



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

January/February 2003 Vol. 21, No. 1



Dave Rittman photo

A UH-1C gunship fires a 2.75-inch rocket after taking ground fire some 75 miles northwest of An Khe, South Vietnam, in October 1967. The gunship was supporting a mission flown by C/229th Aviation, 1st Cavalry Division. The gunship is believed to be from D/229th Aviation. Dave Rittman photo

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From the President

Greetings. I'm writing this while once again in the service of Uncle Sam. That's right — the "mobilized reservist" exercise is in effect.

I've been putting on the uniform for 37 years and, after flying in Vietnam and Desert Storm, I'm able to close out a military career with Desert Storm II.

Other VHPA'ers are also in military service. Mike Roulier, is returning from his tour in Afghanistan. We hope he's home in time to assume his place with the WOC Chorus. We've missed their appearance in our last few reunions.

Because of time constraints, this column will be a truncated version. Our harried Newsletter editor, Jack Swickard, has been very tolerant of my tardy submission. So I'm taking the "hit" when your Newsletter arrives late.

This would be an excellent opportunity to thank my fellow members of the Executive Council for taking up the slack by assuming elements of my duties.

Dave Rittman, in particular, has graciously and effectively performed the duties of national reunion chairman. In a previous life, Dave worked for Ford Motor Co. and executed many meetings for thousands of Ford employees. His planning acumen transferred to the VHPA reunion. Thanks, Dave, for the countless volunteer hours given to this association.

Check out the reunion information in this Newsletter. Plans are moving ahead and the registrations are coming into Headquarters. Fantastic, fun, festivities fill the agenda. And for the first time, we conclude the reunion with a five-day cruise. Register now for all the activities, the banquet, and the cruise. It'll be a great 20th year!

Litigation draws to close

The litigation that has embroiled your association is drawing to a successful conclusion. (As if any court process can be called "successful.") Here's a brief recap of

Classified ads

SEEKING REVOLVER: I am looking for a Smith & Wesson .38 special that most Army helicopter pilots carried in Vietnam. If anyone knows of a source please contact Mike at [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED] Also, does anyone know the actual model number and barrel length?

E-mail items to Newsletter at:
swickard@vhpa.org

the two cases requiring time and resources.

The court recently dismissed with prejudice the case involving a Las Vegas entertainment promoter. The promoter sued VHPA to be paid for time developing a proposal for services.

Prior to the 2002 reunion in Las Vegas, VHPA chapters historically planned the national reunion. Consequently, in February 2001, several members of the Las Vegas Chapter asked a local producer to prepare a plan for various reunion entertainment options.

The two promoters responded with a proposal in excess of \$220,000. This amount was way beyond our planned budget and contained expenditures that, in our opinion, were of questionable value for the dollars expended. Your Executive Council did not accept this bid.

In an attempt to salvage the effort made by the producers and chapter, I emailed one of the principals asking for a bid of a scaled-down version of their entertainment proposal. This was rejected and the producers resigned from the project to take another job.

Months later, the two producers sued VHPA. The suit alleged the producers had attended many meetings with and at the request of the Las Vegas Chapter. It also alleged the chapter implied they would be paid for their time to develop a proposal. The VHPA had never entered such an agreement and refused payment for a proposal. The producer then sued the Las Vegas Chapter and, subsequently, the VHPA.

VHPA documentation provided the attorneys in Las Vegas clearly showed that the National Headquarters of VHPA never guaranteed a contract. On the contrary, on repeated occasions in written communications, we pointed out significant budget concerns and very questionable values for the dollar expended.

Similar written documentation confirmed that we attempted to negotiate a proposal at lesser cost. The attempts were declined. We also produced a copy of their unilateral resignation email to accept a different job.

Then they alleged they had been promised payment for developing any proposals for services rendered, and demanded payment in excess of \$13,000.

Any promises or inferences for payment came directly from a local chapter, not the VHPA. Legally, a chapter has no authority to speak or enter into agreements on behalf

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Correspondence relating to commercial purposes or solicitations shall only be sent to those officers, committee chairmen, and staff listed above.

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You may order past calendars with incredible color photos through VHPA Headquarters at
(800) 505-8472 or online at www.vhpa.org

Product	Each	P&H	No.	Total
Bumper sticker	\$1	Free		\$
Window decal	\$1	Free		\$
Newsletters — back issues	\$2	Free		\$
2001 Directory	\$15	\$5 ea		\$
2000 Directory	\$10	\$5 ea		\$
1999 Directory	\$5	\$5 ea		\$
Directories for years before 1999 (while supplies last)	\$5	\$5 ea		\$
2003 Calendar (Order through Turner Publishing 800-788-3350)	\$12	\$5 ea		\$
2001 Calendar	\$10	\$5 ea		\$
2000 Calendar	\$5	\$5 ea		\$
1998 Calendar	\$3	\$5 ea		\$
1996 Calendar	\$2	\$5 ea		\$
1995 Calendar	\$2	\$5 ea		\$
Historical Reference Directory — Vol. I. (Highlights 1961-65)	\$5	\$5 ea		\$
Historical Reference Directory — Vol. II. (Highlights 1966-67)	\$10	\$5 ea		\$
Vietnam Helicopter History CD (\$15 for VHPA members)	\$25	\$5 ea		\$
Grand total				\$

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Card number:	Expiration date:	
Signature:		

From the President

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of the national association, a policy that is contained in our reunion SOP and various documents provided to the reunion chairman.

Although time-consuming for the Executive Council, I am pleased to report that the VHPA paid no dollars to the promoter or incurred any legal costs as a result of this claim. Our insurance company made all payments to our legal counsel and settled this suit on our behalf for the approximate cost of litigation to date.

Your EC used this litigation as a "lesson learned." If a chapter isn't legally bound to enter and honor contractual agreements, it can't be held responsible for promises or agreements made in the name of VHPA. Without the responsibility, the association (you) is left holding the financial obligation to the vendor endorsed by the local chapter, acting as a reunion coordinator. This was a costly mistake made earlier at the Washington, DC, reunion, and almost in Las Vegas.

The position of national reunion coordinator was established and began functioning prior to the Las Vegas reunion. This position insured that the reunion and its financial obligations had oversight by your elected representatives, the Executive Council.

As a result of carefully allocating expenses against reunion income, the Las Vegas reunion had a positive cash flow. This scenario holds for the upcoming reunion in Orlando and will continue with future reunions.

Second legal issue

Our second legal issue initially involved former member Gary Wineteer, represented by former member Tom Elliston. Last June they sued the VHPA in Missouri, attempting to gain a temporary restraining order to force proxy voting.

Emails later obtained through a subpoena confirmed the effort to obtain proxies by these individuals and about six other supporters.

If successful and, given the short time between filing and the July reunion, only these two individuals and their immediate followers would have had time to pull together proxy votes. The result, if they were successful, would have been to have a very few individuals literally take control of the election process, impact day-to-day operations, and the financial affairs of the Association.

At the time there was nearly \$900,000 in liquid assets held by the association, most of which were advance Las Vegas reunion event deposits by the membership, and life memberships dues paid in advance to the association. All this would have occurred without the knowledge or input of the vast majority of members.

Our founding documents prohibit proxy voting, a

position which is clearly supported by Kansas law for nonprofit corporations such as VHPA.

On June 26, 2002, the courts reviewed the merits of the case, heard the evidence at hand, and ruled against their motion.

Sadly, I must report to the membership that Mr. Elliston then demanded \$15,000 be personally paid to him and Mr. Wineteer in exchange to drop their proxy suit. The Executive Council refused to pay.

Apparently in retribution, they attempted to continue their case. We returned to court in Platte County, MO. On Nov. 26, 2002, after hearing additional arguments, the judge dismissed their entire case with prejudice, which means it cannot be refiled in that court.

After losing their case in Missouri in November, Mr. Elliston advised the Executive Council and VHPA legal counsel that both individuals would be willing to drop the entire case (which they'd already lost). They would do this if they were reinstated, allowed to subsequently resign, and be paid a settlement totaling \$20,000.

So now you know the cost to the membership. If we failed to meet their demands, Mr. Elliston threatened in writing that he would do great legal damage to the association. The Executive Council again refused, and they are now attempting to pursue that case in the court of appeals.

Tom Elliston, Gary Wineteer, and several other current members known by the EC, have at one point or another expressed their desire in various communications and filings to eliminate the present Executive Council, eliminate or significantly change our bylaws and constitution, eliminate all the reunion contracts in place with hotels and suppliers, eliminate the current headquarters and staff, and even disperse our bank account, the majority of which are assets provided and safeguarded from life membership applications.

Not all agree with every item, but their collective intent has been proved in writing.

Your Executive Council and our VHPA attorneys hold correspondence and filings sent to us by U.S. mail and/or email that corroborate this group's overall intent, including many hundreds of email documents subpoenaed by VHPA attorneys from Mr. Wineteer's computer hard drive (during the Missouri suit).

In these memos written among themselves and to others, the stated goal was to harass the Executive Council members and other volunteers, to force members and/or elected officers to resign, financially hurt our annual reunion, and to cause as much financial damage and disruption as possible to the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Subsequently in December, Mr. Elliston representing himself, filed a new lawsuit in Kansas. This litigation is intended to break the back of VHPA, as we now know it. Other than an inordinate amount of time endured by the Executive Council, his blustering has had little effect.

We and our legal counsel strongly believe we will

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From the President

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continue to prevail and certainly your association will continue to thrive, grow in membership, remain financially sound, and live by the rules set down by those who founded VHPA.

All this may sound abrasive, but it's all carefully documented. An extensive review of our current corporate documents and IRS tax status by outside Kansas qualified legal and tax professionals, has found all documents to be appropriate and legally viable for our association.

Our outside auditors have repeatedly issued an excellent rating and described our association as one of the best nonprofits they have audited, as many of you heard first hand at the business meeting last year.

Under the scrutiny of the collective legal and accounting pros, we did take advantage of their collective expertise to streamline our current founding documents. You'll see the results in this issue.

Please carefully review the document. A great amount of time and effort from our Kansas qualified legal and tax experts went into revising the text so as not to change the intent of the founders.

The Executive Council is confident the new bylaws and integrated constitution will continue to serve as the bedrock upon which VHPA is built. You will have a voting opportunity to ratify this revision during the business

meeting in Orlando.

Membership continues growth

On a happy note, the membership continues growing under membership chairman and vice president Dana Young.

Despite the funk of the present economy, our bank account and investments are cash positive year after year. There are not many companies or associations that can say that, and this is a direct result of the efforts of our Investment Committee and financial advisors.

As discussed in an earlier *Newsletter*, effective the first of the year, we established a separate, designated, reserve account to accommodate our life membership funds.

As we move toward the age of majority, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association remains a viable and thriving organization. We continue to press on with the original, founding intent of finding new members, enjoying an annual reunion, and publishing an informative directory and *Newsletter*.

The vast majority of our members are satisfied with these simple goals.

Well, the klaxon is sounding so it's back to duty. And in these volatile times, remember that wise old saying by Mr. Anonymous and the motto of the Special Operations Association: "You've never lived until you've almost died. For those who fought for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know."

See you in the next *Newsletter*.

— Joe Bilitzke, President

Letters

Former VHPA counsel glad to stay the course

I first learned of the VHPA by observing a bumper sticker. This was before any access by me to the Internet and, other than seeing the bumper sticker and asking a couple of polite questions, I went away unimpressed.

However, I later signed up for the Santa Clara reunion and, with a local stick buddy of mine from my Vietnam unit, attended some of the events. Because I registered for that reunion, my name and information was picked up by Ken Fritz when he decided to organize a Northern California chapter of the VHPA. We call it CCN for obvious reasons.

Because of his persistence, I was able to attend the organizational meeting for our chapter. Soon, I was in contact with other persons whom I met during my Army service (1967-72) and became able to deal with that part of my life in a much more relaxed fashion. Having had posi-

tive experiences, I tried to give back something and volunteered as VHPA legal advisor almost three years ago.

Unfortunately, during my stewardship, two members of the organization decided to sue the VHPA, and a further lawsuit came down the pike by reason of failed expectations of certain persons in Las Vegas, NV.

Hence, during the Las Vegas reunion, I found myself at the head platform during the general membership meeting reading correspondence from attorneys retained by the VHPA to defend itself, as well as answering questions from the membership as best I could. Certainly, this was not the experience I was seeking when I joined the VHPA and became more active in the organization.



But fate works in mysterious ways. At the Las Vegas reunion, while doing my normal less than graceful routine on the dance floor, a big man bumped me, bumped me again, and bumped me again.

After stopping to observe him and determine whether or not some altercation may follow, the man simply said, "Don't you recognize me Gunn?"

I almost melted to the floor like warm butter. I hadn't seen the man looking at me for 32 years. He and I had been

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pilots in the same outfit in Vietnam, had flown as stick-mates, and had lived, together, both the glory and the tragedy of that experience.

My eyes misted up and I could barely utter his name. "Vince," I said. Then I said it again and again. Without any consciousness of movement on my part, I found myself, without embarrassment, embracing him on the dance floor.

I don't know what my girlfriend Lori thought at that moment, but our dancing stopped then. Vince, I found out, had stayed on active duty for nine years and was now a real estate professional in Phoenix.

This, I thought later, is what the VHPA is all about. While spending time that evening with Vince and his beautiful wife, we did our best to catch up. It occurred to me then that Vince had maybe not yet seen Soup, our other stick-mate who was present at the reunion.

The next evening, Lori arranged for caterers to bring up some hors d'oeuvres, beverages, and the like to our room. We invited some friends, including Vince and his wife.

Unknown to Vince, Soup and his wife were going to come up as well. That night was able to see Vince become nearly speechless when he walked in and saw Soup. After that, the reunion seemed woefully short. Try as we could, it was impossible to catch up for so many years. I think Soup and I told Vince how we had taken a rubbing of Bobby's name on the wall during the Washington, DC, Reunion.

After the shock, the emotion, and the intense feelings, we were all smiles. I would not trade that experience for anything. This is what it has all been about. I'm glad I stayed the course and continued as an active member.

I thank the EC and all other participants for the contributions, to make the VHPA happen and for not letting distractions, such as lawsuits and threats, often personal, run them off. This member will be on board for the long haul.

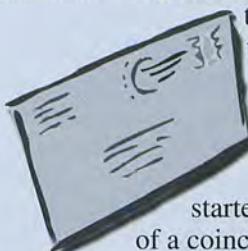
Jim "Gunny" Gunderson
20th Engineer Brigade, 1969-70

Flying with Army pilots an adventure

It is Veterans Day as I start to write this. This day always brings back a lot of memories from the 26 months I spent flying the back seat of F-4 Phantoms in Southeast Asia, of the young Army private with dead eyes dragging

his rifle through the airport at Da Nang, of the two friends on The Wall who have left me sobbing in my family's arms each time I have visited them to leave each a rose, and of the adventures a young man almost inevitably had in that war.

Oh, the adventures! In 400-plus combat missions, I had just about every adventure a Phantom jock could have in that plane. But this one isn't about the Air Force; it's about one wild day off and the Army helicopter crew-



men who were part of one of the best adventures of all.

Like most good adventures, it started innocently enough, just the result of a coincidence. A couple of the guys from my squadron — the 389th Tactical Fighter Squadron flying out of Phu Cat Air Base — wound up overnight at some other base. (I can't remember where or why after all these years.)

In the natural course of things, they went for a beer. Also in the natural course of things, they ended up sharing beverages and stories with some Army helicopter pilots who also were away from their normal "home." The group soon discovered that they were neighbors: The chopper pilots flew out of a fire base just a short distance south of Phu Cat.

As one thing led to another, a great plan was hatched. Each Tuesday, some of the chopper crews from the firebase flew north and staged flights out of Landing Zone English. These were kind of a day off for the Army pilots because they spent the day buzzing around a free-fire zone, checking out their birds and weapons and just generally having fun.

There wasn't supposed to be anyone in the free-fire zone, so things were relatively safe (or as "safe" as things ever got for those guys). Since there was supposed to be little to no danger involved and since they overflew Phu Cat on their way to LZ English, one of the chopper pilots thought it would be a fine idea to drop into Phu Cat, pick up two fliers from the squadron, and take the Air Force types along for some helicopter rides. Vietnam being — well, Vietnam — and young fliers being young fliers, this sounded like a splendid plan. A couple of beers later, the deal was sealed.

A pilot from our squadron and I were the first (and, unfortunately, the last) to go for this joy ride. With the

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blessing of our squadron commander, we each took a day of annual leave.

One of the chopper crews picked us up in a Huey "slick." (At this point, I must confess that I never did understand — and to this day still do not comprehend — Army structure and organization, nor have I ever been fluent in the designations of Army personnel and weapons. I ask that the reader bear with me as my knowledge is limited to "slicks," "Cobras," "LOHs," and poor descriptions of automatic weapons that sure were fun to fire.)

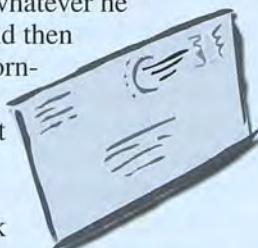
On our way to LZ English, the crewmen told the pilot and me that we were part of a "pink" team. The group included two Cobras, two slicks and two LOHs. I had no idea what that meant or what we would be up to, but it all seemed like a grand plan.

At LZ English, each of us had whatever he thought would pass for breakfast and then the day's fun began. For the two morning flights, it was decided that the Phantom pilot would fly in the front seat of a Cobra and I would ride along in a slick.

I strapped into a seat in the back and enjoyed seeing Vietnam from a much lower altitude than I was used to. The only thing that seemed a bit odd during the otherwise quiet, enjoyable flight was an occasional popping sound. Nothing seemed terribly wrong, however, so I took it in stride. After all, this was Vietnam; if there was not an immediate, apparent emergency, then everything was fine.

When we returned to LZ English for a mid-morning break, I asked my slick pilots what the popping sound was. They replied that they had been firing their pistols out the side of the helicopter and seemed a bit surprised that I hadn't fired mine. Looking at the web belt, holster and Smith and Wesson .38 that I wore low-slung and tied to my leg like some sort of gunfighter, they asked if I even knew if the handgun worked. Sheepishly, I replied that I merely signed it out every time I flew and checked it back in after the mission, so I had never fired it.

They advised me that I really ought to know if the pistol actually worked since my life might one day depend on it, and I readily agreed that shooting a few rounds during the next flight would be in order.



Directory best one yet!

I just received the 2002 VHPA Directory, and it's absobloodylutely amazing. Who do we thank for finding the names and addresses of all those guys who have never been in contact with any of the organizations?

This edition is the best one yet. I can't wait to try to contact some of those guys who have been "missing" for so long.

How did they find Jimmy Bowen's name and address in Rhode Island or Tom Kline's in upstate New York? Can someone near Arlington, TX, do me a favor and check to see if Tom Ridley really lives there?

Well done, Gents.

Bob Paine

119th Assault Helicopter Company, 1969-70

Gator 14

Since I had always heard that Army helicopter pilots could be a little crazy, I should have seen the next "idea" coming. But I didn't.

After considering my lack of experience with weapons that did not move five hundred miles an hour and blow up, one of the chopper pilots suggested that I really get to fire something. That something, of course, was the M 60 on the left-hand side of the slick. I mentioned that I was hardly trained in this sort of thing, but the pilots assured me that a short briefing before we took off and some on-the-job training were all that was necessary.

By flying Phantoms in combat, I had done some things that were right out of novels and movies, but nothing like this! Another in a series of excellent ideas!

Before we took off on the second mission of the morning, the helicopter crew strapped me into the cavity on the helicopter's side with the M 60 and gave me some verbal instructions. (The fellow whose job this normally was — a crew chief, I suspect — seemed willing to give up his position to an Air Force dingbat who would volunteer for his duty while he stayed behind for a nap and maybe some extra coffee.)

As we took off on our second mission, it was pretty much like the first, except that I had a better view. Soon I heard the popping sounds and asked over the radio if the pilots were firing their handguns. They were, so I unholstered mine and fired a few rounds at rocks and trees. It wasn't all that exciting, but it was good to know that the .38 worked!

After we finished warming up our pistols, one of the pilots asked if I would like to fire the M 60. I said, "Sure," but advised that I didn't know what I should shoot. At that

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point, we were passing over a small river (maybe just a good-sized creek). "Kill the river," the pilot replied. So I did.

I was impressed with the sound and fury of the M 60, as well as the way the tracers appeared to curve as we flew forward, but the river wasn't the most exciting target. I asked if there was something better to practice on, and the pilots said that there were some trees coming up on my side that would be good for honing my marksmanship. So I shot at the trees. And rocks. And anything else that came into my deadly field of view.

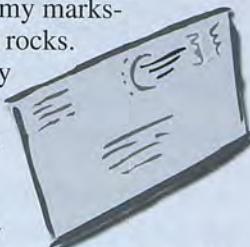
At one point, I asked how much I could fire the M 60. One of the pilots asked how many canisters of ammunition there were between my feet. "Two," I replied. "Well, that's how long you can fire," he said. Alas, his estimate wasn't accurate.

I fired at "enemy" trees, rocks, etc. until the M 60's firing pin cracked and the two pieces eventually wore themselves down to where the machine couldn't fire any more. My time as a doorgunner was done. But what a fine adventure it had been! I sat back a rode along quietly as a tourist as we returned to LZ English for lunch.

After we all had something to eat (and fixed the M 60), my squadron mate and I switched places for the afternoon. The broken and worn firing pin aside, I must have shown some sort of natural (or crazed) ability to handle an M 60, because the F-4 pilot became the slick's doorgunner for the next two missions.

Much to my delight, it was my turn to ride the front seat of one of the Cobras! Just being there looked like a lot of fun; I had no idea how great those toys would be!

Being used to the back seat in Phantoms, it felt strange to be strapped in forward of a pilot. There was a lot of machinery in a very small place, but I was used to that. I didn't understand most of the machinery, except that there may have been some flight instruments that I recognized. But I knew that I was going to be able to see a lot more. (The view from the back seat of a Phantom was mostly wings and engine intakes.) This was going to



IP would have a tizzie

Yo — If a flight instructor saw that TH-55A running unattended, he'd have a tizzie. Good picture, though, and I think I remember one of those cacti.

Jack Knotts

EDITOR'S NOTE: The photo appeared on the cover of the November/December 2002 VHPA Newsletter.

be fun!

I found out just how much fun when my pilot appeared next to me and gave me a tour of the front cockpit. Mostly he instructed me on the device right in front of me that looked like a kid's toy. It had two handles, a button for each, and a transparent piece with a cross in the middle. He explained that when freed so that it could move ("uncaged"), the device controlled two weapons. With my hands on the handles, I could move the device around and wherever I moved it, the two weapons followed. The weapon on the left was a 40 mm grenade launcher and the one on the right was a six-barreled, .30-caliber minigun.

When I looked

through the transparent sight, the grenade launcher and the minigun pointed at whatever was in the crosshairs. Then it was left thumb on the left button for the grenade launcher, right thumb on the right button to fire the minigun. The whole thing was way simple and just plain too cool!

As we lifted off and headed out on the afternoon's first mission, I was impressed! The power of the Cobra, the near 360-degree view, and the feeling of sitting on the front end of a high-speed steel arrow were about as much as I could bear!

Just as I was getting accustomed to being where I was and to what I was doing, the pilot upped the thrill. He casually asked if I would like to fire the forward weapons. Would a child like to meet Santa Claus? Would a dog like to own a butcher shop? Of course I would!

I asked if there were any Viet Cong trees, rocks or rivers in sight that needed to be shot at. He said to fire at some trees that were coming up on the left. I put the trees in the crosshairs and opened up the minigun. It buzzed and I could see an occasional bullet hit. Then I fired the grenade launcher and heard its "Thud! Thud! Thud!" sound

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at a hundred rounds a minute. But it all was disappointing! I hadn't seen anything happen, and noted that fact to the pilot.

He said the grenades had gone in amongst the trees, so there wasn't much to see. The best thing was to hold fire until we got closer to an approaching treeless hillside. I did, and then fired the launcher at the hillside. Much to my amazement, a row of explosions opened up a two- or three-foot pit about every 10 feet. Wow! I quit firing because a display of power like that took a little bit of time to sink in. Also, I figured that the Cobra's weapons didn't have the seemingly endless string of ordinance that the M 60 had had that morning.

I settled back to enjoy the ride. The strategy was the same as in the morning. The two LOH pilots buzzed around at treetop level covering each other and searching for targets.

As the rest of us circled overhead in the two Cobras and two slicks, the

LOHs below reminded me of a pair of mosquitoes, albeit very deadly mosquitoes. If they found anything that appeared to be associated with the enemy, the LOH pilots dropped incendiary grenades on it.

Aside from the ride itself, everything was pretty quiet. After all, this was playday Tuesday, a day off from the normal rigors of the war, a day to take Phantom jockeys along on a busman's holiday.

Or that was the way it was supposed to be. The problem was, no one had told some Viet Cong.

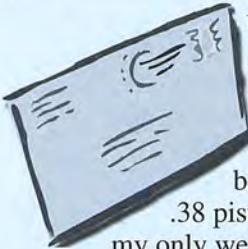
As the LOH pilots went about their work, suddenly one took a hit! There were enemy hiding in a grove of trees that the LOHs were inspecting, and they began firing at the little helicopters. One round came up through an LOH's bubble and struck the pilot in the foot.

Now the day was taking a whole new turn, but I was far too excited to be worried. My combat experience in Phantoms kicked in, so the adrenaline rush in my veins told me to help do what needed to be done, and to help do it now in any way I could!

Of course, the Cobra pilot was running our show and he instantly decided what to do. Thanks to my practice on

the trees and hillside, we had less ordinance than the other choppers, so he radioed to the rest of the team that we would follow the stricken LOH back to the medical pad at LZ English. If the injured LOH pilot couldn't make it that far, he was to set his machine down in a clearing that was big enough for both choppers. We would set down close by and my job was to run to the LOH, help the pilot get out and get back to the Cobra, and then somehow get back in

and then help the injured pilot climb up into my lap.

 Of course, two men in a Cobra's front cockpit would be a pretty tough fit, but it never occurred to me to doubt that it would work. I remember being happy that I had fired my .38 pistol that morning, because it would be my only weapon if I ended up on the ground running between helicopters. Thank the Lord I knew it worked!

As it was, the LOH pilot was able to fly all the way back to LZ English and land on the medical pad. From our vantage point above, my pilot and I were able to watch medical personnel stream out to the LOH and help the pilot from his aircraft. Assuming the only round he had taken was the one he knew about in his foot, he would be all right. And with any kind of luck, his bird would have just the one hole in it.

That accomplished, my pilot set our Cobra down on a different pad. To my surprise, he left the machine running and, even more to my surprise, he didn't tell me to get out. Rather, he told me to "Keep 'er on the ground!" and got out himself.

Now, I think that I remember that the Cobra had a "collector" and one or two other primary flight controls, and I think the pilot even pointed them out to me before we took off that afternoon. I gave myself a crash course in what did what and didn't really mess with much of anything, so except for a little bit of "walking" around, the Cobra more-or-less stayed on the ground.

Meanwhile, I could see the pilot pumping fresh fuel into the bird while technicians were replacing the ordinance that I had expended on trees and such. That all done, the pilot climbed back in, said I had done a good job, and asked if I was ready to go.

"Don't you want a regular front-seater?" I asked. "Nah. You're doing a good job," he said. And away we went.

By the time we got back to the firefight, the other helicopters had pretty well used up their ordinance, but there

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was still activity in the trees below. The other pilots pointed out the hot spots, and then waited overhead for my pilot to do his thing. (And for me to do my thing, whatever that might be.)

My pilot's instructions were simple enough: He would fly at the target while firing his Vulcan cannon and his rockets. When the pass was complete, he would shout, "Breaking" and swing our bird around to the starboard ("right" for all you Phantom pilots out there). That was my signal to open up on the target with both the grenade launcher and the minigun, and to keep both firing at the target as we turned. Easy enough!

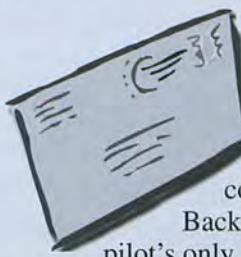
Phantoms did most of their work as dive-bombers, so I was used to that kind of flying. But I didn't expect to do it in a helicopter! The pilot would square the Cobra up with the target area of trees, hesitate the bird in midair for a moment, and then fly at the target at what I considered a medium dive angle while firing both of his forward-firing weapons.

At the end of the pass, he would stop the Cobra in mid-air for an extra second or two of firing, then tell me we were "Breaking!" and I would do my thing. Again, my training in operating a machine under hostile conditions kept me more concerned about doing my job than with my safety. After all, the safest thing to do is to keep your head and do things right. And maybe, just maybe, I was too dumb to be scared.

I don't remember how many passes we made. It may have been three or four, maybe five or six. All I remember

At the end of the pass, he would stop the Cobra in mid-air for an extra second or two of firing, then tell me we were "Breaking!" and I would do my thing.

is that it was exciting. I would have been even more excited had I known what the other crews told us later: Every time my pilot and I made a pass, tracer rounds from the target area sprayed all around our Cobra. Fortunately, we didn't get hit.



On the other hand, we never found out what we did to "them." Eventually, we were out of ordinance and ideas, so all five remaining helicopters flew back to LZ English.

Back at the LZ, we found out that the LOH pilot's only wound was the one in his foot. The consensus among the chopper pilots was that it was probably a blessing; the LOH pilot was a little too crazy for his own good ("too crazy" being an interesting concept among Army helicopter pilots), and now he would be going home to his young wife and kids a lot less injured than otherwise what easily could have been the case. That young soldier would live to watch his family grow up.

Of course, it never occurred to the rest of us that we could and should have had the same concerns for ourselves.

After all that had happened, the ride back home to Phu Cat in the back of a slick now seemed routine and boring. Of course, the adventure had to be told and retold that evening to our squadron-mates over a beer. Or several.

The Phantom pilot and I highly recommended that each take a turn if he had the chance. Unfortunately, when our wing commander found out that his million-dollar fighter jocks were spending their days off flying with and getting shot at with the

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Army, that whole plan came to a screeching halt.

No one else from our squadron ever got to have that adventure again. It's too bad that I was the last, but I'm pleased to this day that I was the first!

Many, many thanks to my good friend, former crew chief and association member, Sgt. Larry Wagoner, who convinced me that this story needed to be written and shared.

I would like to get in touch with anyone with whom he flew that day or anyone who remembers hearing about those missions.

Wade Hubbard

Pierre, SD 57501

Vietnam acquaintances put reality back in focus

Aaron Buford's letter about meeting Vietnamese escapees while on a cruise brought back a wonderful experience that, for me, helps keep my service in Vietnam in perspective.

My wife and I were holding a garage sale for my mother-in-law. Near the end of the day, an elderly Vietnamese couple shuffled up and began looking over the items, particularly a small, porcelain teapot.

I brought up that I served in Vietnam out of Chu Lai. They knew Chu Lai, and the gentleman said he had been a schoolteacher in Da Nang.

He went on to explain how, because he had been a schoolteacher, he was thrown in a "rehabilitation" work camp for 11 years. After his release, he arranged for his wife and two sons to escape Vietnam with him by boat. The refugee boat experience was terrible and they lost one son due to lack of food and water.

My wife and I expressed our sympathies for the loss of their son, and there was this uncomfortable pause in the conversation. Then the Vietnamese gentlemen looked us square in the eye and said, "That was the price for freedom."

My wife was just stunned by the remark. I can only have a slight understanding of the depth of that statement.

I had similar experiences with the "South" Vietnamese when I returned to Vietnam in 1994. I did not do a tour, but just went over on my own. I was greeted with open arms all over what was once I Corps.

I listened to many stories of "work camps," escapes and attempted escapes. But the Vietnamese were happiest when

they showed off pictures of their grown children, standing in front of their own California home with their car. Children who had successfully escaped Vietnam by boat.

Like us, Vietnamese refugees are now becoming part of the Senior Citizen population here. If and when you have the chance, go out of your way and meet them and hear their stories. It will lift your heart.

Robert "Russ" Jones
196th LIB, 1968-1969

www.pullpitch.com

Chopper pilot writes story for scale model brochure

I am not sure if you can use this for your newsletter, but am sending it in case you can.

This is a project that I participated in for a company called Corgi. They make limited edition scale models and they asked if I would participate in their "Unsung Hero's" project.

I wrote the story and they publish it in a brochure that accompanies the model of the AH-1G that I flew. They even capture the unit markings so it is a true depiction of the aircraft. They have also done other types of helicopters from Vietnam.

What I have sent you is a "draft." There are a couple of errors that will be corrected on the final piece. One is a reference to air-to-ground fire when it should be ground-to-air and the other is the diagram of the AH-1G. It shows a stabilizer bar on the rotor head when the Cobra did not have that.

Roy Harris Olive
Gambler 66



AH-1G Cobra — "Gambler Guns"

Roy H. Olive

Born: Sheffield, Alabama, April 23, 1943

Rank: Major AUS (Ret.)

Service: September 1966 to August 1979

Vietnam Service: Captain, September 1969 to September 1970

Unit: B Company, 4th Aviation Battalion, 4th Infantry Division

After completing Primary Helicopter School at Fort Rucker, Alabama, I went on to Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Georgia, for transition training in the Cobra. Once my training was completed I received orders for Vietnam, where I became Gun Platoon Commander of B Company, 4th Aviation Battalion, 4th Infantry Division — The "Gambler Guns." My call sign was Gambler 66.

On December 14 we were given a mission (operation code named "Scorpion") to locate and engage a North

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between the gunships, up the river from the south.

Once we got close to the downed bird, both gunships popped up and simultaneously put down seven pair of white phosphorus rockets along each bank of the river, completely obscuring the enemy's view of the downed bird.

At the same time that the rockets were impacting, the first scout landed on the sandbar and deposited Capt. Peraza and his gunner. They had brought a battery with them to replace the one that had been shot.

The second scout continued to orbit away from the area, prepared to go in and pick up the crew if they ran into trouble and

We saw the blades start to turn on the downed bird, and Capt. Peraza came on the radio and said he thought he could fly it out. As soon as he got enough rpm, he pulled pitch and headed back down the river, experiencing heavy vibrations, but was able to stay in the air.

couldn't start the downed bird. The gunships went into a low orbit around the downed bird and laid down rockets, minigun, and 40 mm grenades to keep the enemy at bay.

We saw the blades start to turn on the downed bird, and Capt. Peraza came on the radio and said he thought he could fly it out. As soon as he got enough rpm, he pulled pitch and headed back down the river, experiencing heavy vibrations, but was able to stay in the air.

Both gunships fell into loose formation beside the crippled bird and escorted it to the closest fire base, which was approximately six to seven miles away.

We landed, the other scouts picked up Capt. Peraza and his gunner, and returned to the 4th Division base camp at Pleiku with the intention of refueling, rearming, and returning to the site to attack the enemy again. We were met at the airfield by jeeps from Division and orders from the Commanding General to come to Division HQ.

Once we got there, Gen. Glenn Walker gave "impact" awards to all participants in the daylong battle. Capt. Peraza received the Silver Star, his gunner got the Bronze Star, and WO1 Elmore and I both received the Air Medal with "V."

We had two primary missions that we flew on a daily

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"Understanding an Era"

Do you feel that an educational institution of truth and information relating to the Vietnam era is important to complement the monuments and memorials to those of us who didn't make it back?

Do you feel, as we do, that the time to build this institution has come? The National Vietnam War Museum is that institution.

You can help build this institution through your purchase of an engraved brick honoring your service in Vietnam. Many of you saw the miniature brick presented to Dave Rittman at the Reunion Business Meeting in Las Vegas. This is a symbol of the brick purchased by VHPA for the museum memorial garden. These bricks will appear throughout the museum's memorial garden as a lasting memory of those who served.

Your tax-deductible brick purchase will be used to help build and maintain this museum focusing on the Vietnam experience.

To order your brick, visit the museum on line at our website: www.nationalvwnarmuseum.org, and order on line, or download the order form to order by mail. You may also order larger unit memorial tablets, for those who wish to honor your Vietnam unit, like the 71st, 119th, 174th, and 282nd Assault Helicopter Companies have done.

This museum needs to be built while the participants are still able to tell the honest and unbiased story of America's longest and most misunderstood war.



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George G. Reese Jr.

Enterprise, AL 36330

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

Evenings

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basis. One was to scout known and probable enemy locations and report intelligence information to the Division G-2.

In flying this mission we operated a machine called an Airborne People Detector or APB. It was mounted in the rear of one of our scouts and operated by someone from Division, who worked the machine and also provided cover for the scout with an M-60 machine gun.

The detector could be operated in two modes; in Condensation Nuclei Mode it could detect dust in the air from movement on the ground or in the jungle.

The second mode could detect ammonia and was called the Ammonia Mode. This was useful in pinpointing areas where large enemy concentrations were camped or had been recently. Of course, we also uncovered large concentrations of monkeys, water buffalo, tigers, elephants, and other large animals. The mission was code named "Scorpion" or "Snoopy."

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trations of monkeys, water buffalo, tigers, elephants, and other large animals. The mission was code named "Scorpion" or "Snoopy."

"Snoopy" meant that we could enter the area and snoop around looking for the enemy, but could not fire our weapons unless fired upon, so we could pinpoint the source of the enemy fire. When cleared in a "Scorpion" area, we could enter the area and kill anything and everything we saw without asking for permission from anyone. We could do recon by fire on suspected enemy locations and kill him if we spotted him. Of course our preference was "Scorpion" so that we could control what happened. This was the nature of the mission in the Chu Pa Mountains.

This mission was always flown with a team of two scouts and two gunships. The lead gunship was mission control and directed the action of the other aircraft.

Each gunship had an aircraft commander who flew the back seat and a co-pilot/gunner who flew the front seat. The scouts had a pilot (officer or warrant) and a gunner, who was usually an enlisted man. I was the ranking officer in the platoon, the team leader of all missions I was involved with.

The second mission was to provide escort cover for the Division's convoys of supplies and personnel. This usually meant that we were just flying circles and boring holes in

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Letters

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the sky since Charlie would not hit a convoy if gunships were on station. Why? Because we were "King of the Mountain" and could bring all kinds of "stink" on Charlie, and he knew it. This mission was usually flown with two gunships and no scouts.

Attempt to ignore disorder perpetuates PTSD stigma

I find I must in good conscience respond to the attempted censorship:

"If it is the policy of the *Newsletter* to print all letters exactly as they are submitted, then I respectfully suggest that this policy be reexamined. A factually inaccurate, excessively

hyperbolic letter such as Mr. Ambrose's

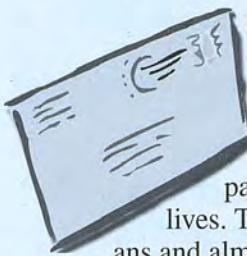
should not have been printed, at least not in its entirety."

(Rick Curtin September 2002 in *The VHPA Newsletter*)

His misguided attempt to ignore the disorder only per-

PTSD Question

petuates the stigma of PTSD and is a slap in the face to the mental suffering of nearly 479,000 Vietnam combat veterans who suffer from it (currently diagnosed).* Apparently Mr. Curtin prefers ignorance over knowledge, a condition I encountered frequently from some RLO's in my two tours as a gunship pilot in RVN.



"The estimated lifetime prevalence of PTSD among American Vietnam theater veterans is 30.9 percent for men and 26.9 percent for women. An additional 22.5 percent of men and 21.2 percent of women have had

partial PTSD at some point in their lives. Thus, more than half of all male veterans and almost half of all female Vietnam Veterans — about 1,700,000 Vietnam Veterans in all — have experienced "clinically" serious stress reaction symptoms." National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Survey, National Center for PTSD. Factual Enough?

I suggest you pull your head out and RE-READ Mr. Ambrose's letter!! In it he states, "I was shocked. It was describing me and every VHPA member I know." That statement belies the assertion by Mr. Curtin "... he should have limited his comments to his personal experience."

It is comforting to know that Mr. Curtin has such an intimate knowledge of the acquaintances of Mr. Ambrose. The pamphlet was produced by the DAV, a well-known

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From Robert Mason, author of the best-selling Vietnam War memoir, *Chickenhawk*

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Harrison Ford



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Letters

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hyperbolic organization. I believe the initials stand for "Disabled American Veterans," of which I am a life member.

I, too, remember the characterization of every warped killer on TV, at that time being a Vietnam veteran. The worst was Jack Lord's Hawaii Five 0; let's not forget Baretta, and every cookie-cutter TV movie of the week. But like most things that come out of Hollywood, a vast oversimplification of a major problem. I didn't like it then, and I don't like it now. But we survived.

This country needs to develop a much thicker skin. Anybody remember: "It don't mean nothin'."

But attacking the messenger (Mr. Ambrose relating DAV pamphlet) solves nothing. It continues to keep veterans and their families ignorant of the realities of the psychological damage, and physical trauma that results from untreated PTSD. He (Mr. Ambrose) is trying to inform the membership (the right thing to do) of a serious health problem affecting Vietnam combat veterans.

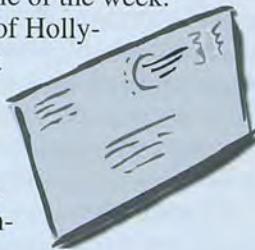
A friend of mine has done some research into hearing loss and Vietnam helicopter pilots. The study reveals that the VA's own research demonstrates the loss of high frequency hearing in helicopter pilots is due in part to tail rotors, but using Mr. Curtin's logic, no one should be informed, they should remain ignorant and deaf because someone might be offended if they were proven vulnerable.

Apparently Mr. Curtin believes ignorance is bliss and a potential life-threatening "condition" should be ignored because you might further stigmatize the Vietnam veteran. We are old news. The only people who care about Vietnam Veterans are Vietnam veterans. (The Vet Centers were initiated by a Vietnam combat medic, The Wall in DC Vietnam veteran-built).

The VA doesn't care, they want vets to go away and die. Look at their history with, Atomic Vets, Agent Orange, Gulf war Syndrome. The VA/U.S. Government has a congressional mandate (CFR's) to care for the U.S. veterans.

How do I know, Mr. Curtin? I am 100 percent service-connected for PTSD. I am also service-connected for hearing loss (tinnitus). I have been dealing with the VA since 1975. But that's another story.

I personally know three other helo-pilots with VA ser-



vice-connected PTSD. I have also been married more than once, not unlike almost every other Vietnam veteran I've talked too in the last 30 years. I used to work at the Eugene Oregon Vet Center.

ex-CWO George W. Williams
Crocodile 8

119th Assault Helicopter Company
1966-67 Pleiku
Nighthawk 40
F/8th Cav
1969-70 Chu Lai

*National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Survey
National Center for PTSD.

Pilot/author participated in PTSD effects study

Dave Eastman gave me permission to forward this letter to you.

Rick Curtin

Rick, I am Dave Eastman, and wrote the book, OUTLAWS IN VIETNAM, which you see advertised in the same newsletter your letter appeared in. I wanted to thank you for your letter printed about the PTSD letter.

For a number of years, I participated in Manchester, NH, with a VA funded research program on the effects of PTSD.

I was in a control group of VN veterans who did not display effects of PTSD — in order to help out those guys who did. Tufts and Harvard medical schools were in on this one, and also Israeli combatants. Even Russian cosmonaut doctorates were around the office. (I let them throw everything at me — my brain has been thoroughly researched!!) One of the comments I sometimes heard during my 14-15 years of this research was that: "We don't see many helicopter pilots around here with the syndrome!"

I heartily feel this is because we "got away," and up into blue sky, every time we survived one of our derring-do exploits. All the grunts know we were very exposed to enemy fire during this war, but wonder how come we are not exhibiting the same trauma as they commonly do. It is because we were not hugging the mud, forced to endure shelling and noise for hours on end, before something was resolved. We were much more in command

PTSD Question

One of the comments I sometimes heard during my 14-15 years of this research was that: "We don't see many helicopter pilots around here with the syndrome!"

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of our destiny, and the ability to do something about it — than those infantry types on the ground. They may believe we were much more in danger on our approaches and departures, but we don't want to be in their shoes either. (Just because you are vulnerable in the air doesn't make you safer on the ground . . .)

So, while flyboys and grunts have mutual respect for each other as veterans in this war, we are not the same. Wonderful for us; but for this guy to walk around hearing the war stories and be bewildered as to their long-term effects on our psyches — we just rejoice we are still alive instead of being tied to their long-term effects. It is a singular aspect of being helicopter pilots that amazes all who listen in. We are not nuts simply because we flew our asses off in combat.

I believe because we had "air superiority" — no MiGs or Hinds helicopters to blow us out of the sky once we did survive a medevac or being guns on station, that this is a particular positive attribute for this particular war. Not many combat aviators will ever be able to say that again. Of course, all this changes if you were shot down and forced to survive for a while in the condition all grunts commonly encountered.

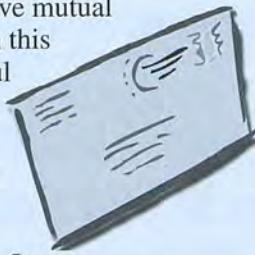
So, being in the sky was safe — relatively speaking — compared to existing in Vietnam for a whole year on the ground, except for R&R.

OK, now to get back to your comments. Right on. This guy is a rank amateur and should have looked around further before submitting his comments in the

manner he did. He does a disservice to all who are affected and those who aren't. And, believe me the pilot in our unit who has PTSD cannot get the sound of the gunfire he heard all day in the Easter Sunday LZ out of his head — it sounds off 24 hours a day, for seven days a week. No drugs, legal or illegal, can silence it. That is what 100 percent PTSD means, and I can't stand it when someone else think they have anything remotely like that condition!!

So, I wanted to reach you quickly and say thanks. Enough damage has been done to VN veterans and we need to change the stereotyping as much as we can. It has gone on long enough, and hippies and other BS'ers have had their day.

Dave Eastman
Outlaw 23-24



Few soldiers prepared for Vietnam experience

If we had problems that were exasperated by our experiences in Vietnam is not so much a question as a given. Very few of us were emotionally or mentally prepared for what we were to face.

As individuals we were not much different from any of those who went into conflicts before us.

What set us apart, in my opinion, was the social and political atmosphere within the States during and after our duty. We, as a separate class of people, were to experience something that none of our predecessors had ever been subject to nor were we prepared for.

Whether Vietnam was the cause of many of our problems or simply exasperated them is rhetorical.

Because of our duty in Vietnam, we were subject to unique emotional, moral and spiritual pressures that many were not able to deal with and have had and may very well continue to have an effect on our life's and our abilities to relate to the world we live in.

Bill Hull
Plymouth, MN

Suggesting most pilots have PTSD is absurd

Let me see if I can summarize the key points from the letter in the September/October *VHPA Newsletter* from Bill Ambrose about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):

All combat veterans have some of the following symptoms: Bothered by loud noises; can't get Vietnam out of my mind; sit with back to the wall; feel more comfortable with weapons; at night we hear people talking and barking dogs; only a few close friends; need a couple of drinks at night; cannot sleep; nightmare flashes; constantly reminded of Vietnam during day by helicopters passing overhead, fireworks, green tree lines, or burning smells.

At a Vet Center, we learn that "a typical Vietnam combat helicopter pilot" is divorced, has had several jobs, drinks too much, hollers and rages at wife and children.

And the article concludes: "Of the VHPA members who read this article, I'd say 75 percent or more of you have PTSD."

There is absolutely no doubt that a small percentage of veterans have PTSD, but to suggest that "all" suffer from some symptoms and at least "75 percent of VHPA members" have PTSD is patently absurd.

It is bad enough when those who were not in Vietnam See LETTERS, Page 19

PTSD Question

PTSD Question

Taps

James Harvey Brown Jr.

James Harvey Brown Jr. died in his home on Jan. 7 after battling cancer. He was 66.

Born May 5, 1936, to Judge James Harvey Brown and Ruth Hopkins Brown in Los Angeles, Brown graduated from Hollywood High School in 1954, serving twice as class president.

Upon graduating from high school, he attended Stanford University. He enlisted in the Army in 1958 and graduated from Officer Candidate School in 1959.

He earned his bachelor of science degree from Troy State University and a master of science degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Georgia Tech.

Brown served over 20 years in the Army as an artillery and aviation officer, including two tours in Southeast Asia. He retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel in 1979.

His last military assignment was as the program manager for the XV-15 Tilt Rotor NASA/Army program at Moffett Naval Air Station, CA. Upon retirement from the Army, Brown worked for General Electric in Los Angeles.

He and his family then moved to Mesa, AZ, where he worked for McDonnell-Douglas Helicopter Co. In 1990, he moved to Port Angeles to become vice president of business development of Rogerson Hiller Corp.

Brown also worked for Magna Force as sales manager and served five years on the United Way board of directors in Port Angeles.

He is survived by his wife Beverly; sons James III, Michael, and David; sister Dorothy O'Leary; and three grandchildren.

Eldon Ideus

We lost another of our number on Jan. 21.

Eldon Ideus, while on a monthly pipeline patrol in

central Oklahoma, went down and didn't make it.

Eldon flew this route every month (4 days, 40 hours) for the sheer enjoyment of flying. He would tell me that this was the first time since the 15th Med in 1966 that he didn't have to babysit and could just enjoy flying. I should know, he was my last CO in RVN, and was a good sitter.

We started flying together again about 5 or 6 years ago, me for a living — him for fun. This was a little while after he retired from the Army as a full bird.

We enjoyed many flights, quite a few reunions, and more than a few Margaritas at the Dustoff reunions.

— **Dave Bennett, Dustoff 61**

Emmett F. Johnson

Emmett F. Johnson, 62, died of cancer at his home in Reno, NV, on Nov. 16.

He graduated with WOFWAC class 64-2W in September 1964 and flew fixed-wing aircraft with the 7th Aviation Battalion at Camp Casey, South Korea, in 1965.

He then attended RWQC class 66-4 and UH-1 and CH-47 transitions at Fort Benning in 1966.

Johnson served from 1966-67 with the 1st Cav in A/228 Assault Support Helicopter Company in Vietnam.

Among his awards while serving in Vietnam were several Air Medals, the Bronze Star, and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He retired from the FAA as a flight service specialist in Reno.

He is survived by his wife Carol and sons Jay and Scott.

He was a great guy and deserved many more good years. We will always value his friendship.

— **Charlie Nolen and Bill Bayer**

James D. O'Neill

Retired CWO James D. O'Neill died Dec. 16 in Lakewood, WA. He was 79.

Born in North Dakota in 1923, he served in three wars: World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

See TAPS, Page 20

Letters

Continued from Page 18

try to stereotype Vietnam vets as all having PTSD, all having taken drugs; all are wife beaters; all suffer from flashbacks; etc., etc., but when one of our own makes such an unfounded statement, I am offended.

If you want to know what a typical Vietnam vet is all about, here is my letter to the editor published in the *Dallas Morning News* on June 1, 1999:

Rick Williams
Garland, TX

★★★★★

"I served in Vietnam between October 1967 and October 1968 as a helicopter gunship pilot. I am married and never been divorced. I am employed and have never been turned down for a job because of being a Vietnam vet. I have never indulged in drugs before, during or since my service in Vietnam. I don't have scruffy beard, and my hair is not tied in a pony tail. I don't wear jungle fatigues, and I don't "work for food." In summary, I am typical Vietnam veteran.

"When I came back from Vietnam, there were no parades or other expressions of gratefulness from the American people, and I have read that I am supposed to be resentful. However, this has never bothered me. Why should the American people thank me? It is I who would like to thank America for the opportunity to have served the greatest country in the world.

VHPA announces election policy

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

National Election Policy

This document sets forth the policy of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA™) regarding candidates for office, campaigning and campaign materials and election procedures. Much of this policy has always been in effect and the purpose of this document is to express that policy in writing in a singular source, along with establishing some procedural matters related thereto.

CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

The following requirements will apply:

The candidate must sign and mail a letter stating his intention to seek a specific office to VHPA HQ or any EC member NLT 12 Midnight, June 15 in the year the candidate is seeking elected office.

The Candidate must be an active member of VHPA for a minimum of one year prior to the first day of the VHPA national Reunion in which he is seeking elected office.

Upon receiving the candidate's letter and verifying his eligibility to hold office, VHPA HQ will mail a "Candidate Packet" containing a copy of the VHPA Election Policy, a Candidate Information Sheet and the name and contact information of the Executive Council Election Coordinator. The Candidate Information Sheet must be filled out and returned to the EC Election Coordinator for posting to the VHPA Website.

The Candidate Information Sheet of every candidate for each office will be posted to a VHPA web site NLT June 20 in the year they are seeking elected office. All names will be posted at the same time and listed alphabetically by office sought.

Any and all questions the candidate may have will be directed to the Executive Council Election Coordinator.

CAMPAIGNING AND CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

The following rules will apply:

Candidates and/or their supporters may campaign and

See ELECTION POLICY, Page 21

Taps

Continued from Page 19

He retired from the Army in 1968 at Fort Lewis after 26 years of service. He then went to work for the U.S. Postal Service, retiring in 1982.

— Steve Henshaw

Michael Russell

A pilot on his last day of work for an air medevac company died Jan. 28 when his helicopter crashed in a West Chicago field after refueling, the Chicago Tribune reported.

Michael Russell, 52, of Cataula, GA, was killed in the crash of a 1989 Augusta 109C helicopter.

Russell was nearly two hours into his last shift at Air Angels Inc. when the helicopter crashed shortly before 9 p.m. He was pronounced dead at the scene of multiple injuries, a DuPage County coroner's spokeswoman said.

Russell, who grew up in Waukegan, IL, began his flying career in the military.

After graduating from high school, he served in Vietnam with the Army. His duties included flying a helicopter that relayed information on the enemy's location to ground forces, said his wife, Gloria, from her home in Cataula.

The couple have two adult sons.

He was shot down several times and received a Purple Heart Medal, she said.

Russell remained in the military for several years and had been a member of the active reserves, an Army

spokeswoman said.

His career, which included serving as a flight instructor, also took him to the Middle East, where he worked for Bell Helicopter and other companies.

Bill Shobel

We lost another of our great warriors. My good flight school buddy, Bill Shobel, died Dec. 28 due to complications from a brain tumor.

We were classmates in the Orange Hat class 70-03 in Fort Wolters and 70-05 at Fort Rucker. We had a blast in flight school, as everyone of us can attest!

I lost touch with Bill after that. He served with the 116 AHC Hornets in 1970-71.

After Vietnam he eventually became a financial consultant, living in North Palm Beach, FL.

I ran into him again at the Lakeland, FL, Sun N Fun Airshow, about six years ago and we kept in touch ever since. I last saw Bill at the 2000 reunion in Washington DC. I remember he ran in the 5k run and was proud that he placed in the top five. He was in great shape.

That next fall he told me he had a brain tumor. I talked to him on the phone, and he did not sound good, but he was confident and in good spirits. He would beat this thing.

He was looking forward to coming to Sun N Fun again. He was looking forward to coming to Las Vegas last year, but could not get a ride, since he could not drive.

The tumor finally got the best of a good man. I will miss him, he was a great flight school buddy and good friend.

God Bless and Hand Salute.

— Herb Nagel

Election policy outlined for VHPA

Continued from Page 20

provide campaign literature and materials at the Annual Reunion.

Candidates and/or their supporters must obtain the permission of hotel management prior to posting campaign materials on the hotel property.

The VHPA or its HQ will not provide member information, of any kind, to candidates and/or their supporters to be used in the campaign.

Candidates and/or their supporters may not use any National VHPA web site to post campaign information.

Candidates and/or their supporters may not use *The VHPA Newsletter*© to campaign for office.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

The following steps will apply:

The EC Election Coordinator will conduct the actual elections in conjunction with the VHPA President's agenda for the Annual Business Meeting.

The EC Election Coordinator will assemble a group of election volunteers to assist with the actual elections. All volunteers must be active members of the VHPA. No volunteer can be a member of the Executive Council, a Committee Chairman, or a candidate of any office being decided at the Annual Business Meeting. The room will be "sealed" during the entire election process.

Ballots will have the names of each candidate, in order of declaration for office, listed on them. Ballots will be passed out by the election volunteers after all candidates for that office have spoken, marked by circling the name of the candidate to receive the member's vote and collected by the election volunteers.

The election for Junior Member at Large will be conducted first. The election for Vice President will follow the completion of the first election.

All candidates must be present at the Annual Business Meeting.

The order of candidate speaking will be determined by random draw prior to the start of the Annual Business Meeting.

Each candidate for office will be allotted two (2) minutes to speak to the member present and voting.

If there are three (3) or more candidates seeking the same office, a candidate must receive more than fifty (50) percent of the votes to win. If no candidate receives more than fifty (50) percent of the votes, a runoff between the two (2) candidates with the most votes will be held. The only exception to this rule will be if two or more candidates tie with the same number of votes for second place and the candidate with the most votes does not receive more than fifty (50) percent of the votes cast, all three (3) candidates will be in the runoff.

Ballots will be taken from the Annual Business Meeting by the election volunteers, under the supervision of the EC Election Coordinator, and sorted, counted and verified by the election volunteers. All the election volunteers will sign the count sheets and give them to the EC Election Coordinator. The EC Election Coordinator will verify the count totals and add the vote totals of each election.

The EC Election Coordinator will announce the results.

All ballots and result sheets will be kept at VHPA for one (1) year.

An active member is not required to register for or attend the VHPA Annual Reunion to attend the Annual Business Meeting and vote in the elections of VHPA officers. However, active members not registered at the Reunion must check in at the Registration desk and pick up an admittance ticket for the Annual Meeting prior to the start of the action election process.

Adopted in principal by the VHPA Executive Council in a teleconference meeting on January 29, 2003.

VHPA briefs

Author writes about Schilling

Author and Army brat Donna Moreau is writing a nonfiction book about Schilling Manor: The Home of the Waiting Wives of the U.S. Armed Forces in Salina, KS.

The base was established by the Department of Defense during the Vietnam War.

As a teenager who grew up at Schilling Manor, Donna is looking for anyone who lived at Schilling Manor during the Vietnam War.

You can contact her at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Membership Directory correction

On Page 350, in Section VI — the History of Helicopter Maintenance in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era, the paragraph titled "Personal Recollections of Jerry Turner" should have been titled "Personal Recollections of Floyd Sparkman."

The Directory editor mistakenly picked up the wrong author from an email message and wishes to thank both VHPA members Edward "Jerry" Turner and Floyd Sparkman for providing information to the VHPA.

— Mike Law

Mini-reunion planned on July 3

The A/502nd — 175th Outlaws will be having a mini-reunion from 1-5 p.m. on July 3 at the Orlando Reunion.

Bunn resigns from selection position

I have attended 16 reunions and for the past 13 years I have served the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association in various capacities, including reunion chairman, member at large, and president.

I negotiated the contract for the 1992 Reunion in Atlanta and for the past nine years I have served as chairman of the Site Selection Committee. Except for 1998, I have negotiated every hotel contract after 1994 and my negotiated reunions will run until 2004.

Some have been good and some have been "difficult," but as I have said before, the VHPA would have fun in a landfill. My goal has always been to keep costs down and get the most "bang for the buck." To try to keep attendance affordable.

Many have asked me why I stayed so long in this work. I'll tell you now.

In October of 1969 a flight school classmate of mine, Jim Cavender, was killed in a crash while flying as co-pilot on an H model attempting to get through the Duc Me Pass between Ban Me Thout and Nin Hoa in poor weather. He had been with the 48th AHC just one week.

I remembered Jim as a "good time Charlie" who tried to steal every dance with Elaine at the WOC Lounge.

At my first reunion, the second for the VHPA, I thought how Jim Cavender would have loved the VHPA and would not have missed a reunion if he had survived. I tried to attend every one in remembrance of him, and when the opportunity to serve came, I didn't hesitate.

Those 13 years have been spent working for an idea. The idea that this Brotherhood could come together every

At my first reunion, the second for the VHPA, I thought how Jim Cavender would have loved the VHPA and would not have missed a reunion if he had survived.

year and, for a few days, recall our youth and enthusiasm for a just and honorable cause to which we dedicated ourselves, and for which we fought in a far away land.

To relive an adventure that bound us together and draw strength from one another as we did so long ago. To put aside, for a short time, the pettiness and strife that had become a daily part of our "other self" and be with men that you could trust with your life once again. Men who were your brothers regardless of their background or what offenses they may have committed. To remember those that didn't get a chance to grow old and worry how the beer would affect their medication.

Now, I feel that my idea has been forgotten by many and corrupted by others. We have former members who would sue their own buddies and current members who would encourage them.

To me, that is tantamount to stepping off paces between our hooches to direct VC mortar fire.

To make matters worse, I find myself unable to continue serving the current Executive Council due to extremely different philosophical viewpoints relative to the way in which site selection, as well as the annual reunion, is conducted.

For these reasons, I have tendered my resignation as chairman of the Site Selection Committee to the Executive Council.

I will continue to see all of you at the reunions, hopefully for many years to come. After 2004 though . . . it's not my fault!

— Kenny Bunn

UN honors VHPA member for rescues

VHPA member Bill Perkins was honored by the United Nations for his participation in the 1980 rescue of almost 1,000 Vietnamese boat refugees in the South China Sea.

He volunteered as a civilian pilot to fly a small civilian Bell 206B helicopter from deck of a small coastal freighter up to a distance of 100 miles from the ship in good and very marginal weather conditions to find the small inland boats full of men, women and children floating without

power, food or water in the open ocean.

He did this without any other boats or aircraft to rescue him should he go down at sea a long distance from the freighter or the Vietnam coast. Perkins was only American involved in this UN/Red Cross mercy mission and therefore was representing the American people and all Vietnam veteran helicopter crews.

In 1970 he flew Army Medical Evacuation (Dustoff) helicopters of

the 498th Medical Co. in northern II Corps. He was shot down in flames on June 9, 1970, while he and fellow crew were attempting to land and medevac a wounded 173rd Airborne Brigade trooper outside of LZ Uplift.

He also took hostile fire hits on his Dustoff aircraft on other missions that year.

The Army Medical Command credited him with evacuating some 1,500 soldiers and civilians from the combat zone to evacuation hospitals.

Time draws near for Reunion 2003

It's hard to believe, but by the time you receive this newsletter, there will be only about 90 days remaining before our 20th reunion, which will be held at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando.

We expect many more than the current 2,000 registered members and their guests to attend.

As it did last year, the VHPA has used technology to find a substantial number of new members, and is in the process to sending out mailings about our association.

Including in their packet is an invitation to attend the Orlando reunion. It is possible you may find and meet that special long-lost friend from so long ago . . . but you have to attend to make it happen!

Haven't signed up yet?

Simply dial up www.vhpareunion.org to complete the simple procedure . . . for both events and hotel rooms, or mail/fax the form within this Newsletter to our Headquarters staff.

Most of our members will arrive on Wednesday, July 2. To make it easier for those flying, we have arranged for Atlas Motor Coach to run a VHPA-dedicated shuttle service from the Orlando Airport to the hotel every 20 minutes from noon to 7 p.m. The cost is only \$5 per person, much less than the typical \$32 cab ride.

Look for a large white bus with the VHPA sign in the window and flag it down. "Atlas Motor Coach" is written in large red letters on the side of each bus.

We kick off the reunion with a welcome reception that night at 7. First-time reunion attendees are invited to a special "pre-welcome" cocktail party at 5:30 p.m. Great entertainment has been booked for our first night . . . a great group called "Volcano Joe" (now that's setting the tone for the evening!).

There also will be plenty of time to meet those special people you haven't seen in years! Similar to last year, the first two beers are on us!

Our annual business meeting is Thursday, July 3, starting at 9 a.m. There also is a special brunch that starts at 9:30 a.m. for spouses or guests . . . which includes the comedy show "Kim and Scott Tie the Knot." It will be an absolute hoot!

There also will be plenty of time for those very special unit mini-reunions in the afternoon, as well as the following several days. A separate detailed schedule is published in this Newsletter and posted on our website.

Thursday evening, we have set up a private and totally



dedicated VHPA "Arabian Nights" dinner theater show located a few miles from the hotel. The performance has been custom-tailored to our association, with a performing cast and support group of more than 100 very talented people.

More than 60 of the world's most graceful horses will be combined with the grandeur of a full Broadway-type production. Did I mention that included is a one-hour reception and a full prime rib dinner, with all the beer, wine and Coca-Cola products you can consume?

Due to capacity restraints, attendance is limited to the first 1,200 members and guests who register for this event . . . and we will sell out ahead of time.

For members who prefer a different theme or after the Arabian Nights show sells out, we have arranged for a different dinner show on the same July 3 evening that is equally spectacular: Pirates Dinner Adventure.

This is an interactive show featuring a 46-foot-long Spanish galleon pirate ship anchored in a 300,000-gallon lagoon with night sky lighting, cannon blasts, and indoor fire and fireworks effects.

A one-hour reception is included, along with all the wine and beer you wish. More than 40 performers participate in the show, in addition to about 50 children of guests who attend. Children who are selected get to race in dinghies around the lagoon as part of the show, and brave the sea-crusty captain.

While this show will not be exclusively for VHPA members and guests, it will be a great experience that will be enjoyed by all.

On Friday, July 4, we have planned an early morning 5k run for those interested. We also have set up two special VHPA-organized tours outside the hotel: A day visit to the Kennedy Space Center or a trip to Port Canaveral to board the Sun Cruz offshore casino ship for a few hours.

For sure, plan on being around the hotel on the evening of July 4, starting about 7 p.m. We have a truly special event planned!

Those of you who remember last year's great pool party at the Riviera in Las Vegas: This one will be even more grand and fun.

In addition to a fabulous, live band called "The Tremors," we have arranged for our own 15-minute major fireworks and laser show with a very patriotic theme at the pool, all synced by computer to music.

The text in the vendor contract's first paragraph starts
See POOL, Page 24

Pool party features patriotic theme

Continued from Page 23

out with: "The sounds of helicopters overhead will introduce a patriotic soundtrack — and laser and pyro display, including Neil Diamonds "America," Lee Greenwood's God Bless the USA." Eric Burden's "I've Got to Get Out of This Place" and some other rock classics also will be synched to aerial fireworks and high-powered laser displays.

The pool party on July 4 will be a truly very special evening, with \$1 beers, great music, and — similar to last year — the hotel will have available "pool food" (hamburgers, hot dogs, barbecue, etc.) on a cash basis.

Also being planned is the return of the WOC Chorus to perform at 8:45 p.m. Bring your swimsuit! However, to attend, you must have a ticket. The fireworks/laser display will not be easily visible from most outside areas around the hotel nor many of the hotel rooms.

The party continues inside at 11 p.m. with a separate band in the adjacent hotel lobby area.

Saturday, July 5, we have our own golf tournament at the premium Mystic Dunes course in the morning, and our final banquet starts at 5:45 p.m. Great entertainment has been booked, including the fabulous headliner Susan McDonald from Las Vegas, and the major, 17-member group "Dance Express" that will perform after dinner and at our closing dance.

As part of our 20th anniversary, we also will be honoring our initial 66 founders and the 20 former presidents, along with some other surprises. It truly will be special evening.

Sunday, July 6, most of the membership and their guest will be checking out of the Rosen and, for those of you heading back to the airport, we have again arranged for Atlas Motor Coach to run a VHPA-dedicated shuttle service every 20 minutes from 6 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The cost remains \$5 per person, payable upon departure.

We also have a great 5-day/4-night cruise extension



booked on Royal Caribbean starting July 6. While, by the time you receive this, our dedicated cabin blocks with the cruise line will have expired. However, most likely it still will be possible to join the cruise by calling JoAnne Weeks at Cruise Holidays in Kansas City at (816) 741-7417, or toll free at [REDACTED]

Details are on our website and in our past two newsletters.

Those booked on the cruise will meet for a breakfast, which includes champagne mimosas, starting at 9:30 p.m. Transfer bus transportation will leave directly from the breakfast area at the Rosen at promptly 11 a.m., en route to the ship, which docks at Port Canaveral about 50 minutes away.

The cruise returns Thursday, July 10, with transportation back to the Orlando Airport or Rosen Hotel.

Tickets are required for all events and, once ordered through our website or our Headquarters, they will be available in your packets upon check-in.

Vendors with merchandise of interest to VHPA members and their guests will be open throughout the reunion and, of course, unit mini-reunions will be taking place on a predetermined schedule thorough out the entire reunion.

Static aircraft displays are planned in, at, and in some cases near the hotel, with perhaps even a real UH-1 Huey helicopter ride provided by the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation for VHPA members and/or guests. Details are being worked on as this article goes to press.

Also in the planning stage are possible rides in a Jet Ranger-type aircraft.

Now is the time to register and book your hotel room. In addition, airfares to Orlando at the moment are very inexpensive from most locations. We already are getting reports that some of the flights are filling up, as Orlando is one of the primary tourist destinations on July 4 weekend. Book early!

In summary, our 20th reunion will be truly special. Make your reservation for events and hotel now at www.vhpareunion.org or send the form in this Newsletter. See you there!

— David Rittman

VHPA shuttle service available at airport

Flying to the VHPA reunion in Orlando this July?

To assist you getting to and from the airport to the Rosen Centre, the VHPA is running our own 49-passenger bus shuttle using Atlas Motor Coach.

The hotel is about 20 minutes from the airport and is a somewhat expensive cab ride — about \$32 each

way, plus tip.

Look for a large, white bus with the VHPA sign in the window and flag it down. "Atlas Motor Coach" is written in large red letters on the side of each bus.

On Wednesday, July 2, the buses will make the rounds at the various gates at the Orlando Airport every 20 minutes, from noon until 7 p.m. The

cost is \$5 per person, collected when you get off the bus at the hotel.

On Sunday, July 6, the buses will depart the Rosen Centre for the Orlando Airport every 20 minutes from 6 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

The cost is \$5 per person, collected when you get on the bus.

The shuttle will not run at times other than listed above.

Taking cruise after reunion? Here is update

VHPA will handle your transfer from the Rosen Centre to the ship Sunday morning July 6. If you already have paid for Royal Caribbean transfers, that amount (about \$38) will be refunded to you upon final billing from the travel agency.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. that Sunday for a great champagne brunch . . . complementary to all people going on the cruise. VHPA buses will leave promptly at 11 a.m. direct to the ship. At least one bus will be ADA equipped.

Upon return to port on July 10, VHPA buses will depart the dock at 9 a.m. prompt (a revised time from previous newsletters). This will get you to the Orlando airport by about 10 a.m.

We recommend you do not schedule flight departures before 11 a.m. if you are going to use our VHPA buses. At least one bus will be ADA equipped.

A separate VHPA bus also will depart at 9 a.m.

prompt back to the Rosen Centre Hotel, arriving about 9:50 a.m.

If these times are not convenient for you, of course there are cabs and other transportation at the dock you can arrange on your own.

There is still room on cruise

Call JoAnn Weeks at Cruise Holiday in Kansas City, MO, toll free at (816) 741-7417 or toll free at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Please identify yourself as belonging to the VHPA, and she will be glad to assist you.

Details are in our past two newsletters or on our website at www.vhpareunion.org

Briefly, the ship Sovereign of the Seas will depart Port Canaveral near Orlando that Sunday for a five-day, four-night cruise to the Bahamas. It returns Thursday July 10. It's may not be too late if you want to go . . . but call now!

Reunion schedule

Tuesday, July 1

1-6 p.m. — Registration for preregistered guests only. Desk area No. 3.

Wednesday, July 2

9: a.m.-7 p.m. — Registration, Desk Area No. 2; preregistration, Desk Area No. 3.

9 a.m.-6 p.m. — Vendor Area. Junior Ballroom F&G.

9 a.m.-6 p.m. — Helicopter Static Display. Junior Ballroom F&G.

9 a.m.-6 p.m. — Memorabilia Display, Florida Chapter. Signature 1.

5:30-7 p.m. — First time reunion attendee special welcome reception (no cost), Grand Ballroom A.

7-10 p.m. — Welcome reception and party for all members and their guests. Grand Ballroom C, D, & E. Music by "Volcano Joe." First two beers are on us.

Thursday, July 3

8 a.m.-6 p.m. — Registration, Desk Area No. 2; preregistration, Desk area No. 3.

9 a.m.-noon — Annual Business Meeting (dues current members only). Grand Ballroom A&B.

9:30 a.m.-noon — Brunch for spouses and guests at hotel. Include the comedy show "Kim and Scott Tie the Knot," a hilarious Italian wedding celebration. Grand Ballroom D&E.

Noon-6 p.m. — Vendor area . Junior Ballroom F&G.

Noon-6 p.m. — Memorabilia Display, Florida Chapter. Signature 1.

Noon-6 p.m. — Helicopter Static Display. Junior Ballroom F&G.

1-5 p.m. — Mini reunions.

6-10 p.m. — Pirates Adventure Reception

and Dinner Show. (Leaves hotel at 6 p.m. prompt! . . . or:

6:30-10:30 p.m. — Arabian Nights Reception and Dinner Show. (Private VHPA show extravaganza.) Buses depart 6:30-6:45 p.m.

Friday, July 4

7 a.m.-8:30 a.m. — 5k run. Buses depart hotel at 7 a.m. promptly.

8 a.m.-noon — Mini-reunions.

8 a.m.-6 p.m. — Registration. Desk area No. 2.

8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. — Kennedy Space Center Tour.

9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. — Offshore gaming ship Sun Cruz. (Docks at Port Canaveral.)

9 a.m.-6 p.m. — Vendor area. Junior Ballroom F&G.

9 a.m.-6 p.m. — Helicopter Static Display. Junior Ballroom F&G.

9 a.m.-6 p.m. — Memorabilia Display, Florida Chapter. Signature 1.

1-5 p.m. — Mini-Reunions.

7-11 p.m. — Major Theme Pool Party.

Live entertainment "Tremors" (an 8-member party band) starting at 8 p.m.; our own huge fireworks and laser show about 9:30 p.m.; WOC Chorus about 8:45 p.m., pool food available from hotel on cash basis; bring swimwear; rain contingency: Grand Ballroom.

10:30 p.m.-1 a.m. — Party with great 2-piece combo continues inside the hotel lounge area, due to noise abatement codes outside the hotel after 11 p.m. Hotel lobby and convention pre-function area.

Saturday, July 5

6:30 a.m.-2 p.m. — Golf Tournament at Mystic Dunes. Includes lunch and mementos; bus leaves promptly from hotel at 6:45 a.m.; T time 8 a.m.

8 a.m. — Mini-reunions.

9 a.m.-6 p.m. — Registration. Desk Area 2.

9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. — Vendor Area. Junior

Ballroom F&G.

9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. — Helicopter Display. Junior Ballroom F&G.

9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. — Memorabilia Display, Florida Chapter . Signature 1.

5:45 p.m.-9:30 p.m. — Final Banquet. (Typically this is a coat-and-tie event. Ladies wear cocktail dresses.) Grand Ballroom

9:30 p.m.-midnight — Final Banquet Dance with 17-member "Dance Express."

Sunday July 6

(Checkout for majority of reunion attendees)

6 a.m.-12:30 p.m. — Shuttle buses depart hotel to Orlando Airport every 20 minutes.

9:30-11 a.m. — For members and guests going on the cruise only: Complete buffet breakfast, champagne mimosas, and pre-cruise meeting with Royal Caribbean. Signature 1 Banquet Room on first floor near VHPA registration area. Bring all luggage with you to room marked with luggage tags provided by ship. You will be boarding the buses direct from this room.

11 a.m. — Buses promptly depart Rosen Centre Hotel en route to Royal Caribbean ship Sovereign of the Seas for 5-day/4-night cruise (must have purchased the transfer option as part of cruise).

Noon-12:30 p.m. — Cruise participants arrive at Port Canaveral for Royal Caribbean Cruise.

1-1:30 p.m. — Cruise participants board ship Sovereign of the Seas directly from Signature 1 Banquet Area.

Thursday July 10

7:30 a.m. — Cruise Ship Sovereign of the Seas docks at Port Canaveral.

9 a.m. — Buses depart Royal Caribbean dock for Orlando Airport . . . or

9 a.m. — Bus departs Royal Caribbean dock for Rosen Centre Hotel for members and guests who have left their car at the hotel during the cruise.

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

20th Annual Reunion • Orlando, FL • July 2-5, 2003

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION/HOTEL RESERVATION REQUEST FORM

Register online at www.vhpareunion.com or mail completed form to:

VHPA Headquarters, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698

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

Member name:	Member No.:	Hotel room? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Flight class:	Chapter:	
1st combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
2nd combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
3rd combat unit:	Call sign:	Year(s):
Address:	Address change?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
City:	State:	Zip:
E-mail address:	Telephone: ()	Fax: ()
Wife/guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Guest name:	Hometown:	18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

A hotel registration form will be sent to you with your registration receipt. The hotel registration form must be completed and mailed to the Rosen Centre. Telephone and fax requests will not be honored.

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION INFORMATION

EVENT	No. of people	Price	Total
Registration through 4/30/2003*		@ \$45.00	
Registration after 4/30/2003*		@ \$55.00	
Total from sidebar	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
New attendee reception (July 2)		Free	
Welcome reception (July 2)		@ \$20.00	
Business meeting (July 3)		Free	
Ladies Brunch (July 3)		@ \$25.00	
Dinner Theatre/Arabian or Dinner Theatre/Pirates (July 3)		@ \$40.00	
5k Run (July 4)		@ \$10.00	
Kennedy Space Tour or Sun Cruz Casino (July 4)		@ \$35.00 @ \$15.00	
Evening Pool Party (July 4)		@ \$20.00	
Golf Tournament (July 5)		@ \$95.00	
Final Banquet/Dance (July 5)		@ \$55.00	
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	1 year	@ \$36.00	
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	3 years	@ \$90.00	
Life membership		@ \$450.00	
GRAND TOTAL			

REUNION T-SHIRTS		
QTY.	SIZE	AMT.
	S@\$15.00	
	M@\$15.00	
	L@\$15.00	
	XL@\$15.00	
	XXL@\$17.00	
	XXXL@\$19.00	

SIDEBAR TOTAL:		
QTY.	BANQUET MEAL	
	Fillet Mignon	
	Florida Grouper	
	Vegetarian	

Membership Fund contribution:	\$ _____
Scholarship Fund contribution:	\$ _____
General Fund contribution:	\$ _____
Vietnam War Museum contribution:	\$ _____

*Each person 18 and older must pay registration fee.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

MC or Visa No: Expiration date: Signature:

CHECK or MONEY ORDER PAYMENT

In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion 2003" with form.

Amendment to bylaws goes to a vote

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Notice of Proposed Amendment to our Bylaws Jan. 29, 2003

To be voted on at our next annual business meeting in Orlando, Florida July 3, 2003.

Our founding Bylaws and Constitution were written almost 20 years ago when our original 66 founders first formed our Association. In 1989 the Association incorporated in the State of Kansas and since that time there have been a number of amendments to the original Bylaws and Constitution.

One of the goals of your current Executive Council was to update, clarify, and combine our existing Bylaws, Constitution, and various resolutions into one comprehensive document. This has now been completed, and in compliance with our existing Constitution and Bylaws, this memo is the required prior notice for voting on this change at our next annual business meeting scheduled in Orlando, FL at the Rosen Center Hotel, 9 a.m., July 3, 2003.

A conscious effort was made not to significantly change base content or original intent of our existing corporate documents and resolutions except as required during this process, which has been ongoing for several months. Legal representatives, highly knowledgeable with the statutes of the State of Kansas, and who specialize in corporate law and federal tax requirements, including those for non-profits associations such as ours, assisted in

the process. They also recommended that we add provisions to identify required quorums, a process regarding special meetings, and other minor clarifications and process procedures. Once merged together, the text was then re-sequenced into a clear logical sequence. The revised by-laws dovetail with our Articles of Incorporations currently filed with the State of Kansas.

Also, on Sept. 8, 2002, your Executive Council provided notice of our recommendation to delete the following sentence from our existing Constitution, Article VIII, paragraph b. "The Executive Council must approve the proposed amendment(s)." Details are on our website and have been previously published in our newsletter. This sentence was removed from the revised by-laws when we merged the various documents and text.

Printed in our current newsletter, which has been expanded to make room for this notice without impacting its normal content, and posted on our web site is a complete copy of our proposed new bylaws for your review and approval this July 3rd in Orlando. These bylaws, when adopted, would then replace our existing Bylaws and Constitution in total.

Joe Bilitzke, President

Dan Ferguson, Sr. Member at Large

Dana Young, Vice President

Mike Sheuerman, Mid Term Member at Large

Tom Payne, Secretary-Treasurer

Angelo Spelios, Jr. Member at Large

Dave Rittman, Past President

Wally Magathan, VHPA In-house Legal Counsel

Bylaws of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA)

CHAPTER 1 — NAME

This Association shall be known as the "Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association," hereinafter referred to as the "VHPA." It is an organization for all helicopter pilots who flew helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era, (1961-1975).

CHAPTER 2 — OBJECTIVES

The VHPA is dedicated to the fulfillment of the following purposes:

1. To enhance and accredit the cohesiveness, esprit de corps, and traditions of the valor of rotary wing pilots who flew helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era.
2. To seek out, using whatever means available, individuals who piloted rotary wing aircraft in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era and inform them of the existence of the VHPA and encourage all eligible individuals to become members.

CHAPTER 3 — OPERATION

1. The VHPA will operate on a calendar year basis.
2. The VHPA shall operate as a not for profit organization.
3. An annual audit will be conducted by a recognized financial agency selected by the Executive Council.
4. The VHPA shall not engage in partisan politics or endorse political parties, candidates, or public officials. Nothing herein shall restrict individual members from being individually engaged in political activities, political parties, or political office. However, members may not mention their membership in the VHPA when involved in such political activities, political parties, or political office in a manner so as to imply endorsement by the VHPA.

CHAPTER 4 — MEMBERSHIP

1. Pilots who flew helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era are eligible for membership.

Members shall be classified as Life, General, and Honorary.

Membership classifications are as follows:

- a. Life membership will be conferred upon an individual eligible for membership, who pays a specified

amount of dues as directed by the Executive Council and approved by the general membership.

b. General membership will be conferred upon an individual eligible for membership, who annually pays a specified amount of dues as directed by the Executive Council and approved by the general membership.

c. Honorary membership is open to distinguished persons, such as aviation pioneers, guest speakers at annual reunions, and aviation dignitaries. Honorary memberships must be voted upon by the Executive Council. Honorary memberships shall be conferred for life by the Executive Council. Honorary members shall not be required to pay dues nor shall they be permitted to vote at membership meetings.

4. In order to vote or participate in any VHPA election or petition, or to be elected or serve as a VHPA officer or on its Executive Council or to participate in VHPA offices, functions and/or meetings, or to be included within a quorum of membership, a member must be current in his VHPA dues.

CHAPTER 5 — EXPULSION FROM MEMBERSHIP

1. Members of any classification, including elected and appointed officials of the VHPA, may be expelled for cause or conduct which the Executive Council deems contrary to the best interest of the VHPA or interferes with the fulfillment of the purpose of the VHPA.

2. General members shall be suspended for nonpayment of annual dues and shall be dropped from the active membership roster until dues are brought current.

CHAPTER 6 — ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSOCIATION

1. The officers of the VHPA shall be as follows:

- a. President
- b. Vice President (who shall be President-Elect and who shall succeed the President).
- c. Three Members at Large.
- d. The Immediate Past President.

2. The Executive Council shall consist of seven members as follows:

- a. President.
- b. Vice President.
- c. Three Members at Large.
- d. The Immediate Past President.
- e. Secretary/Treasurer.

3. Holding office, or other positions of influence and trust, shall be limited to members who are current in their dues.

4. Committees

a. The VHPA may have standing committees whose duties and responsibilities are outlined in the job descriptions and policy statements recommended by the current President and approved by the Executive Council.

b. Vacancies for the chairmanship of all committees will be filled by appointment by the President.

c. All appointments to the chairmanship of committees are subject to ratification by the Executive Council.

CHAPTER 7 — ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. A Vice President and a Junior Member at Large shall be elected by a majority vote of those members present and voting at the annual reunion business meeting.

2. A Vice President shall be elected to a consecutive three year term on the Executive Council. The first year he will be Vice President. The second year he will be the President. The third year he will be the Immediate Past President.

3. Members at Large shall be elected to a consecutive three year term on the Executive Council. The first year he will be the Junior Member at Large. The second year he will be the Midterm Member at Large. The third year he will be the Senior Member at Large.

4. Individuals newly elected to office shall assume duties of that office at the close of the annual reunion.

5. Individuals already holding office shall advance to the next position of their term at the close of the annual reunion.

6. Officers shall be elected by members using written ballots.

CHAPTER 8 — VOTING

1. All members who are current in their dues (with the exception of the honorary members) are eligible to vote.

2. Members, in attendance at a meeting or special meeting, are eligible to vote. Proxy voting of members shall not be permitted.

3. Only life members and general members who are current in their dues shall be eligible to vote in VHPA matters. A list of members entitled to vote shall be reasonably made available on premises at the time and place at which a vote of the VHPA is conducted.

CHAPTER 9 — MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

1. There shall be an annual reunion of the VHPA. This annual reunion shall also serve as the annual meeting of the VHPA membership.

2. The annual reunion shall be conducted at a place and time determined by the Executive Council.

3. The Executive Council shall announce the date and place for the next year's annual reunion at each annual reunion.

4. In the event of a national or natural emergency, the Executive Council shall have the authority to cancel or postpone annual reunions.

5. Special meetings of the membership may be called by either a two-thirds vote of the Executive Council or by the Executive Council upon it being presented a petition signed by one-third of the VHPA's members. Notice of a special meeting shall state the time and date of the meeting (which shall be no less than 45 days after the date such notice is posted) and shall further specify, in reason-

able detail, all matters to be considered at the meeting. For purposes of the travel convenience of the members, all special meetings will be held in Kansas City, Missouri.

6. The presence of three percent (3%) of the membership at an annual meeting shall constitute a quorum. The presence of six percent (6%) of the membership at a special meeting shall constitute a quorum.

CHAPTER 10 — RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. The board of directors shall have all powers granted by Kansas law and statutes. The board of directors may, from time to time, conduct their business and operate under the name "Executive Council of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association" and in all matters the corporation's board of directors and its Executive Council shall be considered one and the same. It shall be responsible for the management of the affairs of the VHPA, including funds, programs, and regulations. It shall have the authority to approve budgets, authorize expenditures, seek and accept contributions, and approve annual meeting sites and program arrangements.

2. Unless otherwise specifically provided herein a majority opinion of the Executive Council shall prevail in all matters pertaining to the VHPA.

3. The Secretary/Treasurer shall have a vote only as a tiebreaker.

4. In addition to business conducted at the annual reunion, there shall be a minimum of three quarterly conference calls made by the Executive Council between annual reunions for the purpose of conducting VHPA business. Said calls are to be conducted at a time that is convenient for the majority of the Executive Council and may be called by any officer. The presence of four members of the Executive Council shall constitute a quorum. The President or Secretary/Treasurer shall have the authority to initiate additional conference calls as deemed necessary.

5. The Executive Council may delegate authority and functions to the Secretary/Treasurer or specific members of the VHPA.

6. The Executive Council shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by these Bylaws.

7. The Executive Council may upon motion go into executive session for purposes of discussion, voting and taking action on the following matters:

a. Legal actions or litigation (except that votes, minutes and settlement agreements must be open to the public on final disposition unless ordered closed by a court of competent jurisdiction).

b. Leasing, purchase or sale of real estate and/or negotiations of bids or contracts where general knowledge might adversely affect the amount paid in the transaction.

c. Hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting a particular employee.

d. Disciplinary and/or expulsion of any member.

The motion calling for the session must state the rea-

son for going into executive session. The Executive Council may exclude the membership from such session and the minutes and records of such session need not be disclosed to members who are not members of the Executive Council until the applicable matter is disposed, no longer an issue, finally decided or concluded. Executive session may only be called during a properly convened meeting of the Executive Council and a record shall be made of all motions and votes calling for an executive session.

CHAPTER 11 — DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the VHPA and all Executive Council meetings.

2. The President shall appoint or remove a committee chairman subject to ratification by the Executive Council.

3. The duties of the officers shall be those which are customary for such office and such other functions as may be prescribed by the Bylaws of the VHPA, the Executive Council, and written job descriptions.

CHAPTER 12 — SECRETARY/TREASURER

1. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be a member and shall be appointed or removed at the pleasure of the Executive Council.

2. The Secretary/Treasurer will be responsible for signing all checks for debts incurred by the VHPA along with the President of the VHPA (and in the President's absence, the Vice President or the Immediate Past President).

CHAPTER 13 — EARLY SUCCESSION TO OFFICE

1. Should the President resign, become incapacitated, or otherwise be unable to fulfill the duties of the Presidency, then the Vice President (President-Elect) shall succeed him as President for the remainder of the resigning or incapacitated President's term. At the completion of the resigning or incapacitated President's term, the President shall begin serving the term of the Presidency for which he was initially elected. The position of Vice President shall remain vacant until the annual reunion.

2. Should the Vice President resign, become incapacitated, or otherwise be unable to fulfill the duties of the Vice Presidency, the position of Vice President shall remain vacant for the duration of the term of the resigning or incapacitated Vice President. A President and a Vice President shall be elected at the next annual reunion.

3. Should both the President and the Vice President resign or become incapacitated, then the Senior Member at Large shall assume the duties of the Presidency (become the Acting President) for the remainder of the term of the President who has just resigned or become incapacitated, but shall not automatically succeed to the position of President after his term of Acting President has expired. A President and Vice President shall be elected at the next annual reunion with the new President's one year term beginning at the close of the annual reunion.

The Immediate Past President shall serve one additional year on the Executive Council.

4. Should the Senior Member at Large resign, become incapacitated, or become the Acting President, then the following shall automatically take place:

a. The Midterm Member at Large shall immediately become the Acting Senior Member at Large. He shall remain the Acting Senior Member at Large until he succeeds to the position of Senior Member at Large under the terms to which he was initially elected.

b. The Junior Member at Large shall immediately become the Acting Midterm Member at Large. He shall remain the Acting Member at Large until he succeeds to the position of the Midterm Member at Large under the terms to which he was initially elected.

5. Should the Midterm Member at Large resign, become incapacitated, or become the Acting Senior Member at Large, the Junior Member at Large shall immediately become the Acting Midterm Member at Large. He shall remain the Acting Midterm Member at Large until he succeeds to the position of Midterm Member at Large under the terms to which he was initially elected.

6. Should the Junior Member at Large resign, become incapacitated, or become the Acting Midterm Member at Large, the President or Acting President shall offer the position of Acting Junior Member at Large to any qualified previous Executive Council member to be ratified by the Executive Council.

7. Should the Immediate Past President resign, become incapacitated, or otherwise be unable to fulfill the duties of the Immediate Past President, the President or Acting President shall offer the position of Immediate Past President to any qualified previous Executive Council member to be ratified by the Executive Council.

CHAPTER 14 — CHAPTERS

1. Chapters may be recognized by the Executive Council. The Executive Council may revoke recognition of any Chapter for conduct of the Chapter or its officers or directors which the Executive Council deems contrary to the best interest of the VHPA or conduct which interferes with the fulfillment of the purposes of the VHPA.

2. Chapters are independent entities and are not and shall not be agents or partners of VHPA. Neither VHPA nor any Chapter shall have the right to contract for the other or bind the other to any contract without express prior written authorization.

3. VHPA shall not be liable for the actions or inactions of the local VHPA Chapters and the local VHPA Chapters shall not be liable for the actions or inactions of or by the VHPA.

CHAPTER 15 — BYLAW AMENDMENTS

1. Proposed amendments will be submitted to the VHPA or any VHPA officer 90 days prior to the annual meeting or special meeting at which they will be considered.

2. The adoption of the amendment(s) at a meeting of the VHPA shall be by two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. Unless otherwise stated in the amendment(s), all amendments to these Bylaws shall be effective the day following the conclusion of the meeting at which they were adopted.

CHAPTER 16 — INDEMNIFICATION

1. VHPA shall indemnify any member of the Executive Council, director or officer who is a party to any suit where the cause of action arose while such person was acting in that capacity; furthermore VHPA shall also indemnify any person on the same terms as one of its directors when such person is acting in the capacity of director, officer, agent or employee of any other entity, if such person was serving the other entity on behalf of and at the request of VHPA.

2. In civil matters, the VHPA shall indemnify such persons for judgments, amounts paid in settlement, and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees, if such person is either successful in his or her defense, the action is settled, or if such person acted in good faith with the reasonable belief his or her action was in the best interest of VHPA. In criminal matters, VHPA shall indemnify such persons for the aforementioned costs if such person acted without reasonable belief that such act was unlawful.

3. Advance fees and expenses may be paid by VHPA to such person, for the cost of his defense, if so approved by the Executive Council. If it is ultimately determined that such person is not rightfully entitled to indemnification, such person shall refund all fees and costs to VHPA.

4. Notwithstanding the foregoing sentence, a member of the Executive Council shall be liable to the extent provided by applicable law (i) for breach of his duty of loyalty to the VHPA or its members, (ii) for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (iii) under the provisions of K.S.A. 17-6424 and any amendments thereto, or (iv) for any transaction from which he derived an improper personal benefit.

Secretary/Treasurer

President

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200 • Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698

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

Membership application/change of address

New application Address change Directory correction

Membership dues: Annual: \$36 Three years: \$90 Life: \$450*

Newsletter subscription only: Annual: \$36 Three years: \$90

Add \$ _____ as my contribution to: Membership Fund Scholarship Fund

NAME

DATE OF BIRTH:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

HOME PHONE: ()

WORK PHONE: ()

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

OCCUPATION:

Please charge my MasterCard/Visa credit card.

Add \$15 for current Membership Directory,

Enclosed is a check/money order payable to VHPA.

plus \$5 for postage and handling

Credit card No.:

Expiration date:

SIGNATURE:

FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS:

SERVICE BRANCH:

COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS:

SOCIAL SECURITY NO.:

Information about each Vietnam tour:

Date of tour		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?



Chariots of Fire - AH-1G



Eye of the Tiger - OH-6A

ALSO AVAILABLE



Magic Carpet Ride-UH-1D/H,UH-1C

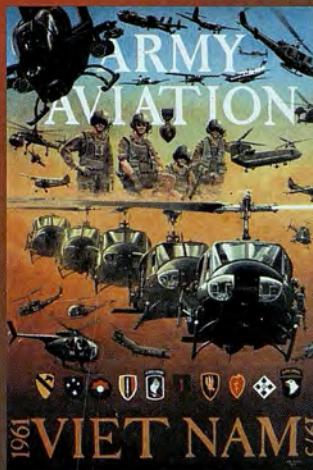


God's Own Lunatics

"God's Own Lunatics" is the phrase coined by noted combat journalist Joe Galloway as a description of respect and admiration for the helicopter crews that would go anywhere, anytime to support ground forces, often at their own great peril.

In his latest release, artist and former Huey crew chief Joe Kline captures just such a moment as a Huey comes in under heavy fire to extract a LRRP team.

Print can be ordered as shown or customized with aircraft markings of your choice, and also changed to a UH-1D.



Army Aviation-Vietnam



Have Guns, Will Travel - UH-1B/C



Iron Dance, CH-47A,B,C



Heavy Metal - CH-54



Dustoff-UH-1B/D/H

These limited edition prints are signed and numbered, and are 20" x 28" in size. Standard version, as shown, is \$80 ea. Personalized version with aircraft markings of your choice, is \$100 ea. Mastercard, Visa, check or money order accepted.

Joe Kline Aviation Art

Gilroy, CA 95020
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