



# THE VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ~ Vol. 27, No. 3 July/August 2009

*Read Dan Fox's story about the Battle of An Loc starting on page 3*



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# From Our President...



Jack Salm

This will be my last column written as the President of our organization as by the time you read this, the Philadelphia Reunion will have been adjourned. I am confident Philadelphia will be a great party, I only hope the economy doesn't have an adverse effect on the numbers attending. Needless to say, it has been a very volatile year for all of us, nationally, personally and for our association. Although it appears the worst of this recession may be over we still have a long road ahead of us to recovery.

When I assumed the Presidency of the VHPA at our last reunion in San

Antonio, the storm clouds of trouble already could be seen on the horizon. Most of us thought they wouldn't affect us, didn't see them or simply chose to ignore them. By the end of the last year our economy was in free fall. Most of us have seen our retirement income decreased through loss of investments, 401K's, IRA's and stocks and not to beat a dead horse, it has been a really bad year for a lot of us. However, all was not negative for the VHPA. In this last year we have achieved the largest number of members ever, in fact, our 14,000th Member will be recognized at the Philadelphia Reunion. We have also had an increase in total number of chapters from 11 to 16 and there are 2 more in the process of forming. We also negotiated a pretty favorable hotel contract complete with advantageous

room rates through the year 2013.

But mainly, I don't know where the time has gone. It seems like I just wrote my first Presidents Column and here I am writing my last.

I would like to thank everyone on the Executive Council (EC), the Reunion Committee (RC) the VHPA HQ's and you, the members of our association, for your support. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your president.

I look forward to seeing you at our next reunion in San Diego in 2010.

*Best wishes to  
you all.*

*Jack Salm  
President*

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I have numerous references.

*What can I do for you?*

**John Conway**

K.C., Ks. 66104

Eve. [REDACTED] • Toll Free  
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**E-mail items to The Aviator at: [editor@vhpa.org](mailto:editor@vhpa.org)**

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# The Battle of An Loc (2841)

*By Dan Fox, 1st Air Cav, A/229th*

Background: The North Vietnamese Easter Offensive in the spring of 1972 consisted of a massive, coordinated three-pronged attack designed to strike a knockout blow against the South Vietnamese government and its armed forces. In this offensive, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) used conventional tactics and introduced weaponry far exceeding anything that had been employed during any previous guerrilla campaign in the war.

This was a radical departure from NVA war strategy up to this point because they believed that the Americans, with only 65,000 troops left in Vietnam, could not influence the current "Vietnamization" strategic policy because the political climate in the United States would not permit President Nixon to commit any new troops or combat support to assist the South Vietnamese forces. Additionally, they believed that a resounding NVA military victory would humiliate the South

Vietnamese president, destroy his war politics, and perhaps foil his bid for reelection.

The Vietnam Easter Offensive saw a total of 14 NVA infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments including 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 Russian tanks and other armored vehicles (virtually the entire North Vietnam Army) maneuvered into battle positions along the Laos and Cambodian border. On March 30, 1972 three NVA divisions (5th VC, 7th NVA and 9th VC) estimated at over 36,000 troops began the Easter Offensive in Binh Long Province to capture the city of An Loc.

At the time An Loc was a thriving and prosperous city surrounded by vast rubber plantations operated by the Michelin Tire Company totaling 75,000 acres and sat astride QL-13, a paved highway leading from the Cambodian border about 70 miles directly into Saigon. Due to its strategic location between Cambodia and Saigon,



An Loc figured prominently in the North Vietnamese strategy because the capture of An Loc would provide the NVA with a military base for a follow-on attack against Saigon to seize President Thieu's seat of government. The availability and responsiveness of American aerial firepower and helicopter combat support proved crucial to the outcome of this battle. (1.)

## My Story:

I was flying with the 1st Air Cav, A/229th (Task Force Garry Owen) from Lassiter Pad at Bien Hoa Air Base during the spring of 1972 watching U.S. military forces leave Vietnam at an ever-increasing rate and remember thinking to myself: "if this keeps on I'll be going home soon." Needless to say . . . I was very wrong!

As one of our unit's Aviation Maintenance Officers, my days were usually spent overseeing repairs for our unit's 24 UH-1 helicopters and up to this time, these repairs had been mostly routine aircraft maintenance with some occasional small arms damage that kept things interesting. All this "routine stuff" abruptly changed when our helicopters began flying combat missions to support the intense Easter Offensive ground battle against overwhelming NVA forces advancing



on the town of An Loc.

Increasingly our Huey's came back to Lassiter shot up and some didn't make it back at all. Routine aircraft maintenance abruptly morphed into 16-hour days with night test flights to meet the requirements for the next flight back into An Loc again. Everyone did their very best to maintain our unit's battle damaged helicopters in flyable condition and thanks to the resiliency of the venerable UH-1, we were able to accomplish the mission through much hard work and replacement helicopters in some cases.

I remember lying on my cot the night of May 11th watching flashes of light on the horizon through my open hooch

door and hearing the distant bomb explosions as Strategic Air Command (SAC) B-52's pounded NVA positions around An Loc every 55 minutes for over 30 hours in a massive display of airpower known as Arc Light carpet bombing. While the weight of this massive bombing effort blunted the NVA advance, it required soldiers on the ground to ultimately secure territory. Our flight crews continued to ferry troops into An Loc to re-supply the ARVN garrisons and by mid June the defensive perimeter had been expanded to encompass the outlying hamlets and some of the terrain that surrounded the city, however the heavy fighting continued because no formal proclamation

of victory had been declared.

On July 5th a combat support airlift for 1000 ARVN soldiers was initiated from Lai Khe using 20 Hueys from A/229th and 20 VNAF Hueys. We arrived at Lai Khe just before dawn and huddled up for our combat flight briefing. While I am unable to recall all the details from this combat flight briefing, I vividly remember we were told: "avoid the .51 cal and 23mm anti-aircraft fire and the shoulder-fired SA-7 Strella heat seeking missiles that could fly up our tail pipes!" The 30 helicopters were split into three flights of 10 aircraft each. Our 20 Hueys were designated as white flight & yellow flight and then further split into 2 and 3 aircraft groupings.

The flight plan then called for each helicopter to load 8 fresh soldiers, fly them 60 miles to An Loc, drop them off in the LZ on QL-13 and then pick-up 8 combat fatigued and/or injured soldiers and fly them back to Lai Khe. We were to maintain three minutes separation between each group of helicopters to allow time for the drop-off and pick-up in the LZ and continue flying this daisy chain until all the 1000 reinforcement troops had been flown into An Loc.

This sounded like a workable plan so we loaded up our 8 soldiers and off we flew toward An Loc.

As luck would have it I was in a group of 2 Hueys as one of the very first flights into An Loc this day. I picked a loose trail as we climbed up to a comfortable altitude of 3000 feet for the flight leg into An Loc.

We were warned that An Loc was still heavily fortified with enemy gun positions but the positions were not accurately plotted. All we knew was the town was surrounded with at least three .51 Cal's and as many 23mm ZSU-23's.

**Oh yes . . . keep an eye out for the SA-7 Strella missiles too!!**

With this information churning in the back of our minds we started our approach as we spotted the LZ on QL-13 straight ahead. We began a nice gentle decent just like they taught us to do in flight school which was not a very good idea! By the time we were on short final to the LZ we realized that we had just telegraphed our arrival to the NVA with the familiar Huey "whomp-whomp" blade-slap sound.

I noticed three abandoned VNAF Hueys running at flight idle in the big



open field just to the left of the LZ as we touched down. I wondered . . . **"what in the world had happened?"** Latter I found out they took fire on their approach and rather than continue into the LZ they had landed there. They all jumped out and ran down into the tree-lined creek bed leaving their Hueys with the engines running.

The three minute clock was now ticking so I yelled: **"get the troops off right away!"** The other soldiers on the ground were already rushing toward our Huey. I looked down the road past the other Huey and saw a puff of smoke, followed by a second puff a few seconds later only closer. I immediately realized the NVA were walking mortar

rounds down the road toward us. They didn't know our exact position but they knew we were on the road somewhere and were hoping to get lucky.

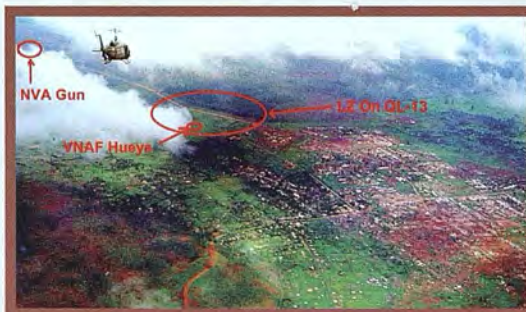
Suddenly my shoulder harness was jerked back pulling me tighter into my seat. I twisted around to see what was happening and found myself looking at a sea of faces! I quickly realized we had 13 little ARVN soldiers crammed inside our Huey all yelling and screaming. This meant that we had a total of 17 bodies on our helicopter! Keying the mic button I yelled for our door gunners to kick 5 soldiers off immediately. Looking forward I saw a third puff of smoke - the mortar rounds were getting closer. The radio crackled as the other Huey announced he was **"pulling pitch in 10"**.

Before we were able to remove the additional 5 soldiers our three minute clock ran out. I rolled the throttle up and began to lift the collective slowly moving forward over the bomb crater in the middle of the roadway and felt my

Huey shudder as we were blasted sideways from a mortar round which landed directly behind us where we had been parked just seconds before. No time to stop now as I pointed my Huey's nose down QL-13 keeping the skids just above the roadway.

After about 1/2 mile the road took a sharp 90 degree turn to the left and by this time we were going so fast I decided to climb over the trees rather than try and make the turn. As I lifted over the tops of the rubber trees I heard the dreaded low RPM audio sound in my headset and saw that the red low RPM warning sign was lit up on the instrument panel. I glanced at the RPM gauge and saw 5900 RPM and going down because of the extra weight from the soldiers that we were carrying and the rapid demand I had just made for power to clear the trees.

I realized that I was running out of rotor RPM but I couldn't lower the collective because



we were close to the tops of the trees. Simultaneously my door gunners started screaming that we had just flown right over the top of an enemy gun position. Thankfully we were so low the NVA gunner was not able to get a shot off. Flight school training kicked in as I quickly rolled the throttle off below 70% N1, flipped the emergency governor switch from automatic to the emergency manual mode and rapidly rolled the throttle back up as much as I could. Our Huey's Lycoming engine began to scream as additional fuel started flowing into the combustion section producing the power needed to regain operating rotor RPM and keep us from descending into the trees.

On the way back to Lai Khe I relayed the position of the NVA gun and then had a long discussion with our flight crew about what had just happened

and how we were not going to make the same mistakes again.

The rest of that very long day we used modified arrival procedures: we flew into An Loc at 6,000 feet with a rapid spiral down through a hole in the clouds right over the town followed by a low level directly to the LZ and a low level back out; all the while carefully avoiding the NVA gun position we had found at the bend in the road.

Final Thoughts: They say that all things happen for a reason and most of the time you don't fully understand the

reason until afterwards. I now know that if we had just picked up 8 soldiers from the LZ like we were supposed to, I would have made a normal climb out which would have

undoubtedly made us a perfect target for the NVA gun that we flew over at the bend in the road. We survived that day because of the mistakes that we



thought we had made, but in reality, those mistakes that we thought we had made really saved us all.

A few weeks later the 1st Air Cav stood down making the Battle of An Loc arguably the last and most intense battle the 1st Air Cav participated in during their years in Vietnam. I am indeed honored to have flown with such a fine group of Army Aviators and to have been a member of A/229th during this time in history.

*Footnotes: (1) Thiet Giap! The Battle of An Loc April 1972, Lieutenant Colonel James H. Willbanks, U.S. Army Retired, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1993.*

## From the Editor of The VHPA Aviator,

My request for information on the Battle of An Loc brought about a couple of interesting responses from Members wanting to talk about the first use of a wire-guided, anti-tank missile system by Army Aviation. A Google search for the system reveals that the complete installation of six SS-11 missiles on a UH-1 helicopter was known as the M-22 armament subsystem and was actually used in combat by the US Army in Vietnam as early as 1966. By that time, the missiles had been re-designated as AGM-22 anti-tank missile. However, the AGM-22 was not a very popular weapon as the missile operator in the helicopter had to visually track the AGM-22B by using a flare on the missile's tail, and had to manually guide it to the target with a small control stick. The guidance commands were transmitted by a wire, which was spooled out by the missile and for this system to work satisfactorily; it needed skilled operators and an undisturbed environment, the latter almost impossible in a combat situation. Therefore, the overall performance of the AGM-22B in Vietnam was very poor and although it was again deployed in combat



After the Battle of An Loc, this Russian T-54 tank was placed on display near Pleiku. Dan Fox, the author of our cover story, is sitting barrel of the main gun, the man on the far left is Dan's co-pilot and the one on the right is a gunner from Dan's crew.

in 1967 and 1972 (during the battle for An Loc); the missile was quickly phased out afterwards, and was no longer in the Army's inventory by 1976. The AGM-22 missile had a range of 3,000 meters and carried a 15 lb, anti-armor warhead.

Furthermore, according to the Astronautica Encyclopedia, despite its shortcomings, the SS-11 system was still a very attractive and cheap missile for third-world countries, production at Aérospatiale ceased only in the early 1980s, after more than 180,000 rounds had been built.

The battle for An Loc also brought about the Army's first use of the Hughes built, Tow Missile system. These wire-guided missiles also had a range of 3,000

meters but were much easier to employ as the gunner now had to only maintain the sight's "pip'er" on the target and the missile would fly to the spot, thereby eliminating the need to continually adjust the flight of the missile to bring it back on path to the target. The tow missile became the backbone of the Army's anti-armor effort for many years to come, being replaced only by the Hellfire

missile which became standard equipment on the Apache Attack Helicopter. The Tow missile system is still in use today, it still serves as the US Marines primary anti-tank system and has been redesigned into an over-fly, shoot downwards version with 3,750 meters of range complete with fire and forget capabilities. And with the thanks of scout pilots everywhere, today's tow missile don't even leave sets of little thin wires lying throughout the battlefield!

But perhaps I (the Editor) digress, the first response to my request for information on the use of anti-tank missiles during the battle for An Loc came from VHPA Member Jack Morrison, he writes:

*continued on pg 6*

David:

I left Viet Nam in March of 1972 and was assigned to CEDEC (Combat Developments Experimentation Command) at Fort Ord, California. How I got there is a story in itself. CEDEC was responsible for conducting trials and experiments on tactics and new weapon systems primarily at the field laboratory at Hunter Liggett reservation south of Fort Ord. I was the admin officer for Team 4 and we were working on tactics for the attack helicopter to improve its survivability in a European threat environment. We were working with assumptions that included the Cheyenne helicopter, Hellfire missile system, TOW missile system and various laser designators. The 155th Aviation Company provided the aircraft and air support for our field experiments. I flew with them to get my monthly flight requirements mostly in UH1H but did manage some right seat time in their Beaver and Otter. When the NVA launched their attack on An Loc, CEDEC sent a couple of teams from the 155th immediately to Viet Nam. Obviously they wanted to test some of the tactics and weapons in a real combat situation. I was not directly involved with the deployment but did get to see some of the films sent back of the teams destroying some tanks with the TOW missile. As a snake driver I was extremely interested in the success of this mission. The films were awesome and it was clear that the TOW system was a success and that its future in Army Aviation was assured. I remember at least three tanks being taken out. The success of the TOW also meant that the Hellfire system would also be included in the Army's inventory.

I think the TOW's were mounted on UH1H's but I'm not sure; it might have been on AH1G's. I am almost certain that this was the first deployment of TOW's in a combat situation.

Hope this helps. If you want any more information or have questions, feel free to contact me at: [REDACTED]

**Jack Morrison**  
**Banshee 22, B/2/17, 101Abn Div, Flight Class 71-04**



The next response to my request came from VHPA Member Jerry Daly, he wrote: David,

I see that you are going to base the next issue on the Battle of An Loc. I believe you are correct, the TOW missile systems were mounted on UH-1's and were first

used there, I believe as a fire team. Also, on or about 10 April 1972, Pickananny Army Arsenal (MSCOM), at the request of the PM - 2.75 Rocket, shipped 1,000, new A.T. (anti-tank) rocket rounds to Vietnam. The warhead was on the drawing boards but not in production and was designed to "marry-up" the 10lb. AT, HE warhead with the LAW (Infantry Light Anti-tank Weapon). At that time, the only 2.75" anti-tank rockets we had available were left over from the Korean War and really didn't penetrate armor very well. The new rockets/rounds were shipped on a special airlift out of Dover, AFB and when they arrived they went directly to Major Larry McCay's unit of the Blue Max (F Battery, 79th ARA). They did a great job with them and their (both the unit and the weapons) success in defeating enemy armor was spread far and wide throughout the Army.

Thanks for your time, and your interest,

**Jerry Daly**

We also received a couple more responses to my request for information but for now, I have decided to leave it at these two stories about the use of wire-guided missiles during the battles. The other stories, included an account of a dramatic rescue of a Marine CH-53 crew by a determined group of Army pilots from F troop, 4th Air Cav, will be told as stand-alone stories in a future issue. That's mainly because I'm more than a little obsessed about Cav Troop and Medivac stories and I want to make sure they get their true telling in the correct way.

**David Adams - Editor of The VHPA Aviator**  
**Sabre 75, D Troop, 1/1 Air Cav**

## HELP AND OR CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED...

Dr. James W. Williams, (Jim to us VHPA Members) has teamed with several of his friends and have undertaken the very complex job of getting our fellow Army Aviator, the recently deceased (Major) James T. Newman, inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame.

Anyone desiring to either help with and/or contribute to this worthy effort is invited to contact Jim at:

## SOME INFORMATION YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING...

Temperatures in Vietnam for July & August average a high of 35 degrees C and a low of 21degrees C in both Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang. Rainfall averages 290 CM for each month and it rains about 22 days of each month in Ho Chi Minh city alone. The BBC Rates the discomfort level, due to the combined heat and humidity, at HIGH.

....The current conversion rate is : US Dollar \$1.00 = VND 17.76 Vietnamese Dong....

Dengue fever has infected almost 20,000 people in Vietnam in the first six months of the year and killed 21, seven more than in the same period last year, the Vietnamese health ministry said on 26 June, 2009. Higher temperatures and rainfalls have been blamed for the nearly 15 percent rise to 19,744 new infections from the mosquito-borne disease, which have been concentrated in the poverty-stricken southern Mekong delta.

# VHPA

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## THE 10th COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION (VAGABONDS) PLANS REUNION FOR ALL ATTACHED UNITS IN VIETNAM

The Vagabonds, under the sponsorship of the 281st AHC, will hold its first Battalion wide reunion in Saint Louis during the period of 29 July- 02 August 2009. Hotel arrangements have been made at the Crowne Plaza, only minutes from the St. Louis airport. Our rate is \$61/night (plus tax) if you mention the reservation code, AH2. The low rate includes free shuttle service from and to the airport, local eateries and the casinos. Contact the hotel directly at 314/291-6700 and ask for group reservations.

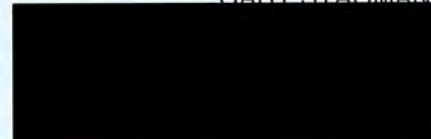
All former members of the units assigned to the 10th BN in Vietnam are invited. We have a commitment from four of the former Battalion Commanders to attend and are looking for the CSMs. However, if you were a mail clerk, cook, door gunner, crew chief, mechanic, platoon leader, aviator or filled any other position in any of the 10th Battalion units, this is your reunion!

Please post this info to your web sites/newsletters, reserve the dates, and contact your buddies. Our agenda includes mini-reunions and activities for individual units. In that regard we need unit level contact individuals to act as liaisons with the 281st.

Sign up now by going to the 281st AHC web site: ([http://www.281st.com/281MemberArea/Bulletin%20Board/click\\_the\\_link.htm](http://www.281st.com/281MemberArea/Bulletin%20Board/click_the_link.htm)) and click on APPLICATION. Deadline is 1 June. You may contact the hotel directly for room reservations.

For more information, please contact our unit coordinator, Gary Stagman, to be put on the mailing list:

GARY STAGMAN



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The VHPA Aviator contains member privacy information the VHPA considers proprietary and confidential.

This information, including but not limited to the VHPA Chapter list, shall not be used for commercial solicitation purposes or for any correspondence related thereto without prior written authorization from the VHPA president. Correspondence relating to commercial purposes or solicitations shall only be sent to those officers, committee chairmen, and staff listed above, in the VHPA Officers, Committee Chairmen and Staff 2008-09.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## *I have an unusual request, after a very long time.*

As commander of a gunship company in VN in 1969 I had a pilot hit by 7.62 bullet, which entered his right jaw and exited his left jaw (I believe with his teeth). The next day, I pinned a purple heart on him, and have not heard from him since as he was quickly evacuated. I regret that I got involved in other things and did not follow up on him. *He was truly a warrior.*

My problem is that I do not have any significant leads to go on since I do not even remember his name. I know these sounds like looking for the proverbial "needle in a hay stack," but it occurred to me that given a time group and incident there just might be a lead with VHPA or the VA because it is unlikely that the same circumstances happened in the same year, 1969.

With the coverage of VHPA, maybe a platoon member, leader, or class member would have a hint as to who he is.

*I would appreciate any comment that you may have.*  
*Thanks,*

**Jim Millirons**  
**Company Commander (1969)**  
**D/229th Avn Bn, 1st Air Cav Div**  
**Located at Dau Tieng**

**Contact:** [REDACTED]

## *Letter to the editor,*

I graduated Flight School with Class 71-13. My class ring was either lost or stolen (most likely the later) and I would like to get it replaced. If someone could provide the correct information on who to contact where to go, etc. *That would be wonderful. Please call me with any details.*

**Mike Streeper**  
[REDACTED]

## *Seeking Help from the VHPA Membership...*

One day I went looking for information on a dear friend of mine, James Rausch, we were teenagers together in Los Angeles prior my joining the Marines in 1962, he joined the Army later. Sadly, on the Air America web page, I found out that James was killed by ground fire in Laos in 1972 while flying a UH-34D.

Can anyone out there help me find out where he was laid to rest? Or if he has any surviving family members I could get in touch with?

**Fred Romero, Simi Valley, CA**  
**E-Mail:** [REDACTED]

## *Dear Members of The VHPA*

I am searching for a Warrant Officer Pilot, US Army that flew me and another man, from Qui Nhon to Nha Trang the day after the Easter Offensive in 1972. I approached him in the Officers Mess at Qui Nhon asking him to assist us in getting back to Cam Ranh. We had driven from Cam Ranh to Qui Nhon the day the Offensive began and three bridges were taken out behind us before we made it into Qui Nhon. We were civilians working for ITT-Federal Electric.

Our Pilot said that if we could be on the Chopper Pad outside the mess hall in 5 minutes, he would give us a ride back to Nha Trang.

We boarded his Huey and while in route to Nha Trang, he was diverted to Tuy Hoa by John Paul Vann. Mr. Vann then used the Pilot and Chopper to inspect mountain-top communication sites and bridges that had been attacked.

We listened to the radio calls at Tuy Hoa, while JPV inspected the sites. One call I partially remember was JPV telling an Officer to tell a Vietnamese General that "if you don't have that bridge back in by noon tomorrow, I will have your ass on the carpet in Saigon."

The Pilot I am looking for was very young and blond, from Southern Calif. I not only want to thank him for getting us out of Qui Nhon, but would like to have his contact info for a story I am writing

**Sincerely, Jack J. Johnstone**

**E-Mail:** [REDACTED]

## *To the Members of the VHPA,*

I wish to thank all the members of our Association that responded to my request in the last issue for music from our Vietnam days. A special thanks to Ed and Anita Duke who sent me a pristine CD of their songs. Many others have offered copies of their tapes. It is my hope that I can make good use of them to further our legacy and promote patriotism.

**Greg Smith**  
**Class 67-11**  
[REDACTED]

Remember, the deadline for this year's  
Christmas in Vietnam Issue  
is Friday, October 2nd, 2009.  
Send in your stories today!

## Are you retiring or changing jobs?

If so, you may be facing some important  
financial questions. That's why now is a good time  
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# AMERICAN HUEY 369

by Phil Marshall, DMZ Dustoff 711

I would like to bring your attention to a project that has been ongoing since 2005.

Paraphrasing the history here, several years ago, John Walker, a former Marine Jolly Green pilot, decided that he and his brother Alan needed to have a surplus Huey to house in their pole barn to sit in and tell war stories. (What a great man-barn that would be!) They found 70-16369 at the Search and Rescue Facility (DEEMI) in Maine, and hauled it 1300 miles home to Peru, Indiana; a nearly complete specimen that, like us, was a Viet Nam Veteran.

Huey 369 served as a Dustoff helicopter with the 498th Medical Detachment in 1971 and 1972 before being returned to the US. Now, with a helicopter sitting in their barn, John and Allen began to realize that 369 was in remarkably good shape! The wheels started turning, and with lots help from many "older" and retired Viet Nam vets, the Walker Brothers and like-minded members from all over the US had a flyable H-Model Huey!

Of course, owning and operating a Huey is not cheap, so the idea was hatched to form AmericanHuey369, a 501c Corporation that sells memberships to keep her legacy going. Since 2007, 369 has flown to 5 Moving Walls, and dozens of Military and Patriotic Events. This summer, she is scheduled for 12 events where hundreds of people, probably over a

burning in a Lycoming gas turbine. All members are essential to the mission of preservation, education and paying tribute to all veterans and these aircraft.

But the John, Alan and the 369 organization was not done yet. In the process of scouring spare parts for their icon, they came across 63-08803, another restorable Huey, and with more investment in dollars, and time, and lots of donations, 803 will fly again this Spring and by the time you read this, should already have logged several hours.

This converted D-Model to an H-Model, 803 also served as a Dustoff / Medevac bird, this time with the 1st Cav 15th Medical Battalion in 1965.

In 1967, it was assigned to the 336th Assault Helicopter Company (Warriors and T-Birds) at Soc Trang where it became a slick with the nose art of Warrior 11. In 1968, it suffered serious damage in a burning LZ, but was flown back to base (with the skids ripped off) and eventually returned to CONUS. The 369/803 members have restored this Huey to it's Warrior configuration.

While memberships and donated time are all that keep these 2 Hueys in their present state, they could really use a corporate sponsorship. I have been to these American Huey events and have seen first hand the healing that is taking place. Gentlemen, for the first time in my life, I have seen people genuinely interested in what we did! Kids are excited about them. Adults are exited, too, but they are asking questions about what we did, what was it like and "I can't believe you all were so young". I don't see the apathy anymore that I saw so



many years ago, and I am doing what I can to keep this legacy going...to keep these blades turning. The public's interest is incredible and for vets, it's very emotional.

Thousands of people see these Hueys each year, and I have got to believe that somewhere there is a sponsor for these 2 aircraft. It's about the Veterans and about the Huey, both of which grew up together in SE Asia. As a 501C Corporation, American-Huey369 write-offs are available.

Future dreams and goals include an American-Huey Museum dedicated to a sponsor for their financial support of this Chapter of our History. Patriotic, America-loving people are flocking to these birds several weekends a year and participating in the effort to keep a living part of history...OUR history...alive. The Walkers and many 369/803 members did not even serve in Viet Nam, yet they appreciate us, what we did and they appreciate the Hueys. We need to insure that these aircraft continue to fly as long as possible.

Contact them at  
[www.AmericanHuey369.com](http://www.AmericanHuey369.com)

Phil Marshall  
DMZ Dustoff 711,  
237th Medical Detachment, 1969



thousand, will get a flight in a Viet Nam Huey. People of all ages line up to hear the sound of her blades and smell the distinctive odor of jet fuel

# In late October of 1969 Camp Bu Prang, a 5th Special Forces A Camp 236 came under siege.....*Author Unknown*

In late October of 1969 Camp Bu Prang, a 5th Special Forces A Camp 236 came under siege.....*Author Unknown*

by elements of the 28th and 66th NVA Regiments. These NVA forces had, from 5 May 1969 through 29 June 1969, besieged Ben Het and Dak To. Ben Het and Dak To were located along the border region north of Ban Me Thuot in the Pleiku area. Bu Prang, one of the southern most in a series of A Camps situated along the Cambodian border in the II CTZ, was located south of Ban Me Thuot on the Cambodian Border. Strategically well located for intelligence purposes, the tactical setting seemed to me to be somewhat less than desirable. It was a typical A Camp configuration lying less than 5 miles from the Cambodian-Republic of South Vietnam international border. The border ran generally north and south but occasionally would make a hook or turn. Bu Prang was located in one of these hooks. Flying from Ban Me Thuot down the "preferred route" along Hwy 14 to Duc Lap, the Camp would come into sight on the horizon, a 2000 foot red dirt airstrip that gleamed in the morning sun like a beacon. Continuing in a straight line of sight course to the airstrip would take you directly over Cambodia and Camp Le Rolland which was on the western side of the border. The "preferred route" was to circumnavigate the border and stay well east of Hwy 14 and approach from the east.

During the first part of the siege from 29 October through 3 November, I flew 46.0 hours of resupply and support for A-236 and its supported Firebases and spent many more hours on the ground waiting. These first six days were intense and many lives were lost to include a Huey Gunship and crew from the 155th AHC. Firebases KATE, ANNIE and SUSAN were established around Camp Bu Prang by the 5th BN, 22nd Artillery. The security at these Fire Support Bases was provided by U.S. Special Forces from both A-236 and A-234 with rotating CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) forces composed mostly of Rhade Montagnards and Cambodes, who were fierce fighters and considered to be among the best warriors in the CIDG program.

By 3 November the three Firebases had suffered continued B-40 and Recoilless Rifle fire and were pretty much beaten down. The NVA Regulars that had worked their way south down the Ho Chi Minh Trail from the Tri-Border area of Laos, Cambodia and RVN were not your garden variety VC. These troops were for real and fought to the death. The Firebases were low on small arms, ammo, and water. Efforts to keep these Firebases resupplied had been repulsed by direct fire from enemy gunners. The Gunship from the 155th was rumored to have been hit by an RPG. It broke up at altitude and exploded, killing the entire crew.

Early on the morning of 2 November Jerry Badley and I were flying resupply for A-236. We had made contact with the RTO at Bu Prang and told him that we had his supplies, which had been loaded at the B Team at Ban Me Thuot. Naturally, he was glad to hear from us but told us not to land on the airstrip. He wanted us to make a low pass and throw the supplies off, so as not to become a magnet for enemy fire. Every time a helicopter landed the Camp was shelled. Well, we did not have to be told twice. We promptly set up an approach that would terminate at the middle of the strip near the Camp entrance. Our intent was to fool the NVA gunners into believing that we were landing at the touchdown threshold and then low level down the strip below the tree line to the actual touchdown point. We received light small arms fire on final and dropped below the treeline as planned. During our run down the length of the dirt strip we could see the mortars hitting behind us. The NVA were not planning on a 100+ knot low level pass and could not keep up with us. We slowed just enough to push the cargo off and then pulled back up to altitude east of the Camp. The troops recovered the supplies without incident.

We were about to head back to Ban Me Thuot when we received a call on FM from the RTO at Bu Prang. He wanted to know if we thought that we could get some ammo and water into FB KATE, which was just southeast of Bu Prang. Badley and I, both PIC's and about to become Aircraft Commanders, talked it over between ourselves and the

crew and decided to give it a shot. Unknowingly, we assumed the worst part of this would be getting the ammo and water loaded

on at Bu Prang. Of course we had just come from there and managed to beat fate once already. The RTO gave us a frequency to contact for coordination.

The 155th was still working the area, trying to resupply the three Firebases.

They had been successful in getting into and out of ANNIE and SUSAN, but KATE was left in dire need of 5.56, 7.62 and water. Upon contact we found that three other UH-1H's had tried unsuccessfully to get into KATE which was surrounded by the NVA. The Gunships had expended and were low on fuel, we were told, and could not cover us on our ingress and egress. Suddenly, this simple resupply was taking on another complexion. During the course of the radio conversation on Victor with the 155th C&C we got a call on UHF Guard. Since Jerry was busy with the C&C, I responded to SPAD 05 and asked him to meet me on 241.0 Uniform. SPAD 05 informed me that he was an A1-E Skyraider and that he could provide coverage for us to make a run on KATE. I immediately asked what he had in the way of armament and station time and if he could get slow enough to cover a Huey on a slow approach into a hot LZ. He quickly advised me that he had 20mm, 250 pounders, Napalm, and rockets and about 3 more hours of station time. I could not believe it. By this time Jerry had finished with C&C and had set up the pick-up at Bu Prang. I told SPAD 05 that we would meet him at SUSAN and he could cover our approach into KATE after we made the pickup.

The pickup was flown much the same as the resupply a few minutes before. This time we came to a full stop and the ground guys had us loaded in no time flat. The mortar rounds were making their way to our touch down point as we flew out of the compound.



Upon reaching SUSAN we hooked up with the Skyraider. This was the first time I had seen an A1-E, and obviously the first time I had ever had close support from one on a resupply. Jerry was flying and I was doing the radios and reading power. As we started our approach all hell broke loose on the right side of our approach path, my side. The door gunner came hot and the noise was deafening. As we came through 40 knots, I looked out the right window and saw the Skyraider. It was a sight to behold. He had full flaps and was right beside us with the 20mm working out. The tree line was splintering from the massive amounts of HE steel being thrown out. A few well placed rockets from the Skyraider and excellent M60 from our Door Gunner and we were in KATE. It did not take long to get rid of the cargo. We picked up two WIA's and were on our way out in what seemed like a few seconds. SPAD 05 was on his in-bound when we lifted off. I have never been

involved in anything that worked so flawlessly. We did not take a hit. The NVA obviously had a healthy respect for the awesome firepower that the A1-E could provide, and they kept their heads down just long enough for us to get in and out. We were almost Bingo on fuel by this time and continued on to Ban Me Thuot to drop off the WIA's, refuel, and have a little lunch.

We returned to the Bu Prang area the next morning at first light with a mission to work with the CIDG Camp just northeast of Bu Prang. When we arrived on station, I could not believe my eyes. The night before had been an eventful one for the guys at the Firebases, Camp Bu Prang, and the CIDG Camp. All three Firebases had been abandoned, and the troops had E&E'd to Bu Prang. The CIDG base had been overrun, and the Rhades had escaped into the jungle after a fierce fight. There were between 20 to 30 NVA bodies hanging in the wire. We cruised the

perimeter, checking for signs of life, but there were none. The camp was empty, save the bodies hanging in the wire surrounding the fortifications. We landed inside the wire and looked around for survivors or wounded but found none. I have no idea how many CIDG were killed or wounded that night, but the sight of the camp at first light is one that I will never forget.

During the siege of Bu Prang, officially from 28 October to 24 December, most of the casualties were among the ground troops involved, such as the U.S. Special Forces-1 KIA, 18 WIA; LLDB (Luc Luong Dac Biet)-1 KIA, 2 WIA and CIDG-25 KIA, 148 WIA. There were 2 Australians WIA during the siege. The intensity waned as time wore on and eventually Camp Bu Prang was leveled and a new camp was established about 15 miles southeast of the old location.

## A FATHER'S DAY STORY

Marine son traces Army father to presidential helicopter

*YORBA LINDA, CA -- Marine Colonel Gregory Woodward wanted to know more about the devoted father who died too soon.*

An Iraqi War veteran, Greg Woodward, 50, was twelve years old when his father, Army Chief Warrant Officer Edward B. Woodward joined the Army's White House Executive Flight Detachment in 1971. One of the Vietnam War's most highly decorated helicopter pilots, the senior Woodward was among the best of the best flying the President of the United States. He retired from the Army in 1977, but tragically, in 1991, suffered a fatal heart attack at the age of 51. His sudden death devastated the young Marine son who would proudly carry on his father's dedication to serving his country.

In 2008, about to retire himself, Woodward's quest to learn more about his father led him and his mother to the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, California. There they discovered the restored helicopter used to fly President Nixon from



the White House the day he resigned the presidency in 1974. The younger Woodward couldn't help but wonder if his father had ever been at the controls of that particular helicopter. After a few inquiries, he made contact with retired Army Lt. Col. Gene Boyer, the pilot on that historical day. Boyer was also the man who had located and coordinated the restoration of the world's most recognizable helicopter.

A White House pilot for ten years and Nixon's senior pilot for five, Boyer, 79, had a copy of the executive unit's flight

log. Woodward was thrilled to learn his father had indeed co-piloted that very helicopter. A few weeks later, he and his wife, Paige, met Boyer for lunch, along with retired CW4 Carl Burhanan, another White House pilot who had known "Woody." Over lunch, Boyer surprised Woodward with a color photo of his father sitting in the cockpit of a presidential helicopter at Crissy Field in San Francisco, California. President Nixon and his family were disembarking, and the tip of the Golden Gate Bridge was barely visible through the fog.

Both Boyer and Woodward had a tough time holding back tears, but Boyer had one more surprise for the younger Marine. On March 6, 2009, the two men met at the Nixon Library where a representative from the National Archives and Records Administration opened the helicopter for Woodward to climb aboard and sit in the very seat his father had occupied nearly four decades earlier. Boyer sat in the right seat and recalls, "I don't think he ever stopped smiling. It was very emotional."

# BANDIT 553 3 April 1969

A/229th AHB 1st Cav Div

By Rich Buzen and Mel Schuck



er! The complete tail number of this UH-1H was #66-16553. In closing I like to say that it was great serving with a wonderful bunch of guys in A Company 229th Aviation Battalion.

Rich Buzen

Approximately 10 minutes into a Psy Ops mission about five miles west of LZ Grant (it was SSW of Tay Ninh in III Corps) over a known NVA battalion with a Vietnamese interpreter and music blaring from the loud speakers and flying at 800' AGL, we were hit by 51 cal fire. The crew consisted of WO1 Melvin L. Schuck as AC, 1LT Rich Buzen pilot, SP4 John Gams (now deceased) CE, and SP4 Richard Aspey gunner. Our autorotation was hampered (just slightly) by the fact that we lost the main rotor head some where on the way down! The wreck was returned to Bell Helicopter for analysis. We were later told that Bell estimated, based on the damage to the skids and undercarriage that we'd lost it between 300 and 600 feet AGL. The main rotor was never recovered. We hit the edge of the clearing we were shooting for and then rolled about 100+ yards through the jungle. I am grateful that SP4 Gams pulled me out through the roof (or what was left of it). We survivors used the path our "rock and roll" crash landing made through the vegetation to get back to the open area where we hid behind termite hills. We were rescued a few minutes later. While the crew all survived with some injuries, I believe the Vietnamese interpreter and some of the passengers died in the wreck. The Huey was recovered the next day and sent to Bell as per their request. We were told they wanted to study it because they were surprised that the fuselage remained intact. I wanted someone to study me to find out why my body had remained intact! Or at least tell me why I wasn't a helluva lot short-

I'll bet I've thought about this incident almost everyday of my life since then. I remember the gunner yelling taking fire as he started returning fire and the Huey bucking from the hits. Rich was flying at the time, so I took the controls and dove toward the trees to gain airspeed while getting away from the NVA guns. The engine cut out too soon to be of much help. We put out a mayday call on the company uniform push and then up on Guard. I remember I flat didn't want to crash in the trees. We saw a clearing so I stretched everything I had to make it. I'd guess we were still going about 100 knots when we finally cleared the trees, so I started a flare. That's when the rotor system came off. Luckily we were in a nose-high attitude when we hit the ground so the tail boom took a lot of the impact. Notice you don't see a tail boom in any of the pictures! I remember coming to and smelling smoke. Of course you immediately think about fire but it was just a green smoke grenade. I also remember thinking that I'd have to jettison the door but when I looked it was completely gone. The armored seat sustained lots of damage but I survived! I got out and started checking on the others. We only had two passengers – an Army lieutenant and the Vietnamese interpreter. I believe the lieutenant was killed almost immediately from the NVA rounds that came through the Huey. The rest of us had

all sorts of cuts and bruises. I believe the gunner might have had a broken bone but none of us were evaced from the company and all of us were flying again in a few days. I remember there were lots of termite mounds and scrub brush in the clearing. Rich is correct – we weren't on the ground long when Black Bart (sorry I can't remember his real name but it was another Huey from our company) landed to rescue us. After Vietnam I stayed in the Reserves until 1999 and just recently retired from the FAA. I really enjoy reading the VHPA Aviator and my good wife always purchases a VHPA Calendar for me. My year with A/229th allowed me to serves with some of the best citizens I've met through out my life. The pilots I flew with were all truly professionals with unparalleled bravery. I also have a great sense of pride and a special place in my heart for the Crew Chiefs and Gunners I flew with, for without their dedication and fearlessness we would not been able to accomplish our mission.

Mel Schuck

## A note from the Calendar Committee:

Periodically a VHPA publication (usually a Calendar and Directory) includes photos or artwork of a wrecked helicopter. We understand publishing these images can be upsetting to some readers. For example we received a message that read something like this after the 1999 Directory went out with this cover.



"How could you be so callous to show a picture showing how men died? This is just terrible!" Well, in our defense and as printed in the photo credits, the truth is that no one died in this Joe Kline artwork. Indeed it was a tribute to the first two AH-1G drivers (CPT Mike Brown and CPT Marco Cordon) who actually survived an SA-7 missile strike on 21 June 1972. However, we did adopt an "unwritten policy" that no crew-member died in pictures we publish. These photos of Bandit 553 adhere to that policy as does the photo May 2010 VHPA Calendar photo showing the wreck of Smiling Tiger 183. So the message is – if you have photos of a helicopter that looked like someone played "kick the can" with it, please consider loaning them to Mike Law, Denver, CO 80227. We are happy that Rich brought his pictures and story to us. It is good to know that someone actually survived after losing the main rotor system!

## Memories Beaucoup.....By Jack Johnstone

*The memory fades with time, but to me, when I ran across these photos, it was only yesterday. To my ear from far away, I can still hear the whoop whoop of those chopper blades and see some of the faces, of those gallant young men who flew them.*

It was 1966 and my first assignment on a DOD contract in Vietnam was at Cam Ranh Bay. Our projects there were the largest military construction Endeavour in history, with 47 projects throughout the length and breadth of Vietnam, from Quang Tri in the north, to Bac Lieu in the south. It was the largest assembly of heavy equipment ever known. I lived in a construction camp of 600 men where we had 12 Vietnamese waitresses working in the American dinning hall. One was named Dang and we became fast friends. I was always super polite to her when she waited on me.



One day she came to my living quarters and told me that she would have to go to Ba Loa, a small village in the Central Highlands. She had received a message that her Mother was sick and she must return home. She was worried that she may not be given the time off, but must go at the risk of losing her job. This trip would take more time than expected, because there was a curfew imposed by the military and you couldn't travel at night. Also the roads were dangerous and unsecure.

My DOD identity card gave me an officer's equivalent rating and gave me access to both the Army and Air Force officer's clubs in Cam Ranh Bay. I took great pleasure in drinking with the Aviators and often they would regale me with stories of their missions that day. When I told a chopper pilot of Dang's plight, he advised me that he flew out of an Army chopper base in Su Chin across the bay. He went on to say that they made frequent flights to Da Lat, an old French resort town in the Central Highlands. Da Lat was close to Ba Loa and the pilot told me that if I filled out a set of travel orders, he could give us both a ride there and back. This would greatly shorten

Dang's trip and require less time off. I expedited our travel orders and also received approval from the Camp Manager for her

time off and signed her travel orders. I also was granted the time off and we boarded the Huey Chopper the next morning.

I wish you could have seen her eye's as she looked over the chopper. She had never flown in an airplane, or any kind of aircraft. It was a beautiful flight into the mountains and we landed near a lake, on a chopper pad near the Continental Palace Hotel in Da Lat. I checked into this old colonial hotel and she took off for her village. I was more than a little worried as I watched her board the dilapidated bus (the type you see in Mexico) and head out over the unsecured roads of the Central Highlands, but thanks to the chopper ride, she was only a few hours away.

After a couple of days she reunited with me at the Hotel and we had dinner, sitting among the wealthy, French & Vietnamese in the dinning room. She had never used silverware before and only ate with chop sticks. I showed her excessive affection, as I doted over her and gave her instructions on their use. I was her hero and we were lovers, much to the chagrin of those staring at us. I don't think I meant more to anyone in my life, as I did to her at that moment.

**As I said, Memories Beaucoup.....**

*Editors Notes" This story, Memories Beaucoup is a only part of an upcoming book by Jack about his memories of Vietnam. He has granted permission for the VHPA to run it under the terms of his retaining the First North American Publishing Rights Only.*



## STUPID PET TRICKS / STUPID HUMAN TRICKS

by Jack Salm

Most of us TV watchers have seen "Stupid Pet Tricks" on Letterman's late night TV show. What about stupid human tricks? Growing up we all went through a phase of dare and double dare and did dumb things. The ego is a very fragile thing, even when we are young.

When I was in my early years we were playing follow the leader. We were at an abandoned water reservoir, the cement tanks were empty, but they were concrete and we were going to cross a 40 foot beam that was about 12 inches wide and about 30 to 40 feet above the cement floor. Common sense told me this was not a good idea, but I wasn't going to "wimp out." So, I went across with the rest. Stupid? Damn right!

I have written in other articles some of the crazy things I have done throughout my life, I sometimes I think I am lucky to be around. Camping on the beach during W.W.II and watching a submarine surface not far beyond the surf, scaring the hell of us. My flight to Birmingham in marginal weather when good sense told me to do a 180 and return to Fort Campbell. Flying without lights over Kentucky Lake and buzzing the tow boats. Inadvertently flying across the DMZ in Korea and almost doing an encore at the Czech border on a flight to Grafenwoehr. Flying in formation into a cloud bank when other pilots in the flight were not instrument qualified - very hairy. Low level at night before night vision goggles were supplied - not smart.

Pre-flights are meant to cover everything mechanically but realistically a pre-flight is only as thorough as the person doing the inspection. Time usually dictates how thorough - perhaps not much more than a walk around, but it does pay to check the fuel tanks. It would be very difficult to explain to an accident board why you crashed the aircraft when only 2 of the 3 tanks were full, or why only 1 wing tank was full. One empty wing tank can make for a very sloppy takeoff.

While in Nam I was in the 48th AHC, the "Blue Stars", their motto is "Skill Not Luck." Good motto but not 100% accurate. You can have all of the skill in the world but without some measure of luck you are toast. I feel I have been a very lucky fellow. While flying an L-19 "Bird-Dog" and having an engine failure right over an airfield was luck, bringing the aircraft to a successful landing required skill. The old saying "There are old aviators, there are bold aviators, but there are no old, bold aviators" is probably not true. Some of you out there were bold and are now old. Go figure!

*I sure many of you have interesting stories to tell.*

PS - David Adams, the Editor of the AVIATOR welcomes stories from all of our VHPA members. Can't spell? Grammar or punctuation not your best field? It really doesn't matter, David reviews and tries to smooth out every one, mine certainly have to be. Give it a try, send your articles to David at: Editor@VHPA.org (for e-mail attachable stories), or [redacted] Round Rock, TX 78681.

# VHPA CHAPTERS

*We have 5 new chapters in the formation stage. They are:*

**South Carolina** (Celebrate Freedom) Chapter  
Larry Russell, Pres.

**Ft. Rucker Chapter**  
John A. Crowley, Pres.

**Arizona Chapter**  
Bill Sorenson

**California Chapter North**  
Ken Fritz

**VHPA of Florida**  
Donald L. Welch

[www.vhpaf.org](http://www.vhpaf.org)

**Fort Wolters Chapter**  
Virgil Laughlin

**Georgia Chapter**  
Carl "Skip" Bell

**Mid South Chapter**  
"Pete" Norman IV

**North Carolina Chapter**  
J.D. Lawson

**Alabama Chapter**  
La Rue "Lash" Weisner, Pres.

**New England Chapter**  
Bill Williams, Pres.

**Virginia Chapter**  
Tom Mitchell, Pres.

**North Carolina Chapter**  
J.D. Lawson

**Ohio River LZ Chapter**  
Dave Garner

**Rocky Mountain Chapter**  
Rick Beaver

**Southern California Chapter**  
Ed Holguin

**Washington State Chapter**  
David Eck

The VHPA and Chapters share information and guidance with one another for the mutual benefit of their members. Chapters are separate and independently managed organizations not under control of the VHPA. Neither the VHPA nor any Chapter is authorized to act as agent or representative of the VHPA or any other Chapter.

## Survival Rounds

*By Michael McCormick*

I drew a .38 from supply. It made a fair hammer. Supply gave me six rounds. 3 were snake rounds, 3 were ball. Had to turn in the empty casings to get replacement ammo. I didn't have enough sense to go to the Air Force or Navy to get more ammo.

### Three months pass...

I drew a .45 and a m-16 from supply. Went to the rocket bunker and got about a pallet of m-16 ammo and a few cases of WP grenades + a few bags of Arty charges to tape to the WP. They blew up real purty just above ground level if'n I dropped them from 750 feet. Couldn't figure out how to strap the m-16 to my butt while flying. Oh yeah, the .45 was not for yer normal personal protection. The damn thing had been used against the Moros or the Apaches. I slid the belt around when flying so the holster was between my legs.

### One month passed..

Got a leather cop shoulder holster for my .38, and green taped my survival knife upside down on it. Added same to my flying arsenal (ensemble??). Threw away the Roy Rogers cowboy belt. The area under my rack in the hooch looked like a divisional arty dump. One mortar round on it would have taken out the entire company officers hooch area. I started flying with my seat all the way down and to the rear.

### 'Nother month passed...

Got rid of all the ordinance. just carried my survival knife and some bandages. Never could hit a damn thing with the m-16 anyway and the .45 kept falling apart every time I took it out of the holster. During that time the m-16 flash guard was replaced with the closed guard so I couldn't even open up a case of "Cs" with it anymore. Worthless toy gun!

### ... 'nother 2 months passed...

Got a grease gun at Tien Phouc SF Camp, and 4 magazines. Now there was a manly-mans toy gun. Replaced the spring with a m-60 spring. Flew with it strapped to my carcass. Prayed I'd never have to piss off any NVA on the ground with it. Tried to find ways to get the armored seat lower and farther to the rear of the helicopter.

### ??? time passed.....

Transitioned into the OH-6A. Damn seat doesn't adjust, but I can fly faster than sound, and lower then a snakes belly. I'm immortal. The LOH has a force trim built into the cyclic (stick), so I can shoot the grease gun out the side window with both hands while I'm flying. I kill a lot of paddy dikes. Even shot up a few fishing nets along the coast line.

### Last 2 weeks in country.

Turned in all the toys. Sat in the dark in my hooch waiting for a C-123 to get me out of the land of the big boom. Only flew flare drops around the perimeter at night. Dare I think I'm going home? Yosarian is alive and well in Chu Lai.

### 366th day....

Landed at Travis with a cat in my helmet bag. People here sure don't like soldiers much.

### Pelican 223

# CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Several VHPA chapters have been in a mostly dormant state this summer. I guess they are refueling for the Reunion and other Fall activities. We do have a few Chapter Leaders who are not on vacation, and here is their input. Remember, if you have any questions about the activities of any Chapter, feel free to contact their Presidents individually, that's why we print their contact information in each issue.

~ Jack Salm

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

The chapter will be in Cripple Creek, CO over the August 8th weekend with the Helicopter War Museum for their Veteran Recognition Event. This event is very interesting with Bill Mc Pherson's Mike model Huey's and the reenactment of a WW II American liberation of a German held town in Europe complete with a few WW II airplanes buzzing around the gambling town. This fall we will be having a couple of social events to be announced.

**Rick Beaver, President**

## SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Our scheduled chapter meeting was changed in order to support the 67th Doolittle Raiders Reunion and the annual Thunder at Fort Jackson, SC., both events kept us pretty busy. We were fortunate to have young Warrants as escorts for the 4 Raiders that attended. I got to ride in a SNJ tail dragger! Was working as an official photographer and got some

really nice shots of a B-25 "Panchito" while flying in formation. Flying with the canopy open (to take pictures) flashed me back to Vietnam when we flew with the doors off. We have a full task list for the upcoming meeting. We meet the second Saturday of each month in Camden, SC.

**Larry Russell, President**

## NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

A small group of us continues to meet the first Monday of each month at noon at Joe's American Bar and Grill in Dedham, MA. Anyone interested in joining us please show up and we will welcome you into our group. We have been meeting as an ad-hoc group while being recognized as the New England Chapter, but we still need to formalize the group with corporation papers, bylaws, a constitution, etc. Please contact me at the chapter phone listing or e-mail address.

**Bill Williams, President**

## ARIZONA CHAPTER

We had a great cookout on Saturday 16 May. Even with 102 degree temperature we had about 70 people show up, this is the best turnout we've ever had. Much of the credit for the success of this event goes to Carroll and Susan Vanik (Sec/Treas) and John and Natalie Ahern, they did all the hard work.

We're also wondering if Homeland Security was out there taking our pictures as possible terrorists (Just Kid-ding)! We're continuing to try to reach other VHPA and non VHPA members

in Arizona.

We plan to have another event in Sep/Oct timeframe and then one in December. (We still have a Christmas Party)

**Bill Sorenson, President**

## VHPA of FLORIDA

On May 24 we participated in Memorial Day ceremonies in Veterans Memorial Park with our displays and the chapter members talked to the crowd. Our OH-6 will be set up for display on 7 June in Oldsmar, FL and on the 8th the OH-6 will be set up at the Tampa Scottish Masonic Center for Flag Day ceremonies. On July 4th, our group will be in the parade in Bradenton, FL. On August 13th thru 16th, the OH-6 and displays will be in Orlando for the 7/17 Cav Reunion.

**Jim Basta**

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

On May 2, 2009 we held our second annual Cinco-de-Mayo Barbeque. Several members and their wives enjoyed the Mexican food that my wife and daughters prepared.

Our Chapter will be participating in the 8th Annual Wings, Wheels and Rotors Expo, Sunday October 25, 2009 at the Los Alamitos Army Airfield (in Los Alamitos, CA.) from 0900-1600 hours

Recently one of our oldest members, David Rhodes III was involved in a serious vehicle accident. Fortunately, he is expected to make a full recovery.

**Ed Holguin, President**

## ON LOSING FRIENDS

A Friend of mine met death today.  
With luck, my life was spared.  
His family soon will cry and grieve  
Not knowing what we shared.  
He drew his lot, as did we all  
And understood his chances.  
He did his job as best he could  
No time for second glances.  
There is no solace for a friend  
Who's seen another go.  
Why him, not me, we ask ourselves  
But, no one seems to know.  
The hurt sinks in, and then gives way  
To what we all must be.  
I hate myself for saying this,  
Thank God it wasn't me.

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Author's Note: This poem comes from grief, not pride.  
It is about life that has to go on, and the shame felt when  
friends in Vietnam were lost. May God bless them all.

**Richard Yood, MAS**

**Gladiator 21**



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Joe Galloway

# First Cav Helicopter

By Joseph L. Galloway, McClatchy Newspapers

*As* with so much in life and in death, there was news this week that was joyous and sad and bittersweet all at once for the small community of the Vietnam War's band of brothers of the Ia Drang Valley.

Early in the morning of December 28, 1965, a U.S. Army Huey helicopter, tail number 63-08808, lifted off from the huge grassy airfield at the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) base at An Khe in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam.

Two experienced pilots, CWO Jesse Phelps of Boise, Idaho, and CWO Kenneth Stancie of Chattanooga, Tenn., were at the controls. Behind them in the doors were crew chief Donald Grella of Laurel, Neb., and door gunner Thomas Rice Jr. of Spartanburg, S.C. All four were already veterans of the fiercest air assault battle of the war, fought the previous month in the Ia Drang.

Huey 808 was one of 10 birds in a platoon of A Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, led by Capt. Ed (Too Tall to Fly) Freeman. It was bound on a short, routine flight down Route 19 to an infantry field position just over the high pass between An Khe and the port city of Qui Nhon.

It was what Army aviators called an "ash and trash mission," hauling cases of C-rations, ammunition and other essential supplies to a company of grunts preparing for an air assault mission. Normally, all missions were flown by at least two helicopters, but this one was so brief and so routine and along a route so well known and marked by the center white line of a familiar highway that Capt. Freeman and his boss, Maj. Bruce (Ol' Snake) Crandall, already at the Landing Zone



with the rest of A Company's 20 helicopters, agreed to waive that requirement and let 808 fly alone.

With that, 808 flew off the face of the earth. It disappeared without a word on the radio of distress or trouble. The helicopter was gone, and a massive search effort began almost immediately and continued for months, both as an organized and methodical search and by individual Huey pilots who flew anywhere near that route.

For weeks, they combed the rugged jungle hills on both sides of the road and on both sides of the mountain pass. Choppers hovered over every break in the tree cover peering down if they could see or sending crewmen rappelling down ropes to look around clearings that were not easily checked from the air. They found nothing. The Huey and its four crewmen had vanished.

The families of the crewmen joined the ranks of those who wait for news, for hope, for some closure of an open wound. More than 1,600 American servicemen are still listed as missing in action in Vietnam.

This week, the Department of Defense liaison officers who work with MIA families called Ol' Snake Crandall and surviving family members of the four missing crewmen to confirm that after 43 years, search teams following one of thousands of leads had found and positively identified the wreckage of Huey 808. In what amounts to almost an archaeological dig the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team assigned to this lead also recovered dog tags, other personal artifacts and some human re-

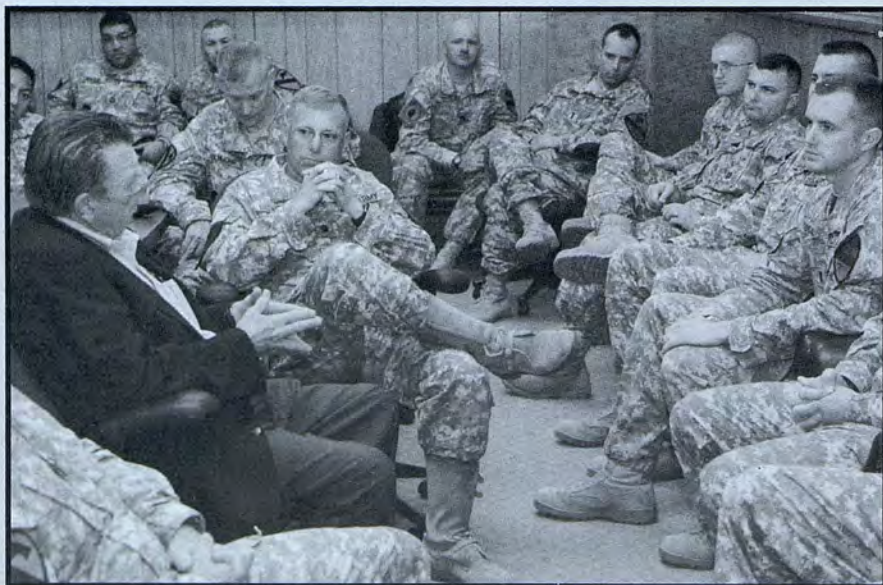


Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs, March 31, 2008  
FORT HOOD - Joseph L. Galloway (left), noted author and journalist, talks with Garryowen troopers from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment March 26 at the squadron's headquarters about his time as an embedded journalist with the Garryowen unit during the Vietnam War. Galloway penned the best-selling book "We Were Soldiers Once...And Young" with co-author Lt. Gen. (retired) Harold G. Moore which recounts their experiences during the battle of the Ia Drang Valley in 1965.

# Found



ion, 7th U.S. Cavalry at Landing Zone X-Ray in November 1965.

Doc's old company commander, Col. (ret.) John Herren, was there. So was Sgt. Earnie Savage, who inherited command of the Lost Platoon after Lt. Henry Herrick and three more-senior sergeants were killed in the first 10 minutes of battle after the 30-man platoon was cut off and surrounded by hundreds of North Vietnamese soldiers.

In all, nine men were killed and 13 were wounded in the opening minutes of a struggle for survival that

lasted 27 hours for the cut-off Americans. Doc Lose used up all the bandages and kept plugging wounds with small rolls of C-Ration toilet paper. He crawled from man to man under intense enemy fire, was wounded twice himself and kept every one of the 13 wounded alive during the longest day and night of their lives.

Doc earned a Distinguished Service Cross for his actions, and his battalion commander, Lt. Gen. (ret) Hal Moore, and I did everything we could to get that upgraded to the Medal of Honor we think he deserved.

Doc Lose died last month, killed by the Vietnam War just as certainly as if he'd been shot in the head by a sniper during those 27 hours with the Lost Platoon. You see, my friend Doc Lose came home from Vietnam a different man. He carried wounds no one but other combat veterans could see. Doc carried the battlefield memories of suffering and death and killing, and they never let him rest.

All that's over now. Doc has crossed the river to be with some other great soldiers. The rest of us will be along soon enough, Doc, so pop smoke when you hear us inbound. The goofy grape (purple smoke) will work just fine.



CWO Jesse Phelps in his WOC Battalion Staff brass

mains. After so long a time in the acid soil of Vietnam, that usually means bone fragments and maybe a tooth or two. Often that adds up to no more than will fill a small handkerchief.

The remains will now be flown to the Central Identification Library in Hawaii and every effort will be made through DNA testing to identify them and attach a name to them.

"They told us it could take several months to complete that process," said Shirley Haase of Omaha, Neb., the sister of crew chief Donald Grella. "I only wish my mother was here for this

news. She waited for so long."

The men of Huey 808 will be coming home at last. Grieving mothers and fathers have died waiting for news that never came. Siblings have grown old. Their buddies have never forgotten and never rested in pressing for a resolution to this case.

Too Tall Ed Freeman and Ol' Snake Crandall, his wingman and boss, never missed an opportunity to ask questions or get a little pushy with a government official, even a president of the United States or a North Vietnamese Army general, in seeking an answer to the mystery.

Too Tall Ed died last summer in a Boise, Idaho, hospital. In their final farewell visit, he and Crandall, both Medal of Honor recipients, talked about Huey 808, and Bruce promised Ed that he'd keep pushing the search as long as he lived.

A week ago, the Ia Drang fraternity buried Doc Randy Lose at the National Cemetery in Biloxi, Miss. Doc was the medic of the Lost Platoon of Bravo Company, 1st Battal-



Huey 808 in action at LZ X-Ray, Ia Drang Valley

# VHPA Members in the news...

**VHPA Member John Harris** was recently honored for his firefighting efforts last November during the "Tea Fire" in Montecito/Santa Barbara County, California. Here is an excerpt from the web site of The Daily Sound concerning the awards:

Those receiving the H. Thomas Guerry Awards for Valor on May 23, 2009 were:

Sgt. Gregg Weitzman, Special Duty Deputy Dave Wight, Special Duty Deputy Jon Simon and Det. Adam Reichick, Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department.

Capt. Gordon O'Neill, Mike Sagely and John Harris, Santa Barbara County Fire Department Battalion Chief Anthony C. Marrone, Jr., and Patrick Stefanski, Los Angeles County Fire Department

When a small brush fire erupted into a devastating, wind-driven firestorm in the hills above Montecito and Santa Barbara, a handful of firefighting pilots and crewmembers boarded their helicopters and began making dozens of water drops despite increasingly dangerous weather conditions.

By the time the smoke settled days later, the Tea Fire had destroyed 210 homes and damaged several others. Without the courageous actions of the pilots who flew hazardous mis-

sions that initial evening, however, fire officials said the losses would have been even more catastrophic.

In gusty winds that topped 75 mph, pilots had to make second-by-second decisions on how to attack the blaze, said John Harris, a fire pilot with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. "Structure protection was a huge part of it, as well as potential [loss]," added Patrick Stefanski, a pilot for the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

He arrived on scene at approximately 10 p.m. that first evening and didn't leave his seat at the helm until 8 a.m. the next day. When asked if he ever felt he was in danger flying a helicopter in such hazardous weather conditions, Stefanski expressed confidence in his equipment and maintenance crews. "I felt more comfortable flying in that fire than driving in L.A. traffic," he said.

The pilots who made water drops throughout the night on the Tea Fire — and more recently during the Jesusita Fire — donned night vision goggles at times to help them avoid hazards such as telephone lines. "You wouldn't want to be up at night without them," Harris said. Stefanski used his goggles to locate navigation points in the unfamiliar terrain below — having never flown in the Santa Barbara area before.

While they acknowledged that it feels nice to receive recognition for their actions, the pilots called out their maintenance crews as the unsung heroes of the evening. Stefanski cited Stanley Fung, Brad Idol and Dave Eastham, while Harris and other county officials gave a nod to Jason Scarborough and Mel Mobley for their role in keeping the firefighting helicopters aloft and operating efficiently.

"When it comes down to it, we're just another tool in the toolbox," said Capt. Gordon O'Neill of the Santa Barbara County Fire Department, also crediting the firefighters and law enforcement personnel who performed in similarly hazardous conditions on the ground during the Tea Fire.

*John Harris adds these words...*

*In summary, I was fortunate to be just one of the pilots & crewmembers honored for our firefighting efforts last November. While I am the only VHPA member in the group, I think our readers may find it interesting that we at the Santa Barbara County Fire Dept. were using both of our forty-plus year old former Army UH-1H Hueys to drop water that night. It was also the first time we had ever conducted live water drops using NVGs. FYI - We even have "Vietnam Veteran" stickers affixed to both sides of our aircraft.*

## Remembering by Jack Salm

### What do you remember most from your tour in Vietnam?

Was it the seemingly endless flight to get there? Or the express elevator descent into Ton Son Nhut? The oppressive heat when you deplaned? The Smells? The crackling energy of the place? It was a strange new world for most of us.

Funny, how you remember some things and forget others. They might both have been important, but some things stick in your mind while others don't. How can you forget breakfast in the mess tent with the Vietnamese firing up the cut-in-half 55 gallon drums filled with human waste while the wind blows the stench through the company area? Yuck!

Or was it the first time you were shot at? It became instantly apparent that this helicopter flying was not going to be all fun and games. Was it the first time your unit suffered a loss? Or, worst yet, was it one of your close friends? It could have been a happy remembrance or a sad one, or both.

I remember Christmas of 1967 in Dong Tre, mud up to our ankles — no flying and no security since the unit we were supporting pulled up stakes and left during the night. Probably my least favorite Christmas of all time.

I remember the best prawns I ever had. We were in Tuy Hoa at the time and a sector chief sent us a gunny sack of them. We cooked them in beer and they were absolutely the best tasting

shrimp I have ever eaten. They were the size of small chicken legs.

I remember flying close to a B-52 "Arc Light", it scared the living daylights out of me. I wasn't right in the middle of it or I wouldn't be here. It was about a mile to my right and the earth just erupted, I have never seen anything like it.

The only time I was ever in Saigon, other than my arrival, was one night at the Red Bull Inn. Strangely, I felt more secure out in the "boonies". Another night spent at the outpost in Duc Co on the Cambodian border was not one of my happy memories. I know we were mortared all night and it looked like we might even be attacked and possibly overrun. We weren't and I was out of there the next morning, feeling very relieved. How could those poor grunts face that everyday?

Do you remember the USO shows? Some were good, some were really bad. I never did get to see Bob Hope but I did get to see Martha Raye. She worked harder to entertain the troops than anyone in her troupe and she was in her 60's at the time. It was a hot day in Tuy Hoa and she had everyone jumping up and down and stomping their feet, a Great Lady was she.

Every one had a DEROS calendar. Some religiously crossed off the days, but we all knew when we were scheduled to return to the world. I guess most of us just accepted that we were there and would make the best of it and do the job we were supposed to do.

## What do you remember the most?

### Just a Friendly Reminder.....

Beginning with membership renewals in September 2009, the cost of the 2010 paper or CD Membership Directory will be \$10 extra. Life members will also be charged \$10 to receive the 2010 paper or CD directory.

To avoid this extra charge, you can elect to use our updated-weekly, online directory at <http://www.vhpaservices.com>



The 22nd reunion of the Ohio River LZ Chapter was held on the weekend of March 6th-8th, 2009 in Louisville, Kentucky. The gathering began early Friday at the hospitality room with many more attendees than normal arriving earlier than in previous years.

The evening progressed very nicely with fun, friendship and a host of personal reunions taking place and new friendships being formed. The evening was topped off with a "Salute to the Troops" demonstration by a local dance troupe. Cindy Saegaert-Book is a member of the dance troupe and is the daughter of Vietnam helicopter pilot KIA Donald Daegaert.

Saturday started with part of the group leaving Louisville and going to Fort Knox to visit the Patton Museum. The museum is wonderful display of memorabilia primarily devoted to the Cavalry and Armor in the US Army.

The other part of our group went over to the Clark County airport where Whirlaway Helicopters is located. Whirlaway Helicopters is owned by VHPA member Bob Poe and his wife Gail. Bob & Gail again made a very generous gesture by donating two helicopters to allow VHPA members to fly for the first time in nearly four decades. Bob & Gail Poe offered this same opportunity back in 2007 and at that time got over 30 pilots to fly again. This year Whirlaway Helicopters afforded nearly 50 helicopter pilots the opportunity to fly again and for the pilots to take more than 70 family members with them. Just imagine for yourself being able to not only fly yourself again but to take your spouse, children or grandkids in a helicopter. There were many smiles and tears of joy shed at this event.

This year featured a special reunion of Marine helicopter pilot Jim Hobstetter and Marine Lieutenant Dan Gardner. Jim Hobstetter (like many other VHPA members) positively touched others in so many ways during their tour in Vietnam. Yet, so many of us never knew just how we made a difference in their lives as we went from mission to mission. Throughout our tour, we were

called upon to extract troops to safety or to obtain medical help. We rarely knew the ultimate fate of those we served.

On May 29, 1969, Jim Hobstetter responded to a medivac call near Marble Mountain in the Da Nang area. A ground unit had tripped a booby trap while on a patrol, severely wounding Dan Gardner and several others in the explosion. Without the immediate medivac, Dan Gardner would have certainly perished.

During the planning of the reunion, the Ohio River Chapter learned of the event in 1969. Dan Gardner of Virginia had been looking for the pilot that saved his life for the past 39 years. The chapter also learned that Dan had only located him in late 2008 but had not yet been able to arrange to meet. So, without Jim Hobstetter's knowledge, Dan Gardner was flown to Louisville and was now waiting nearby.

As Jim climbed into the pilots' seat for the first time in 39 years he was distracted and his view was blocked. Dan was slipped in the back of the Jet Ranger beside Jim Hobstetter's wife Sherri. Jim

took off and flew for approximately 10 minutes only to learn as he returned that he had just flown a man he saved so many years ago. The local NBC affiliate of WAVE 3 was there to record the reunion and featured the flight and tearful reunion as their feature story that evening. The reunion of two warriors was indeed very special event and will not be soon forgotten for all those that were there to witness it.

There were 235 attendees at the Saturday evening dinner which featured Retired General Hal Moore and Joe Galloway as our featured speakers. After the dinner General Moore and Joe signed their books "We Were Soldiers Once and Young" and "We are Soldiers Still" for many of the members and guests present.



Joe Galloway



General Hal Moore

Other special guests at reunion and dinner were the President of the VHPA, Jack Salm, the skipper and crewmembers from the nuclear powered USS Kentucky, Executive Director of Quad A, Bill Harris and the JROTC color guard members from Henry County

High School in New Castle, Kentucky.



Skipper and crewmembers of the USS Kentucky

Dan Gardner presented a plaque to Jim Hobstetter to thank him for his actions on that day 39 years ago. The plaque was created by VHPA member Paul Bartlett of Heleiplaques.



Jim had never been formally recognized for his action on that day. We believe that this gesture by Dan was better than any formal military award that could have possibly been presented. Paul Bartlett created a very special plaque to commemorate the reunion.



VHPA President  
Jack Salm

The evening was a wonderful celebration of duty, honor and country and the bringing together of those that served and the family mem-

bers and friends that supported them. Every year we continue to reach out to those that have never attended our gathering. We especially reach out to those that never attended ANY vet related event on the four decades since their return home. This year there were over 30 vets attending that had not joined the Ohio Valley LZ Chapter but more importantly there were over two dozen vets in attendance that never attended anything since Vietnam. These are the ones that drive to continue to reach out as they are the beneficiaries of what we all have realized. We are proud to have served, proud of those that we served with so many years ago and honor those that gave their last in service to their country.

The 2010 reunion will be held the last weekend of February in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

**Submitted by VHPA member  
- Bob Hamilton**

# Resurrection of a "Dog" by Seppo I. Hurme



## Editor's Note:

On pages 4&5 of the last issue, mostly to take advantage of our ability to run full-color photos of this beautiful veteran of the Vietnam War, we ran a shorter version of this same story. Here again is some of those pictures along with the full text version of the restoration of the restoration of UH-34D #150570



If the venerable Huey was the Army's signature aircraft during the Vietnam War, one could argue that for the Marines, the UH-34D "Dog" shared similar status. While it was not produced or fielded in the massive quantities that the Huey was, perhaps more '34s served with Marine units than any other helicopter. Towards the end of the war, the now venerable CH-46 "Phrog" may have surpassed the "Dog" in sheer quantity. Yet, the UH-34D remains as an enduring symbol of Marine Helicopter aviation.

The Sikorsky S-58 started its life as HUS-1 with the Marines, HSS-1 Seabat with the Navy and H-34 Choctaw with the Army. It was a hit from the date it became operational in 1955. In the early sixties, DoD unified aircraft and helicopter designations. The HUS-1 became UH-34 (D model served with the Marines, Navy used G and J models, mostly for ASW work). At the same time, the newly developed utility helicopter developed for the Army by Bell helicopter was re-designated from HU-1 to UH-1. The UH-34 was the first helicopter certified as a presidential helo. Then President Dwight D. Eisenhower first flew in one in 1957. In the early 60's it served as a recovery helicopter for the Mercury and Gemini space capsules.

First UH-34Ds arrived in Vietnam under the Operation Shufly with the deployment of a crews from Lt.Col Archie Clap's HMM-362 to Soc Trang on 15 April 1962. HMM-362 (reinforced), assisted by HMM 261, both from the amphibious assault ship USS Princeton (LPH-5), were ashore by mid-afternoon and

ready to accept missions the following day. In 1965, when the big American build-up began, Marines landed in Da Nang as did their helicopter units.

In addition to the Army, the Marines and the Navy, the '34 has served with Vietnamese Air Force and several other foreign air forces, as well as, Air America.

For understandable reasons, many of its pilots had a Marine aviation background. Toward the twilight of its career it served in reserve units and finally in

many law enforcement units as a rescue and recovery aircraft.

But in the early sixties, an astute observer could already see the sun setting on reciprocating engine powered helicopters. Turbine powered helicopters were on their way with their much lighter and easier to maintain engines and higher load capacities. In the early sixties, the Marine Corps had ordered the CH-46 from Boeing Vertol (based on V-107 commercial helicopter) which was to replace the UH-34D, CH-53 heavy transport from Sikorsky Aircraft to replace the CH-37A (HR2S-1 "Deuce"), and a light utility UH-1E (derivative of Army "B" model Huey), many of which were later converted into gun ships.

However, while the CH-46A offered significantly more load capacity, it was not yet up to the rigors of combat flying as structural problems dogged the fleet. These problems delayed the phasing out of the UH-34D fleet and new pilots were hastily redirected to the UH-34D, including this writer. Once the problems were identified and corrective actions developed, the fleet of CH-46A's was rotated through overhaul facility in Okinawa and first aircraft were received in late 1967. Once they became operational, the UH-34D squadrons started phasing out their aircraft and returning them stateside. The last helos were returned in 1969 and the last operational squadrons stateside were stood down in 1969. The aircraft then went to reserve units, bone yard or law enforcement units. Some were also eventually bought by commercial operators, espe-

cially when the S-58T turbine powered version of the '34 was developed. While some of these are still flying,

there are only a handful still flying around with the original radial engine.

YN-19 is one of them and one of three in original Marine colors. This aircraft came off Sikorsky line in 1963 as Navy BuNo. 150570 and it was delivered to the Marines on October 28. It flew in Vietnam from 1963 to 1969 and it had served with my squadron, HMM-361, along with several other squadrons. In 1998, after the Pop A Smoke reunion in Pensacola, Florida, several of the veterans got together to see if they could combine their talents and efforts to restore an old '34 to its former glory. The inspiration for this effort had been the appearance of YL-42 at the reunion, another '34 which had been privately restored by Jim Moriarty, a former Marine Crew Chief. Al Weiss, who was at the Pensacola reunion, was struck by the reaction of his fellow Marines to this old war bird and he and others decided to pursue the restoration project.

A non-profit, membership based organization called the Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veterans' Association was formed and they started looking for a helicopter. After some detective work and visits in 2000 to a bone yard in Tucson and a referral from Jake Dangle of Dangle Aviation, Al Weiss was directed to John Haertsch of J.H. Helicopter in Cochise AZ. John had about 25 UH-34 hulks in his yard. After John provided the BuNo.s of all of the air frames, Al cross checked them with available Marine Corps records and identified five aircraft that had served in our squadron. The group made another trip to Cochise in June 2001 to select the best of the five. As it turned out, the one we selected also still had the original Marine Corps paperwork that confirmed that the aircraft had been assigned to our squadron three times. The deal was sealed and the hulk was loaded on a flat bed trailer and hauled back to Long Island, NY where the restoration effort would be performed.

Al Weiss was not able to locate a suitable facility at local Long Island airports so an old barn at a sod farm at Jamesport became the home for the restoration effort. This worked out well for Al Weiss, who lives only 15 minutes from the facility and who has been working there almost every day since that time to the completion of the restoration project. And this is in addition to his day job as a Parts Manager at a local Ford dealership! Al says that his employer has been

very understanding and supporting our project in many ways. Another volunteer and one of the four who went to Cochise, is Ron Hatton who has made trips from his home in Napa, CA several times a year to bring parts and work on the airframe. He and Al are the inspiration for all the rest of us.

The project started with stripping the airframe to the bone, cleaning everything and identifying and storing away usable parts and detailing what needs to be replaced. Clearly, all of the main dynamic components would have to be replaced or overhauled, an effort that was estimated to cost \$350,000. And that would be a daunting sum of money to raise. As it turned out, we were able to get donations for many of the components including a company that overhauls rotor blades who gave us four re-certified main rotor blades with 800 hours of operation remaining. We received an overhauled main transmission that has a life of 500 hours from a company that overhauls transmissions. That alone was worth

\$50,000. We also received two overhauled 1820-94 engines in their original military storage cans from an individual who had purchased them as surplus. Various other components were donated and the largest of these was YL-42, which was donated to us by Jim Moriarty, after the aircraft was damaged in a ground accident. This was a great source of useable parts that included, among others, new radios that are needed for any flying activity. The old radio panels inside the cockpit are retained for display purposes, the modern radios are installed when we fly the aircraft.

Many companies and individuals supported us in the restoration effort. People with experience in other services, as well as, civilian life pitched in. After four and half years and 20,000 plus man-hours of labor we were finally ready for first flight on 12 November 2005. The pilots selected for the first flight were Larry Turner and Ben Cascio. Turner currently operates UH-34s in heavy lift role and also flies two restored

UH-34s for another veteran's organization. Both are former pilots with HMM-362. Of course, Al Weiss was the Crew Chief.

Since that time, the group has tried to take the aircraft on road to various air shows and events. Of course, financial considerations have limited our activity to a relatively small area. It was flown to New River MCAS for the stand up of VMM-263, the first active duty squadron to transition to the tilt rotor MV-22. YN-19 had also served with HMM-263 in Vietnam. Our organization has been trying to locate a major sponsor that would enable us to fly further and wider in our mission to bring awareness of helicopter aviation to the masses.

*For more information and pictures of the restoration effort, I would encourage the reader to visit our web site, [www.freedomsflyingmemorial.org](http://www.freedomsflyingmemorial.org). Of course, any donations to this project are always welcome since we want to keep this piece of history flying.*



## ATTENTION ALL FORMER GHOSTRIDERS AND AVENGERS

**The 189th Assault  
Helicopter Company is  
planning a 2009 Reunion  
From October 8-11 in  
Atlanta, Georgia**

Planned activities include a tour of the Atlanta area, the Georgia Aquarium, the world of Coca-Cola and HUEY rides provided by The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation along with several no-host cocktail parties and a closing fellowship dinner.

Full details on the events, and the accommodations may viewed at their website: [www.189thahc.org](http://www.189thahc.org) or they can be obtained from Gerry Sandlin or [redacted] Yuma, AZ 85365.



On May 17, 2009 over a hundred people gathered to dedicate the Ohio Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall and Gold Star Mother Salute. Located within the Clinton Cemetery in historic Clinton, Ohio, the park's main focus will be a black granite wall that will list the names of the 3,095 Ohio natives that gave their lives in the Vietnam War.

Bricks with names of servicemen from all war and branches of services will pave the way to the center of the park.

## Ohio Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park Dedication



Throughout the park will be monuments, plaques, benches and stones of remembrance. There is no greater gift a man can give than to lay down his life. Humbly, it is the goal of this organization to honor all those who gave a most precious gift, one that we can never repay.

Full details of all the features planned for this Memorial Park can best be found at their web site: [www.ohiovietnammemorialpark.org](http://www.ohiovietnammemorialpark.org)

## ATTENTION VHPA MEMBERS

*Tom Pearcey and David Redel  
are organizing a Reunion of the  
graduates of WOC Flight School...*

**CLASS'S 66-23 AND 67-1**

for this September in Branson, Missouri.

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# DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION PAYS TRIBUTE TO A FALLEN HERO

On February 21, 2009 Warrant Officer Timothy Cole, Jr. was posthumously inducted into the 2009 DUSTOFF Hall of Fame for his unselfish service and humanitarian impact on the DUSTOFF Community, which he served with dignity, honor, and valor. With Tim Cole's induction he joins twenty four other DUSTOFF crew members, three of which are the recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. During his short nine months as a DUSTOFF pilot, he set standards that would be hard to equal by his legacy where he demonstrated courage, exemplary leadership abilities, compassion, and unmatched respect from all with whom he served. He was an intensely dedicated, mission-oriented DUSTOFF pilot, with a true love of God, flight, and the humanitarian cause for which he flew. Those wounded in combat were given the chance to reunite their loved ones.

After graduation from Warrant Officer Candidate Class 67-21 and the Army Medical Department's "Essential Medical Training for AMEDS Aviators", Tim was assigned to the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) where he served with the 1st Flight Platoon at Long Binh, Vietnam. Tim was a fast learner and under the leadership of Hall of Fame member Jim Truscott, his flight platoon leader, he quickly earned the designation of Aircraft Commander. He performed this duty above and beyond what most would expect of such a new and low time combat pilot. As "DUSTOFF 19", his flying abilities as a highly decorated DUSTOFF pilot became legendary. As a mentor, Tim had a tremendously positive influence on many of the new pilots arriving at the 45th Med Co. fresh out of flight school. Two of whom Tim had a positive influence on from the 45th Med. Co. have also been inducted into the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame. Because of Tim's exceptional performance as a DUSTOFF pilot during the autumn of 1968, he and his crew, Pilot James Cassel, Flight Medic Specialist 5 Alex Montanez, and Crew Chief Specialist 4 George Boins, were featured in a United States Army Vietnam (USARV) article titled "DUSTOFF ONE NINE".

On October 7, 1968 Tim returned back to Vietnam from R&R in Hawaii where he and his wife Peggy had celebrated their first wedding anniversary.

Tim was transferred to the 54th Medical Detachment (Helicopter

Ambulance) at Chu Lai as an Aircraft Commander due to pilot shortages. Sadly, on October 18, 1968, while serving as Aircraft Commander for the 54th Med Detachment, in the true Charles Kelly spirit "When I Have Your Wounded", Tim gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country when he was mortally wounded by hostile action on a DUSTOFF mission, doing what he loved doing best, helping others. Even though Tim's life was cut short after serving only nine months as a DUSTOFF pilot, he flew over 800 unarmored, single ship missions and evacuated more than 1600 wounded Armed Forces personnel and civilians. When we remember Tim Cole as "DUSTOFF 19" we think of the many heroic missions he accomplished. During this time, he was awarded the Purple Heart, the Silver Star, five Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and multiple Air Medals.

The following is an excerpt from the DUSTOFF III-IV CORPS Newsletter that highlighted DUSTOFF activities during the 1968 period: "Medical Service aviation suffered a tremendous loss in October with the death through hostile action of WO1 Timothy Cole, Jr. Warrant Officer Cole was transferred from the 1st Platoon of the 45th to the 54th Medical Detachment (Hel Amb) in Chu Lai during late October and was killed as his aircraft went down less than one week later during a medical evacuation mission. Tim "DUSTOFF 19" was highly decorated for his actions with the 45th and was a true professional in every sense of the term. His memory will long be honored by those privileged to serve with him."

*The following are excerpts from several missions for which Tim received his awards:*

While returning from a routine patient transfer from Da Nang, Tim monitored an urgent radio request from an element of the Americal Division requesting the evacuation of two scout dogs and their handlers who were seriously wounded. Without proper support of helicopter gunships or tactical fighter aircraft, he diverted his helicopter to the position of the friendly unit, which was receiving heavy enemy fire. Although subjected to small arms fire during his approach to the friendly unit's position, he skillfully maneuvered his helicopter into the unsecured landing zone and received the wounded American Soldiers and their dogs.

During a night time field standby, an urgent request was received to evacuate numerous casualties that resulted from a Viet Cong assault on the village of My Tho. Upon arrival at the battle site, Tim Cole saw that the Viet Cong had the village surrounded. Ignoring heavy hostile fire, he expertly maneuvered his helicopter without landing lights to the first two pickup points and successfully

evacuated the wounded to medical facilities. Upon returning, he was informed that the final evacuation landing point was a small area surrounded by tall obstacles. He maneuvered through a difficult 100-foot descent into the evacuation point and loaded the final casualties.

While answering an urgent request to rescue a number of Vietnamese soldiers near Can Giouc, making a low-level, high speed approach to the pickup site, his helicopter came under intense fire from the enemy positions less than 100 meters away. Despite the murderous fusillade, he held his position until all the casualties were safely aboard. After transporting them to a nearby medical facility, he returned and expertly accomplished another extraction while armor-piercing bullets slashed his helicopter. He then returned to the same area and made two more extractions in a flooded rice paddy in full view of the enemy forces.

Those of us who had the privilege of knowing and serving with Warrant Officer Tim Cole Jr. will forever remember him as a true to the heart friend and one of the greatest DUSTOFF pilots with whom we ever served. Tim's legacy will carry on for generations from the contributions he made to the DUSTOFF community and the fighting forces that relied on DUSTOFF. Tim was one of those rare individuals who didn't ask for anything for himself, but gave freely to others in need without hesitation or regard for his own safety.

The DUSTOFF Hall of Fame was inaugurated on February 17, 2001 to commemorate those individuals' heroism, selfless service and outstanding contributions to the DUSTOFF tradition "When I Have Your Wounded".



Story By:  
Al Michaels ~ DUSTOFF 8  
45th Med. Co.  
(AA), 1968/69

*The fatal DUSTOFF mission included AC WO1 Timothy Cole, Pilot WO1 Gary Doolittle, Medic SP4 Robert Dieffenbach, and Crew Chief SGT Victor Hernandez. If anyone has any information pertaining to the loss of this DUSTOFF crew on October 18, 1968 at approximately 1800 hours while supporting the 198th B/146 of the Americal Division to evacuate 2 scout dogs and their handlers.*

*The family of Tim Cole and the other crew members families would appreciate any information relating to this DUSTOFF mission.*

*Tim's sister, Carol, can be contacted at:*

# Does Anyone Remember Me?

**Hey Guys!**

I served with the first team in Vietnam 9/66 thru 9/67 11th aviation group.

My call sign was Papa Romeo out of Anh Khe approach.

I would like to know if any of the Helicopter Pilots remember me ?

THX!

Editor's note, unfortunately I received this e-mail without a name included anywhere in it. If this guys looks familiar, let us all know his name and I'll include it in the next Issue's Letters to the Editor column.



## A Really, Really Close Call ~ by Mike Waugh

I read with interest the series of stories titled "Tales of the Blue Max A.R.A "in a recent issue of The VHPA Aviator. Particularly the first story of Jim MacLachlan and his incident of 12 October 1971 outside Fire Base Pace.

Too bad we did not know each other as Jim could have gotten some advice from me on the day he had his little "event".

3 days before I was participating in a combat assault in the same area. We had extracted some ARVN Rangers from the field and had just dropped them off at FSB Pace. We were getting ready to go south to pick up another load. I was flying in the lead aircraft in a flight of 4. On one side of the highway our gun support was taking fire and on the other side of the highway were all the heavy NVA weapons. So our only recourse was to fly low level straight down highway QL22, (if that's what you want to call that dirt path).

Shortly after we started our low level run down that "highway", the turn and slip indicator exploded into my knee and lots of shooting started.

At one point in all of this, I remember seeing some white flecks drifting in front of my face. I did not know what that was at the time. After a series of exchanges we came into some relative calm. It was then that

every light on our panel lit up. We put down at the "secure" ARVN base at Thien Ngon whereupon we immediately started to receive mortar fire. I can remember sitting in the cockpit and feeling pretty safe as I watched dirt flying in the air from the incoming rounds!

We were flying an old D model that day. I think it was the oldest ship in our compa-



ny. As we were regrouping, I tried to get my flight helmet off and could not understand why my sun visor was not going up and why I was getting some funny looks. Eventually, I got my helmet off and found that there were 2 holes bracketing the lone star of the Texas flag painted on the visor cover. Now I knew what those white flecks were. The Styrofoam inside my helmet that was grazed by an AK bullet!!

Fast forward to the next day. I am in my

company area when one of my fellow pilots comes to tell me that our aircraft of the previous day had been returned to Phu Loi and was in front of the maintenance hanger and I had to see it. After looking around at some of the battle damage, I climbed up on the roof of the aircraft and there it was.... A perfect hole, just the size of a B-40 rocket with a perfect sight line to the window of the Aircraft Commander!

To this day, I tell people I owe my life to the poor flying posture of my A/C that day. Gaylord Bishop, one of the finest men I have ever known, always flew very hunched over. Had he been sitting up straight that day he would have been hit squarely by that B-40.

In the past few years I have wondered about the physics of all of this. A helicopter travelling at 100+ Knots with probably the last round of a automatic burst going through my helmet on the right side of the aircraft and a B-40 rocket coming through an open window on the left side of the aircraft and exiting through the roof, missing the rotor blades and going on unexploded. If I was a physics professor at a university, I would probably work on a problem for my students to solve. Fortunately, I flunked high school physics and I just chalk it up to God being on my side that day and I thank him for that!

***I do have pictures  
and I still have the helmet!!!***

***Mike Waugh  
Tomahawk 16  
128 AHC 1971-72***



# TALE OF A COMBAT EXTRACTION

"On 24 March 1967 I (Cpt. Joe Hughes) took off from Song Be to relieve Rod 01, Lieutenant Colonel Mann. We were covering Operation 5/3 from Bu Dop, a Special Force A-Camp. Operation 5/3 was a combined Mike Force/CIDG operation to the east of the Camp. The situation was critical when I arrived. The insertion team was attacked almost before they could move out of the LZ, Sergeant Williams, Sergeant Sammons and a few CIDG were the only friendlies left as I began to direct airstrikes to protect their small force. Armed UH-1s suppressed the enemy fire between the F/W airstrikes, the NVA continued their attack even though they had suffered tremendous casualties.

Extraction was the only way to save the friendlies, but the LZ was not secure, in fact, the LZ could not have been hotter. I decided the friendlies were worth the risk, so I requested a chopper - any chopper - to follow me into the LZ. An UH-1 answered my call and I lead him to the friendlies location. After the first chopper lifted out of the LZ I learned that there were more friendlies to be extracted. I asked for another chopper and immediately another UH-1 was inbound to follow me into the LZ. The second chopper picked up eight or nine CIDG and reported seeing two more as he departed the LZ. A third chopper was called in and I led him into the LZ. He landed and picked up the last two survivors. After these two were aboard, the pilot elected to sit in the LZ for a full minute hoping to save anyone else that might be in the area. All three of these rescues were performed under intense fire. Each aircraft commander displayed outstanding ability and courage as he risked his life and the lives of his crew to save a friendly unit from total annihilation.

For his actions that day USAF FAC Joe Hughes received a Silver Star Medal. Supporting the recommendation for this award was the statement of Jack L. Williams, Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army SF, which is now quoted here:

"On 24 March 67 I was in command of a 120 man CIDG unit from Bu Dop. I was on an operation with an 80 man Mike Force unit from Bien Hoa. We were infil-

trated into a large clearing at YU100303 via helicopter. Rod 13, Captain Hughes, prepared the LZ with three flights of fighters and received light automatic weapons fire from the south end of the LZ. After the helicopter assault, both units began to move north. As we advanced, Rod 13 expended another flight in front of us. Immediately after this fourth flight finished we were hit hard from three sides. The NVA troops were dug in and were waiting for us. Rod 10, Captain Seidman, had relieved Rod 13 by this time and he relayed communications as he waited for more fighters to arrive. Mortars were exploding all around us and radio contact with the Mike Force was lost shortly after hearing the Commander say he was wounded. Rod 10 advised us to head back to the LZ, which turned out to be the best thing we could have done. The enemy attempted to get between my unit and the LZ but most of us made it through. I remained in radio contact with Rod 10 and kept him briefed on our situation, which was not good. It appeared that the Mike Force had been wiped out and many of my men were unaccounted for.

By this time we were surrounded and the situation was desperate. The NVA troops were intent on completely annihilating us. I told Rod 10 where most of the fire was coming from and he directed his fighters with pinpoint accuracy. Each time I thought the end was in sight the airstrikes would drive the enemy back. Rod 10 was relieved by Rod 01, Lieutenant Colonel Mann, and again, Rod 01 and his fighters was the only thing that kept us alive. The NVA were not directing all of their fire at me and my men. The most intense ground fire I have seen during my 24 months in Vietnam was being directed toward the aircraft. I have been in situations almost as bad as this before, and well directed airstrikes have always forced the enemy to retreat, but he would not pull back this time. It appeared that the enemy was attempting to kill every man, and they ignored the tremendous losses they were suffering in the airstrikes.

My unit now consisted of only a handful of men, and we were

located in a bunker on the northwest edge of the LZ. Rod 13 arrived to relieve Rod 01 and only forty-five minutes to one hour of daylight remained. I continued to pass directions to the FAC, and Rod 13 kept the enemy off of my back as he directed his fighters while he himself was under heavy fire. It was approaching dark when I learned that we could not be reinforced because of the heavy fire around the LZ. Of the 200 men that had begun the operation I could account for only 14, the 14 of us in the small bunker. I was trying to decide between escape and evasion and a last stand when I heard Rod 13 volunteer to lead a chopper into the LZ to attempt an extraction of me, and my men. It was hard to believe, but Rod 13 guided the chopper in at treetop level and it picked me up, along with some of my men. It was almost completely dark now. The sky was full of tracer rounds and the ground was alive with muzzle flashes as Rod 13 led in two more choppers to pick up the remainder of my men. Rod had an AC-47 overhead and, after the last chop-

per lifted out of the area, he had the flare ship illuminate the LZ. The LZ was as bright as day when Rod 13 dropped as low as possible and flew back and forth across the LZ in a vain attempt to locate more survivors. Only after several minutes of visual reconnaissance at treetop altitude, that convinced him that there were no more friendlies in the vicinity, did Rod 13 call in his remaining fighters and work them under the flare ship. I consider this engagement the most outstanding example of close air support I have ever witnessed."

Update, 22 July 2006 - The above account is an excerpt of former USAF CPT Joe Hughes' and A-341's SFC Jack L. Williams' contemporaneous accounts on the mission, quoted from The Forward Air Controllers Association FAC History Book, 2004. Bruce Hallberg (a retired fire chief now living in CA), may be contacted at:

Kermit Stewart (a retired banker now living in Texas) may be contacted at:

## NEW!

## "GUNS UP"

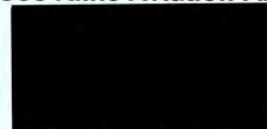


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## BOYD E. KING JR.

KING, JR. Brigadier General (Ret) Boyd E. King, Jr. passed away unexpectedly on Monday, April 20, 2009.

Mr. King, known and loved by all who knew him as Butch, was born on April 24, 1943 in Atlanta Georgia. He was preceded in death by his wife, Diane Wells King and his parents, Boyd Edwin King Sr. and Edna Hackman King Lewallen. Mr. King had been the CEO of VT Halter Marine since 2002 where he was instrumental in reorganizing and revitalizing the company.

Mr. King was retired from the Army after 36 years of service. He served as an enlisted man, a NCO, a warrant officer, a commissioned officer and retired as a brigadier general. He served with honor in Vietnam and was subsequently stationed in Germany, England, various US postings and the Pentagon. Mr. King loved his country and was proud to serve. He was a leader who truly led by example. He valued honesty and integrity and inspired those characteristics in others. He showed the same devotion to his family, his friends and his church. Butch was a warm, generous man with a kind word for everyone. He loved to laugh and brought joy to all who knew him. He was an energetic person committed to doing the best in each of his endeavors. He will be deeply missed for all that he brought to his family, friends, workplace and community. Most of all we will miss his charismatic spark that brought light to even the darkest room.

He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, his sister, his girlfriend Debra Traugher and her daughter and granddaughter, both a brother and sister-in-law, four nieces, five nephews and numerous cousins, great nieces and great nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations made be made to the Coast Guard Foundation or a charity of your choice. Those unable to attend may sign guest register online at [www.obryantokeefe.com](http://www.obryantokeefe.com).

## BRUCE CLAUDE DOUGLAS

Bruce Claude Douglas, 64 died of unknown causes on April 21, 2009 at Lummi Island, Washington.

Bruce graduated with flight class 67-3 and served with A Co, 4th Avn Bn, 4th Infantry Division at Camp Enari from 1967 through 1968 while flying under the Blackjack call sign.

After his tour of duty in Viet Nam, Bruce returned to Ft. Wolters, Texas and became a primary flight instructor until reaching the end of his time in service.

Bruce didn't talk about his Viet Nam service with his brothers Allen or Clark, but if anyone has any information regarding his service in A Co, 4th Avn Bn, 4th INF or as an instructor pilot at Ft. Wolters, please contact Allen (Douglas) at [REDACTED]

## CW4 CLINTON E. DOWNING (RET.)

CW4 Clinton E. Downing (retired) of Live Oak, Florida passed away peacefully in his sleep Saturday, April 18, 2009 after an extended illness. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Norma Jean and one step daughter. He is survived by his three children, one step daughter, one brother, one sister and several nephews and cousins. He also is survived by his ex-wife Jacquie Potter (Robert) and 20 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren and two more on the way.

Mr. Downing served his country in the U.S. Army for 27 years which also included flying helicopters on two different tours in Vietnam. His first tour was with the 118th Assault Helicopter Company "Thunderbirds" in 64-65 flying combat missions. In 1966, he served as a helicopter instructor pilot at Ft. Rucker, Alabama training other aviators to serve in the conflict. He served a second tour in Vietnam during 67-68 in the 147th Assault Support Helicopter Company "Hill Climbers" flying into combat situations to pick up the wounded and to extract "at risk" American soldiers to move to a better strategic location, saving countless lives.

Some of his many decorations for his service include the Air Medal with 20 OLC, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with SS, the National Defense Service Medal 1 OLC, the Presidential Service Badge, the Master Army Aviator's Badge, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Legion Merit medal. He then went on to fly dignitaries and Heads of State in Europe from 1968-1971.

He was very honored in 1971 to be chosen as a pilot on Army One, flying President Nixon and President Ford. He ended his military career at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii in October 1980. He has been living in Live Oak for the past 20 years where he has passionately pursued his love of golf with good buddies (Our Gang) at the Suwannee County Country Club.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to the American Heart Association, the Kidney Foundation or the building fund of his beloved church at this address: Westwood Baptist, Attn. BUILDING FUND in memory of Clinton E. Downing, Sr.

## JAMES T. CHEATHAM

January 5, 2942 – March 11, 2009



Born in Lavee, Arizona, Jim began his flying career through his Dad's instruction in fixed wing airplanes. He later served as a mechanic and helicopter pilot in the United States Army completing tours in both Vietnam and South Korea.

Jim moved to the Salinas California area in 1967 working for the Clevenger's Air Service,

he purchased the company in late 1970 and changed the name to Verticare Helicopters in 1971. During his 42 years flying out of the Salina airport, Jim utilized his piloting skills while performing in air shows, crop dusting, aerial photography, filming charter services and flight training.

Jim is survived by his significant other, Cheryl Harris (Big Sur, CA), sister Janice Shoemaker (Bourne, TX), children Jodi Serrano (Sacramento, CA), Captain Amanda Evans (Osan AFB, Korea), Stacey Wilson (Soledad, CA), Kylie Pachulo (Salinas, CA), Amy Hayes (Yokosuka NAS, Japan), Burton Cheatham, Salinas, CA) and seven grandchildren. He will be greatly missed as he was adored by all his family.

VHPA Member Ray Murphy adds that Jim was also one of the best R-22 & R-44 pilots in the world!

## JAMES A. FULLER

James A. "Jim" Fuller, 71, MAJ, TC RET passed away January 20, 2009 after a heroic 10 year battle with cancer. Jim served two tours in Vietnam, one with the 180th Assault Support Helicopter Company (CH-47) "Big Windy".

He was a Master Mason, a 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, and a Shriner. He was also a member of the American Legion, the Elks, MOAA, and Order of the Daedalians.

Jim was born April 21, 1937 in Hyannis, MA. He is survived by his loving wife of 37 years Malpa Fuller: his son Demetrius Fuller, son James Clayton Fuller, two grandsons, his father COL James Melvyn Fuller RET (also an Army Aviator) of Vermont, one Aunt and one Sister.

Jim's wish was to return to Cape Cod so arrangements are being made for burial with full military honors at Otis National Cemetery, Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

## LARRY R. SALZMAN

Larry R. Salzman, 68, passed away on March 4, 2009 in Girard, Kansas from cancer. He died one day before what would have been his 49th wedding anniversary.

Larry trained with flight classes 68-13 and 68-21, and graduated from flight school at Ft. Rucker. He served from October 1968 through September 1969 with the 281st AHC in Nha Trang. He later served in the 175th AHC in Vinh Long from November 1971 through June 1972.

Larry enlisted in the US Army in October 1957 and retired as a chief Warrant Officer in October 1977. He served in Korea in 1958 and 1959, and was in the Military Police and on border patrols.

After retirement he relocated to Girard and worked in law enforcement with several different agencies in the Crawford County

and Girard area. He was very active in the community serving on the boards of various government and civic organizations. He was also active in the VFW, the American Legion, and the Pittsburg, Ks Disabled Veterans. He was also a Mason. He was the trustee and caretaker of the Girard Veterans Memorial, and a member of the planning and programming committee for the Pittsburg State University Veterans Memorial Amphitheater. He was a life member of the Friends of the Kansas Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Larry is survived by his wife Wilma of Girard, and three sons, Bryan and wife Gayle of Lenexa, KS; Kevin and wife Judy of Rockaway Beach, MO; and Darrell and wife Barbara of Kansas City, MO. Additionally, he is survived by his brother Jay Salzman of Colorado Springs, Colorado who also served in the 281st AHC as a door gunner from April 1968 to July 1969.

## **MICHAEL "PETE" JARINA 1919-2009**

Michael Jarina of Bagdad, Florida passed away Wednesday April 1, at his home surrounded by his family. He was born in Stamford, CT on December 2, 1919 to Slovak immigrants John (Johannas) and Suzan (Zuzanna Babel) Jarina. He graduated Springfield College of Springfield, Massachusetts in 1942. Immediately after graduation he enlisted in the United States Coast Guard and a year later he transferred to the U. S. Navy so that he could learn to fly.

During a 23 year military career that spanned three periods of hostilities, he flew almost every type of aircraft the U. S. Navy had to offer. He finally settled on helicopters as his specialty and as promised in the Navy recruiting posters, he saw the world, including a year's stay in Antarctica. Upon retirement the U. S. Military, he continued his flying and service to his country by joining Air America with which he flew for 9 years in Southeast Asia in support of U. S. Government operations in Laos and Thailand.

With the end of Vietnam hostilities he retired to Bagdad, Florida. There was active in Bagdad Volunteer Fire department, raised a few head of cattle every year and took care of his trees. He was an avid athlete, having been named to the All American Collegiate Soccer team and twice to the All New England Lacrosse teams during his undergraduate years. During his military career he was active in brigade athletics. In retirement he coached the University of West Florida Soccer Club in the mid 1970's.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Dolores Bardol and their five children as well as 12 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother and 7 sisters. He was interred on April 15, 2009 at Barrancas National Cemetery. Donations are encouraged to either the Dio-

cese of Pensacola, Tallahassee Black Indian Missions, or The Nature Conservatory memo line tribute gift for Michael Jarina/Everglades.

## **NEAL GORDON BEARD**

Neal Gordon Beard, 61, died suddenly on April 15, 2009 in Vancouver, Washington. His passing is a great loss to friends and family.

Neal was born December 31, 1947 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, the son of Harley E. Beard and Berniece S. Menze. He was baptized into the Christian faith at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. He moved to Bellevue with his family in 1957. He was confirmed in his faith in 1962 at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Bellevue. Neal was a member of the Boy Scouts and an active participant in the Explorer Scout Search and Rescue program. He graduated from Sammamish High School in 1966 and attended Bellevue Community College before enlisting in the United States Army July 24, 1967.

Neal earned his rotary pilot's wings and was commissioned a Warrant Officer on April 26, 1968. During his Army service, Neal had two combat tours as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, serving with the 176th Aviation Company with the Americal Division, F Troop (Air) of the 4th Cavalry, HHC 2nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and the 120th Assault Helicopter Company. He was decorated for heroism with the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star. He was also awarded the Bronze Star and 16 Air Medals. Following his separation from active service, Neal flew helicopters in the Army Reserve with the 92nd Aviation Company.

Neal returned to Seattle in 1973 and settled in Kirkland and then Bellevue. He worked for Bethlehem Steel before becoming a letter carrier for the U. S. Postal Service on Mercer Island, retiring in 1992. He later worked for the Icom Company in Bellevue and for Werner Trucking as a truck driver, moving to Kettle Falls, returning to Bellevue in 2004. He moved to Vancouver to work for Key Trucking. He was an avid online gamer, participated in Civil War reenactments and loved to ride his Harley Davidson motorcycle.

Neal was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Harley Owners Group. He was a member of the committee that worked for the establishment of Tahoma National Cemetery. He was preceded in death by his parents and two grandchildren. He leaves to mourn one sister, two brothers, one son, one daughter, one grandson, four nephews and three nieces. He was laid to rest on Friday, May 8, 2009, at Tahoma National Cemetery. The family suggests remembrances to VFW Post 2995, [REDACTED] Bellevue, WA. 98008.

## **LTG ROBERT R. WILLIAMS**

The father of modern organic Army Aviation, LTG Robert R. Williams, died at home April 5, 2009 from complications suffered from a fall two weeks earlier.

Bob was in The Class Before One at Fort Sill OK in 1942 and was a great force in Army Aviation throughout his career, especially working for GEN Howze and during the proof of concept of Air Mobility.

The family informs us that arrangements are private at this point and no memorial is yet planned.

Bob was a former National President of AAAA, member and chairman of HOF, and a Gold Order of Saint Michael recipient. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Jean, his family and friends. The family request no flowers, and contributions be made to AAAA Scholarship Foundation Incorporated.

## **DUNCAN WYMAN RAE**

Duncan Wyman Rae, (64), left us on June 12, 2009 after a long illness at Mesa Vista of Boulder, Colorado. He began his life in Indianapolis, IN, on January 25, 1945. He is survived by his mother Katherine Whiting Rae, and preceded in death by his father W. Douglas Rae, a longtime Baptist minister at the First Baptist Church of Bloomington, IN.

Duncan is survived by his daughter Lisa Rae (LeClerc) of Silver Plume, their two daughters and Lisa's mother Judith. He is preceded in death by his son William Douglas Rae, and survived by his two children and their mother Stacey. He is also survived by his brother Doug Rae and his extended family a half-brother, a step-daughter, an aunt and numerous other family members.

Duncan graduated from University School in Bloomington in 1963; attended Murray State University in KY in 1964-65; was a helicopter pilot with the US Army 17th Air Cavalry from 1966 to 1970, and received the Distinguished Flying Cross and a Purple Heart and for his service in Vietnam. He lived in New Canaan, CT, with his young family for 7 years and then moved to Boulder, CO in 1976. He worked for Boulder County Public Works for many years, and later specialized in medical facility renovations throughout the Denver Metro area. Friends and family would characterize Duncan as having a radiant smile, a vivid sense of humor, and a colorful personality. He never missed an opportunity for a joke or a pun! He enjoyed a competitive bridge game and the serenity of growing geraniums or knitting. He was an avid golfer and a passionate wood carver. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Veterans Helping Veterans, PO Box 17158, Boulder, CO, 80308.



*Appeared in the Ft. Wolters Trumpet, Friday February 21, 1969*

*WITH APOLOGIES TO ROBERT SERVICE*

## *The Airman's Story*

By CW2 Robert N. Steinbrunn  
MOI Flight III

It's a measure of man to stick to a plan,  
to reach for what's followed by few.  
And he who attains the desire that remains  
will unto his own self be true.

Oh, I've worked and I've toiled and my hands have been soiled,  
and often I've watched from the ground.  
The beauty I saw in a wing over all.....  
Are the dreams of a mortal unsound?

As I went through my prime and bided my time  
I listened and gathered my lore.  
I foresaw a day when flight came my way  
and made up the pain gone before.

Now I've soared and I've spun, I've laughed and had fun,  
I've flung out my spirit on high!  
And time without number I've bathed in rapt wonder  
at the glory that's there in the sky.

Oh, the brilliance of clouds; the moonlight enshrouds  
all the turmoil that lurks down below.  
For the grace of a plane brings peace home again,  
the airman gives thanks it is so.

It's a measure of man to stick to a plan,  
to reach for what's followed by few.  
And he who attains the desire that remains  
will unto his own self be true.



### ***Dear Brothers,***

I recently became aware of the US Army's Goldbook site on the internet. For those who do not know of it, it's where you can find the history of many of the aircraft that were a part of the Army's inventory from the early 60's on. I'm providing the following story as an update on the page referencing HUEY UH-1-68-16228.

After its tour in Viet Nam, it came to the US Army Reserves at Fort Tilden, Queens, NY, in the early 1970's. My brother, Dennis, and I were Sergeants in Co. D of the 99th Signal Battalion thereat. Although, our TO&E called for a Huey, it was a standing joke that we would never see one. As a Signal Company, we were still using well outdated WW2 TRC 1 Radio Relay and Carrier equipment that was so old we could not even get parts from the Smithsonian! Yet in those lean years with piss poor support from Army, we still managed to keep the framework of the Reserve Program intact and did get the equipment to perform. Finally, at one weekend drill, the gates opened and a long convoy of trucks with radio van bodies on them drove onto the post. The overflow from Nam production finally reached us and we came into the 20th Century! Amazed at this parade of up to date equipment, there was suddenly a wop wop wop heard overhead as our phantom Huey arrived too! I believe it was kept at Ft. Hancock on the Jersey Shore, for we had no facilities to maintain or house it.



UH-1 16228 seen in flight over Fort Tilden in the early 70's. 16228 flew with the 227th AHC, the 57th AHC and the 61st AHC during its tour in

Fort Tilden, a former Coast Artillery base was just about abandoned when we took over the Reserve part of it. There was an active NIKE ZEUS missile base at one end but we never had any dealings with them, being behind wire as they were. Our area was really decrepit, with WW2 wooden buildings that had not had maintenance in decades. The oil burners were all bad and we only managed to heat a building or two by stealing, literally hot, oil burner units out of the Missile Base guys barracks. There was no running water and latrines were flushed with 5 gal. cans of water hauled from the Reserve Center a half mile away. Said flushing was handled by 'problem children' assigned to that special detail.

In later years, the unit moved to Floyd Bennet Naval Air Station in Rockaway, Queens and eventually to Fort Totten in Queens. Dennis and I left the USAR after 13 years and joined the 106th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, New York Air National Guard, at Westhampton Beach, Long Island. There we became Assistant Fire Chiefs in Crash and Smash. I accrued 35 years of service and my brother about the same.

Anyway, enclosed is a picture that Dennis took at one of the meetings capturing that HUEY in flight. We hope this photo may be of use to you in historical documentation.

***Thank you for your service to our great country!***

***Fraternally,***

***Robert C. Conner, Msgt.  
NYANG (Ret)***

# The History of Robert Maxwell's Maxwell System

(XM3/M22 hybrid)



The VHPA has published several Vietnam Era 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery ARA (Aerial Rocket Artillery), 1st Cavalry Division pictures over the years. Russ Warriner of the VHCMA and the Blue Max Organization has contributed much of the material the VHPA published. He gave the VHPA permission to publish this history material that also appears on

<http://tri.army.mil/lc/csa/maxwell.htm>

Recently VHPA Member Steve Rockett contributed the following photo taken about May 1967 most likely at LZ Two Bits or LZ English. Steve flew for the Aviation Platoon, 2nd Brigade, 1st Cav Div so we



Photo of WO Robert Maxwell in front of B Battery UH-1B Huey in 1965, about the same time he designed the Maxwell System.

believe this is a B Battery, 2/20th ARA ship. Russ tells us that A Battery generally supported the 1st Brigade and C Battery the 3rd Brigade. There were only four Maxwell System equipped helicopters in the 2/20th ARA – one in each battery and one in the HHB.

## Dear Russ:

Here is the outline you asked for concerning the origin of the Maxwell System. When the Battalion arrived in Vietnam in September 1965, we were equipped with UH-1B and UH-1C Helicopters, which had the XM3 2.75 inch rocket system mounted as the primary weapons system. Each firing battery had an M22 AGM-22B wire-guided missile system in its spare parts inventory as a secondary weapons system. However, this system was not mounted on any aircraft, but held to be used "On-Demand." This created some problems, since the change over between systems and check-out required about 2-1/2 to 3 hours to remove one system and install the other. With the low demand for the missiles, this meant

WO Robert Maxwell, retired from the Army as a Colonel, passed away on 12 July 1998. Luckily he wrote Russ a letter providing the interesting history of this unique weapons system.



that having a dedicated M22 aircraft available at all times would have been an unacceptable waste of scarce assets.

On my first tour, I was assigned to Bravo Battery, and on several occasions we had to refuse missile fire missions because of the time restraints mentioned above. This disturbed me since I felt that we should do all that was possible to support the infantry and help them accomplish their mission. So I began to research the Tech Manuals on both the aircraft and the weapons sys-

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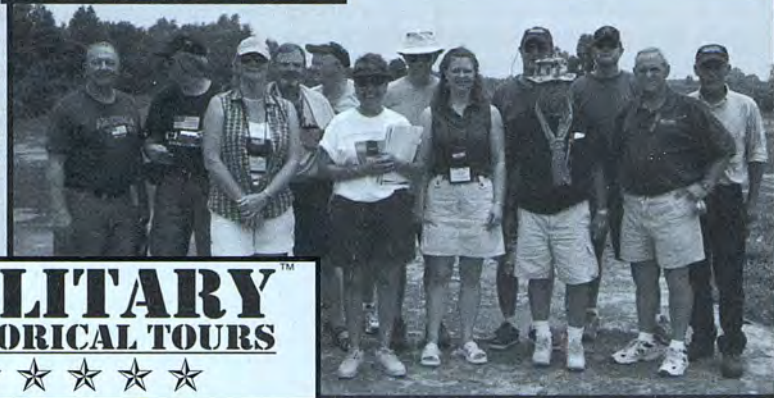


## Vietnam Overview "Rotorheads Return"

9 - 23 SEP 2009

Tour Leader: John Powell,  
1/9 Cav

Note: If you enjoyed John Mackel's AA Report "Return to Vietnam" this is the tour for you!



-tems and discovered that the XM3 and M22 subsystems were electrically separate and independent. This meant the only thing required to combine the two systems was a mechanical device to permit both systems to be mounted at the same time. The next problem to be addressed was the added weight that the combined systems would place on the aircraft mounting hard points. After more investigation and conversations with the 15th Transportation Corps (TC) support company, it was decided the best mix of the two systems would be two banks of six rockets and one missile on each side of the aircraft (this was later extended to three banks of six rockets). This would keep the weight down to an acceptable level and still provide a tactical-ly usable weapons mix.

By late October - early November 1965 we had been engaged enough that we knew that the average fire mission was only using a half load of 24 rockets per bird. This meant removing four banks (12 rounds per side) would not effect to tactical use of the aircraft. But the addition of the two missiles would allow immediate response to fire mission requests on hard targets (bunkers, bridges, or vehicles).

At this point I started to gather up the bits and pieces that would be needed to build the interface between the XM3 and the M22 subsystems. I discovered that a Huey skid tube was the right diameter to mount the launcher for the M22, and that an 81mm mortar metal shipping container was the right size at the mouth to fit the outside diameter of the skid tube. This would give me a steel tube that could be welded, instead of the aluminum skid tube

that could not be worked with the tools available. I then picked up some scrap steel plate that I used to fabricate a ring that the mortar tube was

the flat area of a tube frame from the XM3 system. This was bolted to the frame, then the ring was centered on it and bolted to the plate. This worked as a mechanical adapter between the two systems and allowed one missile to be carried on each side.

Now came the hard part. As I mentioned before, the systems were electrically sepa-

rate, so I had to pick-out the firing circuits for the missiles and build the cable assemblies to fit each launcher, and still allow for mechanical jettisoning of the systems. The only big problem was fabricating a connection between the launcher wiring and the aircraft cable that would allow the unit to fall free, if necessary, but still carry all the firing circuits. After several weeks of



Russ Warrior's photo of VHPA Member Edwin W. Fuller and #64-14054 at LZ Evans in 1968

searching the salvage yards and the electronics shops, I found a large piece of Phenolic plate which was about an inch and a half thick. So with hand tools (hack saw, files, pen knife and sand paper) I cut and carved a plug to fit the inside of the aircraft cable socket. I then covered the face of it with masking tape and coated the pins with stamp pan ink and transferred the pin pattern to the plug. I then took the cable to the avionics shop at the 15th TC and picked-up pin sockets of the correct size. Then I sat down with the wiring diagrams and picked out which circuits would pass the signals I needed to launch and control the missile. After this was accomplished, I located these pins on the plug and using a hand drill, drilled the holes for the sockets. After inserting the wires into the plugs and running a system continuity check, I turned again to the mechanical mount.

After some conversations with the maintenance types, it was determined that the outboard end of the tube needed some addition support since it could have substantial "G" loads imposed during flight. The outboard end of the skid tube still had the attachment lug for the ground handling wheels installed, which I used as an attaching point for two steel support rods, which were threaded on the inboard end and held in position on the rocket tube frame with lock nuts and washers. When this was

done I showed the setup to the Battalion Commander, COL Mahone, who in turn briefed the DivArty Commander and the Commanding General, GEN Harry W.O Kinnard. GEN Kinnard came down and inspected the system and said, "This is what I mean when I say Imaganuity (which of course was his buzz word for a combination of imagination and ingenuity). Division

gave us clearance and we went out that afternoon and fired the system for the first time at a sniper located in a cave in the hills around the Mang Yang pass. The next day I started building three more systems so each firing battery would have one system and there would be a spare (held at Battalion). That is how the Combination Kit (first known as the Welded System and later named the Maxwell System) came in to being.

**Robert Maxwell**

*Another Blue Max Association member, Gus Cianciolo, provides some more details.*

"I was with the 2nd Platoon, B/2/20th ARA during 1965 and 1966 when Bob made that system. Bob flew with CPT Jim For-man and the last three numbers of their bird was 518. Bob was a very versatile guy. As I remember it he studied the manuals and the circuitry and figured out how to make them work. He used materials readily available and although it was jerry-rigged it worked. I think he used part of a Huey skid as the support arm. The first time he powered the new rig with a practice missile (not a live one) mounted, the system activated the jettison circuit and it jettison the missile. I was standing there

when it happened. No big deal! Bob just relooked the wiring, and re did it and it worked fine. He was constantly carving on a pheonlic block to make it round so it would fit into a connector. The 15th TC Battalion worked with him. I don't recall how long it took him to do it but it wasn't long. You have to understand he did this work in a GP Med tent. We only had one 3.5kw gen for the entire battery. Bob wired the entire battery for electricity himself and even put in fuses for safety. He was a hell of a good man."

Russ concludes with, "I know that the system stayed with the unit until the fall of 1968 or spring of 1969. I was the CE on one of the last Hueys in Charlie Battery and that stayed with the battery until just after the move south to Quan Loi."



Maxwell System showing three banks (18 rockets) and one AGM-22B

# A PHOTO CONTEST FOR AIR CAVALRYMEN

*(and anyone else as well!)*



By Mike Law, VHPA Calendar Editor

As most everyone knows all Vietnam War era Air Cavalry Troops (ACTs) were equipped with three different helicopters:

- Scouts (OH-13Ss in the early years, OH-6As from 1967 on, OH-58As from 1970 on). I am not aware that any ACT flew OH-23Gs but it may have happened. I think it is safe to say that the OH-6A was the most common (and arguably the most popular) Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) used in Vietnam by ACTs.
- Gunships (UH-1Bs in the early years, UH-1Cs from 1966 on, AH-1Gs from 1968 on).
- Transports (UH-1Ds in the early years, then UH-1Hs from about 1966 on)

The typical TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment) for an ACT was 10 LOHs, 10 Guns (changed to 9 when the AH-1Gs replaced the UH-1Cs) and 8 UH-1Hs for a total of 28 helicopters in the early years or 27 after about 1968.

It comes as no big surprise that since the VHPA first started collecting photos to publish in its Newsletters, Directories,

and especially Calendars that people have submitted literally hundreds of UH-1Hs and Cobra pictures. We have an "adequate" collection of OH-6A pictures but would welcome more. We have very few OH-13Ss, OH-58As or OH-23Gs - despite years of repeated begging!! Indeed we have published every OH-23G photo we have in the archive save one. I'd guess we only have 3 OH-58A photos and they really are not "good quality" at all. Additionally while we have a few dozen UH-1B (in the armed confirmation) and UH-1C photos, we would welcome more.

Now it is somewhat common to see a photo of a LOH and a Cobra. I'd guess we have about a dozen of them plus another dozen with a Huey and a Cobra or a LOH and a Huey. Naturally we would welcome more.

**However, we only have two photos  
with all three helicopters!!!  
TWO!!! And here they are:**



*VHPA member Ed Wolfe provided this photo titled "The Whole Works." It appeared as the February photo in the 1999 Calendar. Ed took it in July 1970 at FSB Mace of some 1st Air Cav Division aircraft.*

*The VHPA recently acquired this photo taken by VHCMA member and former UH-1C CE Lance Hopkins. Lance took it in May 1971 during a large operation based out of Dong Tam. You can see the UH-1Hs on the right.*



So the "contest" rules are: A single Vietnam Era picture of all three ATC aircraft loaned to Mike Law, the VHPA Calendar Editor, during 2009. Now I wasn't born yesterday and I know what digital image editing software like Adobe Photoshop can produce. Please we are trying to preserve, record, and publish our history, not fabricate it. Thanks, Mike Law, [REDACTED] Denver, CO 80227, [REDACTED] or [calendar@vhpa.org](mailto:calendar@vhpa.org).

# BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life member JOHN PENNY

John Penny, a VHPA Life Member, served with A/377 and is semi-retired from his career as a helicopter pilot, and teacher. He lives in Ellensburg, WA, with his beloved wife of 30 years, Janet.

**FLYING ALLIGATORS AND SILVER SPURS** by VHPA member Charles Oualline is an impressive memoir of his two very different tours in RVN. The title refers to the call signs of the units he served with: the 119th AVH in 65-66, and A/3/17th CAV in 67-68. To say that these two units were in the "thick of it" is an understatement. This book takes you along for the ride in many of the seat gripping combat missions from skid scraping takeoffs in overloaded B model Hueys, low and slow Loach missions, and insertions and extractions from LZs large and small but usually contested.

The author's first tour was with the 119th AHC at Camp Holloway where he was checked out in the B model Huey. He devotes an entire chapter on "Tree Trimming" to describe operating underpowered and overloaded in the appropriately named Central Highlands where he mastered the spiraling approach. He also learned how to maintain a tight formation in bad weather while taking fire! The highlights of this tour included the siege of Plei Me, and flying in the Ia Drang as well as many other engagements.

In the summer of 1966 the author found himself at Fort Knox as the second pilot assigned to the A/3/17th Air Cavalry. Getting checked out as an OH-6A instructor and the many tasks of standing up a CAV squadron from scratch consumed most of his time over the next year, but the handwriting was on the wall very soon as to where he would be heading again. This time the trip was courtesy of the USNS Walker, 27 days long and definitely not the QE2. The introduction of the Air Cavalry concept in RVN was barely begun before the Tet Offensive arrived and there was little let-up throughout the entire tour.

I also enjoyed several chapters of this book that were not about the combat but the more mundane aspects of our service that engaged us all in unexpected ways. The chapter entitled "The Supply System" will be especially interesting to those of you who toiled in the day to day "hook and crook" of keeping an aviation unit in the "necessities" of war and life. Other chapters with titles such as "Naked Generals," "Napalm Huey," and "Prayers" are equally interesting. Oualline dedicates this book to all the helicopter pilots who lost their lives in Vietnam and in particular to the 11 friends who died during his tours. This book is more than just one helicopter pilot's story and is credit to the legacy of all those who served.



**Flying Alligators and Silver Spurs: The dangers, tragedies, and comradeship of the Vietnam War, in a helicopter pilot's own words.** (351 pages, \$21.00 -Texas residents add \$1.71) by Charles E. Oualline, ISBN 1-59196-630-2 is available from his web site: <http://www.home.roadrunner.com/~gator/silverspur3.html>, or [www.allbookstores.com](http://www.allbookstores.com), or by order from your local bookstore. Cover artwork by Joe Kline.

**SCARFACE 42** by Robert W. Robinson, VHPA member, is a compelling narrative of his tour with HML-367 in I Corps in 1969-1970. When asked why he had written this book Robinson told me he knew of few books about USMC aviation in Vietnam and "I was especially surprised that not one had been written about my squadron, HML-367, Scarface Squadron. I wrote my book to tell their story and honor the Marines who served in Scarface Squadron." Robinson describes his tour of duty and many of his missions in UH-1E and AH-1G Cobra gunships in a clear and concise way that also engages the reader in the action.

Robinson was initially assigned to fly UH-1E gunships out of Phu Bai. His reason for wanting a gunship assignment echoes that of many of us when he states that "I did not have the urge to shoot anyone; my motive was personal: I wanted the ability to shoot back." The various missions he flew gave him plenty of opportunity to do just that in areas like Quang Tri, Dong Ha, and The Rockpile. His description of operations flown in support of Prairie Fire SOG/CCN missions is particularly interesting. The book contains some dramatic photos of ladder extractions.

In December of 1969, with the departure of the 3rd Marine Division, HML-367 became a Cobra unit, the first in the Marine Corps, with the "slicks" being reassigned to HML-167. The author had a choice and took the opportunity to move into the front seat of a Cobra. He was assigned to Marble Mountain near Da Nang and a whole new set of opportunities to fly and fight in areas like the Arizona Territory, Elephant Valley, Happy Valley, LZ Ryder, and LZ Ross. It was at LZ Ross that he encountered a Cobra pilot's dream: a column of NVA troops in the open! Operation Pickens Forest in support of SOG/CCC missions was Robinson's final operation but he has also included a detailed discussion of Operation Tailwind with information gathered by interviews and after action reports. The involvement of Marine Corps helicopter pilots in these SOG operations is not well known and makes very good reading.

Robinson has put a lot of effort into bringing his story and the story of all those who served with him in HML-367 to life. It is a labor of nine winters and as he says: "There are about two things to do in North Dakota in the winter, it turned out that writing the book was one of them, the other I'll leave to your imagination." In addition to his own recollections and those of his comrades he has made use of materials from the Marine Corps Historical Center including after action reports, interviews, and tape recording of two actual missions. Additional photos and a dramatic video clip can be seen at his web site: [tailwindpublications.com](http://tailwindpublications.com).



**"Scarface 42"** (310 pages, \$24.95 + \$4.95 shipping) by Robert W. Robinson, ISBN13: 978-0-9797704-0-1 is available from [tailwindpublications.com](http://tailwindpublications.com) (personalized signed copy and shipped free if you put "VHPA" in remarks section of your order) or from Amazon.



## 2010 CALENDAR



**You can purchase the 2010 VHPA Calendar NOW**

*by Mike Law, Calendar Editor*

As mentioned in prior Aviators, the sad news is that the 2009 issue sold out in early January. But the good news is the 2010 issue NOW available. To order call 800-788-3350 or use the keywords VHPA Calendar with the search feature at **WWW.TURNERPUBLISHING.COM**.

Above are some (but not all) of the thumbnail photos from the 2010 issue. While most of the pictures relate to the US Army, we also feature US Navy, USMC, and VNAF pictures. We have OH-6As, Cobras, Chinooks, Skycranes, and lots of Hueys pictures plus some color photos of CH-21Cs and UH-1As. Finally I'm only half way through selecting photos for the 2011 issue. Remember the rules – if you snooze (don't send in your photos) WE (the entire VHPA and all our friends) LOOSE.

**Contact Mike Law** [REDACTED] **or** [calendar@vhpa.org](mailto:calendar@vhpa.org) **for full details.**