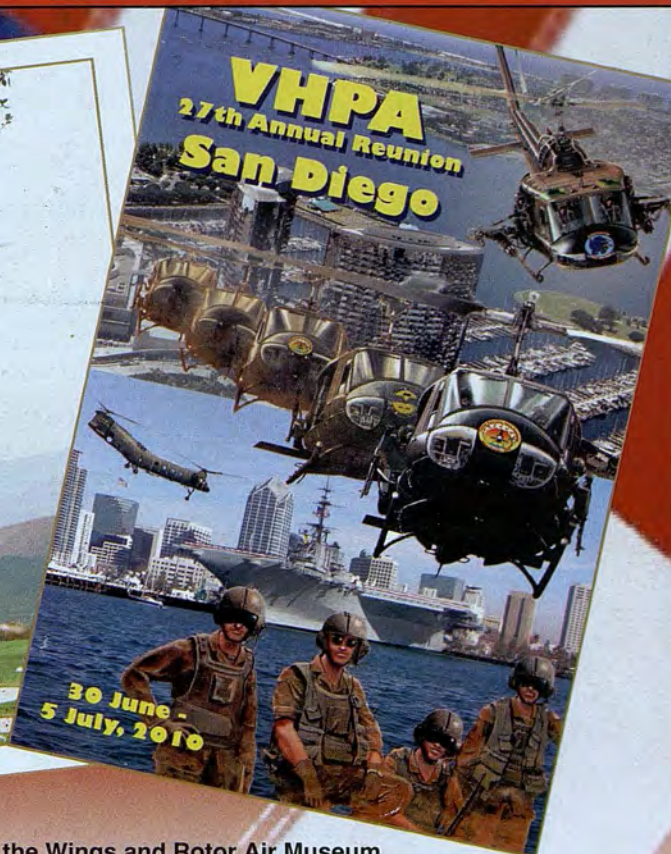




# The VHPPA AVIATOR

On-Line Registration  
for the 2010 Reunion  
is now open!  
Go to [www.VHPPA.org](http://www.VHPPA.org)  
to get started!

The Official Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ~ Issue 28-01 ~ Jan/Feb 2010



A restored B-Model Huey Gunship from the Wings and Rotor Air Museum in Murrieta, California lands on the South Lawn of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Semi Valley, California to join in the 2009 celebration of Veteran's Day. The VHPPA was represented by our President, Gary Roush who made a keynote speech to those assembled. The helicopter was piloted by the VHPPA's good friend, Pat Rodgers, the Executive Director and Chief Pilot of Wings and Rotors Museum and VHPPA member Tom Woehl, a faithful museum volunteer. This is the same aircraft that will be landing on the fantail of the USS Midway as part of our 2010 Reunion in San Diego.

*More on the Celebration at the Reagan Presidential Library on pages 38 & 39 of this issue.  
Full details on the 2010 VHPPA Reunion in San Diego start on page 3 of this issue.*

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# From the President of the VHPA

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

This is the first of six magazines you will receive this year. Thanks to Editor, David Adams for putting together another excellent issue.

This issue contains the details for our annual reunion in San Diego, CA from 30 June to 5 July. Mike Law has done a great job putting together what will be a fun party. There is a lot to see and do in San Diego so what you will see for this reunion is a long list of things to choose from keeping in mind that the primary reason for having reunions is so that we can reconnect with friends from our past. That is the core focus of this reunion so you will see some changes in that regard. Many of us like to sit around and tell war stories and our families get bored with that quickly so there are plenty of outside-the-hotel things for them to do while we enjoy a beer or three with our buds.

Here are some of the changes. First there will be a hospitality room with tables and chairs and a self serve bar. The intent of this room is to try to duplicate the officer's club atmosphere we had in Vietnam. The self serve bar is an experiment with the center of it being keg beer. We have negotiated a special price with the hotel for this service and hope that those who participate will "fund" this bar with donations. We need an average of \$3.00 per 12 ounce cup of beer to break even.

A second change is rooms provided to a few large units for the duration of the reunion to act as their TOCs. They will also be provided with keg beer. This should save these groups some money and provide plenty of space and opportunity for them to have a quality unit reunion. If you are organizing a large group to meet at the reunion, please contact Mike Law so he can arrange a place for you to meet. The mini-reunions will continue as in past years.

The National Reunion Committee (NRC) is very much aware of the high costs of attending

reunions and is working hard to minimize the costs. This is very difficult when we are using a first class expensive hotel in a prime location, but I think the reunion committee has done a commendable job trying

to minimize your costs. A \$125 room price is one example and the \$50 registration fee is another example of that effort. Part of reducing this year's cost is using more volunteers. The Southern California Chapter of the VHPA has stepped forward and is providing the NRC chairman, Mike Law with valuable support. They will be wearing special reunion shirts so when you see them at the reunion, please say thanks and buy them a beer from a keg.

At each reunion we try to provide a unique experience that you can not experience on your own. This year's special event is an evening on the Vietnam era aircraft carrier, USS Midway. This is the top attraction in San Diego so we had to book this museum almost a year in advance. Although you can tour this ship on your own and we encourage that, we have planned a very special program for this once in a lifetime experience. In addition to entertainment, you will get to witness a restored UH-1B Seawolf gunship landing on the flight deck and you will get an opportunity to talk with the crew and closely inspect this expertly restored Huey. The theme of the program will be Navy helicopter aviation in Vietnam so for us Army guys this is the perfect opportunity to learn how the Navy lived and flew in Vietnam including off ships offshore. An onboard BBQ will keep you from going hungry too.

Have you ever wanted to ride in an H-21? You will have that opportunity at San Diego.



**Gary Roush**

That will be another once in a lifetime opportunity! The reunion committee has arranged for rides in an H-21, UH-1B gunship, an OH-58 and a brand new Super Huey. Again opportunities you are unlikely to have anywhere else.

In other business, the EC is planning to put the HQ contract out for bid this year since it is up for renewal in September. It will be in two parts this time. The first will be reunion registration and the second part will be HQ administration minus reunion registration. If you know of a company that would be interested in bidding on one or both of these contracts, please let someone on the EC know.

As a reminder, the primary source of membership information is our web site at <http://www.vhpaservices.com>. This means that the 2010 paper directory or the CD membership directory is an additional \$10 each if you would prefer these traditional products. Once the 2010 directory is printed in September, the cost goes up to \$20. Please be sure to notify HQ prior to 1 September about whether or not you want one or both of these traditional directories so we know how many to make.

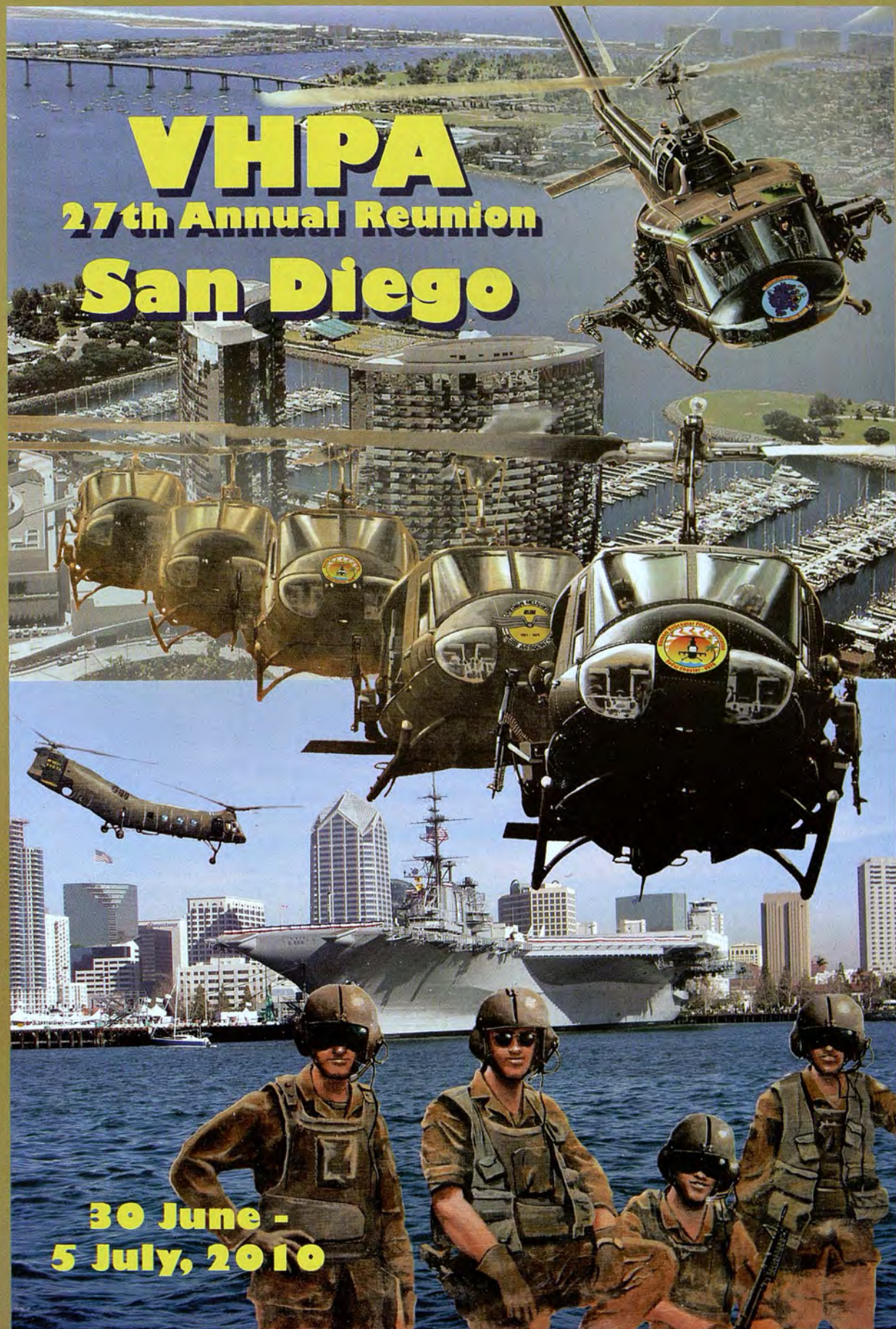
Finally it was my pleasure to represent all of you at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, CA this past Veteran's Day. It was the first time they had recognized Vietnam veterans and their turn out was more than twice what they have had in previous years. I was asked to introduce the icon of our war, the UH-1 Huey. A copy of my speech is elsewhere in this magazine. The Huey that was part of that celebration is the same one that will land on the USS Midway in San Diego. The Reagan Library is a first class operation so I would recommend you extend your trip to California with a side trip to Simi Valley. It is worth the trip.

**Gary Roush**  
**President@vhpa.org**

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

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# **VHPA**

## **27th Annual Reunion**

# **San Diego**

**30 June -  
5 July, 2010**



# This is the Reunion you've been waiting for!



Sea 'n' Air Golf Course, Naval Air Station North Island - Coronado, California

If ever you considered bringing your children or grandchildren to a VHPA Reunion, the Southern California (SoCal) Chapter and the National Reunion Committee promise – this is the Reunion you've been waiting for! Because of the ocean San Diego's weather is PERFECT in the summer so all that junk about VHPA Reunions being too hot just does not apply this year. We have sharpened our planning pencils to give you great value in an absolutely premier destination. The Marriott regularly sells out to large groups at \$220 per night – which makes our \$125 rate look nice indeed.

You'll see the full suite of traditional

Reunion activities – unit Mini-Reunions, War Story Contests/Historical Presentation Forms, vendors, guest speaker luncheon, spouse/guest event, Memorial Service, Final

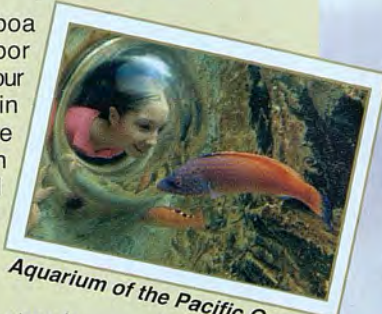
Banquet, etc. This year we've made it even easier to meet old and make new friends from your unit by offering the Early Bird, 1st Reunion Attendee and Welcome Receptions as no charge events, hanging unit banners, and allocating tables to specific units/flight classes.

We believe we have taken good advantage of San Diego's wonderful weather with an array of outdoors events. Want to play golf with an ocean view – you got it with Sea N Air Course. Want to enjoy the #1 tourist destination in San Diego with your family and several hundred of your best friends – join us on the USS Midway. Want to see the sites (the Zoo,

famous Balboa Park, a harbor cruise) – take your family or join friends on more than a dozen organized tours. Want to do something away from the Reunion – check with the SoCal guys (the local Chapter) for their special events. Go to [www.vhpsocal.org](http://www.vhpsocal.org) for details. Want to ride in a helicopter again – with your wife, your children, or your grandchildren – join us at the Classic Rotors Museum.

Go to [www.vhpareunion.org](http://www.vhpareunion.org) to see more details, to register and get hotel reservations.

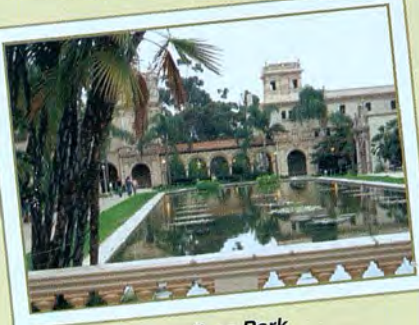
Two words of warning. Parking is limited even at \$22 a day! The number of seats on the various helicopters is very small – we expect 1,800 people to attend this Reunion – book early!



Aquarium of the Pacific Ocean

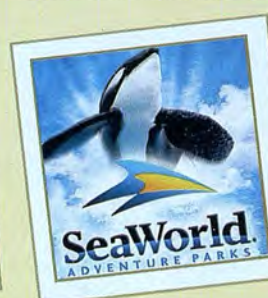
## San Diego Reunion Internal Events VHPASOCAL.ORG

Hopefully you are planning to attend our incredibly awesome reunion in San Diego over the 4th of July in 2010. As usual, we will have the Historic presentations, war story contests, poker (scholarship fund-raiser), luncheon speaker, and mini-reunions. This year we plan to have a war story contest between units where the unit will get 3 or 4 of their best speakers to compete against other units for telling stories. Actual tangible reinforcement devices will be presented (a.k.a.,



Balboa Park

prizes) for this "story-off." In addition, we will be providing rooms as usual for mini-reunions and unit TOCs, so contact your buds and sign up for a mini-reunion. Finally, we are always looking for speakers for our historic presentations. These talks can go for up to an hour, or a half hour for authors talking about their books, etc. Finally,



we are also looking for a volunteer with a background in videography to assist in filming our events. Please submit ideas or contact Jim Fulbrook at



San Diego Zoo



"Riders on the Storm"

## For Sale Joe Kline Originals

serious inquiries only

contact: Toby Hardy

[assault@downrangehot.com](mailto:assault@downrangehot.com)



"Chariots of Fire"



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

27th Annual Reunion • San Diego, California • June 30-July 5, 2010

## NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Register online at [www.vhpareunion.org](http://www.vhpareunion.org) or mail completed form to:

VHPA Headquarters, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 105, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698

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

Member name:	Member No.:	Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Address:		Address change? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
City:	State:	Zip:
Email address:	Telephone: ( )	
Wife/guest name:	Hometown:	21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Guest name:	Hometown:	21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Guest name:	Hometown:	21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Guest name:	Hometown:	21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes

EVENT	No. of people	Price	Total
Registration through 4/30/10*		@\$50	
Registration 5/1/10 and after*		@\$65	
Registration for under age 21		@\$15	
Early Bird Reception (June 30)		No Cost	
San Diego & Old Town Tour (July 1)		@\$35	
USS Midway Audio Tour I (July 1)		@\$35	
Harbor Sightseeing Cruise (July 1)		@\$45	
Golf - Sea N Air Course (July 1)		@\$90	
1st Time Attendee Reception (July 1)		No Cost	
Welcome Reception (July 1)		No Cost	
KIA/MIA Gold Star Function (July 2)		No Cost	
Annual Business Meeting (July 2)		No Cost	
Spouse/Guest Event w/lu (July 2)		@\$35	
Luncheon w/speaker (July 2)		@\$26	
Poker Tournament I (July 2)		@\$25	
War Story Cont./Historical Pres. I (July 2)		@\$20**	
BBQ Dinner on USS Midway (July 2)		@\$84	
Coronado Parade (July 3)		@\$25	
Helicopter Tour & Rides (July 3)		Use Side Bar	
Balboa Park 4 Museum Tour I (July 3)		@\$59	
San Diego Zoo I (July 3)		@\$65	
USS Midway Audio Tour II (July 3)		@\$35	
Luncheon Cruise (July 3)		@\$79	
Poker Tournament II (July 3)		@\$25	
War Story Cont./Historical Pres. II (July 3)		@\$20**	
Movie Night (July 3)		@\$5	
Memorial Service (July 4)		No Cost	
Sunday Brunch (July 4)		@\$33	
Temecula Winery & Lunch Tour (July 4)		@\$59	
Balboa Park 4 Museum Tour II (July 4)		@\$59	
San Diego Zoo II (July 4)		@\$65	
Quilt Show & Tell (July 4)		No Cost	
Closing Banquet (July 4)		@\$80	
Closing Banquet Child (July 4)		@\$18	
Non-Registered Guest at Banquet (July 4)		@\$100	
Fireworks (July 4)		No Cost	
Total from sidebars	XXXXX	XXXXX	
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	1 year	@ \$36	
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	3 years	@ \$99	
Life membership	(full \$540 or 3 inst of \$185)		
2010 CD or Paper Directory Fee		@\$10	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			

<b>Helicopter Tour &amp; Rides Total \$</b> ___ Museum Only \$36* ___ CH-21 Ride \$121 ___ UH-1B Ride \$121 ___ OH-58 Ride \$94 ___ Super Huey Ride \$66 <small>* Includes transportation to the museum/heliport, museum admission &amp; lunch w/drink. Chopper rides are in addition to this base fee.</small>
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<b>T-Shirts Total \$</b> ___ S@\$18 ___ M@\$18 ___ L@\$18 ___ XL@\$18 ___ XXL@\$19 ___ XXXL@\$20
--

<b>Banquet Meal Entrée Choice</b> ___ Beef ___ Fish ___ Vegetarian
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<b>Voluntary Contributions Total \$</b> VHPA Membership Fund \$ VHPA Scholarship Fund \$ VHPA Reunion Sponsorship \$ VHPA General Fund \$ Vietnam War Museum \$
--

<b>REFUND POLICY</b> IMPORTANT: Please review the details of the Refund Policy, including the limited opportunity to purchase a Refund Guaranty available only on a one-time basis at the time of registration, which is posted online at the VHPA reunion website: <a href="http://www.vhpareunion.org">www.vhpareunion.org</a> <b>Refund Guarantee Fee</b> (10% of Total Events) \$
--

<b>CREDIT CARD PAYMENT</b> MC/Visa #: Exp. Date: Signature:
--

<b>CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYMENT</b> In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA" with completed form.
---

\* Each person 21 and older must pay the full registration fee, except for banquet-only guests.

\*\* HPF Fee: Only one \$20 admission fee is required PER FAMILY to attend any or all sessions of the WSC and HPF events. Each family will receive a free DVD of last year's HPF/WSC presentations (a \$30 value).



## VHPA OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN & STAFF 2009-10

President	Gary Roush
Vice President	Woody McFarlin
Past President	Jack Salm
Members At Large	
Senior Member	Mike Law
Midterm Member	Jim Fulbrook
Junior Member	Bill Mullen
Secretary/Treasurer	Tom Payne
Founder	Larry Clark

### VHPA NATIONAL COMMITTEES AND THEIR CHAIRMEN

National Reunion Chair	Mike Law
Membership	Mike Sheuerman
Records/Database	Gary Roush
Public Relations/Publications	Bill Mullen
Membership Directory	Gary Roush, Editor
The VHPA Aviator	David Adams, Editor
The VHPA Calendar Project	Mike Law, Editor
Chapter Liaison	John "Jack" Salm
Vendor Coordinator	Woody McFarlin
Historical	Mike Sloniker
Technology Steering	Charles Holley
Investment	Bob Smith
Scholarship	Tom Payne

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Investment Advisor	Bob Potvin
VHPA Headquarters	(800) 505-VHPA

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Membership Chairman	membership@vhpa.org
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VHPA Reunion Website	www.vhpareunion.org
VHPA EC Forum	www.vhpa.info
EC Forum Webmaster	webmaster@vhpa.info
VHPA Membership Website	www.vhpamembership.org
Membership Webmaster	webmaster@vhpamembership.org

## Neither Rain ~ nor Snow ~ nor Bullets ~

By Thomas H Nadeau

During the Summer of 1971 I was based out of Long Binh Plantation but usually flew MACV missions out of Tay Ninh. That would necessitate at 6:00 am take off so as to arrive at Tay Ninh by 7:00 am but on this day it was different. I was instructed to be at Saigon's Hotel-Three heliport at 7:00 to pickup two passengers and then depart to Tay Ninh.

When I arrived at Hotel-Three, two guys walked out to my aircraft. One was Speed-Four (SP-4), with a half sack of U.S. Mail and the other was a civilian in a business suit!!! I asked the civilian if he knew we were flying into the Bad Lands next to the Cambodian boarder and what his business was. He said yes he knew what was going on and that he was following the mail as he was a U.S. Postal Inspector.

So off we went and arrived at Tay Ninh around 8:00. For the rest of the morning I flew the same "fish heads and rice" runs and at noon I went back to Tay Ninh to do the bi-weekly local mail run. That is when the Postal Inspector reboarded our bird as we went about dropping mail off at the local Ruff Puff compounds which were Vietnamese National Guard posts. There were two or three U.S. Army MACV (Green Berets types) at each compound and they were happy to get their mail because they were "nowhere from nowhere" and got their mail only twice a week, if they were lucky. During the rainy season it was more like every two weeks or so.

At one stop the Army Postal clerk showed the Postal Inspector one piece of mail as he handed it to a soldier and then we were off back to Tay Ninh. Normally we would stay at Tay Ninh until around 5:00 pm but this time they released us around 4:00 and we took the Postal Inspector back to Saigon. Enroute I asked him what was up and he said that a soldier's mom had written her Congressman saying her son in Vietnam was not getting his mail in a timely fashion, So the U.S. Postal Service sent one of their Postal Inspectors all the way to Sunny South Vietnam to make sure some mommy's sonny got his mail.....\$\$\$\$\$

Thomas H Nadeau  
Warlord 17

**AVIATOR PRIVACY STATEMENT** 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

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

I've been a long time member of the VHPA and over the years have always looked forward to the "Newsletter" in its various styles and formats. I also realize that at times there have been discussions regarding appropriate articles, content, etc. I understand that you can't please everyone all the time and took little exception to what members had to say and how they said it. However, I do feel compelled to write regarding content that I found unnecessary and disparaging in the recent issue. Specifically, the attempted humor found on page 26 titled "Summer Classes for Women...." My first question would be why this was included relative to the nature of our publication and second; why didn't anyone think someone might be offended by the inherent sexism openly displayed? I for one am embarrassed that an organization such as the VHPA would find this appropriate.

My wife and I recently attended the first reunion of class 66-23/67-1 (Class Blast at LZ Branson) and shared a great experience with 88 of my fellow classmates - 42 years and the memories and feeling were still evident. Saturday evening's diner, the only planned event, was attended by all. After the opening ceremony, the mike was passed table to table to allow members to say "hello" and offer a brief comment. As we listened we were pleasantly surprised and impressed with the number of men that introduced their wives of 25, 30, 35, 40 and over years (we're heading for 40 next month) and paid tribute to them for their support and understanding. Heaven knows most of us carried some baggage into any relationship and it was fitting that our partners were recognized for the effort they put forth - most would agree with the military term, "above and beyond". I like to think it also reflects on the character and caliber of the young men, boys if you will, that found out what commitment was, honored it and fought for it all those years ago.

With our countries young women, wives, sisters and daughters now serving and dying as US Army Aviators isn't it time to leave this "humor" behind - it's just not funny.

Respectfully,  
Paul Hart  
66/23

C/1/9, 1st. Cav. 67 - 68

Paul,

You need to know that I've always thought of The Aviator as mainly a "man's magazine" but I feel you're right on this issue as Aviator probably isn't the place for any "gratuitous" sexism. This doesn't mean that I am also going to start "softening up" some of the words in the articles, or even the reasons of the death of our members as some publications do, but I will drop some of the crude humor that's found its way into a couple of the issues since I have taken over.

One of the nicest compliments I've received since accepting this job of Editing the Aviator

was another member's e-mail letting me know that one of the things he is really excited about was that finally, mainly due to our new "look", even his wife is picking up the issue's and looking through them. You all need to know that pleases me just as much as it does him - I just need to remember from now on that we are (finally?) having a lot of our wives look through each issue as well.

Regards,  
David Adams

## Clarification

Let the record be set straight....Tom Payne had nothing to do with the compilation or writing of the "I Miss Vietnam" list published on page 19 of the Nov/Dec 2009 edition of the Aviator. That list was conceived, composed and written entirely by Dennis Gulich at home for his Thunderbird friends and shared with them, exclusively. After receiving and reading the list from one of Dennis Gulich's friends, Tom Payne asked it be sent to the Aviator for publication.

Dennis Gulich was the sole author and can be contacted (and thanked for his work) at:

Tom Payne

## To the members of the VHPA,

A Looking For letter in the last newsletter tells about Lt Rittichier and his crew dying in Laos on June 9, 1968.

On page 205 of my book Firebirds, I mention the radio conversation I was listening to that day as I flew along the DMZ with the Special Forces. I could only hear the A1Es talking, the one-sided conversation went something like this: "Go up the road...go up the road... you will see the chute...go further... where are you receiving fire from?"

Another Sandy then exclaimed "what an explosion!" Another asked "what are you going to do now?" The answer (in a resigned tone), "I guess we'll get another chopper and see what we can do". In the book I tell the story of another one of our crews on Sept 27 1968 which was involved in an operation when another Jolly Green blew up and a bird dog was shot down.

Chuck Carlock

## Hello David

A big "Thank You" for adding my 'letter to the editor' in the Sept/Oct. Issue of the VHPA, I received a reply last week via e-mail, and it looks like I have found the co-pilot of the craft that took us out of the Ashaw Valley on May 9th. 69. His name is Richard Green and he said that the pilot was Larry Moak, our story's match very close and we have corresponded several times. Makes good grounds for a mini reunion one day!

Thanks again.  
Leo (Doc) Flory

*I think I can add a small postscript* to David West's article in the Sep/Oct edition of the Aviator (A long silver ball just flew off the helicopter...)

In June 1970 I was 'on loan' for the day to our sister company, A/101 Comancheros. On touching down in an open area near Camp Evans on a normal resupply mission, a mortar shell exploded about 20 feet away at 2 O'clock. The Huey started to slew to the left and I took over the controls from my copilot who had been flying but was now unconscious. Believing the Huey to be the target of incoming mortars, I decided to move it away as an exploding Huey would have been very unpopular in the midst of a platoon of Grunts. Remarkably, it flew very smoothly though I was very gentle with the controls, and we landed safely at Camp Evans.

On inspection, after shutdown, there was considerable shrapnel damage. Most notably, both damper links to the stabilizer bar were missing entirely. It was all just another example of the ruggedness of our beloved Huey's.

Incidentally, the mortar explosion was found to be an old booby-trapped shell.

Lionel Shrago  
Major Retired  
C/101 Blackwidow 1

## Seeking the owner of a lost Class Ring.

I found a class ring for US Army Aviation complete with a blue stone and inlaid wings in Newport News, VA. It has 15U 2008 on one side and MOAD Victory Stratosphere on the other. It is engraved.

*Any idea whom the owner might be?*

Thanks,  
Linda Tuck

Spouse of Retired AF

## Dear Editor,

I'm Ron Garrison from Davison Field, Ft. Belvoir from a long time ago.

I'm sending this note along to let you know that BG George Wear (Ret) saw the article written by C. J. Unruh, which seemed to be referring to him, since he believes he was the only Army General in the Highlands at that time, but the rank and spelling of the name was not correct. He did say it was true, even though he was rated, he never flew without a highly qualified pilot in the other seat.

I send along my appreciation to all the VHPA officers, committee chairmen and all the people who keep our association functioning. I do some volunteer work myself so I appreciate how much time needs to be devoted to tasks no one knows about. Thank you!

Sir:

I received my 2009 Membership Directory a few weeks ago. I went through the directory and found pages missing. The directory goes from page 1 to page 448 then starts repeating at



page 417 and goes to 448 where it then jumps to page 481.

It appears that pages 449 - 480 are missing. I noticed this when I was try to find both units I was with in Vietnam, they were not there.

*Thanks for looking into this for me,  
Reg Harris  
Gambler 5*

*Gary Roush, our Directory Chairman reports that this problem occasionally happens and asks that we all check our directories for similar problems. HQ will be glad to mail you a replacement if you wish, we just need to know if we have a problem with our printer that needs to be addressed.*

#### **ATTENTION: Pilots who flew The Central Highlands**

The Montagnards helped us, now we can help them. Join the Vietnam veterans who are helping the Vinh Son Orphanage stay operational. See our ad in this issue for the full details but please note that every penny goes directly to Sisters of the Miraculous Medal that operate this 500 person orphanage where they shelter, feed and educate each child for about \$12.00 each month!

Please help me get the word out about this amazing facility to our members and especially to the Special Forces veterans who where their advisors.

Thanks, John Everhart  
(White-28, Cougar-6), 7/17th Air Cav (68-69),  
57th AHC (71)

#### **We learn more about last issue's Found On Post Huey....By John Harris**

In summary, based primarily on detailed input provided by Dr. Leeker, who has done extensive research on the disposition of each Air America aircraft, (particularly those in Saigon during the fall), this is what we know for sure:

On 29 April 75, five UH-1H's on loan to Air America from the Army to support the ICCS (International Commission for Control and Supervision) and painted in the distinctive ICCS paint scheme, were stolen at gunpoint from the Air America ramp in Saigon, by VNAF pilots. Of the five stolen, two were known to have crashed but the other three never made it to the US Navy evacuation fleet, which offloaded all of the Air America helicopters which did reach naval shipping, in either Subic Bay or Guam

The only one of the "stolen" ICCS aircraft to ever make it back onto Army roles was 70-15738, which is listed by the Army as having been returned in May 75. While the Army records don't say where it was returned, that is the exact same month I saw the ex-Air America Huey being repainted in South Korea, so it appears certain that the aircraft which made it to South Korea was 70-15738.

Therefore, the conclusion has been drawn that the VNAF pilots who took 70-15738 were likely somewhat reluctant to land the "stolen" Huey on an U.S. aircraft carrier and that is why they probably chose to land on a civil freighter instead.

Since almost 35 years have passed and we sincerely doubt any "authorities" really care about the comanderling of the aircraft (better

than having given a flyable Huey to the NVA), we would still like to hear from anyone who knows or knew the VNAF pilots who flew 70-15738 out. Perhaps one or more of the VNAF members of VHPA can provide more details. Specifically, we would like to find out the name of the ship they landed on, how long they remained on board the ship and where and how they eventually Disembarked.

A great postscript to this tale is the fact that we have tracked down 70-15738 and it is now owned by a civil operator, NW Helicopters, in WA state. After I related the tale of this aircraft's bizarre escape from RVN, Brian Reynolds, the owner of NW Helicopters, confirmed his ownership and advised he is giving serious consideration to restoring 70-15738 to it's former Air America/ICCS configuration and paint scheme.

I think the tale of 70-15738's escape and journey from South Vietnam to South Korea and eventually to Washington State would make a great subject for either the History or Military channel; heck, the Huey could even "play itself" in the show!

Will keep you posted if more details become available.

*John M. Harris  
Green Delta 19/Delta Guardian 19*



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far friendlier  
these days  
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## **Vietnam Helo Ops Overview**

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# More on the Unidentified Cav Guidon at Fort Irwin

*We hear from the Commander of the G Troop, 17th Cav about last issue's story of the unidentified Cav Guidon at Fort Irwin, California*

WILLIAM T. CLARY, 34 Eastbranch Court, Columbia, SC 29223, E-Mail: [REDACTED]

November 3, 2009

**Dear Gary and SSG Hurst,**

This is in response to your article in the current VHPA Aviator magazine. In 1965, I was Commanding Officer, Troop G, 17th Cavalry assigned to The Combat Developments and Experimentation Command (CDEC) at Fort Ord, CA.

This unit was the only one on the west coast at that time that had a full complement of UH-1B's and D's. We also had OH-13's for the scout element of the unit. We provided CDEC with helicopter support for whatever experiments they were doing at the time. We towed various scale model replicas of the UH-1 so the ground troops could shoot at it with live fire. The replica was loaded with recording gear that counted the hits. It was a unique demand on the pilots and the towing helicopter. We did lots of troop hauls and flew lots of folks back and forth to Hunter Liggett Reservation where CDEC performed all their experiments. We also spent lots of hours in the air on search and rescue for lost folks in the hills of CA. We spent from December

24, 1964 until February 5, 1965 on flood relief in Northern California. The weather was horrible and flying was very hazardous. All pilots were awarded an Air Medal for their days of endless rescues and delivery of supplies all over that mountainous area.

When we got everyone back for a rest, Col. Raymond Evers, CEDC Aviation Officer, informed me I was to get Troop G ready for combat training and that I was to take the unit to Fort Irwin, CA. The training exercise was to commence in late May 1965 and complete in early July 1965. We got busy rigging up all the armament systems and readied everyone for the Unit's convoy from Fort Ord to Fort Irwin. So off we went to fire SS-11 Wire Guided Missiles that were allocated, the 2.75" Rockets and whatever else we could muster and get a bang out of it. We had a very successful six weeks at Fort Irwin Army Airfield and the many square miles of firing ranges. As I recall, we even moved the entire unit to the desert for a week during this period. The unit closed back at Fort Ord around the 2d or 3d of July 1965.

I was informed when I returned to Fort Ord that I was to ready all Troop G, 17th Cavalry equipment for shipment to Fort Benning, GA where it would become part of an Airmobile Division that was being formed at that location. In addition to the equipment, most of the personnel were also

reassigned to The Airmobile Division at Fort Benning effective in August 1965. I was the lone remaining member of the unit that remained at Fort Ord and I was tasked with deactivating the unit. I completed that task in September 1965 and was reassigned to the 605th Transportation Company (AM&S) that was being formed at Fort Riley, KS.

I arrived in Vietnam with the 605th in March 1966 and hadn't even gotten my bags unpacked until Walt Duncan and I were infused into The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). He went to D Co., 15th TC and I went to C Co. Needless to say it was like old home week as I rejoined with all my old Troop G buddies that were scattered throughout various units of the 1st Cav. One year after I left C Co. and went to the Army Aviation Test Board at Fort Rucker, I was back at C Co., 1st Cav Div. at Hue Phubi, Vietnam.

*I make no claim that the information on the hillside is from Troop G, 17th Cavalry. I do state as fact that we were there for six weeks hard training in 1965 and that shortly after we left there, Troop G, 17th Cavalry was deactivated and therefore gone from the rolls of active Army units.*

We shall have to wait and see if someone else can provide a solid answer to the mystery. Best regards,

**William T. (Tom) Clary**  
LTC, USA, RET.

## Seeking Photos for Book and Video

Jim Fulbrook and Doug Womack are writing a book on their time in Vietnam with a big emphasis on Lam Son 719. They are seeking photos (slides or negatives) that can be converted into electronic images. In particular, they are seeking aerial photos of Laotian LZs and Vietnam LZs to include unit bases and major landmarks. We will work out a way to get the files electronically copied and safely handled and returned. In addition, if you have any color photos of the following, please contact Jim: agent orange drums and spraying rigs, the ring around exhaust on a smokeship with compartment rig and operations, nighthawk setup, early FLIR or ammonia sniffer rigs, destroyed helicopters, photos of Khe Sanh and specific areas on base (need a photo of the wrecked C123/130 from '68 by airstrip), etc. Of course, any videotapes would also be useful – *all media will be properly attributed to contributors. Got something, please contact Jim at* [REDACTED]

## General Brady Needs Help

"For some years I have noted that too many aviation museums have dedicated little or no space to the helicopter. This is especially aggravating when war centered displays omit the most combat experienced aircraft of all time -- the HUEY! During a lecture at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, I found one chopper, and at the Museum of Flight in Seattle, none.

Thanks to many, the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field near Seattle is now restoring a HUEY for display. They need our help both monetarily and in technical support (no chopper experience there). If you have maintenance skills and live near the Museum of Flight, please call Mr. Tom Cathcart, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. If you have a few spare dollars, send them to Alison Bailey, [REDACTED] Seattle, WA 98108. Alison's phone number is: [REDACTED] and her e-mail is [REDACTED]. We need to stop this neglect of our great Bird.

The Huey can be found on our web site: <http://www.museumofflight.org> under the collections section.

Our Director of A/C Collections, Mr. Tom Cathcart has estimated that it would cost about \$15K to strip and paint, and restore the aircraft with volunteer help. He will do all the coordination at Paine Field. We would like to recruit volunteers and any interested persons should contact either me or Tom, directly. His phone number is: [REDACTED] or E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Donations may be sent to either Alison Bailey or me. If contributed via the web site, please note in the comments section that it is for the Huey. Our physical address is [REDACTED] Seattle, WA 98108. My phone is [REDACTED] Alison's phone number is: [REDACTED] and her e-mail is [REDACTED]

**General Brady**  
[REDACTED]



# Story of a Warrior

## Crew Warrior 26

*Four Decades Can't Dim the Emotional Response to Those Familiar Huey Blades*

*Ohio pilot reunites with his old crew for a special reunion, thanks to American Huey 369*

### TROY, OH—

Forty-two years is a long time between flights. But when your friendship has been tested in the fires of combat, forty-two years can seem more like forty-two minutes.

In August 2009, those years melted away easily as Jim Miller, 64, of Troy, OH, Life Member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Ohio River LZ Chapter of VHPA reconnected with his helicopter crew from Vietnam...and with the machine that had defined and preserved their lives during their year-long tour of duty at Soc Trang Army Airfield with the 336th Assault Helicopter Company.

From 1967 to 1968 Jim had served as aircraft commander of an Army UH-1D Huey helicopter, with a crew that included Don Johnson of Hudson, Wisconsin as crew chief and Steve Zanini, now of Jacksonville, FL as door gunner.

Jim left the Army in December of 1969 and his first reunion with his flight crew was in Las Vegas in November 2004, with other members of the 336th AHC. Jim's wife Jan said she learned more about Jim's Vietnam experience by listening to the three men relive their time together.

You can take the man out of the Huey, but taking the Huey out of the man is more problematic. "It was very clear from the beginning that Jim could not completely leave the Huey behind. Every time he heard one, he ran out the door to watch or rolled down the window to listen," Jan explains, referencing the familiar 'whop-whop-whop' of the UH-1 chopper blades that is seared into the psyche of all those who served in Southeast Asia. "We

spent 1500 hours in her getting shot at every day. To us, that's the sound of freedom," he says.

Jim acknowledges his love affair with the big olive green bird and after early retirement he returned to flying helicopters and now works as a corporate helicopter pilot for High Tec Industrial Services in Tipp City, OH. Jim's journey toward the August reunion began about 10 years ago when he noticed a battered old Huey sitting awkwardly at the edge of the WACO airfield in Troy, OH. The airstrip had been constructed to pay tribute to the fixed wing aircraft produced by the Weaver Aircraft Co (WACO) during the 1930s and 40s. To say the Huey seemed strangely out of place was an understatement.

"When Jim talked to the WACO Board it was evident they

bound when he heard the Huey and got close to it," Jan recalls. "And he was so nervous when it was his turn to fly that he could barely get his gloves on, and fumbled with his helmet and microphone...he was a bit fearful as to whether he could still manage the controls."

But, like the proverbial bicycle ride, Jim's Huey skills came flooding back and he handled the machine so masterfully that the Aircraft Commander praised his piloting skills.

During the 2008 event, John Walker shared with Jim that American Huey 369 had just acquired a new restoration project, Warrior 11, a chopper that had been assigned to the 336th AHC in Soc Trang. Jim realized that he and his crew had likely flown this particular bird when their regular chopper – Warrior 26 – was down for repairs. It was as though fate had taken hold of the cyclic and was guiding Jim toward a singular event. He quickly contact-

ed his old crew and began making plans for a 2009 reunion with the restored Warrior 11. The fact that Jim even had a crew was somewhat unusual since it was typical for a gunner and crew chief to fly with different pilots for each mis-

sion. But somehow these three had managed to hang together for the duration of their stay in Southeast Asia. Jan recalls that theirs was a friendship born of the Vietnam War. "To look at them, it's unlikely that they would have chosen each other as friends under normal circumstances. Steve was a smooth talking, street savvy guy from the South Side of Chicago while Don was a soft-spoken Wisconsin farm boy and the oldest of 11 kids. Jim fell somewhere between the two in personality." But what may have been an odd combination in the "real world" was a perfect blend in the Huey.

As the three veterans prepared for their August 2009 reunion, Jim was busy making sure everything was perfect. That process included securing autographed copies of "We are Soldiers Still," By Hal Moore and Joe Galloway (authors of We Were Soldiers Once...and Young) for each member of the crew. Jim even had a replica flight helmet



Jim Miller (Warrior 11) poses with his aircrew in Vietnam in 1967 and again at the American Huey 369 Reunion in Peru, Indiana on August 22, 2009. (from left to right, SP/4 Steve Zanini, Gunner; WO Jim Miller, Aircraft Commander and SP/5 Don Johnson, Crew Chief).

considered the Huey an eyesore and wanted to find someplace else for it. So Jim began pouring his own money into searching for parts to retrofit the aircraft," Jan explains. His search led the Vietnam Veteran to Peru, IN, where he met John Walker, a Huey pilot/owner who invited him to join American Huey 369, a non-profit organization ([www.americanhuey369.org](http://www.americanhuey369.org)) that preserves Hueys in order to educate future generations about the aircraft and its role in preserving and defending freedom. The organization also practices its own unique form of therapy, reuniting Vietnam veterans with the dependable airship that became so indelibly linked to the Vietnam conflict.

In 2008 Jim had his first opportunity to fly one of the restored birds at an American Huey 369 event in Indiana. "Jim was spell-



made for each one, since the crews were required to leave their original helmets behind for the next crews coming over to "Nam."

Jan recalls that they departed for Indiana on August 21, their back seat and trunk was filled to the brim "for a 48 hour trip. I had no idea what half the stuff was or why we had brought what I did recognize!"

The three crewmembers had arranged a private dinner the night before so they could pick up where they'd left off years earlier. Next day it was off to the airfield where Don and Steve had their first encounter with a Huey since leaving Vietnam.

"We arrived at the airfield early Saturday morning so Don and Steve could have a look around. When two Hueys flew in, in formation, the two men became motionless...unable to speak. And when Jim turned around to say something to them, he saw tears welling in their eyes," Jan recalled. Once the Hueys had landed, all three men were able to touch the aircraft, climb inside and reconnect with the memory of past fears, hopes and adventures.

The reunion brought together not only Jim's crew but a total of about 20 men from the 336th AHC. Jan noted that one visitor had made a particularly harrowing journey. "Back in 2008, at the first American Huey 369 event we attended, I had my first experience witnessing the agony of PTSD," Jan recalls. "During the re-enactment of a ground attack, we suddenly heard a man scream and start to cry hysterically. All the Vietnam veterans gathered around him and held onto him until he was able to collect himself. Later, I spoke with his wife who said that his recovery had been slow going and that he was haunted by nightmares. I found out that he had been a gunner on Hueys and had survived crash landings from being shot down three separate times."



For the 2009 reunion, that same veteran made a return trip to the American Huey 369 event. This time, Jan says, you wouldn't have known it was the same man, thanks to the special kind of healing born of facing the past and making peace with it. "John Walker had encouraged him to help out at the American Huey 369 exhibitions. Each assignment took him a little closer to the chopper and, within 6 months, he was flying the gunner position again! It was amazing to see him and talk to him at the 2009 reunion. What a change," Jan says.

For Jim and his crew, the highlight of the reunion was their own "honor flight," where they got to relive the roles that had brought them together so many years before. This time, however, they could savor the camaraderie without fear of ground fire, tracers, or SAMs. But old habits die hard, and as the bird cleared the tree line Zanini called out "Receiving fire from 3 o'clock!" "Return fire! Return fire!" Jim responded, grinning broadly.

Miller, a quiet but jovial man, says little as Jan describes the reunion, but he smiles and nods vigorously. It is obvious that words do not effectively convey the emotions and sensations of that weekend. Perhaps there truly are no words that can sum up the flutter of the heart and the quickening of the

pulse as they fall into rhythm with that unmistakable whop-whop-whop of those sturdy, dependable Huey blades.

Still, Steve tried to find those words when he e-mailed Jim once the reunion was over. "I have to tell you again what a great thrill it was for me to join you and Don for one last flight together as a crew on a Warrior Huey," Zanini wrote. "As we stood together in that meadow in Indiana when Warrior 11 first approached – and, later, when

you flew us over the corn and soybean fields (which I could have sworn looked like rice paddies), the memories of our time in combat flooded my mind. At one point, you banked slightly to the right, over a winding river. I looked down and saw a small canoe (sampan) that immediately took me back 42 years to the Mekong Delta. I have not experienced a transformation so vividly clear as that day since I left country in December 1967...

As you so warmly stated on your inscription in 'We are Soldiers Still,' we share a very unique bond," Zanini continued. "It is a bond not many can understand; a bond I am so very proud to have...and one that I pray my children and grandchildren will never have to share with anyone. Thank you for being the great pilot you were, for the service and sacrifice you gave to your country...and thank you for bringing us home."

*For the crew of Warrior 26,  
that pretty much says it all.*

*The above story was written by  
Tara Dixon Engel  
of the American Veterans Institute  
with input from my wife,  
Jan Miller, and myself.*

## ***The Kobb-Etchells effect.***

*VHPA Member Bob Smith passed to us an interesting new development just observed by our modern-day aviators in the deserts of Afghanistan...the Kobb-Etchells effect.*

When helicopters pass through dust storms, contact of the sand particles with the rotating blades produces either sparks or static electricity. The phenomenon has been observed during combat operations in Afghanistan; Michael Yon has documented the effect and has named it after two U.K. soldiers who died there. "Kopp-Etchells"

When operating in sandy environments, sand hitting the moving rotor blades erodes their surface. This can damage the rotors; the erosion also presents serious and costly maintenance problems. The rotor blades have a titanium abrasive strip installed on the leading edge and while it's very hard, it is less hard than sand. We're now finding out that when a helicopter is flown near to the ground in desert environments abrasion occurs, and at night there is a visible corona or halo around the rotor blades, caused by

the sand hitting the titanium and causing it to spark and oxidize.

*Do any of our members ever recall the same thing happening elsewhere in the world?*





# Doing the right thing pays your Heart Dividends!

By Paul Bartlett

I am Paul E. Bartlett a Vietnam veteran helicopter pilot, and in October Of 2006, an idea came to me to make plaques with a cross cut section of helicopter rotor blades as their center piece.

In Mid March 2007 I received a post card from Ron Seabolt, National Director of the 71st AHC Rattlers / Firebirds Association, my unit from Vietnam. (<http://www.rattler-firebird.org>). It was a sad but a good notice at the same time. One of our fellow Firebird members who had died in a helicopter crash on January 10th 1970 in Vietnam, along with four other crewmembers, was coming home. Captain Herbert Charles Crosby's remains had been identified December 19th 2006 when one of his ID tags was recovered and he was to be interred in Arlington National Cemetery on the 25th of May 2007. The notice said this is a "once in a lifetime event".

My idea was put in high gear wanting to make the first Memorial HeliPlaque for his family.

A look at the web site [www.firebird91.org](http://www.firebird91.org), created by Herb's sister Marylou Wade, showed me where Herb's mother had just receiving several of her son's POW/MIA bracelets for supporters all over the country. That's when I had an idea to inlay a POW bracelet and id tag on Herb's plaque. A good friend Dave Brigham, who owns Four Corners LLC -a high-end CNC machining wood business, even lent me his equipment to make my Herb's plaque.

I didn't have a bracelet to model the spot from I so typed in "POW/MIA" in a Google search. A list of sites appeared, I picked the sixth one down.

**National League of POW/MIA Families**  
An organization for family members  
of POW/MIA's from the Vietnam War.  
[www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)  
4k - Cached - Similar pages

I went to this site and found the 11th listing

on the left side of the site was "POW/MIA Bracelets" I read that information, then clicked on the "Official Vendor list", and this is what I found:

**BRACELETS-NOT SPECIFIC NAME**  
Liz Flick  
Ohio Chapter MIA/POW  
P.O. Box 14853  
Columbus, OH 43214

*To obtain a stainless steel bracelet, with designated branch of service and biography of the missing man, but NOT by-name requests, send \$10.00 to Liz Flick (price includes shipping).*

I then called Liz Flick and introduced myself, gave her a brief description of what I was making and why. I told her needed a sample bracelet quickly as the funeral was on the 25th of May, less than 30 days away. There was a pause then Liz said "I know who it is for."

I couldn't understand as I had never told her who the plaque was for, when I told her that the plaque was for my buddy, Herbert C. Crosby, she responded by saying "I know who you are talking about, I wore his bracelet for thirty-four years."

I was astounded. I went on to ask if there was anyway she might consider giving me the bracelet so I could mount it on the plaque I was building in Herb's memory. Liz went to look for the bracelet (she had finally taken it off after she learned that Herb's body had been recovered) and when she came back on the line, she told me she had the bracelet in her hand and would be honored to have it given to Herb's mother. Before ending the call I asked her to send a letter with it about the story of her MIA Bracelet as I was so excited and thought I might not remember all she said. The story of Liz's bracelet and her remarkable life also runs in this story.

Following the call to Liz I was home alone as I kept getting up and walking back and forth saying out loud "I just can't

believe this". Then the tears started as my emotions overwhelmed me and to this day I have trouble telling the bracelet story without getting emotional.

Within a few days the bracelet arrived at my home with her letter. I finished building the plaque and took it with me to Herb's services. Photos of the services at Arlington and lots more about this story are posted on Herb's website: <http://www.firebird91.org>.

I was asked to speak during the funeral home service so I told "The Liz Flick Story" to 25 members of our unit, plus all Herbs' family members. I even managed to finish without stumbling too many times during the talk. Col. William (Whiz) Broome, Chaplin at the Pentagon performed the service, Whiz was a Rattler pilot who flew with Herb in Vietnam. My highest honor for that day was to present my plaque to Jane Crosby Wesley, Herbs 88 year old mother.

## **The rest of the story:**

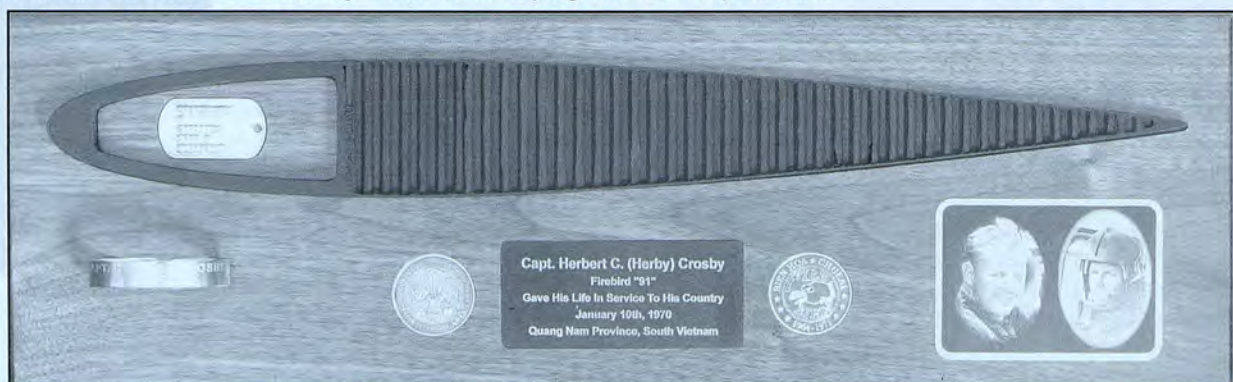
In these days when our country is in flux about immigrants this is a story about a woman who got involved in volunteering before she was a US citizen. Liz Flick wasn't just a flash in the pan as she is still hard at work with National League of POW/MIA Families.

<http://www.pow-miafamilies.org>

Unknown to me how this happened, finding Liz who was dedicated enough to wear this bracelet for thirty four years for one of our fellow 71st AHC veterans was a true miracle.

Herb himself is finally in the land he gave his life for. I am not a particularly religious person but I can't ignore the things that have happened in indicating "Someone" has intervened. I feel that someone (GOD) made it possible for all this to come about.

Paul E. Bartlett  
West Stockbridge, MA



HeliPlaque #1, made for Cpt. Herb Crosby by Paul Bartlett, complete with the POW bracelet worn by Liz Rick for over 36 years.





## NEWS RELEASE

from the United States Department of Defense  
Washington, D.C.

No. 1294-06 IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 19, 2006

### Soldiers Missing In Action From Vietnam War are Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of three U.S. servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Capt. Herbert C. Crosby, of Donalsonville, Ga.; Sgt. 1st Class Wayne C. Allen, of Tewksbury, Mass.; and Sgt. 1st Class Francis G. Graziosi, of Rochester, N.Y.; all U.S. Army. Burial dates and locations are being set by their families.

Representatives from the Army met with the next-of-kin of these men to explain the recovery and identification process, and to coordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the Secretary of the Army.

On Jan. 10, 1970, these men were returning to their base at Chu Lai, South Vietnam aboard a UH-1C Huey helicopter. Due to bad weather, their helicopter went down over Quang Nam Province. A search was initiated for the crew, but no sign of the helicopter or crew was spotted.

In 1989, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) gave to U.S. specialists 25 boxes containing the remains of the U.S. servicemen related to this incident. Later that year, additional remains and Crosby's identification tag were obtained from a Vietnamese refugee. Between 1993 and 1999, joint U.S./S.R.V. teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), conducted three investigations in Ho Chi Minh City and two investigations in Quang Nam-Da Nang Province (formerly Quang Nam Province). A Vietnamese informant in Ho Chi Minh City told the team he knew where the remains of as many as nine American servicemen were buried. He agreed to lead the team to the burial site. In 1994, the team excavated the site and recovered a metal box and several bags containing human remains, including those of these three soldiers.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA and dental comparisons in the identification of the remains.

### Liz's Story...

April 26, 2007

#### **My connection with Captain Herbert Crosby, USA**

In 1972, with no relative serving in Southeast Asia, I purchased a POW/MIA bracelet from an organization called VIVA in California. The man whose name was on my bracelet came home in February 1973 and I immediately purchased another bracelet. The name on this bracelet was Capt. Herbert Crosby, with a date of 1-10-70. I later learned he was a member of the United States Army.

I wore this bracelet continuously until his remains were returned home a few months ago. The bracelet came off my arm only once when I had a MRI and yes, I showered with him every day. I constantly fight with security people at airports and other locations who always want me to remove my bracelet. I refuse and promptly get "wanded" and patted down!

In 1973, I became friends with Jacqueline McGouldrick, and purchased a



bracelet for her husband, Colonel Francis J. McGouldrick, USAF, missing since 12-13068. He and Captain Crosby have "served" together on my arm all these years.

At a regional meeting in the Boston area many years ago, I had the privilege of meeting Mrs. Crosby and showing her the bracelet I was wearing. I am now so pleased to be able to return this bracelet to her and want her to know I have faithfully supported and worked for her son for all these years.

#### **Some personal notes:**

When I purchased my bracelet for Captain Crosby, I was not yet a citizen of the United States – I became one in May of 1973. When I placed the first bracelet on my arm, I knew I wanted to do more than just wear a bracelet and went looking for a group in Ohio with whom I could work. I volunteered my services with Sandi Paul, then coordinator for the Ohio Chapter of MIA/POW.

In 1984 I was elected State Coordinator for Ohio, and later became a regional coordinator for the National League of POW/MIA Families – holding both positions ever since. The Ohio Chapter MIA/POW supports the League financially, and by selling flags, T-shirts, bracelets, literature, etc. literally world wide. It seems I have become a full-time volunteer for the League! On top of running the Ohio Chapter, I also handle all registration material for the annual meeting in DC, as well as being dinner chairman for this event.

Through his bracelet, Captain Crosby has met some fantastic people over the years, and traveled over a good part of this globe. Now may he rest in peace back in the land that he loved.

**Liz Rick**  
**State and Regional Coordinator**  
**National League of POW/MIA Families**  
Ohio Chapter MIA/POW  
P.O. Box 14853  
Columbus, OH 43214  
National League of POW/MIA Families:  
[www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)



# Nose Art Quiz

During the course of research for my upcoming book, *US ARMY HELICOPTER NAMES & NOSE ART IN VIETNAM VOL 1*, enough rotor data has been tabulated to selectively offer the VHPA readers the following tantalizing brain teasers. Enjoy, John Brennan, former SP5, 114 AHC, 1970-71, Vinh Long AAF, Mekong Delta: (email) [REDACTED]

1) Pop singer Neil Diamond has the distinction, in 2008, of autographing a circa 1970-71 surviving battery access door from an in-country veteran UH-1C that was decorated with the original unit artwork and painted words of one of his song titles. Name the song and Army unit involved.

2) Besides *LIGHT MY FIRE*, four other popular Door's song titles were reported to have been carried on several in-country Army helicopters. What were they?

3) The following five genuine in-country copter names all reflect a particular theme, what is it? *ORANGE SUNSHINE*, *CPT ZIG ZAG*, *THE ROACH COACH*, *MARY JANE*, *THE CRYSTAL SHIP*.

4) The following five genuine in-country copter names all reflect a particular mission theme, what was it? *HOVER LOVER*, *IRON LUNG*, *SYMPATHETIC JOURNEY*, *GOT YA*, *MY BROTHER'S KEEPER*

5) The following five genuine in-country copter names all reflect a particular theme, what is it? *MUFF DIVER*, *MISS MYNOOKIE*, *BOOM BOOM A-GO-GO*, *HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN*, *PRAY FOR PIECE*

6) No other 1960's American rock band shares this distinction, or even comes close. Its name bedecked 50 (so far recorded) in-country Army copters including *Medevac/Dustoff* ships. This number ranks it at #1 on my *TOP TEN* in-country chopper "name" list.

7) What three Army aviation units in Vietnam replicated beer can art onto their gunship rocket pods?

8) What brands of beer were they?

9) Which American State's name is incorporated into more in-country Army copter "names" than any other?

10) All of the following helo "names" have been documented to have been painted on in-country Army copters. See which "name" best describes the following helo type: *AH-1*, *CH-21*, *CH-37*, *CH-47*, *CH-54*, *OH-6*, *OH-13*, *UH-1C*, *UH-1H*

- . WAYNE'S WORK HORSE . THE BIG HEMORROID
- . BOONY BUS . THE HEDGE HOPPER
- . THE MAGGOT WAGON . LOAD RUNNER . CYCLOPS
- . HOP-A-LONG . SNAKE CHARMER

*Answers on Page 24*

## The NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR MUSEUM



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

5 September 2009  
Mineral Wells, TX

#### **Museum Donation to VHPA Scholarship Fund**

In April 2008, The National Vietnam War Museum sent copies of our fundraising video, featuring Roger Staubach, to every VHPA Chapter in care of the chapter president. Since the VHPA is a charter sponsor of the museum, we challenged the chapters to show the video to their membership and use the video to help raise money for the museum project. As an added incentive, we promised to donate \$1,000 to the VHPA Scholarship Fund in the name of the chapter raising the most money for the museum.

On September 5th of this year, Museum Board President Gerald Brazell made a symbolic presentation of the \$1,000 check to Fort Wolters Chapter President Virgil Laughlin at the chapter's quarterly meeting. The check was subsequently sent to VHPA Headquarters for the Scholarship Fund in the chapter's name.

*Edward T. Luttenberger*  
Communications Director  
The National Vietnam War Museum

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# *Bill* The VHPA NEEDS A FEW GOOD MEN...

**By Moon Mullins, Junior Member at Large**

*Yes, we need a few good men to throw their hat in the ring and run for positions on the VHPA Executive Council.*

The VHPA Executive Council (EC) consists of six members: past President, presiding President, VP, and three members-at-large (senior, midterm and junior). Every year an election is held to fill two positions: VP and Junior Member-at-Large. This notice fulfills VHPA policy to notify members and to seek nominees for the VP and Junior Member at Large positions.

**If you read this request each year and you use the following excuses not to run:**

- 1) *not many people know me*
- 2) *I don't have a history of other VHPA activity*
- 3) *I wouldn't have a chance of getting elected then you can no longer use those excuses! I, Moon Mullen got elected last year and these are same excuses I have always used! You just need to be an active VHPA member and be willing to serve.*

A member can volunteer as a nominee or someone can nominate another member, although we suggest you check with the person you intend to nominate to

ensure they are willing to serve.

This year I, Moon Mullen, our current Junior Member at Large, is the election coordinator. A person must contact me in writing no later than midnight, June 15, 2010 to be nominated. Contact may be done by email [REDACTED] or USPS mail [REDACTED] PO Box 2082, Pocono Pines, Pa 18350. A phone call will not serve as a nomination application, but you may call me for additional information [REDACTED]

When a nomination is received, I will provide an application packet and form which must be completed and returned by the nominee. The one-page form asks basic information and can be briefly answered. Then the names of nominees for either office will be posted to the VHPA website by June 20, 2010.

The election will take place at the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) during the 2010 reunion in San Diego. Rules for conducting the election will be provided in the application packet and any VHPA member may contact me for this information. Note: a member may attend the ABM without being registered for the reunion.

What does the EC do? We fly the organization thru VFR and IFR, thru hot LZ's and safe LZ's. We have a tele-

phone conference call once a month to discuss and make decisions over issues concerning VHPA.

We also use email between monthly conference calls to steer us to timely decisions. I am happy to be serving as the Junior Member at Large, still surprised that you elected me and doing my best to represent you. Now, need YOU to get involved and run for office!

When elected, you will be expected to attend the reunions. Face time with other EC members, attend the ABM, and help to make sure all the reunion plans go according to plan. Since you are expected to attend the reunions, the hotel contract while you are in office, will provide you a complimentary room.

The Junior Member at Large is a three year position where each year you move up the ladder to become the midterm and then the senior member at Large. The senior member may then competitively run for VP. The VP moves up to become the President of our Association the next year and the past president the year after that.

**VHPA depends and need a quality EC, this election is important.....new guys, new ideas, new energy.....the VHPA needs YOU!!!!**

## HEADS UP MEMBERS

The Executive Council (EC), David Adams (our Aviator Editor), and a few other members have been discussing the idea of having a theme for each year that we publish the Aviator and plan the reunion. It's too late to plan on 2010 for the San Diego reunion, but 2011, will be the 40th anniversary of Lam Son 719. So, in 2011, we will feature stories on Lam Son 719 and there will be Historic Presentations, films, and more. Dr. Jim Fulbrook also plans to have his professional camera set up to film members telling their stories about Lam Son or other events in 1971. OK, actually he'll record anyone who wants to come

forward. In addition, if you have any articles or stories to include on Lam Son 719 or 1971, please start to get them together for our Aviator and reunion. In 2012, we'll feature 1962 (50 years since start of aviation ops in Nam) and 1972 (40 years since Easter Offensive). OK, we think you get the idea. Now you can still submit articles for other times and operations during Vietnam, so the theme is not hard and fast. Finally, keep in mind that we do a Christmas issue every year and are always seeking Christmas (holiday) related stories and photos to submit to David Adams.

POC: Jim Fulbrook,  
[REDACTED]

**Thanks for your contributions.**

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# UH-1 Retirement Ceremony at Ft. Myers

*Text of Jim Fulbrook's speech...*

As a representative of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, I will briefly talk about the UH-1, which is arguably the most recognized symbol of the Vietnam War. The Huey was the first turbine-powered helicopter in the Army and arrived in Vietnam in April 1962 to provide Medevac support. However, by late '62, the first dedicated Huey lift and gunships were created. In the ensuing years, improved Bravo, Charlie, Delta, and Hotel model Hueys were introduced into Vietnam and the concept of air mobility and aerial artillery were borne and evolved, along with the more rapid evacuation of wounded, which saved thousands of lives.

The UH-1 was adapted for countless missions from multi-ship combat assaults to Cav missions to a variety of single ship "slick" missions of resupply, troop transport, command and control, and special operations and missions such as Psyops, Nighthawk, Long Range Recon Patrols or LRRP insertions as they were called and CCN, which stood for Command and Control North operations. More than 5,000 UH-1 helicopters were deployed to Vietnam and nearly half were left behind or lost for one reason or another by war's end. The Huey was truly the workhorse of the Vietnam War and is, without a doubt, one of the most successful, reliable, and cost effective systems the Army has ever procured.

I flew the UH-1 H-model in Vietnam out of Chu Lai with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company from May 1970 until June '71. I logged 1,420 combat hours in that year and over 2,500 hours in the Huey over my aviation career. Anyone who flew the Huey remembers some aircraft over others. After I made aircraft commander in Nam, my assigned Huey was 761. An appreciation and love for this mechanical comrade was



*Dr. Jim Fulbrook of the VHPA speaks to the assemblage at the UH-1 Retirement Ceremony, October 2, 2009*

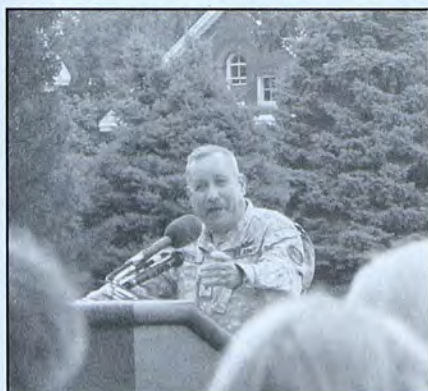
as potent as the bonding that occurred with other crewmembers and pilots such as my best friend for life since Nam, CW4 Doug Wornack, who is sitting here in this audience as I speak. In 761, my crew chief and I took

hits from enemy fire for the first time; thereby losing our cherries as the well known saying went. I still occasionally wear the tail rotor chain bracelet that we made from 761 as a unit tradition after we took those first hits and I'm wearing it now. Yes, we had many adventures and thrills in 761. She never let us down and we accomplished our missions the great majority of the time.

During the Vietnam War, in the Huey, boys became men and, of those men and machines, legends were born that will outlive the aircraft and those of us who proudly flew it. Thank you for being here to share this solemn moment when a true comrade-in-arms is retired with honor and pride. To the UH-1, I say thank you for your faithful service. You served us for nearly 50 years and I have no doubt you will continue to serve others for years to come. We salute you in your retirement from the Army and wish you and your crews God Speed!



*BG Walt Davis, the Director of Army Aviation and Bruce Crandall, a Medal of Honor recipient for his actions while a member of A-229th AHC on 14 November, 1965, gather at the Huey retirement ceremony at Fort Belvoir, VA*



*BG Jimenez, representing the Army National Guard, address's the crowd at their ceremony for the retirement of the UH-1 Huey.*



*UH-1H Huey in a full MediVac paint scheme*



# Army Aviation Association of America Hosts Ceremony

**A member's report of the ceremonies accompanying the retirement of the last UH-1 Huey in the Army National Guard...**  
**by Michael J. Wheeler**

After being notified by Mike Sloniker of the event, I had the privilege of attending the retirement of the "last" UH-1H on October 2, 2009, at the Fort Myer, VA Summerall Parade Field. I say the "last" UH-1H because as one of the speakers indicated there would be a few Huey's remaining in active service for certain select "activities". The event was sponsored by the local Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) in Washington, DC (the Potomac Chapter).

Mike and I arrived at the parade grounds on Ft. Myer, around 1700 hours. There was 60's music being piped in over the sound system that set the mood. Parked there, in front of a hundred or so folding chairs were three aircraft; a UH-60, a new UH-72 Lakota (military version of the Eurocopter EC145) and sitting between these two aircraft an UH-1H. Soon after our arrival LTC (Ret) Bruce Crandall arrived as the honored guest replete in his Cav Stetson on his head and Medal of Honor about his neck. The ceremony started at 1800 hours.

I could tell by the tail number (which I did not write down and do not recall) that this aircraft was not a veteran of Viet Nam. The tail number on this aircraft appeared to be one of the series of aircraft acquired by the Army around 1973 or 1974 at the very latest. I was told the DC ARNG had six UH-1Hs that were used as Medevac helicopters and for missions in the DC area where many LZs were too small for the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter. The UH-60 will remain the Army's primary tactical utility/lift helicopter, while the UH-72 is being fielded for stateside

training and utility use (non-tactical stuff), which is why the UH-1 was being retired.

The point on this old girl was



Bruce Crandall & Jim Fulbrook

## **VHPA Member Mike Sloniker say's**

*"I have personally known Bruce Crandall since 1992 because of the local Veterans Day La Drang Valley Survivor's Dinner. He has a wonderful sense of humor. He had a stroke in 1964 and got it off his medical records but a big one in 1974 grounded him for good. I was told that at his 2007 MOH ceremony with President Bush, an AF General told him that he had to take off his Stetson Cav Hat. Of course he didn't take it off and even looked up that same AF general to get his first salute that all the MOH guys get when they get the award...with his Stetson on."*



*Members of the VHPA at the ceremony's AAAA Closing Banquet. (L to R) Carl Flemer, 174 AHC in 1971; Joe Schwimmer, USMC H-1 Pilot; Jim Fulbrook, 71 AHC in 70-71; Mike Sloniker, 174 AHC in 1971, A-229 in 1971-72; Mike Wheeler, B-101 in 1971, A-229 in 1972; Doug Womack, 71 AHC in 1970-71. Sloniker and Flemer both graduated with flight class ORWAC 70-3.*

of the inferred (IR) suppressive type introduced to the fleet in the late 1970's rather than a polished finish our crew chiefs were so proud of, she had a wire cutter and missile detection system also not found in Viet Nam. I'm sure had I looked in the cockpit I would have seen it equipped for night vision goggle (NVG) operations, but none the less each VHPA member would have recognized her for what she was, a vintage UH-1H.

Mike wanted to know if I wanted to go up close to her but I'll be honest with you I couldn't do it. I wanted to but I had mixed emotions; first, I didn't want to be seen as some old guy that needed to get a "fix" of the old days (I did though) and second, I would rather remember the UH-1H as I last experienced her just a few days before I retired; that being the flight lead PIC (AC) of a battalion lift on a fire exercise in Korea. I know I should have visited her but I couldn't.

VHPA member Dr. Jim Fulbrook made a brief, but spot on, presentation that captured the spirit of the UH-1, her crews (pilots, crew chiefs, and gunners) as well as those who were our sole purpose of being - the Infantry. BG Alberto Jimenez, Maryland ARNG, who started his career as a WO-1 in Viet Nam, also made some very appropriate comments about the Huey's service with the National Guard. There were a few other speakers representing the aircraft manufacturers as well. The ceremony was well done and moved along quickly with the short speeches.

At the conclusion of all the speakers, the crews of each aircraft were introduced with the crew of the UH-1H being introduced last. It's appropriate and I'm sure you will appreciate the fact that the PIC (AC) of this last UH-1 was a National Guard pilot, Viet Nam veteran and VHPA member, CW4 Mike Miles, who was making his last flight as an Army Aviator. The only thing that would have been better, in my mind any way, is if I had been able to have that honor of making that flight.

The crew mounted the aircraft, a DJ cranked

up the sound of Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyrie" (used in the film, Apocalypse Now) and then the helicopter lifted off and departed into a partly cloudy sky and setting sun. This scene wasn't unlike so many that had taken place before that one; maybe a takeoff in response to a Tac "E" emergency extraction or resupply, Dustoff response, flare mission or any of a dozen more. Of course, the trademark "wop wop" sound was there for us to take in one last time and I felt more emotional than I thought I would.

After the outdoor ceremony we proceeded inside to the Ft. Myer Officers Club for a formal Dining Out. There was a small group of VHPA members who were given our own table at the front of the dining room, next to the head table. I think they had heard the stories of our antics of three to four decades past and wanted to keep an eye on us and certainly they didn't want us corrupting the new generation of Army Aviators in attendance!

At our table sat helicopter pilot veterans of the Viet Nam war; Carl Flemer and his lovely date, Joe Schwimmer, Doug Womack his lovely wife, daughter and son-in-law, Mike Sloniker and me. VHPA member Dr. Jim Fulbrook sat at another table set aside for speakers. After the normal toasts to the President, the United States Army, the ladies, those of us who had flown in Viet Nam were recognized with a round of applause; a first for me.

I found my eyes watering twice during the Dining Out, first when several young wounded warriors were recognized. The second time was with the presentation of the "Missing Man Table" that was set for our missing brothers. Well, we included a few photos with this article of the two events. It really was worth attending and the meal was very good as well.

At the conclusion of the meal, LTC Crandall was introduced and he spoke on a variety of subjects, some funny and some sobering. It was a tremendous honor to be in the presence of this great Army Aviator, Hero, and Great American. In case you don't know, LTC Crandall was one of the pilots who supported the Ia Drang Battle made famous by the book and movie, titled "We Were Soldiers."

It was great to see so many old and young aviators and soldiers and the AAAA even presented a few scholarships out by the MC for the night MG (Ret) Rudy Ostovich. One of them was one of the VHPA recipients, Cadet David Fulbrook. After the closing remarks, the floor was opened up for dancing, but never being a dancer I was content to retire to my hotel and reflect on the evening, LTC Crandall, my 20 years of flying the Huey and those who have gone on ahead of us to secure that final landing zone for us.

**Michael J. Wheeler,**



# *Downed Pilots Endure 30 Minutes of Intensity Before Rescue*

*(Army News Service, July 5, 2007)*

**Dateline: Bagdad, Jul 05, 2007**

Chief Warrant Officers Mark Burrows and Steven Cianfrini of the 17th Cavalry Regiment's Troop C, 3rd Squadron, were rescued by an AH-64 Apache helicopter after their helicopter, a OH-58D Kiowa, was shot down July 2, 2007

**BAGHDAD IRAQ** – What started as a routine reconnaissance mission for two pilots suddenly became 30 minutes of intense action July 2 as they found themselves shot down, surrounded by enemy fighters, then finally rescued.

Chief Warrant Officers Mark Burrows and Steven Cianfrini of the 17th Cavalry Regiment's Troop C, 3rd Squadron, had just finished spotting a suspected roadside IED for an infantry unit south of Baghdad when Chief Cianfrini saw tracer rounds arching up toward their OH-58 Kiowa. He quickly shouted to Chief Burrows to turn away. "I saw the tracer rounds come up through the rotors and at that point we tried to get out of range, check our instruments, make sure our systems were good and that nobody was hit," said Chief Cianfrini.

Thirty seconds after the firing stopped and the two decided to return to base, a heavy machine gun opened up on the aircraft. With no time to use the helicopter's weapons systems to fire back, the pilots dodged and weaved to escape the bullets. When large caliber munitions struck the aircraft, the instrument panel lit up with warning lights and alarms rang in the pilots' ears. Then the panel exploded. "One second it was there; the next it was a mess of wires," said Chief Cianfrini.

Being hit by a combination of large and small caliber weapons for an extended period of time proved too much for the Kiowa. "From the time the second engagement started to when we hit the ground we were taking fire the whole time," said Chief Burrows. Chief Burrows decided to attempt a controlled landing in a field as he weaved back and forth in the shaking aircraft, trying to avoid the intense fire. As he slowed, the aircraft began to try to spin on its axis, a sign that the tail rotor had been rendered useless. The aircraft came down hard, bouncing over a canal before landing on its left side near a road.

With only bruises and scratches, the pilots scrambled out of the aircraft and met at the nose. While assessing the situation and dis

covering that Chief Cianfrini's M4 rifle had ejected during the crash, enemy bullets again hit the side of the aircraft. Chief Burrows and Chief Cianfrini decided then to escape across the canal, away from the

enemy fighters. The canal's thick growth of reeds afforded camouflage for the pilots and seemed like the best escape route. "When we got into it we realized the water was up to our necks and we were in knee-deep mud," said Chief Burrows. "We physically couldn't move from the center of the canal."

Being stuck in the canal was a good thing for the pilots, who would have run right into the arms of insurgents had they been able to move down the canal. Soon insurgents gathered on both banks of the canal, shooting blindly into the reeds with their assault rifles. All they could do, said Chief Burrows, was wait for what seemed to be the inevitable. Bullets clipped the reeds around them, hitting the water they were standing in, but not them. "They just didn't see us," said Chief Burrows. "I had one of the attackers in my sights but I knew if I'd shot him they would have known where we were."

Insurgents eventually pulled up in a truck and began firing into the reeds with a heavy machine gun. Again, the rounds came close but none hit the pilots as they hunkered down in the water.

Chief Burrows said the insurgents began moving down the canal, firing into the water, but soon they loaded up into vehicles and left. "When they started leaving, walking away, I felt amazement that we were still alive," said Chief Burrows.

After Chief Burrows radioed a distress signal, Army helicopters and Air Force jets began arriving. The Kiowa that had been flying with them had also been hit and had



*Chief Burrows and Chief Cianfrini*

retreated to a safe distance, where its pilots called in reinforcements over the radio. A pair of AH-64 Apaches from the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, had responded to the "Fallen Angel" call and was circling nearby. One of the Apaches, piloted by Chief Warrant Officers Allan Davison and Micah Johnson, landed nearby. Johnson, the front-seat pilot, jumped out to check Chief Burrows and Chief Cianfrini for injuries.

To avoid insurgents who might return, the rescuers extracted the pilots via spur ride, an unconventional means of extraction in which the pilots clip themselves onto the outside of the aircraft using their built-in safety harness and d-rings. "It wasn't the most comfortable flight but I was elated to be out of there," said Chief Burrows.

Both pilots said nearly 30 minutes passed from the moment their aircraft hit the ground to when their rescuers started the flight back to base. "It happened so fast I don't think we really thought about much except just trying to stay alive," said Chief Cianfrini. "I knew we would be rescued but I can't believe that through all this we made it through without serious injury," added Chief Burrows. "That's the kind of unbelievable part."

The 17th Cavalry Regiment's Troop C, 3rd Squadron, part of the 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, N.Y., is attached to 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade from Fort Stewart, Ga.

*Story by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills, Army News Service, Submitted by VHPA Member David Bales, Fort Huachuca, Arizona*



# Dinner at the Cattleman's

*Disclaimer.... These stories are a bit of reminiscences that happened some time ago. As Aviators of that era, time, has caused memories to be altered just a bit. There might be some embellishment and facts might not be the most correct.*

This is one event that took place with Flight B-3. Most in the class were from the east and upper mid west, New York to Chicago. I was the only candidate from Texas. Most of my classmates thought I was from the east because I didn't have a Texas "twang"... Yaw!!!

It had been a blustery winter in North Texas. The locals said it was the worst muck and yuck weather they had seen in years. Because of the bad weather we would be required to fly on a Sunday to get our needed flight time. The "WORD" came down on Friday afternoon that at formation on Saturday we would be told the schedule.

No wanting to miss any "targets of opportunity" we had cussed and discussed what we would do if we got off. Off to the movies in Fort Worth or Denton. Or any place a candidate could recon a "target of opportunity". But all agreed that dinner at 1830 at the Cattleman's in the stockyards in Fort Worth sounded great. Enough time for those who had dates could get them back to their respective dorms and then be back to Fort Wolters at a reasonable hour.

Reveille was sounded and we were up and at it. Spit shined boots, yellow hats, silver flight jackets, and gray flights suits to match the morning sky. The morning inspection was a non-event. I think our TAC Officer was tired of his charges and the terrible weather.

Our mentor said we would have Passes. Just be back for formation 0700 on Sunday.

When released it looked was like a covey of quail had been flushed. Cars were off and running. (Remember no motorcycles back then, because the throttle twisted the wrong way.) Candidates put their new skills to good use. They went like homing pigeons to various destinations, Texas Christian University, Texas Women's University, American Airlines Flight Attendant School, and to other points.

Candidates and their guests began showing up at the Cattleman's about 1800. We were seated downstairs in an

area, where I think the management wouldn't want us to bother other customers. After an hour of kibitzing, we started to order our meals, with "separate checks please." We ended up with a long table, seating 27 folks. Most had dates. Some six of us were solo.

About mid way though our meal a gentleman and his girlfriend joined us, Mr. Wilderspin and Ms. Whitfield. They were more that welcome. Mr. Wilderspin seemed to be elderly, maybe 65 or so. His girlfriend was about 50. Back then that seemed soooo old. To our amazement they elected to sit down with us. We had the whole downstairs to ourselves.

All were quite talkative and had great conversations with the new couple. Most of the candidates had never met a true Texas cattleman. Their conversation was boisterous and stimulating shall we say. It was time for Mr. Wilderspin to order their dinner. He ordered his favorite steak and his date ordered "Rocky Mountain Oysters". You should have heard the buzz that was created around the table. "What is that?" "Are they served on the half shell?" Finally one of candidates couldn't stand the suspense any longer. "Pardon me Mame, but what are "Rocky Mountain Oysters?" This little, blue haired ol' lady looked him square in the eye and said "Sonny, they're bulls balls!!" The table erupted with laughter. The young ladies faces turned every shade of scarlet you could imagine. What a hoot!!

After everyone finished their respective meals and the conversations had winded out, it was time to get back to Fort Wolter's. Most candidates had some driving ahead; take their dates back to the dorms and then to the base. I asked for our checks. The waitress came over and said, "That gentleman is paying for the whole table!" What a treat. Another random act of kindness.

All candidates and guests thanked Mr. Wilderspin for a wonderful experience. A night none of us will ever forget.

Continuing the evening to remember. Mr. Wilderspin asked a group of us if we

would like a drink. Most of us retorted that we were under age. "Ahhhhh if you can fly one of those wind wagons you can have a drink!! Follow me!"

So off we went in a gaggle of six, following the pied piper. He hopped the two-foot curbs in the stockyards as if he were a spry ranch hand. We were winded trying to keep up with him and his girlfriend. When we got to a hotel he sundered into the hotel bar.

This bar must have been in the movies, gleaming dark mahogany, polished spittoon, polished brass foot rail, beveled mirror behind the bar and the quintessential bar tender, a tall black man in white starched waistcoat. The bar tender didn't miss a lick. As he was polishing the top of the bar, he looked up...with a wide grin.... "Gentlemen what is your pleasure?" As soon as an empty glass hit the bar top it was replenished. More liberated conversation among the junior birdmen, what an evening!!

**Howard D. Horton"**

*Editor's Note, the Author Howard D. Horton graduated flight school in Class 68-9 and ended up in the 108th Arty Group in Dong Ha, Vietnam Oct. 69-Mar70. After his time in the Army, he flew corporate airplanes and helicopters for many years and now works for a Bell helicopters as a flight instructor. He tell's us "It's interesting to see the change in training that some of these young "candidates" now are getting (poor) and also interesting to see some of the bad habits many older guys never get rid of".*



# *I Should Have Never Let Dusty Go On*

*And, Introducing a new Membership Recruitment Program ....By David Adams*

One of the biggest regrets in my life started a couple of days before Christmas back in 1970. Bob Hope was coming to Chu Lai for a Christmas Show up in the division area and the G-3 of the 23rd Infantry Division had loaded our little Cav Troop up with missions to VR (Visual Recon) the "rocket box", the ridgeline where Charlie loved to set up his 122mm Rockets for the short flight into Chu Lai.



We were stretched to the max, one pink team and one red team were committed all day to the VR's, another pink team was on standby in case a firefight broke out somewhere else in the AO (the bottom 1/3 of I Corps). But you need to remember that thanks to the blood of a lot of good men, we were winning the war at the end of 1970 and things in the AO were pretty calm (as long as you stayed in the flatlands). At least they were for most of the Division's assets, after all Christmas was just days away.

I had just finished pre-flying my aircraft and were returning to flight ops where all of the AC's for our team were to meet and set the priority of the day's target when I ran into Dusty (not his real name) and asked him what he was doing down on the flightline? Dusty was one of our best Scout pilots but I knew he had flown for at least the last four days straight and was due for a day off. Dusty told me Flight Ops had gotten a late tasking to send an OH-6 down to fly for the Engineer's at Duc Pho and they had called over to the company area looking for a pilot. Someone has asked Dusty if would take the mission and here he was, almost ready to go. Immediately bells started going off in my head as I knew that we didn't have another gun ship crew available to escort him for the day.

One thing you learn quickly in the Air Cav is just how venerable those "little birds" really are. I had been in-country for almost 6 months and although I had never seen one of our scouts fly any higher than 50' over the ground, I had seen plenty of them take a ton of ground fire and about five of them make some really scary crashes. That's why we did our dead level best never to let one of them go on a mission by themselves, there was just too much that could happen - and none of it was good.

"Quit worrying" Dusty said, "It's just a harmless little Engineer mission". "I probably just pick up a butter-bar and fly him around looking at bridges and ditches". "We've done it many times, the AO is perfectly safe and we've haven't needed any gun cover down there in at least the last three months".

I called BS to that and took my concerns to the Ops Officer but was quickly over ruled; looking back I just failed to fight hard enough for what I knew was right. After all, we were "committed to the max" and it really was just a "crappy little mission where nothing was going to happen".

Of course you can guess the next part of this story, a VC popped out of his spider hole and just did his duty. He stitched our little bird from end-to-end, the Butter Bar and the Observer were wounded, thankfully only slightly, but one bullet severed the lateral push-pull tube and the aircraft

rolled left and crashed almost inverted, braking Dusty's back in the process. It took about two hours for the ground Cav to reach the crash site and pull out the crew, another 30 minutes to medivac them to the 90th General Hospital. When I was finally able to visit Dusty in the wards a couple of days later the Doctors had already told him that he would probably never walk again.

Move forward a year to 1971, it was during the week between Christmas and New Years and I was hanging around in my apartment in Austin wondering what trouble I could get into on one of those glorious mid-winter days that makes us all really happy to be able to live in Texas. As Dusty and I were both from Texas, we had been pretty close in Vietnam and I had tried to get in touch with him when I returned home a few months before then. Information had been able to find his Grandmother's phone number for me (his parents were divorced and his mother had died before he left for the Army) and I had called a few times and left a message with her, but Dusty had never returned any of my calls (remember when there weren't any answering machines and it cost money to call long distance?). I decided to not take no for an answer, after all Dusty just lived a couple of hours north of me, so I jumped into my new Old's Cutlass and hit the highway towards Big D. There probably weren't 20 homes in his home town at the time and I easily found his grandmother's house and knocked at her door. She let me in and took me back to Dusty's room where he was watching TV, that's when I saw that he was still in a wheelchair. We had dinner with his grandmother and once Dusty loosened up a little, we went to a local dance hall and proceeded to drink beer till about 1 AM. I was ready to go home but Dusty was having too much fun, we had a few more beers, went to a truck stop for breakfast where Dusty announced that he now wanted to go deer hunting. So we went back to his house, dug up some warm clothes and rifles, grabbed a 6-pack of Lone Star for rations and made it out to the deer blind about 4:30 AM. There was a special stand built for him on a neighboring ranch that he could roll his chair right into and once inside we got settled in, warmed up and promptly fell asleep, not having seen one damn deer.

About 7:30 the owner of the ranch drove up in a slightly heat up Lincoln Continental convertible complete with suicide doors and honked his horn to wake us up, he was going riding around the ranch and wanted some company. For the next two hours that man drove us around like a bat out of hell on barely visible cattle trails and through the smallest of openings in the woods. The owner had recently retired from a pretty big Government job but if he would have needed the money, he would have made a decent scout pilot, especially since he was drinking Pearl beer like it was going out of style the entire morning. But we survived and I finally got Dusty back to his house just before noon - he said it was the best day he had spent since returning from Nam and I had to agree with him.

For the next two years I called and called Dusty to see what he was up to, I never got to speak to him personally and he never called me back, so I finally quit calling. After all, I had a wife and family of my own by then and an Army career crowded enough to keep us all plenty busy.

Then along came the VHPA and that filled another void in my life, other men to share memories with, something that was pretty scarce in the hippie-filled, peacenik-infested Austin of the 1980's. And slowly the



# *That Crappy Little Mission by Himself*

guilt of that faithful day back in 1970, when I had let Dusty take that crappy little mission by all by himself, began to fade away.

In the early 90's, the pilots of my Cav Troop got together for an informal reunion, as I recall one of us had just moved into this great house in Colorado and we all wanted to see it. I made another attempt to invite Dusty into the fellowship so I called the only number I had ever had for him, but this time his grandmother gave me a new number to call. To my surprise this time Dusty's new wife answered the phone and handed it to him without telling him who was on the other end. Dusty & I initially spent an awkward few minutes exchanging hellos and then almost another hour catching up on the almost 20 years since we had last spoken. Dusty said he was now married and that she had brought one boy into the family and now they had two little boys to contend with. I didn't ask him if he was out of the chair as I thought that might be too painful but he did say that he was generally feeling OK. He also told me that that he had long ago given up on the VA being able to help him, or even caring about trying to help him. It really sounded like he was glad to hear from me and was planning on joining us for the upcoming Reunion. The next day I mailed him a copy of our Registration Packet but he never showed up at the Reunion, and I never spoke to him again.

In 1999 the VHPA's Reunion was in Fort Worth and I thought I would make one last attempt to bring my long lost friend into the fellowship. I tried his "new" phone number but it didn't work this time so I sent him a letter explaining what was happening almost next door to his home town. I ended it by telling him how much it would mean to me if he could join us. Two weeks later I received a letter from Dusty's grandmother, the postman had delivered my letter to her home (remember it wasn't a very big town) and in it she told me that Dusty had passed away on January 1st, 1997, at the age of 48 and exactly 27 years and 13 days after I had let him go on that crappy little mission all by himself. And to this day I know he died a lot earlier than he should have, and I fear he died a lot lonelier than he needed to.

I immediately called his grandmother to express my condolences and while I had her on the phone I offered to make contact with his kids because I thought it was important that they know what a warrior, and a hero their Dad was in Vietnam. She then told that his wife had remarried and moved away and she really didn't know how to get in touch with them, I could tell through the telephone lines that old lady's heart was broken over losing them all. Dusty's grandmother was quite elderly at the time and I'm sure she is gone by now, in fact no one with Dusty's last name has been listed in his home town's little phone book for over 10 years now, I know because I look every time I pass through.



So why am I now digging all this up and passing it on to you? It's because I'm announcing anew membership recruitment program with this letter and here's the details...

I strongly believe in sharing the comradely of the VHPA and in the benefits we have to offer to our membership. I also strongly believe that we can be proud of our Aviator newsletter and what each issue provides to our membership. I know that our website VHPA.org is also filled with ways for all of us to reconnect and share old memories, and to update our friends on what has happened in our lives since we all grew up in a land far

away. So what I propose to do is start a program that will tie these three strengths together and bring more combat aviators into our fold.

So, here's what my "Welcome a New Member into the VHPA" program will entail. I want each of you to think of at least one old friend that you think might be interested in, or benefit from what the VHPA now has to offer. He might be a real "new guy" to the Association or even a former member who hasn't seen what we now have to offer. Then I need you to find \$5.00 for each of those persons.

Then I want you to simply send the name and address for each of your candidates into Tannith at our HQ (E-mail: HQ@VHPA.org). Our Headquarters will then build and mail your prospective member their own "Welcome Packet", and then bill you the \$5.00 for each one they send.

In the Welcome Packet will be a letter from our President letting the recipient know that a member of our Association thinks enough of their friendship to pay to send them this packet. Gary will go on to talk about our program that lets them have (at no cost) 30-day full membership access to our Web Site. While on the web site, they will be invited to update their own information so others might find them, or at least we'll have good info on file when it comes time to run their names in our Taps column (this is a bigger problem than you can imagine). Gary will close his letter with an invitation to join the Association and to come to our Reunion in San Diego. Of course we will also include a copy of our latest VHPA Aviator in the packet so they can see what each newsletter offers our members, plus what we have planned for the San Diego Reunion. And that's the program in a nutshell.

*What's my (David Adams') part in all this? Well it's pretty easy to see that each of these packets will cost the Association more than five bucks to print, build and mail. So, I am going to pick up all the expenses for this program over the initial five bucks that it will cost you; and I pray it will end up costing me hundred's of dollars before we are through.*

**David Adams**  
**Editor of the VHPA Aviator**





# Looking For....

**Editor's Note:** We started this column several issues ago and it has gotten longer each time, but what's beginning to bother me is that it's really just an extension of a part of our Website that's been in existence for quite some time. As of 1 Dec 09 there are 149 messages posted on our "Looking For Message Board", all posted by people trying to find out more info on their lost buddies, their lost loved ones and even those seeking help with substantiating a VA medical claim or confirmation of stories from incidents long "officially" forgotten. For instance, did all of you Pink Panthers out there know Stan Michelsen's daughter has been desperately seeking pictures and information on him ever since shortly after his death in March 2008?

What I am getting at here is that not all the query's the VHPA gets for information make it into the Aviator, and those that do make it are read by just our 8,500+ active members. To a lot of folks in this world our website is the best way for them to make contact with us and they do so almost every day, Gary Roush can attest to that for sure. But the "Looking For" section of our website's "Message Board" section can easily be accessed every day by anyone in the world, it's just another of the options that appear on the left side or our opening page at VHPA.org. Once you are on the correct page, you can search the postings left by our visitors (perhaps someone's looking for you?) or you can make a new posting on your own (perhaps you would like to get in touch with an old flight school buddy?). Give it a try, over 213,800 people have visited the pages in the last 9 years, far more than have read our newsletter in these last three issues.

David Adams

## Mr. Roush,

I've been in touch with Tom Frankenfield of the crew member's assoc. and thru him, I was directed to you. The short story is that I was with MACVSOG and my life was saved by a pilot and co-pilot after being shot down in Laos. The only name I have that I feel is correct is James B. Steen, Jr., the pilot.

We were shot down on 14 November 1968, I was more dead than alive and although he was wounded in the leg, he and his co-pilot carried-dragged be to a pickup LZ and we, the rest of my team, and one door gunner were evacuated to Dak To and then to the MASH unit in Pleiku.

Any assistance in locating then Lt. Steen would be appreciated; I hope he can be found in good health and with a great life.

Thank you,  
Jack Stamps

## Dear Sirs,

I'm looking to find any information I can on the possible helicopter (and pilot) that might have flown the man I am named after when he was KIA in Vietnam, on 02/14/1971. His name was Douglas Lee Horn and he was serving in the Americal Division, 23rd Infantry, 11th LIB, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry, Company A.

Doug's platoon was on a patrol near the Nui Ba Lao mountain, his squad was heading towards Hill # 503, also known as The Rockpile when they were being resupplied by helicopter. Mortar fire came in while Doug and one of his fellow soldiers were unloading the chopper while it hovered. The round landed right near Doug and he took some shrapnel to the head and was pushed into the helicopter as it took off. He died in route to the base, and all I know is the helicopter was named "The Joker" or came from "The Jokers".

Can you assist me in anyway of finding pictures of this helicopter or the names of the crew? From what I've been able to gather so far is that the helicopter group that resupplied Doug and his fellow soldier's was based out of either Duc Pho or possibly Chu Lai. I've been pointed to the 132nd ASHC website and have been in touch with the webmaster Bill McRae there. I know Doug's team operated out of Duc Pho for sure...but unsure where the helicopter units were from?

Any help would be greatly appreciated. I have a PDF of both the AO where Doug was killed as well as a copy of the Duty Log for that day available to anyone who asks for it by e-mail.

Sincerely,  
Doug Robinett

## Dear Sirs,

I desperately need your help. My name is Charles Johnson and I was a door gunner for C troop, 3/17th Air Cav,

I posted a Calvary Hat for sale on EBay and it sold to a member of VHPA. After selling the Stetson, I became acquainted with the buyer but damned if I can remember his name. I went on to tell him of a wonderful photo album my daughter had made for me of my photos and memorabilia of Vietnam. He asked if he could see it, copy it and then send it back to me, which I agreed.

Right after I mailed it off, I was forced into a situation where I had to move (the wife and I separated). She later told me a guy had been trying to call me, I assumed it was him, but she never got a number or

a message. It has been over a year and my daughter would like to make some additions to the album, but I do not have it.

Is there any way you could post a notice in your newsletter that it would mean the world to me to get this photo album returned? Any help you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks in advance...Charles Johnson

## Dear Members of the VHPA,

Thanks for printing my letter looking for assistance is locating the pilots and crew of the Huey from the 57th AHC shot down in Juliet 9, North of the "Bra" in Laos on 11/18/68. So far I have gotten responses from Joe Sottile and Craig Collier. Joe has suggested that I try to locate the following individuals:

Darrell Anthony, Gary Neeley,  
Paul Jones, Carter Higinbottom  
and/or Dan Lindbergh.

Dr. Craig Collier, a MC Colonel at Ft. Rucker, AL suggested trying to locate CW2 Carle Hoecke whom he believed to be the A/C 57th AHC Huey shot down on 11/18/68. He said the co-pilot was a 1st LT. Frederick (last name unknown) and the Door Gunner to be SP4.

Any suggestions you have on trying to contact or locate the persons indicated by Joe or Craig for whom there is no contact information would be greatly appreciated.

Once again, thanks so much for  
your assistance.

Regards,  
Joe Parnar

**Editor's Note:** in exchange for all the assistance Joe has received from the members of the VHPA, he has sent us a copy of his book SOG Medic. In it he has written these words:

## To the Members of the VHPA'

The men of FOB2/CCC will never forget your bravery and heroism in supporting MACV SOG missions in Laos and Cambodia. Many Recon Teams owe their lives to you "angels of deliverance" when all seemed lost.

Thanks and God Bless you all! (Signed)  
Joe Parnar.

I'll bring the book with me to San Diego and we'll auction it off in the ABM with all the proceeds going to the Scholarship Fund.





# Looking For....

## Dear members of the VHPA,

My name is Bill Parrish and I am a first cousin to helicopter pilot Larry Rabren, he was killed on April 30, 1970, in Kontum Province northeast of Dak To. He was with the 17th Cavalry Unit, OH-6A, Tail #67-16126 and his call sign was Scalphunter 16.

As I read through all the stories I can find about the war in Vietnam, I keep hoping to see one that may show his name and provide some details of just what happened during that incident, but that never happens. At the time of his death I was just a couple of years younger than him, I remember him growing up and he was the big guy when we were together although, it was just too short a period in time.

I'm just wanting to learn some more about him in Vietnam, is there anyone in your organization that can help?

*Thank you in advance.*

*Sincerely*

*Bill Parrish*

*ThompsonENGINEERING,INC.*

*E-mail:*

## Dear Sir,

My name is Stan Allen. I am a Viet Nam veteran who served in 1965 thru Mar.-1966. I was stationed in PhuCat, (Camp Lane) with the 161st Aviation Detachment; I was a Spec/5 section chief assistant, under Staff Sergeant Anderson, section chief of Avionics. During my tour, I routinely flew into Plieku (Camp Holloway), to service their helicopters. I was teamed with Sec/4 Steve Wall on these missions. It was on one such mission, in January or February 1966 that we had to stay overnight and leave sometime the next day, to finish the maintenance assignment.

That night Camp Holloway was attacked. After receiving shelling and small arms fire, the enemy was held off. The next day the fog had set in, and all aircraft were grounded. Two hours after sunrise, the fog had lifted to treetop level. Our pilots said we were leaving, flying the highway not wanting to chance getting the base camp hit again. That's what we did, white knuckle all the way, at 110 knots. I am trying to locate those two pilots for a back-up statement, since none of these early flown missions are recorded anywhere.

Can you help me? Those pilots could never have forgotten this episode.

*Thanks for your help.*

*Stan Allen*

## OLD WARRIOR, HU1-D 64-13736, SEEKS CREW MEMBERS

Currently this war bird is sitting at a paint & body shop in Alabama, next to Ft Benning, waiting for a much needed display restoration. She is the property of the National Infantry Museum; the cost of the restoration by will be defrayed by the Worldwide Army Rangers, Inc. Once this icon of the Vietnam War is fit for public display she will be poised beside the parade field adjoining the museum. Once there, the countless thousands who attend the multitude of Basic Training Graduations, a host of other graduations along with many festive activities can take steps back into history just by visiting this proud Ole War Bird.

UH-1 # 736 has a long and colorful history. She was purchased in 1965 when almost all aviation assets and graduating helicopter crew members were bound for service in the Republic of South Vietnam. On 23 Dec 66 while on duty with the 335th AHC during an extraction of troops she took small arms rounds. As was common for the renown UH-1 and their crews, she kept flying and accomplished the mission. Again, on 28 Feb 67, still with the 335th AHC in a combat assault, rounds were taken along with personnel casualties, that mission was also accomplished. While assigned to the 1st Bde, 101st Abn at Camp Eagle, high turbulence resulted in a hard landing damaging a skid and a crosstube. WO-1 J.E. Hayes, who later paid the supreme sacrifice for our nation, was the pilot that day.

But here is where you may be of great assistance in this effort. If you, or if you know someone who may have, served as the AC, P, CC, DG, or even if you were transported by 736; please email [redacted]

[redacted] or phone [redacted]

When some of those listed are located, they will be invited to come to Columbus, GA, to be honored as a part of the dedication ceremony, which will be at least one year from now. Certainly, one who flew in this magnificent flying machine or helped maintain her will relish seeing this great ship once again and then seeing her on public display. Please study the dates and places listed above and below.

From Oct 1966 through Jul 1967 ole 736 was assigned to the 335th Avn Co in VN. During Aug of 68 she flew in the HH Det, 44th Eng Grp, Thailand. In Sep 68, #736 went to the HHC, 1st Bde, 101st Abn, VN and served there until Jul 69. After maintenance at a Naval Air Station, 736 went to the 4th Avn Bn, 4th ID in VN and flew

there from Feb 70 until Oct 70. During Dec 70, she served in the 326 MED, 101st ACD, VN. In Jan 71 she was assigned to Co C, 158th AHB, VN and was there until Oct 71. Nov, Dec 71 & Jan 72 in Co B, 101st AHB, VN. # 736 has also been at the following places, during time listed: Ft Sill OK - 1968, 120th Avn Co, AK - 1974/75, and GA NG in the early 2000's, among several other places unknown to us at this time.

Please contact us if you have, or may know people who have, served with this flying icon.

*Drive On!*

*Bill Spies*

## Dear Sirs,

I have been involved over the last two (or maybe 3 now) years gathering and providing information for various relatives, friends, and involved unit members of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cav, 11th ACR, 32nd Artillery, and 77th Artillery who were involved with a battle on FSB Illingworth on 1 April 1970. FSB Illingworth was NNW of Tay Ninh City and I have Daily Staff Journals (DSJ) and reports that show that the 20th ARA was involved with that action where 25 US Soldiers were killed and 54 wounded from the various units on the base. After action reports shows 11 Sections of Aerial Rocket Artillery were put up.

There are several reasons we're trying to track down the pilots on station that day because everyone on the ground would like thank them all, but there is one pilot in particular we all would like to meet and thank. In my work I received the following statement from a friend of mine (Steve Nicholich) who wrote some time ago: "Another vivid recollection of that day that I have is of a Damned Fool Helicopter Pilot who had used up all his munitions and most of his fuel saving our butts, yet he stayed on call acting as our antenna. I don't think we would have made it without HIM." You see communications to the 8th Cav Tactical Ops Center and 77th Artillery FDC were knocked out during the first incoming rounds shortly after 02:00 hours, so my educated guess it was one of the early sections sent to Illingworth - but who could it be?

Prior to the ground attack (that started after 0200 on 1 April), there are several DSJ entries from the 19th Artillery Battalion who controlled artillery fires for nearby FSB Jay and FSB Illingworth. Jay had been hit on 29 March and now Illingworth was about to be hit. The DSJ's that inter-





# Looking For....

est me start early morning on 31 March, one entry at 1020 hours: "Bounced Silver Dagger section 15 for ground probe at Tay Ninh Base Camp (taking small arms fire.)" All day long on the 31st, the 19th Artillery was calling for Silver Dagger sections....19, 15, 30 etc, for various contacts in the AO. I am making an educated guess it was the pilots from 20th ARA as I have found they operated out of Tay Ninh Base Camp during that period of time and they are seen in various reports as supporting the 1st Cav Division.

Next entry of interest at 2327 hours: "Requested Silver Dagger section for Harassing and Interdiction (H&I) at FSB Illingworth. It was quiet after the radar pick-up." At 2330, "CPT Segler approved the H&I run for FSB Illingworth..."

The 2345 hour entry: "Reported that they only want one section of Silver Dagger and if they need another section they will call for it. They want first section at 2400 hours..." The DSJ was closed out at 2400 hours.

The DSJ for 1 April has the first entry at 0215: "FSB Illingworth was taking 107mm rockets with a ground probe. Bouncing Silver Dagger section 15, for incoming from North to South." Subsequent entries show: section 17; section 15; and two sections (15, 17);

I am, again, estimating it was one of the choppers from sections 15 or 17 (two cobra's per section??). I realize section numbers may not mean anything to the supporting unit if these 'Silver Dagger' terms were not call signs, but some label the 19th Artillery put on 20th ARA. Also, could a "Silver Dagger" section be made up of different chopper tail numbers each time a 'section' was bounced?

Just to provide you the 'rest of the story' about all the air support:

**At 0302 hours:** two more sections of Silver Dagger (no section numbers given).

**At 0326 hours:** Silver Dagger section 49;

**At 0405 hours:** Medevac and Tac Air enroute.

**At 0420 hours:** Silver Dagger section 19 to work woodline south of FSB Illingworth

**At 0438:** TAC Air on station at 0430 and 0450 with another at 0700. C & D/5-7 Cav to be inserted OPCON to 2-8

**At 0520:** Ammo Dump exploding. Firing pursuit fires and waiting for Bird Dog.

**At 0821:** Bounced Silver Dagger section for GAP 07 (I assume this was for protection of the insertion of 7th Cav troops)

**At 0920:** Bounced Silver Dagger section for 1 Sqdrn, 11th Armored Cav Reg Contact. Another US KIA occurred.

**At 1000:** Bounced 2nd Silver Dagger section 19 for 11 ACR contact; They were up to GAPs 09 and 10 by this time, inserting troops.

**At 1105:** Bounced Silver Dagger section 15 for 11 ACR contact.

**At 1200:** Ammo Expenditure Summary: (I just noticed in this info it was Alpha, 2-20th ARA). A/2-20 - 772 10 lb rockets; 68 17lb rockets;

**At 1253:** "Reported they had 2 shadow gunships, 3 Air Strikes, and 2 flareships working at Illingworth last night..."

Any and all information and support greatly appreciated. Steve Nicholich has always wanted to thank the pilot(s) who were on station and then CPT Hobson, C/2-8 Cav would like to know who provided the aerial field artillery and other air support that morning.

Jack Morrison  
FO, B/1/77th Artillery  
for C/2-8th Cav  
April 1970-July 1970

## Gary Roush replied back:

2 BDE 1 INF used the call sign DAGGER in 1966-1967. We have no record of a Silver Dagger call sign. We have call signs Silver for 2 BDE 1 CAV, Silver Eagle for 11 CAG 1 CAV, Silver Scout for 2 BDE 1 CAV, and Silver Spur for A/3/17 CAV. Some units gave their pilots nicknames that were used with call signs. As example, if your nickname was Dagger, your individual call sign could have been Silver Dagger. No idea on who the pilot might be.

## Dear Sirs,

I was with the 31ST TFW (Tactical Fighter Wing) at TUY HOA air base 66-67 and at that time there was an ARMY helicopter base inside the same perimeter. We came over to you PX since we didn't have one on our side. We called the Army TUY HOA south, but that wasn't the proper name, I came over and flew with several of you guys during this time.

Does anyone remember the correct name and unit that was there at the time I was? Any help will be appreciated. Rod Henson, e-mail: [REDACTED]

## Webmaster,

Lee Kohl was my older brother. I would like to send some additional information to you for your records, since I know that the VHPA gave my brother much comfort through the years. On October 24, 2003 he was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. In Vietnam he earned a Silver Star, The National Order of Vietnam, a Bronze Star, an Air Medal with 22 Oak Leaf Clusters, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Aviation Badge, the Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal and a Purple Heart.

If anyone knew my brother and has any stories about him I would love to hear them. Also is there anyway to learn the circumstances for the medals he earned?

Thanks,  
Chris Kohl

Lumberton Texas

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## ANSWERS!

to VHPA Newsletter Quiz #1, John Brennan VHCMA

- 1) BROTHER LOVE'S TRAVELIN SALVATION SHOW, 48 AHC
- 2) CRYSTAL SHIP, SHIP OF FOOLS, STRANGE DAYS, WILD CHILD
- 3) ILLEGAL DRUGS
- 4) DUSTOFF / MEDEVAC
- 5) SEX
- 6) IRON BUTTERFLY
- 7) 92 AHC, 189 AHC, 335 AHC
- 8) BLACK LABEL, BUDWEISER, COORS, PABST BLUE RIBBON, SCHLITZ
- 9) CALIFORNIA (18)
- 10) CH-37 WAYNE'S WORK HORSE  
OH-6A THE BIG HEMORROID  
CH-47 BOONY BUS  
CH-21 THE HEDGE HOPPER  
UH-1H THE MAGGOT WAGON  
CH-54 LOAD RUNNER  
OH-13 CYCLOPS  
UH-1C HOP-A-LONG  
AH-1G SNAKE CHARMER



## VHPA Members:

On page 16 and 17, we have articles about the UH-1 Retirement Ceremony and AAAA Dining Out that took place on 2 October 2009 at Ft. Myer, VA where the VHPA was involved with a representative speaker and honored attendees. On pages 38 and 39, we have another article set covering VHPA President Gary Roush's presentation and ceremony at the Reagan Library, which took place on Veteran's day, 11 November 2009. The VHPA stands ready to support requests for speakers whenever they come along. We usually seek a representative who lives near the venue, but one way or another, when a legitimate request comes along, we will support it when we can. Please keep this in mind if you become involved in or know of an event where the VHPA would be appropriate to include.

***FYI** – the retirement ceremony and Reagan Library speeches were professionally videotaped and will be shown as Historic Presentations at the San Diego Reunion. In addition, Jim Fulbrook has produced a videotape of the UH-1 preflight and starting procedures, which will also be shown at the reunion. A comprehensive DVD disk of the two ceremonies, the preflight/starting procedures, and files of the UH-1-10 operator's manual and pocket checklists will also be available for sale at the reunion. This VHPA product will stand as an excellent resource for UH-1 information and history.*

***Be sure to get yours at the reunion  
– you are coming we hope?!***

## Photos and Videos:

Those of us who took 35-mm photos and possibly videos or audio tapes during our time in Vietnam have probably put them aside somewhere to collect dust for all these years. Now is the time to get them out and go through them. Dr. Jim Fulbrook is seeking photos that cover a variety of topics (see page 9). Note that Mike Law does our excellent VHPA calendar and he is always seeking unique and memorable photos of helicopter action in Nam. So, please go through your stuff and pick out your favorite classic photos and let Jim and Mike know what you got. Better do it now while you still can.

Remember that we also forward material to Texas Tech for our historic archive, so if you wish to donate anything, let us know and please tell your closest family members about us, so if you get reassigned to the aviation unit in the sky, they know what to do with your stuff, so it survives beyond us all. Call us.

***Thanks,***

***Jim Fulbrook***

## Chief WOPA

The cool darkness was a welcome relief as I stepped into the Officers Club out of the smelly, searing heat of a humid Bien Hoa afternoon. Catching the light from the bar, I picked my way towards it. Close behind me was a CW4 I was escorting from MACV Headquarters. He was visiting the 118th Assault Helicopter Company, Thunderbirds.

As my eyes adjusted, I noticed several Warrant Officers looking at the CW4. It was 1968 and most of the warrant officer helicopter pilots in the battalion were WO1s. Some made CW2 at the end of their tour or when they extended their tour in-country but to see a CW4 was indeed a rarity.

We ordered two beers and chatted about the flight up from Saigon. I had picked him up while on an admin run into Hotel 3 and Long Binh and put him in the right seat of my UH-1D Huey. He was a non-rated warrant officer but had been a commercial fixed-wing pilot and was accepted into one of the first rotary wing classes at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma in the early 1950s. He failed the flight physical due to a WWII combat ear injury. He became a regular Army warrant officer in finance and administration and at this time worked in administration for General Creighton Abrams, the commander of MACV. He fought in WWII, Korea and this was his second tour in Vietnam at the age of forty-six.

As we talked, I couldn't help but notice the whispering and heads turning around us in the club. Most of it seemed to be directed toward my companion, the CW4. When we ordered our second beer a young warrant officer walked up and said, "How are you doing Chief?" The CW4 smiled and replied, "Just fine," and a discussion of backgrounds between the two warrant officers ensued. Soon another WO1 approached the CW4 and joined the conversation. After a while, there were four young pilots having wide-ranging discussions with the chief. The CW4 commanded respect, with his six foot height fully upright against the bar, not quite at attention but with a professional military bearing.

Although I was a helicopter pilot I was also a RLO and clearly not part of the conversation. I nursed my Pabst and smoked several Winston's while the chief gave counsel. As I fidgeted and waited, I noticed a strong bond developing among these men. The chief finally announced that it was time for dinner and the crowd slowly dispersed. As we headed towards the Officer's Mess I asked the Chief, "What was that all about?" "Well, son," he said, "it's something that you simply don't understand. What you observed was WOPA in action."

*"WOPA?" I asked.  
"Warrant Officers Protection Association," the chief replied.*

*That was a good lesson in protocol that day. He called me son because the chief was my father, CW4 Herman Grigsby. He and I served in Vietnam together at the same time in 1968. I was proud to see my father and his influence on the lives of young army helicopter pilots. It was a moment that I will cherish forever.*

***Dan Grigsby  
Thunderbird 3  
Rattler 26***

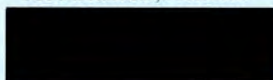


# VHPA CHAPTERS

*We have 2 more new chapters in the formation stage. They are:*

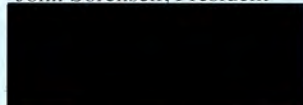
## Montana Chapter

Todd Brandoff, President



## Southern Missouri Chapter

John Sorensen, President



## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

### FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

Chapter officers were elected at the September 12 meeting. Those attending promptly left town without reporting the official results. Rail-roaded 'err...elected were Pat Richardson, President; Lee Westbrook, vice-president; Edd Luttenberger, senior member-at-large; Richard Gau-rkee, member-at-large. An unannounced pilot was likely made junior member-at-large. Virgil Laughlin is now the past president since he survived the cruise he took in October. New officers took over at the December 5 meeting.

The National Vietnam War Museum site is in our territory and several chapter members are active in fund raising efforts. VHPA members nationwide can help by publicizing The Museum among other veterans groups in their area.

Looking to 2010, we will continue our quarterly lunch meetings at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst, TX. We usually have a guest speaker appropriate for a gathering of old aviators and significant others. If no speaker, we exchange war stories; the older we get, the bolder we were. A new health clinic is under construction in Fort Worth. It will be over four times as large as the current clinic. This will greatly expand services to the rapidly growing number of vets in North Texas. We are looking forward to having a presentation about this new facility next September. VA is planning a grand opening event for Veterans Day, 2010.

*Pat Richardson, President*

### VHPA OF FLORIDA CHAPTER

The group has been very busy and visited seven schools and sponsored three events over the two week period in celebration of Veterans Day in November. We had our annual reunion at the same time the Travelling Wall was here in Tampa, it was a great success. The OH-6 was well received at the Wall. We are looking forward to a great year under our new president Gary Harrell.

*Submitted by Jim Basta*

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

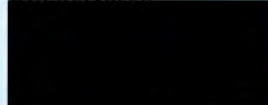
Back on October 8th and 9th we assisted Mullen High School of Denver in honoring a former graduate and recipient of the Medal of Honor, Captain Jon Swanson, and a Vietnam Helicopter Pilot. He and his observer in B/1/9 Cav, 1 Cav were KIA in 1971 while knocking out 51mm enemy gun emplacements with their mini-gun armed, OH-6 Helicopter while flying in support of ARVIN troops. His wife Sandee, family, classmates, and fellow flyers from his Vietnam unit were present in support of the event.

We were pleased to receive additional parts for our Cockpit display in our mobile Helicopter War Museum from Col. Bill Mc Phearson in Cripple Creek, CO. We will be spending the winter months designing and assembling the seat, controls and instrument panel to give our visitors the feel of an authentic pilot environment.

At our November chapter meeting we had Jeff Roy, former Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and a benefits advisor present to us the many veteran benefits available to us and the best means

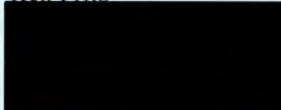
## Arizona Chapter

Bill Sorenson



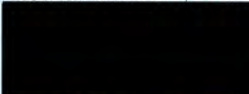
## California Chapter North

Ken Fritz



## Fort Rucker Chapter

Roscoe Souders, President



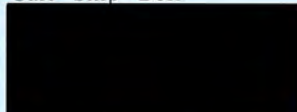
## Fort Wolters Chapter

Pat Richardson, President



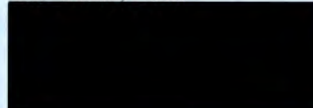
## Georgia Chapter

Carl "Skip" Bell



## North Alabama Chapter

Jim White, Pres.



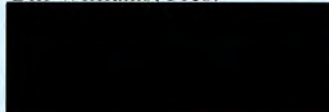
## Mid South Chapter

"Pete" Norman IV



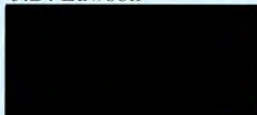
## New England Chapter

Bill Williams, Pres.



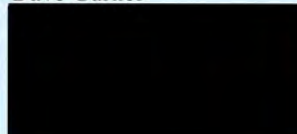
## North Carolina Chapter

J.D. Lawson



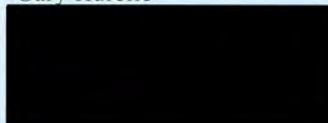
## Ohio River LZ Chapter

Dave Garner



## Rocky Mountain Chapter

Gary Hurrelle

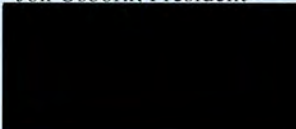


*We welcome another new Chapter into the Association:*

## The Alamo Chapter

San Antonio, Texas

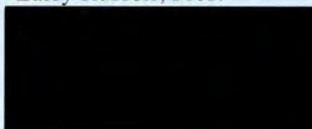
Jon Osborn, President



## South Carolina Chapter

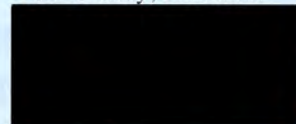
(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter

Larry Russell, Pres.



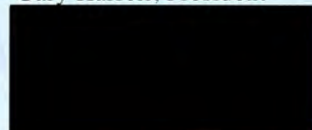
## Southern California Chapter

Tom Crosby, President



## VHPA of Florida Chapter

Gary Harrell, President



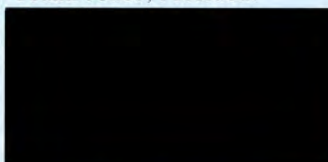
## Virginia Chapter

Ben Gay, President



## Washington State Chapter

Frank Jones, President



*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.*



# CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

to apply for them. Jeff is one of the best sources of information in the nation for veterans to obtain the benefits they deserve.

Over the holidays a couple of our most generous members again hosted parties with wine, women and song (I had to make sure I mentioned the wives). These are always great gatherings in conjunction with the Christmas cookie and cider visits to the Denver VA Hospital, where we meet young and old alike.

*Gary Hurelle, Pres.*

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Back on October 17th, 2009 the Southern California Chapter held its annual meeting at the American Legion Post 291, New Port Beach, CA where we elected new officers. Tom Crosby moved up from Vice President to President, Carl Cortez is the new Vice-President and Dale Berry remained Sec/Treas. The membership has continued work on the 2010 Reunion and the chapter role in the planning. Suggestions were made on a logo for the reunion. Carl Cortez is the point man on this and he is working with Joe Kline on it. A lot of you know Joe Kline's work and we all thank Carl and Joe for their time and effort. We think the logo is super. Bob Whitford is in charge of the golf tournament. It is to be held at North Island Naval Air Station, Coronado, CA, just across the bay from the reunion hotel (where the parade will be on the 3d of July)

Early this next year the Southern Cal Chapter web master, Michael O'Neil, will set up a web page on our web site ([www.vhpasocal.org](http://www.vhpasocal.org)) just for the 2010 Reunion. We will be offering special deals as we get them from fishing charters, restaurants, casinos, tourist attractions, balloon rides, wind surfing, etc. all for your own planning, and not part of the official program. So, come early and stay late, we will give you a list of things to do. You will not get at a hotel this nice for this price in San Diego, CA again. **Please, for more VISITOR INFORMATION go to [www.sandiego.org](http://www.sandiego.org)**

*Tom Crosby, President*

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

As we mentioned in the Nov/Dec issue we were at the Vietnam moving wall back in October of 2009. Please see the photos from that event. We also attended the Blue Star mini-reunion in Williamsburg, VA over Veterans Day. We will have our annual meeting the first Saturday in February after we conduct a memorial service at the Vietnam Memorial on the State Capitol grounds.

*JD Lawson, President*

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

With the holidays behind us, and a new year ahead of us, the South Missouri Chapter is looking forward to a year of growth, service and a lot of fun and fellowship. Our first meeting will be held in Jefferson City, MO in March, 2010, and we are hoping for a positive turnout. The exact date, time and place are available on our website ([vhpasmo.org](http://vhpasmo.org)) and it there that future activities and scheduled events will be announced. Be sure to bookmark our website and become a frequent browser.

All who flew helicopters in Southeast Asia, who now live in Missouri and surrounding states, are encouraged to bring your experiences and talents, join us in Jeff City and become a part of a growing, patriotic and fun filled chapter. Check out our website. You will be impressed.

*John Sorensen, President*

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

Congratulations to GA Chapter member Woody Mc Farlin on his election to National VHPA Vice President! Woody

is a past president of the GA Chapter the VHPA and is active in many other veterans organizations here in Georgia as well. He will do a great job as National VHPA Vice President.

The Georgia Chapter continues to hold its bi-monthly Saturday morning breakfast meetings and continues to assist in local efforts to educate young people the Vietnam War by furnishing speakers to high schools and colleges, Boy Scout troops and other youth organizations who want to learn about the Vietnam War from people who were there. We also continue to assist other Vietnam Veterans groups in the area with their projects by providing personnel and other resources.

Our primary activity continues to be the bi-monthly breakfast meeting - the folks who participate really enjoy the opportunity to get together with other combat veterans, swap war stories, discuss VA-related information and maintain those bonds that were forged so long ago.

If there are former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots in the Atlanta area who would like to join our group, please see our web site at [www.ga-vhpa.org](http://www.ga-vhpa.org) or contact me at: [REDACTED] or via telephone at [REDACTED]

*"Skip" Bell, President*

## MONTANA CHAPTER

I would like to invite anyone who flew in Southeast Asia between 1962 and 1975 to join our newly formed chapter. You can contact me at [REDACTED] Lolo, MT 59847 or [REDACTED]

*Todd Brandoff, President*

## SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER

We are a brand new chapter and invite any interested aviator who flew in Southeast Asia 1962-1975 to join our group. Please contact me at [REDACTED] San Antonio, TX 78253 or e-mail: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]  
*Jon Osborn, President*

## WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

Hope you all had a wonderful holiday. Our next meeting is scheduled for Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que sometime in February, date and time to be determined. In the meantime we elected Frank Jones as our new president. We also lost one of original members, Pat Brady moved to Texas permanently. Our loss is hopefully San Antonio's gain. Our ongoing book project with the VA Hospital at American Lake is still going strong. I don't have a clue as to how many books we have donated, but it is a lot.

*Frank Jones, President*

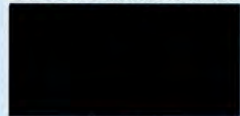


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# TAPS

## Alfredo Coy

Alfredo Coy, age 66, of McKinney, Texas, passed away September 25, 2009, in McKinney. Alfredo was born February 13, 1943, in Riviera, Texas, to Ernesto and Aurora (Garcia) Coy.



Alfredo was a United States Army Veteran. He graduated flight school with class 70-08 & 70-10; he served 20 years in the United States Army including three tours in Vietnam. He is also a recipient of the Purple Heart for injuries sustained while flying a medical evacuation missions.

After his retirement from the Army, Alfredo became a program manager with the Environmental Protection Agency in addition to being a legal mediator and translator.

He is survived by his children, Lynne Coy-Kaminski, Mary Anne Coy McElroy, Samuel Coy, Daniel Coy, Alfred Coy and Jennifer Coy of Dallas, Texas; seven grandchildren and ten siblings. To convey condolences or to sign an online registry, please visit [www.tjmfuneral.com](http://www.tjmfuneral.com).

## LTC (Retired) Billy J. Slusher

Billy J. Slusher, 74, passed away on November 24, 2009 in Lawton, Oklahoma, burial followed with full military honors at the post cemetery in Fort Sill, Oklahoma.



Billy graduated from New-castle High School in 1953. He attended the University of Oklahoma and received a BA in History in 1958. He was commissioned in the U.S. Army through the R.O.T.C. program. He married Sylvia Weaver on May 27, 1960.

He spent most of his twenty year Army career flying both fixed and rotary wing aircraft and was involved in the early development of armed helicopters. He served two tours each at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Knox, Kentucky and three tours of duty in Vietnam. He also served tours of duty in Germany and Fort Rucker, Alabama.

His awards and decorations include the Army Aviator Badge, Vietnam Service Medal with Seven Service Stars, Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross with First Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal with Second Oak Leaf Cluster, Senior Army Aviator Badge, Air Medal with V Device and Nineteenth Oak Leaf Clusters, Four Overseas Service Bars, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm and the Meritorious Service Medal.

His last Army position was with Cameron Uni-

versity as Assistant Professor of Military Science from October 1973 to July 1976 and became Professor of Military Science from August 1976 until his retirement from Active duty in May of 1979 with over 20 years of active service.

Following his retirement from the Army he spent one year teaching High School R.O.T.C. in Houston, Texas, and sixteen years working for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services as a job developer. He was a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America and was known as the "Ole Redbird" caller on the Sports Animal Radio Program. He was member of the DAV and a past member of the Noon Lion's Club.

He is survived by his wife, of the home; a daughter and son in law and two granddaughters. Memorial contributions may be made to the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, 825 NE 13th Street, Oklahoma City OK 73104 or to the charity of the donor's choice.

## Bryson Ernest Penny

Bryson Ernest Penny, 80, died Tuesday, June 9, 2009 from Parkinson's disease at Collinsville Healthcare Center in Piedmont, Alabama. Survivors include his wife, Kay Eseyo Penny; a daughter, a son, three sisters, a brother, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Mr. Penny served in the US Army for 24 years. His service included the 82nd Airborne and the US Army Aviation as a helicopter pilot. He served two tours in Vietnam, one with the 118th Aviation Company where he ferried troops into and out of combat zones in 1962-63, another with the 33rd Trans Br in Bien Hoa flying CH-21's. He also served in South Korea, the Aleutian Islands and Central America. Mr. Penny retired from the US Army in 1972 as a CWO-4.

After retiring from the military he was flight director for Ace Aviation at Ft. Rucker, AL where he trained helicopter pilots for the US Army, US Air Force and several foreign countries. He was a member of the Sardis Hill Baptist Church and was a Mason. Interment was held June 12, 2009, at Nances Creek Cemetery.

The family suggests memorial contributions be made to: The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, ATTN: Tribute Gifts, Church Street Station, P.O. Box 780, New York, NY 10008-0780

## David (Dusty) Rhodes

David B. "Dusty" Rhodes III, age 71, formerly of Oviedo, FL, died suddenly on November 3, from injuries suffered from a previous car accident in which he was hit by a drunk driver. He is survived by



wife, Julie; three sons, one daughter, one stepson, one stepdaughter and numerous grand children and one great great-grandchild.

David served in the U.S. Army as a helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War, 189th Assault Helicopter Company, The Ghostriders, where he received both a Purple Heart and The Distinguished Flying Cross. Dusty graduated flight school with class 69-5 and was a long-time life member of the VHPA and past-president of the Southern California Chapter of the VHPA. David was also a proud alumnus of the University of Central Florida. Funeral services were at Arlington National Cemetery on November 30.

## Gary Eugene Pidock

Gary Eugene Pidock, 66, passed away from pancreatitis on November 1, 2009 in Denver, Colorado.



Gary flew with the USMC in Vietnam with HMM-364 in 1970-1971 in Danang, RVN under the callsign Swift

Survivors include his daughter, Amy (Pidock) Eckel of Columbus, OH. She may be reached at [REDACTED] Gary will be cremated and interred at the Wright-Patterson National Cemetery in Ohio sometime next spring.

The caption for the attached photos reads: Lt. Gary Pidock just prior to his FAC tour with First Force Recon at LZ 401, it was taken by 1st Lt. Doug R. Orahood

## George Wilson Derrick

George Wilson Derrick, 77 years old, died on December 1st, 2009 in Arlington, Texas.

He entered the service during the Korean War, he graduated flight school with Flight Class 70-16. He was a true Army Aviator, a skill that took him on many adventures throughout his life. He was kind and trustworthy by nature and his personality was fueled by the fascination he felt for life.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Katherine Johnson but is survived by the love of his life, his wife of over 58 years, Mary Derrick, one son, four grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and a host of other family and friends. He was buried on December 8, 2009 at Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery. Hemet William Gregg Stegemann

## Howard M. Moore

Howard M. Moore, age 89, passed away on December 7, 2009. Services were held on Friday, December 10, 2009 and burial was at the Fort Sill Cemetery in Fort Sill, Okla.

Col. Moore interrupted his civilian education in June 1942 to enlist in the Army. His first deployment was with the 609th Artillery Battalion in the European theater,



where he earned his first flying Air Medal. While serving as a commanding officer in Korea, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the United Kingdom's Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry in action while withstanding an enemy assault on his position, which threatened to isolate the British Commonwealth Brigade. Other decorations and recognitions include Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 22 oak leaf clusters and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star, and member of the Field Artillery Hall of Fame.

During Col. Moore's military career he held many command staff positions of high responsibility and authority, which included command 101st Airborne Division Artillery, Vietnam; director of instruction at Fort Rucker, Ala.; commander, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion, Vietnam; personnel/administration and security officer, Fort Rucker, Ala.; instructor and supervisor of field artillery and missile gunnery; commander, U.S. Army Primary Helicopter Center and School, Fort Wolters; and commander, U.S. Army technical assistance field teams, Iran.

Retiring from the Army, he became the director of training at Bell Helicopter International, Esfahan, Iran; and assistant to the president, Bell Helicopter International, responsible for all personnel activities supporting 3,500 employees in Bedford, Texas. Col. Moore continued his education while in the service, earning a Bachelor of Science degree and a master of science in international relations. While in the military, he also studied nuclear weapons, rotary wing transition, instrument flying (fixed and rotary wing) and many other disciplines of flying.

Col. Moore lost his first wife but he is survived by present wife, Vera May Moore, one son, four stepchildren, six grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. He will be sorely missed. In lieu of flowers, the family wishes donations be made to the Army Aviation Association of America Scholarships Fund, 755 Main St., Suite 4D, Monroe, Conn. 06468.

## James H Brahney

James H Brahney, 69 died September 11, 2009 in Pittsburgh, PA from Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Brahney began his professional career in June 1962 as an Aerospace Research Engineer on NASA's Apollo Program with North American Aviation in Los Angeles. Despite a critical skills occupational deferment, he opted to enter the Air Force Officer Training School. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in March 1963 and was selected for jet pilot training. He received his wings in May 1964 and went on to advanced helicopter flight training. In 1966-67, Brahney served a tour in Vietnam, flying 200 combat sorties as a Rescue Helicopter Pilot. He was credited with saving nine lives

and was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross for Heroism, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and another Distinguished Flying Cross and seven Air Medals for meritorious achievement in flight.

In 1968, Brahney was selected to attend the U. S. Navy Test Pilot School and following graduation, he was assigned to the Flight Test Wing at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio where he tested a variety of aircraft and flight systems. He was Chief Test Pilot on the Air Cushion Landing System program, and he was the only pilot to make full-stop landings on this experimental system.

His flying career spanned thirteen years during which he compiled 2800 flying hours in 35 different aircraft, including single- and multi-engine jets, single- and multi-engine props/turboprops, helicopters, seaplanes, gyrocopters, and gliders. He was pilot-qualified in 23 different aircraft. In 1976 to 1979, Brahney progressed through a series of program management positions before being appointed as Director of the Advanced Rescue Helicopter Program.

At the end of 1982, following his retirement as a USAF Lieutenant Colonel, Brahney began a second career with SAE where he developed and managed aerospace technical conferences throughout the US, Europe and Asia. He also served as Associate Editor of Aerospace Engineering magazine where he published over 200 technical articles.

Survivors include his wife Carolyn; his sons James, Eric and Scott; his daughter Mary; seven grandchildren and three sisters. James was recently informed that he will be inducted into the Ohio Hall of Fame for Valor in May of 2010. He was looking forward to accepting his award.

## Major James Howard (Lucky) Edwards, USA (Ret)

James Howard Edwards, 68, died on May 1st, 2009 at his home in Cataula, Georgia after a long illness.

He is survived by his wife (of 42 years) Caroline, daughter Michelle (Garcia) and several grandchildren, all of which reside in Cataula, GA.

James graduated from flight school with class 67-12, he flew in Vietnam with the 118th Assault Helicopter Company in 1964-65 and with the 117th Assault helicopter Company in 1967-1968 under the callsign's Beachburn. Pink Panther, Sidewinder and Annie Fannie.

## John Hodnett

John Edd Hodnett passed away Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009 in Arlington, Texas.

John was born June 29, 1941, in Tupelo, Miss., to Dovie and Harold Hodnett. He graduated from Denton



High School and shortly thereafter served in the Army in Vietnam. He graduated flight school with Class 68-01 and flew with the 101st out of Camp Evans in 1969-1970.

After his military service, John began a 25-year career at Six Flags over Texas. He retired from Six Flags in 1987 to start his automotive business. He operated that business until his passing. He was quick to offer his expertise with anything mechanical and could often be found helping his friends. He loved singing at his church, playing his guitar and being with his family.

Survivors: Daughters, Kimberly Beets and Shelly Hodnett; son, Brian Hodnett; sisters, Patty and Delores and Jan; brothers, George and Billy and Lynn; seven grandchildren; and many relatives and friends.

## Larry Carmichael

On November 21, 2009 the VHPA was notified of the death of Larry Carmichael by Don Callison, the Webmaster of the Light Horse Air Cav Troops ([www.lighthorseaircav.com](http://www.lighthorseaircav.com))

Larry passed away on August 19, 2009 after a fight with cancer. He graduated with ORWAC Class 70-6 and served with us in D Troop, 3/5th and C Troop 3/17 Cav at Vinh Long in 1970 & 1971.

Don was notified of his passing his nephew-in-law who reports that Larry had little family and was pretty much a recluse who spoke little of his service.

## Lee Kohl

On November 28, 200 the VHPA was notified of the death of Lee Kohl but his brother Chris. In his e-mail, Chris writes "Lee Kohl was my older brother and I would like to send some additional information on his life to you because I know that the VHPA gave my brother much comfort through the years.

Lee passed away on October 24, 2003 and was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. He graduated flight school with class 68-23 and flew with the 173rd AHC from 1968-1969 under the callsign Robinhood 23. While in Vietnam he earned a Silver Star, The National Order of Vietnam, a Bronze Star, an Air Medal with 22 Oak Leaf Clusters, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Aviation Badge, the Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal and a Purple Heart."

## Lloyd Dennis Lessor

Lloyd Dennis Lessor, 64, of 152 Deer Creek Court, died Saturday, November 14, 2009.

Mr. Lessor was the son of the late Lloyd and Irene Lessor, and was a member of Brushy Creek Baptist Church in Easley, South Carolina where he belonged to the Couples 7 Sunday School Class and was also an Usher Captain. He served two tours as Captain with the US



# TAPS

Army in Vietnam where he was a helicopter commander.

Lloyd graduated flight school with class 69-19 and served with the 227th Avn, 1 CD from 1967-1968 and with the 174th AHC from 1969-1970.

Surviving are his wife, Rebecca Lessor of the home; a son, two daughters, and two grandchildren. Funeral services were held at Brushy Creek Baptist Church. Memorials may be made to the Building Fund of Brushy Creek Baptist Church, 100 Clay Street, Easley, SC 2942.

## Michael A. Martin

Michael A. Martin, 63, died at his home on October 21, 2009 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Michael graduated from flight schools with Class 69-19 and flew with C Troop, 1/9 Cav in 1969-1970 under the callsign Cavalier 11 and Cavalier White. His medals include the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star and several Air Medals.

He is survived by both a sister and a brother.

## Michael Wayne Haley

Michael Wayne Haley, of Mt. Juliet, TN was born December 11, 1948 and passed away November 26, 2009 at the age of 60.

Mr. Haley graduated from Dickson High School and then attended Austin Peay University. After completing U.S. Army basic training at Ft. Polk, LA, he went on to graduate flight school at Ft. Rucker, AL with flight class 58-517 and 68-31. In 1968-1969, as a helicopter pilot Mr. Haley was credited with saving numerous lives of fellow servicemen during the Vietnam War by piloting AH-1G's under the callsign Outlaw 13 in and out of hostile and actively combative territories with the 175th Assault Helicopter Company also known as "The Outlaws" and was awarded the Bronze Star.

After returning home from Vietnam, Mike's service to his country continued as a flight instructor with the U.S. Army at Ft. Rucker, AL. He also served in the Tennessee Army National Guard and was a member of the Mt. Juliet Lodge # 642 F&AM. Continuing his education, Chief Warrant Officer Haley earned a Master of Science Degree from the University of Tennessee. The Journey through Mike's career path included becoming a law enforcement officer in Dickson, TN to retiring from a Fortune 100 company as the executive human resource manager. Michael Wayne Haley was a devoted life long member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association where he and his wife Marilyn faithfully attended reunions all over the country. Mike was the Chairman for the VHPA Reunion held in Nashville, Tennessee in 1999.

He is survived by his wife - Marilyn Colgate Haley of Mt. Juliet, TN, two daughters, two brothers, two grandchildren and numerous other relatives, nieces, nephews and friends.

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He is survived by his wife - Marilyn Colgate Haley of Mt. Juliet, TN, two daughters, two brothers, two grandchildren and numerous other relatives, nieces, nephews and friends.

The family wishes to sincerely express unequivocal gratitude to all friends, fellow servicemen and the members of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association for all the thoughts and prayers. We are so grateful for you all that words cannot truly express the depth of our appreciation.

Funeral services were held December 1, 2009 at Bond Memorial Chapel, interment with military honors followed at Middle Tennessee State Veterans Cemetery. Memorials may be made to St. Jude's Children Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or to the American Heart Association, 1101 Northchase Parkway, Suite 1, Marietta, GA 30067.

## Orville Elmer Bilhofner

Orville Elmer Bilhofner, Lt. Col., Army Retired, went home to be with his Savior on October 13, 2009.

Born October 11, 1927 in St. Louis, MO, husband of Louise (deceased 1992); father of Brett, Mark, Susan and Sally;

grandfather of Michael, Katelyn, Ross, Taylor, Paige, Savannah and Scarlett. Lt. Col. Bilhofner was the recipient of the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star and the Air Medal.

A resident of Coconut Creek, FL since 1971, where he served on the Planning and Zoning Board, he has been a Deacon at the North Creek Presbyterian Church where he was also church administrator from 1992 to 2007. Burial was held at the South Florida V.A. National Cemetery, Lake Worth, FL. Family requests contributions be made to a Veterans Charity of your choice.



## Ray L. Chase

The following passing was reported to the VHPA by Marvin L. "Lee" Chase, the son of a Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and himself an Army Aviator for over 10 years.

Lee wishes to inform the membership that his Dad died on 24 Sep 09 from cancer associated with Agent Orange. "Dad was a Robin Hood in the 173rd AHC (66-67) & a staff guy 70-71".

Lee also wants the membership to know that his family stands by to assist others who were subjected to Agent Orange while in Vietnam make their claims against its effects. "I will make any medical information regarding his cancer available to other veterans that may benefit from it, Lee explains, Dad earned 100% disability from the VA before his death".

There was a Celebration of the Life of Ray Chase, complete with Full Military Honors held 25 Nov 09 in Carlsbad, CA. His family invites anyone who may have served with him to contact them at the below e-mail address.

Respectfully,  
MARVIN L. (Lee) CHASE  
1LT, AV  
Flight Operations Officer

## Vincent Joseph LeDuc

Mr. Vincent Joseph LeDuc of Daleville, AL passed away Friday, November 27 in Ozark, AL. He was 82. A funeral mass was held on December 2 at the Fort Rucker Main Post Chapel and burial with full military honors followed in Daleville Memorial Gardens, Daleville, Alabama.

He proudly served in and was retired from the U.S. Army, having served as a pilot in Vietnam. Mr. LeDuc was a proud recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross award. He graduated flight school with class 54-F and flew with the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cav Division and the 11th CS Company, 1st Cav Division during his 1985-1966 tour in Vietnam.

Survivors include his wife, Merle W. LeDuc of Daleville, AL; 3 daughters, a son, a brother, 5 grandchildren and one great granddaughter. The family requests that donations be made to Alzheimer's Resource Center, Southeast AL Chapter, P.O. Box 1170, Dothan, AL 36302.

## Colonel Willard M. Will" Bennett, Jr. USA (Ret)

Col. Willard M. Bennett, 78, passed away on October 20, 2009 after a courageous battle with lung cancer.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Vonnie, a Son - Scott Bennett, a Daughter - Lori Bennett Mattice and four grandchildren.

Born in Ft. Collins, Colo., to Dr. and Mrs. Willard M. Bennett, Will was commissioned as Second Lt. in the Field Artillery in 1953 from the ROTC program at Colorado State University.



Retired in the grade of Colonel, his military specialty included serving as an Army Aviator, rated in both fixed and rotary wing aircraft. His service assignments include: Korea, Japan, Alaska and two tours in Viet Nam plus many US bases including attending the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pa. He was a Life Member of the Army Otter Caribou Association where he had been a member for 20 years; he served as Treasurer of the Association for about twelve years, and had flown Otters with the 12th Aviation Company. Will had also been a HU-1 'Huey' Company commander for the 1st Air Cav and had been awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action.

Col. Bennett's military awards and decorations include: The Silver Star, Legion of Merit (2), Distinguished Flying Cross (4), Army Commendation Medal (3), The Bronze Star, Air Medal (42). Bennett and his wife Vonnie lived in St. Petersburg, Fla. and part time at Lake Lure, N.C., he was a registered securities broker and enjoyed golf and travel in his free time.

Burial was held on October 30, 2009 at Bay Pines Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Bay Pines, Florida.

## **William "Bill" Robert Menucci**

William "Bill" Robert Menucci, 60, Army Airborne Vietnam Veteran and skilled outdoorsman, died October 5, 2009, at the Zablocki V.A. Medical Center in Milwaukee, after a battle with lymph node cancer, he finally succumbed to pneumonia. He has resided in Channing, MI. for the past several decades.

Bill enlisted in the Army and served this country during the Vietnam War. He graduated flight school with class 68-15 and 68-27, he flew a Huey Helicopter for both extraction and Medivac missions in the Republic of South Vietnam from November 1968 until November 1969 while flying with the 1st Aviation Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade, 61st Assault Helicopter Company with call signs "Lucky Stars" and "Lucky 18." He flew out of Landing Zone English, Bon Song, Quin Yon, An Khe, Plei Kue and Phu Cat AFB.

His military decorations included Sharpshooter Medals (M-14/M-16, Expert (Pistol .45 CAL), Vietnam Service Medal, The Air Medal #31 (for meritorious service), National Defense Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon and a Bronze Star for risking life and service above and beyond the call of duty.

According to his family, Bill was proud to have rescued hundreds of our soldiers from the jungles of Vietnam. Bill was a life time member of Veteran of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans Commanders Club, and numerous sporting organizations. After his military service, Bill graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. He later obtained a law degree from the Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, in 1978 where he practiced law for several

years. Bill spent his remaining years in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the land that he loved.

Bill was a loving and caring man who loved life, this country, the great outdoors and his family. Bill's generosity, humor and his ability to make a short story incredibly long will be greatly missed. Bill was loved and respected by many friends, fellow veterans, sportsmen and family.

Bill was buried on Oct. 22nd 2009 at Cemetery Park in Iron Mountain in the American Legion Section. Donations could be made in Bill's name to Iron Mountain American Legion Post 50 with the deepest gratitude of the family.

Bill, we are grateful for your service to this country and we will always remember that freedom is definitely not free.

## **WILLIAM HAROLD "BILL" MILLER**

William Harold "Bill" Miller, 67 died on 11 NOV 2009 in Grand Prairie, Texas

Bill graduated flight school with class 67-21 and served with the 3rd Bde of the 1st Cav Division in 1968 under the callsign Snoopy 3. In 1971-1972 Bill again flew with the 3rd Bde of the 1st Cav Division, this time under the callsign JAGUAR 3.

Bill was born Sept. 28, 1942, in Columbus, Ga., to William Monroe and Corene Austin Miller. He is survived by his wife, Barbara Miller; a brother, a sister, three sons, a daughter and six grandchildren.

## **WILLIAM GREGG STEGEMANN**

William Gregg Stegemann, age 64, died September 23, 2009.

Originally from Riverside, CA, Captain William Stegemann proudly served his country serving two tours in the Republic of Vietnam as a helicopter pilot in the US Army. He flew with the HHC, A Company and D Company of the 227th Aviation Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division during his 1969-1970 tour in Vietnam, under the Chickenman and Lobo call signs. He was discharged from the service at Fort Ord in 1978.

William was awarded numerous medals during his years in the military which include the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with/1 OLC, Bronze Star, Purple Hearts, Air Medals with/24 OLC, Army Commendation Medal with/1 OLC, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Valorous Unit Awards with/1 OLC, Sr. Army Aviator badge, VN Gallantry Cross w/Palm, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.

His passion was flying. Having owned an RV6, in 2004 he took on a lifetime dream and after 18 months, thousands of rivets and hundreds of painstaking hours he completed the building of a beautiful RV10, which provided he and his wife many hours of enjoyable flight out of the Hemet-

Ryan Airport in Hemet Ca.

William resided in Hemet, CA with his wife, Deborah of 27 years. He was also survived by four daughters, one son, ten grandchildren, a sister, niece and three nephews. Intemment was held on September 30th at Riverside National Cemetery with full military honors.

Mrs. Stegemann writes "We would love to hear from anyone that knew Bill and that would care to share their memories with us. It would be a great honor for me and a comfort to our family." You may contact us through E-mail:

## **Michael J. Novosel, Jr.**

Surrounded by family, Michael J. Novosel, Jr., Age 60, peacefully passed away at his home in Shalimar, FL on Thursday night, December 10, 2009 after being diagnosed with cancer only a month earlier. Mike, Jr. was born on November 19, 1949 to Michael and Ethel Novosel, who are both deceased. Mike, Jr. is survived by his wife, Margaret; one daughter, one brother, two sisters, and three grandchildren.

Mike, Jr. is the only pilot to fly in the same helicopter unit with his father in combat! He grew up around pilots and aircraft. As a teenager, he took every opportunity to be down on the flight line. In 1968, at the peak of the war in Southeast Asia, he graduated from high school in North Carolina and, at 19, enlisted in the Army. After basic training, he reported to Fort Wolters, Texas, for flight school and trained in the same flight in which his father had served as a contract instructor earlier.

Mike, Jr. graduated, received appointment to warrant officer one, and earned his wings on December 15, 1969. It was exactly 27 years after his father had earned his wings! He volunteered for duty in Vietnam and, when he arrived, requested assignment to the 82nd Medical Detachment. With his father's approval, he joined the unit. His father gave him a "dollar ride," an auto-rotation check, an "in-country" flight evaluation, and then cleared Mike, Jr. to fly the Bell UH-1 "Huey." The two Novosels suspended a normal father-son relationship for the next few months, but, when Mike, Sr. completed his tour, his son flew him to the departure processing base. In July 1970, Mike, Jr. became an aircraft commander and inherited his father's call sign, "Dustoff 88."

In a year tour, he flew 1,736 missions, earned 37 air medals, and rescued more than 2,500 allied airmen, sailors, and soldiers. He returned to the States as a chief warrant officer (CWO-2), married Margaret in 1971, and was assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. After serving at Pusan, Korea, he flew the "Huey" and the Bell OH-58 Kiowa with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Fort Bliss, Texas. Posted to Fort Rucker,





# TAPS

Alabama, Mike, Jr. earned an associate degree in Aviation Safety and then went to the 377th Medical Detachment at Camp Walker, Korea. In 1981, he returned to Fort Rucker as a flight instructor and earned a degree in Professional Aeronautics from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.

Next, he was Aviation Safety Officer for 2nd Infantry Division in Korea and then became a classroom teacher and instructor pilot back at Fort Rucker. After assignment to the 12th Aviation Brigade in Germany, Mike's final duty was Installation Safety Officer at Fort Bragg; he retired as a CWO-4 in 1991 with over 5,500 flying hours. In a varied second career, he flew spotting missions for fishing fleets in the south Pacific, crop dusted, and hauled timber. In 1991, Mike flew support for offshore oil exploration and drilling operations in the Gulf of Mexico. With almost 11,000 hours, he piloted the Bell 407, a state-of-the-art machine, for Air Logistics and later extended his wings to helping fellow veterans.

In 2008, Mike, Jr. started The Novosel Foundation to provide immediate aid to Wounded Warriors. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to their Foundation (<http://www.novoselfoundation.org/>) in memory of the two Novosel men who faithfully served their God and country.

## DENNIS R. FREEMAN

Dennis R. Freeman left us on December 09, 2009. He is survived by his mother, two brothers, his wife Marilyn, four daughters, three step-children and six grandchildren.

Denny" served with B/7/1 Cavalry and D/3/5 Cavalry in 1969-70 as a Warrant Officer combat assault helicopter pilot. He was awarded the Bronze Star in 1970, along with several other medals for his volunteer service.

Mr. Freeman treasured the freedom of adventure and he had more adventures in his life than most of us could ever dream of. He has been a world traveler, ocean sailor, decorated Vietnam Vet, equine apprentice, oral historian, singer/songwriter, playwright and professional storyteller. His amazing voice and incredible delivery brought his songs and stories to life and will echo in many hearts forever. Flying represented freedom to Denny, which he treasured so much. So fly free, Denny – and may your story never end. [By Marilyn Freeman]

## RICHARD EUGENE WARREN

Richard Eugene Warren, age 67, died from an illness on May 3, 2009 in Mooresville, North Carolina.

Richard was an Army Avia-



tor who graduated flight school with Class 69-11. He flew with the 68th Assault Helicopter Company in Bien Hoa, RVN under the callsign Mustang 53 from June 1969 through June 1970.

Richard was also the founder of Welcome Home Veterans, Inc. and a member of the VFW and the Boy Scouts of America. In his heart he was still a member of the United States Military, a man who truly loved his country and the men and women who defended it. He was the owner and operator of Pat's Coffee Shop in Mooresville, NC, a gathering place for all military veterans, the birthplace of Welcome Home Veterans, Inc., and where you were greeted with a smile, a handshake, and a sincere Welcome Home.

Many groups and organizations had honored Mr. Warren over the years, from the Marine Corps League to the state Order of the Long Leaf Pine. The latter, North Carolina's highest civilian honor, put him into the company of such well-known winners as Maya Angelou, Michael Jordan, Rev. Billy Graham, and Charles Kuralt.

He is survived by three sons, two daughters, two brothers, three sisters and six grandchildren.

# VSO

## Friends of VinhSon Montagnard Orphanage



The School at Dak Rowa, 1 of 5 Schools Serving the Montagnard Children



### Vinh Son Facts

- Population - more than 500 Montagnard children in five facilities
- Administered by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal
- Location - Kontum, Vietnam
- About \$12 feeds, shelters, and educates one child for one month

### Friends of Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage

A Non-Profit Humanitarian Project Benefiting Vinh Son Orphanage

P.O. Box 9322 • Auburn, California 95604-9322

Email: [info@friendsofvso.org](mailto:info@friendsofvso.org) • Website: [www.friendsofvso.org](http://www.friendsofvso.org)



# WHERE EAGLES DARED:

## Focke and Flettner's WWII German Helicopters

By Ken McElroy,  
175th Assault Helicopter Company

When I first saw the movie, "Where Eagles Dare," I believed that I had caught Hollywood in a somewhat minor technical error. The movie, set in WWII, showed the German's landing a helicopter in the confined courtyard of an Alpine prisoner of war facility.

Having worked as an engineer for Bell Helicopter, I recognized the Bell Model 47 with a Sikorsky style modified tail rotor. I knew that the Germans in WWII definitely did not have Bell helicopters but I was less certain whether WWII Germany had in fact used helicopters during the war. I assumed that Hollywood had taken a bit of dramatic license with the film.

Recently while doing research on military use of the helicopter in WWII, I learned that not only did the Americans use the helicopter in the last years of the war, but the German military used practical helicopter crafts as well. While Igor Sikorsky designed his first helicopter in 1939 for American military use, two German aeronautical engineers, Heinrich Focke and Anton Flettner, were the pioneers for German development of the helicopter used by the Third Reich in WWII. Early German helicopter models fell into three categories: auto-gyro with no main rotor power, contra-rotating rotors on either side of the fuselage, twin synchronized contra rotating blades on top of the cockpit fuselage. A fourth concept, the rotor-tip motor, was primarily a prototype and was never produced for use in WWII.

With Germany being such an innovator in aircraft design prior to and during WWII, you might suppose that German engineers would be the first to have worked out the technical problems associated with the development of the helicopter. This was not the case, as in 1930, the Focke-Wulf Company, led by Heinrich Focke, licensed the C-30 auto-gyro helicopter for German production from the Spaniard Juan De la Cierva. At the time, De la Cierva, was not trying to build a helicopter, but was really trying to develop an aircraft that could safely land if it had an engine failure. To this end he developed the auto-gyro, a wingless airplane with a prop in front that pulls the

plane forward, and a non-powered main rotor mounted above the cockpit. As the plane moves forward, the rotor provides lift for the aircraft. Should the engine fail, the craft would safely auto-rotate which is what happened to De La Cierva in January of 1920 when his model C-4 auto-gyro suffered engine failure but landed safely. With a non-powered rotor, there was no problem with counter-acting main rotor torque and it was also De la Cierva who first worked out practical designs that solved the issues of rotor tilting, feathering and cyclic controls.



Juan De la Cierva's Model C30 Autogyro.

By 1930, the Spaniard had come up with his C-30 design which powered the main rotor prior to take off, built up enough inertia which "jumped" the aircraft into the air, where the rotor was disengaged and the aircraft motor flew the wingless aircraft like a normal auto-gyro. De la Cierva's work greatly influenced German aviation engineers and his C-30 was licensed not only to Germany, but to France and the US, where Igor Sikorsky used many of De la Cierva's rotor designs in the first American helicopters. Several hundred of his auto-gyros were built before De la Cierva was killed in a commercial airplane crash in 1936. A video biography of Juan de la Cierva may be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbalOh4smnM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbalOh4smnM)

After obtaining De la Cierva's auto-gyro design, Focke began a systematic engineering analysis, determined to develop his own improved models. By 1934, Focke had built a twin rotor helicopter model powered by a two stroke engine. This model had counter rotating rotor blades on either side of an airplane body. Shortly after the prototype flew, Focke was forced out of the Focke-Wulf company at the insistence of the Nazi party because he did not want to turn his production facilities over to the building of the Messerschmitt. However, the German Air Ministry was so impressed with Focke's flying helicopter model, they arranged for him to partner with noted test pilot Gerd Achgelis in a new aviation company, Focke-Achgelis.

Focke made numerous design innovations based on the auto-gyro which led to the development of the FW-61 helicopter in 1936. This 160 horsepower, single seat, counter rotating craft was the first

practical helicopter to fly. The FW-61 was flown in May of 1937 by Hanna Reitsch, the first woman to fly a helicopter. Reitsch, a close personal friend of Hitler, test flew Junker's JU-87 and Dornier's DO-17 and during the war she tested the Messerschmitt ME163 Komet rocket propelled bomber and made several flights testing mechanisms designed to cut balloon cables.

The FW-61 had two counter rotating, 21 foot rotors mounted on extended arms on either side of an airplane fuselage. The counter rotating blades solved the main rotor torque problem and led to a series of helicopter records including an altitude record of 8,008 meters, and a top speed of 76 mph. In February of 1938, Reitsch flew the FW-61 inside the Deutschlandhalle sports stadium in Berlin every night that February. Such a display of flight agility in such a tight envelope was certainly a media coup for Hitler and for the use of the helicopter. A video of an actual flight can be seen at [www.video.google.com/videosearch?hl=en&safe=off&q=fa-330&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=wwv#q=fw61&hl=en&emb=0](http://www.video.google.com/videosearch?hl=en&safe=off&q=fa-330&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=wwv#q=fw61&hl=en&emb=0). Focke next designed a six passenger version for Deutsche Lufthansa Airline, the FA-266 Hornet, which flew in August of 1940. The Air Ministry asked Focke to upgrade the Hornet as a military transport. This new model, called the FA-223 Dragon, had two three bladed rotors with 39 foot diameters, a 1,000 horsepower engine and was capable of speeds of 109 mph. In 1941 the Defense Ministry ordered versions armed with machine guns, the first gunships, and one version armed with two



Hanna Reitsch flying the FW-61 in the Deutschlandhalle in Berlin.



250 kg bombs or naval mines.

Two of the FA-223s were assigned to the mountain warfare school outside of Innsbrook, Austria where they operated in high altitude and extreme cold. In one 29 day period they completed 83 tactical missions. Allied bombing raids limited production throughout the war but they were still being produced in February of 1945 when the Russians overran their production plant and captured three of the helicopters. The English captured one craft which was the first helicopter to fly across the English Channel. This machine crashed on its third flight in England and was never rebuilt. After the war, the Czechs built several from captured parts with limited use. Because Focke could not build aircraft in Germany after the war, he built a civilian version of the FA-223, the SE-3000, for a French company but it was not commercially successful when put on the market in 1948. For a video of the FA-223 in flight, go to, [www.video.google.com/videosearch?hl=en&safe=off&q=fa-330&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=vw#q=fa223&hl=en&emb=0](http://www.video.google.com/videosearch?hl=en&safe=off&q=fa-330&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=vw#q=fa223&hl=en&emb=0).



FA-282 "Hummingbird" landing on German Naval ship

they captured the U-852 intact in the Indian Ocean in May of 1944. An excellent video showing one of the remaining FA-330 craft may be found on the internet at [www.video.xfree.hu/?n=nyiloszemi9a723de3bce677018842ed9c627188d5](http://www.video.xfree.hu/?n=nyiloszemi9a723de3bce677018842ed9c627188d5) and a short video showing the FA-330 on a German submarine, can be found at [www.video.google.com/videosearch?q=fa-330&hl=en&emb=0&aq=f#](http://www.video.google.com/videosearch?q=fa-330&hl=en&emb=0&aq=f#)

While Focke worked to improve the C30 auto-gyro and to develop his own innovative designs, another German aeronautical engineer, Anton Flettner, was also working on a single rotor auto-gyro model. Flettner had started his aviation career working for Graf Zeppelin and after WWI had designed record setting nautical sailing ships and rotary ventilators for various transportation vehicles. In 1936 he proposed a single rotor auto-gyro, labeled the FL-184, which had cyclic pitch control. His first flying prototype caught fire in flight and the project, initially shelved was brought back into action by the German Navy. The Navy envisioned using the auto-gyro as a ship to shore transport. The Navy contracted with Flettner for a new and improved FL-185 which came with a non-powered main rotor and two horizontal rotors on each side of the airplane style fuselage for furnishing power and for controlling torque created by the main rotor.

After the initial success of his FL-185, Anton Flettner began to design aircraft with counter rotating and synchronized rotor blades. These craft had two main rotors, one on each side of the gearbox, and tilted at slight angles to each other. In 1938, Flettner built the single-seat, 160 horsepower FL-265 aircraft for the German Navy. After initial problems with rotor blades striking each other, were worked out, Flettner's third version, the FL-282 Hummingbird was produced and was considered my most experts to be the best helicopter of its day. It first flew in October of 1941 and proved to be so agile and stable that it could be flown with hands off the controls. In one series of flight tests, it was able to evade two fighter planes for 20 minutes.

Originally the cockpit of the FL-282 was

was credited with the sinking of the Greek steamer Eithalia in August of 1943 by the submarine U-177. The allies obtained one FA-330 when

open, but was enclosed in later models and an observer's seat was added late in the war. The body for this helicopter showed the characteristic airplane fuselage but the engine was mounted behind the pilot. By 1943 it was seeing service in the Baltic, Mediterranean, and Aegean Sea theaters as an observation, scout, and light transport vehicle. Flettner claimed that the German Defense Ministry had ordered 1,000 FL-282s but due to allied bombing raids, the production of this many craft was never possible. By the end of the war, Flettner was working on his FL-339 model that would have carried 20 passengers. After the war, he immigrated to America but had little success in the aviation industry. Several of his designs are used on the Kaman family of helicopters. A video of the FL-282 can be seen at <http://video.google.com/videosearch?q=fk-282&hl=en&emb=0&aq=f#>

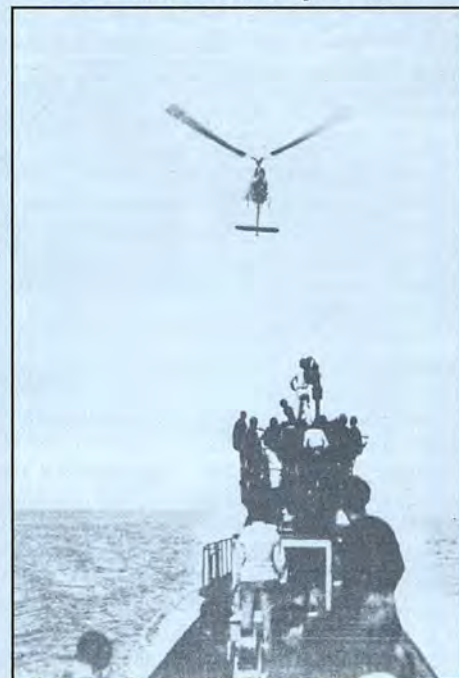
Helicopter usage was in its infancy in WWII for both the Americans and the Germans and this is a fact that many WWII historians are not aware of. Apparently Alistair Mclean knew of the use of such craft and included the helicopter landing in his novel that was later turned into the movie, "Where Eagles Dare." What I thought was a Hollywood error, the dramatic landing by a helicopter in the very small courtyard of a WWII German prison camp, was I have come to find out, very possible after all. While Hollywood may have gotten the exact helicopter model wrong, they did get their historical facts right. Score one for Hollywood!

*Please see next page for websites in a clear, unbroken format....*



FW-61 "Dragon" carrying Krupp Mountain Howitzer

By 1942, the Focke-Achgelis Company developed the motorless, single seat FA-330 Wagtail. This 160 pound gyro-glider, also known as a rotor kite, was designed to be stowed on a submarine which would then pull the craft, like a kite or a glider, on the end of a 500 foot cable. The FA-330, flying at 120 meters of altitude, increased the observation range of a submarine from 5 nautical miles to 25 nautical miles. The FA-330 was installed on at least three submarines that saw duty in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. It



FA-330 "Wagtail" being towed behind a German submarine



# *We Return to the Battle of An Loc.....*

In the July/August 2009 issue of the Aviator you did a good job on the coverage on the Battle of An Loc. There were many brave and gallant men that showed their meddle during this period (me, I was just scared to death).

I was an aircraft commander of an AH-1G with F/79th. In one article it was noted that "the TOW missile systems were mounted on UH-1H's and were first used there,...a special airlift our of Dover, AFB...went directly to Major Larry McKay's unit of the Blue Max..." To fill in some of the information and correct some, I provide a small anecdote.

The afore mentioned unit arrived one day at Lai Khe, whether or not they were attached to F/79th I am not sure, but I don't think so. When I shutdown between missions I went over to talk to the pilots. It turned out that one of the pilots was a man I went to Flight School and Cobra Transition with (we lived together at Cobra Trans.). We went over the tactical situation at An Loc. I noted that An Loc was a siege scenario and that the ARVN/Advisors were in the middle of 10's of thousands of NVA, and the everyone in the NVA seemed to have .51 cal and there was a mess of 23mm (including the ZSU-23-4), 37mm

etc. I noted that the method of using the TOW (at that time), that I was aware of, was to "pop up, acquire the target, and fly the missile, while maintaining the aircraft relatively still at very low altitude. This would make them a sitting duck in a shooting gallery. After some intense conversation we said our good byes and I left to return to another fire mission at An Loc.

When I returned the Hellfire team was not in sight, and I had not heard any radio traffic relative to their activity over An Loc. Being concerned for them I questioned where they were. Someone said that they went out to do some practice work, which I found encouraging. I never saw them again and understood that they went up to DaNang to work the battle going on around Hue and that they were very successful there. The reason being, the battle was being engaged along a FEBA (Forward Edge of the Battle Area). This was the scenario the system was developed for (European).

I want the membership to know that I also have available two 2 documents that might be of interest. One is a letter of Commendation from one of the U. S. advisers on the ground during the

siege at An Loc and the second is the Presidential Unit Citation for the some of the units involved in this battle (229th Assault, Cos. A, B and D), troop F, 9th Cav, Battery F/79th ARA, and 362 Aviation Co.) Contact me at the below e-mail address and I will send them your way.

I am proud that I was a member of a great team (F/79th Blue Max) during the battle for An Loc and that we were chosen as Aviation Unit of Year (it shows up in '73). I am also proud to be member of 229th Aviation Bn that received the Presidential Unit citation. More importantly is, it pleases me that we as a unit were able to be praised by the men on the ground, who were fighting day in and day out. The fact that these guys thought that we were doing our job is more important to me than anything else that can be added to the history of the battle.

***As in all campaigns there is a lot to tell and much that never is.***

*R. D. Toms, Jr.*

## **Having a hard time typing in all those internet link's in Ken's story about German Helicopter Operations in WWII?**

*Well here they are again, in an unbroken line format....*

Also, please note that these links, and the links provided in Ken's main story, may have had some inadvertent hyphens added to them due to the text pagination problems inherent in our printing process.

None of the links provided in either story place are designed to be typed into your search program with a hyphen in them.

*A video biography of Juan de la Cierva may be found at*  
**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbalOh4smnM>**

*A video of an actual flight of Hanna Reitsch flying the FW-61 can be seen at*  
**<http://video.google.com/videosearch?hl=en&safe=off&q=fa-330&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=vw#q=fw61&hl=en&emb=0>** )

*A video of the FA-223 Dragon can be seen at*  
**<http://video.google.com/videosearch?hl=en&safe=off&q=fa-330&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=vw#q=fa223&hl=en&emb=0>**

*A video showing a museum FA-330 Wagtail can be seen at*  
**<http://video.xfree.hu/?n=nyiloszeml9a723de3bce677018842ed9c627188d5>**

*A video of a FA-330 wagtail being assembled and flown over a German U-boat can be seen at*  
**<http://video.google.com/videosearch?q=fa-330&hl=en&emb=0&aq=f#>**

*A video of the FL-282 Hummingbird can be seen at*  
**<http://video.google.com/videosearch?q=fk-282&hl=en&emb=0&aq=f#>**



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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

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SOCIAL SECURITY NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

Information about each Vietnam unit:

Dates in units			Unit	Location	Call sign
	From:	To:			
1st					
2nd					
3rd					
4th					

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

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association? Referred by? Was membership a gift? From whom?

*\*NOTE: Life memberships may be purchased with three bi-monthly payments of \$185 each.*



# 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 31 years, Janet.

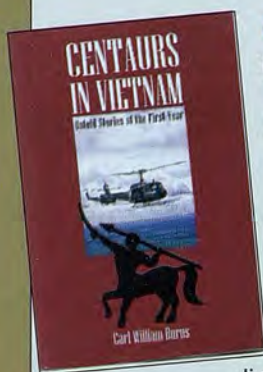
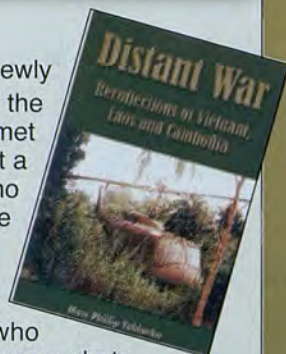
**Distant War:** Recollections of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia by Marc Phillip Yablonka is a newly edited collection of articles covering some 18 years of his freelance reporting on the aftermath of the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. He became interested in Vietnam through the refugees he met in Los Angeles as an adult education teacher and during his five trips to Southeast Asia. He is not a war correspondent but as he notes became a chronicler of war by telling the stories of those who had "been there." He has written for Reuters, Agence France Presse, and been published in the Army Times, Stars and Stripes, and Vietnam Magazine to name a few.

His post-war visits to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia chronicle the lives of those who were left to face an oftentimes grim situation. Their interviews and stories bring back forgotten stories of sacrifice and suffering. He also writes about the challenges faced by Vietnamese refugees who reconstructed their lives in the United States. I particularly found his story about Nick Ut, a Vietnamese photo-journalist for the AP, very interesting. Most of us are familiar with Nick Ut's photo of the "napalm girl" which became an icon of the war and its tragedies. Yablonka also tells us the story of that girl, Phan Thi Kim Phuc, and her long and painful journey of recovery.

The book also presents interviews with a wide variety of military and civilian Americans including former Red Cross girls, Air America Pilots, photographers, combat journalists, civilian doctors and orphanage workers, exploring their exploits, trials and regrets. All of their stories are interesting but it is the story of Cherie Clark who worked in the orphanages, flew out with the children as Saigon fell, and returned to Vietnam to continue her work that I found the most touching. Those of you who visited orphanages and those kids during your tour know what I am talking about.

To say there are many untold stories of the Vietnam War is an understatement. The war was a many faceted conflict that involved soldiers serving their country, and a wide variety of American and Vietnamese civilians. Yablonka's articulate and sensitive reporting brings the personal stories of these men and women alive on the page, providing a very interesting retrospective of that distant war.

*Distant War: Recollections of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (258 pages with photos, \$19.95) by Marc Phillip Yablonka, ISBN13: 978-0-557-08441-8 is available from merriam-press.com, Amazon, and other book suppliers.*



**Centaur in Vietnam:** Untold Stories of the First Year by VHPA member Carl William Burns is a really nice memoir of the first year (66-67) D Troop, Air Cavalry 3rd Squadron 4th Cavalry, 25th Infantry Division served in Vietnam. I was just a high school kid living in Hawaii at the time Carl and his unit shipped out, but I remember seeing the convoys of the "Tropic Lightening" Division from Schofield Barracks headed for Pearl Harbor and thinking this was serious business. This memoir contains personal reflections, but not just Carl's, he sought out and brought in as many voices of the men he served with as he could locate and cajole into contributing to this book.

For all you guys who literally "shipped" out to Vietnam you will enjoy Carl's description of his journey on board the USS Gordon. Not exactly a luxury cruise, considering one shared a "stateroom" with 14 other GIs, but interesting none the less. The arrival of the unit in country and the set up at Cu Chi, a new base with little in the way of amenities was the next challenge and the inventiveness of procuring the "basics" of life is well described. As you know Cu Chi was not exactly the friendliest neighborhood to move into, but it was especially challenging for a brand new unit that had never worked together before. Carl and his cohorts do a great job of describing the ups and downs of establishing a new base and perfecting some of the flying strategies that served to improve their odds of staying alive.

The chapters about the LRRP operations that Carl's unit participated in are very good reading. This unit was set up within the 3/4th from scratch with all volunteers without prior LRRP training. The leadership and men of this unit describe their OJT training and talk about the units unique missions which regularly patrolled "outside the wire" at Cu Chi to keep a watch on the bad guys and hopefully bring them into the cross hairs after locating them. The pilot's stories in this book describe the hair raising missions and extractions flown in support of the LRRP's.

Then there is Ruth Ann Burns, Carl's wife, and the story of a very determined young lady who parlays her status as a writer for a small regional newspaper into a trip to Vietnam. This was, of course, totally unauthorized but she gets a Marine major in Saigon to sign off on her credentials and off to cover the war she goes. Her story of visits to orphanages, hospitals, and hamlets is very interesting. Carl was obviously happy to see her as well. How many of you got a visit from your wife while you were "in country?" I recommend this book to all Centaurs and everyone else who served in Vietnam.

*Centaur in Vietnam: Untold Stories of the First Year, (226 pages with photos, \$19.99) by Carl William Burns, ISBN13: 978-1-4251-7035-6 is available from www.trafford.com, Amazon, and other book suppliers.*



# Veteran's Day 2009

On Veteran's Day, 11 November 2009, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum at Simi Valley, CA recognized Vietnam Veterans for the first time. As a result, their attendance was more than double previous Veteran's Day attendance. The special recognition for Vietnam veterans was accomplished by having a restored UH-1B helicopter gunship land on the Library's South Lawn, a duplicate of the White House's South Lawn. This Huey is from the Wings and Rotor Air Museum in Murrieta, CA. Pictures from that day can be found at <http://www.wingsandrotors.org/vetsday09.html>. This was the first time a helicopter had landed at this site. The Library also showed the award winning documentary "In the Shadow of the Blade," an emotional tribute to Vietnam veterans and our families. Information about this documentary is at <http://www.arrowheadfilms.com/store.html>

I had the honor of introducing the concept of the Huey being the icon of our service. A copy of my speech is elsewhere in this magazine plus you can watch it on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/docsdifference>. This was a great honor for me to speak at the Reagan Library to represent all of you.

The Reagan Library is the largest presidential library in the United States. The museum portion has Air Force One (Boeing 707) on display plus Marine One. There is also a functional simulator of Air Force One. There is more information at their web site at <http://www.reaganlibrary.com/>. It is well worth a visit.

**Gary Roush**  
President@vhpa.org



Over 1,200 people gathered to celebrate Veteran's Day at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, the crowd included several members of the VHPA and their families. The Library staff attributed this, their largest ever Veterans Day turnout, to their decision to dedicate this year's ceremony to veterans of the Vietnam War.

## REMARKS AT THE RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

November 11, 2009

Gary Roush

**Good morning...** As president of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Mission Historian for the In The Shadow of The Blade film production, a Vietnam War veteran, and an American, I am very proud to be here at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on this Veterans Day.

Today is the day we honor the service of the men and women who have paid the price for the freedom Americans and others around the world enjoy. From the



Gary Roush stands next to Pat Rodgers. Pat is the Executive Director and Chief Pilot of the Wings and Rotor Air Museum. He is retired from the Air National Guard.

have served in war understand that ours is not a solitary pursuit. When we face the enemy, we rely on the man or woman beside us, the scores of support personnel behind us, and, equally, the technology essential to our victory in the mission. Every war has its signature technical advancement—the Civil War's cannon, World War I's machine gun, World War II's tank. The icon of the Vietnam War is the helicopter.

In fact, the Vietnam War is commonly referred to as "the helicopter war," as the relatively new technology of rotary wing aircraft was essential in remote, undeveloped territory not accessible by roads. The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association has verified the tail numbers of 11,827 helicopters that served in the war in all branches of the service. Of those, the majority—7,013—were UH-1 "Huey" helicopters.

The Huey helicopter was originally commissioned by the US Army as an air ambulance, and it continued in that important role throughout the Vietnam War, resulting in an unprecedented survival rate for wounded soldiers who could be quickly medevaced to field hospitals for life-saving care. Thousands of American combat troops are alive today due to the medical crews of "Dustoff" units who served on Huey helicopters.

But the Huey was much more than an ambulance. Because it was easily modifiable, the military quickly adapted the Huey

first battles of the American Revolution to today's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the best people of our nation have heeded the call to pursue the noble goal of life, liberty and justice for all people. Individually, we put forth our best effort in the heat of battle, but all of us who

*The crowd gathers around the Wings and Rotor's B Model, President Reagan's gravesite is to the left rear of the aircraft, in the grove of trees in the background. This is the same aircraft that will be landing on the fantail of the USS Midway as part of our 2010 Reunion in San Diego.*





as a transport vehicle. For the ground troops, the Huey was their ride into and out of the battlefield. It was also their supply line--the way they received ammunition, water, food, and mail from home.

Hueys were also adapted as gunships to provide aerial support for ground units in combat. Although all branches of the military service employed the UH-1, most of the Huey's served with the Army, logging more than seven and a half million flight hours. The Huey and the Huey Cobra have more combat flight time than any other aircraft in the history of warfare. It is a testament to the Huey's importance to the war that nearly half of those sent to Vietnam were destroyed and 2,177 Huey pilots and crew members were killed in action.

The flexible, maneuverable nature of the Huey, combined with its universal presence and essential role made it, more than any-



*Marine One used during President Reagan's term. It's on display in the beautiful annex dedicated to the Air Force One that was also widely used during his time in office.*

thing, the icon of the Vietnam War. There is, among veterans, an exceptional fondness for this machine. To this day, those who flew it in Vietnam are fond of saying that when the last Blackhawk goes to the bone yard, a Huey will take the crew home.

A few years ago a young filmmaker from Texas recognized the unique tie between the Huey and the veterans of the Vietnam War, and set out to fly a restored UH-1 across the country as a catalyst for telling the untold stories of the Vietnam War. I had the remarkable opportunity to volunteer on that mission as its historian, vetting the participants and their stories to ensure that every one was true.

I watched over and over in landing zone after landing zone as pilots, crew members, infantrymen, nurses, and the families of our war dead came out and connected with the machine in exceptional ways. I'm happy to tell you that you will get to see this as well, in the screening this afternoon of the documentary "In The Shadow of The Blade."

The aircraft ("Huey 091") that flew that mission of healing and reconciliation is now permanently displayed in the Smithsonian Museum of American History "Price of Freedom: Americans at War" exhibit, representing all the Huey's that served in Vietnam. But it represents much more than that.

Those of us who returned from Vietnam came home as the youngest, most educated fighting force to date in American history. Though the nation had turned against the war, we who were there knew that among us were legions of ordinary men and women who had served

with extraordinary courage, dedication and heroism. For us--the veterans of the Vietnam War--the Huey is the symbol of our service and of the service of those we knew. When we see Huey 091 in the Smithsonian, or when we watch as a Huey lands here later today, we see much more than a machine. We see the better part of ourselves, the nation we were proud to serve, and the comrades we will never forget. The Huey is not just a machine; it is our salute, our tribute, our memorial. The Huey does not only represent a war; it represents that war's veterans. The Huey is our symbol.



**HAPPY VETERANS DAY.**



## VHPA'ERS IN THE NEWS

### North Carolina Chapter Helps Move Two Aircraft to VN Moving Wall

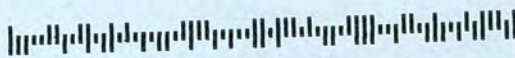


*Members of the North Carolina Chapter of the VHPA took two aircraft to Dillsboro, North Carolina to join a Military Display held in support of the Vietnam Moving Wall visit on October 17 & 18, 2009.*



*(Left to right) Phil Keith, Brock Nicholson, Jerry Seago, & Bill Doran show the plaque they were presented in recognition of their participation in the ceremonies.*





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## ATTENTION VHPA MEMBERS ~ NOW IS THE TIME!

***NOW IS THE TIME. Yes, now is the time.***

Time to get started putting you kids, grandkids, great grandkids, etc that are eligible on the road to applying for the three VHPA scholarships given by the AAAA. These are MERIT scholarships, not NEED scholarships and in applying for our three scholarships, your relations are also considered for almost all of the AAAA scholarships. Last year fifteen out of thirty seeking the three VHPA scholarships received either one of the VHPA scholarships or an AAAA scholarship. Fifty percent of VHPA applicants received in excess of \$18,500 in scholarships. Not bad when you consider VHPA has around \$90,000 total in our corpus.

There are two requirements to apply; 1) you must be dues current with VHPA and 2) your applicant must be an associate member of AAAA (\$20, I believe). Have your applicant or applicants go on line to [www.quad-a.org](http://www.quad-a.org) and see what needs to be done or get the forms necessary. The deadline for scholarship entries is May 1 of every year. Applications are available from AAAA, only. NOW IS THE TIME. Don't wait, do it now.

And, as usual, feel free to contribute whatever you can to the VHPA SCHOLARSHIP FUND. There is no amount that is too small or too large. Our goal is five VHPA Scholarships by 2012. Help our Scholarship Fund attain that reachable goal.

**Mike Sheuerman**  
*Scholarship Committee  
Fundraising*

## SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Madelyn  
(Maddie)

Keyser hails from the San Francisco Bay Area. She enjoyed academic success throughout her school years, but also invested much of her energy outside the classroom. She has been heavily



**Madelyn (Maddie) Keyser**

involved in a variety of church groups, community service projects and high school clubs including founding member of "Project Safe and Sound", a club dedicated to raising awareness of impaired driving among teenagers.

Maddie is an accomplished pianist and frequent member of school musical theater productions. She loves dance, playing soccer, and screaming for her boys in Teal, the San Jose Sharks hockey team.

During the summer of 2008, Maddie attended West Point's Summer Leadership Seminar where she gained a lasting respect for our military and strengthened her own sense of commitment and service to others. A road trip after SLS led her to The University of Pennsylvania, School Of Nursing where she is enjoying her freshman year.

Maddie was the recipient of a \$1000 AAAA Scholarship for 2009; she was awarded the WO1 Arthur F. Chaney Scholarship given by the Colonial Aerospace Group. Maddie is the daughter of VHPA Member CW2 Frank Keyser who flew as Crusader 99 in the 187th AHC out of Tay Ninh, Vietnam in 1969-70.