ARVN in 1969 and they eventually lost it to the NVA. Same with Khe Sahn.

As a former Marine grunt and pilot, I would never disrespect my fellow warriors, the Army. The Army fought with great courage and perseverance despite all the political decisions that hampered the American fighting man.

In several of the articles, on Pages 43 & 53 in particular, the Marines are disrespected.

Shame on your editors for letting this snippet get into this fine book!

I flew many missions in support of army Special Forces troops and would never disrespect them.

You know, we are all brothers in arms and every one of the men I knew in Southeast Asia did their level best.

All I ask is that before your contributing authors do some

#### DFC Society honors aviators

There is a national DFC Society that memorializes the great feats of aviation history, from Charles Lindberg's time up to yours and mine!

I encourage all VHPA members to visit the website: [dfcsociety.org](http://dfcsociety.org) to see what a fine job they are doing to commemorate flyers.

To increase participation, the society is forming local chapters as we have in Louisville, Ky., where we meet quarterly for fellowship and some great storytelling.

I am humbled every time we get together to hear about flying the "Hump" in World War II and the guys who flew in China, North Africa, Chosan and Basra.

There are times gunship driving in the First Cav actually takes a backseat to some of my heroes.

If you know anyone who holds this honor in the southern Indiana or north central Kentucky, please send him or her my way so that we may also honor him or her.

Rodger McAlister

Falcon 27  
A/2/20 ARA 1st Cav

research before throwing rocks at another of the Armed forces

Sincerely  
Gary D Johnson, D.D.S.  
Former Marine Helicopter Aviator  
[REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

I am sure everyone has a story about George Marcotte, a TAC legend from Fort Wolters.

Okay, just one from me that involved calling George late in the evening and needing bond money for a just a trivial brush with the law. I called George, late one Friday evening from the Mineral Wells Police Department because I didn't have the necessary cash money to post bond and he said, "You will get busted out of flight school for this, Kernagis.

About an hour later, the guard let me out. When I asked who posted the bond money, they said they were told I would know whom.

After scrambling the cash together the next day, I put a plain envelope with the bond money on his desk with a "Thank You, I'll always remember."

I visited George in the Mineral Wells area many times over the years. He since has died. How about some other stories out there about George Marcotte, a TAC Legend and a very good man?

Anthony Kernagis  
66-21 B2, 67-5 A4  
2nd WOC

\*\*\*\*\*

Nice survey — broad topics — good return information! The general membership and the 4 percent of the surveyed "active" membership responded very soundly to the EC — twice. Once with the

### *New member knew about VHPA*

Merry Christmas, Gary Moore  
Thank you, Don Reuser,  
Good choice, Nancy Moore

The membership chairman called to thank me for joining the VHPA. Then he asked the searching question, "What finally motivated me to join?"

I've known about the VHPA since the 1980s. We lived in Dallas for over 25 years until I retired from EDS. Several of my friends encouraged me and invited me to join.

My good friend, Don Reuser, sent me several applications in the mail over the years. I kept meaning to fill one out but ... I have heard good things about VHPA reunions and the Membership Directories.

So this year my wife, Nancy, was working with her computer and asked me what I wanted for Christmas. I said, "Okay, I want to join the VHPA."

She found the VHPA's website and completed my application online.

I remember the camaraderie I felt in Vietnam while serving with B Troop, 1st of the 9th Air Cav. I'm looking forward to linking up with my friends.

W. Gary Moore

extremely low attendance in Phoenix (1,132, and a 97K loss) and the other with the "positive for change" responses to the telephone survey that says to the EC ... it's "too damn hot" in July for our reunions.

There are many good people who belong to this great organization, but just look at the percentage who have never attended a reunion ... 44 percent.

Why? I'm sure there are a myriad of personal and professional reasons for not attending but now, with the survey completed, the EC has some real membership opinions to consider and act upon, such as:

- 65 percent said some date other than "through the 4th"
- 74 percent said "other than a holiday"
- 71 percent said room rates were not all that important compared to an "other date"

WOW. This is really good, viable information for our National Reunion Committee to start their planning cycle with.

As a life member of the VHPA for nearly 23 years and a reunion chairman (Reno in 1991), I truly believe the location for our reunions is not nearly as important as the opportunity to "keep in touch with friends."

The National Reunion Committee already has venues for the next three years that will be able to accommodate 1,000-2,000 people during the 4th of July timeframe, it's in the contract. But maybe, just maybe, by having our reunions other than over the 4th of July, as requested by the membership, those locations that were not available (because of the holiday timeframe) just might be anxious to welcome 1,500 veterans in late May or mid-September.

Gentlemen, I've been to our nation's capital in the fall and it's cool and beautiful, not humid; it's a great time to visit.

I applaud the work of the EC and just hope the reunion dates, in 2011 and beyond, will be more welcomed by the membership which, in turn, I'm sure will bring some of us back to the location and the purpose of the reunion in the first place — reuniting with old friends.

Proudly,  
T.L. Pearcy Sr.  
L00283

The "Original" Blueghost 18  
[REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

In April 1967, I commanded Company A, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry during Operation Portsea.

On Day 2 of the operation, my second platoon incurred a casualty after dark, necessitating a Dustoff. The evac crew, I later was told, came from Vung Tau and, because the normal standby choppers had already been committed, a "pickup" crew that had not flown together took the mission.

The LZ was in palmetto, which had been marginally cleared. The Huey touched down, loaded the casualty, and

upon attempting to take off, struck the tail rotor against a palmetto, rolled to one side and crashed.

The casualty died and, I believe, the gunner also. The pilot and crew chief were injured and evacuated by helicopter later that night. The copilot stayed with the second platoon until next day, when the Huey was cannibalized and later burned.

Ironically, the casualty was a British citizen, a resident of Wales, who had been drafted into the U.S. Army, as he had been in the United States on a work visa for over six months. He was, to say the least, truculent and very resentful of any discipline.

Apparently, he dropped his M-16 when the platoon moved into the night position. It was loaded and not locked; it discharged, striking him at the left eyebrow.

My HQ patrol was about 1.5 kilometers distant on a hilltop, where we could maintain better communication and I spent the majority of that night relaying traffic regarding this incident. I also have spent many hours wondering how we could in those days have thought that a poor soldier was better than no soldier at all.

This one, whom we had tried to separate from the

## LETTERS

Army before deployment, cost us more lives and the helicopter itself.

I spent several years as an enlisted helicopter mechanic prior to being commissioned and was curious about the aircraft accident itself. The copilot told me that the door gunner, who was clearing the tail rotor on the starboard side, apparently warned the pilot of dangerous proximity but, facing aft, gave him the opposite correction. I can see this having happened in a "scrape together" crew and it points up the importance of a crew training together.

Another tidbit: On the day after, as we were awaiting approval to burn the Huey, my third platoon discovered what was then the largest cache of weapons and ammo found.

The platoon leader was Randy Jackson, who went on to complete flight school and command one of the first attack helicopter troops at Fort Hood. He is now retired and living in Colorado.

Carl Unlaub

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**Attend Reunion 2008  
in San Antonio**

Veterans Day honors those who have served in the armed forces of the United States. In particular, we honor those who paid the ultimate price for the freedoms and liberties we all enjoy. This day is rightly celebrated with traditional parades and other ceremonies, and I fly my American flag proudly not only this day, but every day.

Local television coverage featuring interviews with veterans from different wars has become another tradition on this day, and it's important to hear the perspective from those who still might fall to the ground if someone yells, "Incoming!"

As a Vietnam veteran, I always listen with interest when another Vietnam vet is interviewed.

Unfortunately, the veteran the TV station chooses to interview always looks the same. He will likely have a scruffy, graying beard, an earring or a tattoo and will generally be wearing jungle fatigues.

Why? Because that's what most Vietnam veterans are supposed to look like or, at least, that's what the public is led to believe.

I sometimes wonder why the TV stations don't run the same Vietnam veteran interview every year, since it never changes.

## What is typical veteran?

So what is a typical Vietnam veteran?

First, one cannot say a typical Vietnam veteran engaged in combat because, statistically, that was only about one in six — most were support troops.

Divorce rates and suicide rates are well within the norm for the general population, so nothing atypical there to attribute to a typical Vietnam veteran.

Numerous studies have shown that Vietnam veterans are more likely to have gone to college, to have a job, to own a home and to earn more money each year than their peers who did not serve.

I'd suggest that there is no "typical" Vietnam veteran. No two veterans had the same experience in Vietnam, and how each reacted to their war experience after returning to

## WANTED

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



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the United States was largely a consequence of his emotional stability and mental maturity before his departure from the United States.

So who should local TV stations interview for their annual Vietnam Veterans Day interview? How 'bout me?

Am I a typical Vietnam vet? Don't know, but I'm not atypical. You'll find me wearing a coat and tie. Here's my story:

I served in Vietnam between November 1967 and November 1968 as a helicopter gunship pilot.

On Veterans Day, I have many poignant feelings about other pilots who were also my friends, like Jim Moore and Sam Gardner, whose return flight home from Vietnam was in boxes.

I also remember how fortunate I am to have returned physically and mentally intact. I am married and have never been divorced.

I was fully employed until my recent retirement, and I was never turned down for a job because of being a Vietnam veteran.

I have never been called a "baby killer."

Since retiring, I have now become a City Council member for the great city of Garland. I never indulged in drugs before, during or after my service in Vietnam.

I don't have a scruffy beard, and my hair (what little is left) is not tied in a ponytail.

I don't wear jungle fatigues, and I don't "work for food."

When I came back from Vietnam, there were no parades or other expressions of gratitude from the American people, and I have read that I'm supposed to be resentful.

However, this has never bothered me. Why should the American people thank me? It is I who would like to thank America for the opportunity to have served the greatest country in the world.

Rick Williams

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Rick Williams retired from the Social Security Administration. He holds a Bronze Star Medal, an Air Medal for Valor and a Purple Heart.

**Richard Yood, MAS**  
Gladiator 21

  
**vernon**  
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## Keith J. Bauer

Retired Col. Keith J. Bauer, 86, died Dec. 15 in Yorktown, Va.

Bauer enlisted in the Army 1942 and joined flight school class J42 at Randolph Airfield, Texas. He soloed in May 1942, just before the June 6 Department of the Army establishment of organic Army Aviation as an adjunct to the Field Artillery.

He was commissioned and given command of a company of 13 L-4 Piper Cubs. He led the unit for three years in combat in North Africa, Italy France and Germany.

Lt. Bauer was an innovator and tried new tactics. He introduced night missions in the uninstrumented "Grasshoppers."

During the invasion of south France, after Normandy, he climbed into the cockpit of his airplane suspended from a boom off the side of a cargo ship. After getting the engine to max RPM the aircraft was dropped and had to gain lift prior to hitting the water 50 feet below.

He adjusted naval gunfire, but Bauer had no ship to return to and landed the airplane on the beach once his fuel was gone. He depended on the ground forces to hold enough beach to have room to land.

Bauer said "hardest day of my life" occurred in April 1945 when he became the first American to find the concentration camp at Dachau, Germany. Circling overhead, he saw the guards preparing to flee. Some were herding prisoners into the tarpaper buildings and setting the buildings on fire.

Bauer landed in the field next to the camp, marched up to the gate, and demanded to be taken to the commander. He announced to the commander that he had been sent to take command of the camp. He was escorted around the camp and gave orders to the commander who relayed them to the guards.

He was the sole American at the camp until the next day when the ground troops arrived. He saved many lives.

Ever the innovator, Capt. Bauer spent the months just after the peace in Germany teaching himself to fly captured Germany airplanes. The Germany aircraft were a real step up from the "Puddle jumpers" he knew so well.

With the outbreak of the Korean War, Bauer was trained in helicopters and given command of the H-13 medevacs supporting the 4077th MASH. He was awarded a Silver Star Medal for rescuing a downed Air Force pilot near the enemy lines.

He flew Cardinal Spellman of New York on a Christ-

## TAPS



Bauer



mas 1952 tour of units. The Cardinal gave him a special blessing after a flight in especially bad weather.

Home from Korean, he commanded an H-21 company at Fort Ord, Calif., where the seeds of the air assault concept were nurtured. He experimented with tactics that later would be used in the air assault doctrine. He showed that H-21s could fly at night in formation without lights, guided only by the exhaust from engines.

He often responded to emergencies. One winter he took the H-21s to rescue the passengers of a snowbound train. As it happened, the passengers included the Boston Celtics NBA basketball team. The team presented him with a punch bowl, which he displayed in his home.

In March 1954 at Camp Hale, Colo., he executed a rescue at 14,000 feet to pick up members of the Cold Weather Rescue team who had crashed onto the mountain. This was thought to be the highest flight of a helicopter with a full load on an operational mission at that time.

Bauer served as a charter member of the Presidential Flight Detachment. He established the maintenance standards for the detachment that first flew President Eisenhower. Bauer would next command the 4th Transportation Company in Germany, his fifth aviation company level command..

In 1966-67, Bauer commanded the 15th Transportation Battalion of the 1st Air Cavalry Division in Vietnam. The battalion was responsible for the maintenance and repair of the 430 aircraft of the division. The battalion was the largest battalion in the Army with 1500 troops assigned.

Following Vietnam, Bauer worked as an assistant to Joe Cribbins, the godfather of Army Aviation, in the Pentagon.

In 1968, Pope Paul VI was scheduled to make a historic visit to South America. The Vatican was worried for the safety of the Pope. A request was made to the Pentagon to helicopter the pope around on the tour. Col. Bauer led the team, and with a CH-47 and a borrowed airline seat, flew the pope safely on his tour.

Bauer departed the Pentagon to command of the Aircraft Maintenance Brigade at Hunter Army Airfield and Fort Stewart, Ga. The brigade maintained and repaired the 425 aircraft of the Aviation School fleet. While contractors maintained the flight school fleet at Fort Rucker, aviation soldiers maintained the fleet at Hunter. At its peak, the brigade had 8,000 aviation soldiers assigned.

Upon retirement Bauer worked 10 years for the U.S. Department of Energy as an expert on aviation fuels. He was instrumental in keeping airlines and agricultural aviation flying during the fuel embargos of 1974 and 1978-79.

Bauer was recipient of the Legion of Merit with 3 clusters, and the air medal with 27 clusters.

## David Lee Caldon

David Lee Caldon, 65, died in his home on Dec. 14. Caldon retired from the Marine Corps, with more than 20 years of service, as a lieutenant colonel.

He served two tours in Vietnam.

During the first tour in 1967-68 he was OpCon from HMM-164 at Phu Bai to 2nd Bn, 26th Marines at the end of December 1967, when they were assigned security for Phu Bai Air Base. He was the air liaison officer for 2/26 based at Hill 558 at Khe Sanh during the siege and his call sign was "Hastyfoot 14." His second tour 72-73, he was maintenance officer with HMA-369.

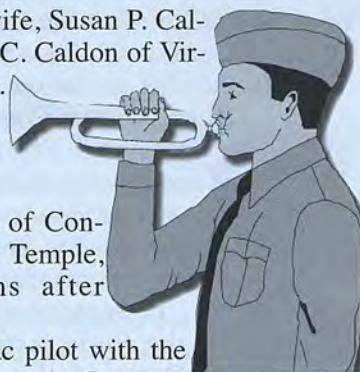
## TAPS

Caldon was the recipient of the Silver Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with Gold Star and 18th Award, Combat Action Ribbon, and the Navy Achievement Medal for Valor.

He was a life member of VHPA.

Caldon was an investment associate with Merrill Lynch for the past 21 years.

He is survived by his wife, Susan P. Caldon; two sons, Christopher C. Caldon of Virginia Beach and James P. Caldon of Ramona.



### Charles M. Clapp

Charles M. Clapp, 60, of Conroe, Texas, died Feb. 11 in Temple, Texas, of complications after surgery.

He served as a medevac pilot with the 498th Medical Detachment in January 1970-71.

After his retirement from the Army, Clapp served in aviation safety, as a truck driver and as a deputy sheriff.

### Alan J. Fry

Alan J. Fry, 63, of Indian Hill, Ohio, died Dec. 27 in Park City, Utah, after suffering a heart attack.

He graduated from flight school with Class 67-18 A-1. Fry served two tours as a helicopter pilot in South Vietnam, with the 128 AHC in November 1967-January 1968; with A/4 AVN/ 4INF in January-June 1968; and with the 129 AHC from January-September 1969.

He attained the rank of captain and was awarded three Distinguished Flying Crosses and two Bronze Star Medals. He was an active life member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

Alan Fry never stopped moving. A 30-year Indian Hill resident, he was frequently seen running mile after mile on the roads through the village.

He completed numerous marathons, and for an extra challenge he decided to run 50 miles on his 50th birthday.

He coached youth soccer for almost 20 years. Fry also had a lifelong passion for skiing, which he shared by working as a ski instructor at Perfect North Slopes in Indiana for 10 years.

More recently, he spent three winters in Utah as a ski instructor at Park City Mountain Resort. In Utah, his

biggest admirers were the young skiers and snowboarders, who watched in amazement as he launched through some of the biggest terrain parks and ski jumps in the United States.

After his military service, he returned to Cincinnati to work in hospital administration at Deaconess and Children's Hospitals, and then worked as a consultant with Management Performance International.

His wife, Patricia, and two children survive him: Laura, 25, a graduate student at the University of Denver, and William, 20, a junior at Cornell University.

### Edward J. Massey

Edward J. Massey, 63, of Manchester, N.J., died Feb. 3 at Jersey Shore University Medical Center in Neptune from injuries suffered in an automobile accident on Jan. 18.

He was born in Montclair, N.J., on Aug. 31, 1944; he spent his youth in Toms River, graduating from Toms River High School in 1963.

Massey joined the Army in 1966. CWO Massey served his country in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 as an Army helicopter pilot.

He was discharged from the Army in 1970.

### Chadwick C. Payne

Chadwick C. Payne died Feb. 9 after suffering from diabetes for several years and having dialysis three times a week for the past couple of years.

He graduated from Lawton High School in 1955 and from Cameron University in 1957. He then attended the University of Oklahoma and graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1960.

He married Pat Tompkins on Dec. 31, 1957, in Burk Burnett, Texas.

Payne served two tours of duty in the Army in Vietnam, flying helicopter gunships. He was awarded the Silver Star, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Air Medal with 49 clusters, the Purple Heart Medal, and Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.

Payne was director of the Delta Elderly Nutrition Program, serving Stephens and McClain counties for 31 years.

He was a talented Western artist and enjoyed painting, classical music and gun collecting.

Survivors include his wife; Pat, two sons; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

### Willard Gary Rusk

Willard "Bill" Gary Rusk died Dec. 11 in Denver after battling pancreatic cancer for several months. He was 62.

He joined the Army in 1966 and earned his wings in warrant officer flight Class 70-9. He served with the 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) in South Vietnam from June 1970 until June 1971.

His call sign was Dustoff 32. One of his Vietnam favorite stories related to helping recover the crew and



passengers from a downed medevac Huey. The enemy had the crash site surrounded and there was no possibility of a second recovery mission. They loaded all 19 passengers in their Huey and somehow got into the air.

After Vietnam, Rusk served with an Army fire rescue team. He displayed a photo of a Huey hovering up to a burning vehicle in much the same situation that we see USAF HH-43 "Pedro" helicopters doing their fire suppression and rescue missions.

He left the Army in 1979. For a time he flew helicopters around New Zealand for a tuna fishing fleet.

Rusk worked for United Airlines for about 10 years.

When his mother died and his father's health deteriorated, he returned home to care for him. He was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and helped in their genealogical efforts.

Rusk's cancer was diagnosed about a year ago.

His father, Dave, and two children, Nick and Julie, survive him.

## TAPS

### **Stephen Patton Shepherd**

Retired Army Col. Stephen Patton Shepherd, 59, of Lexington, Ky., died Feb 16, at his home.

He was a graduate of UNC-Asheville and served as a pilot for Air Methods/KY LifeNet.

He is survived by his wife; and two sons, Jesse Patton Shepherd and Bane Stephen Shepherd.



### **Frank Leon Sweet**

Frank Leon Sweet died Nov. 15 in Tulsa, Okla., at the age of 58.

Sweet served in the Army as a helicopter pilot and later worked as a police officer. He was a member of flight school Classes 71-5 and 70-47. Sweet served in South Vietnam with 12 SIG GRP (1970), 1 SIG BDE (1971), 173AHC (1972-73).

Survivors include his wife, Lynnette of their home; a daughter, Cathryn Kalyn Traenker of Beaufort, S.C.; a stepson, Carol Kalevik of Tulsa; two stepdaughters, Sara Kalevik and Beka Kalevik of Tulsa; and his parents.

### **Douglas D. Trump**

Douglas D. Trump, 57, of Fogelsville, Pa., died peacefully at his home on Dec. 15.

Trump was the owner of the Douglas D. Trump Insurance Agency in Bethlehem, Pa. He was the former owner and operator of the Hilltop Family Restaurant in Nazareth, Pa., and former owner of the Chicken Man in Nazareth.

He also flew medevac at Lehigh Valley Hospital for nine years. He was a 32nd Degree Mason, Easton Lodge 152, and was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Patriot Guard Riders.

Trump served in the Army during the Vietnam War

and flew helicopters.

He was a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard Reserve.

Survivors include his wife, Suzanne; mother, Jane; sons, Michael D. Trump of Whitehall, and David E. Trump of Allentown; daughter, Christine H. Amadio of Slatington; and five grandchildren, Elizabeth, Sylecia, Madelyn, Ella and Evan.

### **Albert Rhea Woodruff**

Retired Lt. Col. Albert Rhea "Al" Woodruff died at his home in Mesa, Ariz., on June 24 of congestive heart failure.

He enlisted in the Army in February 1953 and was accepted into OCS, graduating in June 1954.

In July 1957, Woodruff was assigned to Camp Gary, Texas, and then to Fort Rucker for fixed-wing flight training. He graduated with Class 57-17.

After serving as platoon intelligence officer with the 101st Aviation Company in 1958-59, Woodruff returned to Fort Rucker in January 1959 for rotary-wing training with Class 58-3.

After graduation, he was assigned to 3rd Light Aviation Section in South Korea as the corps commander's pilot.

In September 1960, Woodruff attended the Field Artillery Advanced Officer Course, followed by a tour at Fort Bliss, Texas, as staff aviator and maintenance officer.

In March 1963, he returned to Fort Rucker as flight commander/instructor pilot in the Instrument Flight Training Branch.

He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion (ARA), 20th Artillery in South Vietnam as operations officer in July 1965.

The following year he was name commander of Company A (Assault Helicopter), 82nd Aviation Battalion, at Fort Bragg, N.C.

In January 1968, Woodruff was named commander of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company in South Vietnam.

He became operations officer of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion in July 1968.

From December 1968 until his retirement from active duty in June 1975, Woodruff was assigned to several joint high-level positions at Continental Army Command, Combat Development Command and TRADOC.

He received his BS degree from Hampton Institute in Business Management in 1971 and his Master's in Education from Old Dominion in 1975.

He was recipient of 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 2 Bronze Star Medals and 29 Air Medals.

Woodruff is survived by his wife Joanne of nearly 50 years; and two sons, Charlton and Kevin.



# VHPA CHAPTERS

## Arizona Chapter

Bill Sorenson



## California Chapter North

Ken Fritz



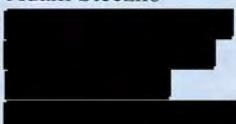
## VHPA of Florida

Donald L. Welch



## Fort Wolters Chapter

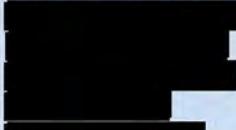
Adam Steczko



## Georgia Chapter



## Mid South Chapter



## North Carolina Chapter

J.D. Lawson



## Ohio River LZ Chapter

John Flanagan



## Rocky Mountain Chapter

C. Edward Fickes



## Southern California Chapter

Ed Holguin



## Washington State Chapter

Paul Fleming



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.

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

Members held their fourth annual Christmas cookie get-together with patients and staff of the VA hospital in Denver on Dec 8.

Members provided cookies, cocoa and cider for the nursing home residents and for ambulatory and non-ambulatory veteran patients.

The veterans welcomed the opportunity to talk with the "young" guys like us, sharing their service experiences and stories. Many patients have no family or none close enough to visit and they enjoy the break from normal routine as much as we enjoy being there for them.

The chapter has been asked by VA staff members to have a pig roast for the hospitalized veterans later this year.

Resident patients are still talking about the successful roast we held for them 2 years ago.

— Ed Fickes, President

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

social hour, followed by dinner. Our dinner speaker was Nathan Gray, special agent in charge of the FBI for North Carolina, who addressed criminal and terrorism priorities within the state. It was an interesting and informative meeting.

— J.D. Lawson

## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

CCN had a very successful Christmas Party at Ken and Marcia Fritz's, with more than 50 in attendance.

For some reason there were a lot of old guys there; everyone had a great time eating, drinking, dancing and swapping "I was there" stories.

Helicopter Association International recognized VHPA CCN member Barry Lloyd, FAA designated pilot examiner and FAA accident prevention counselor, in Sacramento, Calif., during the HAI "Salute to Excellence" banquet and awards ceremony Feb. 25 at HELI-EXPO 2008 in Houston, Texas.

Barry was recognized for outstanding achievement performed by individuals or companies in the international helicopter community. He was presented the Outstanding Certified Flight Instructor Award.

In addition, Barry is a member of the California Bar Association and is an ordained minister. Besides all of that, he's a heckuva nice guy. So, at our Christmas Party, we all sang and hummed a short Pilot Hymn for Barry.

In support of the Seventh Annual Fund Raiser to benefit the Vietnam War National Museum in Mineral Wells,

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Our annual POW/MIA Ceremony was held on the grounds of the State Capitol Building in Raleigh, N.C., at noon on Feb. 2.

The luncheon followed at the home of Brock and Colleen Nicholson of Clayton, N.C.

Our dinner at the Sheraton Raleigh kicked off with a

the chapter has donated \$125. The Friends of the Museum is sponsoring this event on March 29 at Los Vaqueros Restaurant in Willow Park, Texas.

Other chapters and interested persons can send their donations to Friends of the Museum, P.O. Box 146, Mineral Wells, TX 76068-0146. This is not a paid advertisement. It is a challenge to other chapters from the VHPA-CCN.

VHPA-California North (CCN) is in the planning stages of a chapter golf challenge tourney. This would be chapter vs. chapter and the first challenge event would probably be in the fall of 2008. Contact Mike Nord at [outlaw27c@msn.com](mailto:outlaw27c@msn.com) if your chapter is interested.

Maybe we could even do an event before the reunion.

— Ken Fritz

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

### MID SOUTH CHAPTER

We are still looking for experienced personnel to assist in restoring a TH-55.

Contact Chris Horton at [REDACTED] or send him

# Scholarships

## *Now is time to apply for assistance from funds*

Here is my 2008 letter to all fellow VHPA members concerning the two VHPA scholarships administered by AAAA.

If you have a child, grandchild or great-grandchild or, in some of your cases, a great-great-grandchild who is ready to start college or university or is already attending a college or university or grad school, now is the time to start gearing up to apply for one of our scholarships. Could you use \$1,000 to help pay the costs? If so, I say again, now is the time to begin the planning process to apply for one of the two VHPA Memorial Scholarships administered for us by AAAA. These scholarships are awarded on merit, not need.

The deadline to apply is May 1. VHPA currently has two \$1,000 scholarships available annually to descendants of current VHPA members. Go to [www.quad-a.org](http://www.quad-a.org), click on SCHOLARSHIPS, read the requirements and apply.

Make sure your descendant or descendants states on the application that he or she is applying for one of the two VHPA scholarships. But make sure they apply. That's

an email at [REDACTED]

— Chris Horton

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

We had our Chili Cook Off on Dec. 1 and the guys had a great time. It was decided this would be an annual event.

March 15 will be the date of our next quarterly meeting at the American Legion in Newport Beach. The theme is St. Patrick's Day.

May 3 will be our next meeting, at Ed Holguin's home. It will be a Cinco de Mayo theme and will consist of a barbecue and pool party. Ed lives 25 miles east of Los Angeles in Walnut, Calif.

— Ed Holguin, President

### GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter VHPA is scheduled to have breakfast meetings at J. Christopher's Restaurant, 1247 Powers Ferry Road, Marietta, Ga., at 9 a.m. on April 5, June 7, Aug. 9, Oct. 4 and Dec. 6. We invite all members and potential members to join us for a great breakfast.

— Bill Stanley, President

the most important thing, make sure they apply.

Last year, two children of VHPA members were awarded our scholarships, but more than 25 others received AAAA scholarships, grants and low-interest loans, more than 75 percent of those who applied. That's a pretty good success ratio for VHPA applicants.

VHPA has only one requirement to be eligible for our scholarship — you must be the descendant of a dues-current member of VHPA. That's it.

When we are all gone, the requirement will change to "the descendant of a pilot who flew helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam conflict — 1961 to 1975."

Since AAAA administers our scholarship for VHPA, all student applicants or the VHPA father/grandfather must be a member of AAAA.

Guys, get your descendants to apply today. Don't wait. Don't put it off. Go online today and see what you need to do. The VHPA Scholarship Committee looks forward to another record number of applicants for our scholarships.

Mike Sheuerman

## Register online for Reunion 2008 in San Antonio

# Indian River Colony Club



*It's not a Resort, it's your back yard.*



## *Before you decide, note our differences*

First choice in military retirement communities, located just minutes from Melbourne Beach, *U.S. News & World Report* "10 Bargain Retirement Spots", IRCC is a Florida Not-For-Profit Corporation, owned by the members, governed by a 7 member resident board of directors, which determines fees and policies. Administered by a general manager and a professional staff, IRCC provides unsurpassed service to those who served. Small enough to foster friendship and camaraderie; big enough to provide first class amenities and lifestyle.

Unlike many private golfing communities, IRCC is not subject to a developer and an investor group's profit motives. There have been no special assessments in its 20+ year history. All amenities, corporate buildings and grounds are debt free and monetary reserves total in the millions.

Founded for former officers and warrant officers of all the US uniformed services and their surviving spouses, IRCC is an active, 55+ gated community with 24 hour security, and over 770 individually owned single family homes. Sixteen floor plans beginning in the mid \$100's ensure we have the right house plan for you.

The monthly maintenance fee provides worry free living with on-site maintenance staff providing repair or replacement of: appliances, heat and A/C, water heaters, structural / electrical / plumbing / garage doors, and roofing. Also covered is termite and pest control, lawn care, and irrigation systems including water.

In addition to a beautiful 18 hole, par 72 golf course, top-rate Har-Tru surfaced tennis courts, a large swimming pool, and charming country club with 19th hole lounge featuring an executive chef serving casual to gourmet dining, IRCC offers other unique features:

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# McElhiney

## *Helicopter pilot to be enshrined as aviation great*

A pilot from the Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, will be honored this summer at the Air Force War College in Montgomery, Ala., as an aviator who has significantly contributed to aviation history at the annual "Gathering of the Eagles."

CW5 Lance McElhiney, the master gunner for the brigade, will be enshrined at the event with an artist mural and biography plaque that highlights aviation history and the contributions pioneers in the field have made from World War I to the Space Age.

The "Gathering of the Eagles" began in 1982 and, since its inception; only 333 aviators have been inducted. McElhiney is on the top 10 list of 60 who are scheduled to be honored.

"It (the recognition) is an acknowledgment that you have done it right throughout your career and you've done it better than most," said Col. Patrick Tierney, commander of the CAB, about how McElhiney will be mentioned in the same breath with the likes of some of the world's best-known aviators.

The list contains few Army helicopter pilots and recognizes mostly pioneers from the Air Force and the Aerospace field.

"Your peers and other aviators hold you as one of the greatest in aviation history," Tierney said.

"In addition, it's an indirect Air Force acknowledgement of the corps of professionals the Army has as aviators. In the Air Force, the officers are the tip of the spear for aviation, where in the Army it's the warrant officers who are the workhorses."

Some notable "Eagles" who have been inducted are: Neil Armstrong, the first person to step on the moon; former President George H.W. Bush, who rose from seaman second class to the 41st president of the United States; Gen. Richard Cody, a helicopter pilot and the Army's current vice chief of staff; Jimmy Doolittle, who after the attack on

Pearl Harbor planned and carried out the first retaliatory strike against the Japanese mainland; John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth; and Chuck Yeager, who among many accomplishments became the first man to fly through the sound barrier at a speed of 760.5 miles per hour.

"It's a big honor," said McElhiney. "I'm sure there are thousands of other pilots who deserve it more than me. I guess I'm getting it, because I'm so old and have been in the Army for 39 years."

McElhiney was born the son of a Navy man on Dec. 17, 1946, in Peoria, Ill., and joined the Army on Jan. 21, 1969. After basic training at Fort Polk, La., he went to flight school at Fort Wolters, Texas, and Fort Rucker, Ala., and graduated as a helicopter pilot in August 1969.

McElhiney then attended advanced training at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., where he was trained on the first attack helicopter in the world – the AH-1G Cobra helicopter.

In 1970, McElhiney was assigned to South Vietnam where he flew in the invasion of Laos and Lam Son 719.

Since the Vietnam War, he has completed combat tours during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003 with the 1st Cavalry Division and Operation Iraqi Freedom 2005-07.

"After Vietnam, there really hasn't been much of a match," said McElhiney, looking back on his combat experience and the enemy engagements he has encountered. "Although the battle of Karbala (Iraq) was a good fight, so was Laos."

McElhiney's awards and commendations over his four-decade career include the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Star Medals, the Purple Heart Medal, four Meritorious Service Medals, 27 Air Medals with two for Valor, five Army Commendation Medals with two for Valor and five Army Achievement Medals.

— Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt

## Membership Directory on CD

The 2008 Membership Directory will be available again this year on CD.

There are several advantages to the CD versus the paper directory. The main one is that it contains more member information such as telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

The paper directory has gotten so big we have to cut back on information to save space. There are essentially no space limitations for the CD. Since there is lots of space, the history section on the CD is the full section not just an abstract like we have in the paper directory.

Finally, the CD is much lighter and compact so you can carry it with you. If you prefer to receive the CD instead of the paper directory, please let HQ know at [HQ@vhpa.org](mailto:HQ@vhpa.org) or (800) 505-VHPA.

If you received the 2007 directory on CD, you will automatically receive the CD this year too.

The CDs are compatible with Vista and all of the other Microsoft operating systems. The deadline for directory updates will be Aug. 15. Please get updates and changes to HQ prior to that date.

Do you want the latest and greatest membership information? Log on to our new online membership directory at [www.vhpaservices.com](http://www.vhpaservices.com)

# Reunion

*Fewer than 4 months remain until 2008 get-together*

DANA YOUNG

NATIONAL REUNION COMMITTEE

By the time you read this, we will be less than four months from an annual event that started 25 years ago in Arizona. If you have not made your reservations, it's time.

We have come a long way since that first reunion and we have experienced some tremendous successes and a few setbacks.

This year, in San Antonio, we expect to have one of our best-attended reunions. We already have had to add rooms to accommodate the early arrivals and there is a limit on the rooms available for the primary reunion days July 2-5. Register early to ensure having a room in the host hotel for the entire reunion.

The hotel, the Marriott Rivercenter, is located on the famous San Antonio Riverwalk and provides walking access to restaurants, entertainment and local historical sites.

Those who arrive early will have plenty to do prior to the official start of the reunion. We have two tours to choose from on July 2 and 3, the Alamo is within walking distance, and the back door of the hotel is the front door of a major shopping mall.

Details of the tours are online and in the last issue of *The Aviator*.

Based on feedback from the membership, we have made adjustments to the schedule that allows more free time for you to spend with friends and former unit/class members, and still have time to see what San Antonio has to offer.

When you review the schedule you will note the more relaxed, non-structured reunion. There is still plenty to do, but there are only three "main" events, the Welcome Reception, the Business Meeting and the Final Banquet. Scheduled around those three are a number of seminars,

mini-reunions, two tours, golf, poker, a parade on July 4th and the Vince Vance concert.

Details of scheduled events and the Reunion Registration Form are published in this issue and on line at [www.vhpareunion.org/](http://www.vhpareunion.org/)

The Welcome Reception on Tuesday is the kickoff to

the rest of the reunion. You have heard this before. At each of the 15 reunions I have attended, I have seen at least one person for the first time in over 30 years. Nothing is more rewarding than to have someone walk up, tap you on the shoulder and say: "Don't I know you?"

The Welcome Reception is where it all starts. No background noise, no dark room, just plenty of space to mingle, meet, and reestablish lost friendships. The reception includes a dinner buffet and there will be plenty of no-host bars.

Thursday and Friday have something for everyone. Pick what you find interesting, visit with your friends or check out the local area: your choice.

Saturday's Business Meeting and Final Banquet are the two events that make the VHPA what it is today. The meeting keeps the organization running and the banquet makes sure we never forget. Both are critical to our success.

There have been a few administrative changes to what was published in the last issue:

- We will not have a choice of pocket/no pocket "T" shirts. All will come with pockets.

- Parking across the street is more expensive than we were first advised. It will cost \$8 per day or \$18 overnight.

If you drive to San Antonio, you may find it more economical to park remotely after checking in at the hotel and taking a cab (\$10) back. We are still looking for a better option.

See you in San Antonio!



SACVB photo

A boat cruises along the San Antonio Riverwalk, decked out with diners. This year's reunion hotel is located on the Riverwalk.

# Reunion

*Fewer than 4 months remain until 2008 get-together*

**RICH BUZEN**  
**VENDOR COORDINATOR**

On Saturday, July 5, from 1-3 p.m. there are 2 seminars you should seriously consider attending.

The Veterans Seminar, led by our own Pike Anderson, a national service officer with the Purple Heart Association, will be filled with information on the benefits available to us, how they determine if you are qualified, and what to do and how to complete the process so that you get what you have earned.

Recently there have been changes in the availability of eyeglasses through the VA, treatment for many forms of cancer, diabetes, blood diseases, PTSD, and a long list of other health issues you may be covered for under the VA Health Care System.

Many of the health problems you are facing today may have a direct relationship to your service in Vietnam, and may be covered by the VA.

I am also working with the San Antonio Vet Center to try and add speakers from different areas of the VA to help answer your questions and make sure you understand exactly what you are entitled to and where to go to apply for these benefits.

There will be plenty of time for individual questions and, as in Phoenix, Pike stayed until everyone had a chance to ask their questions.

On a personal note and for those of you who still have a negative opinion of the VA Health Care System, much has changed.

I can tell you from personal experience the health and dental care it provides is as professional, well organized, as good and, in some cases, better than health any care on the "outside."

Please make sure you check the box for the Veterans Seminar on the registration form if you plan to attend the seminar.

The second seminar, also on Saturday, July 5, from 1-3 p.m. is the Women's Forum. Led by Francie Latimore, a Vet Center counselor who has worked with families of war veterans for many years, the seminar is designed to give family members a place to go and discuss the impact Vietnam had on them.

The experiences we had in Vietnam affected not just us, but all of our families who had to deal with the legacy the war left with all of us. For example, PTSD doesn't just affect veterans; it has a direct and real impact on our loved ones.

Many of the issues we had to deal with, your loved ones had to deal with, as well. Only they had no one person or group or organization to go to help them understand the problems and be better prepared to deal with them.

And what about the impact on our families of all the other diseases that are part of our Vietnam legacy?

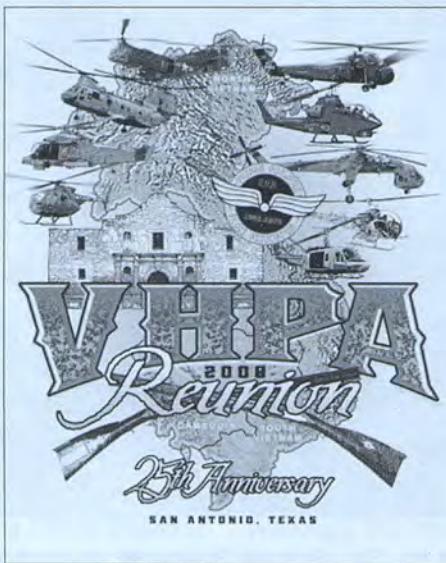
The many forms of cancer that are now directly linked to Agent Orange, diabetes, heart-related problems and a whole list of physical ailments that the VA has on its list of Vietnam-related diseases, and which had such an enormous impact on the quality of life for you and your family?

These are just some of the issues Francie will discuss in her seminar on Saturday.

I encourage you to let your wives and daughters know about this seminar. Judging from the response we had in Phoenix, it is one that will go much longer than its planned 2 hours, and one that everyone in Phoenix wanted repeated again in San Antonio.

Please check the box on the registration form for the Women's Seminar and let us know how many are coming.

I look forward to seeing you all in San Antonio.



# *A Touch of Home:* THE VIETNAM WAR'S RED CROSS GIRLS

They came of age at the dawn of the women's movement, stepping out of conventional roles to take a route away from the expected--to war. Young, adventurous, idealistic, and committed, 627 women just out of college took a breath of fresh air to the dusty firebases and sweaty base camps of Vietnam. They were the Red Cross "Donut Dollies," and their job was to distract US soldiers on the front lines with a game, a listening ear, and a touch of home.

From the award-winning creators of *In The Shadow of The Blade* comes the untold story of American civilian women who worked in the American Red Cross Supplemental Recreation Overseas program during the Vietnam War.

Sister, girlfriend, mother, friend... the Red Cross Donut Dollies were "round eyes" who brought entertainment, a



smiling face, and a reminder of home to millions of young American men who otherwise faced the grim, daily reality of death. For the first time, they share their story of the year in their lives that would affect each of them forever. *A Touch of Home: The Vietnam War's Red Cross Girls* pays tribute to a little-known chapter of American women's courage and service in time of war.

**READ MORE AT**  
[www.arrowheadfilms.com/atouchofhome.html](http://www.arrowheadfilms.com/atouchofhome.html)

**There will be an exclusive pre-release screening for VHPA members at the San Antonio reunion on 3 July 2008 at 3:15 PM.**

**OPERATION FLYING THUNDER**  
**MAY 2008**  
**FULL DETAILS ON PAGE 20**

## 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: To Download Application**

**[www.dfcfsociety.org](http://www.dfcfsociety.org)**

# ***2008 VHPA Reunion in San Antonio***

## ***Detailed Schedule of Activities***

### **Tuesday, July 1**

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM      Vendor set up – Salon J-M  
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM      Pre Registration – Registration Desk 2  
2:00 PM – 6:00 PM      Vendors open for business - Salon J-M  
8:00 PM – 12:00 PM      Early Bird informal get together – Salon I

### **Wednesday, July 2**

9:00 AM – 8:00 PM      Registration – Registration Desk 2  
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM      Highlights of San Antonio/Market Square Tour  
9:30 AM – 2:30 PM      Sins and Saints Tour  
10:00 AM – 6:00 PM      Vendor area – Salon J-M  
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM      First time reunion attendee special orientation welcome reception – Salon I  
7:00 PM – 11:00 PM      Welcome reception , buffet dinner, and party for all members and their guests – Grand Ballroom A-I  
(Full Buffet Dinner served at 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM)

### **Thursday, July 3**

6:00 AM – 2:00 PM      Golf Tournament at Canyon Springs Golf Club; includes lunch and mementos  
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM      Mini-reunions (8:00 AM – noon and 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM)  
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM      Highlights of San Antonio/Market Square Tour  
9:30 AM – 2:30 PM      Sins and Saints Tour  
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM      Registration – Registration Desk 2  
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM      Vendor area – Salon J-M  
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM      Luncheon with “Jug” Burkett  
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM      War Story Contest  
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM      Poker (I)  
3:15 PM – 4:30 PM      Historical Presentation Forum Special Documentation Presentation –  
9:00 PM – midnight      Vince Vance Concert Grand Ballroom A-I

### **Friday, July 4**

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM      Mini-reunions (8:00 AM – noon and 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM)  
7:30 AM – 2:00 PM      Participation in New Braunfels Parade  
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM      Registration – Registration Desk 2  
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM      Vendor area – Salon J-M  
2:30 PM - 6:30 PM      Poker (II)  
2:30 PM – 6:30 PM      Historical Presentation Forum II

### **Saturday, July 5**

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM      KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Noon      Registration – main floor registration desk Registration Desk 2  
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM      Annual Business Meeting Grand Ballroom A-I  
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM      Brunch and Face Reader for spouses and guests  
    Noon - 4:30 PM      Vendor Area Salon J-M  
    1:00 PM – 4:00 PM      Mini-reunions  
    1:00 PM – 3:00 PM      Veteran’s Benefits Seminar  
    1:00 PM – 3:00 PM      Women’s Seminar  
    3:15 PM – 4:30 PM      Historical Presentation Forum III –  
5:45 PM –12:00 PM      Doors open - Banquet, entertainment, & dance (Coat and tie event. Some members wear military dress uniform. Ladies wear cocktail dresses) – Grand Ballroom; ceremonies start at 6:30 PM

### **Sunday, July 6**

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

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

25th Annual Reunion • San Antonio, Texas • July 2-5, 2008

## NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Register online at [www.vhporeunion.org](http://www.vhporeunion.org) or mail completed form to:

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

Fax signed credit card authorization to: (916) 966-8743

Member name:

Member No.:

Wheelchair?  Yes

Address:

Address change?  Yes

City:

State:

Zip:

Email address:

Telephone: ( )

Wife/guest name:

Hometown:

18 or older?  Yes/Wheelchair?  Yes

Guest name:

Hometown:

18 or older?  Yes/Wheelchair?  Yes

EVENT	NO. OF PEOPLE	PRICE	TOTAL
Registration through 5/1/2008*		@\$60	
Registration after 5/1/2008*		@\$70	
<i>Registration for under age 18</i>		@\$10	
Early Bird Event (July 1)		No charge	
Welcome reception for first reunion attendees only (July 2)		No charge	
Welcome reception buffet (July 2)		@\$45	
San Antonio tour (July 2)		@\$25	
Sins & Saints tour (July 2)		@\$55	
Golf Tournament (July 3)		@\$100	
San Antonio tour (July 3)		@\$25	
Sins & Saints tour (July 3)		@\$55	
Lunch with J.G. Burkett (July 3)		@\$20	
Poker I (July 3)		@\$25	
Vince Vance Concert (July 3)		@\$35	
July 4th Parade		@\$25	
Poker II (July 4)		@\$25	
Spouse/Guest Event (July 5)		@\$30	
Veterans' Benefits (July 5)		No charge	
Women's Seminar (July 5)		No charge	
Final Banquet/Dance (July 5)		@\$75	
<i>Non-registered guests at banquet only</i>		@\$95	
Total from sidebar	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	1 year	@ \$36	
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	3 years	@ \$99	
Life membership		@ \$540	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			

T-SHIRTS		
QTY.	SIZE	AMT.
	S@\$18	
	M@\$18	
	L@\$18	
	XL@\$18	
	XXL@\$19	
	XXXL@\$20	

SIDEBAR TOTAL:	
QTY.	BANQUET MEAL
	Beef
	Fish
	Vegetable

Membership Fund contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Scholarship Fund contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Fund contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vietnam War Museum contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### REFUND POLICY

IMPORTANT: Please review the details of the Refund Policy, including the limited opportunity to purchase a Refund Guaranty available only on a one-time basis at the time of registration, which is posted online at the VHPA reunion website: [www.vhporeunion.org/refund\\_policy.pdf](http://www.vhporeunion.org/refund_policy.pdf)

*\*Each person 18 and older must pay full registration fee. (Except non-registered banquet guests.)*

### CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

MC or Visa No:

Expiration date:

Signature:

### CHECK or MONEY ORDER PAYMENT

In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion 2008" with form.

# Four Helicopters....One Mission

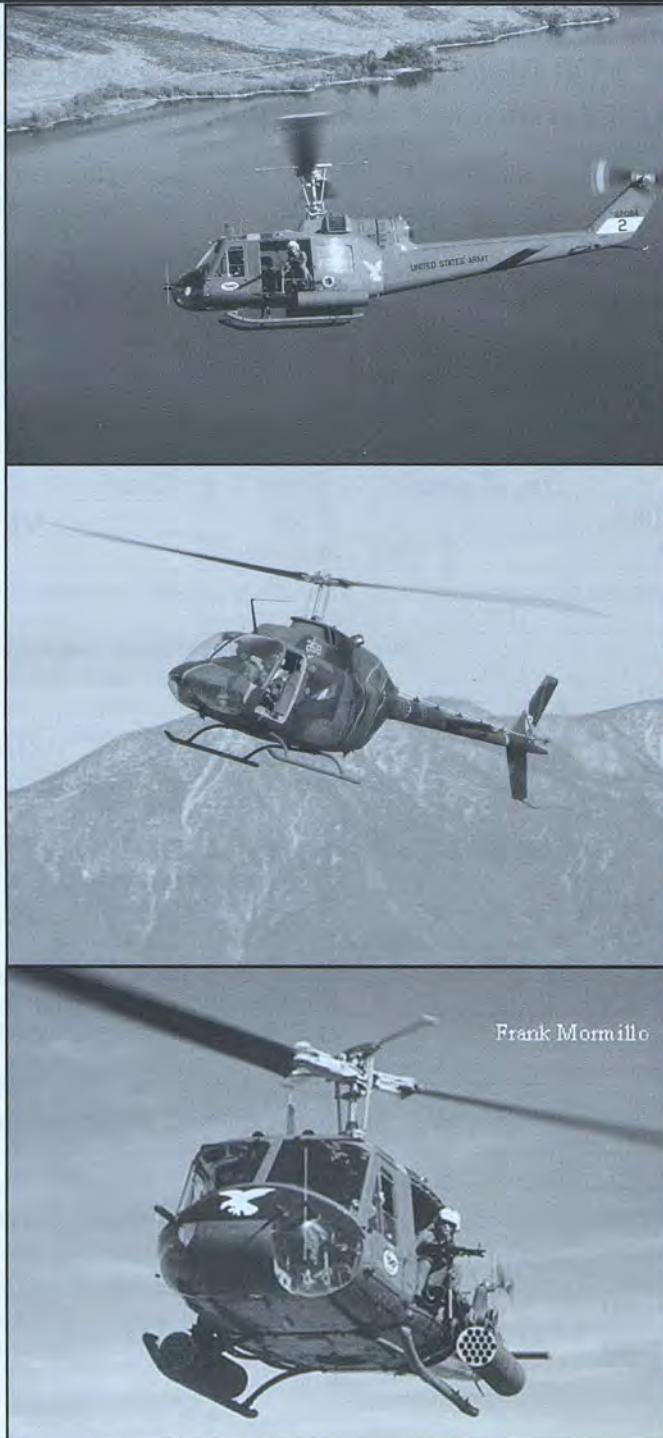
## Flying Thunder – Flight to The Wall to Honor Vietnam Veterans

SHANE MEDER  
MARKETING DIRECTOR

In May, 2008, the skies over America will roar with the heart-throbbing sounds that were ever so familiar to the veterans of the Vietnam War; the pounding of rotor blades whose thunder can only come from the UH-1 Huey helicopter gunship.

Wings and Rotors Air Museum, (a 501c3 non-profit), located in Murrieta California, has undertaken a monumental and historic effort to fly three restored combat veteran Huey gunships and their OH-58 Kiowa on a cross-country flight to honor Vietnam veterans and pay tribute to those who did not come home. The success of this epic event is a joint effort of both private donors and corporate sponsorships. Honoring a well-established tradition of over twenty years, these helicopters will join both Rolling Thunder and Run for the Wall organizations in two lift-off locations as hundreds of riders begin their journey to Washington D.C. and the wall. Regularly, throughout the east-bound 2,500 mile trip, the helicopters will unite with the riders, making for a phenomenal air and ground event.

Leading the team effort is the museum's Executive Director and Chief Pilot, Pat Rodgers, who



Photos Courtesy Wings and Rotors Air Museum

Top & Bottom Photos: A restored Bandit gunship from the 118th Assault Helicopter Company.  
Middle Photo: A restored OH-58 Kiowa in flight.

The aircrafts are owned and operated by Wings and Rotors Air Museum in Murrieta, Calif.

has always had the Huey residing in his heart. Pat joined the Army and became a Huey crew chief and later crew chief for the OH-58. After retiring from the Air National Guard he co-founded the museum with just one plane, the F-4 but his dream was to have a Huey to fly as a tribute to Vietnam veterans.

The museum's B model gunship and H model slick, both restored to their Vietnam markings of the 118th Bandits and 175th Outlaws respectively will be the lead ships. The other B model Huey is a Navy Seawolf owned by Overseas Aircraft Support Inc. in Arizona, and is being fully restored with its original markings by dedicated Museum staff and volunteers. It will carry the names of the four crew members who were KIA when the aircraft crashed in Vietnam in 1970.

Flying Thunder-Flight to the Wall, will journey over 5,000 miles in 25 days, 43 cities and 16 states, greeting Vietnam veterans at every destination.. Museum staff Shayne Meder and Volunteer Lt. Col (ret) Gary Pennington will manage the Air/Ground Logistics making sure that all air/ground events are on target.

(cont. on page 23)

# A Good Case of CRS

DANA JOHNDRO

As we age, we all succumb to an affliction of one sort or another — in varying degrees of severity.

I knew the inevitability of aging, but some afflictions give no warning. You wake up one day and bang there it is. You shrug your shoulder and are happy because at least you're healthy enough to bitch about it.

Every issue of our magazine gets read cover-to-cover at my house. I am in awe at the bravery our brethren displayed and stripped-shorts missions they flew and sometimes the mistakes they made and lived through it all. I wish I could have been a part of it all. Oh wait, I was there.

My affliction seems to control me at times. You see my friends, I have been diagnosed, primarily by my wife, close friends, family, everyone that knows me and that old lady that works at Albertson's with a severe case of CRS.

I thought the Army, after my 26 years, gave me a blue ID card so I could get access to all the great shopping events at our local PX and maybe catch a recent release at the Post Theater. Little did I know it would become the primary means by which I could always remember who I was.

I love the reunions solely for the camaraderie and ... ouch ... Yes, Dear, because my lovely wife and I can spend some quality time together. Seeing faces that vaguely resemble someone I knew in my past is good therapy.

Although sometimes I have to visualize maybe some hair or a person half the size or sans the Coke bottle glasses — you know something like forensic science — kind of like CSI-Vietnam. I seldom do the war story stuff, again because of my CRS. It simply would not do to explain to the unclean ones that we did indeed have an F-4 Phantom in the Pink Panthers — only one mind you, but I did get to fly it a lot.

But I digress. I remember the time — seriously — when I had returned stateside and was initially stationed at Fort Hood. I was assigned to C Company, 227th Aviation Battalion — a slick company.

I got wind of the fact that the CO was looking for a supply officer and a motor pool officer. I knew the best strategy was a good offense. When called into his office, I explained that I would like the extra duty of disinterested witness. You know, the guy who monitors the destruction of classified documents (I had that lofty responsibility in Nam and never knew what it was but, I admit the title seemed to fit me).

I realized he knew like kinds are attracted to each other and I told him once the word got out I'd probably be going to a gun company anyway. He smiled, understood and seemed to be very impressed.

*"I knew the inevitability of aging, but some afflictions give no warning. You wake up one day and bang there it is. You shrug your shoulder and are happy because at least you're healthy enough to bitch about it."*

The next morning I was introduced to my supply sergeant and the awesome responsibility of inventorying bed sheets, Mermite cans, toolboxes and, oh ya, helicopters.

A buddy, Bob Skeldon, who I flew with in Nam and also was stationed in C Company, would stop off at the supply room almost daily for a coffee or two and some reminiscing.

Now we all know you can't BS the guy who was on the same mission, so the "stories" were true. Enter a third party — another warrant. Actually, I remember this because I saw his name in a recent edition and had to smile.

Bob and I would be talking about a particular mission — any mission and at the conclusion our third party would say, "why that's nothing," and proceed to enlighten us as to his escapades. This happened with monotonous regularity.

Then one day Bob and I decided to make up a mission narrated with chilling superlatives such as, "the darkest of hours," "the most highly trained enemy," "the most devastating ground fire" .... Well, you get the picture. Surely we had him.

Oh how naive we were. We listened with our eyes and mouth agape. The gist of his tale involved a mission into North Vietnam wherein his wingman was shot down on a jungle trail. They were bingo (F-4 pilot wannabes lingo) on gas so had to return to home base and refuel and rearm.

They then resumed their recovery mission only, to their amazement, to find the downed aircraft gone and a set of ground handling tracks in its wake — you see the bad guys had ground handled — oh, you get the picture.

All this accompanied with just the right amount of adjectival phrases. Bob, if I remember correctly, said he had to go home and change his flight suit because he had spilled his coffee during the Clive Custer saga.

I personally believe, after hearing that story, it wasn't his flight suit that needed changing. I had to reach into my lower desk drawer to take a shot of "What-The-Hell-Just-Happened"

During reunions, when I ask one of the Panthers who hasn't yet been afflicted, "who was flying on that mission when ..." or "when did we..." and Mike S. will tell me a part and Woody will add something, as will Lash and Blackie or that tall skinny kid ... you know, the one with red hair. Their recall of the finest details is fascinating and they make the whole effort of attendance worth it. I fully understand they might be embellishing at my expense, however, I hold them all in awe.

We all continue to age and it's as much fun now listening to stories as it was back when they occurred, but I realized that my cohorts too will be afflicted some day and that's when I'll spring my F-4 stories on them.

# Helicopter pilot risked his life to save soldiers

FROM THE Nov. 12, 2007, ARMY TIMES

FRED L. BORCH AND ROBERT F. DORR

Thomas Merrill Reeves risked his life amid a prolonged action to save soldiers battling the North Vietnamese. Flying during both daylight and darkness, he inspired troops in a beleaguered company and prevented it from being destroyed by the enemy.

Reeves participated in the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps in college (MTSU) and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Transportation Corps.

After finishing officer orientation at Fort Eustis, Va., Reeves served as a platoon leader before leaving active duty. He joined the Tennessee Army National Guard and became an aide to the assistant commander of the 30th Armored Division.

In October 1965, Reeves volunteered for active duty. After undergoing aviator training and receiving his wings in June 1966, then-1st Lt. Reeves deployed to Vietnam. There, he flew helicopters in the 1st Cavalry Division and later joined the 170th Aviation Company, 52nd Aviation Battalion.

On March 21, 1967, the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, was in a firefight with North Vietnamese in Kontum province along the Cambodia border. When the ground unit's operations officer needed to be flown into the battle site, Reeves volunteered to perform this difficult and dangerous helicopter mission. Despite intense enemy machine-gun fire and automatic-weapons fire, he delivered the officer, enabling the battalion command group to quickly assume control of the situation.

Shortly after completing this mission, Reeves volunteered to fly reinforcements to a company that was heavily engaged with the enemy. According to official records, he "deftly maneuvered his aircraft into the tiny landing zone, overcame dense foliage, limited visibility and intense enemy fire to deliver the badly needed replacements."

As the battle continued for 12 hours, Reeves made repeated trips into the area to provide critically needed ammunition, medical personnel and supplies. He also acted as an aerial

radio relay for four ground companies, continually flying at low level through the crossfire.

Reeves also repeatedly landed to pick up critically wounded men who needed immediate evacuation. When the North Vietnamese unleashed mortar attacks on his stationary helicopter, Reeves responded by flying to an altitude where he could spot the mortar position, and called in a helicopter gunship to attack and destroy it. Reeves then successfully completed his evacuation of the wounded.

For his heroism, Reeves was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, second only to the Medal of Honor for combat gallantry.

After his second Vietnam tour ended in 1971, he left active duty and rejoined the Tennessee Guard, where he served in various assignments until 1990. For the remainder of his 33-year career, Reeves was deputy director for mobilization and readiness, Weapons Systems Readiness Directorate, Redstone Arsenal, Ala., retiring as a colonel in 1996.

Today, Reeves lives in Tennessee.



Tom Reeves in 1966



Tom Reeves in 1996

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Fred L. Borch retired from the Army after 25 years and is now working as the regimental historian for the Army JAG Corps. He is the author of "Kimmel, Short and Pearl Harbor," an analysis of the 1941 Japanese attack on Hawaii. Robert F. Dorr, an Air Force veteran, lives in Oakton, Va. He is the author of "Air Combat," a history of fighter pilots.



## THE "UNOFFICIAL" MEMBERS MOTORCYCLE RIDE (VIII)

Again this year, we are planning the "unofficial" Members Motorcycle Ride (VIII) to coincide with the 25th VHPA Reunion in San Antonio.

We have been in contact with the San Antonio Blue Knights (Police) Motorcycle Club, which has agreed to help us with a route and getting us in and out of San Antonio on our motorcycles, safely.

The Blue Knights also will accompany us on the ride. I suspect it will be much like the way it was organized in Denver with

the Chapter of the Blue Knights, there.

We are planning the ride on July 2 with a morning departure and returning that afternoon. Prospective riders could contact me at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] or George VanRiper at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for more information about ride length, motorcycle rental locations, and so forth.

It will help us a lot to know how many riders to plan for as getting out of



San Francisco Reunion Member's Ride

— DENNIS DEWINE  
MEMBERS MOTORCYCLE RIDE

*NOTE: This activity is not sponsored, sanctioned, or supervised by the VHPA. It is an activity independently planned, organized and monitored by members in their individual capacity, and not as agents or representatives of the VHPA.*

(cont. from page 20)

## Four Helicopters...

Special Events are being planned at Angel Fire, NM.; Ft Smith, AR.; Memphis, TN.; Gaffney, SC.; Big Spring, TX and Tucson AZ, just to name a few. Rounding out the team will be a maintenance crew and logistics crew. Documenting this historic event for the entire 25 days will be an award winning film crew.. Piloting the helicopters will be VHPA founder Larry Clark, as well as



## ...One Mission

Randy Zahn, Tom Woehl, John Harris, and Carl Allen. They will be joined by a cadre of Vietnam veteran crew chiefs and gunners.

Flying Thunder – Flight to the Wall needs your financial support to make this historic flight a success and memorable to all Vietnam Veterans. Visit our website or pick up the phone and call one of people listed and see how YOU can play a major role in the success of this mission.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

PAT RODGERS  
Executive Director  
Chief Pilot  
[REDACTED]

SHAYNE MEDER  
Marketing Director  
[REDACTED]

CAROLE PURCELL  
Fund Development Director  
[REDACTED]

Please visit our web site for more information [WWW.FLYINGTHUNDER.ORG](http://WWW.FLYINGTHUNDER.ORG).  
Your tax deductible donation will support this effort to honor Vietnam Veterans all across America.

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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

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

*\*NOTE: Life memberships may be purchased with three bi-monthly payments of \$185 each.*

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

Add \$20 for printed Membership Directory

Enclosed is a check/money order payable to VHPA

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?

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

[REDACTED]

||||||||||||||||||||||||||||