VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

The VHPA Newsletter

P.O. Box 35699 Phoenix, Arizona 85069 September 1986

THE WREATH, THE WALL, AND BUD HOLZMAN

Photo by C. David Owens

Reunion 1986 - At the Wall

"We are gathered here this morning to remember our friends who are memorialized by this Monument. We all realize that by the grace of God we are able to gather here and bring our fondest memories of these heroes to aid us in this moment. Each of us was made stronger and our freedom became more precious each time a life was lost. We veterans know so well the price of freedom. This Monument puts the cost of freedom into human terms as we read these names we knew so well. We are not here to remember the politics of the war that took these soldiers' lives, but to remember that when their country called, they responded. For these men and women, the war is over, but for some us it is not ... look around you ... at the guy next to you ... he knows exactly what you are experiencing and together we can all help each other through this experience ... this is where the war ends for us ... Now the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association will place a wreath on the monument to show we still care and will always remember that these soldiers and friends paid the ultimate price of freedom ... they gave their lives." Remarks by Mike McDonald, VHPA President, at the Wall, 0800, 4 July 1986.

From the Editor

No comments this issue; need the space for more important things.

ROGER GOULD
Editor

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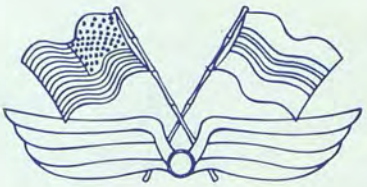

President's Roll Call

Just the third reunion under the belt and over 2000 members. This organization is really taking off!! It is indeed a pleasure to serve as your president for 1986-87. I must first say that I missed Bill Ringer's charm and wit at this year's reunion, but enjoyed filling in for him in our nation's Capitol (aka Disneyland East). Bill, we missed you and are looking forward to seeing you at the '87 reunion.

The theme was this year's reunion was somewhat subdued because of the everpresent reminders of our nation's greatness and the price that must be paid to keep our freedom. The Wall is an experience that has to be felt as no words can adequately describe the feelings we Vietnam Veterans have the first time we view the Memorial. I urge those of you who have not visited the Memorial to do so at your earliest opportunity.

At lunch, Mr. Les Morris, helicopter pilot extraordinaire, dazzled us with his tales of early helicopter flight. Thanks to "Slats" Slattery and the Helicopter Foundation for the opportunity to meet an original helicopter pilot. We hope to see both again on the Queen Mary.

General Westmoreland's speech was both entertaining and informative. He brought up an interesting subject which I wish to address. We are, as you know, a nonpolitical organization but we can act as individuals to help our fellow human beings and especially fellow Vietnam veterans. This is my point: the helicopter pilots of Vietnam are looked up to both figuratively and literally. What better group of veterans is there to lead in the rehabilitation effort that is under way by many volunteer organizations and groups around the country. We pilots, as a group, seem to have survived the most intact. Now let us help those who needed us most in Vietnam and need us more now. VOLUNTEER!!

My compliments to Jay and Jo Elliott and the entire Reunion Committee on an excellent job. Next year promises to be even better. Thanks also to the Hilton staff for their efficient and courteous handling of their most demanding group ever.

Get your reservations in now for next year. We have a limited number of rooms and would hate for anyone to miss the boat!!

Oh by the way, what was that guy doing off of the balcony and what was his bar bill?? Maybe Greg Ross knows?!

MIKE McDONALD

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The VHPA NEWSLETTER welcomes letters to the editor. As space permits, we will publish as many as possible. Letters are subject to editing for brevity and accuracy. Mail to: Newsletter Editor, VHPA, P.O. Box 35699, Phoenix, AZ 85069.

INCOMING MAIL

MIKE'S FOLKS

A dear family friend has sent the February issue of your publication. She is Anne Keagan of the *Chicago Tribune*.

We are the parents of Mike O'Donnell whose picture and poems were in the February issue. We appreciate the recognition accorded our son. Our hearts go out to every man who served in that war.

May we subscribe? We found no reference to non-members nor do we know the cost. Whatever it is, we would consider our subscription a privilege.

Mrs. C. Donald O'Donnell
[redacted]

It's the VHPA that's privileged. Please accept a permanent complimentary subscription. We are honored by your feeling for us and the opportunity to remember your son, our comrade. Ed.

FLYING

Thanks so much for sending me your May newsletter and for the very kind recognition you have given *Flying*.

We are pleased to be of help and will continue to run membership ads for you as space allows.

Patricia Luebke
Marketing Director
FLYING

Considering the folks that read FLYING and the 'extra mile' support FLYING has given the VHPA, it's no wonder this organization is a winner. Ed.

GOOD MORNING AMERICA!

What a wonderful momento! I can't thank you and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association enough for your thoughtful gift.

As I have told more than one audience, if I ever write a book about Vietnam, it will be about the 'kids' who flew the choppers during Lam Son 719 in Laos. I couldn't be more proud than to be recognized by those kids, now a bit older and wiser for their Vietnam experience.

Missing your convention here in Washington was a disappointment, but I'm hoping there will be another opportunity.

Steve Bell
Correspondent/Anchorman
WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING
GOOD MORNING AMERICA

This letter was sent to the President of the VHPA, Mike McDonald. The momento referred to is an engraved brass mug with a brass cyclic grip for a handle. Neat! By the way these mugs can be obtained from WINGS, see their ad elsewhere in this issue. Ed.

DEAR HELICOPTER PILOT, THANKS FOR...

This note is going to seem unusual perhaps. But what it is, is a chance for me to say something that I've felt for many years now. I served in Vietnam in 1968-69 with the 199th Light Inf. Brigade, Charlie Co, 2/3, (Red Catchers), based in Long Binh. We pulled many, many air mobile operations, both North and South of Saigon.

What this is is a note of thanks. I hope it's heard by a least one pilot and maybe by many.

Thank you for your skill at flying in windy mountains. Thank you coming when I called and needed you to help with my wounded friends. Thank you for making me smile with your "Snoopies" painted on the back of your helmets. Thank you for your bravery at getting me out of the jungle when things were hot and I needed a hot meal and a place to rest. Thank you for turning around and tapping me on the steel pot with a smile when you knew the LZ was hot. Thank you for being the life support we needed to survive and do our jobs. My memory of the chopper pilots of Vietnam will always be a warm and thankful one.

Just a few words deeply meant. I wish I could support you in some way, but I know you are only for pilots and I understand.

John Kerin McCombs
[redacted]

John, we can't find words that adequately express our gratitude for your thanks, but we are deeply touched. We noticed you started writing this letter at 0647, so we know it was written with the clarity of the morning. Your elegant testimony reinforces our belief in the value of helicopters and the quality of the crews that operate them. Ed.

"WHAT WAS IT LIKE, REALLY?"

It seems that every time I read the Newsletter I see several names I recognize. This last issue I recognized Jim Caufman, Jesse Miller and Wayne Alexander. I especially enjoyed the "get together" at the HAI and ran across several folks I hadn't seen in quite a few years. Enjoyed the long visit with Al Smith, who I first met while working together at Abu Dhabi Helicopters. Of course, there's Dave Greiger, who was one of my flight leaders at Ft. Wolters when I was a Primary Flight IP and Larry Clark, who hired me into my first civilian flying job while he was director of operations for Air Logistics. Since Larry gave me my first start at Air Log, I have flown for Abu Dhabi, ERA Helicopters (Director of Training-Gulf Coast), EMS Helicopters (Chief Pilot), and my current position of Aeromedical Services Department Head/Chief Pilot, University of South Alabama Medical Center. Thanks, Larry, for giving me my first start in the flying business.

I think that the VHPA will keep growing and that there has been a need for an organization such as this for quite a long time. The stories need to be told and we should not forget those who didn't make it back. Also, let us not forget those who came back with shattered bodies and images which even today disturb their sleep. It is interesting to note that during WWII many books and novels were written about the war, however, it was not until 10-12 years AFTER Vietnam that its stories begin to be told in print, and the public began to read about "What was it like, really?". Immediately after we all came back, the public didn't really want to know what had been happening halfway around the world. NOW...?, they want to know. The VHPA goals and reasons for existence are such that all of us eligible for membership should support the organization. Keep up the outstanding work and time those of you who are active in the VHPA continue to contribute to keep it going. If I can help, please let me know.

Ray Wood
(Black Widow 20)(Comanchero 14)
[redacted]

Continued on next page

You are helping, Ray; what a sales pitch!! From the primary goal of finding old friends to all our other reasons for existence, you seem to know what the VHPA is all about. Ed.

TEARS, SWEAT & LONG HOURS

The May '86 "What is it?" should be a Bulldog of the 129th AHC (268th CAB, 17th CAG) out of An Son.

Enclosed find some examples of unit insignia produced in the RVN aviation units. As you can see, my efforts are progressing. There is a world of tears, sweat and long hours reflected in those bits of cloth.

Judging by the requests and comments regarding insignia, perhaps there is enough reader interest to justify publishing a couple of patches in each Newsletter issue. It might stir some old memories of days past.

The collection is still not finished, some units are still MIA. I would like to hear from others with similar historical interests.

Tom Murphy
(Merlin 10)
[redacted]

Tom, you're right about the "What is it?". Your insignia DID evoke some vivid memories; thanks for sending them. As space permits we will certainly include some examples in YOUR newsletter. Ed.

VM06 REUNION

I am trying to develop a list of addresses for pilots serving in V Squadron in Vietnam. Col. Ed Kufeldt, 10023 Wards Grove Circle, Burke, VA and myself have begun to try to develop information on pilots serving in VM06 so that we may schedule a reunion sometime within the next year. I would appreciate you including this letter in your Incoming Mail section with the hopes that I may reach some of the pilots serving with us.

Joe Turner
[redacted]

We also need all those "lost" VM06 members in the VHPA. Here's hoping a bunch report in, Joe.

OVER PADDIES – NO CARRIER

Although I only joined the VHPA a few short months ago, I am very proud to be a member. I feel we share a very deep common bond.

Having just received my first newsletter I read it from cover to cover. To say the least, I enjoyed it very much.

I flew UH1s with the 1st Sig. Brigade, 2nd Signal Group, Avn Det. at Long Thanh North, Call Sign "Satellite 20" from Nov. '69 to Nov. '70. I would like to hear from any of the other guys who were part of the unit during that time.

In my den at home I have a photo of my Ft. Wolters class (69-33) and last year I stopped by Wolters to look around. What memories it can bring back. It's pretty run down, but the roads and buildings are still there for us all to look at.

I've read *ChickenHawk* and enjoyed it also. Do you know any other books on our lifetimes in Vietnam? I'm sure others feel as I do that I've seen enough of the Jet Jocks from Aircraft Carriers 200 miles out at sea getting so much fanfare. They could spend 15 minutes over the country and be gone! We would spend hours over the rice paddies or jungles and wish we could go to a carrier!

Allen Andrus
(Satellite 20)
[redacted]

Yup! You're right, Allen, there were many times a nice, warm carrier sure would have been nice to go home to, 'cept landing a shot up "fast mover" on the "puppy" may have made "over rice paddies" seem not so bad. Ed.

"HISS AND P - - -" MEMORIES

What a surprise seeing the Bulldog on the May issue back page. The unit is the 129th AHC, home base Dong Ba Thin, RVN. I was privileged to be a member of the "Bite and Strike" unit during 1966-67, and fortunate to have commanded the "Hiss and P - - -" company before the big R&R time came.

We supported the 101st Airborne Brigade Special Mission and were on the move throughout RVN -- 17 moves, never left one helicopter in one year, a real air mobile experience.

That Bulldog brought back some very fine memories of Army Aviation and the superb soldiers who courageously fought the battles in Vietnam. Thanks for a fond memory recalled.

Ronald Merritt
[redacted]

You're welcome, Ron. Was kinda hoping the "What is it?" photo would stir up old memories a bit. Note the letters from other Bulldogs. Ed.

THANKFUL 'BULLDOG'

I just received my Newsletter and would like to comment on "What is it?". The Huey was part of the 129th AHC based at Lane Field, located approximately 25 clicks west of Qui Nhon. Bulldogs was the call sign of the slicks and the guns were King Cobra.

I served with the Bulldogs from Nov. 1968 to April 1969. My unit was under the operational control of the 9th Korean Infantry Div. and was more commonly known (and feared) as the "Tiger Division".

Even though it has been a long time since being there, many of the events that occurred are still very fresh in my mind. I suppose that some things, people, and places are never forgotten. I am thankful for being able to come home and get on with life in the "real world". I am also thankful that an organization such as the VHPA exists so that we may remember, share, and remind others that we were a very select few who served in an unpopular and difficult war.

If it is possible, I would like to hear from any of the guys who served with the 129th during this period. Since I left the Army in 1971, very little information has been available.

Douglass Scott
(Bulldog 15)
[redacted]

And we are thankful for your membership, Doug. We're sure other Bulldogs will be in touch. We remember a story about an AFRVN broadcast interviewing the "Tiger Division" CG, after an operation in the Phu Cat's. When asked how things went the reply was, "Very good, we kill 500 VC and 600 suspects." Ed.

Continued on next page

"STRIKE" PRAISE

The "What is it?" is a 129th AHC slick, located at Lane AHP, An Son, II Corps. The 129th was at Lane for years, even to the point of being one of the "stand down" units.

Call sign for the "Bite and Strike" company was Bulldogs for the slicks and the "gunnies" got individual names proceeded by the call sign Cobra. Flying Bravo, Charlie, and Mikes for these guys for 11 months and 20 days, I guess I was lucky 'cause I never had a slick take a hit while I was escorting. (No skill on my part, just luck!)

Our slicks were some of the finest in RVN. Our fire teams never felt alone on a firemission or "TAC E" when any of those guys were monitoring our freqs.

Vic Gilliland

[redacted]

Luck our a- -! That's 'Nam for you, snakes protecting the dogs. Vic, we're sure the "Bite" half has mutual feelings concerning their "gunnies".

BULLDOG TRAUMA

The "What is it?" is a Huey of the 129th AHC, the Bulldogs out of Lane Army Airfield, approximately 6 miles west of Quin Nhon.

I was a 1st LT there in '71-72 and went over as a 2nd LT for 3 months - UNHEARD OF AT THE TIME. I'm now flying EMS in Jacksonville, FL. I work for US Jet Aviation; so does Charles Huggett who was with the Bulldogs in '71-72 or '70-71. He's flying EMS out of Erie, PA. We're both flying BK117s.

John Barber

[redacted]

It figures, John; a Bulldog would have the tenacity needed to be a great EMS pilot.

AIR RELIC NEWS

Just a note to let you know that I really enjoy the VHPA Newsletter. I think you are doing a fine job and I appreciate it.

Enclosed you will find some back issues of some newsletters that my organization has been publishing over the past few years. I don't have a recent copy to send you because my editor just recently resigned his position and I have not yet found anyone to assume his job. These copies represent several attempts to come up with the right format, but since there seems to be no special way to build a newsletter, you will notice that the only thing we came up with that is common to several similar publications is the way you read it - "left to right, top to bottom". Don't you just love a professional! And to think I went to college to learn all this good stuff.

Another reason I sent the enclosed material is just to let the VHPA know what one more of the "Rotor Heads" is doing these days. I hope you find it interesting.

Part of my organization is devoted to gathering Vietnam Aviation memorabilia, photos, slides, movies, patches, unit crests, etc., etc., so if any VHPA members would like to help us by letting us have copies of slides or photos, we would love to include them in our Museum.

I won't be able to make the VHPA reunion this year, I just took an Airline job in the right seat, and my schedule just won't give me the time off, but I look forward to the next one. If any of the 175th AHC guys are still in touch, please get them in touch with me. I was with the 175th AHC "Mavericks" from Aug. 1968 till Aug. 1969 and I'd love to hear from any of those old gunnies.

Keep up the good work with the VHPA and if there is anything I can do to help, please let me know. My organization is also non-profit and tax exempt, so we have more in common than UH1s and Vietnam.

Jim Spiers

(Maverick 5)

[redacted]

Jim, you might want to get in touch with Tom Murphy (see his letter in this issue), also Dan Hutchinson of the VHPA Historical Committee might need some of your expertise. By the way, folks, Jim is a bit modest as his letter did not include the fact that he is the Co-Founder and President of the Georgia Historical Aviation Museum, publisher of AIR RELIC NEWS. Besides his Airline flying, he regularly flies OV-1 Mohawks for the GA Guard and the Museum's two T-28s. Anyone want to edit an extremely interesting newsletter? Ed.

LIKES VHPA (and BOB)

Thank you for sending your newsletter and for printing my letter. The Editor's remarks were encouraging! Response has been terrific! With your super publication it is only a matter of time before members of the 175th AHC "Mavericks" and "Outlaws" are located.

I am not a veteran and not eligible for membership, but please find enclosed a money order for $20. I would like to receive the VHPA Newsletter.

I contacted Bob Miller, the guy trying to engraved lighter. What a super guy Bob is! His mention of Vinh Long caught my interest as it is the area the 175th was stationed in. He knew several Outlaws plus lots of encouraging information.

Linda Riutta

[redacted]

I'll bet Jim Spiers wouldn't mind hearing from you, Linda; he's a "Maverick" of the first order. Also, GOOD NEWS, non-members can now subscribe to the VHPA Newsletter. Even though the cost is $12 per year, we have credited you with a two year paid subscription. You were the very first with the "green stamps". Ed.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Enclosed is a picture of an UH1C gunship. The emblem on the front is the 191st AHC, 1st Avn Bn, at Can Tho. We were called the BOUNTY HUNTERS. I was Bounty Hunter 41 until I saw an OH6 fly and then I transferred to the Cav, to become DARKHORSE 12.

I flew in the same Company and same Platoon as Hugh Mells, but during different years; I was there in 1970.

Clinton Cain

[redacted]

There's some folks that will think you made a smart move, Clint, and some that will think ....; plus "Mother Bell" wouldn't have been too thrilled. Thanks for the photo, they are always welcome. Hint, hint! Ed.

Bad Bounty Hunter on the go. photo by Clinton Cain

Continued on next page

"GLASSY-EYED"

Having just opened and thoroughly absorbed my first issue of the VHPA Newsletter I sit here, glassy-eyed, paralyzed by the flood of memories it has induced; Wolters and the ROCK! I'm sure I have a photo of that Rock. It has to be the same one. It was red when I was there in'69 and it had a huge set of silver wings on it. Then there was LZ English, An Khe, Pleiku, Bong Son and all points in between; the An Lo, Sui Cau, and Happy Valley and on, and on, OH! the memories!

Although none of the names were familiar, I felt an immediate kinship with all who had written. The combined experience of flying and Vietnam had made them all brothers. Thanks for bringing me that.

Having gotten away from flying over the years, and being in a society in which our kind are in a distinct minority, I've missed you guys. I'm thrilled to once again be in touch with you. Like James Adams mentioned, the goodbyes on our return were all too quick and final. Suddenly the guy who covered your behind going into countless LZs all year long was gone, out of your life as quickly as he had entered; maybe quicker. MACKO J. SQUIRREL (a.k.a. Frank McFadden) WHERE ARE YOU?!

Jerry Gray
(Lucky Star 10)
[redacted]

Jerry, your letter says a lot things many of us have been trying to say. Thanks! Anyone know the final color of the Rock? We wouldn't turn down a photo of it. Ed.

"NO SLIP" NEWSLETTER

I enjoy running through the pages of VHPA Newsletter. Couldn't help but notice that lots of folks are looking for patches. A good source of patches is the QUARTERMASTER catalog, by the Quartermaster Uniform Company (who else?). They may not have the ones someone needs in the catalog, but do have access I believe to others. I have enclosed a copy; hope it helps.

I spent my time flying in III Corps in 1969 under the sign of "Northflag" 56 and 3. If there are any Northflag people out there let me know.

Bill Lawson
[redacted]

Better watch that running, Bill, we're not sure of the 'no-slip' quality of this 'rag'. Between Tom Murphy (insignia collector par excellance) and the QM Uniform Co., 750 Long Beach Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90813, folks ought to be able to track down just about any ole patch. Ed.

LOOKING FOR A 'BLUEGHOST'

I would like to learn the whereabouts of Frank E. Kline. He served in 'Nam with me in F Troop, 8th Cav, 23rd Inf. Div., during 1971. His call sign was "Blueghost 33".

The last time I heard from him was in 1982. At the time he was a recently removed Air Traffic Controller (a product of Reagan's reorganization of PATCO), somewhere around Boston. I lost his address and would really appreciate any information would help me get in touch with him.

Tim Petersen
[redacted]

Tim, this should be an easy one, this outfit has a whole "flock" of Blueghosts (do ghosts come in flocks... or herds... or ...?) Surely one of them knows something about your buddy Frank. Ed.

"EARLY DAY STORIES"

Enclosed is my application and check. I enjoyed reading the Newsletter you sent and am already looking forward to the next one. It is good to have a place to exchange thoughts as well as a forum for getting answers to our questions. I'm glad to see unit reunions happening. Hopefully the 52nd Avn Bn will have a reunion in the future.

I flew with the 117th AHC, 52nd Avn Bn, in '63-64. I am writing a series of stories concerning that era and need information concerning battalion-sized air assault west of Quang Nhai in May 1964. I'd like to hear from any former member of the 117th AHC or 119th AHC who flew on that mission. What was the ARVN unit we flew in? What was the name of that operation? What was the name of the valley or nearby village?

It was a successful and significant mission, since we hauled many captured VC weapons and ammo out on the second and third days. But since it was only 1 or 2 weeks before my DROS, I had other thoughts on my mind.

Even if you can't supply any of the above, I'd still enjoy hearing from any former members of the 117th.

Bill McGee

We sure can understand the "brain lock" 2 weeks before DROS. Maybe there are some "grayhairs" out there that can help, Bill, but don't get your hopes up too high, 'cause you know what the "second thing" old helicopters pilots lose is. Ed.

MISSING NEWSLETTER

I just received my 1986 Membership Directory but have still not received my copy of the May newsletter.

I called Mike Law and he says I am still in the data base and my 1986 dues are paid. He also said that you were experiencing trouble with bulk rate mail. Also, Dennis Lockhard who lives nearby did not get his May newsletter. Mike Law was kind enough to send along 2 copies. Thought you should know the mail did not get through.

Also, on page 71 of the 1986 Directory TOM DUER should probably be CW2 THOMAS W. DUER, W3152404 (331-40-6137) who was killed 23 July 1968 at Cu Chi in a CH47 crash due to transmission failure. Tom received his orders assigning him to the 242nd ASH effective 10 July 1968, so he had been in country only a short time. Also killed in that same crash was WO RANDY R. WERNIG, W31523990 or W31557457 (083-36-4915).

Gary Roush
[redacted]

You're not alone, Gary. Seems the "pony express" has been treating a portion of our bulk rate mailings as expendable. As a result, your Executive Council has decided THIS AND FUTURE Newsletters will go 1st CLASS. If that doesn't solve the problem maybe we will have to send the Newsletter UPS or FEDX. Ed.

51B-35TH COMING UP!

I really enjoy the Newsletters. I wish I could be at the Reunion but it is a long way from Pacific City, Oregon and that's in the middle of our commercial salmon season, so maybe next year.

I would like to hear from any of the members of the 114th AHC and the 544th CHFM Det. from Vinh Long in the 1964-65 era. If anyone knows about SFC Mitchell, my shop foreman, please let me know.

Continued on next page

I have enclosed a copy of the class roster of my class 51B for your information. Also enclosed is a letter we have been sending out to raise money for our H19C Project. We have raised over $20,000 and work started on old 272 in Orlando on May 14, 1986. Our reunion will be May 4-7, 1987 at Fort Rucker. If you have room in the Newsletter, I would appreciate it if you could put a few lines about the H19C fund. Anyone who would like to help out could send checks to me or to: H19C Helicopter Museum Fund, 3233 Gano Street, Houston, TX 77009.

Dick Foreman
(Roadservice)
[redacted]

That ought to be some reunion, 51B was the 2nd WO R/W class. They will be joined by the 1st and 3rd classes, 51A and 52A, at their May '87 reunion. The H19C project still needs 40K plus; can any of you help? Sorry we don't have room for the whole pitch, Dick; maybe next issue. Thanks for the class roster, it will be the foundation of our data base. Ed.

"MILLIONS OF MILES"

Since joining the VHPA last December I have wanted to locate my class roster. After receiving the May Newsletter I put all else aside to rummage through my records to locate the roster. Enclosed is a copy of the roster for Class 67-3.

Reading through the list of classmates unleashed many memories. It has been almost twenty years. It seems like millions of miles.

I am an attorney in Glennville, Georgia. I am also a part time pilot with the Georgia Army National Guard flying CH54 Skycranes, in the 1160th Trans. Co. Most of our pilots are Vietnam Veterans. Dave Loftin served with me in the 117th AHC in Vietnam. Three other "part-timers" graduated from flight school with me. Roland Ferland, Bob Fleming, and William "Barry" Vaughn. Another classmate, Frank Tolle, was the fulltime IP and IFE in our unit until a few months ago. Frank took a job as a DAC Flight Examiner at Hunter Army Airfield flying Hueys and OH58s.

Those of us from Class 67-3 who would up in the 1160th Trans. Co. feel fortunate. After all these years it certainly makes for some interesting war stories at summer camp. The VHPA is a wonderful idea which is long overdue.

Joseph McGovern
[redacted]

You got that right, Joe; plenty of water under the bridge since the start of our "grand adventure". Good for You and Good for the VHPA, your taking time to find your class roster. Without the efforts of members like yourself the VHPA could never complete our history. Ed.

SUPER RECRUITER LOVED REUNION

My wife and I loved the reunion. I got the message at our business meeting. FIVE NEW MEMBERS are enclosed, more on the way. We're all looking forward to the Queen Mary in '87, so send these guys their stuff or I might not be physically capable of attending. They nearly wore out my Directory at Guard Drill.

I'm working on getting copies of initial flight orders on all the guys from my unit that were in Vietnam. Other members of the Guard or Reserve units might check with their flight records people for the same.

I've enclosed some personal records from a former Southern Airways Instructor at Ft. Wolters, Clarence Clarkson. Now a CW4 full timer in my Oklahoma Guard Unit. He's noted those he found out were killed in action.

Bob Clark
(Thunderbird 18)
[redacted]

HOT DAMN! Does this guy BELIEVE in the VHPA?! You bet'cha he does! We will try and throw the new guys some "bones" soonest, 'cause we sure need you at the next reunion. Ed.

"MISSED BY 38"

By now you've received my membership application and I should be on my way becoming a VHPA member. I didn't know such an organization existed; it's a great deal! We've all attended "social" functions at various O-Clubs in 'Nam where the host unit was an aviation unit, GREAT PARTIES! I'll bet your July gathering in D.C. was a winner. I sat in my house 38 MILES away watching the Statue of Liberty show from New York, 'cause I didn't know the VHPA was alive and well. DAMN!! I've belonged to "Quad A" for "eons" and will continue to belong, but Art Kesten and his staff get so involved in the technical stuff that we get lost in the scubble.

Your newsletter is interesting and down-to-earth. I enjoyed reading it. I'm frequently questioned about the Vietnam conflict and flying there. Maybe my Maryland license tags, DUSTOFF, has something to do with that; I get a lot of friendly honks along the road. Vietnam vets remember what we did for and with them; all of us, slicks, guns, medi-evacs, hooks, etc. Thanks a lot for having the guts and dedication to form such an organization. Where's next year's gathering?

Bill Grauling
[redacted]

Count your blessings, Bill; you could have been watching summer reruns; the Statue of Liberty show was pretty impressive. If you miss next year it will be by 2400 or so, but even money says you will be there. We're real glad we finally found you. See you on the Queen. Ed.

"BETTER LATE ..."

Better late, etc. Glad to finally get this renewal in the mail. It has been a pretty tight year, as I have kept myself locked away on an extreme-low-income budget while I have worked to turn myself into a professional writer. One of the results is a finished 400-page novel called *SACRIFICES*, based on my experiences flying Charlie model guns for the 17th AHC (later named B Co., 101st Avn Bn.), and on my years as a disturbed dropout 'Nam Vet since. I'm looking for a publisher and would appreciate any leads the Association might be able to offer.

I am looking forward to seeing the "Brethren" at the reunion some year soon. Thanks for your efforts to keep alive the memory of what was (in spite of the poitical, socio-economic, and ideological fiasco) an heroic chapter in the US military history.

James Nathan Post
[redacted]

Anyone out there able to help Jim get his book published? When you're published, we get an autographed copy, right, Jim? Ed.

Continued on next page

INCOMING MAIL, *continued*

BROTHER!!
CHECK THESE BROTHERS!

Enclosed are the applications of myself and my brother, Stanley Fila. I must say that finding out about your organization was quite a surprise and I regret that we have not heard of it prior to this time.

Stanley did an eighteen month tour with Delta Troop, 1/10th Cav from February 1969 to September 1970. At the time, Delta Troop was attached to the 4th Inf. Div. Stan flew UH1s for his first 12 months and then transitioned into OH6s.

I joined Delta Troop in March of 1970 as a Cobra pilot. I believe that my brother and I were the *only brothers to fly in the same unit, at the same time,* and *even flew some combat missions together.*

We look forward to participating in your organization.

Robert Fila

[redacted]

Bob, we too regret it took this long to find you all, but all's well that ends well, especially since both of you are now onboard. Ed.

IMPRESSIVE REUNION

This was my first reunion. It was impressive! Running into Bert Smith (I was his replacement) and a couple of other Tomahawks and Gunslingers made the whole weekend worth it.

I saw the tape on the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot. I understand it is available for reproduction. I would like to have the address so that I might purchase a copy. It was a moving tape that says it all.

Again thanks to you and all who helped in making the reunion a great success. P.S. I've just been elected as President of the Chesapeake Bay Chapter of AAAA.

Don Beatty (Duck)
(Gunslinger 31)

Congrats on your AAAA election, Don. Glad you liked the reunion; renewing old ties (and making new ones) is what the whole show is all about. The Vietnam Helicopter Pilot tape is available from BOB BEAUDREAULT, 3310 Bissonet, Houston, TX 77005. Cost is $50 postage paid. Ed.

THE COBRA COMPANY

The Cobra Company is dedicated to producing publications covering military aviation history. Thus far we have completed a book dealing with the UH1 and similar publications on the UH1 and 0-1 Birddog. I recently authored a book for SQUADRON/SIGNAL PUBLICATIONS titled "The Huey in Action" and will be following that with a book devoted to US military Huey units, also for SQUADRON/SIGNAL.

I'd like very much to hear from Huey pilots who have photos and information pertaining to their unit and its aircraft. Besides photos, data which would be especially useful include unit locations, mission, aircraft configuration and markings. Virtually anything along these lines is useable, donors would be fully credited and receive a complimentary copy of my book.

Wayne Mutza

[redacted]

Wayne sent this letter to Terrie Clark; we were happy to steal it. Ed.

Reunion '86 - After Action Report

WEDNESDAY 2 JULY

A gathering of the Reunion Committee and Executive Council members started at 1500 hours. This was the start of a great four day party. We sat in Ashby's Bar (Hilton) and gathered about 20 members and wives (girlfriends?) while waiting for a conference room. During the 3½ hour stay at Ashby's, Russ Janis entertained us with a story about "real" helicopter pilots and the proper way to pull up your socks. At 1830 hours everyone adjourned to the conference room to stuff preregistration envelopes and to prepare for the next day's activities. Reunion "6" (Jay Elliott) was on hand to provide guidance, instructions and fatherly advice.

THURSDAY 3 JULY

Registration opened at 1000 hours and went smoothly (thanks to all of those who preregistered). After picking up their registration package, members and guests went to the "Pilot Shop". The "Pilot Shop" housed: D and G (Dave Greiger), VHPA Memorabilia, Women in Vietnam, Helicopter Art, and Helicopter Foundation International. Bob Beaudreault's 1985 video, "A Tribute to the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot" was shown several times an hour at the HFI Booth, thanks to John "Slats" Slattery.

James Goldthorpe registered at 1300 hours and was greeted by Jay Elliott, Larry Clark, Mike McDonald and Dave Owens. James is our 2000th member, and was presented with a VHPA 2000th Member Hat. (We are growing fast.) After registration, time was spent meeting friends and catching up on old news (1 to 25 years worth). The central gathering place was the pool bar (where the sky was clear, the sun hot, and the beer cold). Members were on their own for sightseeing and dinner.

FRIDAY 4 JULY

A ceremony was held at the "Wall" at 0800 hours. A group of about 200 gathered on the east mound. Mike McDonald gave a short but elegant tribute to our friends on the Wall.

Mike McDonald and Larry Clark laid a wreath at the Wall. As the wreath was being laid, two National Park Police Helicopters made a low level fly-by. The helicopters were piloted by two VHPA members: Butch Cronin and Denny Boyle. This was a moment that will never be forgotten. The rest of day was spent sightseeing. Most of our members and guests took advantage of the numerous restaurants within two blocks of the hotel. There's an Italian restaurant that will never be the same (ask Paul Uster about his party of thirty). After dinner a spectacular fireworks display was viewed from the Memorial Wall area.

Park Police Jet Ranger, Over the Wall
photo by C. David Owens

SATURDAY 5 JULY

0830 hours - see Business Meeting Report.

The buffet luncheon was a great success thanks to good food and a great surprise guest speaker, "Les" Morris. Helicopter pilot "Les" Morris' accomplishments include: the first helicopter flight to exceed 100 mph, the first helicopter flight to exceed 5000 feet, and the first night flight, and backyard and rooftop landings. In addition to the above accomplishments, "Les" was Sikorsky's first full-time test pilot and the world's first helicopter instructor.

"Les" spoke for about 30 minutes, focusing on his 1941 through 1947 helicopter career. After his speech, "Les" fielded questions from the members and guests. It was a pleasure listening to a man 70 years young talk about why we fly - with the collective in our left hand and many other lost facts about helicopter development. When "Les" left the luncheon he went to the "Pilot Shop" to autograph his book, "Pioneering the Helicopter", (1945 reprint).

The evening banquet started at 1900 hours with 500 members and guests. Mike McDonald, President, was the M.C. The Joint Service Color Guard presented the colors and the "Star Spangled Banner" was sung by all present.

Mike introduced our guests of honor: General Westmoreland, the keynote speaker; and "Les" Morris. Mike then read a telegram from Bill Ringer, past president. Bill will be in Singapore for three years with McDonnell Douglas Helicopter. The dinner was excellent and the service fast and friendly. General Westmoreland spoke for about 30 minutes. His remarks were both cheerful and complimentary. He spoke about flying in Vietnam and that we wrote the book on combat helicopter flying and changed the way the military and the world perceive helicopters. The General closed by saying he was proud to have been our commander and honored to have been included at this reunion. Dinner was over at about 2200 hours and those with lots of courage attended the survivors' pool party. "The boys from the Cav" sang songs until the wee hours of the morning. Most of the members and guests called it a night at about 0300 hours.

SUNDAY 6 JULY

Sunday morning everyone checked out of the hotel, said their goodbyes and made plans for next year's reunion.

C. DAVID OWENS
VHPA Vice-President

Helicopter history greats: General Westmoreland and Les Morris.
photo by Rich Daudrea

1 + 1 = 3

1986 VHPA Reunion Banquet ***photo by Rich Daudrea***

In Memory

JOHN THYBONY was killed 18 June 1986 over the Grand Canyon at the controls of a Jet Ranger. His helicopter collided with a Grand Canyon Airlines Twin Otter. Twenty-two tourists, besides John and the two Twin Otter pilots, died in the collision. John, a VHPA member, had flown the Canyon for years; in fact, he was one of the most experienced Canyon pilots.

Looking For...

VIC WISSER (Dark Horse II)
OH6 pilot with C/16th, Can Tho, 1970 is sought by CLINTON CAIN, 1134 E. Feemster, Visalia, CA 93277.

ANYONE
from the 57th AVN who remembers John Davis (Triple Deuce 32) '69 to '70 please contact: WES CANTON, 10781 Primrose Court, Manassas, VA 22110.

FRANK KLINE (Blue Ghost 33)
with F/8th CAV during 1971 is being looked for by TIM PETERSEN, Route 1 Box 344 A-8, Bemidji, MN 56601.

New Life Members

CHARLES DAVID OWENS
[redacted]
69-8
71 C/16 CAV
72 13 CAB
Pilot/Consultant

DAVIN G. McLAUGHLIN
[redacted]
69-33
69-70 3 BDE 1 CAV
70 E/1/9 CAV 1 CAV
71 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV
Helicopter Pilot

JOHN CHESNUT
[redacted]
68-1
68-69 A/227 1 CAV
General Contractor

RONALD P. "PHIL" MARSHALL
[redacted]
69-7
69 237 MED
Suzuki/Honda Dealer

THOMAS M. McKISSACK
203rd AVN CO
APO NY 09025
70-39 70-41
71 D/1/10 CAV
72 201 AHC
Pilot US Army

GREGORY A. KOZMETSKY
66-13
67 187 AHC
Business Exec
(Flies own Kingair 200)

JOHN B. TEETSEL
[redacted]
70-21
70-71 B/2/20 ARA
1 CAV
71 334 AHC
Financial Consultant

JIM E. FULBROOK
[redacted]
70-3
70-71 71 AHC
Army Research Scientist

KENITH V. LINDSTROM
69-13
69-70 B/1/9 CAV
Pilot

PAUL ALMER
[redacted]
70-32
70-71 192 AHC
71 C/158 101 ABN
71-72 201 AVN
State Trooper

GARY L. MOCK
[redacted]
68-3
68-69 45 MED CO
Pilot, Air Log

JOHN L. DEER
[redacted]
69-15
69-70 173 AHC
Helicopter Pilot

From L to R: LARRY CLARK (VHPA Executive Director), BOB MASON (author of "Chickenhawk"), BUTCH DENSON (Golden Nugget pilot) – all members of 65-3.

Annual Business Meeting

SATURDAY 5 JULY

The Business Meeting was called to order at 0830 hours by Mike McDonald, President Elect. Present were the members of the Executive Council (Larry Clark, Executive Director; Mike McDonald, President Elect; Mike Law, Dave Greiger, and David Owens, Members-at-Large), and 135 members.

Mike informed the members that the VHPA would be sending the Newsletter out first class and that if you move, please notify the VHPA as soon as possible.

A discussion was held about the VHPA logo. After about a 10 minute discussion, Joe Schreiber motioned that a Logo Committee be established to design a new logo and to determine the cost of change over. Seconded by Ron Raible. Motion carried unanimously.

The next item of business was the '87 and '88 reunions. The '87 reunion will be on the Queen Mary in Long Beach and the '88 reunion will be at the Fort Worth Hilton, with a day trip to Fort Wolters (where it all began). Both reunions will be over the Fourth of July weekend. Suggestions for a time and place for the '89 reunion are now being taken by the Reunion Committee.

Changes to the VHPA Constitution and By-Laws were suggested by the Executive Council. A motion to change the Constitution and By-Laws as recommended was made by Jay Fuller and seconded by Rick Freeman. Motion carried unanimously.

Changes to the VHPA Constitution and By-Laws

Constitution, Article IV, Section II (The Executive Council shall consist of:), paragraph e:

READS: Executive Director, who will be appointed by the Executive Council.

TO READ: Executive Director.

Constitution, Article IV, Section IV (Committees.), paragraph a:

READS: Nominating Committee is responsible for presenting its selections for Vice President and the Member at Large at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting of the VHPA.

TO READ: Nominating Committee is responsible for interviewing each nominated officer the day prior to the annual business meeting. The committee shall ensure that each nominated officer understands the duties and responsibilities for the office which he seeks. The committee will submit the ballot to the Executive Council not later than 1800 hours on the day prior to the annual business meeting.

By-Laws, Chapter 7 (Dues) to become Chapter 8.

By-Laws, NEW Chapter 7: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1. The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Executive Council.

2. A vote to sustain the Executive Director will be the first item of business at each Executive Council meeting.

By-Laws, Chapter 8 (Dues), paragraph 2:

READS: Annual general membership dues are $20 per year. Membership renewals are based on the calendar year and are due not later than 1 January.

TO READ: Annual general membership dues are $20 per year. Membership renewals are based on the fiscal year which starts 1 July and ends 30 June.

By-Laws, Chapter 8 (Dues), paragraph 3:

READS: Corporate membership is $300 per year. Corporate renewals are based on the calendar year and are due not later than 1 January.

TO READ: Corporate membership is $300 per year. Corporate renewals are based on the fiscal year which starts 1 July and ends 30 June.

Due to the changes in the Constitution (annual dues date), the Executive Council decided that dues in January will be $30.00 and be good for 18 months. The July 1st due date will start in 1988 and the dues will be $20.00.

A discussion was held to change the Directory. After a 20 minute discussion it was decided that all Members (Life, Active, and Inactive) will be listed in alphabetical order in the body of the Directory. Inactive members will be listed by name with no other information. Mike Law, Data Base Chairman, needs copies of your flight class orders and any information you have on KIA, MIA, and anyone killed after the war.

The next item of business was the election of a new Vice-President and one Member-at-Large. There were three candidates for Vice-President and seven for Member-at-Large. Each candidate was given a few minutes to address the members. A coffee break was taken while the ballots were counted. The meeting was called back to order and the winners announced. The new Vice-President is C. David Owens, a Member-at-Large for '85-86. The new Member-at-Large is Greg Ross.

The final order of business was installing the 1986-87 standing committees.

C. DAVID OWENS
Vice-President

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Attention All Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine and Navy Pilots!!

At the reunion Daniel C. Ross, a former Marine pilot summed things up rather eloquently — "Several of my buddies back home (the MN Guard) said they didn't want to come here because VHPA was just a bunch of 'Army Pukes' -- but I told them they were wrong -- that Marines belonged too. I said I was going to attend -- to socialize with them -- to get drunk and spit up on my shoes -- and generally show those Army guys that us Marines can be respected." Well, with an introduction like that Dan was an instant success!! We kicked around several Army/Marine jokes and everyone seemed to have fun. (Dan was one of seven former Marine pilots that attended the reunion).

While signing in at the reunion Noel Campbell, a former Navy HA(L)-3 pilot commented, "I really don't know why I'm here. I don't think any other Navy pilots will attend. But you know I flew B Models in the Delta and I feel a special bond with you Army Huey drivers." With an attitude like that, Noel was very welcome and we really enjoyed his company. (Unfortunately, Noel was correct .. he was the only former Navy pilot that attended the reunion).

These good VHPA members raised some interesting ideas that should be shared with everyone. First, it is important that all VHPA members and potential members understand that this organization is not just for Army pilots — rather, all helicopter pilots who flew in SEA. This even includes Air America, Australian and Vietnamese pilots. Second, the statistics published in the 1986 Directory do not include a service oriented breakdown for pilots; however, based on a few minutes with the data base I offer the following information:

Army	1938	(I only scanned the Member Data Base.
Unknown	65	We have about 1000 non-members that
Marine	57	I did not search).
Air Force	16	
Navy	19	
Air America	10	(Most were Army-trained)
Foreign	1	(He is an Australian!)
TOTAL	2106	

Third, many guys who flew for the Marines in the war now fly for Army National Guard Units. Fourth, in the last several months the VHPA membership committee bulk mailed information concerning VHPA membership to all individuals in the US that currently hold a commercial helicopter license. A large percent of these were returned by Marine war pilots.

The bottom line is this — Marine pilots, Navy pilots, Air Force pilots, etc., etc., are IMPORTANT to this organization even though most of the members are 'Army Pukes'; and there are a significant number of non-Army pilots already in this organization. HOWEVER, these non-Army groups need to be willing to join in with the mainstream of the VHPA, be willing to teach the others about their groups, and be willing to learn about other groups. This means more than joining and keeping your membership current. It means attending reunions. It means serving on committees. The Membership (Joe Schreiber), the History (Daniel Hutchinson), and the Records (me) Committees could use help from non-Army pilots right now!!

For example, Dan and Noel were kind enough to teach this 'Army Puke' about the way Marine and Navy units were organized and the methodology behind their call signs. I can do a better job with the CALLSIGNS and general membership data bases because of this information. As mentioned at the reunion, the Records Committee will soon start to reconcile each flight class with our databases of living and dead. I have volunteers for the Army areas and will soon be giving them things to do. I hope any non-Army pilot that has a PC and the desire to help reconcile his group's flight classes will contact me. The requirements are that you must have access at least to an IBM PC (or compatible) with 96K of memory, two 360K floppy drives, and a printer. It is best you have a hard disk. You would need to volunteer about 10 hours a month and work under my direction. VHPA owns the data base software and would pay your out-of-pocket expenses, so it really wouldn't cost you anything but your time and your PC's time. Please contact me directly: Mike Law, 392 S. Robb Way, Lakewood, CO 80226, (303) 989-0999 (H) and (303) 779-2194 (W).

MIKE LAW
Executive Council Member
Records/Data Base Chairman

Fourth Annual Reunion

The Fourth Annual Reunion will be held aboard the Hotel Queen Mary. This ship has been raised out of the water and cemented to the ocean floor with concrete and rock. There are queen and king size beds on all but 50 of the 300-plus rooms. The roll-away beds cost an extra $13.00.

Please send in your hotel reservations NOW. Remember there are only 300 rooms. Also, please be early with your VHPA registration. The more we know about for sure, the better off we will be setting up a great reunion. There will be a price difference for pre-registered and walk-ins.

American Airlines has granted VHPA a very special rate in Los Angeles and the smaller airports which comprise the LA Metro area. You will be granted an additional 5% discount from the ULTIMATE SUPER-SAVER RATE if you reserve well in advance! Many reported that they could not get the lowest rate on American to Washington for the '86 Reunion ... however, they waited until the last moment to call! I would contact American in January for this special price. Even though you must pay within 15 days, the additional 5% may make it worthwhile.

National Car Rental will also grant us a special rate. Please call the 800 number and tell them what you need. Remember, LA is a great big freeway and everything is somewhere else! We do have a lot to do right on the grounds of the Queen Mary, but there is so much there.

JAY ELLIOTT
Reunion Chairman

The Queen

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Fourth Annual Reunion
2-5 July, 1987
Long Beach, California

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Name: _____ Member No.: _____

Wife/Guest Name: _____ No. of Children: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Adults $15.00 **Children: Free** (10 & Under)

Business Meeting Lunch
Adults $15.00
Child: $10.00

Banquet
Adults: $30.00
(Semiformal Dress)

Number of Adult Registrations: ☐ x 15 = $ _____
Number of Adult Lunches: ☐ x 15 = _____
Number of Child Lunches: ☐ x 10 = _____
Number attending Banquet: ☐ x 30 = $ _____
Total: $ _____

Make Checks Payable to VHPA

NAME TAG INFO

_____
(Name desired on your reunion nametag)

_____
(Flight School, Class No., Years)

_____
(Combat Units and Years)

_____
(Hometown)

MAIL WITH CHECK TO:
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association
P.O. Box 35699 Phoenix, Arizona 85069

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Fourth Annual Reunion
2-5 July, 1986
Long Beach, California
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DATE From	DATE To	UNIT	LOCATION	CALL SIGN

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

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WHAT IS IT??? Name type of aircraft, unit and location.

Photo by Tom Ellis

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