



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



Located less than 1 mile from the campus of Texas A&M University and less than 2 miles from the George Bush Presidential Library, lies a 14 acre memorial park dedicated to the soldiers of all of America's armed conflicts. You're invited to see our special 4 page centerfold to learn how you can help the Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial Organization accomplish their mission.

Cover Photos Courtesy Jim Boykin

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*From the President of the VHPA -
BOB HESSELBEIN*



In May of this year I was honored to represent the VHPA at the "Hot LZ" Vietnam War Memorial dedication, a fine tribute locally designed, funded and installed by the volunteer members of the Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial in Bryan-College Station, Texas.

What inspired VHPA representation at the event was the dramatic memorial design: a hovering UH-1D with young infantrymen bravely stepping off the skids into a perilous landing zone (incidentally, those of you who served in A Troop, 1st/9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division may recognize the aircraft as Apache 37). How could we not participate when invited to speak of this iconic rotary-wing mission and symbol of our war?

Iconic symbols and memorials of wartime service and sacrifice are important to our nation's heritage. They have value not merely as tributes to the lost, but as salutes to those who patriotically accomplished their civic duty to our country, this place we call home. And now is the time to create these tributes--this is the moment for our generation of warriors to define how our service to the nation will be remembered.

Dating back to the American Civil War, almost all memorials to the fallen and veterans of war have been created through the efforts and donations of veterans and the families of those who died in battle. This might seem unusual, but it is an American cultural tradition. Our government provides graves in well-kept national cemeteries, but almost all memorials are created through community efforts and private fundraising. This tradition, cold though it may seem, empowers communities to display in stone and bronze the values and images of what matters most to them.

What our nation lacks at the present moment is a specific, national-level memorial honoring the service and sacrifice of helicopter pilots and crewmembers who served in the Vietnam War. Our legacy is currently found in excellent writing, oral histories, "helicopter on a stick" memorials, and airborne demonstrations of Vietnam-era helicopters, but what is specifically dedicated to the almost 5000 who lost their lives in rotary-wing aircraft, regardless of service branch, during the what is universally described as the Helicopter War? It is a serious concern, because history shows if the memorials are not built during the lives of the veterans, they will likely not be created, and the rightful honor discarded by time.

This hard fact is not overlooked by the VHPA. Efforts are being undertaken to design and construct a national tribute to honor our lost brothers and recognize our aviator comrades-in-arms. In the meantime, enjoy a moment to read about the "Hot LZ" legacy tribute, and "stand by" for further information of an ongoing national memorial project in upcoming editions of the Aviator.

FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

Well the reunion in Louisville has come and gone. There were over 1700 people in attendance. It was so great to see everyone. Just to let you know - You are a great group to work with and we enjoy every minute of it!

We still have a few t-shirts left from R2014 in Louisville, R2013 in San Francisco and R2011 in Orlando. If anyone is interested, call HQ to see if we have your size available.

Don't Forget.....if you move, be sure to call HQ with an update to your contact information! This assures that you do not miss any issues of your newsletter. If you have not received an issue lately, give us a call to make sure we have your correct address on file.

Also, you can go on line to <https://directory.vhpa.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password or use your social security number. Then on the left side will be a box with red lettering that says "Other Services". Under "Other Services" will be a box that says "Update My Information". Click on this button and you can make updates directly to your information.

Please remember that the deadline to order paper or CD directories for 2014 is August 31. The directories will be shipped to you in October. You can place an order by calling HQ at 800-505-8472.

As always, our goal is to make VHPA the best it can be for you, the members! If there is anything that we can do to make that happen, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

Sherry Rodgers
VHPA
Office Manager



Weekend for Our Heroes

**Sep 19 & 20 - Tupelo Veteran's Park,
Tupelo, Mississippi**

A weekend to honor our heroes from all conflicts complete with WWII, Korea and the Vietnam War Military Displays, concerts, Huey rides and Helicopter static displays from the AAHF, children activities and concessions. All proceeds go towards funding our city's replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

An afternoon Search and Rescue mission in the southern Gulf of Tonkin

Another Bill Terry story, written by Tom Phillips

Late afternoon March 14, 1966, and US Air Force Captain David Westenbarger's 33rd ARRSq HU-16, callsign Crown Bravo, was "Duckbutt Bravo," the brevity code name for the afternoon SAR orbit in the southern Gulf of Tonkin.

The orbit mission boredom came to an end when an F-4C of the 480th TFS was hit by AAA and tried to get feet wet. The crew ejected a mile off Hon Ngai Son Island about eleven miles east of the coast, and abreast of Vinh, North Vietnam. Hon Ngai was reported to be heavily defended. The Phantom's wingman reported the airmen down in a semi-circular cove about a mile in breadth, with a high ridge on the right shore. There were North Vietnamese sampans nearby.

Crown Bravo raced to the rescue, sighted the two survivors, made a low approach over them, turned into the wind, and landed near the survivor closest to shore; bringing the raft close aboard the tail of the amphibian. The rescue crew could see the pilot was injured, so PJ Airman First Class James Plieman dove into the water with a tag line attached to him and swam to the pilot's raft. He did so, because it was a far speedier retrieval to pull the raft to the Albatross than to swim the raft back.

As Plieman reached the pilot, sampans started to converge on the plane, and enemy shelling began. At that point, the sampans began laying small arms fire on the Albatross. Radioman Hilton returned fire with his M-16 until the gun jammed. Then Captain Don Price, the navigator, took the rifle, cleared it and resumed firing at the sampans. Just as the raft came alongside the hatch, a 130mm howitzer round hit the HU-16. Hilton was killed outright: SSgt Jackson, the flight engineer (FE), was blown out the hatch, Captain Price was thrown against the bulkhead and burned, Airman Plieman was killed, (probably by the concussion), and the plane began to sink. Westenbarger and his copilot, Lieutenant Walter Hall, escaped through the overhead ditching hatches as the wreckage settled.

The F-4 pilot in the raft next to the plane, Major James Peerson, injured and unable to propel the raft, cried for help as flaming fuel spread toward him. Price, egressing through the cabin hatch as the plane sank, swam through the burning fuel and towed Peerson away from the fire. Lieutenant Hall, took the wounded FE Jackson in tow, and the six men tried to escape the flames.

When the F-4 had originally put out its "Mayday" call, two Navy H-3s from HS-4 on a logistics flight were diverted to the scene, because they were the closest helicopters available. The HS-4 birds were unarmored. They were not configured for CSAR as were the other eleven aircraft in the squadron. They did, however, have machine guns mounted both port

and starboard. One was flown by Lieutenant Rick 'Blinkey' Klippert, and the other by Lieutenant Junior Grade Bill Terry. They increased their speed when they heard the distress call from Crown Bravo. Enroute, they passed USS England (DLG-22), where the alert UH-2B of HC-1 Det 5

was landing to quickly refuel in order to respond to the Mayday.

As the HS-4 aircraft approached the scene, they saw "hundreds" of small sail-powered junks. Terry, about a mile behind Klippert, noticed that as Klippert went past the junks, the people on board crouched down showing a submissive demeanor. As soon as the helicopter was past, however, they would rise, produce their hidden weapons, and open fire. Apparently, they hadn't noticed Terry trailing along a mile



behind. Terry commanded his gunners to strafe each 'innocent' junk as they passed. At the scene of the fight, a large motorized junk, perhaps 125 feet in length was shooting at the men in the water. That was until a Navy A-1 from VA-115 (call sign Arab), which had just arrived, rolled in and salvoed his entire load of 2.75" rockets on it (76 rockets from 4-19 shot pods). It literally disintegrated and kindling rained down for the next several seconds. The other junks hastily moved away.

Terry and Klippert moved in among the six survivors, each hovering as small arms rounds splashed all about them. Heavier artillery rounds had been landing initially, but the A-1s had been working over the beach with tremendous effect. As a result only the small arms fire persisted for some minutes. Klippert picked up three survivors quickly and announced his aircraft was full and that he was departing. As luck would have it, the three Klippert rescued were uninjured, and the ones Terry was trying to pick up were all injured. Terry was just approaching his second survivor when Klippert broke his hover. Both the first and second survivor had trouble getting into the hoist and long minutes were spent trying to position the sling for them.

Then things began to get really difficult. A solid wall of water erupted right in front of the helicopter - so close that Terry did not know how it had missed them. He felt that he could have reached out and touched the cascading column. Within seconds, another wall of water rose close aboard to port. Even over the noise of the helicopter itself, the explosions of those large caliber rounds were so loud that Terry related that they seemed to come from inside his helmet. He transmitted "Get the sons-a-bitches off my ass, Arab, or I can't make the pick-up." Arab replied: "Sorry, Big Mother, I've expended my ordnance. I'll continue to make runs at the gun emplacements and see what I can do for you."

Finally the second survivor was aboard, and they moved from the spot

Finally the second survivor was aboard, and they moved from the spot where the shells had been bracketing them. Air taxiing toward the third survivor, Terry had a chance to glance around at the first two. One looked like hamburger. He had taken shrapnel full in the face, and had deep wounds in the groin, leg, arm, stomach, and face. The other man was stretched out over the troop seat, with a broken back, according to the crew chief. The third survivor did not take the hoist.

"Pilot, the hoist is lying on his shoulder and he won't take it." They positioned it twice more. The victim was not responding. Terry looked in his rear-view mirror and saw large shell splashes walking toward them, each closer than the one before. Then one fell right in front – straddled. That did it! Not waiting for the final adjustment, Terry pushed his nose over to gain speed as he pulled all the power the helicopter could deliver, just as the crew aft cried: "Pilot, we need to get the fuck out of here."

He told the crew he was going around to: re-enter the hover as soon as the rounds stopped falling, land in the water, and try to get the guy that way. (The SH-3A has a boat hull to enable landing on the water in emergencies. Note the boat hull in the H-3 photos).

As they approached the hover, the rounds picked up right where they had left off – very close – and Terry waved off again. Flight after flight of RESCAP reinforcements began to check in on the radio. In addition, Lieutenant Commander Dave McCracken, OIC of the UH-2B detachment from England, checked in. The clans were gathering and another helicopter was on the scene – enough. Terry felt he could depart, and started for USS Kitty Hawk and medical help for his two injured survivors, monitoring the continuing rescue effort as he went.

McCracken, with Ensign Robert Clark as his co-pilot, first crewman, Senior Chief Electrician (AECS) Herbert G. Davis, with Airman Edward Campbell as second crewman, arrived on scene and had only a slight delay until more RESCAP arrived and started hitting the gun batteries. With the RESCAP on task, McCracken darted in at 110 knots, Campbell firing his Thompson out the right door at the sampans that were firing at them. He killed one man and made the others stop firing. Over the top of the survivor (Captain Price) McCracken tried using the loud hailer to get him to abandon the raft, but with no response. Quickly, he trapped the raft with the rotor wash and they were able to get Price to take the sling, departing the hover while he was still being reeled in. They departed their hover no more than sixty seconds after entering it. It turned out that Price could not hear the loud hailer because the exploding shell that had destroyed the HU-16 had deafened him.

The two fighter crewmen had been rescued at the cost of two rescue men and one HU-16. Both the Albatross and the helicopters had risked lengthy periods of time within range of too many defensive weapons. Better tactics were required to make the pick-up under those conditions; if successful rescues were to be made with minimal casual-



ties. One of the lessons learned by HS-4 from this rescue was the advisability of putting a rescue swimmer in the water for each pickup. It would become SOP (standard operating procedure) in the near future. The condition of a man in the water is often difficult to ascertain from the hovering helicopter, and injured men are challenged to properly enter the rescue sling.

EDITOR'S NOTE – Tom has sent us several stories to include last issues 'Death From Above' story telling us about life in a cramped aircraft carrier berth cabin packet with "treasures" from the many Golden Far East Shopping Opportunities available to naval aviators during their Vietnam tours. In this story Tom recounts a harrowing SAR mission from the early days of 'Duckbutt' missions. The hero of this story is again Tom's Vietnam CO, Bill Terry, the same man that flew the mission to rescue

Ron Ball. He is also the Author of this issue's "Bringing Tonyhome"

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EYES WITH TEETH

By John Shafer

It was March 27, 1971 in B Troop, 7th/17th Cav.....by SP4 Paul Kuhl
B Troop was stationed at Camp Holloway near Pleiku. We flew hunter/killer teams of LOACHES (LOH's), call sign Scalphunter, COBRAs, call sign Undertaker, and SLICKs, call sign Pallbearer.

I flew LOH's (Scouts) and my call sign was Scalphunter One-Eight. I had been flying LOH's since mid-November 1970. My observer was Sgt. James 'Mac' McConnell who had been flying as an observer since early January. This was Mac's second tour. He was a grunt walking through the jungle on his first tour. He was now flying over that same jungle.

B Troop flew two teams of two LOH's, two Cobras and a command and control (C&C) Huey. We had several Slicks at the staging area waiting to insert troops on enemy encampments or for help in the rescue of the crew of a downed aircraft. The teams would alternate, one out in the area of operations (AO) and one at the staging area. When one team started to return from the AO to rearm and refuel, the other team headed out to the AO.

On this day, March 27, 1971, an Army news correspondent, Specialist 4 Paul Kuhl, wanted to get on-the-spot coverage of B Troop 7th/17th Air Cavalry. He was riding in the C & C Huey and wrote this story about that day. It was published in the Typhoon magazine in its June 1971 issue.

About the author as printed in the article. "Specialist 4 Paul Kuhl has covered numerous actions in the field involving American combat units. His experience as an Army news correspondent for more than a year has often carried him to where the action is to get on-the-spot coverage of such units as B Troop, 7/17th Combat Aviation Group."

The following is his story as he wrote it.

"EYES WITH TEETH"

Thursday morning is cold, as almost every morning has been forever in the Central Highlands of the Republic of Vietnam. The pilots and observers of B Troop, 7/17th Air Cavalry, shiver and talk as they stroll to the flight line, as they speak of things past and yet to come, of what they did yesterday and what they are going to do today. It is the start of an average, ordinary day - just another day to fly.

In spite of themselves and this kind of attitude, the officers and men of B Troop are a special breed. They appear to expose themselves to danger in the same way many people watch a movie or drink a cup of coffee in the morning - casually. They fly aerial reconnaissance missions in light observation helicopters (LOH's or "loaches") backed by the awesome power of Cobra helicopter gunships.

The choppers fly in teams, several LOH's and Cobras per team. The LOH's, called Scalphunters, fly at low altitudes looking for signs of enemy activity or emplacements. These helicopters look much like tadpoles darting from place to place, stopping to hover over a suspicious spot, and then darting on.

The Cobras, or Undertakers as they have come to be called, fly both low over the scouts and high to make the screaming attack runs on demand. The word "Cobra" has found a place of respect in the enemy's dictionary.

The Scalphunters and the Undertakers are not, however, the only members of the team. There are others equally important to the mission and safety of the crews. A Huey 'Slick' flies command and control far above the other ships, con-



Pink Team from B Troop, 7th/17th Air Cav on the way to the AO



1971 Aerial photo of Camp Holloway, home of the 101st Aviation Division and B Troop, 7/17th Cav.

stantly watching and ready to drop down at any time should one have trouble. Back at the base of operations are several other Slicks loaded with troops to be inserted if a rescue mission is necessary. These are the Pallbearers.

Together these airships make one of the most deadly and effective combinations of the war in Vietnam, more mobile than any ground force could be, while having the advantage of the Cobras' fantastic firepower right at hand. Such combinations are well known and feared by the enemy.

This particular Thursday begins normally, everyone going to his respective ship and preparing himself for the possible danger ahead which is part of the job. The night before has evidently been hard for some. Sleep does not come so easily to the man who is still psyched up from one day's action and can think only of the next day's mission in the silent nocturnal hours.

The ships are loaded, take off and head for Tan Canh, where the crews are to receive support material to be used throughout the day. Then on to Dak To, base of operations, for the pre-operation briefing, mapping of the area of operation and final exchanges before mission takeoff.

Finally it is time and the LOH's 'sky up' followed by the 'snakes' (Cobras) which are followed by the command and control ship - a motley parade. No one really counts cadence. All crew members are preoccupied with what they are to do today, what action they saw yesterday, what strategies they would plan tomorrow - if they are flying tomorrow.

It's still a normal day, although somewhat laced with anxiety now...as every day must be. Each man knows his job. Find, kill or capture the enemy, and destroy his bases and supplies. To make it back also punches its way among their thoughts.

**"I've got a bad vibration.
Got to set this thing down"**

The formation reaches the area of operations in minutes. Each pilot maneuvers his ship into place automatically. The scouts are down low, searching. The snakes fly slightly higher and are waiting; coiling, ready to strike with a venomous bite at whatever enemy the eyes see below them. The command and control ship circles high in the air, watching the entire operation like a mother hen concerned for her brood and its safety.

The scouts are skimming the surface now, looking for telltale signs of the enemy just as the American Indian trackers used to do for the U.S. Cavalry units in the old west. They employ the same tricks. A campfire with the ashes still white has burned since the last dew - otherwise the ashes would be black. If the day is sunny, grass that is trampled down means that the enemy passed through within the past eight hours - the time it takes for grass to dry upright.

The Scalphunters know all these things because it is another part of their job. It also keeps them alive. Should they be surprised by the enemy, their chances would be worse if they had no foreknowledge of the enemy offered by the tell-tale signs. In spite of such warnings, they still run a grave risk.

"We have a trail now, about three feet wide, running from north to south. Looks like there hasn't been any activity on it for several days, though," says Sergeant James R. McConnell through the radio net. He's the scout who is closest to his DEROS. "They must be in there somewhere."

McConnell and his pilot, Warrant Officer-1 John A. Shafer, fly on a few more minutes.

"Here's an overnight position," says McConnell. "Twenty to 30 bunkers four by six. Maybe five structures. Looks like they may be in use now."

"Now we've got people. Maybe two-five to three-zero. Khaki uniforms, and they have weapons. Looks like mostly AK's and maybe a few SKS's."

The scouts make another pass over the area to drop a marking grenade of white phosphorus or 'Willy Pete.' Now it is time for them to clear the area and let the snakes do the work.

A low-flying Cobra comes across first, raking the area with fire from its 20mm cannon. And now a high snake follows the first down an invisible playground slide, expending 2.75 inch rockets, both the high-explosive



CW2 John Shafer in Vietnam



B/7/17th's LOH 386 headed to staging area, left to right, Crew Chief in back seat, Scalphunter 18 John Shafer, Spec 4 Bob Moses Observer.



Shafer and McConnell's LOH finally is destroyed by intentional friendly fire.

rounds and the ones called "nails" because they are filled with just that - nail like flechettes.

Within moments, the entire area is in flames.

After the smoke has cleared sufficiently, the scouts go back to make a battle damage assessment.

"Six bunkers destroyed. Three others badly damaged. Two of these structures will never be used again. And we see nine enemy dead," the radio echoes.

Thursday morning is recorded as a productive one for B Troop. And the team is more than ready to fly back to base for lunch which includes an endless rehash of this action in the forenoon hours. Once back at base camp, the men break out C-rations, pass around can openers and call for canteens of water. Some of the crew members crawl under the protective shade of the helicopters for a nap. Others sit and contemplate -perhaps about what the afternoon will bring.

The ships are being reloaded and rearmed. The thirsty snakes drink gallons of fuel.

Thursday is not over yet. After the lunch break, the team will go back to the area of operations and continue their constant search for the enemy. Only after the threat of Communism has been wiped from the country-side will these men relax.

A few Montagnard girls come over and want to know if any B Troopers care to go swimming in the river with them. They are old friends. But Thursday is not a day for frolic. There is work to be done.

Lunch over; the business at hand comes back into focus. The pilots start their ships' engines and loiter up and off the pads, and then it's into high-gear and back to war.

The procedure is the same as it was in the morning. The area is the same, and everyone knows now there are dangerous people on the hunt below.

After the first few minutes of flying, the scouts make their first sighting of the afternoon. The radio barks.

"We have numerous trails here, a lot of activity. They run both north and south, and east and west. Recent use. Looks like an overnight position here, maybe two weeks old. Several bunkers, two by three. One looks like a command bunker, front opening, four by six, three-foot long overhead."

Ordnance is expended on the site, and the enemy has one less haven.

"Another overnighter, but this one's recent. We've got people in here! Receiving fire!"

This time there is no time to drop a marking round. The ship has been hit.

"I've got a bad vibration. Got to set this thing down," says Mr. Shafer.

It is difficult in the best situations to get a disabled helicopter down in one piece. It is next to impossible if there is nothing but surrounding jungle below. Mr. Shafer is able to fly the ship to an area clear enough to be considered a landing zone. He sets his ship down immediately. As the skids settle on solid earth, the tail rotor falls off.

Command and control has been watching and monitoring the whole situation from above and is aware that they are the closest ones in a position to help the downed crew. Captain Horst H. Cleveland, pilot of the C-and-C craft, makes his decision without hesitating.

"We're going down. Get ready to open those doors," he shouts over the intercom.

The Slick slips into a death-defying dive, fighting against time to rescue the crew of the hapless helicopter. The door gunner and crew chief make preparations for the extraction, ensuring that their guns are loaded and ready.

Then the Huey touches down and the doors are thrown open. McConnell and Shafer scramble in, aware that there are unfriendly people around them rapidly closing in. The two Slick gunners are given the signal to go hot and they do, pouring out a blanket of lead from their flaming guns.

In the heat of the engagement, CPT Cleveland momentarily thinks he is flying LOH's again and pulls too much torque for the Huey to handle. The ship puts its nose into the air and begins an agonizingly slow ascent. It seems to stand in one spot for an interminable amount of time which really amounts to only seconds. The trouble is quickly righted and the ship vibrates into its escape with all members intact.

CPT Cleveland radios ahead to the base of operations, assuring them that the LOH crew is all right and that the only trouble anyone has to contend with now amounts to a few hearty appetites. He makes dinner reservations at the mess hall and signs off.

Thursday has been an average day, an ordinary day. And Friday they will fly again."

That was Specialist 4 Paul Kuhl entire story as published in the Typhoon magazine in its June 71 issue.

As I remember it that was not quite the whole story for that day. At the time we were hit the other set of LOHs, Cobras, along with the Slicks launched from the staging area to come help with the rescue.

After the C & C picked Mac and I up all the aircraft started to move out of the area. This gave the impression to the bad guys that we were leaving. A few minutes later the Cobras, Scalphunter Lead and C & C returned to where I had landed the LOH, there were fifteen to twenty bad guys around the downed LOH. The Cobras and Scalphunter Lead rolled in destroying the LOH and the bad guys.

Shortly after we returned to the staging area at Dak To, a replacement LOH had arrived from Camp Holloway, so we could perform our mission for the rest of the day.

The two teams went back out to the same area to find the encampment of bunkers and find out if there were any remaining bad guys. We destroyed the encampment and the bad guys had already left.

Did I mention that this day, 3/27/71, was my 22nd birthday?



Renowned Photo Journalist, Specialist 4 Paul Kuhl loads his camera prior to the day's missions.



It might look like Texas in the wildfire season, but the photo actually shows two B 7/17 Scout Ships "down low and doing their thing".



Warrant Officer Shafer and Sgt McConnell smile after their close encounter. "It's all in a day's work".



John Schafer and "Mac" McConnell share some great memories at their 2011 Unit Reunion in Las Vegas.

John Shafer CW2, Scalphunter 18
B Troop 7/17 Air Cav, 70 - 71
EC Senior Member VHPA
Member, Washington State Chapter VHPA

And the praise for our 2014 Reunion keeps rolling in...

To the VHPA Reunion Committee,

I can say that from my viewpoint the Louisville 2014 Reunion was a roaring success. Well organized, great activities, super food and drinks. The Galt House is a class act and I thought they gave us a great price for rooms plus they even waived the parking fee. Bob, please also pass along my thanks to the Ohio River LZ Chapter staff and membership. I often tell people it takes a lot of hard work to make something complex look so easy in execution. I think we all know the value of meticulous planning and coordination (I learned that from Ken Culwell many years ago). I know you folks worked hard on the Reunion. The professional results speak for themselves. All the folks I talked with were very positive about this Reunion.

Thanks again, George Van Riper,
Master Army Aviator Retired,
VHPA Life Member

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To the VHPA Reunion Committee,

I wish to thank you and all the volunteers for the wonderful reunion in Louisville this past week. Since this was my first reunion, I did not know what to expect. I was more than pleased with the event as a whole and greatly appreciate the work that it took to pull off a Reunion of this magnitude.

I also want to thank you for the opportunity you provided to see and talk with my "Brothers", Bobby, Jim, Jere, Terry, Bruce, Gary, Billy, Barry and the entire list of pilots who attended. There is a bond so profound, it is beyond words.

Thank you many times over,

Ken Bartholomew
[REDACTED]

To the VHPA Reunion Director,

GREAT BIG ATTA-BOYS (AND GIRLS) for a wonderful reunion. You guys have it nailed down and do a fantastic job. The Gault House was beautiful. The city was extremely receptive and my wife and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves!! The banquet is always the main event to us as that is when we honor our brothers but hugs to friends and new friends during the week is almost as important. Also, the "re-enactment" was terrific. The smells and wop-wop was very realistic and my wife, who had never seen anything quite like it, was totally amazed. Anyway, thanks again to all and we'll see you in DC.

As always,

Tom Wood, Black Angel 22

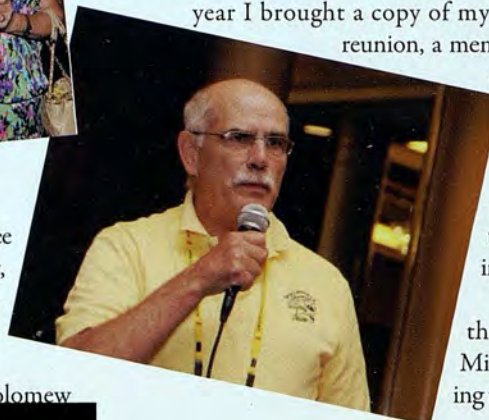
To the Members of the VHPA... Thank You!

During the month of July I had the honor to attend your VHPA reunion in Kentucky, ride in the front seat of a Cobra, in Hampton, Georgia with the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation and visit the museum at Fort Rucker. *Talk about emotions!*

I first found the 361st/Pink Panthers in 1997 and through them I learned who my brother was as an adult, an aviator and a warrior. This year I brought a copy of my new book *Dear Mark* to the reunion, a memoir about finding Mark's unit,

the effects of war and loss on our family and then marrying a Pink Panther. Thank you to everyone for your love and support. And also to the VHPA for the opportunity to be included in the Vendor room.

Thank you Bob Hesselbein for the honor of participating in the Missing Man Table ceremony during the banquet.



Shortly after getting home from the reunion I received an email from a VHPA member asking if I wanted a ride in a Cobra. Do I? Heck yeah! I later found out VHPA member, Bob Chipley had bought Dear Mark in Kentucky, read it, and wanted to sponsor this once in a lifetime experience. I quickly realized I only thought I knew why Mark loved the Cobra. What an amazingly maneuverable aircraft. An experience I will not soon forget! Thank you so much to Dolphin Bob Chipley, thank you to Dolphin Cliff Stern, and the entire crew at The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation.

Two days ago, I walked into the United States Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker. It was the first time I had been there since the summer of 1968 when Mark graduated, class 68-9. The July class of aviators had just ended when I walked through the front doors. A lady asked me if I was there for the graduation and I told her no, realizing my eyes were welling up, I ducked into the restroom. It struck me how happy we were that day in '68. I didn't think it would be emotional for me to go to Fort Rucker, but I also had no idea it was graduation day. I soon found their Vietnam Memorial with alphabetical rows of names of KIA pilots, both helicopter and airplane, and known crew from 1962-1975. A haunting ghost-like, a little larger than life airman, holding his helmet, looking to the skies, is in the middle of the circular room. Another lump in the throat moment. After seeing the rest of the museum I asked the curator if I could have missed seeing the Pink Panther patch on display with all the others and after looking with me and still not finding one he invited me back to look through the huge drawers of archived VN war era patches and still couldn't find one. So, if anyone has original patches from VN and is willing to part with one, the museum would love to have them.

If you haven't visited the museum lately, or ever, consider putting it on your bucket list. I was told they rotate displays every five years to keep it fresh so you will come back. Take your grandkids! It took me 46 years to get back there and I am so glad I did.

Susan Clotfelter Jimison

Author, Dear Mark

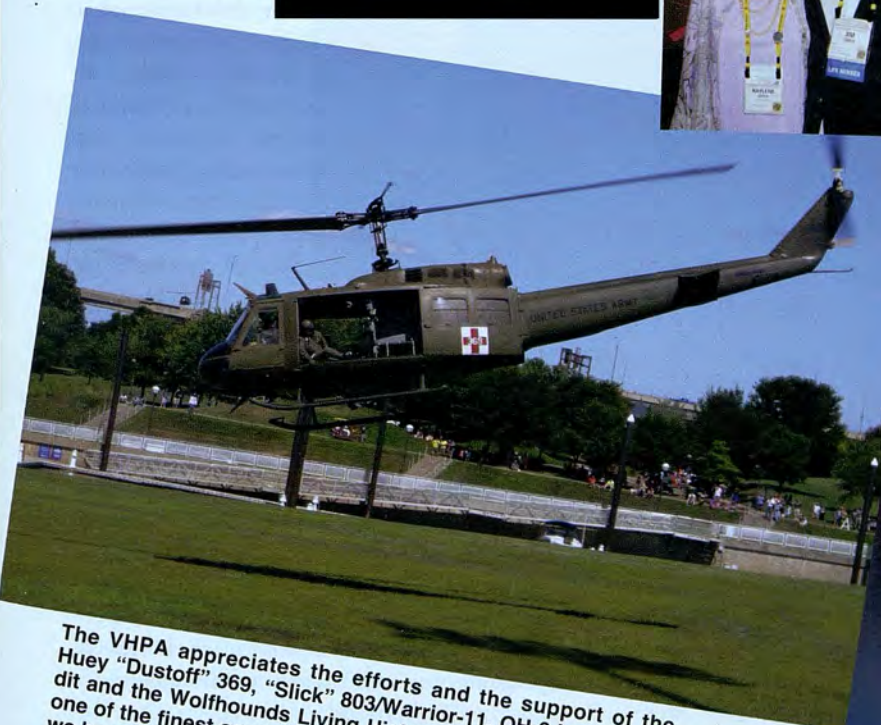
Proud Sister of Mark Clotfelter



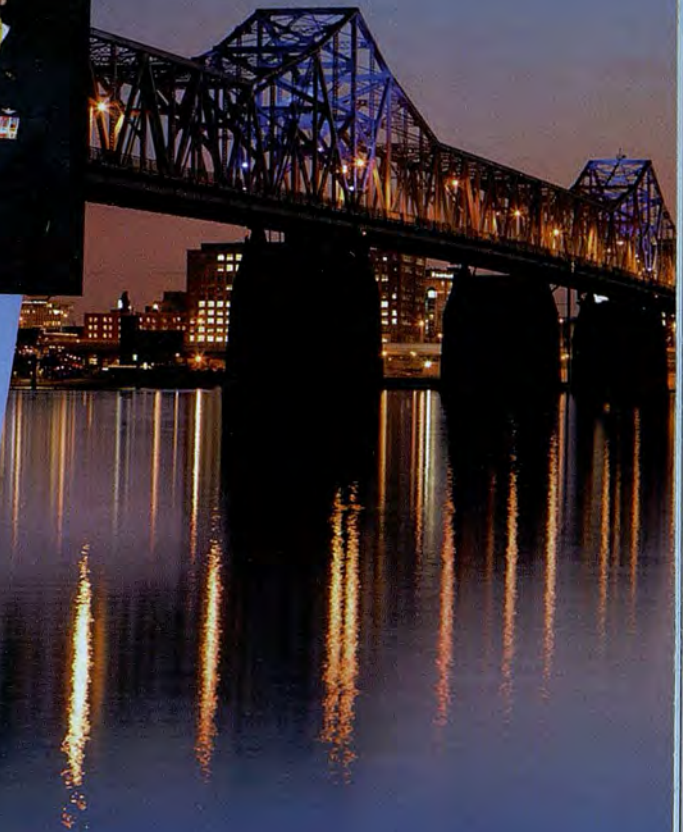
All photos shown here are courtesy of our Reunion photographer, Richard Carmer of Picture Phoenix (www.picturephoenix.com). You can still order copies of all the pictures Richard took while he was with us this year in Louisville as well as last year's Reunion in New Orleans.

VHPA's 31st Annual Reunion

*was in Louisville, KY
July 1st-5th 2014*



The VHPA appreciates the efforts and the support of the Huey "Dustoff" 369, "Slick" 803/Warrior-11, OH-6 Loach Bandit and the Wolfhounds Living History Group and presenting one of the finest combat assault/pilot recovery missions that we have seen in at least the last 40 years.



Gentlemen, we're incredibly lucky to have Julie Kink working for us and our families...

Julie,

Thank you so much for reaching out to me and my family and helping us to attend the VHPA reunion. You are quite the detective! I can't express how much this meant to my brother, sister and I. We wanted to learn about our uncle as a person, if we could, and honor his memory and support the veterans. Everyone we met was so nice and actually thanked us for coming!

We were somewhat reticent about trying to locate someone who knew our uncle and were pleasantly surprised when we discovered the veterans were glad that we were there and were eager to talk to us and were happy we came to support them and the memory of those fallen.

We learned so much about our uncle. We met a veteran who flew with Carl and he spent hours, over the course of two days, talking to us about our uncle and his amazing experiences flying Cobra helicopters.

He was so generous! He was truly touched by his experience flying with our uncle. First thing he said was that he'd spend 24 hours talking to us if we wanted and then he immediately told us a very touching story. He had a tough decision to make about his future flying helicopters and he said our uncle spent 24 hours talking to him, through the night, walking around the base and that our uncle's influence on him changed his life. As you can imagine, it was wonderful to know what kind of dedicated leader our uncle was and that he positively influenced others like this.

I should tell you how we met this veteran. We were at the hotel and we saw on the board that our uncle's unit was having a reunion in the Morrow room at 6 pm that night. We talked about going but then finally decided not to go because we didn't want to put any of the veterans on the spot or hone in on their reunion. When six o'clock rolled around, my wife, Beth, convinced us to let her glide by the room just to see what's going on. I asked her not to talk to anyone, though. She stood outside the room and when one man came out she asked if it would be ok for us to go in and talk to the veterans. He said he thought it would be okay, but

that he wasn't a veteran; he was with his father. Just then a man came out to put a sticker on the placard by the door. Beth asked him if this was the right room for this unit, pointing to the card hanging from her neck. He confirmed it was. She then asked if her husband and brother could come by and see if anyone in the reunion knew their uncle who was

KIA. He said, "Absolutely!" He then asked what the name was of the pilot. She pointed to her card and the name "Carl Thomas Cahill." He looked stunned, turned around and walked away for a moment. When he turned back around to Beth he said, "Carl? Carl Cahill?" She said, "Yes." He said, "I flew with him. I flew with him a lot. Tell your husband and his brother to come and I'll talk to them all you want."

We learned so much. For instance, we learned that our experience growing up in that

no one talked about our uncle and his death in Vietnam was quite common among gold star families and we were not alone experiencing some of the emotions about the war and family members who gave the ultimate sacrifice. We also learned that these helicopter pilots are all very smart, successful, confident, risk-taking and authority-questioning men. Those are a mix of special qualities we learned our uncle also possessed. One thing that really stands out,

and that we never really understood until now, is the clear fact that these young pilots were having the time of their lives doing what they loved! We always kind of thought they were reluctant warriors but we now really understand they were all young volunteers and loved their vocation. So we know our uncle died doing something he loved to do - fly helicopters.

This was an amazing experience we will never forget. We will remain in touch with the veteran who generously provided his time and candor about his and Carl's life and experiences in Vietnam and we again thank you from the bottom of our hearts for reaching out and inviting us to this reunion.

Sincerely,

Mike, Bernie, Therese and Beth Parish



Mike, Bernie, Therese and Beth Parish enjoy the festivities at this year's Reunion

Dear VHPA,

I would like to thank you for allowing me to experience one of the most poignant and moving experiences of my life. It all began a few months ago when I received a letter from Julie Kink, whom I had never met. The letter started out "Dear Gold Star Family Member". It contained lots of information and invited my family and me to the VHPA reunion to be held the week of July 4th.

I was so very surprised to receive such a letter. My dad, Jerry Roberts, died in 1966 when I was 15 months old; my brother was only 11 days old. In all these years, my dad's death had never been acknowledged, so I was quite surprised, but very pleased, to be invited to such a reunion. When I received the letter, I started thinking about some of the others whose lives were changed that day, as well. I began to think of the Reuter family. Capt. Neil Reuter was the pilot and my dad was the co-pilot. They, along with one other man was killed during the same mission. I had never met or talked with anyone in the Reuter family before, but I was curious about them. I wondered how their lives had been and wondered if I could even locate them.

Well, we were having snow here at home--extremely unusual for March! School was cancelled and, as a guidance counselor out of school, I had time on my hands. I spent a lot of time on the internet researching. I searched the Vietnam Wall, and then stumbled upon the Virtual Wall of Faces. On that site, I found that Neil was from Milwaukee, WI. I then searched a number of data bases to find phone numbers of Reuters who lived in the area. After about 30 phone calls, I was able to locate Irene, Neil's wife. We talked about an hour and a half. She was not familiar with the VHPA, and had not received any information about the reunion, so I mailed her a copy of the letter I had received from Julie.

Irene and I have been corresponding ever since. I learned that she and Neil had four children together. At the time of Neil's death the children were ages 5, 3, 2, and 1. She told me that her son Chris lived outside of Dayton, OH, and might be interested in attending the reunion.

Well, he and his family did indeed attend, and we were able to meet for the first time on the 4th of July. We spent the day together, and ate dinner together that evening. The next day--July 5th, we attended a Memorial Service, and later flew in a helicopter together. This was the first time I had ever flown in a helicopter. It was a real thrill! However, I must admit, that I also felt quite vulnerable. I hoped we were securely fastened into our seats, especially since there were no doors to



Nathaniel and Chris Reuter, Marti Roberts Lopez, Rita Roberts, Matthew, Nancy, and Annie Reuter



Jerry V., Marti, and Rita Roberts attend the 2014 Reunion's Closing Banquet



Jerry A Roberts and daughter Marti. Taken on the day he left for Vietnam in November, 1965

hold us in!

The whole experience was so extraordinary and quite bittersweet. It was even more incredible knowing that we were doing this on the anniversary of our dads' deaths 48 years ago. They were killed in action July 5, 1966!

I would like to thank Julie Kink. I am amazed and humbled by the efforts she took to find the Gold Star families who lived in proximity to this year's reunion. I would also like to thank all of the veterans whom we met during our time at the reunion. Each one was such a fine example of the type of man who served, all exemplified honor and integrity. Although, we never met anyone who knew our dads, each veteran we did meet embraced us and made us feel very welcome.

This experience has been absolutely remarkable, and it has made me want to learn more about my dad and the experiences he had while in Vietnam. I would love to be in contact with anyone who served with him. Both Neil Reuter and Jerry A. Roberts were members of the 502nd Aviation Battalion and the Outlaw group.

My contact information is as follows:

Home: [redacted] Cell: [redacted]

[redacted] email: [redacted] I know that Chris Reuter would likewise appreciate contact from anyone that knew his dad. You can reach him the following ways: Home: [redacted] email: [redacted]

Again, thank you for such a meaningful and rewarding experience for us all! May God bless each of you!

Sincerely,

Marti Roberts Lopez

Gary Sterling Fowler, a member of the Fort Wolters Chapter of the VHPA, tends to hang onto things



Originally a member of WORWAC Class 69-47, he held on to his subsequent commission, spending time in the Reserves, and was recalled to active duty twice, finally retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel, all the while maintaining his flight status. But the thing he really held onto was his 1970 Chevy Camaro purchased from Ed Lee Chevrolet in Mineral Wells before he departed Wolters for "Mother Rucker".

In 1980, he converted the car to a drag strip racer, so it is far from original. However, it does still sport one piece of original equipment that resides in the right rear window: his post sticker from Fort Wolters. It's a little faded and chipped around the edges, but it is still very readable. And he also still has the warranty papers. When he spoke about it at the March chapter meeting he let everyone know that "Two more payments and it's all his!"

While Gary was the aviator in the family, there was a strong family connection to aviation especially during the Vietnam era. Gary served with C/229, 1st Cav in 70-71, and his brother John ("Jack") was a Navy Corpsman serving with the Marines in I Corps in 1969, and treated the wounds of Oliver North during a battle in Vietnam. Wounded himself, on July 28, 1969, Jack was medevac'd in a Marine Boeing Vertol CH-46A, and wrote about the incident in a letter to his father, Buck. What makes this significant is that Buck Fowler was employed by Boeing Vertol, working as a supervisor in Engineering Instrumentation Services, and that letter was subsequently published in the Boeing Vertol Division News, October 10, 1969.

After Vietnam, Jack returned to school on the GI Bill, became an officer and spent a 33-year career in Navy medicine.

Edward T. "Edd" Luttenberger
Communications Director
The National Vietnam War Museum

BOEING VERTOL DIVISION NEWS
VOL. 23, NO. 18 THE BOEING COMPANY, VERTOL DIVISION, PHILA., PA. OCTOBER 10, 1969

Employee's son writes:

"Keep up the good work, we need you"

(Ed. Note: Buck Fowler, a supervisor in Engineering Instrumentation Services, received the following letter from his son, John, a Marine corpsman in Vietnam, and though his letter is addressed to his father and the employees of the flight test organization, what he wrote concerns everyone who works at Vertol.)

Dear Dad and Men of Flight Test:
This is just a small letter-- inadequate to express my thanks and the thanks of the men that I 'medevac'd' on 27 and 28 July, 1969.

We were hit pretty hard near the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone). When you have wounded, dying and dead lying all around, the sight of a CH-46 looks like the hand of God descending from heaven.

On the 27th, I 'medevac'd' three men. The chopper came in and danced over a tank. Its maneuverability made me proud that I knew the men who were responsible for building it.

Then on the 28th another CH-46 came in under hostile fire. I put three dead and 10 wounded men on that. Soon they were airborne. I thanked God again-- and Dad and the men of flight test.

A couple of hours later, I was blacked out from a wound of the attack. When I received during the had one of my corpsmen check me. It seems I had some metal in my head and a concussion.

A few moments later I opened my eyes and saw that angel of down to take me to safety. I'm in good shape and so are the thousands of others because of the maneuverability and lifting capacity of the CH-46 and CH-47. I'd like to thank you, Dad, and all the men of flight test for doing such a fine job. Keep up the good work. We need you.

May God be with all of you,

John Fowler



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Our Member Jim Boykin has sent us a twenty-two page research document titled:

HISTORY OF THE US ARMY WARRANT OFFICER

"The Legacy of Leadership as a Warrant Officer"

We have posted a link to the report on our WebSite:

<http://www.vhpa.org/prod02.htm>

or you can contact me directly (Aviator@VHPA.org)

and I will be glad to forward to you

a PDF copy of the research document.

A 15-year dream comes to completion

The Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA displays their new Helicopter War Museum

by John Hagleroad, Chapter President

The Rocky Mountain Chapter of VHPA has always been rightly proud of its Vietnam Helicopter War Museum. Outfitted in a 48' Great Dane highway trailer, we tell the stories of combat helicopter flying in Vietnam and present an exhibition of artifacts and memorabilia from our own personal collections. We have even reconstructed piece by piece over the past few years the complete right-half of a Huey cockpit, including the rear deck and seat, using original Huey components. The museum is mobile and we take it to various patriotic, holiday, and educational venues throughout Colorado and occasionally neighboring states. Adults, young people, and kids alike enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to talk with former military combat helicopter pilots and to imagine what it was like to fly a Huey by sitting in the cockpit module.

So now, what could Frontier Airlines have in common with our Helicopter War Museum to make it even more exciting? We both have very large vinyl graphics applied to the exterior of our vehicles to visually enhance appearance and capture attention. Frontier has the all of their animal characters on the aircraft tails, and we have six, 11'x7' color photo panels of helicopters in Vietnam.

The Chapter's ability to renovate and paint the trailer exterior and apply the photo panels was mostly through donations from a very generous public, and from the sale of mahogany aircraft models. One of our major contributors was Joseph Coors II, whose Coors Ceramic Company manufactured the porcelain core of our "Chicken Plate" which is on display in our Museum complete with bullet holes from an AK-47.

Choosing the photos wasn't as easy as one might think. Not only did they need to be a good representation of helicopters in Vietnam, but the original image needed to be sharp and clear with good color. Then, in order to enlarge what was originally a 35mm slide to an image of almost 80 square feet, we

had to be able to acquire the photo in a 10 MB file or larger.

Mike Law at National VHPA helped us acquire the high-resolution images from the VHPA calendar files and the good people at Finline Graphics in Denver took personal interest in our project and did an outstanding job to assure a high-quality finished product. The photo of 92nd AHC Sidekick #113 with the Coors rocket pods was provided by Bob Harrington. We think the finished appearance is quite dramatic.

Sawaya Trucking and Fleet Services prepped the trailer for us prior to the graphics with a complete new paint job. Sawaya also has provided critical maintenance services for us and, with driver Rob Barnes, has donated a semi truck for many of our trailer movements. The National Guard unit at Camp George West in Golden, Colorado, donates the storage space for our trailer when it's not on the road. We are pleased and proud to have Finline, Sawaya, and the Colorado National Guard as our good friends and major contributors in support of our Helicopter War Museum project. This project has taken nearly nine years to complete and remains under continuous modification and improvement.

We hope you have an opportunity sometime in the future to visit our museum, relive old memories, and maybe reconnect with some old friends. We try to keep current information on the Helicopter War Museum display dates and locations posted on our Chapter website www.vhparm.org. In any event, our museum trailer now looks great and we're very proud of it thanks to the generous donations and financial contributions from our sponsors and the public.



Children enjoying the Huey cockpit module inside the Helicopter War Museum during the Lions Club 4th of July event in Golden, Colorado



The Helicopter War Museum at Finline with the completed right-side graphics. The Sawaya tractor with driver Rob Barnes is at the far left and the helpful team from Finline is lined up with their banner.



Connor Cashman of Finline Graphics applies the vinyl photo strips for the iconic image of a Cav "Blues" insertion to the right side of our Museum trailer at their facility in Denver, Colorado. The image of a Marine CH-46 in a hover hole is already applied.



Rear entrance to the Helicopter War Museum at the Lions Club 4th of July event in Golden, Colorado.



The Helicopter War Museum at the Lions Club 4th of July event in Golden, Colorado.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Member of the VHPA wrote us to say:

"For all of you that are having trouble with receiving the medical care and services you deserve from the Department of Veterans Affairs, please contact your Congressional Representatives. They have Constituent Representatives in their offices and their whole job is to assist Veterans in receiving proper and responsive consideration from the appropriate governmental agencies. It may take some time to get a response and sometimes it will not be in your favor, however, you can bet it will be looked at and all factors considered."

From a VHPA Brother-In-Arms

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

Sequim, WA ~ July 22nd, 2014

Reading the July & August VHPA Aviator, especially the article "An Unanticipated Engagement" by Bob Hesselbein, made me realize that something has been missing in this otherwise great magazine - an answer to the question what, if anything, did we accomplish during our years in Viet Nam. I especially miss articles by former "gun bunnies" and how they now feel about their previous duties.

Allow me to backtrack and give a bit of my own origins. I am a German immigrant whose father was killed in a communist concentration camp following World War II. He was a non-combatant during the war, an engineer who remained in the eastern part of Germany to keep an Audi factory running, leaving two small sons with his parents in the west. With the end of World War II, I was introduced to the friendliness and generosity of the average American GI towards us "rug rats". The joy of getting a meal through the Hoover Plan while going to school, the redevelopment of the western half of the country through the Marshall Plan, and the heroic stand in Berlin with the Berlin Airlift - these were positive influences.

As a young man I joined the German Air Force and was able to come to the U.S. to go through USAF pilot training. There I met a number of the Vietnamese Air Force cadets. In my talks with them I recognized the similarity between their fate and my own, living in a country divided into a communist and a democratic section. Having my family torn apart under circumstances beyond their control, having felt hunger and other hardships associated with growing up in a divided and conquered country, made me feel a certain kinship to the Vietnamese cadets. These experiences combined to make me want to join the U.S. Army and go to Vietnam to pay back some of the debt I felt I owed, and to get revenge on what I perceived to be a common communist enemy.

My time as a German Air Force pilot qualified me to get a direct appointment to WO1. I did the usual training at Ft. Wolters and Ft. Rucker, and in October 1966 embarked on my first tour in Vietnam. After flying slicks for a few months I managed to get myself transferred to flying gunships, as getting shot at without being able to do much about it was not why I went to Vietnam. Whether by sheer dumb luck or not, I managed to finish my first tour without losing a single slick that I escorted while only taking a few hits myself.

The mission that stands out foremost in my memories of those days is my first "Starlight mission." Someone had come up with the idea to have a slick fly at 1000 feet with its lights on, carrying soldiers equipped with starlight scope rifles to search for the enemy. A blacked-out gunship would fly lower and behind the slick, waiting for either Charlie to shoot at the slick, or for soldiers spotting VC and marking them with tracer rounds. As gunship pilots, we would then roll in and fire on the spot marked by the tracers.

It was on such a mission, in the vicinity of Bong Son, that I got my first confirmed kills. We all remember how the statistical body count was THE thing, and I had now fulfilled my training and moved the cause ahead. At the time it happened I was quite proud of myself and felt that I had finally gotten some revenge against the Communists who killed my father and all the others.

I went to Vietnam because I wanted to go. I was not drafted, I volunteered. Now, 47 years later, I reflect and ask myself what did I really accomplish during my personal experience of war? Yes, the guys I killed with my gunship would not take the lives of my fellow soldiers, but today that only provides partial solace. My actions took someone else's loved ones away and probably created only more hatred without changing the outcome of the war. I consider it an irony of war that those we killed were generally just like us: young patriotic men doing what their country asked of them.

What have I learned from the experience and feel is my responsibility as a Vietnam Veteran towards our country and the current generation? As a minimum I vote in every primary and general election to get the best qualified candidates elect-

ed, and I speak out on behalf of the young veterans returning from hostile lands to ensure they are honored in a way we were not. I am proud of my service and my brothers-in-arms. I shall always speak with honesty, and for the rest of my days will act upon what my conscience tells me to do.

F. L. (Fritz) Gruetzmacher
COL, US Army (Retired)

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I was contacted by some fellow aviators at the VHPA reunion in KY and asked to do one more "We Got'ta Get Out of This Place" book. The men provided me with several stories to get me started and I am looking for more. Please consider realying to me a story or two about your time in Nam. It does not have to be a war story, it can also be humorous or show the stupidity of some of our actions. Lord knows I had a lot more of those than tales of daring do. A couple of your members have contributed to my other books and I hope some of you will now join them. Out of the 40,000 helicopter pilots in Nam, 2,200 were KIA and since then we have lost another 8,000 men. At this rate, some stories will never be heard.

The profits from the sales of the books will go charities such as the VHPA Scholarship fund.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Lazares

Author of: "Goodbye My Darling: Hello, Vietnam!", "Tacoma Blue",
"We Got'ta Get Out of This Place"
Volumes 1 & 2 and with your help - Volume 3

E-mail: [REDACTED]

To The Editor of the VHPA Aviator

One correction to the article, "History of the Huey", in the July-August Aviator: the last sentence states that "USAF historians have claimed that nearly all battlefield casualties were evacuated by UH-1 helicopters." The USAF historians are incorrect in this assertion. Virtually all Medevacs for both military and civilian casualties in the USMC areas of operation in Vietnam were flown by UH-34D and CH-46A and D aircraft. That's not to say that Marine Huey's never executed ad hoc Medevacs if they were on-site where one was needed, but they were not typically assigned to Medevac missions as other than as gunships to cover the Marine UH-34 and CH-46 aircraft tasked with making the actual casualty pickups.

The Marines did not have dedicated Medevac units the way the Army did; Medevac missions were typically rotated among all UH-34 and CH-46 squadrons in country, usually on a daily basis.

Member Larry Smith

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

Some of Association Members gave me an idea while we were all together at the latest VHPA reunion in KY and with all of your help, I thought I would do another book - this one entitled "BACK TO THE WORLD".

I would like you to tell me about your return home from the Vietnam War. I'd appreciate reading your memories regarding the following four threads, in any number of words you'd care to share. Any media will be accepted. Author interviews are not planned during this project. Shortimer photos and homecoming images are welcomed.

- + Describe your last week in-country before DEROS.
- + Describe how you got home starting in VN-to-USA.
- + Describe those initial 30 days back in the world.
- + What can our country learn from VN veterans?

I myself am a VN veteran (Army, 114 AHC, 1970-71) and find this topic extremely interesting mainly because no matter how different our jobs were during the war it was the going home experience that would cut across all ranks and military branches alike. If enough responses are received during the life of this project (July 2014-July 2015), they will be forwarded to a publisher for book consideration.

For now, send your responses to: John Brennan at johnmailman@yahoo.com or mail to: 864 Wisconsin St., Chico, CA 95928.

Thanks for your time,

John Brennan

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

CAMBODIAN SUNSET

By Robert Graham

A near miss with another aircraft is not on an aviator's wish list. We are even a little uneasy on crowded ramps and taxiways. During my 1958 OH-23 Raven transition training at Camp Wolters, Texas, the spine chilling event occurred as I returned from the stage field after dark. Solo, I thought I was all eyes, scanning and alert. In that fraction of a second, leaning forward to reach the radio for a channel change to the tower frequency, another Raven passed below me from my right. I was so close that my flight path was disturbed by the turbulence from his rotor. I had a second-long flash of the inside of his dimly lit, green glowing cockpit. He was also solo. This early incident planted owl's instincts in my night flying memory bank.

DESTINY

**Path, time and altitude define an air warrior's space.
Fate puts two in the precise same place.**

Eight years later, 1966, Republic of South Vietnam. The missions: long range reconnaissance patrols (LRRP) in the border area of the Parrot Beak. Our primary mission was information gathering; not raids and fire fights, but stealth if at all possible.

As the operations officer for the Centaurs, D Troop, (Air Cav), 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, I planned the LRRP's five man team mission insertions west of Tay Ninh. Insertions into the heart of the Central Office South Vietnam (COSVIN) near the southern end of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the Sihanouk Trail from the south. COSVIN was the Supreme Viet Cong Headquarters in South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese war of unification in South Vietnam was conducted from this headquarters. Although there were literally tens of thousands of VC involved, they ingeniously maintained a rather amorphous physical structure. A mobile command strategy: limited physical infrastructure, plus dispersion. From this large area they exercised political, logistical, and military command and control of military units up to division size and the total VC civilian infrastructure.

Material and supplies moved on both of these trails in rather huge quantities. Quietly, and with much diplomatic consternation about Cambodia's neutrality, cargo ships regularly unloaded at the port of Sihanoukville. The supply distribution in both directions involved thousands of packers resourcefully using cycles as carts, each carrying up to 300 pounds, plus pack animals (including elephants), and standard military cargo vehicles. Tactical units of up to near division size were moved down from North Vietnam on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We know this now; during the fall of 1966 we were intent on keeping track of all this activity. Ultimately, we were trying to find, fix and destroy the VC capability.

Leading up to the 25th infantry Division August 1966 launch of Operation Attleboro, there was tremendous command and information gathering focused on these VC activities. The 196th Infantry Brigade fought

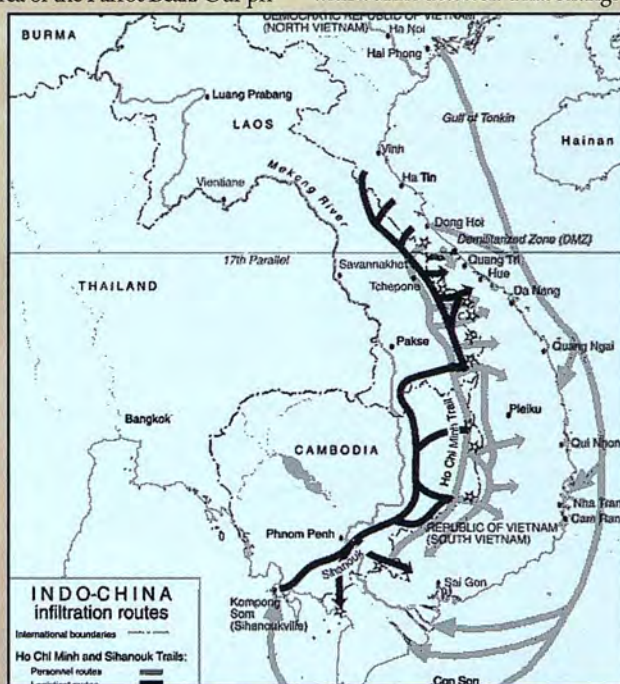
repeated battles to the west of their forward base at Tay Ninh during this period, often with new enemy units. Linguists at the radio intercept station atop Nui Ba Den, The Black Virgin Mountain, monitored COSVIN and other VC radio traffic. Heavy brigade combat patrols, the Air Force flying reconnaissance missions out of Thailand and our own Centaur, D Troop, attached LRRP focused their information gathering on the area. The LRRP had a co-located radio relay atop The Black Virgin Mountain manned by SP4 Dennis Hackamac and SP4 Bruce Hatfield. Except for the light scouts and a couple of gun teams, the majority of D Troop was operating out of the dusty forward base camp of the 196th Infantry Brigade.

Major Jim Peterson, the Troop Commander, and I with the team leaders conducted our detailed aerial reconnaissance for this September 1966 insertion over a period of a week, always in single passes to avoid attracting VC attention to possible insertion Landing Zones. We followed up with very low level tree-top night missions, checking out sources of smoke. We conducted air sampling with a urine detector. That strange device would give an indication on a meter,

believe it or not, of possible locations of large numbers of VC in a given locality. One small technicality: it could not discern concentrations of monkeys from VC.

Our composite intelligence from the 25th Division G-2 was that it was quiet during daylight with virtually no movement; then activity swelled after sundown with significant troop and supply columns. We had to assume that there were numerous lookouts and possibly small patrols anywhere and everywhere. After all, we were in their playground, their back yard. The game we played was to watch and count without hostile contact. We were literally trying to place a firefly on an anthill without a fire fight.

The September 1966 evening air hangs heavy as I finish my routine briefing for the insertion from my plastic map roll and the brigade's current situation map. D Troop's briefing facility is the 196th Infantry Brigades tepid TOC, a sand-bagged general purpose tent. The uneven scrap wood floor constructed of used pallets and ammunition crates. I glean what local sources of aviation weather are available from the frequent intelligence reports. Our radio discipline precludes normal control tower type of departure chatter- besides there is no heliport control tower or radio. No exact touchdown time is designated within the short window of dusk to darkness. We want to be able to safely land, get the inserting slick out, and allow the patrol to get oriented, positioned and then safe in the womb of darkness. MAJ Squires, the seemingly perpetual insertion slick aircraft commander, while airborne, makes the timing choice with SGT Clint Lounesberry, the LRRP recon team leader. Then the drama will go into the high gear.



Typical segment of Ho Chi Minh trail in Cambodia's Parrot's Beak. Nothing in sight during the day; no movement, no people, just dusty cart and tire tracks for miles. After dark, all that changed dramatically as the trail filled with supply convoys and troop movements!

Our challenge was to select a spot to insert our five-man LRRP Team so they could observe the trail for three days and then extract them without casualties! Photo taken by LT John Alto during a reconnaissance flight to select just such a place

In Thailand, two small Asian countries away, an US Air Force RB-66 crew gathers at the air-conditioned Korate TRAF Base Squadron Operations for their crew brief. Simultaneously, the RB-66 surveillance gear, which monitors key radio frequencies, scan with side-looking radar and infrared detection devices, is being given its preflight check. The time at the release point for descent to 1,000 feet over the general area of the Sihanoukville, Cambodia, is 20 minutes after official sunset. Cruising at about 500 miles per hour, timing is working out just fine to proceed directly to the waiting aircraft for preflight. The RB-66's first pass northward will be just as darkness is falling.

Our evening's insertion incorporates fake diversions with a single heavy scout gun ship, a carefully selected series of low grass top passes and circling to act as a decoy and confusion creator. These are not light-hearted little show-off acts as any or all could end up becoming hot, with some degree of a fire fight. These diversion maneuvers will occur both prior to and after the actual insertion. After all, no one can sneak anywhere in a Huey with its incessant wop-wop-wop. We are taking advantage of this sound signature. This cooling dark muggy evening is high tension for everyone.

The RB-66 aircraft commander signals to the ground support crewman that he has finished his start-engines. As the auxiliary power unit umbilical cord drops from the side of the camouflage decorated RB-66, his copilot records the latest weather and sets the altimeter to the current barometric pressure for their immediate departure.

The altimeter is checked against the 726 foot altitude above sea level of the Korate main O6-24 runway. Five minutes later the RB-66 rolls down the 9,135 foot runway, then wheels up, climbing, to trim out at 12,000 feet heading southeast for the short 45 minute flight to their release point (RP) south of Sihanoukville, Cambodia. The navigator confirms the time to the RP and official sunset. The RB-66 crew settles back in their pressurized air-conditioned comfort zone for a moment of aviator peace and satisfaction. Then comes the descent to 1,000 feet mission altitude to arc northward along the NVA logistic routes of the Sihanouk & Ho Chi Minh trails

The Centaurs final act of this evening show is delayed because of the clear weather: from low level flight or the ground the sun must dip below the horizon before there will be sufficient darkness. Only those aboard the insertion slick can make this timing call. Over the mellow Huey hum, radio silence is broken, "in bound" followed by a "roger" from the two supporting light fire teams. From the C & C we can see the dark silhouette of the insertion slick headed inbound.

Mike Squires pauses, holding the insertion slick light on the skids. The LRRP team members slide past Crew Chief James Pyburn and door gunner Specialist Herb Beasley into the shoulder high grass. Seconds later they are alone with the diminishing sound of the departing Huey. An escorting gunship passes along the tree line nearby. In the distance a decoy insertion is in progress. Now there are only sounds of their own breathing and that of the light breeze rustling the high grass. Initial success!

Immediately after insertion, the five men of the patrol are motionless and silent; then the customary cautious short 50 to 100 yards to pause again and monitor their surroundings before moving out to their surveillance location. For all concerned, silence is good. We take the small advantage of the glare of the Cambodian sunset holding to the west with the insertion light fire teams. At the magical 1,000 feet on our altimeter, we fly a holding pattern, using the wavering signal from the distant Cu Chi low frequency marker beacon and the setting sun for orientation. MAJ Pete is peering into the deepening darkness, intent on the LRRP radio frequency. There is absolutely no radio chatter, just Huey sounds. As we circle we search the insertion area for indications of possible contact, a trac-

er or the flash of a grenade. The LRRP team settles in, and we are satisfied that they are safely in place. This is confirmed by their terse mike click code for affirming OK.

Except for that crisp click code, absolutely no radio traffic occurs unless they are compromised. We must assume that the VC are also listening to our frequency. I give a thumb up and get an instrument cockpit blue-green smile in return from MAJ Peterson. There is an assuring peaceful feeling of success now, the mellow whine of the Huey turbine, level at 1,000 feet, heading home toward the forward base at Tay Ninh. It seems absolutely beautifully calm. Because of our altitude there is a spectacular second Cambodian sunset just for us. We will return in three days to snatch up the LRRP team and another successful reconnaissance cycle will have been completed.

The thin horizon eastward toward Tay Ninh, and further Saigon, turns a deep purple with a dark blue night sky. As the night darkens the jungle below, a large

lighted aircraft cockpit flashes by about 30 feet away to our front. My God! So close, just below and in front of us! We just barely discern the nose profile, and the rudder of a RB-66 whisking by, nothing more. In that split second, our Huey jolts once as that big wing passes close beneath us.

The night returns. I am spine-tingling, spell bound! MAJ Pete is stone silent staring into the space of the vanished aircraft. "Sir, did you see that! That large aircraft just passed!" I must have a heart-beat of near 200.

Straining, squinting into the darkness, searching...to the left to see that aircraft. I strain to see some additional image of what has passed, but it has disappeared into the darkening night sky. "Jim, we were so close to that airplane that we could see the green glow of

the cockpit lights. Did you see those cockpit lights?" Silence is his answer.

I have reconstructed that split second many times. We were at right angles, passing about 10 to 15 feet above the mid-span of the left wing. The RB-66 rudder passed right in front of our cockpit! That night there was little cockpit chatter during our return to Tay Ninh.

Robert L Graham, Centaur 3, 1966-67

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

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MAJ James Peterson, Centaur 6. The Commander of D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cav at the time (1966) sits in his Command and Control Huey awaiting departure from Cu Chi Vietnam

After his first Vietnam tour LTC Peterson attended Command and General Staff College. During his second tour he commanded the 1st Squadron (Airmobile), 9th Cavalry, of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), then was G-3 for the 1st Aviation Brigade.

James retired as a colonel and is currently residing in Northern Virginia to be with his son Andrew, daughters Ellen and Lynn, and his two grandchildren.



page on the website. If you are a 'Centaur', or if you know someone eligible for membership, please go to: www.centaursinvietnam.org, and check us out.

Bob Graham, the author of *Cambodian Sunset*, is a charter member of the 'Centaurs In Vietnam' organization, a group that is developing a legacy website just for the Centaur Air Cavalry units and their troopers that served in Vietnam. Our 'Life-Time Memberships' are available without charge to anyone assigned or attached to D or F Troop Troop (Air), 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment during the Vietnam War. Every member will have his own

Bringing Tony Home

By Tom Phillips

On the last day of 1970, late on a gray December afternoon, LTJG Anthony O. Ortiz, USNR, was laid to rest beside his brother, near his mother, and in the presence of his family and many friends, of the little community cemetery of Pirtleville, Arizona.

It was dark, overcast, blowing steadily, and so bitterly cold that those at graveside still remember the piercing wind to this day. A mariachi band, one of the things Tony loved most, battled the wind to be heard as it mournfully serenaded him.

The contrast with Vietnam couldn't have been greater. It was a world away in distance and climate, from the hot, humid, suffocating, oppressive swelter of the Delta in the Republic of Vietnam. The irony of that contrast may have been lost on most of those assembled - but not all. Several of Pirtleville's Vietnam veterans were there.

No Seawolf was there. We could not be spared to escort our brother home and bury him. The war would not wait. For us, the war continued without break, utterly oblivious of the scene being enacted within sight of the Arizona border with Mexico, close by the small town of Douglas.

Almost 30 years later to the day, on Veteran's Day of 2000, I was privileged to attend the dedication of the Douglas Veteran's memorial. Literally the dream of one Douglas veteran, (Bernardo Jordan), the initial concept of a Vietnam memorial quickly became a plan for a memorial honoring the dead of Douglas from all wars. The idea of the memorial united the citizens of the area and was funded entirely with private donations. Although the citizens didn't quite move heaven and earth, they did pressure the movement of Arizona Power's power line to clear the site where they wanted their memorial. It was right on the curve where the main highway becomes the main street of Douglas, and just as you enter town. It couldn't be a better, more prominent or more meaningful location. The site is in the afternoon shadow of the historic Douglas train station. The returning caskets of seventy - seven Douglas sons from World War I, World War II and Korea have passed through that station. Thirteen additional names from Vietnam join these seventy - seven on a handsome set of three black marble tablets, gracing a beautiful new plaza. Advised by 'experts' that such a plan would take at least five years to accomplish (if at all), the community did it in three - without any public funds!

How did I find my way to the outback of Arizona for the dedication of this unique memorial? Robert Ortiz, one of Tony's three surviving brothers, attended a Seawolf reunion in San Diego. "Moose" mentioned the upcoming ceremony, and offered to invite me when I expressed interest. To my surprise, I received a formal invitation from the Douglas Chamber of Commerce. I had no idea what I was getting into when I made the trek from San Diego.

For starters, I got a surprise lesson in patriotism.

This region, heavily populated with Americans of Hispanic descent, is dominated by: blue collar workers, farmers, ranchers, copper mine / smelter workers, and the like. The border town is relatively isolated from the main stream of the state. Ethnic tensions are a fading memory, and the economy is struggling with industry closures. I would not have been surprised by a lukewarm rendering of politely civil acknowledgement of dutiful patriotic sentiment. But make no mistake about it; these folks are Americans, not Hispanic-Americans, or any other politically hyphenated group. Their pride in their Hispanic roots is obvious, but it is nothing compared to their pride in being AMERICANS! This community's unabashed love of country, respect for the service of veterans, and pride in the sacrifices of those they have lost in service to the country, poured out all the day long. It was an experience unlike anything I can recall. It permeated my two days there. It was evident on: the evening before and on Veteran's Day, at the parade, and during the ceremony. Most of all, and most personally, it was demonstrated at the receptions and gatherings, which went into the late night hours. It was wonderful.

A teenager came up to me on the street, before the parade, and thanked me! Can you imagine that, a teenager recognizing a Veteran?

Back in 1970, I had attended the memorial service we had in Binh Thuy in



memory of Tony and the other three crew members lost with him (Dick Buzzell, Johnny Ratliffe, and Robert Worth). We paused, and quietly paid our respects. It was brief and to the point, and we

moved on, out of necessity. His body had already been quietly shipped home. We didn't see him go. I have always thought of him, and the others, as still being over there for some reason. I know we have no cemeteries in that country like we do in other foreign lands where Americans have fallen (my uncle lies in the military cemetery at Salerno, and my cousin lies in Burma). Yet I have thought of him as still being over there, where I last saw him, for all of these years. I had left him there in my mind.

On Veteran's Day morning, before all the ceremonies, Robert took me out to visit Tony's well-tended grave. It was cold, windy, dry and dusty. The hills of Douglas' valley lined the horizon. It was dramatically unlike Vietnam. We had a little private ceremony there, Tony and I - one Seawolf to another.

We went from there to the public dedication, which was a second emotional wringer on a different plane. The city turned out for a parade which went through town and ended at the memorial plaza. There, approximately one - thousand people gathered to witness the dedication. It was well planned, well done, and effective. It included the empty table. Robert's son was so touched by that aspect of our reunion dinner, that he had championed the idea. It was added to the program and was as effective as it has been for us. Bayonetted Springfield, Garand, M-14, and M-16 rifles were stuck in the sod in front of the memorial, topped by period helmets. There was: poetry and music written for the occasion, a calling of the roll of their wall, taps from two distant trumpets, twenty - one gun saluting volleys, high school bands, mariachis ... and lots of tears.

After the dedication, every hall of any size in town, such as the VFW, American Legion, Elks, and Bushmasters (a meeting hall once serving the Arizona National Guard "Bushmasters" of World War II fame in the Pacific), held open houses.

That evening, there was yet a third remembrance of Tony. It taught me much about the man; I realized that I hardly knew, as well as much about the town. Person after wonderful person, throughout the afternoon and evening, welcomed me, treated me like family, and told me little vignettes about Tony that sealed him in my memory. He is honored by his family and friends, and will be long remembered by the Americans of Douglas and Pirtleville, and most of all...by me.

I realize now, after that memorable, memorable, day, that Tony has been at rest for thirty years, at home. Now I am at peace too, I brought him home in my mind. May you ever rest in peace Tony Ortiz, my brother. You walk in beauty.

Tom Phillips

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Editor's note: Tony's photo courtesy of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's "Wall of Faces".





“Looking For”

Looking For....Members and Trainers of Task Force Sea Wolf

The years were 1966 & 1967, the USN Gunship Crews of the Sea Wolves were fresh in-country and we received a lot of help from our US Army brethren on how to fly and how to fight in the III Corps area of Vietnam. Unfortunately, Naval records of those days are sketchy, incomplete and confusing to those of us doing research on those early days. Therefore, we would like to talk to any of the members of the VHPA who might have either flown with, or helped train our aircrews, known as HC-1 Detachment 21, 25, 27 & 29.

POC for this project is either/or Tom Phillips, Seawolf 98 (E-mail: [redacted] or [redacted] and Don Thompson, Seawolf 19/39 [redacted])

If you believe you can help us, no matter how little you remember, please contact us.

Looking For....The crew of Inagodadavita

I was searching for info on a Helicopter used in Vietnam in 1968-70 called "Inagodadavita". It was the main chopper that hauled men for my husband. He was a CAP Unit 1-4-3 Recon Marine.

I would like to show him a picture of it, or an article about it. Any information is appreciated.

Semper Fi, Thanks for your service.

Sincerely, Denise [redacted]

Looking For....Information concerning a 24 February 1967 Dustoff Mission

I'm a VHPA member living in Florida; I was a USAF UH-1F/P flight mechanic/door gunner with the USAF 20th Helicopter Sq. in 1967-1968. I now am the webmaster of the USAF RotorHeads website (www.rotorheadsrus.us) and I'm seeking information about a "Dust Off" mission that occurred on 24 February 1967.

I'm seeking information about who was involved in picking up, MOH recipient, USAF Capt. Hilliard A. Wilbanks, a wounded O-1E pilot who died en route to medical help at Bao Loc from wounds he suffered when his aircraft was shot down and crashed. From the information in the book "War Stories of the Infantry: Americans in Combat" by Michael Green and James D. Brownat, it looks as if one of these authors (not sure which) and 23rd Ranger Battalion advisors, Sgt. Tanksley and Capt. Gary Vote were the guys that actually pulled Capt. Wilbanks from his crashed aircraft. Capt. Wilbanks was supporting South Vietnamese Rangers and their American advisors who were battling Viet Cong in a tea plantation when he was shot down and crashed in the tea fields at the base of Hill 955, near the town of Di Linh. According to the information in the book, after he was pulled from his crashed O-1E and was picked up by a "Dust Off" helicopter but died en route to medical attention at Bao Loc.

Would our other members have any records of this "Dust Off" mission on 24 February 1967, or do you have any contacts with the "Dust Off" folks who may be able to fill in any details about the mission? What I'm trying to find out is; the model of helicopter used in the pickup, tail number if possible, and the names of the crew members on the mission. I'm seeking this information for the son of an Air Force helicopter flight engineer. His Dad and Capt. Wilbanks grew up together and were friends and he is trying to fill in some blanks for his and Capt. Wilbanks' family about their Dad's service in Vietnam.

Any help you can provide or any guidance to contacts that may have more details will be greatly appreciated.

Jim Burns, SMSgt. USAF (retired) [redacted]

Looking For...Mister Wilson

My name is Jan van den Noort and I live in The Netherlands, Europe. A few years ago I bought a 1966 Ford Mustang that used to belong to Mr. Walter C. Wilson, who unfortunately died after his tour in Vietnam on 05/08/1995 at the age of 63. I have never met Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson was a very meticulous person, who kept every maintenance invoice with the car. These invoices tell a beautiful story about the car. Evidently Mr. Wilson always took the car with him wherever he went. He bought it in Jacksonville FL in 1966; in 1970 he took it to Honolulu, just before he left for Vietnam. After his return from Vietnam, he took the car to Arizona (Fort Huachuca), and later to Fort Rucker in Alabama. Mr. Wilson retired, he took the Mustang back to Jacksonville FL.

Your help really means a lot to me, I have owned the car for 15 years and all this time I've tried to find out more about Mr. Wilson. Last year I discovered that he was a Vietnam Helicopter pilot so now I'm asking your association for help. Hopefully one of your members can tell me more about Mr. Wilson, or might even have a picture of him!

I sincerely hope you can help me.

Jan van den Noort

E-Mail: [redacted]

Looking For... Lost Copies of the Charger, the Vietnam magazine of the 196th Brigade of the Americal Division

We're hoping that somewhere out there has managed to keep a Charger newsletter from the Vietnam time frame. So far, we have managed to located about half of the ones that were published and if you would like to read them, go to: www.196th.org

This is a list of the Issues that we know we are still missing – Can you Help? In the Periodic Version, Volume 1, Issues 3,6,8 & 9 and Volume 4, all but Issues #4 & #8

In the Bi-Weekly version, Volume 2, number 2, and possible Issues number 8 & 9 if they were printed.

So, if you have a copy of the Charger magazine left among your Vietnam souvenirs, let me know and we can work out getting it added to the history of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade's history.

Les Hines

E-Mail: [redacted]

Looking For....more information concerning my father, John Leaf

My father, John Leaf, died on May 26, 1986 in Columbus, MS near Columbus AFB. He served in three tours in Vietnam and died from Agent Orange caused cancers. I know from stories from my mom that he was also a Mohawk Pilot in Vietnam and that he was once nominated for the Medal of Honor for his actions. She also told us that my Dad, Bob Portman and another man invented NVG's at Ft. Rucker, Alabama. My father eventually retired from the ARMY at Fort Rucker, Alabama in 1985 as a CWO3.

I have a son who is 16; a nephew who is 14 and another son who is 13 and all three want to know more about their hero grandpa. We tell our stories but my mom passed away in 2012 and sadly, we did not record her stories and we now realize that we are slowly forgetting even the things she told us about Dad. My 16 year old has already been talking to recruiters and wants to carry on for my dad, so anyone with ANY story or having just known him who would be willing to talk is very welcome to contact us.

Jennifer Ray

E-Mail: [redacted]

Looking For...Members that can provide details about the loss of a medivac helicopter on 5 September 1969

This request for information or contact information is in support of an effort by former members of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry (1st Cavalry Division Airmobile) and Hawaii State Legislature Representative K. Mark Takai (under HCR 20) to seek upgrade to the Medal of Honor of the posthumous award of the DSC to 1LT John L. Kauhahao (1LT K) (Hawaii Army National Guard). And way too many of the former company members and battalion staff have died, are suffering from PTSD and cannot or refuse to remember details of the particular event, or have not yet been located. Thus, I am attempting to use every source of information to help reconstruct the combat action narrative in a way that the survivors we locate can use to converge on a common set of descriptions and that will satisfy a likely AR 15-6 informal investigation.

One vital aspect of this effort is to lock in the grid coordinates of key parts of the combat action. The combat patrol concerned occurred on 5 September 1969 some kilometers generally to the southwest of LZ Ike. At the time, LZ Ike was at grid coordinates XT 344716 (which was located at a road junction 19 KM south of Katum, XT 330900); thus, between Tay Ninh and Phuoc Vinh/Camp Gorvad. 1LT K was mortally wounded during a battle with what was later determined to be the security force of the headquarters of the 95C NVA Regiment. At an apparent lull in the battle (mid-afternoon) after bringing in air strikes and supporting artillery fires, we attempted to extract his body and those of other casualties via jungle penetrator. While his body was suspended below the medevac helicopter (about 10 feet above my head), automatic weapons fire engaged the helicopter from the west of the defensive perimeter we had established. The medevac helicopter caught fire and flew off to the north, dragging 1LT K's body through the dense trees. The helicopter reportedly crashed in a clearing well outside of our vision or hearing. According to an e-mail I received from our former battalion commander (LTC [Ret] Fred S. Lindsey), he indicated that he had just arrived and was in orbit over the site when the medevac helicopter was engaged. He directed his helicopter to move to the crash site and recover the crew and others aboard from the burning craft. He later directed a quick reaction platoon from LZ Ike to fly out to find and recover the body of 1LT K (which they did successfully). When/if the medevac helicopter remains were ever recovered I do not know.

I'm hoping the helicopter shoot-down with 1LT K in the penetrator was something the guys in the VHPA can identify as unique across the many combat actions that took place in the fall of 1969. Anything you can provide or point me to is truly appreciated.

Very Respectfully,

David R. Holdsworth
Colonel, US Army, Retired

Looking For – any more information about the attached patch

I was hoping a couple of your members might be able to provide me with some information about the attached OH-58 NETT program and patch.

About all that I know about it is that the patch was given to me by my then boss; Allen Dales, in 1996. Allen was a rather colorful personality in the rotor world, couple tours in Vietnam, started a couple FAR135 ops [Silver Star Helicopters and Pumpkin Air]. I met him at Helidyne in Hurst TX, when the company where I was employed; Corporate Jets performed a pre-purchase of their completion center.

I believe Allen said that the team was involved in a program to arm the OH58, but that had to have been way prior to 1996.

Thanks for your help!

Dana Merrill

E-mail: [REDACTED]



Looking For... anyone who knew my father Richard Percy

My dad was an adviser with the 484 TC maintenance depot with the Black Cats. I'm trying to locate anyone who would remember him while he served in Vietnam. I'm attaching two pictures taken during those days hoping they might trigger a recollection for some of your Members.

Thank you for your help

Sherylol Percy Miller

E-Mail: [REDACTED]






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Help us make sure the memories live on when our generation fades away. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is creating a truly personal experience by matching a photo and a face to every one of the more than 58,000 names on The Wall.



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What Can I Do With My Vietnam Stuff?

By Mike Law

You might be surprised at how often the phone rings at VHPA HQ and the caller says something like, "I have a photo album, maps, a flight jacket plus some other memorabilia from my tour in Vietnam. My family isn't interested in any of it. What can I do with my Vietnam stuff?"

Even at the Reunion, two of my friends said, "I know the VHPA recommends The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech, but they only take pictures and documents. What can I do with my XYZ?"

Sadly we also get, "My Dad passed away several months back. We have all his Vietnam papers and stuff in a box. No one wants it but we hate to toss it. What can we do with it?"

OK, let's all be MythBusters here for a moment! In my humble opinion, there are THREE options. Of course, toss it in the trash ISN'T one of them!

OPTION #1: Go to <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/> and you'll be greeted with something like this:



Notice the ** to the left forming "bookends" to draw your attention to the

Donating Materials

command button.

Clicking that button shows this:

Digital Materials
Donating
Oral History Project
Researching
Conferences & Events
About Us
More

The Vietnam Center and Archives accepts monetary donations for a variety of purposes including **scholarships**, general operation and for our **new building**. You may also want to consider joining the **Friends of the Vietnam Center**. See our **Monetary Donations** page for more information.

Donating Materials to the Vietnam Archive?

The Vietnam Archive accepts donations of materials ranging from single items to large collections. If you are interested in donation to the archive, see our **Information for Donors** page for more information. If you are unsure about donating, please feel free to **contact us** with any questions you may have.

There is an important message at the bottom of this page:

Please note that it may take a long time to process your collection. Factors affecting the amount of time processing s takes include the amount of and types of materials donated, and the number of already donated collections waiting to be processed. After the physical processing is complete, it will take additional time before the materials in your collection are digitized, again depending on the amount and types of materials, and the number of collections waiting to be digitized. If you have questions about the status of your collection, **please feel free to contact us.**

OPTION #2: Please look at the WANTED advertisement on page 9 of the July/August 2014 Aviator ~ John Conway. In my opinion, John has a long and good track record with VHPAers. He is a "standup guy" you can trust.

Option #3: Especially if you have photos or slides, put them in a box and ship them to the VHPA. Easy Peasy! We will sort things out and get it to The Vietnam Archive. This is all part of our legacy. It is crying shame to toss it!

Oh, the answer to the question how often the phone rings at VHPA HQ and the caller says something like, "What can I do with my Vietnam stuff?" At least once every two weeks!!! Ouch!!! Please help us get the word out!

Army Aviation HALL OF FAME 2014 Induction



COL (Ret.)

William S. Reeder is a legendary aviator who has made contributions to survival, evasion, resistance, escape (SERE) training and the attack helicopter community. His 30-year career included two combat tours in Vietnam flying armed OV-1 Mohawk reconnaissance airplanes and AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters.



On May 9, 1972, he was leading a team of AH-1 Cobras supporting two Vietnamese ranger battalions and their American advisors. He was shot down, his co-pilot/gunner killed. Severely wounded, he evaded the enemy but was eventually captured spending nearly a year as a prisoner of war (POW).

Upon repatriation, he returned to military flight duties. He was instrumental in early night vision goggle training programs, tactical innovations later used in combat in Iraq, and the transition of the U.S. Army Apache Training Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas into what would become the 21st Cavalry Brigade. Wanting to help future POWs return home with honor, he wrote his Eight Steps for Survival in a POW Camp, still studied in SERE training courses today.

Colonel Reeder has in excess of 3,000 flight hours, over 1,000 in combat, two Distinguished Flying Crosses and three Purple Hearts. He was named AAAA Army Aviator of the Year in 1977.

“HOT LZ” Honors Vietnam War Vets

by Jim Singleton & Mike Neu

(BELOW) Bob Hesselbein gives the keynote address at the Vietnam War Memorial “HOT LZ” dedication.



(ABOVE) BVVM partners install the 2,000-pound bronze monument plate prior to the dedication at Veterans Park in College Station, Texas.

In honor of those who served the U.S. military overseas, and more than 41 years after U.S. combat troops left Vietnam in 1973, members of the Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial (BVVM) nonprofit group dedicated the “HOT LZ” Vietnam War Memorial at Veterans Park in College Station, Texas. A memorial for all veterans of the Vietnam War, the site highlights the pivotal role of rotary wing aviation during the Vietnam era. More than 1,000 military veterans, families and community partners attended the dedication on May 31.

Titled “HOT LZ,” the primary structure features a bronze UH-1D Huey helicopter façade with soldiers preparing to drop into a dangerous landing zone. The 2,000-pound monument plate, reinforced by 12-inch-thick concrete, is 24 feet long by 17 feet high. Local sculptor J. Payne Lara used input from BVVM Vietnam veterans and an Associated Press photo of a Huey from 1966 as his inspiration for the monument’s design. BVVM raised more than \$150,000 in donations from board members and community partners to fund the memorial’s monument, benches, panels and landscaping.

LTC Robert “Bob” Hesselbein, President of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, provided the dedication’s keynote address. Hesselbein is a lifelong professional pilot, recognized aviation safety and security expert, and served in the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force and Wisconsin Air National Guard. Hesselbein spoke of his experiences as a pilot and of the importance of remembering others who lost their lives in combat.

“[Each visitor] will understand that those who bravely fought long ago in faraway Vietnam were no different than they: individuals with dreams, hopes, and a strong desire to live.”

Bob Hesselbein

Keynote address,
Vietnam War Memorial dedication

Ms. Karoni Forrester also spoke on behalf of the National League of POW/MIA families. Karoni is the daughter of Capt. Ron Forrester, MIA, a Texas A&M University graduate and 25-year-old Marine aviator shot down in Vietnam in 1972. Karoni thanked the many Vietnam veterans in attendance for their service and said they are

all loved and respected today.

Other dedication activities included a Huey flyover and landing sponsored by The Collings Foundation, a memorial wreath presentation by Vietnam Veterans Association Chapter 937 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4692, and a rifle salute by American Legion Post 159. Learn more about BVVM at bvvm.org.



LTG Randy House addresses the crowd as Bob Hesselbein (*seated second from right*) waits to give the keynote address at the "HOT LZ" Vietnam War Memorial dedication May 31 in College Station, Texas.

Photo by: James Haliburton AIA





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VETERANS MEMORIAL**

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The Memorial for all Veterans of the Brazos Valley, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation chartered by the State of Texas. Our sole purpose is to recognize and honor the service and sacrifices of all past, present and future American military veterans.

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4. War of 1812 (1812-1815)
5. War for TX Independence (1835-1836)
6. Mexican War (1846-1848)
7. Civil War - North (1861-1865)
8. Civil War - South (1861-1865)
9. Spanish American War (1898)
10. Philippine Insurrection (1898-1913)
11. China Relief Expedition (1900-1901)
12. Mexican Border Service (1916-1917)
13. World War I (1917-1918)
- 14-16. World War II (1941-1945)
17. Korean War (1950-1953)
18. Vietnam War (1965-1973)
19. Expeditionary Operations (1965-1990)
20. Southwest Asia War (1990-1995)
21. Kosovo War (2000)
22. Global War on Terrorism (2001-present)



Help preserve the honor and memory of our U.S. service members. We recognize all branches of military service.



BVVM.ORG
or call **979.696.6247**

TAPS

ALLISON, Ralph L. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 63-1WT, flew in Vietnam with the D/227th AVN, 1st CAV DIV (1966-67) and with the Cobra NETT Team (1969-70)



Ralph Allison was born May 22, 1936 in Greensburg, PA, and passed away on May 20, 2014 at home in Peyton, CO.

He served 20 years in the Army as a Cobra Chopper Pilot, doing duty tours in Korea and Vietnam. His last duty station was Ft. Carson. He retired and began a new career as a bowling manager, working for many years for Kingpin Lanes, with a break to work for military Morale, Welfare and Recreation for 4 years in Germany.

He is survived by his wife, Karen; one sister, three 3 daughters; 4 step-children; eighteen grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren.

BENNETTS, Kent W. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 59-1. Flew in Vietnam with the 82nd Med Detachment (1965-66) under the Dustoff 5 callsign.

Kent W. Bennetts, MAJ, USA (Ret) passed away on June 19, 2014. He was born in Flint, Michigan and graduated from Fenton High School, Fenton, Michigan in 1949 and attended Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa, prior to enlisting in the United States Army in 1951. Kent served in the Korean War with the 68th Engineering Company and afterward was accepted for Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Infantry and later entered the Medical Service Corps. After completing his initial military service, he attended the University of Missouri at Kansas City School of Pharmacy.

Kent re-entered the U.S. Army in 1957 and became a helicopter pilot. He served in Viet Nam as a member of the "DUSTOFF" medical evacuation team during the 1965-66 buildup of American forces. Kent retired from active military service at the rank of Major after a 23 year career. He was a senior aviator and was awarded the Air Medal with 8 oak leaf clusters, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, the Combat Medical Badge as well as numerous other decorations during his career. Kent was a member of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots' Association, the Solo Pilot Association and the DUSTOFF Association.

After retiring from the Army, Kent graduated from the Research Medical Center School of Nursing in 1977, having served as President of his class. He worked as an ICU nurse at Cushing Hospital in Leavenworth, KS from 1977 - 1980 and then as an industrial nurse with the Hallmark Company in Leavenworth until his retirement in 1989. Kent also was a volunteer camp nurse for Camp Adventure, a camp for children

and young adults with spina bifida, cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy. Kent served as the president of the Leavenworth County Mental Health Association for four years and was a member of its Board of Directors for nine years. He was a lay minister for the Community of Christ and also volunteered with the Leavenworth County Office of Emergency Preparedness, working both as a nurse and weather spotter. He also was on the Board of Directors for Nurturing Families, Inc.

Kent was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 54 years, Mary Louise Bennetts, one daughter, one sister and one brother. He is survived by his two sons as well as ten grandchildren and seventeen great-grand children. Memorial donations may be made to Outreach International, the Community of Christ Health Ministries Association or the Research College of Nursing.

DICKERSON, Charles Wayne. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 70-43, flew in Vietnam with the 192 AHC (1971) and with A/7/17 Cav (1971) under the Night Hawk callsign

Charles "Charlie" Wayne Dickerson, age 64, a lifelong resident of Lexington County, passed away on July 28, 2014. Charlie was a 1968 graduate of Brookland-Cayce High School where he was voted as the "wittiest" for a Senior Superlative. He lived a full life which included faithfully serving his country in the Army as a helicopter pilot, in Flight School 70-43, 102nd AHC, and A/7/17 CAV. He served in Vietnam from 1970 - 1971. After his honorable discharge and return home from Vietnam, he started BankAir, Inc. in 1972.

Along with his mother, brother and sister, BankAir became a thriving family business which continues in operation today. BankAir started as a business in service for local banks, grew steadily and rapidly in the check transportation business, and expanded into commuter passenger service in 1975 by providing regional passenger service in the southeast. In 1984, BankAir was awarded a contract by the Federal Reserve Bank to fly the nation's checks. This enabled BankAir to move from a solely southeastern airline to one that traveled most of the U.S. BankAir averaged more than 12,000 takeoffs and landings each year for 27 years. Today, BankAir is a thriving passenger jet charter service flying both nationally and internationally.

Charlie was a member of the Lutheran Church of the Transfiguration. Charlie was survived by his wife of 45 years, Barbara Kyzer Dickerson, who was the love of his life, he is also survived by one son, three grandchildren, a brother and a sister as well as a large family that includes many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Additionally, he is survived by his son's special friend, Brandi, and her daughter.

Friends, family, and co-workers will remember Charlie best for his dry wit and sense of humor. He was able to bring laughter to any situation and a smile

to the faces around him. He will be sorely missed. The family requests all memorials be made to the Dickerson Children's Advocacy Center, 1615 Augusta Road, West Columbia 29169, or The Lutheran Church of the Transfiguration, 1301 Twelfth Street, P. O. Box 2461, Cayce-West Columbia, SC 29171.

FELTER, Jesse E. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 63-8

Jesse Eloy "Buck" Felter, LTC, USA (Ret), age 79 of Lascassas, Tennessee, passed away August 5, 2014. He was a native of Wisner, LA and is survived by his wife, Jane Felter; five children, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Mr. Felter was a member and deacon at Lascassas Baptist Church. He was a member of the Freemasons. He was a retired Lt. Col. in the U.S. Army having flown helicopters in Korea and Vietnam. Upon his retirement, Mr. Felter was an educator in Louisiana and Texas. He moved to Tennessee in 1989 where he became a veterans representative for the State of Tennessee. After his second retirement, he devoted his time to his church, his family, and to community service. Memorials may be made to the Lascassas Churches Food Bank.

FINNEY, William E., Jr. Graduated flight training with Class 70-09. Flew in Vietnam with 'B' Trp., 7/1 'Dutchmasters' (Sep.'70 - Sep.'71).

William E. "Bill" Finney, Jr., age 65, passed away unexpectedly 14 May 2014 in his home in Bluff City, TN.

Bill grew up in Mullins, WV, attended Concord College in Athens, WV, and enlisted for the Army's Warrant Officer flight training program in 1969. His tour in RVN followed during which time he received numerous awards and decorations including the Bronze Star medal, various Air Medals, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and others. Bill left the Army shortly after returning from Vietnam at which time he turned his aviation experience into a livelihood flying first in Indonesia then for organizations closer to home, ultimately making a career working for Edwards Aviation in Piney Flats, TN from which he recently retired as Chief Pilot. Bill was type qualified in and flew numerous helicopters during this time and recorded an enviable number of hours in the air. He dearly loved his chosen profession, and was a long-time VHPA member who always looked forward to seeing his many friends during annual reunions.

Bill was preceded in death by his beloved daughter, Jessica. Bill is survived by his mother, his wife Judy, three children, one brother, one sister as well as numerous grandchildren, nieces, nephews and other relations. Bill carried an almost constant grin and owned a uniquely special easygoing personality that set him apart, and was much loved by his many friends. He is and will forever be so truly missed.

GESE, Terrence Graduated flight training with Flight Class 70-5 & 70-07.

Terrence Gese (Age 64) Terrence Gese of Spokane passed away June 27 surrounded by family and friends. Mr. Gese was born in Minot, ND and proudly served his country in the U.S. Army as a CW4 medevac helicopter pilot during Vietnam where he received a Purple Heart, along with countless other medals during his service. He also served his community as Captain of Paramedics with Spokane Valley Fire Department from which he retired from after 33 years.

Mr. Gese is survived by his wife of 41 years, Debbie; two sons; and two beautiful granddaughters whom he loved to the moon and back. He is also survived by his mother, four sisters; and three brothers.

JOCHETZ, Charles David. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 63-9, flew in Vietnam with the 173rd AVN (1966-67), the 179th AVN (1970), the 196th AVN (1970) and the 17th CAG (1971) under the Robinhood 25 Callsign.

Charles David Jochetz, LTC, USA (Ret), 73, died of a brain aneurysm in Melbourne, Australia July 21, 2014. He was with his wife, Diane and daughter Penelope at the time.

David served with the 173rd, AHC, Robinhoods in 1966-67 as RH 25 and went on to complete 20 years active duty, retiring as a LtCol. David was highly decorated and always set the example leading the Robinhood flights in combat assaults. He graduated from Texas A&M University and his classmates will honor him this October with a final memorial in Colleague Station, Texas

JOHNSON, Charles F.

Charles F. Johnson, 67, of Acworth, GA died on July 30, 2014. He was born in Brooklyn, NY and honorably served in the U.S. Army as a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War and in the Georgia National Guard. Mr. Johnson was a proud member of the Georgian Vietnam Veterans Association, the National Rifle Association, the Army Aviation Association of America, and the American Legion.

He also volunteered teaching youth rifle safety and use through the NRA. He was a loyal friend and loved his family very much. He will be missed more than words can express. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Carrie Johnson and their 3 children with their families that include several grand children, nieces and nephews.

INGRAM, Duane C. Flew in Vietnam with the 118th AHC (1968-69)

Duane C. Ingram, COL USA (Ret), 79 of Austin Texas passed away on July 26, 2014.



Duane was born in Ft Meade, South Dakota. He earned a Bronze Star, Legion of Merit and Distinguished Flying Cross medals while serving one Korean and two Vietnam tours. Duane is survived by his wife Frances; two sons and five grandchildren. Internment with full military honors was held at the Central Texas Veterans Cemetery.

KAPLAN, Sanford N. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 64-1, flew in Vietnam with 117th AHC (1965) and the 155th AHC (1965)

Sanford N. 'Sandy' Kaplan died June 5, at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. He was 74.

He was born in Newark, N.J. and is he is survived by his wife of almost 50 years, Doreene, one son one daughter and four grandchildren.

Sandy lived life with passion, curiosity and an infectious sense of humor. He loved sailing, inventing and learning new things, laughing and telling stories drawn from his interesting life experiences. People were always saying 'you should write a book' and finally he did, 'An Aviator's Story.' Sandy had many interests but two overriding passions. His first and most important passion was his family, and he did an outstanding job of making his wife, children and grandchildren feel his love, protection and devotion.

Close behind was his passion for flying. From the time of his first model airplane all he ever really wanted to do was to fly. He was a combat helicopter pilot in Vietnam and was very proud of his service to his country. After the service he flew all kinds of missions from delivering Santas to putting out forest fires, filming for movies and television shows, and ferrying celebrities, politicians and other notables. The final twenty years of his career were spent as a corporate pilot for Dow Jones and Co., Inc.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Veterans Square Foundation, Yardley, MA

LEONARD, John Patrick Jr., Graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-1, flew in Vietnam with C/227th AVN, 1st CAV DIV (1966-67).

John Patrick Leonard CW5, USA (Retired) passed away peacefully at home Thursday, March 27, 2014. He was diagnosed with leukemia in 2010 and battled the increasing effects of the cancer to the end.

He was born on January 1, 1940 in Springfield, Massachusetts and attended Technical High School and American International College. He married Sandra Frances Cerow on July 8, 1961. He is survived by his wife, Sandra; one son and one granddaughter, all of Louisville, KY.

He was drafted into the U. S. Army in May



1963. After a tour of duty as an orthopedic technician at Walter Reed General Hospital, he reenlisted to attend helicopter flight training at Fort Wolters in Mineral Wells, TX and Fort Rucker in Alabama in Class 66-1. In 1966 - 1967, he served in Vietnam in C Company, 227th Aviation Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. His final tour of duty was with the 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, 2-228 Aviation Regiment, Fort Knox, KY. He retired from the military in 2002 as a CW5 after more than 39 years as an Army pilot. At that time, he was 61 and the Army's oldest active aviator. His last employment was with the Transportation Security Administration.

His lifelong passion was flying and he was an original member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association in 1984, attending the first reunion in Phoenix, AZ. A military memorial service and interment was held at the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central in Radcliff, Kentucky. John was the man that "bought a drink for the house" at this year's Reunion in Louisville, Kentucky. More details of his life and contributions to the VHPA may be found on page of this Issue.

MARTINEZ, Louis J. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-16 & 68-16. Flew in Vietnam with the 125th ATC (1968-69) and the 334th AWC (1969-70) under the Traffic Minder and Playboy callsigns.

Louis J. Martinez, LTC, USA (Ret), passed away Sunday, July 27, 2014. Serving 26 years in the US Army, initially as a helicopter pilot and flight instructor, he then completed his Army service with the US Army Corps of Engineers. Upon his military retirement he worked another 23 years for KBR and owned his own consulting firm. He was a proud graduate of West Virginia University and received his Masters Degree from John Hopkins University. He was a member and fellow of The Society of American Military Engineers, Past President and member of the Cocoa Beach Daybreak Rotary Club and President of the Florida Chapter of the Design Build Institute of America and member of the Associated General Contractors of America.

He is survived by his wife, Julie; his mother, two children, two brothers and one sister. The family request donations to the Society of American Military Engineers Education and Mentoring Fund. Please note 'In Memory of Lou Martinez' on your donation.

The above was sent to us by his friend Walter Fugler who added "Lou and I just reunited for the first time at this year's Louisville Reunion. I last saw him back in 1970 after he and I crashed a Cobra in the Song Be River on Christmas Day of 1969."



MEASELS, David A. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-6, flew in Vietnam with the 120th AHC (1966-68) and the 117th AHC (1966) under the Beach Bum and Dean callsigns



David (Dave) A. Measels, COL USA (Ret) made his final flight into the clouds on July 26, 2014 in Gainesville, Florida.

Dave was born in Beaumont, Texas on October 6, 1941. He graduated from South Park High School in 1959, attended Lamar University, and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1961. He was commissioned as an Infantry officer through the Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1963. Dave married the former Kim Phung Nguyen, from Mo Cay, Vietnam, on December 31, 1967, while he was serving as a helicopter pilot with the 120th Aviation Company, having the radio call sign of "Deans", and based at Tan Son Nhat Air Base located in Saigon, Vietnam. While serving in the Army, Dave received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Tampa in 1972 and a Master of Science degree from the Florida Institute of Technology in 1980.

Dave commanded three Army companies, two battalions, and the brigade level 2d Infantry Division Support Command in Korea. As an Army helicopter pilot, he accumulated almost 2500 hours of helicopter flight time of which 1600 were combat hours in Vietnam and 600 hours were as an instructor pilot in Vietnam and at Fort Wolters, Texas.

His military awards and decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Medal for Valor (with 35 Oak Leaf Clusters for Service), Army Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Purple Heart, Senior Army Aviator Badge, Parachutist Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, and the Army Staff Identification Badge. His military service took him to Korea twice, Germany, Vietnam twice, and eight states in the United States. After serving as the Deputy Director and then as the Director of Plans and Operations, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Headquarters, Department of the Army during his second tour at the Pentagon, Dave ended his Army career as an Ordnance Corps officer with the rank of colonel in 1992.

In the civil sector, Dave worked as a senior logistics analyst for three different defense contractors located in the National Capital Region until he retired from Science Applications International Corporation in 2001. Dave was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces Association, the Ordnance Corps Association, and the Military Officers Association of America.

Dave and Kim relocated from Springfield, Virginia

to Port Neches, Texas in 2001 where they spent their retirement years traveling the United States and making frequent visits to Vietnam. Dave recalls his 20 months of Vietnam War service with the 120th Aviation Company from 1966 to 1968 with the myriad of great officer and warrant officer pilots, and the crew chiefs, door gunners, and maintenance folks who pulled it all together in the "Best of Times in the Worst of Times." Dave will be remembered for his selfless military service to our Nation for over 31 years, as a loving and devoted husband and father, and a loyal and true friend to all.

Dave was preceded in death by two of his sons, survivors include his loving and devoted wife of over 46 years, Kim Phung Measels; one son, one sister, three grandchildren. In addition to his immediate family, Dave has a very wonderful extended family in Mo Cay, Vietnam and many great friends located throughout the United States.

NORONA, Robert N

Robert "Bob" N. Norona, CPT, Artillery, USA, (retired) flew off to smoother skies on June 20, 2104. Born in Modesto, CA, June 4, 1945, he was proud of his membership in VHPA. A graduate of ORWAC Flight Class 69-6, his call sign was Thunder 24 in northern I Corps with 3 BDE 101 ABN, 1969-70. After Vietnam, he was a flight instructor at Fort Wolters, TX, until the big RIF of 1970, when Bob returned to California to earn a BS in Mathematics and Science, San Jose State University, CA. Bob worked in the electronics industry for most of his career, including work with very early developers of video games, PCs, and telecoms. His ability to manage and conquer complex procurement problems and logistics systems was legendary in the Silicon Valley.



Ken Fritz had flown with him at Wolters and they were still good friends and college classmates in San Jose. Ken knew of Bob's passion for the VHPA and getting things done right, so he drafted Bob for his professional expertise, which shined as Chairman of the 1996 VHPA Annual Reunion. Many of us enjoyed one of the best reunions ever and it all went off like clockwork because Bob was at the helm and constantly managing his crew of event volunteers. He was a great delegator who made certain that his crew knew how to do the job, what was expected, and how to report problems before they got too big, including solution-oriented work. Reunion clockwork? Actually, the hotel failed to keep up with the demand for burgers at the big outdoor BBQ, but because Bob was dealing with them, the hotel compensated with free beer until the burger shortfall was rectified. After overcoming a huge insurance liability problem that arose prior to the reunion, even the CH-47, UH-1, LOH-6 and Cobra "medevac mission" (a Huey recovering a downed Hook crew with scout and gun cover) flight demonstration during the reunion was on

time at the LZ across the street from the hotel in Santa Clara. For years afterward, Bob and Ken had great laughs talking about the burgers and the insurance obstacle which were overcome by skill, determination, and a refusal to cancel the flying. They enjoyed the free burger story, too. Bob was also a founding member of a very successful VHPA chapter - VHPA California Chapter North (VHPA-CCN) which was founded in 1996. Bob Norona is survived by his wife Gayle and son Garrett. An avid skier, keen fisherman, movie buff, and smiling friend with a great laugh will be missed for as long I live.

Submitted by Ken Fritz, VHPA Life Member L00021

ORGAIN, Albert M. IV. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-14, flew in Vietnam with 9th INF DIV (1966-67).



Albert M. Orgain of Manakin-Sabot, Va., died June 27, 2014 when his Cessna 182 had an engine failure in North Carolina. He is survived by his wife, Jacquelyn Norman; three sons; three grandsons and one granddaughter.

Born in Columbia, S.C., but raised in Richmond, Mr. Orgain left home to spend his high school years at Randolph Macon Academy in Front Royal, Va., where he graduated in 1961 and would later serve on the Board of Trustees. After graduating from Virginia Military Institute in 1965, Mr. Orgain served three years in the United States Army as an armor officer, helicopter gunship pilot and instrument flight instructor. During the Vietnam War, he was twice awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart and received six Air Medals. Upon graduating from Washington and Lee Law School in 1971, Mr. Orgain clerked for the Honorable Judge John A. McKenzie in Norfolk, Va. for two years before being hired as an associate at Sands, Anderson. He later became a member of the Sands, Anderson, Marks and Miller law firm for 43 years where he served as the leader of Coverage and Casualty Litigation Group for over twenty of those years. As a specialist in aviation litigation, he earned many honors over the course of his career to include selection to the "Best Lawyers in America" list for the last six years and "Virginia Super Lawyers" for the last seven years. He served as the Chairman of the Virginia Aviation Historical Society and was inducted into the Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame in 2010 for his enthusiastic and persistent work in promoting aviation in Virginia. In 2011, Mr. Orgain was named a Virginia Lawyers Weekly Leader in the Law in recognition of his aviation law practice and support of aviation history in the Commonwealth. In 2013, he was named a Fellow of the Virginia Law Foundation.

The family requests that contributions be made to the Albert M. Orgain IV Scholarship Fund at the Virginia Military Institute or to a charity of one's own choosing.

PARKER, Cecil W. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 65-8w, flew in Vietnam with HHB, 2/10th ARA. 1st CAV (1965-66) under the Armed Falcon 6 and XRay Callsigns.

Cecil W. "Chip" Parker passed away peacefully on July 7, 2014 in Dallas, TX. He is survived by his wife, Vicki Fuller Parker; one son, one step-daughter, one step-son and five grandchildren.

Chip had a long successful career as President of Precision Dialing Services, and was also a member of Dallas Elks 71, MOWW, and the VHPA. Chip will be remembered for his heroism in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, his leadership in business, as "Papa" to his grandkids, as hero and role model to his family and friends, and as larger than life to all who knew him. The family requests that donations in his name be made to the Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW).

RHULE, Steven Paul. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-11, flew in Vietnam with 1 CAV (1968-69) and with 4/77th ARA, 101 ABN DIV (1970-71)

Steven "Steve" Paul Rhule, CW4 USA (Ret) Steven Paul Rhule, died Sunday, June 8, 2014, after a heart attack. He was 66.

Steve was chief pilot at Ibis Tek of Butler and manager at Grove City Airport. Before retiring in 2007, he was a pilot for Continental Airlines and People's Express for 22 years.

He was an accident investigator with the U.S. Army Agency for Aviation Safety, a safety manager, and a military (Army) aviator for 26 years, flying both helicopters and airplanes. He was director of product development for Aeronautical Accessories in Tennessee.

He served two tours of duty in the Vietnam conflict (with the 1st Cav, '68 & '69; and 101st, '71 & '72).

Steve had a lifelong passion for flight and generously shared that love with all, teaching pilots young and old. For four years, he operated Silent Wings Soaring, a glider training school in Grove City.

He graduated from Penn Hills High School in 1965 and earned a bachelor's degree in safety management and a master's degree in systems management from the University of Southern California. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Michele Makary Rhule, his father, one brother, one sister and one grandson. Please consider being an organ donor through the Center for Organ Recovery and Education, www.core.org; or memorial contributions may be made to Mercer Area Library, 110 E. Venango St., Mercer, PA 16137.

ROVETTO, John Larry. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 62-1, flew in Vietnam with the UTT (1962-63) and with D/1/10th Cav (1966-67)

John Larry Rovetto, CW4, USA (Ret.) took his final flight from this world to the next on June 17th, 2014.

John's takeoff was overseen by Jo, his beautiful bride of 55 years, his family and his friends.

John enlisted in the United States Army in 1953, attended Warrant Officer Candidate School, and rose to the rank of CW4 in the United States Army. While on active duty he served in Korea, attended two tours of duty in Vietnam, and posted to numerous positions throughout Europe, Africa and Saudi Arabia. He has been awarded the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal; The National Defense Medal; The Armed Forces Reserve Medal; Fourteen Air Medals; The Army Commendation Medal; The Meritorious Service Medal; The Vietnam Service Medal with Three Bronze Stars and Two Purple Hearts. John retired from the U.S. Army in 1975 after 22 years of service. He then began a second career as a private pilot for Odell Geer Construction Company for whom he worked until his retirement in 2000. All of his friends and family considered him the "Go To Guy" for any situation.

He was a proud member of the DAV, VFW, American Legion, AOPA, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, The Army Aviation Association and the Temple Aero Modelers Club.

John Larry is survived by his loving wife Jo, two sons, one daughter, two brothers, many nephews, nieces, grandchildren, great grandchildren and many friends whom he considered family.

A Celebration of his life was held at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery, the family requests donations be made to the Scott & White Hospice Program, 5701 Airport Road, Temple, TX 76504.

SAYLOR, Ralph Edward Sr. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 70-1. Flew in Vietnam with the 62nd AVN (1970).

Ralph Edward Saylor, CW3 USA (Ret) passed away on July 11, 2014. He was born October 2, 1940, in Elizabethton, Tennessee and except for the time he spent in the Military Service, Ralph remained in Washington County for most of his life. Ralph Saylor was a 7th generation descendant of Gov. John Sevier and Sarah Hawkins Sevier and a 7th generation descendant of Sheriff Jonathon Pugh.

Ralph was a graduate of Elizabethton High School and the US Army Aviation School. He was of the Christian faith, a Master Mason and Life Member of Silverdale Lodge #311, Bremerton, WA. Ralph also coached football in the local area and the military.

During the 23 years of serving his country, Ralph Saylor accomplished many things. He was a pilot for Colin Powell in Vietnam, built ultra light aircraft and was awarded the following medals: Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, Armed Forces Reserves Medal, Good Conduct Medal 3D Award, National Defense Service Medal, Aircraft Crewman Badge, Army Aviator Badge, Vietnam Service Medal with 4 Campaign Stars, RVN Campaign Medal with 60 Device, RVN Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation.



Ralph is survived by his Fiancée, Carol Fargason; two sons, one sister; one brother; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; three nieces; one nephew; and his beloved faithful pet companion, Andy, the Boston terrier. He was interred with military honors on Tuesday, July 15, 2014, at the Veterans Administration National Cemetery of Mountain Home, TN. The family requests that you make a donation to the charity of your choice or to Paws for Veterans, 1900 South Harbor City Blvd., Suite 106, Melbourne, Florida 32901; www.pawsforveterans.com.

WARE, David Auther. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-5 & 66-5W, he flew in Vietnam with the 155th AHC (1966-67), the 245th SAC (1970-71) the 131st SAC (1970-71) and the CAC (1970-71) under the Falcon 9 Callsign.



David Auther Ware, 71, passed away June 25, 2014. He was born November 18, 1942 in Boston, Massachusetts. He retired as a corporate pilot. He served two tours in the US Army during Vietnam. His first tour he flew UH-1 helicopters, both gunships and transports. One his second tour he flew Mohawk airplanes with recon cameras and inferred detection equipment. He was a Warrant Officer and later went to Iran with Bell Helicopters as an instructor. He was awarded the Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Bronze Star and Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Rockport, and was co-leading the Retrofit Program. He was also a member of the American Legion and Vietnam Helicopters Pilot Association. He was active with the Rockport Yacht Club and Bay Yacht Club in Corpus Christi. He enjoyed building, sailing and racing sail boats.

He was preceded in death by one son, he is survived by his wife, Mary Ware of Rockport, two sons, two daughters, one brother, one sister and eight grandchildren.

Lascassas Churches Food Bank.

WILSON, Patrick M III. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-14, flew in Vietnam with C/3/17 CAV (1967-68) under the Charlie Horse 34 callsign.

Pat M. Wilson, 70, of Leon, died on July 16, 2014. He graduated from Point Pleasant High School in May 1960. He then went on to receive his Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from West Virginia University in Morgantown. After completing college, Pat served his country as a captain in the U.S. Army. During his distinguished military career, he received honors that included the Distinguished Flying Cross with 13 oak leaf clusters, as well as a Bronze Star. He honorably served his country as a unit commander, captain and helicopter pilot in the Republic of Vietnam from 1967 to 1968.

He later retired as a journeyman millwright from Millwright Local Union 1755 of Parkersburg. Pat also served the town of Leon as mayor. During his lifetime, Pat was a member of many organizations that included: Scottish Rite, Kiwanis Club of America, Statewide Literacy Coalition and Minturn Lodge No. 19 A.F. & A.M. He was a blood donor for the American Red Cross, donating more than 17 gallons in his lifetime. Pat was also a dedicated lifelong member of Leon United Methodist Church.

Pat had many hobbies that included volunteering at the Mason County Farm Museum, running sawmills, antique steam engines and flying. He is survived by two sons, two grandchildren, one sister, two brothers seven nieces and nephews, twelve

12 great-nieces and great-nephews and both his former wife Elaine Wilson; and his special friend Eleanor Keefer.

WOLFE, Randall, Vern. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-23, flew in Vietnam with A Co, 228th Avn, 1st Cav Division in 1969-1970 under the Wildcat 22 Callsign.

Randall Vern Wolfe, age 66, of Holland, MI, July 18, 2014 following a four year journey with lung cancer. Randy attended Haven Reformed Church in Hamilton, MI and was a member of the Germantown United Methodist Church in Memphis, TN.

He proudly served in the US Army in Vietnam from 1969-1970 as a Chief Warrant Officer flying

Chinook helicopters. He also served in South Korea from 1972-1973. Randy and Kathy's daughter, Amy, was born to them in 1986 while they were living in Memphis; and they made certain Amy knew her extended family in Michigan. Many trips were made over the years "up north" for summertime fun on Ottawa Beach, Tulip Time and Christmas holidays. Randy will be missed by his family, neighbors, many dear friends and fellow FedEx pilots; as well as his ever faithful coffee buddies.

Randy is survived by his wife of 43 years, Kathy; one daughter, his mother, two sisters, numerous in-laws, and many nieces and nephews and their families. Memorial contributions are encouraged to Hospice of Holland.

The recent deaths of the following ten potential members of the VHPA were gleaned from internet searches within these last two months:

PETERSON, James Melford, US Army Aviator
BOAZE, Sam Whitfield, US Army Aviator, Flight Class 66-7
DESJARDIEN, Richard Freeman, US Army Aviator, Flight Class 70-32
WALTERS, J.L., US Army Aviator, Flight Class 69-21
PERDUE, Ron Tracy, US Army Aviator, Flight Class 68-07
BLIGHT, Lawrence B., US Army Aviator, Flight Class 69-03
LEACH, Donald D., US Army Aviator
PIDO, Michael P.
HARKLEY, Herbert J, Jr., US Army Aviator, Flight Class 69-23m Flew in Vietnam with A/228, 1st Cav Div
CLAYTON, Richard Allen, ALLEN, US Army Aviator, Flight Class 71-9, flew in Vietnam with 192 AHC (1971), B/7/17th CAV (1972 and H/17th CAV in 1972

A regularly scheduled search of Social Security records uncovered notices of the deaths of the following twelve potential VHPA members:

ADAMS, ROBERT C. DOD 09/26/2013 - Flight Class 68-12/68-18
BODE, DONALD H. - DOD 01/14/2014 - Flight Class 14-55
BOYD, DANIEL L. - DOD 10/17/2013 - Flight Class 68-503/68-3
BROWN, JERRY H. - DOD 01/13/2014
EDWARDS, DAVID T. - DOD 12/02/2013 - Flight Class 66-22/66-20
HUDGINS, SETH F. JR. - DOD 02/08/2014 - Flight Class 69-28
KERFOOT, FREDRICK J. - DOD 07/17/2013 -
Flight Class 66-23/66-19
LYON, RICHARD P. - DOD 01/16/2014 - Flight Class 69-37/69-35
MATLOCK, JAMES D. - DOD 02/05/2014 - Flight Class 69-9
OUVERSON, LARRY LEE - DOD 12/03/2013 -
Flight Class 66-23/66-21
SHORTRIDGE, RICHARD - DOD 12/23/2013 -
Flight Class 52-B
WEISENBURGER, EDWARD J - DOD 12/22/2013 -
Flight Class 63-6T

All information that the VHPA has on hand for these men can be found at VHPA.org or by calling 1-800-505-VHPA. If any of our members have more information on one of the men in the last list, please report it to: HQ@VHPA.org

Let Me Buy You A Drink At The Reunion!

by Mike Law, Reunion Committee Chairman

Sound familiar? Sure! We've all heard that a few times. However, Sandra Leonard and her family took this idea to a whole new level. They arranged for everyone (well, most everyone anyway!) attending the Early Bird Gathering on 1 July to have a "free drink" ticket. While everyone attending the Gathering heard the story, it is worth retelling!



John P. Leonard, flight class 66-1, passed away this past March from Leukemia. He attended the VHPA's first Reunion in Phoenix in 1984. He and Sandra attended many after that. John made CW5 and his last duty assignment was to command a small aviation detachment at Fort Knox. They loved living in Kentucky and stayed after he retired. Now John told his family that he didn't want a funeral or memorial service or even anything that "looked like" a funeral. Sandra says John was rather emphatic on this subject! As Sandra was putting together the arrangements to have John buried at new Veterans Cemetery near Ft. Knox on July 1st, she remembered the VHPA Reunion in Louisville would be just getting started on the 1st as well. If John were healthy, he certainly would have attended the Reunion. Then the idea came to her - why don't we take the money that we would have spent on a funeral (which John really didn't like at all) and give it to the VHPA Reunion (which John really did like very much)? So she calls The Galt House and the VHPA with the idea of giving the Galt House a nice amount of money plus a supply of little 'free drink on John Leonard' cards. When we did the math, we guesstimated that about 350 folks could have one drink from the O' Club bar sometime during the start of the Early Bird Gathering on the 1st. We sort of "ignored" the fact that the one drink could be a Coke or a beer or a mixed drink (each cost different amounts) by passing out about 320 Galt House drink tickets only valid at the O' Club bar.

According to Sandra, an impressive crowd attended the cemetery service including VHPA member Bob Payne as the lead speaker because there was no minister - by design. John wasn't anti-God - he was just anti-funeral!! After the service, most everyone headed back to The Galt House. With encouragement from the Reunion leadership, Bob took the mic at the start of the Gathering, held up a photo of Sandra and John for all to see, held up a bottle of beer, and in less than a minute basically said, "This one's from John!"

At previous Reunions people who wanted to buy their buddies a drink even when they themselves couldn't attend the Reunion would send the VHPA enough money for a keg of beer. John and Sandra Leonard certainly took the idea of "buying a buddy a drink" to a new and very well received level!

Speaking for the VHPA, "Thanks - We love you Man!"

"Putting on the Wayback Machine"

Chris Jensen, a motion picture photographer with the 221st Signal Company took these pictures of Fire Base Ripcord in July of 1971. If a lot of it appears abandoned, that's because a lot of it had been cleared of all but the perimeter guard as the "wind down was in full swing".

In Chris' words, "FSB Ripcord was under siege and although it was alive, it was not well."

Enjoy the photos,

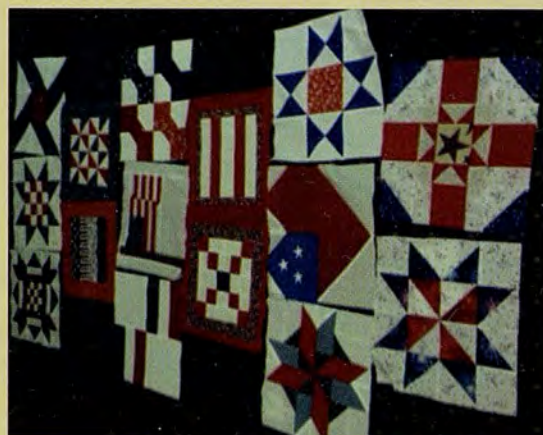
Chris Jensen, Bethlehem, New Hampshire

E-Mail: christopherjensennh@gmail.com



VHPA Quilter's report from 2014 Reunion

Around 50 quilters gathered at the 2014 VHPA Reunion in Louisville. First order of business was the presentation of a patriotic quilt made by Kathleen Sherfey to 94 year old Louisville WW2 vet, Mr. Richard Ratterman, shown in the photo to the right, receiving his quilt.



The quilt to the left, made by Roslyn Atwood, was to be presented to CW2 Richard McCaig Ret. who was unfortunately ill and unable to attend, however the quilt was accepted by his friend Russ Janus who will deliver it to him. On the left of the picture is Roslyn and on the right Kathleen Sherfey.

A tradition has now been established whereby quilts will be presented to military veterans each year at the VHPA Annual Reunion made from blocks constructed by VHPA Quilters.

The quilters in attendance also offered a "show and tell" of the blocks they are submitting for next year's presentation and to show current personal projects.

In the photo above are just a few of the more than 50 blocks so far collected from VHPA quilters.

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VHPA Satisfied Clients

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

- 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
- Bruce Brattain
- James Tinney
- Bill Medsker
- Pete Rzeminski
- James Oden
- William C. Brooks

COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION



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COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

So You Actually Considered a Career in the Helicopter Industry?

By Chuck Ramsdell

Most pilots who were trained in the military (at a cost of over a \$100,000) have considered making it a permanent career. Even if they have not considered it seriously, they have at least researched the possibility of a private sector aviation job. Considering the number of qualified candidates, relatively few have pursued it, and only a handful has succeeded. Not pursuing an aviation career has been influenced in part by low pay, and more significantly- far too many qualified pilots competing for the available jobs. One individual who has been successful in the private sector Aviation business is Jim Crawford. His story is worth telling.

With the help of The VHPA Aviator magazine, I was fortunate enough to spend a few days with Jim Crawford and his wife's son, Guy Armstrong. I wanted to learn how Jim made a place for himself in the helicopter industry. My trip started at 05:00 in St Helens, Oregon. I made it to Jim's house in Monroe, Oregon by 08:00. Jim, Guy and I hooked up a trailer and took off at 08:30.



I had not met Jim before, yet I was really looking forward to hearing his stories. After six hours, we stopped for fuel - I found out that when traveling with Jim you only stopped for fuel.

He does not stop for food or to go to the restroom. Thank goodness I had the boiled eggs my daughter had prepared for me. I pulled one out of the sack and looked at it; there were no initials on it. My wife always puts HB on eggs when they are hard-boiled. Not wanting to risk

cracking a raw egg in Jim's truck I decided to put the egg back in my pack. We drove for another six hours, had dinner, and went to bed.

In the morning we went to Jim's helicopter. Guy removed the protective covers and did a very thorough preflight inspection. He then loaded four boxes in the helicopter. One box contained survival gear; the other boxes contained tools and parts for emergency repairs.

Spare parts, he related, can be crucial to the success of an operation.

As an example he told of a particular case where a starter generator failure was corrected with minimal down time. Any lengthy delay could have been very costly to the client. This job involved transporting concrete. The premix concrete truck, after traveling over fifty miles with wet concrete, had to get the concrete out of the truck even if it meant disposing of it. If the helicopter could not be fixed the concrete workers on the ski slope could do nothing. Jim and Guy had the parts and tools and were able to replace the starter-generator in less than an hour and a half. If they had not been prepared for the failure it could have been a very expensive day.

After Guy's preflight, Jim performed a preflight as well. Jim called his personal



flight service, Adele, his wife. After a quick conversation we loaded into the helicopter and we were on our way back to Monroe. The weather was perfect. I hadn't been in a Huey since December 1969. It felt like slipping on an old glove.

Jim shared some of his flight experiences during the journey. After joining the Army and attending flight school, Jim graduated number two in his flight class, number 67-17. He was rewarded with Chinook helicopter training. Following his flight training he was assigned

to a unit in Vietnam.

While in Vietnam, Jim flew over 2,350 combat hours. During his twenty-eight month tour he never brought back a helicopter with serious damage. Upon completion of his military obligation, Jim chose to pursue a career flying in the private sector. He enrolled in Spartan School of Aviation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with the help of the GI Bill. He joined New York Airways in 1971. This was supposed to be a seasonal job. After about six months the job was terminated as expected.

Jim subsequently found employment with Columbia Helicopter. They were experimenting with Helicopter logging. He was a member of the only two teams in the world to do so. This marriage of a helicopter with logging requires a very efficient use of time and a technique to carry as many logs as possible while observing the limits of the aircraft. This method is only feasible when there is no other option and the timber is of a sufficiently high grade.

Sometimes when Jim got paid he felt he needed to race the other employees to see who could get to the bank first (there might not be enough cash to cover all of the checks). In the end, all of Jim's checks were honored. Columbia Helicopter merged with Erickson Air Crane which helped stabilize both companies. After ten years working with Columbia Helicopter Jim had developed a system that worked pretty well. But Jim wanted to run his own show.

In 1983 Jim leased a model number 214 Bell Helicopter, and started a business on his own. The 214 had a bad reputation, if it didn't kill you; it would drive you in to bankruptcy from expensive repairs. He hired employees and won customers. His business grew well. At one point, his combined logging and flying business had nearly twenty employees. Jim, however, was working harder and making less. Not only that, he wasn't doing what he liked to do - Fly!

Jim and a friend invented a hydraulically controlled log grapple system.



It is called a "Heli - Grapple system". Within a distance of one half of a mile, Jim can move a log every forty-five seconds to a landing site. It eliminates the need of a choker setter on the ground, and it enables the helicopter to carry up to four logs (or a 3,000 pound load). This was a marked improvement for production. The load can be as much as 300 feet below the helicopter.



On one occasion Jim used his Heli Grapple system to remove a pickup truck from a stream in the bottom of a canyon. That pickup had to weigh over 3,500 lbs.



Jim had learned early in his career that it was very difficult to control cost on helicopter operations. The trick was to do more work in the same amount of time. Jim's skill with customers and his flying ability was earning a loyal following of customers.

Logging with a helicopter is an acquired skill. The helicopter has a load capacity of about 3,000 pounds, depending on altitude. A full load of fuel weighs 1,610 pounds. Jim usually carried between 700 and 800 pounds. The grapple weighs about 450 pounds. To use the log grapple the pilot needs to hang out the window so he can see logs he is picking up. It is essential for the pilot to lift the smaller logs when the fuel tanks are full and the larger logs when some of the fuel has burned off. The logs cannot weigh more than the capacity of helicopter. A strategy must be employed that allows the helicopter to fly an efficient pattern in the movement of the logs. The terrain must also be considered. A skilled and experienced pilot with the correct equipment makes a huge difference.



Jim has a million stories. Of the many he shared, my favorite is about a helicopter getting tangled up with a train and a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspector. At that time Jim worked for Fairmont Helicopters and was flying to Bend, Oregon near Chemult, Oregon. He encountered bad weather and needed to land. An hour or so later another helicopter landed near Jim's helicopter. It was flown by a father and son who had just purchased it and were taking it home. There was a restaurant nearby and both pilots decided to wait out the storm. After a few hours the storm moved on, the father and son took off, followed by Jim. Shortly after takeoff, the engine in the father and son's helicopter started to run poorly due to ice buildup. The only place they could land was on the railroad right away close to the tracks. From his helicopter, Jim saw a train coming. Most people have heard one of the biggest lies, "I am from the government and here to help you." Well, on highway 97 an FAA inspector saw both helicopters go down. He rushed over and wrote a ticket for both pilots. The train missed the father and son's newly purchased helicopter by 18 inches. In Jim's words, "That was quite a day." Jim went to court and had his ticket dismissed.

About six months ago, Jim was helping to install some chair lift towers at Breckenridge, Colorado. There was so much demand for his services that he worked seven days a week for 120 days, only taking three Sundays off. He transported concrete and building materials for new construction, rebuilding and moving of the chairlift towers. There is one set of towers he has actually moved three times.

After finishing that job he flew from Salmon, Idaho to Arbuckle, California to help a longtime customer protect his almond crop from freezing. The customer would pay Jim to park his helicopter at Arbuckle, near Sacramento, for a month and a half. If the temperature dropped below freezing Jim would drive down, and fly low-level passes over three, 360-acre fields. He could make a pass every thirty minutes. Each pass would raise the field temperature by three to four degrees. It

was like frost insurance for the farmer's crop.

This year there was no frost but Jim was gladly paid for his services. Jim can remember one year that there were three dozen helicopters all trying to save the almond crop in one area. Luckily there were no midair collisions - what a mess!

Jim has flown a few medical evacuations with an average cost between \$5000 and \$10000. He has also flown in several fire suppression operations. When Jim works with a customer to do a job he comes to a verbal agreement and shakes hands and does the work. He hardly ever enters into a written agreement. This has worked well over the years with one exception.

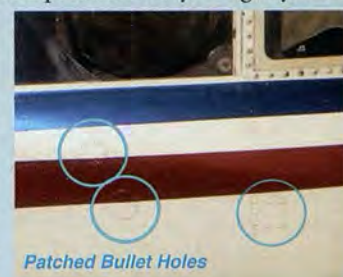
The city of Tahoe got a grant from the Forest Service to log an area with no access. An independent contractor accepted a bid from a helicopter operator. The operator didn't have the equipment or the experience to do the job. Jim was called in to clean up the mess. His bid was higher than the guy who didn't have the experience or the equipment to do the job. Jim had not worked for these people before and they ended up going bankrupt and still owed Jim over \$2,000. The fire chief who was in charge of the job and their Comptroller are no longer employed by the City of Tahoe. This type of problem is common for small businesses. Jim has mostly avoided these situations, due to his strong and loyal customer base.

Jim's current helicopter is a UH-1L model gun ship built in 1967. It served in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. He purchased it in 1986. It still has the original ash trays for cigarette butts. While in Vietnam, it was hit by enemy fire on eight separate occasions, resulting in injuries to four soldiers in all. If there is such a thing as a lucky helicopter this would be it. Jim has updated the running gear of the helicopter so it flies better and has more lifting capability than when it was brand new. While flying on site, Jim removes the cowling from the engine. He discovered that this reduces the engine and transmission temperatures by 15 degrees. There are not very many Huey's that are still flying. Of the 12,000 originally built by Bell, less than 200 are still being used today. The original cost of the aircraft was \$220,000. If it needed a new engine today it would cost \$1.7 million plus installation cost. It burns 100 gallons of fuel an hour (70 gallons at altitude). Its current value is estimated to be between \$750,000 and a \$1,000,000. The Black Hawk that was destroyed on Mount Hood a few years ago, while trying to rescue an injured climber, would cost \$17,000,000 if purchased today. To give you an idea of the cost of combat aviation a helmet for a new F35 fighter plane cost \$500,000.

Jim's safety record is excellent. He has flown 23,000 hours without any aircraft damage. Because of this record, his annual insurance cost of \$65,000 was recently lowered. The rate per hundred for physical damage was reduced from 6.1 % to 4.2%. To rent a helicopter like Jim's could easily cost \$2500 an hour.

Over the last fifty years, Jim has earned the trust of his clients. Most of them are still with him. In fact, he is the only operator that many of them will use. Jim is seventy years old. His daughter Julie holds a commercial license for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft. She loves to fly but has two boys that keep her busy. I was left with the feeling that Jim was hopeful that she would do more flying. Jim says he has the helicopters and spare parts to last for the next twenty years. But that is not for him: he wants to retire next year at age seventy-one. He deserves it!

As we approached Jim's home in Monroe I realized that this day was over. An eleven hour road trip was three hours and fifteen minutes by helicopter. Jim set the bird down within six feet of one of his out buildings. He let the engine cool down and, cut off the fuel and applied the rotor brake. When the machine was completely silent, a tear ran down my cheek. This flight recalled many of my memories from days past. What a great day! Did it have to end? This bird was made to fly. It was at its best while flying. I got in my car, cracked a boiled egg (they were hard-boiled after all - just not labeled), and drove back home. Thanks to Jim, Guy, and the VHPA for making this trip possible.



Patched Bullet Holes

Susan J flies with the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation



This past Saturday, a lady with a long association with the Vietnam War, and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, came to the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF) Sky Soldiers' hangar in Hampton, GA to attend our quarterly meeting.

Susan Susie Clotfelter Jimison, and her Husband Mike, were there as guests of the Heritage Foundation and she was given a ride in our Cobra 998. The day started out with very less than desirable weather, and in fact while Susie was being set up with the seat belts and given instruction in the front seat, there were still drops of rain on the canopy. However, before the flight commenced, the adverse weather rapidly cleared out, and the Foundation had the ceiling and visibility that was required to give her and others rides in the Cobra and one of our restored Hueys. Bruce Whitley was her pilot for the ride. Susie enjoyed the ride very much and some of her comments I've heard were "Better than I ever imagined"; "So very cool" and "It was exciting!"

Now this is no different than the dozens who ride with the Sky Soldiers in the front seat of our Cobras, but this particular ride was special for Susie.

Susie lost her only Brother, Mark Clotfelter, on June 16, 1969 flying gunship cover with the 361st Aviation Company, Escort (known as the Pink Panthers) for a South Vietnamese convoy that was attempting to get critical supplies to a base camp. On this particular mission Mark and his fellow crewman were shot down and both Mark and his fellow crewman lost their lives. Susie was just entering high school at the time of Mark's death. She has recently published a book that is entitled "Dear Mark". The cover is a picture of the Viet Nam Memorial Wall depicting his entry on it with the word Dear and Mark's first name highlighted. It is really an awesome cover. I would highly recommend buying her book. It is available on Amazon and is published by Deeds Publishing of Atlanta, GA. The ISBN number is 978-1-941165-09-6.

I first met Susie electronically several months ago when I corresponded with her about how to get a picture of a Cobra at our hangar. I got to actually meet her and her husband Mike at the recently completed Vietnam Helicopter Pilots' reunion in Louisville, KY. At that time, and later, I suggested that she should come down to the hangar and get a ride in a Cobra similar to one her Brother flew (she had taken a ride in one of our Hueys at a Dust Off event up at Dobbins a couple of years ago). Another of our Viet Nam buddies by the name of Bob Chipley (Dolphin 21) also had the opportunity to meet Susie and Mike in Louisville, and after reading Dear Mark, he took my suggestion to the next level.

Mr. Chipley contacted the AAHF's Cliff Stern who had been his platoon leader in Viet Nam. They had made the connection with each other at a prior reunion and corresponded regularly. Bob and Cliff communicated to see how they could get Susie a ride in one of our Cobras and the next thing you know, the deal was completed. Cliff got with our President Ed Clark, and emailed Susie and invited her to come to our meeting. The rest is history.

Jerry Mellick

Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF)

E-mail: [REDACTED]

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www.vhpamuseum.org

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 Unit(s) served with, if that info is available

We welcome these 27 new Members to the VHPA!
All have joined our Association during the period from 2 June through 31 July 2014

Borden, Steven F. 'Steve'
Scottsville, Kentucky, US Army
Flight Class(s): 70-43 70-45
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
F/4 CAV in 71; 334 ATK in 71-72

Burley, Earl B **
Lutz, Florida, US Army
Flight Class(s): 60-6
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
HHC 1 AVN BDE in 70-71

Cooke, Philip T.
Flint, Michigan, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-7
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): 174 AHC
in 67-68; 14 CAB in 68; 176 AHC in 68

Curtis, Robert F. **
Exeter, New Hampshire, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-25
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
C/159 ASHB 101 ABN in 71-71

Davids, John H.
Fallston, Maryland, US Air Force
Flight Class(s): 67-B
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
20 SOS 14 ACW in 68-69

Dille, George E. **
Elizabethtown, Kentucky, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-16 68-26
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): 192 AHC in
68-69; 183 AVN in 71; 174 AHC in 71

Earp, William H. 'Bill'
Louisville, Kentucky,
US Marine Corps
Flight Class info not provided
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
HMH 463 in 68-69

Folstadt, Robert H.
Garland, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 70-35
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
A/377 ARTY 101 ABN in 71

Gozia, Leonard M.
Crestwood, Kentucky, US Army
Flight Class(s): 70-16
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
B/123 AVN 23 INF in 71; 57 AHC in 72

Harrison, Samuel L.
Ozark, Alabama, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-9
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
117 AHC in 69-70

Likens, Paul G.
Ukiah, California, US Army
Flight Class(s): 70-37
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
FROKA DET in 70-71

Logan, James K. **
Geneva, Illinois, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-503 68-1
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
E/82 ARTY 1 CAV in 68-69

McGlamery, Stanley A. 'Stan' **
Tampa, Florida, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-25 69-19
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
271 ASHC in 70-71

Meehan, John A 'Al'
Winter Haven, Florida, US Army
Flight Class info not provided
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
C/227 AHB 1 CAV in 65

Miller, Dennis W.
Pointblank, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-524 68-44
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
HHC 2 BDE 101 ABN in 69-70

Rohrer, Franklin J. 'Frank'
Louisville, Kentucky, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-3
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
135 AHC in 67-68

Rose, Charles L.
North Vernon, Indiana, US Army
Flight Class(s): 71-21 71-27
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
187 AHC in 71-72; F/4 CAV in 72

Seiber, Elvert H. 'Hugh' **
Donie, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 61-11
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
B/228 ASHB 1 CAV in 66-67

Shoaff, John W. 'Doc' **
Charleston, South Carolina,
US Marine Corps
Flight Class info not provided
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
VMO-2 in 67-68

Smith, Ray F. 'Ray' **
Greenville, South Carolina,
US Marine Corps
Flight Class(s): 52-A
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
HMM-265 in 66-67; HMM-165 in 70-71

Stewart, Dale W.
Elizabethtown, Kentucky, US Army
Flight Class(s): 66-10
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): A/229 AHB
1 CAV in 66-67

Trowbridge, Cornelius Miller **
Hyannis, Massachusetts, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-524 68-40
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
121 AHC in 69; 135 AHC in 69; HHC
164 CAG in 69; HHC 214 CAB in 69

Turgiss, Robert R. 'Bob'
Scituate, Massachusetts, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-15 67-13
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
D/1/4 CAV 1 INF in 67-68

Welsh, Patrick J.
Louisville, Kentucky, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-1 68-43
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
196 ASHC in 69-70

Wheeler, Paul W.
Bangor, Maine, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-1
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): 188 AHC
in 68; 17 AHC in 67; 71 AHC in 71

Whittenton, Charles M.
Scottsdale, Arizona, US Army
Flight Class(s): 70-37 70-39
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
C/158 AVN 101 ABN in 71

Yanda, Melvin L. **
Enterprise, Alabama, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-15
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
190 AHC in 67-68; 25 CAC in 71-72;
120 AHC in 71-72

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Chip Brown, President

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(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter

Larry Russell, President

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Sven Akesson, President

VHPA OF FLORIDA

Tom Rountree, President

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

J.C. Combs, President

Hawaii Chapter – Provisional

Ken DeHoff - POC

Notice to all Members of the VHPA

For a limited time, liaison between the National HQ of the VHPA and the Independent Chapters has reverted to John Sorensen of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. John can be reached at 417-759-7487 or via E-Mail at: jsorensen7106@gmail.com. Feel free to contact John concerning any details on opening your own local Chapter of the VHPA and/or for seeing what assistance is available from HQ to support your efforts.

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER

Several members attended the VHPA Reunion in Louisville. We especially enjoyed the band at the banquet, which appeared to be from our generation and played all the right songs. The hotel staff and the people of Louisville were especially nice, also.

We had hoped to meet on a cruise ship in the Caribbean this fall, but we could not find enough interested members. We might float this idea again in the future. We plan to meet for an election of 2015 officers in September or October - date to be determined. Our Christmas party definitely is scheduled for 12 December, and Alamo Chapter members should watch their e-mails or consult the Chapter website www.vhpa-alamo.org for details of these two meetings

Chip Brown President

GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter continues to hold a Saturday morning breakfast meeting every other month. We furnish speakers to: high schools, colleges, Boy Scout Troops, other youth organizations, and civic groups who want to learn more about the Vietnam War, from those who participated in it. Newnan High School teaches a course on the Vietnam War, and the Georgia Chapter provides our assistance to them whenever possible, i.e. their Student-Vet Connect activities each semester.

Our own Dick Butler was our July Guest Speaker. Dick recently returned from a visit to Vietnam. He took his son on the trip and really enjoyed the experience. He said the facilities were great, the food was really good, and best of all - the trip was really cheap! This time we had a working projector, so we were able view all of his pictures, as Dick described the scenes. Somebody noticed that most of the pictures seemed to be eating opportunities.

I attended the VHPA Reunion in Louisville and reported to the group on the activities there and the results of the Business Session. The GA Chapter had three members involved in the elections this year. Clyde Romero was elected to Vice President. Rick Lester and Dave Sherrard both ran for the Junior Member at Large position. Rick made it to the second round of voting, losing the close election by just four votes, we were told. I thought a re-count was in order, but that never happened.

Our breakfast meetings every other month continue to be our principal activity. The members who participate really enjoy the opportunity to get together with other combat helicopter pilots. We swap war stories, discuss VA-related information, and maintain those bonds that were forged so long ago.

Nominations for GA Chapter Officers will be taken at the next meeting in September for the Chapter elections to be held in November. Please contact me if you would like to volunteer for any of the Chapter positions.

To those former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots in the Atlanta area, who would like to check us out and/or join our group, please see our web site at www.ga-vhpa.org for the next meeting date or contact me at [REDACTED] or via telephone at [REDACTED]

Bill McRae

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

The Oklahoma Chapter of the VHPA met in Oklahoma City on June 21 and enjoyed a leisurely breakfast at Mimi's Café before conducting a short business meeting before departing. It was great to meet other aviators and talk about common experiences during our time in Vietnam. We welcomed 12 new members at our meeting. We are currently at 47 members and growing daily.

We discussed becoming involved with the Oklahoma Honor Flight program, assisting WW11 vets to fly to Washington DC to see their own and other memorials.

We also discussed the opportunity to apply to the VHPA to have the 2017 Reunion in Oklahoma City. A committee was designated to work with the Oklahoma City Convention and Tourism Bureau to develop a presentation to present to the VHPA's Reunion Committee for their consideration.

A website is being developed, to facilitate communication with members. In the meantime, we are utilizing a Facebook group page. It can be accessed by typing in OKVHPA. In addition, we are sending out meeting notices and other communication by e-mail.

The Oklahoma Chapter is motivated and looking forward to an exciting year and future.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Many of our SoCal Chapter members attended the Vietnam Veterans Celebration of Fortitude at Camp Pendleton on July 25th. There were many inspirational speakers from all branches of service as well as free chow. Vietnam veterans were joined by other vets and a platoon of active duty Marines. After the event several of us met at the 5th Marine Memorial Park Garden and toasted our Fallen Brothers.

Our SoCal Chapter is signed up for a Chili Cook-Off at Lake Arrowhead Village on August 16th. We will be using Carl Cortez's famous chili recipe that almost won at several past cook-offs. Many of our members will assist with the cooking.

On Sunday October 26 our SoCal Chapter will have an info booth at the 13th Annual Wings Wheels and Rotors and Expo at the Los Alamitos Army Airfield. Last year we had a CH-21 accompany us. This year we'll have the fully restored and flyable UH-1B Gunship (from Wings and Rotors Museum) next to our booth. Last year there were approximately 30,000 attendees. The event generated \$20,000 in donations to the Los Alamitos MWR (Morale Welfare and Recreation). Military aircraft, helicopters, and warbirds as well as public safety, first responders and military equipment will be displayed. A car show and flyovers are also planned. The Expo and parking are free. Wwrexpo.net. Let me know if you'd like to help with booth duties or just come by and say Hi.

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Upper Midwest Chapter held their normal luncheon meeting on 23 July at the Historic Fort Snelling Officers Club. We had fourteen in attendance: President Bert Leach, Jim Bankston, Russ Jowers, Dick Anderson, Jim Crigler, George Stenejem, Bill Altenhofen (New Associate), JD Hilton (New Member), Dale Dobesh, Dean Lind, Mike Rynerson, Bob Spencer, Bruce Holmberg and Jim Ehmer. The President reviewed our last meeting which was conducted at Mai Village with spouses and significant others and stated his desire to hold another accompanied dinner in November. Jim Crigler and Dale Dobesh spoke about their experiences at the National VHPA Reunion on 4 July in Louisville, KY. They had a wonderful time, especially the Gold Star Breakfast (which is coordinated by our Associate Member, Julie Kink). The President requested our members to attend next year's reunion, in Washington, DC as a group. Several stated they would be interested in attending. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 24th at the Fort Snelling Officers Club at 11:30. Anyone qualified is invited to join our Upper Midwest Chapter and attend our meetings. We encourage our current members to bring someone with them who may be interested in joining the Chapter.

Bert Leach, President - Submitted by: Russ Jowers, Secretary

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

Members gathered on June 14th in the Airlift Northwest hangar at Olympia Regional Airport to conduct our quarterly business meeting and enjoy the Olympic Flight Museum's annual air show

A special guest, Bill Papa of Vulcan Productions, Seattle, explained his efforts to coordinate an oral history project for the Flying Heritage Collection in Everett, WA. He was arranging interviews of helicopter veterans which might accompany displays of a Bell UH-1 Huey and AH-1 Cobra the collection he is planning to acquire. The Flying Heritage Collection, founded by Paul Allen, presently includes twenty-four aircraft and half a dozen military vehicles. All the aircraft are regularly flown except one so rare it never will be - the world's only flyable Focke-Wulf FW-190D-13.

Chapter members also heard a progress report on repair and repainting of a static display Huey which would replace the one that has accompanied chapter members marching in Auburn's annual Veterans Day Parade. This "new" Huey will be an improvement over the weather-beaten previous model, as it will include a static-display rotor system and authentic markings for the 114th Assault Helicopter Co. in

Vietnam. Both Hueys are owned by the Olympic Flight Museum and are lent to the chapter for the parade.

Chapter members raised \$1,000 for paint and materials; labor was donated by Northwest Helicopters, and chapter members who devoted Wednesday nights to the restoration.

The Chapter's next meeting will be Sept. 13 at the Timber Creek Grill Buffet in Spokane, WA. We hope all our "Eastsiders" find time to attend.

J.C. Combs, president - Submitted by Bill Lyons

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The last few months have been even busier than usual for the North Alabama chapter.

In April we exhibited Buc-3, our restored UH-1M at the Scottsboro Collins Elementary School. The students were allowed to climb into the Huey, pretend to fly her and, along the way, learned about the Vietnam conflict in a way that they otherwise could not have. Both the students and the NAVHPA members who acted as docents had a great time.

Our May activity was a Flint River Canoe trip and dinner set up by our president, Les Haas. This turned out to be a blast. We launched with six dry canoes and crew. Four took involuntary baths in the river. So Gene and Sandy Peay, Marshall and Sharron Eubanks got away without drowning. The guy told us that an average of 20 percent flip over. We are proud that we beat that average. We all got back safe and sound and met the rest of our gang at El Olmeca and had some mighty fine margaritas and plenty of food. To say the least the 12 of us had one hell on an adventure. Next the Amazon!! Thank you Les Haas for our great 2nd quarter of fun.

July was, of course, the National Reunion in Louisville. The NAVHPA had more than 22 members in addition to spouses and significant others in attendance. The highlights were the chapter hospitality suite, the closing banquet and the combat assault reenactment.

This was the first year that the NAVHPA had its own gathering place. It was very well received. Our members were able to connect and reconnect with both chapter members and other friends we had not met before. We



even recruited a couple of new members while there.

The combat assault reenactment brought tears to more than a few eyes to experience again the sights sounds and smells of our tours in SE Asia. Many thanks to the American Huey 369 crew for making it possible and to the Ohio River Valley Chapter for organizing the event. This may be the last time that some of us will have to get first-hand memories of combat. It certainly was the first time that many spouses, children and grandchildren could experience this.

The closing banquet, at which the NAVHPA had three tables, was an intimate dinner with 1100 of our closest friends. Good times were had by all. The remainder of the summer brings more opportunities to educate the public about the Vietnam War. On August 9th we will take Buc-3 to Ardmore, AL to exhibit her at the annual Ardmore Vintage Car Show. After all, Buc 3 is a vintage aircraft! We will also assist our partner, The Schnitzel Ranch, in preparing and serving such German fare as brats, schnitzel sandwiches and funnel cakes as a fund raiser for the chapter.



MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The VHPA Reunion in Louisville was attended by at least seven Michigan Chapter members plus five spouses. In addition, three Michigan VHPA members were contacted for recruitment into our Chapter. Glen Veno attended with the American Huey 369 exhibit and was visited by several chapter members.

The Michigan Chapter participated in the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall at Hamburg, MI. Chapter members, as well as other veteran's groups greeted the public. The public was educated regarding our experiences during the Vietnam War. We reached out to gather new members for our chapter as well as the VHPA. In addition to the Wall and our exhibit, visitors had the chance to visit the American Huey 369 and attend a reenactment of the Bob Hope USO show.

Rich Deer,
President



Jim & Suzie Hunt, Gary Brydges, Sheila & Randy Maltby at the VHPA Reunion in Louisville.



VHPA Michigan Chapter members Jim Hunt, Glen Veno, Gary Brydges and Randy Maltby met at the American Huey 369 exhibit during the VHPA Reunion in Louisville

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER AND THE HELICOPTER WAR MUSEUM (HWM): Having reached the funding goal to refurbish

the Museum, we began late last year with a vote to have the Museum (trailer) painted and to apply large helicopter photo graphics. (See related article in this issue.) We just got the trailer out of the paint shop in time to attend our first event of the year, "Rollin with the Troops" at the Lakewood Heritage Center, in Lakewood, Colorado. This was a one day event to promote awareness and raise funds for a number of different Veterans organizations to include the "Healing Warriors Program". The Museum was visited by the WWII Pinup Girls. Then within a week we teamed up with the Wings Over the Rockies Museum of Colorado. This four day event featured the B-17, "Aluminum Overcast", and other vintage military aircraft and vehicles as well as Historic Vietnam Helicopter Inc.'s "Mike" Model Huey restored by Col Bill McPherson and his team. At that event, one of our visitors, Specialist 4 Jerry Cleveland, discovered in our artifacts collection an article that he had contributed to over 40 years ago for the 1st Aviation Brigade magazine, while he was stationed with the 53rd Signal BN, in Vietnam. On the Fourth of July, with photo panels completed, we joined Golden Colorado's celebration sponsored by the Lions Club. The Museum was visited by over 1000 people. Among them was, Alex Swanson, the great nephew of CPT Jon E. Swanson, a Denver native Medal of Honor recipient, whom we have honored in the Museum with a display of his heroism. Alex, who is an Air Force mechanic working on F-16's at Buckley AFB, Colorado, that his great uncle had flown in the Vietnam War; but had no idea that this Memorial to his Uncle existed. This was a personal and emotional discovery for Alex as well as emotional one for the docents. Attending docents for the above activities were: Rick Beaver, Carl Cavaluzzi, John Grauff, John Hargleroad, Robert (Bob) Hartley, Dale House, Jim McNamee, Doug Neil, Terry Olson, Bill Robie, Mike Silva, Robert (Bob) Simms, Steve Swaim, and Walt Wise.

Other Chapter activities

We had our annual elections at the June

meeting. The incumbents: John Hagleroad, President, Dale E House, Vice President, Jim McNamee, Treasurer, and Greg Mann Secretary were all reelected. Terry Olson has volunteered to assist with Museum operations



Alex Swanson visits the Rocky Mountain Chapter Museum at the 4th of July Celebration in Golden, CO. Alex is the Great Nephew of Medal of Honor recipient, Cpt Jon E. Swanson. The Chapter has a memorial in Honor of Cpt Swanson, a native of Denver Colorado, inside the Museum.



Specialist 4 Jerry Cleveland discovers an article that he contributed to 40 years ago among the Museums artifacts



Rollin with the Troops "Pinup Girls" paid a visit to the Rocky Mountain Chapter Vietnam Helicopter War Museum in Lakewood, CO. They were there to promote the Healing Warriors Program.

planning. Several of our members expected to participate in a hike to the summit of 14,065 foot Mt. Bierstadt. We held our August meeting on August 16, at the American Legion Post #1. We discussed the upcoming BBQ event in September. Several members of the Rocky Mountain chapter attended a Baseball game between the Colorado Rockies and the Kansas City Royals. This event was in conjunction with the Military Order of the Purple Heart National Convention and to honor Purple Heart recipients.

Upcoming chapter Activities

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third Saturday of the month, at 10:00 hours at the American Legion Post #1, I-25 and Yale Avenue. We occasionally change venues, so contact us at the address below to verify dates, times and location. We do not meet in December or July, but normally have holiday get together in December. We are planning a Membership Open House and BBQ on September 20th, 2014. The highlight of this meeting will be to present our newly refurbished Museum to the membership, and to promote participation by the membership to be docents at future events. Don and Donna Rice are providing a BBQ for the membership.

The Museum committee will meet periodically to continue categorizing inventory and developing additional displays.

We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum; among these items is a chicken plate with the cloth holder that our visitors can put on and see what it was like to where a chicken plate. Please contact our Chapter President John Hargleroad or Dale House, Museum Curator, with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com

ALASKA CHAPTER



Alaska Chapter members at The Louisville Ky. Reunion ~ L to R: Frank Heffernan, Lynn Kile, and David Buirge

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

These are very exciting times for the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA. We begin our sixth year with membership exceeding one hundred! Our chapter welcomes Ken Sherfey, from Shawnee, Kansas, joining "out of state" members from Illinois, Indiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. If you know potential members in surrounding states, you should know they are certainly welcome to join our ranks and, as a chapter member, your membership will be extended one year for each new member you bring in.

The chapter would like to congratulate a couple of its members. Chapter Vice President, Dick Elgin, served as the "Voice of the Banquet" at the

closing banquet of the recent VHPA Annual Reunion in Louisville, and made us all proud! Also, Chapter Past President John Sorensen was elected to the VHPA Executive Council as Junior Member-at-Large, and we appreciate his service at the national level.

We continue to encourage chapter members to visit our website, vhpasmo.org, and submit your photographs from Vietnam so they might be scanned and added to those submitted by others. This along with your biography, insures your story, as told "in your own words", will be there for future generations to read, share, and enjoy.

Recently, several chapter members joined Vietnam veterans from the 5th Battalion 7th Cavalry during their reunion in Springfield. Special thanks are extended to Mike Sprayberry for his gracious invitation to "have a cup of coffee with some ground pounders". As pilots, we know we flew "above the best" and these 5/7 veterans certainly belong in that class! We extend a big "Welcome Home" to all these veterans and offer thanks again, Mike, for your service, your continued service to fellow veterans, for everything.

Our fourth quarter meeting will, once again, be held at The Keeter Center, on the beautiful campus of the College of the Ozarks. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 11:00am on Saturday, November 8th. John Sorensen will be on hand to discuss his return trip to Vietnam, as part of the College of the Ozarks' Veterans Travel Program. This is always one of our best attended meetings because the students and staff of the college make us feel so welcomed and appreciated. Please make your plans to be there, join us for fun, fellowship, and camaraderie. You will be glad you did!

Bill Thompson,
President



From Left: Maury Edmonds, 5/7 Association President and former Battalion Commander; John Sorensen, VHPA Junior Member-at-Large; Mike Sprayberry, Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient; Bill Thompson, Chapter President; Don Phares, Platoon Leader C Co 5/7 Cav; Russ Emory, Chapter Past President; and Wayne Twichaus, Chapter Member.

OLD DOMINION (VIRGINIA) CHAPTER



Old Dominion (Virginia) Chapter Social Event at The Flying Circus in Bealeton, VA



VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The summer months are normally very slow for us in Florida. The "Snow Bird's" have flown north and we enter our hurricane season. Add to that: ninety degree heat and fifty percent chance of Thunderstorms daily and it becomes a good time for future event planning.

The VHPA's 31st Annual Reunion, in Louisville Ky., was well attended by many of our members from July 1st to the 5th. Those of us that were unable to attend the reunion participated in Florida's largest 4th of July parade in Brandon, FL. This



Brandon HS Students carrying banner

was a great parade featuring thousands of people lining the streets and yelling "Welcome Home". We had both our OH-6 and "Little LOACH" all decorated in Red, White, & Blue. We were led by four Brandon high school students carrying our VHPAF banner.

On July 17th we held our Board of Directors meeting starting at 1300 hours at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park in Tampa, FL. We voted on Veterans Week activities and our upcoming reunion.

This year the VHPAF's 23rd Annual Reunion will take place at the Plantation on Crystal River, Crystal River, FL during the dates September 18th to the 21st. I am very happy to announce that our guest speaker this year will be not only my flight school classmate, but also my stick buddy for our first 50 hours to include our first solo flights. That is - my friend and the Army's first astronaut, BG

Robert "Bob" Stewart USA, Ret. Bob will speak to us on his NASA experiences to include being the first astronaut to make an "untethered" spacewalk. Bob was also the chief test pilot at Edwards AFB for the Army's AH-64, Apache, program.



"Little Loach"

November will be another event packed month as our "Snow Bird's" start to return in flocks. During the school days between, November 5th & 14th, those of us that live in the Citrus County area will participate in the "Veterans in the Classroom". There, we share our firsthand military experiences and travels while serving in uniform around the world in both peace and war.

On November 9th we will have the OH-6 in St. Petersburg, FL for the 12th Annual Vintage Motor Classic in South Straub Park (hosted by the St. Petersburg Yacht Club).

Then on November 11th we will participate in the annual Veterans Day Parade in Inverness, FL with our OH-6 and "Little LOACH" decorated for the event.

December 4th - 8th will find us in Arcadia, FL for the DeSoto County Veterans Appreciation Days. There we will have the OH-6, items for sale, and "Little LOACH" for the kids to ride.

As always we welcome all VHPA members to attend all of our events. Please visit our webpage at www.vhpaf.org where our calendar lists all of our events, or give me a call for more specific information.

Tom Rountree, President

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Membership application/change of address

☐ New application

☐ Address change

☐ Directory correction

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*age 59 and below (\$450), 60-64 (\$350), 65-69 (\$250), 70-74 (\$150), 75-79 (\$100) 80 and above (\$75)

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Information about each Vietnam unit:

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

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

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

*NOTE: Lifetime Membership and/or Subscriber Dues are based on the applicants' age - please provide your date of birth.

** NOTE: Membership Directories are not available to only Aviator subscribers.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

Gathering of the Combat Helicopter Pilot Association (CHPA)

September 7 - 10; Riverside, CA; Mission Inn and Spa

Contact HQ@chpa-us.org; 800-832-5144.

Details available at www.chpa-us.org.

C Company, 227th Avn Battalion, 1st Cav Div (Ghost Riders)

September 17-21, Lombard Illinois

POC is Charlie Phipps - Ghost Rider 6 in 1969

615-904-6080 or Email: cphipp82p@yahoo.com

50th Anniversary Reunion of the Outlaws,
Mavericks, Bushwackers and Roadrunners

Vinh Long, Vietnam 1964-1972

(the62d - A502d - 175th Assault Helicopter Companies)

September 18-22, Washington, D.C.

Contact: Tom Anderson (Teander@cox.net)

Info: VinhLongOutlaws.com (Click: Reunions)

Gathering of the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) Society

September 21-25th, 2014

Sheraton Sand Key Resort, Clearwater Beach/St. Petersburg, Florida

POC: The Reunion Brat at 360-663-2521

or: TheReunionBrat@hotmail.com

More information available at: www.DFCSOCIETY.ORG

Reunion of the 132nd "Hercules" and the 178th "Boxcars"

September 24-28, the Battlefield Holiday Inn in Manassas, VA

POC is Bill McRae, Herc 18 (70-71),

E-Mail wmcrae@mindspring.com, phone 770.843.3973

www.132ASHC.org

Flying Circus Aviation Units - Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade - 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)

September 26-28 - St. Charles, Missouri

Details available at: www.flying-circus.org,

then go to the page labeled: 'Next Reunion'

POC for the Reunion is Tom Kuypers, phone (636) 947-1617

or E-mail: tokpachyderm@aol.com

USAF Air Rescue Association Reunion

October 26-30, Charleston, SC

POC: Al Gaily, Phone 208-382-6395 E-Mail: cagailey@yahoo.com

Full details at: <http://airrescueassn.org>

There's also a Pre-Reunion Cruise, Oct 21-26, POC is

Mary Severns, 1-843-363-0600/3669 or arareunion@gmail.com

The 162nd AHC Biannual Reunion for Fall 2014

November 7-9, Cocoa Beach, Florida

POC: Don Welch, dwelch27@verizon.net or 727-667-0644

Members of helicopter flight school class 66-12 (green hats),
December 1965 through August 1966.

Hugh Smith and I are planning a class reunion in **San Antonio** for
the last half of 2014. Please contact me (Al Flory) at:

aflory54@satx.rr.com or by phone at 210-599-9673

if you are interested in joining us.

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

NEW FILM HONORS AMERICA'S 83,281 MISSING IN ACTION WHO ARE STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR SINCE WORLD WAR II



A new film, now in production, will share the stories of America's 83,281 still missing POW/MIAs; the stories of their family members still awaiting word after decades of not knowing if their loved ones are dead or alive; and the stories of those, whose job it is to locate, identify, return, and bury - with full military honors - those still missing.

The film is entitled "A Solemn Promise, America's Missing in Action" which refers to the promise given to each combatant before they enter into combat... "We will leave no one behind"... but as you can see that was not true for over 83,000 that are still out there somewhere in or near a former battlefield.

This film is being produced by Storyteller Original Films owned by former helicopter pilot, Richard Jellerson, who flew two tours in Vietnam and on his second tour was General Creighton Abrams personal pilot. Richard, who previously written and produced a very popular History Channel special entitled "The Personal Experience - Helicopter Warfare in Vietnam", has placed a 10 minute Trailer of the film "A Solemn Promise" on his website at storytellerfilms.tv

Richard and his film crew traveled to Arlington National Cemetery to film the military funeral of Army Private First Class (PFC) James R. Holmes, who served in Korea with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. PFC Holmes was taken Prisoner of War on December 1, 1950, died while in captivity and his remains were accounted for on January 14, 2014. He was returned home after 64 years and was buried with Full Military Honors in Arlington National Cemetery on May 29, 2014.

While he was there, Richard interviewed Holmes' family members, Korean War survivors, various Veterans organizations and associations, members of Department of Defense POW/MIA Accountability Team made up of the DOD POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) and the DOD Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC); he also filmed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Recently, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel has ordered a revamping of the POW/MIA accountability process which is made up of those who work around the world to help locate, identify and return America's still missing warriors from wars all the way back to World War II.

This new film will chronicle stories just like Army PFC Holmes to tell what lengths America will go to locate, identify, return and honorably bury our fallen warriors, no matter how long they have been missing. Because this is a veteran's non-profit production, it is being made on a "shoestring" through the generous donations of those who feel this is a noble endeavor and want to see stories like PFC Holmes' told for all the world to learn about. Richard's company, Story Teller Films is seeking support for the completion of "A Solemn Promise, America's Missing in Action" in the memory of those still unaccounted for. Or, perhaps, the best scenario would be for a Corporation to sponsor this film in partnership with Richard and Story Teller Original Films and become a part of those who are dedicated to telling the story about American that are still missing after decades of fighting for our country.

Richard is also looking for other stories of those still missing and families awaiting word about their loved ones to add to the film. *His contact information is below:*

Contact: Richard Jellerson

Storyteller Original Films

Phone: (626) 355-0260

Email: richard@storytellerfilms.tv

Website:

(Contains a 10 minute Trailer of the film): storytellerfilms.tv

DON'T FORGET!

The deadline for this year's

CHRISTMAS IN VIETNAM ISSUE
IS: **SEPT 25TH, 2014**

&

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IS ALL THIS JUST A COINCIDENCE . . . OR WHAT???

Is All This Just A Coincidence . . . Or What???

Prior to the VHPA-GA Chapter meeting back in March, Glenn Carr was standing at the back of his truck, when Bill Stanley walked up and said "I see you also have a Distinguished Flying Cross tag and your number looks close to mine." Checking his own tag, Bill finds that his tag number was only two digits higher than Genn's; Carr's number was 105 and Stanley's was 107. About

that time, Bob Lanzotti walked up and asked, "What are you guys BS . . . 'ing about?" When told about the tag numbers and their close proximity, Bob said, "I have a DFC tag too . . . let me check my number." Sure enough, Bob's tag number was 109! Amazed at the fact that these plates were issued in three different counties and in three different months, someone remarked that the number sequence was more than just amazing. It bordered on psychic or paranormal! It just happens to be the same order in which they sit next to each other, at both the GA Chapter breakfast and at the Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association monthly luncheon. Bill is always in



the middle. Now what are the odds of all that happening? Some other wise guy cracked, "It's also appropriate that

those three guys are identified by ODD Numbers." Glenn Carr, Bill Stanley, and Bob Lanzotti are all also life members of the VHPA, and they each served two tours in Vietnam.

It's a good thing they took the picture of their tags

after the meeting. Within an hour after the photo was taken, Glenn was an innocent third party victim in a road rage incident that forced him off the interstate highway into a guard rail support, and then he was broadsided and flipped upside down. His beloved truck was destroyed. Glenn was beat up and cut in a few places, but somehow he survived the accident with no major injuries. Glenn mourned the loss of his "old friend", but he retrieved his DFC tag, to go on his new ride.

By: Glenn Carr & Bill McRae

SO FEW VETS...

By CPT Danny Fisher (Blue Ghost 27)

A few years ago, during a physical exam at the VA Hospital in Dallas, the doctor turned to me and said, "Do you have any idea how unique you are?" I looked at him with an inquisitive look and he went on to say, "Did you know that of all those hundreds of vets you see in the hospital today, very, very few were ever in combat?"

He kept talking and said that most vets were support personnel; made up of clerk/typists, mechanics, cooks, truck drivers, and people in the quartermaster, intelligence, medical, or JAG corps, etc. He said think about how few people in the Navy or Air Force are ever in harm's way.

He added, "What makes you so unique is the fact that you were in combat. Even rarer are pilots who flew combat missions and even rarer still is that you were a commissioned officer!" My response was, "Quite frankly, I had never really thought about it."

As I left the VA, I began to think more about what he had said and began to realize just how right he was. I thought about the miniscule number of US citizens who have ever served in the military, as an example; on the Sunday before July 4th my church always plays the military theme songs and people who served in each branch stand up. Out of a crowd of around 5,000, fewer than 20 people stand from all the military branches combined.

Because of the VA doctor's comments, I started asking some of those who stand up when were they in the military and what did they do. The VA doctor was right, so far I've only met 2 or 3 veterans in my church who were ever in combat.

Since leaving the Army in 1972, I never wore Viet Nam veteran t-shirts or put decals on my car, etc. Not that I had a problem with it. I just didn't think about it much. However, since the VA doctor made his comments, I began to often wear a patch that signified I was a helicopter pilot in Viet Nam.

The result of wearing a Viet Nam helicopter patch has been very interesting to say the least!

It is very rare for someone to say "Thank you for your service." It's always nice when they do and I appreciate their comment. But, what I'm really looking for are other Viet Nam vets. If you haven't noticed, the "Taps" section in the VHPA magazine get's longer with each issue. Old soldiers may just fade away, but old pilots are dying at an increasing rate.

One of my observations is that when I first started wearing a

patch, I would always go introduce myself to someone wearing a Viet Nam veteran patch and ask them where they were in Viet Nam. That's when it would get real interesting. If they started to stutter and look at me funny, then I began to learn what was coming next; they would say they were in communications, operations, or finance, etc. In other words, a REMF! As a result, I stopped asking people who are wearing a generic Viet Nam veteran patch anything. The point is, no Viet Nam vet, who was not in combat has ever asked me where I was or what I my job was while I am wearing a Cobra or Air Cavalry patch.

On the other hand, when someone sees my Cobra or Air Cavalry

patch; walks up and starts talking to me, I know it is either another pilot or a grunt. If it's another pilot, they talk about how much better pilot they were than a Snake pilot. If the guy is a grunt, the first words out of his mouth are; "Thank you for saving my life!" The grunt, often in tears, will go on and on about how many times some helicopter pilot saved his butt. In cases like this, I've heard some of the most amazing stories that always

put a lump in my throat. I've also had children and other relatives of grunts and pilots stop to thank me and tell me stories their Dad or Uncle told them about the feats of those daring young men in their flying machines.

Just to set the record straight; I have the absolute highest respect possible for anyone who served as an Infantryman in battle. After providing aerial fire support to a ground unit, knowing that those guys were still there on the ground, in the jungle, often in the rain, eating cold c-rats while I was flying back to a shower, a dry bed, and going to eat hot chow in a mess hall, I thanked God that I was a pilot instead of a brave and valiant grunt.

I'm curious if anyone else has had similar encounters with Viet Nam vets or their relatives?

Danny Fisher
Danny@mrannuity.com

Danny was a Cobra pilot in F Troop / 8th Cavalry, 16th Combat Assault Group, 23rd Infantry Division from June 1969 until April 1970. From April 1970 until June 1970, he worked in the American's Division Tactical Operations Center.



MEMBERS - HAVE A BOOK FOR JOHN TO REVIEW?
CONTACT HIM AT: BOOKREVIEWS@VHPA.ORG

By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



DUTY, HONOR AND BETRAYAL

by VHPA Member Rod Moon is a memoir of his service with C/229 AHB, 1 CAV in 67-68. Moon shares his experiences with C/229 during the Tet Offensive and at Khe Sahn, A Shau Valley and missions over the line in Laos and Cambodia. It is also the story of coming home to learn there was no recognized honor for the sacrifice of those he served with.

Based at LZ English with C/229th, he was soon put to work "hauling log" and Ready Reaction Force

(RRF) missions into the jungle covered Central Highlands.

The missions soon became even more intense and the losses mounted as C/229 moved to Quang Tri and the Tet Offensive began. Further flying challenges ensued with missions into the rainy and cloud shrouded mountains of Khe Sanh, and the A Shau Valley.

Moon says he wrote this book because he is tired of all the "idiotic statements" about the Vietnam War by those with no personal knowledge. He speaks with a very articulate voice describing the missions he flew and expressing the emotions he and many other Vietnam vets felt about the reception they received when they came home that still haunt many of us.

Duty, Honor and Betrayal: A Viet Nam War Memoir (\$14.95, 225 pages) by Rod Moon, ISBN: 978-0615497419 is available by order from <http://www.fufenhaven.com/books-by-mr-moon>

MISSILE!MISSILE!MISSILE! by VHPA Member Mike Brown is the memoir of his second tour in RVN as a Cobra pilot with F/79 AFA, 1 CAV - call sign Blue Max. Brown, whose first tour was as an FO with 1st BN 5th FA, 1 ID in 67-68, joined F/79 in October 1971 at Bear Cat with all of III Corps as their AO. Brown had joined a unit of high standards; held in high esteem by the troops it supported.

Initially, the level of combat was lower than 67-68 and his first six months with F/79 were pretty quiet. However, on April 5, 1972 the NVA made an all-out assault on Loc Ninh complete with tanks, armored vehicles, and heavy anti-aircraft weapons. With the fall of Loc Ninh the NVA advanced on An Loc. In May the NVA introduced the SA-7 "Strella", a weapon to challenge Blue Max and all other helicopters in the AO. Blue Max lost its first Cobra crew to an SA-7 on May 11, 1972 and another crew was lost on May 24th. Discussions on how to avoid the SA-7 produced no viable options.

Harry Davis, a new member of Blue Max, insisted that flying the aircraft until it wouldn't fly was the first thing to do. But with the likely loss of the tail boom the discussion turned to other things the crew could do. These discussions proved beneficial when Brown and his co-pilot/gunner Marco Cordon were faced by that very situation

near a village called Tan Khai Lai Khe, on June 21, 1972. Brown describes the experience as improbable and unique - improbable that they survived and unique because they did.

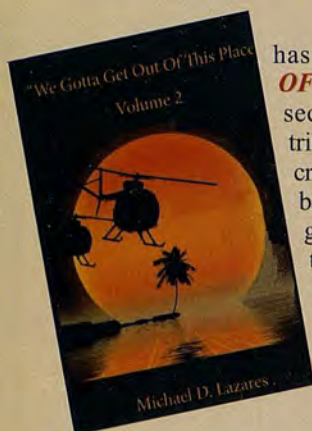
Missile!Missile!Missile! is one of the most amazing stories of survival to come out of Vietnam, the "Helicopter War." Brown does an excellent job of describing the missions and challenges of his tour of duty during a time of US withdrawal from Vietnam when the question arose "was it all worth it." He sees the events of this story as part of his spiritual journey through life; a journey that has also taken him back to Vietnam.

Missile!Missile!Missile!

(172 pages, \$11.29 paperback, Kindle \$5) by Mike Brown, ISBN: 978- 1492192060 is available by order from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.

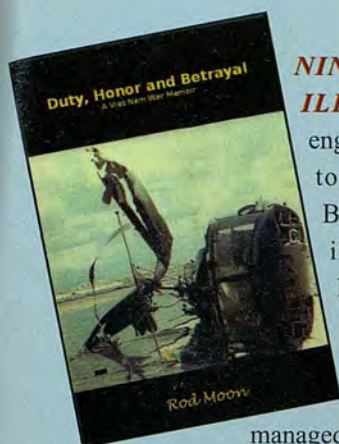


VHPA Member Michael Lazares has published **WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE, VOLUME 2**. This second collection features stories contributed not just by aviators, but also by crew chiefs and gunners; the "kids" in the back who served so well. Voice is also given to the men and women serving on the ground, who share their experiences with helicopters in Vietnam. They include Special Forces, medics, long range recon, "donut dollies", and the "grunts" that put their lives in the hands of the young aviators.



Lazares has compiled an excellent collection of stories ranging from the intensity of combat assaults to the folly involving both ingenuity and larceny while attempting to improve one's dismal living areas to be worthy of "Better Hooch's and Gardens." This is a good reading experience. Readers will be pleased to know Volume 3 is in the works and he is seeking flying stories with a focus on TET '68 and A Shau.

We Gotta Get Out of this Place, Volume 2 (356 pages, \$15.00 at Createspace.com/books/store - Kindle version \$3.99 at Amazon) by Michael D. Lazares, ISBN 978-1494411152 is available from the author at www.mdlazaresauthor.com, or other book suppliers. All profits from this book go to Fisher House and the VHPA Scholarship Fund.



ELEVEN MONTHS AND NINETEEN DAYS: A VIETNAM ILLUSTRATOR'S MEMOIR

is an engaging narrative of Air Force illustrator John Bowen's Vietnam service. Bowen, an experienced commercial illustrator, enlisted in 1961 and reenlisted in 1965. Late in 1967, he found himself headed to Tan Son Nhut AFB. Assigned to the 834th Air Division, Headquarters Unit, which

managed all tactical airlift operations in Vietnam, he could reasonably expect a fairly uneventful tour of duty. He soon learned no place is safe in a war zone. The Tet Offensive began a few weeks after his arrival.

Bowen arrived at Tan Son Nhut and settled into the routines of his assignment although a little creativity was needed to obtain a supply of the tools of his trade from the "Country Store." Bowen's responsibilities involved producing visual displays, documents, and graphic artwork used in publications, signs, charts, and posters. He was also tasked with documenting the ongoing airlift operations by drawing and painting these

operations at Tan Son Nhut and other airfields in Vietnam.

Bowen's detailed memoir focuses on individual emotions: his own, those he served with, and those of his family. It is very interesting to follow the deeply personal and different perspectives each experienced during Bowen's tour. He describes the efforts that he and his fellow airmen went through to defend themselves from rocket attacks, assaults on their base, and dealing with their losses. All of Bowen's original drawings and paintings of the Airlift resupply operations in Vietnam are kept at the Air Force Academy. He has recreated 43 drawings for this book.

Bowen's book won the Silver Medal in the Autobiography/Memoir Category of the Florida Authors and Publishers Association Annual Competition.

You can visit Bowen's website at

<http://www.johnbowenwatercolorist.com/artist.html>

Eleven Months and Nineteen Days: A Vietnam Illustrator's Memoir (269 pages, \$24.99 + \$3 shipping) by John Bowen, ISBN: 978-0985729578 is available directly from the author at john@johnbowenwatercolorist.com

VHPA 2015 CALENDAR

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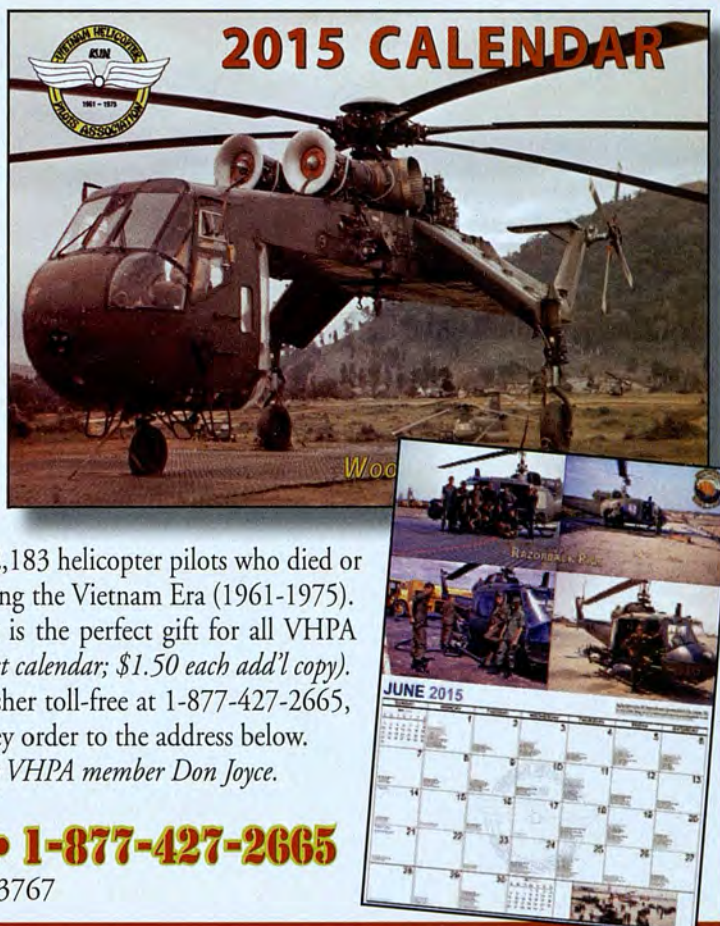
The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Acclaim Press are pleased to present the new VHPA 2015 Calendar, hot off the press and available for immediate shipment. This is the 22nd calendar produced by the VHPA.

The goal of the VHPA calendar project is to refresh the memories of all those who flew and worked on helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era, and to record, preserve and display the events and activities that were important to veterans of that period.

Each month features photographs depicting the machines & people that flew over Vietnam, plus detailed captions about what is pictured. This VHPA Calendar also commemorates the 2,183 helicopter pilots who died or whose bodies were not returned (BNR) from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era (1961-1975).

Printed in full-color, this 17x11-inch (BIG) wall calendar is the perfect gift for all VHPA members and their families. **Only \$14.95 - plus shipping (\$5 first calendar; \$1.50 each add'l copy).** Missouri residents add 6.225% sales tax. To order, call the publisher toll-free at 1-877-427-2665, visit online at www.acclaimpress.com, or send your check/money order to the address below.

Pictured on the cover: Wooley Booger the Skycrane — photo by VHPA member Don Joyce.



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everyone to get their order on time.*

Thank you, Brian and Marilyn