



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

September/October 1997 Vol. 15, No. 5



Donald R. Joyce photo

An armed OH-13 displays its teeth — two machine guns — while parked between missions at Phan Thiet. The observation helicopter belonged to the 1st Cavalry Division's 1/9th.

*****3-DIGIT 454
ID# 108806** 12/99
PKG 181
SACK 54



From the President

The new VHPA membership directory has been sent to the publisher and should be available soon — possibly before you get this newsletter.

A great amount of hard work and quality effort was put into this project by Mike Law and Ken Fritz. Our thanks to both. I'm sure that you will enjoy it.

An important note for those pilots who are getting ready to join the Association: If your membership application is not received by Aug. 15, you will not receive a directory until the following year. The 15th is the cutoff for committing to a fixed number of copies with our printing firm. Please encourage any potential members not to procrastinate after the reunion.

When you do receive your directory, please check it for accuracy. These data are used for several purposes, including pre-reunion preparation of name tags.

I would encourage the chapters to start submitting articles and photos about their chapter activities. Also, a list of upcoming events might attract some new members. I believe the general membership would be interested in what the chapters are up to in their idle moments (keep it clean).

Angelo Spelios and the Fort Worth crew are moving

ahead with the plans for our '98 Reunion. They are putting in a tremendous amount of work for all of us.

And yes, it is true, there is a conspiracy between Angelo and me to get Texas to replace "y'all" with "youse guys."

Mike Haley and the Nashville group already have started planning for the '99 reunion. I hope they invite Dolly.

Jack Swickard continues to do a fantastic job of publishing our newsletter. This is done in spite of all the aliens he has to contend with in Roswell.

Jack Jordan has continued to allow us to use his phone service for our Executive Council meetings. This frees up funds for other association uses.

"Pappy" Jones is consorting with the Confederate Air Force as part of his membership campaign. He has some good ideas on how to get our name out and let pilots know about us.

Bob Smith found 50-plus pilots at Oshkosh who were not in the directory.

It's thanks to these efforts and those of our chapters that will keep the VHPA a healthy organization.

As soon as I finish with this column, I will be leaving for New Hampshire to join Pat McLarney and several other members of the 118th Aviation Co. (Airmobile Light). Yeah, these are the real old folks. As usual, I'll be looking for new members.

— Mike Hurley, President

Reunion hotel rated one of finest in Texas

The Worthington Hotel — headquarters for the Fort Worth Reunion next July 1-5 — is an independent hotel rated as one of the finest in Texas.

The hotel has earned "Four Stars" from the Mobil Travel Guide and "Four Diamonds" from the American Automobile Association.

Called "The Star of Texas," The Worthington is known for taking special care of its guests with warm, gracious hospitality.

To make reservations at The Worthington, call (800) 433-5677.

Rates are \$80 per night for a single and \$90 for a double, plus \$10 for

each additional adult staying in the room. Children 16 years and under can stay free in their parent's room.

The Worthington, a 12-story contemporary concrete structure, spans three city blocks in downtown Fort Worth and offers 504 renovated guest rooms, including 44 luxury suites.

The hotel recently completed a \$20 million project in which the lobby and each guest room and suite were renovated.

Since its completion in 1981, the hotel has won awards for its creative and beautiful treatment of space and materials.

The hotel has 55,000 square feet of

flexible meeting space, including two grand ballrooms, 16 meeting rooms and an exhibition hall, as well as an underground parking garage.

The Worthington offers a variety of restaurants.

Reflections, a world-class, distinctive dining restaurant, is acclaimed as among the best in Texas.

The Star of Texas Grill offers traditional Texas dishes created with a flair.

The Bridge, a European cafe-style "marketplace," offers Fort Worth's best value in pastas, sandwiches, salads and specialty items, as well as the city's most lavish Sunday brunch.

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]. Extension/PIN 8936, or [REDACTED].

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, 949 University Ave., Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95825. Periodicals Publications postage paid at Sacramento, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE VHPA NEWSLETTER, 949 University Ave., Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95825.

VHPA OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND STAFF 1997-98

PRESIDENT	Mike Hurley
VICE PRESIDENT	Thomas Payne
PAST PRESIDENT	Charles Rayl
MEMBERS AT LARGE	
Senior Member	Bob Smith
Midterm Member	Bob Johnson
Junior Member	David Rittman
SECRETARY/TREASURER	Dan Ferguson
FOUNDER	Larry Clark

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Historical	Bob Davies
Membership	Hayden "Pappy" Jones
Public Relations	Ken Fritz
Records/Database	Gary Roush
Gathering (HAI)	David Rittman
1998 Reunion	Angelo Spelios
Site Selection	Kenny Bunn
Chaplain	John Plummer
DIRECTORY EDITOR	Mike Law
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Jack Swickard
Assistant editors	Charles Rayl, "Pappy" Jones
Contributing writers	Mike Law, Mel Canon

VHPA SUPPORT

Legal adviser	Charles R. Rayl
VHPA Headquarters	(800) 505-VHPA

ELECTRONIC MAIL

VHPA Headquarters	HQ@vhpa.org
Newsletter editor	swickard@vhpa.org
Chaplain	chaplain@vhpa.org
Records/Database	roush@vhpa.org
Website	http://www.vhpa.org
Webmaster	webmaster@vhpa.org

VHPA chapters

Ohio River LZ Chapter	Jack W. Shrode Jr., President [REDACTED]
Great Lakes Chapter	John Becker, President [REDACTED] home
North Carolina Chapter	Vic Rose, President [REDACTED]
New England Chapter	Bob Whitford, Past President [REDACTED] home work
Fort Wolters Chapter	Charles Holley, President [REDACTED] fax
Mardi Gras Chapter	Don Hunt, President Lee Overstreet, Vice President New Orleans, LA
Florida LZ Chapter	Judd Chapin, Executive Director [REDACTED]
California Chapter North	Rich Buzen, President [REDACTED] www.hooked.net/~pandata/ccn.com.html

Seeking

Details about aircraft downing

Several California VHPAers have been working with the California chapter of Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and its In Touch program.

Recently, I was contacted by an In Touch representative on behalf of Spec. 4 Alfred R. Gutierrez, a former member of B/7/17th Cav which became H/17th Cav on April 30, 1972.

We are interested in knowing more details about the events of May 29, 1972, at AS198598 near Kontum when WO Gerald D. Spradlin and Sgt. Larry K. Morrow had their LOH shot down by an RPG.

Because of the tactical situation, it was some time

before an ARVN ground unit got to the crash site, where they found WO Spradlin's remains but only Sgt. Morrow's flight helmet. Eventually, Sgt. Morrow was declared dead BNR (body not recovered).

We are interested in details about the events surrounding their shoot-down.

If you can help, please contact Mike Law, [REDACTED]
Mike Law, VHPA Directory editor.

Capt. Steve Gibson

I am trying to find Capt. Steve Gibson, a Cobra pilot who flew with the 3/5 Air Cav, 3/17 Air Cav, 1970-71 at Vinh Long.

Bill Large
[REDACTED]

Father of air cav will be missed

On the 7th of August 1997, at 4:45 a.m., our nation lost one of its true, legendary heroes!

Col. John B. Stockton

USMA Class of 1943

Nov. 7, 1922-Aug. 7, 1997

Bullwhip 6

That loss is profoundly felt by his wife Rita, his daughters and the officers and men of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry. Col. Stockton was literally born in the Army.

His father and grandfather were career military officers. He served in World War II in Cavalry units, where he received the Bronze Star Medal and a battlefield promotion to captain.

After World War II, he returned to the U.S. Military Academy as an instructor.

Many assignments followed until fate intervened on July 11, 1964, when then Lt. Col. Stockton assumed command of the 3/17th Cavalry, later redesignated the 1/9th Cavalry — the "Bullwhip Squadron." This unit was the first true air cavalry squadron

and Col. Stockton set about to write the book on air cavalry operations.

Much of his tactical doctrine was drawn from the old horse cavalry, flavored with his personal experience from a prior tour in Vietnam.

Soon, it seemed, that everyone knew and respected "those black hatted cavalymen," a tradition that lives on today.

The squadron's baptism of fire came shortly after the 1st Cavalry Division deployed to Vietnam, when on Sept. 20, 1965, the 1/9th Cavalry was credited with the 1st Cavalry Division's first kill.

From that point on, everything the 1/9th Cavalry did only added to the mystique of the cav and the reputation of its daring, heroic and legendary commander — Col. John B. Stockton!

We salute you and bid you Farewell, Bullwhip 6. You will live in our hearts and memories!

In tribute to the memory of Bullwhip 6, members of the Squadron who attended the 1st Cavalry Division Association's 50th reunion have established a special fund to buy and donate a cavalry mount to the Horse Detachment of the 1st Cavalry Division. The horse donated would carry the designation as the platoon leader's mount. It is understood that this mount will cost more. However, it will be in a place of leadership within the Horse Detachment as befitting Bullwhip 6.

The horse will be named Bullwhip and it will be trained and ready for presentation at the 1999 reunion of the 1st Cavalry Division Association at Fort Hood, TX.

Continued on Page 5

VHPA Product Order Form

MAIL FORM TO: VHPA
University Ave., Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95825
(800) 505-VHPA

(FAX CREDIT CARD ORDERS: (916) 648-1072)

New VHPA bumper stickers \$1/each _____

New round window stickers \$1/each _____

Back VHPA Newsletters \$20/set _____
(Complete sets only, (\$5 P&H each set)
limited availability.)

1994 VHPA Directory \$10/each _____
(\$5 P&H each)

1995 VHPA Directory \$10/each _____
(\$5 P&H each)

Vol. 1 Historical Reference \$15/each _____
Directory (\$5 P&H each)

Vol. 2 Historical Reference \$20/each _____
Directory (\$5 P&H each)

1995 VHPA Calendar \$5/each _____
(\$3 P&H each)

1996 VHPA Calendar \$5/each _____
(\$3 P&H each)

1995-96 VHPA Calendar set \$10/set _____
(\$5 P&H set)

VHPA History Book, Vol. 1 \$50/each _____
Turner Publishing limited (\$5 P&H each)
edition. Only 17 left.

GRAND TOTAL _____

TO ORDER

Send check/money order or charge to your VISA or MasterCard credit card.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Credit card No.: _____

Expiration date: _____

Signature: _____

Continued from Page 4

A.J. Welch has been appointed the point of contact for all donations to the Bullwhip Fund. If anyone would like to make a donation in remembrance of Bullwhip 6, make a check or money order payable to Bullwhip Fund and mail it to:

A.J. Welch

Names of all individuals who donate to the Bullwhip Fund will be listed on a plaque that will be presented at the reunion.

Art Welch
Swamp Fox
B1/9, H/16, F/9 CAV, 1st Cavalry Division
RVN: 1971-72
ORWAC 70-44

Recalling Mr. Mallet, my favorite instructor

Every one of us probably has at least one special person who, for one reason or another, became a role model or mentor that helped develop our fledgling abilities.

I know that every instructor pilot I had was different from the other, but there wasn't a one I didn't learn from.

The one IP I recall most often and always with special fondness is Henry Mallet. Mr. Mallet was a civilian instructor pilot in the Huey transition phase at Fort Rucker, the part of flight school where we Army helicopter student pilots logged our first hours in Hueys.

I entered the Huey transitioning phase of flight school in a state of disbelief. I couldn't believe I had made it that far.

Contrary to the opinion I had about my aptitude for flying before I actually attempted to fly anything, my experience in flight

Now, here I was, starting the Huey transition phase and nearing the end of flight school. How long was the Army going to let me get away with this?

school had knocked the notion from my mind that I had some natural talent for this profession. The evidence and the testimony were conclusive.

In addition to the evidence of my

own first-hand experience testifying to the difficulty I had getting a helicopter to do what I wanted, several IPs shared with me their expert opinion of my ineptness in grasping the skills of flying a helicopter.

Therefore, based upon the evidence and opinions, I was convinced in my mind, and beyond any reasonable doubt, that the only reason why I kept passing from one phase of flight training to the next was that each IP was afraid to

flunk me in fear I might be recycled through the phase and he would get me again.

Now, here I was, starting the Huey transition phase and nearing the end of flight school. How long was the Army going to let me get away with this?

It was the luck of the draw or, the order of the alphabet, that brought me to Mr. Mallet. He drew three students from my class: Mathis, McComic, and McLean. Maybe it was a coincidence that Mr. Mallet's name started with an "M" also.



Mathis was a quiet, reserved person. McLean was outgoing and, because he already had a private pilot's license before starting flight school, often volunteered to explain aeronautical things to anyone. He carried around a pocket notebook to jot down important information in case anyone needed to be set straight on something.

I don't know all the things Mr. Mallet had done before he started risking himself with Army helicopter student pilots, but I remember him telling us he once had a crop-dusting business in Wichita Falls. That alone was something that automatically raised him several notches on my scale of esteem.

As a kid growing up on a farm, my first encounters with flying machines (other than hay balers caught up by tornadoes) were with crop-dusting airplanes. Unlike a fighter or bomber I saw only in a movie, and unlike even an airliner

Mr. Mallet belied the stereotype dashing aviator. He was a short, round fellow and totally without pretension. I learned that when it came to flying, he had nothing to be pretentious about; he was thoroughly competent.

way up in the sky too high to cast even a shadow on the field where I sweated with a hoe and a cotton sack, a crop-dusting airplane had been immediate and real.

Once, when I was 8 years old, I watched a crop-dusting airplane perform its ballet,

dipping into a field, skimming the rows of cotton, rearing on its tail to climb over the trees of a fence row, circling tight, and doing it again and again. Once, as its path brought it in my direction, the pilot waved down at me and I felt blessed.

Mr. Mallet belied the stereotype dashing aviator. He was a short, round fellow and totally without pretension. I learned that when it came to flying, he had nothing to be pretentious about; he was thoroughly competent. And, as I have discovered to be true of most competent people in their profession, he appeared to make it easy.

And talk? He could carry on a continuous one-man conversation on any subject that attracted his interest and, apparently, there was nothing that did not interest him.

But he was especially interested in talking about any-

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

thing we wanted to know about flying. He always stopped to listen whenever any of us had a question and he could always ask just the right question himself to make sure we got the point of anything he wanted us to understand.

That first day of Huey flight training, after Mr. Mallet walked us through a hands-on preflight inspection, Candidate Mathis was chosen to be the first to fly the Huey.

McLean and I sat in the back.

With Mathis at the controls, Mr. Mallet stepped us through the startup procedure as McLean and I craned our heads from the back. I watched every step as if I were trying to learn the intricacies of brain surgery. McLean took notes and repeated some of the steps to me that he thought I might have missed.



After the engine was running, the rotor was turning, and Mr. Mallet had said all the proper readings for the instruments, I was surprised that he simply said to Mathis, "Ok, let's go."

I expected, this being our first time in a Huey, he would at least hover it himself out of the crowded tie-down area.

Mathis picked the aircraft up with barely a bobble and hovered down through the tie-down area and up to the runway with hardly any fishtailing at all and held it pretty close to three feet off the ground all the way. I was glad Mathis was doing this and not me.

With Mr. Mallet directing the way, Mathis flew the helicopter out to the stage field. On the way there, Mr. Mallet pointed out key landmarks, including the distant Dothan radio antenna and the pasture with the lone hollowed-out pine tree where, he assured us, an owl roosted during the daytime.

All the way there, Mr. Mallet talked about a variety of subjects, including the full spectrum of significant air-speeds (those for normal flight, best rate-of-climb, best glide ratio, not-to-exceed, etc.), engine out procedures, and a personal theory he had discovered about

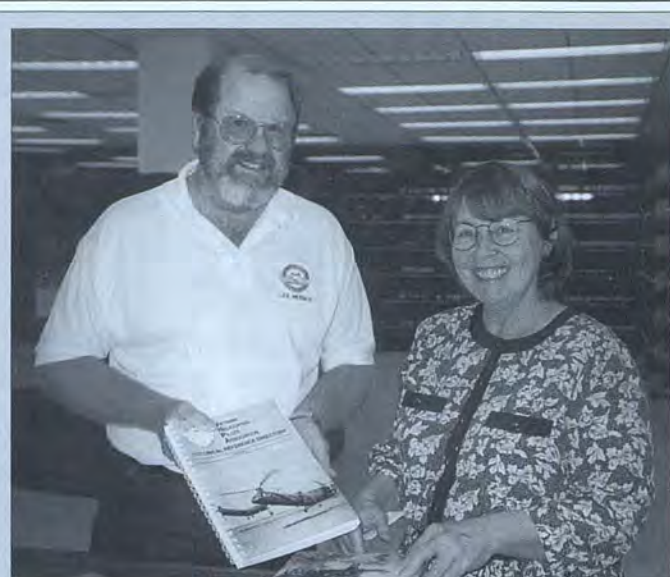
*Having no other recourse
other than immediately
agreeing to spend
the rest of my Army career
as an infantryman, I
strapped myself into the
pilot's seat.*

how to determine the health of an engine by smelling the exhaust.

Arriving at the stage field, a grassy barbed-wire-fenced area with an asphalt runway and a small building sporting a wind sock, he had Mathis land on the grassy strip beside the runway.

When the aircraft came to a rest, he asked Mathis to roll the throttle to flight idle. Then Mr. Mallet turned to the back seat, looked at my name tag, and said, "McComie, it's your turn."

I said, "Yes, sir," and nodded my head, but my knees



Pappy Jones presents a VHPA reference book to Kathryn Fuller, curator of the Texas Tech University Vietnam Center and Vietnam Archive.

Vietnam reference library opens at Texas Tech

Texas Tech University opened a Vietnam reference library. The university has dedicated an entire floor at its Lubbock campus to the Vietnam Center and Vietnam Archive.

I found out about it while visiting my in-laws, who live there, and didn't feel that it could possibly be complete without our being represented.

I purchased (much to the delight of Mike Law) the entire set of reference directories, plus the Turner VHPA book, and presented them to Tech; they were graciously received. I have had some very nice responses from students who have had occasion to read the material.

Here is a picture of the presentation I thought you might want to run in the next publication.

Hayden "Pappy" Jones
Membership chairman

were shaking "no." This was it, I thought. This is where it all comes to an end.

Oh sure, I had survived all of preliminary flight training at Fort Wolters by the grace of some benevolence. And, thus far at Fort Rucker, I had even managed to fly a TH-13 on instruments alone without totally inverting it, even though I was hooded like some dray horse.

But this was different. This was a real helicopter, a Huey, just like the ones real helicopter pilots flew, not some farm boy like me.

Having no other recourse other than immediately agreeing to spend the rest of my Army career as an infantryman, I strapped myself into the pilot's seat.

I sat there, fumbling with the seat adjustment, trying to delay my last moments in flight school. Mr. Mallet filled

Continued on Page 7

Continued from Page 6

those moments by reviewing the green zone of every instrument that had one, then moved to an analysis of why the ashtray was located where it was, and concluded with an opinion regarding the misplacement of the stage field's runway in relation to the prevailing wind.



Eventually, seeing as how I could no longer delay the inevitable, I shifted in my seat like a bronc rider in the chute settling onto "Ol' Thunder and Lightning" and I rolled on the throttle, watching the tach needles marry.

Just as he did with Mathis, Mr. Mallet said to me, "Ok, let's go."

I pulled up on the collective and wiggled the cyclic and foot pedals with little actual hope of holding the Huey in one spot as it came off the ground. Why wasn't Mr. Mallet on the controls with me? Didn't he know I wouldn't be

That's when he reached down and rolled off the throttle. He interrupted his bait discussion briefly to interject for my benefit "Simulated engine failure" before continuing the discussion.

able to hover a real helicopter and keep it within the confines of the State of Alabama, let alone within the perimeter of a stage field, by myself?

Mr. Mallet, unconcerned, was caught up in an explanation of why wind socks were

shaped the way they were.

To my surprise, the helicopter only drifted a few inches before I was able to catch it and hold it on that spot.

Mr. Mallet said, "Give me a standard takeoff." I tried to remember everything I had ever learned about takeoffs as I pulled up on the collective. Up we went, climbing away from the stage field. I kept waiting for Mr. Mallet to show me how I really ought to be doing it, but he simply said, "Stay in the pattern."

On the climbout, Mr. Mallet pointed out a pond that he felt had promising fishing potential. About halfway along the downwind leg, he was speculating on the best bait to use.

That's when he reached down and rolled off the throttle. He interrupted his bait discussion briefly to interject for my benefit "Simulated engine failure" before continuing the discussion.

I dropped the collective and waited for Mr. Mallet to tell me when I should turn the crosswind for this autorotation. Every other IP before him had always seemed to feel it necessary to do that for me.

However, Mr. Mallet was half turned toward the back seat, elaborating for Mathis and McLean the proper aging of stink bait. With a quick glance to the back seat, I saw that McLean was taking notes on this.

When it seemed to me that I ought to be turning the

Could VHPA Directory include e-mail addresses?

As Internet is gaining more popularity, I was wondering if there are plans to develop a listing of members' personal e-mail addresses in any future VHPA Directory?

It seems as that would be a good way to renew old friendships and make new contacts.

Ron Corbin

EDITOR'S NOTE: One of the primary concerns of VHPA officers is to protect members' privacy. The VHPA would be interested in hearing from members on whether they would like to see e-mail addresses added to listings in the annual Membership Directory. Please address comments to: Editor, The VHPA Newsletter, swickard@vhpa.org

crosswind, I decided to go ahead and do so. I felt it might be the wrong time to do that and I was sure Mr. Mallet would yell at me; every other IP I ever had, did. But when I started the turn, he simply asked me, "Where do you plan to touch down?" I replied tentatively, "On the runway?"

"That's good," he said, "but where exactly on the runway?"

Mr. Mallet seemed to have misplaced priorities. Here we were, in a helicopter, a real one, falling out of the sky, with some farm boy he had met only that day at the controls, and he was asking this boy to be precise about where the

impact would occur.

Wide-eyed, trying to round out the turn while riding the collective to keep the rotor tach in the green, I hastily picked a spot. "Uh, I guess beside the stage field building," I stabbed. I had no more confidence in predicting where I would touch down

Mr. Mallet studied the building alongside the runway, a wooden shack some 50-feet-or-so long with two small windows facing the runway. "I'll buy you a Coke if you can touch down right across from the second window," he said.

than I did in picking a winner at the dog races in Panama City.

Mr. Mallet studied the building alongside the runway, a wooden shack some 50-feet-or-so long with two small windows facing the runway.

"I'll buy you a Coke if you can touch down right across from the second window," he said.

McLean thought it was a wager. "I'll raise you two Cokes," and he wrote it down. I took a grim satisfaction in

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

knowing that McLean would never collect those Cokes since I felt certain, with me at the controls, none of us would even survive the fundamental basis of the bet.

I sweated with the controls, puzzled about why it was that Mr. Mallet had me confused with someone else. He was expecting this person sitting in the seat where I was to not only touch down on the runway but on a spot a few window panes long.

Meanwhile, as the runway approached, Mr. Mallet was holding forth on transformations: Trading airspeed for altitude and converting

So, realizing that it was all up to me, I decided that I had to perform at least well enough to convince the accident investigating board that the flight training dollars the Army had spent on me had not been totally wasted.

the potential lifting energy in autorotating rotor blades into practical kinetic energy for touch-down. And, I was sure for my benefit, he added a footnote on the relationship between flare angles and stinger bumping.

He only stopped the discussion because something else caught his interest. "Look over there," he told Mathis and McLean. Pointing out the window, he said, "See that deer in the trees." He stuck his head out of the open window to see it more clearly. "I think it's a white tail," he said.

I despaired. More interested in deer than even his own self-preservation, I no longer had any hope that Mr. Mallet was going to save us. Obviously, Mr. Mallet was not a judge of flying ability, and his mistake in judgment by letting me make this autorotation all by myself was going to prove disastrous.

So, realizing that it was all up to me, I decided that I had to perform at least well enough to convince the accident investigating board that the flight training dollars the Army had spent on me had not been totally wasted.

The hurtling Huey was about 50 feet above the runway

and I pulled back on the cyclic, careful not to let the Huey balloon up. As its forward momentum slowed, I pushed the cyclic forward to level the aircraft, and as it began to settle, I pulled up on the collective to cushion the impact with the runway.

The Huey settled gently onto the runway like dust on furniture, scooted forward on the skids a few feet, and stopped.



Mr. Mallet pulled his head out of the window. "Yep, definitely a white tail."

McLean was jubilant. "Hah, you missed it over 10 feet. You owe me . . ."

I sat there, in disbelief. I had actually flown, and even made an autorotation in, a real helicopter. I had done it, but how was it possible?

Then, a possible explanation came to me. Maybe I actually was becoming a real helicopter pilot. Maybe all those other IPs had, in their own way, actually prepared me to become one. And maybe, between the two of us, only Mr. Mallet had been the one that believed that.

This was an invigorating revelation and from then on, even though it was still challenging, helicopter flying was fun.

"Mr. Mallet, can I do that again?" I asked.

"Yep," he said, "you can do it again tomorrow, but right now," and he turned to the back seat, "it's McLean's turn."

Ira Will McComie

Satan 13

235th Aerial Weapons Company

Can Tho 1968-69

WORWAC 68-7

VHPA marchers a hit at Brandon parade

While recovering from the Orlando "Back to the World" reunion, I came across this story in the *Brandon News*:

"It was a glorious Fourth of July parade this year and Mother Nature kept the rain clouds back until much later in the day. More than 125 units passed the reviewing stand . . . This year's TOP KUDOS go to the following:

"President's Award Adult with best in theme, workmanship and music went to the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association . . . Best Veteran Marching Unit went to the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association."

For those who missed it, the parade was wonderful and our participation was outstanding. Brandon LOVED us! We were the hit of the parade.

The North Carolina Chapter brought down their Cobra (with 1st Cav markings, I might add!!), Charlie model gunship, and medevac slick, and the Florida LZ Chapter had our OH-6 LOH.

VHCMA asks help on disability claim

I need help to establish a VA disability claim.

Anyone who can remember occurrences from Boomerang 019 or from Bounty Hunter 22? (I think this was the tail number) would be a help.

Naturally, they were both with the 191st AHC between June 1967 and June 1968.

If you can help, please contact me at 4540 Kearny Villa Road, Suite 216, San Diego, CA 92123 or call (619) 268-7858.

Dick Calton
VHCMA member

Continued on Page 9

Continued from Page 8

And, to top things off, there were about 300 plus of us helicopter pilots who marched in front of, in between, along side of and behind the helicopters!! It was a sight to behold!!

On behalf of the Florida LZ Chapter Organizing Committee, I would like to thank each and every one of you who participated. We can all be proud, because, as usual, we stood mighty tall!! Thank you all!!

Herb Nagel
70-5 Orange Hats
B/227 1 CAV 70-71
Masher49
Florida LZ Chapter Secretary
[REDACTED]

KIA report incorrectly completed on member

While doing database updates to the KIA records from the VHCMA and VHPA reunions in preparation for the 1997 Membership Directory, I found a KIA record filled out by someone at one of the reunions on Eddie Hester.

It is believed by this person that Eddie Hester was killed on May 23, 1970, south of Khe San when his helicopter was hit by an RPG in the tailboom, killing the crew and two passengers.

Since the person who wrote this did not include his name, I would like to get word to him that Eddie Hester was not killed in Vietnam. The six people killed on this B/158 Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne UH-1H No. 68-15628 were:

- Capt. Eugene Stuart Miller — Aircraft commander.
- WO1 George Francis Barry Jr. — Pilot
- Spec. 4 William H. Vaught III — Crew chief.
- Spec. 4 Stephen John Perkins — Gunner.
- Maj. Shane Nunzio Soldato — Passenger, Special Forces.

• WO1 Larrie John Landersheim — Passenger, fixed-wing pilot going to first assignment.

Eddie Hester is a VHPA member listed in the directory.

Gary Roush
webmaster@vhpa.org
242 Assault Support Helicopter Company
Muleskinners

Captain makes impression after arrival at squadron

When Captain G arrived at squadron headquarters, he was immediately singled out as a second-tour aviator with some administrative abilities.

I'm sure, though I have no proof, that the assistant S-1 was responsible for this, since the captain listed history studies as his background. Captain G was assigned to head-

'Black Widow' crews work on unit history

The 188th Assault Helicopter Company arrived in country in late April 1967 and was attached to the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. We were stationed at Dau Tieng, which was home of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry until August 1967 when it became the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry. It also was known as Camp Ranier.

The "Black Widows" had two different nose arts during their existence. I have a good photo of the first design, but not the second. On June 24, 1967, the "Web" was hit with a one-hour mortar barrage. When the smoke lifted, 29 of our 31 Hueys had received various degrees of shrapnel damage.

After this incident, we received numerous replacement Hueys and a new nose art was designed for the unit.

I need a photo of that nose art for our "Black Widow" history. Any pilots with a photo of this design, please get in touch with one of the former doorgunners who has been working on our unit history for the past seven years.

Dick Detra

[REDACTED]
Vietnam 1967-68
188th Assault Helicopter Company
"Black Widows"
[REDACTED]

quarters troop.

One of Captain G's first jobs was to remove the accumulation of grass on the far side of the hill on which HHT was located.

Now, some description of the area is necessary. This hill was located just inside the perimeter of Lane Army Heliport.

The section of the perimeter below the hill was occupied by a company of ROK (Republic of Korea) troops. The reason for these troops was unknown; however, they gave us great comfort. Because of the inaccessibility of this side of the hill, no one ever went down to that area.



At the bottom of the hill was a creek or river, depending on the time of the year. This marked the perimeter.

All this created a large area of high grass and weeds from the wire to the top of the hill. At the top of the hill were four buildings arranged in an "L" shape, three hooches and the orderly room.

Behind that was the latrine and the colonel's trailer. Behind the latrine was a spider web of clothesline.

Now, back to the story.

Captain G's plan was to back a 1,200-gallon tanker of

Continued on Page 10

Continued from Page 9

diesel up to the latrine and spray the hill. He gave orders to the hooch maids to clear the area of all laundry and sent for the tanker.

After hosing the far side of the hill, Captain G determined the wind velocity and direction. All was ready, except some laundry was still on the lines.

The hooch maids were busy cheering and grabbing cloths and wondering about so much diesel. Observing most of the clothing was gone, Captain G lit the grass.

The hooch maids, seeing the flames ran and left the few items on the line. After the explosion and flames from the diesel, what remained of the cloths were three piles of ashes with the unburned name tags of the squadron commander.

Much to our amusement, a USMC 2½ truck body also was discovered under the grass.

John Tilton
Bulldog 14

VHPA, 'founding fathers' receive strong thank you

I received the following letter from a VHPA member.

Mike Law
Denver

I am writing this as a thank you. A thank you to a wonderful organization, and to the few men who got the idea and put it together years ago.

Why? Since my joining a number of years ago, I have found that every so often I get a contact from the past that would never have been possible without our organization.

These contacts not only reinforce my belief that my Vietnam service was a noble one, but also that the friends and fellow Vietnam veterans I crossed paths with those 25-30 years ago were truly the finest.

I would like to quote a portion of a recent letter, which

*When I received this letter
I was once again
stunned that someone
would not only remember
me from years ago,
but also that for
the past 25-30 years
he had wanted to thank me.*

really is self-explanatory, about what this organization means, not only to me, but surely to many others.

"Don't know if you remember me or not, but I was that crazy LOH pilot at Camp Evans . . .

"You saved my ass several times and I never got a chance to really thank you. After our last trip out of . . . I thought we would get together again before I left, but that never happened.

"So, when I got a hold of your address, I thought that I

would take the time to say 'thanks' for the many times that you helped us out . . .

"Again . . . this letter is to finally say 'thank you' for all the times that you saved my ass in Vietnam, and were just there when the going got rough.

"I am sorry that this letter is so late finding you, however; not until I asked if anyone had information on your whereabouts did I find out your address . . ."

When I received this letter I was once again stunned that someone would not only remember me from years ago, but also that for the past 25-30 years he had wanted to thank me.



Thank me for not only doing my job, but for doing something that I am sure he would have done for me, and surely did for others.

But to remember me, and that he had never gotten the chance to tell me "thank you" is something I'll cherish forever.

None of this would have been possible for me, and for others, I'm sure, without our organization.

So maybe we all owe a debt of thanks to our "founding fathers" for the chance to receive, or to write/call, with a message like this.

This organization succeeds and grows because of men like our "founding fathers," who made it all possible.

We all owe you a thank you.

I've asked Mike Law to publish this letter anonymously, as I'm sure my thoughts are the same as many others who have received letters/calls like this.

I also would like the VHPA member who wrote this letter to me to know just how much I thought of his thank you, and his carrying it for all those years.

And once again, thank you, VHPA, for bringing two old veterans back in touch.

Pilots' sacrifice reflected in eyes during reunion

My deepest thanks to all the Vietnam helicopter pilots at the VHPA Reunion in Orlando on the 4th of July, 1997. The image of your sacrifice was vividly reflected in the eyes of those walking veterans, and even in the displayed helicopters.

I only wish to do one little thing at a time in the Vietnam vets' honor; that is to share with you the information about the Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (FVVM).

Corky Condon is among those who are working each day, devoting their energy to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It's web site: www.vietwall.org

Her organization, Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, brings roses to the Wall on Father's Day. They provide thousands of people with facts and memories about their lost loved ones and do name rubbings from The Wall for many who live far away.

Their "In Memory" program honors those whose names

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 10

are not on The Wall, but died because of their experience in Vietnam.

All is to help the healing process, which is still taking place in America.

Please kindly and lovingly pass on to your friends the toll-free phone number (800) 800-FVVM the "Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial."

With this number, others may call direct to order the powerful book "Offerings at The Wall," and its matching book "Dear Daddy."

All the proceeds go to help the work of healing that is still taking place across the land. Our beloved American Vietnam vets and their families shall appreciate it.

Linh D. Vo

Taps

Mike Arline

Mike Arline, a good friend of mine, died Aug. 20 in a Bell 206 helicopter crash 50 miles northeast of Dillingham, AK.

He was flying for Evergreen Helicopters when his Bell 206 crashed into a mountain. The wreckage was found the next day. His three passengers survived.

I flew with Mike for a few years in the Guard, but hadn't seen him in several years.

He lived in Anchorage, flew in Vietnam with the 176th Assault Helicopter Company in 1968 and 1969, and was in flight school Class 67-5. He was a member of the VHPA and still flew with the Guard. He was one of the good guys and will be missed.

Bob Huecker "Seawolf 21"
Binh Thuy/Nha Be 1971-72
Sitka, AK

EDITOR'S NOTE: Arline was holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster and the Purple Heart Medal.

He is survived by Donna Arline, his wife of 22 years, in Anchorage, and a brother.

Roy Johnsen

CW4 Roy Johnsen, 50, was killed Jan. 13 in an automobile accident outside of Modesto, CA, where he resided.

He was driving home alone from a flood rescue airfield when the driver of a pickup truck crossed the highway media and slammed into Johnsen's vehicle, the Modesto Bee reported.

Johnsen had been coordinating California Army National Guard helicopter flights over flood-ravaged areas of the state for several days before his death, the newspaper reported.

He was born in San Francisco and had lived in Modesto for 12 years.

Johnsen graduated with flight school Class 66-23. During his tour in Vietnam, he logged more than 1,000 combat flight hours in 1967 and 1968.

He held the Air Medal with 20 oak leaf clusters and the



Roy Johnsen

Army Achievement Medal.

He flew with the California Army National Guard out of Stockton. His civilian occupation was substitute teacher.

Johnsen is survived by a son, Scott; his parents; a brother and two sisters.

David R. Kyle

David R. Kyle died June 10 as a result of an airplane accident.

Dave was a Forest Service pilot operating in California.

He flew back-to-back tours in Vietnam with the 21st Signal Group Aviation from November 1968 to May 1971 out of Nha Trang and Tuy Hoa.

Dave is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter, a sister, his parents. Dave left us doing what he loved most — flying.

Richard Miller
CW5, Angus

Clifford A. Lincoln Jr.

VHPA member Clifford A. Lincoln Jr. was killed May 21 in a spray helicopter crash northeast of Milton-Freewater, WA.

Lincoln was born March 3, 1946, in Walla Walla.

He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and flew helicopters in Vietnam as a scout pilot in 1970 and with the 336th Assault Helicopter Company and A/71 Cavalry in 1971.

Lincoln was a member of Class 70-4.

He is survived by his wife Jeanne and two children.

Fredrick R. Neidhardt

CW3 Fredrick R. Neidhardt of Hayden Lake, ID, died July 28 of cancer at Kootenia County Hospital in Hayden Lake.

He was in flight school Classes 66-7 and 66-9. He served two tours in Vietnam — with D/1/4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division in 1966-67 and the 224th Combat Aviation Battalion in 1971-72.

Neidhardt is survived by his wife, Lynne; daughters, Vicki in Memphis and Debby in Cincinnati; and a son, Michael in Erlanger, KY.

Lonnie Joseph Odom

Lonnie Joseph Odom died Jan. 8 while driving to his home in Lineville, AL.

Continued on Page 12

Taps

Continued from Page 11

Odom was born Aug. 26, 1937, in Kosciusko, MS, where he lived until he joined the Army at age 17.

He was in the military police, diesel engine repair, Special Forces, and then became a helicopter pilot starting with flight Class 67-3 and graduating with Class 67-5.

He served two tours in Vietnam on a Special Forces A Team and two tours flying Huey gunships. He was wounded on his first tour and evacuated after four months.

Odom retired from the Army in October 1974, after 20 years of service. He worked for Petroleum Helicopter in Lafayette, LA, from November 1974 to March 1994.

He then decided to become a commercial truck driver and was working for Royster Enterprises of Ashland, AL,

when he was killed on Jan. 8 while driving home from work on a stormy night.

He is survived by his wife Mary Evelyn; five children; Joey, Jeff, Jessica, James and Jenny; and eight grandchildren.

He was loved by all, especially Roland Mitchell and Art Stevenson.

— Art Stevenson

John B. Stockton

Col. John B. Stockton died of a massive heart attack on the morning of Aug. 7.

Stockton, who lived in Miami, FL, was the first commander of the 1st of the 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam in 1965.

He also served as the first commander of 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion in 1963-64

EDITOR'S NOTE: See the VHFCN Homepage <http://www.vhfcn.org/227hist.htm> on the 227th about this first commander of the 227th AHB.

VHPA shows presence at Oshkosh

Oshkosh 1997 was a great time and very rewarding for the VHPA.

On July 28, the forward element of the 1997 VHPA contingent packed their car and headed north, without any map, to take the lead position at Oshkosh for the 45th annual EAA Fly-In Convention.

After an uneventful 10 hours, I arrived.

When you get there, it is a sight to leave any pilot's mouth open. Miles and miles of aircraft, gliders, choppers and some that still have me wondering what they were. If you have never been to the biggest air show in the United States, you really don't understand.

This year, the VHPA shared room with the U.S. Air Force. It was a salute to the Air Force this year and being in the same hangar drew some real attention for the VHPA.

Not only did we share the hangar with the Air Force, we got them to show videos I had brought along. The "The Wild Ones" and "Of Heroes and Helicopters" were awesome and drew dozens of people to the special stage that was set up for talks and videos and to tell the Air Force story . . . well after being high in the clouds with the Air Force all day, our on-the-

*Our VHPA volunteers
showed up from
across the country
at their own expense
to help out.*

deck, look-'em-in-the-eye combat was a real treat.

Why were we there? To have a good time? No, but we did. To see the Air Force display? Don't think so.

We were there to find old friends who have not been found.

I am proud to say the mission was well accomplished. We got leads on more than 70 pilots and got several who showed up to sign up.

Our VHPA volunteers showed up from across the country at their own expense to help out. My hat is off to VHPA members who helped in spending seven days manning our booth. Those who participated were:

Bill Medsker, Rod Rodwick, Chip Brown, George Garrety and Bob Bradley, as well as some of our dedicated co-pilots in life, our wives.

Thanks, guys and gals.

Those who were found or leads that were provided are as follows:

Richard Hodge, Charlie Hart Crossbow, Waylon Lyons, Donald Stoner, Joseph Brian Adair, Richard Gustine, Jerry Vance, Daniel Novack, Tom Beeson, Bruce Meyer, Gordon Lovering, Dr. James J. Huston Jr., Kenneth Knowels, Frank Mainzer, Wayne Parczick, Robert F. Adams, Jr., Arthur Barker, Donald Moss, Morgan Combs, Charles W. Tyler, Bob Kaly, Robert Gordan, Doug Koepke, Harold Marlo, Robert Hayes, Robert Collins.

Raymond V. O'Connor, Frank Amos, Lloyd Blackburn, Perry A. Thomas, Gerald G. Bodway, Gary Sanders, Kenneth J. Bee, Bill Bofencamp, Francis Davis, Joe Connell, Mark Westphall, Chuck Bowens, John Henry, William Cunningham, James Perdue, Allen Vanbeek, Richard (Dick) Fuller, Walter Calahan, George R. Youngblood, Larry D. Seals, Frank D. Hills, Mitch Madison, Howard Mehringer, John McFurlane, John Androski, Ralph Bryson, Robert Hitchcock, Dennis Laramore, Tom Mabelitini, Dr. Warren Jones, Lee Andrews, Byrum Cartwright.

Brad Bradley, Loren Stiles, Bob McCabe, John Simpson, Eddy Ramon, Dave Titlow, Ron Palascak, Jim Berger, Richard B. Dykes, Merle Hoffman, Charles Harrington, William R. Squire, Warren Mullen.

Was our trip worth it? You bet.

Bob Smith

VHPA senior member at large

Avoid guilt for not feeling guilty

A few months ago, I was talking to a friend about our days in Vietnam. He was a slick pilot for an air cav troop in II Corps.

One of the things he said that was so refreshing (and surprising) was, "John, I have to say that my Vietnam experience was not unpleasant or traumatic. I had a ball! And I haven't had any problems adjusting since I got home."

I relate this because I suspect there are many of you who feel the same way.

Not everyone got shot down. Not everyone flew under the daily threat of losing his life. Not everyone lost a close friend



or ever saw anyone killed. Not everyone had an "unpleasant or traumatic" experience, as my friend said.

For this we should be thankful, but this fact in itself causes some people to feel guilty or as another friend put it: "I feel guilty for not feeling guilty." This same friend felt no overwhelming emotion on his one and only visit to "The Wall."

All too many of us have bought into the misconception that we should have had or should be having nightmares, flashbacks, or problems with substance abuse as a result of our tour of duty.

But for many, Vietnam was a time of adventure and a kick-in-the-pants experience. Many of us felt we were fighting for a noble cause; that fighting, or at least serving, in a war for someone's freedom and liberty was worth a year of our lives and even the risk of injury or death.

Unfortunately, the reaction of veterans is often an artificial conformation to our peers. Some manufacture remorse or guilt because we "feel guilty for not feeling guilty." This is not only unhealthy — it's insincere. It's demeaning to one's sense of self to display feelings that just aren't there.

Everyone deals with stressful situations in their own way. Some still suffer from their experiences, while others have nothing to adjust to. Some handle their Vietnam experience very well and have made sound adjustments in their lives. Too many times, while visiting the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, I've seen fatigue-clad veteran's manufacture grief as though it's expected that one should cry when standing before that black, name-encrusted edifice. What a farce!

If you came home from Vietnam proud of your service and slipped right back in the routine of your life whether you remained in the military or returned to civilian life, give thanks to God for that.

If you haven't had nightmares and trauma, give thanks for that too, but for God's sake don't feel like you have to

have a story. You don't have to fit into the stereotype of the traumatized Vietnam veteran.

I think one of the best therapies I've ever encountered is the annual VHPA reunion.

I love to walk in the halls and meeting rooms and listen to the stories being swapped by friends reunited after 25-30 years.

The interesting thing about most of the stories I hear is that they are about the funny things that we were involved in or the dumb things we did.

Occasionally, of course, we talk about buddies we lost, but the large majority of the stories are positive ones. So let's admit it, most of us enjoyed ourselves most of the time in Vietnam and came home with some wonderful memories.

But let's also remember that many of our brothers are still struggling with memories of their experiences. Please accept that and try to understand.

After finally telling my story of my involvement with the bombing at Trang Bang in 1972 in which two children were killed and another horribly burned, the thing that bothered me most was being told by well-meaning friends (and many strangers) that I shouldn't have felt guilty for 25 years.

Some even said that being "just a staff officer" and not the pilot of the planes which dropped the bombs removed me sufficiently from the situation that there is no way I could even relate to what happened that day.

Our feelings are our own and whether I should have felt guilty or not, I did. Feelings are never right or wrong,

they are just real and we have no right to tell another person how they should feel and certainly have no right to judge another person based on their feelings.

What we should do is try to identify

The best thing we can do for a friend is to listen with empathy and understand that you don't have to identify with the feelings he's expressing, just listen.

fy with the person's feelings and accept them for what they are. To pooh-pooh how someone feels is to belittle their feelings and themselves.

The best thing we can do for a friend is to listen with empathy and understand that you don't have to identify with the feelings he's expressing, just listen.

For those of you who have no negative memories of Vietnam, I rejoice and thank God, but for those who do still suffer, please know that keeping your feelings bottled up inside will never bring you relief.

Let one of your brothers help. That's why we have this wonderful organization of ours.

— Rev. John Plummer

POW's biography raises questions

"Why Didn't You Get Me Out?" A biography by Frank Anton. Hardback. 196 pages. 1997 Publisher — The Summit Publishing Group, Arlington, TX

Of all the training we all received in flight school, escape and evasion (E&E) was probably the biggest joke.

However, in the early years, there didn't seem to be much reason to be concerned about the possibility of being captured. After all, didn't we have wingmen and radios and flight following and lots of helicopters??

As I look back now, I would have been poorly prepared to endure and, ultimately, survive such an ordeal, except for my inner strengths. A few hours of classwork and an overnight exercise of hide-and-seek in the woods of south Alabama simply were not enough preparation for the possibility of being shot-down and surviving as a POW in the jungles of Vietnam.

As I read "Why didn't You Get Me Out?" I could not

Frank Anton and his personal experiences are filled with great highs, as he is almost rescued, and lows so low that continued living seems completely unlikely, even unfair.

low that continued living seems completely unlikely, even unfair. You will be unable to put the book down as you read and try to imagine his personal hell.

Released from Hanoi with the other POWs on March

Book review



13, 1973, Frank Anton soon becomes aware of secret documents. He then believes American sources

may have known exactly where he was, all the time! As he describes the revelations of such knowledge, he struggles to understand why.

And, even though you might question or doubt such knowledge, you have to wrestle with the possibility and thus ask: Why?

We can only hope the truth eventually will be really known for sure. The existence of such knowledge and the failure to act on it will be the biggest tragedy of the entire 10,000-day war, except the final loss of some 58,000 plus young men and women.

Finally, I have to give great credit to Frank Anton for going on with his life and picking up the pieces to continue as an Army warrant officer helicopter pilot.

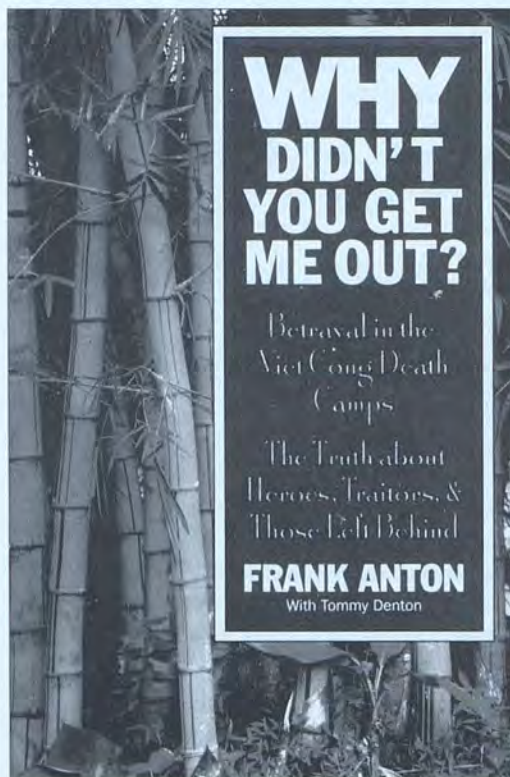
Not one time, as I read "Why Didn't You Get Me Out?" did I get the sense Frank dwells in the realm of self-pity or being a victim.

Had he fallen into such traps, he would never have been able to make something of his life and eventually retire from the "system" about which he raises such awful and searching questions.

Frank Anton deserves to be heard. That is why I can unconditionally recommend "Why Didn't You Get Me Out?" by Frank Anton as a worthwhile book to purchase and read.

Tom Payne

**VHPA vice president
1966-67 and 1970-71**



stop thinking about what I would have done in a POW situation. I have no doubt that when you read Frank Anton's fine biography, you too will be asking yourself the same question.

Thank God very few of us had to experience the hell that Frank Anton and others did.

Almost on his debut flight as a gunship pilot, Frank Anton was shot down on Jan. 5, 1968.

After a short E&E experience, he was captured and endured three years in five jungle POW camps before being moved up the Ho Chi Minh Trail to Hanoi and spending two years.

Plans being made for '98 Directory

MIKE LAW
DIRECTORY EDITOR

I have just finished sending a giant thank you letter to the 45 VHPAers and the six VHCMAers who supported the Helicopter History of IV Corps presented in the 1997 Directory, but already my mind is on the 1998 edition.

After discussing ideas with several of my primary supporters, I decided the history section in 1998 will cover helicopter activities that happened outside of Vietnam. Allow me to explain what I mean by "outside of Vietnam:"

- Helicopter operations that crossed the border into Cambodia, Laos or North Vietnam are sometimes called transborder operations. Many aviation units supported SOG missions which were always "over the fence."

The histories from the 155th at Ban Me Thuot, the 57th AHC at Kontum, and the 361st Escort at Camp Holloway are full of reference to "classified missions," which meant they were flown in Laos or Cambodia.

I have spoken with more than a few guys from various

101st Airborne helicopter units who says things like: "Even before Lamson 719, we were flying SOG support in Laos."

There were a number of SAR (Search and Air

There were a number of specific missions that were outside of Vietnam.

Rescue) missions by mostly Air Force and Navy helicopters that were outside of Vietnam. Indeed, the only Navy helicopter-related Medal of Honor was for a rescue mission into North Vietnam.

Some of the few details the VHPA has about the VNAF helicopter squadrons relate to their losses during transborder missions.

- There were Army and Air Force helicopter units that were stationed in Thailand, but flew combat missions especially into Laos and North Vietnam.

Some of the most famous were the Air Force Green Hornets (the 20th SOS) and Dust Devils (the 21st SOS). The Army 478th Crane Company at Red Beach maintained a single CH-54A detachment in Thailand on a TDY basis for at least a couple of years. The Army Project 404 detachment supported the U.S. Embassy in Laos.

- The Navy had several helicopter units that flew from the huge fleet off North Vietnam. Big Mother, the HC-7 squadron, was the largest but not the only one.

- The majority of Air America's helicopter activities were located outside of Vietnam and, in my opinion, the VHPA has not published enough about their history.

- The Cambodian Incursion in 1970 was certainly "outside of Vietnam" and has not received enough attention by

the VHPA Directory Committee.

- Now, in all fairness the 1994 VHPA Directory featured Lamson 719 and Dewey Canyon II, which was the largest of all transborder operations, so we will not devote much attention to these events. However, we have heard rumors of a II Corps effort into southern Laos associated with Lamson 719 and we are interested in learning more about that.

- There were a number of specific missions that were outside of Vietnam. The Air Force's Son Tay Raid and the Marine Corps HMM-162 support of the "Laos Crisis" in June 1962 are examples of specific missions.

The VHPA Newsletter carried several articles asking for membership input for the IV Corps history and the response was very, very gratifying. Hopefully, this support will continue for the 1998 effort.

Anyway, those are my initial ideas about this subject. If you were involved in anything like this or have information the VHPA could use, please contact Mike Law.

1998 VHPA Directory will be Law's last

In closing I'd like to announce something that I have been quietly discussing with the Executive Council and with other VHPA committee chairmen for several months — that the 1998 edition will be my last as directory editor.

As many of you know, my wife and I plan to retire in early 1999 and hope to be serving on a mission for our church when the 1999 VHPA Directory is published.

I also believe it is time for some new ideas and some new dreams to take over the directory editorship. I have certainly enjoyed the friendships and the "labor of love" that working on the VHPA Directory has given me and I would not trade those for anything.

Anyone interested in being the VHPA directory editor is encouraged to contact Ken Fritz, who currently is serving as the Executive Council's specialist for publications, or VHPA President Mike Hurley.

Again, I want to thank everyone who has worked with me over the years on the VHPA membership directory. It has been a kick!

Law to continue with reference directory

Gary Roush, the Database Committee chairman, and I have been the center force behind the VHPA's other directory effort — the Historical Reference Directory, which is the detailed, day-by-day presentation of all helicopter events known to the VHPA. Currently, we are working on Volume III, which covers 1968.

It will be years before the Historical Reference Directory completes its mission and I plan to continue working on this project.

Again, I want to thank everyone who has worked with me over the years on the VHPA membership directory.

Heroes, Traitors, and the Men We Left Behind

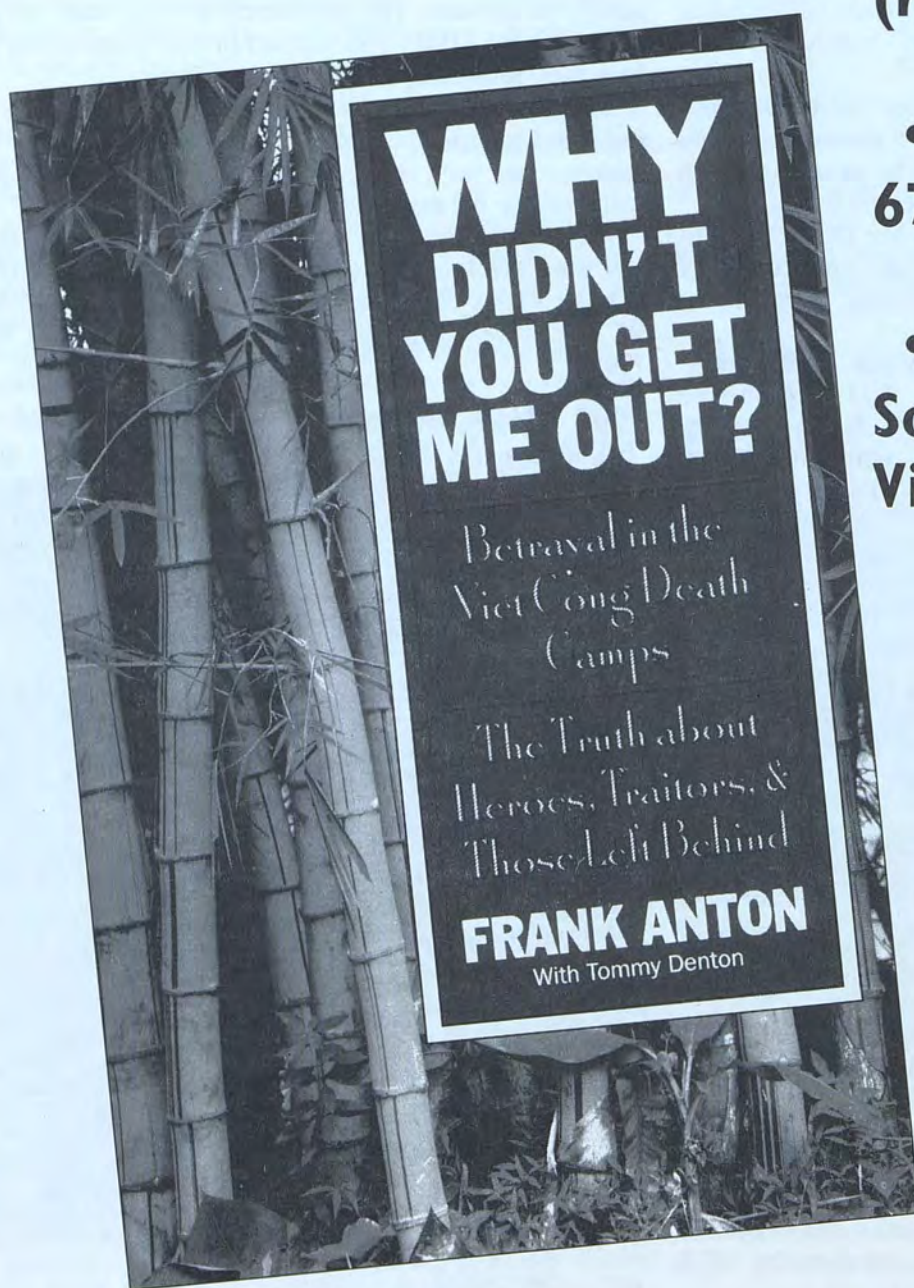
By Frank Anton

- CW4 U.S. Army
(retired).

- Classes 66-23/
67-1.

- POW in both
South and North
Vietnam.

— 1968-73



For autographed
copy, send
check or M/O
for \$24 to:

Frank Anton
730 Palm Drive
Satellite Beach,
FL 32937-2523

Newspaper articles — the missing pieces

MIKE LAW

DIRECTORY EDITOR

From the time I first saw the picture of a South Korean Army Huey in Phil Chinnery's "Vietnam — The Helicopter War," I have been looking for more information about the Korean helicopter unit(s).

Indeed, I've put a plea for information in the half dozen VHPA Directories; but no joy.

Some years ago at Army Aviation Association of America, I met a retired Korean military officer who had been an infantry battalion commander in Vietnam. He verified his army did have a small Huey unit as part of the White Horse Infantry Division.

Over the years, I've talked with several VHPAers who flew for the Blue Stars or Jokers of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company. Many could remember seeing ROK Hueys

Recently, the VHPA's faithful friend, Les Hines, sent me another load of historical material and we learned the name of one of their units — the 11th Aviation Company.

and listening to them on the radios, but could not provide any details.

Recently, the VHPA's faithful friend, Les Hines (he was a CE and maintenance specialist in the 123rd Aviation Battalion, Americal Division) sent me another load of historical material and we learned the name of one of their units — the 11th Aviation Company.

Les sent the VHPA about 150 selected pages from *The Army*

Reporter, which was a weekly USARV newspaper.

He has been reading microfilm copies borrowed from the library at Carlisle Barracks and printing copies of pages with articles about helicopters or the Americal Division. Here are two articles:

Oct. 21, 1967 — 17th Aviation Group Helps Korean Aviation Company Get Off Ground

NHA TRANG (1st AVN IO) — Ever since coming to Vietnam in 1966 to assist the Free World Forces, the Republic of Korea Army commanders have been looking ahead to the time when they could provide their own troops with organic aviation support.

Just recently, their dreams have come true when the ROK 11th Aviation Company, under the 100th Log Command here, was born with the

See FOUR, Page 18

Vietnam pilot in porcelain

Because of all your requests, I have recast the late-era Vietnam pilot in porcelain. It is much less expensive and shows more detail, but is not as durable as the previous white steel copy.

This figure stands 6½ inches high and weighs less than a pound. It only comes painted and depicts a pilot wearing a soft cap, two-piece Nomex flight suit, chicken plate, survival vest, .38-caliber pistol with holster, while carrying a ACH-5 helmet in one hand and a CAR-15 in the other.

The cost for each figure is \$45.00 and the shipping charge is \$5.00. All figures are shipped priority mail and, if you order now, you will receive a figure before Christmas. Please send your checks to Steve Pullen



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at

This figure will make an excellent gift and a welcome addition to your office or den. When you look at the figure, you will remember another time when we flew helicopters and made both aviation and Army history during the Vietnam War.

— Steve Pullen/Banshee 11

Furman heads aviation section

James H. Furman of Austin, TX, has been named chairman of the American Trial Lawyers Association Aviation Section.

Furman began his aviation career as a U.S. Army pilot.

He graduated from flight school in Class 67-15 and served tours with aviation units of the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam in 1968-69.

Furman currently is a partner in the Byrd, Davis and Eisenberg law firm.



Furman

Advertising rates

Display advertising rates for the VHPA Newsletter are:

- Full page, \$500.
- One-half page, \$250.
- One-quarter page, \$125.
- Business card size, \$45.

Classified advertising is \$1 per line or \$7 per inch, whichever is highest.

Advertising revenue is used to help produce the Newsletter and limit the publication's dependence on membership dues.

Four ROK pilots fly with 48th AHC

Continued from Page 17

assistance of the 17th Aviation Group.

Twelve of the 19 Korean pilots were trained at Army aviation schools in the U.S. They have seven Huey helicopters from the 17th Group's 52nd Aviation Battalion.

Nov. 4, 1968 — Four Korean pilots train, fly with 1st Aviation Company

NINH HOA (1st AVN) — Four of the pilots flying the Huey slicks at the 48th Assault Helicopter Company are members of the Republic of Korea Army.

These Koreans are student pilots who were assigned in the 48th for

All three have around 1,000 hours logged in fixed wing aircraft, as well as previous training in other type helicopters.

line on-the-job training while participating in actual combat missions. The 11-week course of field flight maneuvers is a follow-up to the 25-hour transition course taken at the 17th Combat Aviation Group headquarters in

nearby Nha Trang.

The entire program was sponsored by Col. John A. Todd, commander of the 17th Group, and Col. Lee, commander of the 11th ROK Aviation Company, to bolster the relatively small amount of Huey pilots in the ROK Army.

Sixteen Korean officers in all will be graduated from the extensive flight training course in December.

The 48th was a fitting choice for the OJT portion of the course since it flies in support of the White Horse ROK Infantry Division, whose headquarters compound the 48th shares at Ninh Hoa.

Experienced pilots

Though all the Korean pilots were already flight rated when they arrived in Vietnam, none had flown the Huey before, and some were not helicopter qualified at all.

Three of the pilots, Capt. Kim Ki Hwann, Capt. Han Ki Sun and Capt. Choi Hun Yong, graduated from flight school together in 1965 as fixed-wing pilots.

All three have around 1,000 hours logged in fixed wing aircraft, as well as previous training in other type helicopters. The fourth pilot, Lt. Chol Seung Woo, is also fixed-wing qualified, although he has fewer hours accrued than the others and his first helicopter time was with the 11th ROK Aviation Company here in Vietnam.

According to the 48th's operations officer, Capt. Stephen G. Barati, "the purpose of the program is to give the Koreans the opportunity to increase proficiency in all our flying phases. This includes resupply, combat assaults, command and control plus other varied missions."

Barati added: "With the completion of the course just ahead they have flown nearly 300 hours each and their increased proficiency is very evident indeed."

All phases taught

The initial transition training in Nha Trang was concerned with the basics of flying a Huey, such as hovering, normal takeoffs and landings, maximum performance takeoffs, steep approaches, and traffic patterns.

During their tour with the 48th, their progress was closely monitored by Barati and consultations were held.

The two months at the 48th saw the Koreans applying these techniques to regular combat missions. Here they had to learn advanced flight skills

such as sling loads, confined area flight, pinnacle maneuvers, internal loads, and many other phases connected with this type of flying.

During their tour with the 48th, their progress was closely monitored by Barati and consultations were held with the aircraft commanders who flew with them. Methods of improvement were found and special problems areas were scrutinized.

The biggest problem involved was the language barrier, CWO Donald

The language difference has served as an advantage on many missions.

Shorey found, "the key here was just a matter of being patient and taking your time, and explaining things in a simple manner."

Shorey added: "they have twice the usual problems; learning to fly and learning to understand the English language at the same time."

This system seemed to have worked for, in spite of the language problem, their overwhelming desire to learn developed their skill with amazing results.

Language difference

The language difference has served as an advantage on many missions. The 48th's mission is general support of the Korean 9th Infantry Division and daily the pilots must try to communicate with their Korean allies.

Frequently, the ROK pilots were a big help in carrying out the missions. The American pilots' reaction to the subsequent saving of time and trouble was that of surprise and delight.

The Koreans participate in nearly all the phases of operation that the 48th flies. This includes combat assaults, during which all four have undergone hostile fire.

The Koreans themselves have expressed their gratitude to the pilots

See VHPA, Page 19

VHPA should recruit Korean pilot

Continued from Page 18

of the 48th for their assistance.

As Kim put it: "because of the 48th, I am looking with confidence to future missions with the 11th ROK Aviation Company."

The four graduates will return to the 11th upon their graduation to take command of their own Huey helicopters.

OK — now that we are a little smarter history-wise, I would like to issue a challenge to the membership: The VHPA needs to recruit a South Korean helicopter pilot who flew in Vietnam.

At least five former VNAF heli-

copter pilots joined during the Santa Clara Reunion.

I remember years ago when Roger Gould helped recruit a Philippines helicopter pilot who had flown in Vietnam.

We have a few New Zealanders and several from the three Australian military branches who flew helicopters in Vietnam.

Thanks to Les Hines, we even know the names of at least five Koreans who flew in Vietnam: Col. Lee, the commander of the 11th ROK Aviation Company, Capt. Kim Ki Hwann, Capt. Han Ki Sun, Capt. Choi Hun Yong and Lt. Chol Seung Woo.

Additionally, VHPA member John Konek did research in this area and found the Koreans had three helicopter units as follows:

- The Capital (Tigers) Division Aviation Section, which served at Qui Nhon from Sept. 29, 1965 until March 10, 1973.

- The 9th Infantry (White Horse) Division Aviation Section, which served at Ninh Hoa from Sept. 27, 1966 until March 16, 1973.

- The 11th Aviation Company, which served with the ROK Forces Vietnam Field Command (this may have been a Corps level command) at Nha Trang from Aug. 1, 1966 until March 1973.

VHPA briefs

Bowen receives literary award

Iliad Press and The National Authors Registry announced VHPA member Tom Bowen of Fallbrook, CA, is recipient of a 1997 President's Award for Literary Excellence.

Bowen, who graduated with flight school Class 64-74, served with the 121st Assault Helicopter Company in 1965-66.

He received the award for writing a description of flying entitled "Above It All."

1997 Membership Directory

The printer received the 1997 Directory in late September.

The Post Office received the bulk mailing in early

October.

It was mailed fourth class, which can take as long as three weeks to reach everyone in the U.S. postal system.

This year's Directory cutoff date was Aug. 15.

All additions, deletions, and updates made to the membership database at that time appears in the 1997 Directory.

If you have not received your copy of the Directory by Oct. 20, please contact VHPA Headquarters at (800) 505-VHPA or by fax at (916) 648-1072.

Deadlines for newsletter items

The following are deadlines for submitting items to be published in *The VHPA Newsletter*:

- November/December 1997 — Nov. 3
- January/February 1998 — Jan. 5
- March/April 1998 — March 2
- May/June 1998 — May 4

Items may be sent by e-mail to swickard@vhpa.org or mailed to VHPA Headquarters.

**Develop a steady monthly income
for yourself, your club,
your business
by joining one of the fastest
growing Internet providers
available today.**

**Lowell L. Eneix, cyberbroker
1-888-293-6760, Ext. 00924
<http://www.cyberforce.com>**



"YOUR PROMOTIONAL RESOURCE"

R&Y PROMOTIONS & AWARDS, Inc.

TALLAHASSEE, FL
850-222-7755 800-359-7062 FAX 850-222-2266 www.rypromos.com

**Richard (Rick) Yood, CAS
(Gladiator 21)**

is your professional problem solver.

*Contact me for all your
Member, Conference, Convention, Trade Show, Award & Promotional
needs.*

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED



Independent Study

Subjects: 604 #4 Section: PMS401K1ev
 To: John Sullivan July 23/24/97
 From: Professor Clark #2803
 John:

You are quite correct in pointing out the omission of The Chinese People's Republic from the journal article's traditional list of aircraft manufacturers along the Pacific rim.

As you know from the study guide, the Pacific Rim aircraft manufacturing nations have traditionally not been involved with the design and manufacturing of large commercial aircraft, sticking instead primarily to component manufacturing.

However, China is currently in the process of attempting to change this with their aggressive move into design and manufacture of a 100-seat regional jet, to be done in partnership with the European Consortium.

In addition, China has used entry into their market as a negotiating tool to gain component contracts with

How a student in Germany gets the same access to our professors as students living on campus.

One key to successful independent study is the opportunity for plenty of personal contact with instructors. That's why Embry-Riddle has established such a comprehensive communication network for our independent study students.

In the Embry-Riddle Independent Study Program, you may be studying independently, but you aren't studying alone. Here's why:

Twenty-Four Hour E-Mail Q&A. Questions and comments regarding course content can be e-mailed to your professors, providing timely guidance throughout each course.

Telephone Communication With Professors. Professors can be reached by phone for questions during their office hours, and all Embry-Riddle instructors have voice mailboxes for leaving messages.

Computer Interaction With Professors. Graduate-level courses involve active computer interaction with your professors. Assignments can be uploaded electronically to your professor and feedback is usually provided within the week.

Real-Time Chat Mode With Professors And Fellow Students. On-line discussions involving faculty and students can be conducted simultaneously around the world.

Take a moment now to find out more. For full details simply return the coupon at right or call us toll-free at 1-800-359-3728 (for undergraduate programs) or 1-800-866-6271 (for graduate programs). Call today; next semester starts as soon as you're ready.

EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

**Leading The World In Aviation
And Aerospace Education**

**For information on independent study programs at
Embry-Riddle, call 1-800-359-3728 (for undergraduate
programs), 1-800-866-6271 (for graduate programs)
or return the coupon below.**

EMBRY-RIDDLE INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM *We Bring the University to You*

Please send me information about: NAME _____
☐ GRADUATE PROGRAMS ADDRESS _____
☐ UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS
 Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University CITY _____
 Department of Independent Studies
 600 S. Clyde Morris Blvd. STATE _____ ZIP _____
 Daytona Beach, FL 32114-3900
 Internet: INDSTUDY@CTS.DB.ERAU.EDU PHONE (_____) _____ VHPA3 9/97

Chinook lands poorly upside down

MIKE MALOY

The C Model CH-47 was a good aircraft, but didn't do well on inverted landings.

I arrived in country on Dec. 31, 1968, and the Chinooks from Pachyderms, A Company, 159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion, 101st Airborne picked us up at Danang and

The last week in January, a bunch of us were sent TDY to Dong Ha and the Rockpile up by the DMZ.

dropped us at Phu Bai at about 11:50 p.m., just in time to watch the perimeter light up like the Fourth of July.

I was with C Company, 159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion, 101st Playtex. We spent the next couple of weeks

building hooches and bunkers and filling sand bags, and of course, constructing our company Officers Club, a top priority, and getting AO orientation from the guys in Pachyderms and Varsity.

The last week in January, a bunch of us were sent TDY to Dong Ha and eventually to the Rockpile up by the DMZ to support the Marines in the north end of the Ashau Valley.

On Feb. 10, Capt. Kelly Williams was the aircraft commander and I was the pilot. I believe our aircraft number was 67-18501.

We had been flying combat resupply missions all day into LZ Erskine in the north end of the Ashau Valley in I Corps and, on the last three or four approaches, we were getting mortar fire when we approached the LZ and had to break off our approach and go around several times because of sporadic enemy fire.

We were delivering ammo and food into the LZ and taking out wounded.

At about 5 p.m., we went back to Dong Ha to refuel and all the Chi-

nooks were going to head back to Phu Bai. While refueling we were notified by Marine Division at Vandergriff (or the Rockpile — I'm not sure which it was) that they had one more load of 105 mm ammo to go out to Erskine and four Marines who needed a ride back to Erskine.

Williams told them we would take the passengers and the load and then head for Phu Bai from LZ Erskine. After refueling, we picked up the four Marines and then picked up the load of about 10,000 pounds of 105 mm ammo in a sling load and headed back to Erskine.

During the day, we had problems with the beep sticking several times, but it always seemed to fix itself before it became a serious problem, so we continued to fly missions.

About 15:50 p.m., we were on final approach into Erskine with the sling load and Marine passengers and me at the controls, when we saw a puff of smoke and dust on the LZ and the Marine on Erskine told us to go around because they were taking mortar fire.

We circled out into the Ashau Valley and made a second approach with me at the controls in the right seat. We still had the four Marine passengers on board.

Because of the altitude, the heat, the 10,000-pound sling load, and the fact we had just refueled, we were very heavy.

I shot my approach to the ground with the sling load and set the load down, but didn't get it where they wanted it and they asked us to move it.

Because of the altitude, the heat, the 10,000-pound sling load, and the fact we had just refueled, we were very heavy and had to shoot the approach to the ground rather than bringing it to a hover.

At that point, Williams took the

controls and said he would move the load. He told me that with the periodic enemy fire, he didn't want to stay over the LZ any longer than necessary.

We took off from the LZ with the sling load and made a tight 360-degree pattern to come back to the LZ. I doubt we ever got above 60 or 70 knots during that 360, and we

As we dived down the side of the mountain, I saw we were losing rotor rpm to the point it was critical.

were never very far from LZ Erskine and had it in sight the entire time.

As we approached Erskine the third time with the sling load, and while on short final — about 150 yards from the perimeter of the LZ and at

about 35 knots — we experienced a beep failure on No. 1.

I followed through with emergency procedures for a beep failure and Williams said he was going to dive down the side of the mountain to try and gain airspeed and save the load.

As we dived down the side of the mountain, I saw we were losing rotor rpm to the point it was critical. When the rpm hit about 200, I yelled at Williams to punch the load off, and almost immediately afterward I told the flight engineer to release the load and, at the same time, I hit the emergency release switch.

When nothing happened and we still had the load, I recycled the switch three or four times.

To this day, I can recall all the way through flight school being told that if a switch doesn't work, recycle it.

Unfortunately, with the emergency release switch, it operates on compressed air and by recycling it, all I was doing was bleeding off a little bit of air pressure each time, so it never blew the hook open.

I was told some months later the

See ENGINEER, Page 22

Engineer unable to reach release

Continued from Page 21

Army made an amendment to the TM-55 Chinook operator's manual advising pilots not to recycle the emergency hook release switch for this reason.

The flight engineer was never able to reach the manual release handle on the hook because we were bouncing

As we dived down the side of the mountain, I saw we were losing rotor rpm to the point it was critical.

around so much due to extremely low rotor rpm.

The load never released and, according to the report I saw back in 1969 when I got out of the hospital, the load finally caught in the treetops and pulled us into the ground nose

first.

My last recollection of the rotor rpm was that it was passing through 170 and going down fast.

When I regained consciousness, I was hanging upside down in my shoulder harness and the entire cockpit was gone except for my seat and Williams in his seat. The instrument panel, cyclic stick, pedals, and center console and overhead console were all gone.

I couldn't see or talk very well because I had a lot of blood in my eyes and all over my face, and I was choking on blood and bone in my throat.

I tried to take my flight helmet off, but it took me several tries because my left jaw bone was sticking out through my neck and the chin strap

was tangled around the bone.

Once I got the helmet off, I looked back through the companionway and all I could see were flames.

I knew we had almost a full load of fuel, so I yelled at Williams and told him we had to get out immediately. I saw him undo his shoulder harness and fall down into the jungle. Then I did the same.

Kelly got up and ran and I tried to, but when I got to my knees, the nerves in my back were pinched and I fell flat on my face. I tried several times to get up and couldn't, so I started crawling away from the aircraft.

I made it about 20 feet from the aircraft, when the crew chief saw me and came back and dragged me away as the aircraft blew up.

WO1 Gene Collings from Playtex was notified by the Marines on Erskine that we had gone down in the jungle and he came back from somewhere near Camp Eagle and tried to pick us up from the jungle, but couldn't get to us because of the trees.

We crashed about 300 yards down the mountain from the LZ and the Marines sent a squad down to us to provide cover from the Viet Cong. They set up a small perimeter around us and I recall hearing them firing at the enemy occasionally while we waited for a rescue aircraft.

We were so far from the LZ the

Marine squad opted to stay with us rather than try to carry us back up the mountain to the LZ. After what seemed like a couple of hours, a Marine CH-46 was able to get in and pick us up and take us to the hospital ship Repose.

The entire crew got out alive, with me being the most seriously injured.

Unfortunately, three of our four Marine passengers were killed when they were thrown from the aircraft before impact due to violent gyrations caused by extremely low rotor rpm. Apparently they were not strapped in.

I suffered simple fractures of the upper and lower right jaw, simple fracture of the upper left jaw, compound fracture of the lower left jaw, compression fractures of six vertebrae in my lower spine, loss of a tooth, and numerous cuts and burns.

They had me in surgery all that night and when I came to, the sun was just coming up and I could see the beginnings of daylight through the porthole in our room on the ship.

Four days later, I was transferred to Danang, and about 12 hours later, was flown to Tripler Army hospital in Hawaii. I was there for 30 days and then transferred to Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston where I stayed until May, when I was released for convalescent leave.

After getting out of the hospital, I was stationed at Fort Benning, GA, for two weeks, at which time I called the Pentagon and requested immediate reassignment back to Vietnam.

I arrived back in Vietnam on July 4, 1969, and completed my second tour with Playtex C Company, 159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion, 101st Airborne Division.

The entire crew got out alive, with me being the most seriously injured.

VHHPA briefs

Click on the 'X'

On the VHHPA web page (<http://www.vhpa.org>), there is a hidden section indicated by an "X" right before the second red bar.

Behind the "X" is a list of helicopter crew members

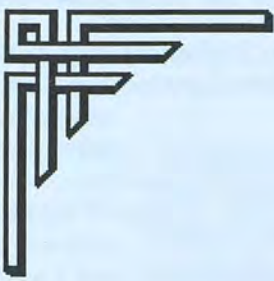
killed, by panel on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

If you have any additions or corrections to this list, please give them to Gary Roush: webmaster@vhpa.org

Crane pilots plan mini-reunion

Crane pilots will gather for a mini-reunion during the 1998 Reunion in Fort Worth in July.

Contact: Jim Messinger: [REDACTED]



VIETNAM

JUNE 10-24, 1998

**"IN-COUNTRY REUNION FOR US ARMY
HELICOPTER PILOTS"**

*SAIGON, IRON TRIANGLE, LAI KHE, WAR ZONE "C&D", PLEIKU,
CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, DANANG, CHU LAI, HUE, PHU BAI*

TOUR HOST:

MG PATRICK BRADY, USA (RET)

MEDAL OF HONOR - RVN, 1968 - 54TH MED DET

If there ever was a "Helicopter War", it was Vietnam. Throughout the history of that war, US Army Aviation blazed the trail for today's armed forces. Initiative and innovation were your watchwords and the credo, "No mission too difficult" was never more true. Whether putting "smoke on a target" or "Dust off"; Gunships, Slicks or '47's - in all corps and in all types of weather the helicopter pilots of the US Army earned a justified reputation amongst all the services in Vietnam as "ever ready"!

MILITARY HISTORICAL TOURS, (MHT) the country's leader in Vietnam tours - "By Veterans for Veterans" is proud to offer this adventure, led by one of our greatest heroes from that war, MG "Pat" Brady, US Army (Ret) who received the **Medal of Honor** for his actions in 1968, while a Pilot with the 54th Med Det at Chu Lai. This very special tour will focus on the sites of interest to the participants and is being developed in cooperation with General Brady and others in the Vietnam Helicopter community. Each participant will receive a detailed questionnaire requesting their particular input on the tour itinerary. Since 1985, MHT has conducted the finest in custom designed tours back to Vietnam, led by Vietnam Veteran Ed Henry and focusing on the battlefields, airfields, basecamps, firebases, city and villages that we all remember.

Tour cost is \$3,295 and includes round-trip international air between Los Angeles and Vietnam; all domestic VN air transportation; first class hotel accommodations; air-conditioned Nissan tour bus; most meals; full trip cancellation, lost baggage, trip delay and emergency medical insurance and much more.

To receive full details, including tour itinerary, contact:

MILITARY HISTORICAL TOURS, INC.

1707 Duke Street, Suite 300 Alexandria, VA 22042
(703) 739-8900 * (800) 722-9501 * Fax (703) 684-0193



Mission as aircraft commander a shock

EARL DOTY

I graduated in June 1968 and did a CH-47 transition right out of flight school.

The "Pachyderms" had only one ship flyable when I arrived in country, so I didn't get much flight time the first few months in Vietnam.

When the third company of Chinooks arrived at Phu Bai to become C

It turned out he couldn't do anything! I had to arm and disarm the hook myself, do all my own pre-landing checks, fly, navigate and get artillery advisories.

Company, 159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, they decided to have an "infusion" and sent one-third of them to each of the other two companies.

As a result, I got bumped over to B Company "Varsity" at Camp Eagle. I didn't like being so close to battalion headquarters, so I volunteered anytime there was an RON (remain overnight) mission; send me anywhere, I'll sleep in a tent . . .

So, the spring of 1969 found me hard at work way up in north I Corps, supporting the 5th Mech and the Marines out of Vandergriff, not far from Khe Sanh and the Rockpile.

Varsity had B models I discovered were stronger than the "Charlie-minus" ships of the sister companies. I flew long and hard and learned fast. But a surprise was on the way.

★★★★★

One day, I was assigned to fly with CW3 Frank Freitas, an aircraft commander I hadn't flown with before.

It turned out he couldn't do anything! I had to arm and disarm the hook myself, do all my own pre-land-

ing checks, fly, navigate and get artillery advisories.

I had to figure out how to get into the many firebases and how to avoid getting shot down — Freitas was so much dead weight.

Eight and a half to nine hours later, I was worn out! The ship was going into PE, so when the last sortie was finished, we headed back down the coast to get a replacement.

I collapsed on my own bunk after the obligatory beer and whisky, totally exhausted, and totally unaware of what had transpired.

Bleary eyed and mildly hung over, I stumbled into operations to see what ship and crew I was flying back to Vandy with . . . Cursing, I noticed the dummies had put me up with Dennis Yost, another WO1.

"Hey, you dummies, you got me with another PILOT!"

"Oh no, Mr. Doty, Mr. Freitas cut orders on you yesterday . . . you're an AC now."

My palms were instantly sweaty, my throat dry. I'd been had. I'd forgotten he was the company SIP. I tried to protest that I only had 230 hours in-country and it took 300, but they insisted it was OK and issued me the SOP.

Dennis was an FNG, so I made him do the top while I walked around the bottom of the suddenly strange beast. The crew eyed me warily as I contemplated my first briefing as aircraft commander.

It all looked different now that I was in charge . . . Who knew anything about performance planning?

We departed the revetment straight up to about 1,000 feet and headed

northwest.

I'd flown left seat some, so it wasn't that different, but the sudden weight of the SOP (one-half ounce

going on 50 pounds) dragged my spirits down. Sooner than I knew, I would have to prove my mettle . . .

Yost needed practice, and 4,300 pounds sounded like a pretty easy load, so I let him flounder around until the poor loadmaster caught the swinging hook.

to land it. I loved external loads 'cause you could punch it off if you got in trouble.

But about halfway into this particular day, the Marines asked us if we could take a combination load to one of their highest LZs.

Twelve passengers got on board, including one with a silver leaf on his "cover" — a Marine chaplain — who sat down on the forward-most right hand seat. I looked back, smiling, and waved. We hovered over to a large, green trailer, an air compressor they said was needed on the firebase.

Yost needed practice, and 4,300 pounds sounded like a pretty easy load, so I let him flounder around until the poor loadmaster caught the swinging hook and we struggled up the valley to our date with destiny . . .

★★★★★

After climbing at full power for far longer than expected, the 8,000-foot mountain finally appeared in our windshield and I called for smoke.

Dennis aborted the first approach when the purple smoke swirled away in the other direction at the last moment. We swung around for another

See AIRCRAFT, Page 25

Aircraft too heavy for mountain air

Continued from Page 24

er try, into what we thought was the wind direction.

It didn't matter.

We were just too heavy in the thin, mountain air. Short final. Another

*Like some
macabre
Christmas
tree, the
lights on the
caution panel
flashed on
as the
generators
dropped off
line.*

routine approach, I thought. But Dennis was a new guy. I was used to acquiescing to the other pilot's skills. I was a new AC.

I didn't think I would have to take controls away from anyone; heck, I'd been recently having the controls taken away

from ME! Something looked wrong. We were too fast.

I watched as the nose came up. I knew we would be losing ETL shortly. But Yost hadn't started adding thrust yet (pull the trigger first, it's what we call the collective on a chinnook).

The load started to pull us down. From the corner of my eye it looked like the wind had changed again . . .

Dennis finally started pulling — too late, too fast — bleeding off rpm. Then the sickening sound of the forward transmission winding down; the mountain rushing up at us.

Like some macabre Christmas tree, the lights on the caution panel flashed on as the generators dropped off line.

We were crashing! And the ink on my AC orders wasn't dry . . .

To this day, I thank God for what happened next, and marvel that I was somehow able to survive.

I've thought about it many times and there isn't the slightest shred of doubt in my military mind that my guardian angel helped me push that thrust down, against instincts that would have killed us.

We were falling into the wire, but somehow I managed to overpower my panicking friend, punch off the load and stumble backwards off the mountain.

Who knew they would fly backwards? One by one, the lights finally extinguished, as the rpm groaned back into the green.

I'd seen the forward blades less than three feet off the landing pad. Death had bounded through my cockpit but, by a miracle, decided not to stay . . .

As their prized compressor tumbled to its death in the valley far below, the radio erupted with cries of disbelief from the Marines.

If they were mad, we were in shock. Everyone on that cargo ship knew that, but for the grace of God, we were goners.

A cautious approach, a ginger touchdown, the passengers disem-

barked.

My ears burned. I dared not turn around again to wave goodbye.

It was my fault. On my first day as aircraft commander, I'd lost a needed, expensive air compressor and nearly let a green pilot destroy a \$3 million aircraft and kill 16 people.

But suddenly my left gunner broke the silence (he was a Catholic boy) saying: "Man, I never SEEN anybody go through their beads so fast!"

Seems he'd been looking over at the colonel (obviously a Catholic chaplain) when we were in the middle of crashing . . .

War is weird. We all broke out laughing . . . and it was over. But I would never again assume Peter Pilot had it under control.

★★★★★

*It was
my fault.
On my first
day as
aircraft
commander,
I'd lost a
needed,
expensive air
compressor
and nearly
let a green
pilot destroy
a \$3 million
aircraft
and kill
16 people.*

Last November, I passed 7,000 hours teaching primary. I've probably told that story to more than a 100 students I've helped learn to fly and soloed. But I still remember it as if it were yesterday.

And not a day goes by that I don't wonder at the miracle I was part of. It wasn't skill. It wasn't just dumb luck. I'm as sure as I am of my own name that there was divine intervention on that mountain so long ago, so far away.

My guardian angel taught me something I can never forget about who's in charge, who's responsible.

It's not the most significant personal religious experience I ever had (that happened when I went home on emergency leave from Vietnam to be with my dad when he died), but that's another story . . .

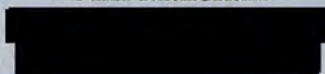
Looking for a:

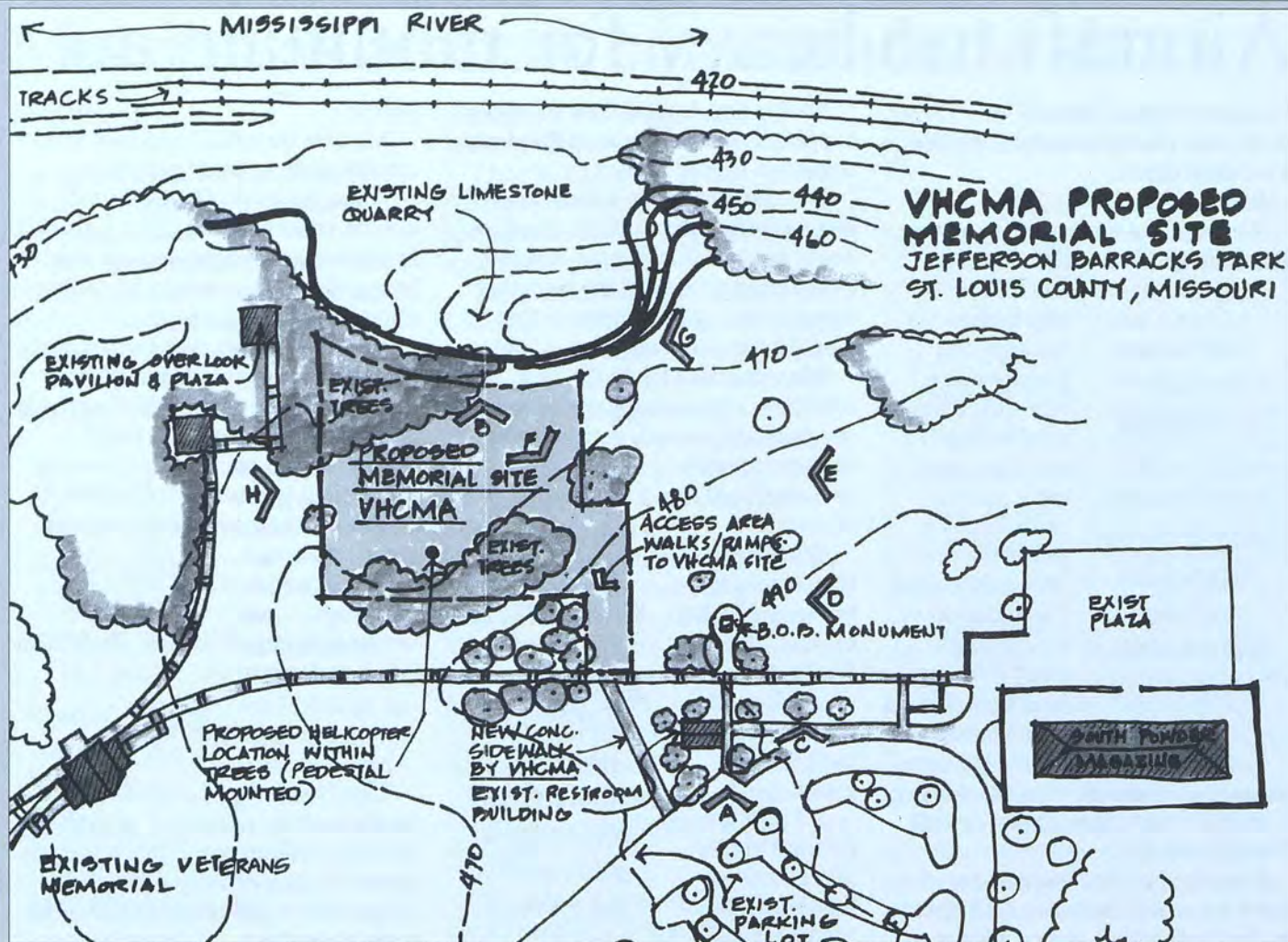
- Long-lost stick buddy?
- A classmate from flight school?
- Your roommate in Vietnam?

Look the easy way. Use VHPA's "Find-A-Friend"

Simply send a No. 10, self-addressed, stamped envelope — and the name of the person you're seeking to:

Phil Marshall





VHCMA seeking designs for memorial

The Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association (VHCMA) is soliciting designs for a national monument dedicated to the men who crewed helicopters during the Vietnam War.

The monument would be on a limestone bluff overlooking the Mississippi River at Jefferson Barracks Park in St. Louis.

When completed, the memorial would consist of two main features:

- A helicopter display consisting of a pedestal-mounted UH-1 "Huey."
- The memorial area plaza that would be integrated into the helicopter display.

The design criteria for the memorial states that "with many countries involved in aviation in Southeast Asia, the memorial needs to have an international approach."

Deadline for submitting proposals

is Nov. 11. Entries will be judged on the weekend of Nov. 15 in St. Louis.

"Jefferson Barracks Park was chosen for its rich military history and scenic location. Just as the horse soldiers of the 1800s trained to protect our country, so did the modern day cavalry with their helicopters. The national cemetery also has our crewmembers in its numbers," said Charlie Rains, VHCMA executive director.

He added, "The Vietnam War has been dubbed by the media as 'The Helicopter War,' which is an accurate description of the technique used to fight this unconventional conflict.

"Vietnam officially lasted for 10 years. More than 3.4 million U.S. servicemen served in Southeast Asia

and, in addition, the following facts should be considered:

"More than 6,000 of the 58,000 who died were helicopter crewmembers.

"Helicopter crewmembers earned a greater majority of the medals awarded for combat and heroism than any other group. (More medals for heroism were awarded in Vietnam than any other war per number of participants.

"Many of the missing in action are helicopter crewmembers and remains are still being returned today.

"We accounted for many of the prisoners of war who were released in 1973."

Design packets are available from the VHCMA at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The association can be contacted at [REDACTED]



NEW

Iron Dance

CH-47 CHINOOK BY JOE KLINE



This full-color, highly detailed, limited edition print is the fifth in the Vietnam LZ Series by aviation artist Joe Kline. Size is 20" x 28". Check, money order, Visa or Mastercard gladly accepted. Fill in pertinent information below for personalized prints. Standard print - \$80 ea. Personalized print - \$100 ea.

Unit _____ Time Period _____
 Unit Markings _____
 Other Markings _____
 US ARMY on aft pylon or UNITED STATES ARMY on sponson
 Model (circle one) CH-47A CH-47B CH-47C
 Tail No. _____ Color of last three digits _____
 Nose Antennas Yes No FOD Screens Yes No

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Visa or Mastercard No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Also Available: Riders on the Storm (UH-1D/H), Chariots of Fire (AH-1G)
 Have Guns, Will Travel (UH-1B/C), Eye of the Tiger (OH-6A)

Joe Kline Aviation Art

6420 Hastings Place Gilroy, CA 95020 408-842-6979 klinejd569@aol.com

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

949 University Ave., Suite 210 • Sacramento, CA 95825

(800) 505-VHPA (voice) • (916) 648-1072 (fax)

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
- ☐ 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 \$150 payments.*