



# The VHPPA Newsletter

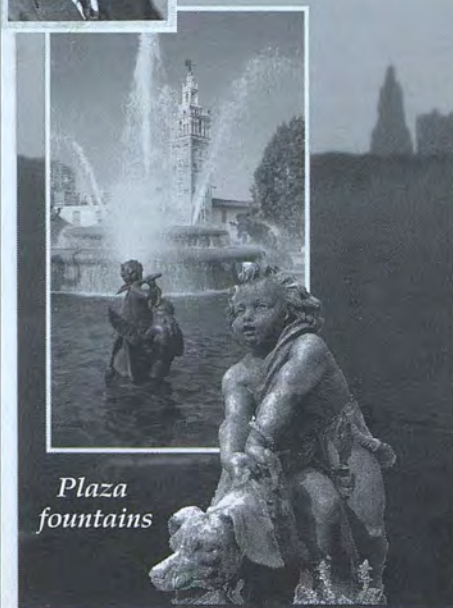
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

June 1995 Vol. 13, No. 3

*Everything's up to date...*



*Truman  
Library  
and  
Museum*



*Plaza  
fountains*



*... in Kansas City*



*Shop Crown Center*



*All that Jazz!*

No matter how you travel — by car, airliner or Chinook — there will be plenty to do in Kansas City at the 1995 VHPPA Reunion.

M00296 02/96



## From the President

This newsletter column will mark my last as your President. It has been both an honor and a privilege to have served you in this capacity.

The next newsletter will see Kenny Fritz taking over the missives of this corner of the newsletter.

Some of my goals were accomplished and others were not, but I can state unequivocally that my tenure was one of fiscal responsibility. To that end I have enjoyed the dedi-

cated support of the current Executive Council and I have no doubt that the policy will continue.

The next newsletter will see Kenny Fritz taking over the missives of this corner of the newsletter. His offerings

are sure to be far more eloquent than mine (Don't worry, Kenny, Jack runs a spelling check!).

I hope you will give Kenny the same encouragement and support that you have given me.

Last week I was pondering on whether or not anyone remembered that party animal in Chicago during the 1989 Reunion? The one with the ammunition bandolier filled with Jack Daniels and Smirnoff miniatures. That guy has been absent from Reunions for some time now and I feel sure it is because he has been taking care of business.

That guy has been absent . . . for some time now and I feel sure it is because he has been taking care of business.

Well, there is a rumor that he will drop in to Kansas City and it is confirmed that he will be at the '96 Reunion. If you see him, give him a kiss . . . or a hymn!

— Kenny Bunn, President

## VHPA chapters

### Ohio River LZ Chapter

Paul Cotter, President

[REDACTED]

### Great Lakes Chapter (Northeastern Illinois)

John Becker, President

[REDACTED]

Bruce Rodewald, Vice-President

[REDACTED]

### North Carolina Chapter

Gary Kimbrell, President

[REDACTED]

### New England Chapter

Bob Whitford, Past President

[REDACTED]

### Mardi Gras Chapter

Don Hunt, President

Lee Overstreet, Vice President  
New Orleans, LA

### Florida LZ Chapter

Judd Chapin, Executive Director

[REDACTED]

## British chopper museum seeking history of Huey

Can we appeal to your members to help us piece together the early history of Huey 66-16579, which we know was delivered by Bell Helicopter to Carswell AFB for shipment to Vietnam in July 1967, but for which we have no further information until relatively recently when it was based with 45 Sqdn, 7th Cav in Europe and operated in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War?

We would particularly like to know the unit(s) and where this aircraft was based in Vietnam, as well as any anecdotal history that we can include with the aircraft on display. Hopefully, some of your members can recall entering 16579 at some time in their yearbooks.

All answers gratefully received at the museum's address, along with any former pilots.

Cllr Elfan ap Rees, Founder/Trustee  
The International Helicopter Museum  
The Airport  
Weston-super-Mare, N.W.  
Somerset, England BS22 8PP

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### ELECTRONIC MAIL

Newsletter.....74127.442@compuserve.com  
Jack Swickard, editor

## What happened to the Lancer's Round Table?

I was one of the many Lancer pilots (B/158 101st) who carved their name and/or call sign into a large (maybe six feet in diameter) wooden table that resided in the officer's club.

We spent many hours at that table talking, playing cards, and drinking.

I even remember a certain warrant officer (I will keep his name out of print to protect his current status as a mature adult) who when reaching a certain elevated blood alcohol level would don a cape and do the "Chicken Man" dance on the ole Round Table.

I have often wondered what happened to that table. Does anyone know?

John Donaldson  
Lancer 14 — "Pig"  
B/158 101st  
Camp Evans — I Corps

## VHPA briefs

### VHPA Reunion vendors

People interested in being a vendor at the VHPA Reunion in Kansas City should contact Jack Jordan for a vendor information packet and application.

Jordan can be reached at [REDACTED], Mt. Vernon, TX, or by calling ( [REDACTED] (work), ( [REDACTED] (home), or [REDACTED] (fax).

### Reunion Yearbook photos

Photos will be taken at the Kansas City Reunion for a Reunion Yearbook.

Portraits, as well as photos of mini-reunion and candid shots of individuals, will be taken during the reunion.

A 1994 Reunion Yearbook and videotapes are available by calling ABS Reunion Visuals at ( [REDACTED] ).

### Volunteers needed

With the 1995 Reunion down to the wire, reunion chairman Bob Smith is asking for help from the VHPA members in Kansas and Missouri who sent cards and letter offering to help.

"You now know what will be happening and you can pick your event," Smith said. "We want this to be fun for everyone, so we need many bodies."

Smith can be contacted at [REDACTED] or ( [REDACTED] ). His fax number is [REDACTED]. Bob's address is [REDACTED] 64-82.

### Information sought for unit history

I am preparing the unit history for the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, September 1965-June 1971. Any information would be appreciated.

If you would like to assist, I could use that too. Contact: Mel Canon, e-mail: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

### Airshows, fly-ins fertile ground

There are a number of airshows, fly-ins, etc. around the United States that have proven to be fertile recruiting ground for the VHPA and the VHCMA.

Our biggest problem is learning about the various flying events and knowing who to contact for booth space. The VHCMA has offered to share a booth and people to man it at such events.

If you are aware of any flying events during the coming year, please notify Jack Glennon, VHPA membership chairman, in care of VHPA headquarters at 7 W. Seventh St., Suite 1990, Cincinnati, OH 45202.



# Track down, greet your fellow pilots

As we count the days until "LZ KC," take a few minutes to track down and give a VHPA greeting to a fellow pilot. It can and needs to be done because too many of us remain untouched by the VHPA.

I've been trying to track down Blueghost (F Troop, 8th Cavalry) pilots since 1988 and, during that search, I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the VHPA.

At the VHPA Reunion in Reno, I was approached by a VHPA'er from XXXXXXXXXX, who was attending his first reunion. He asked if I could help him find a certain Blueghost pilot. Unfortunately, I couldn't help.

The story continued a few months after the reunion and I want to share it with you in the hope it will help you find one of our "missing potential members."

*Richard:*

*... I'm trying to obtain a list of BLUEGHOST pilots who flew in Vietnam. I'm specifically trying to find a guy named "XXXXXXX." That's the only info I can remember him telling me (except) he flew with Blueghost...*

*If you can help at all, please try. I feel it is very important to him and to me to try and locate him.*

*Reno was my first reunion and it was great. I really believe that we can be a tremendous relief to him if we can just locate him.*

I provided the information I had acquired concerning Blueghost pilots. After two years, I received a second letter:

*Dear Dick:*

*Nearly two years ago I wrote you a letter asking for help in finding the name of a man I met only once and had very little info on.*

*Through the Vet Center, I was getting ready to make my first trip to The Wall with a group of local vets. For my lunch break I stopped at a fast food joint and when parking saw a spare tire cover with a large RVN campaign ribbon and "Class of XXXX" painted on it. On entering, I found a guy wearing military aviator sunglasses and a flight jacket.*

*When I approached him and asked if he had been a pilot in Vietnam, he got very wary. After I explained that I was going to The Wall and wanted to offer to transport anything that anyone in my hometown might want left at The Wall, or to bring back "rubblings" for anyone, he gave me a weak teary-eyed smile and said, "No thanks."*

*As I turned to order my food, he abruptly left. As I started to pay for my food, he stuck his head back in the door and quickly said, "Please say hi to all the Blueghosts from XXXXXXXXXX."*

*Continued on Page 5*

## VHPA Product Order Form

### MAIL FORM TO:

VHPA  
7 W. Seventh St.  
Suite 1990  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

### FAX NUMBER FOR

**CREDIT CARD ORDERS:** (513) 721-5315

|                                                |                                  |       |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| VHPA bumper stickers                           | \$1/each                         | _____ |
| Back VHPA Newsletters<br>(Complete sets only.) | \$20/set                         | _____ |
| 1992 VHPA Directory.<br>(7/17 Cav history)     | \$10/each                        | _____ |
| 1994 VHPA Directory<br>(Lam Son 719 history)   | \$10/each                        | _____ |
| Vol. 1 Historical Reference<br>Directory       | \$15/each<br>(\$5 P&H per order) | _____ |
| Vol. 2 Historical Reference<br>Directory       | \$20/each<br>(\$5 P&H per order) | _____ |
| Researcher's Edition<br>1994 Directory         | \$14/each                        | _____ |
| 1995 VHPA Calendar                             | \$5/each<br>(\$3 P&H per order)  | _____ |
| 1996 VHPA Calendar                             | \$7/each<br>(\$3 P&H per order)  | _____ |

### GRAND TOTAL

### TO ORDER

Send check/money order or charge to your VISA, MasterCard or Discover card.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



Continued from Page 4

*Then he ran to his vehicle and burned rubber leaving. Needless to say, it really bothered me that I opened wounds like that and didn't have a clue as how to find him except for the spare tire cover. The info you sent to me still wasn't enough but I sincerely thank you for trying to help.*

*I've had all my friends at work looking for that spare tire cover ever since. A month ago that cover passed me on the freeway. I literally chased him through town and finally caught him in a high level parking garage.*

*He was late for work, so I walked along with him hurriedly trying to explain everything I've said in this letter and also about the VHPA.*

*He finally told me his full name. He has heard about the VHPA before, but never checked it out. I gave him my name, address and phone number and asked him to get in touch. He said he would, but nothing yet. His eyes were very wet as he shook my hand and ran off.*

*Hopefully, some of the "found" Blueghosts knew XXXXXX and will be able to connect with him. His address is XXXXXXXXXXXXX.*

*Thanks for caring and for trying, and please keep it up.*

His name and location are unimportant. He could have flown with any unit during the history of the war. What is important is that some of us have yet to connect with each other or the VHPA and that is a real shame because it's such a nice feeling when you find someone after all these years.

Find a potential member and introduce him to the VHPA and, better yet, invite him to "LZ KC."

Dick Crawley  
"Blueghost Green"  
Jackson, MI

## Services can help you get online for reunion

Here's how you can get online in time for the VHPA Reunion in Kansas City.

Call or e-mail the following online providers for information on how to get their product:

- America Online — (800) 827-6364; POSTMASTER@aol.com
- CompuServe — (800) 848-8199; 70006.101@compuserve.com
- Delphi — (800) 695-4005; askdelphi@delphi.com
- Genie — (800) 638-9636; feedback@genie.geis.com
- Netcom — (800) 554-8649; info@netcom.com
- Pipeline — (212) 267-3636; info@pipeline.com
- Prodigy — (800) 776-3449; info@prodigy.com

See the Feb. 21, 1995, issue of PC Magazine, Page 108, for reviews of the above.

Doug Russell

## Reunion is a chance to show memorabilia

As July approaches, I am looking forward to attending my fifth VHPA Reunion and the fifth opportunity to display my Vietnam War memorabilia during the reunion.

I won't have much opportunity to participate in the various activities or do much sightseeing because I sit with my display all day, every day. But I would not have it any other way.

And, while it does take some time, energy and money to put on the display, I feel that it is worth it. The items that I have accumulated over the years came from veterans, many of them VHPA members.

I feel that I should share my collection and I get a lot of satisfaction when I know others have enjoyed seeing it.

I put my first VHPA Reunion memorabilia display on in New Orleans. It consisted primarily of artifacts, such as

**When I obtain items for my collection, I always try to ask for pertinent information relating to the items.**

patches, uniforms, flight gear, flags, etc. I did have a few photos from the Vietnam era and they attracted a lot of attention.

Since that first display, I have had my display evolve

whereby I try to include a lot of photographs and associated biographical and historical information. The displays are now more well rounded and the photos and information complement the artifacts.

When I obtain items for my collection, I always try to ask for pertinent information relating to the items. But sometimes I acquire things without such information, and then I must do some research.

I have found if I display the items and ask the VHPA members to help provide some information I am usually rewarded with that data. I have actually had members inform me that they were the ones in the photo I was wondering about.

Or I might be asking for information on a certain unit patch, and they would tell me who designed it, and what "Cheap Charlie" shop made it.

The VHPA membership has a wealth of information and I certainly appreciate their sharing it with me.

One area that I would like some assistance with, that I touched on earlier, has to do with preservation of the photographic record of our Vietnam War service.

I am interested in borrowing slides and photos for use in my displays. I am looking for photos and slides showing aircraft with unit markings, individuals wearing patches, crashed aircraft, or any other interesting subjects.

I am not interested in rice paddy shots from 3,000 feet or Mopeds in Saigon.

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## Continued from Page 5

All items sent will be returned. Please provide as much information as you can to help me understand the when, where, what, who, and why. Especially nice photos will be submitted for publication in The VHPA Newsletter.

And now for the sales pitch.

Of course, as a collector, I am always looking to add to my collection. I am running a wanted advertisement in this issue of the Newsletter.

Please look it over and contact me if you have anything to part with. Items will be retained in my collection and will be displayed on occasion. I will offer fair prices and have some items to offer in trade. I have nice walnut medal display cases for trade.

Also, I have the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm and Vietnam Campaign Medal if you are short. I will bring these items to Kansas City, or would be happy to correspond.

George G. Reese  
[Redacted]

## War more than headline; helicopter pilots human

Just to tell you that through Max I have learned that war was not just a big, bold title on the first page of all newspapers and that all of the Vietnam soldiers didn't decide to make movies afterwards.

In my every night prayer I have added to God my request to take nightmares from every human being.

If Vietnam is over or not, it shouldn't matter. Don't waste time on it. God didn't let you live to die in memories that can silently destroy you, although he didn't expect that guilty surviving feeling.

The only guilt that you are allowed to take now is the one for not living peacefully, loving deeply, and dreaming sweet dreams.

Don't try to rush doing all that you haven't before. There's a song in my country, Argentina, that says, "... thinking on tomorrow, I fail today ..."

I also understand that it wasn't possible to talk about it. Now, 25 years after, I can tell you that is the only way, to talk it out. Even though it is hard to believe, you helicopter pilots are humans.

Stop sitting down in places where your back is covered, and carrying guns at home (just in case). The safest place that you can be in this world is between the arms of somebody who loves you.

And, because you are humans, you are going to die. Believe it or not, and maybe in the most stupid way. Like sleeping, that will be a blessing from the Lord, painless and calm. But not in combat, blessing of soldier. So just live, enjoy, share, love, be out of control, shout, yell. You aren't allowed, who says? "No pain" is only for Rocky.

## Son of KIA helicopter pilot wants to hear from dad's buddies

Attention Dolphins from the 174th AHC and members of WORWACs 68-21 and 68-513!

WO1 Edward Lewis Harris was KIA on March 1, 1969, with WO1 Ray R. Davis when their UH-1H crashed on a pinnacle. Ed Harris had one tour in Vietnam prior to flight school and was 26 in 1969.

Ed Harris should not be confused with "Big Al" Harris, also from the 174th, who was KIA in 1971.

Gregg Harris was 6 years old when his dad died and wants to hear from classmates or buddies of his dad.

Please contact Gregg directly at [Redacted]

Jim Schueckler  
[Redacted]

I remember Ken's letter in The VHPA Newsletter: "... the smell of the green paint hasn't changed ..." But the world and we, the people who love you, did. Your kids have long hair, women becoming professionals, wearing zippers in the front of the trousers, etc. And you are still waking up at 0600 hours?

It was more than "Welcome Home," which was not even said. It was "Welcome to the World." You were obligated to fit almost in the enemies' uniform. Haven't you paid enough?

Nowadays, who cares about fitting? Who's got the right to judge what's suitable anymore? The only suit that will fit you is the one that you want to wear.

How could we, the world, have been tougher than Charlie? In my name, I apologize for not being able to understand, for closing my ears to the pain of your soul, for getting mad at you without a special reason.

Instruct us, the civilians, because we just know one side and, unluckily, you have known both.

You are just one kind of the I-am-in-deep ones. Selfish because you have suffered, so now is your turn. Would you explain that to a mother when her baby is born dead, or to a blind person?

Do not thank God every night for being alive, but ask him to guide you on living the way you want, because that's the way he wants.

Sunsets with a Black Label, somebody in your arms when you wake up, graduation of children and mom calling you with that embarrassing special nickname. That, Sirs, is called life.

I hope that you can cry, be weak, feel pain, don't know what to do, don't know all the answers. And I hope that somebody loves you, to hold you then.

Who am I to talk about it? Not American, not from your generation. Not even next to one of you afterwards. Well, I am just a woman who loves one of you and doesn't plan to allow him to be unhappy.

Rebeca Di Leo Razuk  
Buenos Aires, Argentina  
*Continued on Page 7*



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## Helicopter pilots invented their rules during combat

I would like to extend my congratulations to Phil Knight for his outstanding job in taking the 1994 Aerobatics Championship. But the comments about feeling a little out of place in the aviation community . . .

Sure, flying an Air Force rocket sled with wings at angels 30 had a certain appeal to it. And a Navy pilot needs certain skills to slam down on a carrier deck at night. Did you ever think about the fact that he lands to the same LZ every time? Practice makes perfect.

How many crappy little one-ship LZs did you ever shoot a steep approach to, at max gross, in one day, during a ROK Division airlift? Not to speak of the 15 resupply hell holes they found for you once the initial combat assault was completed.

And, speaking of night landings, what about the black-out approaches, to a strobe light in an M-79 barrel, in the triple canopy to get some wounded grunts out of the jungle. Oh yeah, did I mention the intense firefights that always started just when you set down? Who, me jealous of a fast mover? They don't understand the meaning of fun.

Okay, we couldn't carry 750-pounders, but six hot rearms a day in a team of hog snakes sure made up for it in volume and fun. The only difference being, due to altitude and speed, fast movers were harder targets for ground fire. I could go on and on doing a comparison, but for brevity's sake I'll stop here.

Air Force and Navy pilots were flying tactics, rules, and regulations learned the hard way in WWII. What we were doing in RVN was making the rules as we went and setting the standards for today's new Army pilots.

The only jealousy experienced towards fast mover pilots was their air conditioned hooches and subsidized O-Clubs. What we managed to do in RVN was to become the new face of combat aviation.

Dick Snow  
Hawk 16

## Letter writer will complete his war story at the reunion

Okay, guys, turn your clocks back to February 1970 and join me in the cockpit of a "B" model gunship. On this particular night, I was part of a fire team escorting our slicks on a combat assault in the vicinity of Ben Tre.

Flying around Ben Tre at night did not seem like all that good of an idea to us, but apparently someone further up the line decided that this particular operation could/would win the war, so off we went.

Things went smoothly enough until the slicks were on final and the Vietnamese in the C&C ship decided that he wanted the ARVNs dropped in the paddy which they had just overflown. The flight had to make a go-around and try

## His fellow pilots help Jack Horton's last days

Jack Horton died Nov. 26 in Texas. Burial will be in Arlington National Cemetery.

In the '50s, in Korea, for 13 months, Jack and I shared a quonset hut and many a cockpit. He did two tours in Vietnam. He was a great soldier, patriot, aviator and friend.

For all of you who sent cards, thoughts and prayers, I thank you. We did the right thing in trying to cheer his last days. They were hard for him.

Bill Sullivan  
282nd AHC  
Marble Mountain, Danang, 1966-'67

it again.

In spite of our stealth technology, we managed to wake up every VC within 50 miles. The VC, being somewhat irritated for having their rest interrupted, took this opportunity to set up an interesting assortment of automatic weapons — just in case the Americans were crazy enough to come back.

On our second pass, the sky was filled with red and green tracers and our ship was hit. I was fascinated by the battle taking place on the Master Caution panel — each light trying to show that it was more important than the one next to it.

In the midst of all this excitement, the AC suddenly hollered out, "Prepare to RAM!" This struck me as a rather odd thing for a helicopter driver to say, so I decided to inquire as to exactly what he meant.

My question was answered as I looked up and found that we were about to test one of those silly little laws of physics dealing with how many things can occupy the same space at the same time.

BLAMMM!!! We hit a slick with our tail rotor/vertical fin and the old "B" model started shedding parts. With our ability to fly severely limited, we took the express elevator down into the blackness below.

What happened next? Did we make it? Whose slick was that anyway? You'll have to meet me in Kansas City to find out.

Mark Schimpf, Falcon 82  
335th AHC, 1969-70

## Reunion videotape sought

I'm looking to make a VHS copy of somebody's copy of the 1988 VHPA reunion videotape at Mineral Wells, TX. I had my own copy but lost it in my move to Modesto, CA.

Do you know of anyone out there in VHPA-land who might make me a copy or would lend me their copy so I can make a copy? I'll gladly return their copy by Fed Ex.

Stephen "Pat" Spleen



## Taps

### Eugene Madison Brooks

Retired Lt. Col. Eugene Madison Brooks of Boise, ID, died April 25, 1993, in a Boise hospital of complications due to cancer. He was 55.

He served two tours in Vietnam, in 1967 and in 1969, and was wounded during his first tour.

Brooks flew Cobra gunships and was in Special Forces.

During his Vietnam tours, he served with the 25th Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne Division.

His awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Air Medal with "V" and the Purple Heart Medal.

Brooks is survived by his wife, Suzanne; a son, Kurt Brooks of Nampa, ID; a daughter, Gena Bloomquist of Lubbock, TX; grandchildren, Taylor and Daniel Bloomquist; and his mother, Virginia Crittenden of Portland, OR.

### Raymond K. Foley

Raymond K. Foley died April 20, 1994, of cancer.

He is survived by his wife, Beth, and a son, Ray Foley Jr.

### Rob C. Moore

Rob C. Moore of Lincoln, NE, died in May 1994.

He graduated from flight school in Class 68-3 and was a life member of the VHPA.

In Vietnam, Moore served with the 227th AHC, 1st Cav, in 1968; the 11th CAG, 1st Cav, in 1968-69; and the 229th CAB, 1st Cav, in 1969.

### William W. Norton

William W. Norton of Davenport, FL, died Dec. 31 at Heart of Florida Hospital in Haines City. He was 59.

Norton, a decorated Army veteran of the Vietnam War, was a helicopter pilot in Saudi Arabia for 20 years.

He was born in Midland, MI, on July 30, 1935.

Norton was preceded in death by his son, Mark Norton.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara M. Norton; a son, Jeff Norton of Tulsa, OK; a daughter, Roxann Posky of Austin, TX; a stepson, Allen Terry of Orlando, FL; and two stepdaughters, Kennetha Tiner and Karen Tiner, both of Davenport

### Craig Schwalenberg

Craig Schwalenberg, 47, of Oshkosh, WI, died April 22 while skydiving near in Omro, WI.

He served in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 12 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star Medal and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.

Schwalenberg served in the Army for five years, attaining the rank of captain.

He was born April 25, 1947, in Detroit, MI. Schwalenberg graduated from Ball State University in Muncie, IN, and received his MBA from the University of Wisconsin.

At the time of his death, Schwalenberg was employed by Murken Insurance Co.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia; three daughters, Erika Dawn, Alison Beth and Jamie Anne Schwalenberg, all of Oshkosh; a brother, Lt. Col. Mark Schwalenberg of Florida; his stepmother, Donita Schwalenberg of Kokomo, IN; and a stepsister, Sheri Wakeman of Texas.

### Thomas Henry Smyth

Thomas Henry Smyth, 50, of Dothan, Ala., died April 21 at his home.

Memorial services were held in Rochester, N.Y.

Smyth was born March 26, 1945, in Rochester, N.Y., and resided the early years of his life there.

He was a veteran of the Vietnam War, having served as a helicopter pilot. He moved to Dothan in 1970 and lived there the remainder of his life.

Survivors include a son and daughter, Matthew Eric Smyth and Lauren Kathryn Smyth, both of Dothan.

### Richard W. Watson

Richard W. "Dick" Watson, 48, of Boise, ID, died Feb. 11 in a Boise hospital of natural causes.

He served two combat tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot in 1967 and 1968. Watson also served as an instructor pilot at Fort Hood, TX, where he received the Broken Wing Award for safely landing his helicopter after being shot down by friendly fire.

Watson worked as a bush pilot in Alaska and as a stockbroker in Colorado before returning home to Boise to become a gifted carver.

He is survived by his parents, Wayne and Nadine Watson; two daughters, Traci Dawn and Trenna Michelle; and two stepdaughters, Jennie and Tammy.

## Seeking

I belong to the "Wings Club," which is located in midtown Manhattan, next to Grand Central Station.

I would be happy to provide the "Hall" and coordinate dates, times, etc. for anyone interested. I can be reached at my office [REDACTED] or at home ([REDACTED]).

I plan to fly our company Beech Excalibur to Kansas

City and will have room, leaving from White Plains on the morning of July 1 and returning on July 5.

**Tom Seybold**  
New York, NY

Anyone from the Weapons Platoon of B/7/17 in late 1968 or early 1969 who lost a black scarf should contact Marty Martines at [REDACTED].

Marty was an OH-6A SIP for the Squadron and doesn't know how the scarf ended up in his position.



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| 600 S. Clyde Morris Blvd.                       |  |                       |
| Daytona Beach, FL 32114-3900                    |  |                       |

VHPA3 6/95



# 'Robin Hood 6' retires from Army

MIKE SLONIKER  
VHPA MEMBER

The Army's highest-ranking aviator and VHPA member retires in June.

Lt. Gen. William B. "Bud" Forster ends his first career and moves on to his second.

His last military duty was as the military deputy to the assistant secretary of the Army (Research, Development and Acquisition), where he testified as the principal military witness for research, development and acquisition appropriations with Congress, supervised the Program Executive Officer system, and served as director, Army Acquisition Corps.

He started his Army career as an Air Defense officer with an ROTC commission from the University of Alabama. He was a delayed entry while he earned his Ph.D. in nuclear chemistry from the University of California.

His first Vietnam tour was with an Air Defense command whose heavy responsibility was to shoot down MiGs that tried to attack Bien Hoa.

Seeing the light, as I did after serving with the grunts in the 101st in 1967-68, he went to flight school after that tour and returned for a real Vietnam tour as an Army aviator.

"Bud" Forster has had many satisfying accomplishments in his career, however his challenging combat command of the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company, the "Robin Hoods" and "Crossbows," in 1970-71, brings out his stories of how proud he was to lead fellow aviators, crewmembers and maintainers who were tested and succeeded.

The responsibilities of command in 1971 were especially difficult because of all the unit standdowns.

The 173rd, like many other units in 1971, at times had more aviators than crew chiefs; they had to endure the difficult paperwork, pilot and maintenance transition from the UH-1C to the AH-1G, and perform all the normal maintenance and scheduling



Lt. Gen. William B. "Bud" Forster (left) is presented a copy of Joe Kline's "Riders on the Storm" by Mike Sloniker.

challenges while simultaneously participating in LAM SON 719 and later the Combat Control North (CCN) missions near and across the border into Laos.

Gen. Forster will be remembered by many people for many different things.

I will always remember him for two specific events.

In March, Skip Butler, VHPA life member, and I presented him with Joe Kline's UH-1H painting, "Riders on the Storm."

He was having a typical nasty Pentagon day, and was also bothered by some pesky skin surgery that left a band aid on his head. Skip and I got to witness the light come to his eyes when he saw the personalized painting that showed the Robin Hood insignia on the nose and the green and white stripes on the tail.

After we left his office, Butler, who met Forster as a second lieutenant flight student, said, "Let's get a Huey nose battery box cover, send it to Kline and have him paint the Robin Hood hat on it, and we'll give it to him at his retirement dinner."

This is a fairly easy task if you're on active duty, but Butler and I both retired in 1990. I never doubt Butler and his bluster.

In the 11th hour, the week of Forster's dinner, Butler located the nose cover, got it to Kline, and Butler had it in his hands the Friday night before the Saturday night dinner.

With over 300 attendees, at a somewhat formal event (it's somewhat formal if Butler and I have to wear business suits), with many high-ranking officials, we presented the nose cover.

At a night that recognizes a distinguished career, Butler roasted the general, and set the tone for the rest of the presenters. From then on it was a much less formal affair.

Bud Forster will have many accomplishments behind his name: Program Manager Army Helicopter Improvement Program (OH-58D), Program Manager AH-64A, Program Executive Officer-Combat Aviation, Test Pilot-Navy Test Pilot School, training with NASA-Johnson Space Center-Houston, but his most challenging with the responsibility for the lives of others in combat, will be his combat command as Robin Hood 6, Commander 173rd Assault Helicopter Company, Vietnam.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Mike Sloniker, who lives in Fairfax Station, VA, served in the 174th AHC and with A/229th Avn., 1st Cav.



## VHPA briefs

### Copies of pocket patches needed

Jay Riseden is the Directory Committee member responsible for the VHPA's computer clip art collection of pocket patches, unit signs, aircraft markings — indeed, any design image that pertained to a Southeast Asia helicopter unit.

Samples of Jay's efforts appeared in the 1994 Directory and Volume 2 of the Historical Reference Directory.

To contribute, simply take your pocket patch to your neighborhood Kinkos or Mail Boxes, etc., and make a color copy. Then mail this color copy to VHPA Headquarters.

Jay will also have a table at the Reunion to display the collection and to receive copies.

### 1995 Membership Directory

The Directory Committee has already done lots of work on the next Membership Directory.

As per our normal schedule, the cutoff date for historical material is Aug. 1. The Directory goes to the printer in early September and should be in members' hands about mid-October.

The history section of this Directory will cover all four tandem rotor helicopters that flew in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era. This includes CH-21s flown by the Army, CH-47s by the Army and the Vietnamese Air Force, CH-46s by the Marines and Navy, and HH-43s by the Air Force.

Anyone with information, especially first-person experiences, concerning these four types of aircraft or units that flew these aircraft is actively encouraged to contact

Mike Law at ( ) (evenings) or (3 ) (office) as soon as possible.

### 1995 VHPA Calendar

Copies of the 1995 Calendar are still available for purchase. The 14 pictures in this year's Calendar are well worth the \$5, plus \$3 postage and handling.

Please use the order form on Page 4. We need your support to help recover our production costs and to guarantee there will be VHPA Calendars in the future.

### 1996 VHPA Calendar

Subject to approval by the Executive Council, the 1996 VHPA Calendar will go to the printer in late June and will be sent to those with advanced orders during August.

This is the third edition with all new pictures, but with the same high-quality presentation that will make you proud to have flown a helicopter in Vietnam.

Please use the order form on Page 4 to order your copy. Orders will also be taken at the Reunion.

### Historical Reference Directory

The 832-page Volume 2 of the Historical Reference Directory is available for anyone who wishes to purchase it. Please use the order form on Page 4 to order your copy.

It contains five units histories, 12 short stories from nine authors, the Army Flight Class Rosters for the 67- and 68- classes, and 600 pages for the 1966 and 1967 installment of the Incident Database.

The Incident Database contains details on individual helicopters, helicopter and major combat units, major combat operations, and helicopter crew members.

If you have questions about the Historical Reference Directory, please contact Mike Law at ( ) (office).

## Members offer services to committee

The Historical Committee is beginning to take shape.

Several people have stepped forward and offered their services as unit historians; others have offered help, support and history stuff.

I have compiled a "Unit Historian Guide" and a "Resource List" that are available to anyone interested.

The guide and list provide "how to" information, sources for historical documents and a template for the unit histories.

Now that this valuable publication is available, I expect many to rise to the call of duty and offer their services as unit historians.

The following lists the very brave aviators who have offered their services as unit historians:

|                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Mel Cannon      | B/227, 1st Cav.      |
| Howard T. Comer | C/2/20 ARA, 1st Cav. |
| Skip Davis      | 187th Avn. Co.       |

|              |                              |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| Dave Katz    | Co. A, 9th Avn., 9th Inf.    |
| Jay Riseden  | 128th AHC                    |
| Doug Russell | Historical Database (orders) |
| Jim Sewell   | 155th AHC                    |

Gentlemen, I salute you! If you want to offer your help to any of these gentlemen, you can find them in the Directory.

I plan to organize a unit historian seminar/recruiting meeting at the reunion.

Anyone interested in contributing, attending or just sitting in should drop me a line.

Look for an announcement at the reunion as to where and when the seminar/recruiting meeting will be conducted.

Bob Davies  
Historical Committee chairman



# Countdown under way for Reunion

**BOB SMITH**  
REUNION CHAIRMAN

Kansas City is ready. Are you?

The 12th annual VHPA Reunion countdown is under way. Have we seen your registration yet?

What are you waiting for? The party will go on without you. But why miss it? Send your registration in now and be part of the biggest and best reunion yet.

If you missed the last Newsletter, you missed a whole page devoted to a complete listing of reunion events. Don't despair, we have added a listing of events again.

Take it with you on your plane, car, bus or train. There will be a short written test when you arrive about what is happening in Kansas City. (We don't want you to miss any of the excitement.)

Have you made your room reservation? The hotel has a June 11 cutoff date. If you wait, you may miss a room at the inn of "where it's happening."

Call the Westin Crown Center at [REDACTED] or Central Reservations at (800) 228-3000 to reserve your room.

If you are one of the last to call for a reservation and find no room at the

inn, just across a sky bridge you will find other lush accommodations, at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center — our overflow hotel. The cost is the same.

The Hyatt's Central Reservations number is (800) 223-1234, or call the hotel directly at [REDACTED].

Pack your swimsuit separately. Check-in is after 3 p.m., so you can enjoy the pool while you wait.

You could get your room free for four nights if you are one of three lucky winners of the raffle. Details are available at registration.

If you drive, parking should be plentiful, at a cost of \$4.25 per day. Valet parking is available.

## Transportation

If you arrive at Kansas City International Airport on Saturday, we've got you covered. Arrangements have been made to get you to the hotel.

If you drive, you have to make it on your own. But there is help, in the form of detailed instructions on how to get to the Westin Crown Center, which was printed in the April Newsletter.

## Trips

Have you signed up for a side trip

on Monday, July 3? If not, you will be missing some good times.

The Kansas City Royals and the Chicago White Sox are battling it out for first place. The new Kansas City Zoo has just received \$70 million in improvements.

For those who have never visited a presidential library, there is a trip planned to the Harry S. Truman Library.

Want to visit a museum that has mummies and that sort of thing? You don't want to miss the Nelson-Atkins Art Museum.

For the brave and courageous, there is Worlds of Fun, with its big rides. This is real family entertainment in the nicest and cleanest amusement park you will ever visit.

For those who want to sit back and take it easy, there is a bus tour of Kansas City.

Signing up now will assure you a seat for all the fun.

Kansas City will host a reunion you will remember for a long time.

There will be a parade, fireworks, riverboat gambling, 5K run or crawl, plenty of Coors beer, a USO show, mini-reunions, dancing, vendors, a pool party, static displays, a golf tournament, Hawaiian dancers, and much more.

## Mini-reunions

### July 2

| Unit                | Time           | Contact          | Phone      |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|------------|
| 188th AHC, C/101    | 10 a.m.-noon   | Gerald Crow      | [REDACTED] |
| A/501st, 118th AHC, | 10 a.m.-noon   | Gill Ferrey      | [REDACTED] |
| 11th Armored Cav    |                |                  |            |
| 7/17th Cav          | 10 a.m.-1 p.m. | Mike Hurley      | [REDACTED] |
| Lighthorse Cav      | 2 p.m.-4 p.m.  | Rex Gooch        | [REDACTED] |
| 187th AHC           | 2 p.m.-5 p.m.  | John Quesenberry | [REDACTED] |
| 361st ACE           | 3 p.m.-5 p.m.  | Jack Jordan      | [REDACTED] |

### July 3

|              |                |               |            |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| 175th AHC    | 8 a.m.-10 a.m. | Richard Waldo | [REDACTED] |
| Florida VHPA | 8 a.m.-10 a.m. | Barry Speare  | [REDACTED] |
| Dustoff      | 8 a.m.-10 a.m. | Phil Marshall | [REDACTED] |

### July 4

|                  |                  |                   |            |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 119th Avn. Co.   | 2:30 p.m.-4 p.m. | Robert Heisterman | [REDACTED] |
| 188th AHC, C/101 | 2:30 p.m.-4 p.m. | Gerald Crow       | [REDACTED] |
| 189th AHC        | 2:30 p.m.-4 p.m. | Stephen Schmidt   | [REDACTED] |
| 176th AHC        | 2:30 p.m.-4 p.m. | Ken Fritz         | [REDACTED] |

## Other mini-reunions

• On July 2 from 3-5:30 p.m., pilots and crew chiefs from the 335th and the 134th will be making "an assault," as they put it. They have 6.5 hours of tapes, plus slides. Their reunion will be held at the Plaza.

• Doug Russell is planning a meeting of computer online service and Internet users during the reunion. This will include demonstrations on how to communicate online.

• George Reese will display his collection of Vietnam memorabilia.

It's getting close. There is still time to organize your own mini-reunion. We can help with mailing lists and telephone numbers of known members of your unit.

Contact: Bill Medsker, [REDACTED]. Or call him at [REDACTED]. (This also serves as his fax number.)

*NOTE: Changes and additions will be posted in the registration area of the Westin Crown Center.*



# Day-to-day listing of reunion events

## Saturday, July 1

11 a.m.-7 p.m. — VHPA shuttle bus runs from airport to hotel.

11 a.m.-8 p.m. — Registration, third floor.

3-6 p.m. — Early bird cocktails, Garden Terrace next to waterfall.

6 p.m.-1 a.m. — Hawaiian "Early Bird" Pool Party.

## Sunday, July 2

8-10:00 a.m. — Business Meeting, third floor conference area.

10-11 a.m. — Church service, third floor conference area.

10 a.m.-2 p.m. — Static Display at Liberty Memorial. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. — Mini-reunions.

Noon — Royals baseball bus departs hotel.

Noon — Nelson-Atkins Museum bus departs hotel.

1-5 p.m. — Informal pool party for teen-agers.

5-5:30 p.m. — Reception.

5:30-6:45 p.m. — M\*A\*S\*H Party/USO Show.

6:45-12:30 a.m. — Party moves outside to Crown Center Terrace, just across street from hotel. Outdoor buffet, refreshments, fireworks, entertainment.

## Monday, July 3

6:45 a.m. — Golf Tournament buses depart hotel for Paradise Point, Smithville, Mo. (Return to hotel estimated at about 2 p.m.; tee time at

course is 7:30 a.m., shotgun style.)

8-10 a.m. — 5K Run or Crawl.

8-10 a.m. — Mini-reunions.

9 a.m.-5 p.m. — Vendors and Registration.

10:15 a.m. — Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun buses depart hotel.

Noon — Kansas City Zoo bus departs.

Noon — City of Kansas City guided bus tour departs.

Noon — Truman Library Bus, which includes tour of Vaile Mansion and National Frontier Trails, departs.

5:30-6:30 p.m. — Reception, Main Lobby area.

6:30-8:30 p.m. — Wild West Casino Party, buffet dinner.

6:30-10:30 p.m. — In-house, non-profit casino.

8:45 p.m. — First buses depart hotel enroute to riverboat for 10 p.m. "sailing." (First 350 "passengers" will be boarded on the riverboat.)

9 p.m.-1 a.m. — Dance and show in part of ballroom.

9:30 p.m. — Second wave of buses departs hotel enroute to riverboat for 10 p.m. "sailing." (Next 350 "passengers" will be boarded on the riverboat.)

10:30 p.m. — Third wave of buses departs hotel enroute to riverboat for midnight "sailing." (Final load of "passengers" will be boarded on the riverboat.)

Midnight — First riverboat "cruise" ends, buses begin shuttling members back to hotel at 12:15 a.m.

## Tuesday, July 4

2 a.m. — Second "cruise" ends. Passengers will be returned to hotel by bus.

3 a.m. — Last bus returns to hotel from riverboat.

8:15 a.m. — First wave of buses departs for parade and shopping tour in Historic Parkville.

9 a.m.-3 p.m. — Registration.

9:15 a.m. — Second wave of buses departs for parade and shopping tour in Historic Parkville.

10-11 a.m. — Parkville Parade (members, spouses and families can march or ride trolleys in the parade or be dropped off downtown to watch from curbside).

11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. — Shopping, barbecue/picnic lunch in the park or from street vendors.

2-5 p.m. — Kids Pool Party, fifth floor outside area.

2-7 p.m. — Vendor area open.

2:30-4 p.m. — Mini-reunions.

6-7 p.m. — Reception, garden terrace and third floor foyer area.

7-8:30 p.m. — Final Banquet, Century Ballroom.

8:30-9 p.m. — Honor guard, missing man, brief awards.

9 p.m.-12:30 a.m. — Dancing.

## Wednesday, July 5

7 a.m.-3 p.m. — VHPA shuttle bus leaves hotel every 30 minutes for airport.

# Golfers can try to tame 'The Posse' course

Bring your "long rifles" and "par shooters" and join us at The Posse!

On Monday morning, July 3, we will attempt to tame the Paradise Pointe Golf Complex, the 6,177-yard The Posse golf course.

This beautiful, lakeside course, with its gentle, rolling hills, has been the site of the Kansas City Match Play Championships and offers a wide range of challenges.

But, as any good "hard-charger" knows, you salute the flag, kick the skids, light the fire, brief on guard, and attack.

You can form your own team or take the luck of the

draw in our "best-ball" combat assault on The Posse.

Teams will be computer flighted after nine selected holes and we are expecting to have four flights, and will award prizes for the first three places in each flight.

There also will be a "longest-drive" contest for you long-knockers, a "closest to the line" contest for you sharpshooters, a "closest to the pin" contest for you dead-eyes, and a "longest putt" contest for those who are recovering that slightly off-line approach shot.

So bring your sticks to Kansas City and join the fun as we show The Posse how combat helicopter pilots have above-average hand-eye coordination.



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

12th Annual Reunion Kansas City, MO July 1-5, 1995

## REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Mail to: VHPA, 7 W. Seventh St., Suite 1990, Cincinnati, OH 45202

FAX signed credit card registrations to: (513) 721-5315

|                             |                                                       |                             |                 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Name:                       | Member No.:                                           | Arrival date?               | Mode of travel? |
| Wife/Guest name:            | No. of children:                                      | Is this your first reunion? |                 |
| Names of additional guests: | How many reunions have you attended?                  |                             |                 |
| Address:                    | Check here if notifying VHPA of an address change [ ] |                             |                 |
| City:                       | State:                                                | ZIP:                        | Phone: ( )      |

### REGISTRATION FEES

|                                                                           | No. of people                | Price      | Total |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------|
| Registration before 6/1/95*                                               |                              | @ \$ 25.00 |       |
| Registration after 6/1/95*                                                |                              | @ \$ 35.00 |       |
| Early Bird Luau (July 1)                                                  |                              | @ \$ 10.00 |       |
| M*A*S*H Party (July 2)<br>(Food, show and dance.)                         |                              | @ \$ 25.00 |       |
| Riverboat casino (July 3)<br>(Transportation, food, admission.)           |                              | @ \$ 25.00 |       |
| Banquet (July 4)<br>(Order 1 or 100; stop the stampede.)                  |                              | @ \$ 35.00 |       |
| Dues (if included)                                                        | 1 year                       | @ \$ 30.00 |       |
| You can make 3 payments<br>over 6-month Installment<br>period if you wish | Life<br>installment<br>No. 1 | @ \$150.00 |       |
|                                                                           | Complete Life<br>Membership  | @ \$450.00 |       |
|                                                                           | GRAND TOTAL                  |            |       |

#### Indicate if you want to participate in these activities

**Royals' baseball game:**  
(July 2. Transportation, ticket.)  
**Cost: \$17**

**Nelson-Atkins Museum:**  
(July 2. Transportation, entrance fee.)  
**Cost: \$12**

**Kansas City Bus Tour:**  
(July 3. Transportation.)  
**Cost: \$12**

**Kansas City Zoo:**  
(July 3. Transportation, entrance fee.)  
**Cost: \$12**

**Truman Library:**  
(July 3. Transportation, entrance fee.)  
**Cost: \$12**

**Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun:**  
(July 3. Transportation, admission. Slight additional cost to enter both.)  
**Cost: \$21**

**Golf Tournament:**  
(July 3. Transportation, cart and entry fee.)  
**Cost: \$50**

**5k run or crawl:**  
(July 3.)  
**Cost: No charge**

\* Each adult 18 and older must pay the registration fee.

☐ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion '95"

☐ Please charge my: MasterCard VISA Discover (circle one)

Credit card No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### REUNION NAME TAG INFORMATION

Name you want on name tag: \_\_\_\_\_ Call sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of wife/guest: \_\_\_\_\_ Flight school class: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Number or year for Army; branch and year for other services.)

1st combat unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Year(s): \_\_\_\_\_

2nd combat unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Year(s): \_\_\_\_\_

3rd combat unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Year(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Hometown or current residence: \_\_\_\_\_

**Refund policy:** No refunds will be granted prior to the Reunion. All refund requests must be submitted to VHPA headquarters no later than Aug. 5, 1995, and must include all tickets received, plus proof of payment. Refunds will not be granted for fixed-price events (the Banquet is a fixed-price event) that lose money unless the entire Reunion has a positive cash balance. The VHPA headquarters will process and pay all refund requests within 10 days of completing the Reunion account balancing.



## Armless hero denied immigration

MEL CANON  
VHPA MEMBER

Maj. Nguyen Quy An was a flight leader with the elite King Bee helicopter squadron of the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) in 1969.

Cpts. John Lider and Robert Stratiff were U.S. Army pilots flying for the Ghostriders of the 189th Assault Helicopter Company, based at Camp Holloway near Pleiku at the same time. Stratiff was the executive officer of the 189th and Lider was a flight leader.

On Jan. 17, 1969, Capt. Stratiff was just a few days away from the completion of his combat tour and was preparing to return to the United States. He wanted one last flight before leaving country and asked his old friend Lider if he could go along

with him as his pilot that day. Lider agreed.

Sometime around noon on the 17th they were in Dak To flying in support of the 5th Special Forces. A mission was being organized to insert a strike team into Cambodia, along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, to take out an anti-aircraft gun which had shot down a USAF fighter-bomber the previous evening.

The mission was to be flown by the King Bee squadron, with Lider's flight in reserve.

But one of the CH-34s preparing for the mission developed engine problems and could not make the flight. A call for volunteers went out to the Americans and Lider elected to take the mission himself.

He and Stratiff, along with the crew chief, S.Sgt. Ronald King, and

the doorunner, Pfc. Terry Whitehurst, would carry the troops in their UH-1H Huey. The other four aircraft in Lider's flight would tag along as recovery birds in case of problems.

The mission objective was some 85 kilometers inside Cambodia in the Iron Triangle area. Lider and his crew loaded members of the strike team aboard their helicopter and joined the King Bee flight.

The insertions were made into bomb craters created by numerous U.S. air strikes to the area. The craters were the only feasible landing areas in the vicinity of the target.

After Lider and Stratiff inserted their portion of the team, they departed the bomb crater and were immediately engaged by a 37mm anti-aircraft weapon. Their ship suffered several

*Continued on Page 16*



### Book Now and Save to Kansas City!

Exclusive VHPA Travel Discounts  
to the 1995 Reunion

Call the official travel agency of VHPA and receive exclusive airline and car rental discounts for travel to Kansas City. These are special VHPA rates, available only through Carlson Travel Network/Media Travel USA.

You save money and VHPA wins, too! CTN/Media Travel USA will make a donation to VHPA for each airline ticket purchase. Make plans now to meet in Kansas City July 1-5, and take advantage of the exclusive discounts provided by these companies:



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# Huey engaged by anti-aircraft gun

*Continued from Page 15*

hits, one of which ruptured the fuel cell on the Huey, causing a fire.

Smoke immediately filled the ship and Lider had to slip the aircraft out of trim, flying nearly sideways, in order to see where he was going. The heat was so intense the crewmen in the rear had to move away from their weapons and huddle between the pilots on the radio console.

Fearful the ship would explode, Lider began looking for a place to land, but kept flying away from the hostile area. Within a few minutes they had crossed the border into Laos and saw a clearing that appeared to be suitable for their landing.

Maj. An, flying King Bee Lead, flew his VNAF H-34 alongside the crippled Huey. As Lider began his approach to the area ahead, An maneuvered in front of the Huey, forcing it into a right turn toward another clearing.

Unbeknownst to Lider and crew, An had spotted the tell-tale signs of spiked tree stumps concealed within the tall elephant grass. A landing to that area would have impaled the Huey and prevented the landing of a rescue ship.

Deep in enemy territory and under constant small arms fire from the ground, Lider settled the burning Huey into the tall elephant grass and bamboo while An landed in another part of the clearing.

An sent his crewchief to the stricken ship to lead the American crew back.

Lider and crew abandoned their burning aircraft, recovered a sensitive radio scrambler from the radio compartment, and began hacking their way through the elephant grass toward the sound of An's H-34.

They met the VNAF crewchief halfway and were so startled they nearly shot him. All the while, NVA snipers were firing into the tall grass toward the sound of the H-34.

When the Americans finally reached An's ship, the flight leader was sitting calmly in the cargo door

"He was a very welcome sight as we approached the H-34," recalls Stratiff. "He was cool as a cucumber."

smoking a cigarette, impervious to the incoming sniper fire.

"He was a very welcome sight as we approached the H-34," recalls Stratiff. "He was cool as a cucumber."

The departure from the clearing brought even more fire from the approaching NVA.

Says Lider, "I saw holes appearing in the floor of the H-34. I climbed up on the bench seat on the left side of the ship in a foolish attempt to protect myself from the incoming fire."

An managed to escape the area with little damage to his ship and flew the Americans back to the relative safety of Dak To. Later that evening, Lider's commander came to the hospital and informed him that he was being sent home because this had been the eighth time he had been shot down during his tour. He was on an extended tour at the time.

Ironically, he departed Vietnam a few days later on the same flight with his friend, Capt. Stratiff.

Maj. An was recommended for the Silver Star by the Americans, but that was downgraded up the line somewhere. He ultimately was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions of Jan. 17, 1969.

An continued to fly as King Bee lead until sometime in 1970 when he was shot down in flames by the NVA.

He disregarded an onboard fire and managed to get the aircraft on the ground, saving himself and his crew. He was burned so badly, however, his arms had to be amputated by the American doctors. His flying career was ended.

Time passed and the U.S. involve-

ment in Vietnam came to an end. An was left behind to face the takeover by northern forces.

He was quickly interned in a re-education camp by the new government. He remained there for nine weeks before being released when the communists deemed him useless because he had no arms.

An was placed under house arrest and monitored closely by the security police. His wife left him then because she didn't want an armless man as a husband.

The communists also confiscated the DFC he had been awarded for his Jan. 17 actions in Laos. An made several futile attempts to flee Vietnam in the years to come, but was captured each time and remanded to prison.

He spent more than two years in prison for his escape attempts.

When a program allowing re-education camp survivors entry into the United States was implemented, it was learned An did not qualify because he hadn't completed the required one year in the re-education camp.

In a move to circumvent those requirements, immigration officials granted a humanitarian parole to allow An and his daughter to come to the United States. It was a way to get around the fact he didn't fit into any definable immigration or refugee status.

An and his 21-year-old daughter, Kim Ngoc, left Vietnam with a group of five U.S. senators aboard an Air Force jet, commencing a five-day journey that would end up in the United States.

He arrived at Travis Air Force Base near San Francisco on Jan. 15, 1994, to a hero's welcome. It took a lot of maneuvering to bring this visit to pass and there were many players in this country who went to bat to get An out of Vietnam.

An's future currently is uncertain. He was entitled to stay in the United States for one year on his humanitarian parole, but that was extended by

*Continued on Page 17*



# Tale of the Great Outhouse Robbery

From time to time I've notice the VHPA has published the history of the U.S. Navy's HA(L)-3 squadron.

For those who did not see these publications, let me give you an abbreviated history and then add a story that should bring back some memories.

The U.S. Navy wanted to have Navy armed helicopters support their Brown Water and Seal operations in III and IV Corps. Thus Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron 3, later known as the Seawolves, was born.

The U.S. Army supplied UH-1Bs, some training, and some maintenance support to Navy personnel; most of which came from HC-1.

The UH-1Bs came from units in the 1st Cavalry and others that were receiving new UH-1Cs and/or AH-1Gs. They were "war weary" (the politically correct term) by the time we got them, so we called them "Rucker rejects" (a term of affection — trust me!).

In mid-summer 1966, the first detachments were formed and HA(L)-3 officially organized on April 1, 1967. At its peak there were nine detachments based on LSTs and land facilities with a total complement of 35 helicopters. On Jan. 26, 1972, HA(L)-3 departed Vietnam.

Now for my story. Until 1969, the Seawolf Headquarters was at the

There was no outhouse, just a plank to sit on beside a ditch. Yet, there was a perfectly good four-holer at Vung Tau, just 100 miles away.

resort city of Vung Tau on the South China Sea.

Since there were many detachments scattered all around the Delta, it became necessary to move the headquarters to a more central point. Binh Thuy, which was a few miles up river from Canh Tho, was chosen.

Binh Thuy was created by pumping mud from the river bottom up into diked areas and letting the water drain off (at least in principle).

In the beginning, there was a tent for a chow hall and conex boxes for maintenance shops. There was no outhouse, just a plank to sit on beside a ditch. Yet, there was a perfectly good four-holer at Vung Tau, just 100 miles away.

During those early years, the Seawolves had old B-Model "Rucker rejects." On a hot day they could not

lift more than half a load of fuel and a reduced weapons load. A few of them still had cargo hooks, but most had been removed as excess weight.

Many of the Seawolves had long experience at VertRep: The aerial resupply of ships at sea by cargo helicopter. They were accustomed to flying with maximum weight external sling loads.

We calculated that with a 25-knot wind, an empty B-model with 600 pounds of fuel and a crew of three could sling load the Vung Tau four-holer.

The stripped B-model arrived at Vung Tau on a windy morning at first light, the coolest time of day. The crewman strolled casually over to the outhouse, checked to see that nobody was inside, and was seen climbing over the roof.

The B-model picked up and air taxied over, then picked up into a high hover. The crewman slapped the nylon sling into the hook and swung up onto the skid.

With a mighty strain and a belch of black smoke, the B-model staggered off across the Rung Sat at a low altitude, the outhouse slowly revolving in the wind.

The more it revolved, the shorter the nylon strap got; kind of like a kid's wind-up airplane rubber band.

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## Maj. An's future in U.S. uncertain

*Continued from Page 16*

immigration officials for one year in December 1994.

Efforts have been undertaken to change the law and untangle the political strings that prevent An and his daughter from obtaining permanent residence here. So far, it has all been to no avail.

Resolutions have been passed by the California and Colorado legislatures urging Congress to allow An and his daughter permanent residence in the United States.

A bill introduced by Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La., one of the five senators who escorted An out of Vietnam, died last year in the House Judiciary Committee. Johnston has vowed to introduce new legislation to allow them to stay here permanently.

Rep. Norman Mineta, D-Calif., has also promised to introduce legislation, if necessary.

Retired Air Force Col. Noboru "Nobby" Masuoka of Sunnyvale, CA, has led the fight to bring An to this country.

Col. Masuoka remarked recently, "The bottom line is that with all this horsepower, we're still in limbo. It's like trying to move an elephant."

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** I have been following Major An's saga in the San Jose Mercury News. The newspaper has kindly allowed me to use information from its articles for this report. I want to thank the newspaper and the journalists who developed the Mercury News articles relating to An. — Mel Canon



# Net gets wide use by pilots, crew

MEL CANON  
(MELCAN@AOL.COM)

Recently, I was asked by a member of the Executive Council, "What purpose does the online net serve other than a place for the guys to BS?"

The question sort of caught me by surprise and my answer was, unfortunately, vague and incomplete. Afterwards, I was really bothered that I hadn't answered that question better. I knew the net meant a lot of things to a lot of people and my answer certainly didn't do them much justice.

With that revelation jumping up and down in my head, I decided to pose that very question to the members of the net.

My original intention was to compile the answers and send them to President Kenny Bunn and the rest of the EC. However, after reading the responses I received, I felt it very important to share them with the entire membership.

So, here are excerpts from the correspondence I've received in answer to: "What does this net mean to you?"

**BOB ANDERSON** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "I'm compelled to read all this mail EVERY night before I pack it in for the day, regardless of the time."

**SKIP DAVIS** [REDACTED]:

"The net is just an extension of the whole concept of VHPA, only we don't have to wait a whole year to get together. I wouldn't leave VHPA and the group it celebrates, and after just a few months online with these guys (and ladies), I wouldn't leave the net. . . short of a power failure."

**BUTCH DENSON** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "This net serves exactly the same purpose as VHPA; it's a social organization that shares information, friendships, and camaraderie. It's available as often as it's members deem necessary, daily, weekly, monthly or any time of day or night. My wife and I attend the reunions because of the people. I am on this net for the same reason."

**GORDON EATLEY** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "What a sneaky question! Looks easy at first. I guess it means being a little bit younger, in mind if not in years. As I drink in the ribald comments and irreverent remarks, a smile magically appears, or an occasional tear of mirth or sorrow creases my face. Either way, I know that I'm not alone. Most of all, it means friendship and brotherhood, pure . . . with nothing asked in return. Your past is only as far away as you make it. There are times to embrace it . . . each night on the net I do so. To

## *On The InterCom*

New!"

**AL ELLISON** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "The possible combinations are endless. The same question was undoubtedly asked of Thomas Edison. They (the EC) really should look at the net in the same light. We even get free spelling lessons out of this deal."

**RICK HAINES** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "Don't see anything wrong with living in the past! The friends from that era share many of those values. The experiences we shared (directly or indirectly) create a bond that 'outsiders' cannot understand. I don't say much here, just enjoy the good-natured bantering and education I receive. Am looking forward to meeting everyone at KC."

**GARY HICKMAN** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "We have had everything on the net . . . serious discussions, the ongoing battle between the big "C" and little "c," solved the issue of gun control, and had the battle of good vs. evil (the Rev. Thunderhorse battling the forces of evil spelling). It's pleasing to be reminded there were good people driving/riding in/maintaining helicopters around Southeast Asia a couple decades ago . . . and they are still good people today."

**JIM SCHUECKLER** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "VHFCN-L same-same VHPA reunions, same-same VHPA newsletter, same-same VHPA directory, same-same VHPA Historical Reference Volume. Sometimes the conversations are more like being in Vietnam than they are at a VHPA reunion. You can almost smell the burning Honey Buckets and the JP-4 exhaust. You can almost hear the rotors. You can . . . Whump! Huh! What was that? Whump! Whump! INCOMING!"

**JIM SEWELL** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "I'm not some broken down old 'rummy' who hangs out at the local bar or VA hospital crying about how being in Vietnam screwed up my whole life. I am more like the fellow depicted in the popular Vietnam Memorial painting reaching into the wall to some ghostly images of brothers who didn't come home. I think there is something therapeutic about communicating with men who've shared similar experiences and emotions about a very troubling period of our nation's history. I have not attended a reunion yet so maybe it serves the same needs. For me, VHPA is a well-done directory every year in exchange for some money. The net has been much more in exchange for some laughs, some tears (like Jack Horton's situation) and some off-loaded emotional baggage."

**MIKE WISE** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: "Myself and other VHPA members live overseas. Our most frequent contact with the States is through our computers, and the Net has made that otherwise sterile media come alive with friends, stories, jokes, insights, arguments, etc., that otherwise we'd only get to participate in at the occasional reunion we're able to attend. At the only reunion I've attended (New Orleans) I found no one that I knew. Through the Net, I've made many "friends" and although I haven't seen their faces yet, I'm sure at the next reunion I'm able to attend, these will be the first

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# Computer communications popular

*Continued from Page 18*

guys I go looking for to have a beer, share a common experience and form up a flight . . . at least to the chow line. Through the Net I have, by the way, finally contacted an old classmate, who is also a member of the Net . . . the first person from either my class or unit I've met via the VHPA."

The addition of the crewmembers to the Net has been a great asset and there were a couple of responses from them that should appear here as well . . .

**PETE HARLEM (Crewchief, D/227AHB/1CAV, 1967-68)**

( ): "Included in all the BS'ing we do on the net are real jewels of history in the form of e-mail. Some future documentary maker just might find those jewels important. I sure do!"

**GREG OFFRINGA (Crewchief, 335 AHC, 1968-69)**

( ): "I feel the same as many others who have answered this question, but what stands out is what Gary Hickman and others have said in essence: 'Good people then and good people now!' It's great to be here with you guys (and ladies)."

Finally, the one response that really caused my heart to well up and feel proud to be a part of this group. And I'll leave you with this until next time

when we listen in . . . On The Inter-Com.

**AVIATOR'S WIFE (Name withheld upon request):** "I realize I'm probably not supposed to do this, but I think it's important. I'm not a veteran nor am I a helicopter pilot, but my husband is.

"He doesn't know I'm writing this (he's at school), but I want you to know how important you are to him. He shares with me many of the letters he reads here on the net and has told me that someone asked the question: 'What is this net good for?' I want to try to answer that question.

"My husband is the pastor of a mid-sized church. He has to prepare sermons, do all the administrative work, and visit the sick and shut-ins and other members of his congregation as often as he can. He has 2-3 church meetings per week, teaches two Bible studies, and conducts all the weddings and funerals.

"He's been a full-time seminary student for four years and spends up to 2.5 days per week on campus 50 miles away. And his school assignments are very, very heavy. For example, he had two 20-page papers, a 10-page paper, a 20-minute oral presentation, and a term paper proposal all due within a two-day period early this month.

"Needless to say, he was a physical and mental wreck after spending his whole spring break doing all that work. His reading assignments aver-

age 500 pages per week. I have been so afraid he was going to have another heart attack because of all the stress he's under.

"I have seen a big, fun-loving, jovial Christian man who loves everybody become so stressed out that he had almost gotten where he couldn't laugh anymore. The depression he was suffering because of his workload was killing him.

"Then he read about this net in your newsletter. What a gift it has been to him! He checks his mail every morning and every night. I often hear him in his study laughing out loud at the letters he reads. This net has been such a blessing to him. He's made so many friends here and talks about you all the time. I almost feel like I know Doug, Mel, Doc, Jim Sewell and John Shephardson.

"This net has brought him out of his depression and restored him to the man I used to know. I can't thank you all enough for being so supportive of him.

"He misses his old aviator friends and the fun they had together, but he has been rejuvenated by all of you. That's what this net is good for: it has put an old soldier in touch with people who are very important in his life and I thank you all for it. See you in Kansas City."

— Aviator's wife

## The outhouse slowly revolved in the wind

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By the time the B-model got to Nha Ba, the strap was real short and so was the fuel supply.

The cargo hook released, but the strap would not come unstuck from the hook. They had to hover long enough to let the outhouse unwind for a while.

This created a whole lot of attention.

Finally, the strap came loose and

the outhouse dropped about four feet to the steel matting below. It was out of square after that.

It took two more flights to get it to Binh Thuy. The first leg was to Ben Luc.

To prevent twisting, they used a drogue chute from an OV-10A ejection seat to stabilize the outhouse.

It also worked well after that whenever we went to move a conex box. We would stuff the chute under

the cargo to be lifted. The chute had a short net foot nylon strap attached.

We sure didn't want the chute blowing around while we were in a hover hooking up. Then, as the load lifted off the ground, the chute trailed out to be read stabilizing the load.

The loads all had long straps so there was no way the drogue chute could get up near the aircraft.

Roger W. Ek, Seawolf 25 Gentleman Flyer of the Delta



# Maintenance officer evades death

JOE LEMING  
VHPA MEMBER

I was the aircraft maintenance officer for A/501st in early 1965.

I served with a slick driver named Harry who wanted to kill me. He claimed it would be "justifiable homicide" because I gave him Hueys to fly that were not always in the best of shape.

One day the company was scheduled to fly a combat assault in the Delta. The last time it did a CA in the Delta it was shot up pretty badly at Horseshoe Bend and the institutional memory was used to scare the FNGs.

No one was enthused about this mission . . . the tales of Horseshoe Bend had everyone spooked. I had to go along so there would be a maintenance bird in the gaggle, and I flew "tail-end Charlie."

I knew it could be a bad day because after the briefing I didn't attend, all the aircraft commanders did their own pre-flights. Some of them even got out the —20 and a magnifying glass.

That is when Harry went berserk at me. He found the leading edge of his main rotor blades worn at the tip and reported the bird as being "down."

I took a look and told him they were all like that and it was good for another 50 hours. Harry didn't buy off on that and we exchanged comments best not put in print.

The CO was standing nearby and I could tell he didn't want to be sucked into the issue. So, I asked Harry if he'd take the word of one of my tech inspectors. "No," says Harry, "those guys work for you and will swear to anything."

Harry's stubbornness caused me to activate plan B. I asked him if he would take the word of a prop and rotor repairman from "Wild" Bill Taylor's 151st Maintenance Detachment. Harry said, Yes, he would.

As I jeeped over to the 151st, my TI reminded me they didn't have a P/R repairman.

"Sing Loy," says I, "anybody who

can follow instructions will do."

We found a private first class electrician doing nothing and coached him.

When we got back to the Snake Pit, the sparkchaser earned an Oscar. He stood on the Jeep hood, tapped with a silver dollar, looked through his magnifying glass and reported the results of his inspection to us. It was his professional judgment the blade was indeed in bad shape and should only go for another 20 hours.

"See," says Harry, "that blade ain't good for no 50 hours."

"Maybe," says I, "but this is just a 10-hour day. Are you going to snivel out of the mission or what?"

To close the debate, I offered to switch birds with Harry. He could fly the Snake Doctor and I would fly his bird.

"No way," says Harry, "the Snake Doctor is a piece of junk and the last time I flew it, I got bit by one of your spiders."

That did happen to him, but I still swear the spider was a stranger to me . . . not one of my brood.

Harry, having proved the aircraft maintenance officer didn't know beans, agreed to fly the mission anyway.

After all, he had a 10-hour safety net in those blades and a 20-hour day didn't seem very likely. So, Snake Doctor, six Firebirds, 12 slicks, with Harry somewhere in the middle, pulled pitch and headed south.

We hooked up with ships from another unit and flew in circles for several hours, dropping off and picking up ARVNs and assorted Ruff Puffs, but Charlie wouldn't take the bait.

Later in the day, we called it a wrap and headed for home. Going around Saigon to the east, we saw a row of thunderstorms.

Lead came up on Fox Mike and put us in trail formation and told us to turn on our lights and stay tight.

It was raining hard and we were right in the middle of the system when a Mayday came over on compa-

ny push. My worst dream came true, it was Harry with a 1:1 vibration so bad his radio transmissions sounded like he had a bad stutter problem.

Harry broke left out of formation and headed for a rice paddy. Rattler 26 was on his right wing and I hung in on his left.

He flared at the bottom, hit the rice paddy, and the crew ran for 26. Harry paused long enough outside the ship to shake his fist at me in contempt.

As the blade on Harry's ship slowed down, I could see a section of one blade's metal surface peeled back from tip to trailing edge. The metal was flapping like Zorro's cape, but we had a hacksaw and some 100 mph tape.

I had to land twice on the way home. That didn't bother me as much though as the thought of Harry waiting in the bar, getting madder with each drink. That's exactly where he was and he had blood in his eyes.

Before he could say a word, I told him how awful it was the P/R repairman had made such a bad call. I told him "Wild" Bill would surely bust him on Harry's say-so.

In 1965, many warrant officer pilots had previous enlisted time and often had been mechanics and crew chiefs.

Fortunately, Harry had that background and he didn't want to be a party to busting a trooper who had just been trying to do his job. He observed that no one was hurt and the bird was back, so why bust the kid.

"You're a good man, Harry," says I. "I'll call Bill and tell him how you feel about it. We are sure lucky it was you flying that bird today and not some FNG."

Harry agreed it was, indeed, the worst vibration he'd ever seen and an ordinary pilot would never have been able to get it on the ground.

As any pilot can tell you, it's almost as much fun to brag about flying as it is doing it. Once his pump was primed, Harry couldn't be bothered with being angry and my close call was over.



## Marine crew rescued by 190th AHC

**MIKE LAW**  
**DIRECTORY EDITOR**

As part of my Directory Committee duties, I read a lot of historical material.

Periodically I come across a story that I believe would interest all VHPA members. Initially I wrote the word "enjoy" instead of "interest" — but somehow it is hard to have "enjoy" associated with a story where brave, helicopter crew members were killed and wounded.

Please read on but afterwards, answer the question: Who crewed that UH-1C?

On Oct. 26, 1967, a company from the 4th Marines came under a heavy NVA mortar barrage near the DMZ, took casualties and requested a helicopter medevac.

When Capt. Ronald Bennett of HMM-363 attempted to land his UH-34D within the perimeter, those on the ground waved him off because of the intense enemy fire.

As Bennett pulled away, enemy fire hit the rear of the helicopter, separating the tail pylon.

The UH-34 crashed, rolled and began burning about 150 meters out-

side the Marine lines. Bennett and a gunner, Cpl. Edward Clem, died in the crash.

Second Lt. Vernon Sharpless and Lance Cpl. Howard Cones, both seriously injured, managed to crawl from the burning wreckage.

A second HMM-363 helicopter, piloted by Capt. Frank Grassi, tried to land to pick up the survivors but could not.

Enemy fire hit Grassi in the leg and arm, damaged the helicopter, and slightly wounded one of the gunners and a Navy medic.

The aircraft limped away as far as Strong Point C-2, where it made a forced landing.

Capt. James Murphy, the air liaison officer with the infantry, saw Bennett's helicopter go down.

With his radio still on his back, Murphy crawled out to the downed helicopter, moving past NVA soldiers in his path, and found the two survivors near the burning helicopter.

The three Marines were surrounded and there was no way Murphy could get them back to Marine lines. Fortunately, the enemy soldiers in the area either did not know the three men were there or simply did not care.

Murphy could hear NVA soldiers nearby and see some movement. He called in air strikes within 50 meters of the crashed helicopter with the aid of an airborne observer in an O-1C aircraft overhead.

The latter eventually managed to direct a Marine A-4 attack aircraft to deliver a line of smoke so that a UH-1 helicopter could land and rescue the three Marines.

The rescue helicopter was a UH-1C from the 190th AHC whose pilot volunteered to make the pickup. Enemy fire hit the aircraft twice during the rescue and the pilot suffered a minor wound in the arm.

The UH-1C also managed to reach Strong Point C-2 where it, too, made a forced landing.

The 190th had only been in Vietnam a few months and was TDY to I Corps from its base at Bien Hoa.

The 190th helped replace some of the lift the 1st Marine Air Wing lost when their CH-46s were grounded for technical reasons for a few months. These events are covered in more detail in Volume 2 of the Historical Reference Directory.

Now: Who crewed that 190th AHC UH-1C?

### Calendar

#### Aug. 11-13

Members of the 282nd AHC Black Cats and Alleycats will hold a reunion at the Ramada Inn South in Nashville, TN.

Contact: Tom Pullen at [REDACTED]

#### Aug. 16-20

The Army Otter-Caribou Association will hold its annual reunion in Braintree, MA.

Contact: Bruce Silvey at [REDACTED]

#### Aug. 25-27

D Troop, 1/1 Cavalry (1st Squadron/1st Regiment of Dragoons) will hold a reunion in Nashville, TN.

Contact: Bob or Sherry Parsons at [REDACTED] (home) or [REDACTED] (work).

#### Sept. 15-17

Members of the 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cav will hold a reunion in Louisville, KY. Attending will be pilots, crew chiefs and doorgunners who served in the squadron.

Contact: Edd Garrison [REDACTED]

#### Sept. 16

In commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the 1985 ticker-tape parade and party on the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid, VHPA member Bruce McInnes is producing a party to be held on the ship.

All Vietnam-era veterans and their families are invited. Events include museum admission, reunion/locator service, films, slide shows, music, beer and soda, and war stories.

Contact: Bruce McInnes, REUNION '95, Box [REDACTED], or call [REDACTED] or fax to [REDACTED]



# Ohio River LZ meets in Louisville

Bob Hamilton and his lovely OW (original wife), Willa, set up the Ohio River LZ Chapter's annual mini-reunion in Louisville, KY, on the weekend of Feb. 27.

The mini-reunion is set up for those of us with whom once a year with fellow VHPA'ers is not enough.

The Ohio River Chapter covers Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky, though membership is open to all who care to come. Bob Zahn comes in every year from St. Louis, MO, so ya'll are welcome.

In any case, Bob and Willa hosted a round-the-clock reunion.

Friday night, at 11:30 p.m., we went to the worldwide UPS sorting facility at the Louisville airport where we were given a VIP and multi-media briefing.

We then boarded a bus for a flight line tour while the Eastern flights were arriving.

We then toured inside the package sort facility (a couple million square feet building) where most all the next day packages and letters come through.

Then, back to the ramp, where we boarded a B-747 awaiting reload. We were able to climb up to the flight deck and walk all around.

We returned to the VIP area as the West Coast inbound flights were arriving.

At about 2:30 a.m., we departed the facility and returned to the hotel.

Not much sleep, however, because Bob and Willa set up another VIP tour at the Louisville Ford Plant at 10 o'clock that morning. The plant makes the very popular Ford Ranger and Explorer vehicles. What an operation! What a tour!

We walked the entire plant, less the paint area (they said we had lost enough brain cells already due to alcohol intake and couldn't afford to lose any more. Besides, we already looked pretty high from the previous night's intake and little sleep.)

It was amazing to see the way the independent component lines come together in precise sequence so that

Paul Cotter was re-elected president for the third time. We'll keep electing him till he gets it right.

the red truck cab arrives at the mating point exactly when the red truck bed comes rolling along on the chassis.

Due to the popularity of the Ranger and Explorer, the plant has been on an overtime schedule for some time.

Just recently, they added a weekend shift, every second week.

You all would be proud to see this American workforce doing quality work.

We had the opportunity to see some of the options and man, the new sound systems (6 CD changers and all) they are putting in them Fords. Anyway, it was super.

After the 1½ to 2-hour visit we returned to the hotel. Rest?? NO WAY! Bob had set up flight simulator rides for us back at UPS's Flight Training Facility. (Should they refer to it as "Brown Tail U" ????)

About 30 of us went and were humbled by the super 6 degrees of freedom, visual flight simulator, from Rediffusion.

Bob took five of us at a time and rotated us though the left seat. Though they call it a flight simulator, it was more a "crash" simulator for the left seaters, and a "fright" simulator for the backseaters.

There were many a funny war story that followed this experience.

Saturday afternoon we had our business meeting and Paul Cotter was re-elected president for the third time. We'll keep electing him till he gets it right.

Rich Sebastian will host next year's meeting in the Akron, OH, area. All VHPA members are invited. We expect to see some of the folks

from Pennsylvania.

Saturday night was no let up. We got cleaned up real well and reported for happy hour, and a super dinner at our Holiday Inn HQs.

I spend a lot of time on the road and in Holiday Inns, but have never had such good-tasting, well-prepared meal as this.

The introductions of ourselves around the room, together with the catcalls, asides and retorts, provided the entertainment.

Gathered as we were, we remembered our friends. Gary Crossland played a tape of the U.S.M.A. Cadet Choir's rendition of "America." Dry eyes were rare as the our personal memories were revisited.

We returned to the hospitality room for the remainder of the evening where we watched lots of videotapes of helicopter things.

Sunday was brunch day, and departure. Many hugs and promises to meet again at KC for the National and in Akron for the chapter reunions.

If you get a chance to attend a local chapter meeting, or start a chapter, do it. It is really a neat, relaxing weekend.

Pilots attending: Gary Crossland, Paul Cotter, Jim Engelman, Bob Enyart, Gary Frost, Bob Hamilton, Phil Marshall, Roger McAllister, Coy McDonald, Bob McWilliams, Paul "Felix" Miller, Bill Montgomery, Galen Nelson, Harry Nelson, Bob Poe, Don Schneider, Rich Sebastian, Dan Shifflet, Skip Shreve, Jack Shrode, Harold "Hal" Stanford, Jack Tiesing, Larry Wigger, Bob Zahn and me.

Most all who were married brought along their ladies, and many brought along their children. The Holi-Dome, with its indoor playground, pool and spa, was great for the entire family.

We had a great time. Hope I didn't bore ya with the report but, WOW, what a weekend!

John Flanagan



# Huey photo taken 4 years ago in Vietnam

The enclosed photo was taken in Ton Son Nhut Air Force Base, Vietnam, about four years ago. The parties involved with the photo were in Vietnam buying leftover U.S. military aircraft.

Their primary goal was the O-1 Birddog aircraft, but while they were there, they took this photo of a UH-1.

I flew RU-8D's in Vietnam and so I guess I can't be a member of the VHPA due to my fixed-wing heritage. However, I did transition into the UH-1H and OH-58 before the Vietnam War was over, does that count?

I would like to find some photos of the L-19/O-1 Bird-dog aircraft from your members.

Quite a few photos were taken by our troops in Vietnam and these photos make very interesting additions to the many books that have been written about the war and the people who fought in it.

I have written a book about the history of the L-19/O-1 Birddog and its use in the Korean and Vietnam wars. We (the publisher and I) are making the preliminary photo selections now.

I have borrowed over 4,000 pieces of photographic history from every corner of the globe in the past eight years, without loss or damage to any loaned materials. All photos, slides and negatives are returned ASAP and always by certified mail.

I am only interested in the O-1 Birddog. It can be any-



where, doing anything, but the photo needs to have the Birddog in it.

Minard D. Thompson Jr.

Dear Fellow VHPA Members:

I am looking to add to my collection of Vietnam War relics. I will buy those items listed below, or anything else interesting. Items received will be kept in my collection, but will be displayed on occasion, such as the VHPA reunion. Request you provide biographical and historical information with items. That data to be displayed with relic. Also want interesting slides and photos for my display.

- |                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| • BLOOD CHITS                         | • FLIGHT GEAR    |
| • MAPS                                | • SILK/RUBBER    |
| • PARTY SUITS                         | • UNIT HISTORIES |
| • FLAGS                               | • BAYONETS       |
| • MEDALS                              | • INSIGNIA       |
| • RIFLES                              | • PISTOLS        |
| • LIGHTERS WITH CRESTS/INSCRIPTIONS   |                  |
| • VC/NVA CAPTURED WEAPONS AND GEAR    |                  |
| • UNIT POCKET PATCHES AND CRESTS      |                  |
| • FLIGHT HELMETS WITH ARTWORK         |                  |
| • CHEAP CHARLIE BOONIE HATS, FATIGUES |                  |
| • TIGER STRIPE OR JUNGLE FATIGUES     |                  |
| • SPECIAL FORCES ITEMS                |                  |
| • ETC., ETC.                          |                  |

NOTE: I have the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and the Vietnam Campaign Medal for trade if you are one of the many who only received the ribbon.

Thanks,  
George G. Reese

*EVER PUT IN A STRIKE 30 FEET FROM A NAVY RIVER BOAT -  
THEN LAND ON THE DECK OF AN LST...*

*AT NIGHT...*

*IN THE RAIN?*

(The Seawolves did it all the time)



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# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

7 W. Seventh St., Suite 1990 Cincinnati, OH 45202 (513) 721-VHPA

## Membership application/change of address

- |                                               |                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application          | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual dues: \$30                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Address change       | <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership: \$450*                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Directory correction | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter subscription only: \$16      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information only     | <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher's Edition of Directory: \$14 |

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

HOME PHONE: ( )

WORK PHONE: ( )

OCCUPATION:

- ☐ Please charge my MasterCard/Visa/Discover
- ☐ Enclosed is a check/money order payable to VHPA

Credit card No.:

Expiration date:

SIGNATURE:

FLIGHT SCHOOL CLASS:

SERVICE BRANCH:

COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS:

SOCIAL SECURITY NO.:

Information about each Vietnam tour:

| Date of tour |     | Unit | Location | Call sign |
|--------------|-----|------|----------|-----------|
| From:        | To: |      |          |           |
| 1st          |     |      |          |           |
| 2nd          |     |      |          |           |
| 3rd          |     |      |          |           |
| 4th          |     |      |          |           |

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

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association?

*\*NOTE: Life memberships may be purchased with three \$150 payments.*