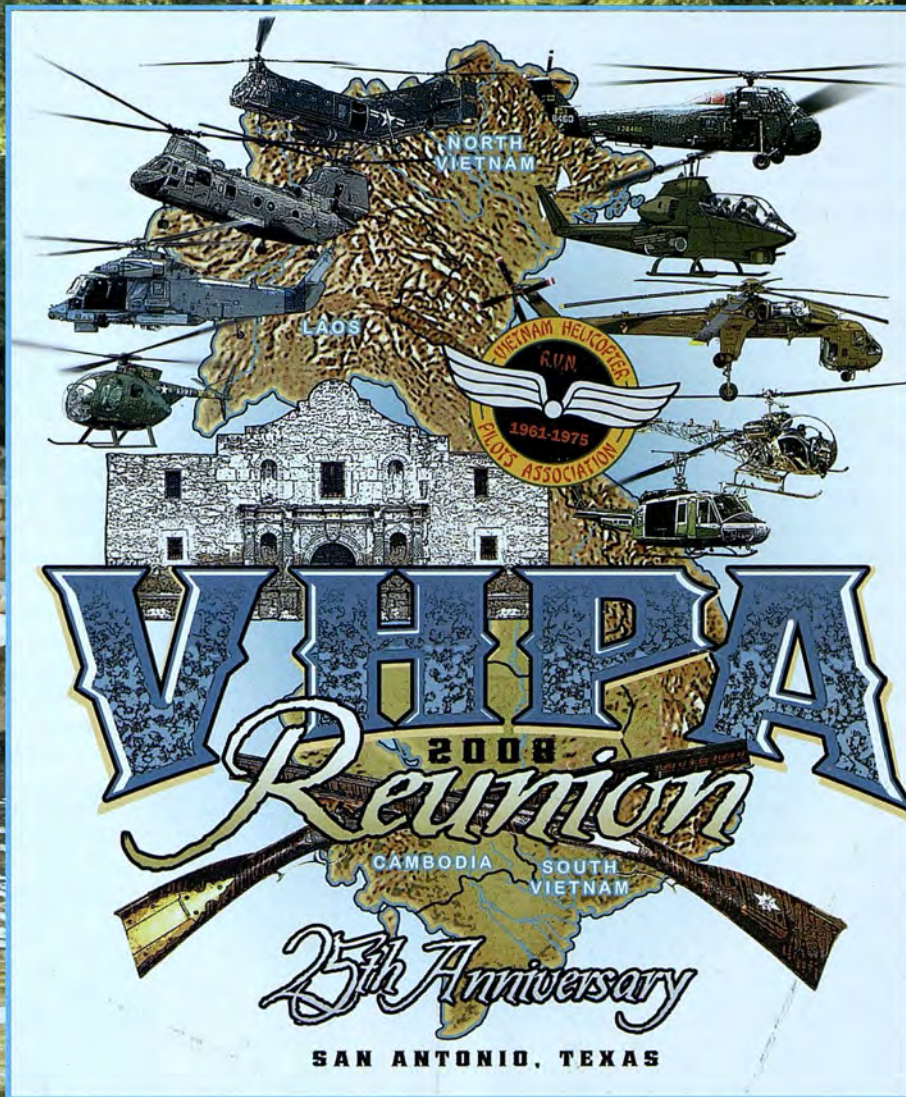




# THE VHPA AVIATOR

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

March/April 2008 Vol. 26, No. 2



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# STILL TIME TO SIGN UP FOR REUNION

This is the fifth column that I have written as your President and I will have one more shot at it before the San Antonio Reunion – where does the time go? The main thing I want to address this issue is that unfortunately, we've had a slow start on sign-up's for this year's Reunion but hopefully

this is because the EC has not gotten the word out that Registration is open.

I'm sure you noticed that the last issue of The



dancing and singing to our favorite songs from the past.

I want to welcome David Adams of Harker Heights, Texas, to the family of volunteers that help make your Association great. Jack Swickard has seen his real, Political Campaign Advisor business take off and therefore his time has been limited, but David gladly stepped forward to help with the publishing of our newsletter. David is a retired Army Aviator, and a longtime life member of the Association who just finished a 15-year stint in magazine publishing. More importantly, he works for the same salary we all do in this business – for free.

Dana Young has been working with several hotel chains to get pricing and available dates for the three reunions starting in 2011. Because of the survey that we asked you to participate in last fall, he has asked for and received several alternate replies. Dana and your EC are sorting through them and will soon report to you about the direction we recommend you take our great organization.

Last, I have asked Retired Army Chaplain Corbin Cherry to give the invocation at the closing banquet for this year's Reunion. Corbin was serving with the 2/501 of the 101st Airborne Division on December 12, 1969 when he stepped on a mine. He was loaded onto a Dust Off helicopter and flown to a hospital and although he lost his leg, lots of people teamed up to save his life. If any of you were the pilot of that Dust Off, please get in touch with me, Corbin is especially looking forward to meeting you in San Antonio. But even if you can't make it to the Reunion, Corbin really wants to pass on his gratitude.



Mike Whitten

Please come to the San Antonio Reunion this July and have a great time enjoying the comradely, sights and sounds that only Texas and the VHVA can offer. I also challenge every one of you to find someone not planning to attend, and convince them to join us.

— Mike Whitten, President

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Aviator was late getting into your hands, we knew it was going to be late despite the best efforts of several people, but we also found out that just trying to get an e-mail successfully sent to the membership has also proven to be a real challenge. Our computer guru's have the ability to send out blanket e-mail to the membership, but to do so; **WE MUST HAVE YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS.**

What we are finding is that we have a lot of bad e-mail addresses and/or because of all the spam messages that we all get, your service provider will not let our mail through. So, we need all of you to make sure the VHVA has your current e-mail address (check VHVA.org for what we show on-file) and then set your spam controls to allow messages from us. The VHVA does not and will not send out e-mail just to fill up your inbox, but we do want to be able to send you pertinent information when necessary. Since the last reunion, the only "blast" e-mail we have sent out to the membership was to let everyone know that registration for the San Antonio Reunion was open – Did you get that one? If not, see above.

This year's Reunion will be a lot different in that we are keeping a lot of free time open to just enjoy the comradeship that these Reunions bring. We will have the normal early-bird evening and the welcome reception and the final banquet and, of course, Vince Vance will put on his usual great show. To those of you who were not able to be in Dallas in 2004, Vince was the hit of the reunion but so far, the sign-ups for this years show are running at only about 55 percent of attendees. Please rethink your decision if you have passed on this evening of entertainment, you will have a wonderful time,

## WANT TO BE ON EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE?

There are two officer positions to be elected to the 2008 VHVA Executive Committee:

### Vice President and Junior Member at Large

If you are interested in either position, submit a letter or e-mail of intent to me no later than June 12, 2008. I will send you the complete application packet by return mail or e-mail.

Send your letter to:

Woody McFarlin

**GUARANTEED VHVA**  
hotel room rates end on  
**June 11th!** After that,  
**you may have to pay more....**  
*or may not be able to get a room period.*

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## VHPA OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND STAFF 2007-08

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| VICE PRESIDENT      | John "Jack" Salm |
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|                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
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| Membership                    | Mike Law              |
| Records/database              | Gary Roush            |
| Public relations/publications | Ken Fritz             |
| Directory                     | Gary Roush, Editor    |
| The VHPA Aviator              | Jack Swickard, Editor |
| Chapter Liaison               | John "Jack" Salm      |
| Vendor Coordinator            | Rich Buzen            |
| Historical                    | Mike Sloniker         |
| Technology steering           | Charles Holley        |
| Strategic planning            | Robert Smith          |

### VHPA SUPPORT

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
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| Investment advisor | Bob Potvin     |
| VHPA Headquarters  | (800) 505-VHPA |

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|                           |                           |
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| Reunion chairman          | NationalReunion@vhpa.org  |
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| Reunion webmaster         | webmaster@vhpareunion.org |
| VHPA website              | www.vhpa.org              |
| VHPA reunion website      | www.vhpareunion.org       |
| VHPA EC Forum             | www.vhpa.info             |

## Aviator privacy statement

The VHPA Aviator contains member privacy information the VHPA considers proprietary and confidential.

This information, including but not limited to the VHPA Chapter list, shall not be used for commercial solicitation purposes or for any correspondence related thereto without prior written authorization from the VHPA president.

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

## LETTERS

### Retiree Recall Program for Aviators

My friend Lash Wisener recently sent me an HQDA message, SUBJECT: RETIREE RECALL PROGRAM FOR AVIATORS that provides policy guidance for a recall to active duty "available to retired officers who are qualified Army Aviators."

It opened my mind to a possibility and, for a few minutes, I actually considered applying. Then I read the what it takes and realized I have three strikes against me already:

1. My aircraft is on a pole in Florence, Ala. A picture of another of my aircraft is in the Smithsonian
2. My eyes aren't what they used to be. I might end up blowing up the entire world. Wait a minute — that's what I wanted to do the first time!
3. There's a weight and balance issue — mine, not the aircraft.

Face it, there's not much chance for overweight, 63-year-old aviators with delusions of adequacy. But, damn. It sure would be fun to strap on a Cobra, fly some missions, do some good for some people, have a couple of beers at the Stickitt Inn, dinner and a couple more beers at the club, watch a movie or floor show and then get up and do it all over again tomorrow.

We become too soon old, and too late smart. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Forrest Snyder  
Panther 19

★★★★★

### Photos Needed After Fire

I have been referred to you by Susan Jones from Midland, Texas, whose late husband was an active member in the VHPA. My brother-in-law, Warren Piwetz, is also a VHPA member and the reason for this letter.

In late December 2007, Warren's home burned and his losses include his photographs taken while he was a helicopter pilot trainee and a pilot in Vietnam. My request is to ask you if you might publicize Warren's information in The VHPA Aviator and/or on your website in the hope that some of his fellow trainees/pilots might have some photos that they might be able to scan or duplicate for him.

Warren's information is as follows:

- Warren Piwetz
- Flight School Class 70-21/70-19
- Units in Vietnam in 1970: C/227 AVN, 1st CAV and B/227 AVN, 1st CAV
- Address: [REDACTED] McKinney, TX 75070
- Email: [REDACTED]

Eileen Piwetz

★★★★★

## LETTERS

### Pink Panther Found in Florida

Great news for the Pink Panthers of the 361st Aviation Company, Escort/Aerial Weapons Company — we finally located Skelly, Robert M Skeldon, Panther 17, a CW3 who served with us from early June 1971 to October 1971.

He is one of the five pilots from the unit we had not located. Dana Johndro found him in Florida. They had served together in Vietnam and later at Fort Hood.

We had searched for him for over 10 years before Dana recalled a slight detail that made it happen — his last name is spelled S-K-E-L-D-O-N, not S-K-E-L-T-O-N. What a break through.

Skelly came to the Panthers when D/227/1Cav shut down in late May of 1971. He was infused in to our unit with Mel Bullock, Lynn Jones and Donald Perrymore, all experienced backseaters, and Mike Kieren, a new guy, my future roommate and my best friend to this day. Skelly was a tall, lanky CW3, one of the few I ever saw in Vietnam.

He hung around with Lynn Jones, the guy I flew with most in my early days in the 361st. They often flew as a Fire team, I recall. Both were assigned to the 1st platoon, as was I.

As we were talking yesterday, we both recalled my first day in the backseat, a very memorable day that I had forgotten. Skelly was lead and I was flying his wing on AO3, the southern mission out of Plei Jurang. We covered VNAF Hueys or KingBees, inserting Vietnamese recon teams in northern Cambodia.

Lynn was flying in my front seat TRYING hard to teach me something. On our second insert, the lead VNAF aircraft landed in a fairly tight LZ and proceeded to put his tail rotor into a rather large tree.

"I take fire, I take fire," he yelled.

"Where? What direction?" Skelly asked.

"I take fire, I take fire," he yelled again.

We didn't hear any gunfire or see any tracers. Then he called for extract, I guess. It was in Vietnamese and the empty chase Huey swooped in to pick up the downed crew. Everybody on the damaged aircraft got out rather quickly and ran.

The empty chase bird came in and picked up the pilots and crew. The four guys in the recon team tried to get on, but were left to fend for themselves. A second Huey finally came in and picked them up after much pleading in Vietnamese.

After a few minutes the VNAF lead pilot came on the radio and told us to "blow up" the damaged aircraft. As interested and excited as we were, we knew better. He kept telling us the bird was all shot up, too badly damaged to be recovered and need to be destroyed immediately before the enemy captured it.

We told him he had to get his higher's permission before we could do it. His voice got very high as he

"ordered" us to blow it up. We called Panther Operations for permission, they said "no." They called battalion, they said "no." Battalion called group, they said "no." Group called brigade, they said "no."

Finally, after about 45 minutes, the VNAF's higher gave us permission to destroy the downed Huey. Now this is the first time I've fired rockets since Cobra Hall six months before. I couldn't hit the ground, much less the target. Lynn raked it pretty well with mini-gun and Skelly was right on target.

Finally, on my fourth pass, I hit the already-burning bird. I was so thrilled. I wish I could tell you I never missed what I was aiming at ever again but that would be what we call a "war story."

Skelly is joining VHPA, if he hasn't already and, his health willing, will join us in San Antonio. Now, to locate the last 4 of 204.

Mike Sheuerman

★★★★★

## 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.

#### For information, call:

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## LETTERS

### Dear Bob:

Thanks for your interest in the Army Aviation Hall of Fame. This is in response to your letter to the Editor published in the November-December issue of The VHPA Aviator.

You asked is it "just a club for generals, making the Hall of Fame Award meaningless?"

For the 2008 selection process, ten generals were nominated and two were selected. (One general selected is a four star Master Aviator general.) Ask the eight generals not selected if they think it meaningless. Nine warrant officers were nominated and one was selected.

In the 33-year history of the Army Aviation Hall of Fame, 134 individuals have been honored with induction. Twelve of these were enlisted soldiers, twenty were warrant officers and thirty-three were generals. (There are currently serving today, thirty-eight aviation general officers.) There have been fourteen winners of the Medal of Honor inducted into the Army Aviation HOF.

Hope to see you at VHPA in July in SAT.

Ben L. Harrison

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This letter is in response to a letter by Bob Baird that appeared in the November/December VHPA Aviator.

★★★★★

### VHPA Calendars

I met VHPA's Calendar Editor, Mike Law, at the 2007 VHCMA Reunion in Phoenix. He was like some traveling salesman with his old VHPA Calendars spread all over a table. He was making friends, sharing stories about the photos, and asking people if they had any photos they'd like to loan the VHPA. Several of my 173rd AHC Robinhood friends and I were passing around our private photo albums. I was a Robinhood doorgunner from 6/67 to 6/68 and am proud to this day that I served with the 173rd! Mike asked if he could look at them and then we made deal. I want to thank the VHPA for using my Love at first sight! as the July 2008 photo. I had a lot of fun working with Mike. Lots of my friends now have VHPA Calendars too.

Dan 'Bink' Binkley

★★★★★

## Get the Membership Directory on CD

The 2008 Membership Directory will be available again this year on CD.

There are several advantages to the CD versus the paper directory. The main one is that it contains more member information such as telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

The paper directory has gotten so big we have to cut back on information to save space. There are essentially no space limitations for the CD. Since there is lots of space, the history section on the CD is the full section not just an abstract like we have in the paper directory.

Finally, the CD does not kill any trees and is much lighter and compact so you can carry it with you. If you prefer to receive the CD instead of the paper directory, please let HQ know at HQ@vhpa.org or (800) 505-VHPA.

If you received the 2007 directory on CD, you will automatically receive the CD this year too.

The CDs are compatible with Vista and all of the other Microsoft operating systems. The deadline for directory updates will be Aug. 15. Please get updates and changes to HQ prior to that date.

Do you want the latest and greatest membership information? Log on to our new online membership directory at [www.vhpaservices.com](http://www.vhpaservices.com)

It is updated at least once each week. This site along with the Membership Directory on CD has most of the newsletters and magazines back to 1994.

We generally post the latest Aviator on the site before it is mailed so you can get the latest Aviator as soon as it is finished without waiting for it to be printed and mailed.

If the online directory is all that you need, please tell HQ so the VHPA can save the expense of mailing you either the paper or CD directory. If you want both the CD and paper directory, there is an additional charge of \$20. The 2007 directories on CD are still available from HQ for \$20.

Gary Roush  
Directory Editor  
[webmaster@vhpa.org](mailto:webmaster@vhpa.org)

### 25 YEARS SINCE FIRST REUNION

It has been 25 years since the first reunion was held in Phoenix, Ariz.

We have come a long way since then and the site of our 25th reunion, San Antonio, Texas, could not be a better place to celebrate.

The host hotel, the Marriott Rivercenter, is located adjacent to the famous San Antonio Riverwalk and provides us with a selection of activities that rivals any we have had in the prior 24 reunion locations.

The first reunion brought 66 pilots together to reminisce over the times spent together. The 25th will provide the same opportunity.

While there are tours available on the first 2 days, and entertainment on the second evening, the focus of this reunion is you, the member. We have done our best to keep time open for you to find lost friends and reestablish those friendships that have been made during the past 24 years.

Any changes to the reunion agenda have been posted on the VHPA web site and you may want to do a final

check to ensure you have registered for the activities you would like to attend. Some will be limited by space and could sell out.

As we get closer to the reunion, check the morning report to see who is attending. You can search by name, unit, call sign and flight school class.

There is nothing more exciting, and rewarding, at a reunion than the moment someone taps you on the shoulder and asks if they know you, and they do. It has happened to me at each reunion I have attended and it is the reason I keep coming back.

Mini-reunions are being scheduled and you should check the web to see what has been scheduled that you would like to attend. The specific location will be published at the reunion site.

The details of specific events are on the web and in prior issues of The Aviator. If you have questions, contact HQ or send me an email at [dmyoung@vhpa.org](mailto:dmyoung@vhpa.org)

*See you in San Antonio.*

— Dana Young

## PZ CLEAN!

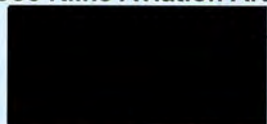


### THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

See my other available prints, and watch for new ones, at [www.joekline.com](http://www.joekline.com).



Joe Kline Aviation Art



[www.joekline.com](http://www.joekline.com)



### ~WELCOME RECEPTION~

*The first group get together at the reunion will be the*

*Welcome Reception on*

*Wednesday night from 7:00 – 11:00.*

*We have changed the format slightly this year to have low background music throughout the event to allow those of us who have heard a little too much turbine whine to actually hear each other speak. A buffet dinner is provided including a garden salad station, grill vegetables, chili with all the fixings, smoked brisket, grill chicken, and topped off with a dessert bar, coffee and various teas. If you haven't signed up yet, we would encourage you to do so. With no structured program, it allows you to walk the room and look for those guys you haven't seen or talked with in 30+ years. There is plenty of food, a cool environment, and four hours of time to allow a lot of catching up to be done without having to leave the hotel. While there is a lot to do, to see, eat and drink outside the hotel, this is an excellent opportunity to see a broad section of those attending and renew those friendships which can be carried on through the rest of the reunion and beyond. If you haven't signed up, we encourage you to do so today.*

# Reunion

See You In San Antonio!

**Amidst the daily hubbub** of a busy metropolitan downtown, sequestered 20 feet below street level, lies one of San Antonio's jewels - the Paseo del Rio.

Better known as the River Walk, these cobblestone and flagstone paths border both sides of the San Antonio River as it winds its way through the middle of the business district.

The River Walk has multiple personalities - quiet and parklike in some stretches, while other areas are full of activity with European-style sidewalk cafes, specialty boutiques, nightclubs and gleaming high-rise hotels.

Stretching for approximately 2 1/2 miles from the Municipal Auditorium and Conference Center on the north end to the King William Historic District on the south, the River Walk designs were mainly the work of the late Robert H.H. Hugman, a landscape architect.

A major flood in 1921 had killed 50 people and resulted in millions of dollars in property damage, as well as public outcries to cover the river with concrete, with the riverbed to serve as a sewer. Fortunately, a small group of women, who formed the nucleus of the present day San Antonio Conservation Society, saved the river from this fate through a puppet show entitled "The Goose That Laid The Golden Egg," written by Emily Edwards.

With WPA work crews, Hugman and engineer Edwin P. Arneson completed most of the walks, arched bridges and entrance steps during 1939 to 1941. Hugman initially called his plan "The Shops Of Aragon And Romula."

The River Walk remained primarily a

park for years, and, in fact, developed a tainted reputation. However, in preparation for HemisFair 1968, the World's Fair in San Antonio, commercial development and beautification along the river began in earnest and still continues.

Today, the river's floating transportation system provides a novel method

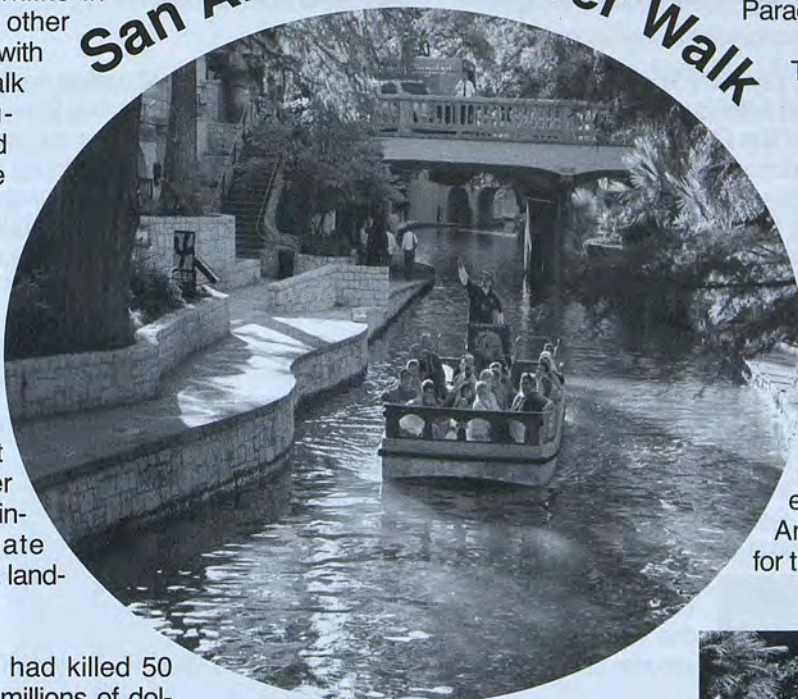
of sightseeing, while nearby Rio Plaza offers dining and entertainment options for every taste in the newest complex on the River Walk.

The River Walk also offers its own unique outdoor theatre. Spectators sit on grassy steps on one side of the river, while the performance stage is on the other. The Arneson River Theatre is the site for events ranging from a Mariachi Festival and a Saint Patrick's Day show to summer's Fiesta Noche del Rio and Coffins on Parade around Halloween.

Two annual parades actually "float" on the San Antonio River downtown each year. The Fiesta River Parade and the Holiday River Parade fill every inch of the River Walk with people, celebrating the season.

The San Antonio River provided life-sustaining water for the native Indians who first settled in this area and still pumps life and energy into downtown San Antonio today as the setting for the River Walk.

## San Antonio's River Walk



of sightseeing and people watching in downtown San Antonio. Groups can also dine aboard open-air, candlelit cruisers. River cruisers deliver visitors to Rivercenter, a dazzling three-level, glass shopping, dining and entertainment complex, and to the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

Entertaining is a favorite activity along the River Walk, and restaurants offer cuisines from the finest Tex-Mex delicacies to sizzling Texas steaks to Creole cooking to Italian pasta. Lively groups sing along in an Irish pub and a Dixieland band performs far into the night. Hard Rock Cafe anchors South Bank, a collection of dining and enter-



SAN ANTONIO RIVER CRUISE

For a free San Antonio visitor information packet, call the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau (SACVB) toll-free at 1-800-ALAMO-07 (TTY 210-207-6706.) Or visit the SACVB's home page at [www.SanAntonioVisit.com](http://www.SanAntonioVisit.com).

## San Antonio Mission Trails

Spanish conquistadors came to Texas in the 17th century in search of wealth and treasures in the new "kingdom." In 1690, another group of Spaniards, the Franciscan friars, journeyed to the new frontier and founded some of the earliest of 38 missions established in Texas. San Antonio was the site of five of these classic church communities that brought Christianity to the Native Americans of the Southwest.

Each mission consisted of the church, a granary, Indian quarters, textile shops, a blacksmith and tannery, irrigated farmlands and a ranch. Some also had a mill, fruit orchards, grape arbors and other economic advantages necessary for survival on the northern frontier.

Mission San Antonio de Valero, popularly known as the Alamo, was the earliest of the chain of San Antonio missions, established in 1718. Today it is recognized as "The Cradle of Texas Liberty," a symbol of freedom and independence throughout the world. This mission was the site of an infamous battle that ended on March 6, 1836, and kindled Texas' desire for freedom. One hundred and eighty-nine Texas patriots met Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna during the Battle of the Alamo. Although all 189 men died, Texas' fight for freedom had just begun.

Except for the Alamo, all of the missions are active parish churches and are included in the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. San Antonio is one of the few urban areas in the United States that has a national park included within its city limits. While all of the sites are representative of the Spanish colonization effort in North America, the National Park Service has assigned interpretive themes to each of the four missions contained in the park. Park

interpreters emphasize one or more aspects of the missionization process at each site.

An excellent way to start your visit to the missions is to stop at the \$9.5 million visitor center located at 6701 San José Drive, adjacent to Mission San José. Interactive displays and a state-of-the-art theater showing an award-winning film provide background on the mission era in San Antonio.

In addition, work is continuing on the \$17.7 million Mission Trails Project. A joint effort of the City of San Antonio,

Bexar County, San Antonio River Authority, San Antonio Water System, Texas Department of Transportation and National Park Service, the project will link all four missions to the Alamo with a 10-mile

bike/hike trail system. A scenic "wet" route will have a close association with the San Antonio River, while an all-weather "dry" route will provide alternate access to the missions. Also featuring improved way finding and signage, the Mission Trails Project is being built in five phases.

### Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo

The interpretive theme of Mission San José, established in 1720, is "The Mission as a Social Center and as a Center for Defense." To commemorate the Texas Centennial in 1936, federal and state agencies combined efforts to reconstruct the surrounding compound and portions of the parish church to its former image of "Queen of the Texas Missions." This mission became the most beautiful, most prosperous and the best fortified of all the San Antonio missions.

The façade and other carvings on the church are among its most notable features. The famous "Rosa's Window," although weathered by time, is considered to be one of the finest pieces of Spanish Colonial ornamentation in the country. Other features include the granary, 84 compartments that served as Indian quarters, an immense quadrangle enclosure and a restored gristmill that houses an original horizontal water wheel. Although San José is the most complete in appearance, each of the missions has a beauty and history of its own.

### Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña

Mission Concepción, whose interpretive theme is "The Mission as a Religious Center," is one of the oldest unrestored stone churches in the United States. The mission was established in 1731, and the present stone church took more than 20 years to complete. Its massive twin towers still show traces of the brightly colored paintings that were used to attract the Indians to the missions. Visible on the inside of the friary are original 18th century wall paintings illustrating colors that have been dramatically brought back to life through a recent National Park Service paint conservation effort.

### Mission San Juan Capistrano

Mission San Juan, moved to San Antonio in 1731 from an earlier location in East Texas, never saw the completion of its stone church. In the chapel are rare figures of Christ and the Virgin made of cornstalk pith. Today, the original friary serves as a museum that displays artifacts from the active days of the mission.

San Juan's interpretive theme is "The Mission as an Economic Center." Within the walls, most of the original compound is preserved, giving an authentic picture of the Spanish Colonial mission plan. Outside the enclosure, a designated nature trail that parallels



THE ALAMO



### San Antonio Mission Trails Cont.

a section of the original San Antonio River channel recreates a rural atmosphere perhaps not unlike the agrarian setting visible in earlier centuries.

#### Mission San Francisco de la Espada

"The Mission as a Vocational Education Center" is the interpretive theme of Mission Espada. One of the early East Texas missions founded in 1690, Espada was relocated to San Antonio in 1731. By 1778, however, the original adobe church structure was in ruin; the principal stone church was never completed. The chapel as we know it today, built originally as the sacristy for the stone church but later converted into the present structure, dates from about 1884. The Moorish-styled, arched doorway, however, dates from about 1780 and represents some of the chapel's most original fabric.

The Espada Aqueduct, which carries water from the San Antonio River across Piedras Creek, continues to feed the original mission irrigation system. Espada Dam, built between 1731 and 1740, is the best existing example of the four Franciscan-designed dams placed on the San Antonio River. The dam is still in use today. Combined, these structures represent perhaps the best surviving physical assembly of an 18th century Spanish irrigation network in the United States.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, established November 10, 1978, after years of community effort and support, operates under a Cooperative Agreement with the State of Texas, the Archdiocese of San Antonio and numerous municipal agencies. The national park opened to the public April 1, 1983.

There is no admission fee at any of the missions, however, donations are accepted. The park is open 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Visitors can access all four missions via an 8-mile road that winds along the San Antonio River southward from the Alamo.

For additional information, contact San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, [redacted] San Antonio 78210-4919, or phone [redacted]



THE TOWER OF AMERICAS

### THE "UNOFFICIAL" MEMBERS MOTORCYCLE RIDE (VIII)



Just a reminder, we are planning the "unofficial" Members Motorcycle Ride (VIII) to coincide with the 25th VHPA Reunion in San Antonio.

We have been in contact with the San Antonio Blue Knights (Police) Motorcycle Club, which has agreed to help us with a route and getting us in and out of San Antonio on our motorcycles, safely.

The Blue Knights also will accompany us on the ride. I suspect it will be much like the way it was organized in Denver with the Chapter of the Blue Knights, there.

We are planning the ride on July 3rd with a riders meeting at 7:30AM and returning that afternoon. Prospective riders could contact me at [redacted] or George VanRiper at [redacted]

[redacted] for more information about ride length, motorcycle rental locations, and so forth.

It will help us a lot to know how many riders to plan for as getting out of the city and into the desired riding area will need a fair amount of coordination with the Blue Knights, so an email to me or George letting us know of the member's intent to ride would be appreciated.

— DENNIS DEWINE

MEMBERS MOTORCYCLE RIDE

NOTE: This activity is not sponsored, sanctioned, or supervised by the VHPA. It is an activity independently planned, organized and monitored by members in their individual capacity, and not as agents or representatives of the VHPA.

### Attend Reunion 2008 in San Antonio



# Reunion

*See You In San Antonio!*

## *Detailed Schedule of Activities*

### **Tuesday, July 1**

|                    |                                            |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM | Vendor set up – Salon J-M                  |
| 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM  | Pre Registration – Registration Desk 2     |
| 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM  | Vendors open for business - Salon J-M      |
| 8:00 PM – 12:00 PM | Early Bird informal get together – Salon I |

### **Wednesday, July 2**

|                    |                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM  | Registration – Registration Desk 2                                                                                                                      |
| 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM  | Highlights of San Antonio/Market Square Tour                                                                                                            |
| 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM  | Sins and Saints Tour                                                                                                                                    |
| 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM | Vendor area – Salon J-M                                                                                                                                 |
| 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM  | First time reunion attendee special orientation welcome reception – Salon I                                                                             |
| 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM | Welcome reception , buffet dinner, and party for all members and their guests – Grand Ballroom A-I<br>(Full Buffet Dinner served at 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM) |

### **Thursday, July 3**

|                    |                                                                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6:00 AM – 2:00 PM  | Golf Tournament at Canyon Springs Golf Club; includes lunch and mementos |
| 7:30 AM – 2:00 PM  | The "unofficial" VHPA Member's Motorcycle Ride (Riders Meeting First)    |
| 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM  | Mini-reunions (8:00 AM – noon and 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM)                     |
| 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM  | Highlights of San Antonio/Market Square Tour                             |
| 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM  | Sins and Saints Tour                                                     |
| 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM  | Registration – Registration Desk 2                                       |
| 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM  | Vendor area – Salon J-M                                                  |
| 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM | Luncheon with "Jug" Burkett                                              |
| 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM  | War Story Contest                                                        |
| 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM  | Poker (I)                                                                |
| 3:15 PM – 4:30 PM  | Historical Presentation Forum Special Documentation Presentation –       |
| 9:00 PM – midnight | Vince Vance Concert Grand Ballroom A-I                                   |

### **Friday, July 4**

|                   |                                                      |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM | Mini-reunions (8:00 AM – noon and 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM) |
| 7:30 AM – 2:00 PM | Participation in New Braunfels Parade                |
| 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM | Registration – Registration Desk 2                   |
| 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM | Vendor area – Salon J-M                              |
| 2:30 PM - 6:30 PM | Poker (II)                                           |
| 2:30 PM – 6:30 PM | Historical Presentation Forum II                     |

### **Saturday, July 5**

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00 AM – 9:15 AM   | KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast                                                                                                                                                      |
| 9:00 AM – Noon      | Registration – main floor registration desk Registration Desk 2                                                                                                                         |
| 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Annual Business Meeting Grand Ballroom A-I                                                                                                                                              |
| 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Brunch and Face Reader for spouses and guests                                                                                                                                           |
| Noon - 4:30 PM      | Vendor Area Salon J-M                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM   | Mini-reunions                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM   | Veteran's Benefits Seminar                                                                                                                                                              |
| 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM   | Women's Seminar                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 3:15 PM – 4:30 PM   | Historical Presentation Forum III –                                                                                                                                                     |
| 5:45 PM – 12:00 PM  | Doors open - Banquet, entertainment, & dance (Coat and tie event. Some members wear military dress uniform. Ladies wear cocktail dresses) – Grand Ballroom; ceremonies start at 6:30 PM |

### **Sunday, July 6**

|              |                                                              |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| AM Departure | Check out for majority of reunion attendees – returning home |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|

# Reunion *See You In San Antonio!*

## VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

25th Annual Reunion • San Antonio, Texas • July 2-5, 2008

### NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

**Register online at [www.vhpareunion.org](http://www.vhpareunion.org) or mail completed form to:**

VHPA Headquarters, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 105, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698

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

|                  |                   |                                                                                    |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Member name:     | Member No.:       | Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                                           |
| Address:         |                   | Address change? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                                       |
| City:            | State:            | Zip:                                                                               |
| Email address:   | Telephone: (    ) |                                                                                    |
| Wife/guest name: | Hometown:         | 18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| Guest name:      | Hometown:         | 18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| Guest name:      | Hometown:         | 18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| Guest name:      | Hometown:         | 18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| Guest name:      | Hometown:         | 18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |

| EVENT                                                       | No. of people | Price     | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|-------|
| Registration through 5/1/2008*                              |               | @\$60     |       |
| Registration after 5/1/2008*                                |               | @\$70     |       |
| Registration for under age 18                               |               | @\$10     |       |
| Early Bird Event (July 1)                                   |               | No charge |       |
| Welcome reception for first reunion attendees only (July 2) |               | No charge |       |
| Welcome reception buffet (July 2)                           |               | @\$45     |       |
| San Antonio tour (July 2)                                   |               | @\$25     |       |
| Sins & Saints tour (July 2)                                 |               | @\$55     |       |
| Golf Tournament (July 3)                                    |               | @\$100    |       |
| San Antonio tour (July 3)                                   |               | @\$25     |       |
| Sins & Saints tour (July 3)                                 |               | @\$55     |       |
| Lunch with J.G. Burkett (July 3)                            |               | @\$20     |       |
| Poker I (July 3)                                            |               | @\$25     |       |
| Vince Vance Concert (July 3)                                |               | @\$35     |       |
| July 4th Parade                                             |               | @\$25     |       |
| Poker II (July 4)                                           |               | @\$25     |       |
| Spouse/Guest Event (July 5)                                 |               | @\$30     |       |
| Veterans' Benefits (July 5)                                 |               | No charge |       |
| Women's Seminar (July 5)                                    |               | No charge |       |
| Final Banquet/Dance (July 5)                                |               | @\$75     |       |
| Non-registered guests at banquet only                       |               | @\$95     |       |
| Total from sidebar                                          | XXXXX         | XXXXX     |       |
| VHPA dues (if not dues current)                             | 1 year        | @ \$36    |       |
| VHPA dues (if not dues current)                             | 3 years       | @ \$99    |       |
| Life membership                                             |               | @ \$540   |       |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                                          |               |           |       |

| T-SHIRTS              |           |      |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|
| QTY.                  | SIZE      | AMT. |
|                       | S@\$18    |      |
|                       | M@\$18    |      |
|                       | L@\$18    |      |
|                       | XL@\$18   |      |
|                       | XXL@\$19  |      |
|                       | XXXL@\$20 |      |
| <b>SIDEBAR TOTAL:</b> |           |      |

| QTY. | BANQUET MEAL |
|------|--------------|
|      | Beef         |
|      | Fish         |
|      | Vegetable    |

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

#### REFUND POLICY

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

*\*Each person 18 and older must pay full registration fee. (Except non-registered banquet guests.)*

#### 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 2008" with form.

# Reunion

*See You In San Antonio!*

## EXCITING NEWS REGARDING THE VETERANS SEMINAR

***I have great news that should add some real substance to the Veterans Seminar on Saturday, July 5.***

The Audie Murphy VA Center in San Antonio will provide at least 1-2 speakers to our panel of experts, in addition to our own Pike Anderson.

The San Antonio Center will have one person from the Benefits Division and one from the Application Division to speak about their respective divisions and answer questions regarding individual situations.

This may be the one time you can sit down with someone from the VA and discuss your specific claims, application or other related issues, get some answers and, hopefully, a better understanding of how the VA works and what it needs to hear from you regarding health issues.

I encourage all of you to bring appropriate paperwork and previous claim history you have accumulated, i.e. applications, letters of denial, etc. and other information that would allow them to give you specific direction on your claim.

We have limited seating, so please sign up when you submit your reunion application and we will make sure there is a space reserved for you.

*I look forward to seeing all of you in San Antonio.*

*Rich Buzen*

■ Have you been denied for something while some of your friends have successfully been approved and you do not understand why? This may be your opportunity to find out what you need to do or what you didn't do the first (second or third) time.

■ Don't understand what is covered and what is not? Bring your questions to the seminar and get the information you need to make a successful claim with the VA.

■ Want to know which diseases are covered and which are not, need to know if your hearing loss is covered, want information regarding the various forms of cancer that the VA has specifically attributed to Vietnam Service, this is the place.

## NEW BRAUNFELS WELCOMES YOU "HOME!"

**ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS** of this year's Reunion will be our chance to participate in this year's New Braunfels' Independence Day Parade!

Expect an early bus load up (0700) in San Antonio for the festivities and the start of an enjoyable day. New Braunfels has planned a really special, very patriotic "Welcome Home" celebration for all of us, and our families, complete with marching bands, short speeches by our County Judge and the Mayor of New Braunfels and maybe our own Congressman Grabb and lots, lots more.

The Parade itself promises to be a short one in length and there will be plenty of bottled water for everyone to drink but the great thing is that this celebration continues throughout the day. First there will be a great lunch at the city's Civic Center complete with some of the finest Bar-B-Que you have ever had and it comes complete with complimentary beer and cold water. Then, if there is enough

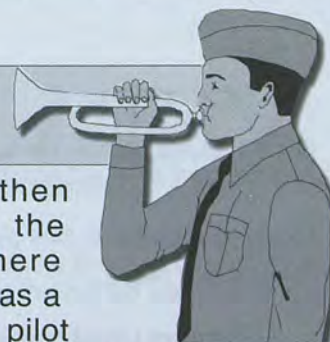
interest, we will "Roll Out the Dance Band" and party the day away (our new ballroom has a fine wooden floor and the ballroom is ours till midnight).

But if we are to pull all of this together - we need to hear from you, our Membership. First, since the fire code limits us to only 750 people for lunch, we need to know how many of you plan to join us in New Braunfels. Next, if you would also like to stay around after lunch and enjoy more of our hospitality, then we will have to shift our bus schedule to allow for your return to the hotel. So, help the event organizers by letting us know your preferences on the Reunion Reservation forms.

Full details on this day in New Braunfels are also available from the organizer's themselves, Roy Knippa

Cliff Hyatt, Tom Andrews, and Russ Jones. Details on the City of New Braunfels and the Parade itself are available on the web at [www.nbcham.org](http://www.nbcham.org).

# TAPS



## THOMAS DOUGHERTY

Thomas Dougherty, 59, died in January after suffering a heart attack.

Dougherty entered the Army after graduating from Seton Hall University in 1970. He attended the Infantry Officers Basic Course at Fort Benning, Ga., prior to graduating from flight training at Fort Rucker in March 1972.

He served as an OH-6 pilot with F/8th in Vietnam.

Upon returning home, he served as a Secret Service agent until his retirement.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara, a son and a daughter.

★★★★★

## ELBERT ELLIOTT DRANE

Retired Lt. Col. Elbert "Bert" Elliott Drane, 85, of Fort Worth, Texas, died Dec. 30.

He retired from the Army in 1968, with 26 years of service. He was a pioneer in Army Aviation and a veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, flying fixed-wing, helicopter and jet aircraft.

He received the Purple Heart, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal and Legion of Merit. He was a member of the Army Aviation Board.

Survivors include his children, Steve Drane of Houston and Joni Beckner of Temecula, Calif.



★★★★★

## GARY A. MAUS

Gary A. Maus, 64, of Albuquerque, N.M., died March 14 after a fight against cancer.

He was born in Dubuque, Iowa, on April 23, 1943. He married Christa Bauer on July 17, 1971, in Hamburg, Germany.

Maus attended Loras College before joining the Army during the Vietnam War. He became a helicopter pilot, ultimately flying 1,400 combat hours.

Maus was awarded the Air Medal with a V for "valor" for "exposing his aircraft to intense enemy fire while evacuating the critically wounded during the battle of Dak To." He also received two Purple Heart Medals.

After retiring from the Army in 1986, he served as a U.S. Customs inspector for 20 years.

He is survived by his wife, Christa; a son, Anthony Maus of Albuquerque; daughters, Christina Webb of Newmarket, N.H., and Michelle Evans of El Paso, Texas.

★★★★★

## TERRELL KENTON PETERMAN

Terrell "Terry" Kenton Peterman, 57, of Mountain Home, Idaho, died March 23 at home with his family after a 2-year battle with brain tumors.

Peterman was born to Kenton H. Peterman and Ruth Jerome Peterman in Nampa, Idaho. He grew up working on dairy farms with his family until he graduated from high school in 1969.

He then entered the Army, where he served as a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War. Peterman flew gunships and troop transport helicopters in South Vietnam and as part of the Lam Son Mission into Laos.

He was awarded two Purple Heart Medals during his military service.

Peterman partnered with his father and a brother in their Peterman Farms agribusiness operation in Mountain Home for the past 34 years. During this time he used his helicopter experience to crop dust.

His wife, Debbie; sons, Dan Peterman of Boise and Ben of Mountain Home; and his mother, Ruth Jerome Peterman, survive him.

★★★★★

## JOHN C. WEAVER

John C. Weaver Jr., 67, of Pittsburg, Calif., died Feb. 23 in Belize, Central America, of an illness.

He graduated from flight school in Class 64-2 and served in South Vietnam with the 187th Assault Helicopter Company in 1967-68 and with the 175th AHC in 1971.

Weaver retired 1986 as a lieutenant colonel, afterwards he worked as a public parks director.

He is survived by his wife, Gwen Weaver; a son, John C. Weaver III of Belize; and a daughter, Tanya M. Weaver of Pittsburg.

★★★★★

# VHPA, The Early Years....

**Larry Clark**  
**Member No. 1**

Whenever I meet new VHPA members at the reunions, one of the first questions I am asked, after they find out I am the VHPA founder, is: "Did you ever think it was going to be as big as this?"

The answer is, YES. And I hope it gets even bigger, as we find more pilots who are eligible for membership. Of course, someday, the membership numbers will decrease, down to the last surviving members, who will be able to sit around the bar and tell "war stories" about the early days of the VHPA, back at the first or second reunion.

What follows is my recollection of events that led up to the formation of the VHPA and a look at some of the behind-the-scenes events that occurred during those early years.

I will also share with you some of the highlights of the first few reunions, for those of you that were not there, "way back when" we could party all night and soar with the eagles the next morning.

## **BEFORE THERE WAS A VHPA**

I was employed by Sperry Flight Systems and worked in the Helicopter Marketing Department. In this job, I came in almost daily contact with other Vietnam-era pilots.

We often talked about our tours, the units, the helicopters, the other pilots we knew, and even events that happened in flight school.

I asked them if they ever got together with their classmates, or had they attended any reunions of their units. For the most part, the response was always, no. There had been no reunions. And there was really no way to find their classmates or other pilots. (Remember, this was way before the Internet and Google search.)

I had a personal interest, as I wanted to find my classmates from 65-3, some who were in the 128th with me in Vietnam.

At the Helicopter Association International (HAI) convention in early 1982 I started to pose the question to other Vietnam-era pilots that I ran into, "Would you attend a reunion, if I put one together?"

About 75 percent of those that I talked to responded with an affirmative. So the work began shortly thereafter to contact as many pilots as possible.

I had a stack of business cards from friends and business associates all over the helicopter industry. I made up a very simple questionnaire form that was mailed to each of them that I believed had flown in Vietnam. I asked them to make copies of the form and pass it on to other pilots that had flown in Vietnam.

Sperry was kind enough to allow me to use the company mailroom and postage meter for all of these early letters.

I also had contacts with most of the aviation publications and asked them to run a notice that I was trying to contact Vietnam-era pilots, toward the goal of putting together a reunion. These magazines hit the streets around July 1982.

My mailbox started to fill up daily with letters, and my telephone began to ring as my home address and phone number started to circulate around the world. Notices were posted on bulletin boards at many National Guard and Army Reserve aviation units.

At that time, I was married to Terrie Clark, (now DeDecker) who took on this crazy idea of mine with full support.

She answered the phone and talked to many of you who called during those first years. She helped me organize all the information sheets that we either filled out over the phone, or received by mail. Many times the information sheet had been copied and re-copied so many times it was hardly readable.

We started to put together three ring binders with the sheets, and just plain letters that we had received.

About this time, I bought my first computer, so we started to organize the information so we could sort by name, unit or class number. Some of the letters arrived with money, to offset the costs.

At this point, Sperry was still permitting me to use the copy machines and the mailroom for my efforts. So the money, cash and checks, were being held to await the first reunion.

It became apparent that there was a need to share with all of you, the database of information that we had started to collect. So the decision was made to create the first directory.

These typed pages were copied and passed out at the first reunion, and mailed to many of you that had sent in money. This list would be passed out at the reunion that was being planned for June 1983 in Phoenix.

Terrie had done most of the planning to locate a hotel, reserve a block of rooms, and plan the event activities and meals over the three days. I contacted one of the test pilots at Hughes Helicopters (McDonald Douglas) in Mesa and asked if they could come and be our after-dinner speaker and tell us all about the Apache helicopter.

The list of those who planned to attend was starting to grow. My goal was to bring together a group of pilots for this reunion, and to put forth the idea that we could form an association, to grow the data list of pilots and perhaps have future reunions.

I contacted several other military associations and asked for information about how they operated and, if possible, get a copy of their constitution and bylaws. The Dust Off Association and River Rats were most helpful and you can clearly see elements of their bylaws in the VHPA version of the first bylaws I drafted.

## **JUNE 1983 — THE FIRST REUNION**

When they arrived, there was a sign-in table where Terrie made sure you had paid for the reunion and got you to fill out an information sheet, if we didn't already have one.

The original 66 then received a copy of the pilot list we had put together. I recall one pilot sitting by the pool at a table reading the new list he had just received a few minutes before, when he jumped up and yelled: "James (blank) is alive and working as a truck driver in Texas!! That is the same SOB that tried to kill me in Vietnam!!"

There were many laughs around the pool for the next few minutes. Then the war story was told, and more drinks flowed.

The first afternoon and evening was spent getting to know everyone: pilots and their wives/girlfriends who had traveled to Phoenix, as well as the local folks who stopped by to have a beer. This was what it was all about!

Those who had shown up for this first event were kindling the VHPA flame that evening. The next morning, more pilots arrived and the group was now up to 66 in attendance.

# VHPA, The Early Years....Cont

The organizational meeting began before lunch with a discussion about starting a formal association to bind this group together and find more of our fellow pilots. The vote was 100 percent to go forward.

I passed out copies of the draft bylaws and a small group of pilots volunteered to go out by the pool and review, rewrite or change the documents as required.

Another group volunteered to come up with a name for our organization.

A third group was told to interview each of us and find candidates to run for election to the offices of president, vice president, etc.

As these organization efforts started to unfold, it became clear that in the group of 66 pilots there were skills and knowledge that could be tapped to get this new organization up and running.

For example, Dave Greiger had just started up a custom shirt and hat business for veterans. He said he could make up our logo and produce the first T-shirts, hats and patches. Mike Law was an expert with computers and databases, so he took on the challenge to maintain our database, and add more fields of information about units, tours of duty, etc.

After lunch we passed out copies of the revised bylaws for review and vote by the group. A few more changes were made during the open session.

One provision that I had put into the draft version was for associate membership for the enlisted crewmembers, (doorgunners and crew chiefs). The group voted to remove this category and felt our group should be limited to only pilots.

Finally, a vote was taken on the revised constitution and bylaws, which were approved. At that point I said, "Gentlemen we have just formed the VHPA."

Next there was a motion from the group to have me serve as the first executive director, a position that would not expire, but carry forward until I stepped down, or was voted out by the membership.

Another motion was to give me a free life membership because of the work and money I already had put into starting the VHPA. Also, the first honorary membership went to Terrie for her work and support in getting this organization off the ground.

At that point I said membership was open to any who wanted to pay now during the reunion. Immediately, two pilots came forward with their checkbooks out, pen in hand, to give me a check, and thus have the honor of becoming member No. 2.

The first to hand me his check was Rick Freeman, followed by Ron Wright, who then became member No. 3.

Not everyone at that first meeting paid dues, nor did they send a check later to become members.

Finally we got around to the first election of officers.

Don Hilderbrand received the most votes, and became our first president, Bill Ringer came in second, thus filling the office of vice president.

Little did we know then that Hilderbrand would be unable to serve and, in fact, died during that first year, leaving Bill Ringer to complete his term plus serving the following year as president.

After the banquet, pilots from the factory gave us a slide show and presented a movie about the AH-64 Apache helicopter and its weapons.

As our banquet ended, a man from the wedding party next door to our meeting room came over to tell us that they had

part of a keg left over and asked if we wanted the remaining beer. That took about a millisecond for the pilots to make that difficult decision.

This aluminum keg, with pump, was later seen that night floating in the hot tub. The hotel told us the next morning that they would need to drain and clean the hot tub because of our party.

The night security guard at the hotel reported there were some people in the hot tub late that night without proper bathing attire. But the hotel manager told us he liked our group and wanted us to come back next year.

After the first reunion, Dave Grieger created some artwork that came very close to representing the hot tub events of that famous evening. This became the, "I Survived The First Reunion of The VHPA" shirt that was made available to only those that were actually there in Phoenix.

Dave had also created the first VHPA logo, which featured generic wings, as we wanted our organization to not only have Army pilots, but pilots from all branches.

I asked Dave to also make up a T-shirt with unit call signs scattered all over the front of the shirt, with the new VHPA logo in the center.

Many members called to say their call sign was not on the shirt, so Dave made the font smaller and added more call signs to a later version.

Immediately after the reunion, I sat down with all the information sheets that we had received, and the money we had received. To all of those who had paid at least \$20, I assigned a member number, which was recorded in a large ledger book, in sequence. Thus, the original 66 pilots at the first meeting did not all get the first 66 numbers.

As I said before, not all of them joined the VHPA. Some very low member numbers were assigned to pilots who did not even attend the first reunion.

Also, one member, Paul Uster, requested number 222 because he was a former Bell Helicopter factory pilot and was then flying a Bell 222 for a local Phoenix company. So he got that member number, even though he was one of the original 66 pilots.

Those who had sent only \$5 were offered the chance to send in an additional \$15 to pay for their first year of membership. The same was true for other amounts that had been donated prior to the official start of the VHPA.

We now had a VHPA bank account and ordered the new VHPA logo patches from Grieger to be included with each membership certificate and member directory that was sent to every new member. We hired a local lady to do the member's name and number on their membership certificate using calligraphy.

Again I went to my contacts in the aviation press, and negotiated free ads and notices in their publications about the new VHPA and that we were planning another reunion for July 4 in Houston.

The volume of incoming mail was so much we had to open a post office box. The volume of outgoing mail forced Terrie and me to attend a bulk mail-training course at the post office so we could get the first VHPA bulk mail permit.

When it came time to mail out newsletters or directories, our house looked like a mail sorting center, with envelopes stacked all over the living room and down the hallways. This was before self-sealing envelopes and peel-and-stick stamps. So we enlisted the free "slave labor" of our children to use wet

# VHPA, The Early Years....Cont

sponges to seal envelopes and to stick on address labels.

Roger Gould took over the newsletter and as editor upgraded the content and even the paper it was printed on. The next newsletter cover had a photo of the original 66 from Phoenix, and contained the reunion registration form and hotel contact information for the next reunion in Houston.

## **JULY 4, 1984 — SECOND REUNION, HOUSTON**

At the first reunion, Mike McDonald volunteered to put together the next reunion in Houston, where he and several others from the original 66, lived. Mike and his reunion committee put together one of the best events in VHPA history. The work that was put into this reunion was unbelievable.

I talked by phone almost daily with Mike or Ron Wright about the latest status of the planning and almost every time they had more surprises as to what was being planned. I feared that Mike and his team were planning too much, but it all came together and the reunion was a colossal success.

The theme and events of this reunion were structured to take those attending from the start of flight school, to Vietnam, on R&R, and back home again.

One of the questions on the reunion registration form was the color of your hat in flight school. When members arrived to check in at the hotel, they got their reunion envelope with agenda, tickets, etc., plus a VHPA baseball cap in the color of their flight school class. Soon there were groups of green hats, red hats, etc. around the pools, taking photos and of course the war stories had begun.

The hotel, near the Astrodome, had just purchased the hotel next door, so they turned that property over to us, including the pool, for almost anything we wanted to do.

We also had local aviation units bring in an assortment of Army helicopters, including a CH-47, which landed in the grass median of the interstate loop next to the hotel for our static display.

We recruited several new members who were just driving down the freeway and saw the helicopters, pulled over to find out what was going on, and paid their dues on the spot.

During the business meeting, the issue of crewmember membership was raised again, and voted down. But the membership encouraged me to go out and help them form their own organization, which I did.

I helped start the Vietnam Helicopter Crewmembers Association. We even held our conventions on the same date, at our 10th reunion in Scottsdale, where we had several combined events.

For the lunch, Mike had arranged with a local guard unit to bring in a field kitchen and set it up in one of the hotel banquet rooms. I'll never forget the look on the hotel banquet manager's face as they backed in a duce and a half, plus a jeep with trailer, right onto the carpet.

A GP medium tent was set up to start the serving line, with trash cans complete with immersion heaters. Lunch was served right out of Mermite cans by hotel staff wearing VHPA T-shirts and cooks' whites.

On the PA system you could hear a tape of Armed Forces Radio Saigon. The doors opened and the members started to enter under the GP tent, with its distinctive aroma, with trash-cans for dipping your mess kit, the Mermite cans and the sight of the Jeep trailer with iced down drinks.

This all brought back strong recollections. There was a lot of explanation to wives and children as to why we had tears in our eyes and what all this was about.

One of our members, Bob Boudreaux, who was a TV news anchor in Houston, did his 5 p.m. news broadcast from the reunion hotel where we were in the middle of a P-38 C-ration opening contest that was shown on live TV.

There were so many who wanted to participate in the contest and, with only one case of C rations, we had to auction off the cans.

I overheard one pilot say, "I can't believe I just paid \$5 for a can of ham and lima beans." The winner received an engraved canteen cup with a "gold-plated" P-38 attached to the side.

The highlight of the banquet was the presentation of the special video that Boudreaux and McDonald had prepared for premiering that evening. The lights dimmed and the show started.

If you have never seen the "Above The Finest" video, please find a copy and watch it. (Dave Grieger of D&G has it available on DVD.) When the video ended there was a short period of silence as it all soaked in, then applause broke out and a standing ovation ensued for several minutes. Many handkerchiefs came out to wipe damp eyes.

After dinner many of us went up to the top of the hotel to watch the Fourth of July fireworks and to kick off the "survivors party" that ended our fantastic second reunion.

Mike had arranged with the local Budweiser plant to get several free kegs of beer. The local laws in Houston required that for any open event, such as ours, a police officer had to be there on duty while the beer was served.

Houston has several pilots who fly police helicopters, who are also VHPA members, so they volunteered to be "on duty" when the beer was served. Think about that, pilots overseeing pilots while they drink beer!

After the banquet, some of the police pilots had to go on duty and fly that night. Every few minutes there was a helicopter, with searchlights on and sirens wailing, making gun passes over the swimming pool.

The pilots down below were pulling down their shorts and bending over to show their reverence for the police pilots above.

The free beer ran out about midnight, so a collection was taken up to go visit the local convenience store and acquire more beer. The police pilot who was on duty said everyone was too drunk to drive so he drove them to the store to buy more liquid refreshments.

Somehow we all found our way home, and were able to return the following year for the third reunion.

*~ But that is another story, for later.*

## **VIETNAM DELTA UNITS REUNION**

*All aviation units based  
in the Mekong Delta area of Vietnam from  
1961 through 1975  
are having a reunion at:*

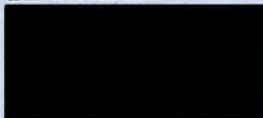
**Fort Rucker, Alabama  
on 6, 7 & 8 June, 2008.**

For more information and to register, contact Stan Gause

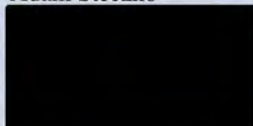
(e-mail: [redacted]  
or John Kennedy at [redacted])

# VHPA CHAPTERS

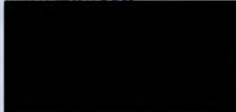
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Bill Sorenson



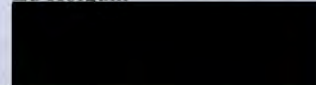
**Fort Wolters Chapter**  
Adam Steczko



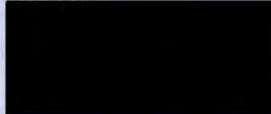
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J.D. Lawson



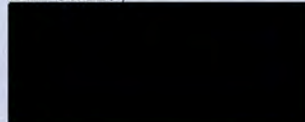
**Southern California Chapter**  
Ed Holguin



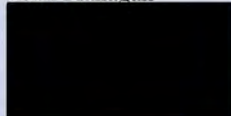
**California Chapter North**  
Ken Fritz



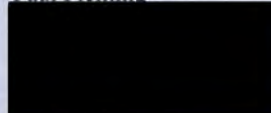
**Georgia Chapter**  
Bill Stanley



**Ohio River LZ Chapter**  
John Flanagan



**Washington State Chapter**  
Paul Fleming

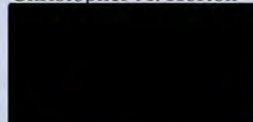


**VHPA of Florida**  
Donald L. Welch



[www.vhpaf.org](http://www.vhpaf.org)

**Mid South Chapter**  
Christopher A. Horton



**Rocky Mountain Chapter**  
C. Edward Fickes



The VHPA and Chapters share information and guidance with one another for the mutual benefit of their members. Chapters are separate and independently managed organizations not under control of the VHPA. Neither the VHPA nor any Chapter is authorized to act as agent or representative of the VHPA or any other Chapter.

[www.vhpawa.org](http://www.vhpawa.org)

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

*No reports received from the Ohio River, Georgia, Arizona, California North and Rocky Mountain chapters.*

### **FORT WORTH CHAPTER**

Our March chapter meeting was held on March 1. We discussed business matters and had a great lunch.

The chapter is cosponsor of "The Empty Chair: Arts and Assemblages of Commemoration" exhibit in Fort Worth.

Our next general meeting is June 7 at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst, Texas. The meeting begins at 11:30 a.m., with food served around noon. Logan's is located on the west side of the NE Mall on the service road next to Best Buy.

— Adam Steczko, president

### **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER**

On March 14 our chapter hosted several guest speakers from Wings and Rotors Air Museum, who reminded us of our days in the Huey and why we are supporters of the VHPA.

Shayne Meder, Scott Donnell, Tom Woehl, a VHPA member, and Carole Purcell told us about all the excitement of their upcoming historic, never-been-done-before trip of flying 4 combat Vietnam veteran helicopters 5,000 miles in 25 days to 43 cities and 16 states in honor of Vietnam veterans. The flight will end at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., accompanied by the 21st Anniversary Ride of the

Rolling Thunder's 300,000 motorcycles.

Our chapter was so inspired, we decided to help financially to offset their enormous fuel costs by becoming charter lifetime members of the Flying Thunder-Flight to the Wall at a \$1,000 level, which entitles our members (in a group, of course) to visit their museum at French Valley Airport and take a ride in one of the old birds.

I'd like to challenge all the VHPA chapters on the route, as well as all other chapters, to consider sending a \$1,000 check for a charter lifetime membership in a show of support from pilots who flew those birds in country.

— Ed Holguin, president

### **WASHINGTON STATE**

Our quarterly business meeting was held Feb. 23 at Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que in Tacoma. After chapter business, we enjoyed a delicious meal.

Our next meeting will be held at the Olympia Airport during its annual air show in May. Come, if you can. It is an excellent show.

— Paul Fleming

### **VHPA OF FLORIDA**

Six or seven of us spent the morning of March 30 transporting equipment (trailers and an OH-6) to Lakeland Linder Airport, starting to get ready for Sun'n Fun.

This is the second largest air show of the Experimental Aircraft Association.

Oshkosh is the biggest!

Once there, we erected a GP medium tent, which will house our memorabilia display for the show and got the trailers and Loach in place.

Next Sunday we will set up the memorabilia display, erect the sales tent, put up the VHPA signs and do whatever else is necessary to get ready for the "Big Show," which starts April 8 and runs through April 13.

Each day we will try to staff our display and activities, with 6-8 volunteers to operate sales, man the memorabilia tent and talk with attendees who may have questions or may be eligible for membership in VHPA and VHPA of Florida.

Every year we manage to sign up several new members. Sun'n Fun is one of our two biggest events of the year.

— Don Welch, President

### **MID SOUTH CHAPTER**

Our next meeting is April 6 at 10 a.m. to elect a new president.

Haywood "Pete" Norman IV is the owner of Pete's Truck Stop in Lebanon, Tenn. E-mail is [redacted] and his phone numbers are [redacted] and [redacted]

He also is the motivation behind the TH-55 we are restoring. We also will provide what help we can to the Flying Thunder Flight to the Wall. They will arrive in Lebanon with 2 UH-1s and an OH-58 on the afternoon of May 20.

— Chris Horton, President

# THE HIGH and LOW of IT

by Jack Salm

The date was Feb. 1, 1967. The 48th AHC was supporting the 1st of the 101st on Operation Junction City out of Phan Thiet.

The operation started without any problems. After briefings the night before, we were up bright and early on the 1st.

I was flying "Ole 097, The Hog" an old UH-1B model. She was a good aircraft, but with all of the armament hung on her, she was barely capable of the task she was assigned.

There were three other Joker gunships and a group of Blue Star slicks. We were part of a larger force of about 65-70 aircraft.

We arrived on station northwest of Bao Loc on time only to find out the Air Force was late. We had to orbit until they did their prep before we could go in.

Finally, we were cleared to the target area. By this time we were low on fuel, so we went back to a refueling point that had been set up on a tea plantation southeast of Bao Loc.

When we landed, we were surprised to find that the JP-4 was contaminated. The Air Force set up an alternate site on a small dirt airstrip on the plantation. It was slow going, but we got rearmed and refueled.

The Air Force was landing C-123s with fuel doughnuts of JP-4, kicking them out with the engines still running, and then making a quick takeoff down the runway.

There was a C-123 on the runway in the middle of this process. We had a full load — 48 rockets, a full load of fuel, 4 crewmen, etc. The old girl wouldn't even hover, she was over max gross.

We were sitting perpendicular on the end of the runway, rotor turning. Since I was the aircraft commander, I told the pilot to wait until the C-123 that was idling on the runway finished unloading and took off.

By then we would have burned off a little fuel and could make a running takeoff down the runway.

I was looking out the left window at the 123 when I felt the aircraft move. I looked to my right and the pilot had the collective up under his armpit. He intended to make a takeoff down a small draw off to his right. If we weren't so heavy it might have worked, but the aircraft just wouldn't fly.

From the point I realized we were going in it is all a blur. I woke up an hour later in the medic's tent. By some miracle, everyone got out of the aircraft. I don't know how I got out, nor do I know why the aircraft didn't explode. With all the ordinance and fuel onboard, it sure should have.

We were very, very lucky. I was air evacuated from Bao Loc to Phan Rang for 2 days of R&R. On the flight out we flew over the crash site. The aircraft was totaled.

While at Phan Rang I received orders transferring me to IFFV Flight Detachment in Nha Trang.

Flying a Huey gunship in the 48th to flying a U-8 in IFFV is quite a transition. The U-8 Beech King Air is a 10-seat turbo-prop and a dream to fly. I thought this is a real blessing.

My ecstasy was short lived. The U-8 was great to fly, but every time we went anywhere Charlie would shoot at us. He knew there was almost always a VIP on board.

I was used to being shot at, but I had a way to shoot back in a gunship, not so in the U-8. Mortared at Dak To and Kontum, also Dong Ha. Small arms, if you want to call 50 caliber small arms, on approach to several places like Dalat, even Danang and Bien Hoa.

Army Aviation, more particularly army aviators, did a yeo-

## VHPA Newsletter Calendar Articles

I am pleased to announce that Turner Publishing has the material for the 2009 VHPA Calendar. This will be the VHPA's sixteenth calendar. You will be able to see production copies and purchase them at the VHPA Reunion in July.

**Can I still get a 2008 Calendar? Yes – they are still available for \$14.95 by phone 1-800-788-3350 or on the web at [www.turnerpublishing.com](http://www.turnerpublishing.com).**

**What's the Calendar Project all about?** The 'official goal' of the VHPA Calendar is to refresh the memories of all those who flew in or worked on helicopters in Southeast Asia, and to record, preserve and display the events and activities that were important to those who served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. The 'working goal' is simply to record history and put smiles on people's faces. For the last few years about half the photo contributions came from guys who were not pilots and even family members in behalf of deceased Vietnam Vets. I attend several Vietnam reunions each year and always make new friends who are happy to add their photos to the VHPA's collection. Trust me – when the VHPA prints someone's photo and tells their story; there is a smile on that face for sure! The photos are printed without borders in an 11 x 17 inch format. This guarantees a very powerful presentation. Sometimes you'd think you could even smell the JP-4 again!!

**What does the Calendar Project cost the VHPA?** Turner pays the VHPA a royalty fee based on sales but they bear all the production, advertising, and distribution costs. This reduces the VHPA's financial risks greatly. Year after year the VHPA adds high quality digital images to its photo collection and develops the next issue at no cost to the membership.

**Are you interested in seeing part of the VHPA's Digital Photo Collection?** Go to [WWW.VHPAPHOTO.ORG](http://WWW.VHPAPHOTO.ORG). Under the CALENDARS tab, you will see a short pull-down list. Click on 2000s and a second pull-down list appears. You will notice when there is nothing under a tab, trying to click on it does nothing. Click on the 2007 or 2008 tabs. You will see some header information that appeared in the publication, then a thumbnail version of each photo plus the narrative description that appeared with the photo. The photos appear in the sequential order printed in the publication. You can also see the owner of each photo.

Are you interested in loaning the VHPA some of your photos? We have already started gathering material for the 2010 issue. If you have photos that you believe deserve a wider audience or have friends that have good photos for our consideration, please contact me soon. Thanks for all those who have shared their priceless photos and priceless stories with the VHPA.

**Mike Law, VHPA Calendar Editor,**  
Unit 72, Denver, CO 80227, 303-988-7797,  
[LAW@VHPA.ORG](mailto:LAW@VHPA.ORG)

man job in Vietnam. Whether you flew a Huey, Cobra, Hook, or any other aircraft, aviation enabled the U.S. to combat the enemy. Without Army Aviation, we would not have been able to mount the mobile operations that we did. Kudos to Army Aviation and all of you who flew in Nam.

# *A tribute...* TO OUR FRIEND BILLY BOWLING

BY SOME FRIENDS FROM THE 1/9TH CAV AND THE 7/17TH CAV.

Both Walter Gutsche and Robert 'Fox' Ferrier flew OH-13S for the Scout Platoon of B/1/9th Cav 1st Cav in 66-67 when CPT Billy Bowling was the Troop's Maintenance Officer. MAJ Bowling returned to Vietnam for a second tour during in 69-70 with the B Troop and HHT/7/17th Cav. Over the years Billy has attended several 1/9th Cav and VHPA Reunions. About 5+ years ago Billy had a stroke. In early 2007 his wife, Angela, felt he was strong enough to attend the 7/17th Cav Mini-Reunion during the VHPA 2007 Reunion in Phoenix. It was a treat to be with Billy again! About the same time Walter and 'Fox' started sending 'remember when' stories about Billy via emails. These stories deserve a wider audience.

Fox recalls: Once during a heavy encounter with the NVA, I had a tail rotor cable shot out and had to make a forced running landing on a PSP runway at a Special Forces Camp in the Bong Son area. Once safely down, Billy arrived and tied the two pieces of tail rotor cable together (literally), then flew the bird back to our area rather than wait for a recovery ship. I will never forget his skills, professionalism and his sense of humor. I was such a kid in those days it is hard to imagine I would have survived without guys like him, Jesse Glance (now deceased) and many others that I would need a few beers to recall by name. How time flies!

## **Walter wrote the following short stories:**

'Sent Out On My First Mission, Alone': Fred Carll (now deceased) was a great flight instructor and brought me along, feeding me all this survival information until he signed me off and I was given my own bird. Her tail number was 33214 (#63-09214 in the VHPA databases) and we would be together for many flight hours in the months to come. I can still remember the first mission they sent me on by myself. Most of the other helicopters had two pilots and they would pair an experienced pilot with an inexperienced pilot to make sure the new guy didn't screw up. I had only been in Vietnam a couple of weeks and I was the most experienced pilot in my aircraft. So

anyway, my first mission was to transport an artillery lieutenant out to his firebase. Whoopee! I am finally earning my keep, after all that training and check rides, I am on my own doing the Army's bidding.

The flight out was basically uneventful, but after I dropped him off and took off to fly back, a terrible banging noise started coming from the right side of the aircraft as the speed increased (our, me and the aircraft). Nowhere in my training had they prepared me for this (actually Fred had,

thing, but apparently the lieutenant had rearranged it when he unbuckled his seat belt and climbed out. Speaking of seat belts, when I was telling our maintenance officer, Captain Bill Bowling about the elusive banging noise, he brought me around to the right side of the aircraft and showed me the seat belt hanging out the door. There were dents on the side of the fuselage where the belt had been beating it. Fred had told me about the "seat belt out the door trick" but as I said, I didn't remember. He had told me so many other things to remember that this fell through the crack. So much for my first flight. It was going to be a loooong year.

'Fire to More Fire' also has the added title 'What happens when your Guardian Angel takes a coffee break': A few minutes earlier I felt the OH-13S take a few hits. At least one other Scout was shot down. By now my helicopter was giving off a strange odor of overheated engine oil and a quick glance at the temperature gauge revealed a pegged, on the high side, cylinder head temperature and engine oil

temperature gauge - I needed a place to land quickly before the engine seizes. But every time I approached a suitable landing area, I received the unwelcome reception of more machine gun fire. The engine was still running, we are still flying, I kept going. By now the sky was filling with Hueys, gun ships and lift ships, all headed in the opposite direction racing to rescue the downed crews. They were a relief to see and I was glad to see their arrival so quickly, it greatly improved the chances of a successful rescue mission. But now I had my own problems, the engine is starting to run rough and if I didn't find someplace to land soon I would have an engine failure and be forced to land wherever it quit. Just as things were looking the bleakest, up ahead I saw the biggest rice paddy in the world!! Well, maybe not, but it was big enough to make it difficult for someone to shoot me without having to leave the cover of the surrounding jungle to come out for a closer shot. I began my approach to the very middle without any further problems while radioing my dilemma to the rest of my comrades. As I was



BILLY BOWLING

but in the excitement of the moment, I forgot). I quickly checked my gauges to see if they could give me a clue to my predicament, but they were all in the green. Landing was not an option because I was flying alone over Indian country and was not sure of the enemy situation, besides the helicopter was still flying and everything else felt normal, so I pressed on. I made it back to An Khe and started an approach and as I slowed down the banging stopped. Then when I applied collective for the final part of the approach the collective travel stopped about three quarters of the way up. Fortunately, there was enough collective movement to cushion the landing and I was able to get to a parking area and set it down without incident. I could now relax and finally divert my attention from flying to investigate what had caused my dilemma. I found that the blade tie down had jammed itself on top of the center collective thus limiting the control travel. I had been warned many times throughout my training to make sure that everything was secured before taking off, and I had secured that

## A TRIBUTE TO BILLY CONT...

shutting down my engine, all of a sudden a gun ship appeared circling overhead. It was a "Hog" gunship. They were called Hogs because they had massive banks of 48 rockets on each side, that's almost a hundred rockets total. I recognized it as Stan Nash's bird. My worries were over. I knew all I had to do was point in the direction of any enemy activity and Stan would turn in that direction, fire and decimate the target. Nobody challenged his presence. It wasn't too long before another Huey showed up and out jumped Captain Bill Bowling with two fan belts! Bill was our maintenance officer and when one of us broke down he was there to get us fixed up. He was amazing, just from the little bit of information he had gathered from the radio transmissions he figured the fan belts would fix the problem. He walked up to my helicopter and looked at the front of the engine and sure enough, they were missing. He reached in front of the engine and slipped the belts over the pulleys. We climbed in, buckled up, and took off. What a day.

'No Fuel - No Fly': Captain Bill Bowling came to my rescue one day was when I was returning from a mission heading for the refueling point and the engine quit! It caught me totally by surprise, but the training I received kicked in and I entered autorotation while steering toward a place to land. I had already chosen that place in case the engine quit and plopped it in there without any damage. My flight instructor sure impressed upon me to remember that when flying a single engine air machine it's a good idea to always keep a forced landing area in mind in the event that the only engine you have quits. So I was constantly saying to myself that I could throw into this LZ or whip into that LZ if the engine were to quit now. The other surprise came when I found out the flight boost hydraulics (like power steering) had also failed. It's something that wasn't covered in my training. This aircraft had an engine driven flight boost hydraulic pump, so when the engine went so did the hydraulics, making it more difficult to whip or throw the aircraft anywhere. So I'm doing an "hydraulics off autorotation," something unheard of in most other helicopters, two emergencies in one. Since the fuel gauges in these helicopters were erratic and unreliable we flew by fuel consumption and time. Every time we refueled we noted how much fuel we used compared to how long we flew. That told us what our burn rate was and if we calculated that with total fuel we knew how long we could fly before running out of fuel and having an engine failure. With adding a little fudge factor to make sure we got refu-

eled in time, we would be all right, except for undetected fuel leaks. I was unaware that I had taken a bullet in the fuel filter and fuel was draining out. I thought I had plenty of time left and sufficient fuel to make it to the refuel point when the engine quit. My wingman called in our predicament to Operations and in a short time Bill flew out to us with a couple cans of fuel and a new filter. He left his helicopter running, ran over to mine, changed the filter and poured the gas into my tanks. Then he ran back to his bird and took off to fix someone else's problem. I didn't even get a chance to thank him. He was always on the move keeping us flying. Since I had successfully autorotated without any damage and now the leak was fixed with some fuel added, we climbed in, cranked up and took off to finish our trip to the refuel point without further incident.

'Bill Jackson': This is a special little section that talks about what happened to an old friend of mine, William L. Jackson (now deceased), and only has to do with me in regards to the fact that we covered each other's tail so many times and I was with him when most of these brazier things happened. Bill was my wingman, and I his. We first met in flight school, graduating from Class 66-1. Most of our class went to the 1st Cav. Div. So Bill and I did a lot of flying together. Remember that this was PT (Pre-Turbine) days for scouts, and our thoroughly deadly scout team consisted of two "armed" Bell 47s. Some had two 7.62s machine-guns and some had eight 2.75 rockets - mine was a rocket ship and Bill's had guns. Anyway I wanted to tell you about the weird things that happened to my wingman during our first tour together. On this day I was flying lead and we were headed back from the AO (Area of Operation) after we had flown several hours towards the refueling point. There was a rain shower ahead and even though it wasn't severe enough to fly around, Bill called me and stated that he wanted to fly around the shower. Two items about his radio call puzzled me, the first was how different his radio sounded (it was like he was in a wind tunnel) and second was his request. So I punched left pedal to shift the nose left to get a look behind me, I discovered that his entire bubble was missing and the only things remaining were the flapping doorframes. If you've ever ridden a motorcycle in the rain then you can appreciate Bill's predicament. He was also averse to getting the electrical equipment in the instrument panel drenched since it was no longer protected by the bubble. Needless to say, we went around the storm and Bill got to give Billy Bowling and his maintenance crew

## FROM AN OLD-TIMER

I'm beginning to feel more like Andy Rooney every day. Nothing seems to be the same anymore.

Remember when you went to a high school football or basketball game and you cheered right along with the cheerleaders? Today the cheers are so intermixed with dance and acrobatics all you can do is watch.

We could spend the whole day on our own and, as long as we were home before dark, everything was okay. Both my parents worked, so my sister and I were "latch key" kids.

I had a paper route, played stickball in the street and somehow muddled through growing up.

Kids today seem to have everything — multitask electronic gizmos, X Boxes, cell phones, iPods, but are they happy or better off? I don't think so.

Many refer to the "good old days." The old days weren't all that good. We had a terrible Depression, the stock market collapsed, there were no jobs. We went through World War II, gas rationing, food shortages and, yet, I think it made us stronger.

Some people today deplore kids and their lack of discipline.

First of all, there a lot more temptations out there today than there were when I was a kid. Drugs were unheard of; sex was an unknown, at least prior to the teen years. Drinking? Very little. So, all in all, we were a pretty naive bunch.

The military still seems pretty capable of making men out of boys — regardless of their experiences.

Is the young GI of today as capable? As dedicated? I like to think we were better, but we probably were not. If I were to be honest, they are probably better, but at least I can feel we were pretty damn good.

— Jack Salm

## A TRIBUTE TO BILLY CONT...

their first of many headaches he would be involved. Apparently there was this single spire of vegetation that went unnoticed by Bill and when he smacked into it removed his plastic bubble shield. A few months later, Bill was flying with an FNG (F\_\_\_\_ New Guy) as his wingman and they were hot refueling from some blivets. Bill had landed first and his wingman landed next to him. Bill's Observer un-buckled and climbed out to refuel the aircraft, when Bill noticed that his cyclic wasn't centered, so he naturally repositioned it back to the center. Unfortunately, the new guy had landed a little too close and when Bill moved to center his cyclic, their overlapping rotor blades smashed together. This caused the wingman's entire transmission and rotor system to rip from their mounts, driving forward smashing through the top of the bubble and hit the FNG in the back of the head as it departed for parts unknown. Fortunately the FNG still had his helmet on, which kept it from being a fatal injury, but the impact did knock him out and he remained unconscious for the next two weeks and dizzy for several weeks after that. Although this was quite an ordeal it was much more agreeable to him than being classified as a KIA. The FNG's machine having lost its dynamic components gave up the ghost and unceremoniously settled into the dust after running out of fuel. Bill's helicopter, however, was still running and driving a partially severed rotor blade that had bent down and chopped off the end of the tail boom. With part of the blade bent down it put the rotor system in a severe out of balance condition. This resulted in Bill's helicopter bouncing around in the POL point. So there was Bill being slammed around inside his bouncing helicopter trying to get it shut-down but the violent maneuvers prevented him from reaching the shut-off controls. Finally he was able to slide the fuel shut-off control down and stop the engine. Incredibly, he escaped again unscathed, but this would be Jackson's second contribution to Billy Bowling's maintenance crew to glue back together. Bill's next "adventure" also involved the transmission and rotor system leaving the aircraft. This occurred while we were reconning in the Plei Djereng plains west of Pleiku near the Cambodian border. Bill was flying lead, and since we had reconned this trail the day before, he thought he noticed something different. The trails in the area now indicated an increase in activity. Bill was so intent on determining the extent of the new enemy movement that he circled in lower and lower, spiraling in closer and closer to get a better look when his rotor blade that was banked low actually HIT the ground. The

impact caused the separation of the transmission and rotor system from the aircraft, (leaving Bill without any visible means of support and susceptible to being arrested for vagrancy). The centrifugal force of the dynamic components leaving the airframe caused his H-13 to recover from the spiral by levelling off right before impact. He, his Observer, and the aircraft skidded straight ahead to a stop without any further damage. However, the engine was still running, but with nothing to drive, it was in a screaming over speed, so Bill again reached up and pulled the fuel shut-off to

hoping to run into Bill again, maybe at one of the reunions, but alas it's too late. I read in the VHPA Directory that he is attending the REALLY BIG REUNION with all our comrades who have departed. Bill did not meet his fate in a helicopter though, but it's not because events didn't conspire to come as close as possible to this end. I will miss him.

'Billy Bowling Rigging an OH-6 for Sling Load': On my second tour I flew Chinooks. I stopped for fuel at Ban Me Thuot. The refueling pumps weren't working properly and the fuel was pumping so slowly that we were burning the fuel faster than we were pumping it in. To overcome this predicament we have to start the APU and put the main engines to an idle to reduce the fuel consumption so the tanks would fill. We actually had to turn off the pump in the tank we were refueling to allow it to fill faster. We went from tank to tank following that procedure until finally after 30 minutes we had full tanks. While we were waiting for the refueling process, we could hear and see an OH-6 flying the traffic pattern doing some training maneuvers. We heard it call from downwind telling the tower it was practicing a forced landing to an open rice paddy. Shortly there after we heard the same voice inform the tower that they had chopped off their tail boom during the landing and needed the tower to call their home base at Ban Me Thuot East to arrange for a recovery. I broke in and told them we would be coming out of refueling shortly and if they got the aircraft rigged I could recover the aircraft back to Ban Me Thuot East for them. It was agreed. The unit at Ban Me Thuot East launched a Huey with the slings to carry the OH-6 and they rigged the aircraft for recovery. They then removed the rotor blades and took the broken tail boom and put them in the Huey. I came out of refueling and just popped up over the tree line and headed towards the downed aircraft. As I approached the aircraft I saw a familiar baldhead and got the surprise of my life. The man standing on top of the aircraft holding the slings for hook up was none other than Billy Bowling!! Holy cow I haven't seen that guy since my first tour three years ago and he is still recovering aircraft like he did from me so many times. Unfortunately he was being barraged by my rotor wash and too busy trying to hook us up to notice that I was flying. I saw him in the 2006 reunion and finally told him I was the one in the Chinook. Since it's a rare occurrence that a Chinook is used to recover a tiny OH-6, he remembered the incident, in fact as I recall the sling loaded aircraft barely changed our hover torque ★★★★★

### BULLWHIP SQUADRON ASSOCIATION 2008 REUNION

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1st Cavalry Division  
Vietnam

Dothan, Alabama

October 9-12, 2008

Contact:

Larry Wright

Ph: (334) 692-5140

[larryw9thcav6566@aol.com](mailto:larryw9thcav6566@aol.com)

shutdown the engine, he then unbuckled his seatbelt, climbed out and calmly dusted himself off. I scrambled the Blues and a maintenance recovery team. We were able to sling it out with a Huey, since half its weight was decorating the surrounding area. Thanks to Bill's exploits Billy Bowling's maintenance team was well on it's way to becoming extremely proficient in the fine art of reinstalling transmissions and rotor systems. Please don't get the wrong impression. Bill was an excellent pilot. These events were just a few things that can happen while amassing over a thousand hours of low level, real low level, flying during a 12-month Scout tour. I was

**Richard Yood, MAS**  
Gladiator 21



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Contact Mike Sheuerman at :  
Membership@VHPA.org for details

## NOT TOO MANY UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT MEANT....

I saw your article in the VHPA Aviator magazine and thought I would send you a photo of my Australian License plate. This was on my 92 pick-up for 3 years while I was living in Queensland Australia. Not too many Aussies understood what it meant. Only the 8 Aussie Soldiers that I flew around once in Vung Tau really knew what it stood for.

I Flew Cobra's for B troop 7/17th out of Holloway from  
Aug 70 thru Aug 71. Class 70-11



*Presently living near St. Louis Missouri.*

*William R(Rick) Schrandt*

## THE VIETNAM WAR'S RED CROSS GIRLS

They came of age at the dawn of the women's movement, stepping out of conventional roles to take a route away from the expected--to war. Young, adventurous, idealistic, and committed, 627 women just out of college took a breath of fresh air to the dusty firebases and sweaty base camps of Vietnam. They were the Red Cross "Donut Dollies," and their job was to distract US soldiers on the front lines with a game, a listening ear, and a touch of home.

From the award-winning creators of *In The Shadow of The Blade* comes the untold story of American civilian women who worked in the American Red Cross Supplemental Recreation Overseas program during the Vietnam War.



Sister, girlfriend, mother, friend... the Red Cross Donut Dollies were "round eyes" who brought entertainment, a smiling face, and a reminder of home to millions of young American men who otherwise faced the grim, daily reality of death. For the first time, they share their story of the year in their lives that would affect each of them forever. A Touch of Home: The Vietnam War's Red Cross Girls pays tribute to a little-known chapter of American women's courage and service in time of war.

READ MORE AT  
[www.arrowheadfilms.com/atouchofhome.html](http://www.arrowheadfilms.com/atouchofhome.html)

There will be an exclusive pre-release screening for VHPA members at the San Antonio reunion on 3 July 2008 at 3:15 PM.

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# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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|----------------|-----|------|----------|-----------|
| From:          | To: |      |          |           |
| 1st            |     |      |          |           |
| 2nd            |     |      |          |           |
| 3rd            |     |      |          |           |
| 4th            |     |      |          |           |

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

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

*\*NOTE: Life memberships may be purchased with three bi-monthly payments of \$185 each.*



## *This is DMZ Dustoff*



This photo collage (titled DMZ Dustoff) will appear as the September photo for the 2009 VHPA Calendar, the following narrative appears in the Calendar for this collage...



VHPA member Phil Marshall helped gather these photos from members of the DMZ Dustoff (237th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) Association. CW2 Bob Hill (KIA 9/27/1970) took the upper left photo of UH-1H #66-01125 at the 18th Surgical Hospital in Quang Tri. This Huey was an upgraded D Model that no one liked to fly, hence it was named Black Bitch. Sitting in the right seat at the time is WO1 Michael Bradley who was killed with Bob Hill while searching for another downed 237th ship. Bob also took the lower right photo of a hoist mission with the patient being loaded onto the Jungle Penetrator. Bob's photos were contributed by his brother Bruce Hill. Former medic Geoffrey Morris took the upper right photo in Laos during Lam Son 719 while landing to a hilltop position manned by the ARVN. VHPA member R. Lee Wood took the lower left photo during training on the use of the Stokes Litter.



\*\*\*\*\* ALL FOR ADC 793

