



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

November/December 2004 Vol. 22, No. 6

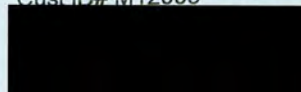


Courtesy of Hornblower Cruises

The San Francisco Belle, a four-deck dining yacht, will carry VHPA members and guests on a dinner cruise on San Francisco Bay during the annual VHPA reunion July 2-5. A five-piece band will play while guests dance and the gourmet meal will be served on linen-covered tables the night of July 4. See article on Page 18.



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From the President

On behalf of the VHPA, I would like to extend Holiday Greetings and the best of the Season to all. I know you are all busily making preparations for family gatherings, dinners and festivities.

By the time you receive this *Newsletter*, the holidays will be over and it will be time to start making plans for another family gathering and festivities. Yes, I am referring to the VHPA Annual Reunion where we gather together once a year to celebrate our brotherhood, renew old friendships and meet new friends.

This reunion promises to be "One To Remember." It has taken more than 20 years for the VHPA to be able to arrange an annual reunion in San Francisco and this may well be a "Once In A Lifetime" opportunity to visit one of America's favorite tourist cities with 2,000 of your closet friends.

The upside is July is at the height of tourist season in San Francisco.

The downside is July is at the height of tourist season in San Francisco. Early planning and registration are highly recommended as the hotel likely will sell out and finding accommodations will be extremely difficult, especially at the unheard of \$109 plus tax nightly rate for a quality hotel in the heart of San Francisco. Make your plans now and avoid the disappointment.

Some changes made

There have been a few changes in the planned event since the last *Newsletter*. We were not able to put together the event with Beach Blanket Babylon. The additional costs we would incur getting the show schedules needed became prohibitive.

If you just have your heart set on seeing this show, I would suggest you check the Reunion Event Schedule provided elsewhere in this *Newsletter* and then call BBB and make arrangements for tickets that fit within your schedule. This show sells out months in advance.

Also, we simply were not able to reach an agreement with the Hiller Museum that would have allowed us to put



Dan Ferguson

on a quality event at reasonable costs.

Unfortunately, that means we will not be able to have the flyable Huey present as there are no suitable locations within the city.

However, there are a number of Memorable events planned that will make this one of the best reunions ever, and still leave time for you to explore the sights, sounds and dining that make San Francisco unique.

There will be a reception on the first night for "first time reunion attendees" to meet with the EC and committee chairmen. This year Larry Clark, VHPA founder, will address the group. This will give an opportunity for the EC and committee chairmen to meet the "new guys" and let the "new guys" put faces with names.

Immediately following the short "new guy" reception, we will kick off the reunion with the Welcome Reception, featuring none other than Eric Burdon and the Animals. You do not want to miss it. This will be an opportunity to see and hear our theme song performed by the original artist!

The Ladies Function promises to be something special this year. The National Reunion Committee is working with the hotel staff to arrange special cooking demonstrations performed by some of their nationally acclaimed chefs.

Guys, this should keep the ladies out of the stores with your credit cards during the Annual Business Meeting!

There are a number of other activities planned and outlined in greater detail in other articles in this newsletter, such as:

- The National Reunion Committee managed to get the Park Service to agree to sell the VHPA a block of tickets for the Alcatraz Tour. This tour normally sells out months in advance so a block of tickets has been reserved for you.

- Mike Whitten has scheduled another outstanding Golf Event this year. Polish your clubs and wash your ... (I caught that one), and plan on another great golf outing.

- Mike Whitten also has planned a "post reunion" trip to Maui for those of you who would like to take advantage of already being on the West Coast and halfway there already. Golf is planned, but not required. Please refer to Mike's article for details.

- As a Special Event, your National Reunion Commit-

Continued on Page 3

Classified ads

SEEKING REVOLVER: I am looking for a Smith & Wesson .38 special that most Army helicopter pilots carried in Vietnam. If anyone knows of a source please contact Mike at (813) 293-0708 or email Mike@resdrywall.com Also, does anyone know the actual model number and barrel length?

E-mail items to Newsletter at:
swickard@vhpa.org

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

From the President

Continued from Page 2

tee has planned for a very special Cabaret Night . . . and another BONUS . . . you don't need a ticket, just your registration badge. This is slated to be a casual party atmosphere where you can hoist a few drinks, visit with friends, tell lies . . . I mean war stories and enjoy some great entertainment.

- Now for my personal favorite, the Hornblower Cruise on the evening of July 4. This will be a spectacular event! Imagine an evening with 400 of your closet friends enjoying the night on the San Francisco Bay with dinner, band, dancing AND \$2 beer. The crowning touch will be a magnificent fireworks display on the bay, fog permitting.

This event is a little pricier than most events we plan, but this is a one shot opportunity you don't want to miss! Register for this one early as we have to "buy" the boat a deck at a time (400 tickets) and we only have a short time period to "buy" the next deck. Otherwise, the first 400 registered will get the first 400 tickets and the rest will just have to imagine what a great time the others had. Don't miss it!

- As always, our premier function will be the Final Banquet where we will join together one last time to celebrate old and new friendships and honor our "missing" friends.

As always, we will enjoy a fabulous dinner, carry out the formalities and traditions and enjoy a great evening of partying and dancing with a very versatile local band before saying our good-byes for another year. I have mentioned the National Reunion Committee several times in this article and realized there may be some newer members who don't know who they are. Joe Bilitzke and Dave Rittman comprise our National Reunion Committee.

I simply cannot say enough about the job they do for you planning our reunions. The hours, phone calls, planning, negotiating, the time and commitment are phenomenal! Look for Dave and Joe in San Francisco. They won't be hard to find, just look for two VHPA types running themselves ragged making sure everything is going as planned.

Stop them, shake their hands, buy them a drink and express your appreciation . . . it's the only pay they receive.

There are more reunion and travel details in other articles in this *Newsletter*. Be sure to locate and read them for additional information.

Reunion Registration will be open by the time you receive this newsletter. We needed to delay the *Newsletter* a couple of weeks in order to finalize some of the

Continued on Page 4

Letters

Argentina UH Club preserves Hueys

In a past *VHPA Newsletter*, a fellow member, Phil Marshall, sent a letter talking about some guys he had found on the Internet who had a club called UH Club (www.uhclub.com.ar/intro_uh.htm) for Hueys that are down in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

They had two tail numbers and were looking for information. It gave a contact name and email address, Juan Souto,

who turns out to be the club president. I had a trip planned to Argentina in September 2004, anyway, so I hooked up with the contact prior to my trip. I took some books, memorabilia and a photo of my upside-down, in the rice paddy, UH-1D to explain who I was.

I thought I would just share all of this stuff with the club guys, as they seemed to have a great interest in all of our flying and our aircraft that flew in Vietnam. Little did I know about what

was going to happen.

Juan and I talked on the telephone upon my arrival and we set up a day trip at the end of that week. We went to the local army airfield to just look at a veteran Hueys they have in service. I accepted the invitation with low expectations, but thought this could be a welcome diversion from spending all day talking with my mother-in-law and wife's family, as I don't speak Spanish.

Now, Juan is a civilian, not even in the reserves, although he did do four years in the military. The first call we made was Juan introducing me, on a first name basis, to Col. Ricardo Cundom, the chief of Army Aviation, a club member, and in charge of the base.

As he welcomed me into his office, I felt a feeling inside me that had lain dormant for 37 years. I was being given respect and appreciation for being a Vietnam Army Aviator and it turns out the photo of my helicopter, with me flying and surviving, makes me a "hero" to them.

After coffee and a very nice conversation, he looked at me in the eye with a smile and said there were no civilians allowed on his flight line and under no circumstances could a civilian "fly" in any of his

aircraft, to which I replied: "Yes, Sir, I understand."

We all stood as he introduced me to Capt. Luis Guillot,

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A former U.S. military Huey is shown in a hangar in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where it and 32 others are cared for by pilots in the South American country.

From the President

Continued from Page 3

reunion details in order to get registration in this issue.

We may also attempt to notify you that "online" registration will be available prior to you receiving this newsletter.

If you did not receive an email notification we probably do not have a current valid email address on file. Please be sure to keep HQ updated with any address or email changes so we can contact you.

A little housekeeping

It came to my attention there was an e-mail circulat-

ing prior to the November elections that was very unflattering to one of the presidential candidates, the war on terror and the war in Iraq. That wasn't too surprising.

The disturbing factor was this email had reportedly been circulated by "the president of the VHPA!"

I was able to get a copy of the suspect email and sent a response to the individual who forwarded the email, explaining I am the current president of the VHPA and I DID NOT circulate the email.

I further explained our organization was strictly non-political by design and it would be a absolutely unacceptable for me or any other VHPA official to engage in such activities and to please forward my response to all that had been copied on the offending email.

Enough said about that.

Until the next column.

— Dan Ferguson, VHPA president

Letters

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another club member and one of the most senior helicopter pilots at the base, to give me a "complete" tour of the flight line.

Wow! What a treasure chest to find! The Argentine Army Aviation has a total of 33 UH-1H's, of which 14 actually flew in RVN. Ship AE-432 was on the flight line, our tail number 67-17624, and logged a total of 2,177 hours in Vietnam. I retyped and attached the list that Juan researched and compiled with the generous help of our own Gary Roush.

These aircraft are now being treated with a special respect and shown honor for the duty they performed in Vietnam, and the maintenance they receive is topnotch.

Without me saying a word, the captain, with a wink, ask if I would like to go for a "ride up front" in 432 and, of course, I said yes. After all the years, it all came back, just

like remembering how to ride a bicycle. Another Wow for me.

They are flying these aircraft exactly the same way we did and enjoying them just as much, if that's possible! I had such a great time that club member Maj. Rodolfo De Luca, chief of Exploration and Attack Squadron 602, invited Juan and me to some overnight field maneuvers they were doing the following week to keep the rocket inventory down, but

that's another letter.

The point of all this is, everyone I met — from the door gunner to the colonel — made me feel that I belonged again, and it felt great.

So, if you recognize any of the tail numbers, they would really enjoy hearing from you!

A photo of the aircraft while in Vietnam would be a bonus to them that you cannot imagine.

If you need a hand with navigating their webpage, as it's all

Spanish, just send me an email for help, as I'm now an official member of the UH Club.

Max Mizejewski, MM 17A

176th Assault Helicopter Company, June/July 1967



Members of the Buenos Aires UH Club stand in front of a Huey belonging to the group.

Breakfast visit leads to reunion

The Dallas VHPA Reunion was the first time I had an opportunity to attend a VHPA function of any type.

Like many, I was hoping to meet a few people from the past. My first reunion experience was well beyond my expectations. My wife and I wondered why we had waited so long to attend one of these events.

But it was a chance breakfast conversation with Col. Chris Gallavan, before he presented Broken Wing awards, which led me to another reunion a month later in Miami.

In late 1971, I returned to Vietnam for a second tour and was assigned to 12th Aviation Group headquarters at Long Binh. Shortly after arriving, I was assigned to fly a "civilian" on what seemed like a weekly basis. I vaguely recall being told to "ask no questions and take him wherever he wants to go."

Over the next several months, while I never learned anything about his background or for whom he worked, it became obvious Felix Rodriguez was using my OH-58 flying service to collect intelligence information on the NVA in III Corps.

On each mission, we would fly to various locations where he would interview Vietnamese troops and civilians. He then would point to a location on a map and ask me to fly over it from several directions while he took photos. I could only guess about what happened to these targets.

In the spring of 1972, he told me he was being reassigned to Latin America and was looking for a full-time pilot. I declined the offer.

In 1987, a familiar face appeared before the televised Senate Iran-Contra Committee hearings. Felix Rodriguez was called as a witness to try to establish a link between Vice President George Bush and the Contra resupply effort. But the more interesting aspect of Rodriguez' involvement in Central America regarded the application of helicopter warfare learned during his assignment in Vietnam by flying with a number of VHPA members.

In the early 1980's, Felix proposed, planned and initiated the use of "hunter-killer" teams of aircraft to track

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Newsletter article helps find cause of malady

In late 1995, *The VHPA Newsletter* contained an article written by John Keller about the anti-malaria pills we took in Vietnam and the other side-effects that we were never told about this medication.

After reading this article, I believe that I had finally found the cause of my vision problems and headaches, etc. My reaction to this article was very emotional as I have suffered for many years with severe poor vision problems and constant headaches. Ultimately, in order not to be declared legally blind, I had to have a corneal transplant and eventually cataract surgery. I still have constant headaches as a result of my strained vision.

My reactions to this medication (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, etc.) while in Vietnam was similar to that of many other soldiers who were under general order to take this 500 mg chloroquine-primaquine medication for the prevention of malaria.

At no time was I, or anyone else I ever knew of, informed of this medication's more serious adverse reactions, i.e. irreversible corneal and retinal tissue damage, liver and kidney failure/problems, etc. These serious adverse reactions are well documented in the pharmaceutical and medical journals. I was treated in Vietnam for these adverse reactions and at one time I was even given an injection of atropine because of the severity of my stomach cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.

I continued to have adverse reactions while still on active duty back at Fort Rucker.

The in-country adverse reactions were every week after taking the anti-malaria pill. After release from active duty



in September 1968, I still had continuing adverse reactions, including headaches. I filed a claim with the Veterans Administration and ultimately received a less than 10 percent non-compensable "Service Connected Disability due to Malaria." I was never diagnosed with malaria in Vietnam!!!

It was only after reading this article that I believed I had found the root cause of all my medical problems for the last 19 years. John Keller received a great deal of response from other VHPA members, as well as responses from members of the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association, who also described various maladies and serious adverse reactions, etc., they had experienced from taking this medication.

John can be contacted at: Telephone: [REDACTED] and email: [REDACTED]

After reading the article, I contacted the Veterans Administration office in Fort Lauderdale and initiated my current claim for a service-connected disability, as well as for compensation for the mental and physical pain and suffering that I have endured these many years.

My uphill battle has gone on for almost nine years. I have "gone the gauntlet" through all of the VA appeals and bureaucracy. My claim was finally approved in August 2004 and I was awarded a 30 percent compensable disability with back disability pay to April 1, 1996. I received a check for \$23,469.09, as well as a monthly disability entitlement of \$316.00, not including a monthly allowance for my spouse, for the rest of my life.

I have won my "battle," but this "war" is not over. The VA had the same evidence to support my claim back in 1996 as it did when they made this decision in August 2004.

When we were called to serve our country, we went immediately. When I called on my country to honor my claim for a service-connected disability, it took nine years!!!

My attorney, Ms. Lisa A. Lee, represented me on a pro-bono basis. If there are other Vietnam veterans or VHPA members who had adverse reactions to this anti-malarial medication, my attorney would appreciate hearing from them.

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Felix played role in hunting Che Guevara

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down and destroy communist insurgents in El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica. Later, at the request of Oliver North, he was involved in efforts to supply the Contras.

Unknown to me in 1972 was the critical role Felix played in hunting down Che Guevara in the Bolivian jungle in 1967 and earlier exploits to topple Fidel Castro.

As mentioned earlier, while having breakfast with Col. Gallavan at the Dallas reunion, we swapped war stories and I mentioned my Vietnam association with Felix and my interest in meeting him again.

Surprisingly, Col. Gallavan told me he was acquainted with someone who knew Felix. Within a week I had an

email address. I was planning to visit my daughter in Miami in early August.

Two weeks later I spent several days visiting Felix. Today Felix Rodriguez is president of the 2506th Brigade, the veteran's organization for Bay of Pigs soldiers.

Felix has made tentative plans to attend our reunion in San Francisco as my guest. I hope he can meet VHPA pilots who supported his CIA efforts in Vietnam.

If you supported him or know of others who were involved, please contact me at: [REDACTED]

Doug Miller
Pleasanton, CA

Letters

Author to interview scout crews

In preparation for a book devoted to Aeroscouts, writer Wayne Mutza would like to hear from anyone willing to share their experiences as a scout helicopter crewman. Stories can be long or short, and range from humorous to traumatic.

Include unit and time frame. Narratives are credited according to contributors' wishes. Contact:

Wayne Mutza

Huey and Loach crew chief, 1970 -72
including Vietnam

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Ms. Lee suggests that other veterans who have suffered symptoms such as mine initiate a claim with the VA and, if denied, follow the appeal process (file Notice of Disagreement) within one year from rating decision, etc. An attorney cannot be hired by a veteran to represent them until after there is a final decision by the Board of Veterans Appeals. There is a bill before the House of Representatives to allow attorneys in at an earlier stage of the VA pro-

ceedings.

Ms. Lee can be contacted at the following telephone number: [REDACTED] or email: [REDACTED]

Robert A. Heber

Call Sign: XRAY3HQ5

II FFV Aviation Detachment

July 1966-July 1967

Australian researches history of battalion

I am researching and writing a history of the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, concentrating on the Battalion's task in AO Columbus, northeast of Bien Hoa, from Jan. 24, 1968-Feb. 13, 1968. The operation was named Coburg by the Australians.



The 7th Battalion's deployment from Nui Dat, in Phuoc Tuy Province, to AO Columbus was carried out by two air-mobile companies supplemented by Chinooks, on Jan. 24. It was a massive airlift, 800 infantry soldiers, and quickly accomplished.

The battalion's task was to intercept and destroy any enemy troops in AO Columbus in order to protect Bien Hoa Base.

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Letters

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The battalion was in action from the moment they landed and exacted a heavy toll on the VC.

Up until, Jan. 31, the battalion had been operating offensively to the northeast of Bien Hoa in AO Columbus. Once the attacks on Long Binh demonstrated that the bulk of the VC was between Long Binh and AO Columbus, the battalion did a tactical about-face and deployed a series of company- and platoon-sized day and night ambushes between the Dong Nai River and Highway 1.

I am concentrating specifically on the Charlie Company Bunker Action fought over three days, from Feb. 5-7. The contact took place about six kilometres north of Trang Bom.

The company received support mainly from helicopter gunships throughout this firefight, as they battled an enemy who occupied an ingeniously constructed bunker system, and had everything in the arsenal, including .50-cal. heavy machine guns, light machine guns, RPG's, 70mm recoilless rifles, AK47's; you name, they had it. Charlie Company captured many of these weapons.

The bunker system was occupied by about four companies of VC. Charlie Company was outnumbered on the ground by about 4-1.

But without the close support given by the gunships, Phantoms, Canberra bombers and Puff the Magic Dragon, the company would have suffered more than the 2 Killed and 30 wounded.

The company, with the help of their friends, won out in the end and the VC retreated in disarray, leaving behind weapons, food, documents, Russian alarm clocks and clothing.

If there are any members who supported the battalion and Charlie Company on this operation, I would like to

hear from them. I was a member of Charlie Company and served in South Vietnam from 1967-68, so I would also like to thank all the helicopter crews who supported us.

Clive Swaysland

Australian National University
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia.

Old friend looking for helicopter pilot

I am looking for a Vietnam helicopter pilot I worked a season with at Bryce Canyon National Park many years ago. After the summer, he moved to Colorado, then to Seattle, I believe.

His first name was Larry and I am reading a book by a Vietnam vet friend of mine, Red Earth, by Phillip Red Eagle, that is making me long for contact and reconnection with him.

His last name may have been Miller and he was a wonderful photographer. My name back then was Robin Charleston, originally from Northern California, now residing 80 miles north of Seattle.

If he is still out there, I would love to find him again. I want him to know I am close by, if he is indeed in Seattle.

Story: Please read Phillip Red Eagle's book about Vietnam, a Native American survivor's perspective. He has a website and his book will be back in print soon . . . he has poetry as well and many used and rare bookstores carry a copy of this book. Something got reopened inside me as I read this book. I lost my grandfather to World War II, an uncle in Vietnam, and love many vets, who survived the wars, alive, but are lost and hurting.

Please help me find Larry again.

Robin Carneen



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Taps

John "Jack" J. Cooley III

John "Jack" J. Cooley III of Cheney, WA, died Aug. 17 in a helicopter crash in Mead, WA. He was 57.

Cooley trained as a helicopter pilot and served with B Company, 25th Aviation Battalion, 24th Infantry in Vietnam from 1966-69 as a warrant officer.

He piloted gunships, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal and several Air Medals.

After the leaving the service, he flew the Amazon Basin for an oil exploration company, and worked the Gulf of Mexico for another oil company, living on production platforms.

He then moved to Saudi Arabia, where he worked in the Persian Gulf. He also spent two years flying for the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in northern California.

In 1979, he was hired by Bonneville Power Administration.

He is survived by his wife of 28 years, Mary Anne MAC Corda Cooley.

Truman Allen Craig

Truman Allen Craig, 58, of Sumner, WA, died July 3 as the result of an accident.



Truman A. Craig

He was born Sept. 28, 1945, in Washburn, MN.

Craig was an Army veteran of Vietnam, where he flew helicopter gunships. He served with the 48th Assault Helicopter Company.

He also was a pilot for 13 years with Airlift Northwest and, most recently, flew for Vulcan of Seattle.

He belonged to the Vietnam Helicopters Pilot Association, the QB's (Quiet Birdsmen) and HOG (Harley Owner's Group).

Craig is survived by his wife, Shirley Craig.

Patrick Wallace Emery Sr.

Patrick Wallace Emery Sr. of Maricopa, AZ, died Jan. 12, 1997, of a heart attack. He was 56.

Emery served as an Army helicopter pilot with the 501st Aviation Battalion at Bien Hoa, South Vietnam, in 1964-65.

He also flew for many years as an "agricultural applicant," did work in South America, flew for tuna fleet off the coast of Mexico and flew fire suppression missions for the U.S. Forest Service.



Carl "Rock" Fallquist

Carl "Rock" Fallquist died Nov. 16 in Goshen, IN, after a lengthy battle with heart disease and diabetes.

He attended flight school with classes 66-17/66-15 and served two tours in Vietnam, the first in 1967-68 with the 128th AHC and the second in 1969-70 with the 361st ACE at Pleiku as a maintenance officer.

Though not in good health, upon being located by his fellow Panthers, Fallquist joined the VHPA and attended several reunions.

He made plans to come to the Dallas reunion, but was forced to cancel due to his health.

Fallquist was a good guy, a great pilot and an outstanding maintenance officer.

His awards included a Distinguished Flying Cross and numerous awards of the Air Medal.

At the time of his death, Fallquist was an ordained minister and resided in Goshen.

Survivors include two children, Susan and Thomas; two grandchildren; and a sister, Linda.

John B. Fleming Jr.

John B. Fleming Jr. of Livingston, TX, died May 28 of lung cancer.

He was a member of Army flight school classes 70-13/70-15.

His wife Elizabeth survives him.

Richard Geraghty

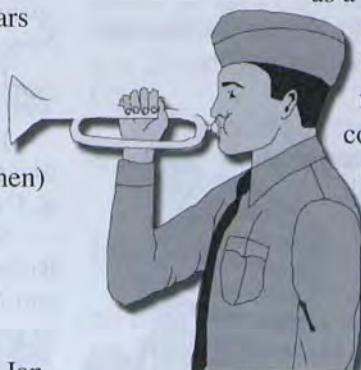
Richard Geraghty, 61, died Nov. 7.

He served 10 years in the Army and attained the rank of major.

He also served two tours in Vietnam, from 1967-69, as a Huey helicopter pilot and a battalion staff officer in charge of training new pilots. After returning from Vietnam, he was a flight commander for student instrument training at Hunter Army Air Field.

Geraghty was awarded the Silver Star Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal with 51 oak leaf clusters, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, the Purple Heart Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Senior Aviator Badge. He was honorably discharged in 1974.

Geraghty was employed by Galtex Hotel Corp. of Galveston, TX, as general manager of several properties, including Moody Gardens, South Shore Harbor Country



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Club, and the Hilton Hotel at Hobby Airport.

He recently purchased a parcel of land, which the family named the Lazy G.

He spent many weekends with his son-in-law and grandsons, Hunter and Fisher, riding four-wheelers, hunting, fishing and telling stories by the campfire.

Geraghty was preceded in death by his father, Jerry Geraghty, on Oct. 21.

He is survived by his wife, Joyce; a son, Michael; daughters Michelle and Deanna; his life grandchildren; his mother, Phyllis; brothers, Ron (his twin), Mark, Gerald (Stu), and Kevin; and a sister, Gayle.

Charles L. Haney

Charles L. Haney died Aug. 16 at his Dothan, AL, home after an extended illness. He was 72.

Several months ago, Haney learned he had lung cancer, but declined to accept experimental drug treatment.

He served as operations officer of the 118th Assault Helicopter Company at Bien Hoa in 1966-67.

Harold L. Huff

Harold L. Huff died May 7.

Huff served in Vietnam with the 81st TC in 1962-63, then flew with the 3rd TC at Fort Belvoir, then back to Vietnam with the 178th ASHC and HHC/11 CAB in 1967.

Dick Legener

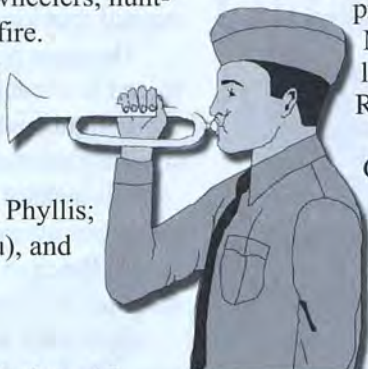
Dick Legener died Sept. 26 at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in King, WI, after a six-year struggle with Alzheimer's disease. He was 73.

He was born in Green Bay, WI, on Nov. 16, 1931. He joined the Army in 1951 and graduated from Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, OK, on May 19, 1953.

Legener married Mariann A. Deering in Kaukauna, WI, on May 23, 1953. They had six children: Chris, Barb, Sue, Carole, Tom and Jim.

He became airborne qualified and then entered and completed Army aviation flight training in Class 54L/54P. He transitioned to helicopters in 1956.

In his 26 years of military service, Legener served at numerous stateside bases, including the Pentagon, and overseas in Japan, the Panama Canal Zone, Puerto Rico, with two tours of duty in Vietnam.



During his first Vietnam tour in 1965-66, he served with the 92nd Aviation Company at Qui Nhon, flying Caribou's for six months before being transferred to the 174th AHC, where he became a platoon commander flying UH-1Ds.

His second tour in 1970-72 was with the 11th CAG, after which he extended his tour for six months to command a battalion assigned to the group.

Legener retired in 1977 at Fort Ord, CA, and returned to Green Bay, where he was an instructor in the ROTC program at Premontre High School. He and Mariann next moved to Bryan, Texas (College Station) where he again served as an ROTC instructor at the high school level.

In 1998, he and Mariann moved back to Green Bay to their retirement home. He entered the Wisconsin Veterans Home in October 2001 when Mariann could no longer care for him at home.

Among his awards and decorations are the Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal with one OLC, the Air Medal with 23 OLCs and one "V" device, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal.

Legener was a Master Aviator, an instrument examiner, and qualified in numerous Army fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft.

Joel L. Lovvorn

Joel L. Lovvorn, 65, of Dothan, AL, died Sept. 10 in his home of cancer.

He was a member of flight school Class 64-1W, and served in South Vietnam with the 128th Assault Helicopter Company in 1965-66.

After military service, Lovvorn's aviation career spanned from test pilot at Fort Rucker to corporate pilot in New York.

He also spent a number of years flying in the oil fields with PHI; in the Gulf of Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

His comment on his illness was: "There is no use getting too upset about all this; there's nothing I can do about it. I've had an interesting life."

Survivors include two sons and daughters-in-law, Richard Alan and Jessie Lovvorn of Dothan, Lee Anthony and Julie Lovvorn, three grandchildren, Damon Lovvorn, Skyler Lovvorn and Lexi Lovvorn.

Edward P. Lukert Jr.

Edward P. Lukert Jr., 77, of Arlington, TX, died Aug. 5 during his daily bicycle ride.

Lukert served as commander of the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion at Pleiku in 1967-68. His call sign was "Dragon 6."

A military brat, Lukert enlisted in the Army right out

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of high school in 1943. He served in World War II and was discharged in 1946. He then attended the University of West Virginia until receiving an appointment to West Point, graduating in 1951.

He flew helicopters in Korea.

His decorations included the Legion of Merit with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Medal with 10 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, the Good Conduct Medal, plus numerous campaign medals, stars and ribbons from World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

His most prized decoration was the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion for its actions during the battle of Dak To in November 1967.

Lukert was a Master Aviator, qualified in fixed-wing aircraft, as well as helicopters. He also was awarded the Parachute Badge and Ranger tab.

He taught at the Army War College and was program manager for the Blackhawk helicopter.

After his retirement from the Army in 1978, Lukert held several influential positions in the civilian world, and was active in various charitable organizations and many bicycling organizations.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Carol, five children, six grandchildren and a sister.

Dennis Marvicsin

Dennis Marvicsin, 64, of Tampa, FL, died July 23 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa, following surgery.

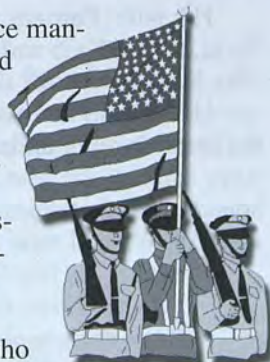
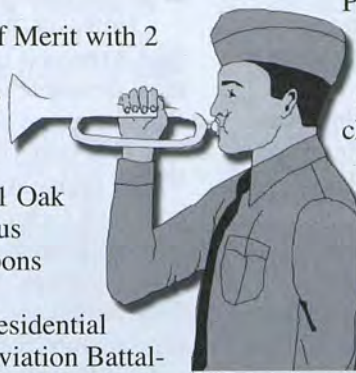
Marvicsin moved to Tampa in 1980 while on active duty at McDill Air Force Base and made Tampa his home after retiring from the Army.

He was a business owner, finance manager for several auto dealerships, and a professional pilot.

Marvicsin was a decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam War, receiving two Silver Star Medals, multiple Distinguished Flying Crosses and Air Medals for valor, the Soldier's Medal and two Purple Heart Medals.

He was one of the few POWs who escaped from captivity during the Vietnam War.

In 1990, his combat memories were published and "Maverick: The Personal War of a Vietnam Cobra Pilot" became a national best seller.



He received a B.S. degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

At the time of his death, he was a pilot for U.S. Helicopters Inc., flying Eagle 8 for WFLA-TV and The Tampa Tribune.

He was a member of Sigma Chi Fraternity, Army Aviation Association of America, Order of the Purple Heart, the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and the National Broadcast Pilots Association.

He is survived by his wife, Sharon Less Marvicsin; sons, Michael Paul and wife, Beth, and Dennis Scott and wife, Cindy; and grandchildren, Nicholas and Alyssa.

Lawrence "Mac" F. McDonald

Lawrence "Mac" F. McDonald, 57, died Aug. 3 at his home in East Wenatchee, WA.

McDonald was born in Phoenix, AZ, to Ernest and Doris McDonald. His father was in the military, so he lived all over the world as a child. He graduated from high school in Okinawa.

He joined the Army, and graduated from flight school in class 66-13B3. His first Vietnam tour was from 1966 to 1968 with the 121st Assault Helicopter Company at Soc Trang. His call sign was "Viking 21."

McDonald served a second tour with the 192nd Assault Helicopter Company at Phan Rang, Air Force Base, in 1970, and a third tour with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Battalion at Dong Ba Thin in 1971.

He retired from the Army in 1993 as a CW4 with almost 30 years of active duty.

McDonald was a highly decorated Master Aviator and fit the image of a patriotic "warrior."

Survivors include his wife, Susan, and granddaughter Alexandria; his mother, Doris of Ottawa, Ontario; son, Dustin of Yuba City, CA; sister, Shari Shiffer, Atlanta, GA; brother, David of Colorado Springs, CO; and grandson, Brian Williams, Warner-Robbins Air Force Base, GA.

A memorial service is planned for the next VHPA reunion in San Francisco, CA.

Edd Shinn

It is sad to inform you that Edd Shinn had finally lost his battle with lung cancer. He died Oct. 19.

We will miss Edd for being the wonderful man he was and for the horrible jokes he kept coming up with. One of a kind.

Edd came to the 189th in 1967. He was an Avenger and ran the operations under Bill Fraker.

If you would like to send Anne a card, I am sure she would appreciate knowing that we cared. Their address is: [REDACTED] AL 36375.

— Gerry Sandlin

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Reunion 2005

San Francisco site of VHPA get-together in July

JOE BILITZKE AND DAVE RITTMAN
NATIONAL REUNION CO-CHAIRMEN

For many of us, we departed from San Francisco or the nearby military bases almost 40 years ago en route to a conflict in a far land.

In July 2005, we return to renew our acquaintances made in those difficult times, renew camaraderie of old, and to have a great time in a fabulous city that knows how to host a great party!

Regardless of whether you have been to a recent reunion (or not) . . . this is one you have to make!

While ensuring ample time exists for meeting that special person you haven't seen for years, telling stories of old that get better by the year in the lounges, and even taking time to just "chill out" in a great first class hotel, this year there are many very special events and activities that will be an experience of a lifetime.

The hotel is first class — and what a rate!

The host hotel this year is THE San Francisco Marriott, located downtown in the heart of everything at 55 Fourth St.

At the fabulous, negotiated rate of \$109 per night, plus tax, as anyone who knows San Francisco, this is a

true bargain. They have even thrown free use of the health club facilities by the entire membership and guests! (Use of guest lockers is optional for \$5).

However, hotel rooms are definitely limited, and this year's reunion is being held right in the middle of the most desirable tourist season. Thus space will be at a premium; be sure you reserve your room(s) early.

This year you will be able to do that through our VHPA registration system again. While last year's hotel could not technically accommodate our Internet web-based registration system, the Marriott has no such limitations, and they will be linked directly to our website. Thus, when you complete registering for VHPA events, the software continues to accept your room reservations online! Simple!

Eric Burdon and the Animals booked for welcome reception

Officially the reunion starts off on Saturday, July 2, although many of you will elect to arrive a day earlier to take in the sights of the city on your own. At the above rates, it is an opportunity not to be missed.

On Saturday, for our first-time reunion attendees, we will have a special welcome reception at 6:30 p.m., and

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Taps

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Phillip Ray "Stoney" Stone

Phillip Ray "Stoney" Stone, 59, died June 23 at his home in Fritch, TX, after a battle with bladder cancer.

Stoney was born on Aug. 27, 1944, in Phillip's TX. He graduated from Phillip's High School in 1963 and went on to graduate from West Texas State University.

He was in the Army from 1969 to 1972 and graduated from flight school in Class 70-34. He flew in Vietnam with the 62nd Assault Helicopter Company at DaNang in 1971.

He later went to work for BNSF Railroad as an engineer.

Survivors include his wife, Linda Stone; son, Phillip Brec Stone; two daughters, Stacy Tucker and Sarah Stone; sister, Joyce Collins; and six grandchildren.

Bennie Eugene Young

Retired Maj. Bennie Eugene Young, 69, of Jupiter, FL, died Oct. 11 after an illness.

Young was a member of Flight School Class 62-5, and served three tours in Vietnam as an Army helicopter pilot. In 1964-65, he served with the 661st Transportation Company; in 1967-68, he served with the 1st Cavalry Division; and in 1971, he served with the 11th CAG.

He was recipient of the Silver Star Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Purple Heart Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster.

His wife, Patricia; a daughter, Lisa Young; four sons, Scott, Keith, Kyle and Mark; and 11 grandchildren survive him.

His time in the Army and, especially, in aviation, defined who Ben understood himself to be. Those times were some of the best times of his life and were a great source of pride to him and to his family. He loved his country. We will miss him.

— David M. Garner

Submit Taps articles from website

A special form has been added to the VHPA website (www.vhpa.org) for writing and submitting Taps articles for *The VHPA Newsletter*.

Eric Burdon headliner act

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for the general membership we open up the doors at 7 p.m. to mingle, possibly find that special pilot you haven't seen in 40 years, and socialize in the best of company.

With the reunion being in the Pacific time zone, our experience has been almost everyone will be checked in and ready to party when our headliner show kicks off at 8:30 p.m. in the main ballroom: None other than Eric Burdon and the Animals.

We have been using his song "We've Got to Get Out of This Place" as our unofficial theme song for years, and now's your chance to hear it live from the band who performed it originally way back when.

Ticket cost, including all taxes and gratuities, is \$35 per person. What a night it will be!

Business meeting shifted one hour later

In recognition of the special opening night show, our annual business meeting will be conducted one hour later than normal, at 10 a.m. on July 3, and is open to all dues-current members.

This meeting is free of charge, but will require an admittance ticket, which will be in your registration packet upon arrival or will be available at the registration desk before the meeting.

Your Executive Council promises the meeting will conclude about noon.

Culinary exhibition and brunch for spouses

This year we have a unique opportunity for our spouses to experience while the annual business meeting is going on in a different area.

The hotel has one of the premium pastry chefs in the country on staff — Bill Holt.

In addition to a fine brunch, Bill and his group of highly talented culinary artists and co-workers will demonstrate how to prepare very unique and exquisite pastries, desserts, chocolates, and the like.

Bill has promised samples of their work throughout the presentation for all.

The cost — including taxes and gratuities — is \$30 per person.

Trip to Alcatraz

We will have vendors available at the hotel to book a number of various tours and excursions upon your arrival at the Marriott. For many tours, just stop by the various desks upon arrival at the hotel, and they should be able to accommodate you.

A key exception is the very popular tour to Alcatraz, which is on an island in the middle of San Francisco harbor.

This trip, operated by the U.S. Park service, is sold out months in advance. In our opinion, you have little hope of obtaining tickets upon arrival, unless the VHPA

sets up the reservations in advance, which is what we have done on your behalf.

The VHPA has put in reservations with the Park Service for 800 prepaid tickets: 400 on Sunday afternoon, July 3, and another 400 on Tuesday, July 5 in the morning hours.

That is all we can anticipate getting.

In addition, tickets are limited to 100 for any one sailing. Thus, the experience is truly capacity limited. When they are gone, they are gone — and there is a possibility the Park Service may not even allocate all the

tickets we have ordered.

The dock where the tour starts is on the same trolley line that stops in front of the hotel, or you can catch a cab for about \$6-\$7.

Thus, we are leaving the transportation up to your individual convenience, so you can walk around the city, see the sights, and not be locked into a specific bus schedule.

By ordering your ticket now for the day you wish to visit Alcatraz, upon check-in at our registration desk at the hotel you will receive your tickets with your precise sailing time from the dock.

The boats run every hour and, like an airplane flight, they are totally reserved.

Cost, including all taxes, gratuities and administrative fees is, \$22.50. Once tickets are ordered, they are not refundable.



San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau photo

The cable car has been a familiar form of getting around San Francisco for 131 years. The cars are a great way to tour the city.

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Sunday a good time to take in sights

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Sunday afternoon free time

With the exception of the Alcatraz Island trip, Sunday afternoon is free time. There will be scheduled mini-reunions for a number of the units, but overall this is your time to see the city, find that special restaurant, and generally have a great time on the town.

But make sure you are back at the hotel by 9 p.m. or you will miss something very special!

Cabaret theme party Sunday

Planned as a free event for all registered members and guests, this is something new for this year, but you will need your ID registration badges to gain entrance to the area.

Casual in tone, set in the large, second floor garden Atrium of the hotel, envision mingling and socializing with all your friends and acquaintances, while great entertainment performs almost non-stop in a interactive Las Vegas-style cabaret setting.

You might even believe you recognize a few of the key performers, who could stop in for guest appearances. This is one not to be missed!

Golf tournament July 4

For the golfers in our group, Mike Whitten has put together another spectacular tournament — this time at the prestigious Stone Tree Golf Course.

Details are covered in a separate article in this newsletter — but if you enjoy the game, you have GOT to sign up for this one! Cost is \$100 per player, including green fees, carts, transportation to the course, taxes, gratuities, and much more.

If you have played in previous VHPA tournaments in recent years, you understand the true value of this event relative to the entry fee.

Free time, vendors and mini-reunions throughout the day

Throughout July 4, there is much to select from and do as you prefer: Mini-reunions for some units, vendors, and plenty of time to explore the city on this festive holiday.

Independence Day harbor dinner cruise

This is truly a special event — and thus a separate article has been written for this newsletter with more details.

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Golfers

Reunion features early departure for Stonetree Golf Club course

Well, it's time to think about going to San Francisco and you know that means GOLF for those of us who think about what has priority over other things.

Again, we will meet at the curb at the Marriott to board buses to go to the Stonetree Golf Club course at 6 a.m. and will tee in up in a shotgun format at 8. We will have some food available for purchase when we get there, as well as hot coffee and other things to warm you up.

You may think about wearing warm clothes when you leave the hotel, but by 10 o'clock in the morning it should be above 80 degrees at the course and reach 90 by the time we finish.

Of course, when we get back to the hotel and get ready to go on the Hornblower, the temperature will again be heading south, so wardrobe-wise it should be an interesting day.

Golf-wise you are going to have the privilege of playing the best golf course in Northern California for turf conditions and one of the highest-rated courses overall. If you would like to take a tour of the course, go to this website: <http://stonetreegolf.com>

I am trying to have some interesting things at the tournament this year since it is on my home ground. I already have got sponsors to donate a case of premium wine and

some other money, and I am working with a San Francisco car dealership to have a hole-in-one contest with the big prize being a new car.

I also am asking if any of you know anyone who would like to sponsor a hole at the golf tournament to please get in touch with me.

I asked last year and we had three members who got their companies to donate \$750 each and five members donated \$150 each. Again, special thanks for Bob Potvin who got nine of his clients to donate \$150 each.

I could use your help to make this one of the most memorable and successful tournaments ever. If you or your company would like to sponsor a hole, please get in touch with me at [REDACTED]

As an extra touch, we have contracted with MOAA Vacations to offer you an opportunity to play golf in Maui, Hawaii, at the conclusion of the San Francisco reunion.

Look at the article in this *Newsletter* about the extension vacation to Maui. Dates, times and contacts will be in that article.

More to come later. Until then, hit them long and straight.

— Mike Whitten

Cruise attendance limited

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What a night it will be: A harbor sunset cruise, dinner, dancing to our own 5-piece band, partying, and — weather/fog permitting — a front row seat to one of the premium fireworks displays in the country.

This trip is limited in attendance and, while expensive, it is a terrific value for a premium seat on the most desirable sailing night of the year in San Francisco. The \$120 per person covers all transportation to and from the yacht, dinner, entertainment, taxes, gratuities, and — weather/fog permitting — the fireworks display. This event is non-refundable once purchased.

This yacht is truly first class and we have booked the entire enclosed top deck, which holds 400 people.

We have an option to book a second lower level (which is identical in layout and ambience) by a certain cutoff date next spring if our reserved count exceeds the capacity of the top deck, but for sure the first 400 people to sign up will have their reservations located on the top area of the ship.

Alcatraz tours continue July 5

Described earlier in this article are the Alcatraz tour details. This morning, more trips are available up to departure at 12:30 p.m.

Regrettably, tours after this hour would not get you back to the hotel in time for the final banquet, thus 12:30 p.m. is the last sailing we will offer, of four that will depart during the morning hours.

Final Banquet — July 5

Starting just a little earlier this year, doors open at 5:30 p.m. For many of you, this will be your final night to enjoy the camaraderie and friendships formed and renewed during the reunion.

There is a choice of three meals: Strip steak, halibut or vegetarian. The evening concludes with a great band to dance and wind up the evening in high fashion. Cost is \$60, including all taxes and gratuities.

Non-registered guests permitted at special price at the final banquet

This year your Executive Council has voted to test a concept talked about within the Association for several years.

If you and your spouse/guest would like to bring a special non-member friend, relative or guest only to the final night's banquet, but not to any other event at the reunion, you may do so without paying the overall reunion registration fee by purchasing a ticket for that person at the same time you sign up for your final night banquet tickets.

Cost is \$85 per guest (all taxes and gratuities included), a figure that covers the approximate true cost per person of conducting the banquet, including the entertainment, ceremonies, and technical support.

Post trip to Maui on July 6

Two years ago in Orlando we launched the concept for a post trip after the reunion, a cruise.

This year we have another exciting trip planned — a land-based visit to Maui, Hawaii, staying at a premium oceanside and golf resort complex at fabulously discounted VHPA prices.

The morning after the final banquet, all you need to do is get yourself to the airport to catch a designated nonstop flight direct from SFO to Maui. Details are in a separate article within this *Newsletter*.

How to register

All you have to do to register is go on the Internet to www.vhpareunion.org right after Jan. 1, and the software will guide you from there.

Simple!

If you prefer not to use the Internet, there is a form within this newsletter you can complete and mail/fax back to our headquarters office in Sacramento, CA. Either way, register early, as many of the special events and rooms at the Marriott are capacity limited. When they are gone, they are gone.

Given the high number of tourists in San Francisco during July, it is likely rooms at the HQ hotel will be exhausted weeks before the start of the reunion. Register now!

Do I fly or drive?

For many of you in the Central and Eastern United States, that decision is obvious. By booking well in advance, there are many discounted airfares to the San Francisco area.



San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau photo
The tallest building in San Francisco, at 835 feet, the Transamerica Pyramid marks the edge of the financial district.

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Two airports serve San Francisco

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Oakland is just across the bay from downtown San Francisco and, while it is about \$20 farther away by cab, Southwest and other discount airlines fly there with frequent schedules.

San Francisco International is somewhat closer to downtown and also hosts many airlines and the resulting discount fares if you purchase them early enough.

Cab fare from SFO to the hotel costs about \$30-\$35, while riding in from Oakland is about \$50-\$55, though traffic can be a factor at certain times of the day.

Shuttle buses also run from the airport to the hotel, but if you have two people going, a cab is about the same price, and is faster.

If you are comfortable with public transportation, the Bay area has a spectacular rapid transit system called "The Bart". It runs from both airports to within a block of the hotel at a fraction of the cost and often is faster than you can drive or take a cab from the airport. Details on how to use that will follow in a later newsletter.

If you elect to drive, parking is somewhat expensive and can be a factor. Directly across the street from the hotel lobby entrance is a multi-story parking garage called Verba Buena Garage. Rates there per day are only \$14 a day, which is relatively inexpensive for San Francisco.

Important! The Marriott hotel garage is owned by an outside vendor that charges \$42 a day. Thus, if you drive, our recommendation for which parking area to use is obvious. Neither area will accommodate a RV motor home. We'll publish a few recommendations for those folks separately in a future edition.

If you are thinking about flying to the reunion and then renting a car for a day or two, Hertz has a counter and vehicles available at the hotel.

Tax impact on costs associated with the reunion

Although the VHPA is a 501c19 veterans organization, under California statutes that status will not provide us with an exemption for state sales tax, which is 8.5 percent.

United offers discount fares

If you fly on United Airlines to San Francisco for the VHPA, you are eligible for a special discount.

Booking your reservation within 30 days of the June 26-July 14 availability date will entitle you to a 5 percent fare discount. Booking more than 30 days ahead entitles you to the 10 percent discount.

To make reservations, call (800) 521-4041 and refer to Meeting ID Code 531CD.

You must call United Airlines directly or book your flight through a travel agent to qualify for the special discount.

In recent years' reunions, including Dallas and Orlando, our Association was able to take advantage of a sales tax exemption that was passed on to the members in the form of somewhat lower pricing. In addition, unlike most previous years, the tax in San Francisco applies not only to items purchased (such as banquet meals, audio-visual equipment, beverages, etc.), but also to the 20 percent service gratuity we are required to pay as part of the banquet setups.

Thus, our banquet meal pricing and registration fees are slightly higher this year compared to last in order to cover this added expense.

Registration fees for the reunion

Due to the extra tax applied in California, combined with the higher cost of putting the reunion on at such a premium time of year in a first class location, we have adjusted upward our overall registration fees per person for San Francisco — but only by \$10.

Similar to our practices in recent years, we will continue to provide a discount to encourage earlier registration. For members and guests who register on April 30 or before, the registration fee is \$55. May 1 and later, the fee increases to \$65.

Our Internet reservation system is scheduled to open the first week in January.

Just dial up www.vhpareunion.org

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EC) ELECTIONS

Here is a heads up for the EC Elections

If you are interested in running for office on the EC, contact me at the following and I will send you a complete election package:

Telephone: [REDACTED]
e-mail: [REDACTED]
or Fax: [REDACTED]

THERE ARE TWO POSITIONS AVAILABLE:

VICE PRESIDENT

JUNIOR MEMBER AT LARGE

EC Coordinator:
Jack Salm

[REDACTED]
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

**SUSPENSE DATE:
NO LATER THAN MIDNIGHT, JUNE 15, 2005**

Schedule:

San Francisco reunion events begin on July 1

Friday, July 1

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Vendor set up – Golden Gate Hall A-C
1:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Registration for pre-registered guests only – Yerba Buena Ballroom area
6:00 PM – Whenever	Early Bird informal get together – 2nd floor hotel Atrium area

Saturday, July 2

10:00 AM – 8:00 PM	Registration – Yerba Buena Ballroom area
10:00 AM – 7:00 PM	Vendor area – Golden Gate Hall A-C
6:30 PM – 7:00 PM	First-time reunion attendee special orientation welcome reception Nob Hill A-D
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Welcome reception and party for all members and their guests – Yerba Buena Ballroom area
8:30 PM – 10:00 PM	Eric Burdon and the Animals – Yerba Buena Ballroom

Sunday, July 3

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM	Registration – Yerba Buena Ballroom area
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Annual Business Meeting (dues current members only) – Salon 8 & 9; Yerba Buena Ballroom
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Brunch for spouses and guests, including culinary exhibition of master gourmet chefs – hotel area TBD
12:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Vendor area – Golden Gate Hall A-C
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Mini-reunions
1:30 PM – 4:30 PM	Alcatraz Island Tour – departure time exact schedule per your pre-purchased tickets – approx 4 hours.
6:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Informal get-together with great 2-piece combo – 2nd Floor Hotel Atrium
9:00 PM – midnight	Cabaret Entertainment and Stage Show – 2nd Floor Hotel Atrium

Monday, July 4

6:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Golf Tournament at Stone Tree Golf; includes lunch and mementos
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Mini-reunions
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM	Registration – Yerba Buena Ballroom area
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM	Vendor area – Golden Gate Hall A-C
6:00 PM – 11:00 PM	4th of July Dinner cruise, dancing, and weather/fog permitting very major fireworks display
10:30 PM- 1:00 AM	Party continues with great 2 piece combo inside the hotel lounge area – 2nd Floor Hotel Atrium

Tuesday, July 5

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Mini-reunions
9:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Alcatraz Island Tour – departure time exact schedule per your pre-purchased tickets – approx 4 hours.
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM	Registration – Yerba Buena Ballroom area
9:00 AM – 4:30 PM	Vendor Area – location to be announced (relocated from Golden Gate A-C)
5:30 PM – midnight	Doors open – Final Banquet & dance (Typically this is a coat and tie event. Some members wear military dress uniform. Ladies wear cocktail dresses) – Yerba Buena Ballroom

Wednesday, July 6

AM Departure	Check out for majority of reunion attendees – returning home
AM Departure	For members and guests going on the post reunion trip to Maui, Hawaii only – flight leaves SFO en route to Maui – exact departure times included in your trip package.

Register at www.vhpareunion.org

Bay cruise

Dinner, dancing cap San Francisco Belle voyage

JOE BILITZKE

CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL REUNION COMMITTEE

How do you like the cover of this Newsletter issue? No, it can't hover, but we have such a spectacular event for the Fourth of July, we thought it should be the cover story.

As the saying goes, "Only in San Francisco." This year's Fourth of July celebration will be like no other. We're going for a boat ride! Actually, it's a little more than that.

Specifically, we're going on a Hornblower cruise on Monday evening, July 4. Dave Rittman has covered the specifics of the cruise in the reunion agenda beginning on Page 12. Here I'd like to give you some details on the event itself.

Hornblower Cruises and Events (HCE) has been a fixture in San Francisco for the past 24 years. It began in 1980 with one vessel in the Berkeley marina, on San Francisco Bay.

Now plying the waters in six California ports, HCE has grown to a \$30 million business, featuring 25 yachts. In 2001, the San Francisco Belle, our ship, was added to the fleet. It lays claim to being the largest dining yacht on the West Coast, accommodating up to 2,000 passengers.

The San Francisco Belle is a four-deck, stern-wheeler. During dinner cruises, the bottom three, fully enclosed decks can comfortably accommodate 400 people. The top or fourth deck is open to the elements.

We have secured the uppermost, enclosed deck for VHPA. It is reserved exclusively for us and, therefore, entry is closely controlled, allowing only ticketed VHPA

members and guests.

Once inside, you'll find linen-covered tables, a dance floor, and a five-piece band with instructions to "keep the tunes in the 1960's."

In addition, our Hornblower event coordinator, Betty Shea, took on our challenge to negotiate beer prices in keeping with the VHPA tradition. She did an outstanding job – domestic beer is going for \$2!

Huge bars, one forward and one aft, will keep the liquid refreshments available all evening.

When it comes time to chow, this is no hamburger and hot dog fare. In addition to dancing and drinking, the Hornblower offers us an outstanding buffet menu selection:

Dinner Buffet

Caesar Salad

*with shaved parmesan cheese,
cracked pepper and herbed croutons*

Entrée Selection (your choice of entrée)

Pan Roasted Salmon with Tapenade

*Herb Crusted Carved Sirloin of Beef
with Horseradish Crème Fraiche*

Herb and Garlic Roasted Potatoes

Seasonal Vegetables

Fresh Fruit Display

Dessert A Selection of Tortes and Cakes

Looks pretty yummy, doesn't it? From experience, I can tell you, it is. Note, wine is not part of our package price, but may be purchased during dinner.

A note on accommodations is in order.

Your Reunion Committee has reserved the top, enclosed deck exclusively for VHPA. Because of the dinner and dance floor configuration, the deck is limited to 400 passengers. The first 400 members to register for the Bay Cruise will be ticketed for the top deck.

If we receive requests exceeding 400, the next 400 will be seated mid-deck. Once full, the bottom deck will

Continued on Page 19



San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau photo
The San Francisco Belle dinner yacht will cruise under the Golden Gate Bridge on the Fourth of July. Tickets are limited, so book reservations now.

Cruise requires reservation

Continued from Page 18

be used. However, we only have an exclusive buyout of the top, enclosed deck. First-come, first-served.

Depending on when Headquarters receives registrations, we may or may not have the lower decks solely available to VHPA before they're offered for sale to the public. The key is to register early to be assured of seating on the VHPA deck. This is the most popular cruise of the year; tickets go fast and it's always a sellout.

Here's the flight plan for the evening.

We'll leave the San Francisco Marriott and board buses for a short hop to the pier. Your ticket and reunion badge

checked, you'll board the Belle and make your way to our private deck. For those who require assistance, the ship is fully ADA compliant.

We'll shove off around 7:30 p.m., still with plenty of daylight to enable you to absorb the sights. While you're enjoying your adult beverage and scrumptious dinner, we'll pass a number of San Francisco landmarks.

The prison island of Alcatraz sits in the middle of the bay. You may have had an opportunity to visit the facility during a tour earlier in the reunion. But we'll pass close enough for you to almost reach out and touch the infamous grounds.

The ship then passes Angel Island – the Ellis Island of the West. Here, most immigrants were confined while going through the process allowing them to remain and help build the city, railroads and gold mines.

Continuing around Angel Island, the captain navigates Raccoon Straits, separating Angel Island from the exclusive (and very expensive) enclaves of Tiburon and Belvedere. This is the land of houses with prices in seven digits.

Looking west from the Straits, you'll see the town of Sausalito. Having lived there for 20-plus years, I can tell you it's a spectacular sight as the sun sets over the hills behind it. The glowing lights of the town will remind you of similar settings along the French and Italian Rivas.

Passing Sausalito, your floating restaurant hugs the coast, turns west, and directly in front of you is the structure that is San Francisco. Soon we're floating under the most recognizable landmark in the world – the Golden Gate Bridge.

From here, the captain will do a 180-degree turn – we don't do open ocean. Back we go to the shelter of the bay. And being the biggest dog on the porch or, more appropriately, the biggest boat on the bay, we get to choose the best spot to drop anchor for the next event. It's time for fireworks!

During the past couple of hours, we've seen sights from the bay, including a spectacular sunset over the Pacific. As the lights of the city now flicker in the twilight, get set for a fireworks show to end all shows. San Francisco has the reputation for the biggest and best fireworks in the



San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau photo
Alcatraz, the former prison island in San Francisco Bay, is along the route of the San Francisco Belle as it cruises the bay on July 4.

West. For those of you who know San Francisco, the fireworks are ignited in the vicinity of the old Crissy Field, adjacent to the bay.

The Belle will moor as close as possible to give you a breathtaking view. Now, if the weather is cooperative and the fog remains outside the bay, you'll have ringside seats to the display. Look around, you'll see the bay literally covered with boats of all sizes. This is a very popular spectacle!

Checking our seasonal weather for July, the average high is 71 degrees F, the average low is 56 degrees F, and the mean is 64 degrees F, with very little cloud cover. So, as you can see, the temperatures remain relatively cool, even in July. Dress accordingly, grab a beverage, and look up. Oooh! Aaah!

As you catch your breath, it's time to head to port. Depending on the time and traffic – that's boat traffic – the captain may return and go under the suspension portion of the bridge connecting San Francisco to Yerba Buena Island. You'll see the entire city of San Francisco on your right and the east bay cities of Oakland, Emeryville and Berkeley on your left.

Another 180-degree turn and we're slowly approaching our berth for the final docking. It's been a fantastic four hours. The meal was stupendous. The live band kept things rocking and you danced as the ship swayed. The sights and scenes surrounding the San Francisco bay are locked into memory.

As the paddle wheel winds down and final tie downs are complete, our deluxe motor coaches are waiting dockside for the quick transfer back to Marriott.

Island trip:

Maui golf, beach excursion planned after reunion

After all the excitement of the wonderful reunion in San Francisco and traveling from far and wide, why not take the next step and go on to Maui for a week of fun in the sun and surf?

How many of you remember having an R&R in Hawaii — probably in Waikiki — during your tour and haven't been back?

We have made arrangements with the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) for seven days at the Fabulous Kapalua Resort on the Island of Maui. We have reserved 45 Condos at the Kapalua Villas in the Fairway section (yes, I am a golfer). These beautiful one-, two-, and three-bedroom villas range from 1,200-2,400 square feet.

Enjoy resort charging and guest privileges at the Ritz Carlton, Kapalua and the Kapalua Bay Hotel and Ocean Villas. Three beautiful, white-sand beaches and 54 holes of championship golf — and just minutes away.

Please look at the following website: *Kapalua Resort - Kapalua Villas - Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii*

If you don't think you can take that much time off, we also have a five-day package available.

The prices below include the price of the condo and airfare. You will notice the price goes down if you want to share with your friends. Remember, these are condos and are fully equipped kitchens, W/D, multiple TV and telephones. All the rooms will be air-conditioned.

We have reserved one-, two-, and three-bedroom condos.

The price per person is as follows. It is based on double occupancy per room, with airfare.

Seven nights

- 1-bedroom condo — \$1,440
- 2-bedroom condo — \$1,316
- 3-bedroom condo — \$1,191

Five nights

- 1-bedroom condo — \$1,207
- 2-bedroom condo — \$1,055
- 3-bedroom condo — \$1,000

Cost of Car for the seven nights — \$345.87 for mid-size, \$280.71 for compact. If you want larger or smaller, minivan or convertible, discuss with the travel agent.

Roundtrip shuttle from the airport to the property and back is \$63 per person if you don't want to rent a car. Most of the activities, except the trip to Hana, have their own transportation to and from the condos.

The insurance waiver is \$69 per person for the trip and is highly recommended, as any changes made to the reservation will cost the person unless he has the waiver. Deposit amount is \$300 per couple, plus the cost of the waiver.

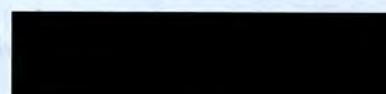
Air will be on United Airlines. Leaving SFO at 9:30 a.m., arriving Maui at 11:40 a.m. on July 6, 2005. Leaving Maui at 9:30 p.m. on July 13, arriving SFO at 5:18 a.m. the following morning July 14.

This gives us a full 7 plus days to enjoy Maui.

We have held one-, two- and three-bedroom condos and the travel agent will be able to match up couples if they request it.

Our travel agent is Bobbie Bograd at MOAA vacations. She can be contacted at the following locations.

She is the only agent who has this program and is the only one who will offer this great program.



We can get more room and aircraft seats if we act soon.

This is the prime season of the year and these rates and rooms will not wait for you to decide you want to go in March or later.

The Villas will be sold out by late January at the latest, as well as the airfares and seats.

You must act now if you want to enjoy this unique opportunity.

— Mike Whitten

Vietnam War museum receives UH-1H

On Oct. 13, the National Vietnam War Museum took possession of its most important and significant asset to date.

A UH-1H, serial number 70-15707, was delivered to Mineral Wells Airport and signed over to the museum by the Texas Building and Procurement Commission, Surplus Property Program, Fort Worth District.

The aircraft will be displayed at the airport until the museum is built, at which time it will become a static display at the museum.

The Huey joins the museum's OH-23D, M35A2, 2.5-ton truck, and 400-gallon water trailer as another major artifact.

The aircraft has a Vietnam history, having served with the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) (HHC 2nd Brigade); 604th Transportation Company; H Troop, 16th Cav (F Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division); and 59th Aviation Company (CAC). The aircraft served in-country with these various units during the period

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VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

22nd Annual Reunion • San Francisco, CA • July 2-5, 2005

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Register online at www.vhpareunion.com or mail completed form to:

VHPA Headquarters, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698

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

Member name:	Member No.:	
Flight class:	Chapter:	
1st combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
2nd combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
3rd combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
Address:	Address change?	☐ Yes ☐ No
City:	State:	Zip:
E-mail address:	Telephone: ()	Fax: ()
Wife/guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If using this manual form in lieu of the VHPA Internet website, once registered, you will need to contact the San Francisco Marriott Hotel, 55 Fourth St., San Francisco, CA 94103-3199 yourself to complete your room reservation. The hotel's telephone number is: (415) 896-1600. Be sure to identify yourself as a VHPA member to receive the heavily discounted rate. A credit card number or one night's advance payment will be required to hold a reservation. Please review the reunion refund policy for further details. Limit of 2 rooms per member unless approved in advance by VHPA Headquarters.

EVENT	No. of people	Price	Total
Registration through 4/30/2005*		@ \$55.00	
Registration after 4/30/2004*		@ \$65.00	
Total from sidebar	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Welcome orientation for first reunion attendees only (July 2)		No charge	
Welcome reception (July 2)		@ \$35.00	
Spouse/guest brunch (Culinary demonstration) (July 3)		@ \$30.00	
Golf Tournament (July 4)		@ \$100.00	
San Francisco Bay Cruise (July 4)		@ \$120.00	
ADA transport needed? Number _____			
Alcatraz Trip — July 3		@ \$22.50	
Alcatraz Trip — July 5		@ \$22.50	
Final Banquet/Dance (July 5)		@ \$60.00	
Non-registered guests at banquet only		@ \$85.00	
VHPA dues (if not dues current) 1 year	1 year	@ \$36.00	
VHPA dues (if not dues current) 3 years	3 years	@ \$90.00	
Life membership		@ \$450.00	
GRAND TOTAL			

REUNION T-SHIRTS		
QTY.	SIZE	AMT.
	S@\$17.50	
	M@\$17.50	
	L@\$17.50	
	XL@\$17.50	
	XXL@\$18.50	
	XXXL@\$19.50	

SIDEBAR TOTAL:

QTY.	BANQUET MEAL
	Beef
	Fish
	Vegetarian

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

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

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

MC or Visa No:	Expiration date:	Signature:
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CHECK or MONEY ORDER PAYMENT

In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion 2005" with form.

Reunion, hotel outline refund policy

REUNION FEES AND EVENTS

No refund will be given for any reunion fee or event unless the member cancels the registration by faxing (916) 966-8743, e-mailing (hq@vhpa.org), calling VHPA Headquarters (800) 505-VHPA, or by U.S. mail.

Headquarters must receive notification by any of the above means no later than 12 noon Pacific time Friday, June 24. After this date we have given firm commitments and guarantees to the hotel and others in your name that generate non-refundable expenses to our Association.

Donations, T-shirt orders and Reunion events identified as "Non Refundable Events" are not refundable.

Specifically for the San Francisco reunion in 2005, the July 4 evening dinner cruise and the Alcatraz Island tour tickets are non-refundable once purchased.

There will be a \$10 cancellation fee charged for each refund request, regardless of the number of items (diners, golf tournament, registration fee, etc.) included in the request.

T-shirts ordered and not picked up will be mailed and shipping charges deducted from the refund.

Each refund request received prior to the above time and date will be assigned a refund request confirmation number on the day the request is received by VHPA Headquarters, and a credit will be issued to your credit card by the third week of July (two weeks after the end of the reunion).

Members eligible for a refund who originally paid by check will be reimbursed by check timed to arrive by the end of July (three weeks after the end of the reunion).

HOST HOTEL ROOM CHARGES

Notice of hotel reservation cancellations must be made directly to the San Francisco Marriott reservations system at (415) 896-1600 by 6 p.m., Friday June 24. The Marriott's national toll-free reservations number is (888) 236-2427. Cancellations after this date will result in hotel charges to you equivalent to one night's room charge, plus applicable taxes.

Should you need to cancel your reservation, please ensure you get and keep a cancellation number for your records.

Also, as a courtesy and to avoid any potential, non-reimbursed reunion fees (see above), please also let our Headquarters staff (800) 505-VHPA know you have canceled. Please note members who check out earlier than scheduled, without notifying the hotel at time of check-in, will incur a \$50 administrative fee penalty, plus one night's room charge and tax payable to the hotel.

The hotel policy is that you may shorten the length of your stay by requesting so at the time of check-in without penalty, however an early check out after that time will result in being charged the \$50 fee, plus a penalty of one night's room and tax.

Re-using reunion lanyards can cut expenses

Help VHPA save a little money on reunion expenses

Starting with the Denver reunion, VHPA lanyards were given to each attendee.

At a cost of almost \$2.25 each, taking into account cost, shipping and handling, VHPA is spending between \$4,500-\$5,500 each year.

The lanyard has not changed in style, design and color since the Denver Reunion and there is no plan to do so. Many of us who attend every year are accumulating a drawer full of lanyards. They actually seem to multiply in the drawer.

As a way to save a little money, please bring your old lanyard to future reunions and use it. Last year, I returned 5 lanyards from past reunions for re-issue. I encourage

you to do the same.

Some members and guests add reunion pins to their original lanyard as a way of showing the reunions they have attended. Kind of like A & D, you might say.

Registration will have new plastic cardholders for all registered attendees, so you don't need to bring the old ones. I know it's not much of a savings when you consider the whole reunion expense, but every little bit helps.

Thanks in advance for your help with this attempt at saving VHPA money. However, should you forget your old lanyard, there will be plenty available at Registration when you arrive.

See you in San Francisco.

— Mike Sheuerman, VHPA vice president

Plans are to restore Huey for display in museum

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from May 1971, through February 1973.

The original plan was to mount the aircraft on a pole at the museum site, but because of its good condition, the decision was made to restore the aircraft to use as a static display. The museum will continue to look for an aircraft in a less complete condition for the pole-mounted display, as

the interior will not be visible, and need not be in show condition.

The UH-1 is arguably the most prominent symbol of the Vietnam War, and as such deserves a place of honor in The National Vietnam War Museum. What is needed now is a project manager to lead the restoration of the aircraft, volunteers to assist, and sponsors to fund the project.

Contest

Association launches drive for new members

DANA YOUNG
MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Last month, each active member of the VHPA received his annual Membership Directory. This directory's increase in size is the result of a continuing search effort that has included the use of several locator firms over the past two years.

Not only is there an increase in names, there is also better accuracy in the member, and potential member, contact information.

Now it is time for you, the member, to do what locator firms could not. We need you to take a look at the expanded directory.

First, verify your directory information is correct. Look up the names of those you know and verify their information is correct. If the information needs to be updated, forward the changes to HQ.

There are two goals that we, the VHPA, have regarding members.

- First, identify and account for everyone who flew with in Southeast Asia between the years 1961 and 1975. We believe the latest Directory has done that. Through the use of locator firms and individual members, we have done the accounting and identified those that are eligible.

- Second, and this is where you come in, we need to contact each potential member and encourage them to join

the VHPA.

The contest — Register 10 new members; get a \$25 VHPA credit.

The VHPA has had membership contests before, but they have tended to reward a few people for their efforts. This time, everyone can be a winner. Each individual, or group, credited with 10 new members will be awarded \$25 to apply toward any VHPA-sponsored event, reunion activity, VHPA products or another membership.* There is no limit to the number of awards you can receive. Register 30, the award, \$75.

The contest began Dec. 1, 2004, and will continue until further notice.

Qualifying "new" members are those who have never been a VHPA member and those who have not been VHPA members for more than five years.

Membership applications, during the contest, should include a "Referred by: _____" to insure the proper individual/group is credited for the membership.

VHPA HQ or an Executive Council member will make follow-up contact with the new members to ensure we don't miss anyone.

***NOTE: VHPA products are limited to those sold by HQ and reunion activities are limited to those identified on the VHPA Reunion Registration. Awards cannot be used for items sold by vendors at the reunion.**

Membership can be given as a gift

MIKE SHEUERMAN
VICE PRESIDENT

In the last *Newsletter*, I wrote an article about giving old friends from flight school and/or your unit in Vietnam the gift of a VHPA membership.

To date I, along with several of my Panther brothers, have sponsored seven guys from our unit who had not joined the Association before. A couple of others got on the phone and talked, harassed, cajoled, threatened and/or begged several other Panthers to renew their lapsed memberships with great success.

Our goal is to have 80 percent of those Panthers, eligible to be in the Association, dues-current members by July 2005.

We're close at 71 percent as of the writing of this article. Out of 168 eligible pilots we have 32 Life (19 percent), 88 Regular (52 percent), 18 Non-current (11 percent), 23 Never Member (14 percent) and 7 Panthers Not Yet Located (4 percent).

We need to sign up or sponsor 15 more Panthers.

The success of growing the VHPA membership rests in the hands of each of us, the current members of the Association. The new directory has the names of more than 38,000 pilots. Less than 32 percent of those listed are now or ever have been members of our Association.

I found two Panthers I had been seeking for several years in the new Directory and contacted them. Both were glad to be contacted. They had thought about and wondered about their old friends over the years.

I challenge each of you to look up the guys you served with in Southeast Asia and contact them. Tell them about VHPA, encourage them to join and attend the next reunion.

Pick one special guy and give him VHPA membership as a gift. The \$36 fee is a beer or two a month. You won't miss it.

Getting 15,000 life and regular members by July is our goal. Please join with me and other members of the Association and help make this happen.

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200 • 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: \$90

☐ Life: \$450*

Newsletter subscription only: ☐ Annual: \$36

☐ Three years: \$90

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 \$15 for current Membership Directory,
plus \$5 for postage and handling

Credit card No.:

Expiration date:

SIGNATURE:

FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS:

SERVICE BRANCH:

COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS:

SOCIAL SECURITY NO.:

Information about each Vietnam tour:

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

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

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association?