



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ~ Issue 29-04 ~ July/August 2011



Fly a gun mission in the heart of the DMZ with Scarface, the finest Helicopter Gunship Squadron in the Marine Corps. The story of that mission (Flight to Red Flag) written by Randolph Crew, the co-pilot on that 1969 mission can be found on pages 18 & 19 of this, the July and August issue of the VHPA Aviator.

This photo of the "Red Flag" marking the start of North Vietnam is courtesy of Jerry DiGrezio, Catkiller 25 & 03, an US Army (O-1) Birdog pilot in Vietnam for the 220th Aviation Company (Surveillance Airplane Light).

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# GREETINGS FROM VHPA HEADQUARTERS

I hope you were able to make the superb reunion in Orlando. It was a great time and included many new features that amped up the entertainment value of the reunion. The "live rock concerts" were such a hit that we are working on something very special for next year (HINT: it starts with Vince and ends with Valiants) So mark your calendar now for Reunion 2012 in Super Fun New Orleans. The official reunion dates are July 31-August 5, 2012 but you may want to plan to come early or stay longer as there is just so much to see, do and eat in NOLA! This reunion will be one for the ages, and it's not over July 4th, so plan on making it to the Big Easy for R2012.

If you didn't make it to the reunion in Orlando this year, you missed out on meeting your new VHPA Headquarters staff. That's a shame! So allow me to introduce you to Sherry Rodgers, who is the lead VHPA Account Manager at HQ. Sherry has been with MRP since 2004 and dedicated to VHPA since headquarters moved to Texas. Sherry is an admin wiz and has been instrumental in cleaning up the bad addresses, emails, and phone numbers in the VHPA database. She has also spearheaded the effort to increase member renewals as well as managing the con-



siderable administration work involved with the annual reunion. Sherry is committed to making your VHPA HQ be the best that it can be.

I would also like to introduce Rebecca Bittle, your VHPA Tour and Event Director. Rebecca does an amazing job organizing, contracting, detailing and executing VHPA's event program. The sheer volume of details that RB manages is over-whelming to most, yet like the Energizer bunny she keeps going until everything is perfect. She is a seasoned veteran of over 15 years in this business and we are blessed to have her as our "forward tour controller".



Also new at HQ for the summer at least is Lauren Casey. Fresh off a stellar first year at University of Alabama, Lauren is helping to process membership renewals and catch calls during the busiest times. Since the rest of us are considerably longer in the tooth, LC brings a breath of fresh air and energy to the HQ environment.



***Don't forget to mark your calendars now for what is sure to be a great 2012 reunion in New Orleans!***

## INTERESTING LINKS FLOATING AROUND THE INTERNET

Another U-Tube video, this one is a 3-minute show that features some cool Aviation fighter and gunship footage, all to the music of Jefferson Airplane:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiKzqcII0jQ&feature=fvw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiKzqcII0jQ&feature=fvw)

Watching a movie and wondering about that airplane that adds a large part to the story? Try this website; they have a remarkable inventory of both still shots and the history of many of the aircraft appearing in movies:

[www.impdb.org/index.php?title=The\\_Internet\\_Movie\\_Plane\\_Database](http://www.impdb.org/index.php?title=The_Internet_Movie_Plane_Database)

Here is a Pacific Theater WW II pictorial presentation on Iwo Jima.

[www.picasaweb.google.com/7thfighter/IwoJima?authkey=Gv1sRgCIW06db\\_6oth&feat=email#](http://www.picasaweb.google.com/7thfighter/IwoJima?authkey=Gv1sRgCIW06db_6oth&feat=email#)

Great Pacific WWII story about a B-17 shot down during a mission, two MOH's were awarded for this action:

[www.theospark.net/2010/06/video-old-666.html](http://www.theospark.net/2010/06/video-old-666.html)

Last - The Army Flier, the Official Newspaper of Fort Rucker is now available on-line.

Go to: [www.armyflier.com](http://www.armyflier.com) for the latest issue.

## 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](mailto:editor@vhpa.org)**

THE VHPA AVIATOR (ISSN 1930-5737) (USPS 001-497) is published six times yearly ~ January, March, May, July, September and November. Annual dues are \$36 or Life membership for \$540. Yearly subscription for nonmembers is \$36. Published by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, 407 W. College Street, Grapevine, TX 76051. Periodicals Publications postage paid at Grapevine, Texas and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the above address.



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VHPA Memory Map Project	Ron Bower
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**Official Web Site of the VHPA**  
**www.VHPA.org**

## FROM MIKE LAW, PRESIDENT OF THE VHPA

### A level playing field PLEASE!

When Mike Law writes "it is so in so's fault" what in the heck is he saying? Case in point - page 21 of the last issue he wrote "this is all Jim Spiers' fault!" What!?!

I trust you are familiar with the lyrics in Louis Armstrong's classic Christmas season song What A Wonderful World that goes:

*"The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky  
Are also on the faces of the people going by  
I see friends shaking hands saying how do you do  
They're really saying I love you."*

When Mike wrote "this is all Jim's fault" - he is really saying that he loves Jim for whatever it was that Jim did - in that case "demanding" that we have some evening entertainment at the Orlando Reunion. As it turned out more than 40% of those attending the Reunion agreed with Jim! Thank you Jim!!! I had fun and it was all your fault!

**So ...** it is **now absolutely imperative** that ya'll know this is **all Dave Rittman's and David Adams' fault**. When Rittman was the National Reunion Committee chairman he'd mail a really neat oversize post card in May to remind all the last minute procrastinators that they needed to register for the Reunion. I still have a couple of them pinned to my wall. I thought Dave did a cool job. He made me smile!

Well along comes our current Aviator Editor, David Adams, with the suggestion that he could prepare a four-page color flyer and use bulk mail postage for about the same money Rittman used to spend on the post card with 1st class postage. Thank you Dave for pioneering this post card idea and thank you David for taking it to the next level!!

In late May, the VHPA mailed 10,250 four-page color flyers to those in the southeastern USA and Caribbean who had not yet registered and who did not open the blast email Gary Roush organized for us. The primary targets - those in our database who most likely hadn't seen a VHPA publication in some time. The flyer basically invited the reader to come to the Orlando Reunion and pointed to our website **www.vhpa.org** where all the details anyone could think of are available.

The response has been most gratifying indeed. I'd guess at least one more new member, former member renewing, someone coming to the Reunion per business day in June than "normal." Already in the first part of June we had 22 new members, more than 120 renewals and 60 register for the Reunion. Rather heady numbers for a bunch of 60 or 70 some things (even 80 some things) guys.

The sad news is that we also got more than a few back with notes - he passed away ... Ouch!!

Anyway, thank you Dave Rittman and thank you David Adams. We only need a million more just like you - but I, for one, am glad to be in the same association with you two!

*Post script - I realize I'm going to take some heat from some of the old timers prior to Rittman. They'll say, "Hey Mike you didn't mention that even before Rittman we did this and we did that to hype the Reunions!" All true! Yes indeed! And I was a witness to those wonderful things as well! I mean you no disrespect what so ever with what I've written here. I'm just saying Dave Rittman's post cards were fun and David Adams delivered on a good suggestion. They both made me proud to be a member of the VHPA.*



# The 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion is Back on Active Duty

In a July 2010 Ceremony at Ft. Hood Texas, the 4th Squadron, 3rd ACR was reflagged onto the 229th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion. The MTOE for the new 229th included 730 soldiers, 24 AH-64D Longbow Helicopters and 10 UH-60L Blackhawk Helicopters. The Battalion is complete with its own Intermediate Level. Maintenance Support capability.

The 229th that deployed to Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division in 1965 has a very distinguished history from the Vietnam War having been awarded two Presidential Unit Citations, the first of which was for the battle of the Ira Drang Valley on 23 October through 26 November, 1965. This is the same battle that became quite famous in the book and movie named "We Were Soldiers Once And Young". Ed (Too Tall) Jones and Bruce Crandall were each awarded the Medal of Honor for their heroic efforts during this battle.

Their second PUC was awarded to the Battalion for the Battle of An Loc for the period 5 April through 7 July, 1972. The Battalion was also awarded at various times during the Vietnam War the Valorous Unit Award, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, three awards of the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm and the Vietnam Civic Action Honor Medal, First Class. The 229th

Stack Deck Battalion" is reported to be the most decorated battalion in Army Aviation.

When the 229th was stood down from duty in Vietnam the flag was returned to the 1st Cavalry Division at Ft. Hood on August 28, 1972. MG James C. Smith, who many of you know, was the Division Commander at the time. During the Vietnam War thousands of our finest served with this great Battalion and it is really great to see the Battalion back on active duty.

In the spirit of many that have gone before them, shortly after being reflagged into the 229th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, the unit deployed to Iraq where they remain till this day. When they return stateside after completion of their tour, the unit will be re-assigned to Fort Lewis, Washington. Their sister unit, the 8th Battalion of the 229th



Vietnam Pocket Patch of the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, the Stacked Deck



Last July's Reflagging Ceremony which brought the 229th back to active duty.



Maj. Gen. James C. Smith (ret) Commanding General of 1st Cavalry Division in 1972 and Col. Lewis McConnell (ret) last Commander of the 229th Aviation Bn. (AH) in Vietnam at the 2006 AAAA Convention in Nashville standing in front of the restored UH-1H with the 229th Winged Assault Crest.

Regiment is also serving in Iraq and will return stateside to their normal billets in Fort Knox.

It's great to see the 229th Back on Active Duty!

Lewis J. McConnell, Col.  
USA (ret) the last Stack Deck 6

E-Mail:



**NEW!** Full color 24" x 36" limited edition print commemorating the role of Army Aviation in **LAM SON 719**. Highly detailed aircraft profiles, markings, patches and callsigns of all participating units. Highly detailed AO map with firebases, etc. \$50 ea.



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# Retirement Ceremony for the Last Huey assigned to Fort Rucker

*Text of the Speech given by CW4 Lawrence (Larry) Castagneto on 17 May 2011 at the Retirement Ceremony for the Last Huey assigned to Fort Rucker.*

As a Vietnam Veteran Army Aviator I would like to thank everyone for coming to this special occasion, on this to be honest very sad day, an end of an era. An era that has spanned over 50 years, the Retirement of this grand old lady, "OUR MOTHER" - the Huey.

First I would like to thank, MG Crutchfield for allowing me to speak at this event and try to convey in my own inadequate and meager way what this aircraft means to me and so many other 'Vietnam' veterans.

But first a few facts about the Huey. It was 48 years ago to this month that the first Huey arrived in Vietnam with units that were to become part of the 145th and the 13th Combat Aviation Battalions, today both of those units are assigned to Fort Rucker.

## WHILE IN VIETNAM THE HUEY FLEW APPROXIMATELY

- 7,457,000 assault sorties
- 3,952,000 attack or gunship sorties
- 3,548,000 cargo & re-supply sorties

That totals over 15 million sorties flown over the patties and jungles of Vietnam but does not include the millions of sorties flown all over the world and other combat zones since then ....what a amazing journey.... I am honored and humbled to have been a small part of that journey.

To those in the crowd that have had the honor to fly crew or ride this magnificent machine in combat, we are the chosen few, the lucky ones. They understand what this aircraft means, and how hard it is for me to describe my feelings about her as a Vietnam combat pilot, for she is alive and has a life of her own, and she has been a life long friend.

How do I capsules in a few minutes a 42 year love affair, she is as much a part of me, and to so many others, as the blood that flows thru our veins. Try to imagine all those touched over the years by the shadow of her blades. Other air craft can fly overhead and some will look up and some may or not or even recognize what they see. But when a Huey flies over, everyone looks up and everyone knows who she is... young or old all over the world - she connects with them all.

To those that rode her into combat, the sound of those blades causes our heart beat to rise and our breaths to quicken in anticipation of seeing that beautiful machine fly over head, and the feeling of



comfort that she brings. No other aircraft in the history of aviation evokes the emotional response the Huey does whether we are combat veterans or not. She is recognized all around the world by young and old alike, she is the ICON of the Vietnam War, of U.S. Army Aviation, and indeed of the U.S. Army. Over five decades of service...

She carried Army Aviation on her back from bird dogs and piston-powered helicopters with a secondary support mission to the force multiplier, combat arm that Army aviation is today.

Even the young aviators of today that are mainly Apache, Blackhawk and other advanced aircraft pilots that have had a chance to fly the Huey will tell you there is no greater feeling, honor or thrill then it is to be blessed with the opportunity to ride her thru the sky. They may love there Apaches and Blackhawks but they will say there is no thrill like flying the "Huey", it is special. There are two kinds of helicopter pilots in today's Army, those that have flown the Huey and those that wish they could have.

The intense feelings generated for this aircraft are not just from the flight crews but also from those who rode in back, into and out of the "devils caldron". As paraphrased here from "Gods Own Lunatics", Joe Galloway's tribute to the Huey and her flight crews and others infantry veterans, comments..."Is there anyone here today who does not thrill to the sound of those Huey blades?? That familiar whop-whop-whop is the soundtrack of our war. The lullaby of our younger days, it is burned into our brains and our hearts. Those who spent their time in Nam as a grunt know that noise was always a great comfort... Even today when I hear it I stop...catch my breath...and search the sky for a glimpse of that mighty eagle."

To the pilots and crews of that wonderful machine, we loved you and we loved that machine. No matter how bad things were, if we called you came - down through the hail of green tracers and other visible signs of a real bad day off to a bad start. I can still hear the sound of those blades churning the fiery sky. To us you seemed beyond brave and fearless. Down you



*Maj. Gen. Anthony G. Crutchfield, Fort Rucker and USAACE commanding general, describes the farewell Ceremony as a "family reunion." (Photo by Jim Hughes - Fort Rucker Flyer)*



*CW4 Larry Castagneto, 1st Aviation Brigade safety officer who flew the Huey in Vietnam and delivered these heart-felt remarks, speaks to a television reporter after the conclusion of the UH-1 retirement Ceremony at Cairns Army Air Field. (Photo by Jim Hughes - Fort Rucker Flyer)*

would come to us in the middle of battle in those flimsy thin skin chariots, into the storm of fire and hell. We feared for you, we were awed by you. We thought of you and that beautiful bird as "God's own lunatics" and wondered, who are theses men and this machine and where do they come from .....they have to be "God's Angels".

So with that I say to her that beautiful lady sitting out there, from me and all my lucky brothers that were given the honor to serve there country, and the privilege of flying this great lady in skies of Vietnam. Thank you for the memories. Thank you for always being there. Thank you for always bringing us home regardless of how beat up and shot up you were. Thank you!!!! You will never be forgotten. We loved you then, we love you now and we will love you till our last breath.

As the sun sets today, if you listen quietly and closely you will hear that faint wop wop wop of our mother speaking to all her children past and present who rode her into history in a blaze of glory. She will be saying to them I am here, I will always be here with you, I am at peace and so should you be - and so should you be.





## THE WALL THAT HEALS *BY TERRY GARLOCK*

The approach of Memorial Day prompts my thought that there should always be a memorial for those who died in war, and that many of our country's soldiers are still in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq. To appreciate those thoughts you would have to understand the power of what we call The Wall and the 58,195 names etched in the black marble panels of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC.

The power of The Wall has much to do with what beats in the hearts of many Americans affected by that war, and a little to do with the memorial's design.

Part of the calculus in deciding to commit US troops to hostilities should be the price they will individually pay, both the ones who will die and the ones who live. The after-effects of traumatic combat experience vary widely. I am not an expert, just a layman with anecdotal experience and believe these things to be true after speaking with a lot of other vets.

The sudden terror of a near-death incident, the violent death of a friend, the horror of bodies torn apart whether enemy, friendly or innocents, have always been things warriors have to push down to a deeply hidden part of their gut so they can continue to function. Like cops who deal with life's underbelly every day, they use morbid humor for relief, but however deep it is buried it never goes away.

Many vets don't realize until years later that the bonds forged by shared hardship in a war put love in their heart for those other guys, even the ones that rubbed them the wrong way. When the shooting starts, they aren't fighting for our flag, they are fighting for each other, and when a buddy's guts are scattered on the ground and he screams for his Mom while he dies, that haunting memory lives vividly forever. These pressures were far harder on grunts than on pilots like me.

You know more about this than you think if you have ever been part of a harrowing event, like a very bad auto wreck, or if you have had the shock of the unexpected death of someone you loved completely. When does the pain go away? Never. It remains just below the surface and, for the rest of your life, when that surface is scratched, there it is, staring you in the face.

Another stress is the isolation felt by a lot of troop's home from a war. After endless dreams of returning home they often have a hard time re-connecting with old friends

because the vet has changed. While he now has a sharp focus that quickly separates the important from the trivial, he often finds the lives of his old friends turn on inconsequential things like shopping and the latest fad on TV. Part of it comes from a disconnect with the public, which seems largely apathetic to the war in which the vets bet their lives - how can everyone carry on and play as if there was no war while our troops are still fighting? Part of it comes from a surprising longing to be back with their comrades, the ones who understand them best now and can convey things with a gesture or a word that outsiders will never understand.

Isolation was aggravated for many Vietnam vets by the rejection they felt from the American public. There appears to be a similar issue for today's combat vets, not from rejection but the public's indifference to a war since there is no draft and uninvolved families have very little skin in the game.

These are some of the pressures carried by vets long after their fighting is done. You can imagine the stress borne by families who received notice the son they loved more than their own life was dead. As long as they live, it never goes away.

The power of The Wall is that it is a place that honors what these vets and families sacrificed. It is their place. For vets, it is a connection with the comrades they already know and many they don't, instant friends when they meet. The Wall scratches the surface of things buried deep inside.

When I visited The Wall I discovered the genius in its simple design. To find the names I searched for I had to find the right panel, passing by so many names, then I had to search on the panel because the names are in order of dates of death, but it appears random because the dates are not marked. Being forced to look through so freaking many names makes you slowly realize that every one is a story, just like the name you are searching for, every one was a son, a brother, an uncle, a husband, a father, a friend. The memorial's message gets lost in numbers but it comes back in the search.

Something special happens at The Wall every day. Visitors leave all sorts of mementos. Jamie O'Hara wrote a fine song titled 50,000 Names, about the gifts visitors leave, trinkets collected daily and kept by the National

Park Service. Part of the lyrics are:

*"They come from all across this land,  
in pick-up trucks and minivans,  
searching for a boy from long ago.  
They search the wall to find his name,  
teardrops fall like pouring rain,  
and silently they leave a gift and go."*

The Wall seems to scratch the surface, to relieve some pressure of deeply buried trauma. Some call it cathartic. Some vets don't want to go to The Wall, reluctant to lose their composure in public. Others say it would be good for them, but I don't know what is good for them; I just know it is good for me.

I also know that vets and families of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars should have a place that honors them, that belongs to them, that connects them. After sending those troops away from their family three, four or five times to do our dirty work in a war zone while we go to the mall, at the very least we owe them a memorial. We should not wait 20 years to build it.

Editor's Note: VHPA Life Member Terry Garlock is also the author of the book: Strength and Honor: America's Best in Vietnam. Full details of the book may be found at: [www.garlock1.com](http://www.garlock1.com)

### REMINDER:

The deadline for changing information in the 2011 Membership Directory is 15 August, so send in any changes you might have to HQ at 800-505-VHPA (8472) before that date.

Also if you would like to have a paper 2011 membership directory or a 2011 CD membership directory, please contact HQ to get your name on a list. They are \$10 extra each. We will only produce enough to cover those that are ordered in advance (prior to 1 September 2011).

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



# Museum Activities continue to build through 2010-2011



Photos Courtesy of VHPA Member Jim Boykin  
For Immediate Release  
29 March 2011  
Mineral Wells, Texas

As we reach the end of the first quarter of 2011 and look ahead to our update of our Vietnam Veterans Memorial replica in June, the museum felt it was time for a review of the activities of the last year, and a preview of this year.

First and foremost, the VHPA national organization has joined the list of museum Founders, alongside the Fort Wolters and Washington State Chapters.

On June 5, 2010 we had the first update of our Vietnam Veterans Memorial attended by over 1,000 visitors. At the same time, we unveiled our "Soldier's Cross" sculpture, and our computer kiosk, which contains a complete database of the names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Locations of the names on the wall can be searched by name, state, or hometown. Even the original in Washington, D. C. does not have this service.

On June 4, 2011, we will again be updating our replica to add the six names that were added last Memorial Day in Washington. We will also be reclassifying the status of 18 servicemen whose remains were identified and repatriated in the past year. Once again we expect a capacity crowd, not only for the Ceremony, but also to take advantage of the updates to the museum that have occurred over the past year.

In December, we completed our Visitor Center and opened it to the public. It is now open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a volunteer staff to answer questions for visitors. In January, we began construction of our first exhibit, a representative example of a Vietnam soldier's living area in a semi-permanent building, commonly referred to as a hooch. This exhibit will be a "work in progress" for several months as it grows and changes to reflect changes in occupants over what could have been a period of several years.

The central part of the exhibit will be a Vietnam era stereo system donated by Vietnam vet Dennis Withers. Also included are a folding cot, mosquito netting, hand grenades, rifle, and a footlocker and table built from scrap ammo crates.

Our fourth themed garden, the Reflection Garden, has recently been started as an Eagle Scout project by Dustin Rollings. In addition to the plantings which were approved by the Weatherford and Mineral Wells Master Gardeners, when completed the garden will feature flagpoles flying the flags of the allied nations who participated in the Vietnam War, and will eventually provide the backdrop for our OV-10 when its restoration is completed. Also provided in this garden will be two large concrete picnic tables and benches.

Also recently completed is the construction of our Service Center building. Now that the exterior is finished, work will begin on finishing out the interior. Included will be office and work spaces to allow us to have a climate controlled area for working on future exhibits.

One planned future exhibit will be on display in conjunction with our June 4 wall update Ceremony. SFC Steve Robinson (USA Ret.) was a combat photographer with the 7th Cavalry Regiment (Garry Owen), 1st Cavalry Division in 1968. In addition to the official Army photographs, Robinson also took photos with his personal camera, and has graciously agreed to display some of them in our Visitor Center in June.

All in all, it has been another busy year as we continue to work toward our goal of building a museum to build understanding.

Please visit our website for more information about the museum, our gardens, future events, and donation opportunities at [www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org](http://www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org).

The National Vietnam War Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the state of Texas.



P. O. Box 146 Mineral Wells, TX 76068





## Lets Smoke on this...

by VHPA Columnist  
Charlie Gossett

# "Why We Went"

Old Lodgeskin wouldn't have to smoke on this for any length of time, "he'd know right away". I have to smoke on it a little longer because it has been a long time since I've heard anyone discuss it. How about you? Does it come to you easy? The reason you went to Vietnam?

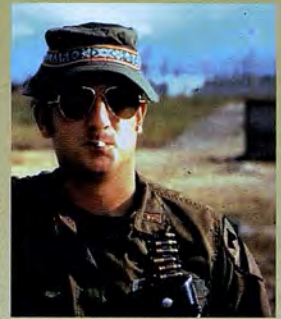
My father served in the on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific during WWII. I started developing my patriotism looking at the walls in his den where there were many items of memorabilia of the Navy and the war. Those who served in The Korean War knew their duty was to stop the North Korean Communist from the over throw of South Korea and making them a Communist country. This was the first "Proxy War" of the Superpowers where the Soviets supported one side and we supported the other, Vietnam was the next; all in an effort to contain Communism and stop the strengthening the Soviet Union.

Now this isn't exactly a history lesson, I knew this information back in the 60's before I went to Flight School. I believed the US involvement in Vietnam was right, the cause just and the people of South Vietnam needed us. I knew all this but it wasn't truly in my heart. It wasn't a rallying cry to take up arms and stop the Red Hoard! I simply had wanted to fly in the military and the Army flight program would give me that chance. All Warrant Officer Candidates knew there was nearly 100% chance to go to Vietnam after graduation and I didn't give it any great concern. I had seen many war movies and the nightly news, I knew people died and others were horribly wounded over there; but it wasn't a factor I dwelled on. I was developing that "not me" feeling and just put it in the back of my mind. So, off I went to flight school in 1969.

I haven't had the chance to talk to WWII and Korean War Veterans,

(as many of the real combat vets, would not talk) to any extent as to what they were feeling at the time they first went to their combat units. I now like to hear the 'Ol Boys talk in the documentaries and other TV shows about their feelings, friendships and the heroes they served with in their wars. The Korean Vets more closely relate to the way I felt because of all the similarities and I do believe one more, they believed in the cause but weren't passionate about it. Is this a good enough reason? To go because it's the right thing and after all, you will be flying helicopters when you do? I think so. Later, you know when you get there to your combat unit; you do what you do to save the lives of the people on the ground. The Communist government and the Soviet Union aren't so important then. It was for the grunts and downed crewmen you fought for. I have heard many of the "Old Boys" say the same thing and even Sun Tsz knew it to be true. To fight to stay alive and to keep the other guy from dying is a great reason to fight hard. That would be a mission accomplished many many times over my two tours.

All these years later I can speak straight out that I went to Vietnam because the United States and her Allies fought to stop a Communist takeover of South Vietnam. This is what our government felt was of such great importance they sent their military to fight, I can look back and say it was my reason for going. Being a pilot and an officer was secondary. I am honored to have served in combat for what my government believed to be right, and proud of the way we accomplished our missions - essentially by just trying to save lives.



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Vietnam Veteran Helicopter Pilot

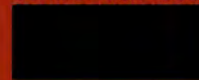
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# US Army Special Operations Aviation Unit Activated

....by Henry Cuningham, writer for the Fayetteville Observer

*Dateline March 26, 2011 from the Fayetteville Observer, copyright 2011 and used by permission.*

The men who pioneered special operations aviation over the past three decades looked on Friday as the Army activated a one-star command to oversee people, training and hardware for the future.

Lt. Gen. John Mulholland unfurled a flag for U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command and handed it to Brig. Gen. Kevin W. Mangum, the first commander, during the Ceremony at Fort Bragg. The provisional command's "ultimate litmus test" is to ensure Army special operations aviation is "even better, faster, more flexible and more ready than it has ever been today," Mulholland said during the Ceremony. Mulholland is commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg. The three-star command includes the soldiers who work in small numbers, often on the most secret, sensitive missions in hostile territory.

"Both our special operations forces and aviation units are in huge demand, as they are indispensable in the current fight, and will certainly be so in the future in a very uncertain world where special solutions and mobility will be the linchpins of success," Mangum said.

The members of the color guard wore the green beret of Special Forces, the tan beret of Rangers and the maroon beret of other airborne special operations soldiers. Mulholland handed Mangum the Army Field Flag, an ultramarine blue flag with the Army seal in white, which is used for ceremonies by units that do not have their permanent flag at the time of activation.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Cooper is the command's chief warrant officer. "I've been in special ops aviation for about 17 years now," Cooper said after the Ceremony. "This is going to be a huge development for special ops aviation, as well as Army aviation."

During the ceremony, Mangum hailed the veterans of the 281st Assault Helicopter Company "for forging a trail for us." The 281st supported the 5th Special Forces Group during the Vietnam War. He also acknowledged three original members of Task Force 160, retired Gen. Doug Brown, an original company commander; retired Col. Ben Couch, an original commander; and Master Warrant Officer 4 Carl Brown, an original pilot and instructor. Brown is a 1966 graduate of Seventy-First High School and former commander of U.S. Special Operations Command at Tampa, Fla. "I was surprised we ever got a battalion," Brown said. In the early 1980s, a company of special operations aviators pioneered night flying wearing



Lt. Gen. John Mulholland salutes during the activation of the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command at Meadows Field on Fort Bragg on Friday afternoon. Photo courtesy of Fayetteville Observer staff photographer James Robinson.



Lt. Gen. John Mulholland said the command's 'ultimate litmus test' is to ensure Army special operations aviation is better than ever. Photo courtesy of Fayetteville Observer staff photographer James Robinson.

night-vision goggles designed for infantrymen, not flying, Brown said. "We were just strapping on 'ground' goggles every night to do these incredible dangerous missions," Brown said.

Mangum hailed John L. Shipley, who has worked special operations aviation program for 30 years, as "the brains and energy behind the great machines we have flown and continue to fly today." Shipley, an N.C. State University graduate, is director of Special Programs (Aviation) at the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Life Cycle Management Command at Fort Eustis, Va. "Right now, they do every night what we originally thought we would be doing once every six months," Shipley said. "Every single night they are in harm's way." Shipley was inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame in 2004 for his work with acquisition for special operations aviation.

Special Operations Aviation Command eventually will bring 118 new positions to Fort Bragg and oversee about 4,000 people at Fort Campbell, Ky., and other Army installations. Most of those people are in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment at Fort Campbell. The Fort Bragg headquarters will have more military personnel than civilian, Mangum said. "Because of the level of headquarters, it will be senior folks – NCO, officer and civilian," Mangum said in an interview before the Ceremony. Fort Bragg will not gain helicopters, but the headquarters eventually will oversee more than 200 helicopters, almost 300 unmanned aircraft systems and some fixed-wing aircraft at other locations.

Military editor Henry Cuningham can be reached at [redacted]

## Helicopter Squadron 4 (HS4) sails into the sunset....

### **TO ALL LEGENDARY BLACK KNIGHTS, greetings:**

This is the last 12 months for HS4. All things being equal, around Dec of 2011 this mighty squadron with its legendary past will fade into history and change its name to become the BLACK KNIGHTS of HSC 4. The pride and name will live on; however, the community that we all grew up in will give-way to a new community with a new airframe and new way of doing business. It is fitting then that in this year of the Centennial of Naval Aviation, HS-4 will make its last Operational Cruise. OUR LAST RIDE.

To commemorate the 59 years of Helicopter excellence we are looking to put together a cruise book encompassing the whole history of HS4. We have almost all the command histories plus some photos. Our plan is to put

together a scrap book that journals the highlights and firsts of this squadron. It will be professionally made along the lines of the cruise books you may already have from deployments past.

So the purpose of this article is to get out the information to as many former BLACK KNIGHTS as possible who might be interested in purchasing one of these cruise books. I would expect this project to take about 12 months - we are about to get under way. We are going to use Photoshop to create the pages and send our work electronically to the vendor. Ideally around the first of next year your books will be ready to mail.

Additionally, you can assist in the creation of this work to make it the most accurate historic record we can produce and an overall better told tale. If you would like to submit photos,

articles, remembrances, etc we can add that to the book. I personally will ensure everything sent to us is returned in the same condition received. If you have the ability to scan documents send an e-copy of the information that you would like to add. Any hard copies we receive will be scanned and returned promptly.

I hope to make this a great memento of our great squadron.

*Looking forward to your responses,*

CDR Robert Aguilar, USN  
Commanding Officer HS-4

E-Mail to: [redacted]





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## The Membership of the VHPA Is invited!

November 11 of this year will be the center of a several day, Vietnam Welcome Home celebration at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. See [www.vietnamwelcomehome.com](http://www.vietnamwelcomehome.com) for complete details.

Governor McDonnell Announces Free Admission to Virginia State Parks through the end of the 2011 for Veterans and Active-Duty Service Members.

**THE UNITED STATES ARMY TRANSPORTATION CORPS IS CELEBRATING ITS 69TH BIRTHDAY on July 30 and 31, 2011. We are having a series of events in which all veterans and civilian friends are invited to attend. Here is a brief listing (flyers are available if you desire):**

■ **Saturday, July 30th:** 0900 - 1230, Transportation Museum, Fort Eustis (located just inside main gate). Discussion on Army watercraft. Tour museum. Lunch.

■ **Saturday, July 30th:** 1230 - 1600, Open House, 3rd Port, 7th Sustainment Brigade, Fort Eustis. Tour LCMs, LCUs, and LSV-1 - Bring the kids!

■ **Saturday, July 30th:** 1800-2100, Transportation Corps birthday buffet dinner at Fort Eustis Club. Contact LTC (Ret) Warren Joyce for reservations: [wjoyce4@cox.net](mailto:wjoyce4@cox.net). Music, gifts, raffle prizes, and short speeches.

■ **Saturday and Sunday, July 30 - 31:** Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Vietnam War. Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport. 0900-1600 daily. Ride in a Vietnam-era UH-1H Huey helicopter over the James River. (cost: \$40 active military; \$45 veterans; \$50 public). Military reenactment groups will have trucks, tents, camouflage nets, and weapons all set up to replicate a Vietnam Fire Base.

For more information on any of the events scheduled for Fort Eustis, contact Colonel (Ret) Ted Cimral at [redacted]



**DPMO**  
Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office

**AMERICANS IDENTIFIED:** There are 1,687 Americans listed by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War.

DPMO recently posted the news that SFC William T. Brown, USA, CA, listed as MIA in South Vietnam on 11/3/69, and Major Thomas E. Reitmann, USAF, MN, listed as MIA in North Vietnam 12/1/65, are now accounted for. SFC Brown's remains were jointly recovered on 4/13/10 and identified 1/6/11. Major Reitmann's remains were recovered 2/12/10 and ID'd 5/2/11. In mid-May, DPMO posted the names of Air Force Col Leo S. Boston, and US Army CAPT Arnold E. Holm, Jr., SP4 Robin R. Yeakley and PFC Wayne Bibbs as all accounted for. Col Boston, from Colorado, was listed as MIA in North Vietnam on 4-20-66, his remains were recovered 4/26/00 and ID'd on 4/4/11. CAPT Holm, from CT, SP4 Yeakley, from IN, and PFC Bibbs, from IL, were listed as KIA/BNR in South Vietnam on 6/11/72, their remains were recovered 7/29/08 and ID'd as a group on 2/7/11.

The number of Americans returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now 896; another 63 US personnel, recovered post-incident and identified before the end of the war, bring the total to 959. Of the 1,687 unreturned American veterans from the Vietnam War, our POW/MIAs, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Laos and Cambodia under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam - 1,294 (VN-475, VS-819); Laos - 328; Cambodia - 58; Peoples Republic of China territorial waters - 7. Over 450 were over-water losses.

**ACCOUNTING COOPERATION:** As of today, JPAC has one Research Investigation Team (RIT), one Underwater Investigation Team (UIT), two Recovery Teams (RTs), and one Underwater Recovery Team (URT) in Vietnam. There are only two RTs in Laos, far less than allowed for each 30-day Joint Field Activity (JFA), and the number of personnel operating in Vietnam is also greatly reduced. The reduction was the result of an uncertain funding but was resolved with the passing of the FY2011 budget.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

I just wanted to correct some of the information that was in the Prescott Daily Courier's article that ran in this last month's VHPA Aviator regarding Luis Molinar receiving his past due medals. Before that story ran in the Prescott newspaper, both Bill Parson and I talked to the young, female reporter and we told her numerous stories about Luis and our common Vietnam experience. She, not being familiar with the subject, mixed up some of the stories we told her in her printed article and later apologized for the mistakes she made in her story. So, with your permission, let me set the record straight for the Membership.

First of all, we served with A Company, 158th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 101st Airborne Division based out of Camp Evans. We flew UH-1H, Huey slicks as a lift company, not gunships, and our call sign was Ghost Riders. The operation that day was a combat assault into an area on the northeastern slopes of the Ashau Valley to establish an artillery firebase to support future operations.

On April 25, 1969 a flight of 10 lift ships took off from LZ Blaze led by our CO Major Maurice Dougherty with 1st Platoon Leader Captain David Watson as his co-pilot. The selected LZ itself was on the edge of a cliff and was surrounded by very tall, triple-canopy jungle; we later learned that we were landing right on top of a NVA Regimental Headquarters and hospital complex. Lead was shot up by small arms and RPG fire on short final to the LZ and Captain Watson was killed shortly after they made a forced landing in the LZ. As additional aircraft attempted to drop troops off in the LZ some made it in and out, but three more Huey's were eventually shot down and crashed in the LZ. Our pilots continued to attempt dropping off troops into the LZ until there was no place to land because of the wreckage of downed aircraft.

Once the upper LZ became unusable, a lower LZ was blown and used to drop additional troops into the battle area but friendlies from both LZ's were not joined until the third day of the battle. The crews of the downed aircraft in the upper LZ were forced to spend the night in the initial LZ and it was in the middle of the night of the second day of the battle that CWO Elton Searcy was killed by an RPG after spending the day helping direct aircraft into the LZ. During the 2nd day of the battle, the upper LZ's ground commander desperately needed reinforcements and he ordered a slick that had landed on the LZ with a shot up hydraulic system pushed over the edge of the mountain. But cooler heads prevailed and the crew chief of the downed aircraft removed a reservoir from another shot-down aircraft and the other crew chiefs helped him repair his bird on-site. Then WO Bill Parson and WO Luis Molinar, selected because he had hurt his back while crashing in the LZ the day before, filled the Huey with wounded soldiers and flew the aircraft out of the LZ to the nearest field hospital. And by the way, they did that in direct defiance of the orders of the General in the on-scene C&C bird. The General told them to shut the bird down, it hadn't been inspected and might not be safe to fly; Parson looked at Molinar and they agreed they were going to fly the aircraft out of the LZ anyway. Parson told

Molinar "you deal with the radios" and turned his off, Luis proceeded to give the General the old "your coming in garbled" routine as he muffled his voice by covering his microphone.

No sooner had the bird cleared the LZ when General exclaimed "OK, now we've got our LZ back, let's get some birds in there! Both Bill and Luis received the Silver Star for their actions that day and a Purple Heart for their wounds.

The LZ/FSB was eventually named Airborne by the 101st, but the Ghost Riders always called it LZ Bear after Capt. Watson and the Ghost Riders received a Valorous Unit Citation for this operation. Three weeks later on May 10th, we were part of the assault onto Dong Ap Bia, Hamburger Hill, and received the Presidential Unit Citation; it may be a record for receiving those two awards in the shortest time for two different operations. The Ghost Riders later received a Valorous Unit Citation for its support during the extraction of FSB Ripcord in 1970 and a Presidential Unit Citation for Lamson 719 in 1971.

Four months later, on August 23, 1969 Luis Molinar was shot down in the southern part of the Ashau Valley during another combat assault. He received numerous gunshot wounds and severe head trauma from the rotor striking the area above his head during the crash. It was that mission that led to Luis being hospitalized for an extended period of time and his memory loss of the events of that day. He was never formally presented his medals for that operation, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the second Purple Heart; they were laid on his pillow in the hospital. Like many with head trauma, he couldn't remember what happened. For years he would ask me and others and we would try and tell the story fill in the blank spots. I finally decided to get our Ghost Rider brothers to send me any and all memories and I wrote a 10 page synopsis of those days events. It helped Luis to recover his memory and the medal ceremony was the final chapter in his recovery.

Regards,

Gene, Spider Man, Franck (correct spelling)

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

**Editor's Note:** Gene later sent us some more details of the action that day that I think would be of interest to our Membership:

"Bill and Luis flew the aircraft straight to the Hospital to get the wounded treated including their own wounds. Luis had hurt his back and had a wound in his buttocks, Parson had a leg wound and all the troops in the back had serious wounds. A few hours after being treated, a nurse came in and told them to clean up as "a high ranking officer wants to see you". Expecting to face the General's wrath, they both looked at each other and started talking about their upcoming courts martial. Turns out that when the General came in, he told them that their actions completely turned the situation around and allowed us to secure the LZ; and that he was making sure that they each got a Silver Star for their actions that day. Bill Parson won a second Silver Star four months later extracting a Special Forces team on a CCN mission on strings while under heavy fire and surrounded, but that's another story. Bill went on to take a direct commission after Viet-

nam and retired after 24 years as a Lt. Col., he became a Louisiana State Trooper at age 50 and just finally retired this past year.

Gene Franck

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

Nice tribute to the Marine Huey on the back cover of the May/June issue, but it is incorrect to say that the E Models were modified B Models. The Marines necessarily switched to a naval version of the Army C Model when Bell and the Army stopped B Model production. Only 34 B-Model based E's were delivered. The remaining 158 had the 540 rotor system, tail boom and dual hydraulics of the C Model. The dual hydraulics allowed addition of the Emerson TAT-101 chin turret, but to my knowledge only VMO-3/HML-367 out of the three squadrons in country kept this system installed on the aircraft. I was later able to fly the more powerful "Mike Model" with the "chunker" and mini-guns that we always envied in Vietnam, as a member of the Utah Guard's 396th Aviation Company (Attack) until we began receiving Cobras in 1979. At a field elevation of 4600 feet getting the old Mike Model in to the air was always a challenge, especially when the DA's got up over 10,000 feet in the summer.

Regards,  
Bob Mabey  
Scarface 41

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

LTC Hatley's letter (May/June 2011) concerning pilots wearing a sidearm between their legs reminded me about one of our pilots who was shot in that "region". As you can imagine blood was everywhere. The Huey chin bubble looked like a punch bowl at a prom dance. From that day forward I always wore a sidearm between my legs while flying. I even exchanged my Army issued 38 for the 45 pistol. I wanted an even bigger gun. (there's a joke here somewhere)

Bob Eustice  
Class 67-23

## To the Members of the VHPA,

**Subject:** Slide restoration/photographic legacy

The VHPA Aviator newsletter for Jan/Feb 2011 featured an article on page 32 about saving your photographic legacy...now! Like many of us vets who had a pile of slides from our time in Vietnam, I had done nothing with them. They were stored and beginning to deteriorate. I called the two veterans in the article who were referred because of their mutually proven abilities to restore and turn slides into great memories. It took no time for me to realize they were incredibly good at what they do and I was motivated to begin the process.

My first effort was to send my slides to Ned Crimin with as much detail as I could provide about when/where/what. He took my information and communicated with me as he restored them to comparable original quality. Ned also made enhancements that improved many of the slides, e.g., cropping, adding color, removing the FM antenna from slides taken from the Huey cockpit, alignment, etc. I received the package from Ned with examples of before/after, CD-ROM's in high



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

resolution, and a JPEG disc with all of the slides. Incredibly well done! Ned can be contacted at: [REDACTED]

The next phase was to get everything organized and sent to Dan Fox. He helped me think through the sequence in which I wanted the slides, descriptive titles as appropriate, my preference for music to accompany the slides, and to have them numbered with a very helpful worksheet he provides. I also had some live action video from some of my fellow pilots at the time and he incorporated some of that into the show giving it a real movie feel. Dan has all sorts of techniques he uses to embellish the presentation, maybe a curtain opening on a stage beginning with your Viet Nam story. One of his many features is adding movement, very realistic. The list of his techniques and features is too numerous but you can see his own show by contacting him at: [REDACTED]

The final production arrived this week after several conversations with Dan (the most patient man I've ever known). There is no adequate way to express my satisfaction with the end results. The show is far beyond my expectations. My kids, grandkids, family and friends will now have some idea what it was like to serve as a helicopter pilot in Viet Nam.

If you have those slides lying around or in a box somewhere, do yourself and your family a favor, get in touch with Ned Crimmin and Dan Fox.

Lanny Julian  
"Serpent 3" A/229th Avn Bn (AH),  
1st Air Cav, 1967  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## To the Members of the VHPA,

A valued member of VHPA, Jack Salm, asked me to attend the VHPA San Diego Reunion. My wife and I did, and on the way home I decided to have a reunion of my Vietnam era fellow pilots, only because of a dinner I had with a fellow pilot from Vietnam, Rich Thacher, and short talks with two others from my time in Vietnam, Curt Knapp and Ed White.

If I had enjoyed the visit with those men in San Diego that much – imagine how much all the men that we flew with from LZ Sally in the 2nd Brigade 101st Airborne in 1968-1969 would enjoy getting together in my hometown of New Orleans!

So I called for a Reunion and was completely blown away by the enthusiasm of those I contacted and turnout we received. If you ever wanted to visit, ask questions, renew friendships, see how they made out, tell them you care about them, do it now. Go to Orlando this year or New Orleans next. Do not wait for someone else. Reach out and find those great men you have so much in common with. We included wives, and you should know they have much in common also. I won't go into details but we had two cancellations and one almost cancellation due to things that happen when we grow older. The time is now, our time together is growing short.

Andrew "Sam" Hover "Brandy 7"

*Editor's Note* – the full story of the Reunion of the men of the 2nd Brigade runs on page 31 of this issue in the story from the pages of the Times Picayune.

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I just received my May/June copy of the Aviator, and read Joseph Hardy's article "Hard Day at Hard Times". What a great story. As a Chinook maintenance officer myself in A Co 228th ASHB, 1st Cav Division, I made a few "non standard" recoveries myself, but none as exciting as that one.

I hate to be a nitpicker, but the picture that accompanied the article, labeled "179th AHSC - Shrimp Boats supporting II Corps in the Central Highlands", is not an 179th Aircraft. If you look at the aft pylon, you will see a 1st Cav patch with a triangle around it, which means it belonged to A Co 228th, the "Wildcats".

Thanks for a great newsletter.  
Neil Lee  
"Wildcat 56"

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

*Editor's note* – the fault was all mine, we ran the photo without the proper caption by mistake. Joe Hardy even pointed it out to me before we went to press but the correction was fumbled by me. One thing for me has come out of all this, no longer will I sweat bullets when available space forces us to print the text in the magazine kind of small – I am not convinced that for the Chinook community at least – you guys can still spot the smallest mistake, old eyes or not!

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I just completed my review of the May issue of the Aviator and read several articles that were very interesting. As I got to the end of the publication, I saw the article covering the dedication of the Orange Arch at Fort Wolters. I was in attendance with several of my college buds, Don Quy and Stan McGowan, who were also helicopter pilots. The entire ceremony was very fitting for a post that trained so many pilots for Viet Nam. I am offering this as an addendum to the article as the project may not have been possible without the involvement of certain specific persons.

A former colleague of mine, Dr. Ronny Collins, is the superintendent of schools at Mineral Wells ISD who chaired the committee for the entry restoration. Dr. Collins knew the importance of the base as we attended college 42 miles from Wolters at Tarleton State University and the base made a considerable contribution to the economy of Mineral Wells and surrounding communities. Dr. Collins indicated that as chair there were many efforts to raise funds including a 5K run on November 6, 2010. Several notable businesses including Wal-Mart, Farm Bureau, and American Legion Post #133 was among the sponsors of the project and many other community members as well. There were more than expected former pilots attending and I wanted to thank Dr. Collins for his leadership in helping bring this renovation to completion.

Mike Bergman, Ed.D.  
Class 70-24, Orange Hats

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

I much appreciated the article about the restoration

of the main gate at Ft Wolters in the May/June 2011 Aviator. It brought back a lot of memories as a WOC and my life after-Vietnam as an IP there.

The article noted it was built in 1967/68 by WOC Class 67-5, 2nd WOC. While in WOC Class 67-13, I was assigned to a detail to paint the arch which was laying on the grounds of the 2nd WOC billets. I remember getting primer paint on my PT sweat pants from that detail.

My thanks to all involved with the restoration. I'm happy that I played a small role in the original effort to construct it.

Richard Deer  
WOC 67-13 "Green Hats"  
48th AHC "Blue Star"  
[REDACTED]

## Gary Gluth

Ron Pepper wants to hear from you – e-mail him at [REDACTED]

## To Gary Roush, Author of the last issue's story about "Preserving Our Heritage".

I read with great interest your article in the May/June 2011 edition of "The VHPA Aviator". My name is Albert H. Wilson III but I have always gone by "Tim". I was a member of Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Flight Training Classes 67-23/67-501. After graduation, I was assigned to the 11th GS Aviation Company, 1st Air Cavalry Division in Viet Nam. The first 7 months or so were spent at Camp Evans in I Corp and the last 5 months or so were at Phuc Vinh in III Corp when the Cav was moved south.

I flew the LOH-6A for several months upon arriving in country and then, after being given a Top Secret Crypto Security Clearance, I spent the rest of my tour flying specially equipped "J" model Huey's in Radio Research/Intercept missions. The only three of this type Huey's in-country were ours (#16334, #16335, and #16336). We were performing the same classified mission as the USS Pueblo, the "spy" ship captured by the North Koreans back then and went under the code name Project Left Bank. We spent a great deal of time flying over the "borders".....yeah, I know. That wasn't allowed or permitted but we did it almost daily. Shame on us!!!

At any rate, we used a lot of maps in our missions and had to be very proficient at using them. I have one in my possession that I think you will find to be really "priceless" (to borrow your description in your article referencing the map that was "donated" to you). I created this map back in June of 1968 and had sent it to my wife so she could follow my "exploits" described in letters to her from me in RVN. The map I created is a 1:250,000 - Edition 2, Hue, Vietnam JOG(G) 1501 NE 48-16 Joint Operations Graphic (Ground) map. It is approximately 28 7/8" W and 21 1/2" H. It is in pristine condition other than the fold marks where it was folded to mail back to my wife. No tears, no marks, nothing.

What is unique about this map is that I marked and labeled approximately 60 "camps", fire bases, LZ's, etc. on this map in their exact locations. The bases around Khe Sanh (Cates, Mike, Thor, Wharton, Tom, Robin, Snapper, Loon, Snake), the A



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Shau Valley (Vicky, Tiger, Goodman, Pepper, Shark, Stallion, Cecille, Lucy, Lillian), etc., are all shown and marked. Approximately 60 in all that were in existence in June 1968.

Although I'm not ready to part with the original, would a full size copy interest you along with a copy of the letter I sent my wife at the time explaining to her how to read the map and follow my exploits in future letters or letting her what she might be seeing in the news back home at that time?

If so, let me know.

Sincerely,

A. H. T. Wilson (Tim)

Granger, Indiana, E-Mail: [REDACTED]

(email)

**Gary Roush answered Tim with:**

**Hi Tim,**

Yes. That map is of great interest for the Memory Map project we are working on right now. What we would do is to arrange for a high-quality digital scan of the original and that way the original can safely stay with your family as long as they like.

If you can't get it scanned in, we are working with the USGS on getting high quality scans of Vietnam era maps and we can arrange for them to scan your map for us, in fact they did the scan of the map I mentioned in that article. We also have the capability to stitch images together so another possibility is to scan your map in sections and then send those to me to be stitched together.

We are hoping to put our Memory Map project online so something like your map would be of significant interest. You have an interesting piece of our history. Are you coming to the reunion in Orlando? If so, would you please bring your map, or the copy of it to show people in the vendor room how we will be using both published and donated maps in our memory map project.

Regards,  
Gary Roush

**To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator, I must share this with the VHPA membership.**

I was driving south on I-35 in Oklahoma City and I have on the back of my truck, the bar for a Vietnam Service Medal with a set of Army Aviator wings superimposed on top.

In my rear view mirror I noticed a late model, shiny Black Chrysler overtaking me. The vehicle pulled along my left side and began to pace me. I glanced over and observed four Oriental males very well dressed in coat and ties and they all were making eye contact with me. The front passenger was nodding his head to the affirmative and mouthed some words to me. The other passengers began to nod their heads in the same manner, mouthed the same words and all four faces lit up with huge grins and big flashing smiles. The vehicle then accelerated and sped off.

I was taken by surprise and some what bewildered. I drove several miles replaying that

scene over and over in my mind trying to figure out what they had said. Then it hit me like a bolt out of the blue. They had all said "Thank You" for my Vietnam service.

I now know that they were saying "Thank You" to all of us not just me. Kind of makes you smile and feel warm all over doesn't it?

Regards,

A.G. McEntire, Flight Class 67-1/67-3  
129th in 1967; 192nd in 1968; 173rd Airborne  
Brigade in 1970 & 71; 92nd AHC in 1971.

**To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator**

I just wanted to thank you for running the series of Charlie Gossett's Up In Smoke stories.

Charlie was one of the "old guys" when I arrived to "Blue Max" in August 1970, I was a newbie Cobra pilot and was quite excited to be assigned to the 2/20th ARA. Of course I flew Peter Pilot for a couple of months, and had the opportunity to fly with Charlie on several occasions and later I became an Aircraft Commander in the unit.

I had a mission with Charlie that always brings a smile to my face when I recall it, and often tell to those that will suffer my stories! I can't remember the date exactly, but Charlie and another pilot, I only remember as "Big O" (Oscar?) was flying the lead for a flight of two Cobras into Song Be and I was the AC of the second Cobra. As we were on approach, Charlie, who used the Call Sign of "CG" (for Charlie Gossett) made the radio call for the flight of two. His call went something like this, "this is the CG and the Big O approaching with a flight of two."

Everything was fine until we terminated at a hover in a whirlwind of red dust. The first thing I noticed was four soldiers, including a Full Colonel, standing beside our termination point saluting through that slowly dissipating cloud of dust. As it turned out the radio operator that had heard Charlie's radio call thought that "the CG" meant the Commanding General and had notified all the Brass that the CG himself was on final. I was initially impressed with their respect of us, but that soon followed with the realization they were PO'd (put out) with the mistake.

Charlie being a CW2, returned the salute very politely. Shortly, afterwards we were given Blue Max call signs and couldn't use our personal ones. I will always remember the "CG and Big O on final" and I have laughed many a time at that incident. Charlie was an outstanding Warrant Officer and pilot during his time with the "Blue Max".

Jerry R. Martin  
Blue Max 67, Class 70-12

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

**To the Members of the VHPA**

I am about to assume responsibility of D Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment.

I am interested in learning how D Troop earned the name "Dirty Delta". I am currently in the process of taking over and will assume responsibility in the next two weeks. If there are Veterans of D Troop in the Fort Campbell area, I would like to extend an invitation to the change of responsibility. believe it is important for today's Troopers to understand their lineage and heritage and look forward to a response.

Respectfully,

1SG Doug DeMint

D/2/17 U.S. Cavalry

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

**Dear Editor of the VHPA Aviator,**

I just finished reading the May/June issue of the VHPA Aviator Magazine. Well done. I enjoy reading this publication whenever it comes. However, this month appears to have some mistakes in the article on the restoration of the front gate at Ft. Wolters. Since I'm willing to admit my memory isn't what it used to be, I consulted some of my colleagues who went through flight school around the same time I did. They concur with my memories.

First of all, I reported to Ft. Wolters in June 1966, where I was a member of WOC Class 67-1. The Arch was in place when I arrived with the two helicopters on each side, so I don't think WOC Class 67-5 could have constructed it in 1967. Our class graduated some time in October 1966, so 67-5 should have graduated in early '67. If 67-5 worked on the Arch, it would have had to have been in 1966, not '67, and quite frankly, I don't remember any major work taking place on the Arch during my tour there.

The article is well written, and it is wonderful to see the Arch and helicopters back in their rightful place at the main gate. I just think there may be a few errors in the article.

Sincerely,

Bob Thompson

WOC Class 67/1 & 67/3, 57th AHC, Kontum, RVN

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## ***The long awaited publication, "U.S. Army Helicopter Names In Vietnam" is now available for purchase***

Written by John Brennan, the book contains over 3,000 Army helicopter names cross-referenced by unit and complete with details on the origin, the time period, the location, serial number, the artist, the crew of the aircraft and more. Lists the names of the over 2,000 contributors, cross-referenced to their submissions and also includes 40 rare photographs.

The book weighs in at 2 pounds, measures 8.5x10 and contains 408 pages. For information, or to order U.S. Army Helicopter Names in Vietnam, go to [www.hellgatepress.com](http://www.hellgatepress.com).



# WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

The following 93 Aviators joined the VHPA from 2 February through 4 April 2011 (two 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.

Adkins Donald V  
Eden, North Carolina, US Army,  
Flight Class not provided  
C/17 CAV in 63

Arnold Buddy L  
Denton, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 69-36  
229 AHB 1 CAV in 70-71

Baker Thomas J. 'Tom'  
Annapolis, Maryland, US Army  
Flight Class 69-2  
228 ASHB, 1 CAV in 69

Ballard Jack E.  
Canton, Georgia, US Marine Corps  
HMH-361 in 69-70; HMH-462  
VN Unit info not provided

Bauer John A. 'John'  
Vincentown, New Jersey, US Army  
Flight Class 69-49  
VN Unit info not provided

Benesch, David M.  
Anchorage, Alaska, US Army  
Flight Class 71-21 71-17  
117 AHC in 71-72

Boden, John B.  
Delray Beach, Florida, US Marine Corps  
Flight Class year 63  
VMO-6 in 66-67

Boyter, Dennis G.  
Spring, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 70-43  
162 AHC in 71-72

Bradley, Richard C.  
Fox Island, Washington, US Army  
Flight Class 67-503 67-25  
604 TC CO in 68-69;  
HHC 34 GS GRP in 72;  
HHC 1 AVN BDE in 72-73

Brenneman, James L.  
Santa Maria, California, US Army  
Flight Class 67-20  
VN Unit Info not provided

Carlson, Emil J.  
Kennewick, Washington, US Army  
Flight Class 68-522 68-40  
VN Unit info not provided

Carmichael, Paul D  
Summerland Key, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 71-40  
57 AHC in 72-73

Chalecki, Eugene E. 'Gene'  
Tallahassee, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 68-501 68-1  
196 ASHC in 68-69

Christensen, Paul M.  
Commerce, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class 68-23  
VN Unit info not provided

Clapp, Edwin L. 'Ed'  
Clarksville, Tennessee, US Army  
Flight Class 71-8  
162 AHC in 71-72; 121 AHC in 72-75

Cochran, John C  
Cove City, North Carolina, US Army  
Flight Class 68-518 68-32  
HHC 1 INF in 69-70; 3/17 CAV in 70

Colling, Edwin L.  
Sugar Land, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 68-521  
135 AHC in 69

Conrad, Anthony J. 'Ben'  
Montross, Virginia, US Army  
Flight Class 69-31 69-29\  
1/9 CAV in 70-71

Cosgriff, Robert P.  
Jordan, Montana, US Army  
Flight Class 70-19  
C/16 CAV in 70-71

Crow, Gerald K.  
Berryville, Arkansas, US Army  
Flight Class 70-49  
VN Unit info not provided

Crowder, Cecil S. 'Chuck'  
Copperas Cove, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 67-25 67-23  
A/3/17 CAV in 68-69; B/7/1 CAV in 69;  
C/16 CAV in 71-72

Davila, Louie G.  
Sierra Vista, Arizona, US Army  
Flight Class 69-1  
118 AHC in 69-70

Dawson, Gary L.  
Lewisville, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 70-46  
VN Unit info not provided

Devall, James C.  
Williamston, South Carolina, US Army  
Flight Class 68-14 68-22  
173 ABN BDE in 62-63

Diveley, Edward L. 'Ed'  
Columbia, South Carolina, US Army  
Flight Class 70-19  
334 AHC in 70-71;  
HHT 1/11 ACR in 71-75;  
498 MED CO in 75-79

Dixon, Leon H.  
Enterprise, Alabama, US Army  
Flight Class 68-503 68-1  
117 AHC in 69-70  
Doherty, Charles F.  
Treasure Island, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 68-24 68-42  
174 AHC in 70

Dubs, Roger D.  
Rapid City, South Dakota, US Army  
Flight Class 67-503 67-23  
173 AHC in 68-69; 18 ENG BDE in 69-70

East, Virgil R \*\*  
San Antonio, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 66-9W 66-9  
116 AHC in 67-68; 146 RR in 70-71

Engelbrecht, Jerry W.  
Brainerd, Minnesota, US Army  
Flight Class 68-521  
VN Unit info not provided

Fears, Oscar B.  
Pleasanton, California, US Marine  
Corps  
Flight Class 69-24  
VN Unit info not provided

Few, Tommy W.  
Mount Pleasant, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 69-13  
VN Unit info not provided

Fisher, Howard K.  
Cary, North Carolina, US Army  
Flight Class 70-2  
VN Unit info not provided

Flatt, Kevin N. \*\*  
Chesterfield, Missouri, US Army  
Flight Class 72-16  
60 AHC in 72-73

Foster, Charles F.  
Columbus, Ohio, US Army  
Flight Class 69-39  
VN Unit info not provided

Forstvedt, Robert J. 'Bob'  
Colorado Springs, Colorado, US Army  
Flight Class 69-16  
A/227 AHB 1 CAV in 69; 11 GS in 70

Fuller, George P.  
Austin, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 70-25 70-21  
VN Unit info not provided

Gatewood, Stephen L.  
Ozark, Alabama, US Army  
Flight Class 70-41  
158 AVN 101 ABN in 71;  
291 TC CO in 72; 343 AVN DET in 74

Geary, Paul J.  
Bunola, Pennsylvania, US Army  
Flight Class 70-291  
01 AVN 101 ABN in 70-71  
Goode, Joseph A.  
Ellicott City, Maryland, US Army  
Flight Class 70-46  
VN Unit info not provided

Gregory, Dewey A.  
Gallatin, Tennessee, US Army  
Flight Class 68-8 68-10  
68 AVN in 68-69;  
HHC 145 AVN in 69-72

Gregory, Stanley R.  
Virginia Beach, Virginia, US Army  
Flight Class 70-3,70-1  
VN Unit info not provided

Grider, Robert  
Sumner, Washington, US Army  
Flight Class 63-8  
57 MED DET in 64-65;  
MEDIVAC PLATOON in 68-69;  
45 MED CO in 69

Guill, Douglas L.  
Salina, Kansas, US Army  
Flight Class 69-37  
VN Unit info not provided

Hamil, Richard C.  
Dawsonville, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class 60-8  
UTT in 62-63

Hamilton, James R.  
Sullivan, Indiana, US Army  
Flight Class 71-23 71-19  
C/229 AHB 1 CAV in 71-72

Harford, Kenneth E.  
De Graff, Ohio, US Army  
Flight Class 68-512 68-20  
VN Unit info not provided

Harris, William K.  
Satellite Beach, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 68-6967  
C/227 AHB 1 CAV in 68;  
11 GS in 68-69; 1/9 CAV in 69;  
199 LIB in 69-70;  
48 AHC in 71-72

Harrison, Woodrow W. 'Woody'  
San Augustine, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 68-18 68-30  
1 CAV DIV 2/20 ARA in 68-69

Hartley, Jim E.  
Saint Petersburg, Florida, US Air Force  
Flight Class not provided  
VN Unit info not provided

Heldreth, Charles H  
Sandersville, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class 71-44  
VN Unit info not provided

Herdrich, Donald J.  
Jupiter, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 68-22  
VN Unit info not provided

Hervert, George G.  
Pompano Beach, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 72-11  
116 AHC in 72-75

Hoffman, Albert T  
Peachtree City, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class 70-32  
54 MED DET in 70-71

Hoke, Guy R.  
Kempner, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 69-50  
VN Unit info not provided



**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, his (Flight) Class and Vietnam (VN) Unit(s) served with, if that info is available**

**Line 4 & 5, Vietnam (VN) Unit(s) served with (if provided)**

Holland, Merlin J. 'Dutch'  
Cambridge, Minnesota, US Army  
Flight Class 69-35  
119 AHC in 70

Hopkins, Clarence E  
Townsends, Tennessee, US Army  
Flight Class 66-6  
C/1/9 CAV in 66-67

Horn, Lewey S  
Linden, Alabama, US Army  
Flight Class info not provided  
68 AHC in 66-67

Hunsicker, Gary B.  
Edgerton, Kansas, US Army  
Flight Class 70-17 70-15  
VN Unit info not provided

Irby, Chester P. 'Weird Irby'  
Memphis, Tennessee, US Army  
Flight Class 68-23 68-41  
B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV in 69;  
HHT/1/9 CAV in 69-70

Jeffries, Harry T.  
Middleburg, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 69-5  
VN Unit info not provided

Jessen, Geoffrey P.  
New Richland, Minnesota, US Army  
Flight Class 69-47  
VN Unit info not provided

Keel, Raymond L.  
Dutton, Virginia, US Army  
Flight Class 71-3  
VN Unit info not provided

Kelly, Gerald W.  
Seminole, Alabama, US Army  
Flight Class 69-41 69-39  
57 AHC in 70-71

Kochenderfer, Allen W.  
Cochrane, Wisconsin, US Army  
Flight Class 68-4  
7/1 CAV in 68-69

Koskie, Nelson W.  
Allentown, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class 69-10  
HHC 164 CAG in 69-70

Laforest, Leonard S. 'Lenny'  
Marshfield, Massachusetts, US Army  
Flight Class 68-511 68-17  
VN Unit info not provided

Lewis, Gary A.  
Suitland, Maryland, US Army  
Flight Class 70-24  
VN Unit info not provided

Libby, Gregory K. 'Greg'  
Weatherford, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 69-39  
11 GS in 70

Lichty, John W. 'Bo'  
Visalia, California, US Marine Corps  
Flight Class 70-18  
HMM-263 in 71;  
HMM-165 in 71-72

Ligon, Bruce S.  
Omaha, Nebraska, US Army  
Flight Class 69-27 69-25  
VN Unit info not provided

Lipham, David K.  
Pensacola, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 70-48  
114 AHC in 71-72

Lord, Gerald  
Dahlonega, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class  
C/158 AVN 101 ABN in 69-70

Losinski, John D.  
Fountain City, Wisconsin, US Army  
Flight Class 69-31  
VN Unit info not provided

Lund, Charles S.  
Tacoma, Washington, US Army  
Flight Class 68-14 68-22  
VN Unit info not provided

Lyons, Steven R.  
Denver, Colorado, US Army  
Flight Class 68-17 68-29  
335 AHC in 68-69

Marotta, Edwin E.  
Nogales, Arizona, US Army  
Flight Class 68-511 68-17  
VN Unit info not provided

Marsh, James H  
Sugar Land, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 69-22 70-24  
20 ENG BDE in 70-71;  
USARVHSG in 71-72

Martz, Kenneth D  
Seale, Alabama, US Army  
Flight Class 67-23  
VN Unit info not provided

Melton, James C.  
San Diego, California, US Army  
Flight Class 69-26  
C/2/20 ARA 1 CAV in 70

Meyers, Thomas L.  
Coralville, Iowa, US Army  
Flight Class 71-26  
VN Unit info not provided

Monahan, Joel P. 'Pat'  
Gulf Breeze, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 68-21  
VN Unit info not provided

Moser, Robert D. 'Tex'  
Killeen, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 71-9  
282 AHC in 71

Norvill, Jay M.  
Lowell, Arkansas, US Army  
Flight Class 68-519 68-35  
179 ASHC in 69-70

Palma, Lawrence W.  
Aurora, Colorado, US Army  
Flight Class 71-20  
A/2/17 CAV 101 ABN in 70-71

Paull, John F.  
Sadler, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 68-2  
VN Unit info not provided

Perrin, William S  
Clarkston, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class 56-13  
11 GS 1 CAV in 66-67

Phillips, Jim G.  
Newark, Ohio, US Army  
Flight Class 69-20  
VN Unit info not provided

Price, Warren L.  
Woodbridge, Virginia, US Army  
Flight Class 69-16  
3 BDE 4 INF in 69-70;  
A/4 AVN 4 INF in 70

Reece, Frank S.  
Newnan, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class not provided  
173 ABN BDE

Smith, Christopher J.  
Arlington, Texas, US Army  
Flight Class 69-1  
170 AHC in 69-70

Sparks, William J. 'Bill'  
Lewisville, North Carolina, US Army  
Flight Class 69-35  
334 AHC in 70-71

Thomson, John D  
Jupiter, Florida, US Army  
Flight Class 62-1W  
UTT in 63-64

Torrance, Richard  
Milledgeville, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class 69-42  
A/101 AVN 101 ABN

Tucker, Stephen M.  
Palm Springs, California,  
US Marine Corps  
Flight Class not provided  
VN Unit info not provided

Williams, Bennie L.  
Fresno, California, US Army  
Flight Class 67-17  
VN Unit info not provided

Worley, Wendell W.  
Lavonia, Georgia, US Army  
Flight Class 70-40  
VN Unit info not provided



## Executive Council Votes to Reduce Cost of Lifetime Memberships

We looked at our current blanket charge of \$540.00 for a Lifetime Membership in the Association and realized that our Member's average age is ever increasing and that we are not competitive as to what other service organizations are charging for their lifetime memberships. In addition, the average age of our Membership is now 67, our oldest member is 95 and even our youngest member is now 58 years old.

After taking all those facts into consideration, effective October 1, 2011, we have adopted the following reduced rates for a Lifetime Membership:

Age 80 and above.....	\$ 75.00
Age 75 to 79.....	\$100.00
Age 70 to 74.....	\$150.00
Age 65 to 69.....	\$250.00
Age 60 to 64.....	\$350.00
Age 59 and Below.....	\$450.00

*We're now looking forward to welcoming many more, new Lifetime Members into our Association!*



# THE VIETNAM VET

While we are watching the Iraqi War,  
we wave our flags and decorate our doors  
with red, white and blue  
and ribbons of yellow,  
But I think we need to be more mellow.

The was another War that we have forgot,  
a War that was years ago,  
a War we all despised quite a lot.

We didn't wave our flags or show our support.  
Instead, as a people, it is sad to report  
that we didn't give our soldiers the proper support  
they deserved.  
They came back to us, all tattered and unnerved.

But, as they returned all tired and sad,  
We despised them and treated them bad.  
We waved our fists and yelled in their faces  
and we told them they weren't our saving graces.

Regardless of if you were against all the fighting,  
there was no need for all the rioting.  
The Vietnam Vet deserves our respect and our pride  
just like we are now giving the soldiers on the other side.

I was a little girl when Dad and Uncle Joe  
left the U.S. for Vietnam and the unknown.  
When they came back, they weren't the same.  
They were treated like dirt, and treated pretty lame.

It is nice to take pride in our soldiers today,  
but don't forget the soldiers of yesterday.  
They fought and they tread just like soldiers today  
They also lost comrades and friends along the way.



Written by Michelle Riley Taylor,  
the niece of VHPA Member Joe Riley.  
Joe flew Cobras in Vietnam  
under the callsign Playboy 17.  
Michelle's father, Stephen Riley,  
was a Flight Engineer  
in the CH-54 Skycrane in Vietnam.  
Joe may be reached at:

Michelle may be reached at:

So while you are waving your flags during this time of unrest.  
Don't forget to acknowledge these past soldiers, they were the best.  
They were our brothers, uncles, fathers and sons,  
They were our pride and joy even though  
They were told to tote guns,  
And fight a war that no one claimed,  
Some never came home and some were maimed.

So you can wave your flags for the soldiers today,  
but I like to wave mine for the soldiers of yesterday.  
They were my pride, my family, my name.  
They are the Vietnam Vets, soldiers just the same.

Before you go dishing the Vietnam Vet,  
Give them the time, the energy and the respect.  
They deserve it too, just like our soldiers get now.  
Dad and Uncle Joe, please take a bow  
And know that I love you and will never forget.  
The Hell that you went through,  
The time that was lost and spent.  
For you are my heroes, my sunshine, my name.  
You are the reason we have freedom just the same.



**MILITARY HISTORICAL TOURS (MHT)** is proud to offer VHPA two choices in 2012 for our moving tours back to Vietnam. Come back with brother VHPA Aviators to visit places that have deep meaning for all helicopter pilots; names like: Saigon, Cu Chi, Dong Tam, Phouc Vinh, Bien Hoa, An Loc, Long Bien, Da Nang, Vung Tau, Quang Tri, An Khe, Pleiku, Tay Ninh, Dong Ha, Song Be, China Beach, Khe Sanh, Hanoi, Hoi An, Hue City, Quy Nhon, and many more. Only \$3495 for 2011, includes round trip air from LAX. Register now to get back in country.

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Above:  
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Leader  
Tom  
Kilduff &  
US Amba-  
sador  
Michael  
Michalak in  
Hanoi!

## Vietnam Helo Operations "Rotorheads Return"

Last one for 2011 - 27 Aug - 10 Sep  
& 25 Aug—8 Sep 2012

★ **Just Announced: 12 - 27 Apr 2012**  
**50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR**  
**OPERATION "SHUFLY" 1962 -**  
**Helicopter Operations in Vietnam**  
**Tour Leader: John Powell, 1/9 Cav**  
**We won't show you just the Temples & Tigers!**



**MILITARY**  
**HISTORICAL TOURS, INC.**





# The VHPA visits the AAAA Convention in Nashville, Tennessee



The Army Aviation Association of America (also known as AAAA or simply "Quad-A") convention was held in Nashville Tennessee on April 16th through the 20th of this year. The VHPA Booth was manned by the Mid South Chapter of the VHPA. We had a number of VHPA members stop by and needless to say, some war stories were told, we also signed up 5 pilots as members of the VHPA during our stay.

With all the technological advances in today's aviation it was an amazing sight on display. Walking around visiting the displays was eye opening. The cockpit displays and guidance equipment is unbelievable, one could spend hours just being briefed on the systems now available. Sikorsky had their experimental helicopter with the counter rotating rotor and pusher prop that could go about 240 knots on display.

The displays took up the entire exhibit area which is the equivalent of about 4 football fields under one roof. There were Ch-47's, UH-60's, UH-72's, AH-

64's, OH-58's and all the equipment to maintain and support these aircraft on display. There were also numerous displays of drone aircraft as well as the armament for them. The "glass panel" cockpit instrumentation flight displays are particularly Star Wars Caliber. Next year's Quad-A Convention will again be in Nashville, the dates are now set for April 1-4, 2012.

*Submitted by  
Christopher Horton,  
CW4 Retired,  
128th AHC  
in 65-66,  
E Co, 701st Maint  
Bn in 69-70.*

*Manning the VHPA  
Booth at this year's  
AAAA conference  
was (L to R)  
Chris Horton,  
Robert Colson and  
"Pete" Norman.*



## COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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[www.CHPA-US.org](http://www.CHPA-US.org)

Combat Helicopter Pilots Association  
PO Box 15852  
Washington, DC 20003-0852

**COMBAT HELICOPTER  
PILOTS ASSOCIATION**



# A RED FLAG

A true story by *Randolph E. Crew*

## My First Mission With Scarface the finest Helicopter Squadron in the Marine Corps

At noon on July 19th, 1969, our flight of two Marine Huey gunships, each armed with door guns, four forward firing M-60s, two 7-shot rocket pods, and two M-60s in the TAT-101 chin turret, departed Phu Bai, RVN, for the DMZ. In the right seat, my HAC (Helicopter Aircraft Commander), a short and cocky Major, skimmed the green rice fields at 90 knots. As our wingman flew a loose parade position on us at eight o'clock, I dutifully followed our flight path on my 1:50 map and snapped the radio frequency changes with the Major's every terse command. I wondered why he wasn't on course, but on my first mission, who was I to question a Major?

At a wide muddy river, he turned and followed it north. We were finally pointed in the right direction, but he seemed more focused on the family canoes on the water than our mission. We blew by them. Behind us, more than one Vietnamese was left hatless and cowering in the bottom of their boat.

A few minutes later, the rice fields slid behind us, and the banks became crowded with lush tall trees. Then, ahead, the trees grew larger, higher, and wider to the point they formed a tunnel effect over the water. He'll climb now, I thought. We zipped into the cool darkness under the limbs, our skids inches above the water, then he yanked us into a left turn to follow a bend in the river. He shot me a proud "Look, Ma, no hands!" smile. I looked out my open window and behind. No wingman.

The game now seemed to be to harass the people on the banks without catching a blade or skid in the water, and as a side benefit, scare the new guy. As if I wasn't there, he spoke on the ICS to the crew chief and gunner. "Maybe we can catch 'em naked." That brought a "Yes, sir," and chuckles. He turned with the course of the river, scattering the villagers on the hard-packed banks, then with an opening in the tree limbs and unable to catch any naked women at that time of day, he flew us back into the hot sunshine and over the white plastered homes of Hue City. The wingman reappeared at seven o'clock.

An hour later, in a small valley along Highway 9 just below the DMZ, we hot refueled at a small North-South airstrip of steel matting called Vandergrift Combat Base, or "Vandy." A radio call to the LSA (Logistical Support Area) on the other side of the strip confirmed that the Morning Guns, with their attached CH-46s, had finished the scheduled supply drops to units in the field and as Afternoon Guns, we were to stand by for on-call missions.

Refueled, the Major wound the dash-eleven engine back up to 6600 RPM, and we departed to the north. Past the Rock Pile, then over the Razor Back, he turned left and followed the valley northwest. I complied with his demands for FM frequency changes, he worked the radios, then he turned around and followed the defoliated Mudder's Ridge along the DMZ and back to the east. Unable to find any Marines with a target for us, we continued east over LZ Mack and the burned out carcass of a CH-46, then we turned northeast and into the flat Leatherneck Square area. Once past Con Thien, a dusty, moon-scape like bump on the ground occupied by Marines and their 105s, we hugged the southern edge of the DMZ, and I changed from the Cam Lo 1:50 map to the Quang Tri 1:50.

We flew on at 1500 feet above the dry wasteland of dead rice fields. Abandoned and decayed villages dotted the scorched earth. Two miles ahead and to my left, the Ben Hai River slowed and snaked its way through flooded bomb craters into a river gorge a mile wide. Downstream, sections of the flat Highway 1 Bridge lay pancaked in the river, and on the other side of the river, flying high on a 200-foot flagpole, a red NVA flag the size of a drive-in movie screen waved in the breeze.

I stared at the flag. The hot windstream whipped at the sleeve of my Nomex flightsuit, then we arrived over Highway 1. He hung a left, entered the DMZ,

and followed the abandoned highway that led to the flag. He shot me a "Watch this" smile. I smiled back, returned to my map, and being too new to know any better, figured this is what we do. He pressed on. I stole a glance out my window. The wingman was in position, but he was 500 feet above us. Maybe this wasn't what we do. The hissing in the radio stopped.

"Scarface 9-0, you're taking fire." Wait a minute . . . that's us.

"Roger," he replied, as if he'd just heard it was a warm day. Then to me, "Make me hot. Rockets, both sides."

I set aside my map, selected Rockets and Both on the armament panel at my right hand, then armed the master arm switch. He pulled the Huey into a twenty-degree climb and pressed the firing button. WHOOSH! Seven presses of the button launched fourteen 2.75-inch folding fin HE rockets toward North Vietnam

and the red flag. With the last rocket away, he turned back toward the south. Amid the smell of melting Nomex, I slapped at the red-hot rocket propellant cinders that had blown through my window and landed in my lap. In my haste to please him, I'd forgotten to raise it. He scoffed.

Once again at Vandy, we shut down in the rearming pit, reloaded the rocket pods, then restarted and repositioned to the fuel pits

on the west side of the strip. Engine running and rotors turning, we faced north. Behind me, the crew chief and gunner, in helmets, flightsuits, and gloves, manned the fuel hose. Alone in the cockpit, I held the controls. The Major stretched his legs and chatted with the wingman. Baking in the hot sun under my bullet bouncer, survival vest, and green helmet, I looked up to the west to see two Huey gunships fly over the hill. One flew toward the airstrip; the other turned south and descended toward the medevac pad and small hospital on the hillside only yards above me. I sat up straighter. It was one of our guns, and there were big holes in its windscreen and nose.

The shot-up gunship landed on the pad, a couple of corpsmen in green scrubs carried a stretcher around to the co-pilot's side, then I watched them remove the co-pilot, a big guy I barely knew, from his seat. The crew chief held the co-pilot's bloody and bandaged lower right leg as if it hung by a tendon. After the co-pilot collapsed onto the stretcher, they hauled him into the medical tent. Then, amid a blinding cloud of dust, the other gunship landed two spots in front of me. A minute later, the shot-up gunship slid into the space between us and squatted onto the matting. The HAC's door flew open. After the engine died, the HAC, another Major, but one with a happier disposition, removed his helmet and stepped out. He noticed me, smiled, and wiped his brow like, "Whew!"

Then minutes later, our flight of two, plus the unscathed Huey from the other flight, departed Vandy. No one told me why. No one told me where we were going. I just knew we were now a flight of three, we were number two in the flight, and we were flying west. After another ten minutes, and looking for some guidance, I turned to the Major. "Sir, my map



A UH-1E with the TAT-101 gun system installed. This is one of the HML-367 "Scarface" Huey's that was transferred to HML-167 in December, 1969, when "Scarface" became a Cobra-equipped squadron.



Bridge over B on Hwy 1 DMZ, South V.

Picture courtesy of the author. Bridge inside river from South Vietnam. The story is at





1st Lt. Tom Hamilton, Hut 8 Momma San, and our author (in the boonie hat) standing in front of Hut 8 and one of the personnel bunkers in the Officer's Quarters at Phu Bai. Probably Aug-Sep 1969.



1st Lt. Steve "Reno" Murray (now retired American Airline Captain), 1st Lt. John "Johnny O" O'Meara (now the Chief Test Pilot for Grumman Aircraft), and Corporal "Red" Haynes taken around Sep-Oct 1969. Photo by 1st Lt. R. Crew, the author, the co-pilot of the other aircraft in the flight of two that day.

runs out at the river ahead, and there isn't an adjoining map in my map case."

He shot me another sarcastic smile, this time as if to say, "Nah-nah, nah-nah, I know something you don't know." I folded my map, put it back in the vinyl map case, and we flew over the border into Laos.

Ten minutes later, through the haze on the horizon, I saw a flash of yellow flames followed by heavy black smoke. An Air Force A-1 climbed away from the blaze. Napalm. Another A-1 appeared above him. Near the smoke, helicopters circled, lots of helicopters—Cobras and Hueys. As we got closer, a light observer aircraft, an O-2 push-pull Cessna appeared, and the radios came alive with rapid-fire cryptic chatter full of phrases, terminology, and call signs I'd never heard. Then our leader descended toward a rocky ridgeline and we slowed. Overhead, the A-1s departed southwest. The Major ordered,

"Hot. Rockets, both sides."

"Yes, Sir." I snapped the switches. I got down my TAT-101 gunsight from the hook over my seat and armed the TAT switches. I felt the guns flop to the forward position in the turret at my feet, but I knew I couldn't use them until he ordered "guns," so I held the gun sight in my lap.

The short bursts of chatter over the FM, UHF, and ICS increased, most of it incomprehensible to me, and I suddenly realized there was an Army Huey in a hover on the ridgeline. The Major dived and fired 100 meters ahead of the Huey: One pair, two pair, three pair. Smoke from the rockets trailed over our windscreen. Cobras

appeared off to our right—Army Cobras—and they dived and fired. Our rocket explosions shook the ground ahead; dirt, rocks, and brush flew into the air, and the ground flashed back at us, but I couldn't tell if the flashes were from the Cobra's rounds or from AK-47 fire aimed at us. I sat there wide-eyed, slack jawed, desperate to help, but clueless as to what to do. Then the Major pulled out of his dive—low, very low and right through the debris from his last rockets. With sweat pooling in my eyebrows, I gripped the gunsight and pressed back into my armored seat. BA-RAT-TAT-TAT! Shit! I flinched and hot brass from the gunner's M-60 clattered all around my seat.

Amid more radio chatter—even more urgent and immediate this time—we came around in a right turn, and our leader glided past us in a dive. Rockets streaked away from his pods. Further to our right, a Cobra dived. Bursts of smoke trailed from his chin turret. Damn, I was useless!

Then, "Guns, both sides." I flipped the switches. I jerked the TAT sight up to my face. Finally, I can do something. But what? There were yellow flashes on the ground everywhere. Which were ours? Hitting friendlies was a big deal; in training we were told, "If you're not certain, don't shoot!" The Major dived. He fired the guns, more spent cordite burned my nose, then he suddenly stopped firing, pulled away, and the radios fell silent. Our leader flew above and ahead of us, but other than that, we appeared to be alone. The Major turned to me. "Put that fuckin' thing away . . . go cold." I secured the gunsight and switches. And took a long deep breath.

On our way back to Vietnam, I turned to him. "Major, I'm really sorry I wasn't more help. I didn't know where to shoot, where the good guys were." Not a word, just another smirk. But by then, he didn't have to say a word. I'd seen enough to realize why my Huey instructor at Pendleton had verbally waved a red flag at me only weeks before. "Watch out for the Majors," he'd said. "They'll get you killed."

In the early days of my tour, I would fly with and survive that Major again. But weeks later, on another mission in Laos with another co-pilot, the Major ignored a zone brief and flew right over the NVA. As a result, his gunship took multiple hits, caught fire, and crashed into a river. The Co-pilot and Gunner died; the Major walked away. This story is for the two who died. Semper fi, guys.

Randolph E. Crew the author of this story has also written two fiction novels with a Vietnam theme. *A Killing Shadow* was released in 1996 and his latest novel, *One-Way Mission*, a 235 page paperback with illustrations, was released earlier this year. Full details of both books may be found at [www.aKillingShadow.com](http://www.aKillingShadow.com) and both novels are available from Amazon.com and other book suppliers.



photo courtesy  
Phil Lowentritt  
Catkiller 38

by Phil Lowentritt  
the DMZ where Highway 1 crosses the Ben Hai  
h Vietnam into North Vietnam, the "Red Flag" in  
the top of the photo.



# LOOKING FOR

## **Looking For.....Gary Gluth**

Ron Pepper wants to hear from you – e-mail him at:

## **Looking For – Anyone who might have known WOC James A. Godfrey, Jr.**

My name is Edward W. Horton and my father was Marshall Ramsey Horton who was one of the original members of Southern Airways of Texas who trained helicopter pilots for Viet Nam. He was there from the start in 1956 through 1961 in which he went to become the first Deputy of Operations at ARADMAC at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas until he died in 1970 at age 47.

I was recently going through pictures of pilot training at Ft. Wolters that he had when I ran upon this particular photo of a Warrant Officer Candidate James A. Godfrey, Jr. After doing following research I found he died shortly after the Viet Nam Conflict. This is a rare picture and I felt if there was any way that his family could get a copy, it would be at least something I could do for this hero's family if possible.

[www.facebook.com/pages/Marshall-Ramsey-Horton-Sr/206595519351875](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Marshall-Ramsey-Horton-Sr/206595519351875)

The above link is to my fan[page for my father with other pictures of Ft. Wolters during the 1950's. Most are US Army Photos given to my father and I would be proud of his estate to allow these photos to be used in any way. If Officer James A Godfrey's family could receive this picture I would be grateful.

Sincerely,  
Edward W. Horton

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## **Looking For - Gunship and Transport Pilots involved in "Nine Days in May" battles**

Presently, I am seeking gunship (and, secondarily, troop transport) chopper pilots and crew from the 4th Avn Bn and 52nd Avn Bn to interview for my upcoming book, *Nine Days in May: The 4th Infantry Division in the Central Highlands, 1967*.

Like my first book, *Grab Their Belts to Fight Them*, *Nine Days in May* will be published by Naval Institute Press, a venerable publishing house based in Maryland that specializes in military history. *Nine Days* will recount the 1st Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division's remarkable campaign in Pleiku Province near the Cambodia border in May of 1967 (May 18-26). The "Nine Days in May" battles, incidentally, were waged under the auspices of Operation FRANCIS MARION.

Little is known and even less has been written about the valorous and ultimately victorious "Nine Days" campaign waged by the soldiers of the unheralded Fighting Fourth near the Cambodian border over that nine day span from May 18th through the 26th of 1967 in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Regrettably, even less has been written about the unheralded helicopter pilots and crews that supported, and quite heroically, the infantry battalions of the 1st of the 8th, 3rd of the 12th, and the 3rd of the 8th during the "Nine Days" battles. I would like to rectify that historical injustice. In order to fulfill that mandate, however, I will need to interview the pilots who participated in the campaign. As is my custom, all interviews will be conducted in a manner commensurate with the utmost regard for the sensitivities and sensibilities of the veterans who have agreed to speak with me.

Serving as the custodian of a Vietnam veteran's experience and assuming the responsibility of chronicling that experience for the benefit of posterity is not a responsibility I assume lightly or frivolously. Thank you for time and support,

Warren Wilkins

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

## **Looking For....members of D Troop, 229th**

I was an A-37 pilot at Bien Hoa 1971-1972 and was "drunk in" to the Air Cav with D Troop/229th.

I'm now looking to hook up with any/all of these fellow misfits. I use to take them up in my jet and they let me fly in the front seat of their AH-1G Cobras.

I can only recall two names/nicknames, Timmy Knight (loach pilot) and a "Buzz: who I think was a Cobra pilot – can anyone out there help me?

Nick "Animal" Nicolai, Henrico, North Carolina  
Phone 703.786.4446, e-mail [REDACTED]

## **Looking For...Dustoff Pilot from 1969**

I asked a friend of mine who was a chopper pilot in Nam where I might get some info on the chopper and pilot who Medivaced me when I was wounded on January 15 of 1969.

I think he may have been out of LZ Baldy (Hill 63) at Tam Key where our unit, the 9th Engineers, 1st Marine Division was stationed. I remember being taken to LZ Baldy before being flown on to Danang! The Americal Division was supporting LZ Baldy at that time!

If you have any suggestions, I would appreciate it! Best Wishes and God Bless The Chopper pilots and their crews!

Rich Hoffman, Sgt. USMC Vietnam 68-69

## **Looking For...Information on a CH-37 Mohave Helicopter**

My name is Stewart Bailey, and I am the curator at the Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum in McMinnville, Oregon. (Home of the Spruce Goose.) We are in the process of restoring one of the last Sikorsky CH-37B Mojave helicopters, serial # 58-0999, and I was wondering if any of your members have information on this particular airframe.

The records of the VHPA indicate that this bird did not fly in Vietnam, but perhaps some of your members might have this bird in their logbooks and might be able to tell me what units she was with, and where she was based. If any of your members remember this particular aircraft and have pictures of it, it would be a big help to us in the restoration. We are currently in the process of painting the aircraft and we would like to try to make it as historically correct as possible.

Anyway, if you could spread the word to your membership that we are working on this Mojave and would welcome, and appreciate any information about her that they might have. Folks who have some history to share can contact me at the address below.

Sincerely,  
Stewart W. Bailey  
Curator, Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum

## **Looking For.....the widow of Glenn Peter Burns**

Per the notes below, I am requesting any assistance you may be able to provide in finding information on the widow of Glenn Peter Burns. Glenn was killed in a post tour private aircraft accident. I obtained that data from the VHPA annual roster a few years ago, but for a number of reasons did not attempt to follow-up at that time. Glenn's wife is named Elaine. I believe they were living in MA at the time of Glenn's death.

Thank you for your time!!  
Brian Foulkes

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



## ANDREW BENTON BANKS, JR.

Andrew Benton Banks Jr., Major USMC, retired, born Stroud, Oklahoma, died May 31, 2011 in Eureka, California.

Andy grew up in Pomona, California, and graduated from Pomona High School in 1953. He immediately enlisted in the Marines but after three years of service he left the Marine Corps as a Sergeant, to attend college and planned to study Pre Med. After graduating from Mt SAC in 1956, he continued his studies at Chaffey College. At that time the Marine Corps needed pilots for the impending conflict in Vietnam and offered the Marine/Navy Cadet program so he rejoined the Marine Corps under the Cadet program and in July of 1959, was sent to Pensacola, Florida for flight training. There he flew fixed wing aircraft but his love was helicopters. He was commissioned as second lieutenant in April 1961, and sent to Camp Pendleton in California for combat training. During this time Andy had met Shirley through mutual friends on a blind date in April 1959. They were married a year later on April 2, 1960, in Crestview, Florida where he was still going to flight school. Shortly before their first anniversary their daughter was born and poor Andy had to wait 6 weeks to drive across country to see her for the first time. The next year he was sent to Japan, and then Vietnam and she was 2 by the time he got to come home again. They had a son in 1964, and their family was complete.

Andy survived 5 different tours of duty, 3 in Vietnam and 2 in Okinawa, Japan, during his 28 years with the Marines. He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action when he rescued 4 marines who were in harms way. His skill and excellence earned him the distinguished honor of being selected to serve in HMX-1, flying the President during Nixon's term. He continued his rise to the rank of Major before his retirement in 1981, and had served his country for 28 years.

After retiring Andy began his new career as Santa Claus while living in Fallbrook, California. He was Santa for the Camp Pendleton Marine Base, as well as other organizations in the community. He even went to a local college to learn Spanish so that he could communicate with some of the children that came to see Santa, who did not speak English. In 2002, Andy moved to Eureka, California, with his wife Shirley, to live near their daughter's family. After completing the construction of their dream Victorian home, Andy once again embarked on his career as Santa Claus. Every person and child he met was immediately blessed by his twinkling eyes, deep chuckle, and warm demeanor from Thanksgiving through Christmas Eve, for all who dared to believe. Andy delighted in keeping his persona year 'round with his silver white beard, and wearing his signature red shirt and leather suspenders. It was not unusual to see him hand a child a candy cane in the heat of summer while giving them a conspiratorial wink to seal their secret. The look of surprise and awe on their little faces is a wonderful memory to keep. Andy became a member of the Elks and soon became their Santa at Christmas time. He loved

his weekly lunches with his group of retired veterans, who call themselves the Wednesday Warriors. Marine tough and Santa soft, he proudly shed tears whenever he pledged a waving American flag.

Andrew Benton Banks, Jr. packed more life into his 75 years than anyone and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him. I choose to believe that God was in desperate need of the most excellent Santa in heaven and so we grieve our loss and celebrate Andy's final, and most well deserved, promotion. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in the name of Andrew B. Banks, Jr., at either of the following organizations. both were very important to Andy: Relay For Life - <http://www.relayforlife.org/eurekaca> (his daughter's team is Teresa's Dream Team #25) - in support of Shirley; and his latest mission, Honor Flight - <http://www.honorflightnorcal.org/> - flying Veterans to DC to see the Memorials. If you would like to leave condolences please visit [www.PierceMortuaryChapels.com](http://www.PierceMortuaryChapels.com).

## BERTRAM ARTHUR MAAS

Colonel Bertram Arthur Maas, USMC (Ret.), 79, passed away on Saturday, May 28, 2011 of lung cancer. Bert was born in Omaha, Nebraska and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota where he graduated from St. Thomas Military Academy. He went on to attend the United States Naval Academy graduating in 1953 when he became a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Marine Corp. Two years after meeting on a train coming from Chicago, he married Charlotte Ann Hiser of Bethesda, Maryland on June 9, 1953. They became the parents of six sons. Bert was also the proud grandpops of six grandchildren; he also leaves behind his beloved sister and many other nieces and nephews.

Following flight training at Pensacola, FL, and Corpus Christi, TX, Bert became a fighter pilot. He attended the US Naval Post graduate School Monterey, CA and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. He later transitioned into helicopters and one of his career highlights was a tour in HMX-1, flying Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. He commanded gunships squadron VMO-6 in Vietnam for which he received the bronze and silver stars. Bert's final three years on active duty in the Marine Corp. was as the CO of Marine Aircraft Group 49 at Willow Grove, PA flying A4's and CH53's. After retirement Bert enrolled in George Mason School of Law and was admitted to the bar in 1986. He enjoyed boating and spending time at his beach cottage in Emerald Isle, NC, with his family. He and wife Charlotte were married for 57 years and were residents of Vienna, VA for over forty years.

A funeral service will be held at a later date in Fort Myer Old Post chapel and immediately following will be interment in Arlington National Cemetery.



## BOBBY G. "BOB" FRANKLIN

Bobby G. "Bob" Franklin, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) U. S. Army, 75, left this life on July 4, 2010 at the Claremore Regional Hospital after a short illness.

Born July 5, 1934, Bob received his Bachelor of Science degree from Arkansas Polytechnic College, Russellville, AR (now Arkansas Tech University), in 1956 and embarked on a lengthy and distinguished career in the U. S. Army. Bob chose Army Aviation early in his military service and was awarded the Master Army Aviator Wings. Bob took great pride in his service to our country and loved to fly. LTC Franklin served two combat tours in Vietnam as well as non-combat tours in Korea, Germany and Alaska. While serving as a pilot in Vietnam with the 116th Assault Helicopter Company he was awarded the Silver Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross. In addition, Franklin received the Bronze Star with Second Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Medal through 13th Oak Leaf Cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal and upon his retirement in 1976 the Legion of Merit Award.

Bob enjoyed his retirement, devoting his energy and hard work to developing a successful cattle operation located on top of a mountain with a scenic vista of the Arkansas River Valley and Petit Jean Mountain in Conway County, Arkansas. In his spare time, he enjoyed fishing with his grandchildren, reading, hunting with his son, playing bridge and hitting the course with a full roster of golf buddies. An avid golfer, he excelled at the sport and his skill was rewarded with a total of five holes-in-one scored during his retirement.

Bob is survived by his wife, Lillian McKee Franklin of Hattiesville, AR; one son and his family, three grandchildren, one brother and one sister. He was preceded in death by his parents and one daughter. Condolences for the family may be sent to [www.fitzgeralddivychapel.com](http://www.fitzgeralddivychapel.com). Donations in Bob's name can be made to the VFW Martin-Bradley Post, 98 City Park Dr., Morrilton, AR 72110 or "The Salvation Army". [www.fitzgeralddivychapel.com](http://www.fitzgeralddivychapel.com).



## CHUCK JOHNSON PICKETT

Chuck Johnson-Pickett, 64, of Stillwell, Kansas, passed away Friday, April 1, 2011 at his home.

Chuck spent his career in the U.S. Army and graduated from flight school with Flight Class 69-43 and 69-45. He flew in Vietnam with B Co, 123rd Avn Bn, 23rd Infantry Division in 1970-17 under the callsign Warlord 38 where he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He went on to become a noted test pilot and he retired in 1989 as a Chief Warrant Officer after serving his country for 21 years.

He then went to work for the BNSF Railroad, where he worked for 12 years as a Conductor and Engineer before retiring in 2010. Chuck received his B.S. in Aviation Management and was a proud member of the United Transportation Union.



He was preceded in death by his father, Charles Breedlove Pickett and a son, Gordon Charles Pickett. Chuck is survived by his wife of 29 years, Janie Johnson-Pickett; one son, two daughters, his mother, two brothers and three grand daughters. Chuck was a much loved husband, father, grandfather, and friend and he will be missed by all. The family suggests contributions to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation; an online guest book is available at [www.louismemorialchapel.com](http://www.louismemorialchapel.com).

## DAVID BLINN McLEAN

David Blinn McLean, 65, a resident of Gassville, Arkansas, servant of Christ, loving husband, devoted father and grandfather, beloved brother and uncle, and cherished friend to many passed away early the morning of May 16, 2011.



He was born on July 7, 1945, in Hampton, Virginia, the son of John Franklin and Fannie Alice Miller McLean. David enlisted in the Army in April of 1967, graduated from flight school with Flights Classes 71-7 & 71-9 and served in Vietnam, where his skills and dedication as a helicopter pilot and technician earned him the Meritorious Service Medal, Master Army Aviation Badge, Vietnam Service Medal with three bronze stars and many others. After his honorable discharge from active duty, David joined the Illinois Army National Guard, where he served for 20 years as a maintenance officer and test pilot, achieving the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 5. During his time with the National Guard, David coordinated and piloted many missions, including providing rescue and aid to victims of natural disasters, flying medical evacuations from Central Illinois to regional trauma centers, and deployment to Panama in the 1990s. After retiring from the National Guard, David relocated to Gassville, Arkansas with his wife, Penny, and his youngest son, Joshua. Ever devoted to children, David and Penny felt called to open their home to children in need as foster parents, and as leaders of their church youth group. David's strong faith, combined with his "never quit" attitude and his ever-present sense of humor never wavered, even when faced with the diagnosis and rapid progression of cancer.

He is preceded in death by his parents and four brothers, survivors include his wife of 30 years, Penny; two sons, two daughters and sons-in-law, one brother, one sister, nine grandchildren and many nephews and nieces.

Burial with military honors provided by the United States Army Honor Guard was held at the Tucker Memorial Cemetery near Gassville, Arkansas. Memorials may be made to CMC Hospice.

## DAVID SHERMAN CRIGHTON, JR.

David Sherman Crighton, Jr., 70 of Middleton, Tennessee passed away Thursday morning, April 7, 2011 at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital.

He last was a pilot for FedEx for 27 years and lived many years in Memphis. He received his BA

degree from Mississippi State. He served his country as a marine helicopter pilot captain during Vietnam, was highly decorated and a Distinguished Flying Cross recipient.

He is survived Anne Wallace Crighton who he married on April 19, 2000, he is also survived by two daughters, one son, a sister and 3 grandchildren. Memorials may be directed to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, KS 66675-8516 or the donor's choice of charities.

## EDWARD McCLELLAN LOWRY

Edward McClellan Lowry, 83, of Canton, Mississippi passed away April 15, 2011 at Hospice Ministries in Ridgeland. Memorial services will be held at a later date.

Ed was a graduate of Mississippi State, he became a revenue agent for BATF in Mississippi. He loved to fly, but his spotting skills from the air were, as he told it, too effective to suite his superiors. He transferred to U.S. Customs, intercepting drug smugglers mid-air around the Gulf States. In 1982, Ed retired to Mississippi. For some years he flew the Life Star air ambulance for UMMC.

An Army reservist, Ed served during the Korea War. After graduating flight school with class 64-1, Ed flew helicopters in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne, earning the Bronze Star and Distinguished Flying Cross and leaving as a major.

Well-read in history and poetry, Ed composed satirical verses to amuse his colleagues. He was ever-ready to walk dogs, critique battles, and tutor Marines. He cherished a succession of beagles and other pups. Married and divorced twice, Ed is survived by a sister, his two sons, one daughter and one stepdaughter. Memorial donations may be sent to the Mississippi Animal Rescue League.

## EDWARD G QUINLAN, LTC. USAF (RET)

Lt Col Edward G. Quinlan USAF, Retired, died on May 18, 2011 at the age of 81 years.

Born in Boston, MA, 10 Feb 1930 to Joseph F and Ethel (Squires) Quinlan, he was reared in Plympton, MA, and graduated from nearby Plymouth High School, Class of 1947. While attending Bridgewater State Teacher's College the Korean War began and he enlisted in the Air Force. He completed training as an Airplane and Engine Mechanic, and worked on RB-36 Bombers, proudly attaining the rank of Sergeant. In June, 1954, he completed the Aviation Cadet Program as a Distinguished Military Graduate, and was awarded aviator's wings and a commission as Lieutenant, USAF. In the course of his 23 year military career he accumulated 5,000 hours flying time, includes 4,000 hours in helicopters. He advanced from Private First Class Mechanic to Lieutenant Colonel Chief of Maintenance. As one contemporary said, "He fixed 'em and flew 'em". Service included tours in Korea, where for some time he was the only Air Force pilot authorized to fly into the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) at Pan Mun Jom where the Korean North-South border was marked with string down the middle of the green-felt, confer-



ence table; in Viet Nam, where he was a "Jolly Green" helicopter rescue pilot and staff officer; and in Rangoon, Burma, as an advisor to the American Embassy and the Burmese Air Force. It was there he discovered that Kipling's "Road to Mandalay" was the fast-flowing, muddy, Irrawaddy River.

He married Lt. Doris Rita Kliment, an AF Nurse from Binghamton, NY, in 1956. Together they created four children, an AF career, and "Quinlan's Creative Crafts" a craft, trophy, and frame shop and gallery in Del Rio, TX, where they called "home" after their AF retirement. Both active in the community, he was the first Lay Eucharistic Minister of Sacred Heart Church, which established that program in Del Rio, a Lector for the Mass, and a member of the Parish Council. He reactivated his long-time membership in the Knights of Columbus, joined the Fourth Degree of the Order, and helped establish the local Randy Cote Assembly of which he was the charter Faithful Navigator. Quinlan was involved in the Del Rio community with the Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Crime Stoppers, Bicentennial Committee, Del Rio Centennial, Val Verde Sesquicentennial Committee, Val Verde Historical Commission, and as a member and Chairman of the Border Credit Union, from which position he designed and supervised the building of their Mission style office on Hwy 90. As part of the Action Del Rio Committee, he and Doris originated the "Arts and Crafts Festival" as part of the Fiesta Amistad celebration. After moving to San Antonio, he volunteered for over ten years with the Methodist Hospital "Bluebird" Auxiliary. He was an active member of the Garden Ridge - Bracken (TX) Lions Club where he became locally famous for cutting fish and not himself for their annual Fish Fry and Auction.

Memorials to St. Jukes Children Hospital or the American Cancer Society. You are invited to sign the guestbook at [www.porterloring.com](http://www.porterloring.com).

## EMIL "JACK" KLEUVER

Col. EMIL "Jack" KLEUVER, U.S. Army, Retired, 85, of Las Vegas, Nevada passed away April 23, 2011. Jack was born Nov. 28, 1925 on the family farm in Brayton, Iowa, he was the youngest of seven children.

He joined the U.S. Army in 1944, training to fly B-25's so he could join his two older brothers in Europe in World War II. Jack's military career spanned 32 years from 1944 to 1976. He served two tours in Korea (2nd Infantry Division, 38th Field Artillery Battalion, 1952, and Commanded the 13th Transportation Helicopter Co., 1963) and one tour in Vietnam (Commanded AMMC, 1970). Jack enjoyed a love of education earning a B.S. in aeronautical engineering from Auburn University and M.S. in engineering management from USC, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the MBA program at UNLV. Also, Jack loved to fly, learning to fly over 67 different aircraft both fixed wing and rotor in his lifetime. He attended the U.S.A.F. Test Pilot School at Edwards A.F.B. in 1960, winning the A.B. Honts Trophy for Overall Excellence. He was a member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. As a test pilot for NASA in 1964, he test flew the Parasev and the Lunar Landing Research Vehicle, helping to enable a safe landing on the moon. He had the honor of



flying the replica of the Spirit of St. Louis which now hangs in the Lambert Field Rotunda. He served as the project manager for the U.S. Army/Lockheed Cheyenne Helicopter test program and commanded the Toole Army Depot. He loved to fly.

Jack is survived by his wife, of 14 years, Jan West Kluever; one sister-in-law, four daughters, one grandson, one granddaughter, one great-granddaughter and one great-grandson. He was predeceased by his wife, of 41 years, Mary Ellen "Penny" Kluever and two sons, Col. Emil "Kent" Kluever and Capt. Larry John Kluever (Vietnam). In lieu of flowers, the family requests any expressions of sympathy to be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, 7020 AC Skinner Parkway, Suite 100, Jacksonville, FL 32253. "Our dad was a member of the Greatest Generation and will be sorely missed by all."

## FREDERICK G. FUNK

Retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Frederick G. Funk, 76, of Fayetteville, NC, passed away on May 16, 2011, in Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Fayetteville from complications following a series of strokes. He was born July 17, 1934, in Calcasieu Parish, LA. Fred had a 30-year military career, and worked for 19 years as a Department of the Army civilian, serving in Special Operations aviation.

Fred spent a total of six years in Southeast Asia, first as an enlisted man, and then as a helicopter pilot. A number of his enlisted service years were spent TDY in six-month tours from the 1st Special Forces Group out of Okinawa. He was a SFC E7 Special Forces Senior Medic when he entered flight school class 67-15 in January 1967 and graduated in September 1967. His first assignment out of flight school was to Ft. Hood, TX where he helped make up the 2nd of the 1st Cav (Blackhawk) Division unit to be sent to Vietnam. He departed with this unit in July 1968 and was assigned to the 4th Infantry Division in Pleiku. He was later assigned to the 281st AHC in Nha Trang in mid October 1968.

Fred was an avid hunter, fisherman, and trapper, and dearly loved his retriever dogs. He once revived one of his retrievers when it collapsed after bringing a duck back to the blind by performing mouth to nose resuscitation. Buddies stopping by Ft. Bragg to visit would be invited home for a dinner of things like quail, duck, goose, squirrel, deer, fish, and frog legs, but no beef or pork i.e. domestic meat. He couldn't see buying meat in a grocery store when he could get wild game.

## GEORGE J. "JOE" MONTGOMERY

George J. "Joe" Montgomery, 66, died Thursday, January 27, 2011 at his home in Cedar City, Utah. He was born in Mt. Airy, North Carolina, and being raised in a military family, he grew up in Korea, Japan, Alaska, Virginia, Colorado and many points between.

Shortly after leaving high school, Mr. Montgomery became very familiar with the Illinois State Patrol. After a few trips to traffic court, his father took away his driving privileges and nailed his driver's license to the wall with a ten-penny nail. Thereafter Mr. Montgomery went on to sample

many of the fine colleges in the Midwestern U.S. and concluded that for the time being, his energies would best be spent elsewhere.

Joe joined the Army in March, 1967 and attended basic training at Fort Bliss, Infantry-Airborne at Fort Gordon, OCS at Fort Meade and flight school at Fort Wolters. Shortly after receiving his commission, he grew his trademark gunfighter moustache, which he wore for the rest of his life. He proudly served in the Air Cavalry where he earned the nicknames "Firebreather" and "The Red Baron". He completed one tour of duty in Vietnam proudly, and heroically serving as a helicopter pilot in C Troop, 17th Air Cav Squadron earning the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Medal for Heroism. He left the Army as a Captain.

After completing military service, Joe graduated from the University of Missouri ("with about 400 transfer credits" he liked to say) and went on to become a journalist and technical writer for the Department of the Interior. His work with the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation allowed him to work with a variety on interesting people, many of whom remained his lifelong friends, despite the fact that he routinely skunked them playing cribbage.

He retired to Cedar City, Utah, to pursue his photography and writing. Most recently, Mr. Montgomery was a clerk in the Kanarrville, Utah Postal Depot where he enjoyed shooting the breeze and generally causing trouble. He was busted for smoking cigarettes in the post office this January, his family was scandalized.

Mt. Montgomery will always be remembered as a soldier and aviator who just happened to be doing something else. He will be fondly remembered for his insightful correspondence, scathing wit, love of great westerns, beautiful and hilarious toasts, and inspired biscuits and gravy. He was a voracious reader, enthusiastic dinner connoisseur, avid church key collector, generous tipper and an unparalleled spoiler of pets. He suffered no fools gladly and reveled in arguing with his friends. Mr. Montgomery is survived by one brother, his former wife, Jan R. Montgomery; two daughters, two grandchildren, his long-time companion and best friend, Deanna Miller and his extended family.

## JACK E. HUGHES

Jack E. Hughes, age 70, of Michigan City, passed away unexpectedly Friday, May 13 at his home. Jack was born March 25, 1941 in Middletown, New York and on October 8, 1963 in Ft. Rucker, Alabama he married Judy Kienitz.

Jack graduated from Middletown High School in 1959 and went to the University of Miami completing his bachelor's degree at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo. He served his country in the US Army as a helicopter pilot for the 1st Calvary Division during the Vietnam War from 1968-1969 and retired from the Michigan National Guard Army Reserves after 30 years of service. Jack was also a District Sales



Manager for 32 years working for Stanley Air Tools and Wilson Air.

Jack was very proud of his military service and loved flying. He proudly displayed his 1st Calvary patch everywhere he went. He was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's Association. Jack most enjoyed cruising to the beach in his WWII Army jeep. He was very patriotic and loved his country. He especially enjoyed spending time with his two children and one and only beautiful granddaughter, 3 year old Scarlett Rose. Jack had fun going to the local car shows and parades. He loved taking pictures and really captured a lifetime of memories in his film. He liked to talk to everyone he met and enjoyed helping his friends and neighbors. He had a fun and adventurous spirit and was always quick with a joke. Jack truly loved life and will be missed by all those whose lives he touched.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one brother. He is survived by his wife, one son, one daughter, one granddaughter, two sisters and three brothers. Burial with full military rites performed by American Legion John Franklin Miller Post 37 was held at St. Stanislaus Cemetery. Memorials may be made to Disabled American Veterans, PO Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250

## JERRY RAWLINGS

Jerry Lee Rawlings, age 67, of Richmond, Va., passed away April 11, 2011.

Jerry graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-10 and 68-14 was a retired U.S. Army veteran. As a Captain, he flew helicopters during two tours in Vietnam. He was retired from Motorola, Inc. and volunteered at the Fan Free Clinic in Richmond, Va. Jerry was a loving and beloved husband, father and grandfather. He grew up in Lawrenceville, Va., attended Old Dominion College, graduated from Methodist College in Fayetteville, N.C., and was a longtime fan of University of Virginia sports.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one sister. He is survived by his wife, Gray Anderson Rawlings; two daughters, two grandchildren, one brother, one brother-in-law, one sister-in-law and many nieces and nephews.

## JOE W. HILL

Joe W. Hill, 72, of Inverness, Florida, died Friday, May 20, 2011, at Oak Hill Hospital in Brooksville, Florida. He was born June 27, 1938 in Huntsville and New Hope, Alabama.

Mr. Hill was a retired chief warrant officer with the U.S. Army with 20 years of honorable service. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War, enlisting as a medic, he then served one tour with the Special Forces (5th SF Group on 1962-64. He went on to graduate flight school with Flight Class 66-13 and returned to fly with the 116th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) from 1967-1968. For his actions in Vietnam he received many awards and commendations, including 3 Purple Hearts. He enjoyed his retirement that included riding his bicycle, bird watching and researching the Civil War and other military history.

He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother, and a favorite nephew, Graham Hill.



He is survived by his loving wife of 31 years, Debra Hill on Inverness, two sons and their wives, his adored granddaughter, Arella, other nieces and nephews and his beloved dog, Tori.

Private cremation arrangements are held in Crystal River, FL, with inurnment to take place at Arlington National Cemetery.

## JOHN DOUGLAS "DOUG" PERRIN

John Douglas "Doug" Perrin, age 66, passed away peacefully surrounded by loved ones on May 20, 2011 at Island Hospital in Anacortes, Washington. At the time of his death, Doug was being treated for T-Cell Lymphoma related to his military service in Vietnam.



He was born on June 9, 1944 in Longview, Washington and was a Veteran of the Vietnam War. He graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-9 & 68-11, and served in Vietnam with the 191st Attack Helicopter Company as a pilot and received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Bronze Star for his service.

Doug moved to La Conner, Washington from Kauai in 1992 with his wife Jill and his two daughters. He loved to kayak around the San Juan Islands and was passionate about the natural world, deriving much inspiration from his many paddling adventures. He loved spending time with his family and his two beloved cats.

Doug is survived by his two children, one sister, Lindy and one brother. Memorial donations in Doug's name may be sent to: Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, Attn. Donations, PO Box 19023, Seattle, Washington 98109. Memories and condolences to his family available online at [www.kemfuneralhome.com](http://www.kemfuneralhome.com).

## JOHN MCKINLEY WILSON

John McKinley Wilson, 71, of Stedman, North Carolina passed away Saturday, March 19, 2011, at his home. No funeral services were held per Mr. Wilson's request.

John was born July 27, 1939 in Bakersville, and was raised in Baltimore during World War II. He joined the Air Force in 1957, then joined the Army in 1962 and retired as a chief warrant officer. He was a Special Forces medic and later went to flight school (with Flight Class 69-19) to become a pilot, qualifying in both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. His awards and decorations include three awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal (Heroism), three awards of the Bronze Star Medal, three awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, 31 awards of the Air Medal, three awards of the Army Commendation Medal, Army and Air Force good conduct medals, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Medical Badge, Senior Army Aviator Wings, Senior Army Jump Wings and Vietnam Jump Wings.

His parents preceded John in death; he is survived by his wife, Ellen C. Wilson; one son, one daughter, one granddaughter and two brothers. Online condolences may be made at [butlerfh.com](http://butlerfh.com).

## JOHN KETTLEWELL II

John Kettlewell II, Age 61, of Brookville, Ohio, formerly of Englewood, Ohio passed away Sunday, May 8, 2011 at the Dayton VA Medical Center, surrounded by his loving family, following a valiant 5 month battle with throat cancer.

John was a US Army veteran having graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-41, he then served in Vietnam, where, as a 1st Lt, he was in command of an all-volunteer helicopter borne forward attack group. After his military service, he was a paramedic with the Kettering Fire Dept. He was a Kentucky Colonel and a self-employed business owner. In recent years, he and his son Jonathan have enjoyed great times assembling and racing sprint cars all over the tri-state area.

John is survived by his wife of 13 years, Alix Kispal-Kettlewell; his parents, one son and his family, one son and his girlfriend, one daughter and her family, two sisters, six grandchildren and one niece. The family would like to thank the staffs at both the Dayton & Cincinnati VA Medical Centers and at Univ. Hospital in Cincinnati. Words cannot express the wonderful care offered to John by the nurses in the ICU and Palliative/Hospice Care wards. Donations may be made in John's honor to any Veteran's Organization or any local animal shelter. E-mail condolences may be sent to [www.gilbert-fellers.com](http://www.gilbert-fellers.com)

## JOSEPH F. RUTKOSKI

Colonel Joseph F. "Joe" Rutkowski, United States Army Retired of Enterprise, Alabama died on Friday, June 3, 2011 at his residence in Enterprise. He was 81.



Colonel Rutkowski was born December 3, 1928 in New York State, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1946 at the age of 17 and attended Officer Candidate School and Army Flight Training. During his first tour in Vietnam, in 1967, he flew with and commanded the 178th Aviation Company (ASH). During his 2nd tour of duty in Vietnam, 1970-1971, he commanded the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion and deployed the unit from Chu Lai to Quang Tri for Operation Lam Son 719. He earned the Silver Star on 3 March, 1971 for the rescue of several wounded Vietnamese troops. He and his battalion eventually received the Valorous Unit Award with the streamer embroidered "HO CHI MINH TRAIL". His other decorations include three Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star for Valor and numerous Air Medals. When the 14th Aviation Battalion left Vietnam, he carried the Battalion Colors home. After his return, he served at the Pentagon, his last duty assignment was as Director of all Training at Ft. Rucker. Although his military service as well as community service did not stop, he retired in January 1983.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Rutkowski, Enterprise, one daughter, one son, one grandson, two granddaughters, one brother and several nieces and nephews. Funeral services with full military honors were held on June 6, 2011 at the new Wings Chapel at Fort Rucker with Chaplain Colonel Dennis R. Newton officiating and Major

General Retired Richard Kenyon providing the eulogy. Burial will be on September 20, 2011 at Arlington National Cemetery. Contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society in his name.

## PHILLIP MOORE LEE

Phillip "Phil" Moore Lee, of Doraville, Georgia died Saturday, April 23, 2011. Phil was born in Roanoke, Virginia and moved with his family from Virginia to Rockledge, Florida 1956.

After graduating from Cocoa High School, Phil attended Miami Dade College where he began his aviation career. In 1967, Phil entered the Army and began training as a helicopter pilot, graduating with Flight Class 68-501 & 68-1. Upon completion of this training, he was awarded the White Standard Instrument rating. He then transitioned in to Chinook helicopters which he piloted while serving in Vietnam. After being discharged from the Army in 1970, he moved to Atlanta and began a 36 year career as a charter pilot for Epps Aviation. Phil had a love for flying that never waned, he was happiest in the cockpit of an airplane.

He was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his former wife, Judy Lee of Gulfport, Florida, one son and his family, one daughter and her family, seven grandchildren, two brothers, one sister, a special aunt, one uncle, a lifelong friend and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Those wishing to do so, may make memorial donations to Georgia Vietnam Veteran's Alliance, 5879 New Peachtree Road, Doraville, GA 30340, (770) 458-7934 or EnAble of Georgia Foundation, Inc., Attn: Tish Ford, Development Specialist, 1200 Old Ellis Road, Roswell, GA 30076. Online condolences may be expressed at [www.crowellbrothers.com](http://www.crowellbrothers.com).

## MICHAEL D. PIERCE

Michael D. Pierce, 74, of Mineral Wells, Texas, died July 28, 2010, at his home following a long battle with cancer, with his wife and stepson by his side.

Major Michael D. Pierce was born Nov. 12, 1935, in Woodward, Oklahoma. He entered into the Army National Guard when he was a youthful lad of 14 years and retired from the Army in 1978. He was a member of the VFW and the American Legion in Mineral Wells.

Major Pierce was laid to rest on March 23, 2011, in DFW National Cemetery in Dallas, Texas, after a memorial service with full military honors. A pilot who served with him during his 1967-1968 tour of duty in Vietnam with A Troop, 3/17th Cavalry (Silver Spurs) shared how Major Pierce was a real soldier of honor and always did what he said he would do for his men. Pierce was the troop's executive officer. Another veteran from the Silver Spurs also attended. A tribute from the crew chief that flew on Pierce's command and control ship was read. Howard Shutts wrote, "I remember Major Pierce being a very kind man. He seemed to have a real concern for his troopers. He was a good soldier, good pilot, and a fine human being. I felt he was looking after me whenever we flew together. He will be missed." Mineral Wells DAV Chapter 235 Commander, Derroll Ross, spoke of how Pierce always helped veterans in any way he was capable. A representative from the Mineral Wells



# TAPS

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Full military honors were rendered at the memorial service by a mixed honor detail from the Army, Air Force, and Marines. The young Army sergeant in charge of the detail nearly broke into tears when he presented the flag to the widow. The sergeant also presented the widow with three spent shell casings fired during the salute. During the memorial and interment, Rev. Jane Hughes of Mineral Wells officiated, presenting the obituary and speaking words of comfort and assurance to his widow and those attending. She committed his soul to God and his remains to their final resting place in a columbarium.

He is survived by his wife, Shirley Marie Johnson-Pierce; one stepson, one son, one daughter and a sister. He is preceded in death by his father, his mother, one brother, his twin sister, and a set of quadruplets. Major Pierce will be grievously missed by all of the many people who loved him, especially by his widow. The family requested that in lieu of flowers, contributions be sent to the National Vietnam War Museum building fund, Mineral Wells, Texas, in honor of Army Major Michael D. Pierce (Retired.)

## RICHARD C. WARREN

Richard C. Warren, 69, died May 25 at his home after a battle with cancer. Born in Burlington, Vermont, he was a graduate of Northampton High School and thereafter the University of Massachusetts serving as co-captain of the 1964 UMass football team.

He joined the Marines in 1966 and became a Naval Aviator serving 13 months in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot with HMM 265. In 1979 he graduated the RN program at BCC with honors and thereafter graduated the Nurse Anesthetist program at BMC in 1980. He served in this capacity for the next 30 years finishing up his career at North Adams Regional Hospital. He was a member of the Christian Assembly Church since 1986 serving in various ministries as well as on the church board for many years. His missionary work involved short term ministry on in the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mexico and Jamaica. He spent 18 months as a medical missionary in Cambodia in 2001.

He leaves behind his wife Lynette Warren; three sons, one daughter, four grandchildren and one

brother. He was predeceased by his parents and one brother. Burial was held in the Pittsfield Cemetery, MA, are suggested to Christian Assembly Church, attention missions department, care of the funeral home 220 East St., Pittsfield, MA. Thoughts may be emailed: condolences@wellingtonfuneralhome.com

## ROBERT DOUGLASS McWILLIAM

Robert Douglas McWilliam passed into Heaven at the age of 79 years. Bob was born and raised in Woodland, California, and graduated from Woodland High School in 1949, and the University of California Pharmacy School in 1954.

He joined the Army and became a helicopter ambulance pilot, eventually rising to the rank of Colonel. He served two tours of duty in Viet Nam, the last one as commander of the renowned 54th Medical Detachment in Chu Lai in 1967-1968. He had deep pride and appreciation for the men and their accomplishments. Bob went on to become a hospital administrator with a Masters degree from Baylor University. He served in Europe and many areas of the US during his 30 year Army career, including his favorite three year tour in Hawaii.

After retirement Bob studied art at University of Texas, San Antonio, and became a well-known kaleidoscope maker, showcasing his talent with hardwood and stained glass. Bob and his wife of 54 years, Patricia, enjoyed traveling around the US and Canada, seeing new places and learning new things. Bob had a great fondness for the western mountains and he spent many summers backpacking and fly fishing in wilderness areas of Montana and whitewater rafting the rivers of the US and Canada. This was done with family and friends from his childhood, giving him much pleasure.

His parents predeceased him, he is also survived by one sister, her husband and their five children. Bob was a loving husband to his wife, Pat, and devoted father to his two wonderful sons and their family's. He loved spending time with his two grandchildren and had started to show them the delights of camping and rafting. Bob was beloved by his family, his friends and by the men who served with him. He was always positive, caring and could find good in anyone. He readily admitted he had enjoyed a wonderful and fulfilling life, we will all miss his love and happiness. A Methodist service was held to celebrate Bob's life in San Antonio on May 12, 2011.

## RONALD H. LILLY

The family of Ronald H. Lilly, 67, of Rineyville, Kentucky would like to inform the VHPA of his death on June 24, 2009, at Kindred Hospital in Louisville.

After graduating flight training with Flight Class 68-509 and 68-13, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Lilly went on to serve 30 years in the U.S. Army, 22 years of which he was a helicopter pilot. He served two tours in Vietnam. A Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart and Meritorious Service Medal were earned by him, along with other awards and commendations.

He was a member of Vine Grove Christian Church, where he attended until his illness prevented his attendance. Surviving him is his wife of

25 years, Sun Im Lilly of Rineyville; two sons and their wives and four grandchildren. Burial with full military honors was held in Radcliff on June 27th, 2009.

## ROY J. LOWERY

Roy J. Lowery, 75, of Wooster, Ohio passed away Saturday, May 28, 2011, at his local community hospital. Roy was born May 14, 1936 in New Reigel, Ohio and was the eighth son of 10 children. He married Nancy J. Witmore on February 2, 1957, they recently celebrated 54 years together.

He served in the U.S. Army during Vietnam as a helicopter pilot and also received a master's degree in counseling and guidance. Roy graduated from flight school with Flight Class 64-w and served two tours in Vietnam. In 1964 he served first with the 118th Assault helicopter Company and later with A Company, 501st Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, in 1969-1969 he returned to the 159th and this time flew with both their B and C companies. Roy retired after 22 years of service from the U.S. Army and during that time he received the Soldier's Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with 2nd cluster, 32 Air Medals, the Senior Aviator Badge, and the VN Cross of Gallantry w/Palm.

After leaving the Army, he went on to work for ConAgra Mills for 17 years and he also taught driving school for the AARP. He was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Vietnam Veterans of America Barry P. Caruso Chapter 255, and Borderline Dancers. He enjoyed wood-working and spending time with his family.

Roy is survived by his wife Nancy, two sons, two grandsons, four brothers and one sister. He was preceded in death by his parents; and four brothers. Burial with full military honors was held at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association, 1689 E. 115 St. Cleveland 44106, or the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, 407 W. College St. Grapevine, Texas 76051. Online tributes may be made at [www.robertsfuneralhome.com](http://www.robertsfuneralhome.com).

## TOM BUCKLEY

Tom Buckley, 69, of Silver City, N.M. peacefully passed away of natural causes on April 11th in the Smoky Mountains National Park while pursuing his lifelong dream of hiking the Appalachian Trail. By his own assertion, Tom led a



full and vibrant life. He served in the US Army for 26 years, including two tours of duty in Vietnam and one in Korea. He was distinguished for heroic service as a helicopter pilot with the Bronze Star and Distinguished Flying Cross. He further served as an Army Comptroller, earning a Master's Degree in Business Administration and CPA while on active duty. He retired as a Lt. Colonel and began a second career as an owner of a multistate distribution company in Houston, TX for 20 years.

When he retired to Silver City in 2006, he served as a stalwart volunteer in the local community. A



quietly committed member of many community organization boards, he brought experience and energy to the Grant County Concert Series, the AARP Tax-aide program, the Grant County Pilot Association, the Senior Services Board, and the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP). Tom was a true master dabbler, language aficionado, and skilled handyman who was not afraid to jump on the roof to install a solar water heating system. As a life-long learner, he had widely varied interests including classical and gospel music, reading, flying, and dancing. He loved to travel, especially adventuring off the beaten path from Patagonia to the Arctic Circle, Europe to the Pacific Rim. And he loved to hike. He so valued the camaraderie and community on the trails, especially his buddies with whom he bushwhacked through the trails of Southern New Mexico and the "families" he hiked with for 235 miles along the Appalachian Trail.

Tom is survived by his loving wife, Mary Ann Buckley of Silver City, his mother, one brother, three daughters, two stepchildren and three grandchildren. Donations can be made in his memory to the Grant County Community Concert Association P.O. Box 2722, Silver City, NM 88062 or the Continental Divide Alliance, 1200 Arapahoe Street, Golden CO, 80401.

## THEODORE W. "TED" PRATT

Theodore "Ted" W. Pratt was born March 16, 1928, and died May 27, 2011, at his home in Colorado Springs.



After High School, Ted enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in Germany during the Occupation of Frankfurt after WWII. Then as a student at Denver University, he joined the ROTC and trained at Fort Benning, GA, and later joined the Army/Air Force Corp in San Marcos, Texas, for pilot training in Flight Class 60-6Q. As an Army pilot, he served in many locations in the United States and in Germany, Italy, Vietnam, and Korea. Ted served two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. He flew fixed wings and rotary wing aircrafts, but his favorite flying machine was the Huey helicopter. Ted served the US Army to redesign and improve helicopters used in wartime. He was particularly proud of his contributions toward the development of the Black Hawk helicopter.

Ted retired from the military in 1972 and earned a degree in guidance counseling from the University of Northern Colorado. He served as a counselor in Colorado Springs and then served as a principal at St. Mary's Adult High School, a school for soldiers at Fort Carson, helping them complete their high school graduation requirements. With his second retirement, Ted turned to golf and served two years as a Rules Official with the Colorado Golf Association. Ted passionately enjoyed playing golf with his friends and family.

He is survived by his wife, Gwen Pratt, two sons, one daughter and two faithful dogs. Donations may be made to Home Front Cares of Colorado or the Broadmoor Community Church.

## WILLIAM JOHN DERUS

William John Derus, 71, died June 5, 2011, at his residence. Born Nov. 23, 1939, in Cleveland, Ohio, he lived in Mentor for the past 40 years.

He enjoyed playing the guitar, fishing, and crossword puzzles, he had attended St. Bede the Venerable Catholic Church in Mentor. He also had been a member of the band "The Savoy's" and had worked in sales for Kerr Lakeside Inc. for more than 30 years. A U.S. Army Veteran of the Vietnam War, having served as a helicopter pilot after graduating flight school with Flight Class 63-1.

Survivors include his wife of 50 years, Barbara, three sons and their wives, six grandchildren and one sister. He was preceded in death by his parents. Interment was held in

Memorial mass will be 10 a.m. Saturday, June 18, 2011 at St. Bede the Venerable Catholic Church, 9114 Lakeshore Blvd., Mentor. Inurnment will be in Mentor Cemetery, Ohio. Contributions may be made to the Covenant House, Times Square Station, P.O. Box 731, New York, NY 10108-0900.

## CW4 (Retired) William Thomas Hargrove, Sr.

CW4 (Retired) William Thomas Hargrove, Sr. died on March 17, 2011. A native of Jackson County, he graduated from Union Baptist Institute (Athens GA) in 1950. He received his Associates Degree from Troy State University in 1982 and his Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from Troy State University in 1983. As a young man, William always dreamed of flying and he accomplished that dream while serving as a pilot for the United States Army. He began his illustrious military career as an enlisted soldier in 1951, served as a combat engineer in Korea, and was a 1955 graduate of "Camp" Rucker's 12th Warrant Officer Candidate class. He served as an YH-40 test pilot, rotary-wing instructor, aircraft maintenance officer, Presidential support pilot, Vietnam combat aviator, and VIP pilot. After being awarded his Army Aviator wings and Warrant Officer rank, he was trained in the CH-34 helicopter and assigned to Fort Rucker's Aircraft Test Activity where he flew flight tests on many evolving Army aircraft, including the "Huey" series (YH-40, HU-1A, HU-1B, HU-1D). Following Warrant Officer fixed-wing qualification in 1960, he was stationed with the Southern European Task Force (SETAF) where he attended the Italian Army aircraft ski-school and was awarded the Italian Army Aviation Badge, serving as a helicopter mountain flying instructor pilot for Italian Army aviators and a trainer for other UH-1 qualified Army Aviators in SETAF. During Presidential visits, CW4 Hargrove flew support for Mrs. Kennedy in Greece in 1961 and for President Kennedy's 1963 Italy trip. In 1963, he piloted one of the SETAF rescue helicopters when the huge landslide forced a deluge of water over



the Vajont Dam in the Piave Valley killing more than 2,000 people. His numerous mercy flight missions, high in the Italian Alps earned him the Air Medal, the Sikorsky "Winged-S" air rescue emblem and the Italian Government Bronze Medal. Vietnam called CW4 Hargrove in 1965, where he flew Hueys and was a Field Maintenance Officer with the 151st Transportation Detachment. Returning to Fort Benning in 1966, he gained additional aircraft maintenance experience as a Detachment Cdr. Back in Vietnam in 1968, William flew as UH-1 Aircraft Commander on all missions flown by MG Robert R. Williams, CG of the 1st Aviation Brigade. From 1969-1974, assigned again to Fort Benning, he was an aircraft maintenance Shop Platoon Leader, flew the stars during the filming of "The Green Berets" and served on the Officer's Club Board of Governors.

Upon his retirement in 1981, CW4 Hargrove left Army Aviation a "legacy of duty" as Master Army Aviator, with 7200 accident-free flying hours, 1200 combat flight hours, and 22 aircraft type qualifications and in 1998 was inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame. His more than 50 medals and awards include the Air Medal w/28 Oak Leaf Clusters and service ribbons and decorations from Korea, Italy and Vietnam. In 1986, William returned to Athens, Georgia where he immediately became involved in community and civic activities, serving as a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Eta Iota Lambda Chapter, assistant Boy Scout Leader (Troop 350), and from 1996 - 2003, he served as the President of the Athens Area Human Relations Council, Inc. He was a member of the Union Baptist Institute Alumni Association, Masonic Electric City Lodge Number 322 (Columbus, Georgia), a 32nd Degree Mason and a Shriner, a Life Member of the United States Army Black Aviation Association, Life Member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and at the time of his death, served as a Deacon at Mount Sinai Baptist Church in Bogart, GA.

In November 1992, he married Annie Jones and he leaves to celebrate his life and carry on his legacy four children (from a previous marriage to Alberta B. Hargrove) Thomas Hargrove, Jr., Cheryl Hargrove Barnes, Gwendolyn Hargrove Ruff and Timothy J. Hargrove; two sisters, Luradine Timberlake (Queens NY) and Linda Guion (Brooklyn NY); ten grandchildren, two great-granddaughters, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, close friends and family. The late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are your doing for others?" William chose to answer that call and live his life to serve others. He was a faithful servant and beloved child of God who loved his family, fought for our nation, and embraced his community. Of all his awards and accomplishments, William's greatest joy was proclaiming his personal experience in power of prayer and his faith in God. William will be dearly missed by the many lives he touched and all those who were blessed to know him.



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

*I am happy to report that the Chapters are doing well. We currently have 24 Chapters, two newly formed in Alaska and Central New York and one, hopefully to come on line within the next six months, in Arkansas. This being said, I am always looking for new possibilities. If you are in an area without a Chapter, perhaps you might be interested in forming one. Call me and I would be happy to discuss it with you.*

**Jack Salm**  
or e-mail: [REDACTED]

**We have two new chapters.**  
**ALASKA CHAPTER**  
Victor Micol  
[REDACTED]

**CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER**  
Questions about this Chapter should be directed to Jack Salm at [REDACTED] or e-mail me at: [REDACTED] We are currently seeking a volunteer to assume the position of President of this Chapter.

**Arizona Chapter**  
Bill Sorenson  
[REDACTED]

**California Chapter North**  
Ken Fritz  
[REDACTED]

**Fort Rucker Chapter**  
Roscoe V. Souders  
[REDACTED]

**Fort Wolters Chapter**  
Lee Westbrook  
[REDACTED]

**Georgia Chapter**  
Carl "Skip" Bell  
[REDACTED]

**Hawaii Chapter**  
Don Harlor  
[REDACTED]

**Louisiana Gulf Coast Chapter**  
Phil Nuss  
[REDACTED]

**Mid-South Chapter**  
"Pete" Norman IV  
[REDACTED]

**Montana Chapter**  
Todd Brandoff, President  
[REDACTED]

**North Alabama Chapter**  
Jim White, President  
[REDACTED]

**New England Chapter**  
Bill Williams, President  
[REDACTED]

**North Carolina Chapter**  
J.D. Lawson  
[REDACTED]

**Ohio River LZ Chapter**  
Jim Miller, President  
[REDACTED]

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

**South Dakota Chapter**  
Harold Pardew  
[REDACTED]

**South Missouri Chapter**  
John Sorensen, President  
[REDACTED]

**Rocky Mountain Chapter**  
Walt Wise  
[REDACTED]

**The Alamo Chapter**  
San Antonio, Texas  
Bob Dillon, President  
[REDACTED]

**South Carolina Chapter**  
(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter  
Larry Russell, Pres.  
[REDACTED]

**Southern California Chapter**  
Carl Cortez, Pres.  
[REDACTED]

**VHPA of Florida Chapter**  
Gary Harrell, President  
[REDACTED]

**Virginia Chapter**  
Ben Gav, President  
[REDACTED]

**Washington State Chapter**  
Mark Hansen, President  
[REDACTED]

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

*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.*



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## THE ALAMO CHAPTER

The Alamo Chapter members met on May 3d for dinner a few blocks behind the Alamo on the banks of the San Antonio River. After an enjoyable meal and libations at Luciano's Italian Restaurant on the famous River Walk, the members boarded a private river barge for a narrated tour along the historic and picturesque river. Photos of the meeting and river cruise may be viewed at our website, [http://www.vhpa-alamo.org/galleries/vhpa\\_alamo\\_dinner\\_cruise/index.html](http://www.vhpa-alamo.org/galleries/vhpa_alamo_dinner_cruise/index.html)

Our next meeting is planned for the evening of June 7th at another great San Antonio restaurant in central San Antonio, the Barn Door. Our guest speaker will be a retired Air Force pilot William C. Eagle who flew F0105 aircraft on multiple deep bombing strikes into North Vietnam during our war. He will give us some interesting insights into those missions.

If anyone knows where and how our chapter might obtain a non-flyable helicopter from the Vietnam era suitable for trailer display and use as a parade float, please contact our vice president, Jim Martinson, at [REDACTED] or e-mail: [REDACTED]

*Submitted by Chuck Oualline, Bob Dillon, President*

## FORT RUCKER CHAPTER

At our Tuesday May 3 monthly meeting we donated \$200 to the relief of the tornado damage in North Alabama. Our next meeting will be at Larry's BBQ in Daleville with our wives on June the 7th starting at 6 PM. We are also planning to participate in an Indian Pow Wow on Nov 11-12-13. Bill Stahl and Roscoe Souders are coordinating. Officers of the Daleville CC are also involved. The program will be dedicated to veterans and will be held in Daleville at Culpepper Park. Native American dancers will be featured.

*Roscoe V. Souders, President*

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter continues to hold its Bi-monthly Saturday morning breakfast meetings and continues to assist with efforts to educate local people and groups about the Vietnam War by furnishing speakers to high schools and colleges, Boy Scout Troops, other youth organizations and civic groups who want to learn about the Vietnam War from people who fought there. Georgia Chapter member Terry Garlock just had an excellent book about the Vietnam War published. The title is STRENGTH AND HONOR. The forward is by Joe Galloway (of 7th Cavalry / Ia Drang Valley fame) and in addition to stories by Vietnam veterans of all military services, the book includes a chapter by B. G. Burkett (author of STOLEN VALOR). In an appendix, Terry gives one of the best most concise synopses of the Vietnam War I have ever read. This book is highly recommended for the library of any Vietnam Veteran. The book is available on Amazon.com or at Terry's web site: [www.garlock1.com](http://www.garlock1.com).

In addition to our meetings, the Georgia Chapter continues to assist other Vietnam Veterans groups in the local area with their projects by providing personnel and other resources. The Georgia Chapter contributed \$500 to the Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association (another local Veterans group) to help defray expenses for their annual memorial ceremony to honor a Vietnam KIA from the Atlanta area. This year's honoree is PFC Ted D. Britt, USMC, who was killed just outside the Khe Sanh combat base on 30 March 1968. For his actions that day PFC Britt was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. Our primary activity continues to be the Bi-monthly breakfast meeting - the men who participate really enjoy the opportunity to get together with other combat veterans, swap war stories, discuss VA related information, and maintain those bonds that were forged so many years ago.

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

*Skip Bell, President*

## NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

The New England Chapter will hold its 2 Annual Reunion meeting and cookout celebration the end of summer at Peter "Pinky" Adams Lodge in Scituate, MA on Sunday, September 11 from 1200-1700. This year's event will honor those who lost their lives on 9/11/2001. Pinky's Lodge is The Glades, Scituate, MA 02066-6606. Map Quest the address and follow all the way to the end of Glades Road. It is a spectacular location on the Massachusetts Coast with an impressive view of the Boston skyline.

Please contact me if you plan to attend. Phone [REDACTED] or e-mail: [REDACTED]

*Bill Williams, President*

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The Southern California Chapter is in the planning stages for a deep sea fishing adventure. We are looking into charter availability with an eye on either a July or August trip out of San Diego. We are also actively searching for local Chili Cook-Off contests to participate in. American Legion Post 291 in Newport Beach hosts the annual Surfest Chili Cook-Off and concert and we are just waiting for the date to be announced. The Chapter is also planning to participate in the Annual Wings and Rotors event to be held at Los Alamitos on October 23d, 2011

*Carl Cortez, President*

## SOUTH CAROLINA (Celebrate Freedom) CHAPTER

Well, it happened again.. Last month we heard the familiar whop, whop, whop of a Cobra landing at the FBO on the other side of our airport, it was another Marine from New River, NC. When we went to lunch at the local "watering hole" in walked two Marine Captains in tan flight suits. One of our guys went over to them and asked if they would like to eat lunch with "real pilots"? LOL - come to find out they sprung an oil seal on the #1 engine and were looking for the local VHPA Chapter to help. Surprise, surprise! Here we were!

A support team was on the way and would arrive late that night with a new engine and to make a long story short, they spent a few days in our hanger swapping out the engine. They were blown away with the support we supplied. Last year a few of us went to New River for a private tour. There were Cobra's and Huey's. Oh Boy! Even a couple of dozen MV-22 Osprey's making all kind of noise.

We were invited to the East Coast Skid Reunion at the Officers Club and had a great time drinking beer, eating BBQ and good fellowship. Man O Man, did those Captains look young. Get out of the house and spend some time with our younger band of brothers - they'll make you proud.

*Larry Russell, President.*

## SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER

Our Chapter had a meeting on 14 May in Sioux Falls at the Woodshed. Our next meeting will be July 16 at the VFW in Black Hills, SD.

*Harold Pardew, President*

## WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

On Father's Day weekend, June 18th, our meeting was at "The Gathering of War-birds Air Show" at Olympia Airport. The meeting covered local projects, major statewide membership drive, but the main event was to tell flying tales and to watch the air show with our families or together as a group at the hanger.

May 28-30, Memorial Day weekend a few of us visited the Mt. Tahoma National Cemetery to remember those who have "crossed the horizon" and to enjoy the beauty of the many American Flags lining the roads and at each remembered site.

We are having a "first" meeting in Spokane in late August-early September. Watch the web site for meeting time/location.

We will again tow our UH-1 Huey in the Annual Auburn Veterans Day Parade.

*Submitted by Doug Decker - Mark Hansen, President*



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

At our last meeting on 19 May, Bernie Parr reported that Yulista Aviation, Inc. is willing to work with the NAVHPA, SOFH and the Veterans Museum in helping to restore the UH-1 helicopter back to static display configuration and be representative of the Vietnam Era. YULISTA has the ground handling wheels and special tools to disassemble and assemble the airframe. Parts are becoming available for restoration through the efforts of Don Bisson and Tim Powell. Many thanks to these men, and to many others who were involved in the getting the project off the ground. It was reported by Les Haas that other aircraft were being considered as projects but it was agreed that we would concentrate on this project and not get involved with any other projects at this time.

Jim White reported that the 'Wings Over Cullman, Alabama is Saturday 21 May, 2011. Some members are planning on attending with our banner in tow to see if we can get some potential new members.

Jim White made the motion that at our June meeting we take the list of potential members who receive our monthly e-mail be divided up and given to current members so that we can contact them individually by phone. We are hoping that through personal contact they might be more likely to join the Chapter. We did have three new members join at the last meeting, so we are growing.

Lash Wisner Attended the opening of the "Southern Museum of Flight" in Birmingham., AL, he reported that it was worth the drive to see. He says that we should consider visiting the museum in the future. Lash was our representative for the Chapter.

*Jim White, President*

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The North Carolina Chapter has supported these events in the last couple of months: April 1 and 2 we had the UH-1 H and the OH-6 in Wilmington, NC for a Viet Nam Vets Homecoming. April 15-17 Celebrate Freedom in Columbia, SC (UH-1 H, OH-6 and UH-1 M). April 29-30 Boy Scout Camp (about 2,300 Boy Scouts with the UH-1 M and OH-6.) May 13-15 Marion, NC at the Vietnam Moving Wall and the UH-1 H was in Booneville, NC at a Vietnam Veterans Homecoming.

We stay really busy in the North Carolina Chapter and always have room for new members.. Have any questions about our upcoming activities or our meetings? Feel free to contact me directly at any of the listed contact address's.

*J.D. Lawson, President*



(left to right) Vic Rose, Joe Armstrong, Phil Keith (kneeling), Jerry Seago, Bob Smith, JD Lawson(kneeling), Brock Nicholson, Len Stevens and Jim Breznay welcome Trooper Henri A. LeGendre (center), a member of the 9th Cavalry in World War II.

## VIRGINIA CHAPTER

The Virginia Chapter is having a cookout on July 9 cookout at Ben Gay's house, [REDACTED] Lanexa, VA. Also, if you have tried to contact me and I haven't gotten back to you, please try again. I would like to talk to any prospective members. Ben Gay, President.

## CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER

Because of medical and personal problems J. T. Severin has been forced to relinquish the Presidency of the Chapter. J. T. is relocating to the Virginia area where he has family. We wish him all the best.

In the interim if anyone has questions about the Chapter please contact Jack Salm at [REDACTED] or e-mail me at: [REDACTED] I will be happy to answer any questions you might have until we get a volunteer to assume the position of President.

*Thanks - Jack Salm*

## HAWAII CHAPTER

As I write this I am working at the National Veterans Golden Age Games (NVGAG) in Hawaii. I can't thank our veterans enough, especially this group of older disabled Veterans. God Bless them all. I am still in the process of contacting prospective members in Hawaii. If you are interested please call or e-mail me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

*Don Harlor, President*

## MONTANA CHAPTER

Our Chapter had a membership meeting on the 11th of July at the home of Todd Brandoff. About 16 members showed up and we had a productive discussion on chapter matters. If you are already a member of National and live in the state of Montana we would certainly welcome you as a member of our Chapter. Please contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

*Todd Brandoff, President.*

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER OF THE VHPA

In early April the Chapter had an extremely successful display of our Helicopter War Museum at Prairie View HS in Brighton Colorado. Over 3,000 students from the high school, two middle schools and two elementary schools visited the Helicopter War Museum. As expected, all enjoyed sitting in our newly install 'Right Seat' Huey cockpit and enjoyed our virtual/interactive 360° Huey interior view video.

The Chapter hosted the 'Honor Flight' Welcome Home of 150 WWII and Korean War Vets as they returned from their free trip to visit 'their' memorials in Washington D.C. in early May We provided coffee, cookies, water and friendship as they deplaned and regrouped for the bus ride home to their families in Northern Colorado and Wyoming. Northern Colorado Honor Flight has two of these trips each year and is now accepting Korean War Vets as the WWII numbers are declining.

The Chapter will display the War Museum during the 4-day 50th Anniversary remembrance of the Vietnam War at Fort Carson on June 9th - 12th. It will be located at the Main Gate to the base next to the 'Traveling Wall'. Our final 'scheduled event this summer is participation in a regional Air Show July 12 - 15 in Hastings, Kansas. We also hope to have our membership BBQ in August.

*Ed Fickes, Operations Officer  
Walt Wise, President*





# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The second quarter has been very rewarding for the South Missouri Chapter of the VHPA. Our general meeting, held 21 May, in Kansas City was well attended with several first-time attendees and a new member. A very educational discussion of veteran's benefits and recent changes was led by our guest, Bill Rieger, a Service Officer with the DAV.

Members of the Chapter have also been meeting returning WWII heroes as they returned on Honor Flights from Washington, DC. What a heart warming experience that is.

We also made a book donation to the Missouri Veterans Home in Mt. Vernon. Members ate lunch with veterans in the dining room and were then given a tour of the facilities. It is comforting to know that those who answered the call to serve our great nation are cared for so well in such a beautiful place. Donations to the other Missouri Veterans Homes are planned for the coming months.

Our third quarterly meeting will be held at the HyVee Club Room, 405 East Nifong, Columbia, MO, on 13 August, beginning at 10:00 am. This will be an important meeting as election of officers is scheduled. We will be electing a Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. If you are a Chapter Member, and would like to seek one of these positions on the Chapter Council, you need to notify the Chapter Council, in writing, by July 15th. Lunch will be provided by the Chapter, so make your plans to attend.

*John Sorensen, President*



## LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER

The Gulf Coast Chapter hosted Mike Law the evening of April 21, 2011 at their quarterly meeting site, Smilie's Restaurant, 5725 Jefferson Highway, Harahan, LA, 70123. Mike was in New Orleans coordinating the 2012 VHPA Reunion to be held August 2-5, 2012, at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel and graciously agreed to talk to the Chapter about ideas on increasing membership and ways to spread the VHPA story.

The Chapter meets the third Thursday of January, April, July and October at 6 PM with fine food and beverages occasionally interrupting the war stories and camaraderie. The Chapter is quite excited about the 2012 Reunion coming to the "Big Easy" and looks forward to assisting in any way they can. New Orleans has so much to offer in history (The Chalmette Battlefield, site of the "Battle of New Orleans made famous by singer Johnny Horton), The National WWII Museum (check out the museum's web site). Then there is the food including seafood, steaks and all the rest available in Creole style, Cajun style, Italian style, Somebody's Mama's style, and that mixture of all four called "New Orleans" style.

Wet your whistle with a Hurricane at Pat O'Brien's, craft beers from Crescent City Brewhouse and Gordon Biersch, or local beers like Abita and Dixie are found just about everywhere. Did we mention the Harrah's Casino located right across the street from the Reunion Hotel? In the Hilton itself is one of the New Orleans areas most revered restaurants, Drago's, home of the "Char Grilled Oysters". A few blocks away is Cafe Giovanni where Chef Duke will not only feed you, but on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings your meal will be punctuated with a live opera singer walking through the dining rooms. Add in the Steam Boat rides, Plantations, Swamp Tours and the (in)famous French Quarter and you can easily see why New Orleans in 2012 will be a good bet for a great time by attendees of all ages. Boy, writing this has made me hungry. I'm off to get a fresh order of beignets from Cafe Du Monde.

Any interested person who lives in or near the Gulf Coast region is encouraged to become a member of our Chapter and to share some of their pictures. It would be wonderful to have interested pilots contact us with photos to share. I think this would be just what we need to bring us together and to provide additional "common ground" among us, go to: <http://sites.google.com/site/gulfcoastchaptervhp/>

*Phil Nuss, President.*



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*From left to right:*

Andrew Hover - Past President  
Phil Nuss - President  
Palmer Sullins - Board Member  
Mike Law - VHPA President  
Victor Lent - 2012 President





# VHPA'ers in the News

## Vietnam War helicopter pilots reunite in Slidell after more than 40 years



**The Times-Picayune**

By Ramon Antonio Vargas, *The Times-Picayune* of New Orleans, Louisiana, Published: Thursday, April 28, 2011, 6:02 PM, Updated: Thursday, April 28, 2011, 7:10 PM and used by permission.

Andrew Hover doesn't talk about his experiences as a U.S. Army helicopter pilot during Vietnam. But, last summer, Hover flew to San Diego with his wife to attend a reunion of chopper pilots who flew in the war. On the flight back he realized that he should try to gather as many of the men he served with in the aviation section of the 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, so they could brief each other on the lives they have led the past four decades. That gathering began this week in Slidell and should last through Saturday. It has reunited Hover with nine men from eight different states, most of whom he has not seen since the war, when they were in their late teens and early 20s. They plan to take a swamp tour; visit the French Quarter; dine well; and relax at Hover's home.

The former warrant officer won't tell you the military honored his service from 1968 to 1969 in the war with 10 medals, including the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star, citations earned by those who complete dangerous missions. He won't go into detail about his duties, which included airlifting wounded soldiers, providing cover fire and delivering supplies to ground troops throughout 969 combat-flight hours. Hover, of Slidell, seemingly would rather discuss the oil and gas industry sales career he pursued after leaving the Army. "One event, one year, does not make your life," he explains sternly. "I do not want people to look at me and see only a Vietnam veteran."

Hover got inspiration for the meeting after catching up with fellow pilot Rich Thacher in San Diego. Thacher told Hover that he had fared well after their days based at Landing Zone Sally, about 15 miles from the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Vietnam. He had become the commander of the Arizona Department of Public Safety's aviation bureau. "I enjoyed catching up with his life," said Hover, a father of two. "Perhaps the others would enjoy it, too."

Back in Slidell, Hover looked up a phone number for his former commanding officer, Phil Lee, a retired colonel who lives in Texas. Lee loved the idea of a reunion and pitched it to a couple of men he still kept in touch with. Then, they called or e-mailed the men they still spoke to about it, and those men did the same to inform others. Soon, Hover, Lee, Thacher and seven others had agreed to converge on Slidell — Ted Smith and Ed White from California; Bradford Stillman from Virginia; Dave Stansell from Oregon; Bob Alexander from Wisconsin; Curt Knapp from Georgia; and Edwin Robinson from Maryland.

The group on Thursday packed a meeting room rented from a Homewood Suites by Hilton near Interstate 12. Some of the documents arrayed atop the room's tables were somber reminders of a conflict that is estimated to have killed more than 5,000 American helicopter pilots and crew members.

Ted Smith brought with him a Western Union telegram his parents received from the Army during the fall of 1968. "Your son ... was placed on the seriously ill list ... as the result of second- and third-degree burns to both legs and 20 percent of his body," it read in part. "He ... also had surgical amputation of his right leg below the knee." The Army's message said Smith piloted an aircraft that "crashed and burned" during a re-supply mission in October of that year. Another letter Smith brought with him, written by a soldier who says he witnessed the incident, explained the helicopter actually was blown out of the air by either a rocket-propelled grenade or a mortar round as men aboard kicked out ammunition to troops below. Nearby, Smith, who walks on a prosthetic leg, spread out copies of condolence letters President Lyndon B. Johnson sent to the parents of three men who died aboard the helicopter.

"While I realize there is little that can be said to lessen your grief, I would like you to know that all our people share my gratitude and genuine sense of loss," the families of Sgt. Robert T. Dunn, Spc. David L. Sparks and Warrant Officer Richard S. Riley Jr. read. "Chilling," Bradford Stillman said as his eyes scanned the text. Away from the papers, he described Vietnam as "tense, a countdown for 365 days to get home in one piece." "I admire Ted for the amount of work he's had to do to be here," Stillman added. "He's resilient." However, more importantly for the men, they also gathered to exchange uplifting professional news.

Stillman, for one, had since become a federal magistrate in the Eastern District of Virginia. Ed White retired as head of transportation for the Oakland Unified School District. Stansell, a heavy-lift helicopter pilot in the logging industry, had logged an astonishing 26,000 incident- and accident-free flight hours. Edwin Robinson pursued a career as a safety inspector and examiner for the Federal Aviation Administration. Bob Alexander retired from the Army and became a commercial pilot. Curt Knapp found a career with American Airlines.

"It's great knowing these guys are still alive, functioning quite well," White said. He gazed around the room, chuckled and said, "We're all older, a little bit fatter. It's hard to put into words."

Hover, meanwhile, seemed to be invigorated by who he saw and what he heard. "They're happy with themselves," he said.

Ramon Antonio Vargas can be reached at [REDACTED]

**DAVID GRUNFELD / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE** Phil Lee, left and Richard C. Thacker look at pictures of their Vietnam pilot group during a reunion in Slidell Thursday April 28, 2011. Slidell resident Andrew Hover was a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War. Last year he and his wife Mickey attended the group's national gathering



in San Diego. On their way home, he announced that he was going to organize a reunion for the pilots that he served with, and he proceeded to do just that. The groups ten other former helicopter pilots, from nine different states, meet for reunion at the Homewood Suits in Slidell. This is the first time they're meeting since their discharge from the Army 43 years ago.

### REUNION ANNOUNCEMENT

Reunion of the Vietnam Veterans  
of the 192nd Assault Helicopter Company  
Is set for September 22-25, 2011 in St Louis, Missouri  
Full details available through Walt Rockenstire,  
30 Ableman Ave, Albany, NY 12203-4827

Phone:

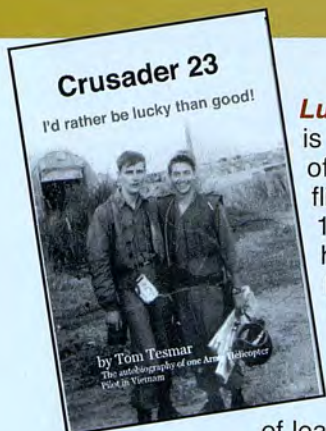
or e-mail:





# BOOK REVIEWS

*By VHPA  
Life member:  
JOHN PENNY*



## ***Crusader 23, I'd Rather Be Lucky Than Good, by Tom Tesmar***

is an interesting, well written memoir of his boyhood home in Minnesota, flight school, his tour of duty with the 187th AHC Blackhawks in 1968, and his life after RVN. Tesmar says his RVN experience did not change him, "it made me."

His description of his passage through flight school is excellent and captures those sweaty days of learning to hover, autorotate and coordinate hands, feet, and brain while hanging on every word of encouragement our brave instructors deigned to bestow on us. He honors one of his most memorable instructors, Henry Mallette, a civilian, for teaching him things about a Huey "not on the syllabus" which he credits with saving his life in RVN.

The title of his book reflects the unexpected, unplanned and serious trouble he got into while flying the unfriendly skies of RVN. His introduction to life in a combat helicopter unit was fast tracked during an autorotation on his "in country" check ride when the hydraulics failed - no problem! His first flight in the AO in support of the 25th Division as peter pilot for the "maintenance spare" was a prelude to his tour and was recognized by the award of a DFC for the AC and an Air Medal for Valor for Tesmar. Welcome to the Nam!

Other highlights of his tour include: "incoming," hairy missions, an engine failure, "ash and trash" missions gone bad, R&R, a "zero zero" landing at Chu Chi, and a powerfully poignant last mission. The narrative of his last mission, southeast of Tay Ninh and the tragic death of his friend and "hooch mate," Al Duneman makes compelling reading and includes an account of his personal visit with Al's family 40 years later.

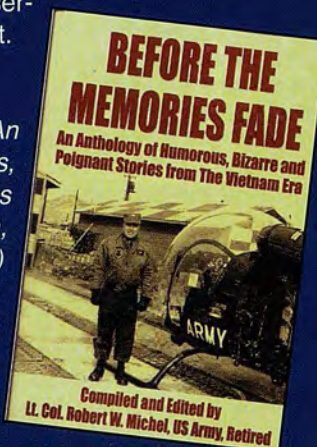
Tesmar dedicates his story to the memory of several of the close friends he lost in Vietnam, men who died before they could tell their own stories. By writing this book he says, "I feel that I've fulfilled a burning obligation to preserve their memories." His memoir is a job well done and goes a long way to preserve the legacy of all who served in RVN. I recommend this book.

*Crusader 23, "I'd Rather Be Lucky Than Good" (199 pages, \$17.95) by Tom Tesmar, is available from [www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/2059856](http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/2059856). Soon to be available in Kindle format.*

***Before the Memories Fade, by late member Robert Michel*** is a collection of stories that he had been working on at the time of his death in March 2004. These stories were written by Vietnam veterans who served in many different roles and range from sad to very humorous.

My favorite story involves a Huey, sniffer dogs and their handlers, smoke grenades, and a tail rotor failure at 2000 feet!! Probably wasn't all that funny to the folks involved back then but it sure is hilarious now. This book is a nice addition to the legacy of our service and I highly recommend it.

*Before The Memories Fade: An Anthology of Humorous, Bizarre and Poignant Stores from the Vietnam Era, (\$17.75, 188 pages) Robert W. Michel, ISBN 978-1418499433 is available from [authorhouse.com](http://authorhouse.com) or other book suppliers.*



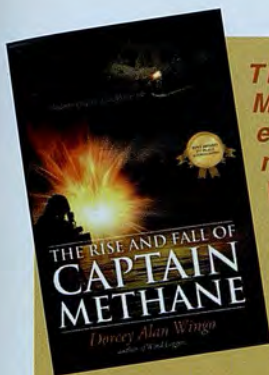
## ***NOTED WITH INTEREST***

*Fiction: John R. "Rick" Taylor, the author of Grunt Air, a novel about an elite helicopter unit in RVN, has written a sequel: The Caves. He has also co-authored A Few Brave Men, a story of post WWI bomber development.*

*Memoirs pending review: Martin F. "Marty" Heuer has self-published an extensive history of the 174 AHC in RVN: Sharks, Dolphins, Arabs and The High Priced Help.*

*Terry Garlock has published Strength & Honor: America's Best in Vietnam, an impressive collection of Vietnam veterans telling their own stories.*





***The Rise and Fall of Captain Methane: Autobiography of a Maverick is the recently published memoir of VHPA member Dorcey Wingo.***

It is a witty and very compelling journey through the life of a true "gypsy" helicopter pilot.

Joining the thousands of Army helicopter pilots who entered civilian life in the post-Vietnam era, Wingo and

many of us looked for jobs doing what we knew how to do. He found the glut created a "dime a dozen" attitude among potential employers. Wingo worked for a restaurant chain for a while with a vague promise of a corporate flying job and eventually found his way to an operator headquartered in McMinnville, Oregon.

He soon found himself in the Amazon Basin of Peru slinging drilling rigs. This was followed by several flying adventures: a Bell 212 on drug eradication in Mexico, pulling a "sockline" through 500KV transmission towers, firefighting in Alaska with a sling bucket, lots of long line logging, and slinging air conditioners onto roof tops; just to name a few.

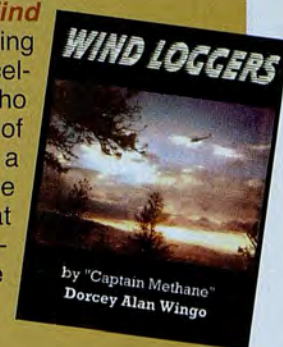
While working for an LA area operator one day he asked, "Just how does one get into the movie business?" That led to several flights and one very tragic accident and life changing event during filming of Twilight Zone: The Movie in which the actor Vic Morrow and two child actors lost their lives. Wingo states that retelling the accident is "a literary punch in the gut." Soon after the accident, he found himself engulfed in a media circus and

trapped in a "legal sewer." His acquittal on all charges and settlement with the studio took years. Nothing will ever keep it out his of mind.

Wingo has done just about anything you can do legally with a helicopter – some things most of us would have preferred to avoid. I think he has more flight time on the vertical plane than many of us have straight and level. He has also become an excellent writer and has been referred to as "the Mark Twain of helicopter pilots" for his unique style. This is a great read and a definite departure from most Vietnam helicopter pilot memoirs. I highly recommend it.

*The Rise and Fall of Captain Methane: Autobiography of a Maverick (\$17.96, 378 pages) by Dorcey Alan Wingo ISBN: 978-1432748289 is available from [outskirtspress.com](http://outskirtspress.com), Amazon, or other book suppliers.*

***Dorcey Wingo has also written Wind Loggers***, a narrative of his time slinging logs in the tall timber. It too is an excellent read not only for those of you who did this kind of work but for the rest of us as well. He has kindly provided a loggers glossary to help us navigate the rather peculiar vernacular of that line of work. The ISBN is 978-0982334515 and the book is available from Amazon.



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# After Action Report - Smokey III is placed in the Smithsonian

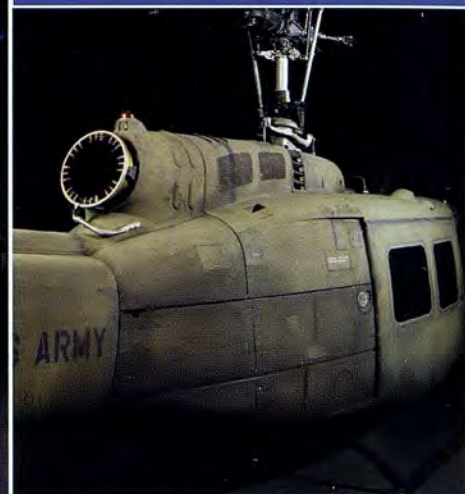
By Al Watkins – Red Dog Smoke, 1968



Smithsonian Institution NASM



Smithsonian  
National Air and Space Museum



11th CAB  
"RED DOG"

The UH-1 "Huey" played the most prominent roles of any aircraft in the Vietnam War. The most common roles that come to mind when the Huey is mentioned are Medevac, Slicks and Gunships. The Medevac Hueys specifically configured for lifting wounded soldiers from the battlefield were often crewed by medics who provided lifesaving treatment to the soldiers as they were delivered to medical facilities throughout Vietnam. The Slicks, configured to lift combat soldiers

to and from areas of operation, were the workhorses of the battlefield. Slicks were frequently called upon to provide medevac services as well but were generally limited to transporting the wounded with very limited ability to aid the soldiers while in transit. Gunships were configured with many different weapon systems designed to provide fire support for a wide range of operations. While these roles were the most common and most important, the Huey was such a versatile aircraft that it played many additional roles that were not so well known. "Re-supply" "Firefly", "Minelayer", and of course "Smoke Ship" missions come to mind for many pilots and crewmembers that flew these missions and the soldiers that were supported.

This celebration is about the UH-1 and what it meant to the past and future of Army Aviation. Although I am very happy that "MY" helicopter is in the Smithsonian, this is really all about the helicopter, not me. UH-1 65-10126 represents ALL of the Huey's that served so well in Vietnam (about 5,000 in all) and the diverse rolls they played in that service. I came here as a TOMAHAWK! Just one average and undistinguished one like the vast majority of the pilots of Vietnam. I just did the job I was asked to do.

Literally thousands of aviators have flown Huey's

and probably 100s flew 126, quite a few were

Tomahawks. I happen to be one of them. I have flown B, C, D and H model Huey's. I flew them as "slicks" inserting and extracting American, Australian, Korean and Vietnamese troops. I flew a journalist and his crew, farmers with their wives, whole families, VIPs and others. I flew supplies, hauled sling loads, lifted dead and wounded

troops, flew a couple of "route recon" missions, occasionally flew gunships with the "Gunslingers" and I flew "Smokey". These were just a few of the roles the Huey played so very well. I also flew many other helicopters like H-13s, OH-23s, CH-34s, OH-58s and others of my era, so I have a great deal of respect for the Huey's diversity and superiority in its day. I have logged over 3,000 hours flying helicopters and over 2,000 were in Huey's. Like thousands of other Vietnam era pilots, I have flown Huey's in rain storms, snow storms, landed on snow and ice covered pinnacles and in very small holes in dense jungle. My Huey's brought me back from missions with bullet holes all over the ship, with major mechanical damage and on one occasion a bullet even took off several inches of my main rotor blade. It was an exciting (and bumpy) but SAFE ride home. In every situation the Huey did the job and did it well. When my ship was in no condition to bring me home there was always another Tomahawk flying a Huey right there to bring me and my crew back no matter the circumstances. The Blackhawk and Apache are far more sophisticated, can carry more fire power and lift heavier loads but as Roger Connor said in an article he wrote about the UH-1, the Huey did it all and at a miniscule fraction of the cost of today's helicopters. The only aircraft that I would consider to be in the same league with a Huey is the C-47 (Goony Bird). Dollar for dollar the C-47 may be the most cost effective fixed wing aircraft ever built for the military

The "smoke ring" modification that made 126 so famous...



128th AHC In Action



126 in Vietnam in 1968

and the Huey is most likely, dollar for dollar, the most cost effective helicopter ever built for the U S Military. For the most part the Huey's military days are done but like the C-47 I expect them to be around for decades to come. I feel honored just to have played a teeny, tiny and relative insignificant role in the life of the Huey and I will celebrate them until the day I die.

In August of 1968 I was transferred from the



Tomahawks to the 11th CAB as the Assistant Operations Officer (Red Dog 3A) and became the Aircraft Commander of Smokey. By chance, the smoke ship that I actually flew was acquired by the Smithsonian Air and Space museum. It is on display at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles International Airport. It is configured as a smoke ship but it is representative of all the "other" roles played by Huey's. In an effort to "tell its story", Mr. Roger Connor, Curator, Vertical Flight, invited me, my crew chief, John "Sully" Sullivan and Jim Palmer, the crew chief before Sully and Jim Leary (a pilot of the 128th that flew several missions in 126) to Washington to do an interview and to share our memories of flying "Smoke".

Our visit began Friday, February 25th, 2011 at 8:00am when Mr. Connor gathered us up and brought us to the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center Air and Space Museum. Upon arrival we were met by other members of the Smithsonian staff and escorted to the aircraft where our reunion with "Smokey" began. We were accompanied by some of our guests and treated like royalty by the staff of the Smithsonian. From our arrival at about 8:15 until the museum opened at 10:00am we and our guests were allowed to have some up-close and personal time with the aircraft, to include sitting in the seats, handling the controls, opening access doors and just generally re-acquainting ourselves with the aircraft. We were able to spend time with our guests explaining the workings of the aircraft and our roles. MANY formal photographs were taken by the official Smithsonian photographer and many more informal photographs were taken by individuals. At 10:00 the rest of our guests joined us. After some additional shared time at the aircraft, all of our guests were treated to a



*Al Watkins Climbing into Smokey in 1968 and again in 2011*

personal guided tour of the museum by Mr. Connor. We then took advantage of the McDonald's inside the museum for lunch. After lunch we all met in the museum's conference room. For the next couple of hours, we viewed slides and movies that were taken by pilots and crews that flew on and with Smokey. Together we shared our memories. It was such a joy to share this with each other, our families and our friends.

Friday evening Mr. Peter Jakab, Associate Director for Collections and Curatorial Affairs as well as Mr. Roger Connor, Curator, Vertical Flight, joined John Sullivan, Jim Leary and his wife, Jim Palmer and his wife and daughter, my niece Pam Kelter and her sons David and Michael and my wife, Emily and me at Phillips Seafood Restaurant to continue our fellowship and the celebration of the Huey. Mr. Jakab was personally responsible for the Smithsonian's acquisition of Smokey III and Mr. Connor made this visit possible for all of us. I am very grateful to both of them. It was an extraordinarily uplifting experience for everyone who attended. For several of us it was the first time we were able to openly share some of our more cherished memories with our family and friends.

*Al Watkins  
Aircraft Commander*

*Smokey III, 1968*



*Crew of 126 at ceremony - Al Watkins, A/C, John Sullivan, CE, Jim Leary, Pilot*



*Photo taken at the post-induction celebration party (from L to R) Jim Palmer, Roger Connor, Al Watkins, John "Sully" Sullivan, Jim Leary and Peter Jakab of the Smithsonian Institute.*

***Before he left to attend the Dedication Ceremony of Huey 65-10126, Al Watkins, sent this e-mail concerning his thoughts on the upcoming ceremony to all his fellow members of the Tomahawk and Gunslinger family....***

"Note to all friends, family member, and most particularly to the Tomahawks and Gunslingers. While attending this dedication is exciting to me it is NOT a big deal! This is about the UH-1 and what it meant to the past and future of Army Aviation. Although I am very happy that "MY" helicopter is in the Smithsonian, this is really all about the helicopter, not me. 126 represents ALL of the Huey's that served so well in Vietnam (about 5,000 in all) and the diverse rolls they played in that service. I go there as a TOMAHAWK! Just one average and undistinguished one like the vast majority of the pilots of Vietnam. I just did the job I was asked to do. Nothing spectacular or noteworthy. I know I am unworthy to "represent" Tomahawks and Gunslingers but I hope that I do you proud! Roger Connor of the Smithsonian plans to have a photographer available to record our visit and we will have a little interview about my "Smokey" memories. That is all I expect the "ceremony" to be.

Literally thousands of aviators have flown Huey's and probably 100s flew 126, quite a few were Tomahawks. I happen to be one of them. I have flown B, C, D and H model Huey's. I flew them as "slicks" inserting and extracting American, Australian, Korean and Vietnamese troops. I flew a journalist and his crew, farmers with their wives, whole families, VIPs and others. I flew supplies, hauled sling loads, lifted dead and wounded troops, flew a couple of "route recon" missions, occasionally flew gunships with the "Gunslingers" and I flew "Smokey". These were just a few of the roles the Huey played so very well. I also flew many

other helicopters like H-13s, OH-23s, CH-34s, OH-58s and others of my era, so I have a great deal of respect for the Huey's diversity and superiority in its day. I have logged over 3,000 hours flying helicopters and over 2,000 were in Huey's. Like thousands of other Vietnam era pilots, I have flown Huey's in rain storms, snow storms, landed on snow and ice covered pinnacles and in very small holes in dense jungle. My Huey's brought me back from missions with bullet holes all over the ship, with major mechanical damage and on one occasion a bullet even took off several inches of my main rotor blade. It was an exciting (and bumpy) but SAFE ride home. In every situation the Huey did the job and did it well. When my ship was in no condition to bring me home there was always another Tomahawk flying a Huey right there to bring me and my crew back no matter the circumstances. The Blackhawk and Apache are far more sophisticated, can carry more fire power and lift heavier loads but as Roger Connor said in an article he wrote about the UH-1, the Huey did it all and at a miniscule fraction of the cost of today's helicopters. The only aircraft that I would consider to be in the same league with a Huey is the C-47 (Goony Bird). Dollar for dollar the C-47 may be the most cost effective fixed wing aircraft ever built for the military and the Huey is most likely, dollar for dollar, the most cost effective helicopter ever built for the U S Military. For the most part the Huey's military days are done but like the C-47 I expect them to be around for decades to come. I feel honored just to have played a teeny, tiny and relative insignificant role in the life of the Huey and I will celebrate them until the day I die.

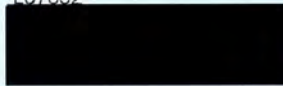
*Al Watkins*

*E-mail:*





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## HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE'S

### William Boyd Benton inducted into the Alabama Aviation Hall of Fame

William "Bill" Benton received numerous commendations as a military pilot in the United States Army. A native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Benton earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for Gallantry during the Vietnam War as a pilot of a UH-1 Huey. His first tour in Vietnam was served with the 118th Assault Helicopter Company (Thunderbirds) as a platoon leader where he participated in a number of enemy engagements, including the Battle of Soui Tre on March 19, 1967. During this engagement, Benton was credited with saving the lives of several of his fellow soldiers while piloting a UH-1 Huey into a "hot" landing zone under hostile fire. In 1971, Benton was assigned a second tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. During this tour, he served with distinction as the Commander of the 164th Combat Aviation Group where his command's area of operation included the entire land mass south of Saigon (Military Region IV). During his twenty-five year military career year Col. Benton served with distinction in several helicopter and fixed wing assignments.

Following his retirement from the United States Army, Benton became the manager of the South Alabama Regional Airport. During his twenty-year tenure as Manager, Benton worked to develop the facility into a major economic resource in central Alabama and under his direction, the airport received forty million dollars in funding for improvements and its on-site jobs increased from three to over seven hundred employees. In March 1997, Colonel Benton was selected as the Federal Aviation Southern Region Airport Manager of the Year, the first manager of a General Aviation airport to ever receive this honor. In 2007, Benton was honored by the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries for his success in developing the airport into a facility that impacted the economy of Covington County and south central Alabama. Benton also received the first ever Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Aviation Council of Alabama.

On the occasion of his retirement in 2008, Benton was described as a man who stayed out of the spotlight. You never saw him up front making a presentation, accepting checks, or having his photograph made. He never sought public acknowledgement, he just loved what he was doing. Bill worked tirelessly for twenty years to develop the airport from a field of



weeds into a field of dreams; his efforts are evident in the continued success and ongoing growth at the airport. He always graciously welcomed everyone into his office with a friendly smile and firm handshake; he is a humble, selfless man, and a wonderful friend and mentor. The South Alabama Regional AIRPORT – Bill Benton field is named in his honor.



### Hugh Mills inducted into US Army Aviation Hall of Fame

Hugh L. Mills, Jr. was one of the most decorated pilots during the Vietnam War. During his two tours in Vietnam as an aero scout and one as a cobra pilot, he flew more than 3,300 combat hours and developed many of the U.S. Army's air cavalry aero scout tactics.

He was shot down 16 times and wounded three times, earning numerous decorations for valor, including three Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit, four Distinguished Flying Crosses and three Bronze Stars, one for valor in ground combat. The government of Vietnam awarded him the Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star and Palm, the Vietnamese Honor Medal First Class and the Civic Action Honor Medal First Class.

Mills, who commanded the aero scout platoon of the 4th Cavalry, was described by Major General A.E. Milloy, 1st Infantry Division commanding general, as "the most courageous small unit leader in the First Division with the highest kill ratio of any combat unit in the Big Red One."

Among his accomplishments, were developing a pilot technique to correct the OH-6 Cayuse "Hughes Tail Spin," which had killed numerous aviators; leading air cavalry raids into Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam; commanding the Army's first night-attack helicopter unit with crude night vision systems; and

he was the first Army pilot to test the XM-8 40mm grenade launcher in combat.

Mills co-authored a book about his experiences in Vietnam, "Low Level Hell: A Scout Pilot in the Big Red One." He retired in 1993 after 26 years of service.

