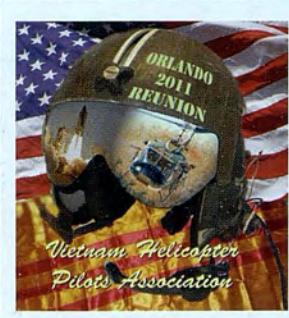




The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ~ Issue 29-01 ~ Jan/Feb 2011

Cover photo courtesy of Steven Robinson, a combat photographer with the 2/7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division. The date was April 2, 1968 and the members of Charlie Company were inbound, just minutes from landing in the Air Assault that was meant to break the NVA's siege of Khe Sahn. More details of the photo and Steve's story follow on page 10 of this, the January and February of 2011 issue of the VHPA Aviator.



Complete
Information of
the 2011 VHPA
Reunion in
Orlando, Florida
runs on pages
4 through 9

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- ★ Welcome to the VHPA 12 & 13
- ★ Least We Forget 18 & 19
- ★ Taps 20
- ★ I Return to Vietnam 27 & 28

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM VHPA HEADQUARTERS

A great big Texas "HNY" from all of us at Military Reunion Planners (MRP) - your new VHPA Headquarters operator. I trust everyone enjoyed the holidays and are looking forward to a great 2011. We are very excited about the VHPA Reunion in Orlando this year and hope that you plan on attending. Now is a good time to start watching airfares to Orlando as Fare Sales typically abound in the first quarter. I use a couple of sites: AirfareWatchdog.com and TripAdvisor.com, to track fares to the cities I will be traveling. I also find that Priceline.com is a great tool for car rentals if you need one. I have been able to use the "name your price" feature to get cars for as little as \$15/day in Orlando.

Our fine staff is ready and looking forward to serving all your VHPA needs with courtesy and a smile. There is a learning curve with every new venture and we ask for your patience and understanding as we implement new initiatives designed to improve customer service and over all efficiencies for the VHPA. It will take a little time, but the ultimate objective is a bigger, better VHPA for all members.

Allow me to introduce the Headquarters staff members you're most likely to come into contact with and their related functions:

Sherry Rodgers – Administration
Karin Karlin – Administration
Rebecca Bittle – Reunion Manager
Ray Casey – General Manager

We look forward to hearing from you and welcome your comments and suggestions for a better VHPA. We are dedicated to providing the best service possible and if we ever fall short please contact me directly. I pledge to make VHPA Headquarters the best it can be!

Last year the Military Reunion Planners organized and ran all of the tours at the San Diego reunion, all of which were very well attended and well received. This year, we will again be providing a number of tours, handling reunion registration, banquet seating and assisting in your individual unit reunions. We look forward to making this the best reunion ever!

As a reminder, your VHPA Headquarters phone number remains the same (800-505-VHPA) as does the email address of HQ@VHPA.org.



Please note however that there is a NEW fax number which is 954-301-0742. Also note that headquarters is now located in the central time zone. The NEW mailing address is:

VHPA
407 W. College Street
Grapevine, TX 76051

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Annual Reunion this July in Orlando – it's going to be quite a show. We'll see you there!



Sincerely,
Ray Casey
General Manager

INTERESTING LINKS FLOATING AROUND THE INTERNET:

There's an Air Force Association publication about the Air Force in the Vietnam War that can be found at:
www.afa.org/Mitchell/reports/1204vietnam.pdf

If you were a part of the Battle of Firebase Plei Me, then VHPA Member Ron Miller [REDACTED] can send you a link to a PowerPoint presentation of the battle by Newsweek Reporter William J. Cook. The presentation contains many never-before-seen photos, the battle is mentioned in the book *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young* and is also famous for the Commander of the relief column at the time, Major Norman Schwarzkopf.

Want to take a ride in an U-2 "Spyplane" flying at 75,000 feet? Enter this link into your browser and enjoy the flight...
www.wimp.com/breathtakingfootage

VHPA Member and Aviator Contributor Judge Rock Lyons sent us a link to his collection of over 200 photos of Huey's and Cobras:
www.flickr.com/photos/judgerock/sets/72157625272248621

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 the VHPA Officers, Committee Chairmen and/or Staff listed in this publication.

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

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VHPA OFFICERS

Committee Chairmen and Staff ~ 2011-2012

President	Woody McFarlin
Vice President	Mike Law
Past President	Gary Roush
Members At Large	
Senior Member	Jim Fulbrook
Midterm Member	Bill Mullen
Junior Member	Bob Hesselbein
Secretary/Treasurer	Tom Payne
Founder	Larry Clark

VHPA NATIONAL COMMITTEES AND THEIR CHAIRMEN

Chapter Liaison	John "Jack" Salm
Historical	Mike Sloniker
Investment	Bob Smith
Membership	Mike Sheuerman
National Reunion Chair	Mike Law
Public Relations/Publications	Bill Mullen
Records/Database	Gary Roush
Reunion Vendor Coordinator	Woody McFarlin
VHPA Calendar Project	Mike Law, Editor
VHPA Membership Directory	Gary Roush, Editor
VHPA Memory Map Project	Ron Bower
VHPA Scholarship Program	Tom Payne
VHPA Aviator Newsletter	David Adams, Editor

VHPA SUPPORT

Legal Advisor	Wally Magathan
Investment Advisor	Bob Potvin

VHPA HEADQUARTERS 1-800-505-VHPA (8472)

VHPA ELECTRONIC MAIL ADDRESSES

VHPA Headquarters	HQ@VHPA.org
President of The VHPA	President@VHPA.org
VHPA Secretary/Treasurer	[REDACTED]
VHPA Chapter Liaison	[REDACTED]
Historical Chairman	[REDACTED]
Membership Chairman	Membership@VHPA.org
National Reunion Chairman	Reunion@VHPA.org
Public Relations/Publications	[REDACTED]
Records/Database	Roush@VHPA.org
VHPA Calendar Project	Calendar@VHPA.org
VHPA Membership Directory Editor	Roush@VHPA.org
VHPA Memory Map Project	[REDACTED]
VHPA Scholarships Program	[REDACTED]
VHPA Aviator Newsletter	Editor@VHPA.org

Official Web Site of the VHPA
www.VHPA.org

New Year's Greetings from the President of the VHPA



Woody McFarlin,
VHPA President

(2841)

I recently moved into my retirement home. While sorting through boxes of "good stuff" to set up my "Woody cave", I happened to come across the 2000 January/February issue of The VHPA Newsletter (now The Aviator) and read Bob Smith's president comments. Bob's second sentence started "Where have all the years gone?"

At about the time you received this issue; it will have been 38 years since the last combat unit in Vietnam stood down!!!! An equally or perhaps more important question: Where have all the aviators gone? How many are still living and haven't spoken to a fellow aviator in all those years? I was there on my second tour in 1973 when we stood down the last Air Cavalry units, then two groups of us flew for the Joint Military Commission for a couple of additional months before we went home. From the Joint Military Commission aviator group, I can only think of one other pilot who is active with the VHPA. If I back up to Cavalry unit, I can only add 3 or 4 additional names to the active list. I'd love to see all of them again just to say hello and to find out what they have been doing during the past years. So, I have work to do.

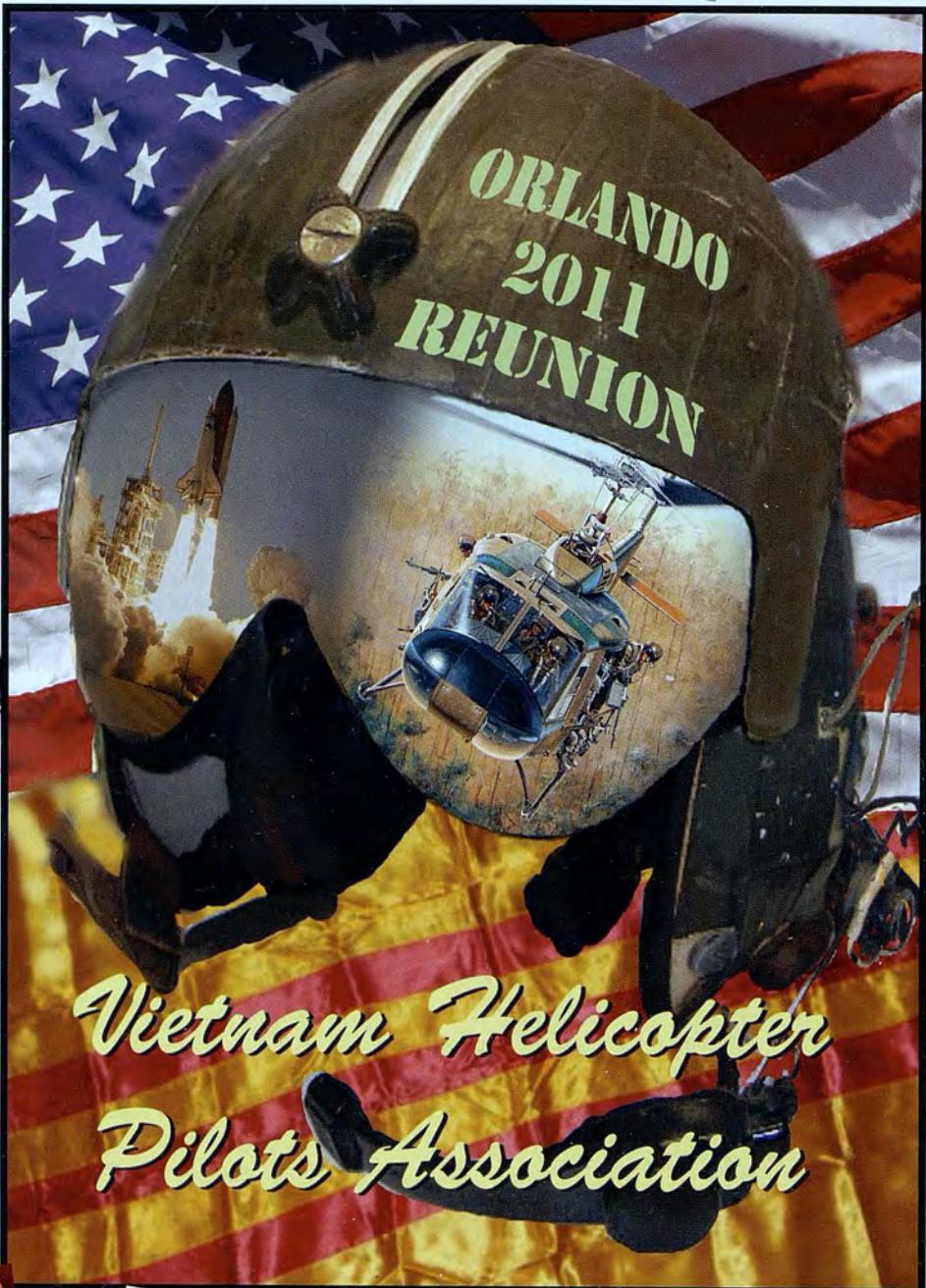
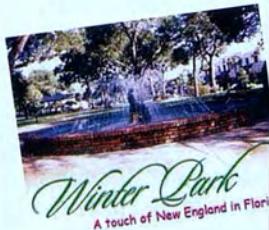
The VHPA offers two tools: the directory to help locate your fellow pilots and the annual reunions to serve as a common meeting place. Over the years Gary Roush and others have spent untold hours gathering and refining data for the directory to make this tool available to you. Yes, many years have passed. Don't sit back and let the years run out before you make the effort to locate and meet with that friend from long ago.

The Reunion Committee and our headquarters management company, Military Reunion Planners (MRP) have been working hard to develop plans and activities for our reunion in Orlando this year, see additional information in this issue. As you can see, we are offering a variety of entertainment and there are many others you may want to check out before or after the reunion. Orlando is a great family entertainment destination, so make your plans now to bring the family, come early and stay late.

Relocation of our headquarters from California to Grapevine, Texas is coming to conclusion. An above and beyond effort by MRP and the Executive Committee has made this possible. A special thanks to Mike Law, Gary Roush, Tom Payne, Wally Magathan and Past President Mike Sheuerman for all the time, effort and resources they gave to get us to the present point. They deserve your thanks when you see them again.

~ Woody McFarlin, President of the VHPA

MEET US IN ORLANDO FLORIDA FOR THE 28TH REUNION OF THE VHPA!





THE 28TH ANNUAL VHPA REUNION

Orlando Florida 5 – 10 July 2011

*A preview of coming attractions by Mike Law,
Reunion Committee Chairman*

INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

This year please visit www.vhpa.org for ALL your Reunion information and online registration needs. The other websites we used in past years are no longer operational. You can also complete the Registration Form printed in this Aviator issue then mail or Fax it to HQ. You can complete the writable PDF version of the Registration Form found at www.vhpa.org and send it to HQ. Finally you can call HQ and they will take your registration order over the phone.

GETTING THERE AND GETTING AROUND

The Reunion hotel is the Hilton Orlando, 6001 Destination Parkway (formerly Canadian Court), Orlando, Florida 32819, 407-313-4300, <http://thehiltonorlando.com/>. The VHPA Group Rate is \$119 per night during the period 1 - 14 July 2011. This year self-parking is free to VHPA attendees and we enjoy free internet access in our rooms. Warning the hotel has another contract for sleeping rooms during the last three days of our Reunion. If you plan to "come early" or "stay afterwards" then you should book early in 2011. There are three ways to make a reservation:

Hilton's Group Services established a personalized website specifically for this Reunion. To use it simply copy the following address into your web browser:

www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/ORLOCHH-VHP-20110704/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

If you are a Hilton Honors member, then sign in at the top of the screen. Please remember that for at least the next three years, the VHPA Reunions will be at Hilton hotels so it might be worth your while to become a member. Even if you didn't sign in, click the Attendee Reservations link on the left immediately below the American flag. You can also scroll down on the initial screen and click the Book a Room tab in the 'Quick and Easy Reservations for Attendees' area. Either action gets you to the 'Dates and Preferences' screen. Provide your arrival and departure dates, room type preference, make certain the code VHP is in the Group/Convention Code field and click the Continue tab. This gets you to the 'Rooms & Rates' screen. Make certain to click the 'radio button' under the VHPA NATL REUNION section, then click the Continue tab. This gets you to the Guest Information screen. After you complete the required fields on this screen, click the Book Now tab at the bottom of the screen. This gets you to the Confirmation screen.

The hotel's Toll Free reservation line is 888-488-3509. You should say you want to make

a hotel reservation and need to mention any number of keywords such as "VHP" or "VHPA" or "VHPA National Reunion" so the agent can find the contract.

The Toll Free Hilton central reservations line is 800-445-8667 (Hiltons). You should guide the agent to the Hilton Orlando property and use the keywords outlined above to find the contract.

We will provide details about airport shuttle later. Be advised there is NO Official Airline or Official Rental Car company for this Reunion.

ACTIVITIES

Even a causal glance at the Registration Form shows there is something for everyone at this Reunion. We have all the traditional receptions, mini-reunion opportunities, vendors, the Honor Keg room, Poker and Golf Tournaments, luncheons, and KIA and DAT Memorial Services. We plan to have Huey helicopter ride opportunities via our friends at the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation. We plan to have some live music. Additionally we plan to have two craft events especially for ladies – quilts and stamping.

Please remember this is not a race! Sign up



for what you are interested in. The Committee believes if we have an event that puts smiles on even 30 faces in a cost effective manner; we are successful.

Note that we have increased our successful HPF (Historical Presentation Forum) to four – actually five if you count the Guest Speaker Luncheon.

TOURS

It is safe to say that the level of tour participation at the San Diego Reunion greatly exceeding everyone's expectations! The Reunion planners understand that Tours are always optional. This year some of our best Tours are offered twice so VHPAers won't miss other Activities.

WWW.HELLO-USA.COM/TICKETS/VHPA11

**The link for Specially Priced Discount Attraction Tickets,
Exclusive Tours and Discount Airport Shuttle Service during
the VHPA's 2011 Reunion in Orlando, Florida**

**Discount Ticket Available to
Walt Disney World, Universal Studios Orlando,
SeaWorld and Separate Dinner Shows**

**Mears Airport Shared-Ride Motor Shuttle Service
A shared-ride, shuttle bus to your hotel that departs
from the airport app. every 30 minutes.**

**Don't want to book online?
Select the Print & Fax option
and you may either mail or fax your order.**

INVITE A FALLEN BUDDY'S FAMILY TO BREAKFAST

BY JULIE KINK

As aviators who have seen combat, most of you remember someone from that long-ago time who didn't make it back from Vietnam. A few of you have connected with the families of your fallen buddies, either through the Family Contacts Committee or by other means, to share with them a memory or two, perhaps a photo, most of all, the knowledge that their loved one was never forgotten.

Have you thought of inviting them to attend the VHPA reunion, and particularly, the Gold Star Family Breakfast, with you?

As a sister of a fallen Vietnam helicopter pilot, I remember the first time I sat down with veterans who served with my brother, who was killed while flying C 1/9 Cav scouts at age 19. The experience of being with men who could tell me more about his life and his service was powerful. I learned that not only are we families of the fallen welcome at veterans' reunions, we are welcomed *warmly* by those who knew

our loved ones and shared their last days.

You might have wondered previously: "Should I invite John's family to a reunion? What in the world would they do there, among 600+ of us rowdy pilots? Would they feel out of place?" For the past few years, there's been an event designed especially to bring Gold Star Families (families of the deceased) together with pilots in remembrance and celebration of the lives we lost: the Gold Star Family Breakfast.

This year, the Gold Star Family Breakfast will take place on Friday, July 8th. We're still working out the details but we know this year, as in the past, the breakfast will be a fitting time for you to share great stories about the lives of the guys we lost, with their families, and the rest of us.

For family members, reunions provide a great opportunity to experience, firsthand, the camaraderie that our loved ones shared with veterans who have never for-

gotten them.

Have you been sending Christmas cards to John's family all these years? Been calling Harry's mom on the phone at Mother's Day just to brighten her day? Have you been emailing back and forth with Bob's brother for years, but just never got a chance to shake his hand? This is the opportunity to do that. Invite them to attend the reunion and bring them to the Gold Star Family Breakfast.

I'm happy to answer questions about the breakfast, as details get confirmed, or about how to connect with a buddy's family.

*Little sister, Julie Kink sister
of WO David Kink C Troop 1/9th CAV
KIA 8-3-1969
member of VHFCN Family Contacts Committee
<http://www.VirtualWall.org/contacts>*

Is it Your Time to Step Forward?

Do you possess the time to participate on the VHPA Executive Council? The VHPA leadership circle is the focal point for executing and ensuring the association's mission, and is made up by members just like you. The Executive Council (EC) consists of six members: past President, presiding President, Vice President, and three members-at-large (senior, mid-term and junior).

Executive Council participation is interesting. It provides a portal to understanding and assisting the efforts that create successful national reunions, year after year, and gives you the chance to assist in the long term VHPA effort to ensure a complete historical legacy and enduring scholarship program. The mechanics of EC activities include a monthly telephone conference call to discuss and make administrative decisions on VHPA functions, and frequent e-mails to share details of ongoing activities.

An election is held each year at the Annual Business Meeting to fill the positions of Vice President (VP) and Junior Member at Large, and each brings a three-year commitment to ensure leadership continuity. The elected VP candidate will serve the first year as Vice President, the following year as President, and the final year as Immediate Past President; the elected Member at Large will serve one year as Junior, one year as Midterm, and one year as Senior Member at Large.

The requirement for candidates is straightforward: the individual must be an active member for one year prior to the first day of the 2010 annual VHPA National Reunion (July 7, 2010). The nomination process is easy, as well. You may personally volunteer or you

may nominate another active VHPA member who is willing to serve. The nomination, however, must be received in writing (e-mail or letter) by the VHPA EC Junior-Member at Large not later than midnight, June 15, 2010.

The election will take place at the Annual Business Meeting during the 2011 reunion in Orlando, FL. Although candidate attendance at the meeting is not required, it is strongly recommended. Rules for conducting the election shall be provided in the application packet.

Please note Executive Council members are expected to attend and assist during the annual national reunion, participate at the annual business meeting, be available for the monthly conference call and actively attend to VHPA interests. Since you are expected to attend and serve at the reunions, the hotel is contracted to provide you with complimentary accommodations.

To volunteer, nominate, or to discuss the EC duties and election process, please contact Bob Hesselbein, current Junior Member at Large and Election Coordinator. He will provide you with an application packet and form to complete and return. The nominee form details basic biographical information which shall be posted to the VHPA website by June 20, 2011. This notice fulfills VHPA policy to notify members and to seek nominees for the Vice President and Junior Member at Large positions. His contact information:

The VHPA remains successful through the work of volunteers just like you. Please consider contributing the gift of your time and enthusiasm and volunteer to serve on the VHPA Executive Council.

2011 REUNION TOURS AND EVENTS

PONTOON BOAT CRUISE & LUNCH

9:00am-4:00pm on Wednesday, July 6th and 8:30am-3:30pm on Saturday, July 9th

Step away from the theme parks and the hustle and bustle of Orlando for a day in Old Florida. Begin with a narrated pontoon boat cruise followed by lunch at an old style Fish Camp where you can taste some famous Florida gator tail. Each tour is limited to eighty (80) people. Today you will enjoy a bit of Old Florida and the Central Florida Everglades. Begin your tour cruising the smooth inland waters of the Banana River aboard a shallow-draft, 50-passenger pontoon boat. As you travel in safety and comfort, you'll learn of the river's significance from a certified Eco-Guide. The Banana River, a backwater estuary and a wilderness waterway used by the indigenous Ais Indians, is considered a sanctuary for the endangered West Indian manatees and bottlenose dolphins. Keep an eye open for these marine mammals as your captain and guide narrate this two-hour cruise tour while you enjoy the sights and sounds of the river's wildlife. Then board your coach for the short drive to the Lone Cabbage Fish Camp for lunch. Relax and enjoy the surroundings of an old style Florida Fish Camp on the banks of the beautiful St. Johns River. The restaurant, popular with locals, offers some of the best local foods, including frog leg, turtle, catfish and gator tail. Lunch, included in the price of the tour, will include some gator tail as well as samples of some of the restaurants most popular dishes.

FANTASY OF FLIGHT TOUR

9:30am-3:30pm on Wednesday, July 6th and Saturday, July 9th



Experience a simulated jump from an aircraft at night, and land to do battle in the trenches of WWI on the Western Front. Climb aboard an authentic B-17 Flying Fortress and feel the tension of a World War II bombing mission on a cold winter's night. Step foot into the stunning art deco facility which is home to the world's greatest aircraft collection. Housed in three huge hangars, are over 40 vintage aircraft, many of which are restored to original flying condition. There are many tours to choose



from while visiting (a detailed schedule will be provided on tour day). The main building offers a self-guided multi-sensory experience from early flight through WWII, several static aircraft displays. The tram tour of the grounds includes the runways, the back-lot and maintenance hangar.

The Wood Shop tour shows the restoration specialists disassemble and restore wooden aircraft. Don't miss the Restoration Shop tour, and the daily aerial demonstration. Included in the price of the tour is a boxed lunch for you to enjoy at your leisure in the "Officers Club" located at the main museum building.

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER TOUR

9:00am-5:00pm on Thursday, July 7th and 9:00am-4:00pm on Sunday, July 10th



This tour explores NASA's launch headquarters; an amazing area that includes towering launch pads, huge rockets, history-making technology, and vast stretches of our Florida wildlife preserve. Board your luxury motor coach and get ready to see history being made at the most prolific launch site in the world. You may choose the tram riding tour of this space complex, which will surely thrill and amaze everyone. You'll view the Launch Complex 39 Observation Platform, Apollo/Saturn V Center, and the International Space Station Center. There are two excellent IMAX movie presentations that will take you to the outer limits, several exhibits and shows. This is a most unusual and interesting tour at an easy pace. Tour of the space center is on your own, there are also plenty of options for lunch on your own at the space center. Don't miss it!

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER TOUR and LUNCH WITH AN ASTRONAUT

9:00am-5:00pm on Thursday, July 7th

This is an add-on feature to the normal Kennedy Space Center Tour. Gather in a private room at the space center for a hot buffet lunch. Dur-

ing lunch you will view a short film about Astronauts living and working in space, followed by a presentation by the guest astronaut. There will be many opportunities for questions and photos. There will be time to tour the space center before and after the luncheon. Please note the Guest Astronaut's name will not be confirmed until the tour date.

KISSIMMEE AIR MUSEUM

9:30am-1:30pm on Thursday, July 7th



The Kissimmee Air Museum showcases Florida's rich aviation heritage through aircraft displays, exhibits and restoration projects. Some of the aircrafts on display include WWII aircraft, a Bell OH-13 and a Hiller OH-23, as well as Cessna, Hillers and a Robinson 44. There are also several aircraft currently being restored in the museum itself. The museum's collection changes often, you never know what you are going to see. A special guided tour has been arranged, followed by ample time on your own to tour the exhibits. Please note; there is no lunch on this tour, please eat prior to departure, or you are welcome to bring a snack.

DAYTONA 500 EXPERIENCE

9:00am-4:00pm on Thursday, July 7th and Sunday, July 10th



Ladies and Gentlemen, start your engines as you visit the home of the Daytona 500! Today, tour one of the most famous race facilities in history. The Speedway Tour includes an IMAX film and takes you on an open-air tram through Daytona International Speedway's garage area, pit road, and the world-famous 31-degree high banks. The narrated tour includes descriptions of each area of the track as you ride past. The tour also makes stops at Pit Road and Gatorade Victory Lane, and the restricted VIP Seats. Following the tour, enjoy lunch (included in the price of the tour) overlooking the track. There will be time after lunch to visit the extensive gift shop and take some photos before returning to Orlando. Please note; tour route subject to change due to track activity on the day of the tour.



2011 REUNION TOURS AND EVENTS

WINTER PARK CRUISE & TOUR

9:30am-3:30pm on Thursday, July 7th and Saturday, July 9th



Winter Park is home to many hidden gardens, parks, world-renowned art collections, shops and restaurants. The tour of Winter Park includes a scenic boat ride, and plenty of time to stroll the streets of this "little Europe". Located on Lake Osceola, Winter Park is brimming with history, culture, shopping and recreation. The area boasts more park – not parking – space per capita than any other Florida city. The day begins with a scenic boat ride on the pristine Winter Park chain of lakes. As you cruise the lakes, watch for large cranes swooping waterside to snag a large fish or a lazy alligator languishing on a nearby bank. Enjoy the swaying palms, towering cypress trees, lush ferns and a variety of flourishing subtropical flowers. Breathtaking views of opulent private homes and exquisite estates sprawling along the shores are also a highlight of this scenic cruise. Following the cruise, stroll down tree-lined streets and browse the many boutiques in the Winter Park Village, Park Avenue and Hannibal Square shopping districts. You may consider spending your time at one of the area's four museums, including the Morse Museum of American Art which features the art of Tiffany. There are many restaurants and cafes for lunch on your own. Please note: You will need to walk about 1/2 mile and climb down about 10 steps to get on board the boat.

ARABIAN NIGHTS DINNER THEATRE

8:00pm-11:00pm on Friday, July 8th



This tour is scheduled as an option for the traditional VHPA free night. Enjoy a thrilling romantic adventure filled with music, lights, daring acts during this large scale theatrical production. The show features riders and acrobats performing with more than 60 horses. Before the show enjoy a delicious 3-course dinner, and unlimited soda and beer. This dinner show that brings a storybook tale to life on horseback. Beautiful horses from around the world are showcased in the world's largest indoor equestrian arena with a permanent show. As a guest of Arabian Nights, you are invited to a celebration and feast. As the story unfolds the arena comes alive with many adventures and surprises – all portrayed beautifully on horseback. The majestic display of breathtaking horses and colorful costumes combine to create a celebration of horses and riders. The show captures your attention, from the moment the Black Stallion enters the palace, to the climatic conclusion of the tale.

MetroWest Golf Club

"Voted the Best Golf Course in Orlando"

July 7, 2011



We have selected Orlando's best golf course for this Reunion's Tournament. A Robert Trent Jones Senior Signature Design featuring a beautiful layout providing a fair, yet demanding challenge to make a pleasurable golf experience for players of all skill levels.

We are honoring Warrant Officer James G. Hodgskin, who was KIA August 18, 1969 while piloting an AH-1G Cobra. Jimmy was from Orlando.

We are proud of the fact that his family has supported all veterans. His Brothers, Donnie and Jon Hodgskin, will be attending our Tournament. This Tournament will include a helicopter golf ball drop that will excite all former pilots. The helicopter will drop balls on one of the greens and one lucky person will win a large cash prize! Each golfer also has a chance to win four hole-in-one prizes – one features a 2011 Harley Davidson FATBOY. Prizes for the top three teams will be gift certificates. Famous Grouse Scotch whisky is sponsoring a par-3 with a greenside surprise. Our Tournament package includes golf, GPS equipped golf carts, bus transportation from/to the Hilton, range balls, continental breakfast, and a delicious deli platter luncheon with the prizes presented at the conclusion. Our Power Pack will be another surprise for lots of CASH prizes. Our 07:30 Memorial Service, Roll Call, and helicopter golf ball drop will profess to be one of the most memorable events at this year's Reunion. We want you to leave with remembering this one as the Best VHPA Golf Tournament ever. You won't want to miss this one, so get your foursomes together, and watch for info coming soon.

Contact Chris Garbow at

or Gary Spooner at
for details.

Visit:

www.metrowestgolf.com

AAAA/VHPA SCHOLARSHIPS UPDATE

Deadline for applying for the 4 AAAA Scholarships set aside for VHPA recipients is May 1, 2011.

Full details available at VHPA.org
GET STARTED TODAY!

CINDY JOCK, A JEWELRY DESIGNER IN FORT WORTH NEEDS OUR HELP.

One of her customers wants her to build a 1968 Warrant Officer Flight School Ring to give to her husband and although Cindy can build one, there are no photos available of what one should look like. So if you have such a ring, and I imagine one from anytime during the Vietnam War will do, could you take a picture of it and get it to her?

Cindy may be reached at
either [REDACTED] or through e-mail at:
[REDACTED]

VHPA 28th Annual Reunion • Orlando, Florida • July 5 – 10, 2011

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Information and register online at www.vhpa.org or mail completed form
to: VHPA Headquarters, 407 W. College St., Grapevine, TX 76051-5218

Fax (954) 301-0742
Voice (800) 505-VHPA (8472)
Email HQ@vhpa.org

Member name:	Member No.:	Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Address:	Address change? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
City:	State:	Zip:
Email address:	Telephone: ()	
Wife/guest name:	Hometown:	21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Guest name:	Hometown:	21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Guest name:	Hometown:	21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Guest name:	Hometown:	21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes/Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes

EVENT	# of people	Price	Total
Registration through 4/30/11*		@\$40	
Registration 5/1/11 and after*		@\$50	
Registration for under age 21		@\$15	
Early Bird Reception (July 5)		No Cost	
Huey Ride (July 6)		@\$85	
Pontoon Boat Tour (July 6)		@\$89	
Fantasy of Flight Tour (July 6)		@\$65	
Poker Tournament 1 (July 6)		@\$25	
1st Time Attendee Reception (July 6)		No Cost	
Welcome Reception (July 6)		No Cost	
Concert-Rolling Stones Tribute (July 6)		Side Bar	
Golf - Metro West (July 7)		@\$89	
HPF #1 VA on PTSD (July 7)		@\$25**	
HPF #2 Tom Marshall LS 719 (July 7)		@\$25**	
Daytona Speedway Tour (July 7)		@\$85	
Kennedy Space Center Tour (July 7)		@\$82	
Kennedy & Astronaut Lunch Tour (July 7)		@\$115	
Kissimme Air Museum Tour (July 7)		@\$31	
Winter Park Tour (July 7)		@\$46	
Scholarship Fund Dinner (July 7)		@\$45	
Concert - The Who Tribute (July 7)		Side Bar	
KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast (July 8)		@\$26	
Gold Star Family Sponsorship (July 8)		@\$26	
Annual Business Meeting (July 8)		No Cost	
Spouse/Guest Event (July 8)		@\$39	
Luncheon w/speaker JPAC (July 8)		@\$32	
Poker Tournament II (July 8)		@\$25	
HPF #3 Frank Anton POW (July 8)		@\$25**	
Arabian Night Dinner Tour (July 8)		@\$69	
Memorial Service (July 9)		No Cost	
Pontoon Boat Tour (July 9)		@\$89	
Stamp Set Show & Tell (July 9)		@\$24	
Winter Park Tour (July 9)		@\$46	
Fantasy of Flight Tour (July 9)		@\$65	
HPF #4 Memory Map Team (July 9)		@\$25**	
Quilt Show & Tell (July 9)		No Cost	
Closing Banquet (July 9)		@\$76	
Closing Banquet Child (July 9)		@\$18	
Non-Registered Guest at Banquet (July 9)		@\$90	
Kennedy Space Center Tour (July 10)		@\$82	
Daytona Speedway Tour (July 10)		@\$85	

Total from sidebars	XXXXX	XXXXX
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	1 year	@ \$36
VHPA dues (if not dues current)	3 years	@ \$99
Life membership	(full \$540 or 3 inst of \$185)	
2011 CD or Paper Directory Fee	@ \$10	
Mult. year CD or Paper Directory Fee	(# of Years x \$10)	

GRAND TOTAL \$

Concerts
One Concert \$20
Both Concerts \$30
Total \$

T-Shirts **Total \$**
S@\$18 M@\$18 L@\$18
XL@\$18 XXL@\$19 XXXL@\$20

Banquet Meal
Beef Fish Vegetable

Voluntary Contributions:
VHPA Membership Fund \$
VHPA Scholarship Fund \$
VHPA General Fund \$
Vietnam War Museum \$
VHPA Reunion Sponsorship \$

REFUND POLICY
IMPORTANT: Please review the details of the Refund Policy, including the limited opportunity to purchase a Refund Guaranty available only on a one-time basis at the time of registration, which is posted online at the official VHPA website: www.vhpa.org

Refund Guarantee Fee
(10% of Total Events) \$

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT
MC/Visa #: _____
Exp. Date: _____
Signature: _____

CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYMENT
In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA" with form.

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

** HPF Fee: Only one \$25 admission fee is required PER FAMILY to attend any or all sessions of the WSC and HPF events. Each family will receive a free DVD of last year's HPF/WSA presentations (a \$30 value).

COVER PHOTO



VHPA member Tom Ellis was attending a VFW gathering earlier this year and another of the attendees, Steve Robinson saw that Tom was a Vietnam Aviator. Steve mentioned that while serving as a Combat Photographer for the 2/7th Cav in Vietnam, he had taken several photos of his unit while they were either on air assaults or while they were on patrol in Vietnam and offered to show a couple of them to Tom while they had the chance. Our cover photo is just one of the three Steve showed to Tom that day and Tom immediately asked if he could have the print so that it could become a part of the VHPA's collection. And that's how this photo of "Supergrunt" ended up on the front cover of this issue.

Steve regrets that he can't positively ID the unit flying their men that day, he believes it was from the 229th Assault Helicopter Company but can't be sure. Steve goes on to provide "the rest of the story" of the breaking of the siege of Khe Sahn with these words. "We were dropped into an LZ of fresh Arc Light

bomb craters about 6 klick's east of Khe Sahn that day, it took six more days to fight our way through the NVA and up to the perimeter of Khe Shan. At least eight troopers of Charlie Company lost their lives in the battle but throughout the entire time, we knew we could count on some great helicopter support."

It turns out that Steve has thirty-something photos of helicopters both in action and shot down in his collection. Mike law is salivating at the thought of adding some of them to the VHPA's history; hopefully we will see more of Steve's work in a future Aviator, or even in a future VHPA calendar.

So, let this be a lesson to everyone of us members of the VHPA, always keep your eyes and ears open - you can never tell where that Leprechaun's Pot of Gold might turn up. Thanks to both Tom Ellis and Steve Robinson for adding to the legacy of the Helicopters of the Vietnam War.



The Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA) Association
will hold its
14th Annual Reunion
on May 18-22, 2011, in Charleston, SC.



2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery
Ia Drang Valley



Battery F, 79th Artillery
An Loc



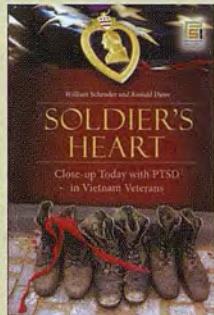
4th Battalion, 77th Artillery
Hamburger Hill - Lam Son 719

All current and former members of the Association and members of the ARA units in Vietnam, CONUS, and post Vietnam "BLUE MAX" units are invited to attend. Special events and tours, including dinner on the USS Yorktown, are planned for attendees and their families. Full details for room reservations and reunion registration are available on the ARA Reunion Website at:

wwwара-reunion.org

or by contacting Jesse Hobby
at [REDACTED]
or by phone at [REDACTED]

SOLDIER'S HEART *Close-up Today with PTSD in Vietnam Veterans*



Thirty years after the Vietnam War, tens of thousands of American combat veterans still struggle with the debilitating and crippling effects of posttraumatic stress disorder. Soldier's Heart explores and analyzes the symptoms of PTSD, brings heightened awareness of the disorder, illustrates its destructive impact on American society and provides hope to those who suffer. By their nature poignant and profound statements on the human condition, the narrative portraits in Soldier's Heart will provide emotional and intellectual comfort to countless of Americans whose relatives and friends have served the country in time of war.

"This book was written to help foster understanding and help answer many of the questions surrounding PTSD. The authors stress the first step for any effective treatment of PTSD is anchored in understanding the multiple manifestations of it. I encourage you to read this well researched and informative book."

~ John Penny, Book Reviewer for the VHPA

"The authors are to be commended for placing this crippling disorder within a meaningful context. The specialist as well as non-specialist will profit enormously by reading this volume the contents of which have obvious implications for the present and future."

~ Willard B. Gatewood, Alumni Distinguished Professor of History (Emeritus), University of Arkansas

"The authors, both Vietnam veterans who have struggled with PTSD for many years, wrote this book to explain to families that PTSD is a brain disorder, not a personality flaw."

~ Dr. Mary Lindahl, Professor of psychology, Marymount University, Arlington, Virginia

"Soldier's Heart" should be required reading for everyone who ever supported the Iraq war--as it dumps its hundreds of thousands emotionally wounded on our already stressed society".

~ Stephen A. Wald, Ph.D.

Soldier's Heart, Close-up Today with PTSD in Vietnam Veterans is available in both hardcover and kindle versions through on-line distributors such as Amazon.com and by special order from your local bookstore. 208 pages, published by Praeger Press (July 30, 2007), ISBN-10 #0275999513

WHAT TO SAY TO MARTHA RAYE!

One of our members, Robert (Bo) Atkinson sent a letter home almost every day while he was in Vietnam. He's since gone through a lot of them and now as he reads each letter, it almost always triggers his memory of those days gone by. He's been kind enough to share those stories with his men on their unit's web site (155ahc.com) and he also been nice enough to send a few of them our way for all the membership to read.

STAGECOACH - COME UP COMPANY FREQUENCY.

One Company Rule we had for all our crews was that they were to monitor the emergency radio frequency at all times when in the air. I am not sure if other companies in the Battalion had this rule, but we were able to contact our crews on quick notice at any time. One of the first uses of this procedure occurred when we received a notice from the American Red Cross that one of our pilots had become a father and his wife wanted him to be notified. Well, we knew that if he was airborne we could contact him so the Operations Officer and I got a Huey, climbed to altitude above Ban Me Thuot and gave Chief Warrant Officer Weimer the first real test of our plan.

Well CWO Weimer answered our call and we relayed the message that his wife Donna wanted him to know that they were parents of a 7 pound 13 ounce baby boy and that both mother and son were doing fine. All he could say in response to my call was a simple "thank you". Turns out that the incident made the Stars and Stripes News and Bob's comment in the story was that he just thought that he was really in trouble when the CO called him by name on the Emergency frequency and couldn't think of a real answer.... This action was also covered stateside by the Army Times which I am sure also pleased the Weimer family.

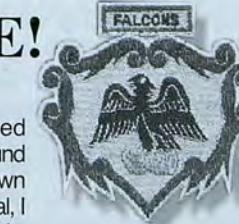
A CELEBRITY COMES TO BAN ME THUOT !!!

Day in and Day out, our crews had their flight missions and when they arrive back in the coral all they want is some peace and quiet. Some time to get the mail and relax. I was no different. November 7th was typi-

cal except that I arrived "home" a little early, around 4 PM. As I walked down main street from the corral, I saw this group approaching, it was not unlike a scene from the movie "High Noon". I recognized most of the group but one person in the center I did not know and I had the feeling that something unusual was about to happen. As the group got closer, those, whom I recognized, stopped a short distance away. The one very small person, who I did not recognize, came straight up to me and said "I understand that you are the person that I have to see to get a drink before 5 o'clock."

The Army teaches you all the tactics in the world about defending against potential enemies, you learn how to operate an airplane or helicopter in an emergency, but no where in all the regulations and army manuals do they teach you: **"WHAT TO SAY TO MARTHA RAYE!"** Once again "I had been set up" and I could hear the group chuckling to themselves. What could I say to this famous movie star except that I thought it was a great idea after all, I knew that she outranked me inasmuch as she was a Lt. Colonel in the Army Nurses Corps and with her influence she could tell General Westmoreland where to go. Her visit was another great morale booster for the men who were able to spend a little time with her. She had one request and that was for some extra Cokes to take to one of her friends at a firebase, we agreed to give her a full case and we scheduled a flight for her the next day. Unfortunately the firebase came under attack that night and we heard that her friend was one of the casualties, we were able to take her out to the firebase the next day.

I don't know how or why she got to the 155th that day, but I can still remember that meeting.



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WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

The following 52 Aviators have joined the VHPA in these last six months. Look the list over and if you recognize anyone, give them a call, drop them a line or send them an e-mail welcoming them into our Association. Full contact information is available either on-line in the Member Services section of our website, or through our staff at HQ by calling 1-800-505-VHPA.

Line 1, Last, first, MI and/or nickname of new member; double asterisks (**) ID new life members

Line 2, his current city and state, branch of service

Line 3 (&4), his (Flight) Class and Vietnam (VN) Unit(s) served with, if that info is available

Blaess, Edward M. 'Ed'
Pueblo West Colorado, Air Force
Class 68-B FW 70, VN Unit: 20 SOS in 70-71

Bohman, William K.
Anchorage Alaska, Army
Class 71-7, VN Unit: 119 AHC

Boykin, James O.
Seguin Texas, Army
Class 70-15, VN Unit: 116 AHC in 70; 282 AHC in 70-72

Carleton, Reid P.
Chula Vista California, Navy
Class 29-56H, VN Unit: HS-8 in 58-61; HS-4 in 66-68

Clark, Robert Hugh 'Bob'
Jamul California, Navy
VN Unit: HC-1 in 66; HC-1 in 67; HC-5 DET 102 in 70

Combs, Robert M.
Maricopa Arizona, Army
Class 68-521, VN Unit: 71 AHC in 69-70

Cone, Lester W.
Cornelia Georgia, Army
Class 63-6, VN Unit: 161 AHC in 65-66; 119 AHC in 66

Cowan, Frank R.
Trinity Texas, Army
Class 69-33 69-35, VN Unit: 159 ASHB 101 ABN in 70-71
227 AHB 1 CAV in 71-74

Dorn, Bruce E.
Portland Oregon, Army
Class 69-7, VN Unit: D/3/5 CAV in 69-70

Freeberg, David F.
Alamo California, Army
Class 68-511 68-19, VN Unit: A/377 ARTY 101 ABN in 68-69

Freeman, Stanley E. 'ED'
New Fairfield Connecticut, Army
Class 70-3 70-5, VN Unit: B/123 AVN 23 INF in 70-71

Gilbert, Robert G
Leesburg Florida, Air Force
Class 73-2, VN Unit: 40 ARRS in 73-74

Goss, Joe W.
San Diego California, Army
Class 68-16 68-26

Gross, Charles E 'Charlie'
Decatur Alabama, Army

Guilday, Michael C.
Lakeville Minnesota, Army
Class 68-511 68-19, VN Unit: A/227 AHB 1 CAV in 68-69

Harris, Fred A
Salem Oregon, Army
Class 66-23 66-21, VN Unit: 114 AHC in 67-68; 187 AHC in 70-71

Herren Steven P.
El Paso Texas, Army
Class 68-507 68-7

Hovanic, William M.
Winter Park Colorado, Army
Class 69-39 69-37, VN Unit: B/158 AHB 101 ABN in 70

Irwin, Jerry F.
Ozark Alabama, Army
Class 63-5W, VN Unit: 82 AIRBORNE in 60-62; UTT in 64-65

Kendig, Loren D.
Mc Gregor Texas, Army
Class 67-19, VN Unit: 121 AHC in 68

Lafferty, Jon C.
Savannah, Georgia, Army
Class 69-43 69-5, VN Unit: 178th ASHC in 70-71

Langhammer, Hans D. 'John' **
Daleville Alabama, Army
Class 71-30, VN Unit: MACV in 64-65; 7/17 ARTY in 68-69
57 AHC in 71-73

Lester, Rodney D.
Claremore Oklahoma, Army
VN Unit 1 CAV DIV in 66-67; 92 AHC in 70-71

Liner, Harold M
Normandy Tennessee, Army
Class 69-4, VN Unit: B/101 AVN 101 ABN in 69-70

Nguyen, Luat Ngoc
Ramona California, Vietnamese Air Force

Nydegger, Neil K.
San Diego California, Army

Padgett, James A.
Whittier California, Army
Class 71-25 71-21

Parthermer, Lloyd Lyle
Bonita California, Navy
Class 50 (FW) 57, VN Unit: HC-7 in 67-68

Pease, Gary B. **
Westfield Massachusetts, Army
Class 69-39 69-37, VN Unit: 101 AVN 101 ABN in 70

Peters, Dennis A.
San Jose California, Army
Class 69-37. VN Unit: 92 AHC in 70

Peterson, Duane P.
Ripon California, Army
Class 68-513 68-15, VN Unit: A/2/20 ARA in 69

Rapp, Howard L.
Hereford Arizona, Army
Class 71-19 71-17

Regan, Robert A. 'Bob'
Houston Texas, Army
Class 64 FW 66-5QC, VN Unit: 334 AHC in 66-67

Rieser, John D.
Saint Louis Missouri, Army
Class 56-11,

Ringler Walter G. **
Huntsville Texas, Army
Class 66-14, VN Unit: 162 AHC in 66-67

Roussel Paul O.
Shreveport Louisiana, Army
Class 69-17 69-15

Rupprecht, Thomas H.
La Center Washington, Army
Class 68-511 68-17, VN Unit: 134 AHC in 68-69
61 AHC in 69

Saker, Peter J.
Manalapan New Jersey, Army
Class 66-10, VN Unit

Schramm, Walter J.
Winter Park Florida, Army
Class 58-1,

Sharp Harry L. 'Skip'
Poway California, Army
Class 67-24, VN Unit A/4 AVN 4 INF in 68-69
138 RR in 71-72

Smith, Norman W.
Arlington Texas, Army
Class 71-30

Stevens, Robert F
Lakeside California, Navy
Class 71, VN Unit: HA(L)-3 in 71; HC-1 in 72-74

Stitt, Harold W.
Huntsville Alabama, Army
Class 66-23 66-21, VN Unit: 191 AHC in 67-68
120 AHC in 70-71

Taylor, Michael S.
Fair Oaks California, Army
Class 70-38

Thompson, Frank W.
Hico Texas, Army
Class 54-F, VN Unit: 1 CAV in 65; 333 TC DET in 69
B/2/17 CAV 101 ABN in 69

Thompson, Thomas W.
Melbourne Florida, Army
Class 69-13 69-11

Twist, Leland T.
Gilroy California, Army

Walters, Jon M.
Cedarville California, Marine Corps
Class 68-10, VN Unit: HMM-463 in 68-69; HMM-462 in 74-75

Whittaker, William A. 'Bill'
Colorado Springs Colorado, Army
Class 67-12, VN Unit: 81 AHC in 67; 10 CAB in 68

Wise, Roger E.
Las Vegas Nevada, Army
Class 69-25, VN Unit: D/1/1 CAV in 69-70

Wolfe, David C. 'Wolfman'
Brighton Michigan, Army
Class 67-11, VN Unit: 282 AHC in 67-68
USARV FLT DET in 68-69; A/159 ASHB 101 ABN in 69-70

Worley, Robert E.
San Antonio Texas, Army
Class 69-15, VN Unit: C/101 AVN 101 ABN in 69-70

EDITOR'S NOTE. After Mike Law sent me this list, I immediately fired back a query asking why my old friend Charlie Gossett wasn't on the list? After all, Charlie joined in October of 2010 and I thought he should have been listed along with these other 52 men. Well it turns out that after an almost 6-year absence, Charlie was just "renewing" his Membership and therefore wasn't eligible for this list of the truly "new guys".

Which means nothing more than for me to remind everyone that Charlie wasn't alone in his returning to the Association, dozens of men each year renew their memberships after an absence. Which is again nothing more than just another reason for all of us members to scour each year's version of the Membership Directory, you can never tell who has just "come home" to the VHPA.



Submitted by new
VHPA Member
Jim Boykin

He warns us to brace ourselves before looking closely at the accompanying image. A pilot at low level has no control over his aircraft, he narrowly misses a crowd gathered for an air show but still slams into four buildings. One can only imagine the horror of the occupants inside those buildings.

You Can Leave The Military, But It Never Really Leaves You



.....By Ken Burger

Occasionally, I venture back out to the air base where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back and says, "Have a good day, tech sergeant." Every time I go back onto Charleston Air Force Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, years ago.

The military, for all its flaws, is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced; a place where everybody is busy but not too busy to take care of business. Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read somebody's uniform from 20 feet away



and know the score. Service personnel wear their careers on their sleeves, so to speak. When you approach each other, you can read their name tag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line that looks like a mirror as it stretches to the endless horizon. I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the sidewalks, the bark of sergeants and the sing-song answers from the squads as they pass by in review.

To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business, especially in times of war. But I miss the salutes I'd throw at officers and the crisp returns as we crisscrossed on the flight line. I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds. I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit.

I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender. Mostly I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea. Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it, and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind with their youth.

*Face it guys [and gals],
we all miss it.*

*Whether you had one tour or a career,
it shaped your life.*

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Editor's note – this story originally ran in the March 4th, 2010 edition of the The Charlestown Post and Courier out of Charlestown, South Carolina, we're repeating it here with his permission. Ken Burger is a graduate of the University of Georgia, he joined The Post and Courier in 1984 and served as the paper's Washington, D.C., correspondent in the mid-1980s. From 1988 until 2008, Burger wrote an award-winning sports column and was hailed as one of the country's best sports columnist by the Associated Press three times. Check out his web site, kenburger.com.

Please Gentleman.... Embellishments must be allowed.

Why should the facts mess up a good story?

Do you remember the days before Avian, Fuji and Dasani bottled water? By Howard Horton

As many of you might recall, while we were in Flight School we heard lots of stories from our instructors. Some heroic, others starting with "this ain't no B____t", and some just pretty mundane. Sometimes I think some of these vets loved to set the young Candidates up for a good laugh.

I remember my TAC X IP telling me about the time they had been in the field. Flying extended days and nights and finally getting back to base to find no showers and no water. And about the only personal amenity that was available to refresh yourself was to brush your teeth.

Well I am familiar with a similar incident. We returned to base after a day or two of being an "Aviation Artillery Advisor" for an artillery raid. All we wanted was to clean up a bit, and NO water could be found anywhere. My mouth was tasting and feeling like the NVA had bivouacked in it. I just wanted to brush my teeth. And remembering the story from my hard core IP at TAC X, I found a canteen, a warm can of warm Budweiser, grabbed my toothbrush and some Crest toothpaste and off I went.

I poured some Bud into the canteen, moistened my mouth with a swig of Bud. Dipped my toothbrush and Crest into the Bud in the canteen. Now locked and loaded the toothbrush was headed for my mouth. When that mixture combined it was a taste and foam explosion. Taste.... Ughhh.... I couldn't spit it out fast enough. That white foamy stuff just kept coming out. I must have looked like a rabid "Wobbly One". My immediate thought was how would I get this taste out of my mouth? I couldn't, until I found a COLD can of Bud and

rinsed and swigged that putrid taste out of my mouth.

I bet if my TAC X IP had been there he would still be laughing his ass off at the spectacle.

Editor's Note, one of our regular contributors and author of this short story, Howard D. Horton graduated flight school in Class 68-9 and ended up flying with in the 108th Arty Group in Dong Ha, Vietnam from Oct. 69-Mar70. After his time in the Army, Howard flew corporate airplanes and helicopters for many years and now works for a major helicopter manufacturer in Fort Worth, Texas as a flight instructor. Howard may be reached at: [REDACTED]



108th Artillery Group HQ and Aviation Section, in Dong Ha, Vietnam

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COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION



DPMO

Defense Prisoner of War ★ Missing Personnel Office



Three Missing In Action SOG Soldiers Come Home



On October 18th 2010, the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced the remains of three servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, since February 18th, 1968, have been identified and will be returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are 57th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) members from UH 1DH 66-16282, crew chief SSG Melvin Dye and door gunner Staff Sgt. Robert S. Griffith. Also returned was the remains of Reconnaissance Team (RT) Maine member from Studies and Observation Group (SOG) Command and Control Central (CCC) Sgt. 1st Class Douglas J. Glover. These ranks reflect the ranks they would have had when Missing In Action (MIA) status was changed to Body Not Returned (BNR), probably in 1978.

The UH 1D was performing an emergency extraction mission in Laos. They were extracting a reconnaissance patrol team consisting of three U.S. Army Special Forces personnel and three indigenous personnel. The aircraft carried a crew of four. Glover was one of the Special Forces personnel aboard. As the helicopter picked up the team four miles inside Laos west of Dak Sut, it was hit by an RPG, exploded, bursting into flames.

The Special Operations Group website, kindly sent us this synopsis of the day's events: This is the account from Crocodile Six, CPT Don Martin, a member of 119th AHC:

19 Feb 68- Douglas J Grover, SSG E-6 of Cortland, NY, USASF, FOB-2, Kontum, Ops 35 and Melvin C. Dye, S GT E-5 of Carelton, Mich and Robert S. Griffith, SGT E-5, of Hapeville, GA, door gunners, and four SCU Team Members, RT Main; MIA, Presumptive finding of death. The pilot, John W. Cook, from the 57th AHC in Kontum died 10 days later in Japan from extensive burns.

Grover was the team leader (One-Zero) with Fred Zabitosky "Zab" as the One-One, and Purcell Bragg as the One-Two and six SCU were inserted into a target Zulu Nine in the Bra, (Zab was the official 1-0; however, for this mission the role was reversed). The team discovered a bunker, which NVA ran to man and began firing on the team. Glover relinquished the one-zero status to Zab. Zab directed Grover to take the team back to the LZ while he initiated a delaying action. Shortly thereafter, a NVA platoon came upon Zab's delaying action and he stopped them with claymores, grenades, and his CAR 15. Zab then joined the remainder of the team at the LZ, with Grover calling in air strikes. The team was fighting off a large assault and the enemy's numbers were growing with four NVA companies converging on the team. Two Huey's arrived and Brag with two of the SCU boarded and were lifted off to safety. Zab and Glover and four SCU boarded the second Huey and it lifted off, almost clearing the LZ when it was hit by an RPG sending the helicopter spinning the tail boom into the main rotor and splitting the helicopter into two pieces and crashing into the ground ablaze in flames.

Zab was thrown clear, but and as he regained consciousness he found his clothes on fire. He suffered severe burns, shrapnel wounds and several crushed vertebrae and ribs. Rolling to extinguishing the burning clothing he was able to extinguish his burning clothing. The pilot and copilot were still strapped in their seats in the burning in-helicopter which had snapped in two, behind the pilot's section. The troop compartment was in completely inflamed and the final cries of the men

trapped therein were heard by Zab, but there was nothing he could do.

Realizing the flames had not completely engulfed the pilots, Zab, utilizing everything he had and entered into the flames to recover the copilot who had all his clothing burnt off and then returned to rescue the pilot. Movement was observed on the ground by another SOG soldier (Luke Nance) who was aboard a Huey flying above the downed helicopter. This helicopter made a decent and began engaging the enemy. The SOG soldier jumped from the helicopter and joined Zab in a fire fight with the enemy and rescuing the pilot and copilot together. One of the pilots died of the wounds which had covered 85% of his body.

(Filed By Cpt, Don Martin, Croc Six) Fred Zabitosky, and the shot-down Huey which burned. I led one of the gunship teams which helped defend Fred while he and others were on the ground around the burning aircraft. The extraction took quite a while, so several, perhaps as many as five, gunship fire teams worked the PZ until the final extraction, for which I was present. Some one on the ground (perhaps Fred or one of his men) communicated with me (Crocodile Six) and directed my fire and that of my wingman, as I recall into the woodline and open ground to the north and east of the burning aircraft. As I remember it, we put the rockets and mini-gun fire where it was needed and assisted in the efforts to get Fred and others out alive. A good friend of mine, then Captain, now LTC (retired) John (Jack) Koshinsky "Gladiator Three," flew (pilot-in-command) the slick (Huey) which picked up Fred and others from the PZ. Fred Zabitosky, then SFC, I believe, deserved and received the Medal of Honor. Also, the incident did begin in Laos around the "Bra," an area with which I was very familiar at the time, but it ended just inside Vietnam, near Ben Het, I think just east of Hill 990, so the aircraft, though torn to Hell by enemy fire prior to going down, was able to limp back inside Vietnam before it crashed. The fact that it made it that far is a credit to its crew.



Vietnam War Military Memorabilia Display



John Conway, the man who maintains the VHPA Museum for us, sent us these photos of his latest display of his Military Memorabilia from the Vietnam War. The display was held in Platte City, Missouri at their Library's "Veterans Salute" on 22-25 October, 2010. Full details of the VHPA's on-line Museum are available on-line at: www.VHPAMuseum.org or by contacting John directly at: [REDACTED]

LOOKING FOR

Looking For a Book...

Lanny McCormack is looking to buy a copy of a book written by a 1st Cav Division Pilot.

Lanny has forgotten the title to the book and he adds "the book itself is of an almost crude publishing quality". But he goes on to say that this fantastic (paraphrased) quote is from the book and that Lanny doubts that anyone who has read the book would ever forget this part: "If the 1st Cav was given the mission to fly to hell and kill the devil, a lot of grunts would die. But eventually some trooper would drag his dead smoking ass out..."

If you can help Lanny, contact him at: [REDACTED]

Looking For Rescue Crew Members

Gentlemen:

I am trying to find any member of the 4-person crew of a Huey gunship that picked me up after my combat ejection into a rice patty from an F-100 in III Corps Viet Nam on 02 Apr 1968.

At the time I was a 1st lieutant with the 510 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing in Bien Hoa Air Base, South Viet Nam. Two U.S. Army Huey's arrived on scene shortly after my high speed impact with the ground, heavy small arms fire was coming from the tree lines in all four quadrants. The two door gunners employed fire suppression throughout my rescue while the aircraft commander exited the Huey, picked up my ejection seat and set it next to me in the passenger compartment.

We then exited the area at high speed and low altitude and I was delivered to the medics on the infield at Bien Hoa just minutes later.

I have a black and white picture of the crew and myself on the infield at Bien Hoa that I would like to share with you while I (once again) thank you for doing a great job.

Sincerely,
Kenneth S. Peterson
Brig. Gen. (ret) USAF
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Looking For My Former Aircrew Members,

I am trying to locate the pilots that I flew with in Viet Nam. I was a spec-5 Commo Tech with the 449th Signal Detachment, assigned to the 161st Attack Helicopter Company in Phu-Cat (later Camp Lane), Vietnam. Myself (Stan Allen) and a spec-4, Steve Wall, were an avionics team that routinely flew into Camp Holloway at Pleiku, to service the unit's aircraft.

On one particular mission that occurred between late December of 1965 and early February of 1966, we flew into Camp Holloway scheduled for two days work. The first night of our mission, Camp Holloway was attacked and for the next hour or so, literally all "HELL" broke loose. The next day the pilots that brought us in said that we all were leaving before the camp was hit again that night. I was a little worried as the weather was almost zero-zero because of the fog but the A/C Captain (who's name I do not recall) said "When the fog hits treetop level, we are out of here. We will fly the highway back to home if we have to". And that's what we did, white knuckle and lots of sweat was the rule all the way back to Phu-Cat.

Well, as it turns out, there appears to be no official record of that mission, so as far as the VA is concerned, it never happened and the burden of proof of the mission is on me. If I can substantiate my experience with a buddy letter that supports my, "alleged experience" (description of the mission given by an arrogant, 20-something, VA interviewer) I could re-open my compensation claim.

So far I have been unsuccessful in locating Spec-4 Steve Wall and/or any of a number of other enlisted men and now I am hoping the pilots who flew the mission might be able to help. If they were there that day, they certainly will be able to recall that trip back to Bear Cat and perhaps they can now help me fight the VA.

Sincerely,
Stan Allen
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Looking For any VHPA Members who might have served with SP5 Gerald (Jerry) Foley

I am trying to help my father-in-law, Jerry Foley obtain the Air Medal he was never awarded in Vietnam. Jerry served from April 1968 to April 1969 as a SP5 Crew Chief in both Di An and Vinh Long, Vietnam with the 7th Armored Squadron, 1st Air Cavalry, Troop B. The Air Medal is not listed on his DD-214 so, officially he was never awarded one.

As you know, the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO does not retain flight records for enlisted personnel, so the next step we are taking is to try and contact the Officers and Pilots of his unit, hoping that they can remember Jerry and testify as to having personal knowledge of Jerry's flight time. Jerry estimates that he flew over a thousand hours while in Vietnam and since an Air Medal can be earned with 25 hours of combat time or 50 hours of combat support time (pigs and rice missions) or 100 hours of combat service support time, we're hoping we can bring sufficient evidence to show that Jerry earned at least one Air Medal.

We were hoping someone in your organization can help us, either by providing us personal knowledge of Jerry's flight time or being able to supply us with an Officer Roster List of Jerry's Unit (Troop B), from those days in Vietnam.

Please contact me at:
James E. Davis

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Looking For Chopper Pilots from during my tour in Vietnam

I was an infantry platoon leader with the 1st Infantry Division in 1969 and 1970. I was with Bravo Co. of the 1st battalion, 2nd Regiment at Dau Tieng. The Call Sign for my unit was the Dracula Black Scarves.

I am in the process of writing my memoirs about my year in Vietnam and I would like to make contact with any chopper pilots that were operating out of the Dau Tieng base camp particularly between 9/1/1969 and 3/30/1970. I am aware of (but have lost touch with) Kenneth Whitley who was based at Dau Tieng at D-229th, 1st Calvary in 1969 as a Cobra Driver, but if you were also stationed at Dau Tieng around the time I was there, or can help me contact Kenneth, please email me at: [REDACTED]

I received a heart transplant in 1991. My book about the experience, Mr. NewHeart, is a free download at: www.lulu.com/content/96663121.

David Hollar
White Plains, MD

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Looking For anyone who might have known WO Kenneth Lance

My father Kenneth Lance passed away on 11-7-10 and ever since then I have been trying to find out more about his two tours in Vietnam.

I know that he served from 67-68 and was assigned to the 240 AHC as a W1. He also served in 72, but I haven't yet found out much about that tour. He was a member of the VHPA and had attended a couple of the reunions.

I would like to communicate with anyone who knew him or has any information about my Dad. Sadly since he passed we have found very few photos of him taken during his service and most of them were probably lost in a house fire. He seldom ever mentioned his service and we want to learn more.

Any help or guidance you could give would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.....Larry Lance

Least We Forget

... what we did when "We were soldiers once, and young"

In 1967, a year before his death, the Nobel Prize winning author John Steinbeck accepted Newsweek magazine's invitation to go to Vietnam to report on the war. While there he visited with the men of the Bravo Company, 228th Aviation Battalion and later on wrote these words to express his thoughts on that visit...

"I wish I could tell you about these pilots. They make me sick with envy. They ride their vehicles the way a man controls a fine, well-trained quarter horse. They weave along stream beds, rise like swallows to clear trees, they turn and twist and dip like swifts in the evening..." – John Steinbeck



Vietnamese soldiers of the 21st Recon Company rush to board waiting Huey choppers in the rice paddies near their forward command post in South Vietnam on Nov. 14, 1969. The men are to be transported into the interior of the U-Minh forest, the large marshy and swampy and forest area at the southern tip of Vietnam, long considered to be a VC strong-hold. For the previous month, an all Vietnamese operation called "Operation U-Minh" had been attempting to drive the VC and NVA regulars from the area. It was the second such operation within the year. (AP Photo/Godfrey)



As fellow troopers aid wounded buddies, a paratrooper of A Company, 101st Airborne, guides a medical evacuation helicopter through the jungle foliage to pick up casualties during a five-day patrol of Hue, South Vietnam, in April, 1968. (AP Photo/Art Greenspon)

A wounded member of the 1st Plt. Company "C," 25th Infantry Division, is helped to a waiting UH-1D "Iroquois" helicopter in Vietnam, May 10, 1967, during the Vietnam War. (AP Photo)



April 30th, 2010 marked the 35th Anniversary of the fall of Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam in Saigon and small part of the Vietnam War and the decade-long U.S. campaign to end the conflict and an estimated 3 million Vietnamese lives.

In remembrance of that event, the Denver Post has set up a special website: www.blogs.denverpost.com/captured/2010/04/30/captured

At a hilltop firebase west of Chu Lai in Vietnam, a huge army "Chinook" helicopter prepares to lift a conked-out smaller one to a base for repairs, April 27, 1969. The firebase was named LZ West and was manned by the troopers of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade forming part of the American Division. The smaller helicopter - a Huey UH-1D - had developed engine trouble so its crew chief called in the local aerial towing service. One sturdy nylon strap to the chopper's winch and the two were off. (AP Photo/Oliver Noonan)





U.S. Army helicopters providing support for U.S. ground troops fly into a staging area fifty miles northeast of Saigon, Vietnam in January of 1966. (AP Photo Henri Huet, File)

the fall of Saigon, when communist North Vietnamese forces drove tanks into the former U.S. embassy and then marching through the gates of the Presidential Palace. The fall of Saigon marked the official end of the conflict against communism in Southeast Asia. The conflict claimed some 58,000 American lives.

[To an on-line photo display of over 100 pictures taken during the Vietnam War, they all may be found at: captured-a-look-back-at-the-vietnam-war-on-the-35th-anniversary-of-the-fall-of-saigon-2/1781/](#)

A supply helicopter comes in for a landing on a hilltop forming part of Fire Support Base 29, west of Dak To in South Vietnam's central highlands on June 3, 1968. Around the fire base are burnt out trees caused by heavy air strikes from fighting between North Vietnamese and American troops. (AP Photo)



The photos offer a look back at the Vietnam War from the escalation of U.S. involvement in the early 1960's to the Fall of Saigon in 1975. I have chosen a few of the pictures from their presentation to include in this issue.

Some of the pictures do contain graphic violence and dead bodies, which should be noted before you start. David Adams, Editor of the VHPA Aviator.

TAPS

Dirick C. Overhamm

LTC (Ret.) Dirick Carl "Dick" Overhamm, 78, died Friday, Nov. 12, 2010 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix Arizona surrounded by his loving family to whom he was especially devoted and inspirational. His presence will be sorely missed by family and his many friends.

Dick was born Jan. 14, 1932, in Teaneck, N. J. to the late W. J. and Rosa M. Overhamm. He was the consummate soldier, serving in the U.S. Army for 20 years, from private to lieutenant colonel. He graduated from flight school in 1956, he flew three combat tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, first with the 18th Avn in 1963, then as Shark 6 with the 174th Assault Helicopter Company 1967-78 and last with Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) in 1972.

Dick is survived by his wife, Toni; sons: Eric (Dina) of Gilbert and Christopher of Glendale; two grandchildren and one stepson. He was preceded in death by his parents.

The family prefers that memorials be made in his name to Guide Dogs for the Blind at PO Box 3950, San Rafael, Calif. 94912-3950.

Fredrick Dean Sando

Fredrick Dean Sando, 79, died on 9 November 2010 in Georgetown, Texas.

Major Sando was born Nov. 7, 1931, in Grand Forks, N.D., to Gilbert Howard and Elsie Sando. He was a proud veteran of both the Korean War and Vietnam War. He was the recipient of the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Parachutist Badge, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Senior Aviator Badge.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Vivian Bailey Sando; one daughter, one son five grandchildren.

Graveside services were held November 12 in Greenwood Memorial Park, Fort Worth, TX. Memorial contributions may be made to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, www.michaeljfox.org for full details.

John J. Griffiths

Major John J. "Griff" Griffiths, 76, of Peoria, Arizona passed away on October 10, 2010.

John graduated from Flight School with class 59 and served in Vietnam with C/1/9 Cav, 1st Cav Division in 1966-67, with the A/4 Avn, 4th Infantry Division in 1968-69 and with MACV in 1974 while flying under



the callsign's Thirsty Red 6, Thirsty Blue 6 and Blackjack 5.

John is survived by his wife and 4 children, interment was held in the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix, Arizona.

LTC Ret. Joseph M.F. May

Joseph M.F. "Frank" May, 79, passed away on 17 November, 2010 from the effects of a massive heart attack.

He was born in New York City, N.Y., and after graduating flight school with class's 68-40 and 68-52, he went on to serve 20 years in the U.S. Army followed by a career in the U.S. Post Office. While in Vietnam he served on the repair ship Corpus Christie anchored in Cam Ranh Bay and was later assigned to Headquarters of the Transportation Group in Saigon in 66 and 67.

He is survived by his wife, Jackie; and sons, Joseph (Catherine) and Thomas and one his sister. A military Service was held on December 1, 2010, at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida. He will be greatly missed.

Kenneth Lance

Kenneth Lance, 73, passed away Sunday, November 7, 2010 in Weatherford, Texas. Kenneth was born Dec. 24, 1936 in Tallahatchie, Mississippi to the late J.B. and Euvie Lance, and was raised in Pampa, Texas. He married Bobbie Jean Porterfield Sept. 8, 1956.

Kenneth enlisted in the U. S. Army in 1956, and served as a medic in Korea. He later went to flight school graduating from flight school with Flight Class 66-13. He served two tours of duty as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam flying with the 240th AHC in 1967-68 and with the 129th AHC in 1971 under the callsign's Greyhound 18 and Bulldog 18. While there he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and 49 air medals, while completing over 1325 combat missions. He retired as a Chief 4 Warrant Officer Jan 31, 1980.

After retiring from the military, he became a school teacher at Peaster Middle School, and retired as Middle School Principal in Weatherford, Texas. He and Bobbie attended North Side Baptist Church and they also enjoyed raising horses and cattle and participated in many wagon team trail rides.

He is preceded in death by his daughter Pamela Kay Lance and is survived by his

wife Bobbie, sons Larry, Gary, Dan and Greg, 9 grandchildren, one brother and one sister.

Services were held at North Side Baptist Church, interment in Memory Gardens in Weatherford, Texas.

Marvin Duane Spieker

Marvin Duane Spieker, 69, of Titusville, Florida passed away on October 11, 2010.

Marvin joined the Army in 1963, graduated from OCS and served two tours in Vietnam. After his first tour he attended Flight Class 68/14-68/22 and he spent his second tour flying Cobras with the 361st ACE, "Pink Panthers" where he was a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer.

While flying front seat in place of a pilot who was ill that day, he was badly wounded during a TAC E in Laos and was medevaced to the States. His wounds were so severe that he was medically retired in 1972. For his actions he was awarded the DFC, the VCG w Silver Star and the Purple Heart.

Marvin was a member of VHPA and attended several Reunions. He was constantly in pain, both physically and mentally, and never fully recovered from his wounds. He is survived by his wife Elsa, his mother, three sisters and their husbands and numerous nieces and nephews.

Mike Sheuerman

Panther 15

361 ACE, Pink Panthers

Merl Hawkins

Merl Hawkins, 65, of Pensacola, Florida passed away on October 26, 2010 after suffering a fatal heart attack while doing what he loved doing, hunting pheasants in South Dakota on the Hawkins' family ranch.

He was born on 1 September, 1945 in Pierre, South Dakota. He attended the University of South Dakota, and graduated from Troy State University with an MBA in Business. After retirement from the military, he owned a real estate company.

Merl graduated Flight School with flight class 67-13 and served in Vietnam with the 191st AHC in 1967-68 and with A/159th ASHB, 101ts ABN in 1970-71. While in Vietnam he flew under the callsign's Bounty Hunter 15 and Pachyderm. He retired from the Army in 1987 but while he was on active duty, he served in Vietnam, Korea, Germany, and varied assignments in the United States.

He is survived by his wife Doris, Daughter Wendy (Jim), and grandson Trey.

Merl loved life and loved his family and friends. He was a member of the Pensacola Chapter of Harley Owners. He enjoyed his motorcycle, golfing, church, music, hunting, and playing with his grandson. He will be missed by many. "Soar with the angels"

LTC Richard L. Naughton

Richard L. Naughton of Hertford, N.C., passed away on September 30, 2010 at age 72.

A retired Army officer and Master Army aviator, he was born in White Plains, NY in 1938 and moved to Terryville, CT where he attended school and then graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1961. He received his MBA from Georgia Southern in 1972. After graduating flight school with classes 64-7 and 68-40, Richard served in the Army Transportation Corps from 1961 to 1987 primarily as an Army Aviator. In Vietnam he flew with the 540th TC in 1965066, the 79th TC Co in 1968, the 604th TC Co in 1968068 and the HHC, 1st Avn Bde in 1972-73. While flying under the callsign's Biog Kahuna, Red Dog 5 and Highlander he accrued multiple air medals and several Bronze Stars during his 3 tours.

After retirement from the Army, he continued to work in the Washington, D.C. area for the U. S. Department of Transportation and several defense contractors. He moved from Reston, Va., to Albemarle Plantation in Hertford, N.C. where he enjoyed gardening, cooking and traveling.

He is survived by his loving wife Carol, two sons and four grandchildren. Funeral services will be held January 13, 2011 at 11 a.m. in the Fort Myer Chapel, Fort Myer, VA. Burial with full military honors will follow in Arlington National Cemetery. Contributions in his memory may be sent to the Army Transportation Museum, P. O. Drawer D, Fort Eustis, Va. 23604.

CW4 (Ret) Norman Cox

CW4 (Ret.) Norman Cox, 81, Clarksville, Tennessee went to be with his Lord Friday, September 17, 2010, at his home.

Mr. Cox was a retired CW4 Pilot with over 30 years of service in the U.S. Army where he served 2 tours in Vietnam and 3 tours in Korea. He was a Master Army Aviator and received numerous awards including the Bronze Star Medal. He graduated flight school with Flight Class 56-13 and flew in Vietnam with the 57TC Co in 1962-63, the 120th Avn Co in 1963 and the 120th Avn Co in 1968-69.

He was member of the First Baptist Church of Clarksville; he was also a 32nd Degree Mason and member of the Masonic Queen City Lodge 761, the Shrine's, the Scottish Rite society, the Vietnam Helicopters Association and the Retired Officers Association of America.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one son. Survivors include his loving wife of 60 years, Maxine Brothers Cox of Clarksville; four daughters, one daughter-in-law and two sisters; he was also cherished by thirteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Paul E. Protzman

Paul E. "Buck" Protzman, 69, passed away of natural causes on 6 October 2010 in Pahrump, Nevada.

Paul was an armor officer with one ground tour in Vietnam with the 4th Infantry Division. After recovering from wounds received while in there, he attended flight school in 1968. He then transitioned into Cobras and served another tour in Vietnam. He attained the rank of Major before leaving the service.

Survivors include two sons, Dirk and Eric (Protzman), five sisters, three brothers, five grandchildren, one great-grandchild and several close friends and other relatives.

Above submitted by potential VHPA Member Maurice E Schuetz who added "I grew up with Paul (Buck) in Missouri and worked with him for a while after high school we ended up as life-long friends".

Richard "Dick" Kearley

Richard "Dick" Kearley. Captain, USN, Retired, passed away in the comfort of his home with his loving family at his side on Wednesday, September 8, 2010. Dick was a proud US Naval Aviator, loving husband, brother, uncle, father, grandfather and good friend.

Dick was born in Pensacola, Florida, on August 7, 1941, graduated from Escambia High School in 1959, graduated from Troy University, and received a Master's Degree in Business Administration. Dick earned his wings in Pensacola, FL in May 1966 and completed a stellar 25 year military career as a US Navy helicopter pilot. In service, he proudly defended his country's freedom including tours in the Tonkin Gulf during the Vietnam War, and Commanding Officer of the HAL 4 Squadron in Norfolk, VA after the War. He received numerous commendations including the Medal of Meritorious Service.

Dick enjoyed the coastal living he grew up with and retired to Tierra Verde, Florida, with his family to enjoy his love for sailing, tennis, guitar and MG cars. After retiring from the Navy, Dick worked as a real estate agent in St. Petersburg. He was a member of the St. Petersburg Downtown Rotary Club.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Gwendolyn Sue (Floyd) Kearley. Funeral services were held on September 24th at the Barrancas National Cemetery, NAS Pensacola. (Published in Pensacola News Journal on September 12, 2010)

Wamon Floyd

I am sad to announce the passing of Wamon Floyd on the second of July 2010. He had lived with a kidney transplant for several years which finally failed and required his return to dialysis for several months. He entered into the hospital in Tacoma, Washington and was found to be riddled with cancer.

He died two days after exploratory surgery.

Wamon graduated with class 64-2W from flight school and served with I Corps Aviation Company 7th Platoon Fangs in 64-65. In 1971-72 he served with A/101 AVN, 101 ABN and the 60th AHC. He retired in the early 1990s as CW4 after 30 years of service.

As a flight school classmate of his and a fellow Fang, I can attest to his uplifting spirit, sense of humor and devotion to duty and country. He was loved and respected by all who served with him and appreciated for his calm demeanor under fire.

Wamon is survived by his wife Vien, his four sons John, James, Joe, and Jason, and three granddaughters. Submitted by his longtime friend and classmate, Alan T. Ellison

Michael L. Sipsey

(Blue 31 or "Sips" if you knew him in Vietnam) was born January 28, 1946 just north of Boston and was always a Boston-loving, Bean Town kind of guy.



Mike and Sharon Sipsey were married 42 years ago (in 1968) and lived in the Greater Boston Area of Massachusetts. Before entering the Army, Mike worked for Sanders Associates, a Government Contractor for Computer Systems. Mike entered the Army in 1968 and of course became a great pilot, achieved the rank of CW2 and left the Army on June 1, 1971; the day after his first son Michael F. Sipsey was born.

While serving in Vietnam, Mike was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross while flying with C Troop 7/17th Air Cav on a dangerous extraction of crew-members from a downed LOH near the Triangle Area on May 11, 1970. I remember Sips was a great guy and everyone liked his style. He had a flower picture painted on the back of his flight helmet that said: "War is not good for children and other living things."

Mike worked in the Computer Electronics Industry for Applicon. Later they were bought out by Schlumberger and Mike was the Director of International Marketing for Schlumberger. His career later was focused on International Electronics Marketing. He was Vice President of BTX, a company in the Entertainment Industry. He retired as a managing partner for Capstone Global Group, having spent most of his career working abroad in the high tech field in Europe and Egypt.

Mike and Sharon had three children, Michael F., William and Alexandra. He loved his family and sailing off the Coast of New England. Mike passed away November 28, 2010 from complications from cancer. Burial will take place in Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. The Ruthless Riders of the 7/17th Air Cav salute Mike and his family.

Gary Spooner, Blue 36

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor (and Members) of the VHPA

Please note that the following VHPA Members have recently made significant contributions to the VHPA Memorial Scholarship Fund:

Mike Sheuerman

Don and Angelina Agren (in honor of Alex Kelley)

Gilbert Ferrey

David T. Messa

Joseph Alfano (in honor of Bryan Boykin)

Bruce Beatty

Steven Riddle

Mr. and Mrs. Norman F. Skipper

Many Thanks to each of them for their thoughtful donations which will soon make it possible for the VHPA to award 5 scholarships each and every year.

Tom Payne
Sec/Treasurer

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

I enjoyed seeing the collection of Medical Evacuation Cards in the recent edition of the VHPA Aviator.

I was the commander of the 82nd Medical Detachment (DUSTOFF) in Soc Trang, when most of the pilots who submitted their cards were in the unit while I was commanding. It was nice to see their names again and to be able to call up wonderful memories of those ever so brave Med Evac pilots.

I could not locate any of my left over 82nd Evacuation Cards, but I am submitting my Evacuation Card that I used when I was a 1st LT in Korea in 1960. I certainly hope you can stretch a point and allow a Korean Evacuation card to be included in your collection.

Edward Taylor, COL USA (Ret.)
DUSTOFF 86 (1968-69)

Editor's note: Col Taylor's "Evacuation Card" will be included along with several Vietnam "Business Cards" in the next issue of the VHPA Aviator. There's still time to include your card in the story, full submission details are available either by email [REDACTED] or by calling me at [REDACTED]

To the Members of the VHPA,

I need to touch base with you all one more time before I finalize my book U.S. ARMY HELICOPTER NAMES IN VIETNAM for publication. The results of this huge undertaking leave for the publisher at the end of December 2010 and this is a "last call" for any possible submissions. May I hit you up once again for crew names, chopper tail/serial #'s, nose/door/doghouse art images and copter "names" either verbally applied to a unit's helo or painted on the fuselage of that scout - slick - gun - cargo - dustoff and/or medevac aircraft.

It has taken me six years to gather 2,900

copter "names" that crews & pilots painted on their rotor aircraft between 1962 and 1973. This compilation of "names" can only be termed a success when ALL the names get recorded. I believe that what I have collected to date represents the MAJORITY of those that were inscribed and painted on our in-country birds.

So, please inform everyone that the time to contribute is now. Posterity will safeguard those that are saved for history; those that go un-recorded will regrettably chip away & erode our collective in-country legacy.

Thank you gentlemen and fellow veterans, let's also welcome home some of our long lost aviation history.

John Brennan, former SP5, 114 AHC, 1970-71, Vinh Long AAF, Mekong Delta.
Email to: [REDACTED]

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

With the help of your notice in the August issue of the Aviator we managed to attract some more former C/227 patriots. We had about 40-50 members and family attend. The reunion was a lot of fun and we all learned that the best way to mess up a good war stories is EYE WITNESSES!

I have sent you a picture taken at the Reunion showing three former Commanders of the C/227 and one WO "Control Officer" (L to R)



they are: Col (Ret) Charlie Phipps, Col (Ret) Kirby Lawson, Col (Ret) Pete Bradley and Master Warrant Officer Mike Rudd.

Thanks again for your help and a wonderful organization like the VHPA! Our next reunion is scheduled for Minnesota in 2012, MWO Swede Olson is the sponsor - Stay tuned!

Pete Bradley,

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

I thought the Membership would be interested in knowing about a project my good friend, Jason Stone, has been working on in behalf of my Vietnam unit, the armed Helicopter Platoon of the Razorbacks of the 120th AHC. Jason has mixed together a lot of the 8mm motion pictures that our aircrews took during our time in Vietnam (some showing actual shoot 'em up action) and some interviews of our pilots that were held at our last two Reunions into a made for TV documentary.

Jason's project is entitled "The Shadows of Men" and he is currently shopping the project out through his company's name, Hermit's Lair Productions. He's also just opened a supporting website at: www.theshadowsofmen.com where a trailer of the movie can now be viewed and eventually, interested parties will be able to purchase their own copies of the movie.

I invite anyone interested in this area to both visit the website and see the trailer. Hopefully we can all help convince the "powers that be" on the either the Military Channel or one of their sister networks to share this film with their viewers.

Cheers, Steve Bookout -- Razorback 33
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

I'm sure your members will recall the article and follow on letters in the Aviator about the rescue of Stormy 03, the F-4 high speed FAC that went down in Laos and was rescued by US Army Dustoff pilots.

After that article (There Wasn't a Billboard that said "Welcome to Laos", Issue 28-04, Jul/Aug 2010 of the Aviator) was published in your magazine, many of us involved in that rescue, both USAF and US Army veterans, got together and planned a Reunion to be held in Fredericksburg, Texas for December 4-5 of this year.

Unfortunately Don Boulet, the F-4 Pilot involved in the mission unexpectedly passed away this last October and while we will still hold our Reunion in December, a memorial service for Don will now be a large part of the gathering.

But I just wanted to again thank you and your membership for your enthusiastic promotion and support of this rescue mission.

Sincerely,

J. James Rooks, JR MD FACS

Steilacoom, WA

Former USAF Flight Surgeon, 390th

TFS, Da Nang, '70

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To the Members of the VHPA

This is to let you know that we are planning to hold our 2011 CHPA reunion at Ft. Rucker, Alabama on October 20-23 of 2011. The folks at Rucker are planning to roll-out the red carpet for us and we'll enjoy tours of the NVG lab., simulator rides, and much more.

As you know, our association is dedicated to "Preserving the Legacy" of combat helicopter pilots which your/our organization so bravely

built upon.

Thank you for your time and watch the next several upcoming Aviator's for more details as they become available.

Rick Roll

CHPA Reunion Chairman & Board Member

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

The Author of last month's story entitled "Christmas Party for Missionary Kids" send us this follow up message...

In reference to my story about our Christmas Party back for the Missionary Family's and their children in December 1966 in Ban Me Thout, I would like to add some more information about the people mentioned in the story. As I said in the update at the end of the story, the Missionary compound was eventually attacked by the NVA and all the staff was taken captive by the NVA, this is the story of what happened to them.

The USAID representative at the party that day was identified to me by an old friend, David N. Smith of the 208th Signal Detachment as being Mike Binge. David went on to say that "Mike Binge, the USAID representative in BMT went on to write an article for the Saturday Evening Post about his years of captivity." The other missionaries captured with him that day were Betty Olsen and the family of Henry Blood. We know that Betty Olsen died in September after 8 months of captivity, not in a camp but moving with North Vietnamese soldiers, starved, sick and exhausted. Henry, his wife Evangeline and their three children were spared in the initial attack but Hank died later of malaria on the force march north and was buried in the jungles of

Cambodia, we're not sure what happened to his wife Evangeline and her three children but we don't believe any of them survived either. Mike Binge himself spent two years trekking in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos before reaching a POW camp near Hanoi. He was finally released in March of 1973 after 5 years and 2 months of captivity. His Saturday Evening Post's article is a great description of the brutality of the animals we faced in Vietnam.

There were also several other missionaries at the station that day who never made it out of Ban Me Thout after the attack. Ed and Ruth Thompson and Bob and Marie Ziemer took refuge in a shallow bunker but the NVA "soldiers" threw grenades inside it killing both Ed and Ruth Thompson and wounding Marie Ziemer. Bob Ziemer was shot later died from his injuries later that day. That still left three other missionaries in the compound that day, Carolyn Griswold and her father, and Ruth Wilting. Carolyn Griswold's father was killed in the initial rocket attack on the compound, Carolyn was gravely wounded. Ruth Wilting tended Carolyn's wounds to the best of her ability but was executed when she tried to also help Bob Ziemer, and without Ruth's care, Carolyn passed away around sundown that day.

As I said, try to read Mike Bing's Saturday Evening Post's story about the attack and his subsequent years in captivity, it is a great description of the brutality of the animals we faced in Vietnam.

Bo Atkinson

Commander of the 155th AHC

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Chapter Activities...

Members of the VHPA's North Alabama Chapter strike a familiar pose (waiting for the Parade to start...) at the 2010 Veteran's Day Parade in Huntsville, Alabama.



Members of the South Missouri Chapter of the VHPA gather at The Keeter Center of the College of the Ozarks. Front row: Kim Phillips, Linda Finder, Carolyn Shields, Meta Smith, Connor (Bill Thompson's grandson), and Quinetta Rutledge. Second row: Lew Phillips, Joe Finder, John Wilkinson, Russ Emory, Roger Shields, Leonard Rutledge, and John Sorensen. Back row: Mik Mikulan, Bob Smith, Stan Coss, Ralph McClurg, Ron Clifton, Larry Brown, Clint Carlyle, and Bill Thompson.

VHPA CHAPTERS

Arizona Chapter

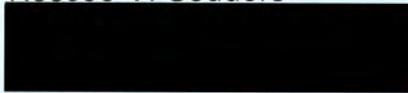
Bill Sorenson

**California Chapter North**

Ken Fritz

**Fort Rucker Chapter**

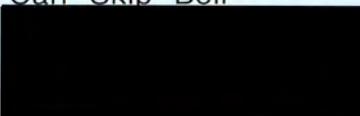
Roscoe V. Souders

**Fort Wolters Chapter**

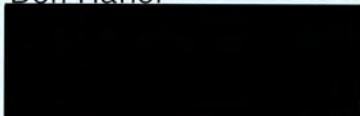
Lee Westbrook

**Georgia Chapter**

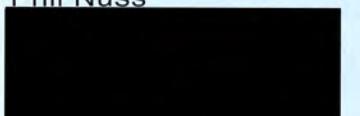
Carl "Skip" Bell

**Hawaii Chapter**

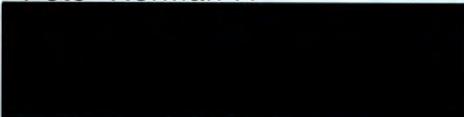
Don Harlor

**Louisiana Gulf Coast Chapter**

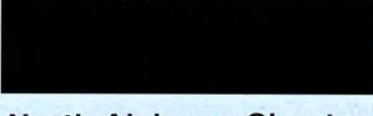
Phil Nuss

**Mid South Chapter**

"Pete" Norman IV

**Montana Chapter**

Todd Brandoff, President

**North Alabama Chapter**

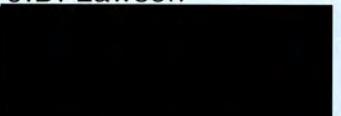
Jim White, President

**New England Chapter**

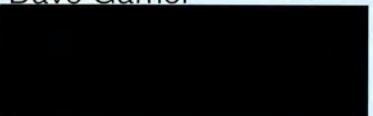
Bill Williams, President

**North Carolina Chapter**

J.D. Lawson

**Ohio River LZ Chapter**

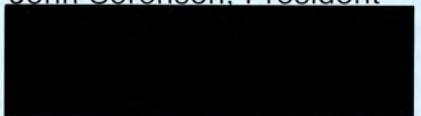
Dave Garner

**SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER,**

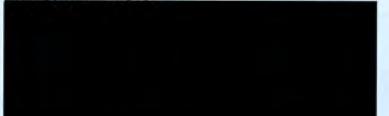
Harold Pardew

**South Missouri Chapter**

John Sorenson, President

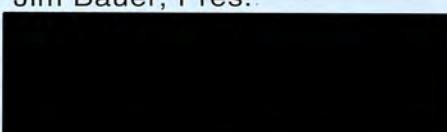
**Rocky Mountain Chapter**

Walt Wise

**The Alamo Chapter**

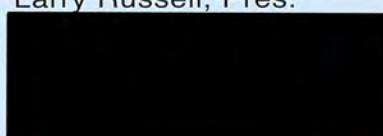
San Antonio, Texas

Jim Bauer, Pres.

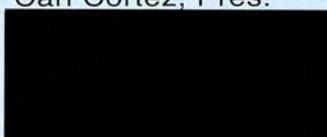
**South Carolina Chapter**

(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter

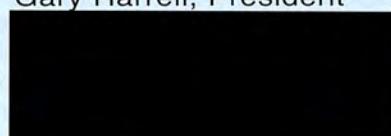
Larry Russell, Pres.

**Southern California Chapter**

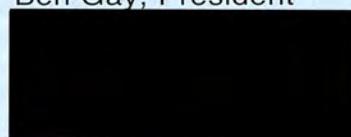
Carl Cortez, Pres.

**VHPA of Florida Chapter**

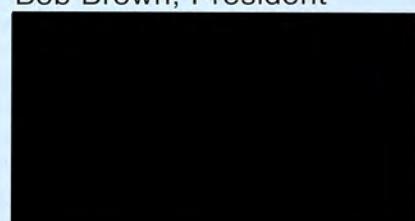
Gary Harrell, President

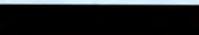
**Virginia Chapter**

Ben Gay, President

**Washington State Chapter**

Bob Brown, President



We're looking for someone to start a Chapter in Alaska. Contact Jack Salm for details on potential members and start-up tips at: 

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

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

On 21 October 2010 we held meetings to discuss several items, among them were if and when we would start collecting Chapter Dues, the solicitation for Candidates for our next Chapter elections and our level of participation in the upcoming laying of Wreaths For Veterans campaign.

Several members of our Chapter took part in the 2010 Veteran's Day parade in Huntsville, Alabama on 11 November, 2010. Lash Wisener, Bob Monette and Ralph Weber made the arrangements and Rick Brunell provided the truck for our non-mobile members to ride in. Lots of people turned out for the parade to show their support for the country's armed forces. See our pictures of the event elsewhere in this Aviator.

Our November meeting was held at the Schnitzel Ranch on 18 November, a great time was had by all. Here's hoping you and yours had a great Holiday Season.

Jim White, president

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

On Saturday, November 6th about 20 of our members gathered in Auburn, Washington to participate in the annual Auburn Veteran's Day Parade. Member Pat Staeheli did a great job in "herding all the Cats" into march order alongside our UH-1 Huey float. Driving that float was Frank Jones, our President Emeritus who, I learned that day, was the pilot who accepted delivery of and then flew the very first Huey delivered into the Army inventory. Great job Frank!

This year member Dan Fox did a great job of documenting our part of the parade. He has produced a really high-quality, edited video, complete with sound for all to enjoy. Simply go to: www.photodex.com/share/pilotdan/mpma9mg4.

Our Board will meet soon to organize our calendar for 2011. Our next meeting will be January 15 at the Museum of Flight in Seattle. Agenda and schedule TBA.

Bob Brown, President

SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER

We are a newly formed chapter and anyone in South Dakota that flew helicopters in Southeast Asia from 1963 through 1975 is asked to contact me. The information listed is on the VHPA Chapters' page on both VHPA.org and in this Aviator are correct.

Harold Pardew, President

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The NCVHPA took both our UH-1H and the AH-1 to Florence, SC for the exhibition of the VIETNAM MOVING WALL from November 9-13, 2010. Our OH-6 was at a local high school on November 6 and at the Veterans Day Parade held on November 11-13.

Our annual meeting will be in Raleigh on February 5, 2011 when we will elect new officers.

J.D. Lawson, President

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

Branson, Missouri, boasts having the country's largest Veterans Day celebrations, running from November 5th through the Veterans' Day parade. The South Missouri Chapter of VHPA held its fourth quarterly meeting on November 6th, at The Keeter Center of the College of the Ozarks. The Chapter welcomed first time attendees, a new member, and several wives joined us for fellowship and camaraderie.

On Wednesday, November 10th, the Chapter Council set up a table at the second annual Vietnam Veterans mini-reunion. There, we met fellow veterans from the far reaches of our great country -- from the state of Washington to North Carolina, from Minnesota to Texas. We left with a true sense of pride in our Chapter, our service, and our country.

Our recent book collection effort has resulted in gathering over a hundred books, which will be donated to Veterans Homes, Veterans

and military hospitals throughout Missouri. The Chapter looks forward to

2011, continued growth, sharing similar experiences with our members, guests and friends, celebrating all veterans, and educating our youth on patriotism and service.

On Veterans Day, all across Missouri, several of our Chapter Members participated in local parades, VFW, American Legion, and AMVETS activities in which the service of all our veterans was recognized, honored, and celebrated. We are thankful for all our veterans, all across our country, and are proud to stand with them as we remember those who paid the ultimate price for our freedoms, as well as their families. We share in their loss, as they were our brothers.

Our first quarterly meeting of 2011 will be held at the World Headquarters of Wings of Hope, [REDACTED] St. Louis, Missouri 63005. The meeting is scheduled for February, 19th, from 11:00am - 2:00pm. Following a brief business meeting, and a short, informative program on the mission of the Wings of Hope, lunch will be served.

Wings of Hope is a non-profit, humanitarian organization, serving those in need around the world, usually healthcare and a transportation system, typically a small bush airplane. They even have a new, ongoing project they are working on in Vietnam. Please make your plans to be with us, feel free to bring your spouse, or a guest, and enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie. You'll be glad you did! Check our website, vhpsamo.org as the meeting nears for additional information and further details.

John Sorensen, President

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER

The Gulf Coast Chapter of the VHPA's quarterly meeting was held on November 18 at Smilie's Restaurant in Elmwood (New Orleans area), Louisiana. Election results for 2011 are as follows.

President - Philip Nuss and Vic Lent, Secretary Treasurer. The Past President, Andrew Hover will also serve on the Board for 2011.

Meeting attendance has varied from less than ten to over twenty members. Chapter priorities include getting all Chapter Members to join VHPA National and to increase participation to at least twenty-five to thirty members at each chapter meeting. While there are still a lot of Vietnam-era helicopter pilots working in the oil patch, their work schedules sometimes do not contribute to large numbers at Chapter meetings. Most meetings are still made up of retirees (reflecting on the growing age of our folks).

Several members have already committed to attending the 2011 reunion in Orlando and of course we can not wait for the 2012 reunion here in New Orleans so that we can show off our town, culture, food and spirits.

Phil Nuss, President

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

Our quarterly meeting was held on 11 September at Logan's Roadhouse. The meeting was called to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a minute of silence in remembrance of those who died in the 9/11/2001 attack. Virgil Laughlin was elected Junior Member at Large, Mike Sheuerman was elected as Vice President and Virgil Laughlin volunteered for the post of Junior Member at Large.

Jim Messinger presented a brief overview of the Fort Wolters' Gate Restoration Project that we're participating in a partnership with the city of Mineral Wells. Total project cost is estimated to be \$50,000 and all contributions to the effort are greatly welcome. Your tax-deductable contribution should be made to the Vietnam War Museum with an attached note that the funds go to the Gate Restoration effort.

The Vietnam War Museum's Visitor Center is up and running and needs volunteers to man the building. Please contact Jim Messinger to sign up. Our next quarterly meeting will be held on Saturday, December 4 at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst, TX.

Lee Westbrook, President

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

The Rocky Mountain Chapter displayed its famous Helicopter War Museum at a presentation of the AVTT (American Veterans Traveling Tribute) Vietnam Memorial Wall on the campus of Colorado State University at Pueblo, Colorado on Sep 30 thru Oct 3. CSU Pueblo proved to be excellent hosts and put on a very well attended event, preliminary numbers suggest that as many as 10,000 people visited the Traveling Wall and the other exhibits in the 4-day period, see the pictures of our part in this event elsewhere in this Aviator. The Museum was then packed up and transported to Fort Carson for display at a special Vietnam Retirees Event in mid October.

The next scheduled exhibit for the Museum is an all day event at Prairie View High School in Brighton, CO in April of 2011. The High School is putting together a two day program to study the Vietnam War and honor all those who served. All classes of the school will tour the Museum during the daylong event to learn about the history of the war.

Ed Fickes, Operations Officer.

VHPA OF FLORIDA CHAPTER

Our members have been at several schools talking to the students about Vietnam and the part we played with the helicopters. At 90% of the schools we were able to display the OH-6 and brief the students on the part it played and its operation. The other functions we took part in are as follows:

8 November -We displayed the OH-6 and conducted briefings at the Carriage Museum and Resort in Windham, FL. They had a week long event for Veterans and the 8th was for Korea and Vietnam.

11 November - The OH-6 was on display at the James Haley VA Hospital in Tampa in the morning, at the Veteran's Memorial Park in Tampa over the noon time frame and in that afternoon, it traveled to Brandon, Florida for a community event in honor of veterans.

13-14 November - OH-6 and display traveled to Tarpon Springs for an event put on by the Chamber of Commerce.

The VHPAF continues to work with the county at the Veterans Park and Museum in Tampa to upgrade the facilities. A new area is being designed for the Vietnam War and we will mount both an UH-1 Huey and an AH-1 Cobra on pedestals in that area.



The Rocky Mtn. Chapter of Vietnam Helicopter pilots have been approved to display their Helicopter War Museum at any displays of the AVTT (American Veterans Traveling Tribute) Vietnam Memorial Wall. Our first showing at a Wall Event occurred at the campus of Colorado State University (CSU) Pueblo in Pueblo, Colorado on September 28th – October 3rd. There we had 800 – 900 folks view the Museum plus we had another 250-300 kids, two middle-school classes and even some adults enjoy our newly assembled 1/2 Huey cockpit.

We have received requests to attend air shows starting in January, but nothing definite yet. Check out our website for the latest at: www.vhpaf.org.

Submitted by Jim Basta Gary Harrell, President

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The SoCal Chapter held their Annual Meeting at the Wings and Rotor Air Museum located in Murrieta, CA on October 23. Outgoing President Tom Crosby turned the reins over to incoming President Carl Cortez. Sven Akesson was elected Vice President and Dick Mc Caig was elected Secretary/Treasurer. *Carl Cortez, President*

GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter continues to hold our bi-monthly Saturday morning breakfast meetings and continues to assist with efforts to educate local people and groups about the Vietnam War. We furnish speakers to high schools, colleges, Boy Scout and other civic groups who want to learn about the Vietnam War from people who actually fought there.

In addition, we continue to assist other Veteran's Groups in the local area with their projects by helping provide personnel and other resources but our primary activity continues to be the bi-monthly breakfast meetings. The men who participate really enjoy the opportunity to get together with other combat veterans, swap war stories, discuss VA related information, and maintain bonds that were forged so long ago.

If there are any former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots in the Atlanta area who would like to join our group, please see our web site at www.ga-vhpaf.org or contact me at [REDACTED] or via telephone at [REDACTED]

Skip Bell, President

VIRGINIA CHAPTER

The Virginia Chapter has scheduled a members and prospective members meeting for January 15, 2011. Please contact me at [REDACTED] Anyone who flew helicopters in Southeast Asia from January 1963 to 1973 and are interested in becoming members of a great group of guys should at least take a look.

Ben Gay, President



The right seat is complete with instrument panel and center console. The Chapter will be adding sound and additional center console and possibly overhead breaker panel items as they are located and become available. All controls are working and interactive – but the seat seems to be smaller than most of us remember. We think that you'll agree that these pictures are worth a 1,000 words...

You can go to the website of the AVTT (www.AVTT.org) to see when their wall will be in your area.

I Return to Vietnam..... by Jim Robbins

April 4, 1968

It was cool, rainy, foggy, and down right nasty that morning of April 4, 1968. 2nd Bde Avn, 1Cav was at LZ Stud in support of 1/5, 2/5, and 2/12 in the Khe Sanh AO.

Those were the days when the revetments were a hole in the ground as wide as a D-9 cat blade + 2 or 3 feet on either side, and as deep as the M-60 gun mounts on a D or H model.

It was about 08:00 when the Maintenance Platoon Sergeant came into operations with a list of needs. My aircraft, the one I was flying that day, needed a hot-end inspection, and fuel. Re-fueling was shut down when we got in the night before. So I grabbed my stick buddy and we took off for the parking area. By the time we got back to the forward company area we learned that 2nd Bde Avn had a Charlie Charlie down. This I remember was about 10:00hrs. Things were very quiet in the pilot's tent that night. Mike Moran and Ron Phears were family and we were not a very big one. We had all flown together, laughed together, eaten together, drank together...but this?

I remember the next day flying along route 9 up towards Khe Sanh looking for the spot where they went down.

I found it. From the air it was just a burned black spot on the road. Fast forward to Sept 8, 2010.

I'm again on a mission in Vietnam, but this time it's with PeaceTrees. We're in Quang Tri province and I was on a bus with the greatest group of folks I've been around in a long time. We had just stopped at the Rockpile and had started up Route 9 toward LZ Stud but nothing looked familiar. Ever since arriving at Dong Ha the day before....nothing looked the same. Vietnam had moved on.... and frankly it looked Great!

PeaceTrees had planted a lot of trees in the 15 years that they had been here. But most of all God had reclaimed the land and grew back what was destroyed. In the 42 years since I had been here last...what a difference. I never saw where LZ Stud once was. All the trees have grown back. I did see the bend in the road where it turned almost 90 degrees right... NW toward Khe Sahn. There use to be a Marine FB there...I think it was called FB Ca Lu. Once we turned NW toward Khe Sahn I realized the road was new and I didn't know if I would find the spot where Mike and Ron died or not. I had planned to place a floral arrangement there and I had been thinking about this day for 42 years.

If only I hadn't gone to Maintenance that day.

Ron and Mike hadn't been in the Army that long and I was sure the O-5 had talked them into going up route 9 low level. The SITREP from 1/5, S-2/3 showed the weather to be 1,300' overcast, 1/2 visibility with fog and drizzle, it was way below VFR conditions that day, besides, we had recently run into a .50 Cal on that same route.

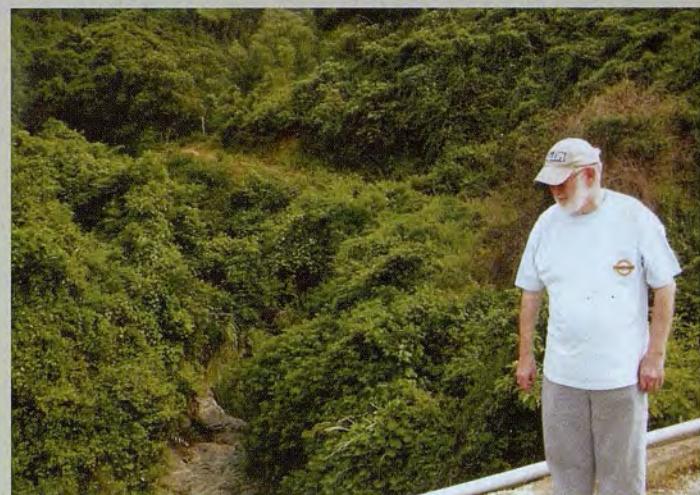
I should have been there. I could have said "no". I had already said no to this guy just the day before. But tickets needed to be punched, and as a result, lives were lost that day...so...for 42 years I have wanted to do something to make sure that Mike and Rod were not forgotten.

PeaceTrees was bending over backwards to see to it that my dream came true. I had told this story to Blair Burroughs, he's the go-to man at PeaceTrees. If it had not been for him I would not be here getting off this bus in Vietnam at the very spot on the map where I had last seen, from the air, where Ron and Mike took their last breath.

After action reports said one of the crew had lived. Wounded, the crew man said that he lived only by hiding under the crashed aircraft after it left the road and slid into the ravine, the NVA shot everyone else. As I walked into an open area I noticed some children standing and staring at me and further down some water buffalo grazed, it was finally a peaceful scene



Portion of old Route 9 that ran from LZ Stud to Khe Sahn. It still shows a dark spot where Ron & Mike's aircraft impacted before sliding off the bridge and into the ravine below.



Jim looks down into ravine where Ron & Mikes' aircraft came to rest that day. The only survivor of the incident hid underneath the wreckage while the NVA shot the other survivors.



Familiar site to many I Corp pilots, the Rockpile as of September 2010



Children drawn to the site that stands so clear in Jim's memory



More signs that life has returned to normal in Vietnam

after all these years. Then there it was...the old road.... a bridge trestle, and the burned hard surface area. When I walked toward the area with the flowers I thought I would lose it. But I didn't, I felt a peace down deep. I was reminded that Ron and Mike were not there...I was still there, and that it was time for me to leave it behind. As I stood on the trestle and looked down into the drop, which appeared to be at least 50 feet deep, I tried to hear the whoop whoop of a Huey behind me... but it wasn't there... nothing but the sound of the children laughing and playing next to the bus, and the water buffalo.

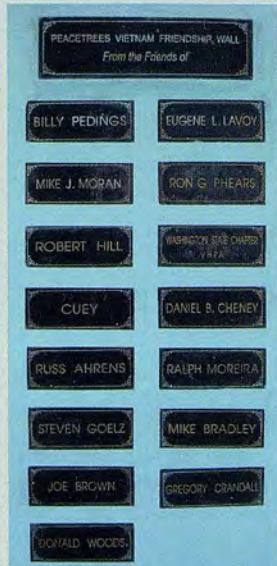
It was time to go. Later in the trip there was a dedication at a library built by PeaceTrees for the children. A "Wall of Honor" with the names of some of the guys who died in the Khe Sahn area was also there. Ron and Mike's names were on that wall. Mr. Quang Lee made sure of that for me.

Quang Lee, the PeaceTrees man in Vietnam, is one of those guys you meet and will never forget. I don't know if I will ever see him again, but if I do...it will be as if we had just seen each other yesterday...I'm sure of it.

But now it's time to go home.

Vietnam is a wonderful place to visit, the kids turn me into a bowl of jelly every time. Everyone was so nice, but I wouldn't want to live there. America is my home....hamburgers and French fries ...and FREEDOM.

But I would like for more of us to know about the good things that PeaceTrees is doing and the Wall of Honor for those who died in the Khe Sahn area. For all you Blue Stars...this is a good thing...believe me I've been there and your buddies will be memorialized forever. If you want to do something...please look at PeaceTrees...they are the real deal.



E-Mail:

What is a Returnee?

....by Jim Robbins

He's a guy who can look out over the rivers and hills of Vietnam and see a sunrise and have faith, hope and courage which is the root of virtue.

When he knows down in his heart every man is noble and as lonely as himself and seeks to know, forgive, forget and to love those that who once hated him.

When he knows how to sympathize with his fellow brother east or west in their sorrows and in their sins, knowing that we fought a fight against many odds.

When he knows how to make friends and hold on to them, but above all how to make friends with himself.

When he can look at the beauty of Vietnam and not hear the thunder of guns, but feel the thrill of an old forgotten joy in the laughter in the little children.

When he can see star-crowned trees that now stand in the glint of sunlight over the Quang Tri River and it subdues him like the thought of an old buddy or a loved one who has gone on before him to be with his Lord.

When he can look into the face of every mortal and see something beyond sin.

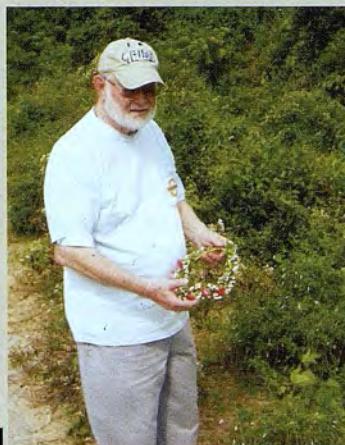
When he knows that he has to leave Vietnam for a second or third time, that this time was different, he was touched down in his heart. Down deep where he couldn't scratch.

He knows that by making this trip he has kept the faith with himself with his buddies, and most importantly with his God.

He has remembered that his hand was on the sword for evil.... glad to be alive....but was not afraid to die...in this place far, far away from home where no one remembers his name, who he is, or what he did....but him.

Such a man is a Returnee....to a place where he left his youth.

This man has found the real secret of peace and forgiveness, never to forget those who gave it all.



The inscription on the wreath says: Dedicated to Ron Phears and Mike Moran, killed here on 4 April 1968. Jim Robbins, September 2010, 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry

CW-4 Jim Robbins
Avn USA (Ret)
Class 67-19, Dancer 26

VHPA Member Rick Williams sent us these photos along with a note:

One day last July I took a trip over to the old Fort Wolters, it was the first time I had been back since I graduated from there in November 1969. We drove around the old post and I took several photos of the older buildings but when we got back on the highway to return to Garland, we stumbled onto The National Vietnam War Museum and Memorial Gardens. The Visitor's Center wasn't open but we enjoyed visiting the grounds, but I was surprise by the small number of Vietnam units that had a commemorative stone placed in their memorial garden.

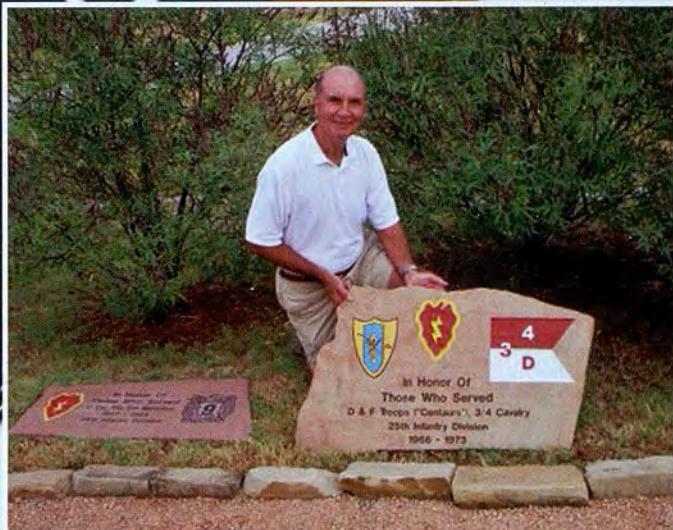
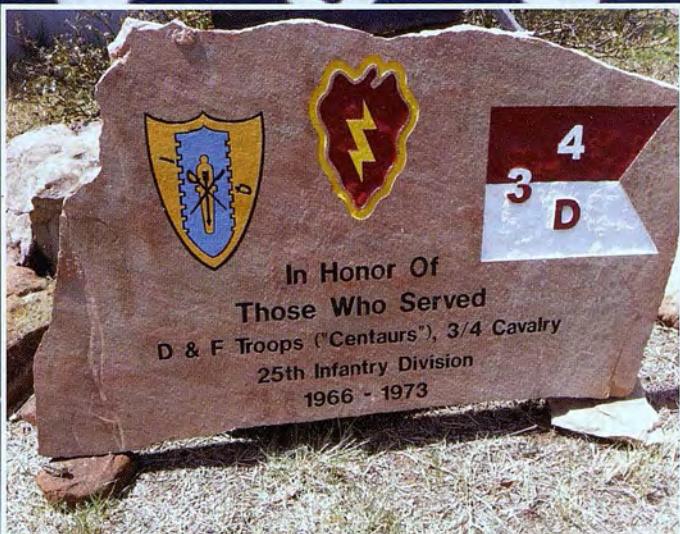
So I contacted some of the pilots from my old unit, and 10 of us chipped in \$41.00 each to have a stone made for our unit, the 3/4th Cav. I've attached a photo of the stone in the hopes that this picture will inspire units to follow our example.

Last, I was really glad to see that story on the Sep/Oct issue where they are going to remodel the main gate entrance into the old Fort Wolters. This is a much needed improvement and it also deserves everyone's support.

*Regards,
Rick Williams, Garland, Texas
E-mail: [REDACTED]*



Replica of the Vietnam War Memorial Wall located on the grounds of the Vietnam War museum and memorial gardens



Rick placing the stone in honor of the 3/4th Cav Details of the 3/4th Cav memory stone honoring the "Centaurs" of the 3/4th Cav, 25th Infantry Division, 1966-1973

War Story, the First Flight of an Army Q-Model TOW Cobra

By Bob Taylor

Following my second tour in Vietnam, I was assigned to the US Army bell plant activity at Bell helicopter as an Army acceptance test pilot from October 1970 until my retirement in August 1977. My first assignment upon arrival was as a ferry pilot (to learn how "factory spec" aircraft should fly, they said). After a year of flying all over the country delivering aircraft, I received orders allowing me to acceptance test new aircraft.

In the summer of 1972 Bell was developing the "TOW Cobra". CW3 Audie Stern was the Army Bell Plant Activity office project pilot for that aircraft and took it to trade shows and various bases to show what it would look like. He had several pieces of "wooden Mock up" gear which he would configure the AH-1G for each show.

Audie was also the project pilot for the development of the float equipped OH-58 which was to be deployed to Alaska in a few months time. Since I was also doing a lot of the armament work for the activity, I attended some of the engineering meetings on the TOW development. As luck would have it, Audie was in Alaska training the OH 58 crews in the use of float equipped OH-58As when it came time to fly the first Tow Cobra. The chief of flight test at that time was LTC Bob O'Donald who had previously commanded the Amarillo Bell facility. He came out of his office and asked if anyone could fly the tow cobra. In my cocky way I responded "Hell it's just another weapons system – I can fly it!" Bob then instructed me to go to Bell's experimental plant 6 located on the west side of Arlington Texas Airport and conduct a safety of flight acceptance on the aircraft prior to it being turned over to the Army guys from Edwards for their testing. "Just do a safety of flight on the bird. Leave the TOW stuff alone." Ok" I respond, got my Flight gear, jumped in the old Huey and headed to Arlington. On landing, I go to the test pilot office and ask for the flight test engineer and make up a short check list. I told him that I was just doing a safety of flight test and would not mess with the TOW System.

I made a few notes but as far as I could see it was just a Cobra with a new weapon on it.

I did a preflight walk around and got in the bird with my single page of notes and went through a normal crank and systems check per the Maintenance flight Test Manual.

As a precaution, I pulled every circuit breaker that said "TOW" just to make sure I did not inadvertently screw something up. This was to be a safety of flight test, not a systems test.

As far as I could tell, no new placards or warnings had been put on the instrument panel and all the red lines remained the same as the AH-1G. I fired the beast up, did all the standard ground, hover test, and commo tests etc. then flew to the south of Arlington Airport to test the aircraft. I liked to climb to about 5 or 6 thousand feet to do the AH-1 flight tests, completing it with a "VNE" check by taking the Aircraft to the red line to check vibrations at high speed (190Kts). I did the cruise checks and turned east bound to do the dive checks. I entered the dive in a rolling turn and began moving to VNE in 10 knot increments checking the vibration levels Gun Sight and control feel. At about 175 knots the aircraft started a right roll. I eased off on the stick and the roll continued as I followed it through and did a sort of "Modified Split S" as I slowed the aircraft. At about 170 knots it started returning to normal. I checked the SCAS system and it appeared normal and I thought, "That's the weirdest SCAS hard over I have ever had." I slowed to below 120kts and turned the SCAS off and everything appeared normal. Turning the SCAS back on, I went in 10 knot increments to higher speed and again, at about 175, it rolled and I flew it out much the same as before.

At about this time the control tower called me and asked "Bob Are you OK out there?" And "What are you doing?" I replied "I read a while and I fly a while" They replied, "You are putting on quiet an air show out



there". I then said, "I am returning to the field" and asked that they have the flight test engineer meet me on the ramp. Meanwhile, on the way back to the airfield, I asked the tower for an FM homing beacon so I could test the FM homing on my way inbound. It did not work. The radio was dead.

On landing, the flight test engineer met me and we discussed the "Hard Over" that I had experienced. I informed him that about 175 knots it rolled on its back and he said "Damn... the VH on this bird is only 155 knots. (VH is the point that damage can occur to wing stores etc.) I said, "Well there is nothing about that in these notes and the damned redline is at 190 knots." He said it still should not have rolled and we started looking the aircraft over. He said "I think I see your problem" I stood at the front of and looked down the sides of the aircraft and saw what he was talking about. There were two different TOW launchers on the bird. One was the launcher that all cobra drivers are familiar with and the other had a debris shield on the back that was about a foot in diameter. The Army had not yet chosen the launcher that would be used in production. I missed that on my walk around. What happened was this: As I entered the area of 175 knots the round flange caught the air and caused asymmetrical drag which yawed the aircraft slowly and the SCAS kicked in slowly to compensate until it reached its limit and the aircraft began to roll. Fortunately it was slow enough that I could recover by slowing the aircraft and continuing the roll to a modified split S and recover. The Bell pilots had never experienced this because they knew enough to stay below 155 Knots.

As a result of that flight, the manuals and check lists were changed, Red lines altered, Warning and cautions place on the panel. And Oh yes, The FM radio was now being cooled by the TOW Blower air and when I pulled the TOW circuit breakers I shut off the air and cooked the radio. I made sure that caution went into the manual also.

I flew the next 8 AH-1Q's off the Mod line at Arlington without incident. Following that first flight I made sure I was in all the engineering meetings on new designs that I could attend just to make sure I was never surprised again. That sort of experience gets rid of "Cocky" fast.

I left the Army in 1977 and went to work for Bell as a design engineer in the Armament Design Group and three years later transferred to Cockpit design and spent a total of 23 years working for Bell before retiring in December 2000.

Bob Taylor CW3 USA (RET)
Life Member VHPA
Ft. Worth Texas.
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

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Winning ticket will be drawn on Sunday, May 29, 2011.

The bluebook on this gem is \$3,650.00, but the raffle ticket is only \$10.

Awardees' of the 2010 VHPA and AAAA Scholarships have been announced!

This year 41 descendants of VHPA members applied for the 4 VHPA scholarships that are awarded/administered by the AAAA (Quad A)

44% of those applying was either granted a VHPA Scholarship or one of an additional 14 Scholarships that were also granted by AAAA. These awards totaled \$18,500.00 so Well Done by the descendants of the Members of the VHPA!

VHPA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

David J Fulbrook
Madelyn L Keyser
Rachel L Koenig
Kayln L Oden

AAAA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

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Madeline C Chais	Stephen T Nee III
Taylor E Cooper	Tyler E Ogg
Jessica M Crandall	Lela M Ruck
John D Gramke	Courtney M Schutze
Erin A Henkel	Amanda K Speare
Casey L Johnson	William A Yoder

If your descendant applied for and received an AAAA Scholarship and somehow I missed his or her name please let me know.

Please encourage your children, grand children and great grand children, etc to apply. There are only two requirements - 1) you must be a dues current VHPA member and 2) you must be a member of AAAA or the applicant must be an associate member of AAAA. Go on line at vhpawards.org, click on VHPA SCHOLARSHIP and follow the prompts.

Deadline for applying for the awards given in this year is May 1st, 2011. We will have four VHPA Scholarships here in 2011 and five by 2012.

Congratulations to all the recipients!

Mike Sheuerman
Fundraising Chairman, VHPA Scholarship Committee

Save your photographic legacy now!

For years Dan Fox procrastinated about restoring his old 35mm Vietnam slides which had been sitting on a closet shelf since 1973. Two years ago, Jack Salm, VHPA President at the time, requested Dan write an article about Christmas in Vietnam for the Aviator. He wrote about flying Christmas trees in December of 1972 which became the Aviator cover story (vol.26, no. 6). Writing that article was the catalyst to have his deteriorating slides cleaned of dust, grit, scratches, blotches, discoloration and converted to digital images which would become part of his Vietnam tour DVD slide show. Not able or willing to attempt this project himself, he found Ned Crimmin, a retired AF Intelligence guy who had the equipment and expertise to do the job properly.

John Penny located his late brother's and recently his own Vietnam slides after they had been stored away for a long time in closets, basements, and garages (he moved a lot). He bought himself a \$98.00 slide scanner and excitedly (but slowly) scanned his slides. He soon discovered that not only was this a time consuming task but scanning them does not erase years of deterioration and neglect. The results were disappointing to say the least. After talking to Dan, he too sent his slides to Ned. The results were amazing.

You too could buy the equipment and teach yourself how to do it with the understanding there will be a huge investment of time and a lot of trial, error, and frankly... humiliation. Scanners run from \$48.00 to \$2500.00; with price indicating the quality of outcome. But, if not properly prepared, a dirty, damaged slide remains... dirty and damaged. The digitalized image will be very disappointing.

There are probably people in your area like Ned with the equipment and expertise for this kind of work; it pays to ask around. There are also companies that you can find online that can digitalize your slides like <http://slidestodigital.com/>, <http://www.scancafe.com>, or <http://www.digmypics.com/>, just to name a few. Prices vary from \$0.22 to \$0.99 per slide for the companies we looked at online - depending on the level of services you want. Most scan services use batch scanners but Ned scans each slide one at a time and then restores and repairs each slide with different restoration programs as needed.

So the "bottom line" is . . . if you have some old Vietnam slides sitting in your closet like we did, don't procrastinate any longer. We both found a guy whose personal service, top of the line equipment, and restoration efforts brought our slides back to life and allowed Dan to complete his Vietnam Tour slide show with great quality.

Ned can be contacted at: [REDACTED] If you are interested in watching Dan's slide show and seeing your own possibilities check it out at:

www.photodex.com/share/pilotdan/w4p26mg4

John Penny [REDACTED]



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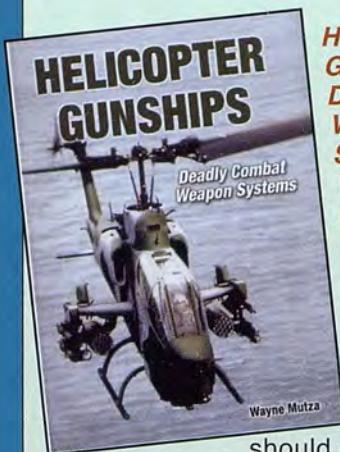
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These covers and coasters are offered by VHPA Member Charles Lee, Playtex 26 / Liftmaster 26, in 1969.

BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life member
JOHN PENNY



Helicopter Gunships: Deadly Combat Weapon Systems is Vietnam helicopter crew chief Wayne Mutza's

21st book about aircraft of all kinds. It

should come as no surprise to any of us that from the first introduction of helicopters to military service there had been an effort to provide these aircraft with weapons systems. This book covers all the helicopters that were armed with weapons by welding, strapping, bolting, or hanging

weapons on them and the attack helicopters that were more often built around the weapons system.

Mutza has done a meticulous and extensive job researching the history and development of the aircraft, weapons systems, and the combat operations of helicopter gunships including the ones we all know about and the ones that never made it to the units. He covers it all from the early studies of mounting a 20mm cannon in the nose of a Sikorsky R-5 to the Boeing AH-6i. The details of every prototype and every helicopter gunship that went into service for the US military branches as well as the foreign manufactured aircraft are presented.

As always, my favorite part of a book like this is the pictures; some of which have been provided by

VHPA members. Mutza has gathered an amazing collection of excellent photographs for this book; eye candy for every old helicopter pilot who would like to saddle up again. These photographs are well presented and arranged throughout the book in a way that is not too dense. I highly recommend this book; it is not some coffee table picture book, this is serious history and I think you'll enjoy the read.

Helicopter Gunships (208 pages with photographs, \$39.95 + \$6.95 shipping) by Wayne Mutza, ISBN: 978-1580071543 is available from www.specialtypress.com and other book suppliers.

Soldier's Heart by VHPA members **William Schroder and Ronald Dawe, Ph.D.**, is a very interesting, informative, and personal story about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in Vietnam veterans. The authors point out, 25% of the combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are being diagnosed with symptoms associated with PTSD. Desire to help this new generation of veterans has created a great deal of attention and study. However, the authors make a compelling case that there is still much to learn from studying those Vietnam veterans who have already lived a lifetime with PTSD.

The authors provide excellent resource information about PTSD, but the true heart of the book centers on intense personal interviews with five Vietnam veterans with PTSD. Their backgrounds are every bit as diverse as their combat experiences. As each veteran's narrative unfolds, an informative analysis describes how their experiences relate directly to their symptoms. You will find these stories of the impact of PTSD on their lives and those of their loved ones

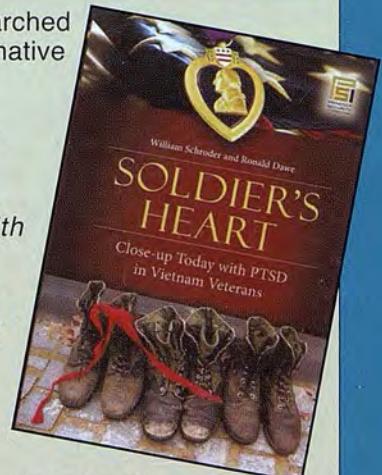
both disturbing and gut wrenching. Their lives back in "the world" became a legacy of failed relationships, lost jobs, anger issues, alcohol, and drugs. The profound tragedy of PTSD was further compounded when these behaviors became the stereotype of the Vietnam veteran in the eyes of many in the American public.

The perception and understanding of the symptoms of PTSD has improved greatly since the term "soldier's heart" was used to describe troubled Civil War veterans. There will undoubtedly be more generations of American combat veterans to face these "invisible wounds." This book was written to help foster understanding and help answer many of the questions surrounding PTSD.

The authors stress the first step for any effective treatment of PTSD is anchored in understanding the multiple manifestations of it. I encourage you to read this

well researched and informative book.

Soldier's Heart: Close-up Today With PTSD in Vietnam Veterans, (208 pages, \$49.95) by William Schroder and Ronald Dawe, ISBN: 978-0275999513 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.



NOTED WITH INTEREST

One Day Too Long: Top Secret Site 85 and the Bombing of North Vietnam by Timothy N. Castle. This is still the definitive book about the loss of Lima Site 85 in Laos. AF CMS Richard Etchberger recently was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for his heroic actions there in March 1968.

The Angel of Dien Bien Phu: The Lone French Woman at the Decisive Battle for Vietnam by Genevieve de Galard tells her personal story of the hellish drama of Dien Bien Phu.



Max 2/20th ARA, 1st Air Cav in 1970. I considered myself is just a regular guy like all the other pilots and shared the same emotions, good and bad. I did worry I was maybe a little more afraid than others, things could get scary in a blinding flash, pun intended!

OK, this is what happened on the first day. A fire-team of 2 Blue Max cobras were scrambled to an area of the AO where contact had already been broken but an unknown number of enemy forces were still in the area. We made contact with the friendly's. Lead (our Mission Commander) introduced us to a captain who was in the Command & Control (C&C) Huey orbiting below us. Turns out the slick pilot was waiting for us as he needed a cobra to follow him down while he landed to take a look at an arms cache in the LZ close to where the bad guys were busted by the Cav's Blues. I don't remember why it was me that locked into the Huey's 5 o'clock and followed him down, but there I went. Suddenly, the Huey was flying over numerous small explosions, I told him it looked to me like they were flying too close to where mortars were exploding in the tree tops. A minute later I heard the pilot say he was taking fire from the right side so I fired a pair of rockets (only one left the tube) and it impacted a 100 meters to the right side and rear of the slick. The C&C Huey climbed up, turned and then told us that that was enough for him, he wasn't going back into the area; and we could go on home. We did just that, put the cobras to bed and went to drink some beer as it was tea time.

A few hours later, I was told to go to our Battalion Commander's office with no reason given, I didn't know him well and couldn't think why he wanted to see me. When I went in to his office, there, sitting in his chair was a Full Bird Colonel. This was the 1st Air Cav's Division Artillery (Div Arty) Commander and

the man wasn't smiling! My Commander told me I was there to answers some questions. I don't remember all the dialogue but do know the Div Arty Cmdr said things like, "Trying to shoot a Huey down" and "Was I on the side of the Communist?" and "cowboy Loch and Cobra pilots!" After an eternity of verbal pounding, he asked me if I had anything to say. In a daze, all I could come up with was, "I'm sorry Sir, and it won't ever happen again!"

He jumped up out of the chair and with shouting that hurt your ears and with words that would tear your heart out, he started in again. He said (something to the effect), "You damned right because you will never fly for the Cav again because I'm putting you up for a Flight Evaluation Board (FEB)!" "No, better still I am going to have you Courts Marshaled!" "Now get out of here and think about that!" I was numb. I walked like "The Mummy" back to my hootch, barely able to move my feet. My mind was a whirlwind of



This is a true story. I haven't added any Salsa, Bull Doo Doo or any other spices to it, as it is plenty salty enough! This happened when I was a new CW2 and a pilot with the Blue

jumbled thoughts.

The walk back to my hootch gave me too much time to think before I could find a friend to tell what just happened. The most terrible thought was going home to my family in total disgrace, thank God for friends and beer that night! The next day my BN CO called me in and had me sit down and tell him about the flight. He told me it's a good time to go on R&R and not to worry. I went to Hong Kong with a friend but I couldn't stop worrying.

A couple of days after getting back from Hong Kong I was told to report to the 1st Cav Commander's (a Major General) office. After cooking for an hour in the outer office, I was sent in. The General had me sit down and he told me what the DIV ARTY Commander had reported and what was being recommended.

The General then asked me to tell him about the flight. He hadn't looked at me yet and I was sitting perpendicular to him on his right side. I told him everything that happened that day and I even admitted that Max pilots didn't have as much experience at low level flying and shooting as did the escort gunships. The two

big black stars on his collar had gotten enormous by the time I finished, I know because I had been staring at them for want seemed to be hours

Turns out it didn't matter, the General said that an investigation revealed that the Huey was damaged by mortar shrapnel, the unit's maintenance people had ruled out all chance of rocket damage.

For the first time, the General looked over at me and said not to be concerned about the DIV ARTY Commander as the man had been in country for 18 months, desperately needed to rotate stateside and in fact was soon going home.

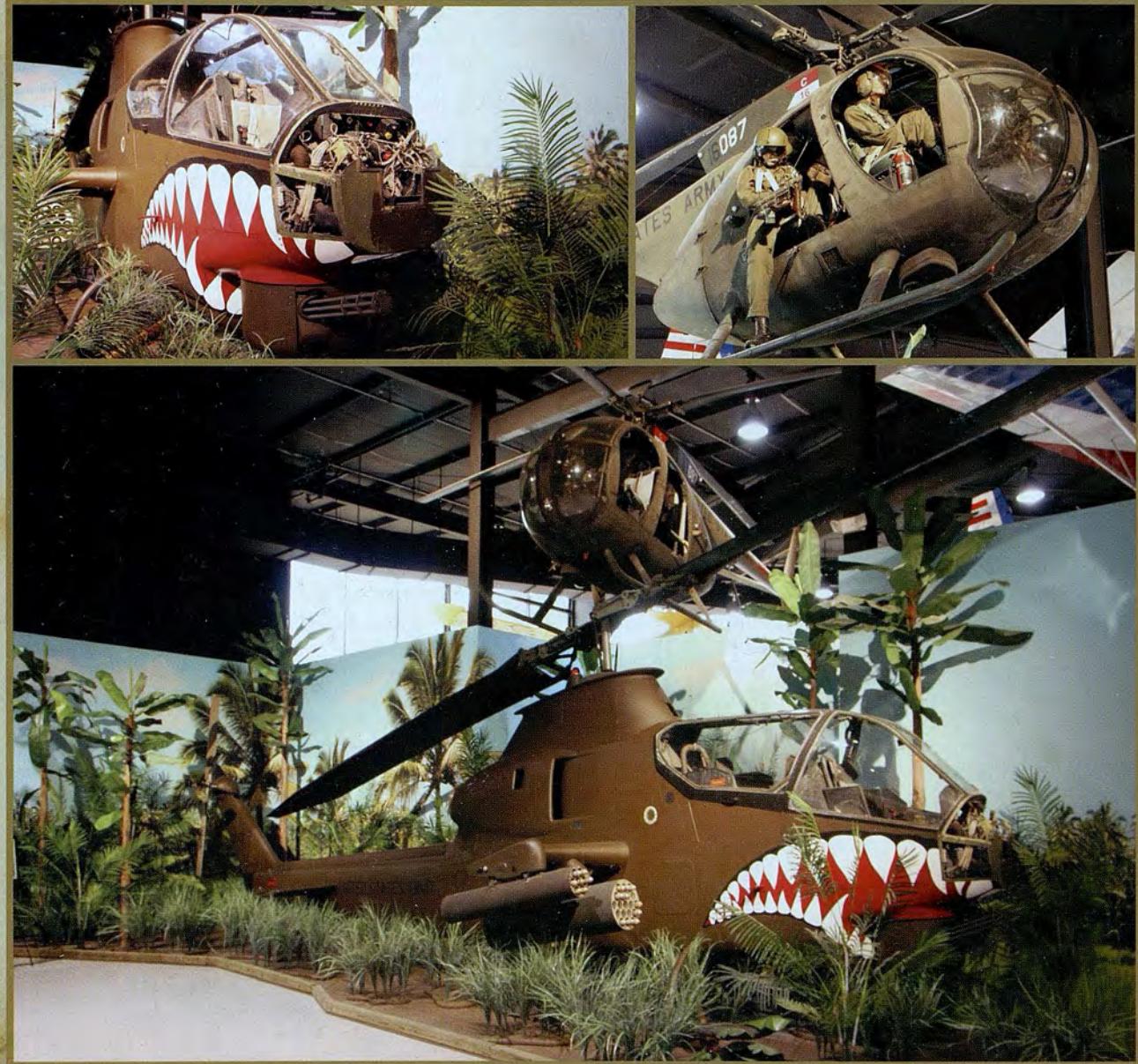
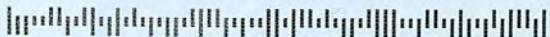
He told me to get back out there and put some rockets on the bad guys for him! "Yes, Sir!" I answered and when I left, there was no walking out of there like The Mummy, I was dancing an Irish jig and whistling "Leaving on a Jet Plane" all the way home!

Amazing story isn't it? I mean had it happened to you it would be amazing, but "that's not all the story" as the saying goes. A few weeks after this life's crisis, I was told to be at the Blue Max operations at 15:00 for an awards ceremony, turns out the medals were to be given by the aforementioned DIV ARTY Commander. I was second man in the first row and the Colonel in question stopped directly in front of me and we stared at each other while the citation was read. The DFC I received that day was for another operation and the supporting verbiage was just beautiful, but I didn't hear a word of it. I was sweating bullets the entire time wondering if the Colonel, locked into attention not 6 inches from my nose, remembered me. Well I guess he did as he just put the medal in my hand and didn't pin it to my shirt. As he moved down the line continuing to pin on medals I could see my Battalion Commander smiling, he then gave me a quick wink! Once the ceremony was over, without another word the Colonel climbed on a Huey that took him to Bien Hoa to catch his own "Jet Plane" stateside.

I don't have any ill feelings about the incident and being an old guy now, it makes for a good war story! At least it does to me and hopefully you will enjoy it too. A true story - from disgrace to honor in just a couple of weeks.



Charlie Gossett



VHPA Member George Graham sent us this update on a project undertaken by the Southern Museum of Flight in Birmingham, Alabama.

In his e-mail he writes "We are putting together a Vietnam display (diorama) inside our museum that features a pink team on a mission in Vietnam where the Loach is covering a downed Cobra. Our Loach is 100% restored and our Cobra is about 75% completed, as you can see we still need a nose cover for our snake."

If any VHPA members have anything to offer to the project, suggestions on the layout or otherwise, please contact Dr Jim Griffin (director) at [REDACTED] or the Southern Museum of Flight, [REDACTED] Birmingham, AL 35206.

Thanks much, George S Graham III, "Gladiator 17"