

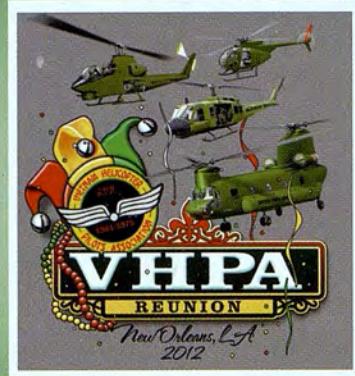


# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ~ Issue 30-02 ~ March/April 2012



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## MEMBERSHIP in VHPA IS GROWING

These last two months has seen an increase of over 50 new members, 42 REGULAR and 11 LIFE Members. A number of these are Marine Corps pilots - Welcome aboard  
- We're glad you joined us.

As of January 31 our newest member is Member #15334. The new LIFE MEMBERSHIP DUES SCHEDULE is also being really well received. Along with several new members joining as LIFE MEMBERS we have a lot of current and non-current guys converting to that status. Please review the new fee structure, I know you will like what you see. We had one guy join last September, Herbert Metoyer, and pay a 3-year \$99 fee as a REGULAR MEMBER. Turns out Herb was 75 at the time so yesterday I gave HQ another dollar in his name and converted Herb to a LIFE Member. Herb attended FW in 57-2, transitioned into RW shortly after, did two tours in Early Vietnam and was checked out in a UH-1 in 1961 by the Chief Test Pilot at Bell. Herb is coming to the New Orleans Reunion and I hope he spends a lot of time with me just telling stories. Unfortunately Herb's brother, Bryford, was one of our first KIA's.

One area that still lags is getting the non-current members to renew and over 4000 guys fall into this category. Sherry at HQ constantly sends out reminders and letters asking them to consider coming back and for now we are seeing 10-15 come back in each month. But we need your help. Call your non-current buddies and inspire them to renew. If you feel so inclined, you could pay the \$36 and get them current for at least a year. Yesterday, I even paid for LIFE MEMBERSHIPS for two men I know that were soon to be up for renewal, one is 65 and one is 77 so it was a little money well spent.

*Thanks in advance for your help.*

*Mike Sheuerman - Membership Chairman*

## AAAA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE DUE 1 May

Just a quick reminder for you to motivate your descendants to get their VHPA SCHOLARSHIP application ready and submitted to AAAA by 1 May.

The VHPA plans to award five \$1,000 scholarships this year, but all of our VHPA applicants are also eligible for all the other AAAA awards granted by that organization. All Scholarships are awarded on MERIT, not need. Go to [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org), click on VHPA SCHOLARSHIP and follow the prompts. Any questions? Feel free to contact me at: [msheuerman@tx.rr.com](mailto:msheuerman@tx.rr.com) or by phone at 214-802-4244.

VHPA would like to see over 50 applicants for our 5 awards this year and we hope to see 30-35 or more of our kids receive awards. VHPA consistently has very strong candidates and last year they received 12.5 percent of all the scholarships awarded. And on another note, don't forget to bring your crisp \$20 bill to the Annual Business Meeting at this year's Reunion in New Orleans. I will be AGAIN be collecting for this great cause!

*Mike Sheuerman Scholarship Committee  
Fundraising*



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

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### FROM MIKE LAW, PRESIDENT OF THE VHPA

*Three ideas please.....* (284)

I'm certain we've all heard the expression "ya snooze ya lose?" To the surprise of even the printer the VHPA 2012 Calendar sold out in early January. This is the second year running this happened – all 1,650 copies gone early in the year. In October the account manager at Acclaim Press reported that he "thought" they had sufficient inventory to make it into deep January and hopefully early February. Maybe everyone's response to The Aviator's Christmas issue boosted December sales? Anyway, they promise to increase the run length for 2013. Word of warning – please – do not wait until December 2012 to order your copy of the 2013 calendar – disappointment happens even to good people!

Speaking of the 2013 VHPA Calendar – our 20th issue by the way – the source material went at the printer in January, so you should start seeing the order form on [vhpao.org](http://vhpao.org) soon. The goal is for Acclaim Press to start filling orders about mid-June. Now is also the time to repent of your procrastination! That "good stuff" in that box in your closet needs to get sent to the Vietnam Archive after you make certain the VHPA Calendar Edition (that be me) has had a chance to review the pixs - PLEASE and THANK YOU!

Second idea - I trust most of us recall the famous 50th Anniversary celebrations connecting with WW II? I remember seeing many stories, etc. in the media. They always put a smile on my face and I thought, "Good for them!" Well – surprise, surprise – those 50th Anniversary activities are starting to stare VHPA'ers in the face as well. Recent email – the UTT wants to commemorate 16 Oct 1962; the first combat gunship mission. Many Aviation companies and battalions were formed in 1962 and were officially active in 1963, for example the 227th AHB 1st Cav Division – 1 Feb 1963. Don't know if you've seen all the good stuff connected with the Celebration of 100 years of Naval Aviation? WOW! Impressive!! I hope (beg might be a better word) that you get involved. Use The Aviator to announce events you discover. Make certain your local chapter knows about events in your area. Gentlemen, don't miss out on these opportunities!!

In closing I want to tell you about an unsung hero – Sammie Williams, the wife of our Member Robert Williams of Granbury, Texas. Out of the blue, beginning in Nov 2010, Sammie started sending HQ the obituaries of deceased helicopter pilots from all over the country, since then she has sent us over 100 such notices. I trust you know the Taps Section is the most popular section in the magazine. Our Members tell us they read that section first, and more often than any other section of the Aviator. It was my pleasure to spend a few minutes on the phone with Sammie the other day and I sent along our appreciation for her services. I had planned to recognize her at this year's Reunion but it doesn't look like they will be able make it. But, if you would also like to pass on your appreciation for what she does for the VHPA, her e-mail address is: [REDACTED]

*See you in New Orleans!*

# Restoring Helicopters and Memories

by Steve Davis

Chuck Carlock wanted to fly. In 1966, he decided the Army offered him the best opportunity for flight training, plus a chance to employ that training in Vietnam. He arrived in Vietnam in 1967 and joined the 71st Assault Helicopter Company that operated in Chu Lai. Initially he flew gunships and later slicks, helicopters without guns. During his 12 month tour, he participated in many dangerous operations, including some in Laos and others during the Tet offensive. During a troop insertion, he was shot down. His crew chief was seriously wounded and Chuck sustained minor injuries.

When he returned to "the world", he earned an accounting degree, worked for Atlantic Richfield Corporation, then KPMG, remarkably rising to full partner within seven years. Next, the Bass family in Fort Worth hired him as accountant. This became his day job for more than 30 years. After he settled into his home with 40 acres and several barns south of Fort Worth, Chuck Carlock decided to pursue restoration of helicopters associated with his training and his service in the 71st Assault Helicopter unit in Vietnam. Although he wanted a personal collection, even more Chuck wanted some Vietnam era helicopters to be available permanently for the enjoyment and education of many generations. He was disturbed to see museum collections and personal collections of memorabilia deteriorating as owners aged or financial support declined.

Chuck wanted a set of aircraft that represented Vietnam era training and service - TH-55 (training), OH-58 (scouting), AH-1 (attack), and UH-1 (utility, some with guns). He learned that some of the models he was seeking could be found in boneyards not far from home. In a local scrap yard he found an OH-58 observation helicopter that had served ingloriously as a target on a shooting range at Fort Hood. Because of its poor condition and numerous bullet holes, the dealer offered it for sale as scrap metal by the pound. Chuck bought what remained of the entire aircraft. Then he had to buy a 40 foot trailer to haul it all home.

Chuck could not find an intact AH-1 Cobra gunship. Another collector donated a hull that formerly flew with the "Redskin" unit in Vietnam. Hoping to restore a single helicopter, he found it necessary to buy remains of five crashed AH-1's from a local scrap dealer. Bringing them home required a group of volunteers driving several trucks with trailers. From another dealer he bought a cobra door, and from yet another several pieces of cobra glass.

A friend notified Chuck that a UH-1D flying at West Point, NY was ready for retirement and Chuck could have it. At the end of the long trip to NY, he discovered he would have to remove the mast, main rotor blade and tail rotor blade to mount the aircraft on his trailer, and he had to hurry. Winter weather was deteriorating. Fortunately, local volunteers helped him finish the job before the storm arrived.

Chuck heard that the hull of a TH-55 trainer was resting in a boneyard in South Carolina. After he brought it home, a fellow collector, a Vietnam veteran crew chief, brought him enough parts to make it whole again.

Gathering bodies and parts for four aircraft into barns on his property was only the beginning of the project. Massive reconstruction was necessary to make these birds resemble those that had served in Vietnam. Probably it is clear from his success in finding helicopters and parts that Chuck is a master of networking and improvising. Chuck's congeniality helped attract the team for this project that "took a village" to complete. As word of his project spread through the ranks of former crew chiefs and mechanics, several of them travelled to his home to assist. Some of them stayed for weeks at a time.

The painstaking reconstruction work triggered flashbacks as participants would notice something linked to a memory. For example, one crew chief told Chuck the colored lights below the doors were reversed. Chuck asked, "how do you know?" This launched the crew chief into a war story of a night time adventure whose memory was triggered by the way these lights dimly, eerily illuminated the aircraft interior. During another work session, Chuck noticed his former crew chief sitting idly for a long time by the mount for the door gun. "What are you thinking about," Chuck asked. "Remember that day when I had a C-ration can fastened to the M60 machine gun to smoothly flow the ammunition into the gun. We took fire and I screamed in horror. You asked what happened and when you looked back you thought I was mortally wounded, for it appeared my brains had splattered on my face and shirt. But I was OK. It turned one of the rounds had pierced the can of pork and beans and exploded it." The project continued for many weeks, restoring memories as well as helicopters.



Continued on Pg. 30

# THE NIGHT HAWK STORY - “NIGHT FIGHTERS”



In 1969 a hunter-killer team concept for protecting Camp Gorvad was established that put a “hunter” aircraft, an armed UH-1 Helicopter from Echo Battery, 82nd Artillery in the night sky and escorted by a heavily armed killer aircraft, an AG-1 Cobra from Bravo Battery, 2/20th ARA and more commonly referred to as “Blue Max”.

The UH-1 known as Night Hawk flew blacked-out at 400 feet and 40 knots over the tree tops patrolling Camp Gorvad AO. Night Hawk’s job was to identify the enemy with an Infra-red searchlight, and then “mark” the enemy targets with 50,000 watts of Xenon white light. Blue Max engaged any target marked by the solid shaft of white light streaming to the ground from Night Hawk. Blue Max, cruising at 1200' with Nav lights up on flash bright, carried a Mini-Gun that was capable of firing 4000 rounds of 7.62 bullets a minute, a 40mm Grenade Launcher capable of firing 150 high explosive grenades in 30 seconds, and 2.75mm Rocket Launcher capable of firing 76 rockets. Now just imagine you are the enemy, night by night witnessing the capabilities of these two helicopters. What would be your first concern? Mine would be death... especially with the mantra “Stay away from Camp Gorvad” running through my head. The concept worked with the enemy just as well.

Echo Battery, 82nd Artillery and Bravo Battery, 2/20th ARA, were both small company size units. Although they are Artillery by name, they are Aviation by Mission. The team’s mission was to protect Camp Gorvad at night and work to eliminate the ever-present rocket and mortar attacks delivered by Charlie onto the base camp at night. The efforts of the team proved so successful that for 31 straight nights Camp Gorvad did not suffer a single attack. On the 32nd night however, the weather was zero/zero in ground fog and the entire Camp Gorvad AO was socked-in. Unable to fly, the Night Hawk team stayed on the ground and the enemy spontaneously bombarded Camp Gorvad all through the night.

Now this is how the Night Fighters made it work: the two hunter- killers would leave their revetments in the black of night. Once airborne, Night Hawk would begin communication with several inserted target detection teams and listening posts strategically spaced across the expanse of the Camp Gorvad AO. These ground teams consisted of infantrymen on patrol who were the eyes and ears on the ground reporting movement to the Tactical Operations Command Post back at the camp. With this system of defense, the Camp Gorvad AO was being watched over and guarded by the teams both day and night. When one of the ground teams reported enemy activity and confirmed their location to the TOC, the Night Hawk/Blue Max Team would fly to their location. With powerful infra-red beams emitting from the light, the “Light Man” could see specific detail on the ground through the 10-inch starlight scope, much like watching a football game from the top bleachers with a good pair of binoculars in the daylight. Once the “Light Man” reported the target was sighted, Night Hawk would establish an orbit around railroad flares dropped by the M-60 door gunner at 90, 180, 270 and 360 degrees around the target and now lighting up the jungle floor.

Then it was time for the Night Hawk crew to verify the location of the friendly ground troops and confirm all clearances. Then, like an explosion from the sky, the 50,000 watts of light hit the ground to mark the target for Blue Max. Night was turned into day. All ground troops would call clear of the light and Blue Max rolled in but with the white light on, Night Hawk was a sitting duck at 40 knots, 400 feet from the enemy. In self defense the Night Hawk crewman manning the electric powered mini-gun pulled the trigger, and with an almost intolerable roar, the gun began laying down defensive fire from the Night Hawk, fire that rained down a bright red string of tracers; 2000 rounds a minute streaming down the brilliant shaft of white light. The tracers in the ammo made it look like a fire hose was pouring a solid stream of molten metal into the now-lit jungle below. Simultaneously, 4 to 6 pair of rockets screamed in from Blue Max impacting into the circle of light below. Suddenly the white light went out, and the signature wop, wop, wop of the Huey rotor blades carried Night Hawk back into the night.

 **DPMO**  
Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of two U.S. servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified. Army Lt. Col. Glenn McElroy, 35, of Sidney, Ill., and Capt. John M. Nash, 28, of Tipton, Ind., were buried as a group, in a single casket in Arlington National Cemetery.

On March 5, 1966, the men were flying an OV-1A Mohawk aircraft that failed to return from a reconnaissance mission over southern Laos. An American forward air controller, operating in the area, reported witnessing the OV-1A aircraft crash after encountering heavy enemy anti-aircraft artillery. Immediate search-and-rescue teams flew over the crash site but were unable to locate any survivors.

Twice in 1988, Joint Accounting Command (JPAC), surveyed the crash site and found OV-1 aircraft wreckage and crew-related equipment—including an identification tag bearing Nash’s name. Between 2005 and 2009, the team interviewed witnesses, investigated, surveyed and excavated the crash site several times. They recovered human remains, more aircraft wreckage and crew-related equipment.

Today more than 1,600 servicemen remain unaccounted for. More than 900 servicemen have been accounted for from that conflict, and returned to their families for burial with military honors since 1973. The U.S. government continues to work closely with the governments of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to recover all Americans lost in the Vietnam War.

# OLD GIRLFRIEND or Hand Salute to a Vietnam Vet

by Mike Law and Bill Robie

One of my good friends, Bill Robie, a fellow member of Rocky Mountain Chapter VHPA, lives nearby in the west Denver area and gave me a call late one afternoon in March, 2011. Bill said he ran into one of my old girlfriends and wanted to know if I'd like to go see her tomorrow afternoon. Well, since Dianna and I have been together for more than 30 years and since she actually was my high school sweetheart – I was having a problem following Bill's "old girlfriend" thread. Turns out, Bill was right! The "girl" was a Huey that I'd flown some 43 years ago!

On that day last March, the vegetation and scrub trees in the foothills immediately northwest of downtown Golden were on fire and hundreds of acres were burning up. But help was on the scene in the form of Rampart Helicopter Services N911UH. 911 was obviously a UH-1H and had all the looks of a Vietnam veteran. This was later confirmed by the owner, Jeff Armstrong, who was on site serving as operations coordinator and Bambi bucket ground control. He says 911 was actually 67-17233 and this is confirmed by the Bell Helicopter plate on the left-side pilot door frame. Jeff is even sentimental enough about his bird's history that he maintains occasional contact with one of its former Vietnam crewmembers, Russ Talley. Russ checks in every once in a while to make sure that Jeff is taking good care of her.

Bill thought it would be worthwhile to check through the VHPA's copy of U. S. Army "Goldbook" Vietnam helicopter database to identify the Vietnam units 67-17233 served with. He found that 233 spent most of its time in Vietnam with HHT/7/17th Cav from 2/68 through 12/69. Then he searched through the VHPA directory for names he recognized that



Mike Law stands beside N911UH in March, 2011.

served with that unit. He quickly called to tell me what he'd discovered and suggested we go meet my "old girlfriend." What Bill didn't know was that our Headquarters and Headquarters Troop only had five UH-1Hs – so it is almost for sure that I flew 233 at least once during my tour in Vietnam. Additionally one of my good friends, Chuck Lund, also crewed 233 and had photos of it in Vietnam!

So, the next afternoon, I met up with Bill and we traveled just a few miles north of Golden to a county open space trailhead park-

ing lot that was being used as a base of operations for the fire fighters. There, in all her proud glory was my "old girlfriend." It was a special moment to see her again, stand by the door, and then take in all the sights, sounds, and smells as she cranked up and hovered off vertically for departure and continuation of a long and proud service career.

## But wait! There is more to the story!

233 was involved in a major battle that B Troop had with the NVA near Bu Prang on 2 Nov 1969. In the space of just a few minutes B Troop had two LOHs and a Cobra shot down in a large "L" shaped area surrounded by tall trees and numerous NVA bunkers protected by anti-aircraft weapons. There were six B Troopers on the ground. VHPA Members WO Bob Rodgers (the HHT Pay Officer) and 1LT Joe Feeney (a maintenance officer who was flying for the heck of it that day) plus SP5 Chuck Lund as CE and (we believe) PFC Allen Sybesma as gunner were flying 233 on a "milk run" to pay the various 7/17th Cav guys in the area. When B Troop asked for help from any Huey's in the area, Bob Rodgers answered the call. 233 was the only Squadron Huey equipped with a rescue hoist and everyone thought that might come in handy. As 233 orbited the "L" shaped area, they saw at least one of the downed airman hiding near a tree. [Naturally none of the guys on the ground had a survival radio!] On short final Joe was wounded in the leg as the NVA shot up 233. Bob pulled out, flew Joe to an aid station, put Chuck in Joe's seat and returned to the battle. It was getting dark. Bob saw a strobe light, landed and rescued 1LT Kirk Curran. Later that night CW2 George Grega died and over the next few days CPT Lou Chirichigno, WOs Mike Peterson and Jim Nowicki and SGT Vernon Shepard became NVA POWs. Miraculously even though 233 was badly shot up (no radios and lots of holes) there were no serious leaks. As best we can determine 233 was turned over to the ADS (most likely the 604th TC CO in Pleiku) because the last entry in the "Goldbook" for 233 is dated Dec 1969. That means 233 was so badly damaged as to be uneconomical to repair and hence removed from the Army's inventory! Obviously it was returned to CONUS and eventually sold for the civilian use. We need to thank Bill Robie for helping us reconnect with an important piece of 7/17th Cav "Ruthless Riders" history.



Chuck Lund provided this 1969 photo of 233 in its revetment at Ban Me Thuot East.

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Postscript – Bob Rodgers received the Distinguished Service Cross and Chuck Lund the Distinguished Flying Cross for their actions that day. Mike Law met Joe Feeney at the VHPA 1994 Philly Reunion but since then he has "gone walkabout." If anyone knows Joe, please have him call me or VHPA HQ? Thanks, Mike Law

# OLD DOG Flies Real Mission

*After Last Year's Crash at the Reno Airshow*

*Editor's Note: A Huey, reconfigured and painted in its original Vietnam paint scheme of the 25th Aviation Battalion was entered in last year's National Aviation Heritage Foundation's Invitational Competition at last year's Reno Air Races. On Friday, September 16th, what was up till then a great experience went all to hell when a P-51 Mustang airplane went out of control and crashed into the edge of the grandstands. What follows here is what VHPA Member Ray Murphy wrote about that day...*

I was one of the 25th Avn Battalion Huey crewmembers in Reno that day. On the day of the tragedy we were parked in the display area when the crash occurred and were immediately asked to lend assistance. On-site medical personal told us there were at least 12 dead and an additional 130 spectators injured.

But first we had to push (no access to a tug) the 6,200 pound helicopter to the ramp so we could get blade clearance to start, unfortunately the distance was about 100 meters, and it was up hill all the way. We slapped some ground handling wheels on the aircraft, organized a lot of volunteer help and finally made it. Mike Haus, one of the owners of the Huey knew we needed some fuel so he chased down the tanker and ordered 100 gallons. Chris, the other owner of the Huey spent the time ripping out the two seats behind the pilot seats to make room for the stretchers. When the fuel truck arrived, the driver would not pump fuel until he received the credit card and I honestly don't know if Chris threw his billfold or just the credit card at the driver. Then the driver pumped the 100 gallons but wouldn't leave until he had a signature for the credit card. Just unbelievable! We fired the bird up anyway, and would have blown the driver away with the rotor wash if he finally hadn't come to his senses and got out of the way.

Two of our crew, Dave a retired fireman, and Brent a CHP Officer ran to triage to tell them of our capabilities while we hovered the helicopter past the wreckage to get closer to the medical center and the injured. I could not believe what I was seeing.

Immediately two stretcher patients were loaded on our floor, and two ambulatory patients were loaded in the door gunner seats. But now came the hard part as we were not familiar with the city of Reno or where the hospital with the trauma center was located. But everything that day that could have gone right for us, went right. First a civilian air ambulance landed and one of the nurses came over to tell us where the hospital was located and where to land; a city park located next to hospital. So off we went for the short 10-minute flight. We had no communication with the hospital to let them know that we were en-route, or the number of patients we had on board, but I guess others must have let them know we were on the way. The park was clear when we arrived and medical personnel came running out of the emergency room the minute we touched down, they immediately took over care for our patients.

After we were unloaded the patients we flew back to Stead Field to help some more, but we were told no more assistance was needed. We returned to the ramp, and kept running for another 5 minutes in case they changed their mind. But when I asked once again, and received the same reply, we shut down.



Then we did the one thing that was just as painful that day as it was over 45 years ago, we washed the blood off the floor of the Huey. Only then did this horrible tragedy sink in for me. But this time I later received some very nice phone calls from two of the patients that we transported that day, and that part of what happened in Reno was very nice.

*Editor's Note: Helicopter Association International presented their 2012 Eurocopter Salute to Excellence Award to the Huey Crew from the 25th Infantry Division who jumped into action that day. One of nine international awards, it was presented to the crew at the Salute to Excellence Dinner on February 13, 2012 during the association's trade show Heli-Expo 2012 in Dallas, Texas. "These awards honor those who uphold the helicopter industry's highest traditions. In an industry for which safety is so important, everyone strives to do their very best—and these awards pay tribute to those who rise above the rest," said Matt Zuccaro, president of the Alexandria, Virginia based organization that represents more than 3,000 members in 70 countries.*

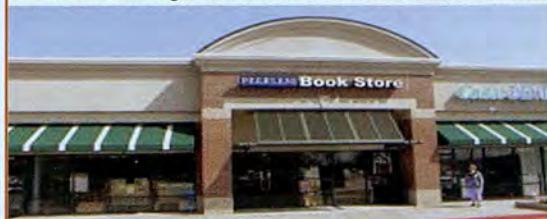
**Peerless  
BOOK STORE**



Co-owner Susan Clotfelter Jimison, wife of VHPA Member Mike Jimison, Pink Panther 21 ~ announces the stocking of a special line of Vietnam War Military History Books at their store in Alpharetta, Georgia.

Signed copies of *Tom Marshall's Price of Exit* have arrived already. More VHPA Authors, including *Mike Sloniker, Chuck Holley, Frank Anton, John Boden* and *David Ballantine* are also on-hand. Titles include *Primer of the Helicopter War, Strength and Honor, To The Limit* and many, many more.

Susan is now working on stocking all the titles on John Penny's list of the VHPA specific books. Call with your requests. [REDACTED]  
email [REDACTED] or order through the website at [Peerlessbookstore.com](http://Peerlessbookstore.com).



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# THE RUB...by Doug Gandy

As I stand on this side of the Grand Canyon and look across to the far hazy rim in the distance, I am having thoughts and memories of days long past. In one respect, the far rim is dim and distant, with vague images. But in another respect it has become more clear - more defined - more vivid. This might be due to the old light bulb syndrome. You know, — how —, just before a light bulb burns out, it suddenly becomes more bright - more vivid, — and then - bam. That could be what I am experiencing - I don't know. But I am having these thoughts and images of Vietnam so I thought I would put them on paper while the light bulb is still on.

Give me some latitude guys - I know our experiences are unique and different - so when I say "we" I am speaking in a generic way. Don't get your panties in a wad and start throwing rocks if you have a different recollection. OK?

After we migrated through flight school at Ft Walters and Ft Rucker, a Spec-4 in the puzzle palace matched our name to a unit and our fates were sealed.

We arrived in Vietnam right out of flight school and we were pretty much worthless. My Unit was A troop 7/1 Cav in the Delta on the Mekong River, outside a village called Vinh Long, and it was 1969, and I was worthless. On a good day, with a check list, I might get a Huey started.

So this is what started me thinking. As I stand here and look back toward the far rim, it seems to me that we evolved through about 4 or 5 phases during our 12 month Vietnam experience. The first phase being - pretty much worthless.

My unit was made up of slicks, guns, and scouts and, except for Christmas - 2 safety stand-downs - and the death of Ho Chi Minh, we put a combat load in the air everyday. Four UH-1s for troop insertion, two pair of cobra gun ships for air cover and two pair of OH-6 scouts, to do what ever it was the scouts did - and a C&C (command and control) high bird. Our mission was search and destroy. I was a new-guy in the UH-1 slick platoon. I remember going to the flight-line for the first time. Each aircraft was parked between 7 foot high concrete walls (revetments). I ask "when are the tugs going to pull them out for us?"

We were told to sit in the right seat - don't touch anything - just watch and learn. It's easy to spot a new-guy. He is as shiny as a new penny, from his eyes to the 38 revolver on his hip. He always has his chicken plate and his safety flairs. He usually has a Playboy magazine in his flight bag. (He has not yet come to realized what is really important - but that will come soon enough). The learning curve is fast and steep. Our young lad is re-learning flight school in short order.

The next phase I'll call the competent phase. Before long we were flying down the ramp at something more than a "brisk walk" and into and out of the revetments without a thought. Our chest plates were being stowed under the seats - They "really were" hot, heavy, uncomfortable and they "really would" be in the way in a "Get the hell out of the aircraft" situation. The revolvers slowly became cameras, and the Playboy magazines were replaced with more important thoughts and images — Food. Mom's great home cooked meals, hamburgers, milkshakes, coconut cream pie. Forget girls - We began to dream about food. And we began to learn how to fly our aircraft in the combat environment.

Due to attrition - some injuries, - but mostly re-assignments and rotations back to the US, at about the 4th to 5th month we had a major transformation . We were assigned as Aircraft Commanders (PIC - Pilot in Command).

For some of us, this was the first time we were put in command of anything. This was MAJOR. We had control and responsibility over men, over machinery, over a combat mission (and our average age was 19 1/2). Our names were painted on the side of the aircraft with the letters AC next to it. As we walked up, the crew chief and door gunner would give us a status report - The crew and co-pilot would look to us for guidance - direction - leadership. The learning curve was still steep but we were beginning to see the big picture. We walked with a swagger. We began to develop our style - our philosophy - our Mission Statement - - - - And — and it had Nothing to do with medals, — or killing gooks, — or winning battles or wars.

*"We got'a get out of this place ----- If it's the last-----"*

We experienced hours of boredom, interrupted with moments of terror. We flew almost everyday, everything from unloading troops in smoking bomb craters to recovering medivac wounded off mountain tops (yep, we had a few mountains in the Delta). Night flare drops to full suppression insertions. From Napalm



Our Author in the Summer of 1969 while flying with A Troop 7/1 Cav

to Orange. Flechettes to Arch lights - It was an exciting, terrifying, horrible, time.

At around the 9th to 10th month we slowly evolved into a new phase. This one was not as defined. There were no new letters after our names, but, due to the same reasons as above, we found ourselves as Senior Aircraft Commanders. We had our ducks in a row. We could plant one skid on an out-cropping of a steep ledge and hold it there while the crew unloaded supply's, as we explained to the new co-pilot what was happening - we could give C&C an update, check on the unloading of supplies going on behind us and, if a mortar exploded in front of us, - the right hand on the cyclic would not waver - Our ducks were lined up. We were the go-to guys - When the missions came down - we were ask to do the hard ones. *"Sure Boss, I'll take that single ship night resupply - piece of cake"*

Mason, in his book *Chickenhawk*, does a good job of describing this phase of our flying skill. (A great book, IMHO). We had the Aircraft Control Touch - The Combat Situational Awareness - and the courage built on skill and experience.

Not just the crews, but the whole unit looked to us for leadership. New Commanders (as they rotated in and out every 6 months - to punch their combat command ticket) would ask us questions. We would answer their questions and give them our advice, — but - - we would never tell them that our Mission Statements did not match theirs.

But - then - something happens. As most of us will learn later in life. It is one thing to get the ducks lined up. It is another thing to keep the little critters there. They begin to wander. It might be a letter from home - or - it might be a good friend has a very bad day. In my case, it was a page being turned on a calendar. There it was, circled in red - The day - the go home date. "I might really make it" And that's when we enter the new phase - we become, A Short Timer.

We begin to act differently - We dust off the ole chicken plate - If we had been talkers , we talk less- If we were smokers , we smoke more - We stop giving good answers to questions and say things like " you Dip Shit - Put the fckn camera down and pay attention".

The same guy that said "Piece of cake" a few weeks before is now standing in the day room with his hands on his hips.

*"NO FKN WAY - You can throw me in the Brig for all I care - I Ain't doin that mission".*  
This is a totally different phase.

Some of the new-guys might roll their eyes - But then a PIC would stand up - "OK guys, cut him some slack - I can take that one Boss"

And so, it comes full circle - We arrive in-country, pretty much Worthless - and we leave to go home - Pretty much Worthless. But that's not the point -- Its all the shit that happens between those twelve months - The transformations and the evolutions - The laughter and the tears - The losses and the life long friendships.

*There-in lies - THE RUB.*

Douglas Gandy  
CW-5 Retired

Oklahoma Army National Guard  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

# Looking For - Rescue Aircrew from battle of 9 March 1968

My name is Harley Mick Hawkins, I was with D company 1st and 50th Infantry, I was what we called a boat person as I came over from the states with the unit on the USS Pope. When we arrived Gen. Westmoreland greeted us and told us that "we will walk you, or fly you, or ride you - but we will get you to the enemy". He really kept his word on that. We constantly were assaulted from choppers, used our M113 APC's to carry us and/or just plain marched to find the enemy.

We were stationed at LZ Uplift and worked out of LZ English, LZ Pony, AN Khe, and others. LZ Uplift did not have helicopters, so we got them out of English and An Khe (or other locations) depending on our needs and our location.

In December of 1967 we took it to the NVA in a battle called Tam Quan and they were not real happy with us. On March 9th 1968 we were in a night position at a location south of LZ Uplift near a village along Highway One in the Binh Dinh province (app. Grid BR908704) at a place we called Lits or Litts, they said it was an old WWII air field.

Early that morning a large unit of NVA hit us with rockets and automatic weapons fire. They hit three or four of our APC's with rockets and they caught on fire. They also hit the Command APC in the center of our perimeter which knocked us out of radio contact with anyone else. The NVA then tried to overrun us where they had knocked out the APCs and I was on one of APC's that was hit with the Rockets. I was wounded in the leg and we had to fight for our lives, I thought that we were going to get overrun for sure. For the first time I used my M-16 on full auto, they were that close.

The command APC finally found a hand held radio and called for air sup-



port. I'm not sure how long all this took but it seemed to be a really long time. Before long we had several dead and wounded and a chopper came in to pick up our wounded. Just as they landed right outside our perimeter, they were shot down by the NVA but luckily no one was seriously wounded. All the crew eventually made it into our perimeter where they joined us in fighting through the night.

I have always wanted to know who these brave men were. They risked it all to help us and if anyone knows anyone that was a crewman or pilot on this ship please let me know. I have attached a picture of the chopper that went down that day. Sorry that it's not a very good picture but it's beautiful to me.

Thank You

Harley Mick Hawkins

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Editor's note, contact me for Mick's home phone number – David Adams

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**VHPA Satisfied Clients**

- Dan Fox
- John Shafer
- John Penny
- Lanny Julian
- Terry Opdahl
- Korean War Vet Satisfied Client Kenny Hames Photos of War Tour
- 1952-53 Heartbreak Ridge & Sugarloaf

**Ned Crimmin**  
**TSgt, USAF, Ret**  
USAFSS Intelligence Analyst 1964-74  
USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83  
Tours of Duty:  
1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx  
1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England  
1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.  
1971-74 Osan AB, ROK  
1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca

**D Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment**

deployed in Vietnam from 1966 through 1971  
is having a Reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada  
from 12 through 15 April, 2012  
and you are invited to join us!

*Reunion Headquarters is the South Point Hotel and Casino*

Email Doug Donnell at: [REDACTED]  
or Ron Adams at: [REDACTED]  
for full details.





# NEW ORLEANS IS BACK FROM KATRINA

*better than ever!*

We have moved the date for this year's reunion away from the 4th of July weekend specifically for those who have told us for years they can not come that weekend because of other commitments. Well now is your chance to attend a reunion so we hope to see you there 31 July – 5 August 2012!

Our primary objective is to provide a safe and comfortable atmosphere for you to reconnect with your past experiences in the military especially those related to flying helicopters in the Vietnam War. It is comforting to be among those who have had similar experiences and those who truly understand those experiences. We are an elite group of men who have survived extraordinary risks by using unique skills requiring incredible courage. We are all of like mind so striking up a conversation with a "stranger" is easy and interesting. Many of us who have attended several reunions have developed new and lasting friendships beyond just reconnecting with our friends from the past. We also provide the opportunity to learn more about our war through Historical Presentations, War Story sessions and special documentaries.

There is something magic about New Orleans that does not exist in any other city. Come find out for yourself. The hotel is the Hilton New Orleans Riverside walking distance from the French Quarter with an incredible nightly rate of \$119. Many things are walking distance, however, the Riverfront Streetcar is out the front door if you don't want to walk. Share the excitement of the Warehouse/Arts District, or try your luck at Harrahs Casino across the street. Connected to the hotel you will find the Riverwalk Marketplace, featuring more than 140 shops and restaurants. You can also visit the Louisiana Children's Museum, IMAX Theater, The National World War II Museum, and Superdome. Nightlife? Ah, the nightlife. It's all there, waiting for you, and Hilton puts you front and center. Bring your friends and family. The schedule as of December 2011 is on the back of this sheet. For an up-to-date schedule of events and registration, go

to our web site at <http://www.vhpa.org> and click on Reunion Information.

We guarantee you that you and your friends and family will not be bored in New Orleans. We have many events to select from with the offerings so numerous it is impossible to attend all of them. This means we have covered the full range of reunion desires all the way from simply enjoying friends in the hotel over a few drinks in the "O Club" to spending the entire week on outside tours with just about any combination of inside and outside events in between. Also in the hotel this year, we are having a comedian group perform on Wednesday night followed on Thursday night with a special premiere of a Dustoff documentary done by Arrowhead Films. This documentary will compare Dustoff operations in Afghanistan with Vietnam. Friday night will be the 10th Anniversary Celebration of the filming of In the Shadow of the Blade an award winning documentary. This documentary got its start at our 2000 reunion in Washington, DC. Many of the "stars" of the show and crew members will be in attendance along with a special "director's cut" of the film. This is a must attend event.

Please note that several events are capacity restricted. The hotel is restricting our room block so you need to make reservations early to insure you benefit from our special room rate of \$119 per night. This rate may no longer be available once our room block sells out. Check our web site at <http://www.vhpa.org> for the latest and greatest reunion information. Please sign up now so you do not miss out on those events that are capacity restricted.

Gary Roush  
[webmaster@vhpa.org](mailto:webmaster@vhpa.org)  
National Reunion Committee Chairman

## Do your part - Take a Leadership Role in the VHPA

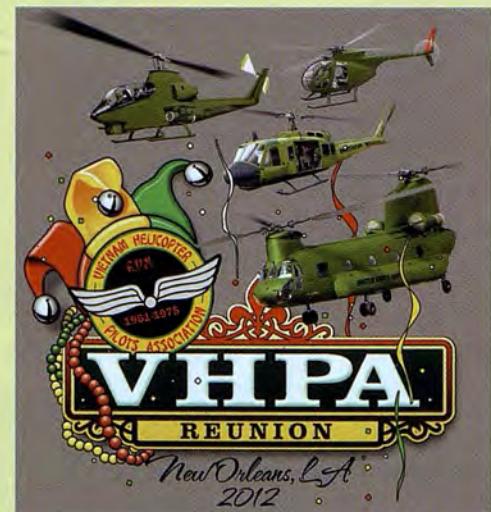
Do you have the time to participate on the VHPA Executive Council? The VHPA leadership circle is the focal point for executing and ensuring the association's mission, and is made up by members just like you. Your Executive Council (EC) consists of six members: past President, presiding President, Vice President, and three members-at-large (senior, mid-term and junior). The Executive Council is the focal point that keeps our Association running and viable for all our Members.

At this year's Annual Business Meeting we will elect men to fill two positions, Vice President (VP) and Junior Member at Large, and each brings a three-year commitment to ensure leadership continuity. Executive Council members have specific duties, but all are expected to attend and assist during the annual national reunion, participate at the annual business meeting, be available for the monthly conference call and to actively attend to VHPA interests.

The requirement for candidates is straightforward: the individual must be an active member for one year prior to the first day of the 2012 annual VHPA National Reunion. The nomination process is easy, as well. You may personally volunteer or you may nominate another active VHPA member who is willing to serve. The nomination, however, must be received in writing (e-mail or letter) by the VHPA EC Junior-Member at Large not later than midnight, June 15, 2012.

To volunteer, nominate, or to discuss the EC duties and election process, please contact Clyde Romero, our current Junior Member at Large and Election Coordinator. He will provide you with an application packet and form to complete and return. The nominee form details basic biographical information which will be posted to the VHPA website by June 20, 2012. This notice itself fulfills VHPA policy to notify members and to seek nominees for the Vice President and Junior Member at Large positions.

Clyde Romero  
Email [REDACTED]  
Cell [REDACTED]



The 29th Annual VHPA Reunion  
New Orleans, LA  
31 July – 5 August 2012  
Hilton New Orleans Riverside

*It's New Orleans -  
you're different here!*

By New Orleans VHPA Chapter President Vic Lent

## THE BIG EASY INSIDER

The 2012 reunion hotel is as close to the "happening center" of New Orleans as one can be. There are open lunch and evening meal times on the schedule of events. So let's fill up the openings on your dance cards.

One restaurant you want to do for certain is Drago's which is right in the hotel. "I got'ta tell you da truth" (old New Orleans saying), this is not a typical hotel restaurant. The original Drago's is still going strong in nearby Metairie but there's no need to drive out there. Owner Tommy Cvitanovich opened Drago's in the Hilton Riverside and every dish there is as outstanding as at the original location. Yes they have oysters on the half shell and all the famous New Orleans dishes but Drago's is most noted for their creation, Charbroiled Oysters. Please try them. And know that you are dealing with a family that gives back to the people of Louisiana. In the weeks after Hurricane Katrina, nearly 80,000 people got free meals at their Metairie location. This past year Tommy received The Times-Picayune Loving Cup given by the daily paper to an outstanding role model in the area.

Another restaurateur that gives back is Chef Duke LoCicero of Cafe Giovanni at 117 Decatur Street, just a few blocks from the Reunion hotel. He distributed nearly \$10,000 in gifts to sick children at Children's Hospital this Christmas bringing the total that Chef Duke's Foundation for Kids has distributed over the years to \$190,000. At this restaurant you can catch live opera singers with your dinner on Wednesday thru Friday nights.

For first time visitors I recommend the "Feed Me" deal. Tell the waiter what you want to spend and the Chef will send out a series of appetizer sized dishes to give you a taste of oh so many wonderful dishes. That all for now. I got'ta go to the Quarter and get something to eat and maybe catch a parade. It's Carnival Time. I'll be thinking about you.

*Victor Lent*

Send your questions to me (Big Chief Vee) at:  
[vhpaw-neworleans@earthlink.net](mailto:vhpaw-neworleans@earthlink.net)

### MORE DETAILS:

(<http://www.dragosrestaurant.com/>)  
& (<http://www.cafegiovanni.com/index.htm>)

### Want to set up Vendor Table at the Reunion?

Know any Vendors  
you would like us  
to invite to our  
Reunion?



Please contact our Vendor Room Chairman:  
Woody McFarlin

E-Mail: [REDACTED]  
Phone: [REDACTED]

## GOLD STAR FAMILY BREAKFAST: AN OPPORTUNITY TO REMEMBER THE FALLEN TOGETHER

You remember him in your mind's eye, as if it were yesterday: he was the tough-talking show-off who picked a fight with you in the O Club . . . the quiet one who told you first when he found out he was going to be a dad . . . the one you asked for a cigarette and he gave you his whole pack . . . the guy who volunteered to take your place on that last mission. And you never forgot him.

As aviators who have seen combat, most of you remember someone who didn't make it back from Vietnam. Some of you have connected with their families to share a memory or two, perhaps a photo, most of all, the knowledge that their loved one hasn't been forgotten.

Have you thought of inviting them to attend the VHPA reunion, and particularly, the Gold Star Family Breakfast, with you?

As a sister of a fallen Vietnam helicopter pilot, I remember the first time I sat down with veterans who served with my brother, who was killed while flying C 1/9 Cav scouts at age 19. The experience of being with men who could tell me more about his life and his service was powerful. I learned that not only are we families of the fallen welcome at veterans' reunions, we are welcomed warmly by those who knew our loved ones and shared their last days.

You might have wondered previously: "Should I invite John's family to a reunion? What in the world would they do there, among all of us rowdy pilots? Would they feel out of place?" For the past few years, there's been an event designed especially to bring Gold Star Families (families of the deceased) together with pilots in remembrance and celebration of the lives we lost: the Gold Star Family Breakfast.

This year, the Gold Star Family Breakfast will take place on Friday, August 3. The breakfast will be a fitting time for you to share great stories about the lives of the guys we lost, with their families, and the rest of us. Invite them to attend the reunion and bring them to the Gold Star Family Breakfast.

We are attempting to contact family members of the Louisiana and Mississippi pilot KIAs who live nearby to send them an invitation to the Gold Star Family Breakfast. If you have contact information for one of these men (see [www.vhpaw.org](http://www.vhpaw.org) for a KIA list by name or by date), please let me know in time for me to contact them about the reunion. Better yet, invite them yourself!

And even if you don't have a fallen buddy's family to bring, please come to the breakfast. You might just find that peaceful place between remembering . . . and letting go.

I'm happy to answer questions about the breakfast or about how to connect with a buddy's family.

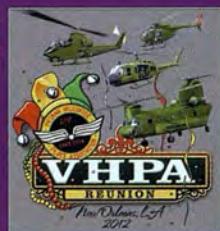
*Little sister, Julie Kink sister of WO David Kink C Troop  
1/9th CAV KIA 8-3-1969*

*member of VHFCN Family Contacts Committee  
<http://www.VirtualWall.org/contacts>*

*Stillwater, MN*

The 29th Annual VHPA Reunion  
New Orleans, LA  
31 July – 5 August 2012  
Hilton New Orleans Riverside

*It's New Orleans - you're different here!*



## FROM THE REUNION CHAIRMAN

Don't like the night life anymore or can't stand the New Orleans August heat? – there's plenty to do in the hotel. Meet and greet old and new friends in the new O Club with specially discounted drinks, attend the Historical Presentations or participate in a mini-reunion and there is always the special entertainment we have lined up. Check it out on our web site or in the January/February 2012 issue of The VHPA Aviator magazine.

Mini-reunions will be big this year. Here is a few already being planned: Pink Panthers, 520th TC Bn, E/82 ARTY 1 CAV, 10th Anniversary Reunion Celebration of filming of In the Shadow of the Blade, PHI & Air Log, and many others. There is still space so let us know if you want to have a min-reunion.

VHPA life member Michael Perrott, 135th AHC in 1968-69 from Australia has already planned his trip to New Orleans and is recruiting as many of his fellow countrymen as possible to make the trip with him. His goal is to bring 30 or more from "down under." Good for you Mike. We are truly an international organization.

Mike is not the only one recruiting attendees. Lance Hiltbrand, E Battery, 82nd Artillery (Aviation), 1st Cav Div is putting together a first time reunion of his unit as a mini-reunion. Vic Lent is out recruiting USMC helicopter pilots and Mike Sheuerman is going after his "Pink Panthers" as normal. One of the neatest Mini-Reunion projects we have in the works this year is that the EC has given permission for our long-time Member Kenny Bunn to organize a Reunion for the men of Air Logistics Helicopters. Like Kenny, most of the early (Kenny flew with them from 1973 through 1994) offshore helo pilots at both Air Log and PHI were veterans of the Vietnam War and they all should fit well with our Membership. Besides, they have agreed to join the VHPA if they are eligible and/or not current with their membership, I'm sure we will all be better for this relationship. So, join Michael, Lance, Vic, Mike and Kenny and start building a Mini-R for your own friends and comrades.

We can provide complimentary business rooms for mini reunions and TOCs (Tactical Operations Centers) for your specific group. The space provided is about 900 square feet and can be available for just an hour or for the entire length of the reunion. We will provide the tables and chairs and the room will be located very close to the Reunion "O Club" cash bar which will have special pricing for VHPA participants. We encourage you to purchase drinks from the "O Club" bar to enjoy in your mini reunion room. The VHPA will not provide any audio visual or food for mini reunions. If you are interested in ordering audio visual or food we can do that for you, however your organization is responsible for the costs. We can organize special meals and/or tours for your group too.

If you would like to set up a min-reunion or TOC, please fill out the form on the

*This e-mail from VHPA member Bob Zajonc tells what you need to know about New Orleans:*

*"Hey the Hilton is a great Hotel, the change of dates brilliant, no need for anyone to rent a car. ... cabs cheap. ... a word to the wise do not carry wallets in the French Quarter at night. ... had a back pocket sliced, per diem, airline ticket taken and never knew it. ... just cash in a front pocket says all the locals. The market about a 15 minute walk to the East is amazing. ... tell everyone to take a nap in the afternoon as it doesn't start to rock and roll until after the sun sets!"*

*Really looking forward to this. Maybe I should get about 4 nurses from hooters to tag along?*

*Bob Z"*

*Richard D. Griffin, Vulture 22 from Jan 1967 to Feb 1968 had this to say:*

*I spent 5 months in New Orleans just after Katrina and watched it grow from nothing back to 75% of its original self. Food, booze and partying are the main downtown attractions. Also take outside trips on small party barges to see the wild life, (alligators) and the wilds of the bayous and waterways. Late at night or early morn, Cajun coffee with hot milk, and a baguette or 6*

VHPA web site or contact **Rebecca Bittle** at [REDACTED]  
Phone [REDACTED]

The Gold Star Breakfast is expanding this year. We have a small group of volunteers led by Julie Kink who are attempting to contact our KIA next of kin in Louisiana and Mississippi areas. If you would like to participant in this, please contact Julie Kink at [REDACTED]

*To register for the reunion, there are three choices:*

1. Online Registration at <https://reunion.vhpa.org>
2. Use the form in this magazine or the January/February 2012 VHPA Aviator Magazine.
3. Call HQ on **800-505-VHPA (8472)** to register or with Questions.

The reunion committee has negotiated special rates for the airport to hotel shuttle. See <http://www.vhpa.org/news.htm> for details. Also we have a special rate for parking at \$15 per night, Internet access for \$9 per day and the health club at \$5 per day. These prices are about half the normal price for this first class hotel. Also you can not beat the \$119 price for hotel rooms.

Check out the 2012 National Reunion Morning Report at <http://www.vhpa.org/infor/morning.htm> so you can see who has already signed up. A lot more men have registered with the hotel than have registered for the reunion so if a name is not on the morning report, that does not necessarily mean he is not going. Call him to see if he is going. You can find phone numbers and e-mail addresses online at <http://www.vhpaservices.com>

Finally please register early so we can be assured of accommodating everyone. The hotel and some events are capacity restricted so if you wait until the last minute you may miss out on our special rates and events. New Orleans is booming now so there is lots of competition.

Any Questions or problems, please call HQ  
(817) 778-4827 or 800-505-VHPA (8472).

*See you in New Orleans,  
Gary Roush, National Reunion Committee Chairman  
roush@vhpa.org*

*makes a wonderful side attraction. Looking at Jackson Square and other old buildings and the outdoor market is very very interesting. Too hot for golf, too many bugs and mosquitoes and snakes. Of course Harrah's has a big casino across the street and with cable car or taxi service close distance of most hotels. I hope to see all you guys there and would like to talk over old times and see who has had the most surgeries and who takes the most meds daily. Ha. My kids ignore me and my grandkids are spoiled brats, another ha ha.*

*Love all you guys and did not realize that until I retired and found out how you helped shape my life.*

*And one more from Bill Fraker, 197th AHC, 334th AHC, 189th AHC, 268th CAB:*

*My wife and I used this hotel eleven times over the years. It is by far the best location of any hotel in New Orleans. When St. Patrick's Day got too crowded in Savannah, we came to NO and this hotel. Last time we came, it snowed! in March. I am sure some of this year's attendees will think about snow when it is 90/90 in August.*

*See you there.*

# OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - THE 29TH ANNUAL REUNION OF THE VHPA

New Orleans, Louisiana, 31 July through 5 August, 2012

See our Website at: [www.VHPA.org](http://www.VHPA.org)  
for the latest details and to register for the Reunion

## Tuesday – July 31st, 2012

11:00am-11:00pm	O Club Opens (Stays open, same hours, throughout Reunion)
8:00am- 10:00pm	Unit Mini-Reunions and Unit TOC's open. They remain open 8:00am – 10:00pm throughout Reunion, see separate schedule
1:00pm- 4:00pm	Reunion T-Shirt distribution open
1:00pm- 5:00pm	Vendor Room Opens
1:00pm- 6:00pm	Welcome & Registration Desk opens
1:00pm- 6:00pm	Tour Desk opens
7:00pm- 10:00pm	Early Bird Reception

## Wednesday – August 1st, 2012

7:30am- 9:00am	Tour Desk open
9:00am- 1:00pm	WWII Museum (only) Tour #1
9:00am- 2:30pm	Combo WWII Museum Tour, Lunch & Victory Belles Show
9:00am- 2:30pm	Combo New Orleans City Tour, Lunch & Victory Belles Show
9:00am- 5:00pm	Vendor Room open
10:00am-5:00pm	Welcome & Registration Desk open
11:30am-2:30pm	Lunch & Victory Belles Show (only)
1:00pm- 5:00pm	Banquet seating desk opens
2:00pm- 5:00pm	Poker Tournament #1
3:00pm- 5:00pm	Tour Desk open
7:00pm- 8:00pm	1st Time Attendee Reception
7:30pm- 10:00pm	Welcome Reception
8:30pm- 10:00pm	3 Charmers of New Orleans Comedy Show

## Thursday – August 2nd, 2012

7:00am 2:00pm	Golf Tournament
7:30am 10:00am	Tour Desk open
8:00am 4:00am	Welcome & Registration Desk open
9:00am 10:30am	HPF #1 - Les Hines, Collecting History
9:00am 11:00am (or 1:30pm)	New Orleans City & French Quarter Tour #2
9:00am 2:00pm	Combo New Orleans City Tour and Lunch Cruise
10:45am Noon	Military Writers' panel discussion
11:00am 2:00pm	Paddlewheel Steamship Lunch Cruise (only)
1:00pm 4:00pm	Banquet seating desk open
1:00pm 5:00pm	Tour Desk open
2:00pm 5:00pm	Mardi Gras & Mayhem Tour #1
2:30pm 4:00pm	HPF #2 - Tom Phillips, USN CSAR
6:00pm 10:00pm	Mardi Gras World Dinner at the Grand Oaks Mansion
8:00pm 10:00pm	Film Premiere – Dustoff Legacy Documentary

## Friday – August 3rd, 2012

7:30am- 9:00am	KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast
7:30am- 9:30am	Tour Desk open
9:00am- 4:00pm	Welcome & Registration Desk open
9:00am- Noon	Business Meeting
9:30am- 1:00pm	Spouse/Guest Event – Cooking Demo & Lunch
10:30am-4:00pm	Banquet Seating desk open
1:30pm- 3:30pm (or 5:00pm)	New Orleans City & French Quarter Tour #3
1:30pm- 4:30pm	Quilt Outing
1:30pm- 5:00pm	WWII Museum Tour#2
1:30pm- 5:00pm	French Quarter On Your Own
2:00pm- 3:30pm	HPF #3 - The Vietnam Archive
2:00pm- 5:00pm	Poker Tournament #2
3:30pm- 5:00pm	HPF #4 - Mike Sprayberry, Search for MIA's
8:00pm- 10:00pm	In The Shadow Of The Blade movie
	10th Anniversary Celebration

## Saturday – August 4th, 2012

8:00am- 9:30am	Memorial Service
8:00am- 9:30am	Tour Desk open
9:30am- 1:30pm	Hands-on Cooking Class
9:30am- 1:30pm	WWII Museum Tour#3
10:00am-Noon	HPF#5 - Jack Heslin, Battle of Kontum
10:00am-3:00pm	Welcome & Registration Desk open
10:15am-1:15pm	Mardi Gras & Mayhem Tour #2
10:30am-12:30pm	Banquet Seating desk open
4:00pm- 6:00pm	Banquet Seating desk open
5:45pm- 10:30pm	Closing Banquet & Dance

## Reunion Continuing Events:

Unit Mini-Reunions and Unit TOC's are scheduled daily from 8:00AM till 10:00 PM every day of the Reunion – see separate schedule for your individual unit's date, time and room assignment.

The Vendor Room – first opens on Tuesday July 31st at 1:00pm and remains open daily from 9:00am - 5:00pm through Saturday, August 4th

The O Club – first opens on Tuesday July 31st at 11:00am and remains open daily from 11:00am - 11:00pm through Saturday, August 4th

Visit  
[www.VHPA.org](http://www.VHPA.org)  
for the latest  
information on  
Reunion 2012

# VHPA 29th Annual Reunion • New Orleans, LA • July 31 – August 5, 2012

## NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Information and register online at [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) or mail completed form

to: VHPA Headquarters, 407 W. College St., Grapevine, TX 76051-5218

Member name:

Member No.:

Voice (817) 778-4827  
Toll Free (800) 505-VHPA (8472)  
Email HQ@vhpa.org  
Fax (954) 301-0742

Address:

City:

Email address:

Wife/guest name:

Guest name:

Guest name:

Guest name:

State:

Zip:

Telephone: ( )

Hometown:

21 or older?  Yes/Wheelchair?  Yes

Wheelchair?  Yes

Address change?  Yes

### EVENT

### #Attending

### Price

### Total

Registration through 4/30/12*		@\$40	
Registration 5/1/12 and after*		@\$50	
Registration for under age 21		@\$15	
Group Dinner at Mulate's	(July 31)	<b>SOLD OUT</b>	<b>@\$45 SOLD OUT</b>
Early Bird Reception	(July 31)	No Charge	
New Orleans City & French Quarter #1	(Aug 1)	@\$45	
WWII Museum (only) Tour#1	(Aug 1)	@\$39	
WWII Museum, Victory Belles & Lunch	(Aug 1)	@\$79	
New Orleans, Victory Belles & Lunch	(Aug 1)	@\$99	
Victory Belles Show & Lunch (only)	(Aug 1)	@\$65	
Poker Tournament #1	(Aug 1)	@\$25	
1st Time Attendee Reception	(Aug 1)	No Charge	
Welcome Reception	(Aug 1)	No Charge	
3 Charmers Comedy Show	(Aug 1)	@\$15	
Golf Tournament with Breakfast & Lunch	(Aug 2)	@\$95	
Plantations Tour& Lunch	(Aug 2)	<b>SOLD OUT</b>	<b>@\$99 SOLD OUT</b>
New Orleans City & French Quarter #2	(Aug 2)	@\$45	
New Orleans City & Lunch Cruise	(Aug 2)	@\$75	
Paddlewheel Lunch Cruise (only)	(Aug 2)	@\$50	
Military Writers' Panel Discussion	(Aug 2)	No Charge	
Mardi Gras & Mayhem Tour #1	(Aug 2)	@\$55	
Mardi Gras World Dinner	(Aug 2)	@\$90	
Dustoff Documentary Premiere	(Aug 2)	@\$7	
KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast	(Aug 3)	@\$26	
Gold Star Breakfast Sponsorship	(Aug 3)	@\$26	
Annual Business Meeting	(Aug 3)	No Charge	
Spouse/Guest Cooking Demo & Lunch	(Aug 3)	@\$49	
New Orleans City & French Quarter #3	(Aug 3)	@\$45	
Quilters Outing	(Aug 3)	No Charge	
WWII Museum (only) Tour #2	(Aug 3)	@\$39	
French Quarter Transportation (only)	(Aug 3)	@\$15	
Poker Tournament #2	(Aug 3)	@\$25	
In The Shadow of The Blade Screening	(Aug 3)	@\$10	
Memorial Service	(Aug 4)	No Charge	
Hands-on Cooking Class	(Aug 4)	@\$165	
WWII Museum Tour #3	(Aug 4)	@\$39	
Mardi Gras & Mayhem Tour #2	(Aug 4)	@\$55	
Closing Banquet	(Aug 4)	@\$74	
Closing Banquet - Child	(Aug 4)	@\$15	
Non-Registered Guest at Banquet	(Aug 4)	@\$90	
Total From Sidebars		XXXXXX	XXXXXX
VHPA Dues (if not dues current)		1 year	@\$36
VHPA Dues (if not dues current)		3 years	@\$99
Life membership	(Call HQ for exact amount)		
2012 CD or Paper Directory Fee		@\$10	
Mult. Year CD or Paper Directory Fee	(# of Years x \$10)		

**GRAND TOTAL \$**

HPF event fee \$25.00

*One \$25.00 PER FAMILY fee buys access to every one of the five HPF events for 2012. It also buys a DVD of all of last year's sessions.*

**Total \$**

### T-Shirts

### Total \$

S@\$18  M@\$18  L@\$18  
 XL@\$18  XXL@\$19  XXXL@\$20

### Banquet Meal

Beef  Fish  Vegetable

### Voluntary Contributions:

VHPA Membership Fund \$

VHPA Scholarship Fund \$

VHPA General Fund \$

Vietnam War Museum \$

VHPA Reunion Sponsorship \$

### REFUND POLICY

IMPORTANT: Please review the details of the Refund Policy, including the limited opportunity to purchase a Refund Guaranty available only on a one-time basis at the time of registration, which is posted online at the official VHPA website: [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org)

### Refund Guarantee Fee

(10% of Total Events) \$

**OFFICIAL REGISTRATION  
CANCELLATION DATE IS  
NOON, CST, 11 JULY 2012.**

IMPORTANT: Please review Reunion Refund & Cancellation Policy carefully

### CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

MC/Visa #:

Exp. Date:

Signature:

### CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYMENT

*In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA" with form.*

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

# Letters to the Editor

## To the Membership of the VHPA

I am a VHPA Member and a retired CW-2 and over the past few weeks I've received several e-mails from a fellow scout pilot that flew with me in Vietnam in 1970.

The first four e-mails were simply: how is it going, haven't talked with you in decades kind of stuff but then I just got one that said he "needed \$1,500.00 to get home because he lost his wallet", that e-mail also conveniently supplied me with his "new" e-mail address in Spain.

I knew it was probably a scam, but I answer that one asking things only he would know (his callsign in Vietnam, where we refueled in country, etc.) and guess what, when that e-mail was returned, none of the questions were answered.

I just hope that fellow VHPA members do not fall for this sort of scam. I'm asking you to publish a Head's Up in the next Aviator, there's no telling where these crooks got my, and my friends e-mail address.

Sincerely,

Ken Camp

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## To The Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I read the advertisement that ran on page 4 of the last (January/February) issue and noticed where the Author of the book Firebirds (Step Tyler) recommended that we read Dr. Dixon's new book, The Secret War.

I though I would let the membership know that the book Firebirds deals with the Gunship Platoon of the Firebirds in Vietnam and was written by our Lifetime Member, Chuck Garlock. Step Tyler wrote the book Fire Birds and that book (and movie) dealt with AH-64's and drug interdiction missions.

Just keeping things straight for the membership.

John Grouw

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## To The Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I have just finished reading the excellent story "Veterans Day 2011 – A Report from the Wall" by our own VHPA member Bob Hesselbein in the last, January/February 2012 issue, and thought it would best if I clarified one thing that appeared in the story.

I think the main speaker that day, war correspondent and author Joe Galloway, should have given the credit for his words "Hate the war, but love the warrior" to the man who said

them first, General Hal Moore. As Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars I am often asked to speak at various gatherings and have used those words many times, but I always tell the story of where they came from, therefore giving Gen Moore full credit for having said them first.

Joe D. Rasnick

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## To the President of the VHPA and reprinted here for the membership.

Mike,

A dear friend of mine and VHPA Member Gary Guerrero has just died. I understand his wife has requested that donations be made to the VHPA in his honor. Just what is the procedure for doing that?

Thanks

Steve Sabree

## Mike Law answered:

Steve, first I see you are a Life Member of the VHPA and I thank you for your service to our country and for your support of the VHPA.

## Concerning your donation in honor of Gary Guerrero,

If you wish to make a donation in his name to the VHPA I suggest that you start with a call to our HQ at either (817) 778-4827 or (800) 505-8472. With Credit Card in hand you can make a donation to whatever fund (General, Membership, Scholarship and/or Reunion Support) you wish and for whatever amount you desire. If you do not want to use a CC, then you can USPS us a check at: HQ of the VHPA, 407 West College Street, Grapevine, TX 76051.

If you would like us to notify Gary's wife of the donation, then if at all possible, provide us her current mailing address. You will receive a thank you from the VHPA for your donation which will serve as proof of a tax deductible gift.

Please feel free to contact me if I missed the mark with this email, or if you have additional questions.

Thanks again, Mike Law

VHPA 2011-2012 President

E-Mail: President@VHPA.org

## COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION



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COMBAT HELICOPTER  
PILOTS ASSOCIATION

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

407 W. College Street, Grapevine, TX 76051

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

## Membership application/change of address

New application

Address change

Directory correction

NAME

DATE OF BIRTH:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

HOME PHONE: ( )

WORK PHONE: ( )

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

OCCUPATION:

Membership Dues:  Annual \$36  Three year \$99  Lifetime (based on applicants' age\*) Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*age 59 and below (\$450), 60-64 (\$350), 65-69 (\$300), 70-74 (\$250), 75-79 (\$100) 80 and above (\$75)

Add \$20 for printed Membership Directory  Add \$20 for Membership Directory on CD

Add \_\_\_\_\_ for Membership Fund Contribution  Add \_\_\_\_\_ for Scholarship Fund Contribution

Aviator Subscription only  Annual \$36  Three Year  Lifetime- see above membership rates\*

Charge my MasterCard/Visa C/Card  Personal check/money order enclosed

Credit card No.:

Expiration date:

SIGNATURE:

FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS:

SERVICE BRANCH:

COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS:

SOCIAL SECURITY NO.:

Information about each Vietnam unit:

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

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

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

# WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

Look the list over and if you recognize anyone, give them a call, drop them a line or send them an e-mail welcoming them into our Association. Full contact information is available either on-line in the Member Services section of our website, or through our staff at HQ by calling 1-800-505-VHPA.

Line 1, Last, first, MI and/or nickname of new member; double asterisks (\*\*) ID new life members

Line 2, his current city and state, branch of service

Line 3 -5 , his (Flight) Class and Vietnam (VN) Unit(s) served with, if that info is available

<p><b>We welcome 36 new Members to our Association in this issue. All have joined the VHPA during the period 03 November 2011 through 31 January, 2012</b></p>	<p>Dye, Harold D Norwalk, Ohio, US Army Flight Class info not reported Vietnam Unit info not provided</p>	<p>Mauk, Roby M ** Spring Hill, Tennessee, US Army Flight Class(s): 64-3 Vietnam Unit(s): 128 AHC in 69</p>	<p>Torrence, Larry E. Virginia Beach, Virginia, US Army Flight Class(s): 67-8 Vietnam Unit(s): 45 ENG GP in 67-68</p>
<p>Atkinson, Thomas J. 'Tom' Winter Park, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s): 64-6 Vietnam Unit(s): 18 AVN in 64-65; 73 SAC in 64; C/15 TC 1 CAV in 67-68</p>	<p>Fedorow, George J. 'Feds' ** Anaheim Hills, California, US Marine Corps Flight Class(s): 68 Vietnam Unit info not provided</p>	<p>Mautino, Richard M. 'Dick' Salem, Oregon, US Army Flight Class(s): 66-21 Vietnam Unit(s): 128 AHC in 67-68</p>	<p>Walker, Johnny M. San Antonio, Texas, US Army Flight Class(s): 70-42 Vietnam Unit info not provided</p>
<p>Baker, Richard L 'Dick' ** Enterprise, Alabama, US Army Flight Class(s): 67-14 Vietnam Unit(s): DIV ARTY 101 ABN DIV in 67-68; 219 AVN in 69-70; HHC 223 CAB in 70</p>	<p>Garrett, James A. Callahan, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s): 67-3 66-23 Vietnam Unit info not provided</p>	<p>McCall, Noris Lyn 'Lyn' Herndon, Virginia, US Marine Corps Flight Class(s): 68-524 68-44 Vietnam Unit(s): VMO-2 in 69-70; HML-367 in 70</p>	<p>Whitesides, Ronald A 'Ron' Evansville, Indiana, US Army Flight Class(s): 68-518 68-32 Vietnam Unit(s): A/19 CAV 1 CAV in 69-70</p>
<p>Baldwin, William R. 'Bill "Silver Chief" Ormond Beach, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s): 67-19 Vietnam Unit(s): 192 AHC in 64-65; 339 TC CO in 68-69</p>	<p>Gordy, Terry L. Conyers, Georgia, US Army Flight Class(s): 58FW 61QC Vietnam Unit(s): 611 TC in 66-67; HHC USARV in 69-70</p>	<p>McElhaney, James W. 'Jim' Niceville, Florida, US Air Force Flight Class info not reported Vietnam Unit(s): 217 SQDN VNAF in 69-70</p>	<p>Wickliffe, Paul T. ** Bonita Springs, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s): 62-1W Vietnam Unit(s): 114 AVN in 63-64; 229 AHB 1 CAV in 67-68</p>
<p>Beck, Silas E Woodbridge Virginia, US Army Flight Class info not reported Vietnam Unit info not provided</p>	<p>Herbert, Harold L. Portland, Oregon, US Army Flight Class(s): 68-514 68-24 Vietnam Unit info not provided</p>	<p>McLeroy, William R. 'Ron' Carrollton, Texas, US Army Flight Class(s): 70-16 Vietnam Unit(s): 195 AHC in 70-71</p>	<p>Winter, John Herman Boone, Iowa, US Navy Flight Class info not reported Vietnam Unit info not provided</p>
<p>Cascio, Ben R ** Oakland, New Jersey, US Marine Corps Flight Class info not reported Vietnam Unit(s): HMM-362 in 68</p>	<p>Holland, John L. ** Odessa, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s): 69-26 69-24 Vietnam Unit(s): 132 ASHC in 70</p>	<p>Newell, Richard J 'Dick' Laurel, Maryland, US Army Flight Class(s): 70-37 Vietnam Unit(s): B/7/17 CAV in 71; 92 AHC in 71</p>	<p>Withaeger, James A. Arlington, Texas, US Army Flight Class(s): 66-15 66-13 Vietnam Unit(s): 174 AHC in 66-67</p>
<p>Clark, Neil D. Springfield, Virginia, US Army Flight Class(s): 71-23 Vietnam Unit(s): B/158 AVN 101 ABN in 71-72</p>	<p>Junot, Arthur J. 'Art' ** Killeen, Texas, US Army Flight Class(s): 52-F Vietnam Unit(s): MACV in 65-66; 120 AVN in 66; 16 CAG in 68; 165 TC CO in 68-69</p>	<p>O'Brien, Michael J. Fort Calhoun, Nebraska, US Army Flight Class(s): 67-19 Vietnam Unit(s): E/82 ARTY 1 CAV in 67-69</p>	<p>Wood, Roger L. 'Woody' Sterling, Virginia, US Army Flight Class(s): 69-36 Vietnam Unit(s): 227 AHB 1 CAV in 70</p>
<p>Cleveland, Horst H Temple, Texas, US Army Flight Class(s): 69-20 Vietnam Unit(s): XVIII CORPS in 69; B/7/17 CAV in 70</p>	<p>Kitchen, Eldon E 'Sam' ** Fayetteville, North Carolina, US Army Flight Class info not reported Vietnam Unit(s): 121 AHC in 67-68</p>	<p>Salazar, Adan Houston, Texas, US Army Flight Class(s): 70-15 70-13 Vietnam Unit(s): 227 AHB 1 CAV in 70-71</p>	<p>Zarbaro, Anthony L 'Tony' Eugene, Oregon, US Army Flight Class(s): 68-503 Vietnam Unit(s): 176 AHC in 68-68; 108 ARTY GRP in 68-69</p>
<p>Crane, Richard A. Beaverdam, Virginia, US Army Flight Class(s): 70-3 Vietnam Unit(s): A/227 AVN 1 CAV in 70; 2 BDE 1 CAV in 71</p>	<p>Mahlow, Paul Huntington Beach, California, US Army Flight Class(s): 71-14 Vietnam Unit info not provided</p>	<p>Scully, Robert C. 'Bob' ** Gilbert, Arizona, US Army Flight Class(s): 60-3FW Vietnam Unit(s): A/1 AVN 1 INF in 65-66; 362 AVN in 68-69</p>	
	<p>Manchester, Donald G 'Guy' Newport News, Virginia, US Army Flight Class(s): 71-19 71-17 Vietnam Unit(s): B/7/17 CAV in 72</p>	<p>Sebion, Richard C. 'Dick' Lake In The Hills, Illinois, US Marine Corps Flight Class(s): 72 Vietnam Unit(s): HMM-261 in 72-74; HMM-162 in 75-76</p>	

## INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN THE VHPA AVIATOR?

The Official Newsletter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

Prices range from \$135.00 for a 1/4 Page to \$475.00 for a full-page, Black/White ad; Color Ad rates are slightly higher. New ad set-ups are free & other price discounts are available. Full Details available at: [Aviator@VHPA.org](mailto:Aviator@VHPA.org) or

# LOOKING FOR

## Looking For – Stories of being an Escort Officer in Vietnam

Early in 2011 I started searching for information on some of my buddies from the 129th AHC who I had served with in Vietnam in 1972. And thanks to a lot of help, from men like Gary Roush, I've had a lot of success.

Gary Woodward, one of the crew chiefs from those days also provided a lot more introductions, many of which were very emotional. One person in particular that reached out to me from the 129th was a retired Warrant Officer Ron Paye who had recently spent time with the family of Tom Shaw. Tom was my roommate in Vietnam and it was my honor to escort his body back home after he was killed during the Easter Offensive of April, 1972.

Anyway, I had not seen Tom's family since May 1972 when I handed the flag to Tom's wife Ann at the burial. But, thanks to Ron, I recently was able to again meet them, this time at a Vietnam Memorial near Neillsville, Wisconsin. It is a beautiful place that's called the "High Ground" and we all really enjoyed our visit. While talking to them I found out that immediately after the burial in 1972, a group of citizens, school friends and family members of Tom went to work putting together a Scholarship Award at Tom's high school (St Mary's Springs Academy in Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin) and named it "The Tom Shaw" Award. The first recipient was awarded in late May 1972 (2 weeks after he was buried) and it has continued uninterrupted for 39 years since. You can't imagine how proud I am of this community to see what they have done by turning this terrible tragedy and loss in war into such a positive influence on the young people of this school.

Now I have been offered the great honor or presenting the 40th Tom Shaw award to the 2012 Recipient at the end of this May. Believe me, I am humbled beyond words. I have started writing my thoughts on what to say to this St Mary's group as I want this award ceremony to be the best in its 40 year history. Personally I'll never forget our Commander, who was desperately short of seasoned pilots at the time, saying that escorting the bodies back home to their families for burial was an honor not given to most families of Vietnam casualties back then, but that "these pilots and especially their families deserved this honor".

I had always thought that such escort duties were quite common, but in my research thus far, I can find no other instances with Vietnam KIA Helicopter pilots where this was allowed. I feel there had to be other escorts of KIA Helicopter pilots and I'm hoping that the membership can help. Even if this was just a rare occurrence, I would like to add this to my many thoughts when I tell this group about how very special Tom was. If any of the membership can help me, please contact me and let me know your thoughts and ideas on all of this.

Thanks for your time,  
Jim Crigler, Bulldog 12  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

## Looking For – Flight Class Photo of Bill Whitright, Flight Class 68-16

My late husband, Bill Whitright graduated from Flight School with ORWAC Class 68-16. I was wondering if anyone out there has a copy of a class photo taken at Fort Wolters in which he appears?

I'm sorry I don't have his Flight Section or Class number while at Fort Wolters available, I've been told it also could even be Class 68-14 or even 68-12, so please check you picture and see if you can find his name and image. I will be forever grateful.

Thanks you for your service,  
Sara Whitright  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

## Looking For – Vietnam Veterans who attended Bishop DuBourg High School in St. Louis, Missouri.

Gary Myerscough  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

## Looking For - the family of Captain Neal M. Turner

My old friend, Captain Neal M. Turner was only 29 when he was killed in an automobile crash in Germany on January 23, 1969. I had known him when we served together in Germany in the late 60's, he was a graduate of Flight Class 66-10 and he was my mentor in Germany while I was applying to and waiting for acceptance into Flight School.

I was in Vietnam at the time of the accident, I do know that he was

buried in a military cemetery back in Texas; I would very much like to know if anyone can help me get in touch with his wife Rita and/or his daughter Cathy.

Regards,  
Paul N Williams  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## Looking For – former members of D/229 in Vietnam

I want to get the word out about availability of authentic D/229 Unit Patches. We were a gunship/Cobra attack aviation company that served with distinction with the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam. When the unit call sign was changed to "Smiling Tigers" a member of the unit asked the Disney Studio to create a combat logo for us that captured the spirit and purpose of the company. The result was a smiling tiger framed by a blue diamond and the rights to the design were passed to the unit and its members. I have noted that there are only a couple examples of D/229 Smiling Tiger patches to be found on the Web. For the most part, they are one of a kind or very crude representations of the original Disney design that was made for the unit.

I have a small supply of patches that were made to fit the front of a standard ball cap that are about 2" by 2" with room left for lettering/call sign/etc., and if former members of D/229, or their families, would like to have one I would be happy to provide them for my original cost, plus postage until such time as I run out. But before all you collectors start calling me, remember these patches are for the former members of D/229 and/or their families

Marc Grimm, Tiger 36  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## Looking For - Fire Fly Mission Vets from the early 70's

Warlord 23, of the 117th AHC in the April 1970 - April 1971 time frame is looking for any gunship pilots, or anyone else with knowledge of the units that flew with the "Fire Fly Mission" in III Corps. In particular, I'm looking for someone who might be familiar with gunship cover of a night medevac mission in III Corps in early 1971.

Thomas Morrissey

## THE ARMY AVIATION MUSEUM AT FT RUCKER NEEDS OUR SUPPORT

While returning to Dallas after the VHPA Reunion in Orlando this past July, my son Hunter and I stopped by Ft. Rucker and toured the Museum. We both really enjoyed it. The place is filled with a vast and varied amount of Army Aviation history from the beginning of Army aviation, WWI, WWII, Korea, our time in Vietnam and recent wars like Iraq and Afghanistan. Four other families also returning from the Reunion stopped by while we were there.

We learned that there are over four warehouses and hangers full of items yet to be displayed, mostly because of a lack of funds to build more museum space. I was really surprised. Guys, this is our museum it holds our history, we need to support it.

I'm not asking you to do something I won't do; I'm contacting the Museum ([www.armyavnmuseum.org](http://www.armyavnmuseum.org)) and making a pledge. It's \$20 for one year, \$36 for two years, \$52 for three years or you can become a LIFETIME MEMBER for a flat \$1,000. As of today we have over 8500 active members and if we each gave \$20 that's \$170,000 which would be a good start. Even Hunter plans to give to OUR MUSEUM for the coming year. Please consider joining us in supporting the Army Aviation Museum

Mike and Hunter Sheuerman

# Another Day Might Never Come.....By Ned Crimmin

Another Day might never come, a phrase that is said and heard all too often by many with good intentions. My Mother had another wonderful saying she often used against me, "Life is what happens while you are making other plans". But I, like most of you out there, many kept putting off things that I should do today, until ANOTHER DAY.

You see I had a rational explanation for acting this way. From 1983 until 1995, it was always ANOTHER DAY, and then one day in 1995....ANOTHER DAY would NEVER come again, my Dad died before that OTHER DAY that everyone kept telling me about happened. For my Brother and me, Dad's passing was not only a loss of our Dad, but also a loss of much of our family history.

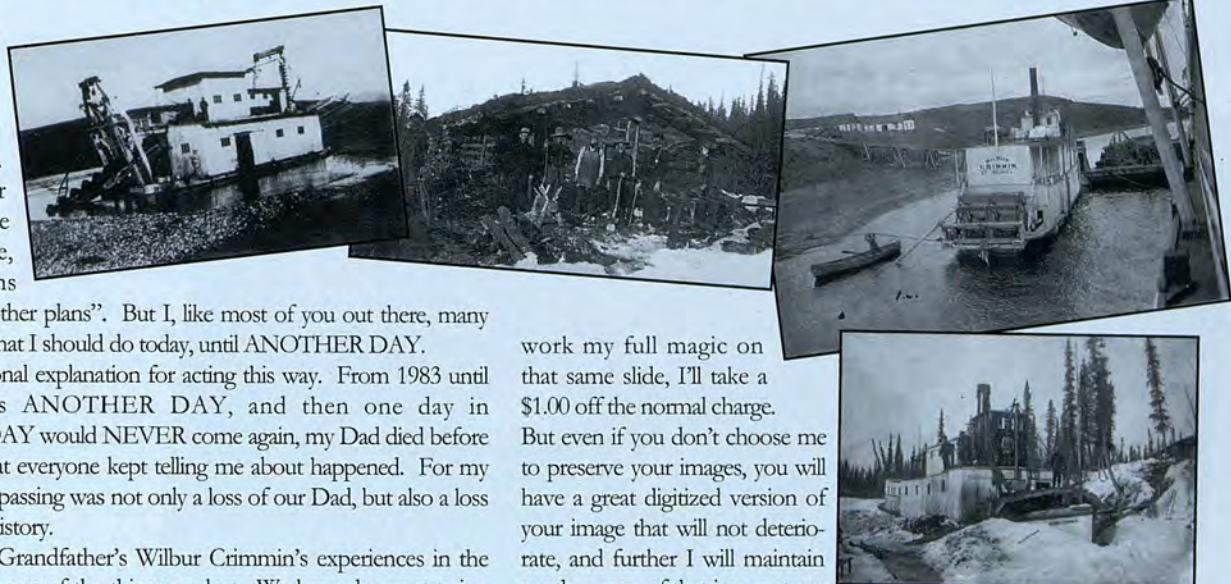
Tales of our Great-Grandfather's Wilbur Crimmin's experiences in the Yukon Gold Rush was one of the things we lost. We know he went twice, once to scratch for gold and upon finding it; he sold his claim for \$10,000.00 and came back to Seattle. He built a home there but eventually he got bored, had a sternwheeler, the Wilber Crimmin, built at Coopersville, Washington and had her shipped her up to the Yukon. For the next few years he did the upper and lower river runs but this time, he was making money the easy way. Unfortunately no other history for him in that era exist, except for one photo of him and his crew on the ship at winter dockage and one other photo of them in front of their winter cabin. Nothing else is left, Dad went to his grave with all the small stories he used to hear, and tell to us when I was a young boy.

Our Dad was also in at the end of WWII, and now all that we are left with are a few letters from basic, a few letters he sent home once back stateside and ten pictures of his time in the Army. Of course we had heard a few stories of him going through France and into Germany but nothing of those days are left. You see it was always going to be ANOTHER DAY when we talked about it, yet that day never came and there is now another vacuum in our family history that is lost forever.

Do not let you be the source of that vacuum in your family. All of us from the Vietnam Era are facing a time in our lives that we must preserve those times or they will be lost forever. Yet even though we all know that, there are still lots of memories being needlessly lost every day.

I know a lot of us saved our memories of Vietnam in slides and photos, but one thing is guaranteed when using those mediums, the images saved there ARE DETERIORATING EVERY DAY. I honestly don't care if you use my service to save your memories, in fact I recommend that you do your own picture scanning. I've found the time spent doing this is a great family bonding time with many unforgettable stories intertwined in the work. All that's required for this type of preservations is a computer with a simple picture-handling program and a flat-bed scanner.

But slides and negatives are a different manner because if they area to be properly digitized and preserved, they must be back-lit to capture the entire remaining image. Equipment to do this type of work is often very expensive, especially if you want to later neutralize the damage and fading that has occurred over time. For this level of preservation I would recommend choosing a professional preservation specialist equipped with both the proper equipment and the proper training. Prices for these services vary widely and only you can decide what best fits your situation. I start my services at just fifty cents (\$.50) each for a simple scan with no enhancement work done. Others may charge less, but my scans are done at 4,000 DPI (Wal-Mart uses 1,200 DPI) and in a TIFF (the best) format. Plus, if you later chose to have me



work my full magic on that same slide, I'll take a \$1.00 off the normal charge. But even if you don't choose me to preserve your images, you will have a great digitized version of your image that will not deteriorate, and further I will maintain another copy of that image at my office in case yours gets ruined. Your new image can be worked on by anyone, I'll even talk you through the process of doing it yourself at no charge. I just want everyone to get started preserving your memories, because TOMORROW MAY NEVER COME!

Ned Crimmin

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## From the VHPA Webmaster - Gary Roush

Thanks to VHPA volunteer Steve Truax we now have all of the past newsletters and magazines online at <http://www.vhpaservices.com>

Steve also has a full set of paper issues that he needs to get rid of because he is moving, so if you would like to have them, please contact Steve. This collection is interesting to go through as it shows how much the newsletter has grown from a couple of mimeographed (remember that technology) type written pages to the colorful, professional 40 page glossy magazine we have today. It is also a good study in the history of our organization. Thanks Steve for a job well done! Please send him a thank you at: [REDACTED]

If you are like me, you are doing more and more online and via e-mail these days. The VHPA is moving in that direction more each day so it is becoming more and more important that we have your most current and accurate e-mail address. To update your e-mail address, please log on to the online directory at <http://www.vhpaservices.com> and click on Update my Information from the left hand menu.

We are also using a new e-mail service called VerticalResponse so please check your spam folders for e-mails from "Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association", they can be found by searching for: [Vietnam\\_Helicopter\\_Pilots\\_Association@mail.vresp.com](mailto:Vietnam_Helicopter_Pilots_Association@mail.vresp.com).

These e-mails are for legitimate VHPA business so please tell your spam filter to allow them to go through. We will not send more than one or two e-mails per month maximum. There is an opt-out feature if you do not want to receive e-mails from us, but we hope you will. Each e-mail saves our association money which can mount up to a substantial savings over time. Also HQ and several volunteers have e-mail addresses ending in [vhpaservices.com](http://vhpaservices.com) so please allow those through your spam filter as well.

Any questions on any of this? Please let me know.

Gary Roush, Webmaster  
e-mail: [Webmaster@vhpaservices.com](mailto:Webmaster@vhpaservices.com)

# The Distant Beat of the Blades ... by Anna Sabree



August 1970. Seven friends from Warrant Officer Flight Class 70-25 gather in their Dress Blues to mark the end of flight school, and the start of the rest of their lives. Pictured here are (from left to right) WO1's Phil Seawright, Dan Stephenson, Mark J. Robertson, Steve Sanderson, Roger Watkins, Carl Sperling and Steve Sabree.

In late September, 2011 six members of WOFT Class 70-25 met on the Mississippi Gulf Coast to renew friendships and honor the memory of friends who did not return from their tour of duty.

On the night of their graduation ball in August, 1970 I watched as seven new ARMY Aviators and close friends had an impromptu photo taken together. Those attending the small reunion forty one years later, with that same photo in hand, were Steve Sabree, Steve Sanderson, Phil Seawright, Carl Sperling, Dan Stephenson and Roger Watkins. The missing man being remembered from the flight school photo was Mark J. Robertson.

Steve Sabree, the cute, lucky one, began his first tour of duty flying Mike Model Hueys with FLIR NEIT - ENSURE 78 utilizing the M21 weapons system. As part of a new equipment introductory team his mission, call sign STARTREK 11, was to evaluate the effectiveness of Forward Looking Infrared systems on rotary wing gunship platforms. During that tour of duty he flew the FLIR equipment with the Condors in Phu Bai, with the Blackhawks in Vin Long and with the Black Cats in Da Nang.

Returning to Viet Nam in 1972 for a second tour of duty after a Chinook transition, Sabree, call sign Big Windy 11, was with the 180TH ASHC flying the CH-47 at Lane Army Airfield, Qui Nhon and then at Camp Holloway in Pleiku. Sabree participated in repelling the 1972 NVA Easter Offensive at Kontum, remaining in country until January, 1973.

When Sabree returned to the States he flew the UH-1 Huey Gun-

ship for the Florida National Guard while attending Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. After graduation from Riddle he flew OH-58's for the Louisiana National Guard while working as a pilot-mechanic for Petroleum Helicopters.

In 1978 Sabree began his flying career with Chevron where he later retired in 2009 as General Manager of Corporate Aviation Services. He now lives in Pass Christian, Mississippi with Anna, his wife of 38 years.

Steve Sanderson, the most dashing of the group, began his first tour of duty flying Huey's with the 114th AHC in IV CORPS at Vinh Long. Near the end of that first tour Sanderson transferred to the FLIR NEIT flying Mike model gunships at Marble Mountain in I CORPS. When he returned to Marble Mountain for his second tour he was assigned to 282ND AHC, he then transferred to 62ND AVN CO before leaving Viet Nam for DERO 24 March, 1972.

Sanderson joined the Vermont National Guard in 1981, flying the HUEY until 1999 when he transitioned to the UH-60 Blackhawk and the Medevac Mission. In 2002 Sanderson deployed as the SP/IE for the 86th Medical Company in support of SFOR 13 in Bosnia. Promoted to CW5 in 2006 he then became an HH60M SP/IE in 2009.

In September 2010 Sanderson deployed with CO C 3-126 AVN (AA) in support of operation New Dawn in Taji, Iraq as the SP/IE on the first combat deployment for the HH-60M. One of the last Viet Nam era pilots to serve in the on-going global war on terror, Sanderson returned from Iraq in September 2011. He continues to serve in the National Guard of Vermont where he lives with Vicki, his wife, and their daughter, Jessie in Montpelier.

Phil Seawright, "Charlie" the most talented of the aviators, graduated flight school on August 25, 1970 and started his tour of duty on September 15, 1970 in Viet Nam with "A" company / 101st assault helicopter battalion / 101st assault helicopter brigade / 101ST AIRBORNE Division at Camp Eagle near Hue Vietnam. Seawright flew on CCN missions and Lam Son 719 with a call sign of Comanchero 31.

After completion of his tour in Vietnam Seawright served as a Medevac pilot in the Missouri National Guard while attending school at the University of Missouri in Columbia. Hired by Chevron in 1981, he flew a variety of rotary wing aircraft including the Bell 206, BO105, Sikorsky S-62, and the Sikorsky S76. During his 25 year career with Chevron he also served as maintenance test pilot and re-

# *bree, wife of VHPA Member Steve Sabree*

tired as Senior pilot.

Seawright is now retired and living with his wife Barbara in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

Carl Sperling, the silver tongued one, flew Slicks in Chu Lai where his call sign was Pelican 33. During his tour of duty in Viet Nam that began in September, 1970 he was assigned to A Company, 123RD Aviation BN, 16th Combat Aviation Group, 23rd Infantry Division. Sperling had the opportunity to fly a wide variety of missions and during the last several months of his tour of duty in the Republic of South Viet Nam he served as the pilot for assistant division commander, Brigadier General, Mc Donough, flying the Huey through the end of his tour.

Sperling is now living in San Jose, California with Rose, his wife of 36 years.

Daniel Stephenson, the tallest of the group, flew Hueys for Medical evacuation in Da Nang with the 236th Medical Detachment during his Viet Nam tour of duty. While flying Medevac missions his call sign was DUSTOFF 613.

Stephenson remained active in the US ARMY through 1975 and then flew UH-1H's with the Oklahoma Army National Guard in Tulsa, Oklahoma through 1978, and one year in the Tennessee Army National Guard. Next he attended Medical School on an Air Force scholarship and remained with the Air Force through 1997. Flight surgeons were never fully trusted and Stephenson did not learn exactly why until he became a flight surgeon in B-52's and KC-135's in the upper peninsula of Michigan. Later Stephenson went on to a residency in family practice and numerous other assignments before being appointed chief of the medical staff at a major Air Force hospital.

Working as a physician for the Veteran's Administration at a small local hospital and a major Trauma Emergency Center, Stephenson now lives in North Dakota.

Roger Watkins, the only gentleman of the group, began his first tour of duty in Viet Nam with the 173rd Airborne, as a Scout Pilot, flying an OH-58 in II CORPS for "CASPER" platoon out of LZ English. He was shot down over the Yellow River, and was returned to the States to recover. After six months he returned to Viet Nam in 1971 for a second tour of duty flying Cobras for "Silver Spurs", 3/17th Cav. with the 1st Aviation Group in III CORPS.

Following Viet Nam, Roger served three years in Germany as an SIP, two years at Ft. Rucker, then four years at Ft. Hood with the 3/7th Cav. After separation from the Army, he flew the "bush" in Alaska for two years, and another two in Singapore

and Indonesia.

Watkins settled down to a steady job of flying for Chevron in 1983, and also renewed his military flying for the Louisiana National Guard. That unit, the 812th Medical Company, was deployed to "Desert Storm" in 1991, where he served as a Medevac pilot for six months. He flew his company's first Medevac mission into Kuwait, following its liberation from the Iraq occupation, carrying in Doctors and medical supplies; evacuating wounded Marines.

Following his return from the war in Iraq, Watkins retired from the National Guard in 1992, and, after a 28 year career of flying offshore helicopters for Chevron, in the Gulf of Mexico, he retired again in Jan. 2011.

Watkins resides in Pensacola, Florida with his wife Tina and his teenage son Matt. Having totally "failed" retirement, he manages an FBO, and operates a small flight school in Foley, Alabama.

Mark J. Robertson the missing man in the flight school graduation photo was a Scout pilot stationed at Camp Eagle with Bravo Troop, 2/17th AIR CAV, 101st Airborne. A native of Detroit, Michigan Robertson was killed in action, BNR, along with his observer, SGT Joseph Ray Pietrzak, while flying a routine mission in the Ashau Valley on February 10, 1971.

Robertson is memorialized along with over 58,000 other fallen heroes on the Viet Nam Wall in Washington, D. C. at Grid YD 257076. The distant beat of those blades and Mark's smile is missed, but will always be remembered...



September 2011, Six veterans of Warrant Officer Flight Class 70-25 hold a Reunion in the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Pictured here are (from left to right) Phil Seawright, Dan Stephenson, Steve Sanderson, Roger Watkins, Carl Sperling and Steve Sabree

# TAPS

## Bruce L. Gillaspie, Sr.

Bruce flew in Vietnam with the USMC

Bruce L. Gillaspie, Sr., 68, passed away Saturday, January 21, 2012 at Lafayette General Medical Center in Lafayette, Louisiana. Bruce was a long-time resident of Acadiana, a proud veteran and served during Vietnam as a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Marines. After Vietnam, he worked for years in the oil and gas industry as a respected pilot for PHI up until his retirement in 1997.



Bruce was a member of the Acadiana Woodturners and was passionate about the American right to bear arms. Most of all, he enjoyed spending time with his family and friends. He was a devoted, loving husband, provider, father, grandfather, brother, comrade and friend and will be deeply missed.

Bruce is survived by his beloved wife and best friend of 45 years, Margaret Ann Ford Gillaspie of Lafayette; one daughter, four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and two brothers. He was preceded in death by his only son, Bruce L. Gillaspie, Jr.

Memorials may be in Bruce's name to Paralyzed Veterans of America at PVA, National Headquarters, 801 Eighteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006-3517, (800) 555-9140, [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org). Online guestbook available at: [www.fountainmemorialfuneralhome.com](http://www.fountainmemorialfuneralhome.com).

## Charles "Skip" Champion - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 69-16 and flew in Vietnam with the 45th Med Co under the CallSign Dustoff 36

Charles "Skip" Champion, COL, RET, passed away November 1, 2011 in Marietta, GA after a bout with cancer. He graduated from North Georgia College in May of 1966 with commission as a 2nd LT, attended Army Flight Class 69-16 and flew with the 45th Medical Company in Vietnam in '69-'70, Callsign "Dustoff 36." Skip spent 30 years on active duty in Aviation Branch. He was a Master Aviator with numerous awards and decorations.

He was a Life Member of VHFA. He was buried in the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton, GA with full military honors. Skip is survived by his wife, Patricia, sons- Chad, Chris and Jon, daughters-Danielle and Ali, four grandchildren, his mother, two brothers and a sister.

Christian Wohlrad Miller "Woody" Neubauer, Jr. Graduated Flight School with Flight Class 66-13 & 66-15 and flew in Vietnam with the 174th AHC (1967).

Christian Wohlrad M. Neubauer, Jr. "Woody", 69, died in Ocean Springs, MS on Jan 17, 2012. He moved to Kentucky in 1945 and was a graduate of Lafayette High School in Lexington, KY.

He served in the Army Intelligence in Germany, and later as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. After his discharge he joined the family business, Kentucky Supply Company, and served as President from 1979 to 1982. Always an entrepreneur, he started and ran various companies in Kentucky, North Carolina, and the Philippines, he finally retired to Ocean Springs in 1996.

Woody is survived by four children, two grandchildren, and one sister. Tributes may be offered at [www.riemannfamily.com](http://www.riemannfamily.com)

David Alan Roblyer - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 66-12 and flew in Vietnam with the 177th AHC (1967), the 155th AHC (1967) and the 52th CAB (1967-1969) under the Minuteman and Dragon CallSigns

Potential VHFA Member David Roblyer, 58, of Los Angeles, California passed away on December 3, 2011. No further details are available at this time.

## David M. Spurgeon - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 65-11m flew in Vietnam with the 117th AHC (1966)

Mr. David M. Spurgeon passed away at his residence in Ozark, Alabama on Monday, October 17, 2011, following a brief illness. He was 69. Mr. Spurgeon was born January 13, 1942 in Alabama City, Alabama. He retired from the U.S. Army as a CW05 and went on to serve as Safety Director for the City of Ozark for over 10 years. Mr. Spurgeon was a member of the DAV Chapter 94, Ozark, he was preceded in death by two brothers: Ronnie Spurgeon and Randy McGowan

Survivors include his wife of 34 years, Barbara Spurgeon; one daughter, one son, two sisters and three grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to DAV Chapter 94 Ozark, P.O. Box 57, Ozark, AL 36361.

## Donald Keith Beauvais - graduated Flight School with Air Force RW Qualification Course Class 71-26AF

Donald Keith Beauvais, passed away on January 16, 2012. "Donnie" was born on September 11, 1947 and grew up in Bossier City, he went on to graduate from Bossier High School and Northwestern State University. In 1969 Donnie joined the Air Force, obtaining the rank of Captain and served his country as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. While serving in Homestead, FL, he received a Meritorious Service Commendation for his service in search and rescue missions. He left the Air Force in 1976 and returned to the Shreveport-Bossier area. For the last 20 years he was in the financial services business.

Donnie was preceded in death by his wife, Rebecca Guldge Beauvais, but is survived by one sister, one brother and several nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his dear companion Rhonda Sutton, his close friend Celia Sawyer and his former wife Penny Durham along with countless other friends who loved him. His very special Pomeranian "Wolf" will miss him terribly. Donnie was a brilliant creator, not only inventing designs to increase speed and efficiency, but also engineering scores of hijinks and good times, bringing laughter and fun to all those who knew him.

The family requests that memorials be made to a charity of the donor's choice or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, P.O. Box 810 Memphis, TN. 35101. [WWW.STJUDE.ORG](http://WWW.STJUDE.ORG)

## Earl Gilbert Reubel - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 67-7, no details of his Vietnam Service are available at this time.

Earl Gilbert Reubel, on December 29, 2011, Earl Gilbert Reubel was suddenly and unexpectedly called to



eternal rest. Earl was born January 12, 1937 at Harlem Hospital Center in New York City, he graduated from Cardinal Hayes High School, before entering St. Johns University.

Earl was drafted in the United States Army in 1960 and served for ten years, he began as a Private, and completed his term as a Chief Warrant Officer and a Helicopter Pilot serving in Vietnam. He resigned from the Army in 1970, and began High Life Helicopters starting with one helicopter performing SAR operations in the Pacific Northwest, and by the company's end had grown to a fleet of 22 helicopters.

Earl and his nephew, William "Joe" Reubel (whom he considered his son), created Verdan Healthcare which became the platform for the creation of Kerna Medical Products, Inc. in 1991, which was headed by Earl's wife, Joyce Kershaw Reubel, whom he married in 1988. In 2011 the company celebrated its' 20th anniversary.

Earl is survived by his wife Joyce Kershaw-Reubel, their sons and daughters and their families and a host of other relatives and friends. He will truly be missed by all. Condolences may be offered to the family at [www.jtfisherfuneralservices.com](http://www.jtfisherfuneralservices.com)

## Francisco Basaldua - graduated flight school with Flight Class 69-14, he flew in Vietnam with the 118th AHC in 1969-70 under the Thunderbird 19 CallSign.

Francisco Basaldua, of San Antonio, passed away peacefully on Dec. 18, 2011. He was a graduate of the American Technological University.

He was a retired US Army Captain and served in the 118th ASC, known as the Thunderbirds in the Vietnam War. He earned numerous campaign awards including, the Vietnam Service Medal with 4 Bronze Service Stars, the Bronze Star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, forty-six Air Medals, Army Commendation Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Army Aviation Badge Expert Rifle, and Meritorious Service Medal.

He is survived by his two daughters, four sisters, one brother, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

## Gary D. Busch - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 62-5, no details of his Vietnam Service are available at this time.



CW4 (Ret.) Gary D. Busch, age 59, of Clarksville, died Friday, December 23, 2011 at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital, Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He was born April 10, 1952 in Kittanning, PA, he served 20 years in the United States Army having retired as a CW4 helicopter pilot. He was also employed by the Clarksville Gas & Water Department as the risk management coordinator.

He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Barbara Stitt Busch of Clarksville; one son, one daughter, three brothers and five grandchildren. Memorials can be made to the Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network, 4813 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814.

# TAPS

**Gary Henry Guerrero** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 68-21 & 68-35, he flew in Vietnam with the 195th AHC (1969-1970) under the CallSign Skychief 13.



Gary Henry Guerrero, 63, passed away December 16, 2011. Originally of St. Louis, MO, Gary served as an Army Special Operations Helicopter Pilot in Vietnam where he earned numerous combat awards to include the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He retired from the Army at the rank of Chief Warrant Officer Four after 21 years of honorable service.

Following his Army career, Gary worked as a helicopter pilot around the world. He retired in 2008 from Chevron Corp. where he held the position of Chief Pilot in Angola, Africa. Gary enjoyed cooking, telling jokes, and spending time with his family. Gary never met a stranger and was loved by everyone who knew him.

Gary is survived by his wife of 43 years, Deborah, originally of St. Louis; three sisters, two daughters, one son-in-law and three grandchildren. Interment was performed at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in Missouri. In honor of CW4 Gary H. Guerrero memorials may be given to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 2600 Virginia Ave, NW Suite 104, Washington DC, 20037.

**Harold R. "Hal" Manns** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 69-16, he flew in Vietnam with the H/29th Arty (1967-1968) and the 361st AWC (1969-1970) under the CallSign Panther 16



Harold R. Manns, beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, passed away January 17, 2012 at the age of 68. He leaves his wife/soul mate, Linda Manns; one son, one daughter, one brother, three grandchildren, four stepchildren and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

"Hal" served honorably in the United States Army for 31 years as a helicopter pilot (Cobra) with his mentors, the Pink Panthers. He served in the Vietnam conflict and retired as a Colonel. Even after his military service, Hal continued to be an advocate for military service members and a huge contributor to military relations.

After leaving the service, Hal became a financial analyst and worked for Telcordia. He was one of the original team members that developed DSL. Among his civilian accomplishments, he was a professor at Lee High University. He was a volunteer for Red Cross, Habit for Humanity, Homeless Veterans Organization, Save our Sea Shores, and the Cure for Leukemia Organization. Also, one of his passions was politics, he wrote speeches for Congressman Posey. Hal was most known for his sincerity and charity. Everyone came first in his heart and mind. If there was ever a problem, Hal was the first to offer help, even for those he barely knew. His life revolved around his wife, Linda, and his mentors, the Pink Panther group, a close knit family for years.

Anyone planning expression of sympathy is asked to consider Homeless Veterans organization, a cause he was extremely passionate about.

**Harry F. Reed** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 68-7, he flew in Vietnam with the 11th BDE, 23rd INF (1968-1969) under the CallSign Primo 3



Harry Ferenbach Reed passed away December 17, 2011 in Park City, Utah, surrounded by his family. He was born in NYC, April 5th 1941, the eldest of 5 siblings. In the early 1960's he moved west and immediately fell in love with Park City, Utah. He was a ski patroller, and ski instructor at Park City Ski Resort while attending school at the University of Utah.

In 1966 Harry was drafted into the army. He made the best of the experience by directing the ski school while stationed in Alaska, learning to fly helicopters, exploring southeast Asia between combat missions in Vietnam, and skiing throughout Europe while stationed in Germany. In the Vietnam War Harry earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Soldier's Medal for his efforts.

When Harry moved back to Park City in 1971, he continued to teach skiing, finished his degree in Political Science at the University of Utah, guided river trips down the Grand Canyon, and flew for the National Guard. He soon became an entrepreneur and started Real Estate Company, a Property Management Company and began his career as a Developer. In 1974, Harry's life long love, Sydney Dunn, accepted Harry's proposal for marriage and moved from New York City to start a life together. Harry supported his family with such development projects as Windrift, Little Belle, Enclave, Sterlingwood, Snowflower, Stagg II, Mount Cervin, and notably, Lower Main Street including the Marriott Summit Watch project, and Lift Lodge. Enriching the historic and active flavor of the town was important to Harry. He started the Historical Society, sat on the HDC and was instrumental in bridging Historic Main Street with mountain activities.

A top priority for Harry was adventure and fun. He never missed an opportunity to be with friends, family or business partners skiing powder, racing sailboats, biking, playing tennis, and golfing. Harry is survived by his devoted wife Sydney, his three children, and his one year old grandson whom he adored. A true adventurer, a visionary, loving husband, devoted father, and loyal friend, Harry will be sorely missed by his family, the Park City Community, and all who had the pleasure to share time with him.

In lieu of flowers he requested a donation to the Harry F. Reed Memorial Foundation, which will disperse money to improve trails, preserve open space, and the historic feel of Park City. [www.livepcgivepc.org/harryreedmemorial](http://www.livepcgivepc.org/harryreedmemorial) P.O. Box 512, Park City, UT 84060.

**Harry T. Pellett, Jr.** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 69-21, he flew in Vietnam with the 195th AHC (1969-1970)

Harry T. Pellett, Jr., 64, died Sept. 17, 2011, at his resi-

dence. He was born in Portland, Maine and graduated from Cheverus High School. After high school he joined the U.S. Army and attended helicopter flight school, followed by a tour of duty in South Vietnam. He received many medals, citations and awards for his service in Southeast Asia.

Upon his return, Harry taught at North East Aero Tech., and was a licensed A & E aircraft mechanic. He worked for Bar Harbor Air Lines and continued his love of aviation as an FAA controller at Bangor International Airport. Harry was a member of the Maine Army National Guard for 25 years with the 112th Medical Air Ambulance Company, retiring as chief warrant officer 4.

After his retirement, he kept active as a bus driver for the city of Bangor. He enjoyed volunteering at Maine Veterans Home, Bangor, as a Eucharistic minister, St. Mary's Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus. He was a certified presenter for Operation Life Saver of Maine and a member of the Experimental Aircraft Association. Harry had a passion for trains, antique car shows, photography, gardening, writing, his cats and a love of quiet country living.

Harry is survived by his former wife, Joan Fowle of Old Town; their three children and their families, and three half brothers. Harry's wit, love of short stories and humor will be missed by friends and family. Donations in his memory can be made to Bangor Humane Society; Maine Veterans Home, Bangor; and/or Troop Greeters at Bangor International Airport.

**James David Rand** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 68-11 and 68-17, flew in Vietnam with the 334th Assault Helicopter Company (1968-1969) under the callsign Dragon 35

The VHPA has been notified of the death of David Rand of Lufkin, Texas. He passed away on December 10th, 2011 from the effects of lung cancer. David is survived by his wife Maria and no children.

**James H. "Jay" Dixon** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 64-2W, he flew in Vietnam with A/501 Avn (1965), 273 HHC (1967-1968), HHC/222 AVN (1968) and the 12th AVN GP (1968) under the Firebird, Superhook and Rebel CallSigns



James H. "Jay" Dixon, 71, son the late Marjorie L. (Bond) and James Howard Dixon went home to the Lord on January 20, 2012. Jay Dixon led an extraordinary life. Dixon was born and raised in Nickelsville, Va. where his father owned and operated the Bush Mill which had been in the family for three generations. As a child, Dixon worked around the mill loading flour sacks and securing them with Miller's knots. When he was 18, Dixon dropped out of Lynn View High School and joined the Army. At the time, he said "school didn't interest me," a statement that is hard to believe today from a man who went on to

earn an engineering degree and master's degree in political science from Auburn University, and a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Starting with basic training at Ft. Jackson in South Carolina in 1958, Dixon worked his way up the military ladder, retiring after 23 years of service with the rank of lieutenant colonel. During his military career, Dixon served in the 44th Construction Battalion in Korea, was a member and instructor for Special Forces, and a warrant officer aviator flying missions in Vietnam. Jay Dixon was a Green Beret instructor at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and helicopter pilot, in Vietnam. He was a faculty member of the United States Military Academy in West Point and the National War College in Washington D.C.

He has received numerous awards including: Bronze Star Medal, two Meritorious Service Medal, seven Air Medals, Vietnam Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Parachutist Badge, Senior Army Aviator Badge, and Ranger Tab.

After a successful career in the military, Jay served as a consultant to civil and defense government agencies, as a military strategist and information systems designer. Dixon recently published a novel, his sixth book, "The Secret War," that draws heavily upon his experiences in Southeast Asia.

Dixon spent several years working with "special access programs" for national defense. While working in Washington, Dixon met his wife, Carol Walcoff Dixon. Jay and Carol were married in 1993. The couple moved back to Gate City, Va. The couple formed the Southwest Virginia Community Foundation and started work on several Southwest Virginia projects, including renovation of the Bush mill, Gate City Performing Arts Center, Clinch Mountain Arts & Crafts, and the Clinch Mountain MusicFest.

Despite all of his accomplishments, including being a renowned musician, Dixon was an extremely humble man. "The most enjoyable time of my life has been spent here in Southwest Virginia... It has been a joy."

Jay Dixon is survived by his loving wife Carol Dixon; two sisters, five children, ten grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren and numerous cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

**Jerome (Jerry) Maitland Boyle - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 69-37, he flew in Vietnam with A Troop 1/9 Cav, 1st CD (1970-1973) and B Troop, 1/9 Cav, 1CD (1971) under the Apache 24 and Saber 24 CallSigns**

Jerome (Jerry) Maitland Boyle, age 73, of Marion, Mont., passed away on Nov. 24, 2011, after a long illness. He is survived by his wife, Andrea, two sons, one daughter two stepsons and seven grandchildren.

Jerry was a longtime resident of Ventura County in California, he was a police officer/detective for Ventura Police Department from 1961 to 1968 and then entered active military duty with the U.S. Army. He went on to fly Cobra helicopters in Viet Nam for 18 months, reached the rank of Warrant Officer 2, and was awarded the Silver Star, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, five Bronze Stars, and various other awards. He also wrote the book "Apache Sunrise," recounting the first six months in Viet Nam.

He and Andrea were married in 1974 and lived in Ojai, CA from 1978 until 2009 when they moved to Marion, Montana.

Jimmie Charles Martin, graduated flight school with Flight Class 66-23 and 66-21, details of his Vietnam assignment are not available at this time.

Jimmie Charles Martin, 70, of Daphne, Alabama passed away November 10, 2011.

Jimmie was a member and Treasurer of Spanish Fort Church of Christ and the former purchasing manager for the Mobile Press Register. He was also a U.S. Army Vietnam veteran helicopter pilot.

Jimmie is survived by his loving wife, Juanita H. Martin, one son, one daughter, one sister and two grandchildren. The family request donations be made to the Spanish Fort Church of Christ, P. O. Box 7400, Spanish Fort, AL 36577.

**Joe B. Thurston - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 65-4, he flew in Vietnam with 145 Avn Plt (1965-66), the 281st AHC (1966), the 25th CAC (1967), HHC 12th CAG (1968), 4/77 ARA 101 ABN (1971), 2/17th Cav, 101 ABN, A/501 Avn (1972) and HHC.1 AVN BDE (1972). His Callsign of choice was Wolfpack 6**

Retired Colonel Joe B. Thurston, 75, died December 9, 2011 in Madison, AL of complications from prostate cancer. Joe was born and raised in Alex, Oklahoma, after graduating from the University of Oklahoma, he entered the Army as a Second Lieutenant in 1959.

He was a member of flight class 65-4, and in September of 1965 he was first assigned to the 145th Airlift Platoon in Viet Nam, the first army aviation unit attached to the 5th SFG, Detachment B-52, Project Delta, for helicopter support. He became the gunship platoon leader as the 145th was absorbed by the 281st AHC, which was attached OPCON to the 5th SFG in May 1966 to support Special Operations. He came to Viet Nam for a second tour in 1967 where he served with the 25th CAC and later with HHC/12 CAG. In his third tour in 1971 he served with the 4/77 ARA, 101 ABN; the 2/17 CAV, 101 ABN in 1972; HHC/1st AVN BDE in 1972. Among his awards and decorations were the Legion of Merit, the DFC, Bronze Star with V, and the Air Medal with V. He later became the first Commander of the Army Space Command in Colorado Springs, CO.

After retirement from the Army, he held several positions within Raytheon as a Patriot Missile engineer and handled International Patriot Sales. He retired from Raytheon in 1999, and did work for several volunteer agencies and became a Master Gardner. The Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame recently honored Colonel Thurston when he was inducted on November 11, 2011 in a Special Veterans Day Ceremony.

His wife of 49 years, Janice, and their two sons and two daughters survive Joe. A memorial service was held in Madison, and burial was at Ft. Sill National Cemetery with full Military Honors. The family request that donations in Joe's name be made to Hospice Family Care, 3304 West Mill Dr, Huntsville, AL 35805 or The American Cancer Society.

**Lt. Col. John W. Hammett Sr. - No Flight Class or Vietnam Unit information has been provided to the VHPA**

Lt. Col. John W. Hammett Sr., known by his family and friends as Bill, born in Shreveport, Louisiana passed away at age 89 on Wednesday, November 30, 2011. Bill will be remembered by all as a consummate southern gentleman. His courage, natural mischievousness and legendary sense of adventure and daring defined his demeanor and were readily captured in his childhood nickname "Wild Bill".

At just 17 years old with a signed permission slip from his father in his pocket, Bill traveled to Montreal, Canada to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force prior to the U.S. entrance into World War II. Once he qualified to fly Lockheed Hudson Bombers, Hurricanes and Spitfire fighters, Bill flew with the British Royal Air Force in the Battle of Britain over France and was shot down and rescued in the English Channel during the Battle of Dunkirk. From 1940 to 1942, he was credited with shooting down 3 German planes. After Pearl Harbor in 1942, Bill returned home to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps flying light aircraft in combat over Africa and Italy. As an artillery spotter, Bill would fly over enemy lines deliberately drawing fire in order to identify and direct return artillery fire on enemy positions.

After World War II, Bill returned home to Shreveport attending Centenary College and going on to complete two of the three years required at Tulane Law School. Even as a student, Bill continued his passion for flying working as both a flight instructor and a crop duster. It was here he met, courted and married Betty Colvin in 1947. Betty and Bill went on to travel the world together, raised a family, laughed, loved and danced for 64 rich years.

At the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 he was recalled to service attending Instrument Flight School in Kansas; Helicopter School in Texas; and Advanced Helicopter School in Oklahoma. Bill served 18 months in combat in Korea - first with the 25th Infantry Division; then assigned to the MASH in Korea as their Air Officer; and ultimately as Commanding Officer of Korea's first Helicopter Ambulance Detachment. Bill was a member of an elite group of military aviators who brought rotary wing ambulances into a battlefield environment.

Known for their courage, commitment and innovation, Bill was among a handful of pioneer aviators who flew solitary missions in primitive helicopters lacking navigational aids and limited to external litter carrying capabilities. Being a solo pilot meant flying at low altitudes over mountainous terrain to land at unlighted, unmarked sites within range of enemy fire. Flying at night was particularly dangerous. Bill flew so many night flights he was nicknamed Captain Midnight by the MASH crew. It was these repeated aerial missions to evacuate wounded soldiers and downed pilots that earned Bill multiple medals for heroic action in Korea but more importantly, the tactical importance of air ambulances in battlefield emergency medical care would go on to save thousands of American lives over the next 50 years.

# TAPS

At the end of the Korean War, Bill trained medical helicopter pilots at Fort Sam Houston; served as a test pilot at Fort Rucker, Alabama; served three years in the Surgeon General's Office in Washington, D.C.; attended Command General Staff College; and spent three years in Germany as a Command and Staff Officer. Six months after returning from Europe, Bill was sent to Vietnam in 1966. Flying medical helicopter missions and serving as the Operations and Aviation Officer of the only medical brigade in the country. During this time, he flew over 25 combat missions in direct support of tactical units under hostile fire.

During his long military career, Bill earned the Legion of Merit in Vietnam, Distinguished Flying Cross in Korea, Bronze Stars in both Korea and Italy, as well as numerous other air medals, campaign ribbons, and decorations. Bill retired in 1973 after 30 years of military service and started another career as Chief of Field Services for the State of Georgia's Emergency Medical System. Over the next 20 years - using his extensive military medical evacuation experience and knowledge - Bill was recognized for being instrumental in organizing and improving the Georgia Emergency Medical System that exists today.

Betty and Bill retired in Atlanta, Georgia in 1993, eventually moving to San Antonio, Texas to be closer to their children. Bill is a graduate of Saint Mary's University and a member of Trinity Baptist Church. In retirement, he found much enjoyment in traveling, fishing, playing golf, and volunteering as a mentor at a local school and for Habitat for Humanity. Bill is survived by his wife, Betty Colvin Hammett; their two children, one grandchild as well as many nieces and nephews that were dear to him. Life will be less vivid without Bill. He will be deeply missed ~ Well done, Captain Midnight.

**Cpt. Kenneth E. Drake - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 69-18, he flew in Vietnam with the 120th AHC (1970-1971)**

Cpt. Kenneth E. Drake, 65, of Mays Landing, New Jersey, died unexpectedly at his residence on Wednesday, December 21, 2011. He was born in Greenport, Long Island and after graduating High School, Ken was drafted into the United States Army where he earned the ranking of Captain while serving as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. After returning from Vietnam, Ken pursued his passion for art and became an art teacher, working at Hammonton High School for 27 years, after retirement he continued to teach as a professor at ACCC.

Ken will be remembered for his great sense of humor, his appreciation of art, his passion for teaching, his service to the United States Army, and most especially for the love of his family. He is survived by his loving wife and best friend Jane (Callan) Drake, one daughter, three sons, two brothers, one sister, three grandchildren and many nieces and nephews, and countless loved ones. Memorial contributions can be sent to Timothy Klay Drake Educational Fund Ocean City Home Bank 5401 Harding Highway Mays Landing, NJ 08330.

**Larry Richard Kolar - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 66-17, he flew in Vietnam with B Troop, 1/9 Cav, 1st CD (1967-1968) and HHT Troop, 7/1 Cav, (1971) under the Blackhawk 8 CallSign**

Larry R. Kolar, a 26-year Barstow, California resident, died unexpectedly on January 9, 2012. He is survived by his wife Jane, two sisters, two daughters, two stepsons and 12 grandchildren.

Larry enlisted in the Army 28 Aug 1957 for three years, served as a Harborcraft crewman and was discharged as a SP4 E-4 in 1960, he immediately re-enlisted for four more years in which he served in Korea as Sp5 E-5 (Boat Captain) and again was discharged on 29 Oct 1964. In February 66 he enlisted for Warrant Officer Flight School, after two tours in Vietnam he went on to attend AMOC, TC OFF ORIENT COURSE, AH - 1G COBRA TRANS COURSE, TC OFFICER ADV. COURSE, FIXED WING QUAL COURSE PH II, and AMC INSTAL MGMT COURSE. Larry was awarded a direct commission and retired as a Major in 1980 after a more than 20-year career in the Army.

Major Kolar's many decorations and medals included the Silver Star, Bronze Star w/V Device and 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Meritorious Service Medal, Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal (5 campaigns), Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Air Medal w/26 Oak Leaf Clusters, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Valorous Unit Award (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Vietnam Cross of Gallantry w/palm, Army Aviator Badge, and Civil Action Unit Citation. Licenses held at the time of his death included Commercial Helicopter/ Fixed Wing/ Single and Multi Engine Instrument.

Larry earned a B.S. Degree in Transportation from Embry-Riddle University. He taught for the Barstow and Helendale school districts, the career he declared to be the most rewarding. He was a member of MOAA, Bullwhip Squadron Association, Popular Rotorcraft Association, California Teachers Association, and SoCal VHPA (Past Pres., V. P., and Treasurer). Larry also owned and instructed in Gyro-Copters which he flew at numerous air shows. As you can see by his many decorations and medals, Larry was a hero's hero and will be missed by many personal friends as well as family and his military buddies. Friends are encouraged to honor his life by doing something to benefit children.

**Larry Kent Kerbs - flew in Vietnam with the 93rd TC Co (1961-62), no other details of his service are available at this time**

Larry Kent Kerbs, passed away May 25, 2011 at his home. He was born in Hoisington, KS, went on to graduate with a BS in Industrial Engineering from the University of Kansas. He served proudly as a 1st Lt. Army helicopter pilot in Vietnam. Larry completed advanced studies in Engineering and Business at UCLA and Pepperdine University. During the course of his career, he

worked for NASA, Mattel, Hasbro, Brunswick Corp, and The Franklin Mint, with many years spent in Asia, and later, as a successful owner of McMurray Uniform Rental.

A craftsman at heart, Larry was known for his assiduous work on his many projects and hobbies. He is beloved by his family for his support, wisdom, and generosity in all things. He is survived by his wife, Ann, with whom he shared 50 years of marriage, one son, one daughter, one daughter-in-law, three granddaughters and one brother. Donations in his honor may be made to Waldorf School of Orange County. ([www.waldorfschool.com/donate](http://www.waldorfschool.com/donate)).

**Louis J Oddone - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 55-1, flew in Vietnam with the 57th TC Co (1961-62)**

Louis J. Oddone, 81, passed away December 27, 2011 in Carson City, NV. Born in Oakland, CA, a young Louis received an A.B. degree, in 1952 from St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, CA, and then attended the University of San Francisco, CA majoring in engineering.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1953 where he flew as a helicopter pilot on numerous combat missions in Vietnam, was stationed in Germany and was deployed to Lebanon. He was honorably discharged in 1963 with numerous awards and decorations. He then enlisted in the Nevada Army National Guard serving his country for another fifteen years finally retiring from the military in 1990. Louis was employed by the Carson City School District for twenty-five years where he taught science, math and English. Later he became the guidance counselor.

Louis enjoyed dancing, travel, RV'ing, carpentry, car restoration, gardening, photography and playing one of his accordions. He was a member of the VFW and the Italian Benevolence Society at the time of his death. He had volunteered at the Carson-Tahoe Hospital and enjoyed performing in the Senior Follies with the Carson City Senior Center.

Louis is survived by the mother of his children, Sieglinde Proctor, two sons, one daughter and one grandson. Donations may be made in honor of Louis to the Veteran's Guest House (Home away from home for US military service veterans receiving medical treatment and for families of veterans) at 888 Locust St., Reno, NV 89502.

**Mark J. Locatelli - graduated flight school with Flight Class 69-23, details of his Vietnam assignment are not available at this time.**



Mark J. Locatelli, 63, of Boulder Creek, California, has passed away. Mark served as Chief Warrant Officer and was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam in 1969 and 1970. He knew the price of freedom that the protected will never know.

Mark is survived by his two brothers, one niece, one nephew, one great niece and one great nephew. Donations may be made in his name to the Boulder Creek Fire Department and Museum.

# TAPS

**Michael V. Baker** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 66-99 and 66-9W and flew in Vietnam with the 334th AHC.

Michael V. Baker, born in Philadelphia, Pa., passed away peacefully on November 19, 2011 following a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

Michael graduated from High School in Philadelphia, Pa. and after attending Temple University he enlisted in the United States Army and bravely served his country as a helicopter pilot and member of the 334th Armed Helicopter Company. After Vietnam he served as a flight instructor at Fort Rucker until being discharged. He later moved to the West Coast, continued to fly helicopters, and started a family. In 1972 he settled his family Auburn, California and joined the National Guard. He went on to work in California primarily as a locomotive engineer and alarm technician.

Michael will be remembered as a caring father and friend. His generosity and thoughtfulness touched the lives of many and he spent much of his time giving back to his community. He was a dedicated and longstanding member of the Knights of Columbus, St. Teresa of Avila Parish, and Applegate Civic Center Club. His passions included collecting books, camping, music, and singing in St. Teresa's choir.

He is survived by his four sons, numerous grandchildren, one brother and two sisters. The family would appreciate that donations in his honor be made to St. Teresa of Avila Church.

**Noel L. "Mike" Hammer** - graduated Flight School with the USMC, flew in Vietnam with the HMM-263 on his first tour and with HML-167 on his second tour

Mike Hammer was a member of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA & USMC Combat Helicopter Association (also known as Popasmoke). Born in Guernsey, Iowa, he died Jan 19, 2012 at home in Lakewood, Colorado. Mike graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Business Administration.

After Marine OCS, Mike attended the Navy Flight School at Pensacola, Florida and went on to fly two tours in RVN. On his first tour with HMM-263, he flew CH-34's, on the second tour, he flew an UH-IE gunships with HML-167. His Air Medals had the numerals 63 along with a bronze star for valor. As a section/division leader in HML-167, Mike often lead missions deep into Laos & North Vietnam on the Mission Prairie Fire (Prairie Fire was also known as Mission # 72). Mike then flew the President of the United States with HMX-1.

After leaving the USMC in 1975, Mike moved to Lakewood, CO and joined the Environmental Protection Agency, for 25 years. He also worked for FEMA on many different emergencies.

Rick Beaver, Gary Heurelle, Fred Lyssy, Jim McNamee & Walter Wise of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA attended Mike's services, they were conducted by Mike's brother-in-law the Reverend Ray Hinsch, himself a former CH-46 pilot in RVN with HMM-161 in 1970.

Mike is survived by his wife of 51 years, Kathryn. They have three children and 5 grandchildren, he is also survived by two sisters and one brother. Mike will be deeply missed.

**Oscar Nolan "Pete" Peterson** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 68-13 & 68-21, flew in Vietnam with the 7 AVN PLT (1968-1969, the 242 ASHC (1969-1971) and the 120th AHC (1970) under the CallSigns Snow White 19 and Dean 7

Oscar Nolan "Pete" Peterson, 69, passed away on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2012.

He served as chief warrant officer in the U.S. Army. He retired as a civilian flight commander, U.S. Army Helicopter Training Center in Fort Rucker, Ala. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and served as a pilot of CH-47 and UH-1H helicopters. He was a member of the Vietnam Helicopters Pilot Association.

Pete was a former secretary of the Greater Fort Rucker Bowling Association and director of the Alabama state bowling association. He was member of the Greater Fort Rucker Bowling Hall of Fame. He was a member of the Professional Bowlers Association and had seven sanctioned 300 games.

He is survived by his loving wife of 39 1/2 years, Lela; his mother, one son, one brother, two sisters, three sisters-in-law, one brother-in-law, 11 nieces and nephews and 18 great-nieces and great-nephews. The family has requested that donations be made to the Carroll S. Roberson Hospice Center, 2431 Legion Road, Fayetteville, NC, 28306, 910-429-7000; or the John Griffin Middle School Library, 5551 Fisher Road, Fayetteville, NC 28304.

**Peter Tuttle Smith** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 58-06 and 62-3, flew in Vietnam with the A/1 AVN, 1 INF (1965-1966) under the Bulldog CallSign.

Peter Tuttle Smith, 77, died Sunday, December 18, 2011, after a series of strokes. Pete is survived by his wife, Dorothy (Dottie) McClenahan Smith; three daughters, two sisters, seven adored grandchildren and a host of nieces, nephews and family members in both Canada and the U.S.

Pete earned a degree in finance at Northeastern University. After serving his country in the military, Pete resumed civilian life, but he was soon called back into service for a second tour as an Army helicopter pilot in Vietnam where he attained the rank of Major. Pete worked as a stockbroker for E.F. Hutton in El Paso for 28 years, after which he began a very active retirement filled with golf, tennis, 9-Ball billiards, crossword puzzles, Austin-Healey automobiles and speeding tickets. Pete loved and appreciated all that El Paso and the Desert Southwest had to offer. For 43 years he was an active member of Western Hills Methodist Church, where he sang in the choir and participated in the Kairos prison ministry. Pete never knew a stranger.

He was enormously proud of his family and did not hesitate to brag about them, at length, to anyone who would listen (or who couldn't get away!). Pete was a kind-hearted, trusting, and honorable man. He loved his friends and family and will be missed. The family invites contributions to the Wounded Warrior Project (877-832-6997) or a charity of your choice.

**Randall "Randy" Lynn Lasater** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 68-12 & 68-18, flew in Vietnam with the A/101 AVN 101 ABN (1968-1969 under the Comanchero 16 CallSign

Randy Lasater, 67, passed away December 14, 2011, at the Veteran's Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was raised in a warm and loving family surrounded by eight brothers and sisters. He played the guitar and sang beautifully, he was also an accomplished horseman.

He served with honor during the Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot (Captain). As a result of his service he suffered Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and a series of health problems resulting in his death. He is survived by his three children, three grandchildren and two sisters. As per his wishes cremation was held and an a Celebration of his Life will be held in the spring with his ashes scattered from a helicopter over the Monte Cristo Mountains.

**Robert Gene Dawson** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 67-5, flew in Vietnam with the 334th AHC in 1967-1968 under the Dragon 33 callsign.

A salute to Robert Gene Dawson "Dragon 33", Chief Warrant Officer II in the 334th Assault Helicopter Company, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion.

Bob was in Flight Class number WORWAC 67-5, Department of the Army Aviation School, Fort Rucker, Alabama in January, 1967. Bob's medals included the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star and the Air Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Chief Warrant Officer Dawson distinguished himself in Vietnam while serving as aircraft commander of the command ship and fire team leader of a light fire team on a night combat operation. His team was directed to provide illumination and additional air cover at the site of a downed aircraft, two crew members of the downed ship were stranded while trying to recover the aircraft's armament systems. Due to the intense enemy fire, all attempts to rescue the men had been unsuccessful. Warrant Officer Dawson volunteered to attempt the rescue and while approaching the disabled craft he was caught in crossfire from automatic weapons. With little illumination, and with automatic weapon fire completely surrounding him, he went on to hold his position until the crewmembers were safely aboard his aircraft. His outstanding flying ability and superb display of professionalism saved the lives of two men. At the time of the rescue, WO Dawson had flown over 500 gunship combat flight hours with the great majority of that time being at night while in command of the Firefly Mission.

Bob was also a Kentucky Colonel, Mason member of the Blue Lodge, Life Member of the VFW, American Legion and member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Florida Chapter. Bob maintained his commercial pilot license for single and multiengine land and instrument airplane rotor craft-helicopter.

Bob passed away November 3, 2011 in Hudson, Florida, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He is survived by his wife Chris, five sons, two daughters-in-law, six grandchildren and one brother.

# TAPS

**Robert R. "Bob" Taylor - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 66-17, he flew in Vietnam with the 119 AHC (1966-67), 545 TC DET (1966-67) and A.5 TC 101 ABN (1969-70) under the Alligator callsign.**

Robert R. "Bob" Taylor, 72, passed away peacefully at his home in North Richland Hills, Texas on Sunday, Dec. 18, 2011, after a long battle with cancer. Bob was a 20-year veteran of the U.S. military, a CWO3, Vietnam combat veteran and retired aerospace engineer. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend. He will be dearly missed.

Bob was raised in the "Tri-Cities" area on the Tennessee-Virginia border, his 20-year military career began with his enlistment at age 17 in the U.S. Air Force and included service in post-war Korea and participation in the Cuban Missile Crisis. After seven years in the Air Force, Bob enlisted in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, where he became a helicopter pilot. As a pilot, he served more than two tours in Vietnam, logging nearly 700 hours of combat flying time with 119th Assault Helicopter Company and the 101st Airborne Division. During his time in Vietnam, he was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation, two Meritorious Unit Citations, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal and 13 Air Medals. After returning from Vietnam, Bob spent six years as an Army test pilot at the Bell Helicopter plant in Hurst. Following retirement from the Army, Bob worked as an engineer at Bell Helicopter, earning a B.S. from Dallas Baptist College in 1981. During his 23-year career at Bell, he designed systems for many of the most advanced rotary-wing aircraft in the U.S. military including the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior, the AH-1W SuperCobra, the AH-1Z Zulu and the V-22 Osprey. He was also awarded several patents in areas ranging from night vision technology to nuclear, biological and chemical warfare defense.

Mr. Taylor authored or co-authored several technical papers on the subject of Human Factors Engineering, Cockpit Design, Electro- Optics and, Chemical Warfare Hardening designs. Unclassified portions of his work are published in the American Helicopter Society Journal, SPIE Journal (The International Society for Optical Engineering), the NATO-based Advisory Group for Aerospace Research and Development (AGARD) publications, as well as numerous technical reports at Bell Helicopter.

In addition to technical publications Mr. Taylor was recognized for providing "significant research" contributions to the condensed aviation history of the Vietnam War entitled "Primer of the Helicopter Warfare" by Charles Holley and Mike Sloniker.

After retirement from Bell, he became active in several veterans' organizations, including the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, The '091" Project, the National Vietnam War Museum and the Wounded Warrior Project. Survivors: His wife of 47 years, Anna Beeson Taylor; three sons, seven grandchildren and his brothers in arms from all branches of service.

**Robert Paul Metcalf - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 65-11, he flew in Vietnam with the 120th AHC (1965-66) under the Dean callsign.**

Robert Paul Metcalf, 66, passed from this world at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas,

January 3, 2012 where he had been a patient since December 20, 2011. Robert was born on January 22, 1945, graduated high school at Lisbon High School in Potsdam, NY and went on to receive two college degrees.

Robert married the love of his life, Shirley Ann Perry, and they resided in the Town of Potsdam, NY. They have one son and two grandchildren. Robert worked as a New York State Police trooper for 27 years and received the Silver Star award for bravery. He spent the last 16 years of his career with the State Police as a Medivac helicopter pilot, coordinating search-and-rescue missions with the forest rangers in the Adirondack mountains and surrounding area and performing hospital transportation flights.

Robert served in the Vietnam War and was awarded the Master Army Aviator Badge, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam service medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, 11 Air medal awards and the National Defense Service Medal with a Bronze Service Star. He retired from the U. S. Army with the rank of chief Warrant Officer, 4th grade.

Robert was a substitute math and science teacher at Lisbon High School for 10 years and was well known for his volunteer work and dedication to serving his community. He was a member of the Potsdam Lions Club and a life member of the Potsdam BPOE Elks Lodge. A spring burial will be held with full military honors in the Church of the Visitation Cemetery in Norfolk at a date and time to be announced.

Submitted by Gary J Stefanini SSG USA (Ret), E-Mail: [REDACTED]

**Robert "Bobby" Cassem - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 69-48 and flew with the 170th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) in 1970.**

The VHPA has been updated on the death of Robert Cassem who took his own life on October 1, 1978 in Virginia. Basic details of the passing may be obtained in private correspondence with his good friend, VHPA Member Michael Harding. E-Mail: MichaelHarding@g.com

Colonel Robert M. Ondrick Graduated Flight School with USMC Flight Class 50-56, flew in Vietnam with the VMFA (1966-67) and HML-167 (1970-71) under the Hondo and Comprise 3 CallSigns.

Colonel Robert M. Ondrick U.S.M.C. retired, age 74, of Madison, passed away Jan. 20, 2012, at Lake West Hospital. Colonel Ondrick was a pilot serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. for more than 33 years, retiring in 1988. He also flew flight operations for six years out of Cuyahoga County Airport.

Robert was a member of American Legion Post 112 in Madison, Marine Corps., the Aviation Association, Vietnam Helicopter Association Local EAA, the Marine Memorial in San Francisco and a Friend of the Madison Library. Colonel Ondrick had received his bachelor's degree and master's degree from Oklahoma State University and George Washington University.

Survivors are his wife, Donna; three daughters, and four grandchildren. Burial will be in Arlington

National Cemetery at a later date. Contributions in his memory may be made to the American Lung Association, Madison Library or the Marine Corps Aviation Association.

**Robert B. Runyan - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 66-22, flew in Vietnam with the A Co, 229th AHB, 1st CD (1967-68) under the under the Hacksaw 16 and Bandit 16 CallSigns.**



Robert B. Runyan, age 68, Ft. Worth, Texas, died January 6, 2012. He was born in Kansas City, MO, and graduated from Paola High School, in Paola, Kansas in 1961. Bob was active in school activities, lettering three years in football while also playing in the band. He graduated from Pittsburgh State College in 1965. He was the ROTC Distinguished Military Student (DMS) via ROTC, and received a regular Army commission instead of being a reserve officer. During his college years, he served as president of the Sigma Tau Gamma Fraternity.

He entered the Army as a 2nd lieutenant in January of 1966, graduating from the Armored Officers Basic Course then completed his training and graduated from the U. S. Army Helicopter Flight School. He served in Vietnam during 1967-68 as a platoon leader in A Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Division. He was awarded several decorations including the Bronze Star, air medal with twenty clusters, and numerous campaign medals. His beloved call sign as a Vietnam helicopter pilot was "Hacksaw 16."

His former flight commander, Col. Eugene Beyer, now retired, described Bob Runyan as a pilot who demonstrated character and leadership during the rigors of combat. He posed this question about Bob, "Where do we get men of this metal?" Bob was known to volunteer for any missions available.

Upon leaving active duty as a captain, he remained in the Texas National Guard flying with the 536th (Hook Masters) Aviation Company in command of a CH Chinook Helicopter platoon. He also served in the G-2 Intelligence group as a staff officer to the Texas Adjutant General, retiring as a major.

After military service, he worked as a medical supply salesman. Thereafter, he was founder and partner in United Medical Supply Co. of Worth, Texas, which had branches in TX, OK and NM. After semi-retiring, he formed Gammon Technologies, a computer company he ran for 12 years. His last years were spent teaching history at various federal correction facilities. He remained a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

He is survived by his sister, Ann Miranda, and her husband, Francis; also one niece and two nephews. Memorial contributions may be given to the VFW Post 3712, 200 W. Delaware St., Paola, KS, 66071.

**Robert E. (Bob) McKelvey** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 68-518 and 68-32, he flew in Vietnam with the 48th AHC (1970) under the under the Bluestar 01 CallSign.

Robert E. (Bob) McKelvey born July 29, 1942 in Winchester, Tennessee, passed away peacefully on December 25, 2011 in Palestine, Texas, after a courageous battle with a malignant brain tumor.

Bob spent most of his early years in Florence, Alabama, on the banks of the Tennessee River enjoying a very traditional and disciplined childhood where he learned the value of hard work and reverent family values. At 18, Bob went to Auburn University where he received a degree in Business.

Upon graduation in 1966, Bob enlisted in the army and after his Officer Candidate School training he completed Jungle Training in the Panama Canal Zone. He then signed up for flight school and after graduation, Captain Robert E. McKelvey joined the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (Blue Stars) in Vietnam. He served as Flight Instructor, Pilot and Company Commander and flew hundreds of rescue missions and herbicidal warfare missions, spraying the dense jungle with Agent Orange. During this time Bob made many friendships with his pilots and other soldiers that would last a life time.

After serving the Army for five years, in 1971 he began his career in the equipment rental business in Palestine, Texas, where he joined his Father-in-Law in his family business, The K Way Equipment Company. Bob developed new concepts in rental equipment and helped grow this relatively small business from one local location to seven locations in Texas and Louisiana, employing over 150 people. After the sale of The K

Way Equipment Company in 1999, Bob did consulting work, and thrust himself into volunteer work in Palestine and surrounding areas. He served on numerous boards and community projects including the Palestine Industrial Foundation, the Palestine Library Board, the Cartmell Home Board and Foundation, Junior Achievement, UT Tyler-Palestine Campus, the Upper Neches River Municipal Water Authority and the Trinity Improvement Association. Bob served as mayor of Palestine in 1997-2001 and was one of the primary leaders in the formation of the UT Tyler Palestine Campus nursing school. Bob was a proud 39-year member of the Palestine Rotary Club and the First Methodist Church in Palestine.

Bob had very wide interests...loved to read, loved hunting, fishing, old cars, ranching, traveling, and above all...family. Whatever he did, it was always with great enthusiasm and dedication. He put his family first, and was an anchor that could always be counted on for support and encouragement. He had such great capacity for love and generosity. He is survived by his wife, Mary Elizabeth McKelvey and her son, two sons, one sister, six grandchildren and numerous cousins, nephews, nieces and a multitude of loyal friends. The family requests that memorial donations be made to the UT Tyler-Palestine Campus in Palestine, to the Cartmell Home for the Aged in Palestine or to a charity of your choice.

**Shelton R. Foles** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 60-6 and 62-6, he flew in Vietnam with A Co, 501th AVN (1964-65) and 273rd HHC (1967-68)



Shelton R. Foles, 79, passed away December 16, 2011 at Regency Hospital in Hattiesburg, MS. Mr. Foles retired after 30 years service as a U.S. Army veteran with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 04. During his military career he was a fixed wing and helicopter pilot, serving in Korea and Vietnam. Upon leaving the service, Mr. Shelton served as pilot for ex- Mayor Bobby Chain of Hattiesburg for another 20 years.

He was preceded in death by his first wife Doris Edwards Foles and a brother. He is survived by his wife, Barbara J. Foles, two step-sons, one step-daughter, one brother, one sister, a number of nieces and nephews, 11 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Donations in his name may be made to Crosspoint Church, P. O. Box 17767, Hattiesburg, MS 39404.

**Lt. Col. Walter H. Huth** - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 61-7, he flew in Vietnam with HHC, 145th AVN (1966-67) and the 335th AHC (1967) under the Cowboy 6 CallSign.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Walter H. Huth - beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend - was called home to be with our Lord, Nov. 12, 2011.

Walt was born in Karnes County, Texas, after college he joined the U.S. Army. During his 20-year career, he served with the 11th and 82nd Airborne, Military Intelligence, and Army Aviation. He was a decorated veteran of Korea and Vietnam. While on temporary duty with the CIA, in 1956, he met Donna Grace Bowbeer of Arlington, Va. They married Dec. 8, 1956, and had three daughters.



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# TAPS

Walter H. "Mac" McLendon - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 66-22, flew in Vietnam with 25th AVN, 25th INF (1967-68) and the 11th GS (1970-71).



Walter H. "Mac" McLendon, 72, died on January 22, 2012 at his home. He was born in Georgia, Colonel McLendon retired from the United States Army in 1993 after 28 years of service which included two tours of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. His many awards included the Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters. After his military career, he joined Cubic Applications Inc., where he worked for the last 18 years.

He is survived by his wife, Mi O. McLendon and two daughters from his first marriage to Betty McLendon. Also surviving are one brother, one sister, three grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Internment will take place at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery with full honors.

*Memorial Contributions may be made to [www.smiletrain.org](http://www.smiletrain.org)*

Walter "Russ" Miller, Jr. - graduated Flight School with Flight Class 61-28 & 71-30, he flew in Vietnam with F Troop, 4th Cav (1971-72) under the Centaur47 CallSign.

LTC Walter R. (Russ) Miller, JR. passed on Nov. 1, 2011 in San Antonio, Texas of a massive heart attack. At the time of his passing, Russ & his wife, Carol were preparing for his retirement at the end of this year and were settling into their retirement home in San Antonio, Texas.

Russ had a successful 27 year Army career. Colonel Miller served two tours in Vietnam, the first as enlisted, the second as an officer flying Cobra helicopters. Russ flew Cobras under the call sign Centaur 47, flying for F Trp, 4th Cavalry from Nov. 1971-Nov. 1972 where he earned three (3) Distinguished Flying Cross's (DFC), an Air Medal with V device.

Russ ended his 27 year career as Commandant of ROTC at Ole Miss. After retirement, Russ & his wife Carol settled in their hometown of Port Gibson, Ms. where he was Commandant for a Military school & for the last 20 years as Sr. Vice President of a local bank.

Russ touched all that knew him and will be missed by all. He was preceded in death by one son, he is survived by his wife Carol, one daughter and five loving grandchildren. All that knew Russ loved him.

Warran V. Wandel - graduated flight school with Flight Class 67-25 and 68-1, he flew in Vietnam with A Battery, 2/20 ARA, 1st Cav Div in 1968 under the Blue Max 27 CallSign.



Warran Vanell Wandel, 64, passed away on January 27, 2012. Internment was held at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery in Dallas, Texas.

Warren was an Army Aviator, an Aviation Safety Officer, a National Transportation Safety Board Accident Investigator and a Consulting Aviation Accident Expert. He was also a decorated disabled veteran. His keen attention to detail, innate ability to analyze complex information with remarkable insight and unwavering integrity made him one of the most respected and sought after aviation accident experts in the country.

An aviator from an early age, Warren learned to fly with his father, becoming a multi-engine, fixed wing pilot by age 16. He volunteered for the US Army and graduated from Army Flight School in 1967 as one of three Honor Graduates in his class and went on to serve as a U.S. Army Aviator from 1967-1996, Active & Reserve, retiring as Chief Warrant Officer Four (CW4) in 1996. His active duty assignments included a combat tour with the 1st Cavalry as an Aircraft Commander, flying AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters in Vietnam (1968). Following training as an Army Aviation Safety Officer and Accident Investigator, he continued to fly and serve in the Reserve, including an assignment as one of two Aviation Safety Officers for the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. He was a UH-1 (Huey) pilot and Unit Safety Officer for the 351st ASA Company attached to Randolph Air Force Base. Later, he served as an Aviation Safety Staff Officer for 5th Army, Fort Sam Houston, as well as a Safety Officer and Investigation Advisor for the Department of the Army.

As a civilian, he worked with Bell Helicopter International as a Safety Officer and Accident Investigator in Tehran, Iran. He was with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Fort Worth Field Office, from 1980 until 1995. Upon retiring, he founded Warren V. Wandel & Associates, working as an Aircraft Accident Investigation Expert until his death. During his military and civilian careers, he investigated more than 1600 aviation accidents and had a profound impact on aviation safety.

Warren was a loving and much loved husband, father and brother. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Dara Agnew Wandel, one daughter, one son, a sister, two nephews as well as many friends and associates across the country who will never forget him. The family asks that remembrances be considered for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the USO, or the International Society of Air Safety Investigators (ISASI).

**Lt. Col. Norman P. Jacobs** - graduated flight school with Flight Class 60-2FW, the 68Q, he flew in Vietnam with the 16th CAG in 1969.

Lt. Col. Norman P. Jacobs, U.S. Army (Ret.), 82, died February 1, 2012, burial will be in Arlington National Cemetery at a date and time to be determined.

Lt. Col. Jacobs was born in Hays, Kan and graduated from St. Benedict's College and the University of South Carolina. He enlisted in the Army in October of 1947 and trained at Fort Benning, Ga., and was qualified as a parachutist and gliderman, he became a member of the Caterpillar Club because of an emergency parachute jump from a crashing C-82 aircraft at Fort Bragg. He completed Infantry Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a second lieu-

tenant in 1952. In Korea, he fought as an infantry platoon leader with the 25th Infantry Division. His airborne assignments included the 82nd Airborne Division, the Army Airborne Center and the Joint Airborne Troop Board at Fort Bragg, N.C., and the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky and Germany. His military education included the Advanced Infantry Officers Course, the Army Command and General Staff College, the Armed Forces Staff College, and the Army's Flight School where he became qualified in both airplanes and helicopters.

He was selected to serve with the Army Staff in the Pentagon for three years, following which he was assigned the 16th Combat Aviation Group in Vietnam receiving numerous awards and decorations.

Following his retirement from the Army in 1970, Lt. Col. Jacobs moved to Columbia and was employed by the Columbia Hospital, he later developed a modernized system for procurement, inventory control, and distribution service; he was appointed the hospital's first senior vice president and served on the Board of Directors. Lt. Col. Jacobs was a member of the American College of Hospital Administrators, the National Association of Purchasing Management, and a Fellow in the Health Facilities Institute.

He was a life member of the Military Officers Association, the Society of Friends of Historic Fort Hays, Kan., the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association; the 82nd Airborne Division Historical Society and the 11th Airborne Division Association. Lt. Col. Jacobs also was a 40-year member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, the NRA and a 20-year member of the Interstate Hunt Club. He was a commercial pilot, instrument flight instructor pilot, and helicopter pilot with over 2000 hours of flight experience. Lt.

Col. Jacobs had a lifelong passion for fast cars, which intensified in 1957 when he purchased his first Porsche while stationed in Germany. At the Porsche factory, he met and collected the autograph of Dr. Ferry Porsche along with his new red Speedster. The love of Porsches continued though out his life as he spent time racing his Porsche in road courses across the Southeast.

Lt. Col. Jacobs is survived by his wife of 17 years, Bene Jacobs, four children, three step-children, two adopted children and three grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to the Army Historical Foundation, PO Box 96703, Washington, DC 20090-6703.

**Eric Lee Holsinger** - graduated flight school with Flight Class 68-6, he flew in Vietnam with HHT, 7/17th Cav (1969) and B Troop, 7/17th Cav in 1969-70.

Eric Lee Holsinger, 69, of Columbia, South Carolina passed away on Wednesday, February 1, 2012. Mr. Holsinger was born in Marion, Ohio and was a retired Army captain and helicopter pilot. He later retired from the South Carolina Department of Corrections and also was a former Mason.

Mr. Holsinger is survived by his wife, Dale Powell Holsinger, one daughter, three brothers, his mother-in-law, one sister-in-law and one brother-in-law. Memorials may be made to the Salvation Army, 2025 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

For at least one former crew chief who suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder, the work served as therapy. When his psychiatrist learned the crew chief had worked on a restoration project, the doctor recommended he spend some time in a helicopter meditating and letting memories run their course. Glad to help, Chuck let this troubled soul spend a few hours sitting in a Huey in the barn. Afterward the crew chief seemed to feel better.

Because the goal was to display the helicopters at events such as Veterans Day parades and helicopter pilot reunions, it was important to mount the helicopters on trailers. Not finding any suitable standard trailers, Chuck built custom trailers that had very low beds. Still, he had to shorten masts to achieve clearance under bridges. Also he shortened cross tubes and skids to facilitate mounting on trailers. To reduce the chance of damage during transport he made the fins on tail booms easily removable.

Due to military policies and federal and state laws, weapons and mounts for weapons were seldom available in scrap yards. For the AH-1's there were sufficient original gun turrets and rocket pods but he had to make mounts for the miniguns and tubes for the grenade launchers. He made a mini gun for the OH-58. All the aircraft now have the appropriate weapons though they will rest peacefully, unable to fire.

As in the old flying days, the restoration work did not always go smoothly. Chuck set up 110 volt power for exterior lights and some of the instruments. Routing the wires was difficult and led to a modern war story. While fishing wire through the column behind the front door of the UH1, Chuck's arm caught on some wires inside the column. Working solo and not having a cell phone, Chuck wondered how long he may be stuck in the barn before someone found him. He struggled but could not reach the wire cutters he had left on the front seat. Finally he discovered a contortion that allowed him to grasp the cutters with his free hand and was able to free himself. Later, when he was loading the Huey onto his trailer, a nylon strap broke. The aircraft fell on the trailer, trapping his son-in-law's leg under the hull. He was seriously scared but not seriously hurt. John Grow, who flew with the 155th, accompanied Chuck on parts hunting missions. John pursued parts like a bloodhound. Once Chuck was alarmed to find John had climbed on top of a 40 foot, precarious stack of parts that was beginning to collapse, but Chuck talked him down safely.

When the helicopters were nearly finished, the Military channel filmed them in the pasture at chuck's house. Also, a film crew and actors from the History Channel visited the aircraft. The Channel featured the aircraft in several shows that included interviews with Vietnam veterans.

After the helicopters were restored, Chuck faced the next issue: where to store them. He could have kept them in his private museum using barns on his property. He could have followed his son-in-law's suggestion to build a truck stop with the helicopters mounted on poles. Instead, he decided to donate the aircraft, trailers, spare parts, and other Vietnam memorabilia to Texas Tech's Vietnam Center. At the Vietnam center the aircraft would be protected from deterioration and would be available for viewing on site and at special events.

Texas Tech received the helicopters at a major ceremony on the campus that was covered by news and television media. Since then they have stored them at an old hangar at the former Reese Air Force Base on the west side of town. The Vietnam Center plans to display them prominently in their new museum building for which they are still raising funds. The helicopters have appeared in public at several events. Anyone interested in donating to the museum or in borrowing the helicopters for events should contact The Vietnam Center, PO Box 41045, Lubbock, TX 79409.

Also, Chuck donated truckloads of aircraft parts and other items to the Texas Heritage Museum and to the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. One

of the History Channel shows is displayed at the Smithsonian.

I asked Chuck what advice he would give to someone who was beginning a similar restoration project. He said "Be younger than me." He found it very difficult to work inside a barn during hot weather. Working outside using a tent was a better idea. He would encourage a restorer by observing that in some ways it is easier to restore an aircraft for display than it is to renovate a car, or tractor, because you do not have to make it flyable. He discovered having appropriate tools makes a big difference. Initially he shot rivets by hand. But some panels had more than 100 rivets. Getting a power rivet gun saved lots of time.

One lesson was not a new one but had to be relearned in a new context. Even when the aircraft is only for display, completing a thorough preflight inspection is still important. During the project, Chuck and his former crew chief were driving trucks, each pulling a Huey on a trailer. Noticing in his rear view mirror that his partner had stopped, Chuck called on the CB radio "What's wrong?" The crew chief responded "The tail boom fell off!" They discovered that due to vibration occurring over several trips, the bolts securing the tail boom had loosened. As in the old days, the pilot blamed the crew chief and vice versa. But the lesson was, do the preflight.

Because the bolts holding the tail boom are hard to see, Chuck improved the aircraft with an unauthorized modification, an extra access panel. Whenever he transports an aircraft he still owns, he is more careful about both the preflight and the tie down. He uses a come-along to link the tail boom to the transmission and several turnbuckles to fasten the main body to the trailer.

Clearly, he considers the time, trauma and money worthwhile. Now he can enjoy the memories rekindled by the project and the satisfaction of knowing the iconic Vietnam era aircraft have a safe home.

Steve Davis

E-mail: [REDACTED]



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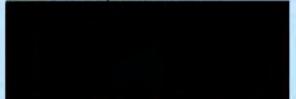
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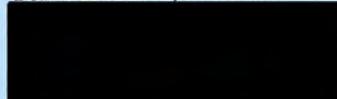
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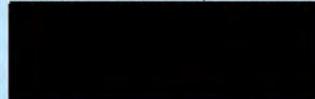
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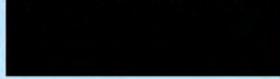
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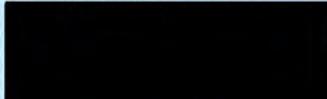
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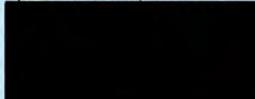
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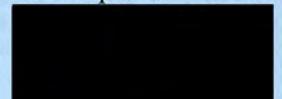
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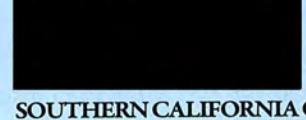
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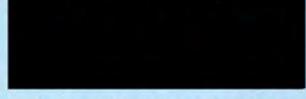
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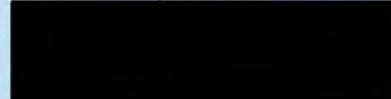
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# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

To those of you who missed the Christmas Dinner Party I am sorry you didn't make it. We had a great time but it would have been even better if you had been there. You missed a wonderful bull session and fine food and an evening with some of the best damn aviators in the world. John Clark did his usual fine job coordinating the event and Jim Barger did his usual fine job of handling the money, the invitations and RSVP's. At the Blue Frog the service and food was really top notch. Michael Hershey is working on a return to the Marines Memorial Club in SF for next year's Christmas Party. We'll have to see what the pricing is on that, as last year it was way too costly for fewer than 40 persons.

VHPACCN will be enjoying FREE MUSEUM DAY at the California Military Museum in Old Town Sacramento on Feb 4 2012 (<http://www.militarymuseum.org/>). We will have our Huey parked in front of the museum; last year the museum had about 7,000 people visit so we expect a lot of questions about the Huey and our flying. We'll have a short chapter meeting to talk about what we wish to do for 2012 and beyond; we'll also enjoy FREE admission to the CA Military Museum and to the other museums in Old Town. The California State Railroad Museum is a world class facility and whether you have been there or not, it's always a great place to visit to see the history of our region and our country as it developed ([http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=668](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=668)). The California Auto Museum is also nearby (<http://www.calautomuseum.org>). Look here for more free museums in the Sacramento area and make a day of it with the family (<http://www.sacramentmuseums.org/museumday.html>)

Here's the site of our meeting on Feb 4 2012 at 1000 Please wear your VHPACCN regalia. CALIFORNIA STATE MILITARY MUSEUM, 1119 2nd Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

*Ken Fritz, President*

## WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

The Washington State Chapter of the VHPA will be meeting for the first time in 2012 at 11 AM on Saturday the 18th of February. Once again, we will meet at Famous Dave's BBQ, 1901 South 72nd St., Tacoma, WA 98408, phone (253) 722-0500. Famous Dave's opens its doors at 11 AM, so come on time, have a cup of coffee with your friends while we prepare to hold our meeting. We've got hats, patches, pins and stickers with our new logo, so you might want to bring a few extra dollars in case you see something you like. We will begin with our meeting and then have a nice BBQ lunch afterward.

As in past years we will be electing new officers for 2012. So, if you're interested in running for a job, or would like to nominate someone who is too shy about stepping forward, please just drop me an e-mail or a phone call at [REDACTED] and I'll see that it happens. Don't worry guys; no one is going to get a job foisted on them that they don't want. Also, your involvement in chapter affairs doesn't have to be as an officer. We have quite a few members that we call upon during the year when we need extra help and/or a specific talent, so if you'd like to just help out, let me know. After the election of officers, we will cover another point or two before adjourning for lunch.

For future planning, the meeting following this will be at the Olympia Airport in June at the Olympic Air Show, and the east side meeting will come in August, with the location yet to be determined. If you have a topic for chapter consideration and would like to add it to the February meeting agenda, please contact me by e-mail or phone. Remember, you can always find information on Chapter activities and maps at our website at: [www.vhpawa.org](http://www.vhpawa.org). Until then, I wish you good fortune and downwind speeds.

*Mark Hansen, President*

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

Our very active chapter meets at Denver's American Legion Post #1 on the 3rd Saturday of each month except July and December unless we have an event scheduled elsewhere. We had over 25 members at our January meeting. Two of our members held well attended Christmas parties, including John Grauff, who annually assembles a very elaborate Christmas light display. We are planning to "march" in Denver's St Patrick's Day parade on March 17th along with chapter member Col Bill McPherson's restored B model Huey gunship. We also are planning a ski day in mid March (yes, many of the Colorado contingent can still put on the boards). We will be displaying our Helicopter War Museum one weekend this spring at the Wings Over the Rockies Museum on the grounds of the former Lowry Air Force Base. We have had several new chapter members join us in recent months and are always looking for more. Please contact President Phil Lanphier for further information. Submitted by Jim McNamee, Secretary/Treasurer

*Phil Lanphier, President*

## FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

The Ft Wolters Chapter will at Logan's Road House in Hurst, Texas on 3 March at 11AM. We will have the Director of the new VA Clinic in south Ft Worth as guest speaker. We also will discuss the upcoming Reunion in New Orleans and plans for the ongoing museum project in Mineral Wells. Any questions feel free to contact me at [REDACTED]

*Mike Sheuerman, President*

## OLD DOMINION (Virginia) CHAPTER

We currently have 22 enthusiastic members and another 6 or so fence sitters. February 4 will be our next meeting. We will be holding our initial election of officers and approval of Chapter bylaws. Both are pretty much a formality. Any qualified aviators in Virginia interested in joining our group should contact me at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

*JT (Tom) Severin, President*

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

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

We held officer elections back in November. I was elected President, Dick Butler was elected Vice President and Gary Earls was elected Sec/Treas. Special thanks go to our outgoing President Skip Bell and Sec/Treas Dave Sherrod. Their leadership and dedication has set a high standard for us to follow. As the new Chapter President I would like to invite any qualified aviators that flew in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam conflict (1963-1975) to contact me if you are interested in joining our group.

*Bill McRae, President*

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

I visited the National Vietnam Veterans War Museum in Fort Wolters, TX last April and found it a very moving experience. One of the gardens has a half scale Vietnam Wall and another has a Huey on a pedestal with the rotor blades and plaque from the Holiday Inn just outside Fort Wolters.

Many organizations and individuals have donated to the museum and a donation of \$1000 will purchase a plaque to be prominently displayed at the site. We have received \$600 in contributions for our plaque and we have sent the museum a check for \$1000 and are awaiting confirmation. I was told it takes 2 to 3 weeks to make the plaque and I promise a picture to all who supported the project. Thanks to all of you who have supported this project.

*Sven Akesson, President*

## ALAMO CHAPTER

Our chapter met for lunch at our president's home on Tuesday, January 10th, and conducted a business meeting. New member Ben Tredaway was welcomed. An election of officers resulted in the re-election of President Bob Dillon, Vice President Jim Martinson, and Secretary Al Flory. Chip Brown, John Deer, and Chuck Oualline were elected as members-at-large, and the office of Treasurer is temporarily open. John Deer continues to maintain our outstanding website, found at [www.vhpalamo.org](http://www.vhpalamo.org). John also is our official photographer.

Members present at the business meeting voted to meet quarterly in future months. Quarterly meetings will alternate between business meetings and social gatherings. Consequently, the next meeting will be a fun-only meeting sometime in April. We tentatively plan a weekend trip to nearby Fredericksburg, Texas, where the Nimitz Museum and souvenir shops can be visited.

*Bob Dillon, President*

## VHPA OFF FLORIDA CHAPTER

The VHPAF Chapter had the great opportunity this past December 2011 to support "The Wall That Heals" at Marco Island, FL in a salute to all veterans. The traveling wall is part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and was hosted by the Marco Island Traveling Wall Committee. The Chapter was invited to display our OH-6A "Loach" during the four day event. Three of our VHPAF members, Tom Tomlinson, Tom Rountree and Tom Rinehart supported the event by explaining how the helicopter was primarily used as a scout and what other missions and aircraft were used in Vietnam. During the four days over 5,000 people visited the wall, the veteran's park and the helicopter display. We also met some very interesting veterans of other wars and who themselves made history. Not a person who visited our display

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

missed "thanking" us for our service and that we represented a great group of guys: the pilots and aircrew members who flew in Vietnam. The support and generosity we received from the Marco Island committee and their sponsors was outstanding. A great job was done by Lee Rubenstein, the committee chairman and Thom Carr, a VHPA member, for inviting the VHPAF.

Also during the month of December the VHPAF supported the 'Thank You Veterans Golf Tournament' which was held in Longwood, FL at the Wekiwa Club. The tournament was sponsored by Don and Joe Hodgskin, brothers of Jimmy Hodgskin, who was killed in Vietnam flying Cobra gunships. A flyby salute was presented by the three Firehawk helicopters owned by Chuck Brainerd, a member of VHPAF. In the flyby, Jim Basta, a key member of the chapter was saluted for his service to the VHPAF and the tournament with a ride in the lead helicopter.

Future events that the chapter will be supporting over the next four months are the American Heroes Air Show (Jan 27-28) Ft. Myers, FL, Sun N Fun (Mar 27-Apr 1) Lakeland, FL and the Vietnam Veterans 25th Reunion (Apr 24-30) Wickham Park, Melbourne, FL. Submitted by Jim Basta

*Tom Tomlinson, President*

## FORT RUCKER CHAPTER

We held our January meeting at Mc Lin's in Daleville, seven members and their wives attended. Our next meeting will be in April. It will also be a dinner meeting with our wives (it's nice to have some beauty instead of a bunch of old aviators). I noticed there were some new members in the area so I will make an effort to contact them for membership in the Chapter.

*Roscoe Souders, President*

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The North Alabama Chapter had a Christmas Party in December. It went so well that we are planning the event annually. The interest in our chapter seems to be growing a little faster as time goes by. We are planning many projects for the future and hope to get the participation of prospective members in the near future.

The Chapter held a work day on 14 Jan to continue the restoration of the UH1C. Bernie Parr, the Restoration Committee Chairman, headed this effort. The hanger that the aircraft will be parked during the restoration was cleaned. The helicopter was removed from the trailer to facilitate its disassembly. Also parts that have been collected by Don Bison, Parts Manager, were inventoried. The success of this effort is going unbelievably well.

Bernie suggested that we have a scheduled work day on the 2nd and the 4th Saturday of each month. This would be to continue the restoration and to modify the trailer to make it more efficient to haul the helicopter to and from events. He let us know that he would be sending out emails to organize this effort and to get the members with their individual skills organized for greater efficiency.

Marshall Eubanks our newly appointed Activities Chairman distributed and collected the money for our Chapter shirts. He will be taking new orders in the new future. We also presented Renja, the owner of the restaurant where we meet one of our member shirts. She and her staff have been great in supporting our meeting place.

Our annual dues are now due, outstanding members may mail their dues to George Kitchen, 125 Beechnut Drive, New Market, AL, 35761. Make checks payable to the NAVHPA.

We have two new members: Ed Gruetzmacher and Louis Kronenberger, this gives our chapter a total of 37 members. We are growing and have several potential members on our radar screen.

*Jim White/President*

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The first quarterly meeting of 2012 of the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA will be held on March 3rd, at World Headquarters of Wings of Hope. We are returning to the LZ for a second visit because it is a wonderful, centrally located facility. At our previous meeting, Wings of Hope provided a very informative program on their mission and proved to be gracious and appreciative hosts. Located at 18379 Wings of Hope Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri, the meeting will begin at 11:00AM. At the conclusion of the meeting, members have been invited to tour the St. Louis Police Aviation Unit, also located at the Spirit of St. Louis Airport.

Efforts are underway to hold our second quarterly meeting at Whiteman AFB in June. Details of this and other meetings for the year are not finalized as of this writing. You are encouraged to check our website, vhpasmo.org for this information and other chapter activities. Our chapter continues to grow and everyone enjoys being with fellow members. The book donations continue, greeting WWII veterans as they return on Honor Flights continues and we continue to look for other ways to cele-

brate and honor our nation's veterans.

As President, I encourage all who can to attend the annual VHPA reunion in New Orleans, August 1st - 5th. One of our own, John Sorensen, becomes VHPA President at the closing banquet, let's show our support as we all celebrate this accomplishment.

I also express my sincere thanks to all for the support and encouragement as we move forward in 2012. You are invited to join the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA and participate in the activities and fellowship we share with fellow aviators.

*Russ Emory, President*

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Several Chapter Members and about 200 other interested people attended the Retirement Ceremonies for the last Fort Irwin UH-1 Huey which was held at the Barstow-Daggett Airport on December 13.



Guest speaker for the ceremonies was CW5 John Harris having just completed 42 years of service. John is also a VHPA Life Member and still a current UH1 IP. CW5 John Harris (photographed in this story) completed the ceremony by leading a 3 ship UH-1 flyby over the airport.

We have been informed that there are 3 more UH1's at Ft Hood still being flown by Army aviators, but they are set to be retired in April.

The next So Cal Chapter meeting is March 17, St. Patrick's Day.

*Sven Akesson, President*

## Looking for Military Memorabilia from the Vietnam War



I am seeking Military Memorabilia that pertains to Helicopter Operations in Southeast Asia.

Items of interest include - pocket patches, calling cards, scarves, headgear, personalized helmets & gear, propaganda, flight gear, pins, wings, plaques, paper items, souvenirs, unofficial/novelty items, flags, artwork and even uniforms and "Drinking Suits" of the era!

This includes Aviation, Transportation or Air rescue units. Army ~ Air Force ~ Navy ~ Marine Corps

I'm very actively pursuing material from Cavalry units - a unit specific Stetson hat, Patches & embroidered scarves, calling cards, a saber carried in country, guidons, plaques and various other unit related material and souvenirs pertaining to flying Cav units.

These items will be used in exhibits 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](http://www.vhpamuseum.org)).

Please note that anything contributed will not be re-sold but will remain in this collection for all to enjoy!

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 to participate!

Many thanks to everyone for your on-going support in this effort!

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

Evenings [REDACTED]

Toll Free Worldwide (888) 870-5408

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

# BOOK REVIEWS

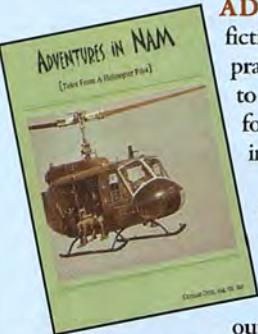
*By VHPA Life member:  
JOHN PENNY*



**ADVENTURES IN NAM** by Clyman Otis is a fictional account of numerous actual antics, pranks and pratfalls of young Army helicopter pilots in combat trying to maintain their sanity. "Clyman Otis" is a pseudonym for a VHPA member who served in A/229 AHB, 1 CAV in 70-71.

The book centers on the vivid and boundless imagination of young men coping with the pressures and absurdities of the Vietnam War experience, along with over 160 pictures from the author and many other pilots.

Re-experience things such as smoke grenades in the outhouse and Kool-Aid in the shower tank. Anyone for convincing "grunts" to crank-start the helicopter or holding a cigarette

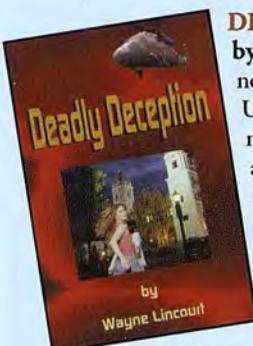


lighter by the exhaust to "light" the engine? Then there was also the "lie detector," and the hilarious comeuppance dealt to "Major Hardass."

You will have to read the book to continue to plumb the depths of the imagination and flashes of mischievous genius of bored Army Aviators. Although "Otis" changed the names of all the personnel in his book he makes it clear that all the events did happen as described...more or less. After reading the book you will know why the author used a pseudonym.

"Clyman Otis" also wrote the well-received Adventures in Yap which is available from Amazon and has just completed Adventures in Wit which will be available from blurb.com by the middle of February 2012.

*Adventures in Nam (\$41.95 softcover, \$49.95 hardcover, 120 pages with photographs) by Clyman Otis, is available from [www.blurb.com/bookstore](http://www.blurb.com/bookstore).*



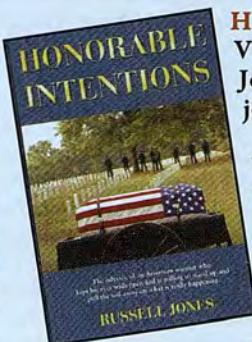
## DEADLY DECEPTION

by VHPA Member, Wayne Lincourt, is an action packed novel of intrigue, deception, and violence played out in the US and the jungles of Panama. While on vacation in Panama, Laurie, an Army biological warfare researcher, meets and enjoys the company of Jim Barnes; a former combat helicopter pilot from Ft. Worth. When foreign agents try to kidnap Laurie, Barnes steps in and they soon find themselves the target of foreign agents that will stop at nothing to get the biological warfare secrets Laurie has. But there is more to Jim Barnes than they know.

Lincourt who served with the 188th AHC and B/3/17

CAV in RVN in 68-69 also enjoys and has trained in shooting sports, close quarters battle and martial arts. Skills that contribute to making this an exciting reading experience. He is also well acquainted with Panama where much of the action plays out. Lincourt, who says he is bored with formula books, says his writing objective is to "give the reader a great ride." He has done that for sure with this book and is working on another, tentatively titled 10 Days to Die, set in the jungles of the Orinoco River Valley in South America.

*Deadly Deception (\$18.95 paperback, \$7.99 Kindle, 278 pages) by Wayne Lincourt, ISBN: 978-0983058014 is available from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.*



**HONORABLE INTENTIONS** is VHPA Life Member Robert Russell Jones' impressive memoir of his life's journey.

His narrative of service and sacrifice in Vietnam begins during his 1994 visit back to the Que Son Valley where he took what he called his "last steps in Vietnam." These reflections serve as a guide to what followed as a police officer, intelligence agent, and forensic consultant.

After obtaining an AA degree in Administration of Justice, Jones volunteered for flight school and graduated with class 68-503. He arrived "in country" and was assigned to fly for the 196th LIB out of Ky Ha at Chu Lai. Besides flying C&C in the Huey, he found himself flying an OH-23 and later the OH-6A with an observer in low level "eye to eye" shoot outs with the NVA. However, it was a Huey C&C mission that turned into a combat extraction that shortened his tour in RVN. After stateside rehab he was assigned to Fort Wolters, serving as a TAC officer in his old WOC unit before leaving the Army in 1970.

Jones began his civilian career as a patrol officer with the San Jose Police Department. He eventually worked his way into the Narcotics Division as an undercover detective working the Nuestra Familia and Hell's Angels in the effort to stem the growing drug trade. It was an assignment paid for in the loss of comrades and marriages. This work led to his recruitment as an intelligence agent in Costa Rica during Iran-Contra and the war in Nicaragua; a job that didn't raise his confidence about the War on Drugs.

Jones has an interesting and well-written story to tell. The story takes us beyond his youth and Vietnam service into the international world of drugs, violence, and corruption. This is a place few of us have visited but nonetheless affects all of us. Jones' commentary on America's failure in the War on Drugs is both articulate and compelling. This is an incredible testimony of the numerous ways many VHPA members have continued to serve their communities and our nation long after Vietnam.

*Honorable Intentions (\$16.95, 295 pages) by Russell Jones, ISBN: 978-0-578-09213-3 is available from [www.honorable-intentions.com](http://www.honorable-intentions.com), your local book store, or other book suppliers.*

## NOTED WITH INTEREST



VHPA Member Gil Ferrey has informed me that he has a limited number of autographed copies of **WINGS ON MY SLEEVE** by Capt. Eric Brown. Brown who flew in the British Navy's Fleet Air Arm in WWII, holds the world record for having flown 487 aircraft types, including the captured Luftwaffe Me 262 and at least 25 types of helicopters.

*This book is out of print.*

Gil also has copies of **MARAUDER MAN** by Kenneth T. Brown who flew the B-26 throughout WWII in Europe as a navigator/bombardier. Contact Gil at [REDACTED] to purchase.

*Proceeds are for the benefit of the Commemorative Air Force.*



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## RETURNING FIRE: IN THE BEGINNING...

by VHPA Life Member  
Col (Ret) James W. "Pete" Booth

A factual story of the development of armed helicopters in the US Army and their first employment in combat as told by the courageous men who lived it.

This is the story of the UTT. Formed in October of 1962, this

company of cobbled-together, UH-1 gunships became the basis for the armed helicopters deployed to Vietnam. The UTT's legacy is strong and endures today, the US Army's Apache program is a direct descendant of these men.

Told by our author, Col (Ret) James W. "Pete" Booth, this book is the factual story of the development of armed helicopters in the US Army and their first employment in combat. It is a true "Must Read" for all rotary-winged Aviators!

Personalized, copies are available directly from COL Booth, (E-Mail: [Pete-Sue@hotmail.com](mailto:Pete-Sue@hotmail.com)). Also available on-line through AuthorHouse Press ([www.AuthorHouse.com](http://www.AuthorHouse.com)), Peerless Book ([PeerlessBookStore.com](http://PeerlessBookStore.com)) and all major on-line distributors (Amazon, Barnes and Nobels etc.). Your local book store can also order you a copy – reference ISBN # 978-1-4567-4522-6



## AAAA SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

VHPA Member Tom Grant sent us these two photos of a Scholarships Presentation Ceremony conducted by the Alamo Chapter of the AAAA. The ceremony, held in

Austin, Texas awarded \$1,000.00 AAAA Scholarships to Kelsey Ogg, Tyler Ogg and Brittany Grant. All three are grandchildren of AAAA and VHPA Member Tom Grant.



Kelsey received the 2011 VHPA – 361st AVN Co., Pink Panther's Heritage Scholarship award. Her grandfather served with the Pink Panthers in Vietnam during 1969-1970 and flew under the callsign Pink Panther 5.



The other photo shows just Kelsey receiving her check from the members and officers of the Alamo Chapter of AAAA. From (L-to-R) you'll find: LTC Tom Grant (Retired) AAAA member, his granddaughter Kelsey Ogg, COL Richard Adams, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade commander and Dibrell/Alamo chapter president; CSM Danny Dean (Retired), Dibrell/Alamo chapter VP for scholarships.



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**[TheCubInn.com](http://TheCubInn.com)**

Or call us at: 209-962-0403  
(land line) to book.



**The Cub Inn**

# Help Us Get Our Huey Gunship Flying Again

A FEW YEARS AGO, I BECAME INVOLVED WITH American Huey 369, (AH369), based in Peru, Indiana, at Grissom AFB. Quoting the web site, (the) "American Huey 369 Organization (some 3400+ members and growing) was formed for the specific purpose of Preservation, Education and Paying Tribute to ALL Veterans / Patriots." At the time that I joined, UH-1H 70-16369 had already been restored back to flight, a Hotel model that flew with the 498th Dustoff in Viet Nam in 1971 and 72. The organization also owned 63-08803, a Delta Model converted to an H model in 1972 and she continued to fly until 1994 when she was surplus and put out to pasture. Originally she had flown in Viet Nam as a Medevac with the 1st Cav from 1965 to 67 and then as a slick with the 336th AHC (call sign Warrior 11) in 1967 and 1968. Obtained as a donation in 2005, but way out of shape for a beautiful girl, the AH369 organization felt that 803 would never fly again. 803 was restored by the members of AH369 as a static display and "trailered around" for nearly two years to various events. It was displayed initially to garner memberships/donations to restore and later to keep 369 flying. But as membership grew and the pool of talented prior service maintenance personnel grew, the decision was made in late 2007 to attempt her restoration. With a tiny bit of blood, a whole lot of sweat and lots of tears, she came back to life. In the summer of 2009 she flew again for the first time in about 15 years. All this happened after 803 sat outside in Niagara Falls weather, unprotected, for 10 years, with virtually no hope of ever turning her rotor blades again.

But all that was not enough, as the 369 Group, lead by founders John and Alan Walker, wanted to obtain a B Model gunship to complete the "nest". This Spring, we obtained 2 B Models, with the intention of making one of them flyable again. That's the good news...the bad news is, of the two we obtained, the one with the more "storied" history is not the one in better condition. Because of her hard but devoted life, 049 is going to require extensive restoration, more time and more expense than we had originally planned for. It has now been determined that several bulkhead composite panels have severe voids that require drilling/removal, very expensive repairs, and then the cost of re-installation. Her expected one year restoration by 369 volunteers will probably stretch into 2 years and will require transportation from Indiana to a Montana repair station for much of the work. But with everyone's support she WILL fly again and our history will mnbe preserved. Once again, though, what's it worth to see 049 fly again...what's OUR history worth to YOU?

## Here's the history on 64-14049:

1965 to 1968....229 AB, Co. D, 1st Cav "Smiling Tigers"  
1968.....Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav  
1969.....282 AHC "Alley Cats"  
1970 to 1971....335 AHC, Co A, "Cowboys-Falcons"  
1971 to 1972....Bell Helicopter Overhaul/Modification Facility, Amarillo  
1973.....ARADMAR Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi  
1973 to 1978....Montana Army National Guard, Helena  
1978 to 1979....Washington Army National Guard, Tacoma  
1979 to 1982....Nevada Army National Guard, Reno  
1982 .....Oklahoma National Guard, Lexington  
1982 to 2011....Trailered Display "Urban Combat Warfare School" Ft. Smith AR

2011.....American Huey 369 Org - Restoration begins!

Anyone who flew this Huey, either in the front or the guys in the back, you are encouraged to contact us and tell us about her War Stories. We really need to have photos of her in country so we can properly tell her history. We have had contact with Gunner Jim Engle of PA who flew her; but there has to be MANY more and, of course, we would love to hear from you to share 049's stories. With 3468 combat hours in 6 years, there HAS to be plenty of you somewhere! And there are also lots of National Guard crews that flew her in the 70s and 80s that can contribute. Hey, even as a Dustoff guy, I am excited about her restoration and getting to fly her again; must be that 2 week gun school I had at Rucker kicking in!

We have already obtained her guns...a fully restored XM-21 system and parts of an XM-5 chunker for the nose. This configuration for a B

Model was somewhat unusual, but fully documented

as accurate in country; in total, it was known

as an XM-50 system when mounted

on the Huey. While this may or

may not have been the config-

uration for 049, we want it

to represent as many of

the options as possible

for the B Models. We're missing some

parts for the XM5

grenade launcher, if

anyone has any sug-

gestions, ideas or parts

for that system, we could

sure use the help. We are

hoping that we will have

everything we need when she is

ready to launch, hopefully by 2013.

To quote co-founder John Walker,

"This will be no small task!"



Members of the 237th Medical Company in Vietnam pose with

Huey 369 during their Reunion held in 2010.

With an incredible length of service for a B model, wouldn't it be nice if

someone who flew this historically significant Huey in combat got to fly her again? There are a ton of crewmembers out there that did fly 049. All you have to do is contact us at [info@americanhuey369.com](mailto:info@americanhuey369.com) or my email at [REDACTED]. I'll be more than happy to walk you through the process.

I ask you to help us continue the mission of American Huey 369 by supporting our organization, to include our new American Huey 369 Museum. Currently the museum is in a temporary location in our hanger at Grissom AFB. The organization's most important goal is to build the National American Huey History Museum, NAHHM, at its own location just down the street from the hanger on land already donated to us, next door to the Grissom Air Museum. The planned 30,000 square foot building will be a much needed destination, a living history museum dedicated to the Huey and its veterans. It will include a restoration facility, library and hanger for our flying Hueys plus other amenities concerning the aircraft. Details and architect drawings are on the web site [www.americanhuey369.com](http://www.americanhuey369.com)

With the expense of flying these gorgeous ladies and educating the public as to what we did and how we did it, oh, so many years ago, we can use all the help we can get. If you live too far away or just can't make it to North Central Indiana, please consider some sort of financial support, i.e.

buying a limited edition 049 Restoration T-Shirt for 50 bucks to include a certificate worth framing. The money will go directly towards putting this war veteran back in the sky where she belongs for all to appreciate. Become one of over 3400 members who have already helped keep these warbirds in the air...all of us in American Huey 369 are volunteers and we always welcome more. Please consider becoming a lifetime member of American Huey 369 and joining nearly 100 other lifetime members, including me, that have made a commitment to keeping these helicopters in the air...not on a stick in front of a VFW somewhere. It's because it's worth it!

A dozen and more events each year keep us pretty busy, but it's a labor of love. Don't let this opportunity to continue our legacy long after we are gone, pass you by...the camaraderie and sense of pride we all shared is still there. Help us preserve our history CORRECTLY and teach others about our sacrifices as wide eyed boys who all too quickly became men. These men are still performing at their best, 40 years later. Don't be shy about being a part of it.

Photos of 049's current restoration progress can be found on the americanhuey369 web site. The pictures start at Page 261 of the Gallery tab, 2011. I will keep you apprised of her restoration in future issues and especially once her blades turn again. Details for anything concerning our aircraft, our organization or the museum can be discussed with either myself at [REDACTED] or co-founder John Walker at [REDACTED]

*What's our history and legacy worth to you?*

Phil Marshall, VHPA and 369 Life Member  
237th Medical Detachment, DMZ Dustoff 711  
Camp Evans and Quang Tri, 1969

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## UPCOMING REUNIONS

D Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cav

12-15 April, Las Vegas, NV

POC - Doug Donnell

or Ron Adams

7/17th Cav Ruthless Riders

3-7 May, Nashville, TN

POC - Barry Speare: [REDACTED]

121st AVN, 121st AHC, 80th Trans Co & 80th Trans Det.

June 21-24, Dothan/Ft. Rucker, AL

POC - John Schmied

POC - Dave Cunningham: [REDACTED]

### Veterans of Air Logistics

31 July - 4 August, VHPA reunion in New Orleans, LA

POC - Kenny Bunn: [REDACTED] or go to: VHPA.org

### National Reunion of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society

19-23 August, Seattle Marriott Airport Hotel, SeaTac, WA

POC - Reunion BRAT: [REDACTED] or go to: www.dfcsoociety.net

### Vinh Long Outlaws Association

62d Avn Co; Co A, 502d Avn Bn; 175 AHC and all attached units.

September 6-10, 2012, Savannah, GA.

POC: Bob Koonce: [REDACTED]

www.vinhlongoutlaws.com

**Want to see your Reunion publicized here?  
Send details to: Aviator@VHPA.org**

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# 92nd Assault Helicopter Company Reunion



Over 50 Members and Vietnam Veterans of the 92nd Assault Helicopter Company gather in Manitou Springs, Colorado, September 2011

The men of the 92nd Assault Helicopter Company and their families held a reunion on September 23 -25, 2011 in Manitou Springs, Colorado.

53 members and 33 guests joined together to renew old friendships, make new ones, and celebrate their time in one of the best assault helicopter companies of the Vietnam War. I was privileged and humbled to again serve as host for all of them.

Several members arrived a day early and found each other very quickly. They banded together and found one of the great local hangouts (The Keg) to eat their first meal and imbibe in some local spirits. They also discovered that there was plenty to see and do in the local area.

The first "official" function was a cookout at the Silver Saddle Motel on late Friday afternoon. A local Manitou family, "The Woofters" hosted the entire event and voluntarily did everything to make it a success. They procured homemade side dishes, brought in tables and chairs, cooked, served, and did all the cleaning afterwards. They wanted all of us to just be able to spend our time with one another without distractions. Don Murphy also procured one of the infamous "Coors beer trailers" which also joined us for the entire weekend.

Late Saturday morning brought a trip on one of the great attractions of the Pikes Peak region when we enjoyed our private cog railway train from Manitou Springs to the top of Pikes Peak. I know that if you ask anyone who made the trip, they will tell you that it was exciting, thrilling, and full of spectacular views! The trip took slightly over three hours and we spent about 25 minutes on top of Pikes Peak at 14,115' above sea level. I think that some folks from near sea level were surprised how labored their breathing can become up there!

At 6:00 PM that evening we gathered at the Castaway Restaurant to socialize and share dinner. An audio/visual slide show of random photos submitted by members and music that we all remember from those times played in the background. A group photo was taken and at 7:00 we had a short program to fulfill one promise that we all made to each other, we took time to remember our brothers who had fallen in battle - We will never let them be forgotten! We also maintained a moment of silence for those who have passed since their tours in Vietnam ended.

A big "Thank You" went out to Dave Sherrard for all the work he did in getting an original 92nd AHC Unit Patch (courtesy of Rich Sale) aboard the Space Shuttle "Endeavour" in 2008. It is now framed with a Certificate of Authenticity and the STS Mission Patch and maintained in our Unit's archives, we believe that the 92nd patch is the only Vietnam War Unit Patch that has flown in space. Photos of it are posted at: <http://www.92ahc.org/spacepatch.html>

Then Barbara Hoke, Kenneth Devore's sister, selected a random number that gave away a Joe Klein print, Mike Palmer was the lucky recipient. Next an excellent buffet dinner was served and I believe that everyone was totally satisfied with how delicious the food was.

Last, many of us gathered Sunday morning for a farewell breakfast and a chance to say goodbye. Everyone was in great spirits and ready for the next reunion!

Jim Koch  
Stallion 505



Veterans of the 92nd AHC enjoy an evening meal on 23 September 2011. The white trailer featured in the background is the ever-popular "Coors Beer trailer", a real hit of the Reunion

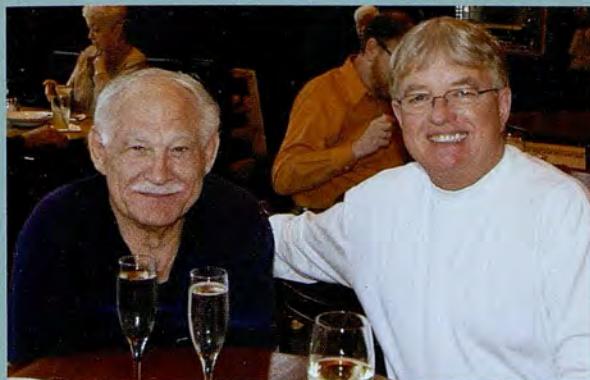


92nd AHC Aircrew poses for photo in Vietnam in 1968. Pictured are (from L to R) Jim Koch, pilot; Tom Collins, CE; three Vietnamese RFPF soldiers; Bob "Bear" Harrington, A/C.



92nd Vietnam Veterans re-create pose of 1968 photo - from left to right can be found today's version of Jim Koch, Tom Collins Brian Yee (standing in for the 3 RFPF soldiers and Bob "Bear" Harrington

# Two Special Thanksgivings



Bob Hesselbein (left) and Tim Rooney enjoying Thanksgiving Dinner 40 years later.

Bob Hesselbein taking advantage of a break in the action to fill up a pod of fresh rockets in Vietnam.



Tim Rooney taking advantage of a break in the action in Vietnam

By Bob Hesselbein

In November of 1971 I was a baby warrant officer (barely 19) completing Cobra transition at Hunter AAF, and a bit unhappy that I would be stuck at Hunter for Thanksgiving, requiring one final training sortie before starting leave enroute to Vietnam. Almost everyone else had finished the course, it seemed, but me. Aircraft maintenance problems followed by heavy Georgia coastal fog kept me grounded before the holiday. I was miserable.

On Thanksgiving Day, Captain Tim "Ranger" Rooney and I went into town to find a turkey dinner. Tim was attending the Cobra IP course enroute to Vietnam. On his first combat tour his aircraft had crashed during a combat assault and he was medevac'd home. Completing his medical recovery, he was reminded by Infantry Branch that he did not complete his first tour, and if he wanted to maximize his career options (being a ranger, of course he wanted to maximize his career options), he had better head back to Southeast Asia for another shot at glory and career progression.

Tim became my mentor. Following our shared dinner, we briefly went our separate ways until our assignment to the same unit in Vietnam. Although not my immediate boss as the lift platoon commander of Troop C/16th CAV, he provided me with as much sound advice as my young (read that: immature) mind could absorb. We also had the opportunity to fly together many times, as I liked flying UH-1 nighthawk missions with him when I wasn't on the morning schedule flying Cobra gunships. Tim not only taught me more about being a better pilot, he patiently taught me how to be a better officer and a thinking human being.

Midway through my tour I volunteered to leave C/16 to help replenish the crew losses taken by Troop H/17th CAV during the 1972 Easter offensive. I regretted saying goodbye to Tim and leaving for Pleiku, but I knew our paths would cross again. I somehow knew we would stay in touch.

In early December of 1972, Tim's aircraft suffered a catastrophic engine failure at night while doing nighthawk mission work. All four crewmembers were injured to some degree in the resulting crash, but Tim sustained the worst: a spinal injury that left him permanently paralyzed below the waist.

It was painful thinking about the injuries Captain Rooney sustained, and I questioned how a "jock" of his caliber could bear the permanent encasement of a wheelchair. Calling him that first time after our Vietnam tour was profoundly difficult for me—I wondered if he would be bitter and disillusioned. Tim, however, was only grateful to be alive, and his attitude towards his experience and situation was nothing short of amazing; it reinforced my respect, no, my awe, for this officer and gentleman.

Since that time, Tim and I continue to remain in close contact and meet whenever time and opportunities allow. As luck turned out, Tim and I enjoyed a Thanksgiving dinner together on November 24, 2011—FORTY YEARS after our last Thanksgiving dinner in 1971! My airline schedule placed me away from home and family, staying overnight in Phoenix. It worked out nicely to share this special meal with Tim.

The restaurant staff was advised of the significance of our particular Thanksgiving meal and provided complimentary champagne and appetizers while we reflected upon the events and moments of the passing years. We discussed over dinner how important lasting friendships are in a world that seems to value immediacy over enduring relations.

Forty years, and two Thanksgiving dinners shared. Events have marked, measured and defined our lives during those long decades, but the truly important factor—the friendship built by shared service—remains valued and untarnished by age or time.

# The \$430.00 Chocolate Cake

By David Adams, Member, Friends of The National Vietnam War Museum



Jim Messinger, Treasurer of the Friends of the Museum Association speaks with Paul Wibbeler of Hoot's Auction Service as they get ready to offer up the first item for auction, a birdhouse that's being displayed by one of the many Association's volunteers.



An invitation to the 11th Annual Spring Fundraiser benefitting The National Vietnam War Museum arrived in my mailbox the other day and it sparked warm memories of a cold spring evening my wife and I had spent in the old Fort Wolters area almost a year ago. Four of us had traveled north from Austin, thinking it was a great opportunity to combine attending the Fundraiser with a chance for Jim and I to show our wives where we lived and trained while in Primary Flight School back in the 60's.

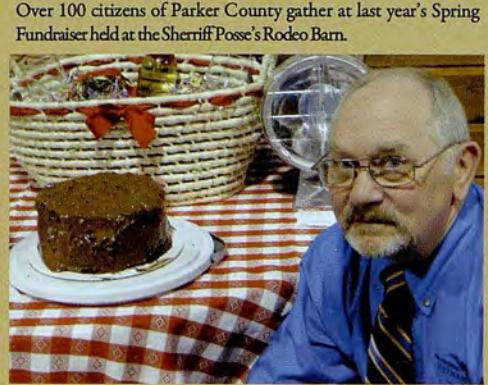
That Auction was held at the Parker County Sheriff's Posse's Arena Barn just outside Weatherford and being a Texan, I knew that Sheriff Posse "Barns" are anything BUT full of cattle poop, horse droppings and dirt. Sure enough this "Barn" was just as I expected, light and bright and full of room, the walls displayed lots of historical photos but even better, it turns out that the auction room was complete with a well-stocked bar that help keep everyone primed for some very spirited bidding.

The crowd gathered at the appropriate time and enjoyed a heaping bowl of cowboy chili while listening to country music courtesy of Jimmy Baldwin and Troy Stone. There were easily over 100 people there that evening, but what struck me as different about that crowd was that I could credit just a few of those folks as being veterans of the Vietnam War. Most of the people in attendance were truly just "Friends of The National Vietnam War Museum" and were there to support the cause. Turns out almost 165 tickets to the event had been sold to supporters all over the country. The event itself had 49 local "official sponsors" (at levels that started at \$125.00 and topped out at \$1,000.00) and I don't know if was a result of the "well-stocked bar" or not, but **Man – those folks sure knew how to bid on the items up for Auction!**

The first item to go up for auction was a hand-made birdhouse and Paul Wibbeler of Hoot's Auction Company good naturally worked the bidding up to over \$150.00. Paul went on to get the bidding on a \$20.00 "Really Big Flashlight" courtesy of Tractor Supply into the \$100.00+ range and everyone in the crowd enjoyed watching the bidding for a wine-tasting party for 12 cross the thousand-dollar mark courtesy of a good natured "mini-war" between the wives of two of the local business leaders. But to me, the true spirit in that room that night was best exemplified when someone happily paid \$430.00 for a hand-made chocolate cake! In short, that night the people of



Paul Wibbeler of Hoot's Auction Company also donated his services that evening to the effort to raise funds for The National Vietnam War Museum



Edd Luttenberger, Communications Director of The National Vietnam War Museum poses with the \$430.00 Chocolate Cake.

Parker County opened their hearts, and their wallets, to the effort of raising money to help build the National Vietnam War Museum.

This year's Spring Fundraiser is being held on March 31st at the Holiday Hills Country Club in Mineral Wells; some of you may recognize the location as the old Fort Wolters' Golf Course (that's correct, now all you former "Candidates" can finally go see the Fort Wolters' Golf Course). This year's Guest Speaker will be Tumbleweed Smith, a nationally-known broadcaster, writer and entertainer. Edd Luttenberger, the Communications Director for both the Association and Museum has assured me they will again have great food, lots of items to auction off AND, another well-stocked bar to make the evening complete.

Last year's Spring Fundraiser cleared over twenty thousand dollars from ticket sales, sponsorships and the silent and open auctions, but we're still over twenty-million dollars short of having the money needed to build The National Museum of the Vietnam War.

You can help do your part. No matter where you live you can call [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and buy a ticket to the fundraiser. Even if you are like many of the people of Parker County that couldn't personally make last year's party, you can support the cause by at least doing this. A visit to the Museum's web page (NationalVNWar-Museum.org) also lists several ways to contribute to the Organization, plus you can catch up on all the exciting events and improvements that are being held at the site until they can start on the museum itself.

You can even do what I will do, leave \$5,000.00 in my will to the National Vietnam War Museum in the memory of the men of my Vietnam Cav Troop. You see I'm thinking that if we don't get the necessary funding fired up to build this Museum pretty soon, it may only be our children that get to visit.

*David Adams, Editor of the VHPA Aviator  
and member of the Friends of the National Vietnam War Museum.*