



# THE VHPA AVIATOR

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

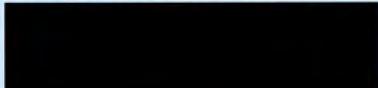
September/October 2005 Vol. 23, No. 5



Dave Rittman photo

What is the combat load of a UH-1 carrying beer and ice? Both are being loaded onto a Huey at the 40-40 yard in Qui Nhon for transport to LZ English by C/229th, 1st Cavalry Division, in March 1967.

|||||



# From the President

Being VHPA president has had a very surprising upside I didn't expect.

A couple of weeks ago, I received an email from VHPA member Bill McRae congratulating me on becoming the Big Kahuna. He mentioned the high expectations he had of me since I graduated from North Georgia College.



Mike Sheuerman

I emailed him, thanking him for the kind words and asked if and when he graduated from NGC. Turns out he graduated with me in 1969. Did I feel dumb? It has been 36 years, though. We've talked several times, remembering old friends from school, talking about our tours in Vietnam, catching up on the past few years and agreeing to get together in DC.

I also found out several other classmates went to flight school and flew in Vietnam. I'm in the process of contacting them now. Some are members. Some are not. More recruiting "targets of opportunity" for me.

Your Executive Council is working on several projects to benefit the Association.

The DC Reunion will be an outstanding event. If you

were there in 2000 and walked in the parade down Constitution Avenue, you remember the thrill of hearing more than 100,000 people cheer and applaud us.

To be honest, I didn't want to do it, but Fearless and Mike K. shamed me into it. Being in the parade remains one of the highlights of my life. We'll have a chance to do it again in 2006. Join me. You will not regret it or ever forget it.

We're also working on a new Request For Proposal to re-bid our management contract. Fritzco has done a good job, but we feel the contract needs more specific details and requirements as to how VHPA expects its business to be conducted.

We're working on an online dues renewal system where you, the regular member, can go to the website and renew your membership without contacting HQ. This system should be up and working by Jan. 1. Thanks to Cholly, Mike Law (glad you are back from the mission) and Gary Roush for all they do for VHPA. If we had to pay for their services, we couldn't afford the dues.

You still need to do the three things I asked of you:

- Send money to the scholarship fund
- Write a story for the *Aviator*
- Sign up a new guy

And you need to do all three. They are all important.

I promised this column would be shorter than the last one. Hope to see all of you in DC.

SIGN UP A NEW GUY!

— Mike Sheuerman, President

## Carsen Nesbitt receives VHPA scholarship

Carsen Nesbitt, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Nesbitt, is the 2005 winner of the VHPA Memorial Scholarship, administered by the Army Aviation Association of America.

Charles Nesbitt, who was in flight school Class 68-501/67-25 and served as a Gladiator in the 57th Assault Helicopter Company from 1968-69, is also member of the New York State Assembly.

Carsen Nesbitt, a sophomore political science major at Westminster College, is a Student Government Association senator and vice president of College Republicans.

She was named to the Dean's List both semesters of this past year. She also was named one of Westminster



VHPA Scholarship winner Carsen Nesbitt stands between her parents at her high school graduation.

College's Top Ten Freshmen.

While at college, she has participated in a number of musical theater productions, along with Women's Choir and the Campus Programming Council.

The fall semester of her sophomore year will be spent abroad in Oxford, England.

## New member count

Between July 22 and Sept. 26, 2005, the VHPA added 80 new members.

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

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## Letters

### Pilot's Vietnam service greeted while driving

Several weeks before the San Francisco Reunion, which was superb, while driving down one of our local streets in Corpus Christi, TX, a guy in the lane next to me starts waving at me.

Not sure what's coming next, I pulled alongside and opened my window.

He yelled at me: "Vietnam chopper pilot?"

"Yea," I said.

"I saw your bumper sticker, and you guys saved my life. Thanks!"

The light turned green and he was gone. That was a first for me.

Two lights later, a kid sticks his head out of his window and yells: "Vietnam!" and gives me the international hand signal — now that's more like it.

Change of location: Fishermen's Wharf, San Francisco, July 4th, Bistro Boudin's white table cloth restaurant. During the course of conversation with our waiter all of 18 or 19, I remarked that we were in town for a VHPA reunion.

When he presented our bill, he handed my wife one of Boudin's famous three-foot-long sourdough breads. I responded with "we did not order that" and the waiter said, "that's right, it is a gift for what you did." He turned and moved away very quickly.

After what we did over 30 years ago, there are still feelings out there with others than just us old rotor heads.

Carl A. Garske



### Riders enjoyed nice weather, light traffic

It is hard to believe a whole month has passed since the reunion in San Francisco. So I guess it is more than time to get the AAR out on the rides.

First off, I want to thank all of you who participated by coming, emailing, and riding. You all make my day.

This was a great reunion in a great place with great weather, put on by some hardworking VHPAers. Thanks!

Our first run Saturday morning to Hollister, led by Rich Lindekens, was great. We left San Francisco from across the street from the Marriott at Mel's Drive In (Happy Days fame).

Though 0730 might have been early to some, the city

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## Letters

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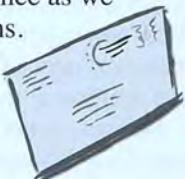
still slept, and the roads and Hwy. 280 South were empty, something I have never seen.

A pit stop in San Jose let us know the people of California were coming alive and the temperature was climbing. Rolling into Hollister was an experience as we merged with a large contingent of Demons. (I didn't get their whole club name and don't think I wanted to).

Rich put us into parking soon thereafter and we got to mingle with more bikes and bikers than I have seen since Sturgis or the Factory open house. We got to watch the Hells Angels mingle with their club wannabes, purchased our pins and got the hell out of there, heading over to Hwy. 1 and the Coast, and cooler temperatures.

We stopped in the small town of Pescadero for lunch before heading the final leg to San Francisco. Stopping at the Cliff House for a photo op, we then drove through Golden Gate Park, making a detour into Haight Ashbury to see what was left of the love children, before continuing back to the hotel and the end of a long day.

We rode 240 miles through some of the most beautiful



country in the world. Thanks, Sven and Cookie, for the beer.

Monday's ride, starting at 0700, saw us with more traffic, but the tourists were still asleep, so it allowed us to ride at our own pace. Along the Embarcadero, seeing the wharfs, Fort Mason, The Presidio of San Francisco, Fort Point and then across the Golden Gate. No Bay fog, so what a beautiful morning and view. Down into an almost deserted Sausalito for a bag of gas, what a bunch of sleepy heads, then out and across Hwy. 101. Heading up and through the clouds to the top of Mt. Tamalpais, what a view of the North Bay to the South Bay, with the city in the middle.

As the temperature climbed and the fog lifted over the ocean, we headed down to Stinson Beach and a run up to Point Reyes Station. We were so lucky with the lack of traffic by driving in the early morning.

We found a Czechoslovakian restaurant just opening for lunch. Valdimir, the owner and cook, was a World War II Czech Special Forces officer with memories of rounding up and killing 300 Nazis after the war. What a story and the food was great.

Back to San Francisco via the Golden Gate, Cliff House and the Golden Gate Park.

Once again, thank you all for one great reunion.

Ken Lindstrom

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## Branson rolls out welcome for vets

**WELCOME HOME!** You could hear it everywhere you went in Branson, MO, from June 13-19. The city and other organizations staged a weeklong celebration of thanks and honor to all Vietnam veterans — America's Tribute to Vietnam Veterans. "The Homecoming We Never Got" was the theme.

Thousands of vets and family members were there for this first citywide Vietnam veterans WELCOME HOME event; all doing what we do best, fellowship and support to one another.

Before I go any further, I have to confess and tell you, I have never volunteered to do anything for VHPA before. But, I have felt guilty about this for years. Then I read a

short article written by Edd Luttenberger in the March/April issue of the Newsletter, requesting volunteers for Branson. This was in my own AO. I was "retired" now. Finally, a chance to redeem myself after all these years.

Well, I just couldn't refuse to represent our organization at this event. Man was I glad I volunteered: I had a blast. So much fun, in fact, I promise to do it here every year if it's repeated. My sincere thanks go to Jim Messinger "Road Boss" of the traveling museum



Missouri volunteer "Mik" Mikulan signs up long-lost friend Roy Tyndall of Richland Hills, TX. The two had not seen each other in 36 years.

display and gift shop of The National Museum of the Vietnam War (NMVW). Remember the Dallas 2004 Reunion trip to Mineral Wells?

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## Letters

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### San Francisco reunion special for aviator

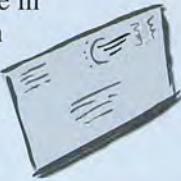
I have really enjoyed all of the reunions I have been able to attend. This year's was special. I live in the Bay Area, and my younger brother, Todd, came out to join me.

Todd was drafted in 1967 and beat me in country by a couple of months. He was in B Company, 1/27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, as a rifleman, "11 Bush."

I arrived in country in December 1967. I told nobody my brother was in country. I was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division Artillery!

I went over to the Wolfhounds to see him and give him his Christmas presents our mother had given me to take to him. I was told he was out in the jungle and would return in two weeks.

When I returned two weeks later, he was still out in the jungle. This time someone realized we had the same last



name and that we were brothers. He was sent back to Cu Chi, and was told he was going stateside. He declined the offer, and became a door gunner for the A Company, 25th Aviation Battalion, Little Bears.

He went on to become the 25th commanding general's door gunner. We flew together a couple of times in 1968. On July 2, he and I flew together again in the "EMU" Huey out of Hayward. We mounted the M-60s, and he took the gunner's spot, me flying and off we went.

It had been 37 years since we were in a helicopter together. I have a photo of us in Cu Chi together in 1968 with a helicopter, and now a photo of us in 2005 with a Huey with the M-60. I also took him with us to pick up the golfers, two helicopter rides he will always remember.

Which reminds me that a San Francisco Police sergeant, Dan Linahan, played a big part in securing the landing site at the Hall of Justice, was there to meet us, and might have given the daily briefing to the two San Francisco Police Department officers who visited the Mobile Officers Club. Sgt Dan made it happen.

I invited a friend Bob Evans, West Point, Class of 1967, I think, to the reunion to join Bill Miller, my brother Todd and me. Bob was the S-1 of an artillery battalion in Hawaii where Bill Miller, Jim Elliott, and I, all Vietnam helicopter pilots, were getting in our ground time. Bob made us feel like we belonged and we became good friends and stayed in touch.

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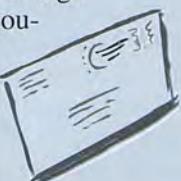
### Museum gives VHPA booth space

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Jim and Edd Luttenberger were coming to Branson with the NMVW exhibit and volunteered, again, to give VHPA some booth space.

Once I had announced my willingness to help out, the HQ office staff rapidly supplied me with a super 3 x 4-foot banner, all the paperwork necessary to sign folks up, bumper stickers, decals and a couple of directories.

Gary Roush provided over 200 pull-and-stick address labels for VHPA members and potential members in my local ZIP code area. I made up a cool (I thought) announcement postcard.



The HQ staff then made hard copies for me and mailed them back. I peeled and stuck all the addresses and stamps on (Remember, I'm doing penance at this point) and off they went. Now here's what happened.

All week long in southwest Missouri, the City of Branson (aka the Country Music and Veterans Capital of America), along with other local organizations, hosted a multitude of veterans' events, shows, displays, etc. For instance, The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF) flew in.

The foundation brought at least 7 Vietnam War air-

craft, i.e. UH-1s, a Cobra, OH-6, and even an old, refurbished Mohawk, Caribou and Birddog fixed-wings.

They gave rides all day long, and all week long. Hundreds of vets and tourists took them, and every one of them was so impressed. For me, hearing and seeing for 5 straight days, the near constant sounds and sights of their Hueys lifting off, flying around Table Rock Lake, and landing at their LZ, just 100 yards from our booth, was something to experience. Talk about a flashback to the old days.

Some of the events during the week were a golf tournament, a fishing tournament with volunteer Table Rock Lake fishing guides taking out fishing DAVs, the traveling three-quarter size Vietnam Dignity Memorial Wall, POW/MIA presentations and services, a good old-fashion All American parade that had more than 200 marching units, groups and branches, mobile displays, military static demonstrations, fireworks, all kinds of other Vietnam-related presentations and mini-reunions, professional singing groups, a blood drive.

Hell, the Budweiser Clydesdale horses, their beer wagon, and even the dog were there. More importantly, the Bud tanker truck also came. There were several hundred Rolling Thunder veteran bikers and their custom rides, and on and on.

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# Letters

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Bob went on the cruise and attended the Final Banquet. He was very impressed with the whole reunion, the friendship and camaraderie of the pilots. He had not been to a Dining Out in over 20 years; he really enjoyed the Final Banquet, the Missing Man Table, posting of the colors, and everything else about VHPA.

I was in a small unit first tour, 8 pilots, so I don't expect to see very many of them. I do see pilots I served with after my first tour. I flew airplanes second tour.

I have met a lot of fine people at the reunions. Thank you, B Company, 227th Cavalry, for coming to my rescue in Dallas. I met Joel Dozier at the Santa Clara Reunion. I also got to meet Glen Baxter, my primary flight instructor at Fort



Ray Murphy (left) visits with his younger brother Todd, who served in the Vietnam at the same time.

Wolters at the Washington Reunion. He performed wonders with me, and taught me how to really fly. It frightened me when he said he remembered me, and that was before we had met eyeball to eyeball. Instructors remember the good, bad and ugly, and I was not one of the good. I owe him a lot.

I would like to explain why I failed to take some of the people who had expressed interest on going over to Hayward to see the "EMU" Huey. My wife was hospitalized on July 1 and released July 7. She is fine now.

If anybody gets to in the Bay Area, contact me, and we will try to make it work. Check out emuinc.org on the Internet.

I am one of the FAA dudes. I know Jon Evans, Wayne Nutsch, Kenny Paulsen and John McClelland, and I will talk to them again about VHPA.

Ray Murphy  
3258 Valleybrook Way  
Hayward, CA 94541

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# Foundation stages 'combat assault'

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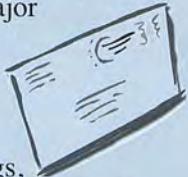
As if this were not enough, the week climaxed with an 11-hour outdoor Grande Finale Tribute. Cost: \$80. It consisted of concerts by the Supremes, Doobie Brothers, Beach Boys, Credence Clearwater Revisited, the 5th Dimension, Four Tops, and many more groups and celebrity performers.

The AAHF staged a full "combat assault" air show demonstration, with broadcast air-to-air commo, pyrotechnics, and awesome aerial flight displays. Using all Vietnam-era aircraft, they made a major impression on the thousands of people who were there on just what Vietnam pilots could do with these aircraft.

Additionally, there were multiple satellite video patched personal greetings, thanks and "Welcome Homes" from our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as personal thanks and welcome home from several senior Department of Defense branch chiefs, and a presidential "Welcome Home and Thanks" on behalf of ALL of America." All these were broadcast on a jumbo screen.

At the booth, in between some of the events, we signed up 8 new members, got 2 renewals, and had an awesome time. All because I answered the call (albeit, finally), and others stepped up to the plate to help me.

Just to show how great doing something like this is, imagine I'm standing by the VHPA booth with all my VHPA stuff, looking for guys with wings on their caps.



Unbeknownst to him, or me, my old (April-December 1968) flight school buddy walks up and wants to know about VHPA.

After he tells me his name, I say: "Hey, I used to know a guy in flight school named Roy Tyndall."

Due to our advanced age, waist lines, recessed hairlines, and dead brain cells, I went and looked each of us up in the Directory and finally figured out it was us, and we hadn't seen each other in 36 years! Well, da! What a reunion!

My personal thanks go to Mike Sheuerman for his enthusiasm and help in making this happen in such a short a period of time.

In closing, I would also like to thank the volunteer helper from the Southern California area whose name I have lost and publicly apologize for.

He happened to see us there, stopped by and really helped me explain VHPA to the many interested visitors, relatives of fallen pilots and crewmembers, and then sign up pilots.

VHPA and all represented Vietnam veteran groups got some great photo and story recognition from John Semper, Branson resident, newspaper photojournalist and VHPA member.

"Mik" Mikulan  
116th AHC (Hornet) FNG  
269th CAB Black Baron 3 Zulu  
Cu Chi, 1969

# Letters

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## The Presidio, Crissy revisited at reunion

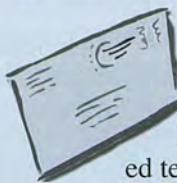
At the San Francisco Reunion, I managed to contact an old OCS classmate of mine. He was supposed to attend a 53rd OCS Reunion at Fort Benning back in April, but at the last minute, couldn't make it.

He and his wife picked up my wife and me up at the Marriott and took us on a tour of the city. We went to lunch at the very upscale St. Francis Yacht Club and later drove around The Presidio. Much has changed in 45 years.

I wrote an article for the AAAA magazine about the

inadequate facilities for RON at Crissy Field. I told what a disgrace it was to be the supporting airfield for then Sixth Army Headquarters. Most Army Aviators would opt to RON at Alameda NAS across the Bay. Crissy was a dump!

The first time I called Alameda for landing and identified myself as a captain, they assumed I meant Navy captain and transportation was waiting upon arrival. That only happened once. From then on, the tower would ask what branch of service?



Crissy is no more. There is now a lagoon and park where the airfield used to be. The Presidio is no more, either, at least not what it once was. It has deteriorated terribly.

What was once one of the most beautifully maintained Army posts is now but a shell of its former self. There are still field grade and general officer quarters that are being maintained because they are being rented for mega dollars, but the post itself is in a steady decline. I can

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## Thinking About Retiring or Changing Jobs?

If so, we invite you to take advantage of our free retirement analysis.

Considering that it's likely a person who is 65 years old today will live past age 85, it is important to plan appropriately for retirement. Regardless of your current age, you should ask yourself:

- Can I afford to retire when and how I would like?
- What should I do with my 401(k) and pension plans?
- Is my asset allocation suitable for my risk tolerance?

A personalized retirement analysis can help you identify your goals, review your assets and understand such influences as market risk and time horizon. Your Financial Advisor can assist you in developing an appropriate retirement savings and investment strategy. After all—your retirement may need to last more than 20 years.

Call us for a complimentary analysis. And start preparing for your financial future today.

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in Washington, DC

# Letters

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still recall Presidio being on a par with Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, as far as preferred assignments.

Sometimes it's better to remember places from the first time around and not go back for a second look.

Jack Salm



Scooter Burke, an instructor pilot at Fort Rucker, is pulled across Lake Tholocco by a Chinook.

## Fort Rucker ski team used Chinook for tow

During one of my three tours at Mother Rucker, my wife and I started the Lake Tholocco Water Ski and Boat Club. We presented many water ski shows at Lake Tholocco for holiday events, as well as traveling to other lakes in the area.

We had a fairly large membership, consisting mostly of military members and their families and some civilian members. We had a para-sail, kite, ballet, a pretty good ski

jumping team (which jumped off a ramp built by the post engineers), and many other events.

Always looking for some thing new and exciting, I had the bright idea to have a skier towed by a Huey. I presented the idea to the then-commanding general, Allen Burdett, (1967) and he said OK, however, Center Safety got into the act and said if it was over water it had to be a Chinook! A bit surprised, I agreed and with a few practices we worked it out.

The skier was an aviator, Scooter Burke, my IP in Chinook school. He skied behind the Chinook, holding onto a long rope, and holding a very wet and heavy sandbag. The sandbag would keep the rope out of the rotors in the event he fell down. In the Chinook, the flight engineer had an ax and a wooden block on the ramp as an additional safety precaution.

We pulled it off and everything went well. Scooter did leave the water and became airborne for a few seconds during a turn. General Burdette was relieved that things went well and he was not relieved of command. He suggested we quit while we were ahead and make it a one-time event.

Bob Wetherbie

## VHPA War Story Contest to be initiated at reunion

Do you remember the joke, "What is the difference between a fairy tale and a war story?" The answer was, "The fairy tale starts out with 'Once upon a time,' while the war story starts out with 'This ain't no sh\_t!'"

This note announces that we are organizing the first ever VHPA War Story Contest, which we affectionately titled, *The This Ain't no Sh\_t Ultimate Vietnam War Story Contest!*

If you enjoy telling war stories about your Vietnam-era

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# Letters

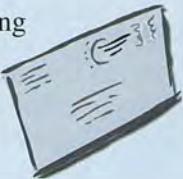
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exploits and experiences that are entertaining, informative, audience appropriate and factual, then we invite you to sign up for this event.

Since this is one of the first times we are organizing the war story event at a VHPA reunion, we will be flexible about how it comes off, but here's how we envision it at this point.

First, sign up for the contest by sending an e-mail or calling Doug Womack

or Jim Fulbrook



## Dec. 26 is sign-up deadline

The deadline to sign up this way is Dec. 26, 2005. When you contact us, provide your name, a short title of the war story, and provide your contact information so we can get in touch with you to coordinate the event. We must have this information in time to schedule a room and announce the event. We may provide a way to sign up electronically on the VHPA website when you register for the reunion, but that's TBD.

Plan on having about 15 minutes (give or take) to tell your war story. Then we will schedule a contest session

where you and other members will tell their stories. Any one registered for the reunion will be able to attend for free. We'll even videotape your story for our oral history archive.

After everyone has presented, we will give out awards, which will consist of official-looking certificates (suitable for framing) that acknowledge your participation and recognition as the best war story, the most interesting, the most unbelievable, the most nostalgic (heart-warming), the funniest war story, the most heroic, etc. at the VHPA reunion – you get the idea.

Everyone will be a winner as long as their story is generally entertaining, informative, audience appropriate and somewhat believable as we stated above.

You could get the hook though if you are a rowdy or blowhard and get out-of-hand. This is meant to be a fun time and open to everyone. Let's face it; all of your family and mini-reunion friends already heard your war story 20 times, so why not share it with other members.

Oh yes, there is a condition – some time during your talk, you must knit in the words, "This ain't no sh\_t!" so we know what you are telling us is true down to the last detail and not some fairy tale!

We will schedule the war story contest at a day and time that does not conflict with other events. Time permitting, we may take impromptu storytellers. We have no idea how many members will sign up or how many members will show up, but if this event is successful, we will offer it

*Continued on Page 10*

## OPERATION MINERVA



BY: JOHN F. SIMPSON

ISBN: 0-9755099-1-8

The author is a member of Special Forces Association Chapter 85 and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Assoc in Florida.

## OPERATION MINERVA

*Operation Minerva*\* is a story about a Special Forces team assigned to carryout a CIA mission into North Vietnam. Each man was hand selected by the team captain for the mission. The target was a North Vietnamese spy school located just a few miles from Hanoi.

The story gives insight into the private life of each man who served on the team and also examines their determination to complete the mission and to overcome each obstacle they encounter.

The author served with the Green Berets in Thailand and he movingly relates the stories of the men who lost their lives valiantly fighting a secret battle in a secret location. It is an engaging and poignant book that will take the reader to the core of experiencing their love and their loss.



*Operation Minerva* is available from BarnesandNoble.com for \$7.95

For a signed copy (still only \$7.95) order directly from the publisher at <http://www.rubricpublications.com>

\* All proceeds from the sale of *Operation Minerva* will be donated to SFA Chapter III in Thailand.

# Taps

## Benny James Archuleta

Benny James Archuleta, 63, of Dallas, TX, died Aug. 6 from cancer.

A 21-year Army veteran, he spent two tours in Vietnam, the first in 1967-68 with the 196 BDE, 23 INF, and the second in 1970-71 as a Chinook pilot with A/159 ASHC.

He graduated from flight school in Class 69-20.

Archuleta was recipient of three Bronze Star Medals, one with a V device, numerous Air Medals, Airborne Wings and Ranger tab.

He retired from the Army as a major in 1981, returned to school, received a teaching.

Archuleta is survived by his wife, Loana; sons, James and Benny Jr.; stepsons, Carlton and Andrew Frosch; stepdaughter, Virginia Woody; his mother; four brothers; and three sisters.

## John Bednarz

John Bednarz, 57, of Portland, OR, died July 21 after an illness.

He was a member of flight school Classes 69-11/69-17. Bednarz served at Camp Eagle in Vietnam with A/101 Avn. Bn., 101st Airborne Division, in 1968-69. His call sign was "Comanchero 29."

Bednarz was a computer systems analyst and administrator for United Parcel Service.

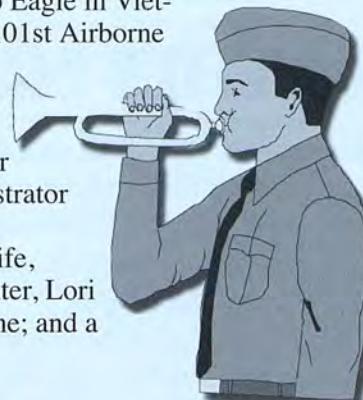
He is survived by his wife, Cecilia of Portland; a daughter, Lori of Portland; his mother, Anne; and a brother, Larry.

## Frederick J. Carll

Frederick J. "Fred" Carll died June 28.

He joined the Army in 1947 and retired in 1967.

Carll served with the 82nd Airborne Division, the Ranger Battalion of 2nd Division in Korea and the 1st of the 9th Cavalry in Vietnam. He had more than 900 combat



hours in the H-13.

He also served in the 6th, 13th and 8th Army Aviation in Korea.

After retirement in 1967 as a CW3, Carll worked at AVSCOM in St. Louis.

— **Bobby L. Holtzclaw**

## Bill Dvorak

The staff at Helicopter Association International is saddened by the death of Bill Dvorak of Air Logistics who died in a helicopter accident on Aug. 17 while landing on an oilrig in the Gulf of Mexico. He was a member of HAI's Technical Committee, as well as a former chairman of the committee.

Dvorak first began flying while in the Army. He was a warrant officer, serving as a pilot on helicopters flying medical evacuation flights in Vietnam. During his tour of duty, his helicopter was shot down.

He was awarded the Air Medal 11 times and a Purple Heart Medal. Dvorak left the Army in 1972 as a captain.

Dvorak graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, where he received his Air Frame and Power Plant Mechanic rating. He then worked as a helicopter pilot flying to oilrigs in the Gulf of Mexico, herding cattle on ranches in Texas with his helicopter, performing helicopter utilities patrols, and as a helicopter mechanic.

He was elected to the Rialto City Council while living in California. Dvorak most recently was employed with Air Logistics in New Iberia, LA.

Dvorak is survived by his wife, Dona Peifer Dvorak; their sons, Navy Lt. (jg) William Travis Dvorak and Josh Dvorak; and his parents, William John and Dorothy Sobeck Dvorak.

## John G. Foley

Retired CW3 John G. Foley died Aug. 15. He was 75.

He rose through the enlisted ranks to master sergeant before attending Warrant Officer Candidate School.

After graduating from flight school, Foley served with the 11th Transportation Company (Helicopter) in Germany; the Army Executive Flight Detachment in Washington, DC; the 57th Transportation Company (Light Helicopter) in Vietnam; the 22nd Air Assault Division at

*Continued on Page 11*

# Letters

*Continued from Page 9*

at future reunions.

We know there are lots of great storytellers out there, so sign up and share your favorite war story with us and a great time will be had by all – and "that ain't no sh\_t!" Remember, the deadline to contact us is Dec. 26 2005.

Jim Fulbrook

## Aviator deadlines

The following are deadlines for submitting articles and advertising to *The VHPA Aviator*:

January/February issue	January 1
March/April issue	March 1
May/June issue	May 1
July/August issue	July 15
September/October issue	September 1
November/December issue	November 1

# Taps

*Continued from Page 10*

Fort Benning, GA; the Inter-American Peace Force in the Dominican Republic; and the Army Flight Training Center at Hunter Army Airfield, GA.

Foley retired from the Army in 1969. His military decorations included the Bronze Star Medal, the Air Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Army Commendation Medal.

He is survived by his wife, Joan Ballam Foley; sons, retired Lt. Col. John B. Foley of Springfield, VA, and Kevin E. Foley of North Canton, OH; and two grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Regina Sweeney Foley and Bartley Peter Foley; and his first wife, Vera Cousins.

— Dennis Fay

## Ken Kinne

Ken Kinne of Lincoln, CA, died Aug. 6 after an illness.

In Vietnam, he served as a gunship pilot with the 129th Assault Helicopter Company at Lane Field. His call sign was "Cobra Alemaster."

Kinne is remembered as a good family man who enjoyed fishing, camping and being in the company of friends.

He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

## Henry L. Kunkel

Maj. Henry L. Kunkel (USMC retired) of Tustin, CA, died April 19.

He flew the CH-46 in Vietnam with HMM-262.

Kunkel is survived by his wife, Shirley, two daughters and five grandchildren.

## Frank W. Nadeau Jr.

Frank W. Nadeau Jr., 78, of Palm Coast, FL, died on April 4, 2004, at Fort Fairfield, ME, after an illness.

He graduated from flight training in 1954.

In Vietnam, he served as commander of the 229th Aviation Battalion in 1966-67 and as aviation operations officer, U.S. Army (Vietnam) in 1970-71.

During World War II, Nadeau served as a gunner on Navy dive bombers. He was injured aboard the U.S.S. Bunker Hill.

He joined the Army in 1950, retiring in 1979 with the rank of colonel.

Nadeau's other Army assignments included gunnery branch chief at Fort Rucker, AL, and aviation commander at Fort Sill, OK.



He is survived by his wife, Lois of Palm Coast; two daughters, Stephanie Bellerive of Salina, KS, and Mary White of Houston, TX; four sons, Terry Nadeau of Arizona, Joe Nadeau of Boston, MA; Timothy Nadeau of Omaha, NE, and Steve Nadeau of Denver, CO.

## Richard James Prosser

Richard James Prosser, 57, of Navarre, FL, died Oct. 1, 2004, of cancer and diabetes.

He graduated from Army flight training in 1966.

## Bruce A. Ruks

I do not know if Bruce A. Ruks, my late boyhood friend, was a member of the VHPA, but he was one with you in his pursuit of a rotary pilot's wings and his combat service in Vietnam almost four decades ago.

An insidious cancer claimed him two days ago at Hines Veterans Hospital outside Chicago. He had battled it for six years. I spoke to his widow, who he met and dated in high school and waited to marry until he returned from Vietnam; they had a great life together for 35 years.

I pledged to her that I would share his passing with those he served with and all those who would understand how he served you members of the rotary aircrews from Vietnam.

My buddy, Bruce, was not a joiner of traditional veterans' service organizations, instead he belonged to community organizations whose participation and support of veterans is legendary — like the Elks.

Despite curiosity, it was difficult for him to join in and attend reunions like those sponsored by the VHPA and his own company, the 161st Aviation Company "Pelicans." According to his wife, it just hurt too much. He never visited our Wall in Washington, DC, and almost made it to the site of a "traveling" Wall a few years go, but he could not leave the parking lot that day. But, we all recognize that there is nothing wrong with that. My friend of a lifetime was just being honest enough to not want to hurt again like he had as a 21-year-old helo pilot in Vietnam during 1967-68 when friends were lost or hurt.

Brian J. Mulcrone  
President, Chapter No. 311  
Vietnam Veterans of America

## Robert G. Sleeth

Robert G. Sleeth, 57, of Gilbertsville, KY, died of a stroke on May 24.

He was born in South Bend, IN, and was raised in North Liberty, IN; Batavia, IL; and Glasgow, Scotland. He started high school in Glasgow and graduated from Wayland Academy in Wisconsin.

Sleeth attended the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago and joined the Army in 1968. After basic training, he completed OCS and then helicopter flight training.

*Continued on Page 12*

# Taps

*Continued from Page 11*

He was a member of flight school Class 70-10.

He went to Vietnam in 1970 and served two consecutive tours, flying with the 238th AWC.

He was recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross and a Bronze Star Medal.

Sleeth returned to civilian life in 1972, met Elizabeth "Betsy" Frank and they were married in September 1973.

He and Betsy had four daughters. Betsy preceded him in death in 2000.

Sleeth completed air traffic controller training and worked in that profession until he ended up on the wrong side of the picket line. He reverted to a job he enjoyed most, flying helicopters.

After several years flying a traffic helicopter, he started flying for the University of Chicago Aeromedical Network (UCAN).

Sleeth served in the Illinois National Guard with the 47th Aviation Battalion, Chicago; 44th Aviation Battalion at Peoria; 106th Aviation Battalion, Midway Chicago, and thoroughly enjoyed his companions and flying.

He flew for UCAN until December 1994, when a heart attack, bypass surgery and a stroke while in the hospital ended his flying days. He retired from the National Guard with the rank of major.

In the early 1980s, Sleeth taught himself what it took to design and build a house. Over the years, he built two homes in Hinckley, IL.

When he could no longer fly, he moved his family to Gilbertsville and built another home.

Sleeth suffered another stroke on May 9 and died 15 days later.

He is survived by four daughters, Kelly Sleeth in Kuwait; Kimberly Sleeth, Illinois; Kristin Darnall, Kentucky; and Nicole Sleeth, Illinois.

## Edward Alvin Stewart

Retired Lt. Col. Edward Alvin Stewart, 84, died June 13 in Las Vegas.

He was born in New York City.

Stewart was an avid aviation enthusiast from the age of 7. He attended Mississippi State College from 1939 until 1942, majoring in aeronautical engineering and commercial aviation. He received his private pilot's license during this time.

In 1942, he volunteered to fly for the British Royal Air Force for eventual assignment with one of the American Eagle Squadrons. The program was discontinued for

political reasons.

After completing a U.S. flight-training program, he received his commercial pilot and flight instructor's ratings. Shortly thereafter, he became a flight instructor at a civilian contract flight school, training Naval aviation cadets.

He served in the Army from 1944-69, flying airplanes and helicopters. His last assignment was as commander of the Army Presidential Helicopter Flight Detachment, where he flew Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon.

After retirement from the Army, he was involved in the aerospace industry, including five years with Bell Helicopter International in Tehran, Iran, followed by a six-year career with the Army Corps of Engineers in Frankfurt, Germany.

He is survived by his wife, Karin Stewart of Las Vegas; four children from his deceased wife, Nives Augusta Perco of Trieste, Italy, Nancy Stewart Turner, Robert Jack Stewart, Ellen Stewart-Schmitt, and Karen Stewart Zagrodzky; and five grandchildren.

## Richard Dale Tierney

Richard Dale Tierney, 59, of Sacramento, CA, died in Rancho Cordova, CA, Veterans Administration Hospital after suffering from multiple cancers.

He was born in Gridley, CA, where he graduated from high school in 1964.

Tierney was drafted into the Army on July 26, 1966, completed basic training at Fort Lewis, WA, and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Polk, LA.

In April 1967, he attended Artillery Officer Candidate School, Class 1967-36B (Foxtrot Battery) at Fort Sill, OK. He graduated and was commissioned a second lieutenant on Sept. 26.

He remained at Fort Sill with the 295th Aviation Company until April 1968, when he attended Officer Rotary Wing Aviator Course with Class 68-36 (Grey Hats) at Fort Wolters and with Class 68-520 at Fort Rucker. He graduated from flight school in December 1968.

Tierney served in Vietnam from Jan. 21, 1969 to Aug. 21, 1970, with the 240th Assault Helicopter Company at Bear Cat, where he was maintenance officer.

During his Army service, he was awarded the Civic Action Honor Medal, 1st Class; Bronze Star Medal; Vietnam Crosses of Gallantry with Palm and Bronze Star; Air Medal; and the Army Commendation Medal.

After returning to the United States, Tierney attended the Field Artillery Officer Advance Career Course at Fort Sill. Tierney separated from the Army on June 30, 1972.

He married Shirley Ann Holton of Ohio on June 8, 1970.

Tierney worked, managed and owned various businesses during his career, including Sears, Jack in the Box in Northern California; Label's Delicatessen in San Francisco; Gunsmithing in Murphys, CA; several Overhead

*Continued on Page 13*

# Reunion

## *Washington, DC, meeting starting to take shape*

DAVE RITTMAN,  
JOE BILITZKE  
DANA YOUNG  
REUNION COMMITTEE

The planning continues for next July's reunion at where the locals call "Foggy Bottom" — Washington, DC.

Depending on your point of view, that term can mean different things, but for sure we are heading for a truly fabulous get-together as we revisit our national Capital again, but in a completely different hotel setting.

Our headquarters next year will be the gorgeous, 1,340-room Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, located in DC's prestigious Woodley Park neighborhood, which is near "Embassy Row," the National Cathedral, and the Zoo.

A photo tour is available at [www.marriott.com/wasd1](http://www.marriott.com/wasd1) but, of course, you will not be able to book a room at our deeply discounted room rates until our Internet registration system opens later this year. There is a Metro (light rail) stop just outside the hotel, and you are only 8 miles

and a quick cab ride from Reagan National Airport (DCA).

While our planning is still under way at this time and, thus, is subject to change, we anticipate some very unique events and activities to occur in-between the overall camaraderie, and the opportunity of meeting that special friend from so long ago.

### **Tattoo event for early birds**

Our reunion officially starts Saturday, July 1, but similar to last year, many of you will be in town for the "early bird" activities the night before.

For those who wish, we will line up buses to go to the U.S. Marine Corps Tattoo, a very, very special 90-minute military event being held Friday night, June 30, on the east side of the city. Later this year, you'll be able to sign up to attend this event, using our reunion registration system.

The "official" welcome reception on Saturday evening, July 1, will be laid out initially so different units and various flight classes are in well-marked areas of the

*Continued on Page 14*



### *Chariots of Fire*

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## KIA statistics

One of the discussion points at reunions is "which flight class had the most pilots killed in Vietnam."

We have information on 519 flight classes, so to answer this took some work. The class that had the most pilots killed in Vietnam was class 67-17, with 242 members and 24 KIAs, for 9.9 percent.

The highest percentage goes to flight class 65-5, with 40 members and 7 KIAs, for 17.5 percent.

In general, classes before 68-6 had a higher percentage of losses because of the greater likelihood of multiple tours. One exception is class 70-13, with 125 members and 13 KIAs, for 10.4 percent.

— Gary Roush, Database Committee

## Taps

*Continued from Page 12*

Door Repair Service businesses in the Sacramento area; G&D Plastics; Mathew's Lounge in Mountain View, CA; and Lawson Sheet Metal in Krebs, OK.

Tierney is survived by his wife, Shirley Tierney of Sacramento; a son, Richard Russell Tierney of Krebs, OK; a daughter, Kiera Dawn Tierney of Elk Grove, CA; and his mother, Ellen Faye Tierney Jacquot of Gridley, CA.

# Reunion

## *Private, after-hours access given to air museum*

**Continued from Page 13**

ballroom, so you will find it easier to link up with others who served with you way back when. Similar to the past few years, we will have a special orientation for reunion newcomers, which we truly welcome and look forward to meeting.

The business meeting is Sunday morning, July 2. Of course, there will be something special planned for spouses during that time. We're down to three options for spouses and guests, and by your next *Aviator*, we should have that locked down.

### **Showing planned at aviation museum**

Sunday evening, July 2, has the potential of being one of those truly special events you'll remember for a long time. You have got to be there!

We have arranged for private, after-hours access to the newly built Smithsonian Dulles Airport Aviation Museum. Our plans include a buffet dinner/heavy hors d'oeuvres, beverages, entertainment, and full access to the museum, including all the Imax theaters and flight simulators.

In existence for about three years near Dulles Airport (about 30 miles from the hotel), the Steven Udvar-Hazy Center of the National Air and Space Museum, houses thousands of aviation and space artifacts not exhibited at the downtown DC Mall locations, some due to their size.

Besides the "many" helicopters on display, among the aircraft to be viewed are the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird, the fastest jet in the world; the Boeing Dash 80, prototype of the 707; the actual Boeing B-29 Enola Gay, which dropped an atomic bomb on Japan at the end of World War II; and the actual Space Shuttle Enterprise. Other major full size aircraft, including a Concorde, are at the museum and may be on display during our visit.

For those interested, after our departure from the Smithsonian, a night tour of the monuments in downtown Washington, lasting about an hour, will be available using our buses.

### **Special visits being negotiated**

For Monday, we are negotiating through congressional contacts to permit escorted, private visits to the normally totally "closed to the public" White House and the highly restricted U.S. Capitol Building. Almost for certain, we will not get permission to bring all our members and guests who would like to visit these two sites, and thus space on these trips will be allocated on a first-come,



first-serve registration basis.

Also being planned at some point during the reunion is a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, with times to be determined.

A significant change this year is that the "final" banquet will not be on our "final" night. We've switched evenings so we can plan something very special on or near the Mall for you on the night of the Fourth of July.

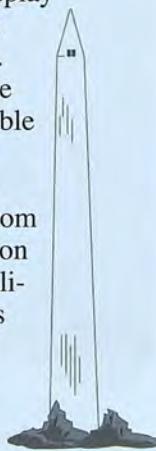
Our final banquet will be on Monday, July 3, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, complete with entertainment, a band to dance to, and the possibility of some very special guests and presentations.

On Tuesday, July 4, plans are for us to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at mid-morning, followed by marching in the very major Washington parade for those who would like. Buses will be available for shuttling members and guests to various sites throughout most of the day.

To finish off our reunion, we are striving to put together a unique Fourth of July evening cookout on or near the Mall. We are planning to have significant entertainment, food and beverages. The

main draw, of course, is the major fireworks display at the Washington Memorial that night.

Our plans include the possibility you'll be able to ride a bus "around the crowds" on a special route we will have worked out and negotiated with the local authorities to and from the hotel. A lot of talented planners, in addition to our congressional contacts, are working diligently on trying to make this event happen as this article is written. Additional details will follow in our next *Aviator*.



### **Hotel located near restaurants**

About the hotel itself, it's located in the northwest part of the city, just off of Wisconsin Avenue. There are many restaurants within walking distance or a short cab ride from the hotel.

In the hotel, there is a full size Starbucks; a gourmet deli serving breakfast items, snacks, and takeout sandwiches and meals; a Perle's, which provides brick-oven pizza, chicken, seafood, and beef items in a casual setting; plus other informal, eating places and upscale hotel facilities.

We will have a huge vendor area in the hotel, includ-

**Continued on Page 15**

# Reunion

## *Washington, DC, meeting starting to take shape*

**Continued from Page 14**

ing the possibility of a number of helicopters and aircraft on display inside the room.

Add to all of the above the mini-reunions, special evening activities, quiet time to meet with friends, and plenty of time to tour the capital.

Overnight rooms in the HQ Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, deeply discounted to \$115 per night, plus tax, in our opinion will sell out early, similar to how they did in San Francisco last year or the last time we were in DC. The "normal" non-VHPA room rate at the Marriott Ward-

man is \$200 or more per night, plus tax.

We anticipate VHPA registration to be open in January. The exact dates will be in the next *Aviator* and on our website: [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org)

Similar to recent years, you will be able to book reunion events and your hotel room at the same time, and you must be registered as a VHPA member attending the reunion to obtain the discounted room rate at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel.

It's apparent this is going to be a truly great reunion! Bottom line: Make your plans now to attend.

## Survey helps VHPA plan reunion

A special thank you to all the members who took the time to fill out and return the survey at the San Francisco Reunion. Your input was appreciated, and it certainly helps us plan our next reunion. A few interesting statistics:

- 83.2 percent are planning to attend DC reunion.
- 65.9 percent are most likely to fly rather than drive.
- 96.2 percent are staying at the HQ hotel.
- 16.0 percent prefer guest speaker at banquet.
- 60.7 percent prefer entertainment at banquet.
- 23.3 percent express no preference regarding speaker or entertainment at banquet.
- 62.9 percent say welcome reception did not influence arrival time (50 percent of attendees arrived at least one day early).
- 52.0 percent say reunion email updates are helpful.
- 33.0 percent didn't get reunion email updates (be sure to give us your current address).
- 96.7 percent say if we moved final night banquet, they would attend fireworks show on July 4.
- 96.4 percent say if we moved banquet to July 3, they would attend banquet. (This guided us to, in fact, move the banquet to July 3).

When we asked what special activities you preferred, there were some very clear majority suggestions provided. The list below added up to more than 80 percent of the requests:

- Smithsonian Air and Space Museum
- Trip to the wall
- Fourth of July Parade
- Monument Tours
- White House tour
- Arlington National Cemetery

Some members requested another Fourth of July harbor cruise. Regrettably, the largest ship on the Potomac only holds 400 people, and we expect more than 2,500 members and guests to attend our reunion next year, thus that did not work for us.

Requests for other tours, such as to Mt. Vernon and the U.S. Mint can be arranged on an individual basis upon your arrival at the hotel.

Many of you were very complimentary to our cabaret show with the Blues Brothers and other acts, and specifically our Vegas headliner, Susan McDonald. Members particularly appreciated the VHPA theme song she wrote, and then recorded/duplicated at her expense to hand out at the final banquet.

You also told us you didn't like such things as the high volume at Eric Burdon's concert.

Also, we will address the long lines at the final banquet seating table for next year, and the vendor area will be open a little more than last year.

### **PowerPoint to be more widely used**

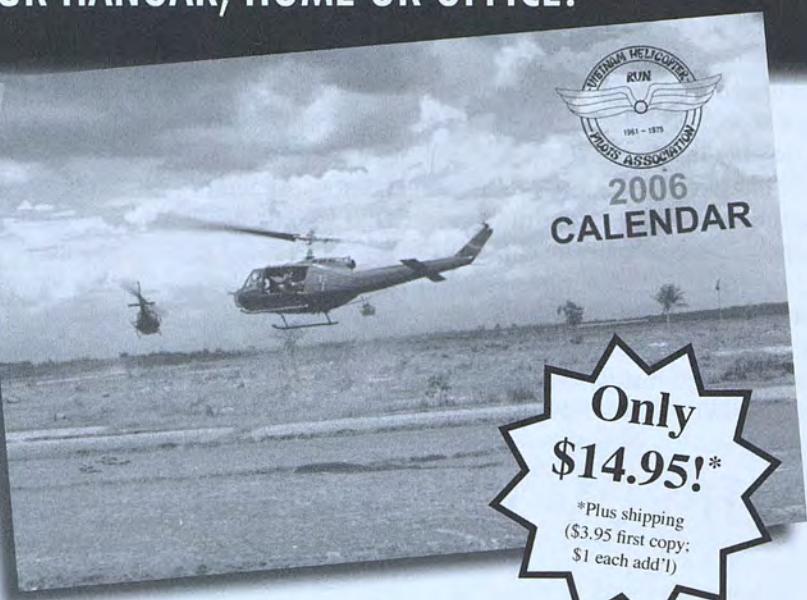
PowerPoint becomes the visual aid of choice at next year's business meeting, and the spouses/guest function will be a completely different type event next year.

Last year's most popular events clearly were the Fourth of July harbor cruise and the Susan McDonald Cabaret Show with the Blues Brothers.

In summary, thank you for all your input and thoughts, which were reviewed in depth by your Reunion Committee and the Executive Council.

Next year we will conduct a similar survey in Washington, DC, with one of the surveys drawn out of the bucket at the final banquet for a free room for 5 nights at our 2007 Reunion in Phoenix, provided by the Marriott Corp.

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- Annual VHPA reunion listed in red.



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# Directory

## *VHPA members a diverse, influential group*

**GARY ROUSH**  
**DIRECTORY COMMITTEE**

At this time of year, it is my pleasure to produce your Membership Directory.

While doing this, I am always amazed at the amount of diversity we have in the VHPA.

Occupations cover nearly all professions, including farmer, preacher, truck driver, mechanic, lawyer, physician, teacher, politician, judge and just about everything else you can imagine.

Of course we have many professional pilots and soldiers, but also professionals in all segments of our great country. Most are in positions of influence and authority and certainly have an impact on our society.

### **Many members retired**

Because of our age, many now list "retired" as their occupation.

No one is listed as homeless or a baby killer. We do have a couple in prison, like any subset of American society, but that is well below national averages.

Unfortunately, we have lost 18 percent of our numbers to death — 2,197 killed in Vietnam and more than 5,000 who died during training or have died since Vietnam.

This year's Directory is 576 pages, smaller than the 640-page Directory last year. Despite fewer pages, it actually has more membership information because we have added even more addresses over this past year.

The primary reason for the decrease in pages is putting the died after tour information on our website like we did with the KIA information last year. This provides us with the opportunity to increase the level of detail available to you and the ability to update the information throughout the year.

Unfortunately the died after tour section is the fastest-growing segment of our membership.

We also restructured the indexes to take up less space and moved the statistics to our website.

### **Applications, renewals reviewed**

One of the things I do throughout the year in preparation for printing the Directory is review all membership applications and renewals to be sure we have your information correct in the database.

I would like to clear up a couple of misunderstandings.

The application asks you to list your units and years. Unfortunately, it says tours instead of units so many of you try to list all units you served in one tour on the same

line. We have a few who continue to insist that we get it wrong every year in the Directory when we list one unit and date per line.

We do not list multiple units together because of space limitations. When we show three units on three lines, all with the date of 1968, it should be obvious they were all in the same tour. We will change the membership form to make this clearer.

The second point of confusion is flight class numbers. Many men were in more than one flight class.

Currently, we can only list two. The two we use are the ones you were in when you graduated from Fort Wolters and then Rucker or Hunter, listing Rucker/Hunter first, then Wolters second.

The logic is the most prominent one is the one you were in when you got your wings. As we upgrade HQ's software, flight class options will improve.

We know there are mistakes in this Directory. For instance, we used military rosters without MOS designations to collect SSNs. This means we may have selected the wrong "John Jones" when looking up his SSN.

We have no way of knowing if we selected the right person until he is contacted to confirm he flew helicopters in the Vietnam War.

### **Share information with committee**

Once SSNs had been selected, we ran these against the SSN deceased file. Unfortunately, if we happened to have the wrong person's SSN and they are dead, we then erroneously show the potential VHPA member as being dead.

So, if you see someone on the Died After Tour list who you know is alive, please let me know.

Addresses for potential members were collected from an address service using SSNs. The address service bases its information on people's credit records. This means there are frequently several addresses listed for the same person.

As an example, if a potential member co-signed a loan with one of his children, the child's address will show up under that person's SSN. Since young people are very mobile, that address could be too old for forwarding to work. Also if a potential member is paying alimony, his ex-wife's address could be one that is listed, too.

Please let [HQ@vhpa.org](mailto:HQ@vhpa.org) know when you determine an address is not valid or you discover a correct one.

As always, if you find any mistakes or missing information, please let me know.

If you have not received your 2005 Membership Directory by the end of October, please call HQ at (800) 505-VHPA.

# Jolly Green

## *Rescue in Vietnam was 37th ARRS's finest hour*

JOHN R. WEIMER

My first tour flying the HH-53C Super Stallion "Jolly Green Giant" with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron in Da Nang was from October 1970 to October 1971.

I flew from England and around Western Europe for about five months when I received orders to return to Da Nang for a 90-day TDY tour.

I arrived back in Da Nang for my second tour with the 37th ARRS in mid-April 1972. This was during the famous Easter Offense when the NVA crossed south of the DMZ in force with tanks, AAA, missiles, etc.

### **When not flying, I would stay up late**

When I was not scheduled to fly the next day, I would usually stay up late reading, shooting the breeze with the troops, or writing letters to my wife. I distinctly remember not being in bed on the early morning of May 1 because I was not on the flying or alert schedule for that day.

About 4 a.m., my friend Maj. Tony Gates knocked on my bunkroom door and advised me to get dressed because we had a mission briefing. It didn't matter I had not been to sleep the whole day, as I was being transported with

numerous other crewmembers to the briefing.

An Army colonel informed us the Quang Tri Citadel was surrounded by the enemy and he didn't expect the garrison resistance in the compound to last much longer. We were told there was a combination of about 150 U.S. advisors and South Vietnamese troops in the Citadel.

### **Other resources not available**

Apparently neither the Army nor the Marines had the helicopter resources to rescue that many people and since the Jolly Greens were in the rescue business, they gave us the mission.

The plan was for us to launch four helicopters at first light and fly up the coast feet wet to a point abeam of Quang Tri. Once the supporting Sandys, fast movers, and the Navy forces finished blasting something of a "safe corridor" between the South China Sea and the Citadel, we would go in one bird at a time, lift them out and take them to Da Nang.

We launched at first light and arrived at our holding position pretty much as planned with an altitude separation of 500 feet between helicopters. Time passed. More time passed.

*Continued on Page 19*

## VHPA briefs

### **Hurricane Katrina relief**

OK, guys, let's step up to the plate. Our country has been hit with a gut blow and needs help from all of us.

We, the VHPA, are not organizing a fund drive, but the Executive Council is asking you to help.

We have approximately 300 VHPA brothers and family members who may have been displaced or whose life may be in complete turmoil because of Hurricane Katrina. We have heard from some that they lost everything and have moved to other states for now and some who are getting by for now.

Your EC has made what we feel is a start and is doing what we can. So far, we have individually donated more than \$1,800 total and have been able to get our employers to match some of our contributions (\$1,000), so we have sent \$2,800 to charitable organization.

We will do more on our own as we feel inclined to do, but we are asking you to do the same.

Encourage your employer to match anything you do to help get the country back and this area of our country growing again.

— Your Executive Council

### **Good news, bad news**

The Good news is: We're living longer. Most of us will see well into our 80's, some into our 90's.

Me, I plan to make it to 118, at which time I will be shot dead by some irate, 24-year-old when he catches me in bed with his 22-year-old wife. Helicopter pilots may age, but we don't change.

The Bad news is: We're living longer. In fact, projections are we will out live our current Life Member dues rate.

Therefore, on Jan. 1, 2006, the Life Member dues will increase to \$540, basically \$36 times 15 years. We need to do this to maintain the level of service to the Life Members down the road.

Remember, it's the funds that have been put in trust for VHPA that allow us to enjoy the excellent places we use for our reunions. It gives VHPA clout when it comes to negotiating contracts with vendors, hotel chains and contractors.

The Life Membership dues is tax deductible.

The current Life Member dues amount of \$450 will remain in effect until Dec. 31, 2005. You can still take advantage of it and the three \$150 payments over three months until the end of the year.

Mike Sheuerman  
VHPA president

# Jolly Green

## *First helicopter finally cleared to go into Citadel*

**Continued from Page 18**

After boring holes in the sky for about five hours, we completed our first air refueling with the C-130s. Then we completed our second air refueling. More time passed.

I remember radioing the lead helicopter crew that someone had better make the call to go in because it was about to get dark.

Naturally, we could monitor the conversations between the FACs, the Sandys, and all the other participating forces.

With a whole lot of nervousness and excitement, the first helicopter finally was cleared to go in. We had three code words: One for going in, one for landing, and one for the extraction.

We listened as first Scotty (Maj. Jackson K. Scott) and then Rod (Capt. Rodney S. Griffith) called out the code words. Then it was our turn.

As the No. 3 aircraft, we were well aware the bad guys knew exactly where we were coming from and what our route would be.

We also knew the 60 or so defending forces extracted by the first two Jollys had significantly reduced the amount of defensive fire the Citadel could provide.

My copilot, Capt. Gary A. Dake, called the code word, we landed and the rear doors flew open.

I remember very vividly seeing bad guys firing at us as they climbed over the walls. As the troops boarded, the guys in back returned fire with our .76 mm Gattling guns.

Finally, the PJs called out all were on board and closed the doors.

### **Helicopter began uncontrollable turn**

As we lifted off, the helicopter started an uncontrollable turn to the right. I knew then we had an extremely heavy load.

As I added more power, I saw the engine torque meters exceed 100 percent and decided not to look at them anymore, as there were more important things at hand.

Standing on the left rudder didn't help much so I elected to go with the flow. As we turned and lifted, I saw shooting coming at us, explosions, fires burning and the Citadel wall in front of us.

Thank God we made it over the wall. Doing so, I dropped the helicopter lower to pick up forward speed and translational lift.

My copilot called that we had picked up the last of the troops and we were on our way out.

### **Voice reported 'still some troops'**

Just then a voice from an unknown source transmitted, "No, there are still some troops here."

I remember listening in horror as the events surrounding our No. 4 aircraft crew unfolded. They were extremely fortunate to get out of there in one piece.

On the way back to Da Nang, one of the PJs called out there were 56 fully equipped combat troops rescued and all five Jolly crewmembers were uninjured.

My thankful gratitude goes to my crewmembers: Copilot Gary Drake, flight engineer Staff Sgt. William A. Simm, PJs Sgt. Richard L. Steed and Airman 1st Class Michael A. Aillet.

I was exhausted. Upon landing, I did not take part in the huge, happy reunion of the crewmembers, survivors, and the rest of the squadron members. Instead, I climbed into the nearest crew truck, drove back to the barracks and went to sleep.

Later, others on this rescue mission and I were awarded a Silver Star Medal.

Looking back on my 15 months of flying for the 37th ARRS, I believe this mission was "our" finest hour.

I am honored to have been a member of the team that pulled off this rescue.

Flying rescue missions has been the most gratifying experience in my lifetime.

To be sitting in the pilot's seat and turning back to see the smile on the face of someone's dad, someone's brother, someone's uncle, someone's husband, or someone's friend who has just had his life saved and is being pulled safely into the helicopter cannot be equaled.

I thank God for keeping me safe.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** John R. Weimer, who retired as an Air Force lieutenant colonel, currently resides in Bailey, CO.



An HH-53C Super Stallion "Jolly Green Giant" similar to the one flown by author John R. Weimer is shown during aerial refueling.

# Resurrection

## *Crew flies Huey to Texas after 15 years in storage*

ALEXANDER J. COLLIGAN

On June 17, I joined Meade Roberts and Carl David at the Eugene, OR, airport.

Our purpose was to accept a refurbished UH-1H helicopter and fly it back to Texas.

Richard Slaney of Rotor Support Inc. already had invested much time in getting the aircraft prepared after being in storage for 15 or so years. Carl spent one more day making final administrative coordination, and Meade and I spent the next week chasing down gremlins and repairing them.

Vivid memories of picking up aircraft at Corpus Christi certainly helped. Looking at the old seats, I knew the nylon parachute cord that drew the fabric tight would not cut it on any long flight, so off I went, searching used parts for those terrific turn-barrels.

Fortune was on our side and we were rewarded with enough to do the aircraft.

The next morning I began the 4-hour task of stretching the fabric over the seats and securing them with the turn-barrels. Success came slowly, but the comfort of strong support on the old rear would be greatly appreciated in the coming cross-country flight.

Meade, in the meantime, kept his flashlight busy, pulling up floor panels and checking fuel cells, checking all the bearings, identifying leaking valves, servos, repairing door slides.

The wiring harness was by far and, as usual, the largest source of grief. The new avionics package also presented problems — it hadn't arrived yet.

Within a few days, the aircraft was ready for run-up and ground tests. Still no radios, but we had managed to establish a portable system that plugged into our helmets.

Meade's years of experience on aircraft maintenance certainly accelerated the time toward the first flight.

The initial run-up tests had a mixed bag of results, some of which were good; others were troubling.

We were confident the aircraft would fly, but numerous seeps, erratic inverters and generators caused a lot of concern. DC generator problems led us to the good, old voltage regulators. After a few frustrating attempts with the proverbial hammer and wiring checks, we opted to try two very old carbon-type regulators and met with success.

The inverters had us checking every wire, changing out inverters, fiddling with the adjustments and, after a few hours, we went to the thing that could not be wrong: A 1-amp circuit breaker.

With the bulk of the write-ups completed, we took to the air and were pleased with the aircraft's performance. Even the new radios showed some promise, except for a nagging squeal on the right side headset.

Strangely, with a headset, no squeal was pre-

sent, but with a helmet, it was unusable. This was similar to previous Huey conversions, only this time with the assistance of the avionics tech, we were able to determine the proximity of the helmet to the new antenna next to the greenhouse was the cause.

“Borrowing” an antenna that would fit better on the underside, from a fixed-wing corrected the problem.

Saturday morning, a final detailed preflight before the long cross-country back, we had bad news: Fuel dripping from the main fuel tank area reminded me of Robert Duvall in “Days of Thunder.” A removal of the secondary “hell hole” and another fuel panel showed a frangible valve being the culprit.

Some more fiddling and tightening, and a patient wait

*Continued on Page 21*



Alexander J. Colligan and Meade Roberts stand beside the UH-1H “Huey” they fixed up and then flew from Eugene, OR, to Fort Hood, TX, in June. The resurrected aircraft had been in storage for about 15 years.

# Resurrection

## *Huey takes off from Eugene for Fort Hood, Texas*

**Continued from Page 20**

of 15 minutes, solved the last problem.

We towed the aircraft out to an open area and took the dedicated crew of 5 on the maiden flight to let them see the results of their labor.

One hour later, the old Huey was filled with fuel, and final checks of luggage, survival gear and tools were once again completed for the trip that would take the Huey on its first long flight in years.

Around noon, the familiar "Clear!" was screamed for the last time in Eugene. As the engine spooled up, knee-boards were attached, radios tuned and, after a final spin around for its last pictures, we were off on the first leg of a long journey.

### **Ground speed in 130-knot range**

Ground speed was up in the 130-knot range at 9,500 feet.

Burns Municipal Airport in the east of Oregon was the first stop. No leaks were visible, but we did take the time to wipe down the head and tail rotor to make sure everything was fine.

The high ground speed allowed us to bypass Boise and continue on in to Twin Falls. After a quick refueling, we were off to Salt Lake City and, this time, we were on the ground before dark.

Eight flight hours had passed and the old princess was performing like a new aircraft. Power was excellent, the radios and the GPS were humming, we were burning 70 gallons of fuel per hour and no leaks.

### **Huey flies at 11,500 feet**

Sunday morning we were in the seats by 10 a.m. Out of Salt Lake, we pushed the machine to 11,500 feet and headed east to Grand Junction, CO. High above a cloud layer, the sight was gorgeous. Two hours later, we descended into Grand Junction.

A quick refuel and we continued on to Farmington

and Albuquerque, NM. It was getting late, so we made a decision to "go for broke" and fly to Killeen, TX.

Roswell, NM, and Odessa, TX, were the next stops and the final refuel stop was at San Angelo, TX. By this time we were in the dark.

A humorous remark about "how long had it been since we landed at night," followed by a remark about staying at the Holiday Inn Express had us laughing as we descended out of the pitch black night and into the airport at San Angelo. At 11 p.m., we were off on the last leg to our destination of Temple, TX.

At 1 a.m., Meade flew the aircraft across the Fort Hood area and descended into Temple airport, where the Huey would get another radio and some well-deserved checks.

Ten flight hours had passed since takeoff, which led us to remark the last time we flew those kinds of hours was when we were being shot at in Vietnam.

Some 18 hours of flight time and 1,100 gallons of fuel were needed to fly this old bird to its new home. Fifteen years had passed since its last flight, but in the finest tradition of the Huey, when it was awakened, it performed just as well as the thousands of Hueys had done before it.

### **Huey back on medevac missions**

From the graveyard, another Huey had been resurrected to start providing a service for which it was originally intended: Fly medevac support for the soldiers of Fort Hood.

System Studies & Simulation, a company located at Fort Hood, responded to provide a critical service to the fort that could no longer be fulfilled because of the mobilization of medical units had left the fort without this service.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Alexander J. Colligan, the author of this article, is a member of VHPA. The other test pilot, Meade Roberts, also is a Vietnam veteran.

# **Plan to attend Reunion 2006 in Washington, DC**

# Memories

## *Remembering events can be challenging, spotty*

JACK SALM

Memories are funny things.

If you have a good one, that's great. If you have a bad one or none at all, you can be in a world of hurt. Some of us have great memories.

I've often thought wouldn't it be wonderful if we could remember all we ever learned. If we had a super filing system that would enable us to bring back from the far reaches of our brain information as it was needed.

Unfortunately most of us do not have that ability. A few have "photographic" memories where it appears they can remember everything they ever learned — probably not everything, but a great deal.

### **Memory can be short- or long-term**

Some of us have short-term memories — things that have happened to us recently are remembered, others have long-term memories where they can recall things that happened many years ago, but can't remember things or events that occurred recently.

I can remember what happened long ago better than things that just happened. For instance, I can remember where I was when the Hindenburg (the German airship) crashed in Lakehurst, NJ, in 1937.

We were on vacation in Beachwood, NJ, several miles away. I was 7 years old.

I remember the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. It was a Sunday. I was 11 and I was reading the comics on the living room floor.

I remember World War II better than Korea or Vietnam.

One date that is firmly affixed in my mind is my wedding anniversary on March 19, 1952.

### **Memory of assassination clear**

I clearly remember the assassination of JFK. I was an IP on a training flight out of Hanchey, and when I landed and returned to the briefing room, everyone was huddled around the TV. President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas.

On the other hand, I don't remember when Robert Kennedy or Martin Luther King was killed or what I was doing.

I can tell you exactly where I was and what I was

doing Christmas Day 1966. I had two gunships at Dong Tre, Vietnam, supporting the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.

It was the middle of the monsoon and we weren't doing any flying. Our two gunships were belly deep in the mud on the airstrip.

The event is vivid in my mind, but I can't remember the names of those who were there with me for that miserable Christmas.

I do know the 1st Brigade pulled out during the night and, in the morning when we awoke, we found that our only security was a CIDG detachment more interested in whatever we had that wasn't nailed down than affording us any perimeter security.

Communications to headquarters were out, so I took it upon myself to make a command decision to return to headquarters in Tuy Hoa, since we no longer had a mission in Dong Tre.

### **Takeoff redlined aircraft**

We went out to the ships, checked them for booby traps, cranked up, pulled max power and literally sucked them out of the mud, redlining them in the process.

We flew down the river at about 20-30 feet to the coast. Charlie could have thrown a rock and hit us.

When we got back to headquarters, I got a royal ass chewing, but I thought I did the right thing.

Two months later, I was involved in a UH-1 accident in Bao Loc. Here the memory is clear as far as the date of the event and things leading up to the crash, but I remember nothing from the point that I realized we were going to crash.

This was later explained to me as "protective amnesia." The mind blocks out catastrophic events when it realizes they are about to occur.

I don't recall where I was when the Vietnam War ended or when the Gulf War started. I am always amazed when watching TV how the attorney asks the defendant where he or she was on a specific date three days or three weeks earlier. They always seem to know where they were.

Oh, were it so cut and dry. Memories are funny things.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Jack Salm is VHPA midterm member at large.**

**Articles for The Aviator should be sent to:  
swickard@vhpa.org**

# Choctaw

## *H-34, briefly in Army inventory, was fun to fly*

JACK SALM

Most of us have beaucoup hours in the "Huey," but how many of you Army types have flown the Sikorsky H-34 "Choctaw"?

Some of our Marine or Navy VHPA guys have, I'm sure. Unfortunately this grand, old gal was not in the inventory for very long, from 1953-67 or thereabouts, around 15 years. Not long when you consider the Chinook.

Oh, I know, there are still many civilian types still flying in the United States and around the globe.

### **Choctaw was lot of aircraft**

The H-34 was a lot of aircraft. When you transitioned into it from the H-13, as I did, it was particularly overwhelming. I only have about 300 hours in the 34, but they were fun hours.

If the powers that be had ever found out some of the insane stunts we pulled, we would have been grounded for life.

One of the favorites was while out night flying we would go out over Kentucky Lake, near Fort Campbell. There was a lot of barge traffic on the lake.

We would turn off our running lights and fly toward a towboat pulling a barge. When we were directly in front of him, we'd turn on our landing light, and then flip it off. There would be a long, loud toot on the tug's horn.

We could just imagine the pandemonium in the wheelhouse.

Another fun time was flying a group of Medical Service Corps officers around a mock radiation course at Fort McClellan, AL. They would take readings at various stations around the course.

I don't think any of them had ever been in a helicopter before. It was amusing, to say the least.

"Radiation monitor to pilot, fly a course heading of 380 degrees."

"Say what? Sorry, sir, we only go up to 360 degrees."

"Okay, make that 360 degrees, over. By the way, is that north or south?"

### **Simulating A-bomb uncomfortable**

We did the radiation monitoring gig once again out at Indian Springs Air Force Base, north of Las Vegas. This time we towed a cable to about 2,500 feet, and then they ran something like a 2,000-volt charge up the cable to simulate an atomic blast.

I was never comfortable with this drill. I always felt something was waiting to happen. It didn't, thank God!

Later, while assigned to Fort Rucker, I trained RVN

Air Force cadets in the H-19. The H-19 "Chickasaw" was an underpowered old girl that had been left over from the Korean War and should have long since bit the dust.

After the cadets mastered, strike that, could at least fly it, we moved them into the H-34. The H-34 was what the VNAF was equipped with during the Vietnam conflict.

During the Cuban missile crisis, I was put in charge of an H-34 Mobile Maintenance Detachment (actually a flight of four H-34s) to fly from Hanchey at Fort Rucker to Marathon, FL.

All four of the aircraft were loaded to the gills with maintenance equipment. I questioned whether anyone had done a check on the weight.

When I tried to hover, the aircraft didn't move. Obviously we were overloaded. I had not been in a 34 in almost a year and had to use the manual to get it started.

Here we were, ready to go to Marathon and, after that, what? Most people were in the dark as to the seriousness of the situation. There was such a run on the commissary it ran out of all staples, milk, bread, eggs, etc.

It very well may have been the last time I would see my family. It was far scarier than going to Vietnam. However, after we took off, we were instructed to proceed to Shell Field (still at Rucker) and to land in the parking area. This was not good.

### **Coming to a hover dicey**

I had made a running takeoff since I was so overloaded and had planned to burn off most of the fuel en route to Marathon and then make a running landing at Marathon Air Force Base. This was going to require coming to a hover and setting down on a spot. Not only me, but I also had three other 34s with me.

I told the other three I would make an approach and see if it looked feasible. I noticed there were wires all around the perimeter of the parking area. As I came over the wires, I determined I could make a short, running landing, thus eliminating the possibility of the bottom falling out at completion of the approach to a hover.

We all accomplished what was required. After we shut down, I wondered what we were supposed to do.

What we did was sit on our duffs for three days and then we returned to Hanchey. The Cuban Missile Crisis was over, the Soviets had turned back, but it could have been Armageddon.

These are but a few of the things I remember about my time in the H-34. There were many other stories of my love affair with this super gal. The H-34 was a wonderful aircraft. It deserved a better fate. It certainly did yeoman duty while it was around.

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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## Membership application/change of address

New application	Address change	Directory correction	<b>Life membership:</b> \$450 before Dec. 31, 2005 \$540 after Jan. 1, 2006
Membership dues:	Annual: \$36	Three years: \$90	
Aviator subscription only:	Annual: \$36	Three years: \$90	
Add \$ _____	as my contribution to:	Membership Fund      Scholarship Fund	

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DATE FORM COMPLETED:

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Please charge my MasterCard/Visa credit card.

Add \$15 for current Membership Directory,

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Information about each Vietnam unit:

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

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

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