



THE VHPA AVIATOR

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

2009 Vol. 27, No. 1

Full Reunion Details on Pages 10-15 of This Issue...

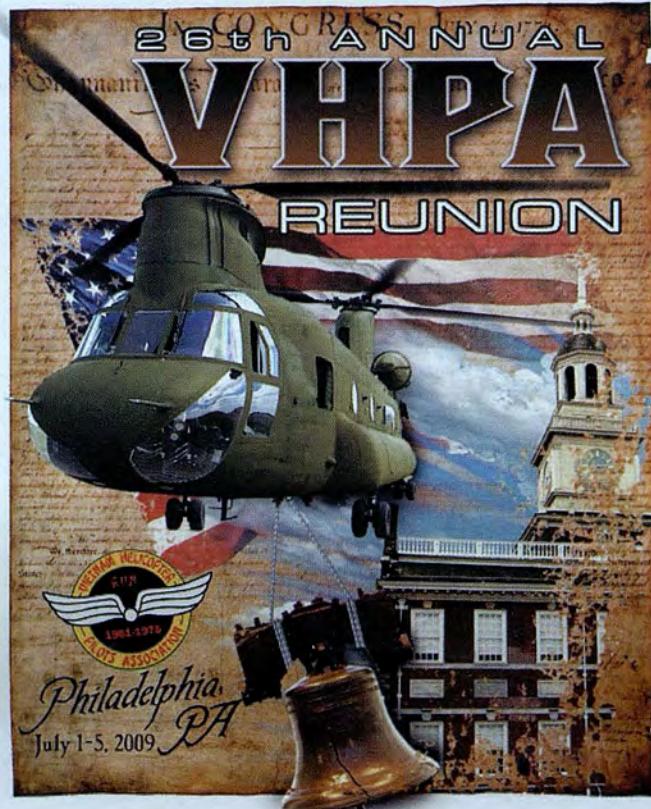
VHPA REUNION ★ 2009



Gentlemen,

We're a go for the
VHPA's 26th Annual Reunion
July 1 - 5, in Philadelphia.

Full details on pages 10-15
of this issue...



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*"Choose
a caption for
this picture"*

#1 - OK FNG don't
touch anything!"

#2 - A Cav guy with a
clean uniform! Impossible!"

#3 - Were we all this young
once upon a time?"

See the Bill Stegemann story
inside on page 9



BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life member JOHN PENNY

John Penny, a VHPA Life Member, served with A/377 and is semi-retired from his career as a helicopter pilot, and teacher. He lives in Ellensburg, WA, with his beloved wife of 30 years, Janet.

Gunbird Driver: A Marine Huey Pilot's War in Vietnam is

David Ballentine's OUTSTANDING personal memoir of his experiences in Vietnam as a UH-1E gunbird pilot with Marine Observation Squadron 6 (VMO 6 - call sign Klondike) in I Corps in 1967-68. In addition to his personal legacy and the paucity of books about Marine Corps gunship pilots, Ballentine states: "Someone needs to get off his ass and testify..." He has done just that in a very articulate way while at the same time using the language of the men he served with. Recounting his 13 month tour of duty, long before many of us served, one is given a very descriptive, often reflective insight detailing the lives of the men he served with and the missions they flew.

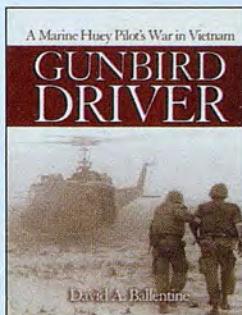
VMO 6 was based on the coast at Ka Ha near the airstrip at Chu Lai, but the unit flew a variety of missions all over I Corps. The units' designation as a "Marine Observation Squadron" is a holdover from the Korean War when the primary mission was to call in artillery and naval gunfire as well as provide close air support.

VMO 6 did that and more in the Republic of Vietnam, with their main mission armed escort of combat assault/extraction missions for the troop carrying CH-34s and CH-46s. Occasionally they even operated from the USS Princeton, an amphibious assault ship (Landing Platform Helicopter.) As usual in aviation units, there were the necessary "ash and trash" missions, as well as the ever important medevac missions which are all well described. There are few books about Marine Corps helicopter units in Vietnam and none I know of documenting the experiences of the units that flew the UH-1E gunships.

What really makes this book such a good read is the effort that Ballentine has put into telling not only his own story but the story of the men he served with. The reader will find himself immersed in the details of day to day life in VMO 6 including colorful portrayals of the personalities of many of the pilots and crewmembers. VMO 6 has been brought to life again along with what the author describes as its "machines, missions, and aircrews, the days of rocket, rotor, and gun." In closing, Ballentine makes a very poignant reflection on his service in Vietnam: "If tomorrow I could walk to an awaiting Huey for a mission, joined by others who have chosen my way, tumblers and gears would again mesh. I would be satisfied having a perfect, specific, and even noble purpose in a remarkable association." Indeed, wouldn't we all.

Reviewed by John Penny

Gunbird Driver: A Marine Huey Pilot's War in Vietnam (256 pages with photos, \$26.06) by David A. Ballentine, ISBN: 978-1-59114-019-1 is available from Naval Institute Press at www.usni.org or Amazon



FROM THE PRESIDENT...

I hope everyone had a very happy holiday. Now, if the economy will cooperate we should have a great reunion in Philadelphia. It is shaping up very well and please keep your fingers crossed.

At one of our EC meetings it was determined that coffee would not be offered at the ABM (Annual Business Meeting). The cost of \$7.50 per cup was thought to be a bit much. Most attendees are coming from breakfast and have already had their caffeine jolt. If not, there is a Starbucks close by the meeting room.

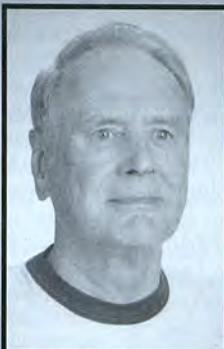
The actual dates for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 reunions have been firmed up. Orlando in 2011 will be Monday 4 July to Sunday 10 July. New Orleans, in 2012 will be Monday 30 July to Sunday August 5. San Francisco in 2013 will be Monday July 1 to Sunday July 7. For those of you who are long distance planners mark your calendars. All three of these reunions will be at Hilton facilities.

In my alternate role as Chapter Liaison Officer I am still looking for interested individuals who might want to start a chapter. If you live in an area that does not have a chapter and you would be willing to start one, give me a call at (206) 842-7998 or e-mail me at john-salmjr@aol.com. After I joined the VHPA I found out that there was no chapter in the Seattle area, so I started the Washington Chapter. At our initial meeting 85 guys showed up, we now have over 150 members. From the time I started the WA chapter until now the requirements to form a chapter have changed dramatically. Now there is no minimum number of members required, the chapter can be setup to meet your needs, the amount of formality is up to you. As you know we currently have several new chapters; the South Carolina (Celebrate Freedom) Chapter, the Fort Rucker (Alabama) Chapter, a New England Chapter and a Virginia Chapter. A complete list of all our chapters, and the POC for each one, appears in every issue of The Aviator. If you live in the area of any of these chapters I encourage you to join. If you would like to start a chapter in your area let me know and I will send you a packet on the procedure. It's really pretty easy.

Also, we are still looking for volunteers to work on the poker and golf tournaments for this next Reunion and I know Mike Law is looking for full-time folks for the VHPA Membership Committee.

E-mail items to The Aviator at:
editor@vhpa.org

THE VHPA AVIATOR (ISSN 1930-5737) (USPS 001-497) is published six times yearly — February, April, June, August, October and December. Annual dues are \$36 or Life membership for \$540. Yearly subscription for nonmembers is \$36. Published by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 105, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698. Periodicals Publications postage paid at Citrus Heights, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE VHPA AVIATOR, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 105, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698.



Jack Salm

Next, the various members of the EC have done some great work explaining several changes that are in the works for all the members of the VHPA. These articles include changes to our Annual Membership Directory program and an announcement about a terrific new program where, for 30 days, all potential VHPA Members can now visit the restricted pages of our website. By opening up those areas or our website, we're hoping all those candidates (bet it has been a while since you heard that term used that way) can see the value in becoming a full-time Member of the VHPA. So be sure and read all three of those articles on page's six and seven of this issue.

We also welcomed our 14,000th Member into our Association last month. The full details of Jack Graham's membership can be found elsewhere in this issue of The Aviator.

Finally, if you are available to be a sponsor for a potential VHPA member be sure you let someone in our organization know. Contact any member of the EC, or call VHPA Headquarters and they will put you in contact with someone we have identified as a good potential member. As a last resort if you want to attend the reunion and don't have a sponsor call me. I will be glad to sponsor you.

I hope for a great turnout in Philadelphia. Please remember to make your room reservations early, we're competing with another group for rooms this year and if you wait too long to reserve your room, you'll probably miss out on the greatly reduced VHPA rate.

Stay well, see you in Philadelphia!

*Jack Salm
President*

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VHPA reunion website	www.vhpareunion.org
VHPA EC Forum	www.vhp.info

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

These are all concerning our last, *Christmas in Vietnam*, Issue

From Tom Payne:

Dave, All I have to say is WOW! What a great looking Aviator and a fantastic idea to feature Christmas. No doubt you are aware that there are many, many more special occasions to use that would create interest and excitement for our membership. Things such as: Tet, Camp Alpha, "Funny things that happened on the way in my helicopter", Civic Action work in Vietnam, and on and on!!

Congratulations of a fantastic idea and a great Christmas edition.

Tom Payne

Editor's note: Personally I also think the *Christmas Edition* turned out just great (with the exception of the reversed picture on the front cover of course) and I really look forward to doing it every year, but I just don't know if there's enough input available from our members to support any of the themes mentioned in Tom's letter. If any of you have some thoughts on doing a special issue on any of Tom's themes, or suggestions for other magazine themes, let me know and we'll try to get them organized.

For 2009, we're going to get the "Special Christmas Edition" out earlier than the mid-December distribution date of last year and I've set the submission deadline for this issue at September 25, 2009. So, mark that date on your calendar and let's make this year's version of our "Special Christmas Issue" even better.

Last, I would also like to thank Tony Robinson (Centaur 40), C.J. Unruh (Gladiator 17), Rich Rutledge and Ron Smith (129th AHC) for their contributions to our 2008 *Christmas Edition*, unfortunately I received your stories too late to be published. But they haven't gone anywhere, they're right here on the top of the stack for next year's *Christmas Issue*.

Dear Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

When I received my copy of The VHPA Aviator today, something just didn't look right. I soon realized the picture of the "H" Model Huey with the Christmas tree was backwards. The collective pitch is on the wrong side of the pilot's seat; the steps and handles to climb on top are on the right side of the aircraft, not the left; the can on the side of the M60 machine gun is on the wrong side: ...etc. Now I'm sure this was meant to be a test for all these old eyes and not an oversight. When I pointed this out to my wife, she said "What difference does it make"? I responded "To an old Huey Driver, it makes a difference".

Thank You,
Paul Thompson
Bulldog 39

Dear Paul – You're absolutely right...Ah the beauty of working with slides... We'll do better in the future and I will be glad to add you to our proofing list, we're always looking for an extra "eagle-eye". Let me know – Regards, David Adams

FYI - We also received similar letters from Bobby Cormack (Black Widow 20), Ed Covill (Minuteman 29, Musket 38), John Clifford, John Shearer, Jim Davidson, Curt Knapp and Marian Clemens among others. The offer to help with the proofing is extended to you as well – just let me know at: Editor@VHPA.org

Dear David,

I just received my own copy of the Christmas edition of The Aviator and am truly delighted and humbled. It gives the 240th Greyhounds, Mad Dogs, Kennel Keepers and THIS unit commander and/or "Air Mission Commander," a lot of wonderful recognition. Thank you very much.

What I failed to do in my input was to highlight the importance of the true HEROES of an Assault Helicopter Company, namely the pilots with nerves of steel who took the Infantry Troops to the ground in hostile territory multi-

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, in the VHPA Officers, Committee Chairmen and Staff 2008-09.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

-ple times daily in tight formations, door gunners blazing away and with the armed helicopters providing close support.

Yes, I flew "lead" on occasions during multiple unit operations with the Aviation Battalion Commander in charge. But as the 240th Air Mission Commander with the Infantry Battalion Commander and others aboard I called the shots from a low yet safer altitude. There were times when I and my crew had to perform emergency med-evacs under hostile conditions or to take emergency "Night Kits" out to Infantry units in contact after dark. (No flight in Vietnam was safe.) But the young Warrant and Commissioned Pilots, some previously wounded and/or shot down, carrying the highly trained INFANTRY, THE VICTORS OF ALL ARMED CONFLICTS, into a hot LZ's are the Army Pilots I mentally salute daily and verbally recognize them whenever I have the opportunity.

Thank you again for recognizing our unit.
Glenn (Hoffman)

Editor's note – There were two reasons for dedicating so much space of the Nov/Dec Issue of *The Aviator* to the Greyhounds of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company. First we (the Aviator staff) wanted to showcase what we could do to highlight the operation of any unit in Vietnam. We took Col. Hoffman's collection of photos and stories and turned it into something of which we can all be proud – and we can do the same thing for your collection, and your unit. All you have to do is ask – I can be reached daily at: Editor@VHPA.org. The second objective behind the story of the 240th AHC was that Mike Law was able to add several valuable pictures, and stories to the VHPA's collection.

Gentlemen, share your photos & share your stories

with all the members of the VHPA. Full details on that program are available directly from Mike Law at: [REDACTED]

From James Scott,

I just read my offering - A Christmas Story - in the "Special Enlarged Edition" of the Aviator. In doing so I realized that both times I mentioned Chu Lai, I left out the "a" in Lai. I credit this to my "hurry up mode" in getting the article to you in time for publication. My wife says that I just can't spell. Thank you for printing my story, just writing it brought back many memories for me.

James "Scotty" Scott, Pelican 15, 37
San Antonio

From Bob Karstensen, our "Guest Contributor" or the poem about WWII's 451st Bomb Group that we ran in the last issue.

Dear David,

Here's a hearty BIG thank you for mailing me a copy of your issue, Vol. 26 No. 6, of your Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association magazine, I'm the WW-II vet that took up most of your page 34 with my poem Interludes & Visions. I have already received several e-mail thanks from your fellow members, and I do appreciate the accolades they've offered. Again, my thanks for sending me your fine publication; The VHPA Aviator.

In Comradeship,
Bob Karstensen, 451st Bomb Group

Dear VHPA Editor,

I read and enjoyed subject article (The Greyhounds of Vietnam) in 2008 Vol 26, no. 6. The

unit has a lot for which to be proud.

There is one thing I need to mention though in the interest of historical accuracy. In the article it is stated "Someone suggested the name 'Greyhounds' because the 240th would be the first to fly the UH-1H (Huey) helicopters." Previously the article stated that the 240th "arrived in Vietnam in May 67".

I just want everyone to know that the 176th Avn Co (Minuteman) arrived in Vietnam in February 1967. We arrived from Ft. Benning and settled just south of Tuy Hoa in Phu Hiep (and later moved to I corps). We brought UH-1H helicopters with us along with our Charlie model gunships. If the 240th did indeed arrive in May 67 then the 176th crews were flying them in Vietnam prior to arrival of the 240th.

I was with the unit in Ft. Benning and for deployment to Vietnam. I was Section Leader in the 1st Platoon.

There may have been other units prior to us who also had the UH-1H for all I know but for historical accuracy, as stated above, I wanted to provide this information.

Keep up the good work.
Don Long
Minuteman Charter Member

Dear Fellow Vietnam Aviators,

My name is Ceasar Soto. I was in one of the 69-45 Classes and I am looking for the class picture. It was recommended to me that I ask you to ask your membership to see if anyone has any 69-45 pictures other than the three posted on your

continued on page 8

VHPA Executive Council (EC) Elections ~ Want to get involved?

From Jim Fulbrook – our Junior Member-At-Large

The VHPA is run by an Executive Council (EC) of six members: past Pres., presiding Pres., VP, and three members-at large (senior, midterm and junior). These are volunteer positions held by VHPA members. Every year an election is held to fill two positions: VP and Junior Member-at-Large (Jr M-a-L). This notice fulfills VHPA policy to notify members and seek nominees for the VP and Jr M-a-L positions.

A member can volunteer as a nominee or someone can nominate another member, although we suggest you check with the person you intend to nominate to ensure they are willing to serve. This year, Dr. Jim Fulbrook, the current Junior Member-at-Large is the election coordinator. A person must contact Jim in writing no later than midnight, 15 June 2009 to be nominated. Contact may be done by email [REDACTED] or USPS mail. Jim's address is [REDACTED] (phone: [REDACTED] for info). A phone call will not do as a nomination application.

When a nomination is received, Jim will

provide an application packet and form that must be completed and returned ASAP by the nominee. The form asks basic information about the nominee to include military and civilian backgrounds that can be briefly answered. The names of nominees for either position will be posted to the VHPA website by 20 June 2009. The election will take place at the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) during the 2009 reunion in Philadelphia. Rules for conducting the election will be provided in the application packet and any VHPA member may contact Jim for this information. Note that a member may attend the ABM without being registered for the reunion itself.

So, what does being an EC member entail? First, the EC has telephone conferences regularly to discuss and make decisions over issues concerning the VHPA. There are more issues to consider than one might expect and the job is an important one. There are also many email exchanges in addition to the telecons. You may also be asked to serve as a representative of the

VHPA at events or assist with some committees or help with the reunion. As the Jr Member-at-Large on the EC, I was surprised at how much the job entails, but it has been rewarding thus far and I am now very much informed about the inner workings of the VHPA.

To be on the EC, you are expected to attend the reunions because the face time with the other EC members, required meetings such as the ABM, and a general show of support are important. The Jr Member-at-Large is a three-year position where each year you move up to become the Midterm and then Sr M-a-L. The VP also moves up to become the President of the EC the next year and the past President the year after that, so the VP election is very important. The Sr M-a-L must competitively run for the VP position. In other words, the jump from Sr M-a-L is not automatic. If you have additional questions, contact Jim Fulbrook. Remember the deadline to notify Jim in writing to seek the VP or Jr Member-at-Large position is 15 June, 2009.

MEMBERSHIP COSTS VERSUS DUES

From the VHPA Executive Council

When the VHPA was organized in 1984, membership dues were established at \$20 per year. On 1 January 1992, the dues were increased to \$30 and ten years later on 1 January 2002 they went up to \$36. During this time, the newsletter went from a couple of mimeographed sheets to a 24 page full color glossy magazine and went from four issues per year to six. The membership directory went from a small black and white 20 page pamphlet to a big 532 page book with a full color cover. Our organization went from being managed by volunteers in their kitchen to professional management by a CPA firm. Reunions went from a casual BBQ to well organized events at major hotels. So we have made tremendous progress.

A small group of dedicated volunteers has worked tirelessly over these past 25 years to bring to you the magazines, directories, CDs, DVDs, calendars and several web sites at the lowest possible costs. As we hope you have noticed, these products continue to improve each year while your dues have not. Our most recent significant improvements are updating The Aviator, adding a membership directory CD

option and the new online membership directory at <http://www.vhpaservices.com> Not only do these things provide added value, but they also reduce costs. Reunions are self sufficient with the objective of breaking even

HERE IS A BREAK DOWN of our Association's expenses:

23% goes to printing & mailing our Annual Membership Directories

22% goes to:
printing & mailing our bi-monthly Aviator newsletters

34% goes to our Management agency in fees

21% goes to Office Expenses

over time. In other words, your annual dues generally do not contribute to reunions. Office Expenses include such things as mailing your renewal notices, telephone expenses and an annual audit that costs \$10,000.

Just like your personal expenses in this bad economy, the VHPA is experiencing price increases across the board. As a result, we are projecting approximately a \$50,000 shortfall in 2009 and this is likely to continue to increase by 3 to 5 percent over the foreseeable future. The Executive Council

(EC) looked at several ways we could remedy this situation. The one that a casual observer would pick up first would be to tap into our over \$800,000 reserve that we have in the bank. The problem with this approach is that with an average age of 64, we have a lot of years left to cover our expenses for the 2,171 life members who paid some big bucks for their level of membership. A second approach is to cut management and office expenses. The problem with that is we are under a three year contract so that will not help in the short term and most of the office expenses, like the \$10,000 annual audit are required. The next approach would be to increase dues by \$10. No one liked that alternative so it came down to cutting back on the paper products that we provide.

It turns out that our expenses for the membership directory are almost \$10 each and we have a superior alternative directory in the password protected online directory that is updated a minimum of once per week, but most often daily. The annual expenses for this web site is under \$1,000 per year so it is truly cost effective versus the almost \$60,000 per year that we spend on the paper directory. As a result,

instead of increasing your dues, the EC has elected to solve our current projected financial shortfall by making the online Membership directory the primary product and offering the hard copy paper or CD version of the directory for an additional fee.

Beginning with members who have dues expiring on 1 September 2009, or after (for the 2010 directory), you will have a choice of keeping your dues at \$36 a year by switching to the online membership directory only, or paying \$10 more to receive the paper, or the CD directory. If you are a life member and you wish to receive either the paper or CD directory, beginning with the 2010 directory, there will also be a charge of \$10 for this service. Distribution of the 2009 version of the Membership Directory will be as they have been in years past.

There are more details about this decision elsewhere in this magazine. If you have any other questions about this change, please let me know.

GARY ROUSH
Vice President
& Directory Editor
webmaster@vhpa.org

Details about the VHPA Directory

From Mike Law, Membership Chairman

The VHPA has always had the goal of providing each dues-current member one copy of the directory each year. To achieve this goal the Directory Committee uses the following objectives:

1. Delivering the directory in a timely manner. We do this by printing the paper version each year from a mid-August copy of the membership database, by delivering the shrink-wrapped packages to the Post Office in late September, and expecting all are delivered by mid-October. Directories going to non-US Postal System addresses generally take longer.

2. Insuring the directory is easy to use. We do this by using an array of indexes for the primary roster of all helicopter pilots known to have served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era plus Flight Class rosters that even include pilots that did not serve in Southeast Asia.

3. Protecting the privacy of each individual's information. We do this by not printing phone numbers or email addresses plus allowing each individual to "mask" certain data fields (i.e. occupation) as they deem appropriate.

4. Insuring the directory is not used for

commercial and/or political purposes. We do this by aggressively and legally pursuing violations. For example we have successfully prevented the sale of directories on E-bay.

5. Adhering to the approved budget. Examples of how we do this are keeping the page count to about 560 and minimizing the number of interior photos.

6. Using various "themes" for the History Section to highlight and present a wide range of interesting ideas to the membership.

In addition to demanding budget account-

ability, the VHPA Executive Council has also used "a steadily forward" philosophy for the annual Directory. For example, years ago when the Directory Committee wanted to start using color photos on the cover; it was approved only when the Executive Council determined the VHPA could sustain using color covers year after year.

For at least the last decade the Directory Committee has had more material to present than a prudent budget would allow. First, we relocated about 40 pages of very

important but somewhat "static" data about our KIAs to a VHPA website. Second, we started printing only a few pages (a "taste" or "sample" if you wish) of the History Section and putting all the material on the website. This wasn't all that bad because it allowed virtually any unlimited presentation for pictures, maps, and text. Third, we relocated the geographic index to the website. The message is that for cost control and budgetary reasons more and more pieces of the Directory have moved from the print-

ed page to the electronic versions.

About five years ago the VHPA Executive Council authorized the Directory Committee to make the CD version available. Many VHPAers welcomed this for several reasons. First, the CD is much more "portable" than the paper version. Second, the CD doesn't take up space in the bookcase as the paper version did. Third, the CD contains more material than the paper version as outlined in the previous paragraph.

ANNOUNCING A FREE, TRIAL VHPA MEMBERSHIP

From our Membership Chairman – Mike Law

The VHPA Executive Council is pleased to announce a new member recruiting tool specifically designed for the more than 21,000 Potential Members in our database. Please remember that a Potential Member is any helicopter pilot who is eligible to be a member but has not yet formally applied for membership and paid his membership dues. Potential Members are also known as "Z Members" because they are assigned a member number in the VHPA database that starts with the letter "Z" versus an "L" for Life Member or "M" for Regular Member.

Briefly this is a free, 30-day membership to the VHPA. The trial membership begins when the "Z Member" logs on to the WWW.VHPASERVICES.COM website and completes the initial update of his membership information. It expires 30 days later. During those 30 days, the "Z Member" is allowed unlimited access to the functions hosted on the WWW.VHPASERVICES.COM website in exactly the same manner as any Life or dues-current Regular Member.

This secure web application hosts:

1. The most current version of the Online Membership Directory. This allows you to search by name, by unit, by flight class, etc. and receive a roster of everyone that satisfied your search criteria.

2. Electronic versions of most Newsletters (now called 'The Aviator')

ever published by the VHPA.

3. Electronic copies of the last three paper Membership Directories, and

4. Electronic copies of the complete History Section material. Remember only a few pages and a few photos are published in the paper Directory and, by design, the complete History Section material is ONLY available via this web application and the CD version of the Directory.

This 'trial membership' does NOT include the right to receive regular VHPA publications (a paper Membership Directory or a paper Aviator) or the right to attend a VHPA Reunion as a dues current member. In order for the "Z Member" to have those rights, he must formally join the VHPA. He can do this online by using the New Member feature at WWW.VHPAMEMBERSHIP.ORG, by calling HQ at 800-505-8472, mailing a completed application form – to name just a few of the ways.

It is also important to remember that this 'trial membership' is not available to someone who previously joined the VHPA but is now not dues-current.

So, you are a dues-current member reading this article and you know at least one Potential Member – what can you do?

Easy – follow this two-step process. First, you need to know his Z Member number. You can get this online at WWW.VHPASERVICES.COM by looking up his name or you can get this by contact-

ing HQ or Gary Roush (webmaster@vhpao.org) or Mike Law (membership@vhpao.org). Second, contact your Potential Member. Tell him about this free, trial membership. Give him his Z Member number and encourage him to visit WWW.VHPASERVICES.COM. An alternate plan would be to have your Potential Member obtain his own Z Member number from the sources above and do everything himself. But you need to tell him about this free, trial VHPA Membership!

Now a small word of warning about the trial membership software on WWW.VHPASERVICES.COM. Besides being a secure application, it is "smart!" For example it "knows" if the VHPA has a valid mailing address for this Z Member or not. It "knows" if the VHPA has Southeast Asian tour details for this Z Member or not. It was programmed to collect this data from the Z Member PRIOR to starting the free, trial membership. You might warn the Potential Members that they should be prepared to provide this important information to the VHPA.

We hope all VHPA members will use this free, trial VHPA Membership tool to help gather important Directory information (address and tour details) and to help recruit new members.

If you have comments or questions about this free, trial VHPA Membership tool please feel free to contact Mike Law 303-988-7797 or any other member of the Membership Committee.

Tom Payne adds this sobering fact...

Gary Roush (our Data Base Chairman) has identified (through a matching SSA number search) a total of over 7,000 of the pilots from the Vietnam era who have died since Vietnam. That is 1/7th of the some 49,000 total pilots who flew in Vietnam. The sad thing is that this number will be increasing, and at an increasing rate from now on!!

Enjoy while you can, Tom

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continued from page 5

website at the Ft. Wolters website. My TAC officer was Mr. Phillip Coates. I would also like to get in touch with him if at all possible. Anyone with information can reach me by Cell Phone at [REDACTED] or e-mail: [REDACTED]

Your help and assistance will be greatly appreciated.

C. Soto

Dear Members of the VHPA,

I have photos of the bird who plucked us out in Operation Wayne Gray in 22 March 69. The Bird was shot up and the pilot was shot through the right foot during the extraction. I have kept photos of the bird, and the co-pilot standing next to it. I would like to try and find the brave men who I flew with on my last chopper ride.

Sgt Jeff Jones. C Co., 1/8 Inf., 4Th Div, 68/69

Dear Sir,

PLEASE give me help or guidance. My cousin, Gary M. Shannon, was killed in Vietnam 06/30/70 in an incident on Huey UH-1D tail number 68-15349.

Only information I have found describes incident only as "aircraft shot down". There were four souls on board, including Shannon. Shannon was the only aircraft crew listed. The other 3 casualties were listed as passengers. Websites I have researched do not show either a

pilot or crew chief/co-pilot as casualties in connection with this incident. Shannon was a door gunner. As a result of this incident, he was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. I would be VERY grateful for any information that you can provide to help me unravel this 38 year old mystery.

Why is there no mention of pilot or co-pilot? Witnesses to the incident reported that the aircraft was on fire and going down. The witnesses stated that the gunner was firing into enemy positions until the time of impact in enemy territory. Shannon was listed as MIA until verification of body recovery came to us 08/1970. PLEASE help me with this.

**Thank you very much in advance,
anxiously awaiting reply.**

Greg Gooden

EMAIL: [REDACTED]

PHONE: home, evenings EST: [REDACTED]

The VHPA received this e-mail from John Brennan, the man who is putting together a book of aircraft names and nose art from the Vietnam War era.

First I wanted to say Thank You to all of your members who have already sent in those recent responses to my request. The VHPA & VHCMA have really been helpful in getting the word out about this "name" project. To date, I've documented over 2,232 copter names, and they just keep rolling in. Nearly 2,000 email responses received also. All in

all, this would not have been possible without the computer and the Internet, and all the vet organizations sending out the word. Appreciate the good work all you fellas have done these past 25 years.

Please understand that because of the length of time it takes to produce a book of this kind, I am also requesting that you please notify me if ever you change your email address. In the near future I will need to get back with you individually when its time to finalize this book project, and ready it for publication.

Another option that you may prefer would be to leave me a telephone number or a mailing address, if that seems more permanent in near future. Again, Thank you for your past help, and for any future courtesy calls regarding change of contact info.

All the best,

**John Brennan, former SP5, 114 AHC
1970-71, Vinh Long AAF, Mekong Delta**

Dear Members of the VHPA,

I am doing an in-depth volume for Specialty Press about the history of helicopter gunships, with emphasis on Vietnam. I would like to hear from anyone who would like to contribute stories or photos. Material is credited and materials are copied and promptly returned. Many thanks.

Wayne Mutza

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From the front cover ~ The Bill Stegemann Story...

This is just too good a story to go untold! It all begins on 17 Oct 1970 when Steve Ellis gets shot down in a LOH while flying for E Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st AirCavalry Division. Steve previously flew Hueys with A/227th AHB 1st Air Cav at Lai Khe, then learned to fly OH-6As in the Aviation Platoon of HHC 3rd Brigade, 1st Air Cav. The Scout pilots for the newly formed E Troop came from; you guessed it, guys who already knew how to fly 6s. Well, Steve is evacuated out of Vietnam. Some Good Samaritan gathers up his stuff and ships it to Steve's home. Steve says, "For several years I knew that these three boxes of 35mm slides were not mine. After looking at them I was certain that the owner would really like to have them. I thought maybe the VHPA

could help, so I mailed them the slides. Like many guys I had my slides developed in Vietnam. In retrospect I'm guessing that some how I accidentally got an entire package of recently developed film and just threw it in my footlocker without looking at it. So it arrived with all my other stuff."

VHPA HQ sent Steve's package to me in my capacity as the Calendar Editor. I read Steve's note and say, "Wow – this is like looking for a small needle in a very big haystack!" Remember the VHPA database has over 50,000 guys in it!! Time passes and eventually I put the 40+ slides in a projector. A smile comes over my face when I see this one.

I can read the Huey's serial number #67-17816. The VHPA helicopter database tells me

it served with A/227th from Nov 68 until Oct 70. The paint on the pilot's door confirmed what the database was telling me. I also believe the man's nametag reads STEGE but I can't be too certain. As good luck would have it, the VHPA membership database only has one STEGE and that is prospective member Bill Stegemann. The VHPA had a mailing address but no phone number. So I put a copy of the picture in a



letter to Bill that said, "Is this you? If so call me."

Three days later the phone rings. Bill says, "My wife just handed me your letter and said, "You won't believe what came in the mail today! A picture of you in Vietnam!"

What is the VHPA and how in the world did you find my slides?" As it turned out Bill served with HHC, A Company, and D Company, 227th during his 1969 – 1970 tour in Vietnam. CHICKENMAN and LOBOs – a big crowd of good guys there for sure!!

Well fast-forward this story to late 2008. Bill is DELIGHTED to be a member of the VHPA, is DELIGHTED to finally see his slides after 40 something years, is looking forward to shaking Steve's hand at a VHPA Reunion, has his 2009 VHPA Calendar hanging on the wall and is working with us to get some of his slides published in a future VHPA Calendar.

Now I ask you – isn't the VHPA cool or what?

Oh by the way, Steve recovered from his wounds and now flies for United Airlines. Thank you, Steve, for trusting the VHPA to help find the slides' real owner. Thank you, Gary Roush, and everyone that helps add value to the VHPA membership database and keep all the details accurate. Thank you, Bill, for being happy. There is nothing wrong with happy!!

Mike Law, VHPA Calendar Editor and Membership Chairman

WANTED

Looking for memorabilia from Air Cavalry, Assault Helicopter, NETT, UTT, ICCS, Support, Medical, Transportation and Special units. Patches, Uniforms, Headgear, unit "Business" cards, Propaganda, Printed matter, Plaques, Souvenirs, Party Suits & Novelty items are all of interest. This material is wanted for use in historical exhibits and information for a book. I have numerous references. What can I do for you?

John Conway



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Richard Yood, MAS

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VHPA 26th Annual Reunion • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • July 1-5, 2009

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Register Online @ www.vhpareunion.org or mail completed form to: VHPA Headquarters,
105 Birdcage St., Suite 0, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7698. Fax signed credit card-authorization to: 916-966-8743.

Member Name:	Member #:	Wheel Chair: Y or N
Address:	State:	Address Change: Y or N
Email:	Zip:	Phone Change: Y or N
Wife/Guest Name:	Home Town:	Wheel Chair: Y or N
Additional Guests:	Home Town:	Wheel Chair: Y or N

EVENT	DATE	# OF PEOPLE	COST	TOTAL
Registration through 4/30/09*			\$40	
Registration 5/1/09 and after*			\$50	
Registration for under age 21			\$10	
No Host Early Bird Reception	June 30		No Cost	
City/U.S. Mint Tour I			\$37	
Reception for 1st Time Reunion Attendees			No Cost	
Welcome Reception with Buffet			\$58	
Helicopter Museum Tour			\$37	
Golf Tournament			\$100	
KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast			No Cost	
City/U.S. Mint Tour II			\$37	
<i>Spirit of Philadelphia</i> Lunch Cruise			\$70	
War Story Contest (WSC) I			\$10**	
Historical Presentation Forum (HPF) I			\$10**	
Poker Tournament I			\$25	
Member's Annual Business Meeting			No Cost	
Spouse/Guest Function, QVC Tour & Shop.			\$48	
(or) Spouse/Guest Function, Art Museum Tour			\$47	
Historical Presentation Forum (HPF) II			\$10**	
Poker Tournament II			\$25	
Reunion Banquet & Dance			\$80	
Non-Registered Guests at Banquet			\$100	
Memorial Service			No Cost	
Lunch with MG Andy Andreson, Ret			\$25	
War Story Contest (WSC) II			\$10**	
Franklin Institute w/Dinner & Fireworks			\$88	
<i>Total from right side of form</i>			→ \$	
VHPA Dues (if not dues current)		1 Year	\$36	
VHPA Dues (if not dues current)		3 Years	\$99	
Life Membership (full-\$540, or 3 installments of \$185 ea)				
GRAND TOTAL			→ \$	

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

**Only one \$10 admission fee is required to attend any or all sessions of the WSC and HPF events.
Each attendee will also receive a free DVD of last year's HPF/WSC presentations (a \$30 value).

Full details are posted on the Reunion website:

www.vhpareunion.org

In lieu of a CC, you can mail a check or money order to address above, payable to: "VHPA Reunion 2009" with this completed form.

T-SHIRTS		
QTY	SIZE	TOTALS
	S ~ \$18	
	M ~ \$18	
	L ~ \$18	
	XL ~ \$18	
	XXL ~ \$19	
	XXXL ~ \$20	
TOTAL → \$		

BANQUET MEAL	
QTY	ENTREE CHOICE
	BEEF
	FISH
	VEGETABLE

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS	
Membership Fund:	\$ _____
Scholarship Fund:	\$ _____
General Fund:	\$ _____
Vietnam War Museum Fund:	\$ _____

REFUND POLICY	
IMPORTANT:	Please review the details of the VHPA Refund Policy, including the limited opportunity to purchase a Refund Guaranty while completing your registration. This opportunity is available only during your initial registration.
Full details are posted on the Reunion website: www.vhpareunion.org	
Refund Guarantee Fee (10% of total events)	\$ _____

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT INFO	
VISA or MC#:	
Exp. Date:	
Signature:	

VHPA REUNION ★ 2009

Philadelphia, Pa

The 2009 Annual Reunion, the 26th, will be held in Philadelphia at the Philadelphia Marriott. Located on Market Street, the location offers attendees a multitude of shops, restaurants and historic sites that are all within walking distance. While the hotel boasts several quality restaurants, you will have your choice of everything from McDonalds to Philly cheese steak sandwiches..



If you want a more detailed view of the hotel, its amenities and location, check out their website:

www.marriott.com/hotels/fact-sheet/travel/phldt-philadelphia-marriott-downtown/

Home of the Liberty Bell
and Site of the
26th VHPA Annual Reunion

1 – 5 July, 2009

★ TUESDAY, 30 JUNE,

This will be the first day that registration will be open for the early arrivals and we will have a location for the Early Birds to gather and kick off the first informal event. There are no special activities planned and for those that would like to see a bit of Philadelphia on their own, there are numerous museums and historic sites within easy walking distance.

★ WEDNESDAY, 1 JULY,

The Reunion will officially start with tours available in the morning and our First Time Attendee and Welcome Receptions that evening. The Welcome Reception will include a dinner buffet but, again, in response to member feedback, there will be no scheduled entertainment that could interfere with the intent of the reception.. seeing old friends and meeting new ones. We will do our best to make it easy for you to see and be seen.

There will be three tours offered this year:

TOUR #1 ~ CITY/US MINT TOUR

Ticket Price: \$37 per person

Philadelphia might be most famously known as the birthplace of American democracy, but you'll find it's an ideal destination for discovery as you explore its colorful neighborhoods, learn more about its rich history and learn of its spectacular sights and attractions. A professional tour guide will lead you through this city rich in history and charm. During your visit you will stop at the US Mint where you will see actual coin production. Exhibits and audio/video stations provide information about the United States Mint and its history, coinage and current programs. Also, located in the main lobby of the building, the gift shop has United States Mint Coin Sets, commemorative coins, numismatic collectables, books, games, and United States Mint souvenirs. Note photo ID is required on this tour.

TOUR #2 ~ HELICOPTER MUSEUM

Ticket Price: \$37 per person

The American Helicopter Museum in West Chester, collects, restores and displays historic aircraft and chronicle the origin and development of rotary wing aircraft. They are home to the largest collection of helicopters in the Nation. Currently, the Museum displays over 35 civilian and military helicopters, autogiros and convertiplanes. The exhibits span the history of rotary wing aircraft from the earliest helicopters to the latest addition to our nation's defense, the V-22 Osprey. More details about what the museum has to offer can be seen at <http://www.helicoptermuseum.org/AboutMuseum.asp>

TOUR #3 ~ SPIRIT OF PHILADELPHIA LUNCH CRUISE

Ticket Price: \$70 per person

Come aboard the *Spirit of Philadelphia* for a dining, entertainment and sightseeing adventure that will be the talk of your group tour. This lunch cruise features a fascinating look at Philadelphia's metropolitan skyline and the riverfront landmarks that make Philadelphia one of the most historic ports in America. Step aboard the *Spirit of Philadelphia* cruise for an afternoon of unparalleled cruising fun on the harbor while you dine and enjoy breathtaking skyline views.

★ THURSDAY, 2 JULY

We move into the first full day of events. The schedule will include the two tours, mini reunions, War Story Contest and the Historical Presentation Forum. In addition there will be several special activities: Golf and the Gold Star Family Breakfast. There are no activities scheduled for the evening but there are numerous restaurants and outdoor activities within walking distance of the hotel.

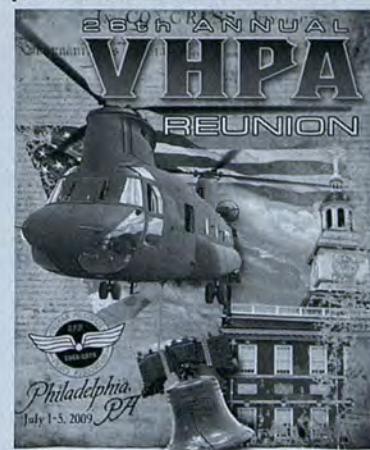
www.vhpareunion.org

This is the home of the 26th VHPA National Annual Reunion in Philadelphia, July 1-5, 2009.

This site is where the latest and newest information on the Reunion is first posted for the membership, info such as events, schedules, hotel room information and everything else to do with the Reunion.

As new information becomes available, it will be immediately published on this website.

Charles Holley
VHPA Reunion Webmaster



VHPA REUNION ★ 2009

Philadelphia, Pa

★ FRIDAY, 3 JULY

Because of a special event scheduled on Saturday, Friday will start with the Business Meeting for VHPA members and, for the first time, while the pilots are conducting business, a choice of activities for the spouses:

- First: A limited number will embark on an escorted tour of QVC, the shopping network, broadcast facility. This includes a chance to take advantage of the QVC shopping area so bring your credit cards.
- Second: Those who would prefer Art to shopping, a private tour of Philadelphia Museum of Art. This event includes a brunch at the museum. Mini Reunions and the second session of the HPF complete the afternoon. The evening, culminates with our Annual Banquet. Seating will be done the same way we did in San Antonio. If you have a seating request, let us know when you register on line and we will do our best to accommodate. Once you arrive at the hotel, we will be able to finalize your seat assignment. Remember to bring your tickets!!!

★ SATURDAY, 4 JULY

The day starts with a Memorial Service, in the hotel. This will be followed with mini reunions, another session of HPF and, a lunch with guest speaker, Ronald (Andy) Andreson MG Ret.

Normally, the Banquet is held on our final night at the reunion site but, this year, in Philadelphia, it seemed appropriate to take advantage of the city sponsored activities on the 4th of July. We have reserved the Franklin Museum, located adjacent to the area where the events/activities will take place. Not only will there be activities and food inside the museum, you will be able to experience the 4th with the City of Philadelphia. The official program and the names of city sponsored entertainment has not been announced yet but, when it is, we will post the information on the VHPA web site and in future issues of the Aviator.

This will be a totally unique experience, fireworks and entertainment provided by "The City of Independence"

★ SUNDAY IS DEPARTURE DAY.

Some administrative notes:

- We will have a representative from the Philadelphia CVB providing concierge services to VHPA members.
- If you are unable to take advantage of the tours that we are providing, this person will be able to help you set up your own local walking tour, with discounts when available, or a professionally guided tour if that is your preference.
- Check the web site for any discounted transportation to and from the airport we are able to set up.
- Parking is expensive in Philadelphia. We are looking for parking alternatives.
- Event times will be posted as we get closer to the reunion. Check the web for updates.

REUNION SCHEDULE ~ PHILADELPHIA 2009 ~ 1 – 5 JULY 2009

- ★ Tuesday 6/30/09
Early Bird Reception
President's Reception
- ★ Wednesday 7/1/09
City/U.S. Mint Tour I
Reception for 1st Time Reunion Attendees
Welcome Reception Buffet
Helicopter Museum Tour
- ★ Thursday 7/2/09
Golf Tournament
KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast
City/U.S. Mint Tour II
Spirit of Philadelphia Lunch Cruise
War Story Contest I (WSC)
Historical Presentation Forum I (HPF)
Poker Tournament I

- ★ Friday 7/3/09
Member's Annual Business Meeting
Spouse/Guest Function, QVC Tour & Shopping
(or) Spouse/Guest Function, Art Museum Tour
(Members in Business Meeting)
Historical Presentation Forum II (HPF)
Poker Tournament II
Reunion Banquet & Dance
- ★ Saturday 7/4/09
Memorial Service
Lunch with MG (Ret) Andy Andreson
War Story Contest II (WSC)
Franklin Institute w/Dinner & Fireworks
- ★ Sunday 7/5/09
Departure

Please Note - If any members are interested in selling any item(s) through the vendor room at the Philadelphia reunion, they need to contact Woody McFarlin immediately at

VHPA REUNION ★ 2009

Philadelphia, Pa

A very special 4th of July ... and you have a ring side seat to it all!

Similar to how we structured the Washington DC events two years ago, we have moved the typical "final night" banquet one day earlier to July 3rd so that we all could take advantage of some very, very special activities on July 4th.

As outlined in our earlier newsletters, Philadelphia is a completely revitalized City from our last reunion there in 1994. Vibrant and exciting, there is much to do and see on a daily basis ... and 4th of July is truly special. Thus we have made arrangements so that you can fully participate in all the evening 4th of July activities in a truly VIP type environment.

Like Washington DC, there will be hundreds of thousands of people in the area the evening of the 4th ... but you have exclusive and complete access to the entire Philadelphia Franklin Institute Science Museum for the entire evening! We have rented the entire 4 story facility for you for a truly special private party ... which is right in the middle of all the activities.

Current City plans call for a major concert by a name performer within easy walking distance of the Museum, and a major fireworks display ... they advertise that it is larger than the one in DC. Last year they was also a special early evening major parade that wound around the streets adjacent to the Franklin Institute Science Museum, which is just down the street from the PHL Museum of Art.

The City of Philadelphia coordinates the parades, fireworks, and books the name performer .. and as of this edition's Aviator deadline, the announcements for this

years name performer and precise schedule had not been announced yet ... however the following two paragraphs outline what they did LAST YEAR ... which will give you an idea of what you can anticipate.

6:00-8:30 p.m. – LAST YEAR
July 4th 2008
Southwest Airlines
July 4th Parade

Marching bands, dancers, patriotic figures and floats fill the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in grand Independence Day style, culminating with Broadway-style routines at the foot of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Everyone can enjoy the show thanks to giant video screens located at various points along the Parkway. The parade is divided into five segments: We Love Philadelphia – A City of Firsts; Love Where You Live; Love Where You Work; Love Where You Play; and Love How We Celebrate. 26th Street & the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

8:30-11:00 p.m. – LAST YEAR
July 4th 2008
Sunoco Sweet Sounds of Liberty
Concert & Fireworks

Five-time Grammy winner John Legend returns to Philly for an evening of smooth R&B followed by a colorful fireworks display above the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Philly's own Russell Tompkins, Jr. and the New Stylistics open the show on the Gold Peak Iced Tea stage with their sleek, smooth sounds and razor-sharp harmonies that made the world fall in love with Philly soul. Brilliant pyrotechnics by internationally acclaimed Zambelli Fireworks Internationale light the sky follow-

ing the concert. Set to the theme The Melting Pot, USA, the show includes music from nations around the world and reflects the colors in each country's national flag. 26th Street & the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

The official web site for the City's 4th of July activities is listed below ... and you may wish to access it to see all the activates that they are doing once that site is updated for this year:

www.americasbirthday.com

Our plans for the Museum will be molded the best we can around the City's schedules once they are announced, but the plans thus far are approximately as follows:

1. Bus round robin transportation will start late afternoon at a time TBD on routes designed to get you to the Museum area about 6 PM when we obtain official exclusive access to the Museum. This will be a ticketed event, and along with your VHPA Registration Name Badge and a 2nd unique security ID devise, you will be permitted unlimited access in and out of the Museum all evening until midnight.

2. Open cash bars will be available all evening at various locations around the Museum

3. From about 7 PM to 8:30 PM there will be a complete buffet dinner served in the spectacular, fully renovated Franklin Rotunda (a truly breathtaking part of the Museum)... with the concept you can grab what you like, and continue to walk around the Museum, or mingle in the Rotunda, which is modeled after the Pan-

theon in Rome. An 80 foot domed area houses the only privately owned National Monument in the United States ... the huge 20 foot high statue of Benjamin Franklin surrounded by 16 huge columns .. and our buffet tables and bar counters.

4. After the fireworks, there will be entertainment at the Museum until we can get the busses back into the Museum area to start the round runs to get you back to the Hotel. It is possible to walk, as the distance is about 7 long blocks (about 3/4 of a mile). However buses shuttling back and forth from the Museum to the Hotel will be available at times we can gain access into the area.

5. We have total run of the museum all night, including shows at the Planetarium. The entire facility is air conditioned and has numerous rest room facilities ... always in short supply during major City events like this

In summary, this will be a very special evening, indeed. Our planning will continue as the City unveils this year's schedules and activates. In the interim ...

REGISTER NOW!! Reservations for this event are limited, and thus early sign-ups are recommended. Given the event logistics, bus availabilities, and complexity of catering a major event on the 4th of July, it is unlikely you will be able to purchase a ticket for this event at the reunion itself

*We will almost for sure be sold out in advance.
See you there!*



REUNION NEWS: MEMORIAL SERVICE EVENT

This year at the Philly Reunion we will reestablish a Memorial Service to our list of events. In the early years of the reunions, there was a Memorial Service, but somehow we got away from it and we think it's time we brought it back.

The service is tentatively scheduled for Saturday morning, to start at around 1000 hours and last one hour. There will be no charge to attend and all reunion attendees and guests are invited. The Memorial Service will be conducted by an ordained minister. Tentatively that will be by Pastor Mike E. Smith (67-68, B7/17 CAV) or Rev. Guenther K.

Fritsch (Red Baron of Ghost Riders, 70-71). Rev. Mike Smith did the service at the Wall at a DC reunion some years back. The service will honor the Vietnam era fallen (some 2,193 compatriots) and those will have died since Vietnam. A recent database update by Gary Roush resulting from a Social Security Index search added 1,249 men to the deceased list, so there are now over 7,000 aviators who have died since Vietnam! By the way, we checked the database and didn't find anyone getting any younger. The service will include music, prayer, and acknowledge the fallen to include recent Taps entries from the Aviator. If time permits, some testimonials for fallen members may be given by attendees. Informal dress will be fine. Please plan to attend this event to honor our fallen. For more information, contact Dr. Jim Fulbrook [REDACTED]

VHPA REUNION ★ 2009

Philadelphia, Pa

The Philadelphia Story

Joe Bilitzke

National Reunion Committee

This ain't your father's Philly any more. For those of you who attended our 11th annual reunion in 1994, you visited a Philadelphia which has changed tremendously – for the better. This time you'll see attractions, go shopping, ride trolleys, and eat in restaurants that were simply not there fifteen years ago. The city has undergone a great transformation and you'll love the experience.

Our hotel, the grand Philadelphia Marriott is right in the heart of the hustle and bustle of downtown. Located at 1201 Market Street (at the corner of 12th Street), it's only two blocks to City Hall. Walk the opposite direction, to 4th Street, and you're standing at Independence National Historical Park, home to the Liberty Bell. This is an entirely new home for our honored icon. You'll also see Independence Hall directly across the park. Tickets are required for entrance and a tour through Independence Hall. Please visit <http://www.nps.gov/inde/independence-hall.htm> for more information and reservations.



Ready for shopping? Walk to 1300 Market Street (that's only a block from the hotel), and visit Macy's. But this isn't your run-of-the-mill Macy's. It's new, opened in August of 2006, and according to the on line description, ...the store's

site — the former John Wanamaker building — has been recognized as one of the most architecturally significant retail spaces in the U.S. and is a National Historical Landmark. The three story building literally sits on an entire block of the city, the famous City Center square. And, the best part, there's no sales tax to add to your already smoking Visa card.

Restaurants? If you're only thinking of a Philly cheese steak, you'll miss one of the most diverse dining experiences in any city. From luxury establishments to late night noshing; from family friendly to upscale pubs, it's all within walking distance from the Marriott. And the newest trend in town? It's the BYOB restaurants. Yes, from our location in Center City, you'll find restaurants encouraging you to Bring Your Own Bottle.

We've had three reunions in our nation's capitol (1986, 2000, 2006), Washington, D.C. But wait until you see what Philadelphia looks like on the 4th of July. This year, we're holding our banquet two nights before departure, on Friday, 3 July. That will leave the following day, the 4th, for you to get a little morning sleep, and then hit the town. Philly knows how to throw an Independence Day party.

Elsewhere in this issue, you can read Dana Young's description of our July 4th evening at the Franklin Institute Science Museum. Yes, we own the entire museum during the city's celebration on the mall. You'll be able to enjoy the hands on museum, have a great meal (included with ticket price), visit the bars, and (most impor-

tant) have access to museum restrooms.

At your leisure, you'll leave the museum and join the festivities provided by the city. Just cross the street (which will be closed) and look to your left. Three blocks away, along a large grassy median, is the Philadelphia Art Museum — famous also for its Rocky steps from the Sylvester Stallone movie of the same name. Originating from the vicinity of the museum, a spectacular firework display is on the agenda.

Although the entertainment following the fireworks has yet to be announced by the city, you can be assured you'll see an extravagant and free show that will be unforgettable. Following the fireworks, you may remain on the mall to enjoy the entertainment. Or, you can return to the air conditioned comfort of our own museum. Inside, we'll continue our own entertainment and the bars will remain open. This truly will be a night to remember as we close the 2009 reunion in the City of Brotherly Love.

So, from the Marriott hotel in the heart of Philadelphia, you'll have the city at your doorstep. Shopping, restaurants, and most importantly, the many memorials and sites documenting the founding of our country await you. It's going to be great reunion in a memorable location and great hotel. Bring your family; show the grandchildren the starting point of our democracy.

*We'll see you in Philadelphia
in July 2009.*

MIA/KIA Gold Star Family Breakfast

Hi Everyone,
Just a heads up that another MIA/KIA Gold Star Family Breakfast is being planned for the upcoming VHPA Reunion (July 1-5, 2009 Philadelphia). This is a great opportunity for families of the fallen (killed in action, missing in action, died after tour) to get acquainted with each other and ease into the large, welcoming extended family of Vietnam Helicopter Veterans. The history of this breakfast may be found at <http://vhfcn.org/goldstargirls.htm>.

This year's VHPA Gold Star Family Breakfast will be from 8-9:30 am on Thursday, July 2, 2009 at the headquarters hotel (The Philadelphia Downtown Marriott).

VETERANS AS WELL AS FAMILIES OF THE FALLEN ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US.

You walked in our loved ones' shoes. We are privileged to be able to share this time with you.

This is a somewhat informal event, the most important part of which (in my humble opinion) is when we each go around the room and explain our connection - why we have come together - and we get to hear from other family members who have come in search of stories and memories about their loved ones. The veterans who attend share their particular reasons for wanting to be there to support and welcome us.

I personally collect donations from individuals who wish to sup-



port this event so that no one who attends has to pay their own way. The math is simple: 100% of the donations go to the breakfast.

If you have been communicating with family of one of your buddies who didn't come back, or who died after his tour, consider inviting them to attend this reunion. For me, the impact of being with those who served with my brother, for the first time, was unforgettable.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to donate. Also, if anyone who has attended this breakfast in past years would like to pass along their impressions, please do so.

Please help spread the word to Gold Star Families you know of. I want them to know that they are not alone in their search, and they are welcome among their loved ones' "brothers."

Also, there is a Gold Star Family Breakfast being planned as part of the 1st Cavalry Division Association Reunion at Fort Hood in June 2009. The 1st Cav Div Association decided to add this item to their reunion agenda starting in 2009.

**Little Sister,
Julie Kink**

*Sister of WO David Kink
C Troop 1/9th CAV
KIA 8-3-1969,
Member of VHFCN Family
Contacts Committee
email: [REDACTED]
www.VirtualWall.org/contacts*



VHPA REUNION ★ 2009

Philadelphia, Pa

REUNION LUNCHEON

With MG (Ret) Andy Andreson Scheduled on 4 July

At the Philly reunion, we have scheduled a guest speaker luncheon for Saturday, 4 July. We did this last year with Jug Burkett (Stolen Valor author) as our guest speaker and the event was well received – over 250 attended at the San Antonio reunion. This year, our speaker will be Ronald K. (Andy) Andreson, MG Retired. MG Andreson is a lifetime VHPA member. He has been decisively engaged in the evolution of Army Aviation for many years. He is a past President of the Army Aviation Assoc. of America (AAAA) where he is still actively involved to include the AAAA scholarship program, which manages our VHPA scholarships.

MG Andreson's luncheon event is

titled, "Army Aviation Today" and will include a slide presentation put together by AAAA on the current state of Army Aviation. He will cover many topics related to recent and current events and speculate on future developments. After his talk, there will be time for a Q&A session for attendees. Of course, Army Aviation today has incredible technical advancements, but many of the tactics and doctrine of current Army aviation still owes its origin to the Vietnam War era. This is your chance to get a cutting edge overview from someone in the know.

MG Andreson is a USMA graduate. He attended flight school in Class 59-12. He served in Vietnam in 1967-68

with the 407th TC DET and 162nd AHC, and again in 1971-72 with the 1st TC BN. Briefly, MG Andreson was: a Program Manager (PM) for the RAH-66 Comanche Helicopter program, a PM for the Blackhawk helicopter (UH-60), he served as the deputy CG for R&D at the Army Aviation Systems Command, and he played roles in the acquisition of the T700 and T800 turbine engines, as well as the Electro-Optical Sensor System (EOSS). Since retiring, he has served as a consultant and industry executive with several defense contractors. Finally, MG Andreson has an MS degree in Aerospace Engineering from Georgia Tech and he has a bunch of other

awards and accomplishments in and out of the military over the years.

As we said, the luncheon will take place on 4 July, probably starting at 11:30. The location and menu are still TBD, but the cost is being listed as \$25.00 on the registration form. Like last year, we are trying to keep this event as low cost as possible for the lunch items. Look for this event on your registration form when you fill it out. This is just one more great reason to attend the Philly reunion. **See you there!**

Questions?

Please contact
Dr. Jim Fulbrook

HISTORIC PRESENTATIONS and WAR STORY CONTEST at Philly Reunion

Here is an update on what we have planned for the Historic Presentation Forum (HPF) and the War Story Contest (WSC) at the Philly Reunion. This year we have two sessions of HPF planned. One of our speakers will be John C. "Doc" Bahnsen who wrote a book titled, American Warrior: A Combat memoir of Vietnam. Doc Bahnsen is a true war hero who will discuss his book, operations, experiences, and more. Tom Marshall is an author who wrote: Price of Exit. Tom will headline the second HPF session. Tom was a Loach pilot during the Lam Son 719 era in I Corps in '71 and he will discuss some of his experiences. Doc and Tom are both VHPA members. We also have an HPF presentation planned by Ron Bower, who is working with Jim McLaughlin (also VHPA members) to develop an interactive digital map called "The Vietnam Memory Map." Think Google Earth and more on this, a sure crowd pleaser. Finally,

we also have a presentation planned by a group that does trips to Vietnam, which will tell you more about as the information is provided. Look for a couple of other HPF additions as we get closer to reunion time and set in the day and times.

This year we will have two sessions of the War Story Contest (WSC). Doug Womack will MC the first session again with such headliners as Mike Sheuerman and the usual suspects who will entertain us with their "This ain't no sh*t stories" about the 'Nam. Mike S. will then MC the second WSC for more fun and frivolity. This year we have added props for the speakers to wear who will down beer to wet their whistles and memories (Black label & Near Beer on station planned).

Note when you register that this year there is a one-time charge of \$10.00 to attend one or all of the HPF and WSC events. In addition, for your \$10, each attendee will receive a free copy of the DVD of last year's

HPF/WSC events – 7 hours of really good stuff to include Jug Burkett (2 talks), John Plaster (2 talks), and Joe Kline (aviation artist) HPFs, the WSC, and the Fries' Arrowhead productions on Donut Dollies and a US Marine's remains being returned. The DVD is a \$30 value, so don't get your Nomex panties in a wad over the cost here because we need to cover AV and development costs on these events. We want the events to pay for themselves, rather than come out of the registration fee, which you should see is lower this year. Ok, we put these events together to entertain and inform you and your guests, as all are invited.

This is our 4th year doing these and each year the attendance has gone up, so don't miss out (days and times do not conflict with other events) and sign up when you register!

Last notes on HPF/WSC: The time is now to sign up to give your war story at one of the WSCs. Contact Jim Fulbrook at

[REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED] to get on board or to ask questions. We will take guys from the audience for the WSC, but we really do need a list to start, please (provide name, contact info and title of story). We are also open to adding any other HPF speakers if you are interested or know of someone who would be appropriate for our members. Yes, we will do a DVD again this year as well and look out for the luncheon HPF, which will feature MG (Ret) Andy Andreson speaking about "Army Aviation Today" on behalf of AAAA.

OK, that's it – *now are you convinced you should come to Philly? Don't let this crappy economy spoil your fun!*

Questions?

Please contact
Dr. Jim Fulbrook

Interested in advertising in The VHPA Aviator?

1/4 page black and white ad - \$125.00, 1/2 page black & white ad - \$250.00

Full page black & white ad - \$500.00, full color ad's are available
on the Back Cover, rates by request.

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

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

Some of you may remember we had a chapter in the New England area once before. We are in the process of reactivating a chapter in our area. If you reside in New England and are interested in becoming a member call me at [REDACTED]

Our meetings are scheduled the first Monday of each month at noon (a correction) at Joe's American Bar and Grill in Dedham, MA www.joesamerican.com for directions.

Bill Williams, President.

VHPA of FLORIDA CHAPTER

In the past four months we have been to 10 different schools talking to the students about Vietnam and our experiences there. Most of our effort and time is spent working with the County's Veterans Memorial Park and Museum. That is where we have the copters and equipment displayed. On display are an OH-6, OH-58, UH-1H and the AH-1 Cobra. In addition there are many items from the Vietnam era on display in the museum. We are in the process of painting the OH-58 which will be mounted at the entrance to the park. Our pilots man the equipment during all Veterans events held there. On 25 February Gen Hal Moore and Joe Galloway will be speaking at Stetson University in Deland, FL. We plan to have a group of our people there with the OH-6 (in 7/17 Cav markings) for the event.

D.L. Welch, President

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

The Fort Wolters Chapter dedicated a memorial to our brothers that we flew with in Southeast Asia from 1961-1975. The memorial is located at the Dallas/Fort Worth National Cemetery. The weather was perfect. After the ceremony we went to the Oasis restaurant at Joe Pool Lake. We had lunch, much story telling and a few adult beverages. Our next meeting will be on March 7, 2009 at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst, TX. The board meets at 11AM. General meeting and lunch at 11:30. Join us.

Virgil Laughlin, President

FORT RUCKER CHAPTER

We are still in the formative stage of starting our chapter and are actively soliciting members. If you live in southern Alabama or northern Florida please contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

John A. Crowley, President

ALABAMA CHAPTER

Please contact LaRue "Lash" Weisner for information on the new chapter in the Huntsville area. I can be reached at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

LaRue Weisner, President

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The NCVHPA officiated at the Vietnam Memorial (at which the members read the names of the MIA's from North Carolina) service in Raleigh at 12:00 on 7 February. Each year on the first Saturday of February we have this service at the memorial on the capital grounds. After the service we convened for lunch and our annual business meeting. That evening we meet for dinner. This year we celebrated the NCVHPA's 20th birthday.

J.D. Lawson, President

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

In addition to our article in the Nov/Dec issue we would like to reiterate invitation to one and all to attend our annual meeting on 5-7 March. Since we only meet once a year it is always a terrific bash. For advanced planning our 2010 meeting will be in Bowling Green, KY, the home of the Corvette. We are also planning on taking an active part in The National Gun Day Show at Louisville Fair and Exposition Center. The Military Society is one of the oldest and largest military collections in the world.

John Flannagan, President

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

Our quarterly meeting was held on 14 February at Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que in Tacoma. Our special guest was General (ret) John Shalikashvili, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs (1993-1997). John Lee from the Veterans Administration discussed VA benefits and changes. Members had numerous questions. The food was great and so was the atmosphere. We continue to collect paperback books for the vets at American Lake VA Hospital. As of now we have probably donated 800 to 1000 books.

Paul Fleming, President

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH

CCN had a successful Christmas party at the Fritz's home with dancing, food and drink, and all the usual hot air—even in December. (Ken put a heater on the deck for those who wanted to smoke outdoors.) The mood was definitely upbeat despite the country's financial condition and all 37 in atten-

dance vowed to make 2009 one of the best years to celebrate at next year's Christmas party. Looking forward, we are in the planning stages of a repaint of the Huey, a Huey trailer rebuild (to get it right), selling the PG&E truck to buy a dedicated tow/pickup with matching paint, new banners for the Huey, getting all of our merchandise posted for sale on our website (www.vhpaccn.org), keeping the site up to date, some golf and a BBQ. Plans are also underway to take the MOC to Philly— we look forward to seeing all of you there in July.

Ken Fritz, President

SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Being full of Christmas spirit, SC had its first chapter meeting in conjunction with a Christmas party. Family and friends were invited to the Viper Den, a hanger facility of the Celebrate Freedom Foundation housing none other than 5 AH-1 Cobras and an early model UH-1B Huey. Since it was the holiday season, we conducted no chapter business, we just concentrated on having a grand time. Our scheduled TH-55 free rides fell through as the owner had to pull duty at the local Nuclear Processing Facility (Savannah River Site). He's a Wackenut Swat team pilot (maybe I wasn't supposed to tell you that.) I was fortunate to run into a fellow stick buddy from my first tour with the 1st Cav. Mike Hudson and I shared a cockpit several times in and around Camp Evans and Quan Loi. After 41 years we met again and found out we only live 10 miles from each other. Had about a dozen potential members and their families participate in the consumption of fine Southern BBQ, ribs, hush puppies, grits and good ole sweet tea - hooah! Kids had fun climbing all over the Cobras and Huey making whop, whop sounds (the kids not the aircraft). We had our 2d meeting in January and had eight potential members show up. We're still in the early stages of forming up with e-mails and feedback from more gents that couldn't make the prior meeting. Once we get a few more members we'll have elections and schedule a regular meeting time and place.

We've been asked to participate in the 67th Reunion of the Doolittle Raiders, which will be held this April in Columbia, SC.. Our next scheduled meeting is February 14 at the Viper Den, Woodward Field in Camden, SC.

Larry Russell, President

VHPA CHAPTERS

We have 5 new chapters in the formation stage. They are:

South Carolina (Celebrate Freedom) Chapter
Larry Russell, Pres.

Ft. Rucker Chapter
John A. Crowley, Pres.

Arizona Chapter
Bill Sorenson

California Chapter North
Ken Fritz

VHPA of Florida
Donald L. Welch

www.vhpaf.org

Fort Wolters Chapter
Virgil Laughlin

Georgia Chapter
Bill Stanley

Mid South Chapter
"Pete" Norman IV

North Carolina Chapter
J.D. Lawson

Alabama Chapter
La Rue "Lash" Weisner, Pres.

New England Chapter
Bill Williams, Pres.

Virginia Chapter
Tom Mitchell, Pres.

North Carolina Chapter
J.D. Lawson

Ohio River LZ Chapter
John Flanagan

Rocky Mountain Chapter
Rick Beaver

Southern California Chapter
Ed Holguin

Washington State Chapter
David Eck

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.

CELEBRATING OUR 14,000TH MEMBER!

On behalf of the VHPA in general, the volunteer leadership, and the staff at HQ, we'd like to welcome the more than 100 former Southeast Asian helicopter pilots who have joined the VHPA during the last three months.

We are especially pleased to announce that Jack Graham, Comanchero 27, who served in A Company, 101st Aviation Battalion in 1970-71, is now our 14,000th member. Jack plans to attend this summer's reunion in Philly so we can all shake his hand as a symbol that the VHPA continues to move forward. The VHPA has a little tradition that we plan to repeat that the Philly reunion. Our founder, Larry Clark, started the tradition of presenting a special hat to the 1,000th member, 2,000th member, etc. member at the Reunion. Our current president, Jack Salm, plans to continue this tradition with Jack Graham.

We would be remiss with

our celebration announcement if we didn't give a special mention to the nearly dozen former USMC helicopter pilots that joined the VHPA during the last three months. Yes, the majority of VHPA's members served in the Army but we are also happy that guys who flew CH-34s, CH-46s, UH-1Es, and CH-53s (to name just a few) have also chosen to join. Thanks again – everyone that flew "sling wings" in Southeast Asia and especially those who support the VHPA.

For a complete list of everyone that has joined the VHPA since we published the last membership directory in August 2008, please go to WWW.VHPA.ORG, then Directory Supplement, then New Member Search. HQ updates this roster weekly, usually at close of business on Fridays.

Mike Law
Membership Chairman



MAGIC CARPET RIDE

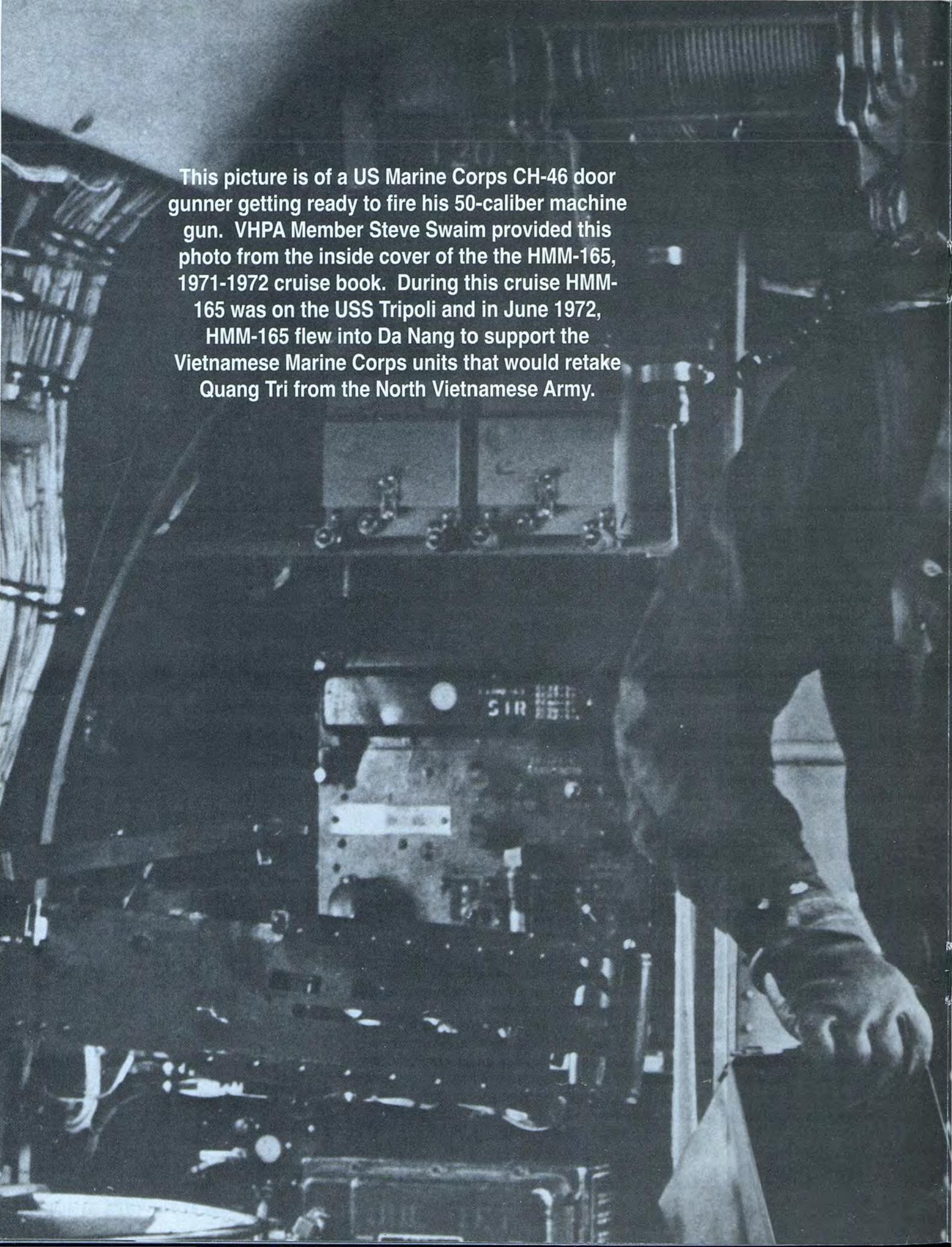
**FULL COLOR. 22" X 28" , LIMITED EDITION
PRINT OF THE UH-1H HUEY. STANDARD
H MODEL AS SHOWN, \$80.00 EA.
CUSTOMIZED VERSION WITH MARKINGS OF
YOUR CHOICE, OPTIONAL D MODEL \$125.00
INCLUDING POSTAGE. SATISFACTION
GUARANTEED.**



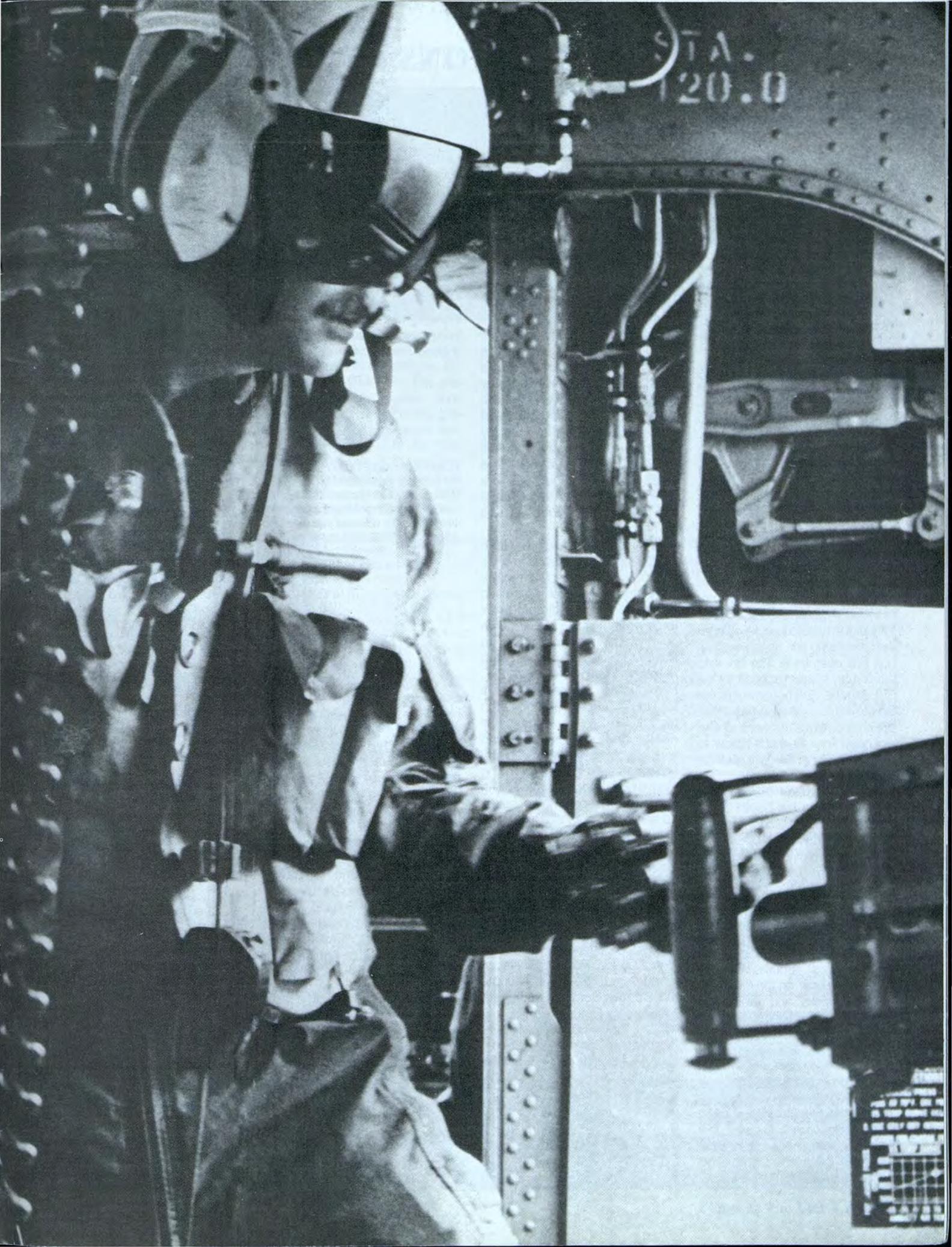
Joe Kline Aviation Art



www.joekline.com



This picture is of a US Marine Corps CH-46 door gunner getting ready to fire his 50-caliber machine gun. VHPA Member Steve Swaim provided this photo from the inside cover of the the HMM-165, 1971-1972 cruise book. During this cruise HMM-165 was on the USS Tripoli and in June 1972, HMM-165 flew into Da Nang to support the Vietnamese Marine Corps units that would retake Quang Tri from the North Vietnamese Army.



STORY RECOLLECTIONS OF MG HAMLET

October 22, 2008

Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Assn.
5530 Birdcage St Suite 105
Citrus Heights, Ca 95610-7698
Attn: Gary Roush

Dear Gary,

I am a member of the Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Assn and enjoy very much your updates and the VHPA Aviator. I am Robert Gibbs of the class of 56-12 of fixed wing flight school. I served in Viet Nam with the 1st Cav in 1966-67.

I read with great interest an article by Skip Powell about my friend and ex-boss James F. Hamlet. I knew Jim very well and thought I might add to Skip's information about Jim. You may use any of this information in any way you see fit.

JAMES F. HAMLET

In the summer of 1966, I was transferred to Viet Nam and assigned to the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division based at An Khe. The Battalion Call sign was Bushmaster. I was further assigned as the XO of the gunship company, company "D". The company call sign was White Fang. LTC A.T. Pumphrey was the Bn Commander. In August, I was made the Company Commander. Shortly thereafter, LTC James F. Hamlet replaced LTC Pumphrey as the Bn Commander. Around the 1st of September the battalion deployed from the base camp and began continuous field operations. The Bn. was the primary aviation support for the 3rd Brigade. Every few days the Bn moved to a new fire base. The area of operations for the Bn. extended from the Laos border to the South China Sea just south of Danang.

In early February 1967 we were operating along the South China Sea moving northward towards the An Lo Valley. Normal operations consisted of providing six "slicks" and two "guns" as a ready Reaction Force (RRF) each night to the Brigade Commander in a forward firebase. On the 5th of Feb I was the lead Gunship and my wingman was Capt Grady King. We flew to LZ English just at dusk. We positioned the "guns" on the ground to cover the "slicks" and awaited further orders from Brigade. A firefight was going on along the north edge of the firebase. Soon the fog settled in and we settled in for the night with radio contact with Brigade. At about 2 AM we were hit by a heavy mortar barrage. Before we could untie the blades we were surrounded by dozens of mortar explosions. All of my crew and Capt King's crew were seriously wounded.

After the mortar attack we gathered together and found an aid station. Later we learned that each helicopter had more than 250 fragment holes. At first light, evac helicopters took the two wounded crews to the 67th Evac Hospital at Que Nhon. After surgery the next day, I woke up to see LTC Jim Hamlet at the foot of my bed. I will never forget him grinning at me as he asked how I was doing. The other members of my Company were all evacuated to Japan. I remained in the hospital for 3 weeks and returned to my Company. LTC Hamlet then sent me with one of my platoons to a quiet base along the seashore south of Que Nhon. He wanted to give me a few days to recover from the hospital stay.

In March Jim relieved me from the Company and assigned me as his Bn S-3. For about four months we shared the Battalion Command Bunker and had adjoining hex tents whenever we moved. One day I was flying as observer of a first light Battalion Combat Assault maintaining radio contact with LTC Hamlet in the Command Bunker at LZ Dog. LTC Hamlet reported to me that the Division Ammo depot nearby had been attacked and was exploding. Pallets of artillery shells and rockets were exploding everywhere. Rockets were flying overhead and some had penetrated some of the sandbag bunkers and several soldiers were injured and 1 or 2 were killed. Jim remained calm as he talked to me on the radio and reported what was happening. The explosions from the ammo dump lasted for several hours. He diverted our flight to another nearby firebase.

In June LTC Hamlet was transferred from the 227th to become the Deputy Commander of the 11th Aviation Group.

In 1968, I again met Jim at Ft Leavenworth, Kansas. He was now a full Colonel assigned to the Combat Developments Command. On a couple of occasions he and his wife had dinner with us at our home with our family. In the 1970s, I visited him in his office as the Commanding General of Fort Carson, Colorado and the 4th



Infantry Division.

In 1980, I retired from the Army after 30 years of service. During that period I never worked for a better boss than Jim. He was a superb commander, an extremely

compassionate human being and a friend. I miss him greatly.

Robert M Gibbs
LTC US Army Retired

Editor's note: Gary Roush also posted the following recollections on the VHPA Website after MG Hamlet's death...

MG James F. Hamlet was a potential VHPA member who died after his tour in Vietnam on 01/05/2001 at the age of 79

Trenton, NJ

Date of Birth 12/13/1921

Served in the U.S. Army

Served in Vietnam with HHC 227 AHB 1 CAV in 66-67, 1 CAV in 71-72

This information was provided by John Keller, Skip Powell

More detail on this person: I don't know how many of our members would remember MG James F. Hamlet who died in January. I just learned of his death last week and am currently trying to get the details. Jim was one of the first black aviators to make general and when he retired he was a Master Aviator. He was my unit commander when I was a 2nd Lt stationed at Fort Ord, CA. He was, indeed, a fine officer and a true gentleman. He was ADC of the 1st Cav in 1967. I was invited to his retirement party at Bolling AFB in DC and will never forget what he said about his early days in the Army. He said, "When I entered the Army a black man was not allowed to lead a squad to the latrine. We have come a long way." I will miss communicating with him from time to time. He was also the one who taught me that military friendships do not require constant nurturing because each time you meet you can pickup where you left off from the last meeting.

From: Bill Redman

I've been "volunteered", and gladly

accept the attempt, to gather all the recollections we can of a couple great Aviation soldiers--MGs James Hamlet and William Maddox. I understand from Dick Tierney that these two heroes were good friends and collaborators in some very significant efforts for Army Aviation. Ironic, like with Adams and Jefferson, that they should die on the same day. Don't you agree it worthy to muster historical tales of these two pioneers and retain them in the Army Aviation Branch historical and memorialization files? Someday we're going to want to look at them in those lights. I will gather your inputs into a single document for each of the two Army Aviator Pioneers and forward them to the Army Aviation Branch Historian, who will insure their appropriate retention and use. Follows is a great example, already received from a retired Army Aviation Master Sergeant and Army Aviation pioneer. I served under MG Hamlet in Viet Nam, 71-72, 1st Cav, 11th Aviation Co. He would send us a case or two of steaks occasionally. CW-4 Bobby Bruce was his pilot just before I rotated in 72 and CW-2 Gillus (spelling may be wrong) was his pilot when I arrived in 71 from Germany. I remember a special formation he called. It seemed a couple of the 75th Ranger got drunk and set off their basic load of ammo. (scared the hell out of me) This happened at Bien Hoa, across the street from my hooch. General Hamlet had a public "Ass Chewing" of the entire 75th Rangers in front of the whole 1st brigade, with them standing at attention and the remaining troops standing at ease.

From: Skip Powell

AAHF

LTC James F. Hamlet was assigned as the Battalion Commander of the 227th ASHB in RVN from November, 1966 to June, 1967. I flew with him in a 64 ship formation near the Cambodian Border area southwest of Pleiku in December, 1966. At the time, it was the largest combat assault of UH-1 Hueys the 1st CAV had ever attempted in RVN. He was an outstanding Officer and Aviator who was impressed with the caliber of Warrant Officers he flew with in the 227th BN.

*From: John Keller A/227th 66-67
Colorado Springs*

into and out of all day. I was surprised since we hadn't heard a shot fired, and our Hueys usually drew fire from Charlie if he was in the mood to shoot at anything.

As I turned my D model toward the LZ, I wondered about the man that was going home early. Who was he? Where was he from? Was he married, and did he have kids? Who in his family was going to answer the door to find an Army officer on a mission he didn't want, bearing news they didn't want to hear. When we neared the area, I keyed the FM radio and requested that the ground unit pop smoke, which they did. I identified it as yellow, and the color was confirmed. Charlie listened to the radio too, and would have loved to lure us into his landing zone with a smoke grenade of his own.

We landed, and the kilo was man-handled aboard, wrapped in the green poncho he was issued. I had turned in my seat to watch the process while the rotor wash whipped the makeshift shroud, and finally blew it off. Here was a young,

U.S. Infantryman about twenty years of age, shot between the eyes. He had been struck by a bullet an inch above the bridge of his nose. A smell peculiar to violent death filled the aircraft, and I wished that I was far away. There was no escaping, however, and rising anger replaced welling tears. We proceeded to Tan An, and the graves registration unit.

As we flew, the living still had to live, and I was obliged to call the artillery advisory at Tan An via FM radio. It was unwise to fly your helicopter through friendly artillery bombardments, so these advisories had been implemented to prevent unnecessary losses of aircraft, not to mention crews. I made my call, and was advised of conflicting fire across my route of flight. This presented no problem, however, since the maximum ordinate of the projectiles was seven thousand feet, and we were only at twelve hundred. As we often did, we flew under it. I requested attendants at the medevac pad since I was inbound with a kilo, and compliance

was advised. As soon as I had finished with business, a fellow helicopter commander radioed, wondering if I might lessen his load. He had picked up a CBS camera team somewhere, and since he wasn't showing them any action, they wanted a new ride. They knew that I was carrying dead, and figured that we could get them some good footage. I didn't want them especially, but offered to check with my commander. I did so, and the power of the press seemed to win out. I was granted the obligation to bring the news team out to the AO, or area of operations.

I landed at Tan An, and the graves registration troops took away the fallen friend I never knew, but somehow missed. I then hovered over to the refueling point to refuel, and meet the press. My crew chief topped off the tanks, the other Huey landed, and here came the nightly news, at least that's who they worked for. Their leader, I guess, jumped aboard and above the whine of my turbine engine yelled "take me where the war is!" The crew loaded their cam-

eras and gear, and climbed aboard, taking care to avoid the puddle of blood on the floor.

We took off and I dropped CBS in the same landing zone where I picked up my lost comrade in the first place, and my crew and I went off to do other things. I never saw them again, and I am ashamed to admit that in a way, I hope they're still there, looking.

You see, the war they were looking for was never out there in the boonies. It was there on my cargo floor, in the mud, and the blood. It was on the doorsteps of America in a mother's anguish, knowing what her uniformed visitor was about to say. It was in the young soldier sobbing from pain, and fear of dying as we raced to save his life, and in him again, later, when he was sorry he lived. It is now on a black granite wall in Washington D.C.

My unit's motto was "Boomerangs Always Come Back". We said it to each other until we almost believed it, but we didn't all come back either.

Copyright 1991 William N. Janes, Sr.

THE AVIATOR;

I'm an army brat, army wife, mother of army brats and now wife of a retired Vietnam vet. My life has been always army; at times I've felt like the subordinate. However, I now realize that I've been more the commander than anything. My Dad spent 22 years in the military, of which he saw duty in many parts of this world, but seldom at home.

I met my husband at Ft Campbell, Ky. We were married shortly after I graduated Clarksville High School. For the next 26 years my life was one of moving and mostly waiting for his return. It was a wonderful life and though very lonely more often than not, I wouldn't have had it any other way. I'm a much stronger person and have raised three independent thinking, unprejudiced children.

I wrote this poem at the death of my Dad but I believe it applies to many; it is with this belief I now send it to you. Thank you for your time.

I must say that I have enjoyed the VHPA Aviator as much as my husband. I usually read it before he does. Each issue is a wonderful look back, however, sometimes melancholy due to the memories, but anxiously awaited. Thanks for your time and effort in putting forth this remarkable magazine

Sincerely, I remain your faithful reader,

~ Jan Clenney

My Dad, the Soldier

Always a complicated sad man
Forsaking his own for those of foreign lands
Seen through the eyes of his child
Discipline was not quiet his style

Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my Soldier keep'
Words spoken in a childish voice
I know, God, he had a choice

Many battles he bravely fought and won
Though he did his best, the job was never quiet done
My Dad, the Soldier, if only he had known
The hardest one awaited him at home

This brave, but distant, man had one last request
"Have my ashes spread across the barren west"
Untold grief burst forth; tears rushed down my cheek
Forgive me Dad, this one command I can not meet

Among the ghostly silence of Arlington National Cemetery
Seven men, standing erect, fire their guns in honor of his military
In memory of sacrifices made, there was none bolder
Taps played on as the final tour ended for my Dad, the Soldier

~ Jan Clenney

On the lighter side.... On a commercial airline flight an old Army Pilot was seated next to a young mother with a babe in arms. When the baby began crying during the descent for landing, the mother began nursing the infant as discreetly as possible.

The pilot pretended not to notice and, upon disembarking, he gallantly offered his assistance to help with the various baby-related impedimenta.

When the young mother expressed her gratitude, the pilot responded, "Gosh, that's a good looking baby...and he sure was hungry!"

Somewhat embarrassed, the mother explained that her pediatrician said that the time spent on the breast would help alleviate the pressure in the baby's ears.

The Army Pilot sadly shook his head, and in true pilot fashion exclaimed, "And all these years, I've just been chewing gum...."

P.O.W. Network's 2008 12th Annual Military Banquet & Gala



The collage of the above photos was taken during the P.O.W. Network's 2008 12th Annual Military Banquet & Gala held in Branson, Missouri on 9 November 2008. Since 11 November 1989 the P.O.W. Network has been dedicated to information distribution on America's Servicemen who are Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. The organization was named the Red

River Fighter Pilots Assn. "Association of the Year" in 2005 and was given the Mozark MOAA's "True American Hero Award" in 2006. Full information on the P.O.W. Network, and their 2009 Gala, can be found at their website:

POWNetwork.org



All the News that's Fit to Print

It was a day like all days, to quote a quote. The Boomerangs were flying combat assault missions just like always. In the World it was the winter of 1968, but it was merely the end of the rainy season in the area south of Saigon designated as Three Corps on military maps.

The war dragged on as it would for years yet. The 191st Assault Helicopter Company (Boomerangs) had been in country almost two years, dedicated to flying combat assault missions to insert U.S. Infantry elements in unfriendly territory. These missions were calculated to mete out swift and sure destruction to our enemies; the Viet Cong, the North Vietnamese Army, or anyone who chose

to fire a shot at us. There was even one occasion when two American soldiers became the enemy by choosing to get high, and shoot at the passing helicopters. We were all saddened, but unable to recall the four 2.75 inch folding fin aerial rockets delivered by our gunships.

A soldier, you see, does not fight for duty, honor, or country. He fights for his life, and those of his friends. As a twenty-one year old aircraft commander in the company, I had learned that in spades. Today's mission was to fly to various infantry fire bases, collect American infantry troops, convey them to remote landing zones selected by their commanders, have them do battle with the enemy if they could

find him, and return them, at length, to the relative safety of their home fire bases. Eagle flights, they called them. Many, many of these missions consisted of twelve hours of tedium since most of the time we didn't know where Charlie was. Sometimes we stumbled on him, and there was hell to pay on one side or the other, or both, but not often enough to win any war. I've chosen, though, to tell you about a slow day in the business of war making, but perhaps a day of significance.

We had flown a number of sorties, inserting the Grunts in several landing zones. It had been "cold" all day as we expressed it, boring, but the only thing that hurt so far was my rear end

from sitting in that seat for hours. My ship was tail end charlie in a flight of ten Huey slicks, and the logical candidate for side missions such as resupply, or medevac. We had just finished a troop lift at about 2:30, when my aircraft was redirected. A kilo needed to be evacuated from the landing zone to Tan An.

According to the International Phonetic Alphabet, kilo refers to the letter k. In this case it was also shorthand for KIA, or killed in action. Personally, I preferred whiskeys, since that is the letter w, or wounded in action, a mission with more tangible purpose. But now my job was to evacuate a dead American soldier from a landing zone in an area that we had been flying

UH-1H 69-15217 - EXTREME MAKEOVER 2008

For you Army types having an interest in this sort of thing here's the facts. 69-15217, was delivered to the U.S. Army in March, 1970 and arrived in RVN in May of that year. It was assigned to the 189th AHC until being transferred to the 162nd AHC in November 1970. Then, C Troop, 3/17th CAV flew 15217 from July 1971 until it was shipped back to the States in April 1972. 15217, accumulated approximately 1500 combat flight hours during its 23 months in RVN.

15217, was part of Bell's 210 program and the failed effort at the Army's LUH contract. Bell went on to sell three model 210 helicopters, S/N 21002 went to Minuteman Helicopters in Missoula and S/N's 21003, (N510WW) and 21004, (N610WW) went to WorldWind Helicopters in Seattle. 69-15217 is now N610WW, having just completed its first season as a Standard Category, civil helicopter flying on the USFS National Exclusive Use - Type II, IA contract, host base John Day, Oregon. As far as we know, the other two 210's are not Vietnam vets.



The designation; Model 210 is more for marketing as the FAA Type Certificate shows them as 205B's. They flew away from Edwards & Associates in Tennessee as '0' time airframes, (as only an OEM can accomplish that feat of FAA magic). We think of the 210 as a Huey on steroids; in short, a 212 nose and tail boom was bolted on to the 'H' model fuselage, the Lycoming T53-13B engine was replaced with the Honeywell T5317BCV, rated at 1800 SHP, the M/R GB beefed up to 1290 HP and all 212 drive train/dynamics added. In general, about the same helicopter as the BHT 205A1++, however gross weight for the 210 is rated at 10,500 on the skids and 11,200 on the hook.

If there are any Army RVN vets out there who may have been crew members on 69-15217, we'd like to hear your stories. In particular, if you have photos showing the tail number of 15217; this would be terrific as we are hoping to develop a static display for this helicopter. Contact Rick at

or

and thanks in advance. N610WW's primary pilot on the Forest Service IA contract is in his early 30's, and, as a former Robbie Ranger, knows very well this is not his father's Huey! There are however, a few Army RVN Vets in this operation, (all older than dirt), flying N610WW too. Now, if we could just find an OEM that processes old pilots to come out the other end 40 years younger, like the helicopters we flew those 40 years ago, you young dudes will never get hired...

This story was passed to me recently and thought it might generate some interest.

*Sincerely,
Mark S. Hansen*

Preventing the Loss of your Airman Certificate Privileges

by Angelo Spelios
Your friendly former FAA inspector

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued new regulations regarding the duration of pilot certificates, flight engineer certificates, mechanic certificates, and aircraft dispatcher certificates. FAR 61.19 states that the holder of a paper pilot certificate issued under this part may not exercise the privileges of that paper certificate after March 31, 2010. FAR 63.15 states that the holder of a paper flight engineer certificate may not exercise the privileges of that paper certificate after March 31, 2013. FAR 65.15 states that the holder of a paper mechanic or a paper aircraft dispatcher certificate may not exercise the privilege of that paper certificate after March 31, 2013.

You can replace your airmen paper certificate(s) with a new plastic credit card size airmen certificate by logging on to <http://www.faa.gov> and clicking on "Replace a License Certificate" under "Pilots" on the right side of the page. Then click on "Login to" and select "Request an Account" at the bottom of the page that comes up. Follow the instructions to obtain a new plastic certificate. Each certificate will cost \$2.00, which you will pay

with a credit card online. You may also, at the same time, if your certificate number is the same as your social security number, request that your social security number be removed as your certificate number.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), of which the United States is a member, issued a requirement that as of March 5, 2008, all private, commercial or ATPs, as well as flight engineers, operating internationally as required crewmembers of an airplane or helicopter have an airman certificate with an endorsement of language proficiency. In the case of persons holding a U.S. airman certificate, the language proficiency endorsement will state "English Proficient." U. S. airmen certificate holders have until March 5, 2009, to comply with the ICAO Language Proficiency airman certificate endorsement requirements. After March 5, 2009, U. S. airmen certificate holders may not operate internationally without this endorsement.

If you replace your airmen certificate as described above, the "English Proficient" endorsement will be added to your certificate automatically because the ability to read, speak, write, and understand English is already a U.S. regulatory requirement. The

FAA Registry began issuing all new certificates with this endorsement on February 11, 2008.

If you do not have access to a computer, you may mail your request to:

Federal Aviation Administration
Airmen Certification Branch,
AFS-760
P.O. Box 25082
Oklahoma City, OK 73125-0082

Include a signed, written request stating your name, date and place of birth, social security number, and/or certificate number, your current address, and the reason you need a replacement. You must include a check or money order for \$2.00 (U.S. funds), made payable to FAA for each certificate you are requesting.

Even if you are not currently exercising your airman privileges, you worked very hard to obtain them. Please take a little time to retain those privileges by requesting replacement certificates.

*Sent to one of our members by Joe Galloway,
the Author is unknown....*

SUBJECT: SLICKS, GUNSHIPS AND SCOUTS

Lest we forget –

In the beginning, God created Slicks giving them the mission of Medivac, rescue, resupply and transport and he said this is good

But the Slicks will need protection, so he created Gunships to protect the Slicks and he said this also is good

But the Gunships needed targets, so he created Scouts to find targets for the Gunships and he said this also is good.

Upon surveying his works, God realized that he needed crews for his creations, so he populated the Slicks with the best and most disciplined Aviators, he populated the Gunships with lesser disciplined Aviators, and with what was left over he populated the Scouts. He looked upon his creations and said this good, now my Slicks will be properly protected and supported in their missions.

God then spoke to the assembled Slick, Gunship and Scout Pilots, saying unto them; now go forth and support my most favored creation...the Grunts.

Washington VHPA chapter Participates in Veterans Day Parade



BTW . . . Jake Salm & I marched in our local veterans day parade this past week along with about 14 other members from our Washington VHPA chapter (see attached . . . I'm on the left front step and Jack is behind me). I had never marched in the veterans day parade before and it was a very moving experience to march about 20 blocks through town with thousands of people lining the street clapping, shouting "welcome home" and some even crying.

~ Dan Fox

ATTENTION VHPA MEMBERS

*Tom Pearcy and David Redel
are organizing a Reunion of the
graduates of WOC Flight School...*

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www.classblast23-1.org



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& Julie Kink (L'il Sis)

Tour Leader: John Powell, 1/9 Cav

Note: If you enjoyed John Mackel's AA Report "Return to Vietnam" this is the tour for you!



**MILITARY
HISTORICAL TOURS**



Promises Made ... Promises Kept

I was a section leader flying ARA guns for the 1st Cav in Jan of 1967 and had just signed off on Captain William Hingston USMA '63 to be my replacement....yes I was short. So on the 24th of the month Bill led a bread and butter insertion that went by the book and this time I flew wing for him. We waited the traditional 10 plus minutes overhead until the ground commander confirmed no contact and would then release us....but not today. Contact there was and as the ground Cmdr ID'd the bad guys Cpt Hingston set us up to take them out....two pair/three ripples into the tree line and good by Charlie. Bill went in first and fired...as he broke left I began firing to cover his tail. When I broke, I looked back and he was not there to cover me. So I radioed, "Falcon 27 bravo, this is Alpha....over" and over and over and no answer. Finally the ground called in on FM to say your buddy is down, there was another machine gun nest on the side he broke towards. The grunts quickly secured the crash site as I covered them and searched for the other firing position. Soon the bad news came....three of the four were KIA includ-



ing "Wild Bill" (nickname dating back to Academy Captain of hockey team).

As usual we cleaned out his locker and I wrote Nancy, his wife, a personal letter as I had so often watched Bill write letters home to her and little Bill and Kim. In this letter I promised them that I would come see her if she wished.

I never heard back and subsequently assumed this was too painful for her. Actually she did reply to me sometime after the funeral and grieving but by then I was enroute to the USA, leave and next assignment in Europe and I never got her letter.

Fast forward to the 1998 time frame

and I saw a message in the VHPA magazine.....children of Bill Hingston USMA '63 who was KIA in Vietnam in January of 1967 would like to hear from anyone who knew their dad.

The procedure was a responsible system where we would email Gary Roush our contact info, he would then inform the families and they would then contact me. This started pages and pages of emails and hours and hours of telephone calls over the years to the extended family of Wild Bill. In fact one of his sisters came to my flight school (66-2) reunion in 2003....but I still had not kept my promise. So in September I took my wife, golden retriever, Cav Stetson and motor home and drove to Denver from Louisville. I finally got to hug Bills wife and daughter and the four of us had a wonderful visit. The photo may only show three people but believe me....Wild Bill was there.

Rodger McAlister

A/2/20

1st Cav 66-67

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120 MPH top end

The VHPA received this message from a crewmember of the 118th AHC concerning the Battle of Dong Xoai.



Members of the VHPA,

I've just recently stumbled upon your web site(s). I'm interested in the Battle of Dong Xoai. The narrative on the 118th website, and on the 145th website, and the separate URL (?) that talks specifically about the loss of helicopter # 63-08557 also called Incident 63-08557 are of particular interest to me. I'm not sure who I should be directing this toward but I have some questions about all of those reports.

I was a door gunner in the 118th and flew through, what I assumed to be, the major involvement of the 118th in that battle. First the lift into the plantation and second the rescue of the SF folks from the compound at Dong Xoai. I was the door gunner on Blue Tail 4. My crew chief's last name was Alley; I don't recall his first name. Captain Hill, second platoon (Choppers) Platoon Leader, was the AC that day; I don't remember the pilot for sure but I think it was Crazy Mr. Baker. We flew lead. Blue 4 had Decca System mounts and Captain Hill flew it because of that, and because it was a strong bird. In as much as he was the Platoon Leader, we were usually the lead bird on Combat Assaults.

I don't recall things happening exactly the way the story is told on the 118th web site or the 145th web site. For example, I don't believe we landed short when the "herd of cattle" (actually, as I recall, a herd of water buffalo) ran onto the air strip. We couldn't have landed short and still had room for that long line of ships behind us to land. Also, we were almost right over the buffaloes; if it happened as told on the web sites, we'd have sat right down among them. I suspect the pilot was actually flying because I remember we flared momentarily as he seemed to be making a decision, then I'm quite sure I remember CPT Hill simply saying, "go long."

We staged the lift into the plantation from Phuc Vin. I remember, as we were waiting for the ARVN's to get organized and onto the birds that many of them had been drinking, some heavily. They seemed to know what was in store for them. The unit commander almost couldn't navigate he was so wasted. We had an "Aspirant" in Blue tail 4 who was nearly paralyzed with fear. Being new in country I didn't know if this was normal or not... I didn't know what to expect.

We landed in trail. Something tells me that we somehow became the second bird in line. I can't say why I think that; we should have been first. I know that the ARVN's who unloaded from my side were dead before they got past our rotor blades. I was shooting up and to the rear as far as I could go without hitting the blades. As far as I remember all the VC fire was coming from the upper story of a building on the right side (gunner side) of the air strip. In the ship behind me the ARVN's were being hit inside and outside of the cargo door. They fell or were thrown out dead. That was mostly the case up and down the line on the right or door gunners side. When we got back to Phuc Vin we lined up the bullet entry and exit holes in one of the ships and there was no way the gunner could have been in his seat and not gotten hit several times. There were multiple holes in the fuel cell that matched up with holes in the floor, most of which would have struck him in the back and traveled down through his hips and legs. Apparently, because he was constantly moving around to shoot and throw dead ARVN's out, he never got scratched.

My memory is that there were multiple explosions as the buffs ran in panic onto the air strip. My memory is that they ran into a mined area that was either contact or command detonated. I have always

believed that had they not run out onto the strip we would have landed in that mine field. My assumption has always been that that's what was intended by the VC; that it was a set ambush. That all those automatic weapons that fired down on us from the windows of the large building to the right of the air strip (the right side as we shot our approach) were part of a well laid ambush. That the water buffaloes, panicked by all that aircraft activity or whatever, ran onto the air strip and saved our families. Neither narrative talks about an ambush; I don't understand that. That's what I remember and that's what I recall all my fellow door gunners, crew chiefs and pilots talking about afterwards; that we had flown into a set ambush. Maybe we were wrong; I really don't think so.



A panoramic photo showing the 118th Thunderbirds doing an insertion of 173rd Abn troops near Tan Uyen, just about 10 miles north of Bien Hoa. According to Tommy Thornton, "this was a 145th CAB operation on May 4, 1966 taking the 173rd Airborne Bde in north of Tan Uyen.

Our company (118th) made 7 lifts that day. We extracted the 173rd on May 6. Our flight had 3 aircraft hit, Top Tiger 6 (MAJ Honnecut) was hit in the leg, and a 197th AWC pilot was hit in the shoulder on the extraction." This area was also near the site of the Leper Colony. (Photo courtesy Tommy Thornton)

I did not see Blue Tail one (was it one?) go down. Those who did, that I know, all said that a mine (buried mortar/arty round?) blew up just to the left of the bird, blowing it up and to the right, tipping it past the point of no return and into that big three story building. That doesn't seem to match up with what I read on the web site or the web site pictures. I do remember hearing the Blue Tail pilot very calmly saying, "This is Blue One; we're going in." A simple drawing of the place would help me a lot. (I was there for less than a minute.) Unfortunately, and for no particular reason, I never got to go back to the plantation.

The name Hagen sticks in my memory but I've always thought that he was a member of the aviation company. His name is not listed on my roster of door gunners from the 25th Division (actually First BN, 14th INF, 25th INF Div). It is possible that he traveled on separate orders but I doubt it. LT Scott, (James T. OF102369) went ahead of the main body by about two weeks. Still, he's on the group order, but no Hagen. I don't remember him in training or the long delayed trip over but I could be wrong on that.

Also, I don't recall there being any strap hangers on any ship that day. The report says there were two and that could have been. I don't recall seeing them at Phuc Vinh where we staged. Usually in a deal like that you would know if there were any "air medal pirates" around. We knew it was probably a "Hot LZ" from the get go; I can't imagine Captain Hill allowing strap hangers in that situation...but maybe.

I'm surprised that no one remembers (in either narrative) Blue Tail 1 saying they were going in. I'm surprised that the (I thought) famous three picture sequence by Horst Faas was not in the story when the bandits (I think it was the bandits) did their recon. I'm really surprised that the great line we heard from them as they flew over the plantation (or maybe the SF compound) wasn't in there: "We haven't seen

anything but be careful...two trees just ran across the road." I've used that line many times afterwards in my 33 year SF career.) It really should be in someone's narrative.

Finally, at the SF compound, I do not recall three birds on the ground, only two. We were volunteers. We volunteered on the basis of the fact that we were the first two birds to be refueled at Phuc Vinh, after the lift into the plantation. That was it. It was all about where the fuel truck stopped and nothing else. Also, there wasn't room for a third bird at the gate of the SF compound. Everyone says Mighty Mouse (MAJ Stewart) was there and it was definitely in his nature but I don't remember seeing him there at all. Were they flying cover in case we needed a dustoff? I remember my crew chief SP5(?) Alley unhooked his helmet and went through the gate into the compound to get the SF folks (maybe two) and the CB's (I think like seven) to move toward us while I had the hot side of the compound. The other bird was more

or less hidden from the VC, being on the far or south side of our ship from them. Neither our crew chief nor their door gunner could shoot because they were facing each other, not many feet apart. Beating away that mob of Vietnamese from getting into the birds was a real chore. I believe we had 7 Americans, 1 Vietnamese (don't know how he got by me) and a 4 man crew for that C (B?) model to lift out in the early afternoon air. The landing strip, less than 50 meters from, and perpendicular to, the front gate of the compound was a section of old route 14 that ended in a solid wall of jungle a couple of hundred meters to the south. I don't know how long they kept firing at us as Captain Hill backed up as far north as possible then ran along the asphalt on the front of the skids, and pulled pitch just in time for us to break through the tops of the trees, cracking the chin bubble, and finally stagger into the air. As a member of Shot Gun X, it was our third day in country; I was in no position to appreciate the skill and nerve he displayed at that moment.

If MG (Ret.) Scott, James T. OIC of Shot Gun X at Bein Hoa or CPT James (I think James) Hill, Platoon Leader of 2nd Plt, 118th AML, or SSG (E-5) Emlick Golf, Shot Gun X Platoon Sergeant at Bein Hoa could be contacted, I'll bet a lot of this could be readily cleared up.

Somewhere, someone said that there were two (?) Silver Stars and one DFC awarded for that day. I've always thought that of the two ships who flew the rescue mission the four pilots each got Silver Stars and the four crew members got DFC's. I can say positively that there were at least two DFC's because I got one at the same time the other door gunner from the 1st of the 14th got his. Can't say for certain about the others but my memory is Silver Stars for the pilots, DFC's for the crew.

Please understand, I don't claim to know everything that happened that day. Everything I've said is what I remember, not what I know; there may have been three birds at the compound etc. I'd love to discuss...not argue just discuss...these things with whoever put these narratives together. Some things I've always believed to be true seem now unlikely; others, despite the narratives, still seem quite true. I would hope we might achieve some greater clarity on that long ago battle.

If possible, I would like to hear from someone.

Thanks,

SGM (Ret.) John W. Boyce

Tales of The Blue Max A.R.A. (Arial Rocket Artillery) in Vietnam

Blue Max 22, Ernest (Rick/Fast Eddie) Rickenbacker died on September 12, 2008 and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on 2 December 2008. Rickenbacker had a big impact on many lives, one of those being Jim MacLachlan, who he pulled out of his burning Cobra on 12 October 1971. Jim is one of the rare Vietnam Veterans who was able in his lifetime to thank the man who saved his life. Jim has the crash and rescue story framed and in his den in Colorado



Rick & Jim with framed newspaper account of the Battle for F.B. Pace

Art Jetter's recollection of the incident: "Fire Support Base Pace was located at the junction of highway QL 27 and the Cambodian border. That's where the Ho Chi Minh Trail turned from Cambodia into Vietnam. Rick Rickenbacker and Jim MacLachlan were shot down across QL 27 from FSB Pace. At that time, we were all flying from Tay Ninh to cover the extraction of FSB Pace. There was tremendous enemy activity in the area - heavy anti-aircraft, some radar controlled anti-aircraft and perhaps two divisions of NVA.

The day before Fast Eddie and Jim were shot down ... Larry McKay and several of us went for a situation briefing to prepare for the next day extraction. During that briefing, a request for fire support came from FSB Pace. Bill Baskett, Warren Chunn, Bob Knight, Art Jetter and I launched on it. FSB Pace was taking a great deal of accurate mortar fire. We shot the mortar crew and turned to head back to Tay Ninh. A 23 mm cannon round went through Bill and Warren's engine compartment. Knight and I took a hit in the nose turret, which yanked the helicopter about 30 degrees left. Big flame. As its bright orange tracers passed us, Knight spotted the 23 mm cannon. I dove on the gun but all weapons were inop and the cockpit filled with smoke. Bill Baskett destroyed the 23 mm, and everything else in the area, before it could get Knight and me. At Tay Ninh, Bill's Cobra was red X'd. They fixed my rocket system. Turned out the cockpit smoke was from wire

insulation in the armament system catching fire. My helicopter was flyable but the turret weapons remained inop.

The next day, Rick and Jim were set to escort the battalion Huey as it laid smoke to cover the extraction. I recall Rick saying they were behind the smoke ship, at 800 feet and descending when they took about fifteen 51 cal hits. Rick went into the trees, put it down laying to one side and burning. We listened to all this from our radio in Tay Ninh. All the other unit Cobras were on this extraction mission. The Blue Max

Cobras stayed on station as long as possible and we finally got a call to go replace them. Baskett and Chunn had a B/D helicopter and couldn't go. When we arrived, the patrol was bringing Jim back from the site. Rick wasn't there. He'd given Jim his pistol and went for help. The ground commander at FSB Pace said they acquired an individual in the elephant grass half a click from the FSB. I intended to pick Rick up with the Cobra. Goldy, one of our Medivac pilots, radioed to say he'd heard all this on the Fox Mike, was less than one minute out and so picked up Rick out of the elephant grass. This was good because I was flying 68-15147. Hovering was not one of 147's attributes. Later finding some ironic humor in all this, Rick said, "Those trees saved us. Next time this happens, I'm going right for the trees."

But who are these veterans who called themselves Blue Max? They started out in Vietnam in 1965 as the 2d Battalion 20th Aerial Rocket Artillery Battalion, and by the end of November 1965 completed actions that would bring the award of the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign. As one of the final acts of the 1st Cav's ARA, the last contingent, by then F Battery 79th ARA, they would be recognized for their second Presidential Unit Citation for the Easter Offensive of 1972 as part of the 229th AHB.

According to emails on the Blue Max internet, the "Blue Max" call sign was selected to replace the former "Armed Falcons" call sign, in 1968. By then many veterans of 65-69 tours in 2-20 ARA were preparing for



Taken at the services for Eddie Rickenbacker (from left to right): Marco Cordon, Art Jetter, Suzette Cherry (Fast Eddie's daughter), Fast Eddie's Urn, Scott Rickenbacker (Fast Eddie's son), Warren Chunn, and Jim MacLauchlan.

their second ARA VN tour, forming the second ARA battalion, the 4th Bn 77th ARA, in the 101st. The first 4-77 ARA battalion commander was LTC "Black Bart" Bartholomew who commanded an ARA battery during the fight in the Ia Drang, 14-17 November 1965. His actions can be read in "We Were Soldiers, Once, and Young" by LTG ret Hal Moore and Joe Galloway. Unfortunately, he and the 101st DivArty commander, COL Vogel, would be lost in a Charlie Model on 25 November 1968 before the entire battalion arrived from Ft Sill and Ft Bragg.

The first bloody action for 4-77th ARA was at the battles around Dong Ap Bia in the A Shau in 1969, known in the New York Times as Hamburger Hill. 4-77th was used habitually to cover Studies and Observation Group SOG units from Combat Control North, into Laos from Quang Tri at FOB 1.

As the war wound down, during the time of Rickenbacker's 71-72 service, the 4-77th went to Ft Campbell KY in January 1972, and by then the lone remaining ARA unit was F-79 ARA, in 3d Bde Sep, 1st Cav, task organized as part of the 229th AHB. As a member of A-229 AHB, I witnessed many units standing down, sending their aircraft to Vung Tau, Tan Son Nhut or to the VNAF. We thought we were next to go home when the Easter Offensive of 1972 hit III Corps, then known as Third Regional Assistance Command in the vicinity of Loc Ninh and Nui Ba Den at Tay Ninh. From 5 April 1972 until 1 August 72 Blue Max was in continuous action. 8 of 32 pilots in the Battery were killed in action.

On June 21st 1972, a Blue Max crew accomplished a flying feat no other Army Aviation crew has repeated when their AH 1G was hit by an SA 7 at 4400' over Tan Ky, south of An Loc. The explosion of the SA 7 caused the tail boom to severe and separate from the Snake. Mike Brown and his Copilot Gunner,

Brown and his Copilot Gunner, Marco Cordon, flew what was left, the main rotor, the fuselage and the skids down to the trees and survived the crash. They were rescued after 45 minutes on the ground by a crew from B-229 AHB.

The 71-72 Blue Max remain a close knit group 36 years later. With the loss of Rickenbacker, they reflected the many who died after their tours, like Barry McIntrye, "Magilla" and how they had forgotten to note his passing in the VHPA newsletter.

Recently another 70-71 Blue Max, passed as "On January 8th, 2009, we lost Jim "Bugs" Moran. His spirit was not forgotten and was reflected in John Doug Foster's "Trapper Dan," tribute:

"Bugs' tour overlapped with mine for 6 – 7 months, so I got to know him as a peer after I got my own fire team. I'm familiar with the details of Bug's night mission east of FSB Mace that earned him his Silver Star because I heard most of his radio transmissions. My fire team was



Joe Kline, the VHPA's own combat artist, painted this 1972 scene of a Blue Max Cobra in a mid-air breakup just south of An Loc after being hit with a SA-7 missile.

first on station for that mission; Bugs' team replaced ours when we ran low on fuel. Back at Mace, we refueled, our team listened and waited, in case Bugs needed us to replace his team. I can testify that Bugs was entitled to his Silver Star and more for getting that LRRP team + advisors out alive. Bugs ran the whole show: putting down suppressive fire, calling in artillery fire, calling a lift ship and directing it in and out of the pick-up site and then back down into a blackened meadow to unload part of the team when the lift ship started sinking into the trees trying to carry the whole team, then directing a lift ship into the blackened meadow to

pick up LRRPs, laying down more suppressive fire, and on and on and on. Bugs' team came back to Mace on fumes. I felt very fortunate that it was Bugs, not me, who had the final responsibility for getting the LRRPs out safe that night."

On a lighter note, I don't think any Blue Max Charlie Company pilots will ever forget the evening "Follies" that Bugs designed and set up as the company's Vector Control Officer. Bugs had a knack

for seeing humor in just about any situation, and he managed to control the vectors and at the same time give fellow pilots a good work out and a good time.

Many years after VN, I met Bugs at the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots' reunion in Nashville; and he humored me by accompanying me to the Hank Williams, Sr. museum. Since then we've stayed in contact by exchanging emails and I've been looking forward to seeing Bugs at another pilots' reunion. Even though Bugs' life and mine crossed only a few times, *I feel I've lost one of my best friends. I admired Bugs and I always enjoyed his company. I will miss him.*

John Doug Foster in Oregon, a/k/a Trapper Dan

If we don't remember them, who will? Mike Sloniker



The last day of "Blue Max" F Battery 79th Aerial Field Artillery, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion in Vietnam, August 1, 1972

Back Row (L to R) Garrett, Kedrow, Toms, Parker, Laguens, Tusi, Phillips, Robinson, Funk

Front Row (L to R) Harmeling, Gower, Causey, Russo, Clausen, UNK, Baskett, Dobesh, Hurt



Names Given by
Al Russo &
Updated by Russ
Warriner 3/30/04



Painting by Joe Kline, 1972 scene of a Blue Max Cobra in a mid-air breakup just south of An Loc after being hit with a SA-7 missile.

To Veterans of the 229th and Blue Max
From: Mike Sloniker

Subject: The loss of a Blue Max Cobra Gunship to an SA-7 Missile on 21 June 1972

1. The Cobra ended up upright with spread skids after 4000 fast Half Cobra Auto and tearing up the trees.
2. Main rotor was gone when Marco got out, just the mast stump. Engine was running. They could not shut it off, it just quit.
3. They were on the ground 45 minutes before being rescued. The Second Huey from B-229 was the one that went down the hole they made. At least 5 dead ARVN's on board who were ripe. Hover hole approach was after 1300 so density altitude was a factor. Amazing Huey pilot. Hovered over the mast so they could climb in. Had 5 bodies and 4 SOBs when he went DOWN the hole. Came out heavy. Flew straight to Lai Khe from Tan Ky. Marco transloaded to Medevac and 3d Surg.
4. Before Crash they had intercom communications, Marco said it was as fast as a normal autorotation, Mike wanted the turret emptied, and rockets fired to move the CG back on the tail less Cobra, but no electrical power. Wonder how the intercom worked? Aircraft was in slow pedal turn under the main rotor all the way down. At the bottom they both pulled collective.
5. After Marco got out, he went to help Mike Open his door. Apparently Mike could not get it open and was going to break the glass out of the left side of the snake when Marco opened the door. Mike was real intent on breaking the glass. Marco had to really shake Mike hard to get him to understand the door on the other side was open.
6. Marco had his chicken plate on in front of him. Wanted that away when they crashed so he unbuckled to get the chicken plate out. When acft impacted he was not strapped in. Compressed L1, 2, and 3 vertebrae, and cracked hip however he said the adrenalin kept the pain away UNTIL he climbed up to the Huey 45 minutes later.
7. When the Cobra finished crashing, the 2.75 rockets were laying out in front of the aircraft. Just fell out of the tubes.
8. Marco had full tour with 190th AHC. Came to F 79 late April 1972, left after 21 June 72 Medevaced.

Full details of the incident can be found at:
<http://www.vhfcn.org/missle.html>

Amazing Warriors.
Mike Sloniker

TAPS

CHARLES K. MILLER

Charles K. Miller died unexpectedly on November 9, 2008. He was born in Akron, Ohio on March 30, 1949, and lived in the area all of his life.

Charlie entered the U.S. Army in August, 1969. After completing basic training at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, he went to Fort Polk, Louisiana and completed Advanced Infantry Training. He attended and graduated with the rank of Sergeant from the NCO Academy at Fort Benning, Georgia.

In July of 1970, Charlie attended Primary Helicopter Flight Training at Fort Wolters, Texas. Following that, he completed Advanced Helicopter Flight Training, receiving his wings and commission as a Warrant Officer, at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

In May of 1971, Charlie was sent to Viet Nam. He was a WOI helicopter pilot in the 174th Assault Helicopter Company at Chu Lai, RVN. While serving a one year tour of duty, he was shot down twice, but received no injuries.

In April of 1972, he returned home from Viet Nam, and was discharged from the Army. He continued flying in the Ohio National Guard and the Florida National Guard until 1990.

Charlie worked as a pipefitter out of the Union Hall, until he was hired by Chrysler at the Twinsburg Stamping Plant. He worked there for 15 years, and was within 6 weeks of retiring. Charlie is survived by his fiancée, Linda Miller of Canton, Ohio; son, Charles E. Miller II; daughter, Rachel Miller, both of Jacksonville, Florida; mother, Violet (miller) VanLear of Tallmadge, Ohio; sisters, Melanie Heyn and Gayle Savage both of Tallmadge, Ohio. He was known as Uncle Bud to a nephew, two nieces, and seven great nieces and nephews.



*This poem was written
by a fellow
Vietnam Veteran
and friend,
Stephen Burr
to honor
Charlie at his funeral....*

“Charlie’s Bird”

By Stephen Burr

Attention to orders you band of angels and those who have gone before
Prepare to open your ranks and make room for one more

Charlie carried some of us on the start of our final journey home
Now he is back in the pilot's set and exchanged it for a throne

Someday he'll come to pick us up and as we prepare to fly away
“Hurry up” he'll say with a grinning smile “we haven't got all day”

The skids are up the pain is gone, all without a hitch
A steady hand is in the controls as one more time he pulls pitch

As the rotor blades grab the air and he breaks the bonds of earth
His course is set to finish the mission he's been on since birth

While off in the distance a host of angels can hear the welcome sound
“Pop smoke” commands the Lord “and open heaven's gate”
Charlie's bird is inbound

November 14, 2008

AFTER THE STORM...

And so the stormy sea subsides,
But leaves its frothy tongues askew
On littered beach I wander 'bout
And look for something new.

Flotsam here and jetsam there
Are what's left to remind
Of tempest's rage, and sailor's cries
On ships that left the land behind.

I kick at drifts and frothy clumps
But nothing do I find
Of valiant sailors on the sea,
To ease my troubled mind.

The Sailors of the Sea of Life
I want again to see.
Their voyage wrecked, their cargo lost,
Their loss a part of me.

On littered beach there's one who seeks
The answers lost in time
But what I seek is Vietnam
And, Comrades that were mine.

No Trace I find on battered shores
Of Friends lost long ago
Nor do I find the answers
To pain that plagues me so.

I wade in frothy tongues to seek
The wisdom of the Sea
And Answer just one question:
Why them and why not me?

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HARRY WILLIAM OSBORN KINNARD U.S. ARMY RETIRED

Considered by many to be the father of Army Aviation, Lt. General Harry W.O. Kinnard (U.S. Army, Retired) died on January 5th of 2009. He was 93 years of age. He is survived by his wife Elizabeth Kinnard of Arlington; three daughters, Susan C. Payson of Prescott, Arizona, Kathleen L. Coursey of Stockton, California, and Cynthia L. Harman of Lexington, South Carolina; two sons, Robert H. Kinnard of Prescott, Arizona and Harry W.O. Kinnard III of Gainesville, Florida; two step-daughters, Libby Nicholson of San Clemente, California, Janmarie N. Hall of Hamilton, Virginia; one step-son, COL (R) Tom Nicholson of Augusta, Georgia; sixteen grandchildren and fifteen great-grandchildren. His son, Bruce Kinnard, preceded him in death.

Born and raised in an Army family, he attended the US Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1939. His first assignment was with the Hawaiian Division where he witnessed the attack on Pearl Harbor and participated in the defense of the island.

Returning to Fort Benning, Georgia from Hawaii, he completed Officer Basic Infantry Course and then the Parachute course after which he joined the newly formed 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment. After prolonged training and maneuvers the 501st sailed to England and became a part of the 101st Airborne Division for the duration of World War II.

He parachuted into Normandy on the night of 5-6 June 1944, and took command of the 1st Battalion, 501st on June 12th. His next operation as the Battalion Commander of 1st Battalion was the airborne invasion of Holland, in Operation "Market-Garden", on 17

September 1944. For those actions, the Queen of Holland knighted him. Shortly afterwards the Division Commander, General Maxwell Taylor, chose him as Division G-3 and he served in that position until the end of the war, becoming a Colonel at the age of 29. In the Battle of the Bulge, as G-3 of the 101st at Bastogne, he coined the "hole in the doughnut" phrase and also suggested to General McAuliffe that he reply to the German surrender ultimatum with the word "NUTS!".

After the war, he headed the Airborne Test Section at Fort Bragg, North Carolina where his combat airborne experiences helped shape the future of airborne operations for the Army. While at Fort Bragg, he was selected by the Army to be the Technical Advisor to the



Kinnard being awarded for his actions while serving as the as G-3 of the 101st at Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge. He suggested to General McAuliffe that he reply to the German surrender ultimatum with the word "NUTS!"

MGM studio in Hollywood for the filming of the war movie, "Battleground", which portrayed the 101st at Bastogne.

Then, after a series of assignments as a student and instructor at several military schools,



he again served as a commander of both an Infantry Battle Group and Division Artillery in the "Pentomic" 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

He returned to Washington in 1958 for a series of staff duties and as a student at the National War College. While in Washington, he served as Executive to the Secretary of the Army, until his promotion to Brigadier General reassigned him as Assistant Division Commander of the 101st Airborne Division. During this assignment he became an Army Aviator eventually earning Senior Aviator status.

In February 1963, the Army Chief of Staff chose him to command a brand new Army organization, the 11th Air Assault Division (Test), at Fort Benning, Georgia. This new unit was to test the concept of Army Air Mobility enunciated by the Howze Board. As Commander of the 11th, General Kinnard organized, trained and led the Division through 2 1/2 years of intensive testing of the Air Mobile Concept (the substitution of Army aircraft (primarily helicopters) for ground based transport and weapons systems).

When this testing proved the validity of the Air Mobile Concept, General Kinnard (by then a Major General), was directed, in July 1965 to form the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and deploy the Division to Vietnam. MG Kinnard was the commander of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in November of 1965 during the first major engagement of American troops in the Vietnam War, the battle of the Ia Drang Valley. Under his command while in Vietnam, the Army's first airmobile division performed splendidly and received the

only Division Presidential Unit Citation of the war. After 39 months as the Division Commander, General Kinnard assumed duties as Commander of 1st Field Force Command in Vietnam. He returned from Vietnam to serve in the capacity as the Army's Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Force Development, which was followed by his promotion to Lieutenant General in 1966, and assignment as Commander of Combat Developments Command at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He held that position until his retirement from the Army in September 1969. His awards included the Distinguished Service Cross, three Distinguished Service Medals, Silver Star, Two Legions of Merit, Bronze Star, nine Air Medals and the Purple Heart.

After his retirement, General Kinnard remained very active as a consultant in Army matters, particularly those related to Army Aviation. He was President of Army Aviation Association of America in 1970-1972, and in 1974 was inducted, as one of the first seven so honored, into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame. He also served as President of the First Cavalry Division Association in 1976 and as President of the 101st Airborne Division Association in 1983-1984. In 1994, during the 50th Anniversary Commemorative events of WWII, he represented the President of the United States in "Market-Garden" ceremonies in the Netherlands and later represented the Secretary of Defense in the Battle of the Bulge ceremonies in Belgium and Luxembourg. In 1995 he received the Infantry's "Doughboy" award as the outstanding Infantryman for 1995. In 1996 he was named "Airborne Man of the Year" during ceremonies in Atlanta, Georgia. Most recently he served as the Army's Grand Marshall in the 2006 Washington, DC Memorial Day Parade. He lived in Arlington, Virginia for the past 24 years.



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ARCHIE LEE AHL

Archie Lee Ahl, CW4 US Army (Retired) of Cascade, Colorado died Sunday December 7, 2008 in Tucson, Arizona. Born April 13, 1937 in Allendale, SC. He was the son of Pickens and Mary Lee Clayton. Archie grew up in Ridgeville, SC and graduated from Ridgeville High School.



He joined the US Army August 4, 1953 and started a 38-year career. This career included 82nd Airborne Division (Paratrooper), Special Forces (Green Berets), Helicopter Pilot, Fixed Wing Aircraft Pilot (including Various Army Jets). Archie attained the rank of CW4 and was for a time the senior CW4 in Europe and later, the senior CW4 in the Army. He received yearly extensions from the Secretary of the Army to allow him to remain on active service after the normal 30 years. His tours of duty included four tours in Viet Nam in Special Forces Teams and later in various roles as a helicopter pilot. His last several tours involved Flight Operations in Europe transporting high-ranking military officers, ambassadors, and cabinet level secretaries. During his distinguished career, his awards included 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, and 16 other service awards. He also received awards from the Republic of Vietnam.

While stationed in Berlin Germany, Archie met and married Marianne Effner on August 15, 1957. Their son Roy was born November 16, 1962. Archie is survived by Marianne (his wife of 51 years) and Roy, two brothers and four sisters. Memorials may be made in memory of CW4 Archie Ahl, US Army (retired), to Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation.

The following was submitted BY VHPA Member Brian Foote, briangfoote@gmail.com.

On December 7, 2008, the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association lost one of its own. Archie Ahl passed away after a bout with cancer in Tucson, Arizona. Archie had four tours of duty in Vietnam in both the Special Forces and Army Aviation units. He was a Retired CW4 and a member of Flight Class 67-4QC/66-5, as well as a Life Member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. Archie served in Vietnam with the 190 AHC in 67-68, the 2nd Signal Group in 70-71 and Project 404 in 73-74.

Memorials may be made in memory of CW4 Archie Ahl, US Army (retired), to Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation, PO Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250.

And this was sent to us by Archie's Son, Roy
Hello Everyone,

This is Archie's son Roy and I am sending a mass email to all of my Dad's contacts. Some of you may already know, and if you don't I'm truly sorry to tell you this way, that Archie passed away Dec. 7th, on Pearl Harbor Day. One week after coming to Tucson, Archie's cancer became very aggressive and that in addition to pneumonia was too much to overcome. We were able to get Archie home where he passed in peace his final day. We had a very nice ceremony at AMVETS there in Tucson and Mom and I are now in Charleston, SC with his family. The Special Forces has been notified per Archie's wishes and

his funeral ceremony at the family plot in St. Georges South Carolina was conducted with full military honors.

I know that Dad really enjoyed keeping in contact with all of you. It brought him great joy and it really was a great hobby for him. I'm afraid Archie's computer at his home in Tucson was not functioning correctly so he might not have been in contact with you for awhile, if so, I am really sorry it took so long to contact you. Archie also wished to have an Irish Wake to celebrate his life and "empty the liquor cabinet". This will be done at his home in Cascade, Colorado probably in May or June and the details are to follow.

Thank You so much for your years of friendship and may Archie rest in peace – Roy

BILL (MAC) MCGOWAN

VHPA member Al Walker copied us on this e-mail...

Dear 610'ers,

It is my sad duty to inform you that Bill (Mac) McGowan passed away on Wednesday, January 14, 2009. He was 69 years old when he died peacefully at home. Mac was one of our more gregarious aviators of the 610th Trans. Co. and was a member of the unit in 1967 & 1968. After his tour He transitioned in Ch-47's and did another tour in Vietnam with the 101st Abn. Div. when he was evacuated near the end of the tour with a collapsed lung. He retired from the U.S. Army in 1977 at Ft. Rucker where he was an Instructor Pilot. He continued on as a Civilian IP until his 1990 retirement in Ozark, AL. His wife, Marie, told me that there will be a Memorial Service at their residence at 323 Ben Street, Ozark on Monday at 1400 hrs. The Internment will be at the Fort Mitchell National Cemetery, Seale, Alabama

*Regrettably,
Al Walker*

ED SWEENEY

VHPA Life member Edward J. "Eddie / Poppy"

Sweeney, Jr., 62, of Huntersville, NC, the husband of Ellen T. Finn Sweeney for 41 year, the Union County Public Schools Maintenance Director and a retired Army Lt. Colonel, died unexpectedly Tuesday, December 2, 2008, at Charlotte's Presbyterian Hospital. Born and raised in Boston, MA, Ed received a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Tampa in 1967 and was commissioned in the U.S. Army's Corps of Engineers. He completed flight school with classes 68-16 and 68-510 and served in Vietnam from July 1969 to July 1970 with C/3/17th Cav as Charlie Horse 16. He flew both OH-6As and OH-58As scout helicopters. Besides the Silver Star he was awarded 45 Air Medals. After Vietnam he was stationed at many bases throughout the eastern US plus a tour to Germany before retiring in 1987 from Ft. McPherson, GA. Ed moved his family to Huntersville, NC in 1989 where he served as the Assistant Director of Maintenance for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. Then, in 1994, Ed became the Union County Public Schools Maintenance Director where he earned this moniker - a Massachusetts Yankee with a North Carolina Smile! Known for his crazy, fun cos-

tumes and hats, Ed loved to entertain kids and lighten-up meetings with his frivolous spirit. Ed spent his later years playing golf with his wife, cheering for his beloved Boston sports teams, and fishing with friends in Cape Cod and Florida. He was a parishioner of St. Mark's Catholic Church in Huntersville. In addition to his wife, Ellen, Ed leaves a son and daughter-in-law, Sean and Julie Sweeney of Highlands Ranch, CO; a daughter, Shannon Sweeney of Huntersville, and several grandchildren. He was buried at Bourne National Cemetery on Cape Cod, Otis AFB.

VHPA Life Member Frank Glenn penned the following tribute to Ed. "If one is lucky you have a friend that transcends friendship. Conditions in Vietnam placed me under his leadership in 1970. I am a different person as a result of the friendship we developed living and flying together in Vietnam. Not only was he my friend, he was my platoon leader; for six months I was one of his Scout Pilots. We flew some of the most hazardous flights in Vietnam. Ed taught me so much about both leadership and friendship. Interestingly, one is that you could effective lead and still be a friend. Sadly, many in the military and the business world think they are mutually exclusive. Sweeney proved them wrong! In a world where it was easy to succumb to anxiety, fear and even depression, Sweeney taught by example the Serenity Prayer. He taught you to focus on what you had control of and to ignore what you couldn't control. He taught you to have fun and even happiness in the face of constant danger and poor living conditions. "Work hard, play hard" was his life and life's lesson. He was an unselfish a person you could know. The day before he was to meet Ellen for R&R in Hawaii, he not only scheduled himself to fly, but to take the mission that we all knew would bring heavy enemy fire. Yep, it was one of those bad days and Sweeney was shot down. His engine was shot out and he crashed landed in their backyard. Sweeney got on his survival radio, and confirmed he was safely in a bomb crater next to his downed aircraft, but he could hear the shouts of the VC as they were searching the bamboo and nipa palm for them. Ed popped a smoke grenade and called for his Cobra to lay down fire and not to worry about how close it got to the smoke. The jungle swallowed the helicopter and the only visual the Cobra had was the smoke. Ed had to refresh it with more every several minutes as the old smoke grenade burned out and dissipated. For over an hour Ed continued calling in Cobra fire around his smoke from a "chain" of Cobras called into maintain a curtain of fire around the bomb crater where he and his two door gunners were hugging the bottom. All this time the Cobras surrounded them with mini gun fire, HE and flechette rocket fire. Finally, Ed called for a "cease fire" and called Scouts in to check his perimeter. They confirmed that the VC were either dead or gone; Ed and his crew were finally extracted. He flew out the next morning for R&R, same old Ed (a few bruises and scratches) - Yahoohoing and carrying on about meeting Ellen, rubbing our noses with the fact that he would either be on the beach or in bed for the next 6 days! By the way, when he got back a week later, we asked him how Ellen



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responded to his ass getting shot down the day before. As you would expect, his answered, "Why would I go telling her about that?" From that day forward the scout pilots forced him to start rotating the known dangerous missions and that he could no longer take more than his share."

SSG Arthur C. Bonevich, AKA Kamakazi Scout, provided the following: "Capt. Sweeney was my Scout Section Leader, I was his Scout Section Chief. We were a team. He took care of the Officers, I took care of the Scout's. All in all, we, all of us took care of one another. We were a team. Thanks to Ed we had the best Air Cav Scout Section in Vietnam. I will miss him. He and I will meet again and we will continue on our mission. Capt. Sweeney was my kind of leader, and friend."

Contributed by VHPA members Dr. Matthew Ginalick and Frank Glenn plus VHCMA member Artie Bonevich.

FREDERICK T. ZANDRI

Frederick T. Zandri, 60, died September 10, 2008 in Tenn. Born in Troy, Fred was the son of the late Marsino and Ida Spinacci Zandri. He graduated from Cohoes High School and served his country during the Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot in the 101st Airborne Division. He worked for the Tennessee Valley Authority and retired in 2006 after over 30 years of service. He was also a lifetime member of the NRA. He is survived by his son, Marsino T. (Noelle) Zandri of Cohoes and grandson, Marsino Zandri III. He was the brother of the late Daniel P. Zandri. He is also survived by his three loving nieces in Ariz. and several cousins.

GEORGE W. FRYER

George W Fryer, CW4 RET, Panther 55, 2/71-5/71, passed away Monday, December 29th after a short fight with liver cancer. He served two tours in Vietnam, the first in '65-'66 with 2/2 INF, 1INF DIV and the second as a Maintenance Warrant, '70-'71 with the 189th, the 170th and finally with the 361st. He attended 69-27/69-25 followed by the Maintenance Course.

George joined VHPA in 2000 after being located by his fellow Panthers and attended his first Reunion at Denver in 2001. He and his lovely wife, Pat, were regular attendees after that. He and Pat always road a motor cycle from their home in Fayetteville, NC to the VHPA Reunion no mater where it was being held. The only exception was San Francisco where his bike had a mechanical problem in the first mile away from his home. He pushed the bike home, they got in their car and headed west.

George was a great guy, fantastic Maintenance Officer, loving husband, devoted father and constant friend. He is survived by his wife, Pat, his daughter Kimberly Ann Price, six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. He will be missed.

JAMES ALSHIRE

James Alshire, 64, died this month (January) in Winston-Salem North Carolina. James died as a result of a lengthy illness, he graduated with flight class 66-19, served with A Troop, 1/9 Cav (67-68) and 242th ASHC (69-70) in Vietnam. He went on to become a commercial and EMS helicopter pilot. Burial was in the Salisbury (North Carolina) National Cemetery.

JAMES T. NEWMAN

Retired Army Major James T. Newman, an air cavalry troop commander whose personal courage rescuing downed helicopter crews in Vietnam made him a legend among his troops, died Sunday, January 11, 2009, at the UNC Medical Center in Chapel Hill. His son said the cause of death was complications associated with lung cancer. He was 73. Newman, who was twice nominated for the Medal of Honor, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest award for combat valor, and numerous other medals.

A former enlisted man promoted to commissioned officer, Newman was severely wounded flying supplies to beleaguered ground troops on his first tour in Vietnam in 1966. He was evacuated to the United States and spent months in a military hospital, where doctors proposed to amputate his leg to stem the spread of infection. He refused and eventually regained his flight certification, although he limped the rest of his life. The UH1 "Huey" helicopter he was flying just feet off the ground when he was hit by rifle fire, was repaired, returned to service and is now on display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History on the Mall in Washington.

Newman returned to Vietnam in 1970 as commander of C Troop, 2/17 Air Cavalry, part of the 101st Airborne Division. The unit, nicknamed the Condors, established a reputation for daring reconnaissance missions over territory controlled by North Vietnamese regulars in the northernmost region of South Vietnam and in neighboring Laos, where U.S. and South Vietnamese forces tried unsuccessfully to cut the Ho Chi Minh supply trail in early 1971. The Laos invasion, known as Operation Lam Son 719, was the most dangerous period in Vietnam for helicopters because North Vietnamese forces were entrenched with heavy anti-aircraft weapons designed to bring down much faster jet fighters and bombers that routinely attacked the trail from bases in South Vietnam and aircraft carriers offshore.

Newman won the Distinguished Service Cross for defying withering enemy fire to rescue the crew of a medevac helicopter downed in Laos. He also wore the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, four Distinguished Flying Crosses and 23 Air Medals. On one occasion, when two Cobra gunship crewmen were stranded on the ground in Laos as North Vietnamese troops closed in, Newman steered his helicopter into a grove of trees, cutting down saplings with the spinning main rotor blade to clear enough room for him to land and pull the downed crew aboard. He often remarked that a manufacturer's representative who examined the damaged chopper afterward determined it was so mangled as to be unflyable. "Well," Newman replied in his characteristic Georgia drawl, "I flew it in here."

Charles Vehlow, a Cobra pilot who often flew cover for Newman's command ship, said Newman "would stop at nothing to not only complete the mission but, more importantly, to take care of any downed pilots or air crew members." Vehlow was quoted in *Lost Over Laos* by Richard Pyle and Horst Faas, in which some of Newman's exploits were recounted years later. The book notes the troop commander was recommended for the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award

for valor, for maneuvering his Huey through a storm of fire to retrieve four crewmen of a U.S. Army medevac helicopter that had been shot down at a besieged fire base in Laos. Unknown to Newman at the time, a fifth American was left behind. The recommendation for the Medal of Honor was downgraded to a Distinguished Service Cross, and Newman always suspected it was because he inadvertently had left someone behind. The soldier, who said he was trapped in a bunker by incoming mortar fire, was rescued days later and was decorated for valor in helping South Vietnamese forces prevent their base from being overrun.

Members of Newman's troop were fiercely loyal to their commander, at least in part because they knew he would make every effort to rescue them if necessary-and protect them from superiors, too. Newman boasted that some of his men had stolen a jet engine intended for a general's helicopter because they needed it to keep their own ships flying. He quietly commended them, even knowing they had technically committed a crime. "It always amazed me at how so many people with so many different backgrounds and personalities could all find common agreement on the value of this one man," said Richard Frazee, one of his former pilots after learning of Newman's death. "Jim Newman was a man of immeasurable courage that made us all feel invincible and hard pressed to keep up. I was and am a better person from having known and served with him."

In an action in the A Shau Valley on July 4, 1971, C Troop lost three helicopters at once. One rescued the crew of another but was hit and crashed on its way home. All aboard were saved. The third disappeared from the sky, and no one in the unit knew what had happened to it. The gunship's two-man crew was wounded, and one of them desperately tried to call for help with a signal mirror from his fellow crewman's survival vest. As North Vietnamese infantrymen swarmed over the downed chopper and searched the surrounding high grass for its crew, Newman caught the glint from the mirror and swooped down to pull his men to safety with seconds to spare. The pilot, former Warrant Officer Mike Sherrer, who was decorated for helping save his co-pilot and was awarded the Purple Heart for his wounds, said: "I was an accidental hero. Jim flew into the situation. He's my hero, and he deserves it. A great human being."

Several of the crewmen who served under Newman tried a few years ago to persuade the Pentagon that he deserved the Medal of Honor for his many acts of bravery in taking care of his troops. They learned that he couldn't be considered for the July 4, 1971, action because he had already been approved for a Distinguished Flying Cross that had never been awarded. Word of the Army's decision to make the award had been lost in the closing days of the war. Then-Rep. Robin Hayes, R-N.C., arranged a ceremony in November 2005 to present Newman's long-lost medal in front of several of Newman's men in Fayetteville, NC, near Fort Bragg.

As the United States withdrew its forces from Vietnam, Newman was reassigned to Fort Bragg, as executive officer of a cavalry squadron. He

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retired from the Army in March 1973 after 20 years' service. Following his retirement, he remained in the Fayetteville area near Fort Bragg, where he managed and owned several used car dealerships.

In 2000, Newman was inducted into the 101st Airborne Division's Hall of Fame at Fort Campbell, KY.

A native of Newnan, GA, he is survived by a son, James T. "Jay" Newman of Raleigh; daughter-in-law, Elizabeth, their two daughters, and a younger sister, Elaine Bagby of Bremen, GA. Newman was buried on February 18, 2009 at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. By coincidence, it will be 38 years to the day after the rescue mission in Laos that led to his first Medal of Honor nomination.

The following was added by VHPA John Barron on January 18th, 2009: I would like to pay tribute to a great Vietnam War hero, leader, and aviator, Major (Ret) James T. Newman. Major Newman lost his battle with lung cancer last Sunday, January 11, 2009. It was my fortune to have such a courageous and inspirational leader in combat. I was an AH-1G Cobra gunship pilot under his command of Charlie Troop, Second Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division. His men would willingly follow him into Hell because we knew he would get us all safely out of Hell and he did. Two recommendations for the Congressional Medal of Honor are testimony of his bravery. Unfortunately the CMH's were downgraded to the Distinguished Service Crosses, the second highest award for bravery. After all these years, 39, I still hold this man in reverence. His men will miss him.

JOHN "BIG BARKING BEAR" Barron

JAMES W. "BUGS" MORAN

James W. "Bugs" Moran, 61, of 6 Cedar Drive, Baldwinville, Massachusetts, formerly of Ashburnham and Gardner, died unexpectedly Wednesday, January 7th, at his residence.

He was born in Worcester on February 23, 1947, the son of the late James Earl and Marjorie Moran and grew up in Grafton, graduating from Grafton high school. He attended UCONN for three years and later graduated from Worcester State College after the completion of his military service.

Jim was a financial advisor for Investors Capital Corporation. While living in Ashburnham, Jim was active with the Ashburnham Little League as a coach and Past President. He was a former Selectman for the Town of Ashburnham and former member of the town's Advisory Committee. Jim was an active member of the Polish American Citizens Club in Gardner and had served in the offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Head if it's Board of Directors. Jim was also an active member with Ovila Case Post 905 VFW and was its present Quartermaster. He gave speeches at Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances. Jim also was a substitute teacher at the Narragansett Regional Middle School. He was a Past President of the Leominster Rotary Club.

Jim had just completed his second year as a football official and was on the Fitchburg Board, Northeast Conference Mass. Conference of Football Officials. He enjoyed building model airplanes and helicopters. He also enjoyed golfing and striper fishing. He was

active in raising money for college scholarships for graduating high school seniors. His number one enjoyment came from spending time with his family.

Jim proudly served in the Army during the Vietnam War as a Cobra helicopter pilot with C Battery, 2/20 ARA "Blue Max", 1st. Cav Division. He was a recipient of the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnamese Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Army Aviator Badge, Good Conduct Medal, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medals, one awarded for Valor, 2 o/s stars. He was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

He leaves his wife of four years, Denise J. (Marcox) Larson-Moran, one son, Matthew D. Moran and his fiancée Megan MacMahon of Hoboken, NJ; three stepchildren, Edward P. Larson of East Templeton, Lori A. Guthrie and her husband Jody of Baldwinville and Lisa M. Larson and her boyfriend Ryan Daigle of Gardner; four brothers and two step grandchildren. A sister, Cindy Moran, predeceased him.

"Bugs" was a patriot of the first order, a true American hero, a great story teller and always fun to be with. We will all miss his humor, good nature, positive attitude and most of all his "friendship". You are all welcome to sign the guestbook for Jim's family, search for the website for the Snow-Ladeau Funeral Home on the internet and go from there.

JONATHAN PEERY LEE

Jonathan Peery Lee, born March 27, 1946, of Flint Hill, Virginia died on Monday, January 19, 2009. He was born in Framingham, Massachusetts to Robert and Clyde Lee and spent most of his childhood living overseas in Turkey, India, and Libya. Jon graduated from George Washington High School in Alexandria, Virginia in 1964.

Jon served as a Captain in the United States Army from 1966 to 1972. He graduated from OCS at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. He was a member of the Green Hat class 68-18 A3 at Ft. Wolters, Texas. As a Cobra Helicopter Pilot, he served in the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 (call sign lobo 36). Jon was the platoon leader, Delta 227. After his service in Vietnam, he was an instructor pilot at Fort Hunter in Savannah, Georgia. Among his awards, he received The Bronze Star, The Air Medal for Heroism and The American Spirit Honor Medal for the display of outstanding qualities of leadership best expressing the American Spirit: Honor, Initiative, Loyalty and High Example to Comrades in Arms.

Jon graduated from the University of Texas in 1976. He founded the Texas Framers Cooperative in Austin, Texas. He and his family moved to Flint Hill in 1979 where he started Lakewood Stove Manufacturing, later the Catalytic Damper Corporation. He held a patent for catalytic dampers for wood burning stoves and kerosene heaters. For many years he worked in sales for the window and stairs industry.

Jon had suffered from systemic lupus for the last twelve years.

Jon is survived by his wife of 41 years, Margaret Dove Lee; his daughters, Gabrielle and Britney; known as Poppie and loved by his grandchildren, Kelsey, Jake, Sidney, Jenna,

Katey and Jon Keeton.

A gathering of family and friends will be held at a later date. Jon was an avid reader and lover of the written word. In his memory, the family requests donations be made to the Rappahannock County Library at P. O. Box 55, Washington, Virginia, 22747.

REX M. MEDCALF

Rex Mercer Medcalf, treasured father, died peacefully at home on December 2, 2008, in Austin, Texas. Dad was a humble and honest man with a streak of self reliance common to many of his generation. He also had a smile and sense of humor that allowed him to meet and make new friends. Born in Bangs, Tex., on June 12, 1922, during the Depression, he grew up in a small community but with many nearby relatives. Rex began a military career in July 1940 at age 18 and he served as an Army Aviator in World War II. In 1945 he married Irene Olson of Ellendale, MN. He attended college through the GI Bill and in 1950 received his degree in Pharmacology from the University of Oklahoma. Rex practiced briefly before being recalled to military service in the Korean War. He decided to make the US Army his career, and served his country first as a fixed wing and later as a helicopter pilot, including service in Vietnam, and retired at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1968 after many assignments in the US, Europe and Asia.

Rex then made considerable efforts to attend family, high school, and military reunions. He was especially proud to associate with his fellow Sergeant Pilots, a very unique group of 2,574 men who completed advanced pilot training and were warranted as enlisted pilots in 1942.

Survivors include daughters, Cheryl Henry and Greta Rymal of Austin; sister, Sylva Whitehead of Ft. Worth; sisters-in-law, Mary Ann Rowher, Eva Olson, Marian Utpadel and Jo Ann Olson, all of Minnesota; nephews, nieces and cousins; as well as his neighbors and many friends. Services with full military honors were conducted at Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery. Memorials and guestbook online at <http://wcfish.com>

KENNETH A POKORSKI

Kenneth A Pokorski, 65 passed away on November 7, 2008 in Sloan, New York after a long illness.

Ken earned his wings with the Army's flight class: 67-11 and served in 1967 in Vietnam with the 118th Assault Helicopter Company flying under the call sign Blackwidow 48. From 1968-69 he flew with the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company.

After active duty as a CW2 Ken was an engineering manager for a local firm and flew helicopters in the National Guard. Ken recently served as the Mayor of his home town, the Village of Sloan, NY. Ken was married to Theo Pokorski for 38 years and they had two children, Brian and Nicole.



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RAYMOND L MOORE, JR.

Graveside services with full military honors for retired were held on January 21, 2009 for Chief Warrant Officer, Ret. Raymond L. Moore Jr., 66, of Temple, Texas. Burial was in the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery.

He was born June 8, 1942, in Childress, Texas to Raymond L. Moore Sr. and Mavis Moore. He then moved to Pampa at a young age where he grew up and graduated from White Deer High School in 1961. He joined the U.S. Army, graduated from flight school with flight class 69-27 and became an attack helicopter pilot. He served two tours in Vietnam and was awarded multiple medals for valor to include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and National Defense Service Medal.

He then moved to Copperas Cove and later to Temple. After retirement from the Army he worked for Lockheed Martin as an aircraft assurance inspector until May, 1995. He married Connie Cahall Aug. 16, 1979. He was a member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Survivors include his wife; two sons, Jonathon Carpenter and Wesley Moore; three daughters, Connie Lea Holmes, Diana Curly and Christine Kitzmiller; his parents, Raymond L. Moore Sr. and Mavis Moore; a brother, four sisters, 12 grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

ROBERT FRANCIS (SAUCE) WORCESTER

Dear Hookers,

It is with profound sadness that I must report the death of our dear friend Robert Francis Worcester.

"Sauce" was found in distress at his home in San Diego. He had apparently been lying unconscious at home for several days before his neighbors called the police & broke into his house on the 26th of November.

It was first thought that he had suffered a stroke but further diagnosis revealed a tumor in the right hemisphere of his brain which served to induce the stroke. Although he was operated upon, and the tumor removed, Sauce had incurred too much damage to his body before being found.

Sauce was a Mohawk systems operator in Vietnam, and attended flight school after the conclusion of the Vietnam War. He attended the CH47 "Chinook" transition in the spring of 1980. His Chinook assignments included the 271st Medium Helicopter Company (Innkeepers) in Korea, the 179th Medium Helicopter Company (Shrimpboats) at Ft. Carson Colorado, and the 180th Medium Helicopter Company (Big Windy) in Schwäbisch Hall, Germany, where he retired from the Army in 1988 as a CW3 with twenty-four years of service.

He is survived by his sister Rosemary Gorton, her children, several cousins, and all of his friends with whom he served in the Chinook community. Sauce was sixty-five years old at the time of his death, Christmas Day, 2008. The family said burial will be in Arlington National Cemetery.

John F. Clifford, CW4 U.S. Army (Retired)
Bikini 24, Big Windy 8, Lift Master 8

VERLIN BORTON

Alice Tranter, wife of Verlin Borton writes:
Good afternoon.

I am Verlin Borton's wife, Alice. I see all your names on our computer so I am writing to tell you about my husband. As many or all of you have known, he hasn't been well.

On Thanksgiving morning he had a fall which gave him only a hairline fracture of where the hip and pelvis meet so there was no operation. However, apparently it was very painful so he entered the hospital. He remained there and gradually he wanted more and more pain medicine. Well, finally at 12:15 AM Tuesday the 9th of December he was said to be gone. Yes, he died. He went to heaven, the place he loved to talk about. The funeral was the 12th and now his body is in Illinois, awaiting burial. Part of his family has gone there and will have a military farewell for him on Monday. So I am starting to take care of things here while I gain strength from the Lord.

Most sincerely, Alice Tranter

Editor's Note – Mrs. Tranter's e-mail was forwarded to us by William Proud, a member of (then) Captain Trainer's unit in Vietnam. He said that he couldn't forward it to us with out adding a few words of my own.... Back in 1967 Captain Tranter was the 240th Assault Helicopter Company Greyhound's, White Flight's, first Platoon Leader in Bear Cat VN. He was also a hell of a pilot. I can testify to that having filled the Crew Chief seat many times with him at the controls. He flew by the book, there was not a bit of hot dogging or playing around with him at the controls. He trusted his crew and made all who flew with him understand what he expected from them. He wanted his crew to talk to him, to report over the intercom what we see, hear and feel. That kind of communication made dropping into a bomb crater L/Z in the middle of the jungle a snap. Without his leadership our tail rotor would have been history, along with us. He stayed cool. We stayed alive, because we communicated. He retired a Lt. Col.

In 2001 I sent him some pictures of himself that I had taken of him back in 1967. He told me when he received them that he and his wife Alice cried with joy.... He was a good man. And a great pilot. I will miss him. May he rest in peace.

SP/5 William Proud,
Grey Hound Crew Chief 1967

WILLIAM FREDRICK O'NEAL

Col. William "Bill" O'Neal, 71, was called to join his Heavenly Father on Wednesday, December 10, 2008 in Austin, Texas, eleven days after a motorcycle accident that also took his wife Lisa. A retired U.S. Army Colonel, Bill served his country proudly for 29 years, including two tours of duty in Vietnam. A decorated Army career included appointments as Director of Aviation for the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and as Brigade Com-

mander for Davison Aviation Command at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Educational achievements include a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Missouri-Rolla and a Juris Doctor degree from George Mason University School of Law.

Never one to retire, Bill followed up his Army tenure with careers as Executive Manager for Beechcraft Aircraft Company, financial advisor with Merrill Lynch, and lastly as a mathematics teacher at Smithville High School, Dobie Middle School, and Vista Ridge High School. Although his days of working for a paycheck came to an end in 2007, Bill never stopped learning, as he became an avid reader of the Bible and Believer in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. His hobbies included riding his Harley-Davidson, traveling the hill country, flying, studying the Bible, and riding with the Patriot Guard Riders.

Bill is survived by two children, Brian O'Neal and Ashley Spaulding, both of Shawnee, Kansas, two step-children, and four grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in Bill's name to the Patriot Guard Riders (www.patriotguard.org) or to Hill Country Bible Church Northwest. A life dedicated to fitness of the body, mind, and soul.



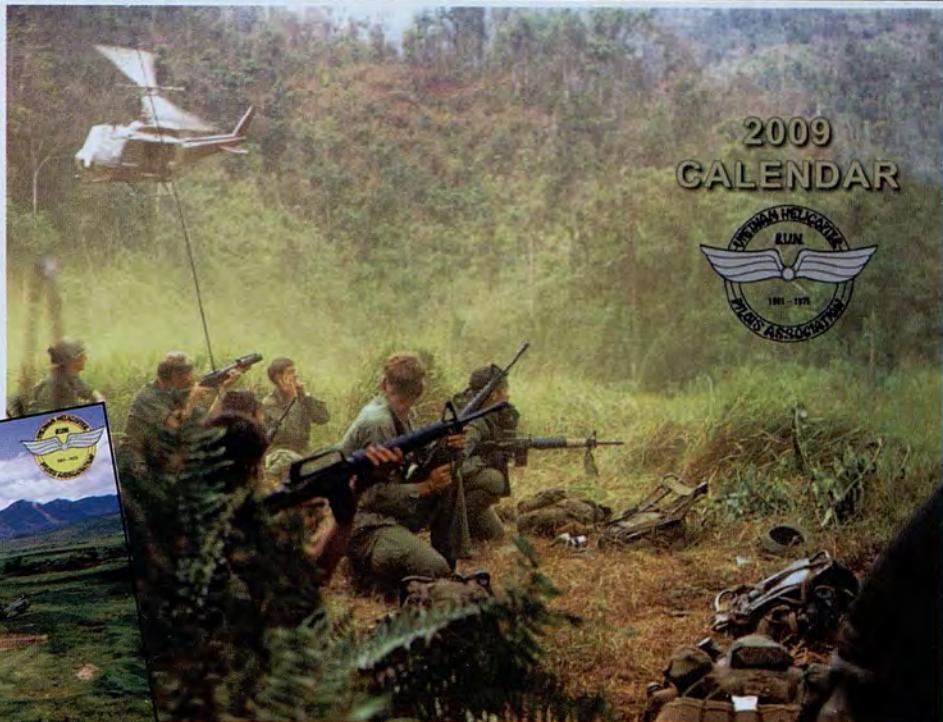
Veterans of the 179th AHC "Shrimpboats"

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through 4th, 2009
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& anyone associated
with Chinook units in
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www.179thash.org/
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Harold Lanham



VHPA 2009 CALENDAR



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The annual VHPA Calendar is the perfect way to honor the men and mission of helicopter pilots in Vietnam. Each month features a different helicopter, including a description of the craft and its surroundings. Photos include the UH-1, CH-37, CH-47, CH-54, OH-6, CH-46, and more. Oversized (big) 17x11-inch format, printed in full color. Includes the names and units of the 2,198 helicopter pilots killed or declared MIA in Southeast Asia from 1961 to 1975, each listed on the date of death or disappearance. ISBN: 978-1-59652-483-5. 17x11-inch in full color. \$14.95 plus shipping.*

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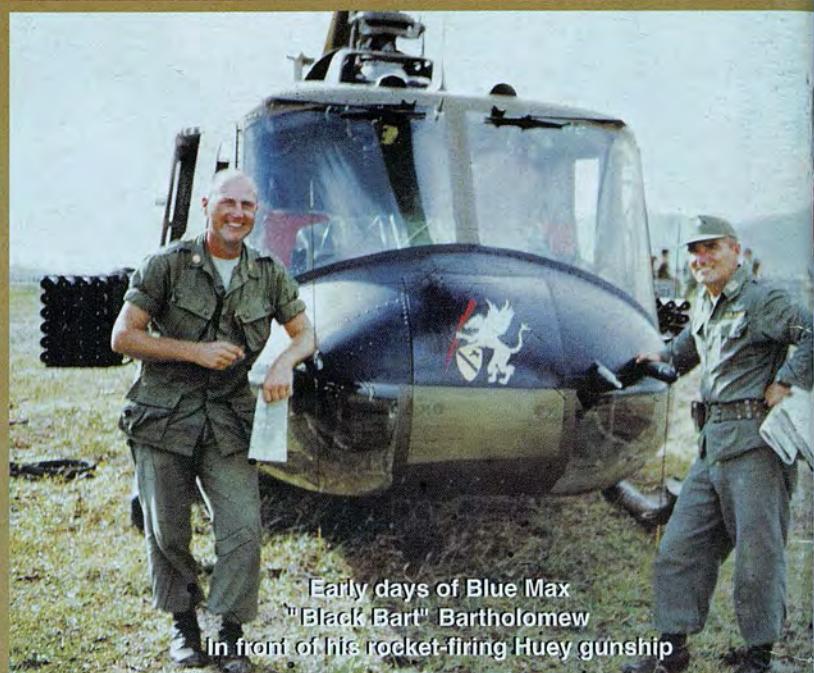
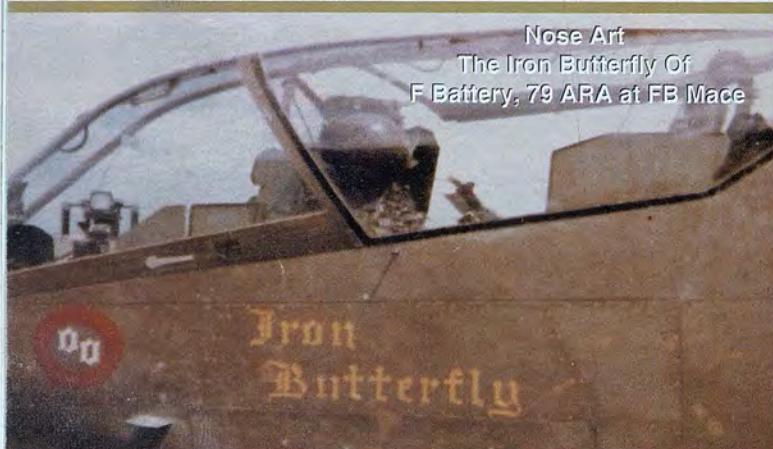
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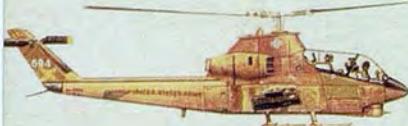
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See pages 23 & 24
for stories of
The Blue Max
ARA Batteries In Vietnam



BLUE MAX
In Memory of Those Lost Over Loc
Ninh and An Loc
April - June 1972



April 5, 1972 AH-1G #67-15594
CPT Spengler
CW2 Windeler



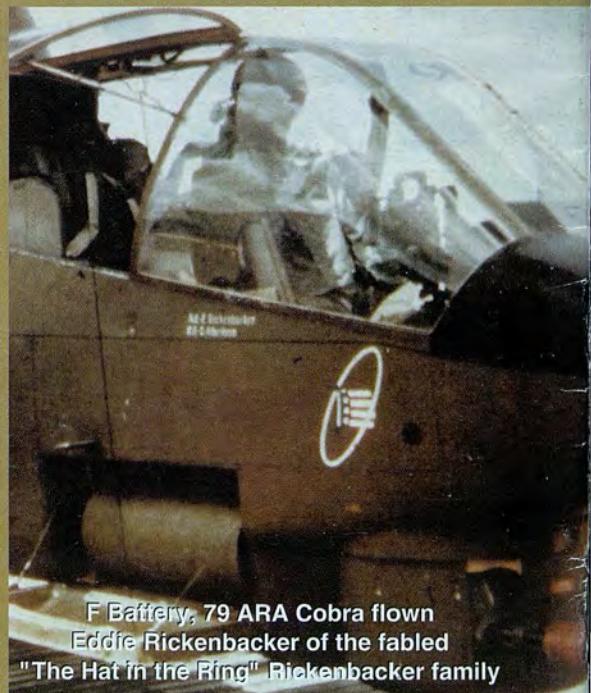
May 11, 1972 AH-1G #68-15009
CPT Strobridge
CPT Williams



May 22, 1972 AH-1G #67-15836
CW2 Hosaka
CW2 Henn



June 20, 1972 AH-1G #67-15670
1LT Shields
CPT Northrup



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