



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

July/August 2000 Vol. 18, No. 4



Washington parade

- In top photo: VHPA members march behind a banner stretching across Constitution Avenue during the Fourth of July Parade in the nation's capital. The North Carolina Chapter's four Vietnam-era helicopters are towed behind the banner.

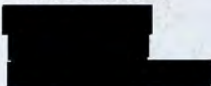
- In photo on right: Spectators line Constitution Avenue, standing and cheering as the VHPA contingent marches past. Crowds gave the pilots enthusiastic cheers.

Gil Ferrey photos



*****3-DIGIT 368

Cust. ID # M00296



From the President

This being my first article as your new president, I would first like to thank all those who made last year a success. I'm not going to list each individual, since that would be repetitious with Bob Smith's previous Newsletter column.

I want to say, however, that I also recognize you and thank you for the contributions you have made to the organization's success, both in the past and the future.

I also would like to thank Bob Smith for his leadership this past year. Under his guidance, we had a progressive Executive Council (EC) that accomplished a number of management tasks to improve the VHPA. I hope to "pick up the baton" and carry forward in the same manner.

I also would like to welcome aboard our newly elected officers to the EC:

• **Dave Rittman**, who has provided many years of service to the VHPA and has served on the EC for three years, was elected vice president. Dave's wisdom and guidance have been of tremendous value and I can't imagine a more appropriate person to take over leadership of the organization next year.

• **Dan Ferguson**, who has served as secretary/treasurer for more years than anyone can accurately count (I've heard somewhere between 7 and 10), resigned from that position to run for junior member-at-large — and was so elected.

According to Dan, he did this because he was tired of not having a vote in EC decisions. Well, now he's got a vote and it is one that will be well used to serve the membership's best interest.

It's been my pleasure to work with Dan for the past year and I can assure you the electoral body made an excellent choice!

• **Thomas Payne**, former president, has agreed to serve as secretary/treasurer and will continue to make his outstanding contributions to VHPA in this new role.

Reunion 2000 — Washington, DC

What a show and party! If you weren't there, my condolences.

Jim "Goldie" Goldthorpe and his Reunion Committee staged a reunion filled with events that will live in our

memories forever.

Some of the highlights, at least for me, were the wreath-laying ceremony and fly-over at The Wall, the excellent and moving variation on the Missing Man Toast, the Fourth of July Parade, and the Hubcaps (great band!).

I've also been told the Potomac River Luncheon Cruise (ladies function) was quite enjoyable.

To you, Goldie, and each member of your committee, I say, "Thanks for the memories!"

And how could we pull off a reunion without the endless efforts of our management contractor?

To Marcia Fritz and the staff of Fritzco, you performed to your usual level of excellence, which means above and beyond the call of duty, and you have our heart-felt gratitude.

A Salute to the Reunion 2000 Committee

Our hats are off in salute to the Reunion 2000 Committee for its hard work and dedication in giving us a great reunion!

- Chairman — Jim "Goldie" Goldthorpe
- Registration/computers/printing — John Powell
- Golf Tournament — Peter Kacerguis/Budd Christman
- Picnic — Peter Kacerguis
- Raffle — Ron Seifert
- Transportation — Mark Fienberg
- T-shirts, pins and bags — Mark Fienberg
- Vehicles to pull aircraft — Gil Moore
- Mini-reunions — Jim McDaniel/Jack Blanchard
- Public relations — Doug Nelms
- Sponsors — Doug Nelms
- Vendors — Steve Haines
- 5K Run — Mike Johnson
- Reunion logo — Jay Brown
- Wreath-laying ceremony — Mike Sloniker
- PA system at The Wall — Bob Tredway
- Ladies Function — Ann Goldthorpe
- Baskets for ladies — Glenda Helmick
- Program design (handout) — Glenda Helmick
- Entertainment — Ray Johnson
- Fly-over coordination — Ray Johnson
- Fife & Drum — Ray Johnson
- Color Guard — Ray Johnson
- Registration gift — Ray Johnson
- MC (Ron David) — Dave Clemmer
- Banquet seating — Dave Clemmer

See FROM THE PRESIDENT, Page 4

Classified ads

POSITION WANTED: Experienced helicopter pilot looking for a position in the areas of EMS, natural resources or public service. Experience: Regular Army, Indiana National Guard. Class 68-27. Call Bill Resor at [REDACTED].

CALORAD: All natural wellness product. Would you like to lose inches/weight while you sleep? Build lean muscle mass? No diet or exercise necessary. Too good to be true? An 86% long-term success rate speaks for itself. Available retail or wholesale in an excellent business opportunity. Call VHPA member Paul Uster (L200) at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and follow the cues. Or visit www.evicom.com Use code word: paul

THE VHPA NEWSLETTER (ISSN 0896-3037)(USPS 001-497) is published six times yearly — February, April, June, August, October and December. Annual dues are \$30 or Life membership for \$450. Yearly subscription for nonmembers is \$30. Published by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7621. Periodicals Publications postage paid at Citrus Heights, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE VHPA NEWSLETTER, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7621.

VHPA OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND STAFF 2000-2001

PRESIDENT	Charles Holley
VICE PRESIDENT	David Rittman
PAST PRESIDENT	Bob Smith
MEMBERS AT LARGE	
Senior Member	Joe Bilitzke
Midterm Member	Don Joyce
Junior Member	Dan Ferguson
SECRETARY/TREASURER	Thomas Payne
FOUNDER	Larry Clark

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Historical	Mike Sloniker
Membership	Robert Wiggins
Records/database	Gary Roush
2001 Reunion (Denver)	Mike Law
Site selection	Kenny Bunn
Public relations/publications	Kenneth Fritz
DIRECTORY EDITOR	Mike Law
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Jack Swickard
Assistant editors	Kenneth Fritz, Bob Smith, Robert Wiggins
Contributing writer	Mike Law

VHPA SUPPORT

Legal adviser	Charles R. Rayl
Investment adviser	Bob Potvin
VHPA Headquarters	(800) 505-VHPA
Fax	(916) 966-8743

ELECTRONIC MAIL

VHPA Headquarters	HQ@vhpa.org
Historical chairman	sloniker@vhpa.org
Newsletter editor	swickard@vhpa.org
Directory editor	law@vhpa.org
Records/Database chairman	roush@vhpa.org
Website	http://www.vhpa.org
Membership chairman	membership@vhpa.org
Webmaster	webmaster@vhpa.org

Chapter support

Points of contact

VHPA points of contact for chapters are Vice President David Rittman and Jodi Allison at VHPA Headquarters in Citrus Heights, CA.

Their e-mail addresses are:

- Rittman — [REDACTED]
- Allison — HQ@vhpa.org

New chapter kits

If you are forming or are considering forming a VHPA chapter, go to www.vhpa.org to download a "New Chapter Kit." You should find everything you need.

VHPA chapters

Arizona Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (home)
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

Albert Rodriguez, President

[REDACTED]

California Chapter North

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

George Larson, President

[REDACTED]

VHPA of Florida

[REDACTED]
www.vhpafl.org
[REDACTED] (home/work)

Gary Bortolus, President

[REDACTED]

Fort Wolters Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

Bobby Bateman, President

[REDACTED]

Georgia Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (home)
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

Woody McFarlin Jr., President

[REDACTED]

Las Vegas Chapter

[REDACTED]
www.VHPALasVegas.org
[REDACTED] (home)
[REDACTED] (work)

Lad Vaughan, President

[REDACTED]

Mid America Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (work)

Gary Wineteer, President

[REDACTED]

Mid-South Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (home)
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

Charlie Bell, President

[REDACTED]

National Capital Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (home)
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

Peter Kacerguis, President

[REDACTED]

North Carolina Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (home)
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

Allan Hoffman, President

[REDACTED]

Ohio River LZ Chapter

[REDACTED] (home)

Bob Hamilton, President

[REDACTED]

Rocky Mountain Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

Ellwood V. Sonderlind, President

[REDACTED]

Southern California Chapter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (home)
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (fax)

Carl Cortez, President

[REDACTED]

From the President

Continued from Page 2

- Banquet — Steve Reilly
- July 4th Parade — Gil Ferrey
- 5K Run permit — Skip Butler
- Registration — Grover Frank Thompson

Reunion 2001 — Denver

And now we move forward to Reunion 2001. The chairman, Mike Law, and his reunion committee are intent on making it the best reunion ever!

They've planned some rather unique events and some quality entertainment, including the "hottest band in Colorado." Coors is providing all the beer we can drink; Mike probably didn't tell them this would cause a dip in their third-quarter earnings.

Further details of the reunion are in later pages of the Newsletter and additional details will be published as they get "locked in stone."

The really good news is the EC and Site Selection Committee have had time to react to the hotel room problem. We anticipate sufficient rooms to house everyone in the Adam's Mark Hotel. We're "borderline" on our projections (recognize we're shooting at a moving target), mostly because we're "maxing out" the hotel, but worst case should be a slight overflow.

Beginning with Reunion 2002, the Site Selection Committee will only consider hotels that can accommodate us under one roof.

The hotel registration problem

Hotel contracts are signed two to three years in advance of the reunion.

Beginning with Fort Worth '98, we've seen a 30-40 percent growth per year in reunion attendance.

Because of the contractual time lag, we've been forced to go to an "overflow" hotel strategy for the past three reunions.

As I mentioned above, this probably will be corrected for Reunion 2001, and certainly for Reunion 2002.

However, with or without being able to "house everyone in the same hotel," a hotel registration problem has arisen that has to be solved.

The problem is that, as soon as the VHPA room block becomes available for registration, folks have reserved multiple rooms, but then have canceled the extra reservations at the last minute.

We also have non-members making reservations in the VHPA block.

This creates several problems:

- The "headquarters" hotel sells out immediately.
- Members who have real plans to attend the reunion can't get a hotel reservation.

- The EC scrambles to find overflow hotels and com-

See **FROM THE PRESIDENT**, Page 5

VHPA Products

MAIL FORM TO:

VHPA
5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(800) 505-VHPA/HQ@vhpa.org

FAX CREDIT CARD ORDERS: (916) 966-8743

VHPA bumper stickers	\$1/each	_____
Round VHPA window stickers	\$1/each	_____
Back VHPA Newsletters (Limited availability)	\$2/issue (\$5 P&H each set)	_____
1994 VHPA Directory	\$10/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1995 VHPA Directory	\$10/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1997 VHPA Directory	\$5/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1999 VHPA Directory	\$15/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
Vol. I Historical Reference Directory — 352 pages	\$10/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
Vol. II Historical Reference Directory — 832 pages	\$15/each (\$5 P&H each set)	_____
1995 VHPA Calendar	\$5/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1996 VHPA Calendar	\$5/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1998 VHPA Calendar	\$5/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1999 VHPA Calendar	\$8/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____

GRAND TOTAL

TO ORDER

Send check/money order or e-mail charge to your *VISA* or *MasterCard* credit card.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card No.: _____ Expires: _____

Signature: _____

Letters

Remarkable event occurs at The Wall

A most remarkable thing happened at The Wall during our Washington reunion. I wish to share this with the membership.

I had never visited The Wall. I attended the memorial service on July 2, but did not have time to find all the names on my list. My wife and I marched in that wonderful parade on the Fourth and afterwards walked down to the memorial for the second time in my life, to complete my business.

At panel 51W, I found the names of the four good men we lost on one bad day in July of 1968. I was kneeling to make a rubbing of CW2 James D. Smith on line 44. I was vaguely aware of a couple standing behind me, searching for a name.

Just as I finished the rubbing, the wife said to her husband something like, "I think he has it covered with that paper."

I stood up in shock and asked, "Are you looking for James Smith?" They were, and I could not believe it! They were distant relatives of Smith's, they were from California, and this was their first visit to our memorial.

Then I asked if they knew how Smith died. They replied he was a pilot and they knew only that he was killed in a helicopter. I told them it didn't happen like that.

I recounted how one of our scout ships was shot down and how Smith's UH-1H landed to help the scouts who were still inside their aircraft.

The young chief warrant officer bravely got out of his pilot's seat to run to the crippled OH-6A, probably so the Huey doorgunners could stay on their guns. Then the

enemy opened up on Smith and his Huey, killing its crew chief and raking the ship with 16 rounds. The other pilot was forced to take off to save the ship and what was left of the crew, leaving Smith behind the cover of a rice paddy dike.

Through a few tears I told the couple how we tried repeatedly to land to pick up our people, but were driven off by ground fire. It was after dark before we could recover the bodies of Smith and the two scouts. I told them I think we made the right decisions at the time, but that I still second-guess myself and it still hurts.

The relatives gratefully received the information, comforted me, and said they would relay my facts to the rest of the family. Later, my wife saw the man weeping quietly away from the panel.

What are the odds of meeting the relatives of a comrade while you make a rubbing of his name, on your first visit and theirs, 32 years after his death? I know that God was involved in this.

I have promised to provide the family with a written account, and at my request, Gary Roush has already sent me his historical information about the incident, which I will pass to them.

Charles E. "Chuck" Oualline
Silver Spur 3

Visit to war memorial cherished experience

I recently attended the reunion in Washington, DC. It was my first trip to The Wall and it was one of the most profound experiences I have had in my life and one I will cherish forever.

I have attended several reunions, always in hopes of meeting up with some of the 50-plus pilots from the 1965-67 "Outlaws" and "Mavericks" and air crew members who shared our experiences. At all the reunions, I have only met

See LETTERS, Page 6

From the President

Continued from Page 4

mits the organization to a specified guarantee.

When members get to the reunion and discover that rooms have "suddenly" become available at the headquarters hotel, they cancel their overflow hotel accommodations and move to the headquarters hotel (and they can't be blamed for doing this).

Because of this, the VHPA is looking at default penalties in DC, and some control measures need to be implemented to contain the situation.

For those of you who received the flier in DC indicat-

ing the Adam's Mark Hotel would begin accepting VHPA reservations on Sept. 15, 2000, please ignore that.

The EC met on July 23 to work on a hotel reservations policy. The September/October edition of the Newsletter will contain the details.

One thing that has been agreed on is a one-night deposit will be required for each room reserved and the cancellation date without forfeiture will be earlier.

It is unfortunate we have to take such measures, but not to do so would be unfair to the general membership.

In closing, I thank you for the trust and confidence that has been placed in me as your new president and I shall discharge that trust and confidence to the best of my ability.

— Charles Holley, President

OUR NATION REMEMBERS
THE COURAGE, SACRIFICE,
AND DEVOTION TO DUTY
AND COUNTRY OF ITS
VIETNAM VETERANS

Letters

Continued from Page 6

morning of July 4, just off Constitution Avenue: VHPA members forming up to march in the Independence Day Parade in Washington, DC. Somewhat unbelievable a few years ago.

The 48th Blue Stars, wearing their unit T-shirts, were selected to carry the VHPA banner, which stretched the full width of Constitution Avenue. That's big.

Behind them were members grouped by flight suit as they appeared in 'Nam. First were those in KB2 gray, cotton flight suits, then the slant-pocket jungle fatigues, then the two-piece and one-piece Nomex flight suits.

Finally, were those in VHPA T-shirts, accompanied by family members.

Separating each group were trailer-mounted Hueys, a Cobra and a Loach from the North Carolina VHPA Chapter.

The 7/17 Cav was well represented. I'll not mention names for fear of forgetting most. I'm sure they will add their impressions.

While waiting our turn to move out, a middle-aged Vietnamese man gathered five or six of us clad in Nomex and Cav hats and posed while his companion snapped a picture. He bowed and thanked us.

Later, a Vietnamese woman came up for a photo. Vietnamese and Korean people expressed their thanks.

During the parade, spectator response was, in my estimation, overwhelming and just plain GREAT! Numerous "thank yous," "we love yous," "looking good" and "welcome home" were heard throughout the parade route, all shrouded in rather vigorous applause.

One fellow rushed down my rank, pointing at each of us, saying: "Thank you, thank you." He retreated, still applauding.

One wise guy shouted: "Hey look, even the colonels are in step!"

It was interesting to note when we halted several times to maintain spacing, the applause stopped and, upon the command to forward march, the

applause resumed before the left foot struck the pavement.

I believe we witnessed a sincere expression of acceptance, thanks and welcome home to all Vietnam vets.

It was a GREAT day to be an American and an even GREATER day to be an American soldier!

If my poor portrayal of these events didn't cause good feelings and pangs of patriotism, then you just ain't cav!!

Glenn P Carr
Embalmer 6, 70-71

Washington reunion full of many things to do

We arrived from all over the world to celebrate our 17th annual reunion.

Questions arose, as usual, in our minds as well as in our throats — the result of facing memories that have, for some, almost faded away.

Would he be there? Would I see someone from my unit who actually served with me? Or would there only be others who wore The Patch — for after all, there was only one unit that counted, or so some of us thought.

The New Guy Reception — what a way to welcome one back home!

The first evening was then accentuated by the U.S. Marines' Evening Parade at the Marine Barracks. I thought we would never get there with all of the one-way streets, but we persevered.

Thanks to the reservations Goldie requested for 300 of us to see this superb band and drill performance, we not only felt welcome in our nation's capital, but proud to have served when we did. We were proud to be Americans and to witness the precision and color of the Corps.

On Saturday morning, many of us drove or rode by bus to the Paul Garber Restoration Facility in Suitland, MD, a short, 20-minute ride from our hotels.

This facility is probably the best aircraft museum in the world, and a working museum at that. Many aircraft sent

See LETTERS, Page 8



Letter about brother helps inspire book

In December of 1995, a letter of mine appeared in *The VHPA Newsletter*.

It was about my brother, Mickey Allen Wilson, missing since Jan. 8, 1973. He married a Vietnamese woman just before his helicopter was shot down. I also wanted info about her.

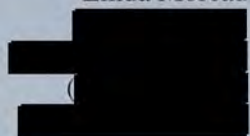
Well, the wonderful members of the VHPA came through for me! They helped me put some closure on a very old wound. They helped me understand "The Vietnam War" from a different angle.

They also helped me find my sister-in-law. They let me know that my brother had a son! I can never thank all of you enough for reaching out to me and my family.

I have written a book called "Da Nang to Memphis" (my sister-in-law and my nephew live in Memphis). The VHPA is mentioned several times in my book, as are the very special people who changed my life. I just want to say thank you again. I love you all.

Click www.barnesandnoble.com to see my book. You can view it by title or author.

Linda Moreau



Letters

Continued from Page 7

there are the only ones of their kind in existence, and the atmosphere is literally charged with history. Our guides, or docents, were wonderful, and we left after about two hours with a greater appreciation of our place in aviation history.

The rest of us either hung out at the hotels, I guess, or played golf.

That same evening, at the Welcome Reception, we were treated to the entertainment of Mrs. Foggybottom & Friends and the Hilltop Singers. They caused more than a few laughs and brought back some great memories of times past.

On Sunday morning the Memorial Service at The Wall was presided over by Mike Sloniker, and what a tremendous job his team did to pull off this once-in-a-lifetime fly-by effort. Our brothers, whose names appear on The Wall, were thankful to all of you who planned and performed this service for them.

Thanks to the Maryland National Guard, the Army, the FAA, the Secret Service, the National Park Service, and to all of the rest of those individuals and organizations who bent over backwards to make it happen. Coordination was key and, in typical aviator fashion, you pulled it off with a bang. And the bus service to and from the hotels was right on time, as well.

There was a will, and you cajoled, negotiated, and found a way. We'll never forget it!

And it did not stop there. We were transported directly to Fort McNair for a big picnic on a hot day on the edge of the water. MDW came through with the Army's Drum and Fife Corps to entertain us while waiting in the chow lines food was great, especially the chocolate chip cookies which melted in one's mouth — some even before they got there.

The flyable helicopters from the AAHF which participated in the Memorial Service fly-by were on static display, as were the four birds from the Northern Carolina Chapter of the VHPA, which had been trailered here from Jerry Seago's home to be towed in the parade and displayed at the banquet.

The NC Chapter did triple duty at this reunion and we cannot thank them enough to their dedication to our public relations cause.

A buffet and entertainment by The Hubcaps kept the reunion going after a hot day outside, but the energy was there for most of us. A challenge to participate in the Fourth of July Parade was laid down before the entertainment had warmed up.

Monday saw a 5K Run. Good thing it was early in the morning.

The business meeting was one of the best we have attended, and the inclusion of the VHPA as a member of the



Large VHPA truck stickers still available

While president of the VHPA, I had printed at my own expense 125 large, yellow-and-black, 30-inch VHPA logo stickers with Headquarters' 800 number and www. address on them.

I have given away about 25 of the stickers and now have about 100 of them remaining.

Anyone interested in one or more of these, should contact me by phone, e-mail or letter with \$11 for each sticker, which includes shipping. I will mail them by U.S. mail in a triangular priority mailer.



A large VHPA sticker adorns the back of a trailer.

Tom Payne

AAHF was one of the highlights. Again, with the 40' VHPA banner flying, participation in the parade was pumped.

One cannot say enough about Joe Galloway, the band, the Old Guard's Color Guard, the Executive Committee's support, the Reunion Committee's planning, the North Carolina Chapter's aircraft, and the fantastic turnout at the banquet by all of the VHPA members, their families and friends.

It was a magical evening, even though it commenced to rain outside. The precipitation brought some relief from the heat, however. Again, participation in the Fourth of July Parade the following day was encouraged.

Dawn broke fairly clear on the 4th yet scattered showers were forecast. They did not materialize, fortunately. From an initial response of 250 participants, more than 1,000 showed to swell the ranks of the VHPA in our first ever parade down Constitution Avenue on the 4th of July. The North Carolina Chapter with their four birds and Bill Medsker with his Lawnmower Louie showed up at 9:15 a.m. to get properly positioned.

VHPA members in military uniforms of former eras and in VHPA civilian garb began to arrive around 11 a.m.

A couple of Vietnamese came up and asked that their picture be taken with some of us.

An educator who has season tickets to the Redskins

See LETTERS, Page 9

Letters

Continued from Page 8

football games gave me her card saying she would like to donate a pair to our group as a thank you.

A Vietnamese man approached Jack Swickard at the end of the parade, shook his hand and said: "Thanks for what you did for my country."

It was give-back time — time to give the spectators back a second opportunity to say thanks to us for having served our country and the cause of the South Vietnamese to the best of our abilities. We felt good and so did they.

One elderly black woman, probably in her 80s, could not restrain herself and left the curb walking toward us with her arms outstretched. Another member and I approached her and she said she just had to give us a kiss. We both embraced her and returned to our position in ranks.

A couple of our Aussie comrades commented that as participants they will never forget this event the rest of their lives. We were all touched.

From the front of the group, I can report that as the spectators on both sides of the street read our banner, they stood and/or started to applaud as we approached.

It was like a mini wave at a football game. As we came closer, the wave rolled ahead of us. Even four of Washington DC's finest stood in a group and applauded.

I think that those of us who either participated in the parade or who watched and filmed it really became an integral part in adding an exclamation point to a wonderful reunion.

For a newly formed chapter to manage to pull together a reunion like this really says something about the strength of our organization.

Gil Ferrey

VHPA reunion creates unforgettable memories

I would like to thank the VHPA Reunion Committee, especially John Powell, Bob Tredway, Mike Sloniker, chairman Jim Goldthorpe, and VHPA past president Bob Smith for adding another unforgettable chapter to the memory book.

The standout reunion events can't be adequately described here, although I need to mention them.

My brother was one of you; he didn't come back.

I am humbled by the sheer magnitude of this event — with 2,427 attending, gratified by the welcome I saw extended to other KIA family members attending for the first time, and astounded by the dedication of the reunion committee and its ability to build into each event a celebration of the lives of the survivors and the fallen.

It wasn't long ago that I honestly had no idea whether anybody remembered them at all.

At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Sunday, July 2, we the living were THEIR guests, walking the pathway that brought many of you face to face with your fallen brothers for the first time in many years.

No one can ever forget the power of the haunting helicopter flyover, Lane Brody's "All the Unsung Heroes," Joe Galloway's speech recognizing the pilots and crew members, the bagpiper and bugler, and the wreath-laying.

VHPA member/Yellow Hat Volunteer/Family Contacts Committee member Jim Schueckler shouldered the task of laying down memorials that listed every single helicopter pilot KIA for each panel.

I was honored to be asked by Mike Sloniker to join the delegation carrying the wreath to the apex of the memorial and inspired by the remembrance I saw in the faces along the way. I know it took some private courage to stand there.

Thank you, Mike Sloniker, for this incredible event and for being one of my first and closest "new big brothers" since April 14, 1996.



Photo shows 'moment' with Gary and friends

In the May/June VHPA Newsletter, Gary Bortolus (currently president of the VHPA of Florida Chapter) wrote an article on "the club" and some of it's many "moments."

Having had the pleasure of flying with Gary during late 1966 and 1967, we did share many a fine moment around that 55-gallon drum.

Attached is a photograph taken in December 1966 at Phan Thiet. Gary is on the far right. WO Sisk and Owen, who contributed many a fine night of music and entertainment in otherwise difficult times, are on the left. Memories, indeed!

Dave Rittman
Axle / Wheel 3

C/229th Aviation, 1st Cav



Letters

Continued from Page 9

At the VHPA banquet July 3, during a Missing Man ceremony that surpasses any I have ever seen, they, the fallen, were OUR guests, invited to each table by name, honored with a toast, remembered in candlelight for the brief light each of them shed on the lives of we who loved them.

For those who weren't there, in addition to the table in the center of the huge hall with the missing man items and a young man in full military dress presenting the flag in the spotlight, each of the 2,000-plus seated at the banquet had in front of them a place card bearing the name of one of the 2,208 Vietnam helicopter pilots who were lost.

We were each to think of that person as our honored guest, invite them to our table, and we lit a small candle in front of our place in their honor.

To have been there, in the huge Washington, DC, convention center in candlelight, in complete silence and then to hear that whole crowd each saying their young man's name all at once, was unforgettable.

Thank you, John Powell, for this very special memory . . . thank you for flying Cobra "high bird" cover on July 21, 1969, while my still-breathing brother David was lifted from a burning LOH, and for being the first person from his unit and time period to contact me on Dec. 26, 1996.

I've told many people I never want to forget the unanswered longing I had for all those years that I sought to find someone . . . anyone . . . who knew my brother. From the time he died in 1969 until 1996, I had no idea how to find anyone, had no concept of the strong brotherhood of Army aviators, didn't know a single Vietnam veteran and had no clue that an organization like VHPA existed. I never want to forget how it felt to be "alone" with Vietnam.

In my heart, I put that feeling next to the chill I felt at the VHPA banquet on July 3 with 2,000-plus people, hearing the names of our 2,208 brothers being spoken at once.

As one of a handful of family members honored to be able to attend this gathering, I know I was in the company of living heroes and no longer alone. Because you are reading these words, you too are no longer alone with Vietnam.

I can't leave out the sheer joy with which I watched C Troop, 1st of the 9th Cav welcome its own huge contingent of newcomers who were "brought out from under their rocks" by renewed brotherhood and the personal magnetism of Walker Jones, thanks to the hard work of Bob Tredway and Ann Martin, Randy Zahn and Nate Shaffer.

The C Troop wreath-laying, mini-reunion and banquet were among several individual unit activities which took place that weekend.

I also am extremely grateful for the VHPA's graciousness in allowing the Family Contacts Committee to take a few moments during the banquet to recognize the untiring

efforts of our chair, Gary Thewlis. And thankful for the welcome extended to KIA family members there to see, for the first time, what their brother, dad, husband or uncle may have become had he lived. It took some private courage for them to stand among you, too.

Even though we are the humble guests, it is YOUR reunion. In my communications regarding the Family Contacts, I encounter many VHPA members who have never come to a reunion. I always encourage them to attend.

This year, three newcomers told me they came partly because of my urging. Only three out of nearly 2,500, but it still makes me proud.

You guys have never let me down. I knew, without a doubt in my heart, they would be welcomed home where they belong. And there are more of these guys out there who need to be found and welcomed to the fold.

Thank you all again for another indelible mark on the memory.

Julie Kink

Sister of WO1 David Kink

C Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Air Cav

June-July 1969

KIA 8-3-69 20W L92



Beeper leads Huey crew a 'mile from the moon'

At about midnight in the spring of 1967, I was part of a Huey crew returning to our base camp at Phu Loi.

We had just completed a mission to the 93rd Evacuation Hospital at Long Binh. Flying conditions with a full moon were perfect.

All of a sudden, we heard the "beeper" from someone's emergency radio. This, in itself, was not unusual, because these radios had a habit, usually unintentional, of transmitting. The offender normally, in short order would catch it and shut it off.

However, this one did not stop . . . Just keep beeping. For some reason, I decided to check it out.

Contact with Bien Hoa Tower indicated nothing unusual in its area of responsibility. Contact with Tan Son Nhut also turned up nothing.

We continued on to Phu Loi with the beeper ringing in our ears.

Listening closer, through the beep, we could hear a voice, not completely coherent, fading in and out, transmitting: "I'm a mile from the moon and a mile from the fire."

I attempted to contact whoever it was transmitting this message asking him to turn off his beeper so I could hear him "in the clear." After a bit he did so.

I then tried to find out from him what was going on and where he was? All he would say was, "I'm a mile from the moon and a mile from the fire."

He was fading in and out like he was in shock. I told him to hold on; we would find him as quick as we could, but he had to help us by providing us with some idea of his

See LETTERS, Page 11

Letters

Continued from Page 10

position. Again, the same: "I am . . . from the fire."

We decided to "line up with the moon" and fly this path to see if we could spot anything.

Sure enough, when flying away from the moon, we spotted a rather large fire burning out of control. We circled it to see if we could make out what it was caused by.

Not successful, we decided to land, as close to the fire, as we could. In the glare of our landing light, we could see there were many Vietnamese looking at the source of the fire.

Remember, we were not close to any friendly units.

With my crew covering me, I jumped out of the helicopter to see for myself what was going on. Much to my amazement, I discovered a furiously burning, fairly intact, Lockheed Constellation freighter.

I was able to get close to what was left of the cockpit section. It had broken off from the rest of the fuselage and had about burned itself out.

The crewmembers' bodies were burned beyond recognition. With this discovery, we got airborne again, now to locate whom it was that I had been talking to.

We also contacted Tan Son Nhut and told about the crash with apparently no survivors.

Now we headed toward the moon, flying as low as we dared, with our landing light on, over the jungle and occasional rice paddy.

Reestablishing contact, I asked the voice to listen for the noise of our helicopter and look for our landing light.

Hearing us approach, he was able to steer us toward his location.

It did not take very long to locate him. We spotted his chute first and then him. We landed as close as we could, for he looked to be, physically, in trouble.

We lifted him onto the helicopter, stretching him out on the cargo floor because it appeared he had serious back problems and headed off to the medevac pad at Tan Son Nhut.

Radioing ahead for assistance, we were met at the pad by an ambulance and off he went. We never had a chance to really talk to him, while in flight, for he was in great pain and in shock. All we got was "a mid-air collision with something . . ." And that was that. We left and resumed our return to Phu Loi.

As much was going on, at the time, I really did not have much of a chance to get to the bottom of what happened that night until about a week later and, as noted, it was difficult to extract at best.

What appeared to have happened is as follows (keep in mind this is what I was told and events simply never gave me the time to verify any of this; also Air Force operations personnel at Tan Son Nhut, for obvious reasons, were not to be pleased to talk about it):



That night, the weekly mail plane from Clark Air Force Base was on an extended "final approach." It had been cleared earlier.

About this time, the American tower operator turned the tower over to a Vietnamese operator and left. Somehow, the fact a "Connie" was on a "long final" was not passed on.

Unaware, the new operator cleared an RF-4C on "high key" to land at the same time. The result was the mid-air collision that night between the mail plane and the jet.

What makes this story interesting is . . . recall, when we first heard the beeper, Tan Son Nhut, when told about the beeper and asked if it had anything unusual to report, said: "no."

It was an American who gave us that reply. The Connie and the RF-4C, which I think was from Udorn, just simply disappeared. The best we can figure, someone kept all this quiet until we reported the crash.

As stated earlier as to how all this happened, no one would talk about it. Whereas, I was able to check on the condition of the pilot we rescued. The reason he was hurt so badly was his ejection sequence was so low he was lucky to be alive.

Also, I guess you might say he was fortunate there was a full moon that night and an inquisitive helicopter crew that somehow sensed his beeper was for real.

I, of course, after all these years wonder whatever happened to our "Mile From The Moon Pilot." If he is still around, I would sure like to meet him and hear his side as to what really happened that eventful night in 1967.

Nick J. Primis
"Custer 6"

Pilot's daughter writes poem commemorating friend's death

I was initially assigned to the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company, the "Robin Hoods," when I arrived in Vietnam in January 1972.

At that time, the 173rd was located just outside of Da Nang, at Marble Mountain Army Airfield. Three months after being assigned to the unit, the 173rd stood down and headed back to the States.

I was reassigned to our sister unit, the 48th Assault Helicopter Company, "Blue Stars," and remained at Marble Mountain.

My assignment to the Blue Stars reunited me with an old friend, Lt. Bruce Kline. Prior to our Vietnam assignments Bruce and I had attended the Transportation Officer Basic Course, Flight School, and the Aircraft Maintenance Officers Course together. We even flew to Vietnam on the same airplane.

On May 24, after flying several combat assaults against North Vietnamese forces in the Hue area, we landed in a field to refuel.

See LETTERS, Page 12

Letters

Continued from Page 11

Bruce was flying copilot in the command-and-control ship with our commanding office that day. I talked to Bruce after we'd finished refueling the helicopters and asked him if he was getting any stick time. He said all he was doing was tuning radios and our CO was doing all the flying.

Since I knew he and the commander didn't get along well together anyway, I started to say: "Go get your helmet and I'll switch positions with you." Something kept those words from leaving my lips that day.

A few minutes later we started the aircraft and headed back to Marble Mountain.

Immediately after takeoff from the refueling point, we heard a radio call saying a Chinook had taken a mortar round hit and had crashed at LZ Lion.

The commanding officer ordered us to continue back to Marble Mountain. Since LZ Lion was only a few minutes from our location, he said he was going there to see if he could help the Chinook crew. Minutes later, while en route to LZ Lion, an NVA heat-seeking missile blew his Huey out of the air, killing the CO, Bruce and the enlisted crew.

About a week before this Memorial Day, I found my daughter, Alyssa, looking at my Blue Star Yearbook. She also was looking at a plaque from the "Robin Hoods."

I told her the story about 1st Lt. Bruce Kline and how close I had come to changing flights with him.

A few days later, Alyssa completed a high school English assignment requiring her to write a poem about war. She wrote the following poem for her English assignment and presented me a framed copy of it for Father's Day.

Vietnam War Story

The year was 19 hundred and seventy two,

Huey helicopters were what he flew.

In Da Nang Vietnam he defended the U.S.,

They called him Robin Hood; he flew with the best.

He had some good times; he also had the blues,

But still he did his job transporting different crews.

By the 48th Company he loyally stuck,

He fought by their motto "Skill Not Luck."

He had a friend Bruce, who didn't get much flying time,

So he offered to switch missions just to be kind.

He didn't know why, but with his

original mission he stayed, Soon he'd find out why God didn't let them trade.

Not 15 minutes later from out of the sky, Bruce's 'copter was shot down as it was trying to fly.

A heat-seeking missile had taken it down,

They called the recovery team, all the men were found.

It's strange how God works in mysterious ways,

God was watching over "Robin Hood" for a reason that day.

He paid his respects to Bruce and many tears he cried,

If they had traded missions, my dad would have died.

Father's Day 2000

Alyssa

Philip K. Manuel
Montclair, VA 22026

Assistance in claims for benefits to the Department of Veterans Affairs

**at the Regional Office; Board of Veterans Appeals;
or the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims**

Nationwide practice

Experience in claims for PTSD, war wounds, peacetime in-service injuries; Agent Orange, hepatitis, and psychological disorders, and claims for widows of veterans who died of service connected injuries.

Assistance in claims for service connection and increased benefits

Theodore C. Jarvi, Attorney at Law
retired JAG Colonel — USAFR

Vietnam-era veteran

4500 S. Lakeshore Drive, Suite 550

Tempe, AZ 85282

Tel 480-838-6566; Fax 480-838-8810

Federal law prohibits the payment of fees by a veteran to an attorney prior to the veteran receiving a final, negative decision from the Board of Veterans Appeals, so I am unable to take such cases unless my fee is paid by someone other than the veteran.

Taps

Richard R. "Rick" Ahlberg

Richard R. "Rick" Ahlberg died April 17 of injuries suffered in an airplane crash at Reno-Stead Airport. He was 55.

The aircraft was a modified Grumman S-2D Tracker which had just departed on a cloud-seeding mission for the Desert Research Institute.

A Reno native, he was born Dec. 17, 1944, and had lived in Reno most of his life.

Ahlberg was a Continental and Singapore Airlines pilot.

He was a retired Army major, having served as a war-

rant officer during the Vietnam War, piloting the Cobra attack helicopter.

A 1962 graduate of Sparks High School, Ahlberg graduated from Sacramento City College, Sacramento, CA, and received a bachelor's degree from Regency College, NY.

He is survived by his wife, Vassilka; his mother, Ruth Ahlberg, both of Reno; and brothers, George W. Ahlberg of Fallon, NV, and Ted M. Ahlberg of San Antonio, TX.

Robert D. "Gabe" Gabriel

Robert D. "Gabe" Gabriel died on March 29 from complications following a "routine" heart procedure.

He was born Oct. 26, 1943, in Logan, OH. He joined the Army in April 1965 and attended flight school at Fort

See TAPS, Page 14

VHPA business directory

ATTENTION PILOTS:

ARE YOU READY TO RETIRE?
NO!

THEN START BUILDING FOR IT
TODAY!

www.excelir.com/nolen

OR

CALL PETE NOLEN@800-398-8921

kubotan pepper spray mace handcuffs personal alarm
window alarm door alarm personal alarm door jammer
wired and wireless hidden cameras nanny camera
100,000-500,000 volt stun guns & batons door stop alarm
beer, soda, video, wall socket, book stone diversion safes

www.self-defense-mall.com

spyglasses electronic dog repeller telephone voice changer
knives child watch monitor throwing stars telescopic
steel batons crossbows wrist rocket counterfeit detector
pen telephone 10-hr recorder gunlock blowguns pepper
pager wildfire 15 percent Pepper Spray mace canine
repellent home protection infrared motion alarm magnetic
door/window alarm window glass alarm big jammer door
brace electronic barking dog tasers folding knives pen
knives butterfly knives kubotan pepper spray mace hand-
cuffs personal alarm door jammer door stop alarm

Do you have a DFC?

Call or write us for information

THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS SOCIETY

6920 Miramar Road, Suite 207-D
SAN DIEGO, CA 92121-2642

Tel. (858) 693-1950

Fax (858) 693-1882

Visit our Website: www.dfcsociety.org

**DFCS reunion — Nov. 9-11
in San Antonio, Texas**



"YOUR PROMOTIONAL RESOURCE"

R&Y PROMOTIONS & AWARDS, Inc.

850-222-7755

800-359-7062

FAX 850-222-2266

TALLAHASSEE, FL

www.rypromos.com

Richard (Rick) Yood, CAS
(Gladiator 21)

Call me for help in getting any of the following types of products decorated with your unit insignia or corporate logo:

Caps, Shirts (T & Golf), Coffee Mugs, Pens, Pencils, Plaques, Trophies, Decals, Coleman Coolers, Watches, Coins, Rulers, Koozies, Clocks, Cameras, Letter Openers, Mouse Pads, Stress Balls, Lapel Pins, Water Bottles, Candy, Prepaid Phone Cards, Bags (Plastic & Cloth) and many other items from the over 15,000 types of products available.

Taps

Continued from Page 13



Robert D. "Gabe" Gabriel sits among friends during the 1999 VHPA Reunion in Nashville. Joining Gabriel, who died March 29, are (standing, from left) Dean Gardner, Terry McDowell and Art Darling.

Rucker and Fort Wolters, Class 66-3.

Gabriel served in Vietnam with the 1st Air Cavalry, 229th Attack Helicopter Platoon in 1966-67.

He was an instructor pilot at Fort Wolters in 1967-69.

Gabriel served in the Ohio Army National Guard as a pilot and state marksmanship coordinator; National Guard Recruiting and Retention; Reserve liaison officer for the U.S. Military Academy; and Reserve operations officer with Operations and Plans at the Pentagon.

He retired from the Army Reserve as a lieutenant colonel in 1998.

Gabriel was a proud Vietnam veteran whose military service spanned four decades. He was recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 20 Clusters and "V" device and many others.

He and his wife enjoyed VHPA reunions and had planned to attend the 2000 Reunion in Washington.

His family would like to thank his flight school classmates: John, Art, Terry and Dean for attending the service and to all those who sent cards, flowers and donations.

Gabriel graduated from Capital University in 1986. He was a sales representative for Logan Clay Products Corp.

He was a 50-year member of the Immanuel United Methodist Church and Choir, member and past president



of the Logan Rotary Club, American Legion, was a special deputy sheriff, NRA certified instructor and a member of various other civic and charity organizations.

Gabriel and his wife owned and operated the Colonel's Quarters in the Hocking Hills.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Roseanne; sons Capt. Joseph R. Gabriel and Staff Sgt. Ryan F. Gabriel; daughter Alison E. Gabriel and granddaughter Madison Gabriel.

Lewis "Ed" Kauffmann

Lewis "Ed" Kauffmann of Chesterfield, MO, died May 27 of a massive heart attack.

He entered the Army in 1963 and served a partial tour in Germany before being accepted for Infantry OCS in 1964.

After attending airborne training at Fort Benning, GA, Kauffmann attended rotary-wing flight training at Fort Rucker in 1965.

He was reassigned to Germany, where he flew H-34s.

Kauffmann served two tours in Vietnam, flying CH-54s during one tour.

He retired in 1986 with the rank of colonel.

Robert Neale Mackinnon

Retired Maj. Gen. Robert Neale Mackinnon died June 7 at his Fort Worth home. He was 77.

Mackinnon was born in Baggio, the Philippine Islands, on May 25, 1923, the son of Col. William and Edith Mackinnon.

He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1945 and served in the Philippine Island Campaign during World War II and with the Army of Occupation in Japan, 1945-46.

Mackinnon served in the Korean War as a company commander in 1950-1951. In the Vietnam War, he served as a brigade commander with the 1st Cavalry Division in 1968-69.

He was commanding general of the Primary Helicopter Training Center at Fort Wolters from 1969-71.

Mackinnon was commanding general of the 1st Aviation Brigade in Vietnam, 1971-72, and commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks Hawaii, 1972-74.

He was vice president of Bell Helicopter International, managing operations in Iran from 1976-79, and president of Aerospatiale Helicopter Corp. from 1980-83.

Mackinnon was awarded numerous decorations for valor in combat, including the Silver Star Medal, three Bronze Star Medals and four Air Medals.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy, of Fort Worth; and sons, William C. Mackinnon of Atlanta; Stephen R. Mackinnon of Woodbridge, VA; Thomas D. Mackinnon

See TAPS, Page 15

Taps

Continued from Page 14

of Dallas; and Robert M. Mackinnon of Dallas.

Valentino "Val" Martinez

Valentino "Val" Martinez, his wife and pet dog were killed June 5 about four miles northeast of Howard, CO, while flying in his Cessna P206 from Gunnison, CO, to Hastings, NE.

They were on their way to visit Martinez' brother, who had suffered a heart attack.

Martinez, 63, was a 20-year Army veteran and 20-year petroleum helicopter pilot.

He was in Class 67-17 and served with the 195th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam in 1968-69. Martinez was a retired CW3.

May he rest in peace.

Gerald R. Meador

Richard L. "Dick" Stroud

Richard L. "Dick" Stroud of Mineral Wells died March 27.



He entered rotary wing flight training as a warrant officer candidate in the spring of 1957, along with 77 other aspiring young candidates. He graduated near the top of his class on Sept. 7, 1957, one of the 32 survivors of Class 57-7.

After graduation, Stroud was assigned to the 57th Transportation Company at Fort Lewis, WA. The unit went on to become one of the first two U.S. Army helicopter companies assigned to Vietnam in support of the South Vietnamese Army.

Stroud was one of those who helped train the pilots and prepare the unit for combat.

Later he served in Germany before returning to the States to participate in development of the 11th Air Assault Division at Fort Benning, GA.

When the 11th Air Assault Division's mission was completed, it was renamed the 1st Cavalry Division. He was in the unit's initial deployment to Vietnam and helped carve the 1st Cavalry Headquarters out of the primitive jungles of the Central Highlands at An

Khe.

When not flying CH-47 Chinooks, Stroud used his off time to first scrounge the materials and then to build the officers club at the developing base.

Every cav officer at An Khe who threw a leg over a

See TAPS, Page 16

Complete Financial Services

- Government Securities • IRAs
- Corporate Bonds • Stocks • CDs
- Mutual Funds • Municipal Bonds
- Managed Accounts • Tax-Exempt Bonds
- Retirement Plans

For more information call:

Robert F. Potvin
Account Vice President
"Stingray White 25"

Joseph Potvin
Account Vice President
"Chickenman 24"

Thank you
PaineWebber®

1500 Abbott Road, Suite 200, East Lansing, MI 48823
(517) 333-8600 (800) 782-2306

www.painewebber.com

PaineWebber and Thank you PaineWebber are registered service marks of PaineWebber Incorporated.
© 2000 PaineWebber Incorporated. Member SIPC

Rayl resigns post Executive Council seeks new VHPA legal adviser

Past President Charles Rayl, who has served the VHPA admirably for 11 years as legal adviser, announced his retirement from that position on Aug. 7.

The Executive Council has accepted his decision, with regrets and with the knowledge the VHPA has lost an extremely valuable asset.

Due to his length of service as legal adviser, Charles will be recognized with emeritus status.

The EC now solicits the membership for volunteers to serve as VHPA legal adviser.

The only mandatory requirement is an applicant must be a licensed attorney in good standing.

If you qualify and would like to volunteer for this position, please notify President Charles Holley at president@vhpa.org or [REDACTED]

Rayl, a resident of Strong City, KS, served as VHPA president in 1996-97.

He graduated from flight school with class 67-6. In Vietnam, Rayl served with A/7/17th Cavalry in 1967-68 and with the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion in 1968.

Taps

Continued from Page 15

stool in the club, owed the experience to Dick Stroud.

Stroud flew every tandem rotor helicopter the U.S. Army ever bought. He had so much tandem rotor experience, the Army selected him to participate in an evaluation of an experimental heavy lift tandem rotor project.

He was one of a select few chosen for transition to the Douglas C-47, ultimately serving as the post commander's pilot at Fort Wolters.

After 20 years as an Army aviator, Stroud retired in 1976 and returned to civilian life, flying airplanes.

He served as corporate pilot for a small company in the water purification and conditioning industry.

In 1979, Stroud bought the water company and, with the help of his sons, Wayne and David Stroud, established Offshore Water Conditioning Co., which converted sea water and lake/river water to drinking water.

The business grew and they provided water systems on the North Slope in Alaska, in the Gulf of Mexico, in

Egypt and in Angola, Africa.

Dick sold the business in November 1999 so he and his wife Evelyn could travel and relax in retirement, while he conjured up new challenges and helped create the National Vietnam War Museum.

He was diagnosed with cancer in December and was winning that fight when he unexpectedly died of a complication.

Stroud was the first "Landowner" of the National Vietnam War Museum.

Donations are being accepted in the Dick Stroud Fund in the NVNWM Endowment established by the Museum at P.O. Box 146, Mineral Wells, TX 76068.

William Frank "Bill" Williams

William Frank "Bill" Williams, 72, died of cancer May 30 at his Garland, TX, home.

Williams' 33-year military career included combat duty in the Korean War as an infantry platoon and company commander.

A former paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division who also piloted fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, he served in the Vietnam War as an aviation company com-

DC reunion will never be forgotten

BOB SMITH
PAST PRESIDENT

I have now had a week to recover from sleep deprivation and reflect on what the 17th reunion of the VHPA was all about.

The main reason we get together each year is to reunite with old buddies and reintroduce ourselves to friends that we made nearly 30 years ago.

To achieve this end, we need only to follow the simple steps of registering early, booking a room, and then showing up to party. What could be easier?

This naive and pristine view of the simplicity of our annual reunion was shattered when I became reunion chair for Kansas City and reinforced as I carried on my duties as president.

Granted, a majority of our members can still follow steps 1-3 and thoroughly enjoy themselves.

However, I would be remiss if I did not recognize those who have worked countless hours to ensure that we can enjoy the company of friends.

Jim "Goldie" and Ann Goldthorpe, your reunion committee chairman and his wife, gave a year of their life, a full year of hard work by the both of them.

Those who have busted their buns for a year to put on a reunion that we will remember until our last breath.

The wreath-laying ceremony; the flyover; the Fourth of July parade we proudly marched in; the missing man ceremony, to name just a few.

Sure, there were rough spots. I still have about a dozen drink tickets because I failed to realize that I would not be able use them at the convention center.

The registration lines were a little long at times, and a few people may have never gotten their name tags or life membership ribbons.

But is there an alternative way we

could manage our reunions and still get the same amount of energy and excitement and a reasonable cost? The answer is most certainly no.

I have been to all 17 reunions now and I understand we could never get the dedication and commitment from someone other than our own who stood up and said they will lead the way.

Jim "Goldie" and Ann Goldthorpe, your reunion committee chairman and his wife, gave a year of their life, a full year of hard work by the both of them.

Furthermore, my hat is off to the DC Reunion Committee. We owe you all a debt of gratitude for the gargantuan task you successfully undertook.

In the president's column are the rest of those who made the reunion possible.

In the end, no one can ever realize the weight of the famous "Reunion Rock" until they have worn the chain and rock around their neck for a year. "Goldie" and his crew handled the weight well and came through with a real winner.

Association announces raffle results

BOB SMITH
PAST PRESIDENT

The results are in and we have some very happy people.

The 2000 Reunion Raffle provided some excitement for 68 of our members.

For those of you who did not get a chance to hear or read the results, you might scan below and find out you are little richer.

Judy Murphy, wife of Bill Murphy, is this year's top prize winner. No, we did not give away the grand prize, but the second prize was almost as grand.

Judy walked away with \$20,000. Ticket sales were a bit slow this year and we did not meet our goal of 1,210 tickets. That number was the magic number to give the grand prize and all other prizes.

We also had a cutoff for the second prize to prevent a loss to the VHPA. A last-minute decision was made to give away the second prize and not give away all the \$100 cash prizes. We also had a donation of two round-trip airline tickets fall through.

Altogether the raffle netted \$4,101 after awarding these prizes.

Make sure you thank two of our sponsors who donated tickets. Cathay Pacific Airlines and Asiana Airlines donated tickets valued at more than \$12,000. The best way to thank them for their donation is to fly them the

next time you get a chance.

Ron Seifert was the DC committee member responsible for making the raffle happen. His team came through and we appreciate their effort. My thanks to all the DC 2000 Reunion Committee for its help and support.

Last to thank are the various chapters. The results are not in yet, but we also can thank several chapters who helped us sell tickets and take advantage of making \$5 for each ticket sold.

Headquarters has asked that all \$100 prize winners send a copy of their ticket with their name and address for verification before the awards are sent out. The copy may be mailed or faxed to headquarters at:

VHPA

5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 966-8743 Fax

Don't feel left out. If you did not win or buy a ticket, we will be having other raffles at other reunions. Start saving your dollars now and be our next big winner.

Prize winners

1. Judy Murphy — \$20,000 Cash or Harley-Davidson motorcycle.
2. John M. Willingham — Two round-trip tickets on Cathay Pacific Airlines.
3. Hugh J. Brown Jr. — Two round-trip tickets on Asiana Airlines.

4. Robert Lackey — TV/VCR combination.

5. John Madden — TV/VCR combination.

6. Don and Sandy Elmore — TV/VCR combination.

7. Joe Edney — TV/VCR combination.

8. Ray Pollock — TV/VCR combination.

9. Carol Brown — TV/VCR combination.

10. Lexa Lynn Hooper — TV/VCR combination.

11. Mike Hope — TV/VCR combination.

12. Al Eason — TV/VCR combination.

13. Charles Rayl — TV/VCR combination.

14. Don Clayton — Life membership.

15. Jerry Fenzel — Life membership.

16. Mike Harding — Life membership.

17. Robert E. Lee — Life membership.

18. Jim McDaniel — Life membership.

The \$100 cash winners ticket numbers are: 0313, 1491, 0097, 1505, 1504, 0122, 0141, 0248, 1847, 0146, 0415, 1488, 0221, 1191, 0032, 1670, 0413, 0038, 0196, 0550, 0157, 1014, 1549, 0011, 1809, 1828, 1806, 0019, 0130, 0411, 1189, 0030, 0246, 1160, 0309, 0148, 1489, 1502, 0455, 1177, 0088, 1002, 0234, 1198, 1184, 0013, 1752, 0409, 1503, 1186

Amendment proposed to Constitution

Proposed Amendment to the
VHPA
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS

General Information: During the 6/4/2000 Executive Council meeting, the following amendment to the VHPA Constitution and Bylaws was approved by the Executive Council.

For ratification, it must be approved by two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at the business session.

The purpose of this amendment is

to state clearly the intentions of the VHPA concerning its operations. From time to time, the nonpolitical nature of the VHPA is challenged. The Executive Council intention was to put into the Constitution the actual wording to clarify our operations, leaving no doubt as to our nonpolitical nature.

Proposal:

Under ARTICLE III — OPERATIONS, VHPA CONSTITUTION, add Section IV. which shall read:

Section IV. The VHPA shall not engage in partisan political politics or endorse political parties or candidates or public officials. Nothing herein shall restrict individual members from being individually engaged in political activities, political parties, or political office. Provided, however, members may not mention their membership in the VHPA when involved in such political activities, political parties, or political office in a manner so as to imply endorsement by the VHPA.

Galloway recalls helicopters' role

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following speech was given by Joseph Galloway, U.S. News & World Report senior writer, at the Annual Banquet during the VHPA reunion in Washington, DC, in July.

JOSEPH GALLOWAY

I have got to tell you that looking out across this assemblage I must confess: I haven't seen this many bad boys collected in one location since the last time I visited Leavenworth Prison.

When I first learned that I would be doing this gig I asked an aviator buddy of mine what else I needed to know . . . and he said, well, most of you would be bringing your wives along . . . that half of you were so damn deaf that you couldn't hear a word of what I was saying . . . the other half would be so damn drunk you couldn't understand what I was saying . . . so I might just as well talk to the ladies . . .

I have waited years to be able to share this story with so august a group of aviator veterans as this: A few years ago I was at a large official dinner and I was seated next to a nice lady who was the wife of a two-star general. I knew the lady had two college-age daughters and I also knew that one of them had been dating a Cavalry lieutenant . . . so I thought to make some polite conversation and I offered her my condolences at her daughter's choice of companionship. "Oh No!" the general's wife said. "He is a fine young man. Nothing wrong with him . . . and at least he isn't a goddam aviator!"

I just wanted you to know that your successors in the business continue to win friends and influence people in high places.

Before I go along any further in this thing I need to ask you some questions:

Is there anyone here who flew with the 1st Cavalry Division? The 229th? The 227th? How about the old 119th

*Hell . . . every story
anyone has about Vietnam
starts and ends with
a helicopter . . . you guys
were simply fantastic.*

*Thank you all.
Thank you for
everything . . . large
and small.*

out of Holloway? Any Marine pilots who flew them old CH-34 Shuddering Shithouses??? Now I know I am among close friends . . . I know that old Ray Burns from Ganado, Texas, is here . . . and I have got to tell you a story about me and Ray that goes back to October of 1965. Plei Me SF Camp was under siege by a regiment of North Vietnamese regulars. I was trying to get in there . . . like a fool . . . but after an A1E and a B57 Canberra and one Huey had been shot down they declared it a No-Fly Zone. So I was stomping up and down the flight line at Holloway cussing . . . when I ran across Ray. He asked what the problem was and I told him. He allowed as how he had been wanting to get a look at that situation and would give me a ride . . .

I still have a picture I shot out the open door of Ray's Huey. We are doing a kind of corkscrew descent and the triangular berms and wire of the camp below fill that doorway . . . along with the puffs of smoke from the impacting mortar rounds inside the camp. Hell . . . I can scare myself bad just looking at that photo.

Well old Ray drops on in and I jump out . . . and the Yards boil out of the trenches and toss a bunch of wounded in the door and Ray is pulling pitch . . . grinning . . . and giving me the bird. When the noise is gone this sergeant major runs up: Sir, I don't know who you are but Major

Beckwith wants to see you right away. I ask which one is the major and I am informed he is the very big guy over there jumping up and down on his hat. I go over slowly. The dialogue goes something like this: Who the hell are you? A reporter. Son, I need everything in the goddam world from food and ammo to water . . . to medevac . . . to reinforcements . . . and I wouldn't mind a bottle of Jim Beam . . . but what I do not need is a goddam reporter. And what has the Army in its wisdom delivered to me? Well . . . I got news for you . . . you ain't a reporter no more; you are my new corner machine gunner."

Ray . . . I want to thank you for that ride . . . wasn't for you and Chuck Oualline I wouldn't have had half as much fun in Vietnam.

Hell . . . every story anyone has about Vietnam starts and ends with a helicopter . . . you guys were simply fantastic. Thank you all. Thank you for everything . . . large and small.

Now I guess I got to get down to business. All of you know that I have spent most of the last 40 years hanging out with the Infantry . . . a choice some folks view as perverse if not totally insane. But there was always method in my madness: With the Infantry things happen close enough that I can see what's happening . . . and slowly enough most times that even I can understand what I'm seeing.

There's just this one little downside to my long experience with the Infantry: During that time I have personally been bombed . . . rocketed . . . strafed . . . and napalmed by the U.S. Air Force . . . U.S. Navy . . . U.S. Marines . . . and U.S. Army Aviation . . . as well as by the air forces of South Vietnam . . . Laos . . . Sri Lanka . . . India . . . and Pakistan.

Now I don't consider myself an inconsiderable target . . . and wasn't even back when I could fit comfortably behind a palm tree . . . but here I am . . . running my mouth . . . nothing hurt beyond my dignity. Don't get me

See YOU CHOPPER, Page 19

'You chopper guys were our heroes'

Continued from Page 18

wrong; I don't hold any grudges against those gallant winged warriors. But ever since the first time they attacked me and missed . . . I have never ever used the words "surgical bombing strike" in any story I ever wrote.

I had the chance to say some good things about all of you at the Memorial Service at The Wall on Sunday. I meant every word of that . . . and more. You chopper guys were our heroes in Vietnam. You were our rides . . . but you were much much more than that. We were always either cussing you for hauling our butts into deep kimchi . . . or ready to kiss you for hauling us out of it. I have a feeling that without you and your birds that would have been a

To this day I think the finest meal I ever ate was a canteen cup full of hot split pea soup that a Huey delivered to a hilltop in the dry paddies of the Bong Son Plain in January of 1966.

much shorter and far more brutish war.

You were our heroes, though, first last and always. You saved us from having to walk to work every day. You brought in our food and ammo

and water . . . and sometimes even a Marmite can full of hot chow. To this day I think the finest meal I ever ate was a canteen cup full of hot split pea soup that a Huey delivered to a hilltop in the dry paddies of the Bong Son Plain in January of 1966. For a moment there I thought if the Army could get a hot meal out to an Infantry company on patrol maybe . . . just maybe . . . we could win the damn war. Oh well.

I think often of all that you did for us . . . all that you meant to us: You came for our wounded. You came to get our dead brothers. You came . . . when the fight was over . . . to give us a ride home from hell. There isn't a former Grunt alive who doesn't freeze for a moment and feel the hair rise on the back of his neck when he

See **YOU ARE**, Page 21

VHPA LOGO ITEMS

(DAVE GRIEGER, L-66)

THEY'RE BACK!! THESE ITEMS ARE STOCK ITEMS AGAIN

VHPA JACKETS (L,XL) — \$59.95 (XXL,XXXL — \$64.95) BLK

CALL SIGN, NAME, UNIT, LOCATION, DATE, ETC. — FREE (3 LINES)

ALSO AVAILABLE: WINGS (ALL SERVICES), CIB, CMB, ABN, PATHFINDER, MORE — \$12.00 EACH

VHPA BIG BACK PATCH (10")	\$29.95
VHPA EMBL'D HAT (WHT)	\$12.00
VHPA HAT WITH PATCH	\$11.95 (BK, N, WH)
VHPA HAT W/"EGGS" & PATCH	\$12.95 (BK, N, WH)
VHPA EMBL'D GOLF SHIRT	\$25.00 (L,XL) WHITE
	\$30.00 (XXL, XXXL)
VHPA PATCH	\$ 4.50
VHPA PIN (HUNDREDS AVAILABLE)	\$ 3.95 (WOPA, RLO, ETC.)
VHPA WINDOW STICKER ('W')	\$ 2.00
VHPA BUMPER STICKER ('B')	\$ 3.00
VHPA LICENSE PLATE	\$9.00 VSR SUPERIMPOSED WITH VHPA LOGO
VHPA ADDRESS LABELS (100 EA.)	\$8.50 LOGO ON DAY-GLOW
VIDEOS — 30-MIN. REAL FOOTAGE, SHOT BY AUTHOR — \$19.95	
"GUNSLINGERS" — 128TH AHC, CPT JAMES POWELL (1968-72)	
VHPA COIN (NEW) — \$12.95 (PLUS 1ST CAV, 3RD MAR, DOZ'S OF OTHERS)	

AND OTHER MILITARY DOD/NOVELTY ITEMS:
MEDALS, PINS, PATCHES, KEY RINGS, CAPS, FLAGS,
VN MAP — MORE
28-PAGE COLOR CATALOG — \$ 2.00
SHIPPING & HANDLING — \$ 4.45 (MC/VISA)

D&G ENTERPRISES

P.O. Box 180

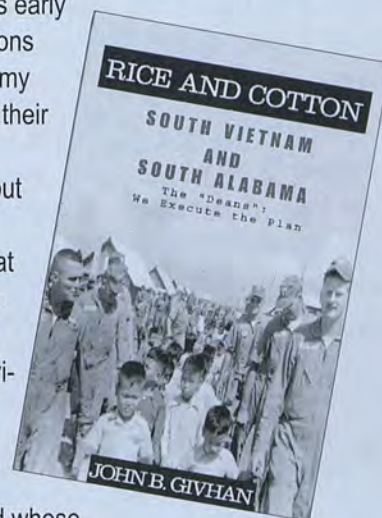
SALEM, AL 36874-0180

Mon.-Sat. (7 a.m.-noon EST) — (334) 749-9222/Fax: (334) 749-1818
Website: www.DandGEnterprises.com/Screen name: DLG555@aol.com

Little was reported about the Vietnam War while John B. Givhan served as an Army helicopter pilot in South Vietnam from November 1963-August 1964.

In *RICE AND COTTON: South Vietnam and South Alabama*, Givhan details early helicopter assault missions flown by courageous Army pilots — their living and their dying.

The book also is about April 12, 1964, in the Mekong Delta, a day that will be forever etched in the minds and souls of the men of the 120th Aviation Company, the "Deans," whose valor and devotion to duty reigned supreme — and whose innocence was lost!



Author John B. Givhan, a rancher and lawyer, received the Purple Heart Medal, the Bronze Star Medal and the Air Medal with nine Oak Leaf Clusters flying helicopters in Vietnam.

To order a copy, write the publisher: Xlibris Corp., 436 Walnut St., 11th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19106, call (888) 795-4274 or e-mail: books@xlibris.com Or you can download an electronic ebook version at www.booklocker.com

i think even General Patton would be jealous.



American Opportunities Fund Class B
(Among 3,469 Domestic Equity Funds)



European Growth Fund Class B
(Among 1,104 International Equity Funds)



Information Fund Class B
(Among 3,469 Domestic Equity Funds)



Mid-Cap Equity Trust Class B
(Among 3,469 Domestic Equity Funds)



Prime Income Trust
(Among 1,617 Taxable Bond Funds)



Short-Term Bond Fund
(Among 1,617 Taxable Bond Funds)



Small Cap Growth Fund Class B
(Among 3,469 Domestic Equity Funds)

Morningstar Overall Ratings™ as of 12/31/99

I have a fondness for stars, particularly when it comes to the Morningstar ratings of my mutual funds. After all, who wouldn't envy the stellar performance of these Morgan Stanley Dean Witter Funds. Of course, I'm well aware that past performance cannot guarantee future results. And I may have a gain or loss when I sell my shares. I also realize foreign securities and markets pose different and possibly greater risks than those customarily associated with domestic securities, including currency fluctuations and political instability.

To find out how we can tailor a Morgan Stanley Dean Witter
i Funds portfolio for you, contact

James B. Kelly
First Vice President

MORGAN STANLEY DEAN WITTER
Success. One investor at a time.

MORGAN STANLEY
DEAN WITTER

i
Funds

As a result of market volatility, current performance may vary from what it was during the period in which the ratings were assigned.

Ask for our free brochures and prospectuses, which contain complete information on risks, charges and expenses. Read the prospectuses carefully before you invest or send money.

There is no assurance that the Funds will achieve their investment objectives. The Funds' share prices will fluctuate with changes in the market value of their portfolios' securities. When you sell Fund shares, they may be worth more or less than what you paid for them. Accordingly, you can lose money investing in these Funds.

Morningstar proprietary ratings reflect historical risk-adjusted performance for the periods ended December 31, 1999. Ratings are calculated from the fund's 3-, 5- and 10-year average annual total returns (when applicable) in excess of 90-day Treasury-bill returns (with appropriate fee adjustments) and a risk factor that reflects fund performances below 90-day T-bill returns. The ratings are subject to change each month. The top 10% of the funds in an investment category receive 5 stars, the next 22.5% receive 4 stars, the next 35% receive 3 stars, the next 22.5% receive 2 stars and the bottom 10% receive 1 star.

American Opportunities Fund Class B received 5 stars for 10 years (of 770 domestic equity funds), 5 years (of 2,180 funds) and 3 years (of 3,469 funds). European Growth Fund Class B received 5 stars for 5 years (of 638 international equity funds) and 4 stars for 3 years (of 1,104 funds). Information Fund Class B received 5 stars for 3 years (of 3,469 domestic equity funds). Mid-Cap Equity Trust Class B received 5 stars for 3 years (of 3,469 domestic equity funds). Prime Income Trust received 5 stars for 10 years (of 387 taxable bond funds), 5 years (of 1,221 funds) and 3 years (of 1,617 funds). Short-Term Bond Fund received 5 stars for 5 years (of 1,221 taxable bond funds) and 3 years (of 1,617 funds). Small Cap Growth Fund Class B received 5 stars for 5 years (of 2,180 domestic equity funds) and 3 years (of 3,469 funds).

*Prime Income Trust invests in senior loans whose characteristics are substantially different than the fixed-income funds in its Morningstar category. There is not expected to be any secondary trading market in shares of Prime Income Trust, which is a continuously offered closed-end fund. Investors should consider the Trust an illiquid investment. However, each quarter the Trust will consider making tender offers for shares at net asset value.

Emphasis on one industry involves greater risk than is usually associated with a less concentrated portfolio. Investments in small- and mid-sized companies involve greater risk than is typically associated with larger companies.

Morgan Stanley Dean Witter is a service mark of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co. Services are offered through Dean Witter Reynolds Inc. and Morgan Stanley Dean Witter Online Inc. Members SIPC. i is a service mark of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co. © 2000 Morgan Stanley Dean Witter Distributors Inc. Member SIPC.

'You are cream of . . . generation'

Continued from Page 19

hears the whup, whup, whup of those helicopter blades.

What I want to say now is just between us . . . because America still doesn't get it . . . still doesn't know the truth, and the truth is: You are the cream of the crop of our generation . . . the best and finest of an entire generation of Americans. You are the ones who answered when you were called to serve . . . You are the ones who fought bravely and endured a terrible war in a terrible place. You are the ones for whom the words duty . . . honor . . . country have real meaning because you have lived those words and the meaning behind those words. You are my brothers in arms . . . and I am not ashamed to say that I love you. I would not trade one of you for a whole trainload of instant Canadians . . . or a whole boatload of Rhodes Scholars bound for England . . . or a whole campus full of guys who turned up for their draft physicals wearing panty hose.

On behalf of a country that too easily forgets the true cost of war . . . and who pays that price . . . I say Thank you for your service! On behalf of the people of our country who didn't have good sense enough to separate the war they hated from the young warriors they sent to fight

I would not trade one of you for a whole trainload of instant Canadians . . . or a whole boatload of Rhodes Scholars bound for England . . . or a whole campus full of guys who turned up for their draft physicals wearing panty hose.

that war . . . I say we are sorry. We owe you all a very large apology . . . and a debt of gratitude that we can never adequately repay. For myself and all my buddies in the Infantry I say: Thanks for all the rides in and out . . . especially the rides out.

It is great to see you all gathered here for this reunion. A friend of mine, Mike Norman, a former Marine grunt . . . wrote a wonderful book called *These Good Men* about his quest to find and reunite with all the survivors of his platoon from Vietnam. He thought long and deep about why we gather as we have done this evening and he explained it thusly:

"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to

tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted their best . . . men who suffered and sacrificed . . . who were stripped raw . . . right down to their humanity.

"I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life.

"They would have carried my reputation . . . the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made . . . the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

"As long as I have memory I will think of them all . . . every day. I am sure that when I leave this world . . . my last thought will be of my family and my comrades . . . such good men."

I'm going to shut up now and let us all get down to the real business of drinking and lying . . . er . . . telling war stories.

Thank you. I salute you. I remember you. I will teach my sons the stories and legends about you. And I will warn my daughters never ever to go out with aviators . . . Good evening. God bless . . .

Recruiting Contest winner: Herb Nagel of Florida chapter

We have a winner in this year's VHPA Membership Recruiting Contest.

Herb Nagel, secretary of VHPA of Florida, was the only member to reach the "10 New Recruits" minimum in the contest that ran from July 1999 to July 2000.

Nagel will be reimbursed for four nights at the Renaissance Hotel for VHPA 2000.

He was the "OIC" at the VHPA of Florida's Vietnam display at the weeklong "Sun 'n Fun Fly-in" at Lakeland, FL, in April.

All told, 50 other VHPA members recruited from one

to five new members during the year-long contest.

Stand by for details of this year's new contest. In the meantime, always put your name and VHPA membership number at the bottom of every new application you send to Headquarters.

VHPA gained 81 new members in June 2000.

Keep up the growth by contacting your non-member friends, listed in the Directory with a "#" symbol by their name, and other pilots not yet listed.

Don Joyce

Galloway lauds helicopter crews

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following speech was given by Joseph Galloway, *U.S. News & World Report* senior writer, at the Vietnam War Memorial during the VHPA reunion in Washington, DC, in July.

JOSEPH GALLOWAY

Is there anyone here today who does not thrill to the sound of those Huey blades? That familiar whop-whop-whop is the soundtrack of our war . . . the lullaby of our younger days.

To someone who spent his time in Nam with the grunts, I have got to tell you that that noise was always a great comfort.

It meant someone was coming to help . . . someone was coming to get our wounded . . . someone was coming to bring us water and ammo . . . someone was coming to take our dead brothers home . . . someone was coming to give us a ride out of hell. Even today when I hear it I stop . . . catch my breath . . . and think back to those days . . .

I love you guys as only an Infantryman can love you. No matter how bad things were . . . if we called, you came.

Down through the green tracers

and other visible signs of a real bad day off to a bad start. I would like to quote to you from a letter Gen.

William Tecumseh Sherman wrote his friend Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at the end of the Civil War:

"I knew wherever I was that you thought of me, and if I got in a tight place you would come — if alive."

That was always in our minds and that is how we thought of you. To us you seemed beyond brave and fearless . . . that you would come to us in the middle of battle in those flimsy thin-skinned crates . . . and in the storm of fire you would sit up there behind that plexiglass seeming so patient and so calm and so vulnerable . . . waiting for the off-loading and the on-loading.

We thought you were God's own lunatics . . . and we loved you. Still do.

We are gathered here this morning to appreciate the lives and honor the memory of 2,209 helicopter pilots and 2,704 helicopter crewmen who were killed while doing their duty in the Republic of Vietnam between May 30, 1961, and May 15, 1975. Theirs are some of the names among the 58,220 on this precious Wall. So many good men . . . so many good friends.

Before I come here, I always

remind myself of what another good friend . . . Captain B.T. Collins . . . who is now gone . . . liked to say at gatherings like this:

"No whining and no crying! We are the fortunate ones! We survived . . . when so many better men gave up their precious lives for us. We owe them a sacred debt . . . to live each day to its fullest . . . trying to make this world a better place for our having lived and their having died."

So we come here today to remember them . . . and to celebrate their lives and their deeds. I like to come here at dawn . . . or around midnight . . . when things are so quiet you can hear their voices. What they are saying . . . when you listen hard enough . . . is this: "We are at peace; so should you be . . . so should you be."

I would like to close by reading you from something written by a World War I poet named Lawrence Binyon:

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old,

Age shall not weary them . . . nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,

We will remember them!

God bless all our absent friends . . . and God bless you.

Rittman, Ferguson elected VHPA officers

JACK SWICKARD
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

David Rittman was elected VHPA vice president and Dan Ferguson was elected junior member at large during the general membership meeting July 3 at Reunion 2000 in Washington, DC.

Rittman, who served last year as senior member at large, will succeed Charles Holley as president next year.

Holley automatically succeeded Bob Smith as VHPA president.

Ferguson, former secretary/treasurer, next year automatically will

become midterm member at large, while this year's midterm member, Don Joyce, will succeed senior member at large Joe Bilitzke.

In other business during the membership meeting, management contractor Marcia Fritz said her company is establishing a training program for volunteers at the Denver reunion in 2001.

Fritz said the VHPA website also will be beefed up, with more user interfacing for banquet seating. She encouraged members to get more information on the VHPA from the website.

Secretary/Treasurer Dan Ferguson presented the financial report, which shows the VHPA is healthy and has excellent reserves.

The association's nine chapters were recognized by Vice President Charles Holley.

Gary Roush, records/database chairman, reported CD-ROMs were distributed with the Membership Directory this year; more than 7,000 e-mails were received during the year, requiring response; and more unit information is needed for KIAs.

Roush said his committee has

See VHPA, Page 23

VHPA has 2.7 million file database

Continued from Page 22

identified 17,000 of 40,000 people eligible to belong to the VHPA. He said the committee now has a database containing 2.7 million files "to help cull out phony veterans."

"Everyone out there has a story; we need your story in writing," he said, asking also for volunteers interested in writing these stories.

Hayden "Pappy" Jones, membership chairman, said this past year was a good year for membership.

Mike Law, Membership Directory editor, and Roush, discussed the CD survey conducted in *The VHPA Newsletter*.

Law spoke about value of distributing information on CD to hold down printing costs, recommending CDs be available on request and that pages removed from the Directory this year be put back in.

Roush conducted a quick survey on interest in receiving a CD from VHPA. Most said they would be willing to pay up to \$10 per CD for the additional information.

Jack Swickard, newsletter editor, encouraged all VHPA members to send material to the newsletter for publication. He emphasized, "it's your newsletter."

Swickard thanked Tom Pettit of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University for buying a full-page color ad on the back cover for the past several years. This allowed the newsletter to publish color photos on the cover at no additional cost to members.

Kenny Bunn, Site Selection Committee chairman, discussed growth of VHPA members attending reunions.

"It's hard to plan such growth 3-4 years in advance; VHPA would pay for unused rooms, plus a substantial

penalty because hotels believe they lose food and beverage business," Bunn said. The problem has been with some people booking multiple rooms early and canceling some of them late.

President Bob Smith added that to hold a reunion in a city, there must be a chapter in place for at least a year.

Bob Potvin, investment adviser, said he would like people to help on investment committee.

Stephen Maxner of the Vietnam War Archives at Texas Tech University said the institution is working on a Vietnam War oral history project.

The purpose is to interview people who participated in the war, to provide a complete record of the history of the war. Those interviewed include former Viet Cong, as well as allied soldiers.

See BUILDING, Page 24

RINGS WITH WINGS

"Precious Metal for Men of Mettle"



10 Carat Yellow Gold VHP ring with 10 Carat White Gold Wings
Terrium (stainless steel) ring with 10 Carat Yellow Gold Wings
10 Carat Yellow Gold Pendant (same as center picture)
Lapel Pin or Pendant (non-precious metal, same as center picture)
(add \$3.00 shipping & handling for pendants and lapel pins)

\$650.00
\$375.00
\$100.00
\$ 15.00

For a price list of additional items* available, call or E-mail
*** additional items include Swiss Army Knife with VHP**
Emblem, VHP Shirts, and VHP Logo Mouse Pads.

RINGS WITH WINGS
800 222-7580

Organizers worked countless hours

JAMES GOLDTHORPE
REUNION CHAIRMAN

I hope you have all recovered from the Washington reunion.

We hope you agree we achieved our goal: To help heal.

Please keep in mind 15-20 people put on the entire convention. These people spent countless hours planning and organizing the wonderful events that were the VHPA Washington capital experience.

I have taken a little time to reflect on the magnificent roller coaster ride we all took in DC.

The emotional events: Wreath-laying, missing man/candles/honored guest, the parade.

Mike Sloniker, my hat's off to you for an excellent event. The planning, execution and timing could not have been any better. A lot of healing occurred.

The banquet was collective. Steve Reilly's idea of the missing man table in the center. The floor plan was in the pattern of the Union Jack, the symbol from where we, as a nation, got our Independence.

The votive candles and names were my wife's idea. Some of you know the reason.

The eloquence of Ron David and his transition of the missing man toast to the name reading of the honored guest was not conceived until 5: 59 p.m. that evening.

The MDW Honor Guard, the Air Force Honor Guard member Peter from Amvets who presented the flag to the table, bagpiper Chris Jackson. Even the meal was excellent.

Joe Galloway's presentation at The

Wall and the banquet were remarkable.

The WOC Chorus singing "I Am Proud To Be An American" when all those votive candles began to flicker. One memorable evening.

Gil Ferry and the parade

My sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude goes out to all of you who assisted in making the reunion what it was!

John Powell supplying the computers, obtaining the printing, assisting with the missing man. All the people who assisted with registration.

The golf tournament — Peter Kacerguis, assisted by Budd Christman and committee. Ron Seifert's handling of the raffle, assisting with registration. Shipping the TVs to the winners.

Mark Fienberg's multi-tasked: Transportation coordinator, obtain the RC shirts, reunion T-shirts and pins for chapter sales, finding a supplier for the reunion bags!

Gil Moore's coordination with the military vehicle society and the NC Chapter's helos for the parade/static display-picnic/banquet. Jim McDaniel for the mini-reunions, assisted by Jack Blanchard. Only heard favorable comments.

Douglas Nelms' public relation efforts, with press releases sent and all the sponsors he obtained. Vendor assistant Steve Haines. Mike Johnson chaired the 5K. His niece assisted in obtaining the Motorola radios used.

Skip Butler obtained the permit for the 5K run, plus he obtained an additional 24 radios used at The Wall. Bob Tredway assisted in obtaining the permit for The Wall, plus obtain-

ing the sound system.

Logo — Jay Brown. Ladies Function — Ann Goldthorpe. Ray Johnson did a lot. Entertainment, guest speaker, flyby, P-56 (lots of hands in that pot), coordinating with MDW ceremonies for the Fife and Drum Corps, honor guard letter to the Marine Corps.

Sheila's wall plaque. Frank Thompson for being there. Dave Clemmer's Harley, banquet seating, getting the MC. Glenda Helmick's skills with Publisher designing the "program," her talents decorating the "door prize" baskets for the Ladies Function. Dear, sweet Ann, obtaining the material for the hostess bags (Ladies Function). Place settings for the banquet.

Missing banner

We have a very important request to make of you. The USO very generously loaned us the use of two banners they send out on tours.

These are historic banners: Two Satin banners, approximately 4 inches by 6 feet, white background with blue lettering and red trim. They say "USO Presents . . . from Hollywood."

We added our own computer-generated overlay banners advertising Mrs. Foggy Bottom and The Hilltop Singers. These banners were hanging in the Grand Ballroom at the Renaissance Hotel on the stage where the band performed. They were taken down July 3 and placed on the stage.

That is the last anyone has seen of them. We must return these banners to the USO. If any one knows where these banners are or who has them, please contact Ann Goldthorpe.

Building will house Vietnam War museum

Continued from Page 23

He said the archives plans to construct a building at Texas Tech where VHPA items will be kept, as well as be put online. The building also will house a Vietnam War museum.

Maxner asked for items of muse-

um quality.

Mike Law, 2001 Reunion chairman, said the Denver Reunion will be July 2-6 at the Adam's Mark Hotel, the largest hotel in the city.

He said the VHPA will have sufficient rooms at the hotel.

Thomas Payne, heading up the Scholarship Committee, said the Executive Council approved placing \$8,219 in the AAAA Scholarship Program for investing.

The VHPA will not lose control of funds, he said.



The Rocky Mountains tower over downtown Denver, site of the 2001 VHPA Reunion next July 3-6.

Outside activities stressed at reunion

MIKE LAW
REUNION CHAIRMAN

Since Colorado is such a beautiful state, the 2001 Reunion Committee wants to help everyone get outside and play!

In addition to the traditional VHPA golf tournament, we are finalizing plans for a "Rumble in the Rockies" (a motorcycle ride in the mountains) and two picnics (one in Golden and one at Fort Carson near Colorado Springs).

We also are looking at group tickets for the Colorado Rockies baseball games, the famous Ski Train to Winter Park, and family events such as the Children's Museum and Colorado's Ocean Journey, a new world-class aquarium.

• **Mini-reunions and luncheons:** Since the VHPA will have more than a dozen large business rooms in the Adam's Mark Hotel during the reunion, we will host several simultaneous flight school class or unit mini-reunions.

Additionally, we will have guest speaker luncheons and special event or subject matter presentations. •

• **Vendors:** Since we will have twice the space used in Washington

Denver Reunion schedule

July 3 (Tuesday)

- Golf.
- Motorcycle ride.
- Artists Luncheon.
- Mini-reunions.
- Early Bird Party.



July 4 (Wednesday)

- Mini-reunions.
- Authors Luncheon.
- Welcome Reception.

July 5 (Thursday)

- Picnics in Golden and Colorado Springs.
- Talk and Enjoy Party.

July 6 (Friday)

- Business Meeting.
- Ladies Function.
- Mini-reunions.
- Banquet/dance.

and Nashville, we expect many more vendors with larger displays.

• **Evening activities:** There will be live entertainment every night. No DJs at this reunion!

Playing for the Early Bird Party will be The Hot Tomatoes, a swing,

jazz and big band ensemble. For the Welcome Reception, the band will be The Nacho Men, a rock 'n' roll street corner a cappella' dance band that is fun, fun, and more FUN!

The Talk and Enjoy Party will feature several groups in 45-minute sets. The outstanding 101st Army Colorado National Guard Band will play during the banquet and at the closing dance.

• **LZs:** We have scheduled two large areas — one for smokers and one for nonsmokers — with virtually nonstop cash bars. You want to sit and drink and tell war stories? You got it on the Mezzanine Level at the Adam's Mark!

• **Banquet:** The Adam's Mark has the largest hotel banquet facility in Colorado.

We are planning to accommodate 3,000 happy people who can see and hear everything that is going on!

The next issues of *The VHPA Newsletter* will have the Reunion Registration form, the mini-reunion registration forms, vendor information and advertising, discounts for airport shuttle, parking information, special features for wheelchair and others, plus additional details about the events and the hotel.

United the official reunion airline

MIKE LAW
REUNION CHAIRMAN

United Airlines is the official airline of the Denver VHPA Reunion.

If you or your travel agent call

United's toll-free number (800) 521-4041 to book reservations, you will receive a 5 percent discount off the lowest applicable discount

fare, include first class, or a 10 percent discount off full fare unrestricted coach fares, purchased seven days in advance.



An additional 5 percent discount will apply when tickets are purchased at least 60 days in advance of your travel date. Discounts apply on United, Shuttle by United and United Express.

To take advantage of these discounts, you must fly into Denver or Colorado Springs between June 29 and July 10.

Be sure you tell the agent your meeting number is 592XE. Call (800) 521-4041 from 7 a.m.-midnight EST seven days a week.

• **Unit and chapter banners:** The hotel has agreed to hang lots of banners, so we want to encourage units and chapters to bring them.

More information will be available in future newsletters, but the Reunion

Committee wants to get the word out now. Get those banners made and plan to bring them to Denver!

• **Special needs:** Many people at the Washington Reunion told the

Denver Reunion Committee they needed information on RV parks, special transportation issues for wheelchairs, and motorcycle trailer parking.

Thanks for the "heads-up" and read the newsletter for more details.

What to do in Denver

The Adam's Mark is

located at the top of 16th Street, within easy walking distance of the State Capitol, the U.S. Mint, the Denver Art Museum, the Colorado History Museum, and the main office of the Denver Public Library, which has a superb collection on the West.

The hotel is two blocks from the new Denver Pavilions, a two-block entertainment complex for

shopping and dining.

It has the Hard Rock Café, Nike Town, Wolfgang Puck Café and more.

Free public shuttle buses run every eight minutes along 16th Street, which is a pedestrian mall that extends for 14 blocks to LoDo (Lower Denver), where we have Coors Field and more restaurants and sports bars.

These places are all open on July

4th and the weekends. Use www.denver.org for more details. A few minutes from the hotel via public transportation will get you to more shopping — the Cherry Creek Mall is upscale and outstanding; more entertainment — amusement park and aquarium.



Nose of United Airlines flight Denver



Chapel at Air Force Academy Colorado Springs



Colorado State Capitol Denver

What to do in Colorado

If you come early or stay after the reunion, there's lots to do within a day's drive.

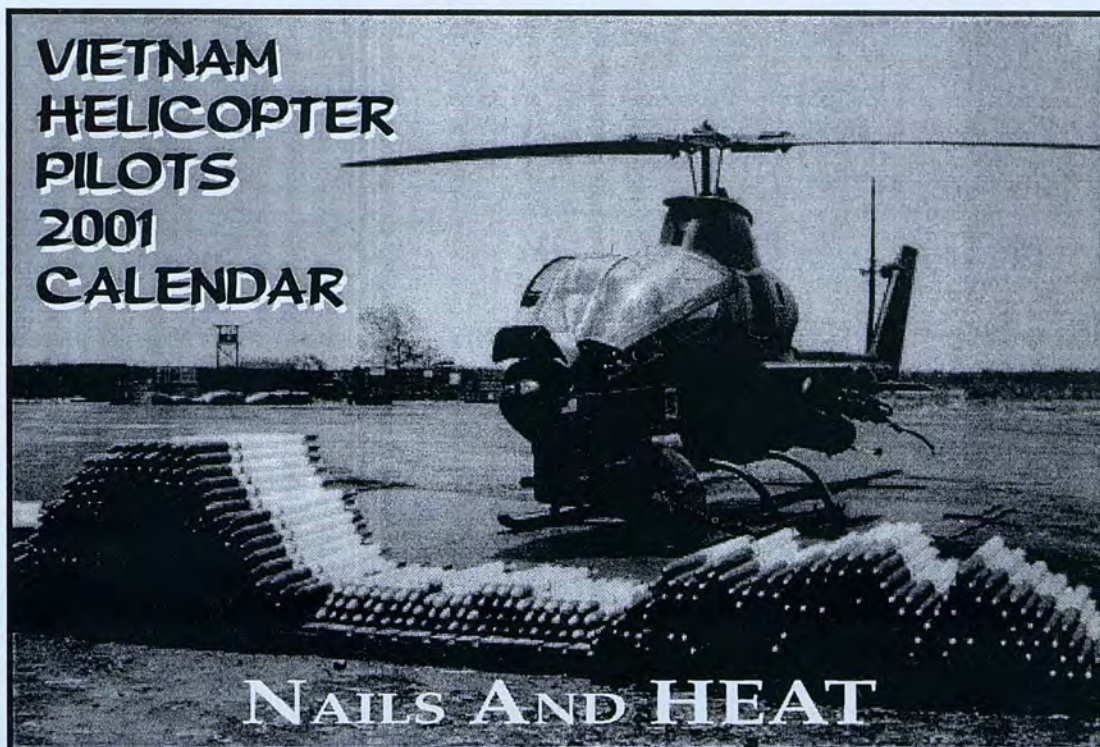
To the south, the Colorado Springs area has the Pike's Peak, the Air Force Academy, the historic gold and silver mining area at Cripple Creek.

To the west, the very popular Georgetown Loop Railroad, plus "God's Country" Summit and Eagle counties with Dillon Lake, Breckenridge and Vail.

To the north is Estes Park, plus the major towns of Boulder, Loveland, Fort Collins and Greeley.

Watch the next newsletter for details about the official rental car company.

VHPA 2001 CALENDAR



The VHPA 2001 Calendar, in **Full-Color**, is the Perfect Gift For Any VHPA Veteran, Family Member or Helicopter Enthusiast!

- Each month shows a different helicopter, including a description of the craft and its surroundings
- Photos of UH-1s, OH-13s, CH-47s, CH-46s and more
- Photos taken during the Vietnam War
- Annual VHPA Reunion listed in red
- VHPA Calendars become collectibles!
- Includes the names and units of the 2,214 helicopter pilots killed or declared MIA from 1961-75; each is listed on the date of death or disappearance
- Oversized (**BIG**) 17x11-inch Full-Color format!
- Pictured above is the calendar cover. Photo from F Troop, 9th Cavalry courtesy of Ron Timberlake

RESERVE YOUR COPIES TODAY!

Send all orders to:

VHPA 2001 Calendar • Turner Publishing Company • P.O. Box 3101 • Paducah, KY 42002

☐ Please enter my order for ____ copies of the **VHPA 2001 Calendar - Only \$12.00 each**

☐ Add \$5.00 shipping and handling for up to three copies; \$1.00 for each additional

☐ *Kentucky residents add 6% sales tax*

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Ship To: (Please print)

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY -
VHPA 2001 CAL-RWB-PRE

Check _____ Amt _____

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200 • Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7621

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

Membership application/change of address

- ☐ New application ☐ Annual/renewal dues: \$30 (Newsletters included)
- ☐ Address change ☐ Life membership: \$450*
- ☐ Directory correction ☐ Newsletter subscription only: \$30

NAME _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: () _____ WORK PHONE: () _____

OCCUPATION: _____

- ☐ Please charge my MasterCard/Visa credit card. ☐ Add \$15 for current Membership Directory.
- ☐ Enclosed is a check/money order payable to VHPA.

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?

**NOTE: Life memberships may be purchased with three bi-monthly payments of \$150 each.*