



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ~ Issue 28-04 ~ July/August 2010

VHPA member Robert Brackenhoff took this photo of a USMC CH-53D ground taxiing at Quang Tri in Feb 1971 during Lam Son 719. Most likely this is YH-19 from HMH-463, their radio call sign at that time was DIMMER.

Mike Law, the VHPA Calendar Editor, is actively seeking photos of CH-53s (USMC or USAF) taken in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. If you are interested in helping please contact him at: [REDACTED] Denver, CO 80227 or [REDACTED] or calendar@vhpa.org



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Gary Roush

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE VHPA

WHO WE ARE by Gary Roush

This is my last column as your president, so I would like to leave you with the following:

We are the sons of the greatest generation. Our fathers and uncles and neighbor men went off to war to fight the evil empires in World War II. Our mothers and aunts took their places in factories and kept the home fires burning while their men were off to war for two to five years at a time during the early 1940s. It was shortly after the great depression. It was a time of rationing and shortages and great hardships for all. Many men did not return. Casualties were enormous and all families were affected directly or indirectly. But it was a period of unwavering patriotism.

We grew up in the aftermath of these life changing events. We were told of the sacrifice and heroics and honor of our elders. We were taught to be proud of our soldiers and our country. We learned that Communism like Nazism was the source of all evil. We dreamed of the day that we too could proudly serve our country and fight Communism like our fathers fought against Nazism. So we all volunteered to fight in our war, the war in Vietnam.

Our war was the helicopter war and we were its pilots. We accumulated more true combat flight time than any other combat pilots before or since. Our main helicopter was the icon of the Vietnam War, the Huey. The Huey along with the Huey Cobra have more combat flight time than any other aircraft in the history of warfare and so do we. We paid the price for this unprecedented exposure. 14% of KIAs in Vietnam were officers and 28% of those officers were helicopter pilot KIAs. We will not forget our fallen.

The greatest generation, our parent's generation, is credited with creating great wealth and prosperity in our country. We were credited by some with trying to destroy it.

World War II was the good war fought

against evil. To many of our generation, our war was the immoral war filled with atrocities, hopelessness and victims. We were mis-portrayed as the biggest victims of all. We were not and are not victims.

War is a messy business. Approximately 300 American soldiers were executed during and after World War II for crimes and atrocities while none were executed from the Vietnam War. Yet the vast majority of WWII vets upon their return were rightly received as heroes, while all of us were unfairly vilified for unspeakable atrocities. The news media was heavily censored during the great war while we had television and totally uncontrolled and uncensored reporting. Unfortunately too much of the media had and exercised a bias that greatly distorted what we did and how we did it.

Out of the 2,583 listed as missing in action in Vietnam, all but 55 have been accounted for. By contrast, there still are 78,000 unaccounted-for Americans from World War II. The accounting of our missing is unprecedented in warfare. This is in large part due to our helicopters and those of us who flew them into hot LZs and the teeth of enemy fire, to take out the wounded and KIAs who in earlier times would have been left on the battlefield.

There are many myths out there about us. Even today there is the perception that Vietnam veterans are homeless, drunken drug addicts, who have a high rate of suicide and incarceration and who are time bombs ready to go off at any moment. These myths are just not true.

The truth is that our war was basically no different than our fathers' war. We served our country just as honorably as they did. We have proven all of the Vietnam War critics wrong. Not only were they wrong about the morality of the Vietnam War – they were also wrong about us. Unlike our fathers, we came home from war to ridicule and scorn with no support network. Our fathers had welcome home parades and organizations like the VFW and the American Legion. We had no parades and although we qualified to belong to those organizations we were not initially welcomed. Even many of the warriors before us disapproved of our service. The ideals and respect we had for the greatest generation did not apply to us. Our treatment was unfair, unwarranted and unprecedented.

So what did we do? We got on with our lives. We became very productive members of society. We are more successful than our non-military peer group and we advanced America to even higher prosperity and greatness. Our parents had the wind at their backs after World War II which made it easier to prosper. We had to overcome unfair and unjustified stereotypes to succeed, but we did and we proved that we are as great as the greatest generation.

Our war was a major battle in the Cold War as was the Korean War. The Vietnam War was the turning point in the Cold War. Up until the Vietnam War more countries in the world were switching to Communism. That reversed during the Vietnam War and more countries started moving toward democracy and finally the collapse of the Soviet Union. We helped win the cold war. The domino theory was correct. Our involvement in Vietnam provided time for countries like the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand to stay free of Communism because of the U.S. commitment to Vietnam. Without the Vietnam War, that whole region would have reverted to Communism.

Finally – we did not lose the war in Vietnam. All of us can honestly say "We were winning when I left" because it is true. Our war was over in early 1973 following the peace settlement signed in Paris on 27 January 1973 and the final withdrawal of combat troops on 29 March 1973. The fall of Saigon happened two years later on 30 April 1975 because the U.S. Congress cut off funding to the South Vietnamese causing them to run out of fuel and ammunition. We are rightly proud of our service and deserve the honor and respect that was bestowed on generations of warriors before us. Not only did we serve our country honorably but we also have taught our children to honor and respect national service. Most of us have children who have served or are serving in our armed forces today.

It has been my honor to be your president over the past year. In my view, and I think history will show that I am right, you have achieved as much as the greatest generation. Thank you for your service to our great country and **God bless the United States of America.**

E-mail items to The Aviator at: editor@vhpa.org

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Old Vietnam Aviators Reunite in Iraq



VHPA Member Barry A. Geller has sent us a photograph showing that three aviators from Flight School Class 70-19 ended up crossing paths nearly 40 years later in the Iraq Theater of War. Shown left to right in the photo are Barry Geller, Don Clayton and Mike Silva.

Barry goes on to say that at the time I thought such an encounter would have never in a million years be possible, but now I believe it's really not so unusual.

Barry is currently deployed as a battle captain with a unit that provides Army fixed-wing assets for missions throughout the Iraqi Theater. Shortly after arriving in-country, Barry received an e-mail from one of the battle captains that tasks them with their daily missions that ended with an interesting signature block. It said:

Dennis W. Nicks
CPT, AV
USF-1 J33 Air
CUOPS BTL CPT
"PHANTOM CORPS" FLY ARMY!
1972-3 129th Aslt Hel Co "BULLDOG 19", 1st Avn Bde
1970 A Co. 159th Aslt Spt Hel Bn "PACHYDERMS", 101st Abn Div

Barry continues – "The first chance I had to talk with Dennis on the phone I asked him to explain his signature block and he told me that he had twice flown in Vietnam, his first tour was as an enlisted CH-47 crew member and then he returned in '72 as a pilot." It turns out that while I arrived in country in August '71 and although we just missed being in-country at the same time, we did fly in the same AO with the 101st. Encountering Dennis was a surprise but not completely unexpected as I have run into numerous Vietnam vets on multiple tours to this theater. I would bet if the VHPA ranks were polled to see who has deployed during this current conflict, the number would be surprisingly high.

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FREEDOM BIRD



By Lawrence E. Pence,
Colonel, USAF (Ret)

Interesting account of a 1967 AN-2 attack on Lima site 85 during Viet Nam war.... CIA Huey shoots down attacking AN2. For most servicemen who served in Vietnam, the Freedom Bird was that civil airliner which took them back to the land of the big PX at the end of their tour. Mine was a bit different sort of Freedom Bird.

In mid-1967, as a junior Air Force Captain, I was detailed to 7th AF Hq in Saigon as an Air Technical Intelligence Liaison Officer, short name: ATLO (the "I" gets left out, as people look strangely at anyone who calls himself an ATILO, thinking he is somehow related to Atilla the Hun). My job was to provide 7AF and the air war the best technical intelligence support that the Foreign Technology Division of AF Systems Command (my parent organization) could provide, in whatever area or discipline needed. Also I was to collect such technical intelligence as became available. This was a tall order for a young Captain, and this assignment provided much excitement, including the Tet Offensive.

At that time, Operation Rolling Thunder was underway, the bombing of military targets in North Vietnam.

The weather in NVN was often lousy, making it difficult to find and accurately strike the assigned targets, so a radar control system was set up to direct the strike force to their targets. This system was installed on a remote, sheer-sided karst mountain just inside Laos on the northern Laos/NVN border. The site could be accessed only by helicopter or a tortuous trail winding up the near-vertical mountainside, so it was judged to be easily defensible. The mountaintop was relatively flat and about 30 acres in size.

On it was a tiny Hmong village called Phu Pha Ti, a small garrison of Thai and Meo mercenaries for defense, a helicopter pad and ops shack for the CIA-owned Air America Airline, and the radar site, which was manned by "sheep-dipped" US Air Force enlisted men in civilian clothes. Both the US and NVN paid lip service to the fiction that Laos was a neutral country, and no foreign military were stationed there, when in reality we had a couple of hundred people spread over several sites, and NVN had thousands

on the Ho Chi Minh trail in eastern Laos. This particular site was called Lima (L for Laos) Site 85. The fighter-bomber crews called it Channel 97 (the radar frequency), and all aircrews called it North Station, since it was the furthest north facility in "friendly" territory. Anywhere north of North Station was bad guy land.

The Channel 97 radar system was an old SAC precision bomb scoring radar which could locate an aircraft to within a few meters at a hundred miles. In this application, the strike force would fly out from Lima Site 85 a given distance on a given radial, and the site operators would tell the strike leader precisely when to release his bomb load. It was surprisingly accurate, and allowed the strikes to be run at night or in bad weather. This capability was badly hurting the North Vietnamese war effort, so they decided to take out Lima Site 85.

Because of the difficulty of mounting a ground assault on Lima Site 85, and its

aerial rocket pod under each lower wing, and 20 250mm mortar rounds with aerial bomb fuses set in vertical tubes let into the floor of the aircraft cargo bay. These were dropped through holes cut in the cargo bay floor. Simple hinged bomb-bay doors closed these holes in flight. The pilot could salvo his bomb load by opening these doors. This was a pretty good munitions load to take out a soft, undefended target like a radar site. Altogether, the mission was well planned and equipped and should have been successful, but Murphy's Law prevailed.

A three plane strike force was mounted, with two attack aircraft and one standing off as command and radio relay. They knew the radar site was on the mountaintop, but they did not have good intelligence as to its precise location. It was well camouflaged, and could not be seen readily from the air.

They also did not realize that we had "anti-aircraft artillery" and "air defense interceptor" forces at the site. Neither did we realize this.

The AN-2 strike force rolled in on the target, mistook the Air America ops shack for the radar site, and proceeded to ventilate it. The aforementioned "anti-aircraft artillery"

force- one little Thai mercenary about five feet tall and all balls- heard the commotion, ran out on the helicopter pad, stood in the path of the attacking aircraft spraying rockets and bombs everywhere, and emptied a 27-round clip from his AK-47 into the AN-2, which then crashed and burned. At this juncture, the second attack aircraft broke off and turned north towards home.

The "air defense interceptor" force was an unarmed Air America Huey helicopter which was by happenstance on the pad at the time, the pilot and flight mechanic having a Coke in the ops shack. When holes started appearing in the roof, they ran to their Huey and got airborne, not quite believing the sight of two biplanes fleeing north. Then the Huey pilot, no slouch in the balls department either, realized that his Huey was faster than the biplanes! So he did the only thing a real pilot could do-attack!

The Huey overtook the AN-2's a few miles inside North Vietnam, unknown to the AN-2's as their rearward visibility is nil. The Huey



remote location, an air strike was planned. Believe it or not, the NVNAF chose biplanes as their "strike bombers!" This has to be the only combat use of biplanes since the 1930's. The aircraft used were Antonov designed AN-2 general purpose "work-horse" biplanes with a single 1000hp radial piston engine and about one ton payload. Actually, once you get past the obvious "Snoopy and the Red Baron" image, the AN-2 was not a bad choice for this mission. Its biggest disadvantage is, like all biplanes, it is slow. The Russians use the An-2 for a multitude of things, such as medevac, parachute training, flying school bus, crop dusting, and so on. An AN-2 just recently flew over the North Pole. In fact, if you measure success of an aircraft design by the criteria of number produced and length of time in series production, you could say that the AN-2 is the most successful aircraft design in the history of aviation!

The NVNAF fitted out their AN-2 "attack bombers with a 12 shot 57mm folding fin

flew over the rearmost AN-2 and the helicopter's down-wash stalled out the upper wing of the AN-2. Suddenly the hapless AN-2 pilot found himself sinking like a stone! So he pulled the yoke back in his lap and further reduced his forward speed. Meanwhile, the Huey flight mechanic, not to be outdone in the macho contest, crawled out on the Huey's skid and, one-handed, emptied his AK-47 into the cockpit area of the AN-2, killing or wounding the pilot and copilot. At this point, the AN-2 went into a flat spin and crashed into a mountainside, but did not burn.

It should come as no surprise that the Air America pilot and flight mechanic found themselves in a heap of trouble with the State Department REMF's in Vientiane. (REMF is an acronym. The first three words are Rear, Echelon, and Mother.) In spite of the striped-pants cookie-pushers' discomfort at (horrors!) an international incident (or perhaps, partly because of it) these guys were heroes to everybody in the theatre who didn't wear puce panties and talk with a lisp. They accomplished a couple of firsts: (1) The first and only combat shootdown of a biplane by a helicopter, and (2) The first known CIA air-to-air victory. Not bad for a couple of spooks.

Communication with Headquarters was very good in Vietnam, and I learned of this incident within an hour or so of its happening, although I had no details. But the prospect of access to a North Vietnamese aircraft of any sort was very attractive to an intell type, so I grabbed my flyaway kit and headed for Udon AFB in northern Thailand, where I knew I could get transport to the crash site from the Air Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS), the Jolly Green Giants. Sure enough, the next morning we headed for bad guy land with a flight of three Jolly Green Giants. The State Department geniuses had decided to cover their ample butts by having the remains of the AN-2 airlifted down to Vientiane to put on display to an outraged world press, thus proving that North Vietnam had violated Laotian neutrality by sending armed aircraft against a peaceful civil airline facility. Yawn. The Air Force went along with it because it provided good cover for our intelligence operation. Of course, when State found out that I had gone in without saying Mother-may-I to them, they were really hot. But by then I had already gotten the goods we wanted, and what could they do to me? Fire me and send me to Vietnam?

We found the crashed AN-2 a few miles inside NVN. There were already some Meo mercenaries there led by a CIA field type, whose mission was to bag the crew's bodies and check to see if they were Russians.

They weren't. The jungle and rough terrain precluded landing, so we went in by jungle penetrator, a cable-mounted weighted affair somewhat like a large plumb bob. I would have liked to parachute in because a behind-the-lines jump is considered a combat jump, opposed or not, but the jungle and rough terrain would have made that very dangerous. I may be a little crazy - all parachutists are - but I'm not stupid. With me went a couple of PS's - pararescue specialists. These men are elite young tigers who regularly risk their



Soviet Antonov An-2. Seen here on display at Gatow, Berlin. The An-2 first flew in 1947 and production continued through 1992, over 18,000 were built in the 45 year period.

lives to save downed aircrews. They are universally and deservedly admired and respected. The PS's function was to rig a sling on the AN-2 so it could be lifted out, and to look after me. I was very glad they were there.

I was delighted to find the crashed AN-2 had the piece of equipment aboard that I had hoped to find, a brand new undamaged IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) electronic "black box". An IFF ~ a coded signal when interrogated by a friendly radar, thus identifying itself as a friendly. All combat aircraft have an IFF, and I had felt certain that the AN-2 would have been fitted with it for this mission. We had never before gotten our hands on one in undamaged condition. With this, we could "reverse engineer" a system which could reliably locate the small, sleek, elusive MiG-21's before they could sneak up on our strike aircraft. And we did just that, greatly improving the RED CROWN warning system we had at that time. This capability saved a good many crews and aircraft during the later years of that miserable war. I am very proud to have had a hand in this effort.

After rigging the sling on the AN-2, and finishing my intell collection, we tried to lift it out, but it was too heavy for the Jolly Green helo. (We sent in an Army Chinook heavy-lift helo the next day to lift it down to Vientiane.) All this activity took several hours. Suddenly we got a call from the Jollys that an RS57 had been shot down somewhere north and had strung bailed-out crew members along a twenty mile path. An all-out rescue effort was required and our helicopters were being pulled off our mission immediately, without even time to pick us up. They would be back

to get us when they could. Suddenly, what had been a relatively low risk in-and-out mission took on a whole different aspect. I knew from good intell that there were NVN Army elements in the vicinity, and they would no doubt be directed to find and destroy the crashed AN-2. All the stooging around with noisy helicopters we had done that morning, plus voluminous radio comms, could not have failed to alert them. We were four Americans, who knew not ten words of Umon between us, and about a dozen Meo mercenaries, none of whom spoke English. Our arms consisted of three .38 revolvers, my Colt 1911 .45 automatic, and the Meos' ragtag lot of M1's, M14's, and '03 Springfields. We had very little ammo, no water, no rations, no flares or smoke grenades, not even a compass. We did have short range ground-to-air radios, and a promise to return for us, but who knew when that would be. Not a good situation.

After a hasty conference, we decided to remain at the crash site until an hour or so before dark, and then move off and find a defensible place to spend the night, if necessary. So we waited. Late that afternoon, we heard a helicopter and got a call that the big rescue operation was completed, and we should saddle up for extraction. I can't begin to describe how relieved we were to see that big beautiful Freedom Bird flying toward us. Our Freedom Bird picked us up with no problem, and we were back at Udon in time for Happy Hour. No ARRS crewman ever bought his own drink at any club in 'Nam. I can assure you none did that night.

As a postscript, Lima Site 85 was overrun by ground troops about a month after the bombing attempt, and all US personnel were killed or captured. The comm guys who heard their last messages said it was a pitiful situation as the site team reported the attackers' progress at getting at them in their cave bunker. The official version of what happened is that North Vietnamese troops climbed the sheer sides of the mountain with ropes and pitons to attack the site. I didn't believe it then, and I don't believe it now. The attack had all the earmarks of a Spetsnaz operation, probably insertion by a HALO parachute team, but unless the Russians admit it we will probably never know.

Of interest, the History Channel in their Missions of CIA series, did a one hour documentary on the Lima Site 85 incident which I saw a few months ago. It showed footage of the AN-2 in Vientiane, and discussed the ground assault (the "official" version). All in all, they did a pretty good job with it, especially considering that it was over thirty years ago. They got some things wrong, and some they never knew about, but they weren't there at the time. I was.

By Lawrence E. Pence
Colonel, USAF (Ret)

Let's call this "the Tales of Hookers and Lookers"

~ A Tribute to the Girls of Vietnam

by CW4 Tom Murphy



- I recall very well the first trip to the USO in Saigon, there were real American girls in there. I just stood and stared, but they must have been used to it and were very gracious. I was way too shy to actually talk to them, but they were a greatly appreciated reminder of home.

My friend Steve Losorwith flew for 45th Dustoff in Long Binh. I went there once and could not believe that he actually worked in the presence of real round eyes every day. I was so jealous.

- Remember Steam and Creams? On the surface steam baths, I did love to go there because it was the only place to go with hot water to get really clean by sweating out the crud. Then mama-san doing her thing with the massage and walking on my back. About then she would bring up the proposition of a happy ending, at a few extra dollars cost. Why not? Maybe tomorrow would be my last day on earth. I can assure you none of that foolishness is tolerated now. The Morality Police are firmly in control.

- R & R in Australia was very popular with guys I knew, they went there to meet girls in

King's Cross in Sydney. With luck, one could hook up with a cute girl and stay with her all week. Great pictures and stories came back, along with many vows to return and marry the young ladies. None did, as far as I know. The girls liked GI's because they treated them like queens, unlike their own men.

- There was an actress named Susan Oliver that was on a USO tour. I was tapped to fly her, so off we went. Being young and naive, I wanted to impress her with my aviation prowess by flicking switches and turning knobs that didn't need to be flicked or turned. She sat there quietly and watched me go through the motions. When we landed she handed me a piece of paper, which turned out to be an FAA pilot's license with more ratings than I came close to having. She knew I was full of BS. The rest of the flight I shut up and touched nothing to avoid further embarrassment. I have a photo of the two of us with my arm around her waist. I look very young and awkward.

- My unit went into Cambodia in the summer of '70. In preparation for the incursion, I had to fly a jeep engine up to Song Be. The weather went sour and I spent the night in a bunker filled with ravenous mosquitoes. Meanwhile, the guys had hired a local girl of loose morals to come around that night and try and seduce me as I had a reputation for being a real straight-arrow. She was to

receive \$20 if I refused her, and \$40 if she got me to have her. Of course, I was gone when she got there, so the guys thought why waste her? She proceeded to work her way through the group. The laugh was on me however, since many of them were shortly lining up to get their dreaded "non-specific urinary infections" treated, I was only scratching my mosquito bites.

- Who could forget the awful Philippine floor shows doing stale imitations of American rock and roll? If we were lucky, the group included a stripper. With more luck, she was worth looking at. I went to the Philippines for a survival class, there was no return date on the orders so I just stayed until I ran out of money. One of the attractions there was the Family Show, I heard it was good, so I went. Imagine my surprise when a very attractive

couple came into the center of the crowd, removed their clothing, and proceeded to put on an amazing demonstration of love-making.

Where are all of them now? What do they look like now? It doesn't matter, as they will be forever young and beautiful in my memory. I salute all of you!

CW4 Tom Murphy
MERKIN 10



Susan Oliver (February 13, 1932 to May 10, 1990) was an Emmy-nominated American actress, television director and a record-setting aviatrix.



Looking For Details on old Mike Model

Hello Everyone,

My name is Todd Kowalski and I have an old 1966 UH-1B helicopter that originally the serial number (SN) 66-712. Records show that in the 70's it was made into a UH-1M model by the Army and went on to serve a 2nd tour in that configuration.

Well I now own it and have some old maintenance logs, but don't know the complete history of this Huey. I am hoping some of you out there could help "fill in the blanks" by passing on more details.

Today 66-721 is in pretty rough shape and has no main rotor blades, rotor hub or engine plus it needs almost all new wiring. I bought the old war bird for a long term project and hopefully some day it will fly again, but it will take lots of time and money to get it to do that.

I have little over 19 years in the Army and have two tours, 1 in Iraq and 1 in Afghanistan. If any of you Vets might know this Huey, please e-mail me back.

Thanks,
Todd Kowalski,

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

There wasn't a billboard that said "WELCOME TO LAOS"

Steve Woods, Keith Shafer, Jerry Graff and Wayne "Doc Gordie" Gordon

Written by Phil Marshall

Taken from the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing's "Da Nang Gunfighter Gazette", Volume V, Number 8, dated December 5, 1970:

By Captain Mike Freel

Da Nang may not be everyone's cup of tea, but two 366th Tactical Fighter Wing pilots, Capt. James R. Robinson and 1st Lt. Donald A. Boulet II of the 421st and 390th Tactical Fighter Squadrons, respectively, will positively tell you Da Nang is all right.

"It beats punching out of an F-4 and spending 4 hours on the ground in hostile territory," said Captain Robinson, who along with his back-seater, Lieutenant Boulet, did just that last Wednesday.

"We punched out at about 1500 feet in a heavy cloud bank," explained Lieutenant Boulet, "which actually was a plus factor because 'Charlie' could not get a fix on us."

The two landed on a ridge about a mile apart in country that was described by Captain Robinson, "as rolling, muddy and full of trails, which you can be sure we both did our best to avoid."

"The punch out and the landing was uneventful except I got hung up in a tree about six feet off the ground," continued the captain. The first SAR (Search and Rescue - Ed.) aircraft on the scene were the "Spads" and "Jolly Greens" from Da Nang followed by U.S. Army "Huey" helicopters.

"We can't say enough for the rescue people who came to our aid," praised Captain Robinson, "especially the 'Huey' from the 571st U.S. Army Medical Detachment from Quang Tri, piloted by Warrant Officer Woods. "Those guys really 'stuck it out' flying back and forth across the terrain trying to get a fix on us. In fact they took sufficient battle damage on the first try to extract us that they had to recover and return with a second chopper to get us out," added Lieutenant Boulet. "Our sincere thanks to all who participated," said both aviators.

"An exciting day," said Captain Robinson, whose 29th birthday was, you guessed it, last Wednesday.

And so it went; that day in 1970, as two more lives were saved by a DUSTOFF crew in South Viet Nam. But as our "good friend and newscaster" Paul Harvey says, "And now you'll hear, the rrrest of the story..."

During this period of the Viet Nam War, things became so "busy" in Northern I Corps that assets of the 237th Medical Detachment, DMZ DUSTOFF, and the 571st Medical Detachment, Phu Bai DUSTOFF, were often combined to complete missions. Losses to

both aircraft and personnel in those two units were so high that crews and aircraft were often "mixed together". This included additional aircraft from other units, including the 498th Medical Detachment, but no other personnel from the 498th, only helicopters.

On this particular mission, Warrant Officer Steven Woods and 1LT Keith O. Shafer were assigned to the 571st while the other crew members on board were from the 237th. The aircraft on this mission was 69-15216, "The Peace Seeker", as the nose art indicated, an aircraft assigned to the 237th and normally flown by Crew Chief Specialist 5 Jerry Graff and Medic Specialist 5 Wayne "Doc Gordie" Gordon. Crew Chiefs were assigned to perform the daily maintenance of their aircraft and routinely flew each mission on "his" helicopter; there is a certain amount of military wisdom in that theory. "You worked on it, you fly in it!"

Jerry Graff was one of the first to become aware of the mission. His description of setting up the aircraft was typical of the missions flown...one never knew what to expect when a mission came in. It was the proverbial "Luck of the Draw!"

Wayne and I had just finished flying first up the day before and we had just switched with the other crew, we had completed our inspections and cleanup of our aircraft. The other crew wanted to get some things done so they had walked off and Wayne and I had gone to the Barracks for some rest and to get cleaned up. The phone rang looking for the other crew because they just received a phone call from the tower at the airfield about a downed F-4 out near the Laos border. We went to the radio room and started to figure out where to get the crew. The Crew chief and Medic had gone over to the airfield for some items they needed and so we decided that we would cover them on the mission and it was decided that I would prepare my aircraft to fly the mission instead of taking their aircraft. This meant I would have to move the hoist from their aircraft to 216. I moved the gear of the two pilots to my aircraft and moved the hoist to 216. That was no easy task and I ended up damaging my back during the move. When the pilots showed up with all the information the other crews also came back. We decided that since we were ready to go, the two first up pilots went with our aircraft and the other crew would follow us out for a communication link with our control center during the search.



WO Steve Woods, Dustoff 509

Following is Aircraft Commander Steve Woods' statement:

"At 1000 hrs. on 2 Dec. 1970, I was notified by Lt. Shafer that two Air Force pilots had been shot down about 30 miles southwest of Quang Tri. I assembled an all volunteer crew to go on the search. I was Aircraft Commander, Lt. Shafer volunteered to fly as pilot and Specialist Graff was the Crew Chief and Specialist Gordon was the medic. I instructed the crew to install the hoist and then we departed for the crash site. The weather wasn't very good but it didn't give us much of a problem. I decided to fly low level and instructed the crew to maintain an alert for enemy fire. We arrived in the general area where the crew was shot down and began our search. We drew concentrated enemy fire on several occasions but only got hit once."



1LT Keith Shafer, Dustoff 507

1LT Keith O. Shafer:

"While we were on standby at Quang Tri, I got a call from 'Pamper', the radar guys. I was told that a Fox Four (F-4 Air Force jet) had gone down somewhere along the border

and I believe they gave me some general coordinates but they did not have a pinpoint site. We did not realize at the time that we would wind up in Laos."

"We had a solid low ceiling somewhere around 500-700 feet but the visibility was OK. As we headed out in the general area, we

made contact with 'King', the Air Force Search and Rescue (SAR) Command and Control (C&C) aircraft. "King" was receiving a beeper signal from one of the downed pilots and tried to give us directions of where to head for our search. The area was about 35-40 minutes from Quang Tri so we only had about an hour of flight time on site before we would need to head back to refuel. At that time, we were the only ones below the clouds while all of the Air Force was above the cloud layer."

Steve Woods continues:



Commander Woods inspecting the tail boom of 216 upon return to Quang Tri.

"We remained on station until we got low on fuel and then returned to Mai Loc. We inspected the aircraft and found only minor damage. We went back to the area and continued the search. A Cobra spotted the parachute

of the downed co-pilot. My Crew Chief spotted him on the ground. The medic operated the hoist and lifted him aboard while WO George advised me of my position. We located the pilot about 100 meters to the east and hoisted him aboard also. The performance of the entire crew was outstanding and made the rescue successful. Their determination in the face of enemy fire is indeed a tribute to Army Aviation."



Jerry Graff, Crew Chief

Jerry Graff describes the refueling:

I found a round had entered the bottom of the tail boom and exited next to the tail rotor shaft cover. Both holes were in the skin of the aircraft and not any structural part of the aircraft was damaged. We decided to return to the search area and continue the operation. The Cobra crew said they would work with us and wished the NVA would try something as he still had a full load of ammo!

Keith Shafer continues:

"After refueling, we made contact with 'King' again and after much back and forth comm (communications) on guard we heard one of the Jolly Green Giant pilots say 'If they could get the Army out of the way they would get the job done!' Needless to say, this just pissed us off and made us more determined to find the downed pilots. By this time a Cobra gunship joined us on station so here we are- two Army helicopters searching the jungle low-level and half the Air Force is above the clouds doing their circle-jerk!"

Warrant Officer Kenneth George was in a second aircraft, supporting Mr. Woods. Mr. George's statement:

"On 2 Dec 1970 I was pilot aboard Dustoff 710. Dustoff 509 received a request to perform a search and rescue mission for two pilots who had been shot down. Dustoff 710 flew out to Khe Sanh so that we could maintain communications with our sister ship and Dustoff Control. The area of the search was reported to be filled with enemy 37mm gun positions. Dustoff 509 drew concentrated enemy fire on several occasions but was able to make the rescue of the two pilots after 4 hours of search."

(Note: Pilot call signs of the 571st started with "5" and pilot call signs of the 237th started with a "7". Thus, 509, 710, etc. As a 571st pilot, Mr. Woods was 509 and as a 237th pilot, Mr. George was 710.)

And the Cobra gunship? From Captain Joseph F. Keller; we can't overlook his statement:

On 2 December 1970, I was the escort gunship team leader helping Dustoff 509 to extract two Air Force pilots who had been shot down about 30 miles southwest of Quang Tri. In making the pickup of the two pilots, Dustoff 509 was forced to contour fly low level in order to reduce exposure time. The area of the pickup site was in the location of a known enemy infiltration route. On several occasions, Dustoff 509 came under intense automatic weapons fire. Although he took hits in the tail boom of his aircraft, Dustoff 509 continued the mission. Disregarding their own safety, Dustoff 509 continued to search for the downed pilots. After much searching, Dustoff 509 was able to locate and hoist both of the pilots out. Only the skill of the two pilots and the bravery of the crew made the mission a complete success.

Keith Shafer:

I seem to remember the Cobra spotting the first chute and directing us over it. We hovered around for a little while still looking for the pilot while the Cobra Gunship dared anyone to fire at us. We knew he would watch our backs and blow the hell out of anyone who fired at us. The pilot finally crawled out from a bush and we hoisted him aboard.

Crew Chief Graff's comments:

Wayne hoisted the pilot up while I kept an eye

for the other pilot or others that we figured would be showing up before too long. The pilot was able to give us general direction to the other pilot was located and after a few moments of hovering and not getting shot out of the sky the other pilot came out of the bushes. The odd part of this was I know we did not have very much time before we had more than a few others showing up and yet I was trying to tell the pilot to break a dead tree branch off so we could land and pick him up instead of getting him on the hoist and out of the area. Finally we had him on board and flying out of the area at 120 Knots. I remember the one downed pilot asking Wayne if we could go any faster now that they were on board and the look on his face when he told them this was it, we couldn't go any faster! They told us they were hit by radar controlled guns and they were at 600 knots. They appeared very happy once we were able to place them back at a military base.

After hoisting the second pilot aboard, 1LT Shafer continues:

We low-leveled our way back to Quang Tri and dropped off the pilots at the Emergency Room of the 18th Surgical Hospital. After shutting down, we inspected the aircraft and found several small arms hits in the tail boom. We then went in and talked to the pilots of 'Stormy 02'. One had a sprained ankle but other than that they were both OK. They said they really got scared when we were flying tree top level heading back to the hospital!"

In a 1990 letter to Wayne Gordon, Jim Robinson offers more information about how they got shot down and a little bit of background on their mission. Portions of his letter include:

"There were 3 Air Force squadrons at Da Nang, 390th, 421st, 4th, but also a volunteer squadron by the name of 'STORMY' which took people (only volunteers) from the other 3 squadrons for a 3 month tour. The reason it was voluntary and only 3 months was that generally you got your ass shot off. We were a single ship operation doing high speed low level visual recon for targets of opportunity in North Vietnam, Laos and later, Cambodia. We carried no bombs, just a small pod of 'willy pete' (White Phosphorus -Ed.) rockets to mark targets and the 20mm cannon because we also had a backup S.A.R. mission. Don (my GIB from the 390th, I was from the 421st) and I were in 'STORMY' the day you found us wandering around rural Laos lookin' for a motel and a cold beer. We were just breezin' down the 'Laos Freeway' at about 500 feet and 500 knots when it seems as though we pissed-off some North Vietnam tourist around 'Delta-45'. You know some people just can't take a joke...a little buzz job and they really get irate!!! Well from that point forward my life turned to shit in a hand basket, but quick! Now, I've been hit before...but, hell, you don't

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"Doc Gordie" Wayne Gordon, Medic

Wayne Gordon replied to Captain Robinson's letter; here is an excerpt from it:

"While we were getting the coordinates and checking all of our equipment....They gave us encouragement by saying we'll give

you all the protection you need...just get our men out! Our ship crossed the border into Laos and proceeded to your approximate position...which looked like a Kennedy Airport air show....There were so many different kinds of aircraft looking for you guys...we went into a valley at treetop level, went up the crest of a hill when the jungle below us opened up....Mr. Woods did a 180 and went top end speed trimming trees to get out of range, we thought we saw something below....Being low on fuel, we left and went back to Viet Nam to refuel and assess the damage at Mai Loc...Jerry said it was not structural...took a vote if we should go back...we all said 'Let's go'....Off we went to get you guys out...A lot of things were in your favor...you had the best Pilots in our Units,...Jerry knew what the ship was able to withstand....and having a medic who did HOT HOIST before....Not to mention that we usually don't carry the Hoist on board unless requested...So with all these in order and a little luck we should be able to get you out!.....and thank God it worked...!

After our flight back to Quang Tri, 18th Surgical Hospital, an Army Officer balled us out for violating another country's airspace...your commander praised us and said we were going to get a medal for our action...The Army Officer told us not to accept it, that the Army was going to give it to us....Isn't that a kick in the ass...here we are saving two American asses and we got balled out...that's the Army for ya!"

Soon after the rescue, a party was thrown in Da Nang by the Air Force's 366th Tactical Fighter Wing for the crew of Dustoff 509. Doc Gordie continues his letter to Robinson with this recollection:

"The party was hard to forget...you guys had a Hall filled with food that us Army Fly Boys don't see!...roast beef, turkey, potatoes, jello, salads and only God knows what else...the Champaign we had to chug-a-lug (which I haven't touched since that time)...the wheel barrow with the gold balls that were hung on our zippers by a Lady in a flight suit...saying we had BRASS BALLS...your Commanding Officer stood up on stage....rose his arms into the air over his head...you guys stood at attention with your glasses toasting him and saying.... 'HIM...HIM...FUCK HIM'...then proceeded to throw food and junk at him until he lowered his arms....then you all sat down with respect!...It was unbelievable...Air Force pilots are too much...I don't remember much about that day except HUGGING your FLUSHED TOILET and meeting RRRRRRRRAALPH!!!, AND YOUR FALCONS....and the most interestin' flight back to Phu Bai in our DRUNKIN' HAZE...I still don't know how we got back, we wobbled and rocked back and forth in the air and had one of our roughest landings ever!!!!...but worth every minute of it.

Keith Shafer remembers a little more detail:

"That was the best party I have ever been to. I remember our whole crew going through a receiving line of all the fighter wing pilots to include the Jolly Green pilots. When Woody asked which one said he wanted us to get out of the way so they could get the job done, the guilty party was identified. He offered us a ride in his 'real helicopter' and Woody told him 'If you ain't Dustoff, you ain't shit- come ride with us and we will show you what it's like to be a real pilot!' I remember the Wing Commander saying 'You give 'em Hell, Woody!' and slapped him on the back."

"Yes, we did get some medals but I think all of us were rewarded with the idea of saving two guys from capture and have had the pleasure of being proud of that for the rest of our lives."

So there it is, one mission in the tapestry of Dustoff in Viet Nam. Note that most everyone says "about 30 miles southwest of Quang Tri"...never "into Laos". Why is that important? While the Air Force celebrated the Dustoff crew's rescue of the two F-4 pilots with a "Major League" party, the Army wanted to Court Martial them for flying into Laos! It was OK for the bad guys to violate Laos, but not us! What's up with that?

Doc Gordie's statement during the interview for this story, I think, says it best. "We were flying off our maps and there was no billboard that said 'Welcome to Laos!'"

The crew members of Dustoff 509 were all put in for the DFC, Distinguished Flying Cross, one of the highest awards a Dustoff crew member could hope to achieve. However, as it seems with most Dustoff award recommendations, they were downgraded. Instead of DFC's, they were all awarded Air Medals with "V" device for Valor, still a prestigious recognition of their actions. Considering they were almost given a Court Martial for this mission, one would suppose they should be damned happy they didn't lose their wings!

"And now you know, the rrrrest of the story!"



Reunited After Four Decades

In a Ceremony held at VFW Post 10281, in Vine Grove, Kentucky, Donn Wilimzik (Mixer), of Crown Point, Indiana, was once again able to renew his bond and come in contact with his aircraft after 40 years.

With the assistance of former members in his old Unit, other Army Pilots, the help of Paul Cupp, who was the Crew Chief of 15457 and the VHPA (Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association) he was able to track down the AH-1G Huey Cobra that he had spent so much time in.

After a horrific crash in March of 1970, Donn (Call sign Apache 31) received the replacement aircraft, new to his unit, rebuilt 67-15495. It became known that the new ship was the most powerful Cobra that A Troop 7/1 Air Cav had. The other Gun Ship Pilots



couldn't wait for Donn to get a day off so that they would be able to fly it.

Mixer was awarded numerous medals in 495 including the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross) while flying hundreds of Combat hours to various sites in Viet Nam including the Cambodian Invasion.

Donn placed a wreath before the Memorial Placard, beneath his Air Craft, that represented the Crew Members that lost their lives on May 10, 1970 and stated that "Over these many years, 495 has taken on a new look with all of the modifications, upgrades for new technology and the tail rotor being placed on the opposite side. But in my heart, I feel the sentiment for this Lady carrying me through very dangerous situations to bring me home."



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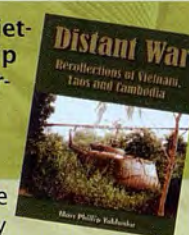
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DISTANT WAR: Recollections of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia by Marc Phillip Yablonka. A collection of articles covering some 18 years of his freelance reporting on the aftermath of the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia.



Marc is not a war correspondent but as he notes, he became a chronicler of war by telling the stories of those who had "been there." He has written for Reuters and been published in the Army Times, Stars and Stripes, and Vietnam Magazine to name a few. See what these reviewer's had to say about the novel...

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.

*~ John Penny - VHPA Aviator contributor
Kudos on your book. It's a very interesting read, well written and well researched. Glad you righted the wrong done to the Air America guys. Can't believe there was still a Huey lying in the weeds at Cu Chi as late as 1990 [cover photo], Cu Chi was my first duty station flying with the 116th Assault.*

~ Richard Jellerson, Storyteller Films

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.

Vietnam Heroes Welcomed Back to Fort Rucker

History converged on Fort Rucker this weekend as the Army Aviation Center welcomed back members of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion (CAB) from Vietnam to celebrate their biennial reunion. Approximately 200 Vietnam veterans from the 164th Group, 1st Aviation Brigade, Vietnam were in attendance. Such historic combat units as the 121st Assault Helicopter Company "Tigers," the 175th Assault Helicopter Company "Cowboys," the 162nd Assault Helicopter Company "Vultures," and the 135th Assault Helicopter Company "Emus" were hosted by 1st Battalion, 13th Aviation Regiment, the present day unit that claims such historic lineage. 13th CAB members and their families were treated to tours of various sites across Fort Rucker, where they were able to witness where Army Aviation has come in the last 40 years from the waters of the Mekong Delta to the creation of the Aviation warfighter of today. Amidst the educational components of the weekend, there remained an air of nostalgia as veterans shared their reminiscent stories of days gone by and the proud recollections of brothers who had been to war and lived to tell the tales.

The formal festivities kicked off on Saturday, 15 May, with a picnic at Yano Hall—a facility that was in use during the training of aviators during the Vietnam War. 1-13th Aviation Regiment, 1st Aviation Brigade, Soldiers were on hand to share stories with 13th CAB veterans and to present some of the newest equipment in Army Aviation, including the Tactical Air-space Integration System (TAIS), the Mobile Tower System (MOTS), and the newest Air Warrior ensemble. 110th Aviation Brigade supported the event as well with informative static displays of the OH-58, UH-1, UH-60, and CH-47. MG James O. Barclay, Commanding General

of the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, and CSM Tod L. Glidewell, Aviation Branch Command Sergeant Major, stopped by to formally welcome the group and mingle with 13th CAB veterans. One of the highlights of the day were the UH-1 Huey flights offered to veterans and their families by the Army Aviation Heritage Association out of Atlanta, GA. For some family members, it was the first opportunity to ride in the aircraft that had served as the chariot for their loved ones to and from the battles of the Vietnam War. It was hard to ignore the glint of recognition and pride that shone in the eyes of veterans as they heard the familiar beat of the rotor blades and stepped aboard an old friend once again.

The evening brought the 13th CAB to The Landing at Fort Rucker, where they celebrated the capstone reunion banquet. The Fort Rucker Color Guard and the 98th Army Band were on hand to support the event, as Brigadier General Kelly Thomas, the Deputy Commanding General of the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, opened the ceremony. His comments conveyed the highest praise for the sacrifices of the Vietnam veteran and the assurance that future reunions would always be welcomed and supported at Fort Rucker, their Aviation "home." MAJ Jay Yuskaitis, 1-13th Aviation Regiment Executive Officer, followed the Deputy Commanding General in welcoming the veterans and



MG Barclay poses with COL (Ret) Harry Harper, prior Battalion Commander of the 13th CAB during Vietnam



Logo on the wheel chair of veteran Tom Collins. Tom was a door gunner for 121st Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) in Vietnam.



showed a video that enlightened viewers on the current mission of the 1-13th Aviation Regiment. Mr. Stan Gausse, former S4 and aviator for 162nd Assault Helicopter Company, provided a comprehensive history of the venerated Delta Battalion and their contributions in Vietnam. The headline speaker for the evening was Army Aviator and NASA Astronaut, Mr. Robert Stewart, who expertly infused humor into his unique, first-hand perspective on space travel to the delight of all in attendance. He elaborated how his one and only chance at a spacewalk was greatly affected by a 15 cent button on his space suit that greatly vexed his 7 hour experience outside the space shuttle. Despite the uncomfortable, grueling ordeal, he resolved that it was an experience that he "wouldn't trade for the world." Capping the evening off, MAJ J. Billington, former S3 of the 1-13th AVN REGT, dedicated a song he had written in honor of Vietnam veterans everywhere entitled "The Eagle Cried." The lyrics spoke of a Soldier who returned from Vietnam and didn't receive the hero's welcome that his efforts deserved. The song ended with the lines, "God forgive us for the day we lost our sight, and we turned our eyes when the Eagle cried." One red-eyed aged veteran commented that it was, "the best [welcome home] he'd received since he got back [from Vietnam]." Nowhere during the evening was the brotherhood between the current 1-13th and the Vietnam-era 13th CAB more evident than the connection made with this simple song.

On Sunday morning, reunion attendees converged on Veterans Park, where CW4 Larry Castagneto, former UH-1 pilot from the 162nd Assault Helicopter Company and current Chief Warrant Officer for 1-13th Aviation Regiment, led them in a memorial service for their fallen comrades who never came home from Vietnam. COL Timothy Edens, USAACE Chief of Staff, imparted heartwarming comments reinforcing the idea that the sacrifices of the 13th CAB would not be forgotten and our current Aviation Soldiers owe them a debt of gratitude for bringing Army Aviation where it is today. These comments provided a fitting conclusion to the weekend's events, sending a final "thank you" ringing in the ears of the 13th CAB veterans as they departed their Fort Rucker home for their homes across America.



(From left to right) COL (Ret) Harry Harper, former commander of 13th CAB; CW4 Lawrence Castagneto, 162nd AHC pilot during Vietnam and current 1-13th Chief Warrant Officer; and COL Edward Toffa, the last 13th CAB Commander in Vietnam, place the memorial wreath commemorating the fallen heroes of 13th Combat Aviation Battalion.



Ebay Listing
#260569385643
US Army Aviation
Graduation Booklet
from 1967

This is the graduation booklet for the Graduation Ceremonies at Fort Rucker for Officer fixed wing aviator Class 67-7, Officer rotary wing aviator Class 67-10 and Warrant Officer rotary wing aviator Class 67-9. The seller says "The booklet shows wings on the cover and the inside has a list of all

graduates. It has 15 or so pages. The booklet has light yellowing but is in very good condition."

Available at a "Buy It Now" price of \$10.00



Ebay Listing # 170493810491

A-13A Waltham Aircraft Chronograph 8 days Clock 1962
Item condition - Used

Seller description: This is an one (1) pc Vietnam A-13A Waltham Aircraft Eight-Day Chronograph Clock P/N 22322-S-ET-12 1962, With one-hour elapsed time feature and sweep hand. The start, stop and flyback of second and minute hands does not disturb time of day. The lever for adjusting rate is accessible without removing the clock movement from its case. Clocks contain an unbreakable, anti-magnetic cobalt alloy mainspring and an anti-magnetic temperature compensated hairspring to ensure accuracy. Mechanical clocks are stand-alone, time -keeping instruments which are not affected by environmental extremes or system failure.

Starting Bid - \$299.33 or "Make an Offer"



Ebay Listing # 290378930829

ORIGINAL RAY BAN VIETNAM WAR
AVIATOR SUNGLASSES

Seller Description: Offered to you are these very rare original Ray Ban vintage aviator sunglasses. Common used by the American pilots during the Vietnam War. Scarce and highly collectable item.

Price: US \$900.00 or "Make an Offer"



E-Bay listing # 190388719120

USMC Marines HMM-363 Vietnam War Patch

Seller's Description - Vietnam Era Patch - The patch is not new and shows signs of use. Patch size is 9 x 8 cm. Two available.

You can "Buy It Now" for \$9.99. Items are located in Bangkok, Thailand so "shipping may take more than two weeks".



Buying on Ebay....

by VHPA Member Judge Lyons

Caveat Emptor - you may remember this Latin phrase from those long ago school days. It means "let the buyer beware". When dealing on Ebay this should always be kept in mind. Ebay does not own the merchandise being sold and in no way will they be responsible if you are unhappy with your purchase. They are merely a means for a seller to find a buyer. However there are steps you can take to keep from being taken advantage of. My wife and I have bought and sold thousands of items through Ebay over the past fourteen years and over 99% have been completed without significant problems.

Before buying anything you must be a registered user. This is a fairly easy process that they will walk you through once you have logged on to Ebay.com. Once you have an Ebay name and password you are ready to start bidding. As a bidder I strongly recommend also signing up for PayPal. Most purchases using PayPal are protected against non-receipt or receipt of damaged or items not being as described. Also once you are set up with a PayPal account you do not have to give out your credit card numbers to the sellers.

Once registered with Ebay and PayPal (optional) you can begin buying and selling on Ebay. We will start with talking about buying items on Ebay.

You can buy almost anything on Ebay. From their home page select categories and you will be presented with an extensive list of available merchandise from real estate to baseball cards. I will use one example - COLLECTIBLES. Within this category there are many sub-categories including militaria. If you select Militaria you will find even more sub-categories including Vietnam (1961-75). You will see that there are over 25,000 listings under Vietnam providing the buyer with the opportunity to buy items from unit insignia, photographs, maps and almost everything imaginable.

To bid on an item after you have registered and signed in, one simply clicks on the PLACE BID button and enter your bid amount. Some items are given a BUY IT NOW price so if you want the item, at that price, simply click BUY IT NOW and follow the instructions to complete the purchase.

Placing a bid does not guarantee you will get the item. Between the time you bid and the auction closes others can enter higher bids. If I find something I really want, I try to be at my computer in the minutes just before the auction ends and enter my highest bid about

30 seconds before the auction is due to end. Even then sometimes I find myself outbid. Ebay recommends that the bidder enter a bid that is the maximum you are willing to pay. On a standard (non-reserve) auction this doesn't mean that that will always be the final price if you are the successful bidder.

An example of how this works is like this: the item has a current bid price of \$20.00. You are willing to go as high as \$50 and enter a bid of that amount. Your bid will show up as \$21.00 (the minimum amount over the current high bidders bid) and if no one else bids on the item you get it for the \$21.00 amount. However let's say some one now bids \$35.00, then your \$50.00 maximum bid kicks in and you now have the "new" highest offer of \$1.00 over that, or \$36.00. Ebay's computers go on that way, in milliseconds, comparing one persons max bid to all the other bids until the bid price either goes higher than your maximum amount, or you end up with the high bid. Last, those clever guys at Ebay have also worked out a way to send you an e-mail when you have been "out bid" for an item, giving you another chance to raise your bid, just another way to feed that ago old sickness - auction fever.

A reserve auction works the same way except if your high bid exceeds the reserve price the bid amount shown will be the reserve price set by the seller. Example: the sellers reserve is \$50.00, the current bid amount is \$25.00. You are willing to pay up to \$75.00 and enter a bid of that amount. If there are no further bids you will have bought the item for the reserve price of \$50.00. If another bidder enters a bid of \$60.00 before the auction closes the auction will still show you as the high bidder, but now your purchase price would be \$61.00. If another bid is entered of \$80.00 that bidder is now the high bidder at \$76.00. But on a reserve auction, if your "winning" maximum bid does not exceed the seller's set reserve amount, then there is no obligation for the seller to sell you the item at your "winning" amount.

There is also an electronic process called SNIPING that will enter bids automatically for you at the last second even if you are not at your computer. For anyone interested in this they may go to Google and enter Ebay sniping tools for software and information about sniping tools and services. Use of these 3rd - party Sniping Services is not free, but their small commissions often can make the difference in winning and losing an auction.

A good rule is for you to set a maximum amount you are willing to pay and walk away when the bids exceed that amount. Buyers who get carried away by "auction fever" will usually regret it and often these people will be the ones who post negative feedback.

In addition to the usual "auction" format and the "buy it now" process some sellers offer you the opportunity to submit a "BEST OFFER". As the name implies you simply send the seller an offer and within 48 hours they will accept, reject or come back with a counter offer.

PITFALLS OF BUYING ON EBAY

1. You don't know the seller.
2. You don't get to examine the goods.
3. You are dependent on the seller's description.
4. The picture(s) may not be the same item sold.
5. Many "antique and collectibles" are reproductions.
6. You only receive them after they are paid for.
7. Getting a refund may take weeks or never happen.

AVOIDING the pitfalls of buying on Ebay.

Every selling customer on Ebay has a "feedback" rating (posted in the upper right corner of the listing ad). That number in parenthesis is the number of previous buyers who have left positive comments (minus the number of negative ones). The more important number is the % number. I don't deal with any sellers rated below 95% and if they have over 100 entries, they must have at least a 98% positive rating. Anyone can have one or two negative postings; after all you can't please everyone every time, but if there is a pattern, stay away from that seller.

Ask any questions before bidding. Again, in the

upper right corner there is a place to click "ask a question". Use it to clarify any issues about the item you're looking at prior to bidding.

Read the ad carefully before bidding. Some ads may say things like 2-4 weeks for delivery, shipping from China or other conditions that may cause you to reconsider bidding. It is too late if you have already bid, under certain circumstances a bid may be cancelled but it is better to not have to depend on that. Also, be sure and check the amount listed for "shipping charges", this entry will affect the final amount you will pay for the item. Ebay officially discourages sellers from making up part of their prices through use of inflated "packing and shipping" charges, but it happens. Last, if the seller is a commercial enterprise, and the "item location" is listed as being in your state, then the seller can and will collect sales tax on the transaction.

When buying antique or collectible items such as military collectibles, old coins etc. it is almost impossible to tell from an ad whether the item is the genuine article or a clever reproduction. Without thorough provenance (documented history) it is easy to be taken in. A reproduction worth twenty dollars might sell for hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Anyone who sells such bogus collectibles is unlikely to be there for a refund if you find out you have been the victim of a scam.

Returning an item. Be sure to read the return policy of the individual seller. Some sellers will accept any item returned but they often will require reimbursement for shipping cost. Many sellers set a time limit. A few items will state "NO RETURNS". Again, once you have bid you have

accepted their return policy.

Payment issues. NEVER send cash or use wire transfer to pay for purchases. Although some Ebay'ers bad mouth PayPal I am a strong advocate. Ebay buyer protection is predicated on using PayPal. If you use PayPal and do not receive the item or it is somehow different from that described Ebay/PayPal will refund your money including shipping cost. This process will usually take two to three weeks but it does work. Most sellers will accept checks but there again you are not fully protected and your purchase will not ship until after your check has cleared. Many commercial sellers will accept credit cards by phone but there once again you are giving credit card numbers, expiration dates CVV numbers and your address too every seller multiplying the opportunity for someone to misuse this information.

As an Ebay buyer I have purchased everything from a \$125,000 motor home to items costing less than one dollar. I have only had two bad purchases and had I followed the suggestions given above those two would not have happened. This article is not intended to cover every buying issue you may encounter but to highlight a few of the main ones. Read the Ebay rules and bid carefully.

Last—relax and have fun with E-Bay! Currently a search of: UH-1 Huey in all categories on Ebay shows the highest item at \$2,500.00 for a complete Huey collective "control stick" to a .99 cent used copy of Chickenhawk (sorry about that Bob); but there's another 404 things between those two items that are sure to bring joy to a lot of old slick pilots out there.



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History of 2010 Reunion Logo Poster



I was in the flight that day the photo was taken and now I have to listen to war story after war story on how the picture is copied by seemingly everyone. But don't worry about it, we in the 229th are always happy to do our part

Now that the 2010 Reunion in San Diego is over, I thought I would send you a copy of the photo that served as the basis for our 2010 Reunion Logo.

The picture shows 5 aircraft of the 229th Avn Battalion landing in formation in Dau Tieng, Vietnam. All 10 of the aircraft pilots are still alive, I know only 5 belong to VHPA but I'm sure they will all note that the 229th logo has been replaced in the final poster.

The attached picture is a great sense of pride to each of them, the five members of the VHPA say that they only joined VHPA because of me, they have all enjoyed the VHPA's Reunions in DC in 2002 and 2006 along with our Las Vegas reunion in 2002. We all attend our own unit reunion at Myrtle Beach, SC held in September every year.

Mike Sloniker

COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION



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DUTY • HONOR • COURAGE • NEVER EVER FORGET

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COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION



27 May 1967 – A Day in the Life of a “Blue” from B Troop, 1st/9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division By SGT Barry McAlpine 1966-67

The Aero Scouts had found some commo wire during their low level scouting and visually followed the wire from one village into another village earlier in the day. This area was near Duc Pho in Quang Ngai Province. The CO inserted the ground scouts (Blues) later that afternoon simply because we had been involved in several other air assaults and small firefights for most of the morning and early afternoon. The insertion of the Blues at the LZ was uneventful and seemed routine. Usually I walked point but for some reason on this day the second squad with point man Frank Guzzi leading the way followed the commo wire. Guzzi was advancing slowly with eyes on the ground and glancing to his right and left flank. The village had an abundance of punji sticks planted in the ground for the purpose of slowing down any American soldiers that may patrol. The second squad was advancing in single file on point while the first squad (my squad) moved to the left flank and the third squad went to the right flank. The fourth squad was the rear guard and was staying close. When Guzzi made 15 yards into the village all hell broke loose. Guzzi took a through-and-through gut shot and the number two man, SP4 Joey (Dennis Joseph) Keenan, was killed immediately. The third and fourth men were hit by small arms fire but their wounds were not as severe. The VC were laying down a wall of machine gun fire and throwing grenades into our area. A couple of guys crawled forward with the medic and pulled Guzzi (WIA) and Keenan (KIA) back to a trench that ran the full southern edge of the village. The platoon immediately spread out in the trench in a defensive fashion and I kept my squad as the left flank to our position. A long and intense fire fight ensued. At one point a VC lady appeared from the left tree line and walked to the top of the trench or ravine right in front of me and Gerard Mullaney, my radio operator from Queens New York. It was this lady's job to get a position fix and count how many of us were there. It was common in this situation for this type of person to get close enough to us and then throw a couple grenades into our midst. I had kept an eye on her for several yards and all of my men had her under surveillance immediately. When she got right in front of Poncho Salines from San Antonio I yelled "Kill her!" Poncho pretended he didn't hear me and kept firing his M-16 at targets running in front. When she got in front of Jimmy Bushy, a very shy kid from upstate New York, I again yelled "Kill her!" Nothing happened. John Tunewald, a more experienced soldier from Albany Georgia looked at me and nodded. She disappeared. The battle raged on. The machine gunner, Brance Hutt from East St. Louis, was in a great position and had his machine gun set on its tri-pod stand and was making that M-60 bark in rhythmic spurts.

A Blue usually carried 10-12 clips of M-16 ammo, 200 rounds of belted M-60 ammo, 6-7 grenades, 1-2 Claymore mines, Bowie knife, machete, 3 canteens of water, C-rations, etc. We had one purpose, gather intel from the ground and search and destroy. Small shoot-outs and firefights were our forte. May 27 was not a small firefight. It doesn't take very long to use up all ammunition when you're almost surrounded by superior numbers. After what seemed like a couple of hours of serious fighting we ran extremely low on ammunition and other supplies. We called in artillery and air strikes that hit so close we could feel the heat from the napalm. It seemed we could reach up and touch the bombs as they screamed just over our heads and exploded only feet away. These were not "smart bombs" like we have in today's military. These bombs were addressed to-whom-it-may-concern. The Viet Cong had us almost surrounded and the situation was getting worse, so much so that I told my men to save one bullet for themselves. We could see the enemy slowly trying to advance towards us and we could see them climbing in the trees. By this time every one of our birds had taken at least one hit, was out of fuel and had gone for POL. In between the F-4C Phantom's bombing runs and other air support from our own gunships and other ARA's, a UH-1D from the 174th Aviation Company made a heroic effort to resupply my beleaguered platoon with much needed ammo, grenades, water, etc. The Huey approached the battle zone from the west and the crew chief started to kick the ammo and other supplies out of the aircraft. The problem was the aircraft was in a very small crease between the good

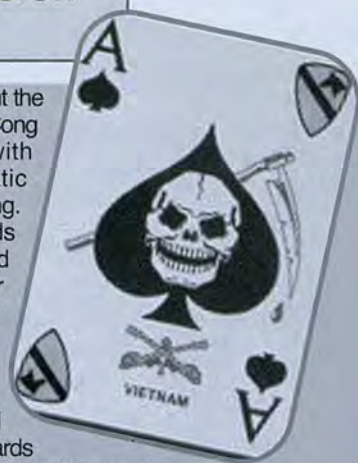
guys and the bad guys. In an instant the aircraft was shot down. The Viet Cong were attacking the aircraft with grenades and heavy automatic weapons fire. It was close fighting. The Huey was on fire and rounds were cooking off. The crew had jumped to safety on impact however one of the pilots was unconscious and caught in his seat harness. The crew quickly ran and crawled to the trench where we were laying down what little fire power we had left. As the crew was running towards us I left my position and ran forward to the left side of the downed aircraft and cut the pilot free. I believe PVT Jimmy Cryster and SSG Claude Baskin went to the right side of the aircraft, cut out the other pilot and dragged him back to our trench. Jimmy (James Perry) Cryster was killed on 11/13/1967 while making another air assault in the same area. The Blues kept the bullets flying and kept the enemy at bay until we returned with the pilots. For the past 42 years I have often wondered what happened to that courageous pilot I pulled from that burning wreckage?

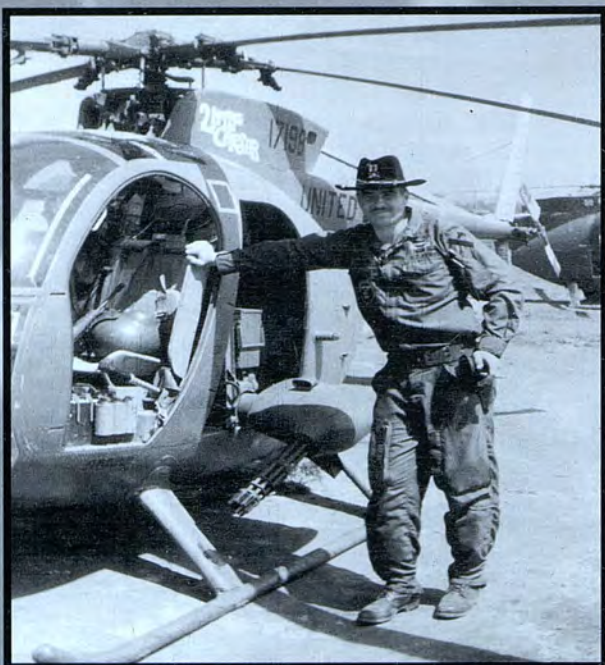
The VHPA's Helicopter database shows that UH-1D #64-13870 from the 174th AHC was shot down, crashed, burned and was destroyed on this date. The crew members' names are not recorded for this incident.

In a while it started to get dark and our lift ships brought in some reinforcements. When night finally arrived the main body of Viet Cong broke contact but left a few fools around to probe our perimeter in the darkness. In the morning I found several VC bodies within 6 or 7 feet of my night-position, several were burned crispy from the napalm. The CO wanted a body count the next morning so as we swept through what was left of the village we dragged the dead Cong out, collected their weapons and piled them in a pile for a photo shoot. As we advanced into the village at first light I remember the unforgettable smell of napalm and burned flesh - the smells of war. The silence was deafening. The fog was staying low to the ground that morning and as we slowly moved forward past the dead VC bodies the once loud and violent village of yesterday was eerily quiet. In this situation it was protocol to not advance past an enemy soldier unless he was either secured or dead. Because we wanted to maintain silence as long as possible the Blues were to use their bayonets or Bowie knives to confirm the enemy soldier was in fact dead and not playing possum. I could hear the guys giggle as their dull bayonets bounced off the hardened bodies that were left in front of us. Humor appears in strange ways to combat toughened soldiers. It wasn't long until someone had to use their M-16 and our stealth was compromised. Our platoon finished the sweep of the village in a couple of hours with only a few small insignificant shoot-outs with wounded or holed-up VC. We kept a couple of prisoners for intel and by mid-morning we were lifted out. I knew we took several casualties in the last twenty-four hours but I did not know how many were WIA's or KIA's. There was no time to ponder, within ten minutes after lift-off I was briefed via radio and we made another air assault into some unnamed LZ in the middle of nowhere chasing bad guys. And so it went in the day to day. This was the life of the 1/9th Blues and our total dependence on helicopter pilots.

Post Script: Barry McAlpine, a great friend of the VHPA, is now a Chiropractor in Holland, MI, and has attended the VHPA Reunion in Philly and several others in prior years. Furthermore, usually at least one of the 1/9th Cav Mini-Reunion's have been his "fault" and the VHPA is always grateful for his faithfulness. Barry submitted this article with a note saying how sad he was for not being able to attend the San Diego Reunion but he and his wife have been given an all expenses paid trip to Alaska during the first week in July.

"But I'll see you in Orlando!!" Barry McAlpine





Jon Swanson in 1971. Shown with an OH-6A loach belonging to B Co, 1/9th Air Cav



Headstone at Arlington National Cemetery marking the resting place of the remains of both Jon Swanson and Larry Harrison.



Sandee Swanson (Jon's widow), Jack Shields (our author) and Tom Swanson (Jon's younger brother and Sandee's current husband) visit in October, 2009.



Pocket patch, Scout Platoon B Co, 1/9th Cav



Photo of Lieutenant Jon Swanson, taken by Sandee's father many years ago



VHPA Member and event organizer Phil Lanphier addresses the Assembly at Mullen High School.



The Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA hosted their Helicopter War Museum for the students, staff and families of Mullen High School.

Ceremony Commemorates the Life of CMH awardee Jon Swanson...by Jack Shields

October 9th 2009 was something of a "full circle" day for the family of Medal of Honor awardee Jon Swanson. Jon graduated from Denver Colorado's Mullen High School in 1960 and the school paid a special tribute to Jon and all veterans, as part of their Homecoming activities. Mullen is justifiably proud of their Colorado State champion football team. The football stadium is literally across the road from Fort Logan National Cemetery, so the idea of honoring a veteran is not lost on its students and October 9th was special. Two teachers arranged for two special assemblies. The Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA set up their mobile museum in the parking lot just outside the assembly hall and staffed it with about a dozen members to help the students see and understand the museum's display. It was a great way to learn history especially when one of their own was a part of that history.

VHPA member Jack Shields who had flown with Jon during both tours in Vietnam, RMCVHPA and VHPA members Ed Fickes and Phil Lanphier who had helped "bring this all together" would address the assemblies. Jon's wife, Sandee, was the guest of honor and she displayed Jon's Medal of Honor to the students. The RMCVHPA prepared a special display with photos of Jon's and SSG Larry Harrison's B/1/9th Cav LOH plus the MOH citation, a photo of their Arlington Cemetery marker, and a plaque of B Troop's, Scout Platoon pocket patch. SSG Harrison was Jon's door gunner and the scout platoon sergeant.

Jack Shields was Troop XO at the time. He was able to contact several troopers that were directly involved with the fire fight. He got in touch with Doug Ricks, Dick Cross, Tom Genetti and Bo McAllister from A Troop. After reawakening old memories, many permanently etched in their minds; they were able to connect with others like Mike Machulsky and the full story was put back together. Add to that the information from Sandee and her husband Tom (Jon's younger brother) we have a fascinating description of the 26 February 1971 mission that claimed the lives of Jon and SSG Larry Harrison. They were shot down while flying a VR (visual recon) in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia. The 1/9th Cav was looking for and found what we now know was part of the early buildup of forces for the spring 1972 attack on Saigon. The NVA was there in force. ARVN armored cavalry convoy; attempting to rescue Jon and Larry; ran into an NVA ambush and quickly lost over 100 troopers.

Earlier in the mission Jon and Larry found several .51 cal pits with guns and were able to disable two of the guns. Jon realized they were in the middle of a major NVA command complex. In order not to alert the aero scouts, the NVA left the guns unmanned until they were taken under fire. Jon's LOH had already taken several hits and he was losing fuel. Mike Machulsky, leader of the replacement Scout team contacted Jon letting him know he was just a few minutes out. Jon wanted to make certain Mike knew exactly what they'd found so he escorted him to a third .51 pit. As soon as they passed over the tree line to where the emplacements were, all hell broke loose. Jon's LOH was fully engulfed in flame and went straight in. Mike and his gunner landed about 50 feet away but were quickly driven off after receiving a barrage of NVA fire and repeated calls from the Cobras and Command & Control to get out of there. For several days, there were exchanges of fire between the air cav and the NVA. Even an illegal, remember we weren't in Cambodia according to our government, assault by 1/9th Blues

was attempted but was driven off by NVA heavy weapons at the last moment.

When the ARVNs pulled out of Cambodia, Jon and Larry were declared KIA BNR (body not recovered). They had forced the NVA to give away their position and intentions allowing the ARVN forces to better prepare for the upcoming attack. The 1/9th Cav leadership nominated Jon for the MOH. Because of where the battle took place, the award was downgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross. Sandee recalls that the CG of Fort Carson personally invited her and her two daughters, now Holly Walker and Brigid Jones, to come of the base where the award would be presented. When she declined, the general actually drove to her house in Boulder to give her Jon's award.

Starting in the 80s Sandee and her family were flown to Washington, D.C. to receive an annual briefing from the Joint Task Force - Full Accounting. Over the years more information was given to them. The first of three separate excavations and site visits by various joint US/Cambodian teams happened in 1992. Sandee shared the more than one-inch thick final report from the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii. They found pieces of the helicopter, pieces of SSG Harrison's clothes and enough human remains to be rather certain they were from Caucasians. During these annual briefings, Sandee and her daughters learned that Jon was originally recommended for the MOH. In 1998, Holly gathered all the material she could concerning the awards and went to see Representative Floyd Spence of South Carolina, then chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. While he made no promises, he did guarantee he would look into the matter. When Spence stepped down from his chairmanship and passed away in 2001, the family thought that was the end of it. On 1 May 2002, Sandee and her family were presented Jon's MOH by President Bush. Jim Kurtz, A Troop, Jack Shields, B Troop, and Walker Jones, C Troop represented the 1/9th Squadron at the White House Rose Garden ceremony. Two days later Jon and Larry's remains were interned in a shared grave in Arlington National Cemetery.

And the "full circle" situations continue! Jon graduated from Colorado State University in 1965 and via their ROTC program was commissioned a 2LT in Infantry. Also in October 2009, CSU honored Jon, MAJ William Adams (another helicopter pilot), and Peter Lemon - these three attended CSU and were later awarded the MOH. After Jon completed helicopter school with class 66-10, he went to Ft. Riley, then deployed with and served his first tour in Vietnam in 1967-68 with D/3/5th Cav. This past April, Sandee and Tom attended the D/3/5th Cav Reunion in Atlanta because of a special invitation from the "Light Horse" guys.



TAPS

ALBERT NEIL ALLEN

Albert Neil Allen, 79, of Lumberton, Texas passed away on May 28, 2010.

An USMC Helicopter Pilot, Neil flew in Vietnam with HMM-262 in the 1958 time frame.

Albert Neil Allen, Lt. Col. USMC (Ret) was a Marine Corps Aviator and his career included two tours of duty in Vietnam where he earned 49 combat decorations for bravery. Following his career in the Marine Corps, Neil and his wife Kim taught in the Silsbee Independent School District until retirement.

Neil is survived by Kim, his wife of 54 years and his four sons; Albert Jr. and his wife Dawn, Travis and his wife Elizabeth, Peter and his wife Melanie, and Timothy and his wife Sonia. Neil also leaves behind seven grandchildren; two sisters, one brother as well as many beloved nieces, nephews and cousins.

On 22 May 2010, the VHPA was notified of the death of ALAN NORTH of Ocean-side, California.

The notification was sent to us by John W. Howard who wrote "I would like to inform the board that Alan North of Oceanside California passed away this past Wednesday (May 19th, 2010). Alan flew UH1's and was married to my cousin." Editor's Note: The VHPA's records show Alan attending Flight Class 68-513 and graduating flight school with Flight Class 68-23, but no other details of his service have been provided.

John Howard goes on to say "I was wondering if anyone could tell me which unit he served with in Vietnam. I know that he was severely injured and trapped in a crash or shoot-down and would have burned to death had neither his crew-chief or co-pilot went back and got him out of his burning aircraft. Alan meant a lot to me and I hope someone could help me find information on his unit(s) or his crash, any help would be greatly appreciated."

*Thank you. Sincerely,
John W. Howard*

BURTIS G. PARCELS

Burtis "Burt" G. Parcels, 64, passed away April 24, 2010, in Centerville, Maine as a result of an automobile accident.

He was the husband of Kathy Hickey Fulham Parcels and the late Nancy (Collins) Parcels. He was the father of six children and the stepfather of five. Born in Keyport, N.J., Burt graduated from the Lawrenceville School and Boston College. He later received a doctorate in education from Boston University.



After college graduation, Burt joined the Army and graduated flight school with Flight Class 69-39. He then served as an U.S. Army Ranger helicopter pilot in Vietnam with the 92nd Assault Helicopter Company from January through December 1970, during his tour he received the Bronze Star and numerous other awards and decorations.

Most recently, he was employed as adjunct faculty/lecturer at the B.U. School of Education and instructional design consultant at B.U.'s Metropolitan College. He loved his wife Kathey, his children, mother and extended family. He adored his grandchildren. He delighted in music of all kinds, especially when played by the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra. Burt also enjoyed the fun and companionship of the Swing Dance Group.

A devout Catholic, his religion was very important to him. Burt was the father of three daughters and two sons; he was predeceased by one son, the late Daniel Parcels. He is also survived by five stepchildren, his mother of Keyport, N.J. and six grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in Burt's memory to either Cardinal Spellman High School or the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra Music Education Fund. For online condolences and directions, please visit www.johnlawrencefuneralhome.com.

CARLOS E. QUINTERO

Carlos E. Quintero, 61, passed away August 12, 2009, surrounded by family and friends, after a brief battle with cancer.

A Tampa native, Carlos attended Tampa Catholic High School. Carlos joined the U.S. Army and graduated flight school with Flight Class 68-17. He then served his country with pride and distinction during the Vietnam War by flying with the 174th Assault Helicopter Company, 23rd Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne in 1969-1970 under the callsign Charger 19. During more than five years of active duty, Carlos flew 675 combat missions and achieved the rank of chief warrant officer. Carlos received numerous awards for his valor during combat, including the Bronze Star, five Distinguished Flying Crosses, 27 Air Medals with Valor distinctions, three Army Commendation awards, and two Purple Hearts for wounds received during combat.

Following his military service, Carlos became a successful medical equipment sales executive, residing in North Carolina from 1985 to 2006, when Carlos returned to Tampa. Carlos is survived by two children, Jason and Marissa Quintero; two brothers, one sister and numerous nieces and nephews, cousins and cherished family friends.

A connoisseur of the finer things in life, Carlos enjoyed flying, being outdoors at the beach or playing golf, and spending time with his friends

and family. Carlos was a loving father and loyal friend. His charm and sense of humor brought joy to all who knew him, and he will be sorely missed. Carlos will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Carlos' name to LifePath Hospice, [REDACTED] Temple Terrace, FL 33637. Online condolences may be sent to www.jgrfuneralhome.com.

EDWIN LAMAR RICHTER, SR.

Edwin Lamar Richter, Sr., LTC, Retired US Army, age 75, went to be with the Lord on Wednesday, April 7, 2010 in San Antonio, Texas.

He was born on 26 June, 1934 in Galveston, Texas and had a long and distinguished Army career that spanned 29 years where he rose from PVT to LTC. He served two tours in Vietnam, where he was a helicopter pilot with the 1st Cav (D/229th Smiling Tigers) and the 101st Airborne (A/158th Ghost Riders). He was awarded the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross x2, Bronze Star x2, and 33 Air Medals with the "V" device. Ed also earned his Senior Aviator Wings, Jump Wings and the CIB.

Ed was preceded in death by his parents and his infant daughter, Deborah Lynn Richter. Survivors include his loving and devoted wife of 53 years, Barbara Anne Richter; children, Laura J Vaughn, Edwin L Richter, Jr., Victoria E Toledo, Christopher D Richter, and Cynthia M Joss; 11 grandchildren; and 1 great-granddaughter.

Memorials may be made in Mr. Richter's name to M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, P.O. Box 4486, Houston, Texas, 77210-4486. Condolences may be offered at www.sunsetfuneralhomesa.com

GEORGE R. MILLER

George R. Miller of Green Pond, NJ passed away May 4, 2010 from a sudden heart attack.

He graduated from Penn State in 1968, receiving an ROTC commission in the ARMY. He graduated from flight school with flight class 70-14 and following an AG-1G transition, he flew Cobras with the 361st Aviation Company, Escort from August 1970 through August 1971 using the Callsign Panther 11. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and numerous awards of the Air Medal. He was an active member of VHPA, attended several Reunions and always got his money's worth.

George worked in the newspaper industry for many years in the New Jersey coast area. He is survived by his Lady, Jane Yoder, his sister, Mary Ann, his brothers Dennis and Thomas and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in his memory to the Popcorn Park Zoo, PO box 43, Forked River, NJ 08731.

TAPS

HAL LARRY SCOTT

CW-4 (retired) Hal Larry Scott, 74, of Graham, NC, passed away May 19, 2010 at the Hospice Home, Burlington, NC after several months of declining health. He was buried with full military honors including a fly over at the gravesite by two army Blackhawk helicopters. Members of the NCVHPA served as honorary pallbearers.

Hal was a member of flight class 63-7W, and served in Vietnam in 1965 with Co A 82d Aviation Bn, and Co A 502d Aviation Bn. For many years he was an active member of the NCVH-PA, and was editor of the chapter newsletter. Though confined to a wheelchair as a result of injuries sustained in Vietnam in September, 1965, he participated in numerous chapter events at air shows, and etc. with Vietnam era helicopters on static display.

After retirement from the army, Hal did personnel work for both state and local governments, was a county manager for several years, and worked as a private personnel consultant. He also did a lot of volunteer work, including at the local VA Hospital, and received numerous awards for his volunteer activities. He was named N. C. Disabled Veteran of the Year in 1970 and 2001. He was a member of the Ruritan Club, and was a 32nd Degree Mason. One of his greatest joys was coaching youth athletics including his son's baseball, basketball, and football teams.

Hal is survived by his wife Ann Cowen Scott of the home, and his son Greg C. Scott, wife Gayle and two granddaughters. He was well loved by family and many friends in the community, and was loved and respected by the active members on the NCVHPA.

*Above submitted by, VHPA Member
Jim Baker, E-Mail: [REDACTED]*

JACK ROGER AUDISS

Jack Roger Audiss, age 65, passed away May 23, 2010, at Rapid City Regional Hospital after a short illness.

He was born Feb. 19, 1945, at Gordon, Neb., the son of Jack Audiss and Ruth (Olson) Audiss.

He attended school in California, Ohio, Morocco, Rapid City and graduated from Lakenheath American High School in England. After graduating he returned to California to attend junior college where he learned to fly.

In 1965 he joined the US Army and went through Army Aviation Warrant Officer Flight Training for Helicopters graduating with Flight Class 66-3. Following flight training he served during the 1966-1977 time frame in Viet Nam flying gunships with the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (Blue Stars) under the callsign Joker 11. During his tour he was awarded twenty-five Air Medal Citations, one with the "V" Device for Valor. He was awarded the Bronze Star for

valor in combat. When he returned to the States he was assigned as an instructor in Primary Flight School at Ft. Wolters, TX. Upon completing his four-year army commitment he was honorably discharged as a Chief Warrant Officer 2.

After leaving the army he pursued an aviation role in the oil exploration industry in Alaska, Argentina, and Peru. While in Argentina he met and married Christina Rocamora. Upon return to the US he earned his Airframe & Powerplant rating with Inspector certification and worked for many years in the fire suppression and aerial logging industry both as a pilot and a mechanic.

Jack returned to the Martin area in 1976 where he engaged in aerial spraying and aircraft maintenance services. He was an active member of the Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association and a member of the American Legion Post 240.

He is survived by ex-wife Christina, son Jon-nathan, stepson JR Rocamora, stepdaughter Maria Rocamora Suder, his father Jack and stepmother, two brothers, several grandchildren, nieces, nephews and many friends.

JAMES M. LESLIE

James M. Leslie, Retired Brigadier General in the United States Army - died Thursday, April 29, 2010 at the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville after an extended illness. He was 81.

General Leslie was born in Anaconda, Montana and grew up in Butte, Montana. He graduated from Montana State College in 1951 as the Distinguished ROTC Graduate with a commission of 2nd Lieutenant of Infantry. He later entered the Army flight program and flew fixed-winged aircraft and helicopters. He received a Master's Degree in International Relations from George Washington University in 1969. He attended the National War College from 1968-1969.

As a career infantry officer, General Leslie commanded units from platoon to brigade size and served as Assistant Division Commander of the 2nd Infantry Division in South Korea. He was also commanding General of the 3rd ROTC Region at Fort Knox, Kentucky. His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, the Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, Parachutist Badge and Senior Army Aviation Badge.

Mr. Leslie was an active member of Eastside Baptist Church in Marietta GA for many years. General Leslie lived in Knoxville and was a member of the Retired Officers Association and Association of the US Army. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Ann Leslie; son, Richard Leslie and wife, Glen; daughter, Teresa Bowman and husband, Mark and four grandsons.

He is also survived by one brother and one sister.

Interment will be held at a later date in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, DC. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Jacksonville, FL 32256 or www.woundedwarriorproject.com. Online condolences may be extended at www.rosemortuary.com. Arrangements by Rose Mortuary Mann Heritage Chapel.

JESSE FRANKLIN "FRANK" ARCHER JR.

Jesse Franklin "Frank" Archer Jr. passed away on 19 April 2010 after a long fight with cancer.

He was born 20 June 1940 in Stockton, CA and served in the US Air Force from 1957 to 1962. He enlisted in the Army in 1964 and served his first tour in Vietnam in 1964-65 with the USARV Support Command. While stationed at Ft. Eustis, he happened to meet his future Lois while helping someone move, three months later they married in December of 1965. After earning his wings with flight classes 66-15 and 66-17, he was assigned to Fort Knox, KY to help form the 7/17th Air Cavalry Squadron. One of Frank's best friends, Bob Wise, maintained that Frank put his prior service time with the USAF and the USARV Support Command to good use as one of the "official unit scroungers." Both Bob and Frank have done lots and lots for the 7/17th Cavalry Association during the last decade, they were also known to tell a story or two at the Reunions.

Bob tells several about Frank with a high degree of fraternal pride, "seems the Squadron deployed to Camp Enari in late 1967 and the Squadron Commander basically stationed the two of us in Quin Nhon to "acquire" anything we might need". According to Bob they managed to get a load of air conditioners delivered to the base camp before the connection to the central electric power was even in place!

During his time in the Air Force, Frank had mastered the art of stencils and black paint for vehicle bumpers; as a result the Squadron had a 5,000 gal tanker, a rough terrain fork lift, plus an old missile trailer with its tractor! Once Frank was showing pictures at a Reunion and one showed a wrecked UH-1C loaded on a flat bed trailer. Frank said, "That's mine." Then he looked around and realized he was talking to mostly mechanics and pilots so he quickly added, "the trailer - not the helicopter!" He



loved to fly Charlie Model guns and that got him transferred from Headquarters Troop to B Troop's weapons platoon. On 19 June 1968, he took five hits in both legs and in his lower abdomen, he retired from the Army after recovering from those injuries. Later he worked in real estate but his favorite hobby was wood working. He liked to make furniture.

He and Lois moved to Fayetteville, AR in 1998. Lois has nothing but kind words to say about Regency Hospital and Circle of Life Hospice. Frank and Lois have two daughter, Lora and Leah, and three grand children. Submitted to the VHPA by Art Walsh of the 7/17th Cavalry Association.

JOHN R. MORTON

Longtime pilot "Rick" Morton passed away Feb 14th after the helicopter he was flying crashed in Cave Creek, AZ. Cause is not yet determined.

Rick graduated flight school with Flight Class 68-19 and spent a year in Vietnam flying with the 25th Infantry Division.

His warm hearted nature and recognizable laughter brought smiles to all who knew him. Rick was an unselfish man who would help anyone in need. His spirit will live on through the lives he has touched.

He is survived by his wife Charlotte, two daughters Shawna and Brenda, son, Charles, and brother, Scott.

LOUIS JAMES ROCHAT III

CW3 Louis James Rochat III U.S. Army



(Retired), Died May 29, 2010. "Rocket" graduated flight school with Flight Class 69-41/69-45 and flew with A Troop, 1/9th Cav and E Troop 1/9th Cav in 1970-1971 under the Headhunter callsign. The following Obituary was sent to us by the family of Lou "Rocket" Rochat, it was written by Lou himself a few weeks before his death....

Who better to write an obit on someone other than the person the obit is about, EH? I was born on 20 July 1949 at Fort Knox, Kentucky in a military hospital to post WWII military, depression era experienced parents. The first son and oldest sibling of LTC Louis James Rochat Jr (Rocky) and Hermia Tyler Johnson (Johnnie). My parents could not make it back to Texas in time for my birth but I consider San Saba, Texas my home

where my grandparents Louis James Rochat Sr (Gaga) and Linnie Floyce Taylor (Mimi) owned and worked a ranch and farm unit that I dearly loved. My little brother is retired Army LTC Larry Lee Rochat (an Airborne, Ranger, and Aviator) and sister Mary Madelyn Rochat I have two fantastic daughters, Amy Huff and Celena Hendrix. I have two outstanding son-in-laws, James Huff and Michael Hendrix. I have the best grandchildren in the world, McKenna Huff (Little Miss), Cade Huff, Tristan and Gabriella Hendrix.

I dislike the words 'passing, passed on, passed away, gone into eternal rest, went to be with the Lord, entered into Heaven, etc.,' because no one wants to really do those things. Remaining vertical is much better than being carried by six to a hole in the ground. I prefer to know that we each owe a death from the moment we are born so why worry about it. Live life as if there is no tomorrow.

My life history—IT HAS BEEN SOME PARTY! I've played football, baseball, ran track, played trumpet in the band, was the guy in high school with the 1957 Chevy street rod, a licensed NHRA, IHRA and AHRA drag racer in door slammers through Class "A" dragsters, Scuba Diver with a Dive Master rating, NSSA Class AA skeet competitor, NRA Life Member and rifle/pistol/shotgun competitor, dart competition, league bowling, compound bow and arrow competition, have won a Winchester World Championship skeet shooting event, free diver, Olympic shooting competition referee, rode PBRA level rodeo bulls for two years, competition bass fisherman, novice fly fisherman, TSRA Life Member and NRA Service Rifle competitor, black powder shooter in both handgun and Hawken rifle, stamp and coin collector, hand-loader, hunter and outdoorsman in general. I had as much fun taking photographs of animals I ever had actually hunting them. Ice fishing and sled riding in Wisconsin with one of my best friends Steve Ellis was always a winter bonus since we rarely had winter in South Texas.

I will never forget all my adventures of flying and all of our conversations together with my other best friend John Sarviss. TILL WE FLY AGAIN.....

I am also survived by the woman and the love of my life for 33 years Ann. Till we meet again my love!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Interment will be held at 9:00 A.M. at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on Tuesday, August 31, 2010. He will be laid to rest with full military honors.

VHPA Member Chuck Qualline added the following message:

I never met Rocket in this life, but Jan & I attended his memorial this morning. It was very well done, by an Army chaplain (captain,) Jared Vineyard, currently serving with the 101st Airborne. He is married to Rocket's niece, and Rocket asked Jared to lead his service. Rocket accept-

ed Jesus not too long ago.

There were Army & Air Force guys & girls present in uniform, active duty & retired. I wore my Cav hat. (I think Rocket worked at Randolph AFB.) Recently one of his flying buddies donated a needed kidney. He improved for a while, but died of complications.

Rocket is famous in Cavalry circles; flew scout ships and Cobras with 1/9 Cav in III Corps. Shot down 5 times; left a leg in the last one. I was disappointed that no one told the story about how he shot himself in the foot, then calmly drove away, in front of two guys who did not know he had a fake leg. One pilot whose life Rocket saved was present this morning. Happened near Phouc Vinh/Lai Khe. Told how Rocket landed under fire, enemy advancing, was out of his Cobra still 5 feet in the air, hanging on the outside, and put this guy into his Cobra seat. The saved guy was bleeding to death and nearly unconscious. Then Rocket flew out the shot-up scout ship with the two gunners aboard, with no instruments, no radios, and a round through the combustion chamber. God bless the OH-6A. And God bless Rocket's family. Chuck Qualline, E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Michael J. Wheeler

Michael J. Wheeler, age 58, Watertown, New York, passed away unexpectedly Wednesday, May 26, 2010, as a result of an aircraft accident in Boxborough, MA.

Mike was born in March of 1952 in the City of Norwich, NY. Mike attended Berlin Central School, where he was known as Jamie, graduating with the Class of 1970. Mike received a Bachelor's Degree in Professional Aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, FL in 1986.

Mike entered the Army in 1970, graduating from Warrant Officer Candidate School in 1971 with Flight Class 71-25. He then flew in Vietnam under the Bandit callsign with B Co, 101 Aviation, 101 Airborne and A Co., 229th Assault Helicopter Company, 1st CD.

He married Barbara Voorhis in South New Berlin, NY on April 4, 1971. Their life in the Army took them to Fort Bliss, Texas, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Ft. Wainwright, Alaska, Ft. Wadsworth, Staten Island and Ft. Rucker, Alabama. Mike also served two tours in South Korea. During his time in the military, he received numerous awards and commendations including the Legion of Merit, the Purple Heart, and the Air Medal with V Device. He retired from the military with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 4 in 1991 after 21 years of service as an Army Helicopter Pilot and Flight Instructor. He had been an active member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association for the past 15 years.



TAPS

After his retirement, Mike worked in Charlotte, NC and Marshfield, WI as an EMS Pilot for Air Methods, Inc. based in Denver, Colorado. He became their Chief Pilot in 2000. He was employed as a Flight Safety Inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration, in the Boston, MA office at the time of his death.

Mike liked to hunt, was an avid history buff but his greatest love was being with his family, particularly his four-year old grandson. Mike is survived by his wife, Barbara, one daughter, one grandson, his mother, a brother, two nephews and an aunt.

Burial will be in the Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in his name to the Wounded Warrior Project, [REDACTED] Jacksonville, FL 32256 (or online at www.woundedwarrior.org).

One-time A Co, 229th Aviation Battalion "Black Bandit" John Brinkley added these details: It is with great sadness that I inform you of Mike Wheeler's passing. Yesterday he was giving a private pilot rotary wing check ride to a student. After entering autorotation the engine did not come back on line. He, in his typical style, maneuvered the aircraft away from a populated area so that it landed in the woods. He was lost in the process, the student survived.

I flew with Mike in Korea for two years is some very challenging conditions. He was always cool and calm, the safest pilot I ever flew with. We became very close friends and grew to enjoy hunting. We hunted pheasants in Korea and later South Dakota.

Mike was a very young warrant officer in RVN. Mike Sloniker, his ops officer at the time, says that he was one brave man. Knowing Mike like I did I can truly believe it.

MICHAEL TODD KOONE

Michael Todd Koone, 64, passed quietly away early Saturday morning, April 3, 2010. He fought a courageous battle with ALS since being diagnosed with it in August, 2009.

Mike was born in Roseburg, Oregon on August 21, 1945. He and his mother lived briefly in Seattle before settling in Silverdale, Washington. He graduated from Central Kitsap High School in 1963. After graduating flight school with Flight Class's 68-519 & 68-35, he flew two tours in Vietnam with the 121st Avn Bn., D Troop 1/1 Cav and D Troop 7/17th Cav using several callsigns, among them Tiger 27. He was awarded the DFC and numerous other awards and decorations for his overseas service.

After leaving the Army, he worked at the Bremerton Shipyard for 20 plus years as a nuclear inspector. He retired from the shipyard in 1997 and started a new career at Volvo Aero. Mike was a proud American and a friend to all. He enjoyed golf, cars, car racing, football, fine wines, and great food.

He leaves his wife, Happy, daughter, Kathi, and his brother Jeff and his family.

*Submitted by Mike's closest friend,
Frank W. Evans, Boeing
Commercial Aviation Services*
Phone: [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

RICHARD MORGAN MUSICK

Richard Morgan Musick, 65, died April 15, 2010 at Sentara Obici Hospital.

Musick was a passionate man who loved God, life, America, family, and friends. A true aviator, he owned and operated Mercury Flight Center in Chesapeake for the past 27 years. He helped innumerable student pilots achieve their aviation dreams in a warm and welcoming environment. Richard also donated countless hours of his time to aid in life-saving events through air transportation.

Captain Richard Musick served as a Marine Corps Casualty Evacuation MH-46 helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, with the Purple Fox Unit. His service medals include the National Defense Service Medal, the Air Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the Republic of Vietnam Civilian Act Medal. Richard continued to defend the United States throughout his lifetime. Following 9/11, he served in the Special Operations community, participating in numerous counter-terrorism operations. Most recently he supported Rapid Reaction Search and Rescue and Humanitarian Relief Operations after the 2010 Haitian earthquake. He is credited with the evacuation of 105 U.S. dependent children and the delivery of the medical supplies necessary to keep 11 Haitian field hospitals operating in the early days after the earthquake.

Because of his considerable dedication and continuing service to the nation, he was asked by the 9/11 responders and family communities to stand with them in the annual remembrance at Ground Zero in New York. An extremely proud professional accomplishment was that, despite various missions of considerable risk, "he never left a man in the zone." His service to God includes serving a Christian Missionary Mission to Peru.

As a family man Richard was a dependable, committed, and caring husband who was a strong role model and loving father who taught by example the most important life lessons to his two sons, family, friends, students, pilots, teammates, and all who knew him. He will be missed by all of us and never forgotten.

He is survived by his loving wife, Susan M. Musick; sons, Charles W. Musick II and Richard M. Musick; his mother, Frances D. Musick; brother, one brother and one sister. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, [REDACTED] Suffolk, Va. 23434, or to the church. Condolences may be registered at www.rwbakerfh.com.

ROBERT RAMSEY VICKREY

Robert Ramsay Vickrey, 68, passed away April 26th, at his home in Flower Mound, Texas, surrounded by his beloved family.

From an early Dallas family, Robert's great-grandfather owned a wagon yard where Dealey Plaza is now located. Born November 22, 1941 at Florence Nightingale Hospital, he grew up in his grandparents' home at the corner of Hall Street and Turtle Creek.



A member of the first graduating class at Thomas Jefferson High School, he later attended University of North Texas and Southern Methodist University. While working in the insurance business, Robert was drafted for service in the United States Army during the Vietnam conflict; serving from 1967-1971. Graduating with Flight Class 68-21, he flew with the 119th Air Assault Helicopter Company under the callsign Crocodile 5. In Vietnam he was awarded two Purple Hearts, the Bronze Star, 16 air medals, and numerous other campaign and service medals. After serving in combat capacity, Robert was an Instructor Pilot at Fort Wolters where he logged a record of 500 hours of accident-free instruction.

In 1974, Robert met Kris Panek; and three years later they were married on September 1, 1977. Shortly thereafter, he and Kris moved to Pittsburg, Texas where they welcomed their daughter, Sara, in 1982. In Pittsburg, Robert and Kris were active in the real estate business and restored several historic properties, including one which received a Texas Historical Commission marker as a result of their efforts. A meticulous craftsman, Robert did much of the restoration work himself as well as serving as general contractor.

On their return to Dallas, he worked in case management for Eberstein & Associates, and later Pelletier & Associates while helping Kris in her real estate business. A discriminating reader, Robert loved words and their meanings; was a wonderful story-teller, and had a great laugh. He possessed a dry, ironic sense of humor. Patriarch of his extended family, he was always generous with his time, advice, and resources both within his family as well as with his friends he considered family.

He is survived by his wife, Kristine Panek Vickrey, a son, Curtis Kidwell of Portland, Oregon, a daughter, Sara Vickrey of Dallas, a granddaughter, Ginger Kidwell and a grandson, Stuart Kidwell of Portland, Oregon. Also surviving are one brother, two sisters and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

TAPS

The VHPA has been notified of the death of **RONALD W. WILLIAMS**

Mr. Williams passed away in May of 2010 in North Carolina after a battle with cancer. He was a member of flight class 71-31 and flew with B Co, 101 Avn, 101 Airborne, A Co. 229th Avn and the 120th Assault Helicopter Company.

He also flew with the Kentucky Army National Guard and was the former owner Air Star Helicopters based at the Grand Canyon in Arizona. No further details of his career or his death have been provided.

WILLIAM E. (BILL) AUSTIN

Bill Austin, 63, died April 11, 2010 after an extended battle with cancer.

Bill graduated flight school with class 68-28 and flew with the 25th Infantry Division from 1968 through 1969. He served a total of seven years in the Army and continued his service as a Helicopter Pilot in the Tennessee National Guard. During his service in Vietnam, Bill was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, DFC, and several Air Medals.

He later graduated from Austin Peavy State University and worked in several sales and management positions in Georgia. Bill is survived by his wife of 38 years Carla, and son Chris, both of Marietta Georgia.

VHPA Member Hal Duensing (email: [REDACTED]) sends us these thoughts "I had the great pleasure of knowing Bill as he was married to

my wife's cousin, so our family had two former helicopter pilots to content with. Bill's death is a great loss to the family and I personally will really miss him.

WILLIAM A. PRUZAN

Bill Pruzan, 63, of Cape Coral, FL, passed away on 10/22/09 after a long fight with cancer. He was laid to rest at the newly opened Veterans Natl Cemetery in Sarasota. A member of flight school classes 69-27 & 69-29, he served in RVN in 1970 with 2/17th ARTY as Caisson 31.

Bill was a lifetime Chicagoan and the only thing he loved more than his Cubs was flying, which was his chosen profession. He owned and operated Federal Helicopters out of Palwaukee Airport, where he trained many aspiring rotorheads! He continued his profession, where we met, as a Dept of the Army Civilian (DAC), at NAS Glenview, IL. As an IE, and SP in Hueys and Blackhawks, he motivated and honed the skills of many young men who have since served proudly in the Persian Gulf and Iraq wars. Bill was a skilled, dedicated aviator, and a great friend who will be remembered and missed by me, his devoted wife Susie, and many friends and family.

Submitted by Jim Lomonaco, Ghost Rider 25
Email: [REDACTED]



PATRICK "PAT" JOHN O'GRADY

Lt. Col. Patrick "Pat" John O'Grady was born December 29, 1928 in Bemidji, MN. After retirement from the military in 1977, he settled in the Clark County, WA area where he passed away on May 31, 2010 after a short illness.

Lt. Col. Patrick O'Grady served in the United States Army for nearly 31 years. He served in WW II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He received many honors and awards during his career of which include: WW II Victory Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Master Aviator/Expert Infantryman and parachutist badges. He earned several degrees from prestigious colleges.

Pat was an avid fisherman and enjoyed working with wood in his shop.

Pat is survived by five children, Julie Maule, Mike O'Grady, Kevin O'Grady, Ginny Powell and Erin Bacon; 14 grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren.

Memorial services with full military honors were held at Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, OR. Guest Book available at: www.columbian.com/obits



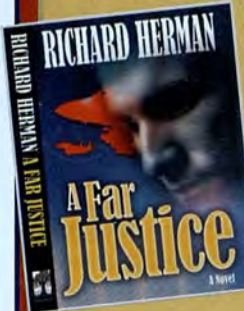
A Far Justice

Gus Tyler is a man under a microscope and the world is watching. He may be a hero. He may be a scapegoat. He stands before the International Criminal Court in The Hague accused of war crimes committed on the infamous Highway of Death during the Gulf War of 1991.

The U.S. is focused on the crisis in Asia as China moves aggressively on Taiwan and desperately needs European help. France seizes the chance to challenge the U.S. and forge an alliance with China. Gus Tyler is trapped in a geopolitical storm.

Tyler faces a powerful prosecutor as the press trumpets his guilt. He is a man going down. A determined lawyer and Tyler's son, a tough Air Force sergeant, have a different plan. For Gus Tyler, the search for justice will lead from a pampered Western Europe to a far and distant place – the slaughterhouse of the Southern Sudan.

NOW AVAILABLE in hard back, paper back and Kindle versions. Complete ordering information available at both Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com



NEW Book!

Praises of other works by Richard Herman....

"One of the best adventure writers around"

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"A skilled storyteller... Richard Herman knows how to describe the pressure and unpredictability of a battle...He has a sure command of what it takes to hold the reader"

~ The Sacramento Bee

Looking for Military Memorabilia from the Vietnam War



I am interested in acquiring any and all Memorabilia that pertains to Helicopter Operations in Southeast Asia. Items of interest include unit patches, insignia, calling cards, scarves, headgear, personalized helmets, propaganda, flight gear, badges, pins, wings, plaques, paper items, souvenirs, unofficial/novelty items, flags and guidons, artwork and even uniforms and "Party Suits" of the era!

These items will be used in Patriotic displays throughout the country and as source material for an upcoming book. I will also place photos and descriptions of anything contributed by a VHPA member on the VHPA's on-line museum website (www.vhpamuseum.org). Please note that anything contributed will not be re-sold but will remain in this collection for all to enjoy!

Last, I'm happy to purchase your items at a very fair price if they help me complete or expand portions of the collection. You don't have to donate your things to me!

For full details contact John Conway at.....

Evenings [REDACTED]

Toll Free Worldwide (888) 870-5408

E-Mail: [REDACTED]





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Military artist Joe Kline, a member of the American Society of Aviation Artists and friend of the VHPA, has been honored with the acceptance of two paintings in the ASAA 2010 International Aerospace Art Exhibition at the San Diego Aerospace Museum. Mr. Kline was one of forty-two artists from around the world whose work was selected. The display opens 8 June and runs through 10 September. His paintings, titled *God's Own Lunatics*, and *Good Vibrations*, depict U.S. Army helicopters in action during the Vietnam War. Mr. Kline was an Army helicopter crew chief with the 101st Airborne Division during the war. The San Diego VHPA Convention will be the 18th in a row that he has attended as a vendor. The exhibition coincides with this year's convention in San Diego. Kline says that "it is a privilege and an honor to be able to help provide a visual legacy for Vietnam Helicopter crews who served during the Vietnam War. Many of the scenes depicted would have been difficult or impossible to capture photographically as they occurred."

The American Society of Aviation Artists was formed in 1986 to bring together, in one professional body, artists who are acknowledged leaders in the field for the purpose of recognizing and promoting interest in aviation art as a fine art form. Artist members are selected by a group of their peers on the basis of their demonstrated abilities and experience. Membership currently numbers over 250 artists and associate members representing all corners of the United States. Foreign affiliates are also welcomed, with members hailing from a number of countries around the globe. Mr. Kline has been an ASAA member since 1996.

The ASAA holds annual forums which cover a variety of subjects and valuable information for artists, collectors and aviation enthusiasts alike. This year's Forum opens its six-day program in San Diego on Monday, June 7th. Next year's event will be held in Pensacola, Florida, as part of the centennial celebration of Naval Aviation.

For more information:

Joe Kline

Nanette O'Neal

OR...

GUNS UP!

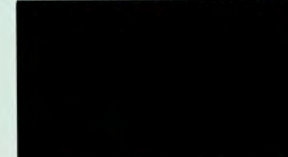


Full color. 22" x 28" , limited edition print of Huey gunships. Standard version as shown, \$80.00 ea. Customized version with markings of your choice, optional armament and B or C Model \$125.00 including postage. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

See my other available prints, and watch for new ones, at www.joekline.com.



Joe Kline Aviation Art



www.joekline.com

The Passing of a Torch

VHPA Member Tom Davis sent us this photo of an Medivac UH-1 V Model, S/N 70-16251 parked next to a new Medivac HH-60 M Model aircraft parked in front of his unit's Hangar at Lakehurst NAS in New Jersey.

The Huey was transferred to us from the DC National Guard and is currently flying in support of Research and Development programs for our organization. Here at our Army CERDEC (Communications & Electronic Research, Development & Engineering Center) Flight Activity we also install modifications on new HH-60M Blackhawks before the aircraft are fielded to a unit. Both of the pictured aircraft were delivered on our ramp within minutes of each other and I thought it would make a good picture. We have several Huey's still flying in support of our mission, as well as UH-60's and C-12s.

Where can you find better job, I can fly a new UH-60M in the morning and a 1969 Huey in the afternoon? Oh yes, and don't forget that Huey sound - You can't beat that sound and I get to hear it all the time!



Tom Davis, Chief Pilot, UH-60A/L/M Maintenance Test Pilot and UH-1H SIP
Class 67-501, 1st CAV 68/69 - Killer Spade 23 25th AVN
Co. 1970 Ret. CW4
Lakehurst NJ, US
Army CERDEC Flight Activity

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Subject: VHPA Aviator, Issue 28-01 (Jan/Feb 2010), story entitled: "We Return to the battle of An Loc"

I thought your membership would like to know that the first TOW missile systems that were mounted on helicopters were accomplished by CDEC (Combat Development Equipment Command) at Fort Hunter-Liggett in California. There the equipment was tested and about a dozen pilots were qualified and trained to fire them (myself included).

We were told to work out the bugs in the system and develop tactics for a European scenario. Hence the "pop-up" tactics you mentioned in the story, all the pilots there KNEW this tactic would not work in Vietnam.

As Detachment Commander at Hunter-Liggett for the 155th Avn Co (ATK) who supported helicopter equipment testing for CEDEC, I received a phone call from HQ at Ft. Ord requesting the names of all TOW qualified pilots. Selected ones were to leave on TDY within a week, destination and duration of stay unknown. I immediately volunteered but told I was too valuable in my present position.

I am reasonably sure they did not send those helicopters to Dover AFB but to Travis AFB, CA. I suppose the Air Force flight could have originated at Dover and loaded the helicopters at Travis. The TOW helicopters were mounted with gun cameras to record the events for review upon their return. It would be a combat extension of our tests.

R.D. Toms referred to the TOW teams as "Hellfire" teams. One of our recommendations while testing the TOWs was to develop a shoot-it and forget-it missile which eventually resulted in the production of the Hellfires. We didn't receive the Hellfire missile system for testing until about a year later.

Upon their return, two of the pilots were selected to take the gun camera films to the Pentagon and give a presentation to the Staff. That concluded, the TOW Team members were sent around the US to at least four military bases to give the same presentation. All of the pilots returned to the Detachment at Hunter-Liggett to continue testing of proposed experimental equipment and tactics.

Steve L. Yuhas (Ret)

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To The Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I really don't know how many Huey's there are still on active duty, but I know at Fort Hood we have three of them assigned to an active Army unit. The maintenance on these "H" Models is done by a defense contractor, and test flown by a Vietnam veteran and VHPA member Wally Williams.

After all, everyone knows that when the last

Blackhawk is taken to the bone yard, a Huey will pick up the crew, and fly them home.

Dave Gray
Harker Heights, TX
[REDACTED]

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator:

Just a quick note to thanks you for all that you do and to pass on how the Aviator can still inform, and surprise us all.

Forty years ago, I found out that my WOC Flight School classmate and friend Cliff Poe was killed in a mid-air collision while flying a "Smokey" ship in VN in 1970. It was supposed to be his final mission before his return to the States. Cliff, a Texan, loved his heritage and showed off his cowboy boots at every opportunity... a real character! After I arrived at Camp Evans in I Corps as a Dustoff pilot, I ran across Poe and 2 other classmates at the 158th "Phoenix" barracks next door! More than one get-together ensued after that initial re-acquaintance.

Now we all know that when two helicopters collide in mid-air, there are no survivors. So imagine my surprise when I read the recent May/June issue of the VHPA Aviator and see a letter from Allen Nohl (Page 36) telling us he was a survivor of that mid-air and is looking for the guys who pulled him out! WOW! That man has to be one of the luckiest individuals ever! Good for him... hard to believe, but miracles DO happen!

Fast forward 2 weeks after I read Allen's letter in the Aviator, and I am giving safety briefings for membership flights in our restored American Huey 369 at LZ Lambeau for the Wisconsin Viet Nam Vets Welcome Home. A former VN pilot wearing his Captain's bars listens attentively to his briefing and when I ask if there are any questions; the Captain says "You know there's a guy over by the Loach that survived a Huey mid-air." WHAT! I'm thinking.... "Was he flying a Smokey ship?" I had to ask. "Yeah, I think so, he was the crew chief and the only survivor." "Please find him for me... I have to talk to him!" was all I could say.

How incredible is that? First I think there are no survivors, and then 40 years later I find out there was one. And two weeks after that, I run across that survivor by chance at an air show hundreds of miles from my home. And as for Poe? "Oh, yeah, Mr. Poe used to wear his cowboy boots all the time, even sometimes when he was flying." Great to meet you, Allen Nohl, WELCOME HOME!!

Phil Marshall - DMZ Dustoff 711
Camp Evans, Quang Tri, 1969

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator:

While John Morris' memories of the Army's last CH-21s were sparked by an image on a reunion poster, my memories were sparked by John's letter in the May/June VHPA Aviator.

I got to the Priority Air Transport (PAT) unit at Davison AAF in September 1968, a month ahead of John, and had the joy of learning to fly the VH-21 under the tutelage of one Major Ed Goldberg; who, as I recall, led several of the VH-21 flights from Davison AAF to Davis-Monthan AFB. The H-21s at Davison, incidentally, were "VH" rather than "CH", since they were "white tops" flying VIP support missions for the Pentagon. (It all comes back to you now, doesn't it, John? Ahhh, memory and old age, what a combination.)

Goldberg, incidentally, was one of the first—and last—U.S. Army pilots to fly the CH-21s in Vietnam, back when Vietnam was known to most U.S. citizens as "Where???"

Anyway, like John, I had "most memorable moments" of flying the VH-21s to Davis-Monthan...one being crossing Arizona's Senora desert, flying moderately low level and in loose formation ("loose" meaning we were all roughly still in the same state) when I heard something to the effect of "cut it out and climb" over the radio. I looked down just in time to see one of the VH-21s clipping along right at cactus top level, popping the tops off the Saguaro cactus as he went. Destruction of a Saguaro Cactus is generally frowned on, punished not only by firing squad, but they tie you to the cactus to do it. Fortunately, no one seemed to remember exactly which pilot-in-command was flying that particular aircraft.

The second part of the story is that on landing at Davis-Monthan, the miscreant helicopter came in for a running landing, and promptly plowed the front landing gear hub into the runway. Seems Saguaro thorns are tougher than a helicopter's tires, and the tire was as flat as it could get.

The other memory I have of that particular flight was hearing "Check out ahead" from the VH-21 just to my right. Sure enough, about a mile ahead, driving down the dead straight highway in the same direction we were going was a convertible, top down, and...yes...containing two beautiful blonds. Within minutes they looked over to see two Army helicopters directly beside them—at their level. We, of course, locked into this formation flying/driving, much to the enjoyment of all concerned, until we also heard the "cut it out and climb."

And now, a question to any and all of the pilots who flew for the PAT at Davison AAF in the late '60s, early '70s...I was out at Davison earlier this year flying the DC National Guard's new UH-70A for a pilot report, looked across the runway at the old PAT hangar (hasn't changed a bit except that the VH-21s and VH-1Ds have been replaced by VH-60s and VH-70As) and wondered if that same game of pinochle is still going on. Anyone know?

Douglas Nelms
Ashburn, VA 20147

E-mail: [REDACTED]

We are actively looking for someone to start up Chapters in both Hawaii and in Alaska.
Contact Jack Salm for full details on potential members in your area tips on how to
get a new Chapter started! E-mail him at: [REDACTED]

VHPA CHAPTERS

-----New Chapter-----

Louisiana Gulf Coast Chapter

Andrew Hover, Pres.

[REDACTED]

Arizona Chapter

Bill Sorenson

[REDACTED]

California Chapter North

Ken Fritz

[REDACTED]

Fort Rucker Chapter

Roscoe V. Souders

[REDACTED]

Fort Wolters Chapter

Pat Richardson, President

[REDACTED]

Georgia Chapter

Carl "Skip" Bell

[REDACTED]

Mid South Chapter

"Pete" Norman IV

[REDACTED]

Montana Chapter

Todd Brandoff, President

[REDACTED]

North Alabama Chapter

Jim White, President

[REDACTED]

New England Chapter

Bill Williams, President

[REDACTED]

North Carolina Chapter

J.D. Lawson

[REDACTED]

Ohio River LZ Chapter

Dave Garner

[REDACTED]

South Missouri Chapter

John Sorensen, President

[REDACTED]

Rocky Mountain Chapter

Gary Hurelle

[REDACTED]

The Alamo Chapter

San Antonio, Texas

Jim Bauer, Pres.

[REDACTED]

South Carolina Chapter

(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter

Larry Russell, Pres.

[REDACTED]

Southern California Chapter

Tom Crosby, Pres.

[REDACTED]

VHPA of Florida Chapter

Gary Harrell, President

[REDACTED]

Virginia Chapter

Ben Gay, President

[REDACTED]

Washington State Chapter

Bob Brown, President

[REDACTED]

The VHPA and Chapters share information and guidance with one another for the mutual benefit of each other. All of our Chapters are separate and independently managed organizations not under control of the VHPA. The VHPA is not authorized to act as an agent or a representative for any of the Chapters nor are any of the Chapters authorized to act as agent or representative for any of the other Chapters or the VHPA as a whole.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH

Our chapter will have a good turn-out at the VHPA Reunion in San Diego. A few guys have volunteered for MOC OD and AOD, but we definitely need more dedicated volunteers. Please contact Mike Nord at: [REDACTED] to put in a bit of time on the job in San Diego. This is the only time you have ever been asked to volunteer for what is really and truly a fun mission. No flak (maybe a little), no one shooting at you (with real ammo), no OER to respond to, no medals to be earned or spurned. You'll be rewarded over and over again - meeting a lot of great guys who have more in common with you than any other group you could possibly imagine.

Their wives are pretty incredible too, so, you won't want to miss meeting them and hearing how they have had to put up with all of us over so many years - just ask my wife how many wonderful men and women she has met over all these years at VHPA Reunions. I'll be gone and out of touch (yes, many say I'm always out of touch, but they don't know the whole story) until 23 June, so contact Mike Nord for more info and to sign on as a guest bartender in the MOC - oops - host/bartender. Again, here's Mike's e-mail (again): [REDACTED] NO Excuses. NO Prisoners. Just Friends.

Ken Fritz, Pres.

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

Fort Wolters Chapter was well represented at the National Vietnamese War Museum function on June 5. Our next meeting will be September 11 at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst, TX. This is a second Saturday meeting instead of the normal first; this clears Labor Day weekend for holiday activities.

The new VA North Texas Health Care System Fort Worth Outpatient Clinic is scheduled to open October 1 with a grand opening event on Veterans Day, November 11. A VA guest speaker will brief the Chapter on the new facility. Also, Chapter officers for 2011 will be elected to take office at the December 4 meeting.

Pat Richardson, Pres.

GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter continues to hold its bi-monthly Saturday morning breakfast meetings and continues to assist with efforts to educate local people and groups about the Vietnam War by furnishing speakers to high schools and colleges, Boy Scout troops, other youth organizations, and civic groups who want to learn about the Vietnam 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.

In April some of our members participated in a Memorial Ceremony at North Georgia College (the Military college of Georgia) to honor the 29 former members of the Corps of Cadets (seven of whom were Aviators) who were killed in the Vietnam War. Mike Sheuerman and Woody Mc Farlin (both North Georgia alumni) attended the event.

Our primary activity continues to be the bi-monthly breakfast meeting - the men 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: www.ga-vhpa.org, or contact me at: [REDACTED] or via telephone at [REDACTED]

Skip Bell, Pres.

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER

The chapter is to kick off a membership drive in July. I have talked to over 60 Vietnam Vets interested in meeting other pilots and joining a local chapter. We are looking for different meeting locations in Southeast Louisiana that will accommodate our expected need of 60 to 100 attendees. If you have suggestions contact me. All the best.

Andrew Hover, Pres.

MONTANA CHAPTER

The Montana Chapter had a meeting at Todd Brandoff's home on June 12. Everyone who attended had a grand time. Our Chapter is going through the initial phases of organization and we are looking forward to having a strong, viable group. We are still recruiting new members, so anyone interested please contact me at [REDACTED] or E-mail at: [REDACTED]

Todd Brandoff, Pres.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

The New England Chapter will be holding its annual meeting celebrating the end of summer at Peter "Pinky" Adams lodge in Scituate, MA on Sunday, September 12th from 12 o'clock noon to 5 PM (or when we run out of beer, whichever comes first). There will be a celebration to honor all the crew members and pilots who served in Vietnam. We would like to make this a clam bake with lobster so it is imperative (big word to make you respond) that you call, e-mail, or somehow let me know if you will attend and how many you are bringing. "Pinky's lodge is [REDACTED] Scituate, MA 02066-6606 if you want to Mapquest the address. It is a spectacular location with an impressive view across the water at the Boston skyline.

Contact me for further information and RSVP.

Bill Williams, Pres.

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The NCVHPA has been busy this summer. We took the UH-1H&M, OH-6 and AH-1 to an airshow in Lumberton, North Carolina on 15 & 16 May. We were at an event in Thomasville, North Carolina on Memorial Day (parade and display at the North Carolina Vietnam Memorial).

On June 5, 6 & 7 all aircraft WILL BE in Florence, South Carolina for an air show and then on July 16-20th, the OH-6 and UH-1M will be in Mt. Airy, North Carolina at the Vietnam Moving Wall.

J.D. Lawson, Pres.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

As with most chapters, the members are all excited about the reunion in San Diego; and are busy making plans for all the scheduled events, as well as their own "unscheduled" events. It will certainly be fun for all. On the home front we will be having our election of officers at our June chapter meeting, prior to the reunion. New officers will assume their duties after the reunion. Design and construction for the Huey Cockpit Display in our mobile Helicopter War Museum is continuing to take shape. A few of the members are contributing much appreciated time and effort to make the exhibit as accurate and realistic as possible. Sitting in the pilot's seat won't quite allow visitors to "take off", but they will be able to feel the controls and get a sense of what a pilot had to contend with. Hopefully, with future funds we can improve the experience with some high tech electronics and simulating videos.

The Bar-B-Q, with hopes of inviting non-member flight crews in August is still in the planning stages, but if it anything like the past ones, no one will go home hungry.

Gary Hurelle, Pres.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

As I write this the Southern California Chapter is still working on the Reunion. But as you read this the Reunion will be over, and all of us from the SoCal Chapter hope you all had a good time and a pleasant stay, with so many activities and places to see we hope we did not overload you.

At our last meeting May 23rd we were able to do some planning for after the Reunion, our annual meeting/election of officers is set for Oct. 16th, 2010 at a place to be announced on our web site at a later date, so please keep Oct. 16th open, also plans for a deep sea fishing trip in the summer were set in motion by Tom Galyean and Carl Cortez.

In ending I would like to thank all of the volunteers for their work on the Reunion.

Tom Crosby, Pres

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

As time draws near for our second quarterly meeting in Columbia, MO (June 12th), the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA continues to grow, adding new members from neighboring states, as well as our home state of Missouri. Our website, vhpasmo.org continues to be developed and with new additions. On-line shopping is now available. The Chapter Council looks to expand and looks for activities and events where the chapter offer support to veterans and to families with a parent or spouse deployed overseas.

John Sorensen, Pres.

SOUTH CAROLINA (Celebrate Freedom) CHAPTER

The Chapter has hit a home run. We have the distinct honor of having Dru Blair paint one of our Cobra's. He and some of his artist friends are going to paint it in Vietnam Tiger Stripe camouflage. It's being dedicated to the Special Forces. Google Dru Blair and you will see tons of military aircraft. Ours will be the first entire aircraft he's painted. Go to our website for the pictures (in progress as I write this, of the before, during and after). A bunch of the chapter members were assisted by a group of auto body students from the local tech center. (Part of our SOAR program where we're local kids learn about the STEM subjects).

Some of our members are going on a field trip to New River and Cherry Point to visit the Marine Cobra Squadron. One of their members made an emergency landing at our airfield awhile back and we assisted with the removal and replacement of a main rotor head assembly. They invited us up for a look see. (Don't tell them, but we're going to take some tools with us -- we need some parts).

Hopefully, by the time you read this we'll have our first Cobra back in the air and the group was kind enough to put my name and call sign on it. HOOAH!!!! Think I'll take some pictures and write a short story for the AVIATOR.

If you ever have a layover at the Columbia Metropolitan Airport (CAE) give me a call and I'll give you a tour of our hanger, treat you to a lunch at the local "greasy spoon" and hit you up for a membership. Might even give you a ride in a COBRA.

Larry Russell, Pres.

VHPA OF FLORIDA CHAPTER

Here are some of the activities we have planned. All of these will have our members there with the OH-6 on display. 14 June - Flag Day ceremonies at the Scottish Rite Memorial Temple in Tampa. They have a presentation in honor of the veterans from the area and hundreds of flags held by the people along the road, 19 June - Congressman Bilirakis will have a veteran's information seminar to provide needed information to them on their entitlements and help to obtain them. All the local veterans groups support this effort. 1 July - The group will be in Plant City for the dedication of the new Veterans Memorial Park. 9 - 10 - 11 September - VHPAF will hold its annual reunion in Orlando. Information on the web site and all are invited. 11 - 12 - 13 November - Our display and the OH-6 will be at Rib Fest in St. Pete. This is a large event and thousands will attend.

Gary Harrell, Pres.

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

Forgive the misinformation in the last issue. The Olympia Air Show is in June and not April. I had the two mixed up. The April meeting was at Famous Dave's Bar-B-Q in Tacoma. The June meeting will be at the airshow in June. Also, the chapter elected to donate \$500 for a brick in the wall at the school in Vietnam in honor of Dan Cheney. The brick will be in honor of Washington State aviators killed in Vietnam.

Bob Brown, Pres.

Members of the Mid-South Chapter of the VHPA gather to present a \$1,000 check to the Fort Campbell Historical Foundation.

In April, 2010 members of the Members of the Mid-South Chapter of the VHPA presented a check for \$1,000 to the Fort Campbell Historical Foundation for their use toward building the "Wings of Liberty" Military Museum at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

This photo of the presentation was taken at the foundation's office.

Pictured (left to right) are: MSVHPA Secretary Ross Rainwater; MSVHPA President Haywood "Pete" Norman; J.H. Binford Peay III (GEN, USA, Retired), the President and CEO of the Fort Campbell Historical Foundation; Ken Cullwell, MSVHPA Past President; Chris Horton, MSVHPA Past President; and Robert G. Nichols (CSM, Retired), Executive Director/COO of Fort Campbell Historical Foundation. GEN Peay is also the current Superintendent at VMI, from whence he graduated in 1962.



LOOKING FOR

Editor's Note – in the last issue we ran a letter from Tracy Saylor who was looking for information about her father, Joe Latham but somehow Tracy's e-mail address got left off of her letter. Two of our members contacted me (the Editor) directly and I immediately responded with Tracy's address. But if there is anyone else out there who would like to help Tracy, but wasn't able to do so because of my mistake, please take the time to contact her at: [REDACTED]
Sorry about that Tracy – David Adams

Looking for – two of your finest WO's who saved my butt on 11 February 1971.

It was late afternoon on 11 Feb 1971 and I was a Lieutenant JG and assistant Platoon Commander of SEAL Team Victor One just south of Can Tho. Two other SEALs a boat crew of 2 and a Kien Giang Province district advisor (Army Major) got ambushed on our way in to a remote outpost in a canal about 50' wide.

No LZ could be established probably because we were surrounded and had 2 WIAs who would not last the night. We were in a dead end canal so we had to return thru the kill zone again where we had sustained a small hole in our LSSC boat. Sea Wolf (air transport) wasn't available, it was dusk, & we had the wounded aboard and wanted to go home. Two US Army pilots heard about our predicament on the radio and offered assistance. They located us and got us back to safety that evening.

I think the 2 wounded ARVNs lived so I'll look for them through another web site; we left them at 3rd Surgical Hospital Binh Thuy. I think the aviation detachment that helped us was located in Binh Thuy as was our boss – the Golf Detachment of SEAL Team ONE.

WHO ARE THESE WONDERFUL AVIATORS who saved the day for us? I want to communicate them and it will be "Beers and Thank You's" all around. You know the routine. Full length screen play to follow...

Jim Young

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To the members of the VHPA

My name is Jaymi Freeman and I'm trying to find people and more information on my father/grandfather who served in Vietnam as a Helicopter Pilot.

He recently passed away and I am trying to make a memorial for him. Any and all information or help you can pass along would be

greatly appreciated. I have listened to his stories all my life but sadly, didn't think he would pass so soon and don't recall all of them. He was such an honorable and great man that I just want him to be remembered properly. He was Basil Dexter Freeman, a WO who graduated in flight class 66-9, he was assigned (as best I can recall) to a "Cowboy" unit.

Again, thanks for any help you can offer in me collecting information about my father's military history.

Jaymi Freeman

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Members of the VHPA

I am trying to locate any individuals who know of or have knowledge of information regarding missions I flew with the 117th Assault Helicopter Company, II Corps RVN between April 1970 and April 1971.

I flew Fire Fly night mission for several months. We worked with gunships and medivac ships from other units and for a TOC located somewhere around Phuoc Vinh I believe. In particular, I am interested in a night medivac at a position I participated in and the consequential capturing of a VC suspect shortly after the position was rocked.

Also, anyone knowing how to contact Captain Taylor, Company XO at the time.

CW3 Tom Morrissey

Warlord 23

117th AHC, 1970-71

SEARCHING FOR JAMES ROSS BANDY WO1

Jim Bandy served with the 129th AHC out of An Son in II Corps in 1972 and 1973. I believe he later became a member of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Battalion (the Night Stalkers).

If any reader knows Jim would you please let him know I would like to contact him and provide him with the following information.

Thank you for your assistance.

Joe Sepesy

Looking For "MEDIVAC PILOTS THAT SAVED MY LIFE"

I, a Marine Amtrack'er attached to an Army unit, was rescued by an Army Medivac Heli-

copter on May 26th, 1968, in the early PM, outside Hue near Coco Island.

I was medivac'd out of a hot zone with two other Army Infantry men in the only medivac that day. We were flown to Phu Bi Hospital and I was never able to thank the pilots and crew that saved my life.

I don't know the Army unit or operation name and have been unsuccessful so far in looking these men. I would now appreciate that opportunity and would be very grateful for any information that people can provide me.

Sincerely, Sgt. Brian Anderson

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Work PH #515.232-8501

Looking for an old friend Editor,

My old commander LTC Sid Lyons and I are trying to find an old friend of ours. His name is CW2 Travis Coon of West Virginia.

We were all in the SMASH Cobra project in 1970 at Ft Hood and we both would like to renew old friendships. Many a day Travis and I would ride in his truck to the tune of country music and I hope I can speak with him again.

Greg Smith

Gunfr44, Lancer 12, Satan 19
(And late for dinner).

Please call either [REDACTED]
or [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Looking for a Vietnam helicopter Pilot with Canadian Citizenship

I am searching for a copter pilot that flew in Vietnam in the vicinity of the Ia Drang valley and perhaps took part in that battle.

His first name is Steve and I met him when he flew me around Canada in his helicopter where he told me the stories of his time in the Ia Drang. I am a writer and would like to talk with him again.

Thank you, Karan

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Looking For Bootstrap Student at University of Omaha in 1965 or 1966

In 1965 or 1966 I was a student at the University of Omaha, Nebraska, now called the University of Nebraska in Omaha. This was where the Army's "boot straper's" went to finish their college degree.

I met one of these guys and we became

friends, he was a CW3 and I think he flew CH-21's. The name Green comes to mind but it was a long time ago. I recall that he also wanted to pledge our frat, A E Pi as that was the frat that had all the "brain-eacks", but believe me, I wasn't one of those "smart guys". Any way, we became close friends until I shipped out to RVN but I have never heard of him sense then.

My friend was my partner in many a hand of bridge in the student union during lunch time and he constantly regaled me with stories of

flight school and the warrant officer program. Because of him I went on to serve 33 yrs in the army and retire as a CW5. If that young man is still out there I want to give him a big warm thank you for setting me on the right track. It's because of him that I am who I am today and I just want to say thank you.

Greg Smith CW5 (Ret)

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

**Looking For information
on Huey Tail Number 64-13603**

VHPA Member Dale Jacobs says. ...

"A friend in Cape Town South Africa is flying a Vietnam Huey, UH-1D 64-13603 for fire fighting, records show it was in Vietnam with the 187th AHC from April '68' to August '68'.

If anyone from the 187th could help, my friend would like very much to know more about the history of the aircraft."

Regards, Dale Jacobe

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

VHPA 2011 CALENDAR

PERFECT FOR YOUR HOME, OFFICE OR HANGAR!

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Acclaim Press are pleased to present the new VHPA 2011 Calendar — *now in stock and available for immediate delivery.* This is the 18th calendar produced by the VHPA. The goal of the VHPA calendar project is to refresh the memories of all those who flew and worked on helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War Era, and to record, preserve, and display the events and activities that were important to veterans of that era. This VHPA Calendar also commemorates the 2,190 helicopter pilots who died or whose bodies were not returned (BNR) from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era (1961-1975).

Printed in full-color, this 17x11-inch (BIG) wall calendar is the perfect gift for all VHPA members and their families.

This annual calendar has sold out for the last two years — order now to be sure you have a copy! Only \$14.95 (plus shipping & Missouri state taxes if applicable)

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Useful Internet Links for all Veterans...

MEMBERS OF THE VHPA — Mike Sheuerman, the VHPA's current Membership Chairman and Scholarship Assistant Chair, has a copy of a list of over a 150 web-sites that provide information on Veterans benefits and how to file/ask for them. There are also many sites listed that explain how to obtain books, military/medical records, information and how to appeal a denied claim with the VA.

Nearly 100% of this information is free and available for all veterans, the only catch is: you have to ask for it, because they won't tell you about a specific benefit unless you ask for it. You need to know what questions to ask so the right doors open for you and then be ready to have an advocate who is willing to work with and for you, stay in the process, and press for your rights and your best interests.

Editor's note — The complete list of the web sites is long, and contains a lot of great information, but it would take over 4 pages of the Aviator just to print all of them. Almost all of the web sites also have a long name that can't be printed here without inserting several unintentional hyphens (-) into the character/number set that really don't belong in the site's address. So, if you would like your own copy of this extensive list, simply e-mail either Mike [REDACTED] or myself [REDACTED] directly and we will provide you with your own copy.

David Adams

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2010 VHPA Member Directory Information Deadline and Ordering Update

The deadline for information changes to the listings in both the paper and CD versions of the 2010 membership directories is 15 August 2010. Please get any changes or additions to HQ at 800-505-VHPA or HQ@vhpa.org before that date. Any information changes after that date will not be included in this year's paper or CD membership directories. We update the online membership directory at <http://www.vhpaservices.com> at least weekly and sometimes more often so this does not apply to the online directory.

If you wish to receive the 2010 paper or CD directories, you must tell HQ before the end of this August. They are priced at \$10 each and if you take no action, you will NOT receive a paper or CD Membership Directory. Any questions, please call HQ at 800-505-VHPA.

Gary Roush
Directory Committee
webmaster@vhpa.org

**Remember, the deadline for the next Aviator
is: **July 23, 2010****
David Adams, Editor of your VHPA Aviator

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Steve Rossiter



Editor's Note - we have had several queries about the photo that ran on the Front Cover of the last Aviator. Here's is the picture's history courtesy of Mike Law, the VHPA's Calendar editor: ~ This Official US Army photo is National Archives still media photo 111-CC-67680. The caption reads: "Members of Co. D, 503rd Inf., 173rd Abn. Bde., return sniper fire and call in gunship support while on a search and secure mission north of the Ai Lao River, 50 km northwest of Bong Song." The date is 29 Mar 1970. The UH-1H has the Casper Platoon (Aviation Platoon, H&HC 173 Airborne Brigade) emblem on the battery cover door. This was the cover photo for the 2009 VHPA Calendar.



From the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

It's not too early to be thinking about our annual Christmas in Vietnam Issue for 2010. This year I hope to concentrate on Bob Hope and what he meant to everyone lucky enough to see (or even fly) him in Vietnam. So dust off your old memories and dig up your old pictures - and show your support of the Aviator by contributing to this year's Christmas in Vietnam Issue. Unlike Battalion Standards, I really am "just here to help" you share your memories with all our Members.

David Adams

E-Mail: Editor@VHPA.org or

Phone

BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life member JOHN PENNY

DUSTOFF: NO COMPROMISE, NO RATIONALIZATION, NO HESITATION, FLY THE MISSION! details Steve Vermillion's service with the 45th MED Company in RVN and his personal journey in life. The title reflects upon the standards of Dustoff legend Charles Kelly as well as Vermillion's personal attitude toward flying medevac missions. He gives great credit to all the pilots and crew members "that diligently followed in Kelly's footsteps," and minces no words when leadership and performance fell short of those standards.

Vermillion's personal journey from a small town community college to the cockpit in early 1969 is a familiar one to many of us. However, he actually wanted to be a Dustoff pilot, a desire which earned him some harassment along the way. Coming fresh from the AMEDD Aviators course he arrived when the number of US forces in RVN had neared its peak and the mission of Dustoff had expanded dramatically from the original modest five UH-1As of the 57th Med Det. in 1962. The increasingly

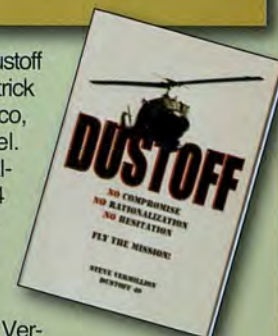
sophisticated anti-aircraft capabilities of the NVA presented serious challenges to the unarmed crews and their missions, especially during hoist extractions.

Vermillion describes a number of his missions in very gripping terms including one where a well executed ambush left him flying his bullet riddled Huey away with the words "maybe next time GI" ringing in his ears. Some missions, such as repeatedly trying to land on Nui Chua Chan Mountain in night/IFR conditions, were unsuccessful despite incredible effort from the crew and pressure from those on the ground. The success of another mission required ignoring the CO's edict on gunship support for hoist extractions in order to return a wounded soldier to the land of the living. Vermillion points out that experienced combat pilots on the scene sometimes found that "policies written by those who didn't fly combat missions were meaningless."

Vermillion gives the pioneers of Dustoff like Charles Kelly and John Temperelli their due

and honors the Dustoff MOH winners Patrick Brady, Louis Rocco, and Mike Novosel. He also memorializes the 214 Dustoff crewmembers that made the ultimate sacrifice "so that others may live." Vermillion's story is an intense commentary about the origins, missions, and leadership of Dustoff and he makes no bones that leadership was sometimes lacking. This book is a good one.

Dustoff : No Compromise! No Rationalization! No Hesitation! Fly the Mission!, (260 pages with photos, \$19.95) by Steve Vermillion, ISBN: 0974125601 is available from Steve at www.dustoff40.com (click on Store).



FRAGMENTS FROM VIETNAM by William "Bill" Deuchar is a collection of memories from his 1969 tour in RVN. Stepping off the ramp of a C-130 onto the hot and dusty tarmac at Phu Bai, Deuchar reported to the 12th SIG which was blessed with an attached aviation section consisting of two well worn UH-1Ds. This was not the flight assignment he had hoped for; his thoughts were more toward serving in the 1st Air Cav. However, after passing through his FNG phase and acquiring certain well

appreciated "supply" skills, his request for reassignment fell on deaf ears. "Extra duties" are the bane of any dedicated Army Aviator and Deuchar seemed to receive them all, but he discovered previously unknown skills in himself. His small unit was especially challenged by the need for timely parts in the labyrinth of the Army supply system. As he states, rather

unabashedly, he "developed some advantageous relationships." One in particular was named Joe, an expert in the newly developed computer inventory system at Long Binh - goodbye to clogged paperwork and annoying delays!

There are many entertaining "fragments" in this "been there done that" book including, such memories as EOD mishaps, "cowboys", "white mice," the Saigon curfew, burning outhouses, and delivering toys to orphanages. In the aerial department, he shares his adventures of deciphering navy landing instructions on a medevac to the USS Sanctuary, the joys of revetments, a hairy engine failure, and being shot up near Hoi An.

Deuchar has brought his memories out of the dust to share with us in this enjoyable book. He notes that many other "fragments" are missing and "lay buried over there...where they should be."

Fragments From Vietnam: Recollections of a Helicopter Pilot (\$12.00, 90 pages) by William "Bill" Deuchar ISBN: 9781600474194 is available from Wasteland Press, Amazon and other book suppliers.

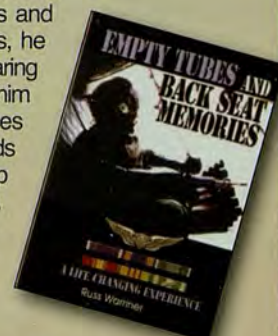
EMPTY TUBES AND BACK SEAT MEMORIES is the story of Russ Warriner's life changing 18 month tour of duty in RVN with C Battery, 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery (ARA - call sign Blue Max) as a crew chief/door gunner. He relates his journey from a small town in Massachusetts, through helicopter repair school, to the back seat of an underpowered UH-1B in combat. However, this book is also the story of his journey back to the "world" with the lasting memories of that time.

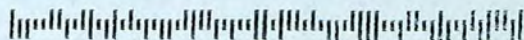
Combat action for Warriner started in November 1967 as he stepped off a Caribou at LZ "Two Bits" and caught a ride to his new unit. Just to kick off his tour, there was a fire mission thrown in on the way to Tam Ky. This set the tone for Warriner's intensive tour that included an onboard Mk-24 flare incident shortly after arriving at C Battery that sent him to the 2nd Surgical Field Hospital. He survived 51 cal fire, Tet, the A Shau Valley, and living and flying in the monsoon. He also worked with a variety of weapon systems including the XM-3 and Maxwell System as the Cobra gradually replaced the Huey for ARA operations.

Warriner, as most of us, carried the experiences and the losses of

those he served with in combat with him when he left RVN. There were failed relationships and adjustment problems. After several years, he was diagnosed with PTSD. Finding and sharing his experiences with other veterans helped him greatly as did writing about his experiences and those he served with. He recommends this as a way for all veterans to heal. To help further this he founded the Blue Max ARA Association now renamed the ARA Association which welcomes all who served in ARA units, including those in current conflicts.

Empty Tubes and Back Seat Memories: A Life Changing Experience (\$16.95, 375 pages) by Russ Warriner ISBN: 9781432753252 is available from outskirtspress.com or Amazon.





The Improvised Secret Weapon

By Stephen Cover

Now everybody knows that all war stories are obligated to start with "This Ain't No Sh*t"..... But, this one really is the truth.

Back in the late summer of 1967 (Statute of limitations is well past.... I hope) I was a helicopter pilot for D Troop 3/5th Cav. It was a few weeks before I qualified as command pilot in our unit flying the UH1-D Huey.

About 8 or 10 miles south of our base was a watermelon patch. My

picked green so they would ripen up in shipment.... Duh!!) That brought up the problem of what to do with the evidence.... We were sure our CO would enlarge our afterburner vents with a glowing poker if he found out about our larceny.

Well, the solution was obvious. There was a corner of a field just off of Highway 5 that always produced some enemy fire. Even though this was in a free fire zone, Command had pretty much decided that one VC shooting at helicopters that were at least a half mile out of range wasn't much of a threat and therefore there was no need to mount an attack on him as long as he stayed where he was. That VC became "The Prime Target".....

Design of our secret improvised weapon was discussed for some time (probably 3-4 minutes). We finally came up with the idea of stuffing the purloined watermelon with grenades to "Wipe Out" the lone VC at the corner of the field. We cut three holes in the watermelon, putting a Frag grenade in the center, and a WP on either side it. When the time came to drop our secret weapon, the crew chief would pull the grenade pins, and throw out the "Bomb". The grenade handles would be held in place until the watermelon burst on impact.... In theory anyway.

That afternoon, were sent on a recon mission. (I think Igor volunteered for it, but don't remember). On the way back, we drifted over to the target area. (Back in those days we flew at 1500 Ft AGL because 30 cal tracers would burn out way before they got to our altitude, making hits on a helicopter with small arms an iffy prospect at best.) At 1500 Ft, Igor started our bomb run. The order was

given to "Arm The Weapon"..... The pins were pulled.... Naturally, all of the communications on the intercom would have made a B-17 crew proud with both "waist" gunners on the lookout for ME 109s.

As we approached the target the Bombardier (Me) located the stream of tracers and advised the command pilot of the precise (?) location of the source. Igor made a slight course correction, and as we passed over the offending jungle, I hollered "Bombs Away". The crew chief threw out the watermelon and we started a tight turn so Igor could see the results....

Yep, we hit the jungle.... Not too close to the VC, but we did hit the jungle. A cloud of white smoke rose from the trees showing that our watermelon had shattered as planned when it hit the ground releasing the grenades. The tracers stopped. I doubt that our VC target had ever been shot at before. Unsure of our results, we returned to base.

The next day, Igor took us back to the target area.... You guessed it, a line of tracers arced up out of the usual place in the corner of the field. We were our usual 1/2 of a mile away and safe. Oh well, It was an unusual adventure anyway.... The war went on.

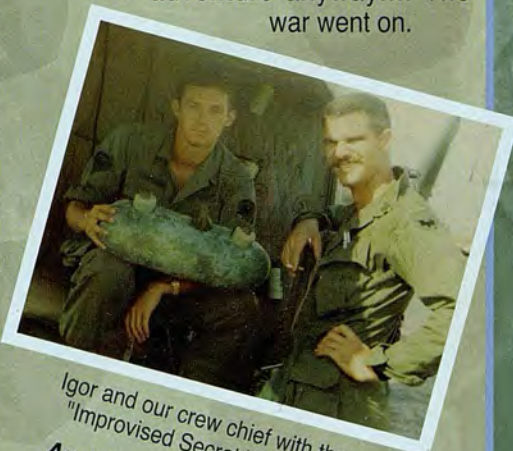


WO1 Stephen Cover, Longknife 23, D Troop 3/5th Cav in 1967 and author of this story

Aircraft Commander, "Igor", would always say we needed to get ourselves a watermelon every time we flew past.

One day, about half of the melons in the field were gone. They were being harvested. That was good enough for Igor. We swooped down on our way back from a mission and landed near the biggest melon in the patch. Our crew chief grabbed the melon and we were off. (Nothing like an armed helicopter for an escape vehicle)

Back at base we eagerly plugged the melon.... It was still white inside.... (We hadn't considered that they were



Igor and our crew chief with the "Improvised Secret Weapon" And "That Ain't No Sh*t"