



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

August 1995 Vol. 13, No. 4



Dave Rittman photo

Led by Charles Rayl and a color guard from Wentworth Military Academy, VHPA members march through Parkville, MO, during the community's July 4th celebration. More 1995 Reunion photos on Page 18.

M00296 02/86

From the President

The '95 Reunion was a very well-planned good time. I thank all of you who attended. To all of you who helped orchestrate everything, I can say: OUTSTANDING JOB WELL DONE! THANKS!

During the coming year I'll have the chance to write five of these messages to all VHPA members who are current with their dues. One more message will go out next February in our Newsletter to every pilot in the VHPA Database.

My wish for the year is that each guy who reads this or any other part of the Newsletter will please take the time to look up a couple of his non-current buddies in the Directory, call or write to them, then get them to rejoin us in the VHPA and write a note to the Newsletter so we know they're still with us.

Urge them to make plans to attend the reunion to swap stories, share laughs and make new friends. This sort of

personal contact is what bonds us together.

The VHPA is an association that helps us stay in contact, but individuals make it work. You'll enjoy the chat with your friends, too, and this is how and why this association began in the first place.

You have the opportunity to support the association and enjoy the efforts of the Calendar Committee. There was some doubt that the funds could be spent on another calendar, but it's been given its clearance.

Help out your association and enjoy the 1995 calendar and at the same time order the new 1996 calendar. Order as many as you can — you'll be sorry if you don't order at least three of each because you'll want to save one, give one away and actually use one.

Have you any solid ways to sell more? Write to me. Same-same for the Historical Reference Directories: Great product, but not enough sold to properly fund/perpetuate the publishing without your membership support.

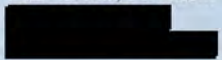
Mike Law and I love these things, but need help. Thanks.

Rotor in the green 'til next time!

— Kenneth Fritz, President

VHPA chapters

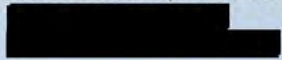
Ohio River LZ Chapter
Paul Cotter, President



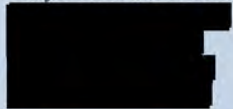
Great Lakes Chapter
(Northeastern Illinois)
John Becker, President



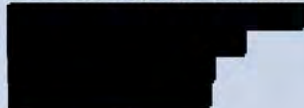
Bruce Rodewald, Vice President



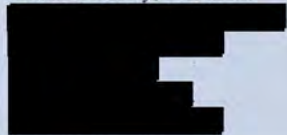
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Gary Kimbrell, President



New England Chapter
Bob Whitford, Past President



Fort Wolters Chapter
Charles Holley, President



Florida LZ Chapter
Judd Chapin, Executive Director



Mardi Gras Chapter
Don Hunt, President
Lee Overstreet, Vice President
New Orleans, LA

Unit Patch Project off to a good start

Initial response to the VHPA Directory Committee Unit Patch Project has been good.

Directory Committee member Jay Riseden received more than 40 copies of patches at the 1995 VHPA reunion on behalf of the project.

The Unit Patch Project was initiated to collect and catalog color copies of all helicopter unit patches used in Vietnam. More than 800 different helicopter unit patches were created in Vietnam.

The patches are an important part of the Vietnam helicopter pilot's history.

You can help by taking your unit patch to your local copy store and making a high-quality color copy.

Jot down such things as unit, when the patch was used, variations, etc. Send the copy and information to the Directory Committee, c/o VHPA, or to Jay Riseden at [REDACTED].

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ELECTRONIC MAIL

Newsletter: 74127.442@compuserve.com

Seeking

VHPA member Marty Martines really wants to find a warrant officer Cobra pilot named John Everhart, who flew for C/7/17 Cav in '68 and '69.

John saved Marty's life a number of times. Marty's home phone is [REDACTED]

VHCMA member Stephen H. Panawash is interested in corresponding with anyone who served in F Troop, 8th Cav, Americal Div from April 1970-April 1971.

He can be contacted c/o Brian Mielke, 1501 S. Antioch St., Waukesha, WI 53186.

RN searching for info on Maj. Thomas Curtis Murray Jr. Army pilot. Fort Sheridan, IL. 5th Region RADCOM 1965-66.

Left for Vietnam April 1966. Stationed Fort Sill, OK, 1968-70 (?). Any info much appreciated.

Please reply to: R. Grubb RN,C BSN, 1111 E. Lee Road, Taylors, SC 29687.

VHPA briefs

Historical Reference Directory

The 350-page Volume 1 of the Historical Reference Directory is available for purchase.

It includes nine unit histories, Army flight class rosters up through 1966, the VHPA radio call sign database, and the helicopter incident database through 1965.

The 832-page Volume 2 is also available. It contains five unit histories, 12 short stories, the Army flight class rosters for 1967 and 1968, and the helicopter incident database for 1966 and 1967.

Please use the form on Page 4 to order your copy. The Executive Council has instructed the various committees to continue to collect information for future volumes.

Unit histories, short stories, details of helicopter incident and missions, as well as questions concerning the Historical Reference Directory, should be directed to Mike Law at [REDACTED] (evenings) or [REDACTED] (office).

Nichols seeks pilots' poetry

Donald L. Nichols, P.O. Box 95981, Oklahoma City, OK 73143 is compiling a book of poems written by pilots who were in RVN about their experiences.

Part of the proceeds would be used to establish scholarships in the name of the VHPA.

Anyone who would like to contribute may send to the address listed. Send only copies; he cannot return originals.

Nichols is a life member of the VHPA.

The 1995 Membership Directory

The 1995 Directory is scheduled to go to the printer in early September.

Bulk mailing from the Wichita, KS, post office begins in early October and can take as much as two or even three weeks to get to everyone in the U.S. postal system.

If your dues are current as of the early September and you joined the VHPA before Aug. 18 (this year's Directory cutoff date), you should receive your copy on or before Oct. 21.

1996 VHPA Calendar

The Executive Council approved the production of next year's calendar. It will be available for general distribution in September.

This edition has 16 photos, including two paintings from artist Joe Kline. All but one are color photos.

Use the form on Page 4 to order copies.

1995 VHPA Calendar

Copies of the 1995 VHPA Calendar are still available. The collection of 14 photos is well worth the \$7.

Kansas City reunion special, meaningful

I'm sitting at the airport in Kansas City waiting to return home after my first VHPA reunion. I'm writing to express my gratitude to the Executive Council, the VHPA staff and all the volunteers and others who planned and conducted this 1995 Reunion.

I know that you have all worked very hard and long to make this event possible, but you have gone far beyond that to make it as special and meaningful as you did. Thank you very much.

Until this year, I had not joined any veterans' groups or attended any functions commemorating the Vietnam War or its veterans. But I am very glad that my OCS and flight school roommate and good friend, Ed Gruetzemacher, sent me a VHPA application and reunion sign-up form this spring.

The opportunity to renew friendships of 26 years ago, laugh, cry and remember was very meaningful to me. I'm sure I'm not the only one to have felt unconnected to my fellow veterans and our military experience.

These few days have helped me to put some things in perspective and to give thanks for my fellow aviators and to those who didn't come home. I would never have anticipated how good it sounded to hear "Welcome Home."

A friend who had to leave the reunion early asked me to get him a couple of T-shirts, but they were all sold right away. Have you considered running another batch? I would buy at least four and, from talking to others, I think you could find homes for another batch pretty easily. If you decide to print more, please contact me.

Again, my heartfelt thanks to all of you. You helped me build and to recall some special memories.

Doug James
B Troop, 7/1st Air Cavalry, 1969

Bob Hope had planned to attend 1995 reunion

One of the stories regarding our Kansas City reunion that was not commonly known was the Bob Hope invitation and his tentative acceptance if his health allowed.

We had been working with his Burbank office for months to set up an appearance sometime during the Kansas City reunion — most likely during either the July 2 Mash party or the July 4 morning parade. I had flown Bob while he was in country in 1966, and had used that connection to invite him to fly to KC to receive our group's thanks for all his efforts and support.

Bob's 92, and his health is a serious concern. He wanted

Continued on Page 5

VHPA Product Order Form

MAIL FORM TO:

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

FAX NUMBER FOR

CREDIT CARD ORDERS: (513) 721-5315

VHPA bumper stickers	\$1/each _____
Back VHPA Newsletters (Complete sets only)	\$20/set _____ (\$5 P&H each set)
1992 VHPA Directory (7/17 Cav history)	\$10/each _____ (\$5 P&H each)
1994 VHPA Directory (Lam Son 719 history)	\$10/each _____ (\$5 P&H each)
1995 VHPA Directory (Available in September)	\$10/each _____ (\$5 P&H each)
Vol. 1 Historical Reference Directory	\$15/each _____ (\$5 P&H each)
Vol. 2 Historical Reference Directory	\$20/each _____ (\$5 P&H each)
1995 VHPA Calendar	\$7/each _____ (\$3 P&H each)
1996 VHPA Calendar (Available in September)	\$10/each _____ (\$3 P&H each)

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 _____

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VHPA participation high point for parade

The people of Parkville enjoyed and appreciated having representatives of your association taking time away from their reunion to march in Parkville's Independence Day parade.

It was an absolutely wonderful event and it has lifted everyone's spirit here in town. We are still talking about your participation and articles and pictures are still being published in the local papers.

I was personally very pleased that the cadets from Wentworth Military Academy were given the opportunity to march with your membership as your color guard. Marching with the colors is a part of their education and by doing this for your association, it may very well be one of the better experiences of their cadet careers.

It occurred to me your members may have some interest in one of the memorials on the Wentworth campus, it is our Vietnam memorial and, as you can see by the picture, it's a helicopter. The memorial was dedicated in April of 1987 and it has become the center of a traditional honor ceremony held each year during homecoming in October.

Due to the unusual nature of this memorial, it occurred to me that members living in the vicinity may wish to view it. Our Vietnam memorial is located near center campus at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] If directions are required, they can be obtained from Mrs. Tom (Chris) Butler at [REDACTED]

Thank you so much again for participating in our parade and the emotional lift you gave this great little community, I hope you will be back!

Al McCormick
[REDACTED]

to come, but there was much fear that the trip would be too much for him. He was resting in the Hamptons, on Long Island, NY, during the 4th, and his PR people had agreed to stop in Kansas City en route to Burbank, CA, if he ended up flying back to the West Coast during that time period.

We also had an offer from one of our members, who flies the corporate jet for Allied Signal/Bendix King to pick him up and get him to Kansas City, but Bob had his own plane on standby.

Attached is a letter I just received from Bob. While it was dated in late June, they held up mailing it until after the reunion was over and they knew for sure he couldn't make it. Please note his comment about next year's reunion.

We were on "standby" for a last-minute appearance all the way until early in the morning of July 4th. We even had a continuous phone communication link with the staff assistant that was with him on Long Island. What a memory that would have been.

Dave Rittman
Reunion Entertainment Chairman
Kansas City

June 26, 1995

Mr. David H. Rittman
Convention Committee
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn.
Parkville, MO 64152

Dear David,

Sorry I can't be at the convention. Some of the bravest and nicest people in the world are the pilots who flew in Viet Nam. It has been an honor meeting some of you and a pleasure performing for you. Keep your pride that you fought such an honorable battle.

Keep me in mind for your next convention.

Bob Hope

POW/MIA postage stamp has a helicopter pilot link

It was interesting to discover the new POW/MIA postage stamp has a Vietnam helicopter pilot connection and, in fact, contains a hidden memorial to a fallen comrade, 1st Lt. James F. Spencer.

In our directory, he is shown as KIA on 11/2/69, as a member of Class 69-16, and as being in the 1st Cav.

His widow, Ivy, has been carrying his dog tags ever since. She is a professional photographer, poet and writer. She graduated from the University of North Florida in 1994.

A staff member at the university, who is also an art director for the U.S. Postal Service, designed the stamp. Knowing her background, he asked Ivy to take the photo of the dog tags which was then superimposed over the flag. She arranged the chain to form an "S" in honor of Jim.

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Mrs. Bigbee was quoted in a newspaper article as saying, "All I got was a closed coffin. The coffin came home sealed, everything was sealed. There's no closure on it for me. I feel guilty that I'm still here and he isn't. That's why I totally empathize with those POW and MIA families."

Jim's son, Tony, was appointed to Annapolis as a descendent of killed-in-action military personnel and is now a naval intelligence officer. Ivy has remarried.

I recently had a nice conversation with Ivy. She had not heard of the VHPA and was very interested in our organization. If any of our members knew Jim and/or the circumstances of his death, she would appreciate hearing from them.

Our organization has helped so many pilots and families find "closure" and I am sure some of our members can help her. The address is: [REDACTED]

Bill Kelbaugh
Blue Star
48th AHC, 1967-68

Red Lions' commander flew choppers in Vietnam

As a former Army aviator and a life member of VHPA, I look forward to reading each VHPA Newsletter. I usually read it cover to cover to see if any old friends appear in one form or another.

I was very pleased to see in the April '95 issue an article on the "RED LIONS" (HMM-363) in Vietnam. So, why would a "doggie" enjoy an article about "jar heads?" The reason is that I am currently the commanding officer of the "RED LIONS" — now HMH-363.

When the "RED LIONS" returned from Vietnam on the

Cost of aircraft a factor in recognizing pilots?

I read Dick Snow's (Hawk 16) letter in the June 1995 issue of the VHPA Newsletter. Dick's honesty in addressing those inferiority feelings prompted me to expand on his letter.

The current Scott O'Grady saga is a continuation of the same old story of the brass letting the fast movers shine the spotlight on themselves at the expense of those who put themselves at risk to pull another shiny boy out.

How about the hundreds and hundreds of extractions that went unheralded in RVN? I guess it's the price of your ship that makes you noteworthy, not the lives one saves.

Jim Causey
Silver Spur 12
Red Horse 1
3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry Regiment

22nd of January 1969, the squadron began making the transition from the UH-34D "Sea Horse" to the CH-53A "Sea Stallion." The squadron currently flies the CH-53D, an aircraft that in most cases is older than the pilots who fly them. In fact, many of the aircraft are Vietnam veterans.

The "RED LIONS" are one of only four squadrons that fly the CH-53D, all of which will be relocated to MCAF Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, by the summer of 1996. The "RED

In fact, many of the aircraft are Vietnam veterans.

LIONS" now reside at Tustin, MCAS, California and will move to Hawaii next summer.

One of the tenets of the modern Marine Corps is emphasis on professional military education (PME) at the unit level.

Mr. Dick Clifton's newsletter article proved to be excellent reading for the junior officers and SNCOs of HMH-363.

As the current commanding officer of HMH-363, I feel that history — especially first hand knowledge of history — is a pillar of the military profession. Mr. Clifton's article demonstrates first hand that the Marines of today have a tangible link to the past.

As one of just over a thousand Vietnam veterans still on active duty within the Marine Corps, I am routinely asked — especially by helo pilots — just what was "the war" really like?

Of course, no matter how much is written, read, or told, there is just no way to truly explain to the uninitiated the total emotions encountered in combat. The message of war is extremely difficult to convey, but we who have experienced it must continue to try so that, hopefully, we will dissuade youth from seeking glory and politicians from seeking political gain.

However, the "RED LIONS" stand as ready now as they did in Vietnam to carry the flag into battle should we be called upon to do so.

Lt. Col. Raymond S. Shelton
Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363
Marine Aircraft Group 16
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing MARFORPAC
MCAS Tustin

What was in Malaria pills we took during our tours?

You know how there was always something you thought about, but were afraid to ask?? Well, now I'm asking!!

I have before me a book entitled "The Essential Guide to Prescription Drugs, 1993" by James W. Long, MD, published by Harper Perennial.

I was curious about those good, old Malaria drugs which

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were required dosage when I was in the First Cav in 1966-67, and then second tour in 1971-72.

I recall the horror stories of the soldiers getting a general court-martial if they caught Malaria after the First Cav Division commanding general put out the order that everyone assigned will use their mosquito nets and roll down sleeves at night.

I even recall my Malaria-like symptoms when I developed a fever of "unknown origin" for seven days which prompted a blood-taking every time my temperature changed.

Luckily, the fever went away, but did I have any lasting effects? I don't really know, but to this day have a minor heart disorder (FAA says it's OK to fly) and some elevated liver function tests (higher than normal Bilirubin). Was the fever caused by the drugs or did the drugs really do their job and suppress the Malaria, so the tests wouldn't pick it up?

Where does all of this lead to? I remember the BIG, orange pill we took as being called "Chloroquine/Primaquine" and the little, tiny white pill as "Dapsone." What is now so unique, is to read about the mild and serious, adverse side effects of these drugs on the "test subjects."

They were introduced in the 1963/1964 time frame, but I wonder if many or all of us in Southeast Asia weren't the real, test subjects??

Here are some of the mild adverse effects: Headache, blurring of near vision (reading), ringing in the ears, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhea.

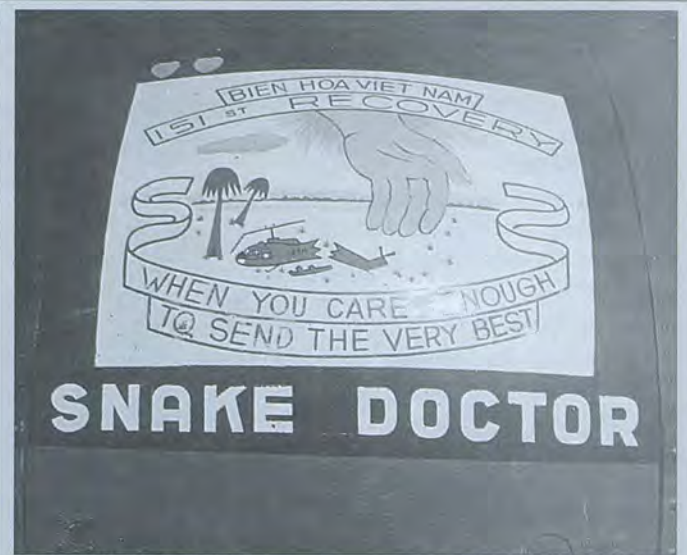
And again, some of the serious, adverse side effects: Emotional or psychotic mental changes, seizures, loss of hearing, excessive muscle weakness, eye tissue damage, specifically cornea and retina, with significant impairment of vision, heart rhythm abnormalities.

WOW!! Possible delayed adverse effects: Irreversible retinal damage has developed seven years after discontinuation of this drug. Retinal damage is more likely to occur following high-dose and/or long-term use!!

The Dapsone pill has many of the same side effects, especially liver damage or increased Bilirubin.

Did anyone else out there have any of the symptoms which may be attributed to these "prevention drugs" or come home with long-lasting damage? Please respond with your comments by phone, fax, message or letter to:

John L. Keller, VHPA No. 572



Snake Doctor was 'Cadillac' of Vietnam Hueys in 1966

Just received my June issue of the Newsletter — sure got a big kick out of Joe Leming's story "Maintenance officer evades death," Page 20.

Joe sure has a great sense of humor — I can share that with him!!! Just one "rub" to his story — "Slick driver Harry" called the Snake Doctor a piece of junk.

When I inherited the Snake Doctor in June 1966, it was the "Cadillac" of the Hueys in Vietnam!! You talk about a crew who had pride in their bird!!! (The best!!!)

I really do understand where Joe was coming from!!!

Charley "Pappy" Morehouse
Snake Doctor — A/501st/71st AHC
Santa Maria, CA

him, I first met Rich when I reported to Battery A, 377th Arty (Avn), 101st Airborne at Gunner's Gulch, Camp Eagle in October of 1971.

I was straight out of flight school and OH-6 transition, and just a little bit green and cocky. Rich had recently completed in-country OH-6 unit IP school and definitely gave me a "no slack" in-county checkout. It started a standard I have tried to live by these last 10,000 hours and has served me well.

Out of the cockpit, Rich was definitely the life of the party at A/377 and held forth in our own little club, "The Jolly Roger." At that time "Vietnamization" was in full swing and the 101st was gradually moving into the stand-down mode.

Our mission were mainly ash and trash and there was a lot of Mickey Mouse work and nitpicking (like tromping through the mud to the PX and being turned away for dirty boots). Add to this the gloom of the monsoon and morale tended to sag. Rich helped keep our spirits up. I will always remember him.

John L. Penny

Rich Hinders set standard for fellow pilot to follow

I was very sad to note the tragic passing of Rich Hinders in the "Taps" section of the April VHPA Newsletter.

I haven't seen Rich in over 20 years, since I went out the gate at Fort Campbell but I still have good memories of

Taps

Kit Beaton

Kit Beaton of Aptos, CA, died Feb. 10 of cancer.

Beaton, a native of Detroit, served with A Troop, 1/9 Cav, 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam from mid-1968 to mid-1969. He was a lift-section platoon leader whose call sign was "Apache 30."

He earned the Silver Star Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and numerous other awards as an Army Aviator in RVN.

Beaton served in the Army 21 years and retired as a lieutenant colonel.

He is survived by his wife, Belinda; his son, Rhett; his daughter, Carrie; his brother, Kent; his sister, Karen; and three grandchildren.

Stuart L. Saikkonen

Stuart L. Saikkonen, 43, of Horseheads, NY, died June 11 as the result of an airplane accident in Bath, NY, while performing an air show at the Jolamtra Airport in his double-winged Steen Skybolt airplane.

Saikkonen was born Aug. 26, 1951, in Ithaca, NY, the son of Leslie and Sarah Mudge Saikkonen.

He was a Vietnam veteran, serving his country with the U.S. Air Force, flying H-53 helicopters used for search and rescue. He was a supervisor of Product Engineering at Corning Inc. and a well-known pilot in the local area.

Saikkonen designed and built experimental aircraft and owned Elmira Air Sports, which was located at the Blue

Swan Airport in Sayre, PA. He was a member of the Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter No. 533 and the International Aerobatic Club.

He is survived by his wife, Joanne Sheleman Saikkonen; step-daughter, Kimberly DeRenzo; and parents, Leslie and Sarah Mudge Saikkonen of Trumansburg, NY.

Lige "Bill" Tillman

Lige "Bill" Tillman, 63, of Enterprise, AL, died July 7 at Medical Center Enterprise.

Tillman was a retired Army warrant officer and a former instructor pilot in the instrument division of UNC Support Services.

Survivors include his wife, Erma Tillman, Enterprise; two daughters, Tracy Rutledge of Enterprise, and Kaitlyn Tillman of Pensacola, Fla.; two sons, Gary Tillman of Auburndale, Fla., and Robin Tillman of Dothan; and two grandchildren, Luke Rutledge and Tristin Rutledge.

Madison A. Wilson

Madison A. Wilson, 40, of Ozark, AL, died when his OH-58 helicopter crashed in a leased LZ south of Troy on the night of May 19.

Two students survived the crash.

Graveside services were held with full military honors. Survivors include his wife, Marie Ann Wilson of Ozark; two daughters, Sian Wilson of Daleville, AL, and Christine Sproull of Cambridge, England; two sons, Sean Wilson and Seth Wilson, both of Daleville; parents, Retired Col. and Mrs. Max Wilson of Odessa, Texas; brother and sister-in-law, Max and Veta Wilson of Tulsa; and sister and brother-in-law, Mia and Daniel Gibson of Houston.

Members can help assure accurate history

Accurately recording our history is very important.

Our experience with "official" government information about the use of helicopters in Vietnam is that there are many mistakes and omissions.

The best source to correct these mistakes and fill in the holes are the people (you) who actually experienced this history first hand.

In order to give you the opportunity to make corrections and additions, we need to make the information we have available to you.

We have started doing this in the form of the Historical Reference Directories.

We now have a problem. It costs more to publish these directories than the revenue received from sales.

How can you help?

First — provide us with your information and/or help us collect and record information. This is the most efficient way to record our history by proactively capturing accurate information before it is published. You are the best source of our history.

Second — buy the products we produce and/or help us sell them. This has two purposes. First the revenue will be used to cover costs. Second it gets more veterans involved in improving the accuracy of our history.

Every Vietnam helicopter pilot, crew chief and gunner should have an opportunity to review the Historical Reference Directories to ensure their accuracy. Corrections and additions are always welcomed. So buy directo-

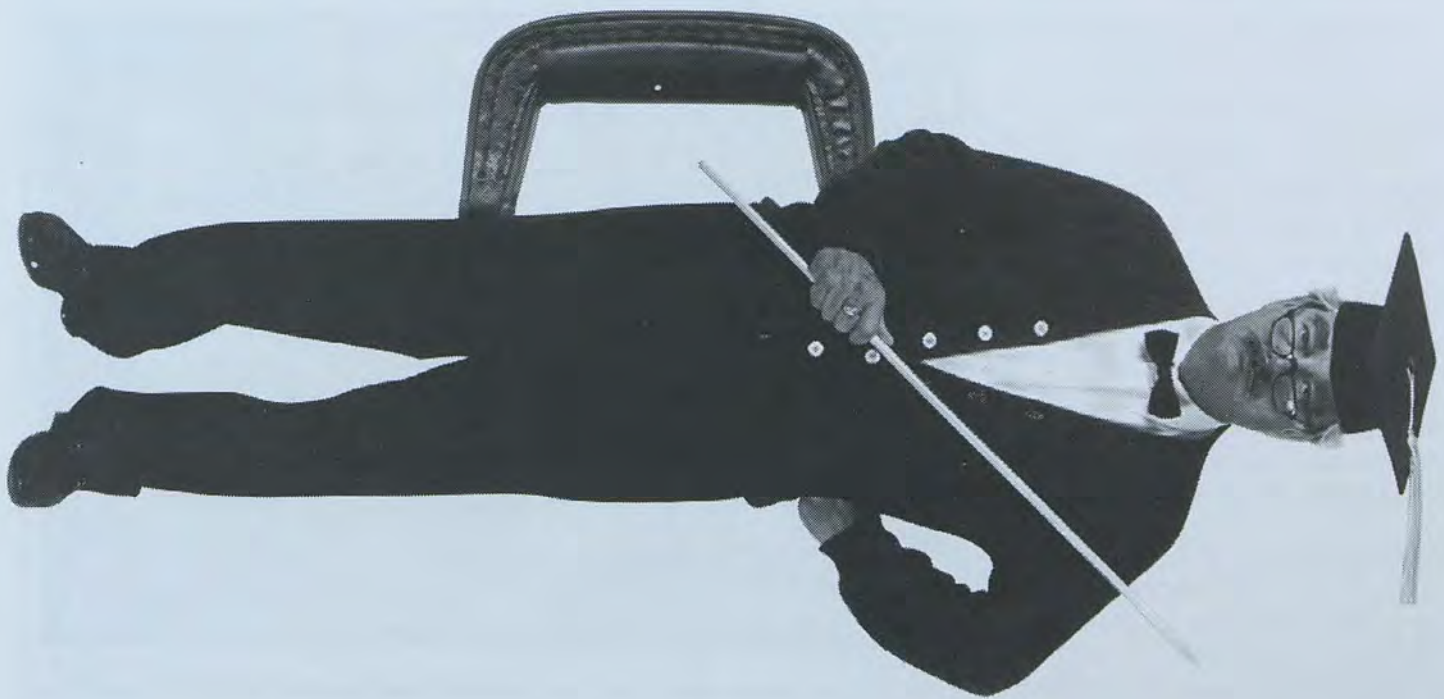
ries for yourself, a veteran friend, veterans organization libraries, and your local library.

Third — donate money to the Historical Reference Directory project and/or help us locate additional funding sources. Cincinnati is set up to keep track of donations for specific purposes.

An extra \$10-\$20 from each member could cover the publication costs, but many members cannot afford increased dues. This means larger donations from those who can afford it.

Since the VHPA is a nonprofit veterans organization, your donations may be tax deductible.

Gary Roush, Chairman
Database Committee
242 ASHC Muleskinners



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STATE _____ ZIP _____

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VHPA1 8/95

Chairmen, officers report to VHPA

President Kenny Bunn opened the 1995 Annual Business Meeting at 8 a.m. on July 2, 1995, at the Kansas City Reunion.

Bunn gave opening comments, introduced Executive Council members and gave a short description of their duties.

Financial reports

Secretary/Treasurer Dan Ferguson presented the association's financial reports, which included a pie chart illustrating how the \$30 annual membership dues are allocated. (Six newsletters, \$6 — 20 percent; management services, \$13 — 43.3 percent; Membership Directory, \$7.25 — 24.2 percent; other programs, \$3.75 — 12.5 percent.)

Ferguson presented the "Income and Expense Report," which showed total income at \$257,647, and total expenses at \$265,142.

He said the VHPA spent approximately \$10,000 more than it brought in.

He presented the "Assets and Liability Report," which showed total assets at \$289,166, and total liabilities at \$250,899, leaving unrestricted funds at \$38,217 for operating capital.

A motion from the floor was made and seconded to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion carried.

A question from the floor asked if there was any way to recover the funds on the 1995 Historical Reference Directory.

Ferguson commented that at \$20 each and 1,000 printed, the absolute maximum revenue would be \$20,000. This leaves a minimum \$10,000 loss.

Database Committee

Gary Roush presented database reports which show there are 629 life members, 3,681 dues-current members, 3,590 members whose dues are not current, and 3,079 friends.

The numbers indicate the VHPA is gaining new members and losing paid members at about the same rate.



Dave Rittman photo

Kenny Bunn presides over the Annual Business Meeting during the 1995 VHPA Reunion in Kansas City. Members of the Executive Council (left) await their turn to report to the membership.

Roush emphasized the importance of "first-hand" information and urged members to help in gathering/supplying information, records, etc.

Directories

Directory Editor Mike Law presented the production proof of the 1994 Membership Directory to Mike Sloniker for his help and efforts on this project.

(Mike Sloniker, who was not present during the presentation, later came forward to receive the proof.)

Law reported on the next Annual Directory. He said additions may include a database of pocket patches, and the directory will return to rigid bindings.

He commented on the proposed 1996 Calendar and gave some history on the first two volumes of the Historical Reference Directory, adding the information contained in those two volumes is just a beginning of the data available.

Law urged members to support these projects by purchasing the items as they become available so the work can continue.

Historical Committee

Historical Chairman Bob Davies said he had developed a unit historian guide to help interested individuals write unit histories.

He called for input, volunteers, histories, documents, etc.

Newsletter

Editor Jack Swickard said The VHPA Newsletter is now publishing 20-24 pages per issue, six times a year.

The past six issues have totaled 128 pages. This compares to 64 pages published each year two years ago — or twice as many pages.

The additional pages have been financed by advertising, which also pays for extras like colored covers.

The Newsletter relies on VHPA members to send items for publication, and members have responded very well.

E-mail has grown rapidly as a method for sending items to the Newsletter. A large percentage of items published in the Newsletter are now sent e-mail.

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Bunns make annual trek to reunion

KENNY BUNN

Another year, another reunion, and the Bunn family took it on the road for Kansas City.

Our first stop was in Tuscumbia, AL, and the childhood home of Helen Keller. The real "miracle worker" was Dammitlane when she stopped me from slapping the taste out the mouths of my teen-age sons as they knelt in front of the well pump, signing into each other's hands, and crying "Wa Wa."

A reunion trip doesn't seem complete without a Civil War battlefield visit and this year was Shiloh in western Tennessee. We visited the Peach Orchard, the Bloody Pond (where the blood of Union and Confederate alike stained the water a deep red), and the sunken road known as The Hornet's Nest.

The visit stirred up a little hornets nest of my own when Frick and Frack said it was too hot to traipse across another Civil War battlefield.

On we traveled, up to Springfield, IL, to answer the old question, "Who is buried in Grant's Tomb?"

Well it sure isn't Abe Lincoln because he and the whole family are buried in Springfield. A beautiful tomb with a large bust of Lincoln out front, although the nose is very shiny. It seems that it's considered good luck to rub Abe's nose when you visit. You can almost hear him say, "I'll watch the play and you stand in front of that closet door."

The National Park Service has purchased the four blocks around the Lincoln home so it finally was able to tear down the Piggly Wiggly across the street. The tourists

were getting in the way of the Thunderbird wine delivery trucks.

Next stop was Hannibal, MO, and the boyhood home of Samuel Clemens, known as Mark Twain.

Across the street from our motel was the train stop for the Twain house. In my best Elmer Fudd voice I inquired, "How much twaining is needed to wun the twain to the Twain house?" The man looked at me like I had just told him his sister had sexy underwear, but not as nice as his mothers'!

Kansas City and the 12th Reunion. Who would have thought I would be the opening act for comedian Tom Rhoades — what a funny guy! I agreed to it as payback for not being lynched at the business meeting.

The highlight for me was going to Parkville and being a part of the parade. I was very moved by all the people who stood and applauded (or saluted) as we passed. I truly felt like I was being welcomed home.

The big question is: Did we empty that beer truck?

After the Reunion, the Bunn family and the Mike Hurley family joined at Charlie Rayl's house.

While there, we visited the Z-Bar ranch, built in 1870, and saw the largest barn in Kansas. After the barn, we all cleaned our shoes (hard to convince yourself that it's just grass and water) and visited the oldest courthouse in Kansas. I asked Charlie if he was one of the first lawyers to practice there.

Back at the house, Charlie wanted Mike and me to ride with him in his Jeep out on the prairie. It was then that we

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Business meeting covers a range of topics

Continued from Page 10

Future Site Selection Committee

Kenny Bunn gave a short presentation on formation of the Future Site Selection Committee.

Bunn chairs the committee, and Charlie Rayl and Joe Bilizke serve on the committee.

Bunn presented the "Reunion Chairman Guide," which helps the reunion chairman plan a successful reunion.

There is also a "Hotel Wish List" that outlines VHPA requirements of a hotel.

There is also a Site Selection Committee Guideline which establishes guidelines for the committee and guards against abuses.

1996 Reunion

Vice President Ken Fritz introduced Anna Roa of Santa Clara, CA, site of the 1996 VHPA Reunion. Anna gave a short speech about facilities and services available.

Elections

Charles R. Rayl, senior member at large, was elected vice president.

Bob Smith, 1995 Reunion chairman, was elected junior member at large.

(Vice President Ken Fritz automatically succeeds Kenny Bunn as VHPA president. Midterm member at large Mike Hurley becomes senior member at large and junior member at large Jack Jordan becomes midterm member at large.)

New business

Jack Clark, a VHPA member and vice president of Vietnam Veterans of America, said he has worked on a proposed Vietnam War display at the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum. He reported the project is on hold because of the Enola Gay controversy.

He expressed concern there isn't a Huey in the Air and Space Museum.

Kenny Bunn made a short statement about VHPA telling the Air and Space Museum of the association's policy not to become involved in politics.

Former President Phil Marshall said the Air and Space Museum has obtained a Huey that flew in Vietnam.

The meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.

After barn, we cleaned our shoes

Continued from Page 11

saw a small herd of cattle ambling down the dirt road.

"Those cows are loose," cried Mike (the New Yorker).

"Those aren't cows, they're steers," explained Charlie.

"What's the difference?" asked Mike.

"Steers are cows with an attitude," I explained.

"They've given up their huevos for an extra 29 cents a pound and a great sense of fashion."

The cattle were loose and Charlie left to call the owner. Some minutes later we saw some dust out on the road.

"Come on guys," said Charlie. "You're going to meet a real cowboy."

When we went out, there was a gentlemen wearing a cowboy hat and sitting astride . . . a \$30,000 sport/utility vehicle. He was running his fence program on his laptop computer and directing repairs on his cellular phone.

Roy Rogers and Gene Autry would have laughed him out of town. If it weren't for the smear of cow shit on his hat, I wouldn't have thought he was anywhere around cattle. Probably didn't know the difference between a cow and a steer! The ride out into the prairie was the nightmare I knew it would be.

When Charlie bought the Jeep he failed to notice there were no springs in the seat either. We drove for what seemed like miles to get to the highest point in the county. You could see for miles — because someone had stolen all the trees!

Coming back we saw one solitary steer/cow standing by the trail. His eyes grew wide and seemed to say, "I

have to be here, Charlie, but you?"

Later, we dined at the Hays House, oldest restaurant west of the Mississippi, founded in 1857 by Seth Hays, who was a great-grandson of Daniel Boone. I wanted to ask if he was around . . . didn't seem like anything ever wore out or got too old to use in Kansas.

It became time to head back to the "Heart of Dixie," but we just had to stop at Mount Vernon. That's Texas, where Jack and Bettie Lou Jordan live, not George Washington's home.

I had heard Jack was an ostrich breeder and, Jack being not that tall, I was curious to see how it was done.

Wandering among the breeder pairs, we came across a large male ostrich with red markings. Jack said his name was Abner. As we approached, Abner fell to his knees and, swinging his head side to side, began to thump his chest. After a few seconds he hopped to his feet with his wing feathers spread behind his head and did a little dance.

"What's he doing," I asked.

After a pause Jack said, "He's giving you a challenge."

As we left, I could hear Abner calling, "Whoo, Whoo, Whooooo!"

Later, Bettie Lou informed me that what he was actually doing was . . . well, it seems Abner had found me attractive. Must have been my cute hat and accessories.

Time to store the old keyboard and start making preparations for Santa Clara.

Hope you are too!!!

VHPA Database Committee now collecting digitized Vietnam photos

The VHPA is just beginning to collect digitized pictures from Vietnam.

By digitizing pictures, we have more flexibility for publication and preserving our pictorial history.

The standard format is Kodak Photo CD. Typically a local photo store can get this done for you.

Approximately 100 photographs using negatives or slides can be put on one Kodak Photo CD for a little over \$1 per picture. Flight class pictures or other pictures that you have without negatives will require an additional step to produce a negative to use for the CD process.

If a copyright issue comes up on your flight class picture, tell them that all negatives and records of flight class pictures were destroyed (I confirmed this directly with the person

who destroyed them) so no copyright issues exist. We are trying to preserve our history.

So, pick out your favorite slides or negatives along with your flight class picture and have them put on a Kodak Photo CD for us. You do not have to fill up the CD, but the price per picture is less the more you put on. You can also send the CD back to add pictures later.

Please write descriptions of your pictures so we know what, where, who, date, etc. Without identification, pictures have very little value. With identification, they can be priceless.

Finally, mail the CD to me.

Gary Roush, Chairman,
VHPA Database Committee



Looking for a:

- Long-lost stick buddy?
- A classmate from flight school?

Look the easy way. Use VHPA's "Find-A-Friend"

Simply send a No. 10, self-addressed, stamped envelope — and the name of the person you're seeking to:

Phil Marshall



WO1 Nerd big, yellow — legendary

JAY RISEDEN

I know there were all kinds of pets and mascots in Vietnam. Some had snakes, exotic birds as well as other creatures.

Our sister unit, the 173rd AHC at Lai Khe, had a pair of monkeys that were renowned in III Corps. I'll leave that story to the Robin Hoods.

In the 128th AHC, the Tomahawks, at Phu Loi, we had a dog, WO1 Nerd. Legendary, big, old, yellow dog. He was just a pup when I arrived in June of 67.

I don't even know where he came from. We fed him out of the mess hall. He grew quickly. Nerd was always in prime condition.

One old papa-san who worked around the area was always eyeing him as if he were a blue ribbon Angus steer. He'd say, "I give you one thousand P for dog." No deal.

Nerd watched over us.

He always went out to the flight line during launch to make sure everybody got off okay. He was always there when we came back. He looked as if he were counting. 'Let's see . . . 12 ships out . . . okay there's the 12th one back in, everything is OK.'

If a ship were held over late for a mission, he just couldn't settle down until it was back. He'd pace out to the flight line and back. When it returned, he could finally relax and have some chow.

One time, Nerd disappeared for a few days, couldn't find him. It seemed that Doc Daugherty from the Third Platoon Gunslingers was the one who looked after him the most while I was there.

Doc borrowed a Jeep and searched all over the compound at Phu Loi. He finally found him half dead, next to

the runway.

We learned later he had tried to take on an O-1 Bird Dog. We don't know if he was trying to protect his turf from the "Bird Dog" or if he just didn't care for fixed wing aircraft.

Doc hauled him back to our company area and promptly put him in Jon Easton's bed. Doc didn't think Jon would mind. Jon was Doc's hooch mate and Jon was convalescing in Japan at the time recovering from a wound to his leg.

Doc fed old Nerd by hand every evening and nursed him back to health. Nerd got to feeling himself just about the time Jon Easton returned to the 128th from Japan. Nerd couldn't understand why this guy was sleeping in his bed and Jon was not too happy to find his bed had become a flea motel.

John Swizer of the Gunslingers

Continued on Page 14

"MARINE HELO"

Helicopter War in Vietnam
With the U.S. Marine Corps

David M. Petteys



240 pages - 2 plates - 30 photographs in color and b/w

David M. Petteys - Box 1232 - Conifer, CO 80433-1232 - USA

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this book to all the Armed Service personnel who served in Vietnam, especially to the US Marine Corps, of which I am proud to have been a part.

The book may seem critical of Marine leadership at times. But I ask the reader to look at the historical context. This book is one person's recounting of the daily mental atmosphere in that time and place, warts and all. This includes the rumors, frustrations, pressures and anguish that are present in a combat environment.

In retrospect, most everyone who went to Vietnam did what their country asked them to do, right or wrong, to the best of his or her ability. Nothing in this book is meant to detract from the sacrifices made by these thousands of brave and effective leaders who in many cases were willing to lay down their lives.

David M. Petteys

Yes, send me _____ copies of "Marine Helo" - \$ 20.00 plus \$ 2.74 postage.

Amount enclosed _____

Send to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

VHHPA news

Chapter to be at national rally

The North Carolina Chapter of the VHHPA will be at the 22nd anniversary National Balloon Rally at the the Statesville (NC) Municipal Airport Sept. 16 and 17.

The chapter will display a Cobra, a UH-1C and an LOH.

A limited number of rooms are available at the Statesville Holiday Inn. To receive special room rates, make reservations at () an tell the clerk you are with NCC-VHHPA.

To make dinner reservations for the night of Sept. 16, please notify Gary Kimbrell ()

(). A headcount is needed by Sept. 8.

Marshall looking for interviewer

Phil Marshall is looking for a person he met at the pool party during the VHHPA reunion in Kansas City.

"We discussed my daughter going to West Point. You said we needed to talk because you interview candidates for the academy," Marshall said of the meeting.

Marshall, who said he lost the person's name, can be contacted on weekdays at ().

Marines have a proud song history

During the USMC/Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Aircrew Reunion last fall, I was talking to another VHPA member about the Songs Section in the 1994 VHPA Membership Directory.

I am very impressed with the quality of the songs and associated songs history presented about those Army units.

I hope the VHPA was able to get a copy of Bernie "Capt. Mac" McGinley's HMM-164 song book that he mentioned in the August 1994 VHPA Newsletter. Certainly, the Marines have a song history that should be recorded.

Anyway, while I was in HMM-163, Andy Novickis wrote a song about one of our fellow H-34 drivers named Jack Geiser. Jack was a legend in his own time in our squadron because of his many screwy escapades — some of which are described in the song that follows.

Jack physically resembled Charlie Brown in the comics. So try to picture a Charlie Brown-type person in the situations I'll describe.

The first thing, Jack was a walking arsenal. He had a pistol. He had a grease gun. He had bandoliers of ammo all over. And he had this huge K-bar knife strapped to his leg. What a sight!

Next he had a manual or a course book with him at all times. We were all quite certain he had taken every correspondence course the Marines,

**We always said
Jack was ready for
any tactical situation.
Hence, the name of
the song, 'The Ballad
of Tact Jack'**

Navy, Army or Air Force had to offer! We all took a few of the required ones — but Jack even took courses on radio repair and radar operations.

And he was forever doing something. Once he was assigned as my wing on the standby pad. I refuel my ship and positioned to the pad. A few minutes go by — no Jack. I call on the radio. He's out shooting practice GCAs!

We always said Jack was ready for any tactical situation. Hence, the name of the song, "The Ballad of Tact Jack" — as in "Tactical Jack."

For those that didn't fly 34s, the max. was 2,800 RPM and 55 inches of manifold pressure. But in I Corps, 53.5 inches was all you could get.

Jack also was one of the luckiest guys I've ever met. Once flying low through a valley, he hit some commo wire. It snapped and wrapped around part of the tail boom, but didn't bring him down.

The incident mentioned in the song wasn't really his fault at all. He was

tail end of a squadron strike — maybe 16 aircraft going into a zone; each of us loaded with grunts. As he approaches the zone, he discovers there was no place for him to land.

So he pulls power short of the zone to wait his turn. But it is hot and high and he is heavy, so he ends up settling into the trees. As luck would have it, he gets just enough of a cushion effect from the trees to keep from crashing.

The rest of us depart and Jack tries to pull forward to land in the zone. Whenever he moves, the old 34 settles further into the trees!

Finally, Jack yells to the crew in back to get the grunts out. Well, they look down and say — No Thanks. Jack says: "We're in trouble, throw 'em out!" The crew explain the situation to the grunts and two of them climb out into a tree. Now Jack can move and lands in the zone.

We can all laugh about it and write a song about it, but that was a very scary situation! Jack did a good job and no one was hurt.

THE BALLAD OF TACT JACK
WORDS BY: LT. ANDRE NOVICKIS,
HMM-163 1966
TUNE: "THE BALLAD OF THE GREEN
BERETS"

*Flying fool up in the sky
Fearless Jack, about to die
Pistol, grease gun, explosives high
An ammo dump up in the sky*
Continued on Page 15

WO1 Nerd takes on Bird Dog, and loses

Continued from Page 13

tells about the time all the pilots were rounded up for a big "secret briefing."

Windows were covered, identification was checked and all attendees had to sign a roster.

When Nerd wandered in with some of the pilots someone thoughtfully entered "WO1 Nerd" on the attendance roster.

John says in about two weeks, Army CID and security types were

wandering around the company area. They were trying to find out who this WO1 Nerd was who had attended the briefing.

It seems there were no other records verifying a security clearance or his assignment to the unit.

When the young men who were the unit pilots spent time playing with Nerd, a smile would come to their face and take them back somewhere private, to a place and time that

seemed so very remote, but nonetheless comforting in its remembrance.

WO1 Nerd died of natural causes during his tour, some time before the 128th stood down in 1972. He was a faithful friend and great companion to those that knew him.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jay Riseden was Gunslinger 35 with the 128th Assault Helicopter Company at Phu Loi in 1967-68.

Aviator died during rescue attempt

FRANK TIERNEY
VHPA MEMBER

Maj. William Adams, KIA May 25, 1971, Congressional Medal of Honor.

For the past several years, whenever I receive a VHPA Directory, I look at the beginning of the KIA section for the name: "Adams, William E."

The only details printed are "Medal of Honor." I get a very guilty conscience each year because I know how this man died and obviously the VHPA doesn't.

First a little background information.

When I joined A Company, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division in March 1971, Maj. Adams was the CO.

My first recollection of him was when he asked me to join him for dinner — something he did with all new pilots. His first question was: "Do you drink alcohol?" I thought this was strange, but answered that I only drank beer, never whisky or anything strong.

Later I learned the company had a tradition of making the first drink for new pilots in the Officers Club. It consisted of "the PITCHER" filled with one of everything from behind the bar until it was full.

Once the new guy took it to his lips, he couldn't bring it down until it was empty. Well, Adams humored the tradition, but he also took care of his new

pilots. I found out later that mine consisted primarily of beer and 7-Up, with just a shot or two of something else.

Another time, someone in our company did something against the rules. I don't remember the details; only the results. The company all backed this man's actions.

After an inquiry, Adams slapped an Article 15 on him and grounded him for a few days. Many were astonished at his actions until a few days later another board ordered him to be court-martialed. But, due to the major's Article 15, the man couldn't be court-martialed and the soldier's career was saved — exactly the way Adams had planned it.

He was a good man. He flew all the same missions we did. He was as much a Cav pilot as he was the CO.

When the 1st Cav stood down at the end of March, we packed our slicks and flew to Pleiku to join the 52nd Aviation Battalion at Camp Holloway.

They asked us what name we wanted for the company and we took A/227th Aviation Company in honor of our 1st Cav heritage. We flew primarily between Pleiku, Kontum, Dak To and Dak Sieng. There was a ridge line between Dak To and Kontum known as "Rocket Ridge" with two ARVN firebases, Firebase 5 and Firebase 6, located at each end.

In a matter of days we were thrust into our first major battle and really

that continued for the rest of my tour.

On March 31, one of our pilots, WO1 Roger Reid, who was our choir leader at the bar, was shot between the eyes and his aircraft crashed on the mountain near Firebase 6.

The co-pilot, WO1 Gordy "Magnet Ass" Bellen, and the crew clamored up to the base while the pilot in another one of our ships took a hit in the knee, but returned to base.

During the rescue effort, a second slick was shot down and further missions were called off.

Later that night, the two crews and all the ARVN E&E'd to a clearing near Firebase 5. Adams and WO1 Jett were the aircraft commanders who flew in to extract them.

A lone American soldier stayed behind to cover their escape from Firebase 6. He remained on that hill for seven days and earned the Medal of Honor for his actions. That was a "Hill of Heroes" if there ever was one!

During the course of the next few months, this hill would constantly claim casualties, including myself with Jett when we literally escaped with our lives.

On May 24, a slick from another company in the 52nd CAB was shot down as it approached Firebase 5 on an ammunition resupply mission. The crew chief, Spec. 5 John Littleton, the sole survivor, managed to climb up the

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Words describe 'The Ballad of Tact Jack'

Continued from Page 14

*Down he swoops into the zone
The troop and VC are all gone
They have all fled down the road
To avoid from getting mowed*

*Down he comes with flare to side
28 and 55
Missing trees with distance slim
Resting finally on a limb*

*"Kick them out," old Jack does say
Troops and Crew Chief, sit and*

*pray
They hesitate, what could it be
Oh per chance, it's the wrong tree*

*Wrap on turns, right rudder kick
Pull max power, work the stick
Funny why no lift I get
Jack, you're out of ground effect*

*Many years their course have run
The war in Vietnam is done
Still in a tree in this strange land
A 34 yet still does stand*

*Rotors still and caked with grit
And inside a skeleton sits
Book on lap, titled "How To Fly"
Extension course from MCI*

Harvey Olitsky
HMM-263 and HMM-161 in 1965
MAG-16 and HMM-163 in 1966

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Directory Committee assures us Bernie McGinley's Phantom Phlyers Sing will be included in the 1995 Directory.

Slick downed approaching firebase

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hill to the base. On a radio he told everyone he was wounded, but OK for now.

During the evening, Lt. Col. Russell Nelson, the 52nd CAB CO, organized a rescue operation for the next morning. It would consist of two sets of AH-1G guns and one Huey. He called around the battalion for volunteers to fly the Huey.

The witness statements on file in the National Archives at Suitland, MD, help fill in some of the things I didn't know or have forgotten.

For example, Capt. Harry Morton's statement, he was the XO of A/227 AHC, described the previous evening's discussion with Adams and Capt. John C. Curran (he was the other pilot who died with Adams and was our operations officer) about the mission.

Adams maintained he was probably the most experienced aviator in the company, that he felt uneasy about asking someone to fly that mission, so he volunteered himself.

All I remember was everyone else in the company truly recognized the commitment he was making.

Nelson's statement says he had talked with Littleton on the morning of the mission and he was concerned Littleton's injuries would place his life in danger if he couldn't be rescued that day. Two ARVNs also needed extraction.

Nelson's statement also provides details about the operation and tactics.

That the NVA had the fire support base ringed with anti-aircraft weapons was well known to every helicopter crew at Pleiku.

So, they selected what they hoped was the best approach route and had two sets of guns establish racetrack patterns along that route.

There were three Cobras on one side and two on the other side. Adam's Huey was in the formation with the two snakes as he looked over the situation and the approach.

After making one loop, Adams made a high-speed, low-level run for the hilltop base. The accompanying

Adams maintained he was probably the most experienced aviator in the company, that he felt uneasy about asking someone to fly that mission, so he volunteered himself.

gunships reported his aircraft took a lot of fire, including heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

His aircraft immediately received concentrated enemy fire after landing on the helipad. The three wounded were loaded and he started out the same way he had come in.

Only seconds after he lifted off, enemy mortar and recoilless rifle rounds impacted on and around the helipad. Departing the base, he attempted to gain altitude, while still under heavy hostile fire.

A gunship pilot inquired if he was OK and Adams calmly replied: "Negative, I've got a fire and I'm going down."

Nelson's statement concludes by stating that at about this same moment, the helicopter burst into flames, the main rotor separated, the Huey overturned and plummeted to the ground, inverted, amid a hail of enemy fire.

The witness statement of Capt. James Caesar, a pilot in the Cougar

A gunship pilot inquired if he was OK and Adams calmly replied: 'Negative, I've got a fire and I'm going down.'

(57th AHC) gun team of two snakes, states that besides his team there was a heavy Lobo (D/227 AWC) gun team.

Adams had selected a north-south approach and flew in formation with the two gun teams as they flew race-track patterns along the approach. After a couple of passes, he dove to the fire support base Adams calmly adjusted the gunships' fire during his approach.

On the exit, at about 1,500 meters from the fire support base, the slick appeared to be descending and this caused the Lobo team leader to ask if he was OK.

Just as he was answering, flames were visible around the mast and transmission. The transmission then exploded, severing the rotor and the aircraft went inverted.

Witness statement by Capt. John Everhart, pilot and team leader of the Cougar gunships, says they had linked up with the Lobo heavy team over Dak To and everyone had a tactical briefing by Adams.

The Lobo team had worked Fire Base 5 earlier that morning and took the west track so the Cougar team got the east side of the racetrack. On their second pass, the Cougar wing received SA fire, everyone adjusted and Adams started his approach. Everhart maintained Adams' ship fell inverted from about 400 feet before it impacted.

A witness statement by CW2 Evan Zangenberg, pilot of the A/227th AHC chase aircraft, also includes a map which shows Fire Base 5 on hill 1338 just northeast of Ngak Bor Beang and south of Dak To with top grid coordinates of 987??3.

In a witness statement, WO1 James Baker, also of 57th AHC's Cobra gun team, states DRAGON 6, Nelson, was airborne and looked for a means to get people into the crash site but that this effort was deemed impossible due to extraordinary intense and accurate enemy ground fire.

A witness statement by WO1 Gary Cantrell, co-pilot in the Cougar lead, states that Adams' call sign was CHICKENMAN 6 and he was only on

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Adams' ship fell inverted

Continued from Page 16

the pad about 30 seconds before calling "coming out."

He also states Adams' inverted aircraft struck some trees when it crashed and bounced about 25 meters down the slope into a small clearing and came to rest inverted and engulfed in flames.

Adams, Curran, Spec. 4 Robinson, the CE, and Spec. 4 Durand, the gunner, died in a UH-1H with the last three digits of "715." Earlier that morning, I was part of a mission where 15 A/227 aircraft inserted some ARVN troops in the Dak To area. We took a break when the gunships transferred to the rescue operation.

It wasn't long after they went down that we learned about it. Even though we were ordered to stay away from the crash site, I do have movies of the impact site moments after the incident.

No fire was visible. Two bodies were observed outside the craft and smoke was seen.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Frank Tierney writes the Silver Wings column for Saber, the Newsletter for the 1st Cav Association.

Maj. Adams also served with 176th Aviation Company and 411th Transportation Detachment in 1967 in Vietnam on his first tour. He had been executive officer of the 227th Aviation Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division starting on July 14, 1970. On Oct. 13, 1970, he became the commanding officer of A/227th Aviation Company.

Still 'flying'



Art Jacobs photo

No matter what the weather, VHPA life member Art Jacobs is ready for very low-level "flying" in Chicago. Art, a member of class 67-17, flew a lot of IFR on his first tour in Vietnam with the 15th Med (Medevac), 1st Cav, as well as a lot of VFR flying Cobras with the 238th Aerial Weapons Company on his second tour. Art lives in Chicago half the year and in Paris the other half.

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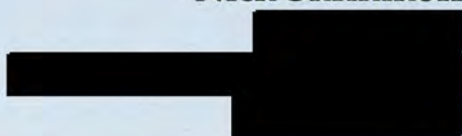
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for the 1995
VHPA Reunion



An AH-1 Cobra lifts off from a static display across from reunion headquarters in downtown Kansas City.



Reunion chairman Bob Smith holds badge of office — a rock.



Parkville Mayor Bill Quitmeier presents plaque to Kenny Bunn, 1994-95 VHPA president, during "Welcome Home" ceremonies on July 4th.

Photos by
Dave Rittman



A place at dinner is set for "The Missing Man" at the Final Banquet to honor helicopter pilots who have died.



A bystander greets VHPA marchers in Parkville's July 4th parade.

Net gets some activity at reunion

MEL CANON

Well, now that all the dust has cleared from LZ KC, guess it's time to reflect on a few things.

The net has grown immensely since the last segment and we've gotten several guys signed up who were introduced to the net at the reunion.

I want to thank all the guys who chipped in and set up the Online TOC at KC.

Doug Russell, the instigator of the TOC, did a great job putting it all together. All the net members who were at the reunion pitched in and lent a hand, also. Special thanks to those net members who brought along their laptops for use.

I hope you all had a chance to meet some of the online crew while in KC. If not, you will have an opportunity next year at Santa Clara. We intend to have another TOC set up there. The TOC can serve as sort of an electronic heartbeat for the reunion and provide a place where folks can hook up with one another through a message board setup.

Well, there has been some talk on the net about the reunion, but not as much as I figured there might be. For one thing, the net was experiencing some technical difficulties about the time the reunion wound down. Those problems were corrected, but communications were somewhat sporadic for a couple of weeks after KC.

One thing that seemed to have more of an impact on the net group than anything was the parade in Parkville.

Well, several things have transpired within the online gaggle since the last column.

One of our members will probably be reading this newsletter from Moscow.

CHARLIE ELIASON () has been transferred to Moscow with his employer, Caterpillar. Charlie and his wife will be moving there this month and have already made a couple of trips to set things in

motion for their arrival.

Charlie flew the CH-54 Crane in Vietnam and was with the 355th Aviation Company at Camp Holloway near Pleiku.

Charlie was put in touch with a friend of our Honduras connection, **MIKE WISE** ().

Mike's friend is a U.S. bureaucrat in Moscow and he has been very instrumental in helping Charlie get set up there. He has even given him valuable information on how to get online from Moscow so he can still

On The InterCom

participate in our net activities. The uses of this

net never cease to amaze me.

Another dimension to the net comes from Down Under.

BOB KYLE () has joined the net. Bob was EMU27 with the RAN (Royal Australian Navy) in RVN and was attached to the 135th AHC.

He hails from Canberra, Australia and is currently attending the university in pursuit of a Ph.D.

We've also added an Indonesian contingent to the net in the form of **RON BLACK** ().

As you might recall, I mentioned Ron in one of the first installments of this column. He is flying for a mining company in Indonesia. Ron has been on our online roster for a while, but just recently got involved with the net.

Another interesting contact comes in the form of **RON SMITH** (). Ron lives in Khon Kaen, Thailand and is a teacher at the university there. He teaches English and Thai.

While I'm identifying our foreign net contacts, I may as well mention **MIKE LOPEZ** (), who is with the U.S. Army in Germany.

ROGER SMITH () is on the net from

Kadena, Okinawa.

JIM STRICKLAND () accesses the net from Korea.

We now have 223 members on our online roster. We represent 39 states and eight different countries. We have 4-USMC, 2-USN, 1-USAF, 14 VHCMA, 212-USA (VHPA), 1-RAN, and 2-women who work with VHPA. We seem to be well represented geographically.

We would like to have everyone who has an Internet address check in with us. You don't have to be a part of the net if you prefer not to, but I would like to have your Internet address for our roster.

Send me an e-mail at: ()

Well, before I run out of space, let me toss out a rambling from the net. This was a during-the-reunion transmission.

JIM SEWEL () — Greetings, fellow netheads, from beautiful, downtown Kansas City.

You'd be pleased to know that your fellow netheads are representing our community well. Thanks to their efforts, some old buddies have been reunited, others have been very interested in what the net can do and, hopefully, some have had their eyes opened about the value of the net.

I confirm all that has been said about the Dougster, and more. He is better looking in person than on the net . . . can't say the same for everyone though.

The Rev done good this morning and whatever the wind blew in to cause him to get the sweating eyes also blew on some others in that room.

Thanks to all who offered encouragement to attend the reunion. I've been reunited with my crew chief from the 155th Falcons (circa '65), a classmate from 65-9 and at least one student. My only regret is that I waited so long to get up the courage to attend my first, but surely not my last, reunion.

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